

Brands on Play: Harnessing the Power of Gamification for Success

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Abstract

In recent years, gamification has emerged as a compelling strategy within the realm of marketing, captivating the attention of researchers and practitioners alike. This abstract highlights the key findings and insights from existing literature, shedding light on the multifaceted benefits of integrating gaming mechanisms into marketing endeavors.

The research landscape in gamification predominantly accentuates its pivotal role in branding strategies. Numerous studies have unequivocally showcased the positive relationship between gamification and various brand-related outcomes. Notably, gamification has been linked to heightened brand loyalty, as customers engaged in gamified experiences tend to exhibit increased attachment and commitment to brands. Moreover, an emerging body of evidence suggests that gamification holds the potential to evoke profound brand affection, often referred to as “brand love.” This emotional connection transcends conventional brand-customer relationships and engenders a fervent devotion to the brand. Such brand love can translate into advocacy, long-term customer relationships, and enhanced word-of-mouth marketing.

Furthermore, the application of game dynamics in marketing has proven to be a catalyst for not only customer loyalty but also increased sales. By infusing elements of play, competition, and reward into marketing campaigns, businesses can captivate their audience, sustain their interest, and drive purchase behavior. The allure of gamification lies in its ability to transform mundane brand interactions into engaging and memorable experiences, ultimately fostering stronger customer relationships and positively impacting the bottom line.

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In conclusion, gamification in marketing is a dynamic and versatile tool with far-reaching implications for brand management. The gamified approach extends beyond mere customer retention, encompassing brand loyalty and love, while simultaneously driving sales growth. To thrive in the evolving marketing landscape, businesses should recognize the potential of gamification as a strategic asset to elevate their brand and foster enduring customer loyalty.

Introduction

In response to the market pressure and growing competition, the companies are forced to look for new ways and methods to attract the attention of consumers and engage them in activities that build a long-term relationship with the company. Surrounded by new and rapidly evolving technologies, companies are under pressure to adopt marketing tools that can attract and engage consumers who are increasingly selective and mindful of how they spend their time and money. Creating experiences, especially when these experiences need to be transformed into a digital context with an appropriate shopping atmosphere, is a challenging issue and a relevant success factor for all companies. In the last decade, many popular concepts, such as big data, predictive analytics, virtual and augmented reality, were introduced. One of the latest promising concepts enabling consumer engagement and the development of long-term relations is gamification.

Gamification involves incorporating elements of games into non-gaming contexts, as defined by Deterding et al. (2011). Some scholars define gamification as a set of design principles, processes, and systems that can be used to influence, involve, motivate, guide behavior, or create desired effects on individuals, groups, and communities. Dynamics, game techniques, and game-style rewards were initially transferred from gaming software to business contexts with the aim of increasing customer engagement. Therefore, gamification refers to the development of applications with game features and has rapidly become a trend in non-game contexts, especially in marketing.

Companies have adopted gamification across various areas, including user engagement, motivation, consumer and employee education, innovation management, and personal development, as noted by Gartner in 2012. Previous research has shown that gamification effectively enhances consumers' intrinsic motivation (Domínguez et al., 2013), boosts participation rates (Witt et al., 2011; Von Ahn and Dabbish, 2008), and improves overall consumer experiences (Flatla et al., 2011; Gnauk et al., 2012). These advantages are valuable to businesses because they lead to increased consumer engagement, characterized by more frequent and longer

interactions. Such interactions lay the foundation for establishing enduring relationships between consumers and companies. As a result, gamification tools can be used to create content, drive conversions, and increase loyalty on e-commerce websites (Milanesi et al., 2022).

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between gamification applications in brands and marketing objectives. Gamification plays a significant role in the world of marketing, and this study aims to understand how this phenomenon contributes to brand management and marketing objectives. The research seeks to examine how gamification positively affects various brand-related factors, such as consumer engagement, brand loyalty, and brand love. Additionally, it will focus on the ability of game dynamics to enhance customer loyalty and sales increase in a marketing context. This study aims to provide valuable insights to marketing professionals and brand managers on how gamification can be used as a strategic tool.

In this study, applications and strategies undertaken by brands within the scope of the gamification concept have been examined. The study encompasses an interpretation of the literature review findings, concluding with results and recommendations.

1. Theoretical Background

1.1 Game Concept

The concept of games can be described as the activities that involve the participation of individuals, are delimited by specific rules and regulations, require competition, and express clear objectives (Juul, 2005). Game is a concept that supports the development of individuals from birth to the end of life, prepares them for life, and influences their mental states. Playing games with each other allows individuals to establish a certain closeness. The personal and social impact of games, their ability to dissipate excess energy, and their contribution to relaxation should not be overlooked (Hunicke, LeBlanc and Zubek, 2004). Throughout history, many researchers have evaluated the influence of games on humanity by examining games. Plato, in a philosophical sense, stated that games were an important tool for relinquishing control of the body and forming a society (Akillıbaş and Ceylan, 2020). Freud said that children create games primarily to overcome unconscious fears. Another researcher has stated that people's thoughts, behaviors, and attitudes are shaped by games (Saltuk and Erciyes, 2020). With globalization and the advancement of technology, many games have become digital today, and it is observed that video game culture has become a strong and growing phenomenon (Akillıbaş and Ceylan, 2020).

1.2 Development of Gaming Culture

Throughout history, sports have been a significant part of all cultures as one of the oldest forms of social interaction. Sports are one of the most tightly linked cultural heritages to the societal structure. Ancient games like the Mesoamerican ballgame and the ancient Egyptian cenote game reflected religious and spiritual elements. Games that emerged in England, such as “The Mansion of Happiness,” which often relied on Christian ethics, and games like “Snakes and Ladders” published in India, had didactic qualities focusing on moral and spiritual themes. Games like “Shatranj” and “Go Around Central Asia” cultivated skills like strategic thinking (Berber, 2019).

The foundation of many sports encountered in daily life today dates back to ancient times, and the culture of sports has evolved with technological changes. Sports markets have developed and transformed in line with technological and socio-economic changes. Nowadays, digital games have started to replace games played in the streets and neighborhoods, and as gaming environments and styles change, so do the players. With the advancement of computer and internet technologies, the use of personal computers or phones has become more widespread, increasing people’s demand for sports in the digital realm. Today, digital games are among the preferred digital activities for people of all ages, but mostly for younger generations like Generation Z (Akılıbaş and Ceylan, 2020). However, the digitization of games has raised concerns among parents about children becoming disconnected from the real world (Balıkcı, 2018).

In today’s world, digital games are frequently preferred by individuals, especially for entertainment purposes. Additionally, digital games are chosen as part of essential needs, such as spending time with friends or taking a break from daily life. With the continuous increase in the use of digital technologies, the frequency of playing digital games and the time spent on them have also been steadily rising. The increasing amount of time people devote to playing digital games every day has created an important strategic field, particularly for marketers, leading to a greater emphasis on digital game strategies (Korkmaz, 2019).

1.3 Gamification

The central theme of gamification involves the presence of a robust infrastructure that creates a sense of flow, conveys a specific narrative meaning in the minds of players, and is supported by consistent graphic experiences. Player interaction is highly crucial for the gaming experience. In doing so, individuals seek a form of communication with their friends, team

members, and even competitors. Therefore, a properly gamified system is expected to motivate users to build relationships efficiently. Psychology and technology emerge as two significant areas used in the gamification process. Hence, the utilization of these elements enhances participation in learning and user experience (Baptista and Oliveira, 2017).

While the concept of gamification has been in the air for quite some time, it's still relatively new in practice. There's a notable absence of structured methods for categorizing game elements. The most promising framework is the gamification pyramid approach, as put forth by Werbach and Hunter in 2012. Although there is no unified approach to classify the game elements, most of the researchers agree with the gamification pyramid approach proposed by Werbach and Hunter (2012). This approach organizes game elements into three key categories: game components, game mechanics, and game dynamics.

In essence, gamification can be described as the utilization of elements typically found in games, such as game mechanics, game dynamics, and game components, in situations unrelated to actual games and everyday contexts. It's increasingly being adopted in the business realm, both for engaging with internal and external customers and for promoting behavior change.

According to Wu (2011), game components essentially serve as the bridge between the game and the players. Their primary purpose is to enhance the overall experience by making activities more engaging, enjoyable, and inclusive. These components are strategically designed to encourage specific behaviors from consumers and cater to users' needs. It's important to note that game components are intimately intertwined with both game mechanics and game dynamics, working in harmony to create a compelling and fulfilling user experience. Game mechanics are defined as a control mechanism that performs fun activities, such as various games, level access, rewards, virtual gifts, leaders, and products. Game dynamics, on the other hand, refer to stimuli that include personality, achievements, rankings, rewards, sacrifices, and competition. In this context, gamification is defined as the use of game design techniques and game mechanics to enhance skills, design behavior, or encourage individuals to innovate in unfamiliar contexts (Baptista and Oliveira, 2017).

1.3.1 Game Mechanics

As described by Werbach and Hunter (2012), game mechanics are the fundamental mechanisms that motivate users to actively participate in the content and keep them engaged in moving the action forward. These

mechanics are essentially like a reward system, encompassing elements such as points, awards, scoreboards, badges, levels, virtual goods, and more. While game mechanics can be straightforward and expected, their critical role lies in steering consumer behavior in alignment with the company's objectives, ensuring that the actions taken by users lead to specific goals.

It's worth noting that there exists a diverse array of game mechanics, and game development companies are constantly innovating and creating new ones. In essence, these mechanics are the gears that power the interactive and goal-oriented aspects of gamified experiences, making them central to achieving desired outcomes.

Game mechanics refer to how the rules and procedures in a game lead to achieving player objectives and how players are rewarded. The mechanics of each game provide feedback that makes the game's outcomes understandable. Within the game framework, feedback is generated through this mechanism, and it is argued that the true power of the game only emerges when users are compelled to make meaningful decisions on challenging goals. It has been stated that the key element of effective game design is to create a clear connection between the player's actions and the outcome of the game in the form of a meaningful experience. Players are motivated by the reward system. With these reward systems, players develop loyalty and showcase their social status (Shen, Fishbach and Hsee, 2015).

In the field of gamification applications, various mechanics exist to engage players and create consistency within the game. Points, badges, leaderboards, progression, status, ranks, rewards, and roles encourage players to continue playing (Seaborn and Fels, 2015).

Essentially, any element that emerges about how the game operates can be referred as a mechanic (Nielson, 2019). In the field of game mechanics, players are required to complete tasks and earn various achievements in the realm of accomplishments. The player's desire for success ensures the continuity of the game.

Game mechanics have their limitations in terms of catering to the diverse preferences and motivations of consumers. People are unique, and what motivates one individual may not work for another. Certain game mechanics might effectively engage one group of consumers but fail to resonate with another group, possibly even alienating them. Additionally, consumers can become disinterested when exposed to the same routine and repetitive actions.

In such situations, game dynamics come into play. They serve as a catalyst for encouraging consumers to pursue additional objectives by amplifying their emotions and feelings. Essentially, game dynamics inject freshness and excitement into the user experience, motivating individuals to stay engaged and explore new aspects of the gamified activity.

1.3.2 Game Dynamics

At the top of the hierarchical structure at Gamification Pyramid (Werbach and Hunter, 2012) game dynamics stand as the concept that needs to be emphasized and managed. According to Werbach and Hunter (2012), game dynamics are the overarching and fundamental elements within a gamified system. Positioned at the apex of the gamification pyramid, they play a pivotal role in enhancing the user experience, emotions, and feelings when a goal or a specific level is achieved. These dynamics are critical components that have a profound impact on the overall engagement and satisfaction of users.

The authors highlight several key game dynamics as particularly significant:

- **Constraints:** These involve certain limitations or enforced restrictions within the game.
- **Emotions:** These encompass a range of feelings such as curiosity, competitiveness, frustration, and happiness.
- **Narrative:** It involves maintaining a consistent and continuous storyline throughout the gamified experience.
- **Progression:** This relates to the growth and improvement of the user as they progress through the game.
- **Relationships:** Social interactions within the game that foster feelings of friendship, status, and altruism.

In the field of gamification strategies, particularly by marketers, it is crucial to accurately define game dynamics (Blohm and Leimeister, 2013). However, Werbach and Hunter (2012) caution against integrating these game dynamics in a way that makes them too easily understandable for the player. This is because when game dynamics are overly transparent, they can lead to short-term engagement in the gamified activities. In essence, a degree of complexity or subtlety in how these dynamics are presented can contribute to more sustained user engagement.

Game dynamics can also be expressed as self-desire satisfaction. Individuals have innate desires to be unique, successful, competitive, and recognized. Game dynamics appear as a tool that helps explain how players can be engaged in the game and how the process can be enhanced. There are several tools that support the definition of gamified dynamics. Sacrifice, achievement, reward, competition, status, and self-expression concepts are considered as fundamental tools in game dynamics. Within the scope of these tools, individuals progress in the game and demand to play again (Nielson, 2019).

1.4 Psychological Basis of Gamification

Gamification, which encourages individuals to behave in desired ways and exhibit certain behaviors, draws from the field of psychology. In the interaction between psychology and facilitation, motivation is the factor that researchers most often emphasize. Motivation is a significant source of power for individuals who play roles in motivating others to take action in groups or communities (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

1.4.1 Hook Model

In today's conditions, there are several significant factors that can divert individuals' interests in various directions. Brands seeking to establish a presence in individuals' minds employ various methods, one of which is the "Hook Model" (Eyal, 2014). A model called Hook Model has been proposed to evoke a specific behavior in individuals and ensure the continuity of this behavior while directing people towards it. In today's marketing and sales activities, the hook model holds a significant place. In this model, the process of habit formation occurs as shown in the Figure.

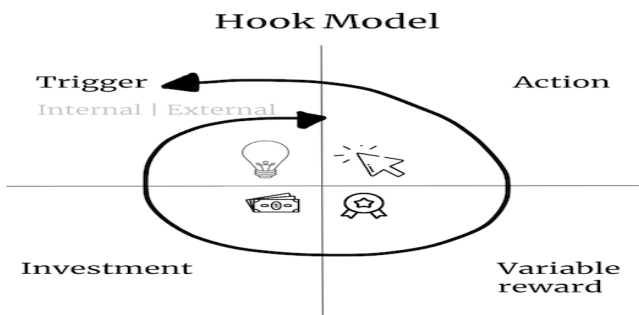


Figure 1. The Status of Habit Formation Stages According to Hook Model

Source: Filippou, Cheong and Cheong, 2018: 4.

Trigger, structurally, is a factor that leads to the display of a behavior. Action defines the behavior exhibited with an expectation of a reward. Variable rewards are methods used by companies to engage users in unknown or unexpected ways. The concept of investment is an attitude and behavior aimed at improving the service or product required for the next cycle process. According to the model, when users start looking at elements such as time, money, and effort specifically for a service or product offered to them, they enter the investment process.

The Hook Model, developed by Nir Eyal (2014), and gamification share a strong relationship in the field of marketing as both concepts are designed to engage and retain users or customers. In the Hook Model, triggers are stimuli that prompt users to take action (Eyal, 2014). Gamification employs various triggers, such as challenges, rewards, or competitions, to motivate users to engage with a product or service brand. Both the Hook Model and gamification are centered around driving user actions. In gamification, these actions often involve completing tasks, earning points, or achieving goals. The Hook Model emphasizes making these actions simple and easy to perform. Both concepts leverage the idea of providing variable rewards to users. In gamification, this can take the form of unpredictable rewards like unlocking new levels or receiving surprise bonuses. The Hook Model suggests that variable rewards keep users engaged and coming back for more which later make them invest in offered product or service brands (Eyal, 2014).

1.4.2 Fogg Behavior Model

In the context of the Fogg behavior model, the occurrence of behavior change requires the creation of an action, motivation, and response loop (Yılmaz, 2018). Motivation in this model is based on three elements. These elements are:

- Pain - pleasure
- Rejection - social acceptance
- Fear - hope

Games often motivate individuals through dynamics such as earning badges, gaining points, surprises, losses, and progress, thus engaging them in the game. In this context, the power of game dynamics is discussed under three headings (Wu, 2011):

- Game dynamics leverage positive feedback such as progress, badges, and rankings to increase user motivation.

- They can enhance users' skills by simplifying difficult activities and transforming them into a more achievable form.
- When users feel competent, the dynamics of the game will influence them to participate more in the game.

1.4.3 Self-Determination Theory

Although it has been introduced into the literature by Ryan and Deci (2000), the theory of self-determination refers to the examination of relevant processes, self-motivation, innate psychological needs, and developmental instincts that trigger self-determined situations. In this theory, motivation is perceived both internally and externally. Internal motivation is expressed as the desire to do something, while the sense of having to do something is referred to as external motivation (Şahin and Özerdoğan, 2018).

Within the context of the self-determination theory, there are three fundamental elements that individuals inherently need: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. In the field of gamification, these three elements are used to encourage a specific attitude or behavior and to change people's behaviors (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Rewards are used as part of the gamification process. However, this does not necessarily mean punishment or rewarding. Incorporating external motivations recklessly into the gamification process can lead to negative attitudes and behaviors in individuals. To bring about a change in consumer's behaviors and sustain it over a long period like establishing a brand loyalty, elements of internal motivation should be used.

1.4.4 Flow Theory

Flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) defines a situation where individuals are so deeply engrossed in an activity that they do not care about an isolated object. For a person to achieve a goal in their daily life or accomplish an important task, they need to focus on it and free themselves from other distractions. Conflicting views and thoughts in an individual's mind that are contrary to the intention or mission at hand can distract and hinder the fulfillment of that mission. Optimal experience has been suggested for resolving conflicts in individuals' ideas and aligns with the best moments in life. This occurs when a person voluntarily exceeds the limits of their memory while attempting to complete a task. Since testing in a flow process is neither easy nor difficult, the reward is solely the effort.

Flow theory and gamification are two concepts that are often discussed in the context of motivation, engagement, and the design of interactive experiences. While they are related, they also represent distinct ideas. Flow theory is often applied in various domains, such as sports, work, education, and leisure, to understand how people can achieve peak performance and satisfaction in their activities. Flow theory, developed by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990), describes a state of optimal experience characterized by complete absorption, focus, and enjoyment in an activity. When individuals are in a state of flow, they are fully engaged, lose track of time, and find the activity intrinsically rewarding. Key elements of flow include clear goals, immediate feedback, a balance between skill level and challenge, a sense of control, and a deep sense of enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Gamification can be designed to facilitate the experience of flow. By providing clear goals, challenges, and immediate feedback, gamified systems can help users achieve a state of flow during an activity. When game-like elements are well-designed and balanced, they can help users maintain the right level of challenge relative to their skill level, which is a key aspect of achieving flow.

Both flow theory and gamification are concerned with enhancing intrinsic motivation—the motivation that comes from within-, driven by personal satisfaction and enjoyment. Flow theory seeks to understand and create conditions for intrinsic motivation, while gamification leverages game elements to trigger and sustain intrinsic motivation in various contexts.

Gamification is often used as a tool to enhance engagement, and achieving a state of flow is one of the highest levels of engagement in any activity. Gamified systems can employ elements like feedback, progress tracking, and rewards to sustain user engagement and facilitate flow-like experiences.

In summary, flow theory and gamification are related in their focus on intrinsic motivation, engagement, and the design of enjoyable and immersive experiences. Gamification can be seen as a practical application of some of the principles derived from flow theory to create motivating and engaging experiences in a wide range of contexts. When implemented effectively, gamification can help individuals enter and sustain the state of flow during various activities.

2. Gamification in Marketing World

2.1 Gamification Impacts in Marketing

Companies typically reach their marketing objectives through loyalty programs. Customer engagement creates a connection between the

organization and its customers. Gamification plays a significant role in achieving this engagement. Integrating gamification into the marketing mix do not only increase loyalty but also contribute to some degree of brand differentiation from the competitors, thereby increasing sales (Güler, 2015; Tunga and İnceoğlu, 2020). In the gamification systems, marketing objectives have been considered.

Table. Marketing Objectives in Gamification Systems

Marketing Objectives	Gamification System
Consumer Engagement	Social mechanisms such as rewards for effort, competition, peer control, status, helping friends, and belonging to a group, points, recommendation system
Brand Loyalty	Access restrictions, badges, virtual rewards
Brand Love	Task accomplishment prizes, enjoying tools

Source: Karaarslan and Altuntaş, 2016

Recent research provides evidence that gamification is positively linked to consumer engagement (Garcia-Jurado et al., 2021), brand loyalty (Hwang and Choi, 2020) and brand love (Hsu and Chen, 2018).

2.1.1 Consumer Engagement

Cheung et al. (2015) draw from prior research on consumer engagement and highlight that the concept can take on varying meanings, leading to the identification of three distinct approaches:

1. **Consumer Engagement as a Psychological Process for Loyalty:** In this perspective, consumer engagement is viewed as a psychological journey that ultimately results in the development of loyalty.
2. **Consumer Engagement as Extended Behavioral Interaction:** Another interpretation sees consumer engagement as the outward expression of a customer's interaction with a brand or company, extending beyond mere purchase behavior to encompass broader interactions and connections.
3. **Consumer Engagement as a Motivational Psychological State:** This approach characterizes consumer engagement as a psychological state driven by motivation, reflecting the consumer's inner disposition and inclination.

Gamification works successfully when people attain concentration or absorption stages when engaging with the web. Commenting on items and engaging in the product review system enables a user to keep track of his or her status while also focusing on the online purchasing experience. It has been demonstrated that the usage of points, badges, and leaderboard impacts people to be more attentive when surfing the web. Remaining on those sites that use gamification for a longer period of time than on non-gamified sites can assist people purchase items on that sites rather than on rivals' websites (Garcia-Jurado et al., 2021)

2.1.2 Brand Loyalty

The core concept of gamification revolves around tapping into the motivational aspects of games by incorporating various game design elements like points, rules, challenges, badges, clear objectives, feedback mechanisms, and progress tracking into non-gaming scenarios, such as loyalty programs. If people find games engaging because they are inherently motivating, then it's possible to generate similar levels of engagement by infusing game-like motivation into brand loyalty programs.

In fact, one could argue that the initial generation of loyalty programs already exhibited early forms of gamification. These programs rewarded customers with items like coins, stamps, or points for their purchases, which could later be redeemed for products or prizes, with the primary aim of incentivizing repeat purchases. However, with the advancement of technology and the emergence of loyalty programs in the form of mobile apps, gamification within this context has reached a whole new level.

Modern brand loyalty programs now incorporate a wide range of gamified elements to make them more captivating for customers. These elements include spin-to-win games, code-based challenges, treasure hunts, friend referral contests, badges and trophies, scratch-to-win games, seasonal challenges, tier-based achievements, augmented reality experiences, quizzes and polls, and opportunities for social interaction. Brands leverage these gamification tactics to enhance the appeal and engagement of their loyalty programs, taking customer interaction to new heights (Kekes-Szabo, 2022).

2.1.3 Brand Love

Brand love represents strong, passionate connections that individuals have with brands, as highlighted by research from Batra et al. (2012) and Carroll and Ahuvia (2006). It's important to note that brand love goes beyond mere liking; it involves a deeper emotional connection than mere satisfaction, as

emphasized by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006). Consequently, brand love may wield a more significant influence on both brand loyalty and word-of-mouth (WOM) compared to satisfaction (Aro et al., 2018; Hsu and Chen, 2018).

Previous research has indicated that both utilitarian and hedonic values play a role in influencing brand love, as demonstrated by studies from Hsu and Chen (2018) and Overby and Lee (2006). However, in the context of gamified applications or websites, it's worth noting that hedonic value can trigger stronger emotional reactions.

Hedonic value is associated with elements of enjoyment, pleasure, and entertainment, while utilitarian value pertains more to the practical aspect of accomplishing tasks or achieving specific goals. Additionally, the concept of social value can bridge the gap between the application or website and the brand. Social value arises from the ability of these gamified platforms to enhance a user's social self (Hsu and Chen, 2018; Overby and Lee, 2006).

In essence, a gamified application or website has the potential to elevate a user's social identity, leading to emotional responses like the development of brand love. This means that the fun and entertainment aspects of such gaming platforms, combined with their ability to enhance one's social self, can be powerful catalysts for fostering strong emotional connections with a brand.

2.2 How Gamification Fosters Positive Behavior in Marketing

In today's marketing landscape, the increasing customer demand emphasizes the importance of utilizing various marketing strategies. Moreover, different gamification strategies are employed by each company to target different customer portfolios. Meeting customer expectations and growing customer needs are common criteria when companies employ gamification strategies. Companies invite customers to games as part of their gamification strategies and expect a positive attitude towards the company. Gaining a positive attitude towards companies is seen as the core objective of facilitation strategies.

Consistent with the literature (Blohm and Leimeister 2013; Groh 2012; Huotari and Hamari 2012), the use of game design elements is being assessed to enhance customer value and promote value-added behavior in non-game products and services. For example, MeYou Health's Daily Challenge sends users a reminder to take healthy measures every 24 hours. Users earn points for completing each task and are encouraged to share their achievements with their connections, who are then motivated to create beneficial posts. It

should be noted that the non-gaming use of game-like elements is not new (Blohm and Leimeister, 2013).

The ubiquity of mobile technology and other factors make simplification especially suitable for companies striving to increase consumer enjoyment, engagement, and retention, as many mobile service offerings have already become a significant component of a strategy. Particularly, Generation Y and Z heavily utilizes both gaming technology and mobile phones (Madden and Zickuhr, 2011).

2.3 Gamification Examples in Marketing

The term gamification, which has been used in various fields for a long time, has started to take on another dimension with digitalization in today's conditions. Gamification differs from other computer, mobile device applications and social media platforms. If checking in, making friends, exploring new places, liking and commenting on foods and drinks has become widespread today, in the near future, gamification may also become the norm in marketing area (Yılmaz, 2018).

2.3.1 Nike+Fuelband Gamification

The Nike+ FuelBand gamification is considered as an important project in terms of simplifying marketing strategies. During physical activities, it calculates calories expended by users and tracks them using variables like heart rate and distance. Additionally, it presents users with various goals and encourages them to achieve these goals. With the increasing demand in the gaming industry and people's rising expectations from sports, devices like FuelBand have gained significance. In future, an increased demand is expected for FuelBand applications as part of Nike's gamification projects.



Figure 2. Nike+Fuelband Project

2.3.2 Starbucks Gamification

The “Collect Stars, Get Your Coffee” project is considered as a significant gamification project. Starbucks is one of the world’s leading coffee chains, and digital applications are considered essential as part of Starbucks’ business model. In the field of digital applications, gamification strategies are actively used to enable customers to make their purchase transactions faster and easier. Users with set goals, for example, buying coffee and collecting stars through barcode applications, positively influence customers’ purchase intentions. Starbucks is recognized as having successful initiatives in gamification marketing compared to its competitors.



Figure 3. Starbucks “Collect Stars Get Your Coffee” Project

2.3.3 Yemeksepeti Gamification

Yemeksepeti, Turkey’s largest food delivery application, often employs gamification as a fundamental marketing strategy. It generates points for customers based on their locations and accumulates points based on order frequency. Customers who place orders through the digital platform collect various points that positively support their intention to make repeat purchases. In today’s world, the gamification model is one of the most preferred strategies in marketing. Creating a business model within the scope of gamification efforts strengthen companies’ customer relationships and increase their brand loyalty.

2.3.4 BiTaksi Application

BiTaksi application, which has gained significant popularity among young people, is one of the most frequently used applications in Turkey. With this mobile application, in addition to calling a taxi, you can also view the name of the requested taxi's driver, his rating, and license plate number. Payment can be made using a credit card if preferred. The application also allows customers to choose between yellow and turquoise taxis. Users can earn certain badges by taking specific actions in this application, and they can share these badges on their social media platforms. Furthermore, users can update their packages and engage in live chats with customer support through the application.

In today's world, many companies actively utilize digital and mobil applications. Implementing marketing strategies through digital applications provides significant benefits to companies. Inviting customers to various games and meeting customer expectations with various promotions is one of the recent marketing strategies of gamification. Many companies expect their customers to achieve various goals or rewards within the framework of their applications. Various benefits or campaigns that help customers achieve their goals positively influence the customer's expectations and attitude towards the business. Therefore, the correct use of gamification strategies is considered as an important marketing strategic tool by many companies in today's world.

3. Conclusion

Games are considered as a significant cultural value in society. Therefore, evaluating a society's games is a way to understand and examine their culture. In this context, communities can be divided into those that play strategy-based games representing higher-class cultures, those that engage in physically demanding games, and primitive communities that do not engage in sports. Traces of cultural ideologies can also be found within games. Games play a role in the development of individuals from birth to the end of their lives, preparing them for life's challenges and influencing their mental well-being. Playing games with each other fosters a sense of closeness among individuals. The personal and societal impact of games should not be underestimated. The increasing digitilization of games, children's detachment from the real world, and the growing popularity of sports in certain regions are encouraging parents to promote physical activity.

With the digitilization of games, especially, bringing games into the digital realm has become an important channel, particularly for marketers.

In the field of the gamification business model, inviting customers to play games and directing them toward different objectives can influence customer demand and loyalty in a positive way.

The fact that consumers are now spending so much time on digital channels and in games, making it a significant part of their time, has made gamification increasingly important for marketers. Game narratives created in the field of gamification should be designed within the framework of various game mechanics and ensure the consistency of players. It has been emphasized that establishing an effective relationship between games and brands and creating games that enhance brand loyalty are critically important for branding. Inviting customers to various games and meeting customer expectations with various promotions is one of the most effective marketing strategies in today's world. Many companies expect their customers to achieve various goals within the framework of their applications offering various benefits or rewards which will contribute positively to customer perceptions and attitudes towards their brands, thereby benefiting companies in the end. In the future, within the framework of strategic marketing activities, it will be essential to establish a strong relationship between games and brands and develop game dynamics that will capture consumers' engagement and attach them to their brands. To increase loyalty to the brands, it is necessary to make emotional and psychological impact on consumers through gamification.

In conclusion, gamification has emerged as a powerful tool within marketing strategies, playing a pivotal role in cultivating brand loyalty, nurturing brand love, and fostering deeper consumer engagement. By integrating game-like elements and mechanics into marketing campaigns, businesses can create immersive and enjoyable experiences that resonate with their audience on a personal level. This approach not only encourages consumers to form stronger connections with brands but also incentivizes ongoing participation and loyalty. As the marketing landscape continues to evolve, gamification remains a dynamic and innovative strategy to captivate and retain customers in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

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