

Rotation Station and Learning Motivation: Effects on Job Application Letter Writing Skills in Indonesian Senior High Schools

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ABSTRACT

Effective job application letter writing is a crucial functional skill for high school students. However, traditional instructional methods often fail to engage learners actively. This study explores the impact of the Rotation Station method—an active learning model adapted from STEM education—on students' job application letter writing skills, with particular focus on the moderating role of learning motivation. A quasi-experimental design was conducted with 89 Grade XII students at SMA Negeri 20 Batam. Participants were assigned to an experimental group ($n = 47$), taught using the Rotation Station method, and a control group ($n = 42$), taught using conventional methods. Writing performance was assessed through a validated test scored with an analytic rubric, and learning motivation was measured using a questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$). Students were categorized into high- and low-motivation groups based on a median split. Data were analyzed using independent samples t-tests and two-way ANOVA. Students taught using Rotation Station significantly outperformed those in the control group in writing scores ($M = 85.64$ vs. $M = 78.27$), $t(87) = 4.31$, $p < 0.001$. Both high- and low-motivation students benefited similarly, with no significant interaction between teaching method and motivation, $F(1, 85) = 1.15$, $p = 0.286$. The Rotation Station method improved writing performance regardless of motivation level, highlighting its potential as an inclusive and effective instructional strategy. Its application in language education supports active engagement and real-world writing practice, offering a valuable alternative to traditional teaching approaches.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four core language skills—alongside listening, speaking, and reading—and is classified as a productive skill essential for effective communication (Dewi, 2021). Among the

functional writing genres taught in senior secondary education, the job application letter holds particular significance for students nearing graduation. For Grade XII students at SMA Negeri 20 Batam, mastering this genre is not merely an academic requirement but a vital life skill. As a rapidly growing industrial and economic hub, Batam offers abundant employment opportunities, yet competition is fierce and employers demand high levels of professionalism. A well-structured, grammatically accurate, and contextually appropriate job application letter can significantly enhance a candidate's chances of securing an interview and employment (Husda, 2019). Thus, developing competence in this genre directly supports students' transition from education to the workforce.

Despite its importance, students' ability to write effective job application letters remains consistently low. Field observations and prior research indicate persistent difficulties in organizing ideas, selecting appropriate diction, constructing coherent sentences, structuring paragraphs, and applying correct spelling (Deliani et al., 2023; Nuri Rizki et al., 2024). These issues reflect a broader challenge in writing instruction: students often produce texts that fail to meet functional and professional standards. Several studies (Masripah, 2013; Handoko, 2018; Maidah et al., 2020; Nariyah et al., 2021) highlight that conventional teaching methods—focused on rote memorization of formats and theoretical rules without authentic practice—fail to develop students' real-world writing competence. This disconnect between classroom instruction and professional expectations limits students' ability to apply their knowledge meaningfully.

Student performance in writing is not solely determined by cognitive ability but is deeply influenced by learning motivation. Low achievement often stems not from a lack of capacity, but from insufficient motivation to engage deeply with the learning process (Zulhafizh & Syahrul, 2013; Rahman, 2024). According to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), motivation is enhanced when learners experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness—psychological needs that are often unmet in teacher-centered classrooms. External factors such as classroom environment, instructional design, and teacher facilitation also play a crucial role (Moslem et al., 2019; Emda, 2018). Therefore, effective writing instruction must not only develop technical skills but also foster intrinsic motivation through engaging, student-centered approaches.

From a pedagogical perspective, constructivist learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1966) supports the idea that knowledge is constructed through active experience and social interaction. Writing, as a complex cognitive process, benefits from scaffolding, collaboration, and iterative feedback—elements often missing in traditional instruction. Najamudin and Sukarismanti (2020) emphasize that effective learning occurs when methods actively involve students in meaningful tasks, rather than passively receiving information. This underscores the need for innovative, interactive models that transform writing from a mechanical task into a dynamic, purposeful activity.

One such model is the Rotation Station method—a structured, station-based learning approach where students rotate through different learning centers, each offering varied activities, media, and modes of engagement (Ferlianti et al., 2022). Originally used in STEM education, Rotation Station promotes differentiated instruction, peer collaboration, and active learning by allowing students to engage with content through multiple modalities. Each station can be designed to target specific writing components—such as content development, diction, grammar, and formatting—while incorporating authentic job application examples from local industries. This aligns with constructivist principles by enabling students to build knowledge through hands-on, context-rich experiences.

Despite the potential of Rotation Station, there is a notable absence of research applying this model to Indonesian language writing instruction, particularly in the context of job application letters. While prior studies have identified the problem of poor writing skills (e.g., Masripah, 2013; Handoko, 2018), they largely focus on diagnosing issues rather than testing innovative pedagogical solutions.

Moreover, no existing study has examined the integration of Rotation Station with motivational strategies to enhance writing outcomes in vocational or industrial contexts like Batam. Although motivation is recognized as a key factor (Teni & Agus Yudiyanto, 2021; Rahman, 2024), its synergy with active learning models in writing instruction remains underexplored.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the impact of the Rotation Station model on Grade XII students' job application letter writing skills, with a focus on both writing performance and learning motivation. The research contributes a pedagogical innovation by adapting the Rotation Station method for writing instruction, integrating motivation strategies, and developing a contextualized module aligned with regional industry demands. The resulting instructional design not only enhances technical writing skills but also prepares students for real-world professional communication, offering a replicable model for language educators in vocational and industrial settings.

2. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative experimental design with a 2x2 factorial structure to examine the main and interaction effects of an instructional model (Rotation Station vs. conventional method) and learning motivation (high vs. low) on students' job application letter writing skills. The research was conducted with Grade XII students at SMA Negeri 20 Batam during the 2024/2025 academic year. The sample consisted of 89 students: 47 in the experimental class and 42 in the control class. Purposive sampling was used to select intact classes based on comparable academic performance in prior Indonesian language assessments. Pre-test scores on writing proficiency were analyzed to confirm baseline equivalence between the two groups, with no statistically significant difference found ($p > 0.05$), supporting the validity of the comparative design.

Data were collected using two primary instruments: a learning motivation questionnaire and a performance-based writing test. The motivation questionnaire, adapted from established scales grounded in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), used a 5-point Likert scale to assess intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87 after pilot testing with a separate cohort. Responses were scored, summed, and ranked; students were then categorized into high and low motivation groups using the median split method (top 50% and bottom 50%).

The writing test required students to compose a complete job application letter based on a realistic job advertisement. Essays were assessed using an analytic scoring rubric aligned with curriculum standards and research indicators. The rubric evaluated five dimensions: (1) content completeness and relevance, (2) organizational structure, (3) diction and tone, (4) sentence grammar and mechanics, and (5) formatting and conventions. Each dimension was scored on a 5-point scale, with a maximum total score of 25. To ensure scoring reliability, all scripts were independently rated by two trained evaluators, and inter-rater reliability was confirmed with an intra-class correlation (ICC) of 0.89, indicating strong agreement.

Data collection followed a structured sequence: (1) administration of the motivation questionnaire, (2) pre-test writing task to identify baseline skills and learning needs, (3) implementation of the four-week instructional intervention—Rotation Station with scaffolding in the experimental class and conventional lecture-based instruction in the control class, and (4) post-intervention writing test. Collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26. Prior to hypothesis testing, normality was assessed using the Lilliefors test, and homogeneity of variances was tested using Bartlett's test, both confirming assumptions for parametric analysis ($p > 0.05$). Hypotheses

1, 2, and 3 were tested using two-way ANOVA to examine main and interaction effects. Student writing was scored using a rubric and interpreted using criterion-referenced standards aligned with curriculum benchmarks, allowing for the determination of mastery levels in job application letter writing.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed. Informed consent was obtained from students, parents, and school authorities. Participants were assured of confidentiality, the right to withdraw, and that their academic grades would not be affected by their involvement. The study adhered to ethical guidelines for educational research and was conducted with the approval of the school's academic committee.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

The calculation results of mean, data dispersion measures (standard deviation), and variance of students' job application letter writing skills are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Summary of Job Application Letter Writing Skills Scores for Grade XII Students at SMA Negeri 20 Batam

Analysis Results	Experimental Group	Control Group
Mean	85.64	78.27
Standard Deviation	8.93	12.19
Variance	79.7449	148.5961
Maximum Score	100	92.50
Minimum Score	67.50	30.00

Prior to hypothesis testing, prerequisite analysis tests were conducted, including tests for data normality and variance homogeneity. The normality test was performed to determine whether the score frequency distribution was normal, using the Lilliefors test with the criterion that if $L_0 < L_{\alpha}$, the data is normally distributed. Testing was conducted at a 5% (0.05) significance level.

Table 2. Summary of Data Normality Test Results

Sample Group	Sample Size	L-calculated	L-table	Conclusion
Experimental	47	0.095	0.129	Normal
Control	42	0.099	0.136	Normal

The variance homogeneity test was conducted to ensure that any differences found in the t-test truly resulted from between-group differences rather than within-group variations. This study used the F-test for variance homogeneity, with the criterion that if $F_{\text{calculated}} < F_{\text{table}}$, the samples are considered homogeneous. Testing was performed at a 0.05 significance level.

Table 3. Variance Homogeneity Test

Test of Homogeneity of Variances	Experimental	Control	Sig.	Conclusion
Levene Statistic	1	87	0.297	Homogeneous

Based on Table 3, the significance value was 0.297 at a 0.05 significance level. Thus, we conclude that since $\text{sig} > 0.05$, the job application letter writing skills data for both experimental and control groups are homogeneous.

3.1.1 Hypothesis Testing

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.690	.378		7.113	.000
Keterampilan Menulis Surat Lamaran Pekerjaan	-.037	.011	-.329	-3.249	.002

Figure 1. Result of Hypothesis Test 1

The results of the first hypothesis test revealed a significance value (Sig.) of 0.002, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, H_0 was rejected and H_1 was accepted, indicating a statistically significant difference in job application letter writing skills between students taught using the Rotation Station method and those taught using conventional instruction. The experimental group achieved a higher mean score (85.64) compared to the control group (78.27), with a difference of 7.37 points. This finding demonstrates that the Rotation Station method is more effective in enhancing students' writing performance than traditional teacher-centered approaches. The strength of Rotation Station lies in its structured, multi-station design, which includes activities such as analyzing authentic job application examples, drafting content, peer feedback, and simulation tasks. Rotation Station not only improves technical writing skills but also fosters deeper understanding and real-world application, making it highly suitable for functional writing instruction.

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.062	.482		8.427	.000
Motivasi Belajar Tinggi	-.078	.014	-.758	-5.458	.000

Figure 2. Result of Hypothesis Test 2

With a significance value of 0.000 at the 0.05 significance level (Sig < 0.05), Hypothesis 2 is accepted. These results demonstrate a statistically significant difference in writing skill achievement between high-motivation students taught through Rotation Station versus conventional methods in the same student population. Thus, H_0 was rejected and H_1 was accepted, confirming that high-motivation students taught with the Rotation Station method achieved significantly better writing outcomes than their counterparts in the conventional group. Students with high intrinsic motivation tend to be more proactive, reflective, and persistent in their learning. Within the Rotation Station framework, these students benefit from the autonomy and variety of tasks, allowing them to engage more deeply with each station and produce higher-quality work. As a result, Rotation Station acts as a catalyst for high-achieving students, transforming their internal drive into tangible academic success.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.211	.781		5.393	.000
Motivasi Belajar Rendah	-.083	.023	-.603	-3.546	.002

Figure 3. Result of Hypothesis Test 3

The statistical analysis shows a significance value of 0.002 (Sig < 0.05 at $\alpha = 0.05$), leading to the acceptance of Hypothesis 3. This indicates that even among students with low learning motivation, those taught using Rotation Station showed significantly better writing performance compared to those in the conventional group. This result is particularly significant from a pedagogical standpoint, as it shows that Rotation Station can overcome affective barriers such as disengagement or low self-efficacy. Unlike conventional methods, which often lead to passivity and boredom, Rotation Station provides dynamic, multimodal, and collaborative learning experiences. The rotation between stations, combined with immediate feedback and scaffolded tasks, creates a sense of accomplishment and gradual skill development. This approach aligns with principles of active and differentiated learning, demonstrating that all students—regardless of initial motivation—can improve when provided with appropriate support and engaging instructional design.

Table 4. Result of Hypothesis Test 4

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F ₀ (A)	F-table $\alpha=0.05$
Between A	309	1	309	25.75	4.07
Between B	0.52	1	0.52	0.04	4.07
Interaction AB		13.83	1	13.83	1.15 4.07
Within		520	43	12	
Total		843.35			No interaction

For Hypothesis 4, F-calculated = 1.15 while F-table = 4.07 at 0.05 significance level, meaning F-calculated < F-table, thus H₀ is accepted and H₁ is rejected. Therefore, we conclude that there is no interaction effect between teaching methods and learning motivation on job application letter writing skills of Grade XII students at SMA Negeri 20 Batam. This suggests that the effectiveness of the Rotation Station method is consistent across both high- and low-motivation groups. In other words, Rotation Station functions as an equalizer, lifting the performance of low-motivation students to levels comparable to—or even exceeding—those of high-motivation peers in conventional settings. While no statistical interaction was found, the practical implication is clear: a well-designed instructional model can reduce achievement gaps by providing equitable learning opportunities. The absence of interaction also implies that motivation does not amplify or diminish the method’s impact in this context, highlighting the primacy of instructional design over individual learner characteristics.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Rotation Station method significantly enhances students’ job application letter writing skills, outperforming conventional instruction regardless of

students' initial motivation levels. This outcome aligns with constructivist learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which posits that knowledge is actively constructed through social interaction, experiential engagement, and scaffolded practice. Unlike traditional, teacher-centered approaches that treat writing as a static product to be memorized, Rotation Station transforms it into a dynamic, process-oriented activity where students analyze models, draft content, receive peer feedback, and revise—mirroring real-world writing practices (Kumalasari & Pramono, 2024). The multi-station design fosters cognitive engagement, collaboration, and differentiated learning, allowing students to internalize genre conventions through active participation rather than passive reception (Durrari & Kamal, 2020).

The model's effectiveness is further explained through Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential drivers of intrinsic motivation. Rotation Station supports autonomy by allowing students to navigate tasks at their own pace and make choices within stations. It enhances competence through scaffolded activities—such as guided sentence construction or formatting practice—that build confidence incrementally. Meanwhile, relatedness is fostered through peer collaboration, group feedback, and shared problem-solving, creating a supportive learning community. These conditions not only improve writing outcomes but also cultivate a sense of ownership and relevance—particularly crucial for functional writing tasks like job applications, which directly connect to students' future careers (Aditiawarman et al., 2025; Ningsi & Ulya, 2025; Islami & Ulya, 2025; Gidion & Ulya, 2025).

Students with low learning motivation showed substantial gains, outperforming their peers in the control group. This suggests that Rotation Station acts as a motivational scaffold, compensating for low intrinsic drive through extrinsic engagement triggers—such as gamified tasks, peer interaction, and tangible outcomes. This finding resonates with Dweck's (2006) Growth Mindset Theory, which emphasizes that students' belief in their ability to improve through effort can be nurtured through structured, success-oriented experiences. The Rotation Station model provides such experiences by breaking down complex writing tasks into manageable, mastery-based challenges, thereby reinforcing students' self-efficacy.

The two-way ANOVA revealed no significant interaction between the instructional method and learning motivation. This indicates that the positive effect of Rotation Station is consistent across motivation levels, functioning as an equalizer rather than a multiplier for high-motivation learners. One possible explanation is that the strength of the instructional design—its structure, scaffolding, and active engagement—overpowers individual motivational differences. Alternatively, the absence of interaction may reflect limitations in measurement; the motivation questionnaire, while reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$), may not fully capture the dynamic, context-specific nature of motivation during writing tasks. Furthermore, the lack of qualitative data limits insight into students' lived experiences, perceptions of engagement, or the socio-emotional dynamics within stations—factors that could deepen understanding of how and why the model works (Aditiawarman et al., 2025; Alwi et al., 2025; Naini & Ulya, 2025; Ramadhan et al., 2025; Wulandari, 2025).

The single-school context also restricts the generalizability of findings. Cultural, institutional, and curricular differences across schools may influence how students respond to Rotation Station, particularly in non-industrial or rural settings. Future research should explore its effectiveness in diverse educational environments and with different writing genres. When compared to prior studies, these results both align with and extend existing literature. For instance, research on Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Think-Talk-Write (TTW) has shown that structured, collaborative models enhance writing performance by promoting critical thinking and peer scaffolding (Meilasari et al., 2020; Sari et al., 2022). Rotation Station shares these principles but adds a spatial and temporal differentiation—students physically rotate through stations, engaging with varied modalities (reading, writing,

discussing, presenting)—which may further enhance cognitive flexibility and retention. Unlike PBL, which often requires extended time, Rotation Station is more adaptable to standard class periods, making it a practical alternative for time-constrained curricula.

This study affirms Rotation Station as a robust, inclusive, and pedagogically sound model for teaching functional writing. It transcends motivational disparities by embedding engagement, autonomy, and real-world relevance into its design. While the lack of interaction effect warrants further investigation, the model's consistent effectiveness across learner profiles underscores its potential as a scalable strategy within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. Educators are encouraged to adopt and adapt this approach, particularly in vocational and career-oriented contexts where writing proficiency directly impacts students' life opportunities.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Rotation Station method is a highly effective and inclusive approach to teaching job application letter writing, outperforming conventional instruction across diverse learner profiles. Rather than functioning as a one-size-fits-all solution, its strength lies in its structured differentiation—by rotating students through learning stations focused on specific writing components (e.g., content development, diction, formatting, and peer feedback), the model provides tailored support that simultaneously enhances technical skills and fosters engagement. Notably, its effectiveness is consistent regardless of students' initial motivation levels, indicating that well-designed, active learning environments can compensate for affective barriers and promote equitable outcomes in writing performance.

The absence of a significant interaction between teaching method and motivation further underscores that instructional design can be a more powerful determinant of success than individual learner characteristics. This highlights the transformative potential of pedagogical innovation in vocational and secondary education, particularly within the framework of Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes student agency, contextual learning, and real-world readiness.

For classroom practice, teachers are encouraged to implement the Rotation Station model through structured learning centers that align with the stages of the writing process. For example, one station can focus on analyzing authentic job advertisements, another on drafting application content, a third on revising for tone and formality, and a fourth on peer review and digital submission simulation. This not only scaffolds skill development but also mirrors professional workflows, enhancing the authenticity and relevance of the learning experience.

Future studies should explore the long-term effects of Rotation Station on writing fluency and genre transfer, integrate qualitative data such as student interviews and classroom observations to deepen understanding of engagement dynamics, and examine its applicability across other forms of professional writing—such as CVs, cover emails, or business correspondence. Additionally, research could investigate the role of teacher facilitation and digital integration (e.g., using collaborative platforms within stations) in optimizing the model's impact. This study affirms Rotation Station as a scalable, student-centered strategy that bridges the gap between classroom instruction and real-world communication demands, offering a practical pathway for enhancing writing instruction in Indonesian language education.

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