A Review on Gamification and its Potential to Motivate and Engage Employees and Customers: Employee Engagement through Gamification

Anchal Gupta, VIT University, VIT Business School, Vellore, India
Gomathi S., VIT University, VIT Business School, Vellore, India

ABSTRACT

The concept of gamification uses the human behavior of indulging in gaming activities and combines it with their work with the purpose of enhancing, employee engagement. Game mechanics and dynamics are able to positively influence human behavior because they are designed to drive the players above the activation threshold. Achievements, appointments, bonuses, levels, points are some of the game mechanics which are used for influencing human behavior and human desires. These human desires have been referred to as game dynamics. The applications of Gamification range from being useful in the internal organizational processes of recruitment, employee recognition, employee performance, training programs, wellness and safety as well as customer oriented applications of building brand loyalty, enhancing customer satisfaction and engagement. This research paper aims to review this emerging concept, its literature and theoretical development along with a highlight on the present applications of gamification and their role in enhancing engagement and motivation of the users.

KEYWORDS
Engagement, Game Dynamics, Game Mechanics, Gamification, Motivation

INTRODUCTION

Gaming has usually been looked upon from the viewpoint of being a leisure activity for people to engage themselves in their free time. Every day, endless number of hours and millions are spent by people across the globe on computer and video gaming (Ong, 2013). All this time and money ideally is being spent by people for indulging in a repetitive and non-value adding activity. Gamification was brought out as a concept to use this human behavior of indulging in gaming activities and combine it with their work so as to apply the results in the areas of education, customer engagement, employee engagement and other business and management activities. Concisely, it attempts to bring the concept of work and play together (Pratskevich, 2014). In 2015, 40% of the largest 1,000 organizations in

DOI: 10.4018/IJSKD.2017010103
the world have been estimated to apply Gamification techniques while reforming their business activities (Blohm & Leimeister, 2013). Also, Gamification has made it to the list of being one of the best technology trends in HR in 2014 conference of Society for Human Resource Management (Brigade, 2014).

Formally, there are two definitions of Gamification that have been widely followed by academicians and industry. Firstly, Gamification is defined as ‘use of game design elements in non-gaming context’ (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled & Nacke, 2011a). Further, it has been also defined as ‘a process of providing affordances for gameful experiences which support the customers’ overall value creation’ (Huotari & Hamari, 2012). The definition given by Huotari and Hamari (2012) has been written considering the customers to be value creators for the companies who in return attempt to make customers experience gameful and enjoyable. From game design viewpoint, gamification is considered to be a part of human computer interaction (HCI) where the researchers of the field are aiming to develop appropriate model, techniques and heuristics for the application of games. The aim is to create gamified information systems that are effective for the companies (Deterding, Sicart, Nacke, Hara & Dixon, 2011b). There is a strong positive belief about the effectiveness of Gamification in business operations based on the premise that gaming is believed to be an enjoyable and any process involving that mechanism would too be engaging and motivating (Hamari, 2013). The basic principle of Gamification focuses on utilizing the engagement derived out of game playing which is being applied by business corporations (Levy, 2012).

As a concept, Gamification is being applied by the companies to enhance employee engagement and motivate them to perform their job responsibilities with more enthusiasm. Also, the technique aims to engage the consumers and get them to participate, share and interact through an activity/community. Gamification technique exploits the inherent human desires for competition, achievement, status, self-expression, altruism and closure. The core tactic of gamification lies in providing rewards for the players who accomplish their tasks. The different types of game mechanics or rewards that are being used include points, badges or levels, virtual currency provided to the user (Rishi & Goyal, 2013). The need for such a technology trend can be attributed to the change in workforce composition of companies which now are dominated by echo boomers/Gen Y. This generation is hugely dependent upon and has grown up under the influence of technology and ecommerce. Technology has changed their way of communication, engagement and social collaboration with each other. Gamification serves as an effective tool for the enterprises to engage and interact with their employees and consumers in a creative manner (Xu, 2011; Rishi & Goyal, 2013). Companies like Nike, Microsoft, Wipro, MakemyTrip.com, Vodafone and many others have used gamified applications for enhanced employee and customer experience. The industry wise applications have been discussed in the later section of the paper. These applications of Gamification range from being applicable in the internal organizational processes like recruitment, employee recognition, employee performance, training programs, wellness and safety as well as customer oriented applications of building brand loyalty, enhancing customer satisfaction and engagement.

**METHODOLOGY**

The structure of the paper was designed using secondary research and the review was undertaken by identifying and selecting significant studies for this paper, and a thorough scrutiny was done on the subject by searching on the Scopus, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and Emerald and Google databases. A total of 43 studies have been used to complete the article. This includes 5 empirical papers, 12 conceptual papers, 2 books, 2 theses and the rest comprises of reports, news and magazine articles. The decision
Communicating “What's Not Said”: Mobile Apps for Psychological Wellbeing
[www.igi-global.com/article/communicating-whats-not-said/172479?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/communicating-whats-not-said/172479?camid=4v1a)

Reorganizing People in Customer Knowledge Management Change
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/reorganizing-people-customer-knowledge-management/52131?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/reorganizing-people-customer-knowledge-management/52131?camid=4v1a)