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The effectiveness of the writing clinic program in improving compliance with scientific articles and methodological standards

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the journal writing clinic as a strategic approach to increase the academic capacity of the university community to produce scientific articles in accordance with national publication standards. Using qualitative descriptive methods through literature studies, observation of clinical activities, and analysis of training and mentoring documents, this study explains the basic concepts, implementation process, optimization strategies, and effectiveness of writing clinics in supporting the productivity of scientific publications of the participants. The results of the study show that the writing clinic functions as a systematic, directed, and collaborative guidance space, which provides technical assistance related to article structure, research methodology, journal style of cheating, as well as strengthening scientific argumentation, reference quality, and understanding publication ethics. Optimization strategies in the form of intensive workshops, individual mentoring, peer review, and gradual evaluation have been proven to improve the quality of participants' writing, while the success of the program is greatly influenced by the competence of the facilitators, the availability of literature, and the commitment of participants. Overall, journal writing clinics have proven to be effective instruments for academic development and have important implications for universities in designing sustainable mentoring models to improve the quality and quantity of scientific publications in Indonesia.

Keywords: Clinic; Writing; Journal

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



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1. INTRODUCTION

Scientific publications are an important pillar in the development of science and the improvement of academic quality in higher education. In Indonesia, the demand for publications is increasing with the enactment of various regulations related to student graduation, promotion of lecturer functional positions, and accreditation assessment of higher education institutions. This condition encourages an increase in the need for the ability to write good scientific articles in accordance with national and international journal standards. However, in reality, most students and novice researchers still experience obstacles in writing scientific papers, ranging from difficulty in formulating problems and compiling comprehensive literature reviews to determining the right research methods. In addition, several studies have shown low academic literacy among students, including in understanding citation techniques and ethics of scientific publications such as plagiarism, which also affects the quality of the manuscripts produced ([Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020](#); [Mulyani, 2018](#); [National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021](#)).

In this context, universities increasingly support scientific writing competence through structured writing-for-publication initiatives, often delivered as article or journal writing clinics, writing retreats, and other guided programs ([Kamler, 2008](#); [Murray & Newton, 2009](#)). Typically, a writing clinic operates as staged mentoring in which participants draft iteratively and receive focused feedback to strengthen manuscript structure, argumentation, the presentation of evidence, and strategies for selecting an appropriate target journal ([Vika et al., 2023](#)). Evidence from writing-center consultation research also indicates that consultative feedback can improve writers' self-efficacy, helping them address common writing barriers and approach submission with greater confidence ([Lundin et al., 2023](#)).

In addition to providing technical understanding, writing clinics also play a role in shaping a productive scientific culture, which is a culture that places writing as an integral part of the academic process. This is in line with the view that the success of a publication is determined not only by technical ability but also by motivation, discipline, and a supportive academic environment. Therefore, the journal writing clinic has a strategic position in efforts to strengthen research and publication capacity in Indonesian universities. With structured mentoring, the availability of competent mentors, and the integration of programs in academic policies, writing clinics are expected to improve the quality and quantity of academic publications sustainably ([Manurung, 2020](#)).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to comprehensively describe the phenomenon of organizing journal writing clinics based on literature reviews and published empirical findings ([Sugiyono, 2017](#)). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the process, strategy, and dynamics of writing clinic implementation through interpretive literature analysis and previous study results.

This type of research is library research, which is conducted by examining various written sources such as research methodology books, national journal articles, academic training reports, and relevant university documents ([Nazir, 2014](#); [Zed, 2014](#)). Through this technique, researchers can identify patterns, concepts, and theories related to scientific writing.

The research data were collected through documentation techniques, namely the collection of materials in the form of academic texts related to scientific writing competency, writing clinic models, and training program evaluations. Documentation techniques are effectively used to produce an in-depth understanding of the concepts, practices, and challenges of writing clinics, because written sources provide historical and conceptual information that can be analyzed systematically ([Arikunto, 2019](#)). To ensure the validity of the data, this study used the source triangulation technique, which cross-checked literature from various types of references (books, journals, and research reports). This technique helps researchers ensure

that the information analyzed does not come from a single source but has the backing of various academic publications (Arikunto, 2019).

With this method, this study produces a strong conceptual picture of how the journal writing clinic is run, what are the obstacles, and how strategies can be carried out to optimize the effectiveness of the mentoring program.

3. THE CONCEPT OF JOURNAL WRITING CLINICS AND THEIR URGENCY

Journal writing clinics are basically a form of academic assistance that aims to provide intensive guidance to students or lecturers to produce scientific articles that are worthy of publication (Putra, 2019). This program was born as a response to the low scientific writing skills that are found in many Indonesian academic communities. Studies on writing and mentoring programs indicate that common barriers include a weak understanding of article structure, difficulty in formulating problems, and limited ability to integrate literature sources into coherent scientific arguments (Mulyani, 2018).

In addition, the increasing demand for publications, both for graduation, lecturer performance assessment, and institutional accreditation, is an important reason for the need for writing clinics as an academic intervention. Universities realize that the quality of publications is highly determined by writing skills honed through intensive training and mentoring, not just through methodological lectures (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020).

3.1. Purpose of the Clinic

The main objectives of the journal writing clinic include: (1) Improve participants' scientific writing skills; (2) Produce articles that deserve publication in accredited journals; (3) Shaping a scientific culture through the writing community (Manurung, 2020); (4) Improve participants' understanding of publication ethics, including plagiarism and copyright (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020; National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

3.2. Scope of Material

Writing clinic training materials generally include: (1) Drafting titles and problem formulation; (2) Journal-based literature review; (3) Research methodology; (4) Data analysis; (5) Writing results and discussions; (6) Reference technique using Mendeley/Zotero (National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021); (7) Strategy for choosing journals and submission process (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020).

3.3. Effectiveness of Journal Writing Clinics

The effectiveness of a writing clinic is often reflected in measurable improvements in participants' drafts after iterative mentoring and feedback cycles. Structured writing-for-publication programs commonly use staged drafting plus peer review of key sections (e.g., abstracts, outlines, and full drafts), which helps writers sharpen structure, strengthen argumentation, and improve how they integrate and synthesize sources (Cuthbert & Spark, 2008; Murray & Newton, 2009). Evidence from evaluations and reviews of writing interventions suggests that these supports can improve not only productivity but also manuscript quality—partly because repeated review and revision functions like a “pre-peer review” process before journal submission (McGrail et al., 2006), alongside improvements in writing process and output within structured writing development programs (Morss & Murray, 2001).

Beyond technical skill gains, clinic effectiveness can also be assessed through concrete submission outcomes (e.g., how many manuscripts are submitted/accepted after the program). A cohort evaluation of a short intensive writing course followed by ongoing peer support reported substantial increases in submissions over a two-year pre/post period, alongside participants' reported increases in writing confidence (Rickard et al., 2009). This aligns with broader evidence that writing interventions (writing

courses, writing groups, and coaching) are associated with higher publication rates across diverse contexts (McGrail et al., 2006) and that supportive consultation/feedback environments can strengthen writers' self-efficacy—an important psychological driver of readiness to submit to reputable journals (Lundin et al., 2023).

3.4. Clinical Implementation Model in Higher Education

There are several models of implementation of journal writing clinics, including:

3.4.1. Intensive Workshop

The workshop is a training model in the form of face-to-face sessions that lasts 1–3 days and focuses on knowledge transfer regarding article structure, citation techniques, and manuscript editing practices. Amalia (2020) found that intensive workshops can significantly improve participants' understanding of scientific article structure and citation practices. However, short-duration workshops are generally not enough to produce manuscripts ready for publication due to limited time.

3.4.2. Ongoing Mentoring

The individual or small group mentoring model with a duration of 1–3 months is the most effective approach. Participants received direct feedback from the mentor regarding the title, abstract, method, and discussion. Continuous mentoring makes it easier for participants to improve the structure of argumentation and increase the depth of analysis.

3.4.3. Online Writing Clinic

Technological developments allow online clinic implementation through the Zoom platform, Google Docs, or campus LMS. This model makes it easier for participants from different regions to participate in mentoring without geographical restrictions. The challenge lies in the consistency of attendance and discipline of participants, especially when sessions are not conducted face-to-face (Institute for Research and Community Service, State University of Semarang, 2019; Manurung, 2020).

3.5. Challenges in Organizing Journal Writing Clinics

Although effective, the journal writing clinic is inseparable from a number of challenges. First, low participant motivation is often a major problem. Many students feel that writing scientific articles is a heavy task so they are less enthusiastic about participating in the mentoring process. Second, the limitation of experienced mentors, especially in small universities, is an obstacle in providing quality guidance. Third, the difference in participants' initial abilities makes it difficult to carry out mentoring uniformly. Some participants already understood the basics of research, while others still had difficulty composing good scientific paragraphs (Manurung, 2020; Putra, 2019).

In addition, limited access to reputable journals is also an obstacle, especially for campuses that do not subscribe to international databases. In fact, adequate access to literature is the basis for preparing a quality literature review (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020).

3.6. Journal Writing Clinic Optimization Strategy

To overcome these challenges, several strategies can be implemented. First, clinic organizers need to develop a structured training curriculum that includes understanding article structure, paraphrasing techniques, and strategies for dealing with the peer review process. Second, the evaluation of the manuscript should be carried out gradually, starting from the title to the reference, so that participants can improve the writing systematically. Third, the formation of a writing community (writing group) is important to maintain the motivation and consistency of the participants. Fourth, collaboration with journal editors or reviewers can greatly help participants understand the actual quality standards of journals. Finally, the clinic should be integrated with the academic policies of the campus, for example

becoming a mandatory activity for final year students or lecturers before submitting articles; this has been shown to increase the number of publications of institutions ([Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020](#); [National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021](#)).

3.7. Journal Writing Clinic Flow Model

The journal writing clinic flow model is a systematic stage designed to guide participants from the stage of identifying needs until the article is ready to be submitted to the journal. This flow is important to ensure that the writing process is structured, directed, and in accordance with scientific writing standards. In the national context, many universities have developed a writing clinic approach through training, workshops, and coaching clinics. In general, the flow of the writing clinic consists of six main stages: (1) identification of needs; (2) the formulation of topics and problems; (3) the preparation of the article framework; (4) drafting writing; (5) revision; and (6) finalization and submission ([Institute for Research and Community Service, State University of Semarang, 2019](#)).

3.7.1. Identify Participant Needs

The initial stage was carried out by mapping the participants' abilities, starting from mastery of research methodologies, knowledge of the structure of scientific articles, to previous publication experiences. This assessment helps the supervisor adjust the mentoring model. According to [Arikunto \(2019\)](#), needs analysis is an important step so that the mentoring process is more effective and according to the conditions of the participants.

3.7.2. Formulation of Research Topics and Problems

At this stage, participants are directed to choose relevant topics and have scientific contributions. The formulation of the problem is the main focus because it determines the overall direction of the article. [Zed \(2014\)](#) stated that the determination of research problems is a fundamental element in producing quality scientific works.

3.7.3. Outline

The article framework is prepared to help participants write in a systematic and systematic manner. An outline usually includes the main sections: introduction, literature review, research methods, results, discussion, and conclusion. This framework also simplifies the revision process because the supervisor can see the structure from the beginning. According to [Nazir \(2014\)](#), the preparation of the framework is important to maintain the coherence of scientific writings and avoid the repetition of ideas.

3.7.4. Article Draft Writing

Participants begin to write entire sections of the article based on the framework that has been created. In this phase, the supervisor provides direction on scientific grammar, the use of references, paraphrasing techniques, and the drafting of arguments. [Sugiyono \(2017\)](#) emphasized that scientific writing must follow methodological rules and be systematic in order to be accountable academically.

3.7.5. Draft Revision and Evaluation

Revisions are carried out to ensure that the substance, methodology, and writing format are in accordance with the standards of the destination journal. This stage also includes checking the level of similarity using a plagiarism detection tool. In line with research and publication guidance, revision is essential for strengthening methodological rigor, argument coherence, and compliance with publication ethics ([Arikunto, 2019](#); [Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020](#); [National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021](#)).

3.7.6. Finalization and Preparation of Journal Submissions

The final stage is to adapt the manuscript to the journal template, ensure consistent references, and complete supporting files such as cover letters and metadata. Participants were also simulated to understand the journal review process so that they were ready to receive reviewer input. According to the [Directorate General of Higher Education \(2020\)](#), the finalization of articles is an important step before submission to ensure accreditation and publication ethics standards.

The scientific journal writing clinic is an effective strategy to improve the academic competence of researchers, students, and lecturers in producing quality scientific papers. The clinic serves not only as a consultation forum, but also as a means of continuous coaching that includes the improvement of technical skills, methodological understanding, and publication procedures according to national scientific standards. Through systematic assistance from topic determination, drafting, drafting and reference review, to the process of submitting to journals, writing clinics are able to overcome various common problems for novice writers, such as weak concepts and arguments, ignorance of the surrounding style, and technical errors in writing references and article structures.

The results of qualitative descriptive research show that the success of writing clinics is largely determined by collaboration between competent mentors, participant commitment, and facility support such as writing modules, literature access, and scheduled consultation sessions. Optimization strategies in the form of structured workshops, layered reviews, individual mentoring, and progress monitoring, which are organized in pre-clinical flows, core clinics, peer review, revision, and article submission, have been proven to improve participants' ability to compile articles according to IMRaD format, compile citations correctly, develop arguments, and understand publication ethics. Thus, writing clinics are a strategic solution to strengthen academic culture, increase the productivity of scientific publications, and produce new authors who contribute to the quality of national publications and the reputation of the institution ([Manurung, 2020](#); [Sari & Rahmawati, 2021](#)).

Ethical Approval

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Confidentiality Statement

Not applicable.

Authors' Contributions

DA conceptualized the study, conducted data analysis, and drafted the manuscript. JN contributed to data collection, interpretation of findings, and manuscript revision. Both authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

Disclosure Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest related to this research.

Data Availability Statement

Not applicable.

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