

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Argumentative writing is a fundamental academic skill that requires students to express their stance on an issue, support it with logical reasoning and credible evidence, and critically address opposing views (Gaff & Birkenstein, 2018). An argument is a piece of writing that shows whether a statement is true. The author of the argumentative text uses a variety of strategies and rhetorical devices to convince the reader that the statement is true or untrue. The purpose of an argumentative writing is to present evidence in favor of or against a position, idea, or point of view, in García et al. (2020) and Latifi et al. (2020), argumentative writing ought to include evidence and explanations to convince readers of the value of the writer's points of view.

According to Tsemach and Zohar (2021) and Valero Haro et al. (2019), a strong scientific argumentative writing must also satisfy the following requirements: the claim must be backed up by arguments, logic, facts, or data, and if required, the opposing viewpoint must be presented to bolster the author's position. It takes a strong argumentative strategy to write argumentative writings. In their writing, students frequently neglect to employ this persuasive technique. Students' inability to write argumentative writings can be attributed to a number of factors, such as the fact that many still lack a thorough understanding of the qualities of an effective argumentative writing, struggle to apply them because they haven't practiced, or are unaware of the characteristics of an argumentative writing (Meyer, 2005; Noroozi et al., 2020). However, many students, particularly

in vocational schools, face challenges in constructing well-structured argumentative writings. These challenges include a limited understanding of argument structure, lack of critical thinking skills, and low motivation to engage in writing activities (Guo, Gu, & Jin, 2021; Noroozi et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2022).

Moreover, traditional writing instruction often reliant on lecture-based or textbook approaches frequently fails to foster student engagement or provide meaningful practice opportunities. In the context of 21st-century learning, such conventional methods are insufficient to meet the learning styles of Generation Z students, who are digital natives and more responsive to interactive, technology-driven approaches (Mohamad et al., 2020; Zhang & Yu, 2021).

One innovative strategy to address these issues is digital gamification. Gamification affects to the use of game features include points, badges, levels, and leaderboards in non-game contexts to enhance user engagement and motivation (Dicheva et al., 2015; Baptista & Oliveira, 2018). In education, gamification has been found to enhance students' interest, foster collaboration, and enhance learning outcomes as well (Kazu & Kuvvetli, 2023; Zainuddin et al., 2020). However, its application in the context of writing instruction, particularly argumentative writing, remains underexplored (Guo et al., 2023).

However, many studies have examined the effects of gamification in language learning and writing skills in general, several gaps can be identified:

- a. Lack of research that focuses on vocational school students, who have different characteristics and learning needs from students at the general level.

- b. The lack of exploration on the implementation of digital gamification that is systematically integrated in the learning process of argumentative writing, starting from the idea development phase, writing, to peer evaluation.
- c. Limited data regarding students' perceptions, motivations, and challenges in using gamification platforms specifically for argumentative writing in formal learning environments.

This study, therefore, aims to investigate how digital gamification can be effectively used to improve argumentative writing skills among vocational school students. By integrating technology through gamification platforms such as Quizizz and several others. This present research has a purpose to create an engaging supportive, and interesting learning environment to support students' writing enhancement. This research is especially important in vocational school settings, where students often need innovative approaches to cultivate language skills that are critical for academic success and professional readiness.

## **1.2 Research Problems of the Study**

After writing a background about this research that will be studied, the researcher has compiled several questions related to the problem of study:

1. How does digital gamification affect students' argumentative writing ability?
2. What are students' perceptions and challenges in using digital gamification for argumentative writing instruction?

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the study's problems, the research objectives are:

1. To examine the effectiveness of gamification platforms in enhancing argumentative writing.
2. To discover students' perceptions and experiences of using gamification in writing instruction.

### 1.4 The Scope of the Study

This research focuses on examining the implementation and impact of digital gamification on the argumentative writing skills of eleventh-grade accounting students at Yayasan Perguruan Sultan Iskandar Muda, Medan. The participants, consisting of approximately 60 students, are divided into experimental and control group that receives instruction through a gamified learning platform, *Quizizz*, *Kahoot!*, and a control group that learns through conventional, text-based methods and classroom discussions. The gamified learning process is structured into individual proposal drafting, and peer review for critical feedback. Writing tasks center on accounting-related topics, providing contextual relevance to affect students effectively. The intervention was conducted over a two-week period, allowing adequate time for students to complete all phases of the gamification-based activities. Data collection involves both quantitative measures, such as pre-test and post-test writing assessments, students' ability surveys, and in-game performance metrics, as well as qualitative data from open-ended questionnaire responses analyzed thematically. While this study aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of digital gamification in improving students' argumentative writing skills within a vocational education setting, its findings are limited to the specific

context of one vocational school and subject area, and therefore, should be generalized with caution to other settings or disciplines.

### **1.5 The Significances of the Study**

The result of this research is significant theoretically and practically, for both students and teachers. This research provides whether digital gamification can enhance the students' achievement in writing, especially Argumentative. For students, this study may be used to enhance their achievement in writing.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the enhancement body of knowledge on gamification in educational settings, especially in the context of vocational education. It aims to deepen the understanding of how gamification strategies influence students' academic skills, particularly in writing argumentative writings. By integrating theories of gamification with pedagogical frameworks, the research provides insights into the mechanisms through which gamified learning environments enhance cognitive engagement and learning outcomes. This study not only reinforces existing theories but also offers new perspectives that can inform future theoretical developments in educational technology and language learning.

Practically, the findings of this study are beneficial for multiple stakeholders. For researchers, it provides empirical data and a comprehensive analysis of how gamification can be applied effectively in English writing instruction, offering a basis for further investigations and methodological advancements. For teachers, the study presents practical tools and strategies for integrating gamification into classroom activities, especially in writing lessons, helping them address diverse student needs and improve instructional quality. For students, gamified learning environments offer increased motivation, active participation, and the development

of essential skills like critical thinking and collaboration. Additionally, for curriculum developers and other educational practitioners, the research offers valuable references and data sources for designing effective teaching models that support the improvement of students' argumentative writing skills in vocational schools.

