# A REVIEW OF STRUCTURE, IMAGINATION, COHERENCE, AND LEARNING MOTIVATION IN WRITING FICTIONAL FABLE STORIES AMONG THIRD-GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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#### Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh rendahnya kemampuan menulis siswa Sekolah Dasar, khususnya dalam menyusun cerita fiksi fabel yang terstruktur, imajinatif, dan koheren. Padahal, kemampuan menulis merupakan keterampilan literasi dasar yang penting dikembangkan sejak dini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kemampuan menulis cerita fabel siswa kelas III SD ditinjau dari aspek struktur, imajinasi, dan koherensi serta hubungannya dengan tingkat motivasi belajar menulis. Kebaruan dari penelitian ini terletak pada integrasi analisis linguistik dan psikopedagogis, yaitu mengaitkan kualitas tulisan siswa dengan profil motivasi mereka. Metode yang digunakan adalah survei kuantitatif eksploratif, dengan melibatkan 50 siswa dari satu SD di Gugus II Kecamatan Pulo Ampel sebagai sampel. Instrumen penelitian terdiri atas tes menulis dan kuesioner motivasi belajar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan menulis siswa secara umum berada pada kategori mulai berkembang (rata-rata skor 10,06 dari 18), sedangkan motivasi belajar menulis berada pada kategori sedang (rata-rata 43,82 dari 60). Terdapat hubungan positif namun lemah antara motivasi belajar dan kemampuan menulis (r = 0,367; p < 0,05). Temuan ini mengindikasikan perlunya penerapan model pembelajaran yang mampu meningkatkan kemampuan menulis dan memotivasi siswa secara bersamaan.

Kata Kunci: kemampuan menulis, cerita fiksi, motivasi menulis, struktur, imajinasi, koherensi

# Abstract

This study was motivated by the low writing proficiency among elementary school students, particularly in composing structured, imaginative, and coherent fable narratives. Writing is a fundamental literacy skill that should be nurtured from an early age. The aim of this research is to describe the fable writing skills of third-grade elementary students in terms of structure, imagination, and coherence, to examine their relationship with students' motivation to write. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of linguistic and psycho-pedagogical analyses by linking the quality of students' written work with their motivational profiles. This research employed an exploratory quantitative survey method, involving 50 students from one elementary school in Gugus II, Pulo Ampel District, as the sample. The research instruments consisted of a writing test and a writing motivation questionnaire. The results indicated that students' writing ability was generally in the "emerging" category (mean score: 10.06 out of 18), while their writing motivation was in the "moderate" category (mean score: 43.82 out of 60). A weak but positive correlation was found between writing motivation and writing ability (r = 0.367; p < 0.05). These findings suggest the need for instructional models that simultaneously enhance students' writing skills and motivation.

Keywords: writing ability, fictional narratives, writing motivation, structure, imagination, coherence

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Writing ability is one of the main pillars of language mastery and a fundamental competency that must be acquired by students at the basic education level. The context of learning in elementary schools shows that writing skills are not merely about putting words into written form; they also constitute a process of critical, creative, and communicative thinking that reflects students cognitive and affective development (Setyorini &



Masulah, 2020; Wohlwend, 2011). Writing activities can strengthen students understanding of the subject matter, enhance their reasoning abilities, and develop their imaginative capacity (Jumiaty et al., 2021; Ritchey et al., 2023). Therefore, this skill not only supports the achievement of learning outcomes in the Indonesian language but also serves as a crucial foundation for overall academic success (Futri et al., 2024).

One form of writing that is highly relevant for development among elementary school students is fictional story writing, particularly fables. Fables are fictional stories whose characters are animals that behave like humans, possessing a unique appeal for young learners (Husain et al., 2025). Through fables, students are encouraged to imagine, construct plotlines, build characters, and convey moral messages in an enjoyable and educational manner (Sugiarti & Prihatini, 2023). Writing fables allows students to combine narrative elements with character values, thereby not only training linguistic aspects but also instilling moral and social education (Chaerunnisa et al., 2024). This activity aligns with national efforts to improve student literacy quality through contextual and literacy culturebased approaches (Mutiara et al., 2022). The use of fables in learning, particularly in the Indonesian language, can also enhance student academic achievement (Yanti et al., 2024).

Writing fables can serve as a strategic means to stimulate students comprehensive literacy skills (Rahmawita & Arief, 2020). Literacy is not merely understood as the technical ability to read and write but also encompasses the capacity to comprehend, construct, and meaningfully communicate information (Saputra et al., 2023). The activity of writing fables requires students to understand the structure of narrative texts—such as orientation, complication, and resolution—while simultaneously training them to develop imaginative ideas and convey them coherently (Darmayanti et al., 2024; Fadilah et al., 2024).

Thus, through fable writing, students are trained to think sequentially, develop ideas, and organize plotlines logically, all of which contribute to the enhancement of overall literacy skills (Aisyah et al., 2024).

In contrast to this ideal, many elementary school students in practice are not yet capable of writing fictional stories with a clear structure, imaginative ideas, and good coherence (Manshur, 2023). This indicates challenges in the writing learning process, especially for third-grade students who are in the transitional stage from concrete to abstract thinking (Akyol & Aktaş, 2018). One important factor that can influence writing ability is student learning motivation (Wang & Troia, 2023). High motivation can encourage students to be more active, creative, and persistent in completing writing tasks, whereas low motivation often becomes an obstacle in the process of thinking and expressing ideas in written form (Troia et al., 2024).

Story writing ability is part of creative writing skills, which, according to Jean Piaget theory of language development, is closely related to stage of a child cognitive development (Jones, 2022). At the age of third-grade elementary students (approximately 8 to 9 years old), children are in the concrete operational stage, where they begin to understand cause-and-effect relationships and start forming symbolic representations more systematically (Akyol & Aktaş, 2018; Manshur, 2023). This ability serves as an important foundation in story writing, particularly in constructing a complete and logical narrative structure (Darmayanti et al., 2024).

Furthermore, according to Lev Vygotsky socio-cultural theory, writing ability also develops through social interaction and the use of language in meaningful contexts. From Vygotsky perspective, story writing activities can stimulate the development of students imagination and reasoning abilities, as they are required to reconstruct experiences and social values into a narrative form (Nurfaidah, 2018). Writing stories,

p-ISSN: 2355-2638, e-ISSN: 2746-1866, Hal. 149-158 Vol. 12 No.3, 2025

especially fables rich with moral messages. enables students to form social understanding plots construct they themselves (Manshur, 2023). Linguistically, Hyland genre theory states that writing ability depends not only on linguistic aspects but also on understanding the text structure and the social context in which the text is used (Liu & Chen, 2022). Writing fables involves understanding the structure of narrative texts consisting of orientation, complication, and resolution as well as the ability to construct ideas coherently and creatively in accordance with the genre (Chaerunnisa et al., 2024; Sugiarti & Prihatini, 2023).

Based on these fundamental concepts, this research is urgently needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the ability to write fables among third-grade elementary school students. The main focus of this study is to describe the profile of students writing ability in terms of three main aspects: story structure, imagination, and coherence. Additionally, this research aims to analyze students writing ability based on their learning motivation categories. Through this approach, the study not only assesses the product of student writing but also attempts to understand the internal factors that shape the quality of their work.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the linguistic analysis of student writing with the psychopedagogical aspect of learning motivation. Most previous studies have focused solely on the form of writing or linguistic errors, without examining the internal factors influencing the quality of the work. Moreover, specific studies on fable writing ability among third-grade elementary students remain limited, even though this cognitive developmental stage is crucial for the emergence of writing creativity. This study seeks to fill that gap by mapping fable writing ability based on structure, imagination, and coherence linking it to learning motivation. Thus, this research not only enhances the understanding of literacy in elementary schools

but also offers a new perspective for more integrative writing learning strategies.

## 2. METHOD

An exploratory study with a quantitative approach constitutes an initial effort to understand the poorly defined phenomenon of fictional fable story writing ability among thirdgrade elementary school students. Its objectives are to identify key variables, develop research more precisely, questions and develop preliminary hypotheses for further testing. The quantitative data collected serve as input for mapping the phenomenon and designing a more systematic subsequent research plan, thereby playing a crucial role in establishing a theoretical foundation and direction for future research (Bambang, 2018). The population of this study consisted of third-grade students from Cluster II, Pulo Ampel Sub-District, Serang Regency, Banten Province, totaling 361 students from 10 public elementary schools. A sample of 50 students was selected from Mangunreja Public Elementary School using random sampling, which is representative of the research population.

This study commenced with a literature review on learning related to fictional fable story writing that can be developed through schoolbased instruction. Based on this review, a test of ability was designed, focusing on structure, imagination, and coherence of the written product. Additionally, a survey on the motivation for story writing was conducted using a questionnaire. This study aimed to analyze writing ability based on learning motivation, thereby elucidating student profiles according to their motivation levels in story writing. The research instruments for both tests were subsequently developed and applied to the sample. After the instruments were prepared and the sample was determined, a pilot test of the research instruments both the written test and a digital version assisted by Google Spreadsheets



was conducted. The pilot test results indicated that some items were invalid and the reliability was suboptimal. Consequently, several items were dropped, considering the validity and reliability values in accordance with the planned number of items. After analysis, the final research instruments were obtained, and the study proceeded to analyze the results and draw conclusions.

The assessment aspects for the fictional fable stories were applied to evaluate the stories created by the students. These aspects underwent content validity testing by two language experts, serving as a reference for judging the instruments used in evaluating student test results. The expert content validity assessment evaluated the feasibility and relevance of each indicator for assessing elementary students' fable writing ability. Rubric assessment by two experts indicated that each sub-aspect of the assessment was deemed very important (score of 4), while several were categorized as important (score of 3). Overall, the results showed that the rubric for assessing the fictional fable story writing ability used in this study was recommended for use without revision. The reliability of the assessment rubric, based on instrument pilot testing, yielded a value of 0.927, categorized as high.

Based on item validity testing using the Product Moment correlation, results from 15 positive and negative statements on the learning motivation for thewriting instrument showed that r-count was greater than r-table = 0.279 (5% significance level). This indicates that all items possessed good validity. Reliability testing via Cronbach's Alpha yielded a value of 0.985, categorized as high. Consequently, given the results of the item validity and reliability tests for the learning motivation for writing items, all questions were retained for use in the study.

Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to categorize the level of fictional fable story writing ability and students' learning motivation for writing based on the scores obtained from the research instruments. Each writing sub-aspect was scored on a scale of 0 to 4, and each of the 15 learning motivation statements was scored on a scale of 1 to 4. According to Arikunto (2014), test or questionnaire scores can be converted into percentages and then classified into qualitative categories such as very high, high, moderate, low, and very low based on specific value ranges. The equation used is presented in Equation (1):

$$P = \left(\frac{s}{s_{max}}\right) \times 100\% \tag{1}$$

where P represents the student's percentage score, S is the score obtained by the student, and  $S_{max}$  is the maximum possible score. After each student's score was calculated and converted into a percentage, it was interpreted into categories. The analysis results are presented in frequency distribution tables and bar charts to provide a comprehensive overview of the trends in fictional story writing ability and students' learning motivation for writing.

The relationship between the fictional fable story writing ability and students' learning motivation for writing was analyzed using correlation techniques. Before correlation testing, a normality test was conducted to ensure that the data met the assumption of normal distribution. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov method was used for normality testing. The decision criteria for this test were as follows: if the significance value (Asymp. Sig.) > 0.05, the data were considered distributed; conversely, normally significance value was less than or equal to 0.05, the data were declared not normally distributed. If both variables showed a normal distribution, the analysis proceeded with the Pearson Product Moment correlation. However, if one or both variables did not meet the normality assumption, the non-parametric Spearman Rank correlation test was used (Santoso, 2023). The purpose of this correlation analysis was to measure the degree of relationship between the variables of fictional fable story writing ability and learning motivation for writing. The analysis results are presented in the form of a correlation coefficient (r) and a

significant value (p-value). If the significance value was < 0.05, it was concluded that a significant relationship existed between the two variables.

# 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data in this study were obtained through measurements of two main variables: the ability to write fictional fable stories and the motivation for learning to write among third-grade students at Elementary School Cluster II, Pulo Ampel Sub-District. The research employed a survey approach with a cross-sectional design, involving 50 students as the sample. The collected data were analyzed to identify the distribution of categories for each variable and to provide a general overview of the profile of students'

fictional fable writing ability and their motivation for learning to write. The results of the analysis are presented in tables and graphs to facilitate interpretation. Furthermore, the research findings are discussed in relation to relevant theories and previous studies.

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis of the third-grade students ability to write fictional fable stories, as presented in Table 1, it was found that most students were classified in the "beginning to develop" category, with 28 students (56%). A total of 12 students (24%) fell into the "needs intensive guidance" category, and only 10 students (20%) had reached the "well-developed" category. This classification was based on the assessment results of three main aspects: text structure, imagination, and coherence.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of Students' Ability to Write Fictional Fable Stories

Categories	Assessment Criteria			T-4-1	Percentage
	Structure	Imagination	Coherent	Total	(%)
Needs Intensive Guidance	12	23	20	12	24
Beginning to Develop	28	25	28	28	56
Well Developed	10	2	2	10	20
Sum of Total	50	50	50	50	
Average Score	1,88	1,44	1,62	10,06	
Maximum Score	3	3	3	18	
Category				<b>Beginning to Develop</b>	

In terms of the fable story text structure aspect, the majority of students (28 students) fell into the "beginning to develop" category, with an average score of 1.88 out of a maximum score of 3. This indicates that most students have understood the fundamental components of the narrative text structure, such as orientation, complication, and resolution, although they have not yet fully demonstrated consistency in applying them completely and coherently.

Meanwhile, in the aspect of imagination and originality, 23 students remained in the "needs intensive guidance" category, reflecting a low ability among students to develop creative and unique story ideas. This aspect received the

lowest average score compared to the other two aspects, at 1.44, indicating the need for learning interventions that encourage imaginative exploration and expression in writing.

Regarding coherence and cohesion, 28 students were again classified in the "beginning to develop" category, while 20 students still required intensive guidance, and only 2 students reached the "well-developed" category. The average score for this aspect was 1.62, suggesting that students continue to struggle with logically connecting ideas and maintaining a unified and comprehensible narrative flow.

Overall, the students average writing ability score was 10.06 out of a maximum total score of



18, placing their fable story writing ability in the "beginning to develop" category. These results indicate that while most students have demonstrated foundational abilities in writing fictional fable narratives, they still require guidance, particularly in developing imagination and using coherent language.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Writing Learning
Motivation

Motivation					
Total	Percentage (%)				
4	8				
18	36				
28	56				
50					
43,82					
Moderate					
	Total 4 18 28				

Table 2 presents the results of the descriptive analysis regarding the level of writing learning motivation among third-grade students. Based on the obtained data, out of a total of 50 students, the majority were classified in the high motivation category, comprising 28 students (56%). A total of 18 students (36%) fell into the moderate motivation category, while only 4 students (8%) were categorized as having low motivation. The average score for students' writing learning motivation was 43.82. When compared to the predetermined categorical range, this mean score falls within the moderate category. This finding indicates that, in general, the writing-learning motivation of third-grade students is relatively adequate, though not yet comprehensively at an optimal level.

The data distribution also reveals that most students already possess a strong drive and interest in writing activities. This serves as a positive indicator in supporting the learning of story writing, particularly in the development of the fictional fable writing ability. Nevertheless, the presence of students in the low motivation category remains a concern, as it may impact their writing performance in terms of ideas, structure, and content completeness. Overall, these findings provide an initial overview of the students' affective profile within the context of writing instruction, which is essential to consider when

planning intervention strategies or learning models aimed at comprehensively enhancing writing proficiency.

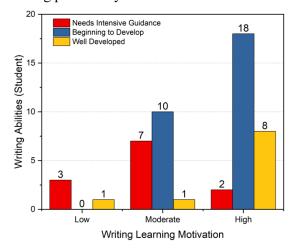


Figure 1. Distribution of Students' Fictional Fable Story Writing Abilities According to Their Writing Learning Motivation Categories

Figure 2 presents the distribution of students' fictional fable story writing abilities according to their writing learning motivation categories, classified into three levels: low, moderate, and high. Each motivation group was further categorized on the basis of three levels of writing proficiency: needs intensive guidance, beginning to develop, and well-developed. In the low motivation category, it is evident that the majority of students (3 students) fell into the needs intensive guidance proficiency level. Only 1 student reached the well-developed level, while no students were classified in the beginning to develop a category. This indicates that low learning motivation tends to correlate with low writing achievement.

The moderate motivation category demonstrated a more varied distribution of writing abilities. A total of 7 students remained in the needs intensive guidance category, while 10 students reached the beginning to develop level, and only 1 student was classified as well-developed. These data suggest that moderate motivation can encourage some students to begin developing their writing abilities although it does



not predominantly lead to the highest achievement levels.

Meanwhile, the high-motivation category displayed a more positive distribution pattern. A total of 18 students were classified at the beginning to develop level, and 8 students achieved the well-developed level. Only 2 students remained in the intensive guidance category. This pattern indicates that higher levels of writing learning motivation are associated with a greater likelihood of students demonstrating better writing abilities.

Overall, this graph provides preliminary evidence suggesting a positive relationship between writing learning motivation and fable story writing ability. Students with high motivation tended to achieve better writing proficiency than compared to those with moderate or low motivation. This finding is important as a basis for designing learning interventions that focus not only on cognitive aspects but also on enhancing students affective domains, such as learning motivation.

Table 3. The Result of The Normality Test

	Fable Story Writing Ability	Writing Learning Motivation	
N	50	50	
Test Statistic	0,134	0,153	
Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	0,025	0,005	
Category	Not Normally	Not Normally	

To determine the appropriate inferential statistical analysis, a normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 5. The significance value for the fictional fable writing ability data was 0.025, and for writing learning motivation, it was 0.005, both of which are below the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that the data were not normally distributed; therefore, a non-parametric statistical analysis was employed to examine the relationship between the variables.

Table 4. The Relationship Between Fictional Fable Story Writing Ability and Writing Learning Motivation

The Method	d of Analysis	Value	Category	
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	0,367	Weak	
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0,009	weak	

To investigate the relationship between the fictional fable story-writing ability and writing learning motivation, a correlation analysis was conducted using Spearman's rho, as shown in Table 4. The results revealed a weak yet significant relationship between the fictional fable story writing ability and writing learning motivation, with a correlation coefficient of 0.367 and a significance value of 0.009 (p < 0.05). Thus, it can be concluded that in this correlational study, higher fictional fable story writing ability did not consistently correspond with higher writing motivation.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings indicate that the fable writing ability of third-grade elementary school students in Cluster II, Pulo Ampel Sub-District, remains at a moderate level (mean score: 10.06/18). Among the three assessment aspects, structure received the highest score, followed by coherence, while imagination scored the lowest. This suggests that a relatively students possess adequate understanding of basic narrative frameworks but continue to face challenges in developing creative ideas and maintaining narrative cohesion. These observations align with previous studies highlighting the difficulties that elementary students encounter in narrative particularly in aspects of imagination and story elaboration (Aisyah et al., 2024; Fadilah et al., 2024).

Students' writing learning motivation was categorized as moderate, with a mean score of 43.82/60. While the majority exhibited high motivation, a small proportion demonstrated low



motivation. Correlation analysis revealed a weak yet statistically significant relationship between learning motivation and writing ability (r = 0.367; p < 0.05). This finding reinforces the perspective of Wang & Troia (2023) that motivation plays an important role in writing success but is insufficient without appropriate instructional strategies and environmental support.

Students' limitations in imagination can be explained through a Piagetian perspective, which posits that at the concrete operational stage (ages 8–9), children require tangible stimuli to develop logical thinking and construct cohesive narratives (Akyol & Aktas, 2018; Jones, 2022). The lack of concrete stimuli often results in superficial story ideas. Meanwhile, Vygotsky theory emphasizes the role of social interaction and scaffolding in enhancing writing ability, where teachers function as more knowledgeable others who facilitate idea organization through guided questioning, discussions, and feedback (Nurfaidah, 2018).

Consequently, writing instruction strategies in elementary education should adopt an integrative approach that combines textual structure reinforcement with imagination stimulation and motivation enhancement. Models such as guided writing, project-based learning, or engaged writing strategies can increase student engagement while improving the quality of the structural and content aspects of writing (Sugiarti & Prihatini, 2023). The use of contextual media, such as images, animated fable videos, or story maps, is also relevant to help students construct coherent, creative, and meaningful narratives.

# 4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the fable writing ability of third-grade elementary school students in Cluster II, Pulo Ampel Sub-District, falls within the moderate category, with a mean score of 10.06 out of 18. Among the three analyzed aspects, structure ranked highest, followed by coherence, while imagination remained the

weakest aspect. This indicates that although students possess a sufficient understanding of basic narrative frameworks, they still require concrete stimulation to develop ideas creatively.

Learning motivation for writing was in the moderate category, with a mean score of 43.82 out of 60. While most students exhibited high motivation, a small group demonstrated low motivation. Correlation analysis revealed a positive yet weak relationship between learning motivation and writing ability (r = 0.367; p < 0.05). This finding suggests that improvements in writing ability are influenced not only by motivation but also by relevant instructional strategies and learning environment support.

Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on the interconnection between affective and linguistic factors in elementary school writing skills, particularly during the concrete operational developmental stage. Practically, the research results recommend the implementation of instructional models such as guided writing, project-based learning, or engaged writing strategies, which can be integrated with visual and digital media to enhance student engagement, imagination, and narrative quality.

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p-ISSN: 2355-2638, e-ISSN: 2746-1866, Hal. 149-158 Vol. 12 No.3, 2025

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