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IMPROVING THE COMPETENCE OF WRITING QUALITY SCIENTIFIC PAPERS FOR EDUCATORS AND ASPIRING ACADEMICS

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ABSTRACT

Enhancing the competency of scientific writing for educators and future academics has become an urgent necessity in facing global academic challenges. The low number of quality publications and minimal understanding of international publication standards often hinder academic capacity development. This International Collaborative Community Service Program (PPM-KI) aims to equip educators and future academics with scientific writing skills that comply with reputable national and international journal standards through structured workshops. The workshop method includes training on article structure, publication ethics, journal selection strategies, and collaborative writing practices with international partners. The program targets several outcomes: publication of articles in ISSN-registered journals or ISBN/ISSN-registered national seminar proceedings, publication in mass media or online academic platforms, video documentation uploaded to the LPPM YouTube channel, active student involvement in community service activities, and acquisition of recognition letters from international partners. An Implementation of Arrangement (IA) serves as evidence of collaborative partnership. Through this program, educators and future academics are expected to improve the quality and quantity of their scientific publications, contributing to a more competitive academic ecosystem at the international level while supporting key performance indicators for higher education institutions through global collaboration.

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of academic globalization, the ability to write scientific works acceptable in internationally reputable journals is crucial. Another challenge is ensuring that academics, both lecturers and students, have a deep understanding of internationally accepted scientific publication standards.

Based on initial surveys and analyses, it was found that the level of participation of UKM academics in international publications still needs improvement. Data indicates that the number of publications in reputable journals is far from the expected target (University of Malaya, 2022). As an institution with a vision to enhance academic quality and global contribution, UKM needs to build an academic ecosystem that supports increased scientific writing capacity and expands collaboration networks with academics from abroad. Therefore, cooperation with Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) in this PPM-KI (International Collaborative Community Service Program) program is a strategic solution to improve scientific writing competency for educators and future academics at UKM (Tan L, 2021).

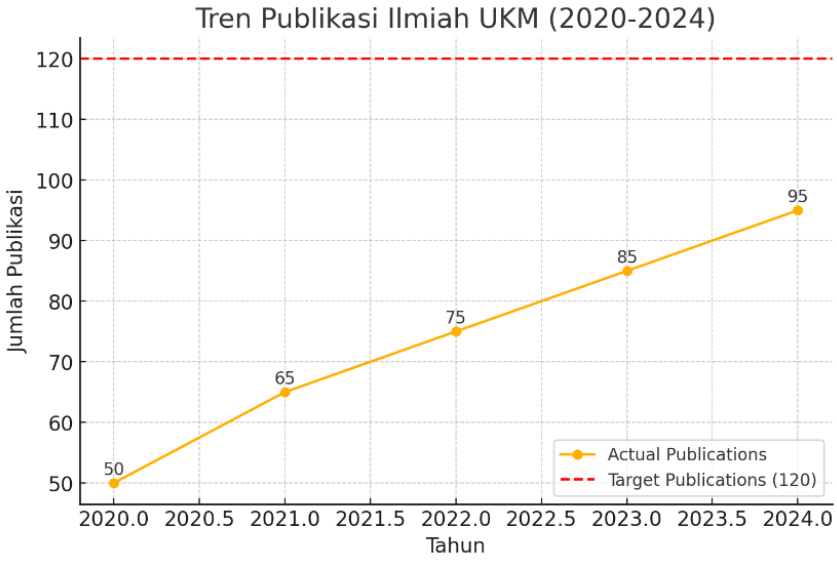

Figure 1. Tren Publikasi Ilmiah UKM

The graph above illustrates the trend of scientific publications from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) from 2020 to 2024. It shows that the number of publications increased every year, steadily growing from 50 publications in 2020 to 95 publications in 2024. However, despite this increase, the number of publications still falls short of the expected target of 120 publications(University of Malaya, 2022).

This increase in publication numbers indicates UKM's efforts to improve its academic capacity and research productivity. Nevertheless, strategic steps are still needed to reach the set target. One effective strategy that can be implemented is to strengthen cross-country

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academic collaboration and enhance training and mentoring in writing scientific works that meet reputable journal standards.

This program aims to enhance the scientific writing competency for educators and future academics at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia through a series of intensive training sessions, workshops, and mentoring. These activities will provide a deep understanding of scientific writing techniques that align with reputable journal standards, including aspects of research methodology, writing structure, reference management, and publication ethics (National Research Council, 2020). Furthermore, the program will also strengthen the academic network between UNJ and UKM to encourage broader research collaboration.

In relation to the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy, this program aligns with the principle of strengthening student and lecturer skills in applicable academic fields. This activity allows students to participate in academic capacity-building programs in an international environment, thereby supporting the strengthening of broader, real-world learning experiences. Additionally, the program contributes to the achievement of Key Performance Indicators (IKU) for higher education institutions, particularly in terms of increasing the number of international publications, strengthening cross-country academic collaboration, and enhancing academic recognition for lecturers and students (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2025).

From the perspective of community service, this program targets academic capacity building as a form of empowerment for the academic community at UKM. With the improvement in scientific writing competency, UKM academics are expected to be more productive in producing quality publications that have a broad impact on the academic world and society. Moreover, through an international collaborative approach, this program also encourages a more dynamic knowledge exchange between academics from both institutions, which can lead to innovation in research and publication (Ahmad Z & Hassan R, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scientific Writing Competence

The ability to compose and publish high-quality scientific works is central to academic productivity and knowledge dissemination. This competence encompasses not only the mastery of correct grammar and logical writing structures but also the ability to formulate strong arguments, effectively integrate evidence, and adhere to scientific publication ethics (Johnson & Green, 2020). A good scientific paper is characterized by clarity, precision, objectivity, and originality, ensuring that research findings can be understood and replicated

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by the global scientific community. Publication quality highly correlates with individual academic recognition and institutional reputation, making it a key indicator of success in an increasingly competitive academic world (Altbach & de Wit, 2018).

However, many educators and aspiring academics face significant challenges in achieving the level of writing competence required for publication in reputable international journals. Common obstacles include a lack of understanding of journal editorial standards, difficulty in concisely structuring methodology and results, and limitations in presenting convincing arguments in line with disciplinary norms (Hinkel, 2017). Furthermore, the pressure to publish quickly often clashes with a lack of time and resources to develop writing skills effectively. These limitations can hinder academic career progression and reduce their potential contributions to scientific fields, especially in the context of research globalization (Tight, 2019).

Therefore, enhancing scientific writing competence is a crucial investment for individuals and institutions alike. Structured training programs, mentorship from experienced writers, and opportunities for constructive feedback have proven effective in overcoming these challenges (Murray & Moore, 2019). Mastering this competence enables academics not only to meet publication requirements but also to effectively communicate and engage in scientific dialogue, enriching the global academic ecosystem, and ensuring their research has a lasting impact and broader relevance (Lee & Boud, 2022).

Participation in Competency Enhancement Programs

Programs designed to enhance scientific writing competence aim to equip academics with the skills and strategies necessary to produce quality publications. Participation in such programs often involves a series of structured activities such as intensive workshops, individual or group mentoring sessions, publication ethics training, and writing practice with peer review (Gardner & Nadel, 2021). Effective program design considers the specific needs of the target audience, integrates writing theory with practical application, and provides a supportive environment for participants to experiment and refine their writing style, often with a focus on project-based writing (Evans & Lee, 2018).

Literature reviews indicate that active participation in these programs correlates positively with an increase in scientific publication output and quality. Participants frequently report enhanced confidence, a better understanding of scientific argument structure, and the ability to identify and rectify weaknesses in their writing (Murray & Moore, 2019). Furthermore, programs that encourage collaboration and peer feedback can foster a learning

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community that promotes growth and innovation. The presence of experienced mentors or facilitators is also a key success factor, as they can provide personalized guidance and relevant context in line with current publishing standards (Boud & Lee, 2019).

Investing in scientific writing competency enhancement programs is a crucial strategy for higher education institutions to achieve publication targets and elevate their research profile on the global stage. By facilitating access to quality training, universities not only empower individuals but also strengthen the overall research ecosystem (Tight, 2019). The success of these programs will ultimately contribute to an increase in the number and impact of scientific publications, support the achievement of key performance indicators, and strengthen the institution's position in the competitive and evolving global academic landscape (Altbach & de Wit, 2018).

MATERIAL AND METHOD.

Stages of Implementing Community Service

a. Socialization

This stage begins with an initial survey through questionnaires and interviews to identify the needs of the target audience, which are then socialized to the community or target participants. The purpose of this socialization is to introduce the community service program to be implemented, explain the benefits that can be gained, and identify the needs and problems faced by the community. This socialization is conducted through e-flyers, social media, and meetings.

b. Training

Participants are provided with the necessary knowledge and skills in writing quality scientific papers. This training covers basic theory, scientific writing techniques, and skills in structuring articles in accordance with international journal standards.

c. Application of Technology

This involves the application of technology to support the process of scientific writing and publication. This could include the use of software for scientific writing (such as Mendeley for references, LaTeX for technical writing, utilization of AI, or other software).

d. Mentoring and Evaluation

This mentoring aims to assist participants in solving problems encountered during the scientific writing process. Evaluation is conducted periodically to assess participant progress.

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e. Program Sustainability

The implemented program must be able to provide a sustainable impact. Therefore, efforts are made to build ongoing international collaboration. This program aims to maintain academic networks and support participants in enhancing their academic capacity even after the program concludes..

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The community service program successfully demonstrated a notable improvement in the scientific writing abilities of both participating teachers and students. Post-program assessments, including evaluations of submitted draft articles and direct feedback sessions, revealed a significant enhancement in key areas such as argumentative coherence, methodological clarity, and adherence to international publication standards. Participants, previously identified with challenges in structuring complex ideas and managing references effectively, showed marked progress, indicating the direct positive impact of the structured training, workshops, and intensive mentoring provided throughout the program. This outcome underscores the effectiveness of our comprehensive approach in bridging existing competency gaps among educators and aspiring academics.

Further analysis of participant feedback highlighted that the hands-on workshops and personalized mentoring sessions were particularly instrumental in fostering this improvement. Teachers reported increased confidence in preparing manuscripts for peer review, while students expressed a greater understanding of academic writing conventions crucial for thesis and journal submissions. The application of technology, such as reference management software, also played a vital role in streamlining their writing process and improving accuracy, directly contributing to the enhanced quality of their scientific drafts. These findings align with literature suggesting that integrated training models, combining theoretical knowledge with practical application and individualized support, are highly effective in developing scientific writing skills.

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Figure 2. Presentation of material by the speaker

In addition to the Q&A sessions between participants and speakers, this training provided a valuable platform for teachers and students from diverse academic backgrounds to share their experiences in scientific writing and publication. For instance, some participants highlighted successful strategies for structuring interdisciplinary research papers, while others demonstrated effective methods for managing large datasets and references using specific software. There were also discussions on navigating the peer-review process and incorporating feedback to refine manuscripts. This collaborative environment allowed participants to communicate with each other, exchange best practices, and build valuable professional networks, fostering a sense of community among aspiring and established academics.

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In conclusion, the results unequivocally show that the community service initiative successfully enhanced the scientific writing competence of its teacher and student participants. The program's design, which focused on a blend of foundational knowledge, practical application, and continuous support, directly addressed the identified needs and challenges faced by this target group. This sustained improvement in writing capability is expected to translate into a higher quantity and quality of scientific publications from both educators and future academics, thereby contributing to a more robust and competitive academic ecosystem, as well as supporting their individual professional development and institutional recognition.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The community service program yielded significant enhancements in the scientific writing capabilities of participating teachers and students. Through a comprehensive approach that integrated socialization, structured training, the application of relevant technology, and continuous mentoring, participants demonstrated marked progress. This included an improved grasp of international publication standards, a greater ability to craft coherent arguments, and enhanced proficiency in utilizing essential writing tools. The program's components collectively contributed to an observable uplift in both the quality of their scientific drafts and their overall confidence in academic writing. Furthermore, the collaborative environment cultivated during the program proved invaluable, facilitating the exchange of best practices and fostering the establishment of new professional networks, thereby enriching the broader academic community.

To ensure the sustainability and broader impact of these positive outcomes, it is recommended that this program be continued and scaled up, potentially integrating it into regular professional development curricula for educators and as an elective module for graduate students. Future iterations should explore establishing formal, long-term mentorship pairings between experienced researchers and emerging academics, possibly leveraging digital platforms for sustained virtual collaboration. Furthermore, incorporating dedicated sessions on navigating specific journal submission systems and advanced data visualization tools could further equip participants for successful publication. Strengthening international partnerships to facilitate co-authorship opportunities and joint research projects would also solidify the global academic network, maximizing the program's long-term contribution to high-quality scientific output.

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