

The Influence of Field Trips and Reading Interest on Writing Skills

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the influence of the field trip learning method and reading interest on junior high school students' ability to write observational report texts. The research was motivated by the importance of writing skills as part of 21st-century literacy, as well as the need for instructional strategies that are contextual and responsive to learners' characteristics. A quasi-experimental method with a 2x2 factorial design was employed, involving two seventh-grade classes. The experimental class was taught using the field trip method, while the control class followed conventional instruction. Reading interest was measured through a validated and reliable questionnaire and categorized into two levels: high and low. The primary instrument for assessing writing skills was a test on observational report texts, evaluated based on six indicators: relevance of content and title, structure, paragraph cohesion, sentence effectiveness, diction, and accuracy of spelling and mechanics. Data were analyzed using normality tests, homogeneity tests, t-tests, and two-way ANOVA with SPSS 27. The findings revealed that there was no significant overall difference between the experimental and control groups; however, significant differences were observed among students with both high and low reading interest who participated in the field trip method. In addition, a significant interaction was found between learning method and reading interest in influencing writing skills. These results indicate that the effectiveness of instructional methods is strongly influenced by students' internal factors, such as reading interest. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers implement contextual and differentiated learning strategies, taking into account students' characteristics and needs in order to optimize writing learning outcomes.

Keywords: *field trips, reading interest, writing skills, observational report texts*

Introduction

Writing skills are one of the fundamental competencies essential in the field of education. This ability is crucial for developing students' critical and analytical thinking in formulating ideas systematically and logically. One common form of writing skill taught in schools is the composition of observational report texts. Writing observational reports trains students to observe, record, and organize information obtained in a structured manner (Arya et al., 2023; Magfiroh, 2024). The practice of writing observational report texts does not only focus on the technical aspects of writing but also sharpens students' ability to think critically in analyzing data and drawing accurate conclusions (Arya et al., 2023; Magfiroh, 2024). In this context, the skill of writing observational reports becomes an important aspect in the development of 21st-century literacy.

One of the instructional methods that can be employed to enhance writing skills is by providing direct experiences through outdoor learning activities, such as the field trip method. This approach offers students the opportunity to observe phenomena firsthand,

thereby enriching their knowledge and deepening their understanding of the subject matter being studied (Arya et al., 2023; Magfiroh, 2024). Field trip activities enable students to connect the theories they learn in class with real-world situations, making the learning process more meaningful and contextual. Moreover, the firsthand experiences gained through field trips provide students with more concrete sources of information to be utilized in writing observational reports, ultimately improving the quality of their writing (Hadi & Dani, 2024; Ningsih et al., 2024; Septia, 2024).

Reading interest also plays an important role in the development of writing skills. Students with a high level of reading interest tend to possess better writing abilities, as they are more frequently exposed to a variety of information and diverse writing styles (Nurzaiyanah et al., 2021). In addition, reading interest enriches students' vocabulary, broadens their knowledge, and enhances their critical thinking skills (Fahrurrozi et al., 2020; Rahma et al., 2024). Studies conducted by Karunaratne & Navaratne (2023); Solanki & Patoliya (2024) demonstrate that students with strong reading interest exhibit superior writing performance because they are better able to organize ideas and convey information clearly and coherently. Therefore, the combination of experiential learning methods and reading interest holds significant potential for improving students' writing skills, particularly in composing observational report texts.

Research that specifically examines the influence of the field trip method on students' ability to write observational report texts remains relatively limited. Most previous studies have tended to focus on technology-based learning methods or conventional classroom instruction. However, several recent studies have begun to highlight the effectiveness of field trips in the context of observational report writing. The field trip method has been found to significantly improve students' ability to compose observational report texts (Hadi & Dani, 2024; Septia, 2024). Students who engaged in learning through field trips achieved higher writing scores compared to those taught through conventional methods. The average student score increased from 71.5 to 84.6 following the implementation of field trips (Nurhotimah & Suryadi, 2023). Although research on the effect of field trips on writing observational reports is still limited, preliminary evidence indicates that this method is effective in enhancing the quality and outcomes of students' writing. Further studies are needed to strengthen these findings and expand understanding across different educational contexts.

Furthermore, although numerous studies have examined the influence of reading interest on writing skills, no research to date has combined both factors namely the field trip learning method and reading interest in the context of improving students' ability to write observational report texts. Most existing studies tend to focus on the effect of a single factor, either the learning method or reading interest, on writing proficiency (Anjani et al., 2022; Morelent et al., 2023). This indicates a gap in the current literature, specifically concerning the interaction between the field trip learning method and reading interest in enhancing students' observational report writing skills.

This study offers a novel contribution by integrating two factors that have received limited attention in educational literature namely the field trip learning method and reading interest in influencing students' ability to write observational report texts. Most existing research has examined the impact of each factor separately, without considering how these two variables may interact to enhance students' writing skills. This study seeks to address that gap by investigating the combined effect of both variables, which can provide new insights into more effective instructional strategies for improving students' writing proficiency. In this context, the present research will not only examine the direct

influence of the two factors but will also explore how they interact and contribute to shaping the quality of students' writing.

This study is limited to examining the influence of the field trip learning method and reading interest on students' ability to write observational report texts at the junior high school level in Solok City. Other factors such as socio-economic background, gender, and students' psychological aspects are not the primary focus of this research, although they may serve as influential variables in future studies. The objectives of this study are to (1) investigate the effect of the field trip learning method on students' ability to write observational report texts, (2) examine the effect of the field trip method on students with high reading interest, (3) examine the effect of the field trip method on students with low reading interest, and (4) analyze the interaction between the field trip learning method and reading interest in influencing students' writing skills in composing observational report texts. This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of education. Theoretically, it provides a deeper understanding of the application of field trip learning methods in improving students' writing skills, particularly in writing observational report texts. Furthermore, it is anticipated to enrich the literature on the role of reading interest in the development of writing skills, as well as on how these two factors interact to influence students' writing performance.

Practically, the findings of this study can be utilized by educators to design more effective instructional strategies for enhancing students' writing skills. The research may also provide new insights for teachers on how to foster students' reading interest as part of a broader strategy to improve their writing proficiency. Thus, the outcomes of this study can serve as a solid foundation for the development of more innovative and contextual learning methods in the classroom.

Method

This study adopts an experimental design with a quasi-experimental approach, employing a 2x2 factorial design. This design was chosen to examine the effects of the field trip learning method and reading interest on students' ability to write observational report texts. The 2x2 factorial design enables an in-depth analysis of the influence of two independent variables learning method (field trips vs. conventional learning) and reading interest (high vs. low) as well as the interaction between these variables on students' writing skills. In this study, two groups will be formed: the experimental group, which will receive instruction through the field trip method, and the control group, which will follow a conventional learning model. Reading interest will be measured and categorized based on a validated questionnaire, which classifies students into two categories: high reading interest and low reading interest.

The population of this study consists of all seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Aek Nabara Barumon, Padang Lawas Regency, totaling 53 students. The study involved two classes: Class VII-A with 28 students as the experimental group and Class VII-B with 25 students as the control group. The assignment of experimental and control classes was based on the school's existing class division, where Class VII-A received the field trip learning method, while Class VII-B was taught using conventional learning methods. The entire population was used as the sample, or a census, given the relatively small number of students, which made it manageable and efficient. As explained by Arikunto (2014), using the entire population as a sample is an appropriate choice when the population size is limited, as it can increase the validity and representativeness of the data obtained. By

applying a census approach, the findings of this study are expected to more accurately reflect the actual conditions of the two classes.

The primary instrument used to measure students' writing skills was a test on writing observational report texts. This test was designed to assess students' ability to compose texts that are systematic, clear, and logical, while adhering to the appropriate writing conventions. The test focused on several key assessment indicators, as follows:

Table 1. Assessment Indicators of Writing Skills in Observational Report Texts	
Indikator	Keterangan
Relevance of Content and Title	This indicator measures the extent to which the content of the observational report aligns with the chosen title. A good report should have a title that reflects the content and objectives of the observation.
Accuracy of Structure	Refers to students' ability to compose reports with a clear structure, including introduction, method, results, and conclusion, in accordance with proper report writing conventions.
Coherence Across Paragraphs	This indicator evaluates the logical flow and connectedness between paragraphs. Each paragraph should support and relate to the others to ensure smooth comprehension for the reader.
Sentence Effectiveness	Assesses how effectively students use clear and concise sentences, paying attention to sentence length and the proper use of punctuation.
Diction/Word Choice	Evaluates the appropriateness and accuracy of students' word choices within the report. Proper diction enhances the quality of the text and conveys messages more effectively.
Correctness of Spelling and Mechanics	Ensures that students use correct spelling and mechanics in accordance with standard language conventions, including capitalization, punctuation, and proper word usage.

The reading interest questionnaire in this study consisted of 26 items that had been validated by experts and through construct validation to ensure alignment with the research objectives, as well as tested for reliability to guarantee the consistency of measurement results. The questionnaire was designed to measure students' level of reading interest through several indicators: (1) intensity related to enjoyment in reading activities, (2) engagement in reading from various sources, (3) preferred locations for reading activities, (4) intensity related to the amount of time spent on reading, and (5) efforts made in reading activities. This questionnaire aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of students' reading habits and how their reading interest may influence their writing skills.

Data analysis in this study employed SPSS Statistics 27 to conduct tests of normality, homogeneity, t-tests, and two-way ANOVA. Preliminary assumption tests were carried out to ensure that the data met the basic requirements before proceeding with further statistical analyses. The normality test used the Shapiro-Wilk test to determine whether the data were normally distributed. If the test result showed $p > 0.05$, the data were considered normally distributed. Subsequently, the homogeneity of variance was tested using Levene's test to examine the equality of variances across groups. If the p -value > 0.05 , the assumption of homogeneity was accepted, allowing the continuation of the t-test and two-way ANOVA.

Results

Normality Test

Before conducting further inferential analysis, prerequisite tests were carried out to ensure that the data met the basic assumptions, one of which was the normality test. The purpose of the normality test was to determine whether the data in each group were

normally distributed. In this study, the normality test was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test, as the number of samples in each group was fewer than 50. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 2 as follows.

Table 2. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

	A1	A2	A1B1	A1B2	A2B1	A2B2
Statistic	0.929	0.935	0.941	0.940	0.917	0.931
df	28	25	9	9	8	8
Sig.	0.057	0.113	0.595	0.586	0.408	0.521

Based on the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test presented in Table 2, it was found that all data groups namely the experimental class (A1), control class (A2), experimental class with high reading interest (A1B1), experimental class with low reading interest (A1B2), control class with high reading interest (A2B1), and control class with low reading interest (A2B2) had significance (Sig.) values greater than 0.05. The Sig. values obtained were 0.057, 0.113, 0.595, 0.586, 0.408, and 0.521, respectively, indicating that the data from each group were normally distributed. Thus, it can be concluded that the normality assumption was met, and the data were appropriate for analysis using parametric statistical techniques.

Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test was conducted to determine whether the variances among the data groups were equal, as one of the prerequisites in parametric statistical analysis. This test was performed using Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances, which aimed to examine whether the variances of the data across groups were homogeneous. The results of this test are presented in Table 3 as follows.

Table 3. Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Sig.	α
Students' Learning Outcomes	0.326	0.05
Students' Learning Outcomes with High Reading Interest	0.995	0.05
Students' Learning Outcomes with Low Reading Interest	0.690	0.05

The results of Levene's test indicated that all groups had significance (Sig.) values above the threshold of 0.05, namely 0.326 for overall learning outcome scores, 0.995 for the group with high reading interest, and 0.690 for the group with low reading interest. Since all Sig. values were greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the variances among groups were homogeneous. This finding demonstrates that the assumption of homogeneity was fulfilled, allowing the data to be further analyzed using parametric statistical techniques such as the t-test and two-way ANOVA with valid statistical grounding.

Hypothesis Testing

After the data were confirmed to meet the assumptions of normality and homogeneity, the next step was hypothesis testing to determine whether there were significant differences between the experimental and control groups in writing observational report texts. This hypothesis test was conducted using the Independent Samples Test under three conditions: overall, among students with high reading interest, and among students with low reading interest. The results of the test are presented in Table 4 as follows.

Table 4. Independent Samples Test

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed Hypothesis 1	1.523	51	0.134
Equal variances assumed Hypothesis 2	3.046	15	0.008
Equal variances assumed Hypothesis 3	2.433	15	0.028

The hypothesis testing in this study was conducted to examine significant differences between the experimental and control groups under three different conditions. Based on the results of the Independent Samples Test presented in Table 4, the findings are as follows:

1. Hypothesis 1 showed a significance value of 0.134 (> 0.05), indicating that there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups overall in writing observational report texts.
2. Hypothesis 2, which tested the difference between the experimental and control groups with high reading interest, obtained a significance value of 0.008 (< 0.05), leading to the conclusion that there was a significant difference between the two groups.
3. Hypothesis 3, which compared the experimental and control groups with low reading interest, produced a significance value of 0.028 (< 0.05), also indicating a significant difference.

Thus, it can be concluded that the field trip learning method had a more significant effect on students with both high and low reading interest, whereas its overall impact on the entire population was not statistically significant.

To test the fourth hypothesis whether there is an interaction between the learning method (field trips vs. conventional) and reading interest (high vs. low) on students' skills in writing observational report texts a Two-Way ANOVA was employed. This test aimed to determine whether the two independent variables jointly exerted a significant influence on the dependent variable. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 5 as follows.

Table 5. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Tests of between-subjects effects Hypothesis 4 (A*B)	1398.080	24.715	0.000

The analysis results showed that the significance value for the interaction between learning method and reading interest (A*B) was 0.000 (Sig. < 0.05), with an F-value of 24.715. This indicates that there was a significant interaction between learning method and reading interest in influencing students' writing skills. Thus, the effect of the field trip learning method on students' writing skills did not stand alone but depended on the level of reading interest possessed by the students.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the field trip learning method and reading interest significantly influence junior high school students' skills in writing observational report texts, while also demonstrating a strong interaction between the two variables. These results substantially expand the discourse on strategies for improving writing literacy among adolescents, particularly through experience-based approaches and the affective characteristics of learners.

The field trip learning method was found to have a positive impact on students' writing skills, particularly within subgroups with both high and low levels of reading interest.

Although the first hypothesis test did not show a significant overall difference (Sig. = 0.134), this result does not necessarily negate the effectiveness of the field trip learning method. Studies by Behrendt & Franklin (2014); Nespor (2000); Subramaniam et al. (2018) emphasize that the impact of field trip activities is often stronger when combined with explicit instructional strategies, post-activity reflection, and a high level of curricular relevance. In this context, the limitations observed in the first hypothesis may be attributed to the heterogeneity of students' reading interest within the experimental group, which was further clarified in the subsequent hypotheses.

Studies by Lau et al. (2019); Rahmi et al. (2023) also indicate that the field trip learning method can enhance students' learning motivation and engagement when field experiences are directly connected to academic tasks such as report writing. In the present study, students in the experimental class gained authentic experiences that provided them with concrete sources of information. The field trip method facilitated contextual and transformative learning, which naturally stimulated critical thinking and reflective writing activities (Najia & Sutikno, 2024; Nurhotimah & Suryadi, 2023). Transforming field trips from mere observation into a reflective process based on direct experience has been shown to improve conceptual understanding, critical thinking skills, and students' emotional engagement. This approach holistically links theoretical knowledge with practical application, making learning more meaningful and transformative (Dellaportas et al., 2022; Ningsih et al., 2024).

Stronger empirical support emerged in the second and third hypotheses. Among students with high reading interest, the field trip learning method produced a significant difference (Sig. = 0.008) in writing skills compared to the control group. This finding confirms the results of Gumelar (2023); Usman & Sugianti (2021), who stated that students with high reading interest tend to have greater ability to access, organize, and internalize information. High reading interest contributes to better reading comprehension and the ability to connect new information with prior knowledge (Darmawan & Arti, 2022; Darmawan & Yuniarti, 2022; Hidi, 2001). In this context, the field trip method provides field data that are then processed more effectively by students with strong reading habits, which directly impacts the quality of their writing.

More interestingly, students with low reading interest also demonstrated a significant improvement in writing ability after participating in the field trip learning method (Sig. = 0.028). This finding suggests that although students may have limitations in reading literacy, authentic experiences still serve as an effective stimulus for writing activities. This result aligns with the theory of experiential learning proposed by Garofalo (2024); Kim (2020), which emphasizes the importance of concrete experiences in building conceptual understanding. In similar studies, Can & Yildirim (2014); Jersild & Meigs (1939) found that students with limited reading habits were still able to produce well-structured scientific reports when provided with opportunities for direct observation and guided post-activity reflection.

The results of the fourth hypothesis test (Sig. = 0.000) indicated a highly significant interaction between learning method and reading interest on students' writing skills. This finding suggests that the effectiveness of instructional methods largely depends on students' affective characteristics. In other words, pedagogical approaches cannot be viewed as universal solutions but rather need to be tailored to learners' profiles. These results reinforce the findings of Garofalo (2024); Kim, (2020), who recommend integrating direct learning strategies with interest-based literacy interventions. In the context of language and literature learning, the interaction between external factors (such as instructional methods) and internal factors (such as interest) has long been recognized

as a strategic combination for improving writing performance. More recent studies, such as Windi & Suryaman (2022) also emphasize the importance of multiple approaches to teaching writing that take into account motivation, experience, and contextual support.

Theoretically, this study enriches the body of research on writing instruction by demonstrating that the combination of experience-based learning and affective variables such as reading interest can enhance the quality of students' writing. Previous studies have largely focused on the influence of each factor separately Azmy & Abdurahman (2020); Yulfita & Afrita (2024), while research integrating both within the context of observational report texts remains very limited. Therefore, this study provides a novel contribution to the development of writing instruction strategies based on the interaction of multiple variables.

The practical implications of this study are highly relevant to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes differentiated, active, and contextual learning. Teachers can employ the field trip learning method as an inclusive instructional strategy, particularly for students with low reading interest. Meanwhile, students with high reading interest can be assigned more complex literacy tasks to expand their observations into more in-depth writing. This approach also aligns with the findings of Noreen & Iqbal (2025); Roberts & Rochester (2021), who recommend integrating literacy activities with authentic experiences as an effective way to improve learning outcomes across all ability levels.

Conclusion

Overall, this study reinforces the importance of experience-based learning approaches, such as the field trip method, in enhancing students' writing skills, particularly when combined with the reinforcement of reading interest. The interaction between these two factors provides evidence that instructional strategies cannot be separated from learners' internal contexts. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the sample size was limited to two classes within a single school, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Second, not all intervening variables such as initial writing ability, family support, or access to learning resources were analyzed in this research model. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ multivariate designs and involve larger populations to provide a more comprehensive picture. Thus, the findings of this study are expected to serve as empirical references in designing adaptive, contextual, and needs-based instructional models for students.

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