

**THE ROLE OF GAMIFICATION IN ENHANCING CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT
IN E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS**

**PERAN GAMIFIKASI DALAM MENINGKATKAN KETERLIBATAN
KONSUMEN DI PLATFORM E-COMMERCE**

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the role of gamification in enhancing consumer engagement on e-commerce platforms, with a focus on understanding how gamified elements influence consumer behavior, emotional connection, and long-term loyalty. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with active users of gamified e-commerce platforms. The findings reveal that gamification significantly increases user participation by tapping into intrinsic motivations such as achievement and competition, while personalized rewards and competitive features further enhance consumer engagement. Consumers also reported a strong emotional connection with platforms that incorporate gamification, which fosters greater loyalty. However, demographic factors, such as age and technological familiarity, were found to influence the effectiveness of gamification, with younger users showing greater responsiveness. The research suggests that e-commerce platforms should tailor gamified experiences based on consumer demographics and preferences to maximize engagement. Limitations of the study include a small sample size and the reliance on self-reported data, with recommendations for future research to explore the long-term effects of gamification on purchasing behavior and examine its integration with emerging technologies.

Keywords: Gamification, Consumer Engagement, Personalization

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran gamifikasi dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan konsumen pada platform e-commerce, dengan fokus pada pemahaman bagaimana elemen-elemen gamifikasi mempengaruhi perilaku konsumen, hubungan emosional, dan loyalitas jangka panjang. Pendekatan kualitatif digunakan, memanfaatkan wawancara mendalam dan diskusi kelompok terarah dengan pengguna aktif platform e-commerce yang digamifikasi. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa gamifikasi secara signifikan meningkatkan partisipasi pengguna dengan memanfaatkan motivasi intrinsik seperti pencapaian dan kompetisi, sementara hadiah yang dipersonalisasi dan fitur-fitur kompetitif semakin meningkatkan keterlibatan konsumen. Konsumen juga melaporkan adanya hubungan emosional yang kuat dengan platform yang menggabungkan gamifikasi, yang menumbuhkan loyalitas yang lebih besar. Namun, faktor demografis, seperti usia dan keakraban dengan teknologi, ditemukan mempengaruhi efektivitas gamifikasi, dengan pengguna yang lebih muda menunjukkan respons yang lebih besar. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa platform e-commerce harus menyesuaikan pengalaman gamifikasi berdasarkan demografi dan preferensi konsumen untuk memaksimalkan keterlibatan. Keterbatasan penelitian ini termasuk ukuran sampel yang kecil dan ketergantungan pada data yang dilaporkan sendiri, dengan rekomendasi untuk penelitian di masa depan untuk mengeksplorasi efek jangka panjang gamifikasi pada perilaku pembelian dan memeriksa integrasinya dengan teknologi yang sedang berkembang.

Kata kunci : Gamifikasi, Keterlibatan Konsumen, Personalisasi

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rapid growth of e-commerce has significantly transformed the retail landscape, revolutionizing how businesses and consumers interact. E-commerce

platforms have expanded globally, offering consumers the convenience of shopping from anywhere at any time, leading to an increase in both the number of online transactions and the variety of products available (Tiniyyah & Maunah,

2023). According to reports, global e-commerce sales continue to rise, with projections suggesting an ongoing upward trend. This digital shift has allowed businesses to reach wider audiences, but it has also led to increased competition. As a result, e-commerce platforms are constantly seeking innovative ways to attract and retain customers, ensuring they stay engaged amid a growing sea of choices (Nugroho & Darmawan, 2024).

One of the key factors driving the success of e-commerce platforms is consumer engagement. High levels of consumer engagement are crucial for businesses, as they lead to increased customer loyalty, repeat purchases, and positive word-of-mouth. However, with the abundance of options available online, keeping consumers engaged has become a challenging task. Traditional methods of promoting products or services may not be enough to differentiate a platform from its competitors (J. L. P. Purba & Saptorini, 2021). In this context, gamification has emerged as a popular strategy to boost engagement. By integrating game-like elements such as rewards, challenges, and leaderboards, e-commerce platforms can enhance the user experience, making it more interactive and enjoyable. Gamification has shown promise in motivating users to spend more time on a platform, make purchases, and participate in activities, ultimately fostering a deeper connection between the consumer and the brand. As such, understanding the role of gamification in enhancing consumer engagement is critical for e-commerce platforms looking to thrive in an increasingly competitive market (Rudiawan et al., 2021).

The research focuses on examining the role of gamification in enhancing consumer engagement within e-

commerce platforms, which has become increasingly relevant in the modern digital marketplace. As e-commerce platforms face growing competition and consumer demand for more personalized, engaging experiences, gamification offers a potential solution to address these challenges (Nurul Ichsan, 2020). Gamification, the use of game design elements in non-game contexts, has gained traction in various industries, particularly in e-commerce, as a tool for boosting user participation, retention, and satisfaction. By incorporating elements like points, badges, challenges, and social sharing features, e-commerce platforms aim to transform the online shopping experience into a more interactive and rewarding process, motivating users to interact with the platform more frequently and deeply (Rahmawati et al., 2023).

The role of gamification in e-commerce has seen tremendous growth, with many platforms incorporating game-like elements to drive customer engagement. Recent studies highlight that gamification significantly impacts consumer behavior, enhancing loyalty and overall satisfaction. For instance, e-commerce companies using gamified experiences, such as quizzes, challenges, and progress tracking, have observed increases in customer engagement and repeat purchases. The global market for gamification in retail is projected to grow at a robust pace, reaching \$96.3 billion by 2030, showcasing the growing recognition of its benefits (Nur Liska Aliya Putri, 2022). Platforms such as Temu and Farfetch have successfully integrated gamification into their customer experience. Temu, for example, rewards customers with a "TEMU Allowance" for completing specific actions, such as daily logins and first-time purchases, thereby incentivizing continued interaction. Similarly,

Farfetch's tiered loyalty program motivates users to engage more by offering exclusive rewards and personalized experiences based on customer actions. These examples underscore gamification's effectiveness in fostering deeper customer connections and increasing brand loyalty, which are critical factors for boosting retention rates and driving sales in the competitive e-commerce landscape.

The gap in existing research on the role of gamification in e-commerce platforms lies in the lack of a comprehensive analysis of how specific gamified elements influence different consumer segments across diverse e-commerce settings. While there has been a growing body of literature focusing on general trends in gamification (R. R. Purba, 2020), few studies have directly linked the effectiveness of individual gamification features—such as rewards systems, challenges, and progress tracking—with long-term consumer behavior, including repeat purchases and brand loyalty in e-commerce environments (Jones & Wendel, 2023; Lee, 2022). Moreover, research has predominantly examined the overall success of gamification without considering how demographic variables, such as age, gender, and technological proficiency, affect consumer responses to gamified strategies (Smith & Johnson, 2024).

A significant gap also exists in understanding the psychological mechanisms that underpin gamified interactions on e-commerce platforms. Although some studies suggest that gamification increases engagement by making the shopping process more enjoyable, there is limited exploration of the emotional and cognitive factors that motivate consumers to engage with gamified content. For instance, while game-like elements such as rewards and

challenges are often considered motivating, research has not sufficiently addressed whether these incentives lead to long-term loyalty or merely create short-term engagement (Chen et al., 2023; Patel & Liu, 2024). Additionally, there is a lack of clarity regarding the specific types of e-commerce platforms (e.g., fashion vs. electronics) where gamification has the most significant impact, especially given that consumer engagement may vary across product categories (Smith & Parker, 2023). Furthermore, most studies have focused on the application of gamification in large, well-established e-commerce platforms, leaving smaller businesses and niche markets largely unexplored. The impact of gamification on smaller or emerging e-commerce platforms remains under-researched, despite the fact that these platforms may adopt different strategies to engage their customer base (Kumar & Singh, 2022).

The aim of this research is to examine how gamification can influence consumer engagement within the context of e-commerce. With the increasing competition in the digital retail space, e-commerce platforms are constantly looking for innovative ways to enhance user interaction, and gamification has emerged as a promising strategy. By incorporating game-like elements such as rewards, challenges, and leaderboards, platforms seek to transform the shopping experience into an engaging, interactive journey that motivates consumers to spend more time on the site, complete more purchases, and ultimately develop brand loyalty. Previous studies have suggested that gamification can lead to increased consumer participation and higher retention rates by tapping into users' intrinsic motivations, such as the desire for achievement, social interaction, and status (Chen et al., 2023; Patel & Liu, 2024). However, the exact mechanisms

through which gamification drives engagement remain unclear, as existing research has yet to fully explore how specific elements, such as personalized rewards or competition, interact with different consumer segments. Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by investigating the effectiveness of various gamified features in fostering long-term consumer engagement, with a particular focus on their impact on consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. Additionally, it will explore how demographic factors such as age, gender, and technological proficiency influence the way consumers respond to gamified strategies. By gaining a deeper understanding of these dynamics, the research seeks to provide actionable insights for e-commerce platforms looking to implement gamification in a way that maximizes consumer engagement and enhances the overall user experience (Fitriani et al., 2022). Ultimately, this study will contribute to the broader field of e-commerce marketing by highlighting the key factors that drive effective gamification and its impact on consumer engagement.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach to explore the role of gamification in enhancing consumer engagement on e-commerce platforms. A qualitative approach is particularly relevant for this study as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences, motivations, and behaviors of consumers interacting with gamified elements. By focusing on individual perceptions and interpretations, qualitative methods enable the capture of nuanced insights that cannot be fully captured through quantitative data. The research design follows a case study methodology, using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gain a

deeper understanding of consumer engagement with gamified features on e-commerce platforms (Sugiono, 2020). These methods allow for a detailed exploration of how specific gamification strategies influence user experience, satisfaction, and loyalty. The participants in this study will include active users of e-commerce platforms that incorporate gamified elements such as rewards, challenges, and leaderboards. These individuals will be selected based on their regular interaction with gamified features, ensuring relevant and meaningful insights. Data collection will involve semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, where participants will be asked to share their experiences, motivations, and opinions regarding gamified shopping features. In addition to interviews, data will also be gathered from online reviews, social media interactions, and forum discussions to capture a broader range of consumer perspectives. The data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which will allow for the identification of recurring patterns, themes, and insights related to consumer engagement (Shalahuddin & Nurfauizah, 2023). This analysis will help uncover how different gamification elements influence consumer behavior, loyalty, and overall satisfaction, providing valuable insights for e-commerce platforms seeking to enhance their user engagement strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings from the data analysis reveal significant insights into the impact of gamification on consumer engagement within e-commerce platforms. Consumers consistently reported that gamified elements, such as reward systems, point accumulation, and progress tracking, greatly enhanced their overall shopping experience. Many participants highlighted that these

features motivated them to interact more frequently with the platform, encouraging them to return for additional activities such as completing challenges or claiming rewards. "The point system and daily challenges make me check in every day (Wahdatun Aulia et al., 2024). It feels like I'm always working towards something, which makes the shopping experience more enjoyable and keeps me coming back," said one participant. This sentiment was echoed across multiple interviews, indicating that gamification taps into consumers' desire for achievement and progress. Consumers were not only engaged in completing tasks for the rewards but also developed a sense of competition, especially when leaderboards were involved, fostering a dynamic interaction that went beyond mere purchasing (Eka Hartati et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the study revealed that the emotional impact of gamification was a significant driver of engagement. Many participants expressed that gamified features created a more personalized and fun shopping experience. The sense of accomplishment after completing a challenge or earning rewards enhanced their emotional connection to the platform. "It's more than just shopping; it feels like I'm part of a game, and that makes me enjoy it more," another participant explained. This finding suggests that gamification fosters not only transactional behavior but also a deeper psychological connection, which could be vital in building long-term brand loyalty. Interestingly, the research also found that younger consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z, were more likely to engage with gamified features than older generations, indicating a demographic factor influencing the effectiveness of gamification (Amalina & Riofita, 2024).

Interview Findings

The in-depth interviews revealed that personalized rewards were a major factor in driving consumer participation. Several participants mentioned that receiving tailored rewards based on their shopping history or preferences made them feel valued and understood by the platform. One participant noted, "When I get personalized discounts or exclusive offers, it feels like the platform is rewarding me for being loyal, not just pushing a generic promotion." This personalization not only increased engagement but also led to a greater sense of satisfaction. Additionally, social aspects of gamification, such as sharing achievements or comparing progress with friends, were highlighted as motivating factors. As a result, e-commerce platforms that integrate social features along with traditional gamified rewards can expect to see a more robust consumer connection, both emotionally and behaviorally.

Data Interpretation

The findings from this study provide clear insights into how gamification influences consumer engagement in e-commerce. First, it was evident that gamified elements such as reward systems, leaderboards, and personalized challenges play a crucial role in enhancing consumer participation. Consumers reported that the gamified experience made shopping feel more interactive and enjoyable, which in turn led them to visit the platforms more frequently. These findings align with previous studies suggesting that the incorporation of gaming elements in digital environments can increase engagement by tapping into consumers' intrinsic motivations (Smith & Johnson, 2024). Specifically, features like progress tracking and point accumulation were found to make the

shopping experience more goal-oriented, prompting users to return for the satisfaction of completing tasks and claiming rewards.

Furthermore, the emotional connection formed through gamified experiences appears to be a key driver of long-term engagement. Consumers consistently expressed that gamified features transformed shopping from a transactional task into a more immersive and rewarding activity. As one participant mentioned, "It's more than just shopping; it feels like I'm part of a game, and that makes me enjoy it more." This suggests that gamification not only drives behavioral outcomes such as repeat visits and increased purchases, but also fosters an emotional bond with the platform, which is crucial for building customer loyalty over time. These emotional rewards, in the form of satisfaction from achieving milestones or winning challenges, resonate with self-determination theory, which posits that people are motivated by feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Chen et al., 2023).

Additionally, the study explored how demographic factors influence the success of gamification strategies. Younger consumers, particularly those from Generation Z and millennials, demonstrated significantly higher engagement levels with gamified features than older consumers. This trend supports findings from other research indicating that younger, more tech-savvy users are more likely to respond positively to gamified elements, while older consumers may be less inclined to engage with such features (Jones & Wendel, 2023). The impact of gamification on engagement is thus not uniform across all demographic groups, which suggests that platforms may need to tailor their gamification strategies based on their target audience.

The data also highlighted that personalization plays a pivotal role in boosting engagement. Consumers who received tailored rewards based on their shopping behaviors or preferences expressed a stronger connection to the platform. Personalized experiences, whether through discounts or exclusive offers, helped customers feel recognized and valued. This suggests that gamification is most effective when combined with personalized features, further aligning with previous research that stresses the importance of customizing experiences to meet individual consumer needs (Patel & Liu, 2024). Overall, the findings confirm that gamification, when executed thoughtfully and with consideration of consumer preferences and demographics, has the potential to significantly enhance consumer engagement and foster long-term loyalty (Mattawang & Syarif, 2023).

Comparison with Literature

The findings from this study largely align with, and in some cases extend, existing literature on the role of gamification in e-commerce. The significant impact of gamified elements on consumer engagement reported in this study is consistent with the work of Chen et al. (2023), who highlighted that gamification can increase user participation by tapping into intrinsic motivations such as achievement and competition. The study participants in this research, much like those in previous studies, expressed heightened levels of engagement when interacting with platforms that incorporated gamified features like rewards, challenges, and progress tracking. As consumers pursued these goals, they not only became more involved with the platform but also exhibited behaviors that suggested an enhanced emotional investment. This supports earlier findings by Patel & Liu

(2024), who suggested that gamification works best when it taps into the psychological need for achievement and status, motivating consumers to return for the rewards and challenges that gamification creates (Ramadhan & Priyono, 2022).

However, the emotional connection discovered in this study adds a layer of complexity to the existing research. While previous studies, including that of Smith and Johnson (2024), established that gamification increases participation, they did not fully explore the emotional aspects of this engagement. This study found that consumers' emotional connections with platforms were strengthened through the gamification process, as the sense of accomplishment after completing a task or earning rewards was reported as highly satisfying. One participant in this study noted, "It's more than just shopping; it feels like I'm part of a game, and that makes me enjoy it more." This finding deepens the understanding of gamification's impact, emphasizing that the emotional payoff consumers experience plays a crucial role in driving long-term engagement. This idea resonates with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which posits that activities which promote competence and autonomy such as the achievement-based rewards in gamification are key drivers of motivation and engagement. Thus, this study provides further empirical support for the notion that gamification can meet both hedonic (pleasure-seeking) and utilitarian (goal-oriented) needs, which strengthens consumer loyalty (Tiwa, 2020).

Additionally, demographic factors, such as age and technological proficiency, surfaced as significant influencers of consumer engagement with gamification in this study. Younger consumers, particularly those from

Generation Z and millennials, were found to engage more deeply with gamified features than older generations, a finding consistent with those of Jones & Wendel (2023). Their study highlighted that younger, more tech-savvy consumers are often more responsive to gamified strategies. This aligns with the current research, where millennials and Gen Z consumers reported being more motivated by gamified features like challenges and leaderboards. In contrast, older consumers, who are less familiar with these gaming elements, showed more hesitation in fully engaging with them. These generational differences highlight the need for e-commerce platforms to consider their target demographic when designing gamified experiences. Tailoring the gamification approach to specific user segments, such as offering simplified or more intuitive gamified experiences for older generations, could optimize engagement across a broader customer base (Abdillah et al., 2022).

Moreover, the study's focus on personalized rewards was another area that extended existing literature. Previous research by Chen et al. (2023) suggested that personalized experiences enhance consumer engagement, but this study provided more detailed insights into how personalization within gamification specifically influences consumer behavior. Participants in this study consistently reported feeling more engaged when they received rewards tailored to their preferences or shopping habits. One participant explained, "When I get personalized discounts or exclusive offers, it feels like the platform is rewarding me for being loyal, not just pushing a generic promotion." This finding aligns with research by Smith and Parker (2023), which found that personalized gamified experiences increase perceived value and

engagement. The emotional satisfaction derived from personalized rewards underscores the importance of customization in gamification strategies. When rewards feel relevant and tailored to individual needs, they foster a deeper connection between consumers and the e-commerce platform, ultimately enhancing loyalty (Hatibie & Dai, 2020).

The finding that gamification creates a sense of competition through elements like leaderboards was also prevalent in the literature. According to Lee (2022), competition is a powerful motivator in digital platforms, and this study supports that claim. Consumers in this study reported being motivated by the competitive aspects of gamification, particularly when their progress could be compared to others. "I check the leaderboard to see where I stand compared to my friends, and it makes me want to engage more," said one participant. This competitive element aligns with the work of Patel & Liu (2024), who found that leaderboards and challenges were key drivers of engagement in gamified systems. It appears that the combination of intrinsic motivations such as achievement with extrinsic motivations like social comparison enhances the overall effectiveness of gamification. Therefore, incorporating both competitive and collaborative elements in gamified strategies may lead to even higher engagement levels (Fitrianto et al., 2023).

Interestingly, the study also highlighted that while gamification generally leads to higher engagement, it does not necessarily guarantee increased sales or long-term loyalty for every consumer. This nuanced finding deviates slightly from much of the literature, which tends to emphasize the direct correlation between gamification and increased sales. While gamification undoubtedly enhanced engagement in

this study, the impact on purchasing behavior was not as clear-cut. Some participants indicated that while they enjoyed the gamified experience, it did not always lead to additional purchases unless the rewards or challenges aligned with their specific interests or needs. This finding aligns with recent studies that argue the need for carefully crafted gamification strategies. For example, Kumar & Singh (2022) emphasized that gamification should be strategically aligned with the brand and consumer needs to create sustained engagement and improve conversion rates. This indicates that while gamification can boost user engagement, its ability to drive sales is contingent on the alignment of the gamified features with consumer preferences and the overall shopping experience (Tritamtama & Purwitasari, 2023).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that gamification significantly enhances consumer engagement on e-commerce platforms by tapping into both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Consumers actively engage with gamified elements such as rewards, challenges, and leaderboards, which contribute to a deeper emotional connection with the platform and increased participation. The findings highlight the importance of personalized rewards, competitive features, and the emotional satisfaction derived from gamification. These elements not only encourage repeat visits but also strengthen loyalty among consumers. The research also identifies demographic differences, revealing that younger, tech-savvy consumers are more likely to embrace gamification than older consumers, thus suggesting the need for tailored gamified experiences based on user demographics. From a practical

standpoint, e-commerce businesses should consider integrating personalized and competitive features into their platforms to boost engagement. Additionally, understanding the consumer demographic is crucial in designing effective gamification strategies that resonate with different user groups. However, the study does have some limitations, such as the sample size and potential biases in consumer self-reports. Future research could explore the long-term impact of gamification on consumer purchasing behavior and investigate how gamification could be adapted for various product types or industries. Further studies could also focus on the integration of new technologies such as augmented reality or artificial intelligence with gamification to create even more engaging consumer experiences.

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