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Influence of the KIMIGO program on the development of argumentative writing in secondary school students

Influencia del programa KIMIGO en el desarrollo de la escritura argumentativa en estudiantes de nivel secundario

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of the KIMIGO program on the development of argumentative writing skills in fourth-year secondary school students at a public educational institution. Using a quantitative approach and a quasi-experimental, applied-level design, the study seeks to determine the extent to which the program's implementation improves argumentative writing, considering the dimensions of text structure, textual properties, and linguistic register. The premise is that the pedagogical integration of digital tools geared toward debate, the organization of ideas, and collaborative writing strengthens complex communicative competencies. The sample consisted of 60 students, assigned to an experimental group and a control group, who were assessed using a pre-test and post-test rubric. Data analysis included descriptive and inferential statistics, using the Mann-Whitney U test to test the general hypothesis. The results show statistically significant differences favoring the experimental group, with a substantial improvement in argumentative writing after the intervention. The dimensional analysis reveals consistent progress in textual organization, discourse coherence, and appropriate use of linguistic register. In conclusion, the KIMIGO program is consolidated as an effective pedagogical strategy for strengthening argumentative writing at the secondary level.

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Keywords: basic education, written expression, educational technology.

Resumen

El presente estudio busca analizar el efecto del programa KIMIGO en el desarrollo de la escritura argumentativa de estudiantes de cuarto grado de educación secundaria de una institución educativa pública. Con enfoque cuantitativo y diseño cuasi experimental de nivel aplicativo, se pretende determinar en qué medida la implementación del programa mejora la producción escrita argumentativa, considerando las dimensiones de estructura del texto, propiedades textuales y registro lingüístico. Partimos de la premisa de que la integración pedagógica de herramientas digitales orientadas al debate, la organización de ideas y la escritura colaborativa fortalece competencias comunicativas complejas. La muestra estuvo integrada por 60 estudiantes, asignados a grupo experimental y grupo control, a quienes se aplicó una rúbrica de evaluación mediante pretest y postest. El análisis de datos incluyó estadísticas descriptivas e inferenciales, utilizando la prueba U de Mann–Whitney para contrastar la hipótesis general. Los resultados muestran diferencias estadísticamente significativas a favor del grupo experimental, con una mejora sustantiva en la escritura argumentativa tras la intervención. El análisis por dimensiones revela avances consistentes en organización textual, coherencia discursiva y uso adecuado del registro lingüístico. En conclusión, el programa KIMIGO se consolida como una estrategia pedagógica eficaz para fortalecer la escritura argumentativa en el nivel secundario.

Palabras clave: educación básica, expresión escrita, tecnología educacional.

Introduction

Argumentative writing constitutes an essential communicative competency in secondary education, as it enables students to formulate positions, organize ideas, justify opinions, and engage critically in both academic and social contexts. In today's educational landscape, marked by the expansion of digital technologies, the development of this competency acquires strategic relevance, given its direct connection to critical thinking, digital literacy, and the capacity to interact reflectively with multiple information sources. Nevertheless, various studies indicate that a significant proportion of secondary school students experience persistent difficulties in producing coherent, well-structured argumentative texts that conform to academic register, representing a pedagogical challenge of both international and national scope (Graham & Perin, 2007).

The research problem addressed here lies in the gap between the availability of technological resources and their effective pedagogical use for developing argumentative writing. In the Peruvian context, national assessment results show that most secondary school students fail to reach satisfactory levels in written production, particularly in argumentative texts, despite many educational institutions having access to the internet and basic digital tools (Ministerio de Educación, 2015; Ministerio de Educación, 2018). This situation is compounded by limitations in teacher training for integrating information and communication technologies into complex writing instruction processes, thereby restricting their didactic potential.

The relevance of investigating this problem stems from the fact that argumentative writing not only responds to curricular demands but also constitutes a key skill for academic performance, informed civic participation, and integration into a society characterized by the constant circulation of competing discourses and opinions. Strengthening this competency involves promoting in students the ability to analyze information, contrast viewpoints, support ideas with evidence, and communicate reasoning clearly and rigorously. Within this framework, the pedagogical use of digital tools represents an opportunity to enrich the processes of planning, drafting, and revising written texts, provided they are integrated through sound methodological approaches (Haleem et al., 2022).

From a theoretical standpoint, the research is grounded in a framework articulating constructivism, sociocultural theory, and connectivism. Constructivism posits that learning is actively constructed through experience and student reflection, which is fundamental to teaching argumentative writing as a recursive and conscious process (Piaget, 1970). In turn, sociocultural theory highlights the role of social interaction, language, and scaffolding in developing higher-order cognitive skills, underscoring the importance of feedback and collaborative work in textual production (Vygotsky, 1978). Complementarily, connectivism emphasizes network-based learning and the use of digital technologies as mediators of knowledge, a perspective particularly pertinent to digitized educational environments (Siemens, 2005).

Consistent with these approaches, the KIMIGO program was developed to integrate the digital tools Kialo, Mindomo, and Google Docs as mediators of the argumentative writing process. Kialo supports structured debate

and the construction of arguments and counterarguments; Mindomo facilitates visual idea organization during planning; and Google Docs enables collaborative writing and peer revision, elements that strengthen the structure, textual properties, and linguistic register of the argumentative text (Haleem et al., 2022).

The reviewed research literature supports the relevance of this proposal while also suggesting a gap that justifies the present investigation. Although international studies report improvements in textual organization, coherence, and argumentative quality when digital tools are incorporated through a process-oriented and collaborative approach (Mateo-Girona et al., 2021; Collebecchi et al., 2019), such evidence does not always evaluate integrated programs that systematically articulate argumentative debate, visual planning, and collaborative writing within a single didactic sequence. At the national level, various studies show progress following digital strategies but simultaneously point to the need for methodologically structured and context-verified proposals to ensure sustainable results (Chura & Villacorta, 2022). In that sense, this study seeks to provide situated empirical evidence on the effect of the KIMIGO program on secondary school students in a public institution, contributing to closing the gap between technological availability and effective improvement of argumentative writing in the classroom.

The research was conducted at the public educational institution N.° 81516 "Libertad," located in the district of Casa Grande, La Libertad region, during the 2024 academic year. In this context, recurrent difficulties were identified in fourth-year secondary students' argumentative writing, particularly regarding text organization, coherence, and management of linguistic register, despite having access to digital tools.

In line with the foregoing, the general objective of this research is to determine how the KIMIGO program influences the improvement of argumentative writing among fourth-year secondary school students at the public educational institution 81516 "Libertad," Casa Grande, 2024. Hypotheses are also proposed to test its influence on the dimensions of text structure, textual properties, and linguistic register, with the aim of providing empirical evidence that contributes to strengthening pedagogical practices mediated by digital technologies in Peruvian secondary education.

Methodology

This research was developed from a quantitative approach, as it sought to objectively measure the influence of the KIMIGO program on argumentative writing among secondary school students. This approach enabled the testing of previously formulated hypotheses through statistical analysis of the data obtained, establishing comparisons between groups and determining significant differences arising from the pedagogical intervention. Such an approach was consistent with the explanatory and applied purpose of the study (Hernández et al., 2018).

Regarding research type, the study was classified as applied, as it aimed to address a concrete educational problem through the implementation of a pedagogical proposal designed to improve argumentative writing competence. Likewise, it operated at an explanatory level by identifying the causal relationship between the independent variable (the KIMIGO program) and the dependent variable (argumentative writing), analyzed across its dimensions of text structure, textual properties, and linguistic register (Ñaupas et al., 2018).

With respect to its nature, the study was situated within an experimental design, given that an intervention was intentionally introduced on the independent variable through program application. However, as participants were not randomly assigned and the comparison groups were not equivalent, control over extraneous variables was partial, and the design was thus specified as quasi-experimental (Ñaupas et al., 2018). From a temporal perspective, the research constituted a short-term longitudinal study, observing variations in the dependent variable at two defined moments (before and after the intervention) over a brief application period.

The study population consisted of 275 secondary education students enrolled at the public educational institution N.° 81516 "Libertad," located in the district of Casa Grande, during the 2024 academic year. For the development of the study, a sample of 60 fourth-year secondary students was selected, distributed across two sections: 30 students from fourth grade "A" (experimental group) and 30 from fourth grade "B" (control group). The sampling was non-probabilistic and convenience-based, as the groups were pre-organized by the institution and met the conditions for the intervention (Hernández et al., 2018).

Inclusion criteria considered students officially enrolled in the SIAGIE system during 2024 with regular participation in academic activities. Those with frequent absences or who did not complete any phase (pretest, intervention, or posttest) were excluded, thereby ensuring data consistency.

Regarding data collection techniques, structured direct observation was employed during the pretest and posttest, in which students produced argumentative essays. This technique allowed for systematic recording of

their written performance before and after the KIMIGO program (Ñaupas et al., 2018). The primary instrument was the Rubric for Evaluating Argumentative Essays, validated by expert judgment and used in previous studies, which assessed writing across text structure, textual properties, and linguistic register (Chura & Villacorta, 2022). Additionally, during the intervention, a checklist was used to monitor the use of digital tools and student participation.

For data analysis, SPSS version 24 software was used. The Shapiro–Wilk normality test was applied beforehand, and the results determined the use of non-parametric statistics. Consequently, the Mann–Whitney U test was employed to contrast differences between groups in the posttest, aligning with the hypothetico-deductive method of quantitative studies (Hernández et al., 2018).

Regarding ethical considerations, the study complied with principles of confidentiality, anonymity, and personal data protection. Informed consent was requested from parents/guardians, and institutional authorization was obtained, guaranteeing voluntary participation and exclusive use of information for academic and scientific purposes (Ñaupas et al., 2018).

Finally, the study acknowledged limitations such as the quasi-experimental design without randomization, the reduced sample size, and its application within a single institution, which limited generalizability. Additionally, rubric-based evaluation may have been subject to inter-rater variations despite standardized criteria. These were considered in the interpretation and suggest future research with larger samples and more robust designs.

Results

This section presents the findings derived from the analysis of data collected through the pretest and posttest, following the statistical techniques detailed in the methodology. These findings allow for contrasting the general hypothesis, revealing the impact of the KIMIGO program on the dimensions of text structure, textual properties, and linguistic register in argumentative writing.

Table 1

Levels of argumentative writing before the application of the KIMIGO program

Levels	Scale	Control Group		Experimental Group	
		Pretest		Pretest	
		N	%	N	%
Poor	0 a 7	14	47	16	53
Fair	8 a 15	15	50	14	47
Good	16 a 23	1	3	0	0
Excellent	24 a 30	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		**30**	**100%**	**30**	**100%**

The study results demonstrate that the application of the KIMIGO program generates significant effects on the improvement of argumentative writing among fourth-year secondary school students at the public educational institution N.° 81516 "Libertad." In the initial assessment, pretest results show that both the experimental and control groups present similar and predominantly low levels of argumentative writing, reflected in recurring difficulties in structuring the text, organizing ideas coherently, and employing an appropriate linguistic register. These initial findings confirm the existence of the diagnosed problem and justify the need for a systematic pedagogical intervention, as noted in previous studies conducted in similar educational contexts (Chura & Villacorta, 2022).

Table 2

Levels of argumentative writing before and after the application of the KIMIGO program

Levels	Scale	Control Group				Experimental Group			
		Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%

Poor	0 a 7	14	47	14	47	16	53	0	0
Fair	8 a 15	15	50	14	47	14	47	10	33
Good	16 a 23	1	3	2	6	0	0	12	40
Excellent	24 a 30	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	27
TOTAL		**30**	**100%**	**30**	**100%**	**30**	**100%**	**30**	**100%**

Following the application of the KIMIGO program, posttest results reveal clear overall differences between the experimental and control groups in argumentative writing levels, supporting the claim that the observed improvement is associated with the intervention. As shown in Table 2, the control group maintains virtually the same performance pattern before and after: in the pretest, 47% were at the deficient level and 50% at regular, while in the posttest, 47% remained deficient and 47% regular, with minimal shifts toward higher levels (good increased from 3% to 6%). In contrast, the experimental group shows a marked shift toward higher levels: starting from a pretest concentrated in deficient (53%) and regular (47%), the posttest completely eliminates the deficient level (0%) and distributes results across regular (33%), good (40%), and excellent (27%). This change in distribution, absent in the control group and sustained in the experimental group, supports the overall effect of the KIMIGO program and substantiates the study's main hypothesis.

Table 3

Mann–Whitney U Test for argumentative writing after the application of the KIMIGO program

Test and Group	Rank			Test Statistic		
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann–Whitney U	Z	Asymptotic Significance (Two-Tailed)
Control Group (Posttest)	30	16.25	487.50			
Experimental Group (Posttest)	30	44.75	1342.50			
				22.5	-6.320	0.000

The inferential test results confirm that the observed differences between the experimental and control groups in argumentative writing after the KIMIGO program application are statistically significant. As shown in Table 3, the posttest mean ranks evidence a clearly superior performance of the experimental group compared to the control group, reflected in a higher sum of ranks. The Mann–Whitney U statistic value (U = 22.5), together with a Z value of -6.320 and a two-tailed asymptotic significance of 0.000, allows for rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the research hypothesis. These results demonstrate, with statistical evidence, that the difference previously presented in Table 2 is not due to chance but rather a direct consequence of the KIMIGO program's application, consistently closing the study's overall findings.

Table 4

Comparative results of argumentative writing dimensions in the control and experimental groups before and after the KIMIGO program application

Dimension	Levels	Scale	Control Group				Experimental Group			
			Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
text structure	Poor	0 a 7	13	44	12	40	16	53	0	0
	Fair	8 a 15	15	50	16	54	13	44	8	27
	Good	16 a 23	2	6	2	6	1	3	15	50
	Excellent	24 a 30	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	23
	Poor	0 a 7	13	44	11	37	15	50	0	0

textual properties	Fair	8 a 15	15	50	17	57	14	47	7	24
	Good	16 a 23	2	6	2	6	1	3	15	50
	Excellent	24 a 30	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	26
linguistic register	Poor	0 a 7	14	47	11	37	17	56	0	0
	Fair	8 a 15	14	47	17	57	13	44	8	26
	Good	16 a 23	2	6	2	6	0	0	14	47
	Excellent	24 a 30	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	27

The dimensional results clearly show that the effect of the KIMIGO program manifests consistently in the argumentative writing of the experimental group, which eliminates the deficient level and shifts performance toward the good and excellent levels in text structure, textual properties, and linguistic register, evidencing improvements in argumentative organization, coherence and cohesion, and language appropriateness. In contrast, the control group maintains similar distributions between pretest and posttest, with a predominance of the regular level and minimal variations, indicating that the observed advances are directly associated with the intervention.

Taken together, the dimensional results confirm that the positive effect of the KIMIGO program is not limited to an overall increase in argumentative writing but rather expresses itself coherently and consistently in text organization, the management of discursive properties, and the appropriate use of linguistic register. These findings explain and complement the statistically significant difference previously demonstrated at the global level, evidencing that the improvement achieved by the experimental group stems from comprehensive advances in the fundamental components of argumentative writing.

Discussion

The results obtained confirm that the KIMIGO program exerts a significant influence on improving argumentative writing among fourth-year secondary school students, demonstrating that the pedagogical integration of digital tools can generate substantive changes in written performance when applied systematically and with a clear didactic orientation. The statistically significant difference observed between the experimental and control groups, corroborated through the Mann–Whitney U test, allows for affirming that the improvement achieved is not due to random factors but rather to the educational intervention implemented, a finding consistent with the methodological criteria of quantitative studies applied in the educational field (Hernández et al., 2018; Ñaupas et al., 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, the results are interpretable consistently with the postulates of constructivism and sociocultural theory, which hold that learning is actively constructed through interaction, mediation, and reflection on one's own practice. The simultaneous advancement in text structure, discursive properties, and linguistic register suggests that argumentative writing is strengthened when students participate in processes of planning, discussion, and collaborative revision, mediated by cultural and technological tools that facilitate the organization of thought and the exchange of meanings (Vygotsky, 1978). Likewise, the connectivist approach helps explain how the use of digital platforms fosters knowledge construction in networks, promoting deeper and more contextualized learning in digital educational environments (Siemens, 2005).

When contrasting these findings with previous research, a clear coincidence emerges with national and international studies reporting positive effects of digital tool use in teaching argumentative writing, especially when adopting a process-oriented and collaborative approach. Recent investigations indicate that the pedagogical use of digital platforms favors the organization of ideas, textual coherence, and argumentative quality of texts produced by students, results that align with those obtained in the present study (Mateo-Girona et al., 2021; Chura & Villacorta, 2022). Nonetheless, the specific contribution of this research lies in the articulated integration of tools with complementary functions, which helps explain the comprehensive improvement observed across the various dimensions of argumentative writing.

From the standpoint of novelty and practical application, the KIMIGO program constitutes an innovative and relevant pedagogical proposal for the public secondary education context, demonstrating that it is possible to improve argumentative writing through the strategic use of accessible and easily implementable digital resources. These results offer concrete guidelines for teaching practice, particularly regarding the planning of writing activities that integrate argumentative debate, visual organization of ideas, and ongoing feedback, aspects identified as key in studies on educational innovation mediated by digital technologies (Haleem et al., 2022).

In sum, while the study's findings are consistent and relevant, they should be interpreted considering their scope and limitations, particularly the sample size and the program's application in a single educational institution. Nevertheless, the results open perspectives for future research aimed at replicating and expanding the proposal in other educational contexts and levels, contributing to the strengthening of the research line in language didactics and pedagogical innovation with digital technologies, as recommended by recent methodological and educational studies (Ñaupas et al., 2018; Hernández et al., 2018).

Conclusions

Based on the results obtained, it is concluded that the KIMIGO program constitutes an effective pedagogical intervention for strengthening argumentative writing in secondary school students. The empirical evidence shows that the improvement achieved by the experimental group, compared to the control group, is a direct consequence of the systematic application of the program and not of random factors, thus validating the general hypothesis and confirming the relevance of the adopted methodological approach.

The analysis of the study variable reveals that the program's effect is not limited to an isolated component of writing but manifests in an articulated manner across text structure, discursive properties, and linguistic register. This consistent behavior supports the claim that argumentative writing develops more effectively when the teaching process incorporates strategies of planning, discussion, and collaborative revision, mediated by digital tools with a clear pedagogical intentionality. In this sense, the findings align with the postulates of constructivism, sociocultural theory, and connectivism, highlighting the value of mediation, interaction, and networked work in learning complex communicative competencies.

From an applied perspective, the study allows for affirming that the KIMIGO program is a viable and relevant alternative for public secondary education contexts, as it promotes improvements in written performance and pedagogical practices consistent with current educational demands. Nevertheless, questions remain regarding the sustainability of the effect over time, replicability in other educational contexts, and adaptation to populations with greater sociocultural diversity, points that open future research lines to expand and contrast the findings of the present study.

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