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Gamification in Employee Engagement

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<p>Gamification is the novel concept implying the usage of game elements and game thinking in a non-game environment, for example, in business activities. The present research was carried out to investigate how the gamification effect on employee engagement and, additionally, to understand its implication on the Finnish market.</p> <p>The analyses were based on secondary qualitative research - by processing the existing literature and also on the interview with the representative of one of the leading gamification companies in Finland. The practical objective of the current thesis work was to develop the guidelines for companies to employ gamification system in employee engagement.</p> <p>The findings indicated that gamification is a powerful tool for employee motivation and has a positive influence on it. However, the results also showed the significance of the appropriate preliminary design of the experience and a strong understanding of how it will influence employees' behaviour.</p> <p>On the Finnish market, the gamification is still on its developing stage and rarely used in the engagement of the personnel. Although, more and more companies become aware of and consider gamification application in the future.</p>	
Keywords	Gamification, Employee Engagement, Game Design, Game Elements, Millennials, Motivation, Human Resources

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Glossary

Gamification	an application of game elements in a non-game context.
Employee Engagement	the desire of employees to input the maximum contribution to the development and success of their company.
The PBL System	(Points, Badges, Leaderboards) the most common reward system used in gamification.
The MDA Framework	(Mechanics - Dynamics - Aesthetics) used in game design to analyse games.
Player/User	the actual participant, for whom gamified process is designed.
Extrinsic Motivation	incentives that come from outside of a person and often involve external rewards.
Intrinsic Motivation	incentives that come from within an individual.

1 Introduction

Gamification is a modern concept implying an application of typical game aspects to non-gaming processes including business, work productivity, marketing, education and etc. Even though the gamification approach was spread in recent times, it originated nearly 100 years ago as the current definition of “business game” or “simulation”. Nowadays, the concept is far beyond the original implication – it is extensively applied in business to diversify routine tasks at a workplace, improve a customer journey and enhance key performance measures. Gamification is commonly exercised in the form of rating, points, scoreboards or awards (Savignac 2017).

Despite the concept of gamification is relatively modern, a significant number of books have been written by specialists studying gamification theory and practices. However, most of the researches are limited to the consumer-oriented gamification practices, and only a few works are focusing on the internal business aspects, for instance, Human Resources Management. Based on the preliminary literature review, the author has decided to contribute to the least developed area of gamification implication in HR – employee motivation. Moreover, there is no one common opinion about the gamification – a number of researches defend the traditional motivation tools, while another – emphasize the positive sides of gamification. Therefore, the present thesis work focuses on the principles of gamification applied to Human Resources activities – in particular, employee engagement. It considers the possibility and reasonability of a game framework to be adopted in modern companies.

The research aims to answer whether gamification practices have a positive effect on employee engagement or not. In order to find the resolution, the review of the existing literature on this topic and its critical analyzation were the main methods used. Due to the fact that the author of the thesis studies in Finland, it was also valuable to understand the extent to which gamification is used in employee engagement on this market. For this purpose, the researcher conducted an interview with one of the leading gamification experts in Finland. Finally, as the practical part of the thesis, the guidelines on how to apply the gamified employee engagement activities were developed.

2 Gamification: an interpretation

2.1 Definition

Gamification is not a new phenomenon, rather a term and its' definition are modern. To some extent, the idea of gamified elements applied to the reality always existed, but in a simplified form. The concept lies in the belief that people are keen on playing games, having fun and relaxing. It leads to the assumption – an absorption of information or performance of some actions in a playful form increases emotional involvement and therefore, new material is internalized faster and more effectively. Conceding that earlier games mostly implicated kids and were widely used in a kindergarten or elementary school, nowadays, because millennials accustomed to computer games, gamification becomes extremely relevant for adults.

Whereas a word "gamification" may be misleading and unintelligible at first sight, it is indispensable to address to the original definition of the concept. Since gamification is somewhat a new approach – there are various existing definitions developed by the authors through the history of the phenomenon. The most prominent one was developed by Deterding et al. and implies gamification to be "the use of game design elements in non-game contexts" (Deterding, et al. 2011). The present explanation is relatively broad and focuses on the very basic idea and comprehensive meaning. Thus, it does not support possible reactions or results as well as goals of the phenomenon itself (Stieglitz, et al. 2017).

In 2012 Kai Huotari and Juho Hamari in their research on defining the gamification proposed a new definition, which, in their opinion, focuses on the empirical essence of games and gamification rather than a general understanding of the concept. The authors claim that the concept of the game for each individual is unique, thus, the gamification effect occurs only when the person faces "a gameful experience" implying deep engagement and joy. In this sense, it contradicts the above-mentioned definition stating game design elements can only be applied to the non-game environment. Since every individual perceives "gamefulness" exclusively – it is highly challenging to identify a non-

game context and consequently a gamification framework to be applied on a case-by-case basis. The researchers state: "Gamification refers to: a process of enhancing a service with affordances for gameful experiences in order to support user's overall value creation" (Huotari and Hamari 2012). Relying on this explanation, authors emphasize the goal and outcomes of the gamification experience instead of the methods applied to create the action. If gamification is applied merely to increase business KPIs (= Key Performance Indicators), it may hinder into the process of creating a valuable experience for a final user (Huotari and Hamari 2012).

Statements considered above are depicting the phenomenon from different angles trying to explain the same core value. In order to fully grasp both definitions and their meaning, it is highly important to delve into history when the concept of the gamification originated. However, the approach is new, despite its novelty - it already has its own history.

2.2 History of the phenomenon

Even though the gamification approach was spread in recent times, it originated over 100 years ago in the form of a modern definition of "business game" or "simulation". Through time the concept endured a variety of modifications until it reached the peak of popularity and current notion.

It all started in the United States in 1896 when the Sperry & Hutchinson company (hereafter S&H) developed one of the first loyalty programs – a marketing strategy that aims to retain existing customers. S&H distributed branded stamps in shops, gasoline stations and supermarkets. Customers received stamps after purchase and collected them in a special album. Afterwards, it was possible to exchange the collection of stamps for prizes from the S&H catalogue. The program was extremely successful and generated similar projects worldwide (Hatala 2013).

Considering the history of gamification, one of the most important points in time is the creation of the first multi-user computer-based virtual world game called MUD1 (Multi-

User Dungeon) developed by Roy Trubshaw in 1978. The main goal of the game from the point of the player was to collect a certain number of points and get the “wizard” title, which gave the character immortality (Wolf 2008). Since 1978 the MUD1 game’s popularity served as a blast for the future revolution in multi-user virtual game industry, from where all the modern gamification principles and methods originated (Robson, et al. 2015).

The 1980s gave the birth of rewards-based loyalty programs in various industries, such as airlines, hotels and car rentals. After the Airline Deregulation Act in 1978 in the United States (implied the removal of governmental-imposed entry and price regulations), aircraft companies were forced to promote their services more intensively due to the increased competition. Consequently, American Airlines launched the “AAdvantage” loyalty program which is still in use and allows customers to get superior service based on the amounts of miles accumulated. After the success of American Airlines approach, the concept spread to the hotel business. Thus, in 1983 Holiday Inn initiated a similar loyalty program for their customers (Watkins 2013). Nowadays, most of the companies in these industries still offer akin loyalty policies for the customers.

Millennials - a generation born from 1983 till the early 2000s and commonly associated with their deep connection with digitalization and, in particular, game industry. Owing to this generation, the gamification is considered to flourish due to the boom of computer and online based experiences as well as overall social influence in technology adoption (Jain and Dutta 2018). Since that time, over the last 30 years, researches from all over the world have started to study the effect of the computer game – the reasons why it became so engaging and successful. Attempts to search for answers to this question resulted in the number of studies and theories (Robson, et al. 2015).

In 2002 Nick Pelling, video-games design professional, launched the business project which aimed to combine strategic management, game dynamics and programming all in one. The idea was to develop electronic devices into entertaining platforms. It is the point in history when the word “gamification” was used for the first time. Figure 1 provides the main webpage of Nick’s company. However, the society was not ready to

adopt this concept yet, so the company was soon closed because of the low public interest (Data Newsroom 2012).



Figure 1. The webpage screenshot of Nick Pelling's company website. Adapted from Data Newsroom (2012).

However, over time in the late 2000s, several business representatives came up with the idea of the creation of a gamified online platform for other purposes rather than simply online games. For example, in 2007, the Bunchball company (self-proclaimed "the leader of the gamification") creates the website called "Dunder Mifflin Infinity" in honour of the popular comedy show, The Office. According to the statistical data, because of the novel approach, the website received over 8 million-page views in one month and a half (Bunchball 2018). In 2009 the innovative school in New York opens its' doors for 6th graders. The school practices the extraordinary learning approach: "drop kids into inquiry-based, complex problem spaces that are built to help players understand how they are doing, what they need to work on, and where go next" (Tekinbaş, et al. 2011).

Finally, in 2010 the term gamification became the trend and therefore began to be used in the different areas of operation all over the world – from education to business activities. The term resulted to be widespread because of Jesse Schell, an American author and video game designer, representing "Design Outside the Box" talk in the

D.I.C.E. summit¹. The author proposed the future of games and insisted that games' elements will become a part of our lives (Carlton 2018).

The trend started to grow rapidly – in 2014 nine out of ten businesses, which entered the gamification elements into their activities, state the initiation was successful. Besides, 71% of respondents claimed the concept helped to increase sales indicators (Brudner 2014). Figure 2 provides the infographic of the results. The increase in the usage of smartphones and the development of mobile applications push the gamification even further. In 2018 the estimated market size for global gamification was valued roughly at USD 5.5 billion and is expected to grow by 30.31% in the next five years (Mordor Intelligence 2019).

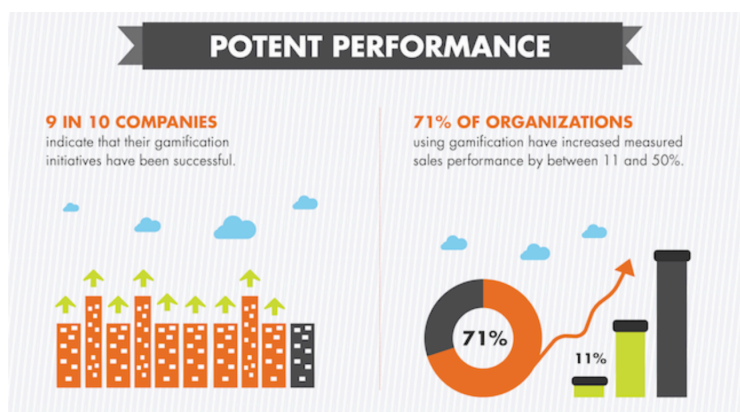


Figure 2. Gamification indicators of 2014. Adopted from Brudner (2014).

The technology correspondent, Nick Wingfield, in the article for the New York Times states: "Many businesses are using these game tricks to try to get people hooked on their products and services — and it is working, thanks to smartphones and the Internet" (Wingfield 2012). Indeed, over its long history and evolution, starting from the loyalty programs and computer virtual worlds, gamification is currently used within an organization and outside of the business – in education, health and social sphere.

¹ D.I.C.E. (Design, Innovate, Communicate, Entertain) Summit – a conference organized by the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences, inviting the top video game designers and developers to debate trends and future of the game industry (DICE Summit 2010).

2.3 Purpose of Gamification

To fully understand the underlying and ultimate goals of the gamification concept, it is easier to structure them in one common format. As mentioned previously, nowadays gamification is adapted in various areas of our lives, therefore in this part, the goals are assumed to be general and suitable for different situations. Certainly, in the specific activities or fields, objectives are subject to change.

What is the purpose in general? The purpose or goal is defined as the “reason” for which some activity is implemented or why it even exists (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2019). Opinion leaders in the field of gamification highlight the goals of the phenomenon to help the society and business to answer the question: Why to gamify? The author of this research paper finds it necessary to consider purposes from different perspectives – businesses, personal and social.

The purposes of the gamification from the business perspectives are:

- to engage and motivate people to change their behaviour;
- to have an impact on overall business indicators and activities;
- to achieve certain business objectives previously set;
- to increase the retention rate;
- to encourage loyalty and purchasing actions;
- to reinforce the company brand;
- to receive direct feedback from customers.

The goals of the gamification from a personal perspective (“player”) are:

- to get fun and joy – play games in real life;
- to achieve personal goals and results;
- to increase motivation;
- to socialize;
- to instill a new habit;
- to adapt to changes and challenging situations.

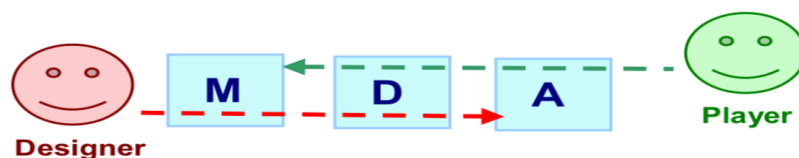
The goals of the gamification from a society perspective are:

- to share experiences and insights;
- to build the community.

Modern technologies do not only penetrate into our routine lives but also have the serious influence on ourselves – nowadays people are more accustomed communicating via social networks rather than in the reality, playing computer games and sharing achievements online with friends. Gamification allows a person to use the virtual game elements to solve the real-life problems, while for businesses it is the chance to achieve business goals and increase customer retention (Werbach 2012a).

2.4 Game Design Elements

The whole idea of gamification implies the application of the game elements into the real world. Games are characterized by the three-step approach called the MDA framework (Mechanics, Dynamics and Aesthetics) developed by Hunicke et al. in 2004. Considering games from the point of systematic framework helps the designers of games to define the choice of the model and to analyze it at any point of the construction. The original idea of the MDA framework systemizes the games into the separate elements – Rules, System and “Fun”, where every single one is referred to the step described above. Figure 3 represents the MDA framework, where the game is considered from different perspectives – designer and player (Hunicke, et al., 2004).



The designer and player each have a different perspective.

Figure 3. The MDA Framework. Adopted from Hunicke, et al. (2004).

In 2010 in the TED Talks² conference Chatfield and Priebatsch claimed that similar principles applied to the video games should be also used in the process of gamifying practical situations in life (Stieglitz, et al. 2017). To create a successful gamification case in any field of application, it is necessary to understand the game elements at first. This chapter describes the MDA Framework in detail, the goal of which is to become the tool for further development of recommendations for businesses on how to apply the gamification framework.

The MDA framework represents the interdependence of the gamification principles – mechanics, dynamics and aesthetics and demonstrates how to combine all these foundations together in order to create the successful gamification experience. Thus, knowing the gamification principles in the form of the MDA framework will help designers to gamify the experience to solve the real-life problems.

2.4.1 Mechanics

Mechanics are choices that designers of the gamification process undertake in order to set up the rules, goals and boundaries of the game. Mechanics are developed before the initial launch of the process and they remain constant for the whole period and for every separate player. For example, in board games, mechanics will be the rules of how often players throw the dice or how a winner is chosen.

There are three common types of mechanics – setup, rule and progression mechanics. All mentioned are used by the designers to gamify the experience. Setup mechanics are the environment, goals and how they are assigned among players. It covers the number of users and teams involved in the process, whether the game is time-limited or infinite and is there any competition involved in the action or not. Moreover, setup mechanics include the place in which the virtual or real world the gamified experience happens, for example considering virtual space – on which platform the game is released. Rule mechanics are permitted, and forbidden actions of the gamified experience developed specifically for the player to understand the boundaries and feel the pressure. For instance, the above – mentioned mechanics determine what kind of reward the person

² TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) Talks – is the American fond, supporting conferences all over the world on the most interesting topics and innovative ideas (TED, 2019).

gets while checking-in in certain geo-location – in Foursquare in case the player visits the gym often, he/she is awarded the “healthy badge”. Progression mechanics are instruments introduced in the gamified reality. This category of mechanics is aimed to increase the likelihood and therefore the retention rate of the player implying rewards, scores, progress bars or currency. It is necessary to develop the “desired” achievement rewards otherwise it may lead to the unsuccessful application of the gamification.

Mechanics are conditions applied in the gamification process, which define the main roles, how players collaborate, how to gain achievements and win the game. However, mechanics as game elements are not sufficient to create the fruitful, user-friendly gamified experience. Thus, in order to achieve the goal of gamification in the form of influencing the behaviour of players, two other dimensions are introduced – dynamics and aesthetics (Robson, et al. 2015).

2.4.2 Dynamics

Dynamics in gamification are behavioural patterns emerging when players participate in the gamified process. Gamification dynamics are not determined by designers, but by players themselves when they act in accordance with mechanics planned. Dynamics represent behaviour, interactions and key strategies appeared during the gamified experience. The excellent example of dynamics in the game industry is shuffling or betting in the Poker card game.

Behaviour occurred during the game mainly depends on the structure of dynamics. For example, in the inner corporate gamified experience, a team-based player structure may lead to the cooperation, while single player system promises elements of competition to reveal. Furthermore, research shows that in case the players of the gamification process are observed, they tend to change the behaviour – they are more competitive and active. Accordingly, dynamics include a variety of behavioural patterns generated during the game, for instance, competition, assistance, dishonesty and so on.

Unlike games, gamification dynamics are challenging for designers to foresee, which can result in unexpected reactions, both positive and negative. Thus, the main goal for

designers from the point of dynamics is to forecast the behavioural patterns that may emerge during the gamified process and adapt the mechanics of the game accordingly (Robson, et al. 2015).

2.4.3 Aesthetics

Aesthetics characterize the desirable emotions awakened in the player during the game. The word aesthetics itself is widely used in the game industry, therefore, some of the gamification professionals prefer to call it "emotions", which, in their opinion, better represent the engagement that businesses aim to reach through gamified experiences (Robson, et al. 2015). Aesthetics cover, for example: sensation, fantasy, discovery, expression and etc., which constitute the particular emotions the player perceives during the game. Equally, as with games, the gamification process has to be fun-oriented and attractive from the point of player's emotions rather than mechanics. However, the player's emotions should also not distract the user from the ultimate goal of the gamified experience. Fun and enjoyment may occur in a variety of feelings including excitement, surprise or wonder. However, the mix of emotions may lead the player to disappointment and sadness. In the context of gamification, aesthetics should serve as objectives of the gamified system (Stieglitz, et al. 2017).

2.5 Game elements

2.5.1 Parties involved in gamified experiences

The gamification theory and history represent the tight connection between gamified experience and games. However, applying the gamification process to someone's business or non-game industry, firstly, a designer should discern what kind of elements to derive from games and how to employ them in a distinctive field. Elements of a game are a toolbox for building the successful gamification experience – combining all of them in various ways will give a producer different outcome. Considering the classical draughts game, it is possible to highlight several game elements it is comprised of - players, checkerboard, rules, dark and light pieces and etc. The example shows the complexity

of the game and tools used to build it without those it will not be the same play anymore. This approach is generally transferred to the creation of gamified experiences in non-game reality (Werbach 2012b). The first and the most critical part of gamification experience is parties or people involved in this process.

There are various types of parties associated with the gamified experience – distinguished by the degree to which a person participates in the process. Commonly, four types of parties are involved in the gamification process: designers, players, spectators and observers. All of these people are to some extent actively or indirectly partake the experience. These types of parties are also characterized as roles of the gamified experience (Robson, et al. 2015).

The most obvious group involved in any games is players. Players are people competing in the gamification process. Players possess the key role in the game because they actively participate in it. In 1996 Richard Bartle, who researched characteristics of players involved in multiplayer real-time virtual games, allocated four different players' archetypes including Killers, Achievers, Socializers and Explorers. The classification describes the motivation the players have while participating in the gamified process. All these types are characterized as follows:

- Killers are players, who are fond of winning the game and beating others.
- Achievers represent the type of people, who are playing to achieve a certain level or gain points.
- Socializers are people, who are participating in games with the goal to interact and communicate with others.
- Explorers are characterized to be curious about the process and boundaries of the game itself.

Four archetypes should be taken into the account while creating the gamified experience. However, it is important to consider that a single player rarely represents the one single type, generally player is the "mixture" of more than one (Bartle 1996). The theory of four players' archetypes is the underlying base for the gamification process.

Designers' role in the gamified experience is straightforward – to create, develop and maintain the game and process. For instance, from the point of gamification used in business reality, a designer will be the company's customer relationship manager, who aims to boost consumers' engagement. The position of the designer in gamified experience is challenging due to the complexity of the MDA framework and gamification principles. The designer is aggressively involved in the activity while setting up the experience, while during the process he/she takes a relatively passive position.

Spectators are people indirectly but actively participating in the gamification process. Moreover, being part of the gamified experience' environment, they create an atmosphere and impact on how it works. In business reality, spectators can include supervisors or authorities who do not design or participate but follow the rules and assure the process progresses appropriately, therefore influencing players' behaviour.

Observers are the group of people passively involved in the gamified experience and look at it from the outside. They have no direct influence on the process; however, the number of observers can change the status of the experience, e.g. make it popular. Also, in some cases, observers can become players in the future. In the business reality, observers can be the employees from different department or office, who are aware of gamification experience happening but have no direct effect on players, designers or spectators.

All these four types of people are involved in the gamified activity to some extent – passively or actively. Certainly, through time the single player can become spectator or observer can transfer to be a player. Nevertheless, it is essential to understand the types of individuals involved in the gamification course in order to understand the concept and design of the qualified strategy (Robson, et al. 2015).

2.5.2 Classification of games

As mentioned previously, every game has its own environment and "board", for example, checkerboard in draughts, grid on the paper in tic-tac-toe or virtual reality in online computer games. Similar to the game industry, there is the classification of gamified

activities by means of the ground. First and the simplest are wall or regular board tools used to create the gamified experience. It includes boards of honour or badges that are so far widely used in manufacturing plants. For instance, in order to encourage the higher employee' efficiency, the factory decides to announce a worker of a month. The second classification is a field or team experiences – aiming to build the team or players to explore the surroundings. Nowadays, these types of gamified experiences are commonly realized via mobile apps. And the last but not the least – online space, the most popular place where the gamified experience is happening. One of the examples of such online virtual gamified experience is the Uber app for drivers, which will be covered in the next chapter along with other relevant cases (Whitehill 2008).

2.5.3 PBL: Points, Badges and Leaderboards

Every gamified experience implies users or players achieving the goal of the game and getting rewards. In order to choose the reward system, values and interests of the participants should be taken into consideration. It is crucial that a prize offered by designers is worth the players' effort. Points, badges and leaderboards (hereafter PBL) are the common rewards used in gamified experiences. Every element of PBL system possesses its own functions in the gamification activity.

Points – prevalent "currency" of the gamified experiences, they are used as rewards for the performance of a certain action. In the gamification activity, points may play a number of roles, for example:

- to represent relative players' positions;
- to prescribe a winner;
- to attach the number to the actual prizes (for instance, the first person, who gains 500 points, receives the reward);
- to serve as feedback in order for the player to understand the progress in the game;
- to provide the additional data for experience' designers – by showing where, how many and how fast the player earns points.

Badges – achievements or virtual awards specifically created to measure the activity of players in the gamification process. The player receives a badge when achieving a certain level or reaching a variety of goals in the gamified activity. In general, badges look like a graphical button and are located on the player's profile or public page, where other competitors can see it. Badges are a useful tool for designers to push the player to behave in a certain way. For example, the user can get a badge for first time logging into the system, for successful achievement of a task or just surprisingly for anything else. One important thing that should be taken into the account is badges can determine the general aesthetics of the gamified experience. They are graphical, therefore should be designed with its own, inimitable style. Besides other things, badges also serve as an identity of the player and support the collection and therefore player's retention rate.

Finally, leaderboards are "boards", which indicate the leaders among all the participants of the gamified experience. The main goal of the leaderboard is to show the player his/her exact place in relation to other participants. There are various types of leaderboards practically used – original, personalized ones (the player sees only personal result and the one above and beyond, so it comes in the middle of the leaderboard), friend relative boards (the player sees only personal and friends' results) (Werbach 2012c).

The PBL triad is the main awarding system used in the gamification process. Besides, the designers may also employ rating, levels, virtual currency and goods. However, in some cases, especially in terms of gamified real-life experiences PBL system may not work, thus, it is important to consider its limitations. First of all, rewards being a type of game elements do not mean the gamified experience will be "engaging" or "fun" for users. The PBL system, even well-planned, but laying in the core of the game, may lead to the player's burnout or misunderstanding of the point of the experience. Secondly, in general, awards in games or gamification activities do not receive the practical reinforcement, which leads to lower motivation to continue to play. That is the reason why it is highly important to consider not only game elements but the whole MDA framework to design the correct and effective gamification experience (Werbach 2012c).

2.6 Areas of application

To outline the gamification principles, this section focuses on real-life examples of gamification applied in various situations. Areas of the application of gamification have no limits – it is applied in healthcare, education, business activities, etc.

The most prime and one of the first examples is the gamification used in the US army recruitment process. In 2002 the U.S. Army has created and published a game called America's Army. The game provided anyone with the opportunity to experience realistic soldier duties and combat situations. All the player's behaviour is collected as data and then analyzed by the U.S. Army in order to identify the individuals, who have great potential of being a great soldier. The Army then is able to target these individuals for recruitment. Besides, the game is designed in a way to promote and advertise U.S. Army – individuals who play the game often are more likely to be in favour towards it and in turn, are more probable to consider recruiting (Lowman 2016).

Kevin Werbach, an American professor at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of the book "For the Win", highlights three different types of gamification in business – external environment, internal environment and behaviour changing. One of the examples for external gamification is Marriott, the hospitality industry giant has created a Facebook game called "My Marriott Hotel" in 2011, which aims at simulating hotel work in simplified game manner. A player is offered to manage different hotel business duties such as kitchen work and depending on how good or bad management is – the hotel is either prospering and the manager is getting promoted or it stays on the ground level. At any point in time, a player had an option to go through a link "Do It for Real" and access Marriott career website, where he or she would be presented with the positions, that best suit personality, based on the game results (Lopez 2011).

While the external gamification is applied to the outside activities of the firm, for example, to increase customer engagement, the internal one aims to work with employees within the company.

For instance, Uber, a transportation and network company based in the USA, uses gamification to push drivers to compete with each other and work faster and longer. Despite receiving various badges for “excellent service” or “great conversation”, Uber also uses the ludic loop³ method to retain the driver in the system for longer period of time as shown in Figure 4 (Olyslager 2018).

Behaviour changing gamification influence social interactions or even the health of the person. This type of gamification strives the person to form new habits (Werbach and Hunter 2012). For instance, the mobile app Fitocracy, which helps its users to build the personal workout and nutritional plans, uses gamification to engage users, build the community and inspire people to work out and take care of the personal health. The app applies leaderboards, points, achievements and badges to entertain users (Crook 2013).

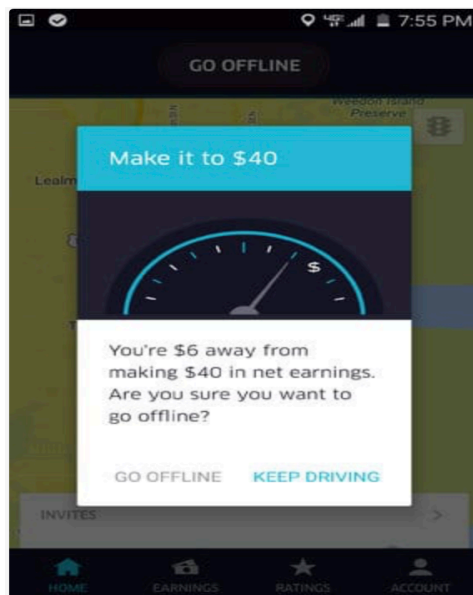


Figure 4. Uber App uses gamification to encourage drivers to stay on the road longer. Adopted from Olyslager (2018).

In addition to above, gamification is also widely used in learning, training and education – not only for kids but for adults as well. In education, gamification can influence the efficiency of learning progress as well as reduce the cost of programs without losing quality. Duolingo, the mobile application for learning languages, uses the gamified design

³ Ludic loop – doing some action over and over again, the best historical example of it is the Tetris game. In the modern world, it lies in checking emails or social networks all day (Zhang 2018).

to interact and inspire users to learn more. As many mobile apps nowadays, the main game elements of the application are badges, achievements, leaderboards, community and the possibility to compete with friends (Solis 2015). According to all the example mentioned in this section, the creation of gamified experiences and activities makes it possible for designers to enliven our routine life and solve problems with fun.

2.7 Criticism

It is crucial to mention not only positives aspects and implementation of gamification, but also existing criticism.

One of the main points gamification is being criticized on is that its principles, for the most part, are based on simple game mechanics like points and leader boards. Thus, the approach should be rather called "pointification". Initially, the term was brought up by Margaret Robertson – director of UK based game design company – the main argument is that gamification principles are based on game elements, that are least essential to games. Game design goes beyond a simple badge and points reward system and scoreboards – it is not what makes games so attractive. It is possible to avoid the trap of pointification by thinking in advance and designing gamification implementation strategy taking into consideration business's specific objectives and core values in order to produce sustainable personnel engagement that adds value to employee's performance, business's results and improves the working environment (Robertson 2010).

Another critique on the topic of gamification argues that gamification concept, especially when designed poorly and follows a simplistic pointification approach, will increase personnel engagement only temporarily – with time people will adapt and understand that there is no real value behind points and scores and the engagement level will start to decrease (Werbach 2012d).

The third issue of gamification claims that the use of badges and points in order to motivate and reward people may drive people away from natural occurring motivation,

engagement, interest and love for the process. Kathy Sierra – a noted author and speaker on the topic of interaction design referring to this critique compares gamification principles with “high fructose corn syrup”, that replaces true organic drivers of motivation and engagement with simple short-term tricks (Werbach and Hunter 2012).

This critique applies to poorly implemented gamification principles, which are oriented on improving business’s KPIs in the short term, rather than concentrate on adding value to personnel. If applied correctly, gamification may serve as a powerful tool to drive the company forward and improve the employee’s working environment and experience.

There is another large criticism of gamification principle – exploitationware, which is mainly concerned with using game elements to force employees to do things they wouldn’t otherwise do. This aspect will be discussed in detail in a further chapter on employee engagement (Werbach 2012e).

3 Gamification in Human Resources

3.1 Gamification HR: areas and examples

Gamification activities are currently widely applied in one business field – Human Resources (hereafter HR). Internal gamification, focusing on in-house business operations of a company, introduces game elements into a workflow and creates the environment, in which employees have the opportunity to work comfortably and with no stress. In that sense, a gamification process is an HR tool through which it is possible to motivate personnel, train them and therefore even increase their efficiency. Gamification is applied to various HR tasks, for instance, employee recruiting, training, motivation and evaluation. In this section, various application of gamified experience will be considered based on the main HR functions and real-life implementations of this phenomenon (Paliwal 2014).

3.1.1 Gamification in employee recruitment and selection

Gamification processes are generally applied to employee recruitment and selection in two various ways. First of all, gamification helps companies to attract the attention and interest people in their brand and open positions. Usually, if the company is by itself attractive to the potential candidates, it will receive greater interest and consequently more job applications. Online Facebook game developed by Marriott, which can be found in the previous chapter, is a good example of this matter. Secondly, gamification can be directly applied to employee recruitment and selection processes. In that case, candidates are suggested to pass tests or find real-life solutions in business cases and simulations. With the help of these techniques, the employer can judge the ability of candidates to make decisions, understand their motivations and suitability to become a member of the team. Moreover, some companies offer potential candidates to pass test or business simulation in the form of the online game. The winners or players with higher results are offered the job interview in the company (Armstrong, Collmus and Landers 2016: 140-165). For example, in Finland KPMG division is using an online computer-based game to assess potential candidates. The player is required to go through various

mini online games focusing on testing candidates' logic and ingenuity skills, ability to produce decisions quickly and resist to stressful situations.

3.1.2 Gamification in employee learning and training

For many people learning is not the most interesting and exciting activity, especially in terms of career development. Theoretical knowledge is the essential requirement for an employee to be competent and professional in the daily activities at a workplace. However, literature, seminars and lectures do not provide important practical experience for workers. Gamification allows the company to transfer the necessary learning process into the practical environment which is close to real business situations and issues. It may help employees to gain valuable experience, develop new skills and learn how to act in complex and stressful situations. Gamified activities can either help to simplify the adaptation period of new employees or motivate experienced ones to learn something new or develop advanced skills (Armstrong and Landers 2018: 1-8). One of the examples is till training game developed for McDonald's, in which employees could practice the accuracy of preparing orders and assess personal knowledge through answering questions. In return, McDonald's has got professionals, who know how to deliver the best service to customers (A City & Guilds Group Kineo 2014).

3.2 Gamification in personnel engagement

Gamification can also be a good tool for employee engagement and involvement in the working processes. Gamification is considered to be a way to deal with routine tasks and to create deeper meaning in the work activities. Knowing that game elements cause meaningful emotions, it is possible for companies to stimulate the necessary behaviour and therefore to increase the employee' efficiency (Medium 2018). This section focuses on the traditional ways of employee engagement comparing it to the gamification method and reveals the real-life applications of gamified experiences.

3.2.1 Traditional ways of employee engagement

Solid working team means employees implement their work efficiently, fast and with necessary passion. To build this team and create favourable work conditions are two main tasks of most of the employers. There are various ways to engage the personnel, but first, it is important to understand the concept of motivation and its' forms (Clarke 2018).

Motivation is the desire to act in some particular way or do something specific. Primarily, motivation is the psychological process, which rules the activities of a person. Correspondingly, from the point of an employer, motivation is the creation of specific working conditions and incentives, which encourage employees to implement their tasks efficiently and achieve stated objectives (Inc. 2006). There are two forms of motivation generally distinguished: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation encourages a person to do something because of the external stimuli. For instance, if an employee's main incentive is to work for money, the increase in wage payments or receiving additional monetary bonuses will motivate him/her to work more. In most cases, the extrinsic motivation of employee is associated with the tangible methods: monetary and non-monetary rewards or from another side – a system of fines. Monetary rewards include a wage increase, bonuses, benefits or discounts. Non-monetary compensations are usually training or courses at the expense of the company, vouchers and business trips. Another side of extrinsic employee motivation is the system of fines at the workplace. It consists of monetary punishment of an employee for being late or for improper behaviour at the workplace and etc. Motivational force of such punishments is an arguable question because introducing the system into the workflow, an employer needs to have the necessary experience in this field and understand the importance of an individual approach to every person. The result of punishment depends on the orientation to employees' needs, the strength of the sanction and its correlation of rewards.

Intrinsic motivation is stimuli that originate from inside of the person. In contrast to extrinsic motivation, intrinsic one does not rely upon material benefits. Conversely, the work is implemented by employees for their own development and satisfaction. In case the employee is well-motivated internally, he/she understands the reasons for working

in a particular company and why it is necessary to make an effort at work. At first sight, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation seems to be completely different, however, at the workplace, they are tightly interconnected. For example, to encourage the team, one of the methods is for the employer to recognize the success and set outstanding employees as an example for others. In the future, it may stimulate workers and engage them for personal growth within the company (Bernazzani 2017).

3.2.2 Engagement through gamification

Considering traditional ways of employee engagement, it is now possible to analyze at what kind of different ways gamification can motivate individuals at work. Gamification is also one of the tools of personnel engagement at the workplace. It gives the opportunity for workers to learn new skills, behaviour and discover new ways of solving problems. The system of rewards and achievements in the games create a consecutive change in the behaviour. Most importantly, gamified experiences are generally planned to leave positive feedback for workers to increase their motivation. Moreover, in employee engagement gamification is practised breaking down complex tasks into simplified assignments which is beneficial for both employees and the employer. It is crucial to understand; gamification does not terminate the traditional ways of employee motivation but serves as the supplementary system to induce the intrinsic motivations of workers if properly planned and executed (Nelson 2016).

In order to understand the ways how gamification activities are used in personnel engagement, it is vital to demonstrate the actual business cases. The head of one of Microsoft testing team has found the unusual way to the problem arose at the stage of program development – plenty of mistakes in dialogue boxes of programs in different languages. The Language Quality Game was created, in which every Microsoft employee from all over the world could participate. Employees received points from each error found and competed on the overall leaderboard. The game was successful and showed that workers were highly motivated and engaged by the idea, which made them do something that was not part of their responsibilities. In this case, gamification encouraged the development of the intrinsic motivation of workers, which in turns increased productivity and cohesion (Microsoft 2012).

To engage employees, companies usually apply the PBL system discussed previously, in the form of online badges, virtual currency, different levels and ratings depending on the type of gamified experience. However, in some company's gamification practices used for employee engagement fail. For example, the Omnicare corporation, which is the pharmacy service provider, failed to use gamification to solve the problem of long waiting times at a helpdesk. The company introduces the leaderboards for employees to compete and therefore increase their productivity. Employees, who worked faster than others, also got the cash bonuses. Unfortunately, the results were fatal – high employee liquidity, the dissatisfaction of consumers and workers. The reason for the failed gamified experience is the inability of managers, who adopted the system, to understand the true motivation of workers in the company as well as poor gamification design (Naveed 2018).

In the modern world, the question of employees' motivation is pressing – HR managers working hard to improve the productivity of workers and engage teamworking. Ian Cook, director of research and learning for the British Columbia Human Resources Management Association, reviews the positive examples of gamification adopted in some companies. The author claims no matter successful outcomes, the gamification approach is unpredictable and can lead both to progress and failures (Cook 2012: 31). Jacek Woźniak, the academic writer on the topic of gamification, supports the claim stating most of the gamification examples come from large-scale organizations and there are some barriers for adopting game principles in small and medium enterprises (SME) – for example, the lack of managerial knowledge. However, in further research, the author suggests applying the gamification principles to the motivational methods in SME in case of dissatisfaction with an existing one (Woźniak 2017).

One of the main critiques of gamification usage as the tool for employee engagement is that it can be used to influence people behaviour or so-called "exploitationware". This term was developed by Ian Bogost, game designer and researcher at the Georgia Tech University, in his personal blog post. He explains that gamification is the way to exploit employees rather than motivate or engage them. The author states that using fictional incentives (badges, leaderboards, virtual currencies) companies stops to employ traditional motivational ways such as money, better working conditions or higher job responsibility. As a result, the businesses apply gamified systems to exploit employees

and increase their productivity without giving something valuable or real in return and not considering the true motivation of workers (Bogost 2011).

The main problems of the gamification application into the motivational system of employees are the unawareness of player's interests and risks of the improper introduction of gamified experiences, or on the other hand, intentional way to force people to act in a certain way. Thus, the first thing to consider before designing the gamification is the main objectives of the business and what is the purpose of engaging people to do something. The second important questions are who the players are and what are their motivations to work in the company. These initial steps are leading to the appropriate gamification design and its successful application in employee engagement (Werbach 2012e).

4 Research Design & Data Collection

4.1 Background and motivation

The determining factor in the company's growth is personnel, directly fulfilling certain activities and functions. In modern organisations, the problem of engaging human resources is a challenging task, therefore the attention to the employee motivation has increased significantly. Managers develop various and innovative ways of recruitment, training and stimulating employees (Napolitano 2017).

Gamification is the novel concept and to this date researchers still discuss its significance and actual influence. Being mostly customer-oriented, it is rarely studied and discussed in terms of HR management and in particular employee engagement. In reality, it is obviously not easy to apply game elements to the existing corporate structure as it requires varied knowledge, for example designing and an invention of games. Obtaining the significant popularity in the USA, gamification application on the Finnish market is undiscovered. Moreover, there are not many specialists on the market providing these technologies with proper competencies. Thus, gamification is a topical theme with regard to current business trends and future implications.

4.2 Research objectives

The thesis work focuses on the principles of gamification applied to Human Resources activities – in particular in personnel engagement. During the initial stage of the thesis work, two research hypotheses have been stated:

H1: "Gamification has a positive impact on employee engagement."

H2: "Gamification is widely practised in employee engagement on the Finnish market."

The ultimate purpose of the thesis work is to develop the set of recommendations for the introduction of gamification principles in the system of engaging and retaining employees in a modern Finnish company. To achieve the objective of the research, the set of general tasks was developed as follows:

- to acknowledge the theoretical aspects and practical implementations of gamification;
- to consider the role of the gamification in Human Resources Management and in particular personnel engagement and retention;
- to analyze the HR gamification current trends on the Finnish market;
- to analyze the current state of gamification applied to personnel engagement in Finland;
- to develop recommendations for the creation or improving the system of employee engagement through gamification principles for Finnish firms.

The practical significance of the current research is its further usage in the creation and application of gamified experiences in employee engagement of the Finnish companies.

4.3 Data collection and analysis

In the present thesis work, the gamification is used as the dependent one-dimensional degree to understand its effect on employee engagement and its' relevance to the Finnish market. As the practical part of the thesis, the recommendations for designing of appropriate gamified approach for Finnish firms are developed.

The steps of the research are created in the systematic scheme represented below. This concept helps the author to narrow down the research and to create the structure of it. Figure 5 shows the stages of the research implemented to achieve the objectives of the thesis work.

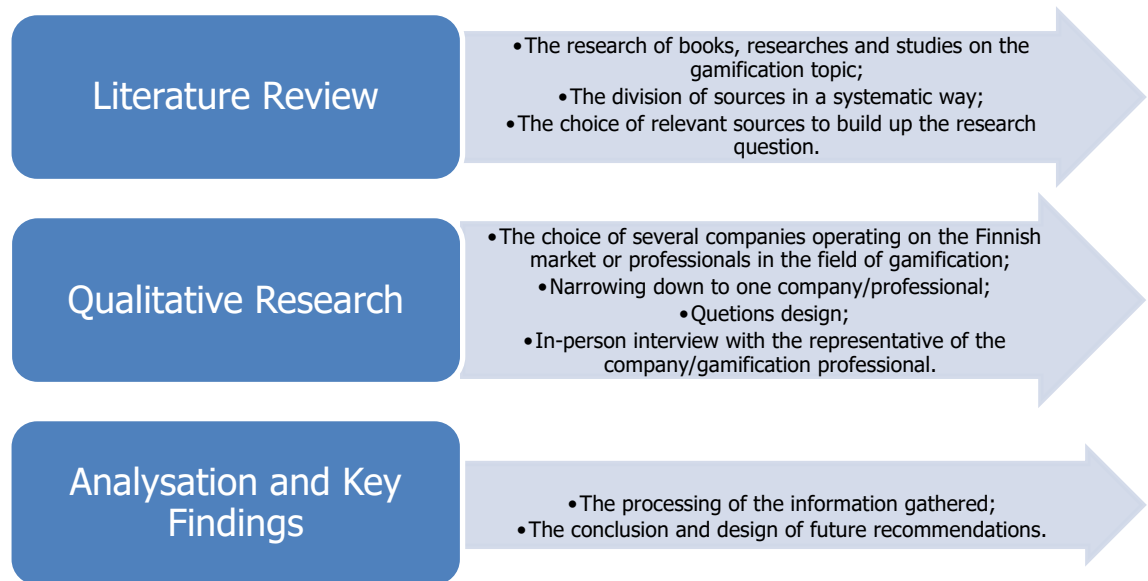


Figure 5. The research methodology. Developed by the author.

In order to answer the research questions, the author decided to contact the gamification professional in Finland. The largest company on the market that gamifies various business processes as a service is Richen. Richen was founded in 2012 in Helsinki, it employs only 5 people, but already has a track record of working and providing gamification services to big Finnish corporations. Among other clients, Richen has worked with Rovio, Dagmar, Veikkaus, Aalto University and Elisa Appelsiini.

In order to acquire the most accurate industry data and information regarding the research question, it was necessary to contact Richen as an industry expert, that has experience working with many companies providing service in the field of gamification. Usually, the information regarding internal business processes is confidential and cannot be accessed via public sources, therefore the decision was to contact the service provider directly, instead of searching for a number of companies implying gamification in employee engagement. Richen has been able to provide combined knowledge of their service and client needs as well as processes being done in Finland and their relevance.

The author has contacted Fredrik Sirén – Founder of Richen Oy. Fredrik, due to his leading position in the company has a considerable amount of knowledge on the topic of

gamification and on Richen operations. He was able to share some of the information in a short interview. The transcript of an entire talk can be found in the Appendix.

Furthermore, as research is partly based on the literature review and analysis, the author of the thesis took the additional online Coursera course on Gamification created and conducted in 2012 by Kevin Werbach - the gamification expert. Throughout the whole paper, there are a lot of references to the course discussions.

The thesis is problem-centred as it refers not to the specific company but relative to the overall Finnish business industry. That is why it is mainly based on the secondary research and supported by the real-life examples and opinion of the gamification professional.

4.4 Research limitations

The current research is the subject to several limitations based on the method and data collection resources used by the author. First of all, because the current research work is mainly based on qualitative secondary data, all the informational sources presented in this paper are assumed to be accurate. The gamification is a relatively new trend; therefore, all existing researches are merely assumptions and opinions based on previous findings – long-term studies do not yet exist.

Secondly, as the base for the thesis work is an interview, it is limited to the one chosen company's professional opinion which is analytically analyzed and discussed. Based on the accumulated data, the general recommendations and practical implications for the Finnish organisations will be developed and proposed. The research is conducted to give answers to specific questions concerning the current gamification implementation on the Finnish market as well as it allows to eliminate possible biases occurring while analyzing the secondary data, for example, the relevance of the information.

Finally, the research is limited to the time constraints and amount of resources used by the author. As the thesis is the part of Bachelor studies, there was not enough time to

observe and analyze the long-term development of the gamification on employee engagement.

5 Key Findings & Discussions

5.1 Gamification's impact on employee engagement

The current research illustrates an exhaustive review of the gamification applied in HR management, particularly employee engagement. The analyzation of the existing literature showed that the gamification introduced to employee engagement influence a person's behaviour and motivation to work. In this business field, gamification is the tool for an anti-crisis solution used to stimulate more efficient productivity of employees.

In analyzing the secondary data, two opposite views on the gamification usage in employee engagement were discovered. Some researchers considered gamification to be an effective tool influencing favourably the employee behaviour, motivation and productivity, while others supported the idea of gamification to exploit employees in the interests of the company.

Both of these opinions are legitimate as the authors of them reinforce the viewpoints with real-life examples and implications. While the gamified experience of Microsoft had an astonishing success and positive influence on employee engagement, the example of Omnicare compels to think about the risks of applying gamification in the HR field.

However, there were some researchers trying to remain unbiased and considering both – positive and negative sides of the gamification influencing on employee behaviour. They contemplated it is highly crucial to take into the account risks and criticism of the gamification in order to create the superior and successful gamified experience. Kevin Werbach, the expert in gamification, in his gamification course on Coursera discusses:

“Frankly, a big problem with gamification today is that many companies think that just throwing elements onto a business process magically makes something game like. Magically makes it fun and engaging without doing any of the really hard work” (Werbach 2012).

The statement provides evidence of gamification to be a powerful tool if properly designed and considered in advance. The author explains of the gamification fails to be

the company's intended or accidental unsuccessful attempt to understand the approach as well as employees and business objectives.

As a result of the literature review analyses, it is possible to state that findings support the initial hypothesis – gamification has a positive influence on employee engagement. Most of the resources provided the evidence of gamification to be a successful tool in employee engagement under the condition of the appropriate design corresponding to the business objectives of the firm. However, if gamification is misunderstood, intentionally used to exploit workers or confused with pointification – the result turned out to be deplorable.

5.2 Gamification in employee engagement on the Finnish market

The purpose of the interview with the leading gamification company on the market was to prove or refute the second hypothesis as well as get to know more about the current situation in the field of employee engagement in Finland. Based on that, the interview questions have been designed.

Fredrik Sirén (2019) states that companies in Finland request cooperation in order to improve various HR activities, for example, employee engagement. Despite claiming to provide the "gamification" services, Sirén explains that for the most part what clients practically request is employee engagement tactics using game mechanical elements. As discovered previously by the author of the current paper, it is simply the usage of so-called pointification, which is not the complete gamification practice. However, the expert asserts that it is only in the case of improving HR activities, while all the rest gamification is done appropriately.

Sirén assesses the current state of the gamification in Finland to be at an early stage of its lifecycle. The main reason for this argument is the low level of awareness of the gamification concept among HR specialists in the Finnish industry. Another reason is that gamification is generally misunderstood and mixed with other practices or engagement tools. As occurred in the present research conducted by the author, it is quite a common

problem all over the world. Nevertheless, the fact that companies like Rovio and Elisa are already adopting this approach is the good sign of the bigger future of the gamification on the Finnish market, and probably employee engagement process. Thereafter, the second hypothesis has not been confirmed and currently, the gamification is not widely applied in employee motivation activities in Finland.

5.3 Implication guidelines for companies

Gamification is a complex method consisting of multiple aspects. The main objective of the research was by combining the information and insights to develop a common system of recommendations for companies to gamify the employee engagement process. It is important to highlight that instructions are overall with no detail steps of implementation because every company is different from its nature. Moreover, they are subject to the author's critical analyzation of the variety of literature sources without practical application of it in the organization.

Set the goals. Before the actual designing of the gamification process, it is important to set the business objectives or determine the gap in employee engagement that the gamified experience needs to fill in. By defining the business objectives, the company outlines the target behaviour of employees (Werbach 2012f).

Get to know the players. This aspect is easily ignored by gamification designers and companies as they follow only own interests. It is crucial to know the demographics and real employee's motivations in advance. How do they already behave? What kind of items engages them? It is useful to understand the players in advance since different groups of people have distinct needs. Employers should not force the workers to participate in gamification activities (Nelson 2016).

Design Framework. After considering all the preliminary aspects, it is time to design the actual gamification experience. Game design requires professional knowledge and practical experience, therefore better to be implemented by a gamification expert. However, some guidelines are formed to direct the flow of design. The following Figure

6 combines the suggestion for design steps of simple and generalized gamification process developed by the author based on the literature review. As the design is the functional part of the gamification process, its implementation varies based on the designer's knowledge and resolutions. The designer needs to consider a delightful rewards system, activity loop and not to forget about fun part of the gamification. All of these aspects were disclosed in the present research.

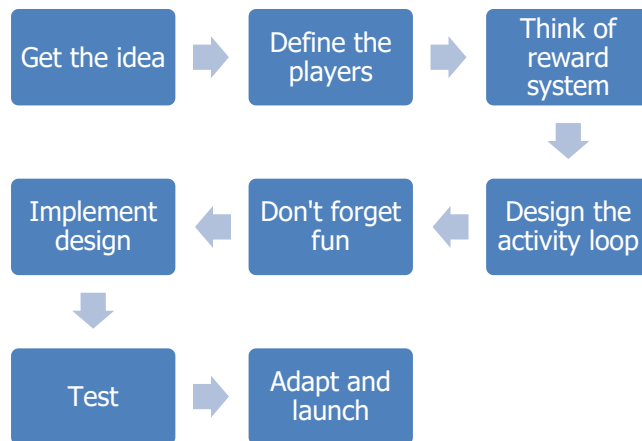


Figure 6. Simplified steps of the gamification process design. Developed by the author.

Every player goes through the particular path – the journey of the gamification process. The journey needs to be designed and planned ahead of time. Figure 7 represents the generalized player journey. It all starts with the “onboarding” process responsible for the player to start the game, understand the rules quickly. Usually, it implies initial training and guidelines. At this stage, the responsible person should be appointed to lead the whole process, answer questions and follow the procedure. The advice is to give direct and simple guidance sentences providing the express feedback.



Figure 7. Generalized user journey. Adopted from Werbach (2012f).

To the end of the player's journey through the gamification process, the user should achieve the goal of the game, develop new skills or master something. The last stage is offboarding when the participant summarizes the results, shares personal emotions and leaves feedback (Werbach 2012g).

Feedback. Gamification uses constant two-way feedback throughout the whole gamification process for two reasons – to motivate the employees and adapt the system to employee's needs and experience. It is an essential condition of every gamified experience (Nelson 2016).

Timeframe. There is no recommendation on the specific duration of the gamified experience. However, analyzing the existing positive and negative examples, the author recommends keeping it short-term for employee engagement. Traditional motivational ways after becoming habits have no longer similar effect. That is the reason to create a complex and amusing gamified activity.

Among other conditions, the gamification experience applied to engage employees should be balanced, simple and interesting to players. Following all the instructions along with the knowledge presented in the current research, it is achievable to design the successful gamification experience.

6 Conclusion

The present study focuses on the gamification effect on the employee engagement process. After the careful review of the literature sources, existing researches and real-life examples, gamified activities have been proven to have a positive impact on employee motivation at the workplace. However, the analyses also showed the importance of the gamification designer to understand the ultimate objective of the process, which should correspond to the employees' incentives and overall business goals. All the failed attempts to introduce the gamification into the internal business processes are claimed to be the misunderstanding and underestimation of the concept by the game designer or the employer.

Another part of the research was based on testing the presence of the gamification on the Finnish HR market. The study was based on the interview with one of the leading gamification experts in Finland – the founder of Richen company. According to his experience and opinion, gamification state in the Finnish business environment is currently on the very early stage. Despite the low popularity of the gamification in employee engagement in Finland, there is the tendency of companies to slowly adopt this concept in the future.

Based on the information gathered and analyzed during the proceeding of the present thesis, the recommendations for future gamification introduction into the existing employee engagement system has been developed by the author. They serve as the support for companies and for future researches in the field of the gamification.

The above-mentioned results support the first hypothesis to be right, while at the same time refute the second one. However, the second hypothesis was disapproved by the results of the research, it still provides valuable insight for the ground of the future researches on this topic.

In conclusion, the gamification is the novel topic in business serving as a tool for improving the efficiency of users, amusing routine activities and assisting in easier learning and training. Due to its modernity, it is difficult to judge its future development

and long-term application. However, if applied correctly, the gamification is a powerful mechanism easing our lives.

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Interview Transcript

M (Svetlana): Good morning, Fredrik. My name is Svetlana and I study at Metropolia University and currently, I am in the process of writing my thesis. The topic of the research is gamification in employee engagement. After the industry research, I came across your company (Richen) and I would like to ask you a couple of questions.

F (Fredrik Sirén): Sure, let's go.

M: Great, in my gamification thesis I focused on HR and especially on employee engagement. I have seen on your website you have an Ideapp service - gamification tool for businesses, but I couldn't find any information about how it works. Could you please explain in details how does it operate from the client perspective?

F: To be honest, our website is a bit outdated - we stopped to develop an Ideapp because currently work on different projects. Ideapp is a crowdsourcing tool helping, for example, in project management. For Ideapp we cooperate with Aalto University. Lately, we have done talent engagement work for Veikkaus and Kesko group.

M: Good to know. Another question - I see that you cooperate with a lot of companies in Finland. How often do they ask you to improve their internal HR activities?

F: It is very common. Many Finnish companies contact us to improve their internal HR management processes. One of which is employee engagement. But I should say it is not exactly the gamification itself - we separate this definition. It is rather an employee engagement using game mechanical elements. That's the thing that we do the most.

M: And one last question - how would you assess the current state of gamification in Finland in the HR area if we talk about employee engagement. Is it developed or not?

F: It is absolutely in an early stage. Gamification is usually misunderstood by the companies and used primarily as a hype word. Some HR professionals in Finland haven't even heard of this term. That is why I think it is not really common and not developed. However, there are still some companies approaching us to bring the gamification in their companies.

M: Thank you very much for your time. It was interesting to get to know about level of gamification in Finland.

F: Thank you. Good luck.