

The Role of E-Pena in Fostering a Culture of Scientific Article Writing Among Students

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ABSTRAK

Budaya menulis artikel ilmiah di kalangan mahasiswa masih tergolong rendah, bukan semata karena minimnya informasi, tetapi juga karena hambatan psikologis seperti rasa takut salah, rendahnya kepercayaan diri, dan anggapan bahwa menulis artikel ilmiah itu rumit. Artikel ini mendeskripsikan peran E-PENA (E-Leaflet Penulisan Artikel), media edukasi digital berbasis carousel Instagram, dalam menumbuhkan budaya menulis artikel ilmiah di kalangan mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Sosiologi Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Hukum Universitas Negeri Makassar (FIS-H UNM). Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif berbasis studi kasus yang dilaksanakan pada April-Mei 2026. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, telaah konten E-PENA, dan validasi ahli, lalu dianalisis untuk mengidentifikasi hambatan

menulis mahasiswa dan strategi responsnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan enam hambatan utama, dari kebingungan memulai hingga anggapan keliru bahwa artikel ilmiah sama dengan makalah biasa. E-PENA merespons hambatan tersebut melalui normalisasi kesalahan pemula, pemecahan proses menulis menjadi langkah kecil dan konkret, checklist kesiapan, dan pesan motivasional yang dipublikasikan berkala melalui Instagram program studi. Strategi ini menggeser kondisi mahasiswa dari tanpa titik awal yang jelas menjadi memiliki panduan bertahap yang siap dipraktikkan. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa penumbuhan budaya menulis memerlukan pendekatan yang tidak hanya informatif tetapi juga motivasional dan berkelanjutan, melalui pengembangan seri lanjutan dan integrasi E-PENA ke orientasi akademik mahasiswa baru.

ABSTRACT

The culture of scientific writing among university students remains weak, not merely a lack of information but psychological barriers such as fear of mistakes, low confidence, and the perception that scientific writing is complicated. This article describes the role of E-PENA (E-Leaflet for Article Writing), an Instagram-carousel-based digital educational medium, in fostering a culture of scientific writing among students of the Sociology Education Study Program, Faculty of Social and Legal Sciences, Universitas Negeri Makassar (FIS-H UNM). The study employed a descriptive qualitative case-study approach conducted in April-May 2026. Data were collected through observation, content review, and expert validation, then analyzed to identify writing barriers and E-PENA's responsive strategies. The findings show six main barriers, from confusion about how to start to the misconception that articles equal ordinary papers. E-PENA addresses these barriers by normalizing beginners' mistakes, breaking the writing process into small, concrete steps, providing readiness checklists, and delivering

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motivational messages published periodically via the program's Instagram account. This shifted students from having no clear starting point to a practical step-by-step guide. This article concludes that fostering a writing culture requires an approach that is informative, motivational, and sustained, through a follow-up content series and integration into new-student academic orientation.

INTRODUCTION

Writing scientific articles should ideally not be merely an academic obligation that emerges as final assignments approach, but rather a habit that develops gradually throughout a student's years of study. In reality, however, the culture of writing among students remains weak. Interest in writing scientific work is influenced by internal factors such as motivation, self-confidence, and personal interest, as well as external factors such as lecturer support, academic culture, and the availability of facilities (Rasyid et al., 2025). When these factors are not adequately present, students tend to postpone or avoid writing activities even when they have ideas worth putting into writing, as found among students taking the Scientific Paper Writing course (Anggraini et al., 2024). In the digital era, the ability to write scientific articles is also increasingly linked to digital literacy, namely the ability to use information technology to support the writing process accurately and responsibly (Nurhayati et al., 2025).

Within the Sociology Education Study Program, Faculty of Social and Legal Sciences, Universitas Negeri Makassar (FIS-H UNM), this condition is clearly visible. Students not only lack information on how to write scientific articles, but also face affective barriers: confusion about where to begin, reluctance to read journals, fear of making mistakes, low confidence in using academic language, a lack of understanding of article structure, and even the perception that scientific articles are no different from ordinary papers. Students generally seek information on article writing independently through the internet, without structured guidance or encouragement that builds the confidence needed to begin. This low level of confidence is important to address, since belief in one's own ability is an important predictor of academic success (Januaripin & Munasir, 2024), while students' difficulties in starting to write scientific papers have been widely documented from the very earliest stage of the writing process (Hosniyeh, 2025).

This weak writing culture has broad implications: students lose the opportunity to practice critical thinking and academic communication early on, while the study program loses the potential to increase scientific output that would support the academic culture as a whole. This problem cannot be resolved simply by providing technical information on how to write; an approach is needed that also addresses the psychological dimension and gradually and sustainably builds a writing habit. This condition constitutes the main motivation for this study, namely the conviction that fostering a writing culture among students cannot be achieved merely by providing technical information on how to write, but

instead requires an intervention that deliberately lowers students' psychological barriers and gradually builds a writing habit from the very beginning of their studies.

On this basis, E-PENA (E-Leaflet for Article Writing) was developed, a digital educational medium in Instagram carousel format designed not only as a source of information but also as a starter that lowers students' psychological barriers to beginning a writing habit. This article aims to identify the barriers students face in fostering a culture of scientific article writing, describe E-PENA's strategy in responding to these barriers, and evaluate early indications of change in students' writing culture following the implementation of E-PENA.

To address these objectives, this study employed a descriptive qualitative approach based on a case study, conducted during the May–June 2026 period at the Sociology Education Study Program, FIS-H UNM, with data collected through observation, a review of E-PENA's content, and expert validation. The findings show six main barriers faced by students in writing scientific articles, ranging from confusion about how to begin to the misconception that scientific articles are no different from ordinary papers, which E-PENA addresses through normalizing beginners' mistakes, breaking the writing process down into small steps, a readiness checklist, and motivational messages published periodically, thereby shifting students' condition from having no clear starting point toward possessing a concrete, ready-to-practice writing guide.

The theoretical support for this study rests on three complementary bodies of literature: the psychology of mistakes in learning, the habituation of writing through small steps, and social media as a means of habit formation. First, from the perspective of learning psychology, beginners' mistakes should not be viewed as failure but rather as a natural part of the learning process. A systematic review by (Harapan, 2025) shows that a growth-mindset approach - which views ability as something that can develop through effort, including through the experience of failure - has a positive effect on learning outcomes, both directly and indirectly through increased motivation and self-efficacy among learners. This aligns with the finding that self-confidence is an important predictor of academic success, since belief in one's own ability enables students to face learning challenges more effectively (Januaripin & Munasir, 2024).

Second, a writing culture does not grow instantly but through habituation built from small, organized actions. Kurniadi (2017) found that habituating students to write scientific papers in an organized manner over a set period proved effective in improving the reliability of students' writing skills, with more than 98% of respondents stating that this action made the writing process easier. Similar findings have been reported for the application of scaffolding techniques in teaching the writing of popular scientific articles, which significantly improved students' writing ability compared with conventional lecture methods (Roniati et al., 2025), indicating that staged support - whether in the form of scaffolding or small-step habituation - is consistently effective across various writing-instruction contexts.

Third, reinforcing this habit requires a delivery channel relevant to students' daily routines. This is closely related to the concept of digital literacy, namely the ability to use information technology to access and present knowledge accurately and responsibly (Naufal, 2021), which among digital-generation students is largely formed through the use of social media as a means of informal learning (Mendrofa & Aprilia, 2023). Ashari et al., (2025) found a significant relationship between the intensity of social media use and students' study habits, particularly in time management and focus. How these three findings specifically relate to E-PENA's strategy is elaborated further in the Discussion section. By synthesizing these three bodies of literature, this study positions E-PENA not merely as an information medium, but as an intervention deliberately designed on the basis of psychological and learning-behavior principles to foster students' writing culture in a gradual and sustained manner.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach based on a case study design (Rusandi & Rusli, 2021), chosen to document and analyze in depth the role of E-PENA in fostering a writing culture within a specific organizational context, namely the Sociology Education Study Program at FIS-H UNM. The study was conducted at the Sociology Education Study Program, Faculty of Social and Legal Sciences, Universitas Negeri Makassar, during the April-May 2026 period. The research subjects were students of the Sociology Education Study Program at FIS-H UNM as the target audience of the educational medium, selected as the reference for observation using a purposive sampling technique, namely the selection of subjects based on their fit with the research objectives rather than at random (Lenaini, 2021), with the author serving as the principal designer and implementer of E-PENA's development.

Data were collected through three techniques, each supported by its own instrument. First, observation of students' initial condition in writing scientific articles, using an observation guide in the form of a checklist covering common affective and practical barriers, such as confusion about how to start, fear of making mistakes, and a lack of understanding of article structure. Second, an in-depth review of E-PENA's content using a content-analysis matrix to identify design elements that function to build motivation and writing habits, such as normalizing statements, calls to action, and staged material. Third, expert validation involving two lecturers with backgrounds in instructional media and academic writing, using a rubric-based validation instrument to assess the fit between the content strategy and students' psychological needs.

Data analysis was carried out descriptively and qualitatively in three steps. First, identifying and categorizing students' writing barriers based on observation data and E-PENA's content. Second, mapping each of E-PENA's design elements against the barrier it

addresses and the underlying psychological mechanism. Third, comparing the condition of writing culture before and after E-PENA's implementation to assess the early indications of change produced.

RESULT

Barriers to a Culture of Scientific Article Writing among Students

Identification of the condition of students in the Sociology Education Study Program at FIS-H UNM shows that the weak writing culture is not caused by a single factor, but by a combination of practical and psychological barriers. Table 1 summarizes the six main barriers identified along with the responses designed into E-PENA's content.

Table 1. Students' Writing Barriers and E-PENA's Content Responses

No	Students' Writing Barrier	Response in E-PENA's Content
1	Confusion about how to start writing	Basic staged steps: identifying the phenomenon, collecting data, then determining the title
2	Fear of making mistakes	Normalizing message: "Every writer was once a beginner"
3	Reluctance to read journals	Recommendation of concise reference sources (Google Scholar, GARUDA, DOAJ) and practical citation tips.
4	Low self-confidence	Motivational statements and a call to action in the closing section
5	Lack of understanding of article structure	Simple, visual explanation of the IMRAD structure
6	Perceiving scientific articles as no different from ordinary papers	Explanation of the concept of novelty and the standard article structure that distinguishes it from an ordinary paper

Source: Research data, elaborated by the authors.

These six barriers reinforce the finding that internal factors such as motivation and self-confidence are dominant determinants of students' interest in writing, while external factors such as the availability of mentoring also determine whether these barriers can be overcome (Rasyid et al., 2025). Most of the barriers identified - fear of mistakes, low self-confidence, and misconceptions about scientific articles - are affective in nature rather than simply a lack of technical knowledge. This condition confirms that a medium presenting information

alone, without addressing students' psychological side, is likely to be less effective in fostering a writing habit. Two of the more technical responses in Table 1 are also grounded in well-established references: the explanation of the IMRAD structure refers to a scientific-writing technique already standard in journals indexed by SINTA, Scopus, and WOS (Rahmat et al., 2023), while the recommendation of reference sources such as Google Scholar refers to its documented benefit in supporting students' scientific-writing process (Aprilia & Marlini, 2025).

E-PENA's Strategy for Fostering a Writing Culture

Based on the barriers identified, E-PENA was designed with a number of elements specifically aimed at building writing habits and motivation, rather than merely delivering technical information. Table 2 summarizes these elements along with their psychological purposes.

Table 2. Habit-Forming Elements in E-PENA's Design

Design Element	Purpose for Building a Writing Culture
Normalizing beginners' mistakes	Reduces writing anxiety by affirming that mistakes are a normal part of the writing-learning process.
Breaking the process into small steps	Turns a writing task that feels overwhelming into a series of concrete steps that are easier to begin.
Submission-readiness checklist	Provides a sense of completion through measurable, self-checkable targets.
Periodic publication on Instagram	Provides repeated exposure on a channel that has already become part of students' daily routine.
Broadening the context for writing	Links writing to students' various needs (coursework, theses, competitions, publication) so that it feels relevant and sustained.

Source: Research data, elaborated by the authors.

The strategy of presenting reassuring statements such as "Every writer was once a beginner" and "A scientific article starts from a simple idea" throughout the content reflects an effort to build a sense of psychological safety before inviting students to engage with technical aspects. This approach is consistent with the principle that fostering interest in writing requires strengthening motivation and self-confidence first, before technical skills can develop optimally (Rasyid et al., 2025). Placing E-PENA on Instagram, a channel that has already become part of students' daily routine, is likewise a strategic choice for fostering a writing culture through repeated exposure. Concise visual media published consistently have

a greater chance of shaping understanding and habits than lengthy documents accessed only once (Muslihah et al., 2025; Wahyuni et al., 2022), while Instagram itself has become part of digital-generation students' informal learning strategies (Putra et al., 2025). This kind of concise visual format is consistent with findings that infographic-based instructional media can significantly boost students' learning interest (Tumewu et al., 2023).

Early Indications of Change in Writing Culture

Evaluation of students' condition before and after the publication of E-PENA shows a shift in several indicators related to writing culture, as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Condition of Writing Culture Before and After the Implementation of E-PENA

Before Implementation	After Implementation	Indicator of Writing Culture
Students had no concrete starting point for beginning to write a scientific article.	A simple initial step (phenomenon–data–title) is available and can be put into practice immediately.	Availability of a starting point for writing
Information on writing was obtained by students independently and without direction from the internet.	A structured series of content is available, published through the study program's official channel.	Direction of writing-learning resources
No message existed to normalize anxiety and beginners' mistakes in writing.	Motivational messages and calls to action are available, published periodically.	Affective support for beginning writers
No continuity plan existed for building students' writing habits.	Development of a follow-up series and integration into new-student academic orientation has been designed.	Sustainability of the writing-culture-building program

Source: Research data, elaborated by the authors.

The most fundamental change lies in the availability of a concrete starting point for students to begin writing, as well as the presence of affective support in the form of motivational messages that were previously unavailable in the study program's academic services. It should be emphasized that this change represents only an early indication, not a

longitudinal measurement of writing culture, since a new culture can only be considered established once the writing habit persists and recurs over a longer period of time.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that a writing culture does not grow simply because information is available, but because of the presence of psychological encouragement that makes students feel capable and safe to begin. E-PENA functions as a starter that lowers affective barriers at the most critical point, namely the moment students decide whether to begin writing or to postpone it. This role is consistent with the view that fostering interest in writing requires a strategy that integrates strengthened motivation, mentoring, and sustained support, rather than merely one-way delivery of material (Rasyid et al., 2025).

As outlined in the Literature Review, the growth-mindset principle (Harapan, 2025) explains that normalizing mistakes can increase motivation and self-efficacy. What distinguishes its application in E-PENA is the context: growth-mindset studies are generally applied through mentoring sessions or structured instruction, whereas E-PENA embeds the same principle into brief visual messages on an Instagram carousel, without requiring face-to-face mentoring sessions. This format has the potential to reach students who are reluctant or unable to seek formal mentoring, although the resulting psychological reinforcement is consequently brief and repetitive rather than deep and personal, as in face-to-face intervention.

Likewise, the success of writing habituation reported by (Kurniadi, 2017) was achieved through structured mentoring over six months with direct supervision from an instructor. E-PENA adapts the same habituation principle into a much lighter format, namely content exposure without direct mentoring, making it easier for study programs with limited resources to replicate. A consequence of this adaptation is that the resulting intensity of habituation is likely not as strong as structured mentoring, so that the continuity of content exposure - rather than a single publication - becomes the key determinant of whether this habituation principle actually works.

The choice of Instagram as the channel also responds to the pattern observed by (Ashari et al., 2025), namely that students' social media use is intensive yet often not directed toward academic purposes. By deliberately embedding messages that foster a writing culture into this channel, E-PENA essentially seeks to convert part of the time students spend on social media - previously recreational in nature - into exposure with educational value, without needing to change students' social media habits themselves.

The common thread running through these three adaptations is that E-PENA translates psychological and behavioral mechanisms previously tested in more intensive contexts (group mentoring, six months of guided support) into a much lighter and more fleeting format. The resulting trade-off lies between the reach and the depth of the intervention: E-

PENA has the potential to reach more students at lower cost, but does not necessarily provide psychological reinforcement as strong as more intensive interventions. The implication is that E-PENA is more appropriately positioned as the entry-level layer of a broader set of support for fostering a writing culture, rather than as a replacement for deeper mentoring.

Nevertheless, a writing culture cannot be fostered through a single media product alone. (Rasyid et al., 2025) emphasize the importance of sustained mentoring, the formation of writer communities, and strengthened institutional support as part of a long-term strategy, consistent with the finding that social support from learning communities is positively correlated with students' academic perseverance (Suprihatin & Setiowati, 2021). In line with this, the sustainability of E-PENA is designed through three steps: first, periodic content updates to remain relevant to students' needs; second, the development of a follow-up series that broadens the scope of writing topics beyond the initial twelve segments; and third, integrating E-PENA as academic orientation material for new students, so that exposure to writing-culture-building messages occurs from the very start of their studies, rather than only at certain moments.

Thus, E-PENA's main contribution to writing culture lies in its role as an entry point that changes students' perception of writing scientific articles, from something frightening and complicated into something that can be started with a small step. The long-term success of fostering a writing culture will depend heavily on the consistent continuation of this strategy as well as structural support from the study program, lecturers, and students themselves.

CONCLUSION

The culture of scientific article writing among students in the Sociology Education Study Program at FIS-H UNM remains hindered by six main problems, both practical and psychological in nature, ranging from confusion about how to begin to the misconception that scientific articles are no different from ordinary papers. E-PENA (E-Leaflet for Article Writing) was developed in response to these barriers through design elements that normalize beginners' mistakes, break the writing process into small steps, provide a readiness checklist, and deliver motivational messages periodically through the study program's Instagram account. The implementation of E-PENA shows early indications of a shift in writing culture, from students who initially had no clear starting point or affective support to having a step-by-step guide and motivational encouragement that can be put into practice immediately.

As a follow-up action, it is recommended that the study program strengthen the sustainability of E-PENA through periodic content updates, the development of a follow-up series covering more diverse writing topics, and the integration of E-PENA into new-student academic orientation so that the fostering of a writing culture begins from the very start of

their studies. The study program is also advised to consider forming a student writing community or group as a complement to the digital medium, in order to strengthen the social support that aligns with the motivational encouragement already built through E-PENA. For future researchers, it is recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted to measure the extent to which students' writing habits persist and develop following sustained exposure to media such as E-PENA.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

This study was conducted in accordance with research ethics principles, with participants' voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of personal information duly respected.

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