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Lecturers' Strategies in Optimizing Motivation for Writing Scientific Publications Among Students of the Elementary Madrasah Teacher Education Study Program

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to explore in depth the strategies implemented by a lecturer at the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi in optimizing student writing motivation for scientific publication purposes.

Methodology: The approach used was qualitative with a phenomenological design, with one key informant selected through purposive sampling based on verified experience and track record of scientific writing guidance. Data collection was conducted through in-depth semi-structured interviews referring to interview guidelines with four main dimensions: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, technical guidance strategies, and evaluation and obstacles.

Main Findings: The results of the study revealed that the lecturer's strategy was built on five mutually supporting pillars: (1) strengthening intrinsic motivation through instilling career awareness and sharing personal narratives; (2) providing structured academic appreciation and incentives as a reinforcement of extrinsic motivation; (3) implementing guided autonomy in topic selection and collaborative writing as a means of real learning; (4) gradual scaffolding accompanied by growth-oriented feedback; and (5) the introduction of digital tools and artificial intelligence that are relevant to Generation Z.

Novelty/Originality of this study: These findings confirm that warm interpersonal relationships between lecturers and students are the main foundation that determines the effectiveness of all motivational strategies implemented.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Scientific publications are a crucial indicator for measuring the quality and academic productivity of a university, as well as a concrete manifestation of the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, contributing to the advancement of lecturers' academic careers and the quality of the institution. In Indonesia, the demand for publication productivity is growing in line with higher education policies that prioritize research output as part of university performance indicators through the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) scheme [1]. This indicator serves as the basis for planning, implementing, and evaluating the institution's overall performance. However, in practice, contributions to publications are still dominated by lecturers, while student involvement as active contributors remains relatively limited [2]. This situation indicates that the culture of scientific writing in

the academic environment has not yet developed optimally, particularly in encouraging students to produce work that meets publication standards.

This challenge is also reflected in Islamic higher education institutions, particularly the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi, which is transforming into a research-based university. This institution is faced with the need to not only strengthen the research culture among its academic community but also increase the capacity of students to produce publishable scientific work. In this context, the role of the supervisor is crucial, not only as a technical guide but also as a motivator and role model who directly influences the development of students' motivation and academic enthusiasm.

Various studies have shown that the main obstacles for students in writing for publication lie not only in the technical aspects of writing, but rather in the motivational dimension.[3] Motivation is a driving force that influences the direction, intensity, and persistence of individual behavior. When weakened, various psychological barriers emerge[4]. Lack of self-confidence, fear of journal rejection, unclear writing processes, and minimal academic support are factors that consistently emerge as obstacles to students' scientific writing productivity [5], [6]. This situation indicates that student success in writing for publication is largely determined by the quality of support and strategies provided by the supervisor in motivating them.

In an effort to understand these motivational dynamics more deeply, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan offers a relevant conceptual framework, explaining that authentic and sustainable motivation grows from the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relationships [7], [8]. In the context of scientific writing mentoring, the fulfillment of autonomy is reflected in providing students with space to independently determine topics and writing approaches, while competency relates to technical skills such as understanding IMRaD structure, reference management, and data analysis, which influence self-confidence. Relationships are realized through psychological safety, a condition where students feel safe to express ideas and admit difficulties without fear of judgment. Fulfilling these three needs encourages intrinsic motivation, which strengthens students' persistence and ability to overcome obstacles during the scientific writing process leading to publication [8].

In line with the SDT framework, a pedagogical approach that emphasizes active and gradual support is crucial for optimizing student motivation in scientific writing. Two strategies that can be implemented are collaborative writing and scaffolding. Collaborative writing not only improves the quality of writing but also serves as a means of academic socialization, helping students understand the norms and practices of the scientific community [9]. Direct faculty involvement in the writing process, such as developing arguments and selecting appropriate academic diction, has proven more effective than simply providing feedback on the final draft [10]. Scaffolding helps students achieve gradual progress through structured support according to the Zone of Proximal Development concept, where formative feedback at each stage is proven to be more effective in maintaining motivation than feedback that is solely evaluative [11], [12].

In Islamic higher education settings, the implementation of these strategies has a richer motivational dimension. Islamic values emphasizing the importance of knowledge and the obligation to spread goodness through writing, in accordance with the concept of da'wah bil qalam, can be a powerful source of intrinsic motivation if intelligently integrated into the mentoring process. For students at the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi, scientific writing is not merely an academic obligation but can also be a form of worship and a broader social contribution. Furthermore, the emergence of various artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools such as Grammarly, Quillbot, Mendeley, and generative AI platforms has fundamentally transformed the academic writing ecosystem [13]. For Generation Z students growing up in a digital ecosystem, the introduction of these tools is a symbolic statement that their academic process is relevant to the world they inhabit, significantly increasing engagement. Ultimately, students who consistently publish their work are characterized by two key characteristics: strong self-confidence as writers and a positive mentoring relationship with their supervisors.[14]

However, there is a significant research gap in the available literature. Most research on student writing motivation has been conducted from the perspective of the students themselves, while exploration of concrete strategies implemented by lecturers, particularly in Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia, remains very limited. The novelty of this research lies in its position, which takes the lecturer's perspective as the primary subject of experience, while simultaneously integrating the dimension of Islamic values as a contextual variable that has not been widely studied in the literature on academic writing development. Thus, this research not only complements the existing literature but also offers unique insights relevant to the development of mentoring strategies in Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia.

The urgency of this research is increasingly apparent given the increasing pressure on publication productivity in Islamic higher education institutions, while systematic, evidence-based mentoring strategies remain rarely documented. This study aims to fill this gap by phenomenologically exploring the experience of a lecturer at the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi in designing and implementing strategies to motivate scientific writing for his students. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) describe the strategies used by lecturers to instill students' intrinsic motivation to write; (2) identify the forms of incentives and appreciation provided as reinforcements of extrinsic motivation; (3) analyzing the technical guidance and scaffolding approaches applied

in the writing mentoring process; and (4) revealing the main obstacles faced by students and how lecturers overcome them.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Research Approach

This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting, where the data obtained and the analysis are qualitative in nature [15]. Meanwhile, phenomenology is a research approach that focuses on exploring the subjective experiences of participants to gain a deeper understanding of a social phenomenon[16]. In this approach, individual awareness and experience are the primary focus so that the meaning of the experience can be revealed more comprehensively. Through a phenomenological approach, researchers attempt to capture reality from the perspective of participants [17].

This approach was chosen based on the research objective, which was not only to describe the scientific writing guidance process but also to deeply understand the meaning and essence of lecturers' lived experiences in motivating students. The phenomenological approach was chosen in this study because of its advantages in revealing the meaning of experiences in depth. Phenomenology allows researchers to describe phenomena as they are without manipulating the data, so that the reality obtained is authentic. Furthermore, this approach emphasizes a holistic understanding, where phenomena are viewed as a unified whole and inseparable from their context [18]. Thus, phenomenology is not only able to explore individual subjective experiences but also provides a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being studied.

2.2 Research Informant

This research involved one primary informant selected using purposive sampling, which involves deliberately selecting informants based on their relevance, knowledge, and involvement in the phenomenon being studied [19]. The informant in this study was an active lecturer in the PGMI Study Program at the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi, who had at least three years of experience guiding students to write and publish scientific articles, a verifiable publication track record, and was willing to participate openly and reflectively in the in-depth interview process. The use of a single informant in this study was based on considerations of depth of experience (information-rich case), so the research focused on an in-depth exploration of the informant's lived experience in motivating students to write scientific publications.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data collection was conducted using three complementary techniques. The first and foremost was an in-depth semi-structured interview lasting approximately 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted face-to-face on the campus of the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi, recorded with the informants' consent, and then transcribed verbatim. Second, contextual observations were conducted to understand the physical setting and academic culture in which mentoring practices take place. Third, a documentary study was conducted of relevant materials such as the writing guide used by the informants, a list of published articles by mentored students, and the institution's academic policy documents.

The primary data collection instrument was an interview guide developed based on a literature review and organized into four thematic dimensions: (1) intrinsic motivation and how lecturers instill self-awareness in students; (2) extrinsic motivation through incentives, appreciation, and competition; (3) technical mentoring strategies and processes; and (4) effectiveness evaluation and identification of obstacles. The interview guide was designed as a flexible guide, rather than a rigid script, allowing the researcher to explore subthemes that emerged spontaneously and unexpectedly during the interviews. The following table outlines the research interview instrument used.

Table 1. Outline of the Research Interview Instrument

No.	Dimension / Focus	Interview Questions
1	Intrinsic Motivation (Self-Awareness)	a. How do you provide students with an understanding of the importance of publishing scientific articles for their future careers? b. What steps do you take to increase the confidence of students who feel that they are “not talented” in writing? c. Do you often share your personal experiences (failures/successes) in writing articles to inspire them?
2	Extrinsic Motivation (Support & Rewards)	a. Do you offer certain incentives (such as grade conversion or course recognition) for students who successfully publish in national or international journals? b. What forms of appreciation or praise do you give to students who show progress in their writing? c. Are there any competitions or publication targets established in the class to stimulate students’ competitive spirit?

No.	Dimension / Focus	Interview Questions
3	Guidance and Technical Strategies (Process-Oriented Approach)	a. How do you guide students in identifying research topics that are interesting yet still within their capabilities? b. Do you use a collaborative writing method (lecturer and students writing together) as a form of practical training? c. How do you provide feedback so that students do not become discouraged when their writing is criticized? d. What media or supporting tools (such as Zotero or Mendeley) do you introduce to facilitate their writing process?
4	Evaluation and Challenges	a. In your opinion, what is the greatest obstacle students face when starting to write a scientific article? b. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of the motivational strategies that have been implemented so far?

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study refers to the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, in which the analysis process is carried out cyclically and repeatedly from data collection to drawing final conclusions. This activity continues until the data reaches saturation, when no significant new information is found from the data collection results [20]. If the data is not yet saturated, the researcher conducts further exploration through additional interviews to enrich and deepen the research findings. Within the context of the phenomenological approach, analysis is conducted through a process of identifying essential themes from informants' lived experiences before categorizing them using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. This process aims to capture the subjective meaning of informants' experiences in depth so that the essence of the phenomenon being studied can be comprehensively understood.

The data analysis process involves three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions [21]. Data reduction involves selecting, focusing, and simplifying the raw data obtained from interviews to obtain information relevant to the research focus. Data presentation is presented in a structured, descriptive narrative, making it easier for researchers to understand emerging patterns, relationships, and trends. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn in stages, with continuous data verification to ensure the research results have a high level of validity [22]. Furthermore, this study utilizes data triangulation techniques to enhance the validity of the findings. Triangulation is achieved through comparisons between data sources, consistency of interview results, and member checking of information with participants [19]. Thus, the analysis results are not only descriptive but also possess a high level of credibility and trustworthiness.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on an in-depth analysis of interview data, observations, and documentation obtained from informants at the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi, this study identified five major themes reflecting the comprehensive strategies implemented by lecturers to optimize their students' writing motivation. These five themes do not operate in a linear and isolated manner, but rather intertwined within a coherent and contextual pedagogical ecosystem.

3.1 Cultivating Intrinsic Motivation: From Career Awareness to Personal Narrative

The first dimension revealed from the interviews is the lecturers' strategy for cultivating intrinsic motivation in students, a process described by the informants as "lighting the fire from within, not from without." This strategy is implemented through two main, complementary approaches. The first approach involves reframing the meaning of scientific publication within the context of students' real lives. Rather than presenting publication as a formal and technical academic obligation, informants consistently connect scientific writing activities to concrete and relevant long-term career prospects for their students. The informant explained his approach:

"I always start by asking students: where do they want to go after graduation? Do they want to be a lecturer? Do they want to work in a government agency? Do they want to be a researcher? Whatever the answer, I show them how having a scientific publication can open doors that were closed to others. On this campus, many students never imagined their name could be in a journal. My job is to help them imagine that and believe that it's possible for them."

This narrative aligns closely with the principle of autonomy in Self-Determination Theory [8], which emphasizes that the strongest and most sustained motivation grows when individuals can connect their activities to personally meaningful values and goals. By helping students see the connection between scientific writing and their larger life purpose, the instructor is not simply providing technical instruction; he is helping them discover a reason to care.

A second approach that has proven highly effective is sharing personal narratives about the instructor's own academic journey, including the failures, rejections, and struggles they have experienced. The informant revealed that he regularly shares stories about his articles that were rejected by journals:

"Students often think that lecturers never fail. They don't know that my article was rejected many times before it was finally accepted. When I tell them that, their reaction is always the same: they look relieved. It's as if a huge burden has been lifted. They realize that rejection is not a sign of incompetence, but rather a normal part of the academic process."

This strategy of sharing personal narratives reflects a deep pedagogical understanding of the importance of modeling and identification in the learning process. When students see that someone they respect has experienced failure and risen from it, they receive living proof that failure is something that can be faced and overcome, not something to be avoided by not trying at all. This is the foundation of what educational psychologists call a growth mindset, which emphasizes that individuals view failure as an opportunity to learn and develop abilities, rather than as an indicator of personal limitations. [23]

In the specific context of the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi, the informant also integrates Islamic values in cultivating this intrinsic motivation. Scientific writing is linked to the concept of da'wah bil qalam (Islamic outreach), a contribution to goodness through writing, which in Islamic tradition is viewed as a continuous charity that continuously generates rewards. This integration of spiritual values provides a powerful additional layer of meaning for students in Islamic higher education settings, making scientific writing feel like more than just an academic task.

3.2 Extrinsic Motivation Structure: Incentives, Appreciation, and a Competitive Climate

While intrinsic motivation is an ideal foundation, lecturers at the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi recognize that in the early stages, when students lack sufficient experience and confidence, well-structured extrinsic motivation can serve as a highly effective catalyst. Informants developed several different but complementary incentive mechanisms. One form is formal academic incentives. Students who successfully publish their research articles in Sinta-indexed journals receive recognition in the form of convenience in completing their final assignments, such as accelerated defense or recognition of publication achievements as part of academic assessment, without eliminating the obligation to attend thesis defense. An informant explained:

"There is a policy here that allows students who have already published articles in Sinta journals to receive convenience in their thesis defense. I take full advantage of that. For students in their final semester, this is a very tangible and direct motivation."

However, the informant also acknowledged that formal incentives alone are insufficient and can even be counterproductive if not balanced with personal and meaningful appreciation. He developed a habit of providing specific and substantive verbal appreciation, not just generic praise like "good job" or "keep improving," but appreciation that demonstrates that the lecturer has truly read and understood his students' writing.

"When I read a student's draft and there's a really good paragraph, I point it out straight away: 'This paragraph is amazing. The way you build your argument is so logical, I don't need to change anything.' Their reaction is incredible. It's like they just realized they can actually write."

This practice reflects a fundamental principle in motivational psychology: that specific and targeted appreciation is far more effective in building self-efficacy than general, insubstantial praise. When students receive specific and meaningful feedback on the quality of their writing, they gain concrete evidence of their competence, which in turn boosts their self-efficacy and confidence in learning. Recent research shows that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between feedback, learning engagement, and student academic performance[24].

The informant also fostered a healthy competitive climate in the classroom by setting collective publication targets. She created an informal progress board where all students could see how far their peers had progressed in the writing process. This approach leveraged social dynamics, particularly the natural tendency to compare oneself with others in the same reference group, as a motivator. However, the informant emphasized that this competition should be kept supportive, not destructive: "The goal is not for anyone to lose, but for everyone to be encouraged to progress."

3.3 Guided Autonomy and Collaborative Writing: From Topic Guidance to Collaborative Writing

One of the most interesting findings of this study is how the informant balanced student autonomy in choosing topics with the need for clear direction and structure. The informant developed what this study calls guided autonomy, an approach in which freedom is granted meaningfully, not unfettered. In practice, the informant never dictated research topics for her students. However, he doesn't leave students to struggle alone in a sea of

limitless possibilities. His approach is to first explore students' interests and life experiences through exploratory conversations:

"I always ask first: what do you think about most often? What problems around you bother you most? From there, topics usually emerge that are truly their own, not ones I 'entrust' to them. When the topic is their own, their enthusiasm for writing is very different." This approach directly activates the need for autonomy, the first pillar of SDT. When students feel that the topic they are working on is one they chose themselves based on genuine interest and concern, rather than one imported from a lecturer's research agenda, their emotional engagement with the writing process increases dramatically. Writing is no longer seen as a task to be completed, but rather as a medium for expressing things that are meaningful and personal to the students. This condition reflects the development of intrinsic motivation, namely when individuals engage in an activity because of the interest, value, and satisfaction derived from the activity itself [25].

Once the topic is determined, the informants implement a very intensive collaborative writing approach. She not only commented on students' drafts but also actively wrote with them, sitting side by side in front of a computer screen, discussing word choice directly, and demonstrating the thought process of an experienced academic writer in real time:

"I once sat with a student for three hours just to perfect a single introduction. Not because her writing was bad, but because I wanted her to see firsthand how a scientific argument is constructed from scratch. It can't be taught with just words."

In this collaborative writing practice, the informant consistently placed her student as the first author on the articles they produced together. This decision, essentially prioritizing the student's academic interests over the lecturer's formal recognition, had a motivational impact far beyond its nominal value. When a student's name was listed as the lead author in a national journal, a fundamental identity shift occurred: the student began to see herself as a capable young scientist, not just a student fulfilling a curricular requirement.

3.4 Gradual Scaffolding and Growth-Oriented Feedback

The fourth dimension that stood out in this research data was the systematic implementation of scaffolding in the writing mentoring process. The informant developed a structured yet flexible weekly assignment model that allows students to experience tangible and measurable progress without feeling overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the task at hand. The scaffolding model implemented by the informant at the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi generally follows this pattern: the first week focuses on searching and mapping relevant literature; the second week on developing an outline and argument structure; the third week on writing the introduction; the fourth week on the literature review; the fifth week on research methods; and so on until the article is ready for revision and submission. Each week concludes with a short review session that serves as a checkpoint and a forum for discussing any obstacles encountered. The informant emphasized that good scaffolding design is not just about allocating time, but rather about ensuring that each stage provides a tangible experience of success for students:

"I deliberately make the first week's target very achievable just collect 15 references and write a brief annotation. When students come the next week with 15 references in hand, their faces are different. There's a sense of accomplishment there. And that sense of accomplishment fuels the more challenging weeks that follow."

This strategy reflects a deep understanding of the psychology of achievement-based motivation. Repeated successful experiences, even on a small scale, build what Bandura calls mastery experiences, which are the most powerful and enduring source of self-efficacy. Students who consistently succeed at small goals develop the belief that they can accomplish larger goals, and it is this belief that ultimately leads to success. pushing them beyond limits they previously believed they could not overcome[26]. However, effective scaffolding would be meaningless without quality feedback. Informants developed a very clear and consistent feedback philosophy: every criticism should always be accompanied by a concrete solution, and every weakness should always be balanced with an acknowledgement of strengths:

"I never return a student's draft with just a red mark. For every sentence I cross out, I write why and how to improve it. For every section that needs strengthening, I point to a helpful reference. The goal is not to judge their writing, but to teach them how to think scientifically."

This approach aligns well with previous findings that confirm that dialogic, process-oriented feedback is far more effective in fostering writing development than evaluative, product-oriented feedback[27]. Moreover, consistent feedback demonstrates to students that the instructor is genuinely reading their writing, a form of attention that indirectly strengthens the relational dimension of SDT.

3.5 Technology and AI as Writing Partners for Generation Z

The fifth dimension identified in this study also reflects the informant's adaptive response to the characteristics of his students, who are part of Generation Z. The informant acknowledged that the way his students think, learn, and interact with information is heavily influenced by their experiences as digital natives, and that effective pedagogical responses must respond to this reality, not resist it. In terms of reference management, the informant actively teaches all his students the use of Mendeley from the beginning of the writing process. He not only explains the software's functions abstractly, but also conducts practical training sessions where students directly try importing references, creating groups, and inserting citations into documents:

"Once they know how to use Mendeley, one of the biggest obstacles disappears. They no longer have to manually type their bibliography, and that in itself saves a significant amount of time and energy. That energy can then be diverted to more important things: thinking and writing."

Informants also began introducing AI-based tools like Quillbot to assist students in the paraphrasing process, with a strong emphasis on understanding that good paraphrasing involves more than simply asking the AI to rephrase a sentence, but rather understanding the original idea and restating it in their own words. The use of AI was taught not as a shortcut, but as a tool that should be used consciously and responsibly. Informants also mentioned the use of generative AI platforms as brainstorming tools, especially in the early stages when students were struggling to formulate research questions or find fresh perspectives on a topic. They taught students how to engage in dialogue with the AI to explore multiple perspectives on issues they were interested in, with the clear understanding that the AI output was only a starting point that must be developed, critiqued, and verified through the actual research process.

Informants consistently reported the impact of these technological strategies on student motivation. Students who had previously seemed reluctant and overwhelmed by the writing process showed a marked increase in enthusiasm when they realized they had access to tools that could help them navigate the complexities of the academic process. This is in line with previous findings which confirmed that the relevance of technology in the learning experience is one of the strongest predictors of Generation Z student engagement[28],[29].

3.6 Barriers and Evaluation: Informant's Critical Reflection

Complementing the narrative about effective strategies, the informant also candidly identified the main barriers her students faced and how she responded to these barriers in her mentoring practice. The first and most fundamental barrier, according to the informant, was what she called "blank page syndrome," the inability of students to start writing even when ideas and data were readily available. Students often fall into a false sense of perfectionism: they refuse to write anything for fear of imperfection, ultimately ending up writing nothing at all. The informant's response to this barrier was to explicitly ask students to produce "a draft that can be bad," instructing them to express their ideas without filtering, with the agreement that revision was a task to be done later, not now.

The second barrier was the lack of a reading culture among students, which directly impacted the lack of references in their writing. The informant overcame this obstacle by requiring a minimum of 20 minutes of journal reading daily as an academic ritual, and regularly discussing recent articles in mentoring sessions, not for memorization but for critical analysis. The third obstacle was fear of the peer review process and potential journal rejection. The informant overcame this by conducting a mock internal review before article submission: she had her students present their drafts to peers, receive questions and criticism, and then respond academically. This process not only prepared students technically for the actual review process but also built the emotional resilience essential in the world of academic publication.

In terms of evaluation, the informant adopted a systematic, reflective approach. She measured the effectiveness of her strategy not only by the number of articles published, although this metric is important, but also by changes in students' attitudes, behaviors, and ways of speaking about scientific writing. Students who initially used the word "can't" but later replaced it with "I'm learning" were seen as an indicator of success just as important as articles published in journals.

3.7 Lecturer-Student Relationships as the Foundation of All Strategies

One theme that ran consistently across all dimensions of the interviews and could not be reduced to a specific strategy category was the quality of interpersonal relationships between lecturers and students. Informants repeatedly stated that all the strategies they implemented, from technical scaffolding to the introduction of AI, would only function optimally if implemented within the context of relationships characterized by trust, mutual respect, and genuine concern.

"I can't force students to be motivated. What I can do is create the conditions where motivation becomes a reasonable option for them. And that condition is built on trust. If they don't trust me, if they're afraid of me, none of my strategies will work."

This statement encapsulates the essence of all the findings of this study. Even the most sophisticated motivational strategies, whether based on cutting-edge psychological theory or utilizing the latest AI technology, will be nothing but empty shells without a strong relational foundation. At the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi, in an academic culture that still highly values authority figures, the ability of lecturers to present themselves as warm and human partners, rather than simply as assessing experts, is an indispensable prerequisite.

This finding is fully consistent with the Self-Determination Theory framework which emphasizes that the need for relatedness is one of three basic psychological needs that must be met for authentic motivation to grow and develop. Skinner et al. emphasized that in a pedagogical context, the quality of the relationship between educators and students is not only one factor that influences motivation but is a condition that allows all other factors to work[30].

The findings of this study both strengthen and expand the existing literature on writing motivation in the context of higher education. Most previous studies have explored writing barriers from the perspective of students as experiencing subjects [6], while research explicitly highlighting the perspective of lecturers as strategic actors, particularly in Indonesian Islamic higher education settings, is still very limited. This study fills this gap by presenting a lived narrative of a lecturer's experience in designing and implementing an integrated pedagogical ecosystem, while demonstrating that the integration of Islamic values, such as da'wah bil qalam (Islamic teachings), into motivational strategies is not merely a cultural ornament, but rather a substantive variable that actively shapes the meaning of writing for students in that context.

Phenomenologically, lecturers' experiences in motivating students to write are not merely interpreted as technical academic activities, but as relational and transformational processes involving the development of self-confidence, personal meaning, and the internalization of students' academic and spiritual values. The essence of these experiences suggests that writing motivation grows through a combination of emotional support, gradual mentoring, and the provision of meaningful autonomy.

The findings of this study have important implications both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study strengthens the relevance of Self-Determination Theory in the context of higher education, particularly in scientific writing mentoring, by demonstrating that fulfilling the needs for autonomy, competence, and relationships can be operationalized through concrete pedagogical strategies. Practically, this study provides recommendations for lecturers to develop a mentoring approach that is not only outcome-oriented but also process-oriented, through the implementation of guided autonomy, collaborative writing, gradual scaffolding, and the provision of specific and constructive feedback. Furthermore, the adaptive use of technology and AI can increase student engagement, particularly among the digital generation, in the scientific writing process. At the institutional level, these findings also indicate the importance of policies that support student publication as part of an academic ecosystem that fosters a sustainable writing culture, particularly at Islamic universities in Indonesia.

However, this study has several limitations that need to be openly acknowledged. First, the use of a single informant limits the variety of perspectives obtained, although this aligns with the phenomenological approach that emphasizes the depth of individual experience. Second, the research context, which focuses on a single institution, the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi, makes the findings contextual, requiring caution in generalizing to different higher education contexts.

4. CONCLUSION

This phenomenological research successfully revealed five groups of strategies implemented by lecturers of the PGMI Study Program at the Muhammad Azim Islamic Institute in Jambi in optimizing students' writing motivation for scientific publications, including cultivating intrinsic motivation through reframing and personal narratives; structuring extrinsic motivation through incentives and appreciation; guided autonomy in topic selection combined with intensive collaborative writing; gradual scaffolding accompanied by growth-oriented feedback; and responsible use of technology and AI. The most significant finding is that the effectiveness of all these strategies is largely determined by the relational foundation that supports them, the lecturer-student relationship characterized by trust, authentic concern, and a sense of psychological safety is the main prerequisite for the functioning of these strategies and that the integration of Islamic values through the narrative of da'wah bil qalam provides a unique and effective dimension of meaning in the context of Islamic higher education. Based on these findings, supervisors are recommended to make relationships the main foundation of mentoring, institutions need to develop systematic co-publication policies along with training in motivational strategies and the ethical use of AI, while further researchers are encouraged to examine the long-term impact of motivational strategies and the implications of using AI in academic writing mentoring.

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