



The Influence of Reading Culture and Learning Interest on Students' Short Story Writing Skills

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Abstract: The background of this study is based on reading culture and interest in learning as two important factors that influence the ability to write short stories. In this context, culture is understood as a collective habit formed through social and learning processes, which reflects individual values and attitudes towards reading activities as part of everyday life. This study used a quantitative design with an ex post facto method and involved a sample of 70 students. Data were collected using a questionnaire to measure reading culture and interest in learning, as well as a short story writing task to assess writing skills. The results showed that both variables, namely reading culture and learning interest, had a significant influence on short story writing ability, with learning interest making a slightly larger contribution. Multiple linear regression tests revealed that both contributed significantly to improvements in short story writing ability, with an R^2 of 0.874. The contribution of this study is to deepen the understanding of the importance of reading culture and interest in learning in improving writing skills, and to offer recommendations for developing effective teaching methods.

Keywords: ability write short stories; interest in learning; reading culture

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's low caliber of human resources suggests that its national education system has not been entirely successful in creating a generation of self-sufficient students. Since learning seeks to ascertain the degree of change a person experiences during the learning process, it is essential in influencing individual change (Narca & Caballes, 2021; Rosadi & Mun'amah, 2023). Since learning promotes attitude changes and the capacity to behave independently, people who regularly participate in learning are more likely to become independent. Since a nation's civilization is based on cultural accomplishments that support religious and traditional values, a noble civilization can influence a high-quality human life in this context (Damaianti et al., 2017). Literacy skills play a significant role in advancing scientific development in academia. Compared to people with poor reading habits, those with excellent reading proficiency typically have superior problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Reading is not merely a passive activity in a culture that values it; rather, it is a dynamic process that improves quality of life, develops character, and encourages creativity and invention. Government, educational institutions, and society must all encourage the establishment of a reading culture to ensure that books and other useful reading resources are easily accessible (Kovalova & Shalman, 2024; Yulianingsih et al., 2024). The ability to write short stories (narrative writing) is an important skill for students, as it not only enhances language proficiency but also nurtures creativity, imagination, and critical and analytical thinking. This skill is an integral part of the educational curriculum since writing serves as a foundation for communication in academic and social contexts (Ali et al., 2024). However, students often face various challenges in writing short stories, including difficulty generating ideas, boredom, lack of motivation, and trouble developing initial concepts. In addition, some teachers are only familiar with the theoretical aspects of short stories and are unable to effectively guide the writing process (Maula et al., 2024; Kasse et al., 2019).

In today's fast-paced society, reading is widely acknowledged as a fundamental component of human growth. It supports the development of the mind, culture, education, and emotions. Early reading habits foster emotional resilience, improve critical thinking, and lead to meaningful answers to life's problems (Samuel, 2022; Baah & Debrah, 2023). Academic achievement, reading motivation, empathy, and vocabulary acquisition are all enhanced by a good reading culture (Loh et al., 2017; Lamba et al., 2024). In educational environments where almost all learning is mediated through text, reading ability becomes a powerful indicator of students' academic and intellectual achievement (Kabir & Jeromes, 2022; Otieno & Hesbon, 2021). To support students' overall growth, it is imperative to foster a culture of continuous reading. In numerous international studies, a strong

reading habit has been consistently linked to enhanced narrative writing abilities. For instance, [Ihsan \(2019\)](#) found a statistically significant correlation between students' reading habits and their ability to write narrative texts, indicating that students who engage in regular, varied reading tend to produce more coherent and imaginative stories. Similarly, [Lestari and Kusumawati \(2025\)](#) reported that students who frequently read a wide range of literary and informational texts produced richer thematic content and structure in their essays than those with limited reading exposure. These findings underscore that reading culture is not merely a cognitive skill, but also a catalyst for creative writing, supporting the argument that reading engagement fosters narrative competence through exposure to diverse styles, vocabulary, and storytelling techniques.

Developing educational strategies that convert written material into internalized values and conceptual understanding is essential in higher education and the contemporary information society. Reading culture reflects a broader set of values, attitudes, and behavioral habits ingrained from an early age and should not be viewed as a purely technical skill ([Absatova et al., 2021](#)). In this sense, fostering a strong reading culture and understanding serves as the cornerstone for students' writing skills, especially when it comes to writing short stories, which demonstrate their intellectual interest in literature and their individual interpretations of its meaning ([Asif & Yang 2021](#); [Cekiso 2024](#)).

Reading culture is also shaped significantly by the surrounding environment. Families, peer groups, and schools all serve as primary socializing agents in the formation of reading habits. Schools, in particular, bear substantial responsibility for fostering literacy through structured programs such as the School Literacy Movement (GLS), as mandated by the Indonesian National Education Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 4, Paragraphs 3–5. This law emphasizes education as a lifelong process of empowerment and cultural development ([Prasetya & Adlan, 2022](#)). Within this framework, reading serves multifaceted purposes: it provides a source of meaning-making, entertainment, personal enrichment, and holistic learning that supports both academic and character formation ([Samuel, 2022](#)). Additionally, school libraries and extracurricular reading clubs can serve as effective platforms to reinforce these values. Regular exposure to diverse texts also helps students develop empathy and cultural awareness. Writing development is also significantly influenced by learning interest and self-efficacy. According to [Stavropoulou et al. \(2025\)](#), students with high writing self-efficacy were more persistent, used more self-regulated strategies, and achieved better writing outcomes. Accordingly, [Collins et al. \(2024\)](#) found that undergraduates' involvement and mastery orientation in academic writing were strongly influenced by increased writing-related self-efficacy and enjoyment, which, in turn, led to substantial gains in writing quality. These findings demonstrate that cultivating curiosity, particularly when combined with confidence in one's writing skills, serves as a motivating factor, encouraging deeper engagement and consistent effort—two qualities necessary for producing imaginative, well-structured short stories.

In addition to reading culture, students' learning interests serve as a vital internal factor that influences the effectiveness of the educational process. Interest is marked by emotional engagement, attentiveness, and intrinsic motivation toward learning activities. Numerous studies affirm that interest correlates positively with academic achievement, as it enhances students' willingness to engage with content, persist through challenges, and strive for deeper understanding ([Herpratiwi & Tohir, 2022](#)). Learning interest is not merely about temporary enjoyment but also includes a sustained desire to explore knowledge further and to connect learning with meaningful, motivating real-life experiences ([Wahdi et al., 2024](#); [Pohan & Murti, 2022](#)). A high level of learning interest fosters resilience and a growth mindset in students. These psychological traits are essential for long-term engagement in academic and creative tasks.

However, learning interest does not arise in a vacuum. It is primarily influenced by students' learning experiences, the quality of instruction, and the overall learning environment. The integration of educational technologies such as interactive digital media, gamification, and innovative teaching strategies can significantly enhance students' engagement and interest in learning. Additionally, parental involvement and community support are essential in nurturing curiosity and intellectual enthusiasm in students ([Davidovitch & Dorot, 2023](#); [Fitria, 2019](#)). When students are exposed to topics that are relevant, meaningful, and contextually engaging, the learning process becomes not only more effective but also more enjoyable and sustainable. Creating a collaborative and supportive atmosphere between home and school can greatly strengthen this process. Moreover, teachers' attitudes and enthusiasm also play a central role in maintaining students' interest.

These viewpoints make an empirical study on the impact of reading culture and learning interest on students' short story writing skills imperative. Many high school students still struggle to write short stories, as evidenced by their limited narrative creativity, poor character development, and disjointed story structures, according to an initial assessment. According to interviews with Indonesian language instructors, students' lack of enthusiasm for reading and learning also severely impairs the caliber of their written work and limits their ability to express themselves creatively through narrative. A more integrative literacy framework that incorporates cognitive, affective, and cultural dimensions is needed to address these drawbacks. Reading to build on kids' prior knowledge can lay the groundwork for more complex narratives.

While previous studies have mainly focused on teaching strategies, instructional media, and technical writing skills to enhance short story writing, a significant research gap remains. Few studies have investigated

psychological and cultural variables, specifically reading culture and learning interest, that may influence students' writing competence. Therefore, it is necessary to explore how integrating these two factors contributes to the development of students' narrative writing skills, especially in secondary education. Understanding these influences can help educators design more student-centered literacy interventions. It can also inform curriculum development that emphasizes both skill and motivation.

Given the background information above, the study's three main goals are to examine how reading culture affects students' ability to write short stories, how learning interest affects that ability, and how reading culture and learning interest interact to affect that ability. It is anticipated that the research's conclusions will contribute to the body of knowledge in pedagogy on writing instruction and offer helpful guidance to teachers seeking to improve their students' literacy through evidence-based, culturally and psychologically sensitive methods. Schools looking to create comprehensive reading programs can benefit significantly from these ideas. Over time, this study may also help shape national literacy policies.

METHODS

This study uses an ex post facto research design to determine the effects of reading culture and interest in learning on the ability to write short stories among high school students. The ex post facto design was chosen because the variables tested in this study already existed among the research participants and were not manipulated by the researcher (Ghanad, 2023). The researcher examines solely the connections among the following factors: reading culture, learning interest, and short story writing skills present in the participants before the study. Using this design, the study will determine whether the two independent variables, reading culture and learning interest, affect the dependent variable, short story writing skills.

The sample for this study consisted of 70 high school students selected through purposive sampling. This technique was chosen because the selected students already had reading experience and demonstrated specific learning interests relevant to the research objectives. This study will use scales to measure students' reading culture and interest in learning. The reading culture scale will measure how often students read and the types of reading they consume, while the learning interest scale will measure the motivation and engagement students have in their learning activities. This scale is structured in a Likert format to obtain more valid and reliable data. Students' short story writing ability will be measured through short story assignments evaluated on creativity, story structure, character development, and language use.

Three specialists in educational psychology and language education conducted a content validity assessment of the scales prior to their administration to ensure the items accurately reflected the desired constructs. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the instruments' reliability, and Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to verify the empirical validity. With alpha coefficients above 0.80, the instruments showed excellent reliability. A comprehensive rubric comprising four primary criteria: creativity, story structure, character development, and language use was used to evaluate the short story writing assignments. A 4-point Likert scale was used to score each criterion, and descriptors were given for every performance level. The students' work was evaluated by two independent raters, Indonesian language teachers, to ensure impartiality and consistency in scoring. When Cohen's Kappa was used to analyze inter-rater reliability, a coefficient above 0.75 indicated strong agreement.

Data collection took place over two weeks in January 2025 at the participating high school. The researcher coordinated with the school administration and language teachers to distribute the questionnaires and supervise the short story writing session in class, ensuring standardized conditions. Following data collection, SPSS26 was used for data analysis in this study. To determine whether the variable distribution data follows a normal distribution, a fundamental prerequisite for performing regression analysis, the first step is to perform a Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test. The researcher will proceed with a multiple linear regression analysis to determine the extent to which reading culture and learning interest impact short story writing skills, assuming the data are normally distributed. The results of this regression test reveal the direction of the relationship between the variables and the extent to which each independent variable influences the dependent variable. Additionally, this study uses a determination test (R^2) to assess how well the two independent variables, reading culture and learning interest, account for differences in short story writing proficiency. This test demonstrates the percentage of variation in short story writing skills that can be accounted for by reading habits and a shared desire to learn. To put it another way, this test assesses the relative contributions of the two factors to students' short story writing skills. It is anticipated that the analysis's findings will provide a better understanding of how reading culture and learning motivation affect students' short story writing skills, which can serve as the foundation for creating more effective teaching methods in classrooms. In this study, ethical considerations were closely adhered to. The school's principal gave explicit approval before any data was collected. The study's objectives and methods were explained to the participants, and their involvement was entirely voluntary. Consent papers were issued to both students and their parents or guardians, ensuring that participation was based on informed consent. Throughout the entire research process, participant identities and responses were kept private.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the impact of reading culture and learning interest on students' short story writing skills, with data analyzed using SPSS 26. The first stage was a normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, which confirmed that the residuals of both independent variables were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$). This guaranteed that performing multiple linear regression was appropriate. Table 1 displays the analysis results.

Table 1. Normality Test Results Reading Culture

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
N		Unstandardized Residual 70
Normal Parameters^{a,b}	Mean	0,0000000
	Std. Deviation	10,69262069
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0,078
	Positive	0,078
	Negative	-0,064
Test Statistic		0,078
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,123 ^{c,d}

The reading culture variable's One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results indicate a test statistic of 0.078 and an asymptotic significance (p-value) of 0.123. The reading culture data are normally distributed because the p-value is greater than 0.05. This suggests that the premise of normalcy is satisfied, enabling a reliable statistical examination of the connection between short story writing skills and reading culture. As a result, the investigation can proceed without concern about normalcy violations, ensuring the validity of the findings on how reading culture affects writing ability.

Table 2. Normality Test Results Learning Interest

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
N		Unstandardized Residual 70
Normal Parameters^{a,b}	Mean	0,0000000
	Std. Deviation	10,69262069
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0,081
	Positive	0,081
	Negative	-0,076
Test Statistic		0,081
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,151 ^{c,d}

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov One-Sample test statistic value for learning interest is 0.081, and the asymptotic significance (p-value) is 0.151. We can conclude that the study's interest data is normally distributed because the p-value is greater than 0.05, indicating that the normality assumption is not broken. As a result, the study's interest data satisfies the prerequisites for additional statistical analysis, including multiple regression, which is used to examine how study interest affects short story writing skills. This outcome guarantees the validity and reliability of the analysis of the connection between learning interest and short story writing skills.

Table 3. Multiple linear regression test

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Writing Short Stories	50,378	7,198		6,999	0,000
Reading Culture	0,566	0,230	0,342	3,822	0,000
Learning Interest	0,631	0,291	0,412	4,221	0,000

Short story writing skills are significantly influenced by both reading culture and learning interest, according to multiple linear regression analyses. Both reading culture and learning interest have favorable effects on the development of writing skills, as indicated by their respective regression coefficients of 0.566 ($t = 3.822$; sig. = 0.000) and 0.631 ($t = 4.221$; sig. = 0.000). The higher coefficient value and t-count suggest that learning interest has a marginally bigger impact than reading culture. Both variables are crucial in influencing students' short story writing abilities, as significance levels below 0.05 in both indicate a statistically significant effect.

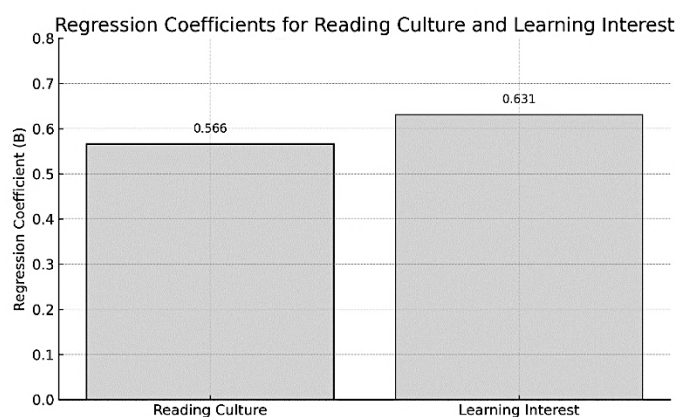


Figure 1. Analysis of Regression Coefficient

Using the regression coefficient, Figure 1 makes it easier to compare how each variable affects the ability to compose short tales. The coefficient for interest in learning (0.631) is marginally higher than that for reading culture (0.566), suggesting that interest in learning has a greater impact. This visualization supports the conclusion that the development of writing skills needs to be promoted by simultaneously bolstering students' interest and literacy culture, even though the difference is not very noticeable. It also supports the regression test results, which indicate that both variables contribute positively and significantly.

Table 4. Determination Test Results

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.939 ^a	0,874	0,791	2,336

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.874 indicates that 87.4% of the variability in short story writing ability can be explained by reading culture and interest in learning, while other variables outside the model explain the remaining 12.6%. Although this figure shows very high predictive power, it should be interpreted critically because R^2 values close to 1 can raise suspicions of overfitting or measurement bias, especially if the model is built without accounting for control variables or is not tested on other data (e.g., via cross-validation). The possibility of multicollinearity among the independent variables warrants further review, as both variables relate to students' cognitive and affective aspects. Therefore, although these results demonstrate a very robust model, further analysis and external verification remain important to ensure its valid generalization.

The study's findings suggest that students' short story writing skills are positively and significantly impacted by reading culture. This aligns with [Ye and Liu \(2023\)](#), who claimed that reading exercises expose students to vocabulary, language style, and story structure, all of which tangentially enhance writing proficiency. In this regard, children who read a lot are typically better able to arrange stories creatively and cohesively. In addition to being mechanical, this impact molds students' literary sensibility by helping them comprehend story components. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that curiosity about learning plays a major role in proficiency in short story writing. Students who are very interested in learning participate more actively in the learning process, including the development of their writing abilities. This result is consistent with [Obiosa \(2020\)](#), who highlights the importance of intrinsic drive and interest in the learning process in raising academic achievement. Students who are interested in learning are more likely to keep practicing and experimenting with different writing styles when it comes to short story writing.

According to the regression results, reading culture and motivation in learning variables both contributed to $R^2 = 0.874$. This result is categorized as very high, meaning that these two factors account for 87.4% of the variation in short story writing abilities. Nonetheless, a methodological critique of this high value of determination is required. A highly high R^2 in a social model could be a sign of measurement bias or overfitting, claim [De Santis et al. \(2024\)](#). As a result, careful interpretation is necessary, and the model must be further validated using different data or methodologies. An interpretation of the influence of reading culture shows that students' exposure to a variety of reading provides them with inspiration and an understanding of genre, writing style, and story structure. This reinforces [Azizi et al. \(2020\)](#), who state that reading literacy not only enriches information but also shapes syntactic and semantic skills in written expression. In the context of secondary school students, reading culture can be considered as a bridge between literacy consumption and literacy production. Students are intrinsically motivated to strive for higher writing quality through their passion for learning. Highly motivated students are more likely to persist in completing assignments and to be open to editing their work. Interest in learning is correlated with the capacity for self-regulation in learning, which in

turn affects the caliber of academic output, including narrative writing, according to Hwang (2025). Students' enthusiasm for learning enhanced their involvement in the creative writing process.

The combination of reading culture and interest in learning as the main predictors shows that external and internal factors complement each other in shaping students' literacy skills. Reading culture provides cognitive and stylistic inputs, while interest in learning provides an affective drive to process these inputs into writing products. This finding is in line with the integrated literacy theory proposed by Septiawati and Trisnawati (2023), which posits that cognitive and motivational engagement are important foundations for the development of functional literacy. Overall, this study contributes to strengthening the holistic approach in literacy education by emphasizing the importance of habit and motivation aspects in teaching writing. The practical implications of the findings encourage teachers and policymakers to emphasize not only the technical aspects of writing but also a culture of reading and a passion for learning as key prerequisites. Future research could expand the scope by considering additional variables, such as emotional intelligence, support for the learning environment, or the influence of digital media on writing skills.

CONCLUSION

According to this study, 87.4% of the variation in students' short story writing skills can be explained by reading culture and learning motivation. Learning interest makes a marginally larger contribution than the other one, underscoring the importance of intrinsic desire in artistic expression. By confirming that affective and behavioral factors influence writing proficiency alongside technical training, these findings make a unique contribution to educational theory. From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the importance of creating literacy programs that both tap into kids' intrinsic desire and cultivate a strong reading culture. Developing relevant, long-lasting writing abilities in the classroom requires this approach. This study has limitations despite its compelling results. The use of quantitative, cross-sectional data restricts the potential to capture dynamic changes over time, and the sample was limited to a single educational context. Future studies should employ longitudinal approaches, include a wider range of student demographics, and investigate qualitative aspects of students' writing and reading experiences. Furthermore, combining genre preferences and digital reading habits could provide fresh insights into how literacy evolves in modern classrooms. Future research can expand on this study to inform more complex, all-encompassing methods of literacy instruction by tackling these areas.

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