

## **Indonesian EFL students' reading motivation and writing achievement across gender**

**<sup>1</sup>Ajeng Inayatul Ilahiyah\***  
**<sup>1</sup>Diah Maya Andina**  
**<sup>1</sup>Punggulina Andawaty Tiven**  
**<sup>1</sup>Bambang Yudi Cahyono**

*<sup>1</sup>English Language Teaching Study Programme, Graduate School of Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia*

**\*Corresponding Author**  
Email: [ajengilahiyah22@gmail.com](mailto:ajengilahiyah22@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*The inseparable linkage between reading and writing has gained a crucial emphasis on language learning. It has been regarded as a constructive issue for the improvement in teaching English skills. However, little attention is given to the underlying relationship between students' motivation in reading and their achievement in writing. This current research aimed at the correlation between students' reading motivation and their writing achievement across gender. It involved 50 third-year EFL students enrolled essay writing course divided into two classes in the ELT department. The quantitative data were collected through the use of the questionnaire on motivation in reading. Correlation analysis completed using Pearson product-moment revealed that the students' motivation in reading significantly positive influences their writing scores. It described that changes in students' reading motivation are a very weak correlation with the changes in their writing score. Another finding demonstrated that female and male students' reading motivation and their writing achievement are significantly different. It signified that the differences correlation coefficient of both male and female students. Finding teaching implication is one of the areas that future researchers are suggested to investigate. Regarding the research findings, it indicates that there are more extensive areas offered for further studies in the relationship between reading and writing.*

**Keywords:** *Reading motivation; writing achievement; gender*

Received:  
31 May 2019

Revised:  
16 July 2019

Accepted:  
12 August 2019

Published:  
31 August 2019

### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past few last decades, much emphasis has been put on learners' attitudes, motivation, beliefs, and perceptions of learning and teaching, especially within the field of second language acquisition (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015; Goodridge, 2017). Motivation, which is defined as "some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something", has been widely accepted to be a key factor in the language teaching (Harmer, 2001). The high correlation between the strength of motivation and level of L2 achievement makes it clear that the connection

between these two is quite significant (Saville-Troike, 2006). As well as playing a crucial role in learning a language, motivation also determines whether the learning is superficial or deep and internalized (Capen, 2010). Thus, the discussion about motivation within language learning is proliferating and apparently unending.

Hence, several studies proposed abundant positive effect when we were integrating both skill reading and writing. In accordance with reading to write, research has shown that connection between reading and writing has a significant role in students writing process. Ever since the past several decades until recently, the processes in which writers engage as they compose a text have been focused by researchers (Sanders-Reio et al., 2014 ;Graham et al., 2017; Plakans et al., 2019). One of the engaging factors that reading is very beneficial in helping students develop the structure of the text (Simatupang, 2018), enhance literacy performances and gain more insight to create their own text, leading to better comprehension of text produced (Graham et al, 2016). Reading a variety of genres helps children learn text structures and language that they can then transfer to their writing. In addition, reading provides them with prior knowledge that they can use in their writing.

To be a good writer, then, a student needs a motivation to read a lot. According to Larrive (2006), motivation is defined as emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals. A teacher can alter students' intrinsic motivation with appropriate and valued academic constructs that the students will perceive as worthwhile. It means that motivation can stimulate students to write in order to improve their quality in evolving a text and it makes them become creative writers.

One of catalyst driving writing development is reading motivation. Motivated readers are defined as "engaged, curious, and anxious to talk about what they are reading" (Marinak, Malloy, & Gambrell, 2010). In this case, Bandura (2010) suggests that motivation is the result of an individual's self-efficacy related to a task. He further defines self-efficacy as the beliefs we have about ourselves that cause us to make choices, put forth an effort, and persist in the face of difficulty. Moreover, for help in the classroom, he notes that one of the most potent sources of self-efficacy is mastery experience. It can be construed that awareness of reading various relevant sources before writing might help writers to produce better composition.

Reading and writing are particularly rich areas for motivation research because there are so many reasons for engaging in these activities, and the essentially social nature of literacy. Reading can be a source of pleasure, a source of information, a classroom task, or a context for social interaction. It can be seen as a means to gaining knowledge or status, or as an enjoyable activity in itself. One of the few studies of reasons for reading taking an emic perspective is the work of Guthrie and his colleagues (Guthrie, Wigfield, & VonSecker, 2000). Like reading, writing also has functional, tool-like aspects that can be seen as a means of social interaction or an inherently engaging activity in its own right. Through the writing, the information processed from listening and reading could be reported and justified properly. In this case, inspiration is necessary –where literacy is not only a matter of reading and writing but also entailing motivation as the seed.

Furthermore, concerning essay writing, a skill which demands that students should organize their thoughts clearly and effectively, is a fundamental skill of the art. Hornby (2004) sees writing as the activity which

is in contrast to reading. However, students are expected to be grounded in all these. In addition, essay writing is an essential part of the English language, which is taught in both junior and senior secondary schools. The students cannot do without essay in the language learning process. The nature of writing itself is not appealing enough to motivate English learners to practice regularly (Hedge, 2005). Hence, there should be any improvement in elevating students' motivation in writing using various ways and approach.

At the point, students who read more are seemingly easier in producing words and sentences and turning them into better writing than those who are reluctant to read before writing. Thus, Farahzad & Emam (2010) affirm that reading and writing skills are strongly interrelated, and because of that, they also conveyed that good writers are good readers. In this case, some lecturers typically use this following words to their students who also use to grumble and whine not know how to start working with their writing tasks "read, you will not ever know what to write before you start it with reading". This indicates that the lecturers also see the tight bond between reading and writing. Therefore, this study aims to find out the correlations between students reading motivation and their writing achievement. The study focuses on this issue is still rare and hard to find. Moreover, this study also tries to see the difference correlation of reading motivation and writing achievement between male and female students. Despite, gender has become a controversial issue as to whether it influences students' academic achievement or not.

There was a study conducted by Fidelia (2015) investigating the effects gender in students' achievement in English essay writing using collaborative instructional strategy. Using a quasi experimental research design in her study, she found that males performed better than females in the experimental group, while in the control group, females performed better than males. It was than concluded that sex is not a barrier to attainment of a students' desire in education. However, she did not investigate the effects of gender on students' writing achievement by correlating the students' reading motivation in her study. Therefore, the current study might be indicating the significant difference of students writing achievement.

Furthermore, Agustrianti, Cahyono, & Laksmi (2016) believed that motivation and gender have significant roles to the success of language learning, particularly in literacy skills. In their study, they examined the relationship of students' motivation in English learning and their literacy skills across gender. The result of the study indicated that when the students have high motivation, they have better scores in literacy skills –when the students get high achievement scores in reading skill, their achievement in writing are high as well. However, their study did not reveal any significant relationship between motivation and gender, as well as between literacy skills and gender.

Taking the issue above as the point of departure, the aims of the study are formulated into the following research questions:

1. Is there any correlation between students' reading motivation and their writing achievement?
2. Is there any difference between female and male students' reading motivation and writing achievement?

## METHOD

The research employed a correlation design and was conducted on the 50 fifth-semester-students enrolled in the English Department, Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 11 males and 40 females and were taking the class of Essay Writing.

There were two kinds of data collected in the current research; scores on the students' reading motivation and writing. To collect the data on students' reading motivation, a closed-questionnaire was developed in the format of Attention-Relevance-Confidence-Satisfaction (ARCS) model proposed by Keller (2000). The questionnaire consisted of 20 items with 5 items on each category (see Appendix 1) which is in the form of five-Likert-scale. Then, the questionnaire was validated by the correction of the expert in that field before it was administered to the participants. Meanwhile, the score on students' writing test was obtained from the lecturer of the course.

After all, data gathered, the data was analyzed through some steps. First, the data has tested the normality using Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. The data then were analyzed using SPSS 22. Regarding the normality, the number of participants and the type of data, the Pearson Correlation was considered most appropriate to use. First, the data were analyzed to see the relationship between the students' reading motivation and their writing scores. After that, the data analysis was made across female and male students. Furthermore, the relationship was visualized in the form of Scatter Diagrams.

## FINDINGS

It was important to ensure that the distribution of reading motivation and writing scores data were normally distributed. The normality of scores was investigated by the significance value of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in two writing class. The significant value was 0.2 which was higher than 0.05. It indicated that the data were normally distributed. To answer the research questions, the results will be systematically reported.

Table 1 presented correlation statistics of reading motivation and writing achievement with 50 students as the sample of study. According to table 1, the value of correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was 0.025 which was in a very low relationship domain (Cohen & Louis, 2000). It is shown that there was a low relationship between reading motivation and writing score. Furthermore, the negative sign in the correlation coefficient ( $r = -0.025$ ), indicated that reading motivation and writing achievement is a negative correlation. The distribution of score will be displayed by a scatterplot (Figure 1).

Table 1. Correlation between students' reading motivation and writing achievement

<b>Correlations</b>		Reading Motivation	Writing Achievement
Reading Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.025
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.865
	N	50	50
Writing Achievement	Pearson Correlation	-0.025	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.865	
	N	50	50

The scatterplot (Figure 1) visualized the values of reading motivation with a low correlation coefficient of 0.025. The scatterplot is shown a very low relationship between two attributes aforementioned. It almost indicated that

there was no prediction could be made for a value of reading motivation and writing achievement. The negative correlation showed in figure 3 which all the dots lie on the line falling from the upper left-hand side to the lower right-hand side (Roeve, 2017).



Figure 1. Correlation between students' reading motivation and writing achievement

The second research question asked whether gender difference contributed to reading motivation and writing achievement relationship or not. Next, the researchers investigated the correlation between two variables between male and female students. Table 2 revealed that 39 female students filled out the questionnaire. According to table 1, the value of correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was 0.126 which was in a very low relationship domain (Cohen & Louis, 2000). It is shown that there was a low relationship between reading motivation and writing score. This meant that changes in female students' reading motivation are weakly correlated with changes in their writing score. Furthermore, the negative sign in the correlation coefficient ( $r = -0.126$ ), indicated that reading motivation and writing achievement is a negative correlation. The distribution of score will be displayed by a scatterplot (Figure 2).

Table 2. Correlation between female students' reading motivation and writing achievement

	Motivation	Score
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.444
	N	39
Score	Pearson Correlation	-.126
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.444
	N	39

The scatterplot (Figure 2) visualized the values of reading motivation with a low correlation coefficient of 0.126. The scatterplot is shown a very low relationship between two attributes aforementioned. It almost indicated that there was no prediction could be made for a value of reading motivation and writing achievement. The negative correlation showed in figure 3 which all the dots lie on the line falling from the upper left-hand side to the lower right-hand side (Roeve, 2017).

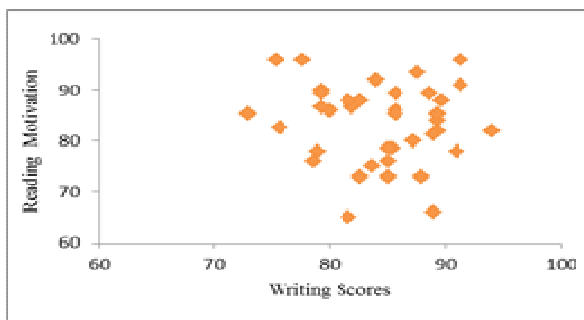


Figure 2. Scatter diagram of female students' reading motivation and writing achievement

Table 3 presented that the sample of research was 11 male students. The table showed that the value of the correlation coefficient is 0.496 which was in medium relationship domain (Cohen & Louis, 2000). It meant that there was a high but not perfect relationship between reading motivation and writing score. This meant also that changes in students' reading motivation are strongly correlated with changes in their writing score. The value of the correlation coefficient was 0.496, without the minus sign. It meant that between male students' reading motivation and their writing achievement correlatively positive.

Table 3. Correlation between Male Students' Reading Motivation and Writing Achievement

	Motivation	Score
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.120
	N	11
Score	Pearson Correlation	.496
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.120
	N	11

The scatterplot indicated a high but not perfect correlation. It could be seen that the dots are fairly close to the line of best fits, which rises from the left-hand side to the right. It illustrated that male students' writing achievement could predict the value of reading motivation, and vice versa. The positive correlation showed in figure 3 which all the dots lay on the line of best fit (Roeve, 2017).

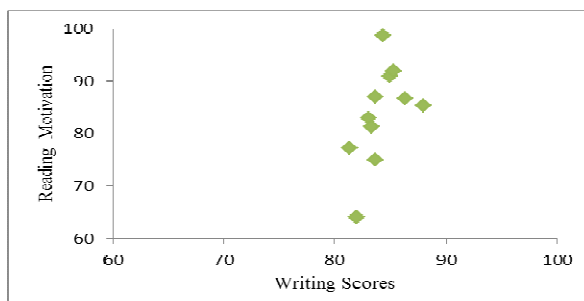


Figure 3. Scatter diagram of male students' reading motivation and writing achievement

As reported before (see Table 2 & 3), the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) in female students and male students were 0,0126 and 0.496, respectively. That

was, the male  $r$  score was higher than female  $r$  score. The signs of  $r$  results were different between two groups as female students had a negative correlation (-0,0126) and male students had a positive correlation (0,496). It indicated that the significant differences between female and male students' reading motivation and their writing score.

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on the results, the significance value of students' motivation in reading and their writing achievement was 0.865 which was higher than 0.05. Thus, it could be concluded that there was no significant correlation between those variables. It meant that the increase or decrease in students' reading motivation did not significantly relate to the increase or decrease in their writing achievement. Besides, the Pearson  $r$  value in this research finding was -0.025. It indicated that the higher motivation in reading students have, the lower scores in writing students get; or the lower motivation in reading students have, the higher scores in writing students get.

Consequently, the results from this current research contributed to the knowledge that students' motivation in reading generally did not relate to their achievement in writing. It was then probably caused by the different type of skills measured. The first skill measured; reading was included in receptive skill, while the other was considered as a productive skill; writing. Nevertheless, reading and writing were interrelated each other and seen as parallel skills (Farahzad & Emam, 2010).

In this research, the researchers wanted to know whether gender difference had an effect of correlation between motivation in reading and their scores in writing or not. The finding from the correlation value in Table 2 and Table 3 showed that there was a difference in the correlation between female and male students' reading motivation and their writing achievement. It was revealed that male students' reading motivation and their writing achievement had a positive correlation. The result showed that the  $R$ -value of male students' motivation in reading and their scores in writing was .496 with a significant value of .120.

Therefore, it could be concluded that when the male students' motivation in reading increases, their scores in writing would increase as well. However, it did not indicate that there was any significant correlation among those two variables as the value of significance was greater than .05. Accordingly, when the male students' motivation in reading increased, it did not significantly relate to their scores in writing which would seemingly increase too.

On the other hand, the research finding revealed that reading motivation and writing achievement in female students had a low negative correlation. The Pearson  $r$  value was -.126 with a significant value of .444. It indicated that the higher motivation in reading female students have, the lower scores in writing they get or vice versa; the lower motivation in reading female students have, the higher scores in writing they get.

The results were then similar with the results of previous studies which suggested that there was a difference in correlation between female and male students in their achievement (Fidelia, 2015; Weis, Heikamp, Trommsdorf, 2013). However, (Agustrianti, Cahyono, & Laksmi, 2016) argued from their research findings that female and male showed a similar behaviour of

motivation and resulted in similar achievement in their writing. It meant that there was no significant difference between female and male students in its relation to their scores of reading motivation and writing.

Apart from it, the finding in this current research contributed to the knowledge that gender difference had an effect correlation in the students' reading motivation and their writing achievement.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research revealed that there was no significant correlation between students' reading motivation and their writing achievement since the result indicated the significance value 0.865 which was higher than 0.05. In addition, the result showed that the relationship value between those two variables was low negative correlation. It indicated that when the students felt highly motivated in reading, their scores in writing would somehow show the contrary. However, the result revealed that there was a difference correlation between male and female students' reading motivation and their writing achievement. In this case, gender difference contributed different result of correlation on their reading motivation and writing achievement. It was exposed that the higher motivations in reading the male students have, the higher scores in writing they achieve. On the contrary, the higher motivation in reading female students have, the lower scores in writing they achieve; or the lower motivation in reading female students have, the higher scores in writing they achieve. Finally, it was suggested to the future researchers to investigate the teaching implication of reading motivation and writing achievement.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Our thanks to Prof. Drs. Bambang Yudi Cahyono, M.Pd., M.A., Ph.D. who has guided us in completing the article, and allowed us to use his writing classes and have his students in our research so that this research could be accomplished. We also thank to the Faculty of Letter of Universitas Negeri Malang for the consent to conduct the research in the English Language Teaching study programme there.

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## **Appendix 1: The Close Questionnaire**

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Following are a number of statements about reading motivation on selected topic in writing essay.
  2. Read each statement carefully and fill the column with (√) sign judiciously whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are undecided (U), disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD) concerning with the statement.
- 
1. I find essay writing interesting.
  2. I think essay writing on selected topic is challenging
  3. It is important to read any related material before I compose the essay writing
  4. I am motivated to read comprehensively
  5. I realize that what I read will influence my essay writing quality
  6. What I read is useful in composing my essay writing
  7. I think composing essay writing after reading on selected topic is important
  8. The more I read the better I write
  9. Reading from many sources is useful for my writing
  10. Writing essay helps me to learn more material through reading intensively
  11. Even if writing essay on the selected topic is difficult, I believe I can do it.
  12. I am sure, I can produce a good essay writing
  13. I am happy that I can provide various information related to the topic
  14. I can make a good writing if I have prior knowledge
  15. I believe my writing score is good as I read a lot to learn to write
  16. I am satisfied with my writing product
  17. Reading material encourages me to write more
  18. I feel I achieve the objectives of this learning
  19. I would recommend to read a lot
  20. I like to read related material to writing an essay

**Appendix 2: The students' reading motivation and writing scores**

Class A

No	Initial	Sex	Reading Motivation	Writing Achievement
1	APK	M	87	84
2	AO	F	86	86
3	AS	F	73	83
4	AM	F	88	90
5	BN	M	91	85
6	CMW	F	91	91
7	DKM	M	64	82
8	DA	F	82	89
9	DR	F	65	82
10	DN	F	73	85
11	LS	F	90	83
12	MBAH	M	83	79
13	MA	F	75	84
14	NF	M	75	84
15	NF2	F	86	80
16	QA	F	78	79
17	RDIH	F	86	80
18	RPU	F	84	89
19	RYP	F	96	91
20	RK	F	78	91
21	SRI	F	66	89
22	TA	F	82	94
23	YCI	F	80	87
24	ZNAR	F	73	88

Class B

No	Initial	Sex	Reading Motivation	Writing Achievement
1	AFE	M	85	71
2	AR	F	89	74
3	ARDPA	F	81	68
4	AAR	F	89	74
5	AIP	F	96	80
6	CRY	F	76	63
7	CDR	F	96	80
8	CAY	F	79	66
9	CN	F	85	71
10	DS	M	92	77
11	ENH	F	79	66
12	FRP	F	83	69
13	FWD	F	85	71
14	GWD	M	77	64
15	HPN	F	85	71
16	IA	M	87	72
17	JSD	F	87	72
18	KA	F	93	78
19	KU	F	76	63
20	MKD	M	99	82
21	MT	M	81	68
22	NNA	F	88	73
23	PSA	F	87	72
24	RM	F	92	77
25	SS	F	89	74
26	YP	F	88	73

### Appendix 3: The results of normality test

#### One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		50
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	7.96363713
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.102
	Positive	.046
	Negative	-.102
Test Statistic		.102
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 <sup>c,d</sup>

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.