



Gamification as a motivational tool

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<p>Abstract:</p> <p>For over the years, companies have been trying to find the ways to get the most out of employees. It has been a long time since business owners realized that, instead of forcing people to work, people tend to perform better if they are motivated. However, statistical data shows that from 60 to 95% of employees globally are not engaged and indicates that addressing motivation is now more important than ever. At the same time, technologies advance and new concepts arise. One of them is gamification, which implies using game elements in non-gaming situations. Now the concept is actively used in different contexts and, among other things, in motivation. The aim of this paper was to study motivation and gamification, as well how they relate to each other, and how gamification tools may be offered as a practical solution resulting in stronger motivation and improved performance. The study has a form of action research, which allows for constantly taking in new means of data and make new decisions based on that data. Multiple sources of information were taken into use – both primary data, such as interviews or personal knowledge, and secondary data, which is various books, articles, databases and other literature. The theoretical part thoroughly examines both motivation and gamification concepts, various motivation theories supporting gamification activities are defined and some gamification models with focus on motivation are presented. The empirical part has a form of developing a gamification solution. Through gathered data, gamification framework was elaborated and adapted to specific company, which serves as an example of how gamification may be applied in practice in business context. The key focus was on motivation, and results are also discussed in relation to how various motivators are addressed – both intrinsic and extrinsic.</p>	
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FOREWORD

This Master's thesis is a final step to complete my education at Arcada. The choice of a thesis topic was not easy for me, though. For different reasons, first ideas had to be discarded, and I had to get back to the process of searching for a new topic again. By chance, I found out that Evgeniya Lyubko, my former schoolmate in Moscow, had written a book on gamification in human resources. She is, as it turned out, one of the first practitioners in the field in Russia. Her book and ideas expressed in it somehow inspired my interest in the subject, and, as a result, this work was written.

I would like to thank many people who have been continuously supporting me on my way. I am grateful to my former work colleague Dmitrii Borodin. If it had not been him, I would have never seriously considered studying in Finland. Big thanks to Calle Johan-Rosenbröijer, former Programme Director and now Vice Rector for Education at Arcada, for always being there for us, students. I also want to say thanks to my Thesis supervisor Henrika Franck for her help and valuable advice. Of course, I will not forget my schoolmates at Arcada for the time we have spent together. Finally, I extend my warmest thanks to my family – my husband and my parents. They kept their faith in me at times when I thought I could not make it. Without their support, this thesis might have never seen the light of a day.

1 INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that motivated people work better and more efficiently. Consequently, it is very important to make sure that company's staff is highly motivated and satisfied, as well as employees are willing to contribute to the company's success and further growth. However, multiple researchers cite the fact that nowadays employees are suffering from low motivation and there is a lack of employee engagement in general, which is also proven by poll results. For example, according to Sorenson & Garman (2013), over 70% of American employees are disengaged from their work. More recent Gallup poll results (2017) show that 85% of global workforce is not engaged or actively disengaged, and, which is also quite surprising, in the Western Europe only 10% of employees are engaged in their work. In particular, in Finland only 12% of the workforce is engaged at workplace, more than twice less than in post-Soviet countries – Russia included – where the figure stands at 25% (see Gallup, p.81 & p.104).

The reasons for low engagement and job satisfaction are complex, as well as there are multiple factors that cause low level of motivation among workers – varying from job insecurity and overwork to lack of interest and procrastination (Hedges, 2014). The author of this paper is by no means aiming to solve this problem in one paper but would rather like to emphasize that the nature of work has changed itself, since humanity has been moving away from manual labor to digital world, artificial intelligence and robotization (Depura & Garg, 2012). Leveraging on technology advances, a new concept with the roots in the field of information systems has arisen – gamification. Today gamification is being increasingly used for motivational purposes in order to boost the staff performance, and gamification tools is one of the realistic alternatives for the company to lift the non-financial motivation to a new level and at the same time increase employee engagement.

1.1 Background and need

There is an increasing interest towards the phenomenon of gamification from both the businesses and theorists, but, even though it is generally believed that the term first appeared in 2002, before 2010 no one even searched for the term (Fuchs et al., 2014,

p.120). However, in 2011, all of a sudden, it became a popular trend in the USA and, later, in Europe (Duggan & Shoop, p. 9).

Despite that some nine years have passed since gamification became a mainstream, there is still a lot to learn. First, there is a lack of theoretical research. Many researchers state that, while there have been some positive changes in the last few years, there is still a gap between practice and academic development. As a trend, gamification has started receiving recently a lot of attention. Scientific research regarding gamification and the effects of game-design elements in the workplace is lacking though (Lowman, 2016; Suh & Wagner, 2017, p.417). Ferreira et al. (2017) share a similar view that academic research is scarce and quite limited and state that literature related to appropriateness and usefulness of gamification in human resources (henceforth referred as HR) is mainly exploratory.

While there is a common belief that gamification received more attention from practitioners than scientists and the term itself is relatively known, it has not gained widespread adoption after all (European CEO, 2019). At the same time, while gamification is indeed becoming more and more popular in different fields, many businesses and their superiors tend to implement gamification practices for marketing activities, where the concept is being widely used for popularizing products and services. Meanwhile, gamification programs may foster loyalty, promote employee engagement and motivation and create an environment in which workers feel recognized (Sims, 2018). As a bonus, one of the unexpected advantages of gamification is that it does not necessarily imply taking into use monetary-based rewards. Virtual rewards can be even more powerful than monetary incentives and, what is more important, they are often low-cost or even no-cost rewards (see Duggan & Shoop, 2013; Wozniak, 2015). Thus, no big investments are required.

Based on the mentioned above, the author came to conclusion that there is a reason to conduct a further investigation. In this paper, she aims to present the concept and provide an insight into gamification. The author also believes that through this paper she will be able to draw attention to the concept of gamification and its usability as a tool that can help motivate employees and inspire them to superior job performance.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Lack of motivation and low work engagement have been already cited above as a problematic issue for many companies. Financial motivation in developed world is no longer sufficient to keep an employee satisfied and involved in work activities (see Rheem, 2017). Although in Eastern Europe and Russia financial motivators are still considered to be effective, the situation has been nonetheless slowly changing in a positive direction (Gdowska et al., 2018, p.95 ff.). At times, it is also a matter of the size of the company. Small-scale companies often do not have sufficient amount of resources to keep revising salaries continuously. For these reasons, employers have to offer their workers something more than a good salary (see Friedrichs, 2011, p.1). Companies should start thinking of new innovative ways of increasing employee motivation.

Another issue is the generational change. It is important because more and more millennials (born between early 1980's and mid-1990's) are constantly entering the labor market. Millennials are technical savvy and they better understand the benefits of gaming, as they have grown up playing different kinds of games. At the same time, they also expect more challenging work assignments. It is the employer's task to provide the younger workers with motivational environment, so that they work efficiently and productively while enjoying the work they do. It is indeed easier said than done. It is in some way a real challenge for business executives in general and HR departments, as they need to invest both their time and money in order to learn, understand and leverage on the ways in which the new "digital generation" behaves. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.94; Ronda, 2016)

Another matter is connected to specific socio-economic situation in Russia, for the empirical part of the research is linked to a Russian company, which is chosen as a case company for this project. Russian economy has been heavily affected by the local crisis, which emerged in 2014 (see Medvedev, 2016). Consequently, many companies, especially the smaller ones, have been hit hard by the crisis as well. Being affected by that situation, companies are forced to think of the other ways to raise employee motivation than financial incentives.

The author personally believes that gamification is a potential tool for solving all the aforementioned problems.

1.3 The case company

The case company chosen for this project is quite familiar for the author. “Trampoline Centre C9” (henceforth referred as C9) is a small Russian company based in St. Petersburg, and its operations are limited to Russian market only. As a company, C9 was established a little less than eight years ago, in 2011. The services offered by the company to its customers are either sports or entertainment related by its nature. C9’s clients are entitled to a number of services – to name a few – training with an instructor in a group or in a private session, different sorts of activities without instructor assistance. It is also possible to organize a celebration and hold different forms of events, like birthday or corporate parties.

Most of the company’s customers are young people, who are at the very least under 30 years old. The bigger part of them is teenagers, who are very supportive of active sports, or children, being brought into sports by their parents attracted by a possibility of training with an instructor. The company’s executives have a pretty good idea of their customers, what they want and need, but the same cannot be said about the employees, as they have never been the primary focus.

The author of this paper suggests raising the level of attention to this issue, as financial capacity of the organization is limited, being harmed by the local crisis and rising competition in the field. The author’s assumption that gamification could be a solution to company’s problems is also based on that, as at the end of December 2018, 65% of company’s workers were under thirty years old, and only 20% of employees were over thirty-five years old. Gamifying activities are indeed not limited by the age of participants, but, as has been already mentioned, young generation is believed to be more perceptive to gamification techniques.

Although as a case company a Russian company was chosen, the author is inclined to believe that the same trends, which are affecting C9, most likely affect other companies

from all over the world in similar ways. These trends have been already mentioned by author – low work engagement, generational change, low response to monetary incentives. There are indeed country-to-country varieties, which may be also said about the rate of adoption of gamification in different industries. For instance, Vinichenko et al. conducted a research in 2016. According to their findings, in Russia, within Moscow region, gamification techniques were employed in less than 20% of the organizations. More than a third of respondents stated that they had not even heard of gamification as a tool in HR. As another example, Finland was the first country in the world to get a professor in gamification – Juho Hamari took that position in December 2016 (Yle, 2017a). The country also has good chances of becoming one of the leaders by taking the concept forward and introducing it in various fields of expertise.

In general, though, motivation depends greatly on desire of an individual to perform specific tasks, and gamification is such a tool that may positively influence it, regardless of the country where it is applied.

1.4 Service businesses and motivation

Employee engagement and motivation should be considered as a top priority for client service organizations, since providing exceptional customer experience is a key issue for success of any service company (see Kumar & Raghavendran, 2015, p.3). The author has, in particular, decided to highlight this matter, because the case company is a service company, which mainly has to deal with customers “face-to-face”.

According to Business Dictionary (2018), service company or service business is a commercial enterprise that provides work performed in an expert manner by an individual or team for the benefit of its customers. Thus, service companies have to interact and communicate with their customers, and that puts customer in the centre of the company’s attention. Unsurprisingly, employees need to be highly motivated in order to be willing to provide services to customers in the best possible way. The reward, consecutively, becomes a crucial factor for promoting task achievement.

Gamification is one of the tools to reward and foster employee performance – the tool, which has probably yet to see an increase in popularity in service industry (cp. Korn & Schmidt, 2015, pp.3424-3425 & pp.3427-3428). The author personally believes that applying this tool for influencing level of employee motivation could be beneficial not only for the case company's needs but for service organizations in general.

2 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter provides an insight into how research is conducted. Firstly, aim of the study, its purpose and research objectives are defined and formulated. Following that, research strategy and methods of data collection are discussed. Finally, study limitations are mentioned and thesis structure is presented.

2.1 Aim of the study

As the focus of the following study is on gamification and motivation, the basic idea is to explain the concepts and how they may be connected to each other. Thus, **aim of this research project** is to structure existing knowledge, describe both concepts and give an idea on how gamification may be used as a tool in motivation. The study aims to fill the gaps in literature by investigating numerous research papers, articles and theories. Furthermore, **the aim of research** is to advise on gamification solutions to a particular company, so that in theory by implementing gamification techniques a company in question could increase employee motivation, work engagement and, consequently, boost up employee performance and productivity.

2.2 Purpose of the study and research objectives

The **purpose of the study** is to explore and analyse relevant literature on motivation and gamification so as to apply gained knowledge to the case company and present solutions involving gamification techniques in order to improve employee productivity.

The following **research objectives** were formulated:

RO1: present and describe the concept of gamification and its methodology;

RO2: present and study the concept of motivation, identify and analyse motivation theories;

RO3: link gamification to motivation and explain how gamification techniques may be used for motivational purposes;

RO4: propose gamification tools as a solution to increase employee motivation.

2.3 Procedure

Deciding on a way to conduct a research is not an easy task for researcher. For this project as a research method an **action research** was chosen. Action research is used in applied settings and involves a researcher in a situation in order to develop new skills or solve a problem in that particular situation that directly arises from the setting (see Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

There is a particular problem to be investigated in this paper – application of gamification tools for the motivational purposes. The case company is used to illustrate how the problem may be addressed in practice. The purpose of this work is not limited to analysing literature or exploring the case company situation but also involves suggesting a solution to a problem and providing recommendations. In other words, “the research is concerned with the resolution of organisational issues such as the implications of change together with those who experience the issues directly” (Saunders et al., 2009, p.147). The author is also in some way a part of the research itself. While doing a research on her own and not implying that research results are to be necessarily incorporated into company’s activities, she also understands that being an employee means being “a part of the team” and as such relates to another specific feature of action research – “involvement of practitioners in the research” (Saunders et al.).

The aforementioned reasons made the author realize that action research is the right choice for a methodology strategy in relation to this study. As for other distinctive features of action research, the following should be mentioned: “action research should have implications beyond the immediate project” and “spiraling and cyclical nature typically involving stages such as diagnosing, planning, taking action, evaluating” (Saunders et al., 2009, p.147). The latter one is presented graphically on the Figure 1.

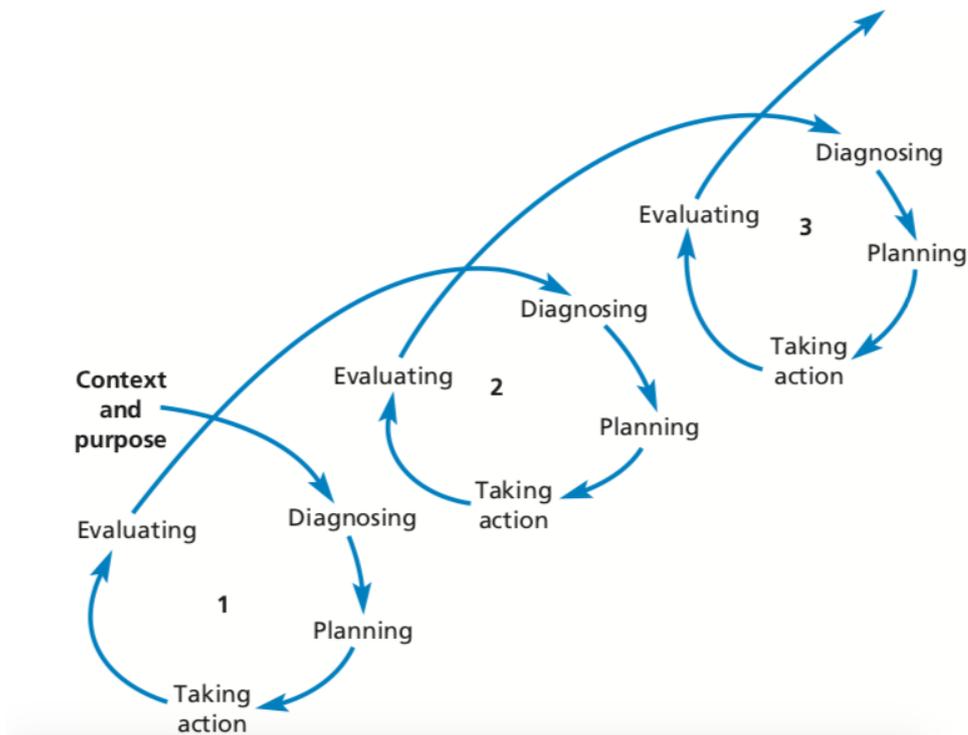


Figure 1. The action research spiral (Saunders et al., 2009, p.148)

For this study the action research stages could be reformulated as following:

1 **Diagnosing** – state the problem and need for a change, formulate research questions.

2 **Planning** – choose the appropriate research method, structure the research, decide on appropriate means of collecting data.

3 **Taking action** – review relevant for the study literature as well as gather data from other sources.

4 **Evaluating** – develop and present a solution to the problem through the use of gained knowledge.

For illustration purposes stages of the research are presented in graphic form on the Figure 2.

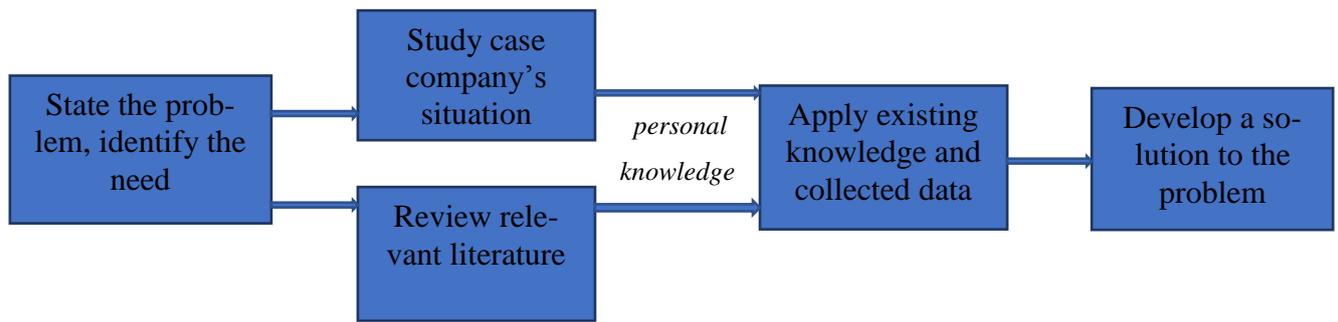


Figure 2. Thesis research stages (author)

2.4 Data collection

Collecting data for this thesis included gathering both **primary data** and **secondary data**. According to Saunders et al. (2009, p.256), primary data is new data, which is collected for a specific research, whereas secondary data is data that have been already collected for some other purposes.

Collecting secondary data was split into two parts:

- 1 reviewing existing literature;
- 2 gathering evidence and data issued and stored by the case company.

For the purposes of research, different types of data were analysed, including documentary data, data coming from multiple sources as well as various survey results (Saunders et al., pp.258-263). As for literature review, multiple books, journals, websites and other literature sources were studied. Case company data includes numerous reports and brochures, information from official company's website as well as data gained through access to the company's database. The availability of this data was not an issue for the author, because being an employee of the case company it was not difficult for her to obtain access to the mentioned sources.

Primary data was mainly collected through semi-structured or in-depth interviews (Saunders et al., pp.320-321). The interviews were conducted to learn more about the case company situation and in the same time to focus and limit the scope of research.

Employees also participated in the short quiz, which served as another source of valuable data.

2.5 Study limitations

As any research project is in some way limited, there is always something to be left beyond the scope. First of all, both topics discussed in this paper – gamification and motivation – are broad enough, and it would not be possible to describe or explain all existing theoretical knowledge related to these disciplines in one paper. Thus, the author tried to limit discussed topics and the literature sources to either the most relevant or the most comprehensive, focusing mainly on choosing literature supporting the purpose of this research.

The empirical part of this research has a focus on exploring how gamification may improve case company's operations, as original purpose is to suggest and present certain solutions, which would aim at increasing employee motivation in a particular company. However, defining implementation details and related aspects is not intended to be a part of the thesis project. Moreover, whether any of recommendations will be actually adopted remains questionable. There is a possible interest on the part of case company, but that interest is actually more or less theoretical.

However, the author believes she did her best to investigate the topic, and any possible limitations, which narrow the research, rather serve the purpose of understanding the future areas of interest.

2.6 Thesis structure

The thesis paper is composed of the following chapters:

The **first chapter** serves as an introduction to the topic. The case company is presented, some background is provided, and initial idea is explained.

The **second chapter** explains the way research is conducted. Aim of the study, purpose and research objectives are stated. Research methodology is elaborated and means of data collection are discussed. Finally, study limitations and thesis structure are introduced.

The **third chapter** is a theoretical study discussion. The literature review serves a purpose of providing an insight into the concepts of gamification and motivation, as well as explaining how both concepts are connected to each other. Some relevant theories and models are also described.

Empirical study presented in the **fourth chapter** of this paper takes place in the form of service development, which is in this case a gamification framework adapted to the needs of the case company. Main idea is that through implementing gamification initiatives, which are formulated in this chapter, there will be a considerable effect on employee motivation and, consecutively, on their performance.

The fifth chapter has a form of reflective discussion in connection with research objectives and thesis purpose, logically resulting in the **sixth chapter** summarizing whole findings of the study.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The literature to be discussed in this chapter comes from different sources, various books and journals, multiple articles and websites. The author spent a lot of time on finding appropriate sources and tried to limit literature review to the most beneficial topics in reference to the purpose of this research.

3.1 Introduction

It has been decided to divide this chapter into three parts. The first part defines the concept of gamification in general and its applicability in HR. Precursors to the concept are mentioned and gamification methodology is presented. The second part describes the concept of motivation, important terms and presents an overview of motivational theories. The latter part explains the logic behind using gamification as a motivational tool at the company.

3.2 Gamification

Gamification, as a matter of fact, is not a new concept, and it has been a while since it expanded beyond technology and became a multi-disciplinary term. Although in gamification, technology is exactly what has been used as an attempt to push people towards various activities (Hamari & Koivisto, 2015). Playing games is indeed a natural activity, which roots back to the early days of becoming of mankind, but the roots of gamification, however, date back to the 70s, to the video game industry, a sector, which is well-known for its specific feature – keeping an ongoing individuals' interest, so that people are willingly playing all the time and maybe even getting involved in activities, which they would not be otherwise eager to do. Games are supposed to catch the attention of the player in such a way that all the other distractions are pushed to the periphery of consciousness, which may lead to experiencing a loss of self-consciousness and a distortion of time when playing. In some cases, “the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p.4). When such a huge potential is at stake and technologies keep advancing, it

was only a matter of time before game playing was taken to a new level and the concept got adopted by other industries. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.94; Harwood & Garry, 2015, p.235)

Some researchers have even speculated that “85% of the tasks in our daily lives will include game elements by 2020” (Settles, 2014). While, in the author’s opinion, at this point that seems rather unlikely, gamification has been actively introduced in various sectors: education, training, health, child-raising, sports activities, charity, military training, eCommerce, ecology simulations, marketing, human resources. The list is almost endless. Depending on the subject, areas of application differ. In education, for example, game mechanics has been introduced by segregating learning into levels, thus learners get to complete different tasks in accordance with previously earned skills. Different kinds of rewards and leader-boards are introduced in order to encourage participation in learning activities (Morales et al., 2016). In healthcare, some basic medical procedures may be taught through games. Gaming techniques are also used to help patients with rehabilitation (Korn & Schmidt, 2015, p.3426). Businesses are ready to utilize advantages and positive sides of gamification, as they are increasingly recognizing the importance of fun and enjoyment in workplace activities (Liu et al., 2013). Companies are actively investigating benefits of the concept and massively adopting it by various means, i.e. in marketing, human resources, sales, research & innovation, customer relationship management, engineering, support (Duggan & Shoop, 2013, p.11).

3.2.1 Gamification at workplace

While the term gamification takes its roots from the word “game”, instead of referring to games it suggests using game-related elements in non-gaming situations (Deterding et al., 2011). For instance, gamifying marketing activities translates into more active and rewarding customer-business engagement. Sales departments aim for higher revenues by encouraging competition among workers through the use of score boards. HR departments use gamification as a way to keep employees satisfied and motivated for better work performance. Organizations are constantly seeking for new ways to engage their employees, improve their productivity and drive positive behavioural outcomes. Gamification tools help HR managers promoting and increasing employee engagement

in company's activities. They are also used in recruiting, for example, for creating gamified simulations of work environment at the job interviews, or in training for upleveling workers' skills through participation in games. Gamification is useful in other areas as well, such as employee retention, performance appraisal or talent development. All in all, gamification in HR is a new way to "reward behaviour that can help create powerful business results", which is, according to researchers, fast becoming more and more popular, as more and more organizations adopt gamification principles, introduce gamified applications, gamified video lectures, tests, quizzes and other tools. In the end, it translates into more positive experiences and higher level of employee engagement. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, pp.94-95; Ruhi, 2015)

Whatever targets or goals the company pursues, gamification principles are more or less universal. The logic behind the use of games in business is psychology related and is rooted in human instincts, more specifically in human desire for competition, validation, status, accomplishment. Satisfying these needs has been generally seen as the objective of gamification. Regardless of the tools used, gamification brings fun into work processes as well as it triggers a desire to participate in gamified activities, perform the intended tasks and, through their performance, receive a reward. The most important is that there is a component of competition as a challenge motivator for encouraging the task performer. Every time the performer gets something done, for instance a small goal related to the challenge, there is an immediate reward, which, depending on the context, environment, nature of the task and the task performer, may take different forms – prizes, points, virtual currency, accomplishments badges as well other stimulus (Harwood & Garry, 2015, pp.535-536; Ronda, 2016).

3.2.2 History of the concept

It is believed that gamification of work environment as a term first appeared in 2008 (Deterding et al., 2011), but some authors argue that, while in the past the term "gamification" itself was not used, a few game related approaches were taken into use, however. According to Nelson (2012), there were two major precursors to the currently available gamification strategies. The Soviet approach, which was widely implemented on the territory of the former Soviet Union, was also probably the first try to implement

gamification techniques on practice. The pillar of the Soviet approach was a theory of “socialist competition”, which primary initiative was to force labor market participants to compete with each other so as to improve work productivity through improving worker morale. Cutting production costs and improving efficiency rates were also another important aims of the approach (Kamasheva et al., 2015, p.79).

The most important distinction from modern gamification is that no “capitalist-style monetary incentives” were introduced and the focus of the approach was mainly, if not only, on non-monetary rewards. Among the utilized techniques were, for example, different games tied to productivity or team games, which supposed to affect the morale building aspects, such as sense of duty and work fulfillment (Kamasheva et al., 2015, p.79). Thus, points and badges were not connected with financial incentives but were used to encourage and guide workers. To a certain extent, it was a friendly way of pointing the workers in the right direction. While an execution of the idea differed from the currently used practices, it is hard not to notice that socialist competition was in many ways linked to motivation and the tools they used resemble more recent gamification practices as well. (Nelson, 2012)

Another approach is the American management trend of “fun at work”, which was very popular in 1990s and 2000s. In contrast to a Soviet approach, this one, as Nelson claims, was rather focused “on a sense of childhood play”, so that the workplace would be considered as a fun and playful location. There are two main reasons which explain the popularity of this concept. First one is based on the assumption that it is possible to motivate workers through using various competitions or points instead of paying more bonuses or other financial rewards. The second reason is based on belief that in some areas work productivity may not be induced by monetary incentives, but only intrinsically motivated employees can do these kinds of jobs at a satisfactory level. (Nelson, 2012)

The chosen tools and techniques were pretty similar to the Soviet approach, though – a set of different games and competitions aimed at making workplaces more “efficient and harmonious” (Nelson, 2012). Another similarity is that, while both approaches focus on work productivity, in both cases an attempt was done to appreciate the role of workers and acknowledge what they are doing.

Both Soviet and American approaches obviously differ from currently used gamification techniques. On the other side, gamification is based on the same patterns that motivate human behavior, and these patterns have not changed a lot in the many years. The simple fact that there is an overlap between the now obsolete approaches and existing gamification methodology makes it worthy of the researchers' attention. By learning the historical movements, their positive and negative sides, it gives us a chance of better understanding of the recent trends, and how should we attempt to improve or reshape them, taking into account the "mistakes of the past". (Nelson, 2012)

3.2.3 Positive value for the business

Companies adopting gamification techniques gain multiple advantages, varying from productivity improvement to increased competitiveness. Desai & Nagaraju (2018, p.97) in their work compiled a list of the most important benefits for a company that decides to implement a gamification program in practice:

1. Increase in motivation

In companies, gamification methodology is usually applied through different rewards systems. It means that there are goals that employees should achieve. If the task has been successfully completed, the worker gets in return some kind of a bonus. Rewarding employees encourages them to work more productively, affects their job satisfaction and performance, improves their motivation in general. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.97)

2. Improving productivity

Higher motivation usually translates into higher productivity. Gamification programs help to create a relaxed and collaborative environment at the workplace, thus fostering cooperation between workers. Games also help increase employees' skills. As a result, productivity rises. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.97)

3. Fostering creativity

Playful activities encourage employees to think and act more creatively. According to Desai & Nagaraju (2018, p.97), both creativity and commitment may be improved drastically if the workers participate in gamified activities.

4. Strengthening internal communication processes

Gamification programs usually involve workers from different departments in the process. Games unite people, and, through participation in game activities, internal communication between departments is improved. Communication between HR departments and other departments is also improved through the feedback HR managers receive from employees. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.97)

5. Facilitating employee engagement

A greater commitment to the organization is achieved through gamification training programs. Game-based learning makes it easier for the workers to identify themselves with the company and they also feel the sense of belonging to a team. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.97)

6. Introduction of innovative dynamics

Desai & Nagaraju (2018, p.97) claim that gamification allows for facilitating innovation in the company. According to them, learning through games helps developing skills, and workers grow both personally and professionally. Higher-qualified, innovative-oriented staff is more likely to lead the project towards success.

7. Development of specific skills

Gamifying training programs are quite useful if the company needs their workers to improve some specific skills, for instance, leadership, stress management or communication skills. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.97)

8. Transmitting corporate image

In this case, gamified programs work as a tool to distribute corporate image both among the employees and among potential candidates. For recruiters, it is easier to attract new

job candidates by communicating company image to them via gamified activities. At the workplace, communication processes are simplified. By keeping in touch with employees, it is easier for an enterprise to explain not only the current situation but also the future directions. Knowing that they are trusted with information, workers realize the importance of their role in the organization. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.97)

3.2.4 Gamification methodology

Gamification methodology basically defines core game elements, which constitute gamification system and, as such, are required to design and build it. It is not a common practice to separate out some specific to HR activities game tools. Therefore, gamification methodology used in other business contexts does not differ much.

Werbach & Hunter (2012, pp.77-78) define three different types of game elements in gamification: dynamics, mechanics and components. These elements should be also linked to each other in a certain order, as will be explained in the next section.

Dynamics (game dynamics), according to Werbach & Hunter (2012, pp.78-79), are the large-scale aspects of gamified system, which should be considered and taken care of but, due to its nature, may not constitute a part of the game. Game dynamics may be compared to employee development. In order to create desired dynamics, it is required to move in the right direction through the use of applicable practices – same as with employees – in order to develop the staff, workers have to be pushed towards performing required activities.

Werbach & Hunter (2012, p.78) consider following game dynamics as the most important ones:

- **constraints** or limitations;
- **emotions** (curiosity or competitiveness etc.);
- **narrative** (a consistent and ongoing storyline);
- **progression**, i.e. growth and development;
- **relationships** or social interactions.

Mechanics are the drives for action, which keep the person engaged in the process. Through exploiting game mechanics, one or more of the dynamics described above are achieved. By using game mechanics, it is possible to influence feelings (emotions) of participants of gamification system, such as arouse their interest in what they are doing and increase level of task involvement. Other means of mechanics could involve social challenges, which pertain to social interactions and relationships or address to other types of dynamics (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, pp.79-80).

Werbach & Hunter (2012, p.79) identified the following important game mechanics:

- **challenge** (the kind of a task, which requires an effort to solve);
- **chance** or an element of randomness;
- **competition** (implies competing with the others);
- **cooperation** (working together is required in order to achieve a specific goal);
- **feedback**, i.e. information on progress in activities;
- **resource acquisition** through obtaining useful items;
- **reward** or a benefit for an action taken or progress achieved;
- **transaction** (takes place through trading with the other participants);
- **turn** (can be translated as sequential participation in game activities);
- **win state** (relates to performing an objective in order to win).

Components are the low-level game elements and, in the same way as mechanics, they are also tied to higher-level elements (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p.80-81). To provide an example, a person completes a task and receives a badge, which addresses to challenge and/or reward as game mechanics, and they, in turn, address to emotions or progression.

Werbach & Hunter (2012, p.80) list fifteen game components:

- **achievement** or defined objective;
- **avatar** (an image, which is in some way linked to particular person's character);
- **badge**, visual sign of achievement and recognition;

- **boss fight** (refers to especially hard challenge, usually followed by valuable reward);
- **collection** (a set of items accumulated during the game process);
- **combat** (a defined battle);
- **content unlocking** through accomplishing an objective or a set of objectives;
- **gifting** (takes place through sharing with other participants);
- **leaderboard** (visual display of progression and achievement);
- **level** (a defined milestone progression);
- **point** (numerical data that indicates status progress of a person in the game);
- **quest** (a challenge with pre-defined objectives and rewards);
- **social graph** (relates to social network data within the game context);
- **team** or a group of people working together in order to reach a common goal;
- **virtual good**, i.e. a virtual product, which has either perceived or real money value).

3.2.5 Gamification design

In the previous section, important game elements were mentioned. However, implementing points, badges or leaderboards on their own is not enough (Goh, 2014). Gamification system has to be carefully designed and integrated in order to make it efficient. Werbach & Hunter (2012) in their work provided an example on how game elements should be coordinated with each other (see Figure 3).

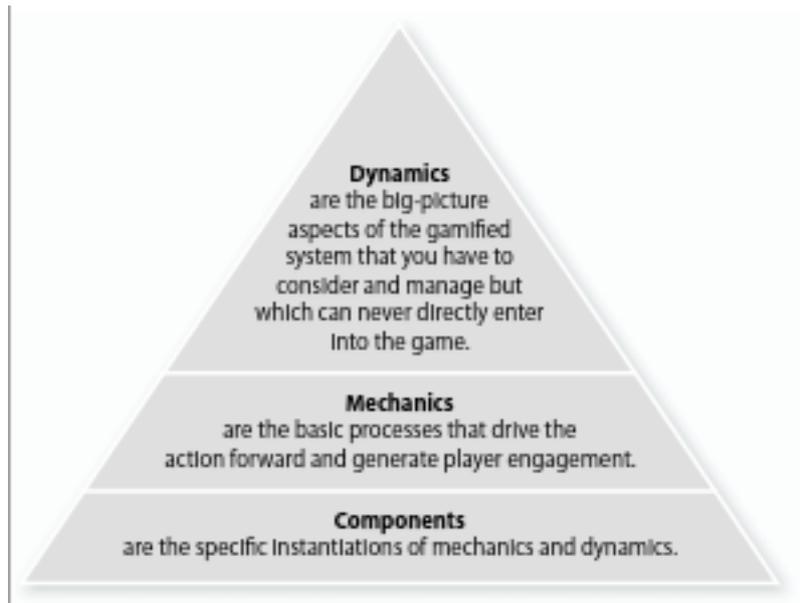


Figure 3. The Game Element Hierarchy (Werbach & Hunter, 2012, p.82)

While Werbach & Hunter (2012, p.82) imply that putting game elements together is an important task, they also mention that it is hardly possible to master them all perfectly. On the other side, they also mention that having a list of elements is not sufficient. In order to build something useful and engaging, “checking off the right boxes” is not enough. Gamification system has to be in perfect match with particular situation, its elements have to be aligned with each other and implemented well.

Another example of how various components of gamification system should be integrated is provided by Indian researchers Sarangi & Shah (2015). In their work, they developed a conceptual model of gamification, which is presented on the Figure 4.

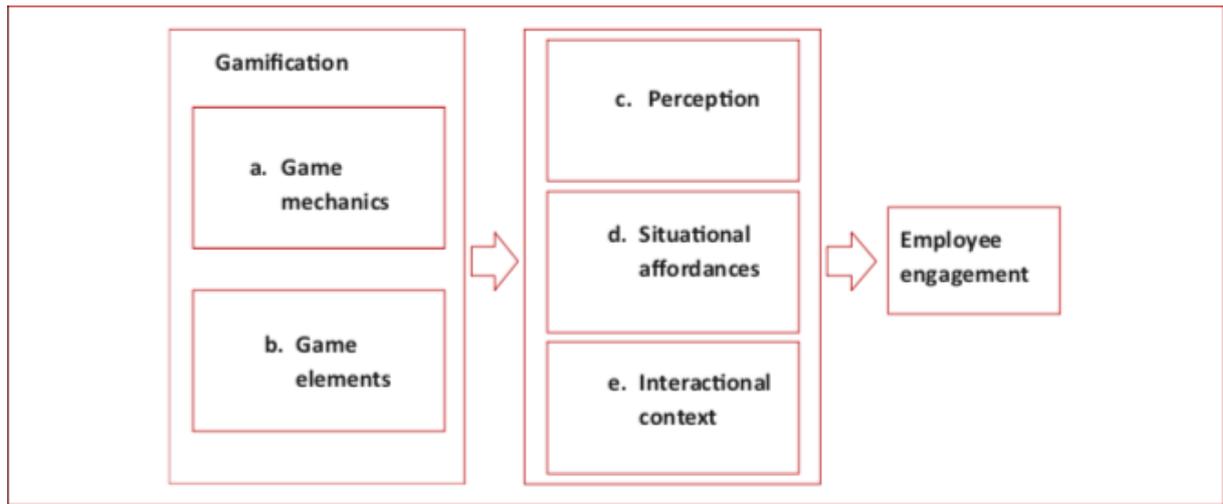


Figure 4. Conceptual model of gamification as a driver of employee engagement (Sarangi & Shah, 2015, p.25)

The two left components, although differently named, resemble, to a great extent, game elements in the Game element hierarchy of Werbach & Hunter. Sarangi & Shah (2015, p.24) define game elements (**a.** on the picture) as embedded parts of the game, which may either be integrated or switched or taken out. They list, for example, badges, leaderboards and levels as game elements. Game mechanics (**b.**), in their understanding, is basically the description of the game: the way it works, how it is designed. To put it differently, it is an instruction to the game, in which its inner parts, game participants and the rules are given and explained.

Three other components of the system (perception, situational affordances and interactional context), according to researchers, are the core of personal experiences, which are affected by gamification system, its mechanics and elements. Perception (**c.**) defines how game participants interpret gamified activities and whether they embrace them or not. Indeed, the system works better if employees understand the game and its rules, nature of the work tasks and how they can progress in that game. Situational affordances (**d.**) determine if employees may satisfy their motivational needs by interacting with gamified context. Thus, game designers can target specific motives and needs of certain people. The last component is interactional context (**e.**), which refers to the broader organizational framework, such as corporate culture and existing motivational networks,

and whether they may be aligned with particular gamification system or there are any interferences that may oppose its implementation (Sarangi & Shah, 2015, pp.24-25).

According to Sarangi & Shah (2015), if components of the model are properly addressed and game elements, mechanics and context are taken into account, then the framework will serve as a driver for employee engagement and, consecutively, result in better performance.

3.3 Motivation

The Latin root of the word “motivation” means “to move”. In a way, motivational theorists and researchers have been studying what moves people to do something, what drives them to act one way or another (Eccles et al., 1998). According to Business Dictionary (2019), motivation is a set of internal and external factors that stimulate desire and energy in people to be interested and committed to a subject, a role or a job, if it is employee motivation in question. However, the author personally prefers the following definition: motivation is the cause for human behavior and actions in a particular situation or role, which is influenced by interaction of various factors (individual motives). These motives are indeed complex and vary from person to person, and in a business context the company’s task is to align them with the needs and goals of the company itself (see Friedrichs, 2011, p.6 ff.).

A great interest for motivation is easy to explain. A person works better and pays more focused attention to work tasks if he/she is motivated to do the job. Consequently, it is important to motivate an individual and get him interested in performing the work tasks in such a way, which allows for achieving the targets set by a company in the most optimal way. Better performance, in its turn, translates into better work results. Lack of motivation, on the other side, leads to the fact that people invest less time and energy in their work, they find it hard to develop professionally and achieve the goals, they underperform. Motivation is therefore related to goal achievement, work performance, engagement and many other concepts (Eccles et al., 1998; Wigfield & Cambria, 2010). Attracting and retaining employees has become nowadays a critical issue for a company’s success (Marston, 2007). It is no wonder that organizations from all over the world

have been constantly thinking of the ways to motivate their staff to achieve excellent work results.

3.3.1 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

One of the basic but important distinctions in motivation is based on the type of motivator: intrinsic or extrinsic. **Intrinsic motivation** refers to internal motives, whereas **extrinsic motivation** is presented by external motivation techniques. Extrinsic motivators may take a form of a reward (material or non-material) or a purpose (a goal). In this case, people are usually motivated to complete some activity because they want to obtain a reward or reach the goal, but the activity itself is not necessarily interesting or even not interesting at all. Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, implies that activity itself is rewarding, or, to put it differently, no reward or goal is required to enjoy that task. (Chou, 2019; Kumar & Herger, 2013)

According to Kumar & Herger (2013), extrinsic motivation is the most effective if some simple tasks are required to be done. However, if completing the task requires a lot of thinking or creative skills, extrinsic motivation is no longer useful. Moreover, the same factors that used to be previously effective may in this case become demotivators. Thus, intrinsic motivation is preferable if some complex problems should be solved. On the other side, if it is required to complete some monotonous routine task, extrinsic motivators are more favorable to keep the person focused on that activity.

Another important issue to be aware of is that once extrinsic motivators are no longer a part of the motivational system, a person's motivation is likely to decrease to even lower levels in comparison to its former state, before extrinsic motivators were taken into use. (Chou, 2019)

3.3.2 Motivational theories

Over the years, numerous motivational theories have been formulated – whether it be “classical” and mostly cited theories or newer ones. The author believes that providing in-depth description of all existing theories would be an overwhelming task, neither it

suits the purpose of this paper. For these reasons, it has been decided to place greater emphasis on the theories supporting the idea of gamifying HR processes.

The bigger part of theories belongs to the need (content) group. They are mainly based on the assumption that an employee may be willing to participate in meaningful and demanding activities but not unless his specific needs are satisfied. Therefore, it is the company's task to assure that employees have the opportunities to satisfy their needs (see Friedrichs, 2011, p.19). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Self-determination Theory, and Need Achievement Theory are some examples of this group of theories. Other theories do not focus on the needs but take into account something else – for instance, Operant Conditioning Theory suggests taking into use reinforces and Flow concept is based on an idea that there should be a right level of challenge, as well as activity should be aligned with the person's skills. Other game-related theories include, for instance, Goal Setting Theory or Fogg Behavior Model (see Ferrell et al., 2016).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

One of the earliest and probably best-known worldwide theories is the Hierarchy of Needs introduced by Abraham H. Maslow in 1943, which is usually graphically represented in the form of the pyramid depicting five levels of needs (Goh, 2014; Wu, 2011). The following levels of needs are defined (their corresponding examples are given in the brackets): psychological (food, sleep, air), safety (health, stability, security), belonging (love, friendship, family), esteem (self-esteem, confidence, achievement), self-actualization (self-sufficiency, individuality, creativity).

Maslow's theory is based on that people get motivated by the aforementioned levels of needs. First levels of needs are basic ones, and as long as the lower levels are not ensured, the higher ones will not be of any importance. Thus, a person advances to the next level only if the lower level needs are at least partially satisfied. If the need is fully satisfied, it will no longer influence behavior of a person, but he will be driven by desire to satisfy needs of the higher levels. (Wikipedia, 2019; Wu, 2011)

Flow Theory

The Flow concept (see Figure 5) supports an idea that people become too anxious and nervous if the task is too difficult. On the other hand, if the task is too easy, they are easily getting bored of that activity. If the task, however, is not too difficult or too easy, a person becomes “fully immersed in the feeling of energized focus”. That state is called the state of Flow. (Kumar & Herger, 2013)

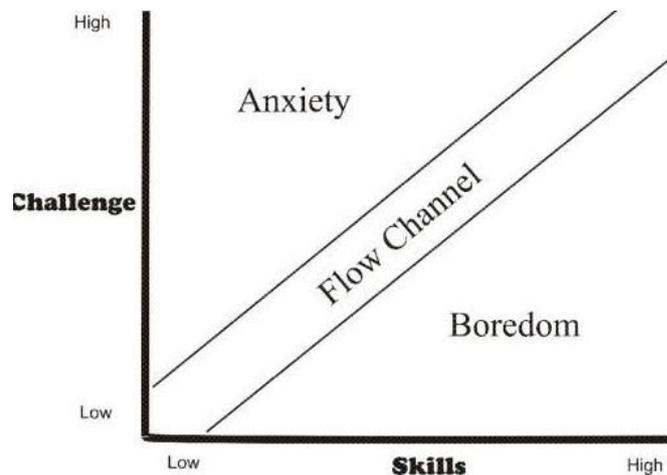


Figure 5. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)

In practice, it means that each activity should be set at the right level of difficulty for a particular person. To find an activity that is an ideal match to person's skills is an incredibly difficult task. Most of activities are either hard or too easy, as with acquiring new skills former assignments are no longer challenging enough. That is why some balance on task variety should be found. Businesses may benefit from integrating this concept by implementing level system, so that depending on employee skills complexity of the task would differ. (Kumar & Herger, 2013; Wu, 2011)

Fogg Theory

The Fogg Behavior model states that for a certain behavior to happen, three different factors must be addressed at the same time: Prompt, Ability and Motivation (see Figure 6). For instance, if there is a particular task for employee to get done, there should be a prompt, which may be a notification or directive or any other form of communicating the task. An employee should have an ability to perform the task (resources, time, skills, level of difficulty). Finally, he must be motivated to accomplish the task. It is essential

that prompt and ability are applied before addressing to motivation and that all elements are present. Otherwise, desirable behavior might not occur. (behaviormodel.org, 2019; Kumar & Herger, 2013)

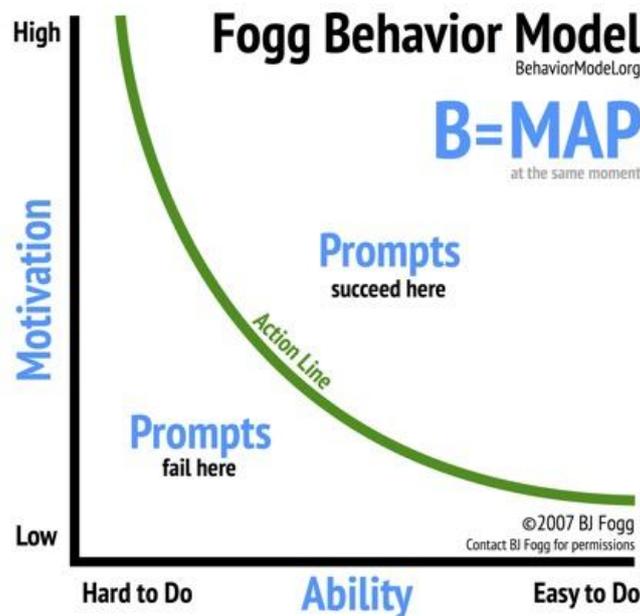


Figure 6. B. J. Fogg's Behavior Model (behaviormodel.org, 2019)

The principal elements (motivation, ability, prompt) of this model also have their own subcomponents, which define the bigger elements (behaviormodel.org, 2019). The following elements are defined:

- **core motivators** (define motivation): pleasure or pain, hope or fear, social acceptance or rejection;
- **simplicity factors** (define ability): time, money, physical effort, social deviance, non-routine;
- **triggers** (define prompt): facilitator, spark, signal.

Operant Conditioning Theory

B. F. Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory does not take into account human needs. Instead, this theory's focus is on reinforcements, which are used to shape desired behavior. As Wu (2011) explains, properly used reinforces stimulate learning activities. That

way, they become motivators. Karimi & Nickpayam (2017, p.39) note that continuous and partial reinforcements should be also differentiated. Continuous reinforcements help establishing desired behavior faster, but if they are removed people stop acting in a desired way very quickly. Moreover, occasional reinforcement schedule leads to better results in general. One good example is the lottery game in which the gambler is involved in the process of continuous reinforcement. However, the actual reward he gets is never the same, but varies depending on a ratio schedule.

According to Wu (2011), in business gamification reinforces may often take form of points, and points system may be useful in various activities, for instance, in learning. People earn points through progression and advancement to the higher levels. Wu also mentions that it is highly important to elaborate the reinforcement (reward) schedule, so that the right amount of points would be given at the right time at the right rate.

Goal Setting Theory

Goal Setting Theory was developed by E. A. Locke and G. P. Latham, and it is based on an assumption that an individual person is more likely to accomplish activity if the goal is clear and specific. At the same time, the goal should be difficult but not overwhelming, so that a person would not lose belief in ability to complete the task. Apart from the difficulty and specificity of the task, there is another important component – proximity of the goal. Long-term goals are usually less motivating, as often having too much time translates in distraction and procrastination, and the person's attention shifts away from the original goal. As per this theory, clearly defined and timely goals with the right level of difficulty also serve as a challenge to task performer and motivate for goal accomplishment. In theory, the mere fact of getting the task done is often considered a rewarding activity by an individual. (Karimi & Nickpayam, 2017, p.38; Wikipedia, 2019)

This concept is also believed to be linked to the SMART goal-setting methodology, which claims that the right goal is SMART. There have been various versions of explaining what those letters stand for. According to one of them, the goals should be specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time-bound (Kumar & Herger, 2013). It is

not difficult to see that a SMART goal is achievable, time-based and very specific, built right according to the principles of Goal Setting Theory.

Need Achievement Theory

According to Karimi & Nickpayam (2017, pp.37-38), achievement motivation is heavily based on the type of achievement behavior, which, in its turn, depends to a large extent on personality. Some people are motivated by a desire to achieve and demonstrate an ability to succeed to the others, they do not think too much about possibility of failing. Another group of people mostly wants to avoid the failure. John W. Atkinson, one of the early researchers in the field of achievement motivation, states that these groups of people are motivated by two separate motives, and, regarding of their motivation, they prefer tasks of different difficulty levels. Evidently, a person with higher motivation to succeed will choose more difficult task.

As Karimi & Nickpayam (2017, p.38) mention, achievement motivation is an important element of many games, which encourage and reward their players through various achievement systems, status or progression indicators. It is also important to acknowledge that, regardless of the area of application, this theory provides an explanation why some players choose low-level difficulty tasks, whereas the others opt for the higher difficulty. It would be advisable to make note of it in the business context as well, since, based on their achievement behavior, employees will aim for different objectives and probably also have different attitude to internal competition within a company.

Self-Determination Theory

Originally, Self-Determination Theory (or SDT) was proposed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan in the beginning of the 1970s. The theory's primary focus is on extent to which a person's behavior is self-determined or self-motivated. According to the theory, there are three basic needs that have to be satisfied and, if they are satisfied, motivation – especially intrinsic one – and productivity generally increase. Otherwise, both

productivity and satisfaction are seriously harmed. These needs are presented on the Figure 7. (Karimi & Nickpayam, 2017, p.38; Wikipedia, 2019)

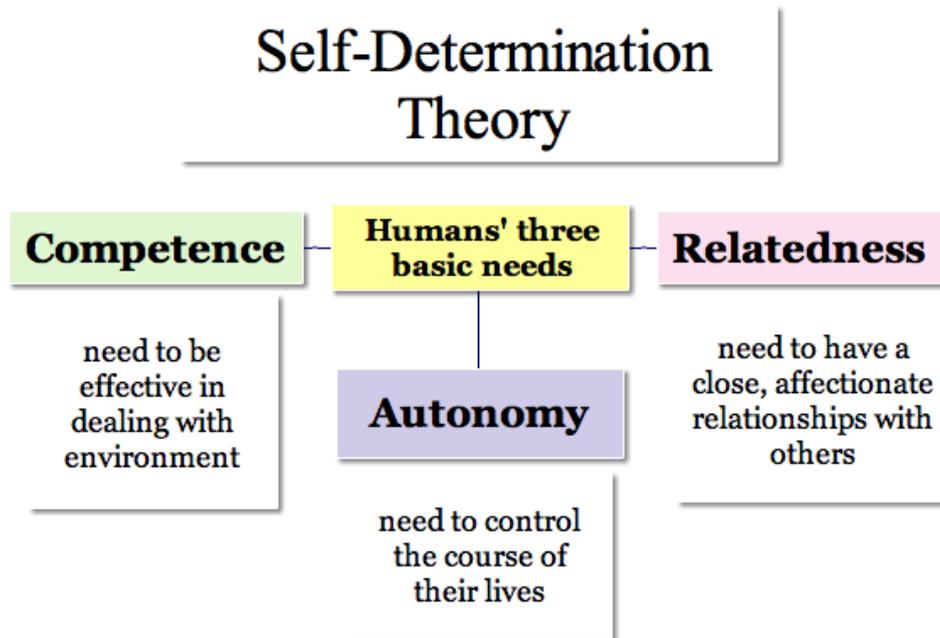


Figure 7. Self-Determination Theory (positivepsychologyprogram.com, 2019)

According to Karimi & Nickpayam (2017, p.38), **autonomy** is the possibility to control one's own behavior, **competence** is linked to ability to reach a result and mastery required to do it and **relatedness** refers to a feeling of connection with others. Depending on a level of self-determination, people are intrinsically motivated (highest level of self-determination), extrinsically motivated or demotivated (the least self-determined).

SDT is probably one of the most known theories, also commonly used for gamification purposes. As per Karimi & Nickpayam (2017, p.38), the main reason is that experiences of competence, autonomy and relatedness are essential to the concept of game enjoyment, regardless of the game specificity. Alsawaier (2018, p.60) lists as an example leaderboards, which have proven themselves as a successful gamification tool – by seeing the results displayed on the leaderboard, a person feels more satisfied, and that is where the element of relatedness comes into play.

3.4 Gamification and motivation

The logic under adapting gamification techniques for motivation purposes is quite clear. Playing games is fun, does not require specific skills and, most importantly, it generates a positive emotional response driving a desire to keep playing. In other words, the gamers are engaged in the process and motivated for the further interaction inside the gamified environment. It could be also said that games are so fun and appealing because they motivate or, to put it differently, push forward the players toward certain activities. In the gaming world, these activities are usually some kind of objectives, targets, quests, but, despite the fact that some action is to be taken, these actions are also a part of the game aimed at keeping the player continuously entertained. To conclude, while the game process itself is fun, an overall purpose of gamification is to influence individuals' behavior in a desired way. Points systems, achievements, leaderboards, badges and other means of instant rewarding are used exactly for that purpose. (Duggan & Shoup, 2013, pp.9-10)

The mere fact of being rewarded may, in turn, further motivate an employee to perform work tasks in a desirable way. Knowing that you are improving and capable of challenging yourself – this is what makes gamification so effective. Gamification gives a more tangible purpose for performing better, as the person is prompted by desire to increase a previous result/target/score, which consequently leads to increase in productivity, and productivity, on its side, is everything for businesses. By using gamification tools, companies encourage their workers to work more actively and reach better results, and employee efficiency is to some extent quantifiable, which means it may be measured. According to Bernier (2015), as long as the process or activity is measurable, it may be gamified. (Gain, 2017)

Some researchers state that game industry was the first to have learnt how to master motivation and engagement, for the games were specifically designed to please those individuals who are playing them and hold their attention for a long time (see Chou, 2019; Kamasheva et. al, 2015). It should not be surprising then that there are so many people who play games. According to the industry report by Spil Games (Harwood & Garry, 2015, p.533), there were over 1.2 billion players worldwide by 2013 and there are over

2.2 billion game players as of 2018 (Gaimin, 2018). Today organizations by applying same principles make working as fun as playing and turn boring tasks into games. As a result, employees' experiences and perceptions of work are generally improved (Klasen, 2016). The same tools, while slightly altered, that were at some point only used in the game contexts and have proven themselves successful, today are slowly becoming an important part of HR activities aimed at improving employee motivation. By applying gamification tools, such as different kind of rewards, recognition, rankings, a company takes non-financial motivation to a whole new level in the organization, thus providing a whole new set of capabilities to increase sales results, stimulate team work, engage employees, motivate them to achieve and even overachieve the targets. At the same time, other important HR indicators are influenced in a positive way: job satisfaction, loyalty, retention rates and others.

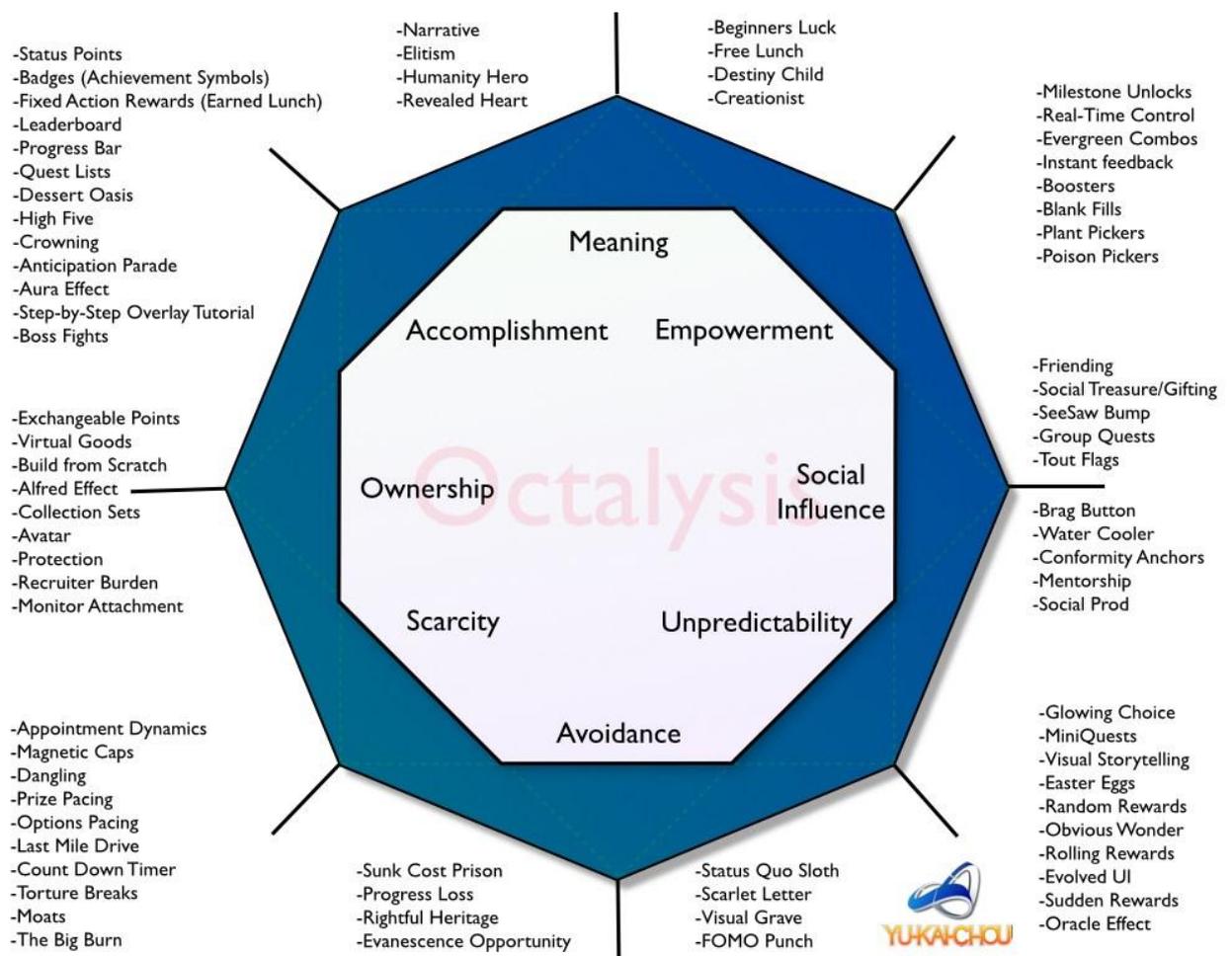
Today gamification has become a part of the motivation strategy in different companies all over the world. As it has been already explained, gamification takes its roots in the game industry – fun and other game elements are applied to the needs of businesses. Motivation, in turn, has a lot in common with human behavior. Our needs drive our interest in doing something or willing to do something. Some of the human needs and motives may be somewhat affected by gamification techniques. Through interaction with gamification apparatus, companies have an opportunity to influence motivation and build better and more efficient motivation system. At the same time, companies are supposed to get better and more productive results. The motives that are under discussion constitute the core drives for human motivation or core drives of gamification, depending on the angle taken. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.95).

3.4.1 Octalysis Gamification Framework

Chou defines 8 core drives of gamification. All of them are included in the Octalysis Framework developed by the aforementioned researcher (see Figure 8). Specific feature of this framework is that it is “Human-Focused Designed”, as opposed to “Function-Focused Designed”. The author explains that the difference is that the framework places specific focus on human motivation, whereas function-focused framework would only take into account productivity and efficiency. As the researcher claims, human-focused

design framework leans on the fact that people have feelings, insecurities, their own motivations, and they cannot be omitted. According to Chou, the Octalysis framework is optimized in a way, so that human motivation and engagement are taken to the higher level within the motivation strategy. (Chou, 2019; Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.96)

Chou (2019) is actually not alone in his views. For instance, Conway (2014) advocates that too often gamification framework has organization-centred design, whereas it should be rather designed as user-centred. In practice, it means that personal features of staff should be taken into account by employer, and it is not only a desire for reward, which pushes employees towards desired activities, but also their own psychological needs and motives. Therefore, the challenge for employer is to understand that each employee is a person, which would mean that in ideal situation motivational factors and according set of rewards should be treated individually (see Singh, 2012).



The following core drives are a part of the Octalysis Framework (as seen in Figure 8):

1. Meaning

This core drive makes a person believe that he is doing something greater or bigger than he is, that he is doing something meaningful, or perhaps that he was destined to do something. Chou (2019) states that the most evident examples are when an individual spends a lot of time on administering a forum or he/she is involved in doing things for his community. By participating in various activities, people validate their existence. Thus, it makes own life more enjoyable.

2. Accomplishment

Accomplishment is the internal drive that gets people to develop their skills and eventually overcome challenges and obstacles on their way. The crucial term here is “Challenge”. According to Chou (2019), an award is meaningless without a challenge. He also specifies that this drive is the easiest to master, and, for this reason, in many cases too much attention is placed to accomplishment. Kumar & Herger (2013) also note that the challenge should not be too easy or difficult but just at the right level of difficulty, otherwise the person’s level of motivation and task involvement is likely to drop, because it is either impossible to achieve success or the challenge is too simple.

3. Empowerment

The next core drive comes into action in those situations when people have to think creatively, as they are constantly learning new things and trying different combinations. As Chou (2019) explains, people need to exhibit their creativity. At the same time, they also need to see results of their actions, get feedback, and respond accordingly.

4. Ownership

Ownership, in this case, means a feeling when a person feels like he or she owns something. It makes a person feel inspired by what he is doing. Moreover, people who feel

ownership, they “want to make what they own better and own ever more” (Chou, 2019; Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.96). Sense of ownership drives in people a desire to gain wealth and become rich. Companies may use this core drive up to their benefit when they implement virtual currency system in the organization.

5. Social influence

In this core drive, all the social elements that affect human behavior are incorporated. Chou (2019) lists the following elements: mentorship, acceptance, social responsiveness, competition. Due to effect of this core drive, people are better motivated if there is a co-worker with extraordinary skills in the team. Another example of how this core drive affects people would be a desire to be closer to people/places/events if there is an attachment related to it. Chou notes that many firms have taken an advantage of it by implementing various online social strategies.

6. Scarcity

Scarcity makes a person desire something because he/she cannot have it. A noticeable example of this core drive in use would be game-related. Majority of games do not provide the player with adequate or, depending on the game, limitless amount of resources at the start. Gamer has to act in accordance with the rules of the game in order to earn the required resources, and that fact forces player to keep thinking about it continuously. (Chou, 2019; Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.96)

7. Unpredictability

Unpredictability is the element that keeps people wanting to find out what happens next. It works this way – not knowing what is to happen next, a person’s brain is engaged in thinking about it all the time. Chou (2019) provides as an example a real-life situation when an individual has started reading a book or watching movie, and a desire to learn what is to happen next keeps an interest to read it or watch it till the end.

8. Avoidance

People generally try to avoid of something negative happening to them. The final core drive is based upon this kind of avoidance. For instance, an individual is afraid of losing a job or the fact that he has been doing something useless for a long period of time. Another kind of avoidance is when some opportunities will disappear if an immediate action is not taken. (Chou, 2019; Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p. 97)

3.4.2 The Intrinsic Motivational Network

Chou’s Octalysis Framework is, according to himself, pretty much balanced and takes into account both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators (Chou, 2019). In contrast, the Intrinsic Motivational Network places specific focus on intrinsic factors, and by addressing them motivation should generally increase in the long term (Goh, 2014).

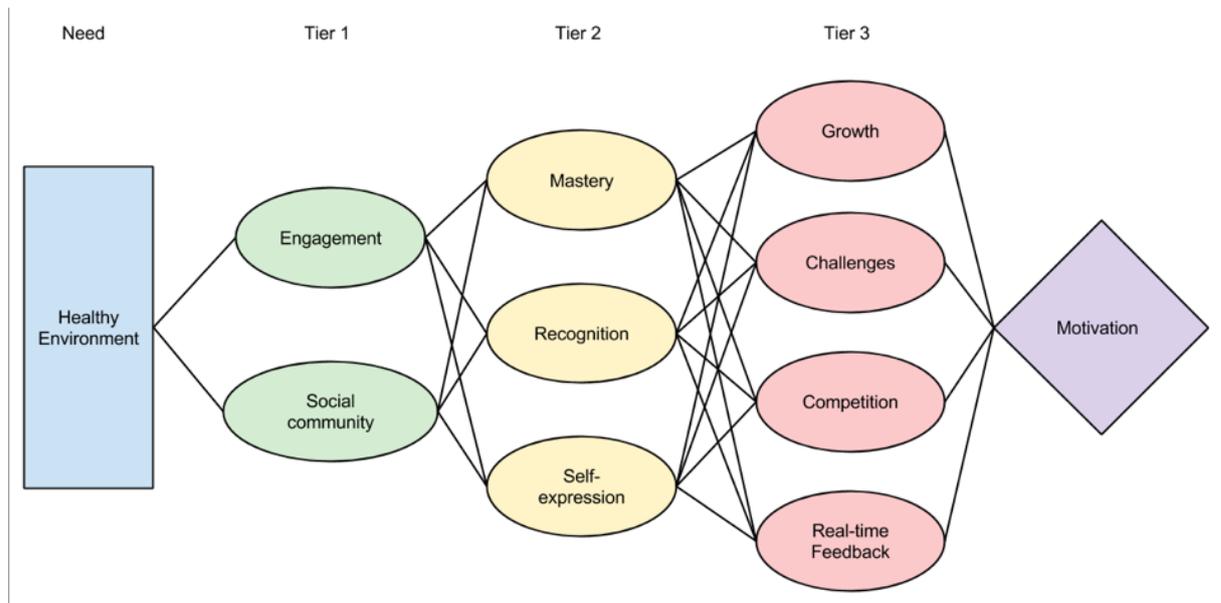


Figure 9. The Intrinsic Motivational Network (corp.gametize.com, 2014)

The framework is presented on the Figure 9. In its design, it resembles in a way a classical Maslow’s theory but, as Goh (2014) explains, it “acknowledges that lower levels have higher contributions to end-motivational levels”. The author personally understands it this way: the need and the lower-level tiers should be addressed first, because if they are not taken into account, the overall result will be affected. Goh provides a similar explanation. According to him, the need (healthy environment) should be addressed

first, as in the poor environment people may have an opportunity to cheat in their attempts to get more points or badges. Tier 1: Social Belonging is the next one to the right – it includes social belonging and engagement. To the right of it is Tier 2: Mastery, Recognition and the last one is Tier 3: Growth. Goh also adds that all the tiers do not necessarily have to be affected in the same way, the framework is dynamic, and it allows for adjusting motivational factors, depending on desirable outcome.

3.5 Summary

Gamification has been actively used for motivating purposes in various contexts – whether it be learning, marketing or employee engagement. However, there is much more to gamification than only leaderboards, badges and points. Gamification addresses game elements to engage the player – that is the technical side of the concept. But there is another side as well – rooted in psychology – which is not less important than the technical one. It appeals to human emotions and innate desires to motivate individuals towards desired activities.

Interestingly enough, gamification mainly draws upon motivational theories in the goal of promoting desirable behavior. There is a vast number of theories, and some of them may be applied to create engaging game experience. Numerous researchers and practitioners (e.g. Kumar & Herger, 2013; Wu, 2011) in their books and articles describe these theories and give examples of how they may be used in business situations. Some of these theories were provided in this chapter. They were not specifically designed for applying them to gamification concept, but they are still useful and may lead to productive results, if applied properly.

Specific theories designed for developing gamification systems are almost non-existent or either very poorly designed. For instance, even though the Intrinsic Motivational Network takes into account various needs, it is in many ways a mere improvement of Maslow's theory. Besides, it does not take into account extrinsic motivators – in contrast to Octalysis Gamification Framework, which is one of the few well-known models developed specifically for designing gamified experience. It is a complete and easily

customizable model, which allows for adjusting motivational factors in the system in accordance with desirable outcome.

After all, applying theory to the needs of practice is not the only important step. There should be also understanding of the context – the initial goal, target audience, game tools – in order to make gamification system work, and some attempts to shed a light on practical points of applying gamification to business context are given in the following chapter as a part of empirical research.

4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The empirical part of this research aims to examine nuances of applying gamification theory to business context by exploring the concept in a practical setting. For this purpose, both theoretical findings presented in the previous chapter and data provided by the case company were used. Practical implementation comes in the form of developing the concept of gamification for the case company's needs, ending in presenting some practical solutions, which incorporate gamification tools to help motivate employees and boost their performance.

4.1 Introduction

This part of thesis was divided into four sections. At first, the current state of case company in relation to the purpose of research is described. In the following section, research method and means of data collection are discussed. Then the setting and the choice of a model used in the thesis project are explained. The next stage is basically an elaboration of a gamification framework based on a chosen model. Some suggestions on how to apply gamification to a particular situation in the case company are also provided.

4.2 Current state of case company

As previously mentioned, understanding the needs of employees has never been a priority issue for C9. In fact, there is no HR department at the company, which is often the case for SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises). Thus, there is no separate unit, which would handle employee-related issues in the company. There are definitely both pluses and minuses of not having own human resources department, while there is no right answer whether a small company should establish it or not. As Miksen (2019) notes, some companies employ about fifty employees but decide not to add HR department, whereas some businesses have only a few employees and still they prefer to have an HR administrator in their team.

As C9 does not have its own HR department, it means that key functions of human resources have to be split between existing employees. For example, payroll-related functions and record keeping are held by financial specialist, legal and tax advisory services are mainly outsourced, recruiting, initial training and employee onboarding are conducted by managers or even business owners at times. Employee performance improvement had been a matter of consideration. However, there was only sporadic interest on the part of company's executives and no systematic approach has been developed. Reward system is also almost non-existent; remuneration takes various forms – fixed salary, pay per hour rates and others, but no bonuses or similar incentives have been introduced.

The owners of the company admit themselves that they did not pay much attention to motivating workers, for there have always been other problematic issues, which had to be addressed in the first instance. Basically, there were no resources left, which could be allocated to investigating this matter. As such, there is no data stating that employees are satisfied or non-satisfied or not engaged in their work. The company's executives confirm though that, as no extrinsic motivators have been used, in most of the cases employee involvement is driven by intrinsic motivation. Thus, employees who lack intrinsic motivation generally work for the salary. The most problematic area is lack of willingness to perform monotonous and repetitive tasks, which nevertheless have to be done, and people rarely have innate desire to perform these kinds of tasks on a higher level (see Delves, 2011).

The author mentioned in the previous chapters that financial motivation is not any longer that helpful as it used to be in the past, especially if organization does not have enough resources to keep increasing the wages continuously. Another factor in favor of gamification has been also mentioned – an overwhelming majority of company staff is millennials (also called generation Y), and a few younger employees, born after 1995, come from the newest generation – generation Z. Its representatives are believed to be even more technology savvy than millennials, as digital technologies have been an integrated part of their lives since early childhood (FourHooks, 2015).

Obviously, gamification may not be a solution to all problems, and there are undoubtedly other solutions as well, but the author sees it as a possibility to provide new type of rewards for employees of the case company, which have not been previously exploited.

4.3 Data analysis

The nature of this research is **qualitative**, which means that collected data is mostly non-numeric and non-quantifiable (Saunders et al., 2009, p.480). The only exception is the quiz in which employees had to rank and give a number to each core drive of the Octalysis Gamification Framework – that is numerical and quantitative data (Saunders et al., p. 482). However, the quiz was not a primary source of data but rather provided a valuable feedback for research and a set of new data to reflect on.

As explained in Chapter 2.3, the research method is **action research**, which includes four different stages (diagnosing, planning, taking action and evaluating). In connection with empirical research, those stages may be defined as following:

1 **Diagnosing** – state the relevance of the problem for the case company, explain the need for a change and that gamification is potential solution to the problem.

2 **Planning** – collect data about the company, decide on appropriate model and sample group (sales & customer service staff).

3 **Taking action** – analyse chosen model (Octalysis Gamification Framework) whilst at the same time provide a discussion on how this model may be applied to specific case of the chosen company by addressing previously collected company data and referring to the literature on gamification and motivation.

4 **Evaluating** – develop a solution by applying Octalysis Framework to the specific context of this research, analyse additional set of data gathered by quizzing employees and reflect on the data.

Cycling nature of action research (see Figure 1) shows itself mainly through continuous analysis, reviewing and evaluating of new **means of data** – whether it be literature review or case company data, such as data from the company’s database, various reports, interviews, employee quiz and other sources.

4.4 The initial setting

In the beginning, there was a desire to gamify everything: all the activities, all company’s departments. However, on a closer look, after having spent a lot of her time on thorough research of the subject, the author realized that there is no single universal tool. It might initially seem right to gamify marketing or accounting activities, but the truth is that certain tasks are difficult to gamify, if not impossible. Moreover, the effect of gamifying these activities will not be necessarily positive but may have quite the opposite effect. Kamasheva et al. (2015, p.79) share a similar opinion, stating that gamification system is rarely applicable to all departments and employees of one company.

It is also worth noting that C9 is a small company and it does not employ many specialists. There are just a few marketing experts, IT administrator, financial specialist, legal and accounting services are partly outsourced, the greater part of the personnel is represented either by instructors or customer service staff, while the rest are either technicians or cleaning staff. As instructors and customer service are the only two large groups of employees, the final choice was limited to these two groups only. The first group is responsible for providing training sessions to customers as well as taking care of safety issues, such as ensuring that clients adhere to safety rules while remaining inside trampoline area. Customer service representatives are responsible for both sales and administrative work, which is partially due to cost-saving measures. As such, they should serve customers and at the same time perform a lot of routine tasks – enter data into company’s database or maintain customer records in order.

Both employee groups are equally important, since both of them are responsible for serving customers and providing high-quality customer experience, though in different ways, and the author has already explained how important it is for a service organiza-

tion to be able to maintain high quality of customer service level. Services are different from products by its nature and they have unique features attributed to them (cp. Vou-doris et al., 2008, p.5). This fact outlines the importance of putting customer into focus both for the case company and for the service industry in general: clients will not pay for the service if its quality is less than satisfactory.

For illustration purposes, it was decided to present a comparison between different groups of staff in a graphical way.

Table 1. Comparison of customer service staff and staff of instructors (author)

Employee group	Employees, ppl.	Job positions	Work tasks and flexibility	Remuneration
Sales & customer service	10	administrators, senior administrators; supervisor	repetitive, monotonous, tasks, low variety; low flexibility, should adhere to corporate policies	pay per hour or fixed
Training staff	15	instructors, senior instructors	repetitive but more variety in task performance, more creative tasks; should adhere to policies but more flexibility	fixed + performance-based or performance-based only; depends on workload

As indicated in the Table 1, salespeople in C9 in general are involved in conducting well-defined tasks on a repetitive basis, whereas instructors' work is in some way more engaging and creative. Instructors also receive performance-based reward, which means that in practice they are rather interested in performing at a high level and retaining clients, because the larger share of returning customers and customers on the whole translates in the higher salary. In contrast, remuneration of sales staff does not depend on their performance. Thus, either their work engagement is driven by intrinsic motivation or, otherwise, employees feel that there is no meaning or any personal value for them in what they are doing.

The author, therefore, estimates that motivation of customer service employees is presumably lower in comparison to instructors' motivation. The company's owners support this view: customer service personnel work at an average level and are reluctant to provide better results. At the same time, both this paper's author and C9's owners think that employees are capable of reaching higher levels of performance. Besides, salespeople motivation is very important, as company revenues heavily depend on sales performance – sales staff performance is a key to success of organization as a whole (Lucero, 2019).

Thus, it has been decided to primarily concentrate on customer service and sales gamification. Although there are more instructors than sales employees in the company, sales work is standardized to a great extent and employee performance can be easily measured (cp. Bhasin, 2017). Consecutively, it is easier to gamify sales activities and estimate the effect of gamification. Moreover, it seems reasonable to apply, first, gamification to one employee group in a particular company and then, depending on the results, decide if the concept should be expanded.

On top of everything else, administrators deal with customers on a daily basis and also do a lot of routine work, such as typing in customer data in the database or making sure that it is correct. Thus, gamifying their work has a three-fold aim: increase sales, improve customer experience and ensure that employees pay more attention to customer data, keep it in order, complete and relevant. These three tasks are actually the key job responsibilities of this group of employees. Moreover, they are, at least sales volumes and quality of customer experience, are fundamental to success of the case company, the same as with any other service business. Performing these activities on a higher level directly links to the purpose of this paper, which is, among other things, to improve employee productivity.

As a model choice, the author decided to adapt Octalysis Gamification framework. First of all, up to this moment it is one of the most comprehensive, practically-oriented and worldwide popular gamification models, which was developed by Yu-Kai Chou, one of the earliest pioneers in gamification research and also Gamification Guru of 2014 and 2015 (see Chou, 2019; Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.95). Secondly, Octalysis framework

is easily customizable and user-friendly. According to Chou, it was implemented by Facebook, Twitter and other companies. For designing gamification framework purposes, other theoretical knowledge from the Chapter 3 was also partially taken into account.

4.5 Designing gamification framework

Summing up what has been written in the previous sections, the following may be concluded: we have a defined group of employees whom we would like to target with gamified activities, we know what are their job responsibilities as well as we know what we want to improve in their work and how exactly we want to do that. The model that is intended to be used as a tool for designing gamification framework has been also chosen.

Thus, having decided on initial data and parameters, the next step is to design a framework in the particular setting of C9. This process was divided into a few steps:

1. Link Chou's motivational factors to current situation at C9.
2. Analyse each factor and give an explanation on the applicability in relation to the case company.
3. Based on analysis from the previous section, evaluate the importance of each of the core factors and build a proposal for gamification framework.
4. Add up data from employee quiz on the importance of each of the core drives.
5. Compare results, reflect on the data, make small adjustments to the framework, if required.

4.5.1 The initial remarks

Prior to applying the model to our case and building a gamification framework, in my author's opinion, it seems beneficial to have a look at the current situation at C9. Even

though it has been in some way discussed at the previous sections, now I would like to provide discussion in the view of gamification framework.

Many researchers in the field of gamification (e.g. Goh, 2014; Kumar& Herger, 2013) note that gamification is not limited to points or badges but is rather related to making proper use of intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivating factors. Progress bars and different levels – they are only the tools, which may be exploited in order to address the specific aim. Even if the employer does not keep focus on motivation and motivational techniques, there are always reasons why particular people work in the particular company. Employees have their own experience, needs, motives, which influence their behavior, and they are anyway, at least, partially addressed and satisfied within a company – even if the company has nothing but financial reward to offer. Otherwise, employees would leave the company.

Therefore, at the very least, some motivational factors are being affected, even though the company may not pay any attention to addressing this issue. In our case, as has been already mentioned, sales and customer service employees receive financial reward only, which means that C9 mainly addresses **Core Drive 4 “Ownership and Possession”** of Octalysis Framework (see Figure 8). To some extent, **Core Drive 8 “Loss and Avoidance”** also has an impact on employee behavior, since employees would not want to lose their job or face any fines for having done something wrong.

Of course, this motivation only works until the person finds a better place where he can get better compensation package, career opportunities, or work in more encouraging environment, which, in turn, leads to higher employee turnover. Employee turnover rate issue is actually well-known problem in the sales sector (see Skok, 2015). This problem is also relevant for C9, and, incidentally, in relation to staff employees. The nature of work, lack of motivation and presumably low work satisfaction most likely contribute to this state of events. Therefore, C9’s employees are either confined to search on their own for intrinsic motivation to work in the company or they are staying unless they move to another job.

In his book, Chou (2016) also claims that employee gamification should be more intrinsic and positive in nature as long as the long-term effect is desirable. Extrinsic rewards work well only for a limited amount of time. After that, their effect on performance is diminishing or may even become demotivating (see also Karimi & Nickpayam, 2017, p.35). The same may be said about negative motivation. While Chou states that both kinds of motivation may be efficient, the important difference is that negative motivation may lead to desirable outcomes and motivate a person towards required activities, but there is no positive value in it for that person. In fact, it is more likely that he/she feels bad or dissatisfied after interacting within this kind of gamification system. As a result, negative motivators are also not very good in the long run.

With regards to Octalysis Framework, the left side of the framework (accomplishment, ownership, scarcity) typically consists of extrinsic motivators, whereas the right side of this framework (empowerment, social influence, unpredictability) is represented by intrinsic motivators correspondingly. At the same time, the top core drives (meaning, accomplishment, empowerment) are positive motivators and the bottom ones (scarcity, avoidance, unpredictability) are more negative than positive.

My personal intention is not to add only point and badges to gamify work activities but also add more intrinsic content so as to make employee-employer connection long lasting and, in general, more positive. At the same time, I realize that service industry workers, in general and in case company as well, are not engaged, for instance, in creative work in its nature, and that will obviously affect the way the framework built for C9 will look like. Thus, opportunities of utilizing, for example, **Core Drive 3 “Empowerment of Creativity and Feedback”** are rather limited. After all, Yu-Kai Chou (2016) himself says that “sales jobs have not typically screamed of intrinsic motivation”.

4.5.2 Analysing core drives of gamification

The next stage in building a gamification framework is to analyze core drives of the chosen model. At the same time, some ideas and practical solutions aimed at addressing C9’s problems and improving employee performance are also presented with their connection to each factor. For this purpose, author applied her personal knowledge of the

case company and industry in general, examined industry examples, as well as referred to the corporate vision through the data she had gathered about C9.

In total, there are eight core drives, which constitute the Octalysis Framework. Their descriptions were given in the section 3.4.1 of this paper. Below is the analysis of how these drives may be applied to the chosen case company.

Core Drive 1 “Epic Meaning & Calling”

Core Drive 1 relates to the higher meaning or narrative, if addressing to Werbach & Hunter’s methodology. It is a very positive motivator and it does not make a person feel bad for what he is doing, neither he feels addicted to the game or any other negative emotions towards it. However, to be honest, it is difficult to find meaning and purpose in a job of service industry workers. The job is stressful enough, as well as conflicts or some misunderstandings often arise due to the fact that employees deal with actual customers, and, unfortunately, they are not always happy, regardless of the effort made to please a person. Such conflicts are also almost impossible to avoid completely (see Kumar & Herger, 2013). Work pace also often puts a lot of stress on employees once they have many customers coming in. Not to mention that the job itself is not that interesting – some would even say that it is boring.

Thus, while importance of selling, providing high quality experience to customers or typing in the necessary data should not be underestimated, but how can an employee find meaning in that? In my opinion, the only way is to go beyond obvious and have a look at the problem from another angle. C9 offers their customers a possibility to train their skills in acrobatics or have fun while jumping at the trampoline area. A possible solution could be emphasizing the meaning of helping other people stay fit and healthy while enjoying their time. That meaning has to be prioritized and somehow promoted on the higher level – for instance, through using such slogans as “We make our customers happy and healthy”. Such initiative should be, indeed, supported by the business owners, so that employees would believe in it. Otherwise, it is unlikely to work.

In terms of the game, it seems reasonable to utilize, at first, existing channels. C9 has been using CRM software for a long time. However, possibilities of the program for various reasons have never been used to its full potential. Adjusting and enhancing the program in a way so that it would support gamification activities is one of the logical solutions to support desirable employee behavior. With respect to this core drive, some of the possible ideas may include random pop-up messages appearing on the screen and prompting an employee towards required activity, such as “Never forget that you help our customers stay healthy and sporty”, or supportive feedback straight after having served a customer “You have just helped one more person stay healthy”. As quite a big share of C9’s customers are children and teenagers and they are often enjoying sports activities, especially if the activity in question is jumping on the trampolines, the message for the visitors under 18 years old might be also rephrased to “Great! Now there is one more happy kid in the world!” It could be also useful to make a “meaningful note” of how many customers were served during the working day by an employee by giving feedback through the statements as “You have made N customers choose healthy lifestyle today”, where N is the number of customers served by a particular employee on that day. This way, we may address at the same time other core drives as well, such as positive data on progress (N customers healthy/happy) would refer to Core Drive 2 and feedback on the progress would also refer to Core Drive 3.

To address the “calling” part of this core drive, one possible suggestion is to implement “Beginner’s Luck” game technique (Chou, 2019). This technique suggests awarding a person with some valuable resource at the beginning of the game. The unexpected prize becomes a strong motivator to participate in gamified activities, because that person believes that he was specifically chosen to get the award and he is the lucky one to obtain it. A practical implementation of this technique may involve granting each employee with initial set of points. Perhaps, some element of randomness would be a worthy addition as well – so that each employee receives different amount of points – although variation in points accrual should not be too significant, because that may demotivate as well. By adding that “special prize” we may also relate to Core Drive 6 and “scarcity” component. As a bonus, such components as randomness and unpredictability refer to Core Drive 7.

Core Drive 2 “Development & Accomplishment”

Core Drive 2 is a positive and, at the same time, extrinsic motivator, which refers to competitiveness, progression, growth. The challenge is an important element of this core drive, and Generation Y is ready to take the risks (Kumar & Herger, 2013). Many sales companies have taken into use the “change element”, and leaderboards, all of a sudden, became widely popular. On the other side, though, men find it more tempting to compete, whereas women usually prefer social games. It is important to make note of it because the bigger part of customer service staff at C9 is females. Besides, C9’s owners have a strong desire that their employees would not be too “pushy” when persuading customers to buy a subscription.

One of the possible solutions could be to stimulate individual achievement in contrast to various leaderboards, which promote competition. Thus, employees would only have to compete with themselves – not with the others. They would also have to improve on their own results only. In practice, it could be achieved through informing employee at the end of the working week – or any other period – that his/her improvement on the previous sales result is X percent. The individual leaderboard is another possibility, so as to show how is the employee’s progress is connected to a few previous weeks’ results. This way, a person has a chance to see if he is doing well or not or should he think of a way to start selling more. Both these ideas through their connection to feedback also refer to Core Drive 3.

Points system is another solution. Moreover, it may be applied to all activities. Employees may be awarded with points for selling monthly/yearly subscriptions to the trampoline center, since most customers, if not motivated properly, intend to buy one-time tickets only. Depending on the value of the sold product, amount of points may vary. Secondly, employees may be awarded for providing good quality of services, for instance by granting “one point for each happy customer”. Finally, employees may be awarded with points for typing in data in the system correctly, since complete customer profile is important for many reasons – one of the obvious ones is to find contact details of the customer in order to be able to reach that person.

For the latter purpose, it may be also advisable to use progress bar, which would clearly indicate how much data is left to fill in. As an idea, progress bar would be colored red if only customer's name and surname are typed into the program, it will turn yellow if employee puts in mobile phone number, and if other valuable data, such as e-mail and other means of contacting person, or all the required fields are filled out – the progress indicator will turn green. Green indicator will also mean that an employee gets a point for completing the task.

If the worker manages to get all the tasks done on a particular workday or, to put it differently, completes “to-do checklist” – does not get negative reviews from the customers, types in all the customer data correctly, increases personal sales numbers – he will get an extra point. If the person completes a challenge for a few days in a row, it might be worthy to grant him also with a badge, which should be visible on his personal photo in the software program. As such, other staff will also get to see the badge. By doing so, we also positively influence social status of that person and address as well Core Drive 5.

The last element to be discussed is the quest, which may be only partially applicable for C9, since pushing subscriptions is not the right idea due to the risk of angering customers. However, simple quests – “fill in the data in the database and please all customers for X days in a row” – may be put into practice. For completing the quest, a reward should be provided – for example, a small random gift. As sales person would not know in which form the gift will come, such a possibility may as well excite him, and, by doing so, we address the Core Drive 6.

Core Drive 3 “Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback”

Core Drive 3 is another positive but this time extrinsic motivator. At the same time, according to Chou (2016), it is the hardest one to master. This core drive relates to the joy of being involved in some activity, and, just as in the case with the Core Drive 1, it is difficult to imagine a person who would enjoy filling in the data and listening to customers' complaints for not serving them “good enough”. This work is not creative in any way. Zichermann & Linder (2013) state that lack of autonomy is one of the serious

issues in the service industry. To be fair, it is also difficult to imagine how can sales and customer service workers get more autonomy. Moreover, there is very little flexibility in the work tasks – employees are told how they should welcome customers, advised on which words are the best to use and what techniques are the best to persuade a client to make a purchase.

In this connection, it is difficult to advise on how make the best use of this element. However, there should be some consideration on whether strict adherence to the rules is that necessary as the business owners think. Perhaps, the same goal may be reached by taking different roads. After all, administrators and supervisors work in the trampoline center, which is not at all a formal structure, even though that work itself is structured. Moreover, other groups of employees, such as instructors, for instance, may express more creativity in relation to how they carry out job tasks.

It is, nevertheless, possible to address the feeling of empowerment by introducing game technique, which is called “Milestone Unlocks”, which basically refers to unlocking some previously unavailable content. In case of C9, it would be useful to apply this technique as a prize for completing some difficult challenge. The prize should be at least somehow connected to empowering employee – giving a set of new, more interesting responsibilities or at least agreeing on giving a break from the most dreary and boring activities, such as typing in and checking the data for its relevance and correctness.

It is probably easier to address the “feedback” part of this core drive, for it is relatively easier to provide feedback on the progress of employees. First of all, C9 is small company, and, mostly due to it, business owners take a direct part in managing the business. It is easy to reach them, and they, in turn, invest their time in connecting with employees. Feedback on the progress may be also visualized and presented through the data on performance collected by CRM software. Customers may give their feedback as well by reviewing their experience and sharing their impressions on the customer service with the company. For instance, they could evaluate their experience as either positive or negative or they could write an extensive review via desktop at the reception. Each positive experience would translate in one point. If the customer, in addition to that, writes a

positive review in one of the company's social media groups, an employee could get an extra point.

Core Drive 4 “Ownership & Possession”

Core Drive 4 is an extrinsic motivator, which is connected to our inner desire to own things. In many companies, this drive has been seriously over-exploited, since people want to own more and they stick to the goal completion in order get their reward. In most cases, it is exactly what the companies want from their employees. However, Chou (2016) advocates that without adding intrinsic content people quite quickly lose their interest towards gamification activities. They focus on completion and not on the quality of their work. On the other side, extrinsic motivators have proven themselves really useful for routine tasks, even though intrinsic motivation may be at the same time affected negatively.

Indeed, in our case, creativity is not something that is required from workers. Typing in data is a routine job, and it is very difficult to make it appealing. As for other tasks, while dealing with customers may seem at first sight a more creative and social activity, after working for some time in C9, employees try to limit communication with clients, use only set phrases and have hardly any passion for performing at the better level. The reasons have, in fact, been already discussed, and adding some intrinsic motivators may probably influence the situation in a positive way. Nevertheless, due to the nature of sales work, it may be reasonable to add some motivators by exploiting the potential of this core drive.

As for practical realization, virtual currency is the most obvious way of taking advantage of the opportunities offered by this drive. Virtual currency should be accrued based on employee performance and, probably, amount of points earned during a particular period – one calendar month, for instance. Implementing this technique does not in any way imply that virtual money or points may be or should be redeemed for real money, as it would have a negative impact on gamification system on the whole. Instead, virtual currency may be spent to buy something tangible, such as coupons or gift certificates. Those gifts do not have to be expensive, neither it is required to spend a lot

on them. There are actually opportunities for savings. Marketing specialists at C9 organize joint sweepstakes in social media in cooperation with partners and reward the winners with various gifts varying from visits to SPA-centers and salt therapy rooms to educational activities, such as vocal classes or different quests. Incidentally, quite often these goods are left unclaimed by prize winners. Would not it be a good idea to make use of these gifts instead of throwing them into the wastebasket before their period of validity is over?

Interestingly enough, badges, if seen on the personal photo at the employee account, also relate to this core drive – a person feels ownership towards them, because they have become a part of their own profile.

Core Drive 5 “Social Influence & Relatedness”

Core Drive 5 addresses to human need of social interactions with other people. It is an intrinsic motivator of human behavior and it could be utilized through exploiting various techniques. First of all, collaboration is very important because people get the sense of relatedness through cooperation with others. They socialize through participating in common work activities.

How can we make use of this opportunity in C9? Sales and customer service work is not a team work in C9 – everyone is responsible for his own work. Thus, group tasks are an unlikely solution to the problem. However, it is possible to organize group quests – as an example, a quest that would last a month. During the time, each employee should improve on his own results, receive zero (or very limited amount) negative reviews from the customers, and earn, at the very least, pre-defined number of points throughout the time period. If everyone in the group manages to do so, some tangible reward should be provided to incentivize this type of behavior in the future. As a bonus, through implementing these group quests in practice we also address the Core Drive 2 and Core Drive 4.

Employee collaboration may be also developed through exchanging or sharing points – staff should have opportunity to transfer points to their colleagues. This way, we may

support social recognition in this particular group of employees. It is essential, though, that only a small amount of points may be transferred to another person – at a guess, no more than 30%. Otherwise, it will undermine the principles of gamification system, since awarding of points should, for the most part, be tied to employee performance. To encourage social bonding, it is probably also useful to grant an employee with extra point for sharing a reward with a colleague.

Finally, it could be a good decision to show support to employees. In practice, business owners or executives may praise employees for the good work they have done. Imagine that everyone in the group accomplished the goal, got the points, passed the quest – would not it be a good idea to support the excellent work by giving praise in the group chat, so that all employees would see that, or even in the social media group? It is also a nice way of providing the feedback to employees and address the Core Drive 3.

Core Drive 6 “Scarcity & Impatience”

Core Drive 6 is both negative and intrinsic motivator, which refers to such game dynamics as constraints or limitations. If applied correctly, it may serve as a valuable addition to the gamification system. How can it be applied to C9’s workers? One good example is game technique, which Chou (2016) calls Appointment Dynamics. It is heavily based on use of triggers or reminders to stimulate people to participate in some activity. In a limited way, it is possible to apply the same technique to updating the customer database. One example is a reminder in the form of pop-up message at the end of working day showing that “you have X minutes left to type in the data. Remember that you only need Y point(s) to improve on your last week’s results. You can do it!”, where X and Y are real numbers. Immediately, the countdown starts, and the worker observes that with each second there is less time left to complete the task. The only downside is that this technique cannot be applied to activities related to serving customers, since limiting time allocated to communicating with customers will most likely have a negative effect on customer relationship.

Another solution is to organize “double points day”. At that day, each task completion would be granted with twice more points than usual. Consequently, everybody would

like to work on that day. The logical implication is to hold these events on the official holidays. Shift work implies that someone has to be present during the weekend, but who would, honestly, admit that he wants to work on the holiday? This incentive may result in more employees willing to take the shift on that “special day”. At the same time, through earning points this technique also addresses to Core Drive 2.

Core Drive 7 “Unpredictability & Curiosity”

Core Drive 7 is intrinsic but negative motivator, which appeals to such emotion as curiosity. It reveals itself through human desire to learn what it is to come next. In fact, it is quite easy to address this emotion by adopting the element of randomness – randomly generated tips, messages, random rewards. According to Chou (2016), the most important is that, once the message was shown or goal was set, the action needed to obtain the reward is short and simple. An element of randomness may be integrated into various activities – such as mini-quests, for instance. To give an example, on the desktop screen appears a message “Keep up the good work! Make 5 people happy with our services today and you will get a prize!” At that point, we give a promise – once the goal is completed, there will be a reward. This way, we address the Core Drive 2. We address the “meaning” component as well, for we appeal to the higher meaning of helping people stay healthy while enjoying their time as well – this is where the Core Drive 1 comes into action. The reward itself appeals to desire of owning things – Core Drive 4. A random message on the screen appeals to both “unpredictability”, because it was not expected, and “curiosity”, since an individual does not know what reward he will get for performing the task and, because of that, he also becomes curious in participating in the activity. Both elements are the parts of this core drive (Core Drive 7).

The aforementioned example is one of the ways of using “Mystery Box” technique (see Chou, 2016) – a person expects a reward, but he may not know what form it takes. Another interesting technique is “Easter Egg”, which suggests giving an employee a reward, which he did not even expect. How could it be applied to our case? As an example, company may from time to time on a random basis grant employee with extra point(s) without tying the reward to individual performance. An employee may be informed of that through various messages such as “You are doing good today! You get

one extra point just for being a good worker”. Notably, at the same time, we also praise employee’s work and appreciate what he is doing for the company and, by doing so, we relate to the “social aspect” of Core Drive 5.

Core Drive 8 “Loss & Avoidance”

Core Drive 8 is both negative and extrinsic motivator and probably the least desirable out of all. Nonetheless, this core drive may be actually very useful for motivating purposes, especially if activity itself is not very pleasant and interesting (Chou, 2016). The problem is that it leaves a person feeling bad, and people do not like it. Why would the workplace be an exception? However, if we have a look at the problem from another angle, we once again get back to the point that customer service and sales work does not offer many interesting and meaningful tasks, the work is not creative at all, and employees rarely have intrinsic motivation to excel in this type of work.

Loosing points and/or progress may be frustrating but, on the other side, how else can we inform a person that he is doing something wrong? Moreover, loosing points, perhaps, is less demotivating than facing real money fines. Of course, the tricky part is correct implementation of this drive in reality. The progress loss needs to be threatening, but the system should not be built that way that if an employee makes a small mistake, a large amount of points is automatically withdrawn, or that person will lose an interest in the game or, in the worst case scenario, becomes demotivated towards work tasks.

Another way to implement this core drive is to take into use limited-time offers. Although possibilities of implementing this solution in the case company are rather limited, one way of addressing it is to plan limited sales offers. To give an example, one day per month employees get to spend less virtual currency or, to put it differently, get a discount for buying gifts in the virtual shop.

The “double point day” solution, which was earlier presented in connection to Core Drive 6, actually also corresponds to the “loss” part of Core Drive 8. If the particular worker misses out on that day, he might as well end up feeling unsatisfied for losing all

those extra points he could have earned. Next time, that person will make an effort so as not to miss that rare opportunity.

4.5.3 Building the framework

Based on the previous section in which all core drives of Octalysis Gamification Framework have been analyzed as well as some practical ideas and solutions were also presented, we may now rate these drives of gamification. The actual numbers given do not necessarily and not entirely correlate with amount of provided game techniques or solutions but rather refer to the author's vision of the direction which should be taken, since it is always advisable to think of new ideas and further develop them.

Therefore, based on a rough estimation of the importance of each factor for our specific case, it was decided that the most important motivators in this gamification system are **Core Drive 2 “Development & Accomplishment”, Core Drive 5 “Social Influence and Relatedness”, Core Drive 1 “Epic Meaning & Calling”**.

Though Core Drive 2 is extrinsic by its nature, it is also a positive motivator, which is very useful for reinforcing goals accomplishment – and that is, to be honest, what most of the businesses need. Not to mention that C9 is a service company, which sells its solutions –tickets, subscriptions or any other form – to the customers, and whole company's success depends on sales results, while at the same time clients should be pleased with the service quality. There are goals and tasks, and it is crucial that employees would be able to achieve them. For these reasons, this drive was ranked the highest in the framework. Some less important are Core Drives 1 and 5 because they are not tied to performance so directly. However, they help keeping the framework balanced and give intrinsic meaning to activities. Game techniques related to these drives should be promoted so as not to let employees quickly lose their interest in participating in the game. Moreover, socially rewarding and meaningful activities will make the game more fun and enjoyable.

The fairly important motivators are **Core Drive 3 “Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback”** and **Core Drive 4 “Ownership and Possession”**. Core Drive 3 is a positive

motivator, which also helps grow intrinsic motivation. The problem is in the difficulty of addressing the “creativity” part of that drive due to non-creativity of the job itself. As for the Core Drive 4, the initial idea is not to tie game performance to financial rewarding so strongly. There is a difference, indeed, between real money and virtual currency, but too many gifts is likely to result in killing the suspense of the game, whilst employees will only concentrate on gaining as much goods as possible.

The least important motivators are **Core Drive 6 “Scarcity & Impatience”**, **Core Drive 7 “Curiosity & Unpredictability”** and **Core Drive 8 “Loss & Avoidance”**. All of these drives generate negative feelings, even if they motivate towards required activities and strengthen intrinsic motivation. Relying heavily on these techniques may be useful under certain circumstances. However, I am inclined to believe that employee motivation is not the right situation for exploiting these drives. As a downside, there is a lack of urgency for committing work tasks once employees get used to being rewarded, and the reward itself becomes no longer as attractive as it used to be. For this reason, it is, nevertheless, useful to apply some game techniques appealing to these core drives so as to avoid fading interest in game project. Some of these techniques have been suggested by the author.

Based on the rankings, the draft gamification framework was elaborated and presented graphically on the Figure 10.



Figure 10. Gamification framework proposal, draft version (author, created by using Octalysis tool)

4.5.4 Data on staff's attitude towards motivators

To add more tangibility to this research, it was decided to conduct a short quiz in order to reveal employees' opinions towards importance of each of the core drives in Octalysis Framework. For this purpose, sales and customer service employees were asked to rate motivation factors in accordance with their understanding of the importance of each factor in connection to their work. Detailed explanation of all core drives was provided as well. However, employees were not informed of possibility of using the data for the purpose of designing gamification system so as to keep the focus on "motivation" part only. Each core drive had to be ranked and assigned a number between one and ten. In total, ten responses were received. Based on the data, an average mean value was calculated for each drive and rounded to the nearest whole number. The data is presented graphically on the Figure 11.

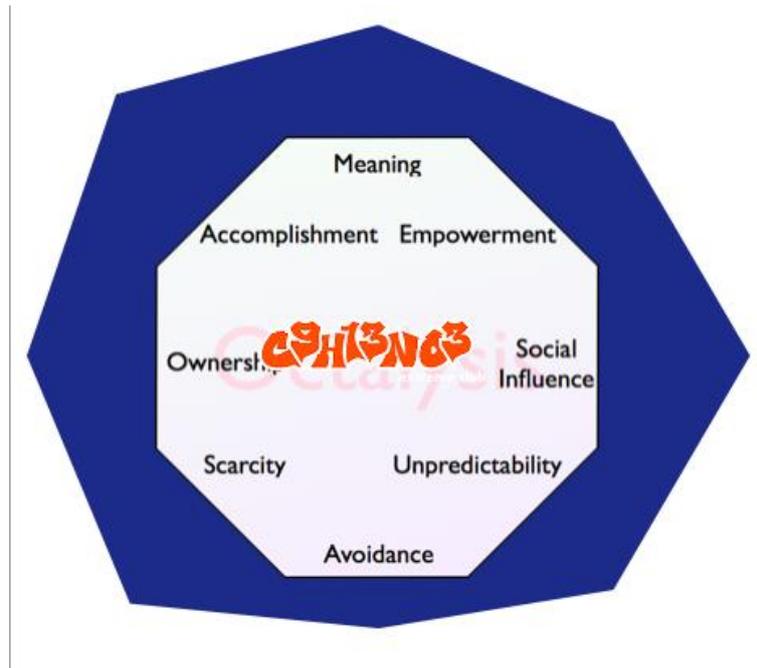


Figure 11. Gamification framework based on employees' quiz results (author, created by using Octalysis tool)

4.5.5 Reflection on the data

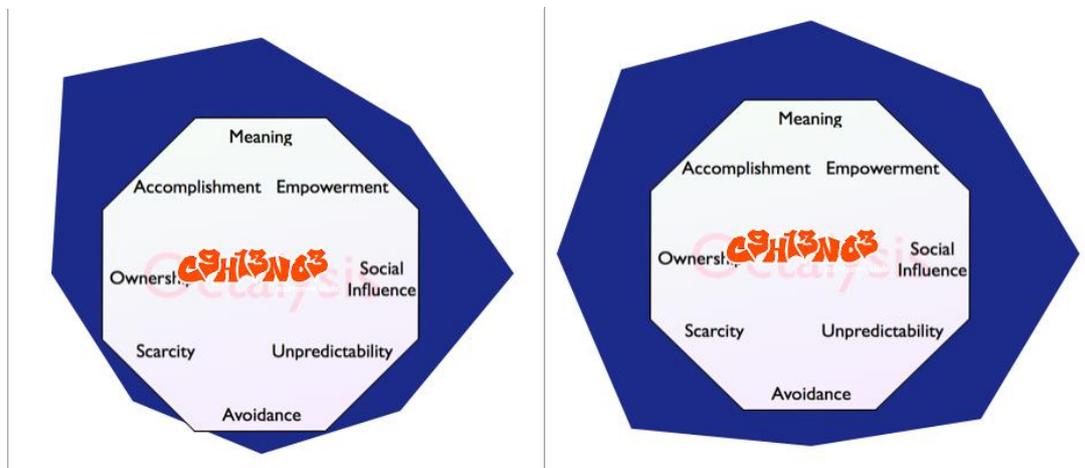


Figure 12. Gamification framework (author's version compared to the one based on quiz results, created by using Octalysis tool)

As it can be seen from the Figure 12, there is variability between the employee perceptions of the importance of each factor and the framework proposed by the author. In

employees' vision, almost all drives are ranked quite highly. Thus, at first sight, it seems that there is a fair balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators and positive and negative motivation. However, I would like to draw attention to the fact that it only gives us information on acceptance of these core drives as motivators. To put it differently, this particular group of employees finds these particular motivators appealing to them. As such, I firmly believe that in their answers company's workers rather state that achievement, meaning, recognition or any other factors are important to them, whereas there is no evidence that gamification system built on employees' rankings would work after all.

In continuing the analysis of quiz results, it becomes clear that the biggest difference concerns the bottom drives of the framework – notably **Core Drives 6** and **7**. These drives scored 6 to 7 points in comparison to given by the author 2 to 3 points. Thus, C9's staff places more value to scarcity, unpredictability, curiosity. One possible reason is that there is too little interest in the job itself. Probably, employees also got bored of their work activities, which is not surprising, since they do the same work every day – serve customers, sale case company's solutions, type in the data. Each next workday is almost the same as previous one. Therefore, they lean towards motivators, which would somehow “spice up” their work life, add an emotional component to it, even if the long-term effect could be negative. One of the bottom drives has, however, scored low – **Core Drive 8** got only 3 points, almost the same as in the author's version. In my understanding, the reason is obvious – while “unpredictability” or “scarcity” can still somehow connect to basic human needs and desires, nobody would want to lose or avoid anything. There is hardly a person who would admit that he gets motivated by being in a hurry, since he may face some penalty if he does not manage to finish the task in time. Despite that, this motivator may be useful for the company to get the employees' attention – but only under certain circumstances and, ideally, for the short time only.

Apart from that, there is also significant difference regarding importance of the **Core Drive 4**. Employees ranked it considerably higher than the author – 7 points compared to 4. Perhaps, the reason is that the staff, in general, considers getting rewards an important matter – at least not less important than work meaning or recognition. Maybe

they also think that they should aim for more tangible rewards, because it is difficult to get positive reinforcement any other way due to the nature of work.

Regardless of the reasons why employees have different understanding of the importance of some of the core drives, it should be also noted that quiz results should be considered with caution. First of all, people may not always state in their answers what they think but rather how they want to be perceived by the others – in other words, provide socially desirable answers (see Saunders et al., 2009). Secondly, individual answers provide more data on how each person finds his own meaning in each motivating factor. In this way, there is probably weak connection to the service industry or the case company in general. Perhaps, it would be more valuable to analyze individual answers and, depending on that, define what motivates each particular person. On the other side, an idea that a small business would invest resources in distinguishing motivation types and modify gamification activities based on player types is beyond the imaginary – or at least not in the first stage and not unless there is some real evidence that gamification system positively affects employee performance in the particular company.

Thus, the best way to refer to this data is as an insight that could highlight some weak spots in game design. As a suggestion, it could be useful to think of the ways to make the game more interesting and appealing to the players – probably, add a few light techniques addressing the Core Drives 6 and 7 in a positive way. At first, when the game has just been released, the feeling of sensation will drive employees' interest towards participating in the game, but once the initial emotions are no longer prevalent some game techniques will help keeping interest in playing.

Gamification framework may be adjusted in accordance with above-mentioned suggestions. A refined version is presented on Figure 13, along with some gamification techniques.

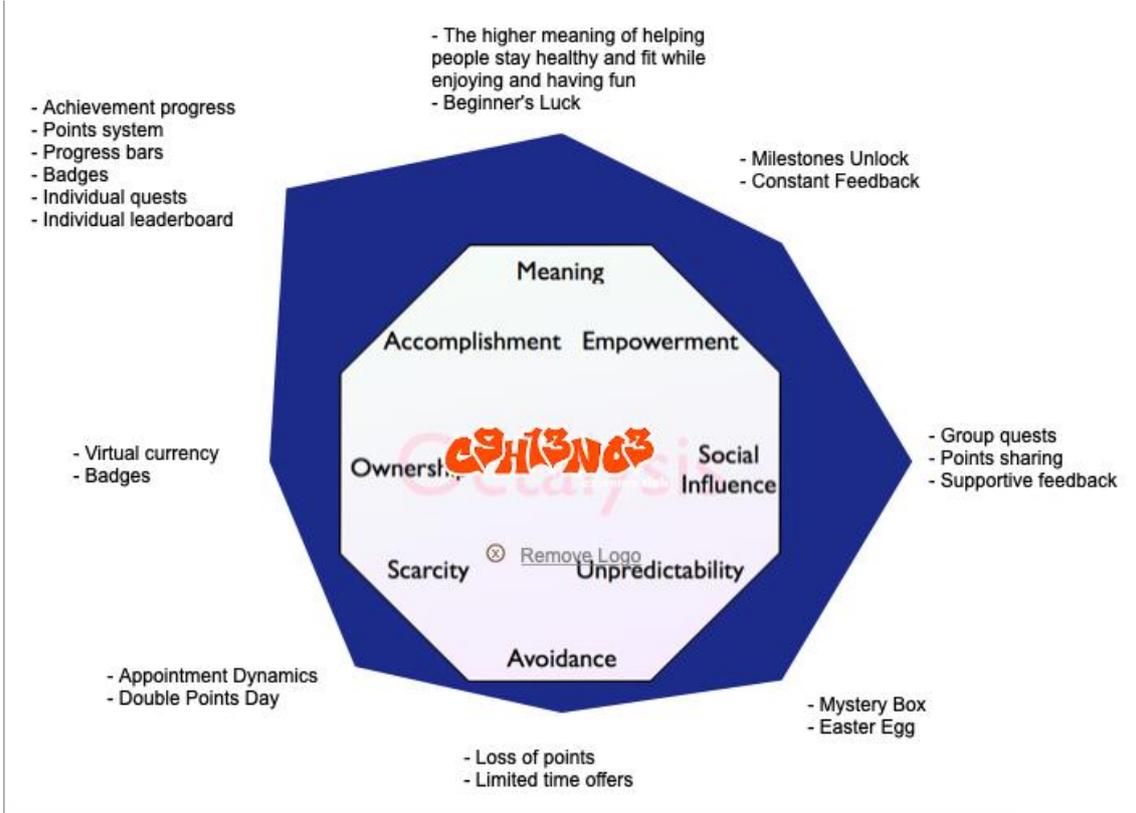


Figure 13. Gamification framework proposal, final version (author, created by using Octalysis tool)

5 DISCUSSION

An overall aim of this thesis project was to give a valid reasoning for adopting gamification as a motivation tool. On a smaller scale, four research objectives were defined, which included: presenting and describing the concepts of gamification and motivation (**RO1 & RO2**), linking them to each other (**RO3**) and propose gamification tools as a practical business solution (**RO4**).

The first three objectives were theoretical and they have been explored in the Chapter 3 of this thesis, which is dedicated to literature review. Importantly, these objectives provide an adequate explanation and understanding of key concepts – motivation and gamification – which are further addressed in a practical context in the empirical part.

Games motivate us as they appeal to our inner desires and basic psychological needs, but how can work be motivating? Perhaps, the most important point covered in the theoretical chapter is that it is not enough to choose appropriate game elements and connect them all to each other (Goh, 2014). Moreover, none of game elements or techniques are perfect – a lot depends on the situation (Chou, 2016). Games should not just motivate but rather help creating interesting and engaging environment, so that people would be naturally motivated to perform on a better level – whether it may be reached by applying motivational theories or by taking into use more specific tools, such as Octalysis Framework, which was later used as a model in empirical research.

The last research objective (**RO4**) was examined in a practical study, concerning use of gamification tools for increasing motivation. Chou (2016) claims that building a long-term successful employee gamification strategy is difficult, since after a short period of time extrinsic motivators usually become no longer useful. Consecutively, it requires a lot of thinking on how to develop intrinsic motivation. The author faced the same challenge in her research, as the focus was on building a long-term solution, which would have a positive impact on employee motivation in the long run. Therefore, she decided to add more intrinsic content, which positively affects work motivation and engagement and makes people feel good, and primarily concentrated on such factors as meaning or

social relatedness. On the other hand, due to specifics of sales and customer service work in service industry, some extrinsic factors – accomplishment or ownership – had to be addressed as well.

Both original Octalysis Framework and the adopted for the case company's needs version of the framework address various motivators in order to make the game effective and stimulate desired activities. In this way, there is also connection to motivational theories, which have been discussed in the theoretical chapter.

For instance, *Self-Determination Theory (SDT)* addresses needs in competence, autonomy and relatedness (Karimi & Nickpayam, 2017, p.38). All these needs may be also addressed through Octalysis Framework, and the author in her framework proposal referred to these needs as well. Competence is in other words “accomplishment”, and it is very important motivator, since points, badges, leaderboards – they all fall into this category. In her research, the author put special attention to this factor and thought of game techniques, which would take advantage of achievement motivation. Relatedness refers to the “social influence”, which was also given a high priority in the author's framework proposal. Necessity of social interactions may be acknowledged by implementing various techniques – one of the author's suggestions is points sharing, for example. The autonomy, which corresponds to “empowerment”, has been affected the least of all, mostly because of the scope of work tasks that sales staff do.

Similarly, the higher levels of the *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* correspond to both the SDT and Octalysis Framework: “belonging” refers to “relatedness” or “social influence”, “esteem” refers to “competence” or “accomplishment” and “self-actualization” to “autonomy” or “empowerment”.

According to the *Fogg Behavior Model* (behaviormodel.org, 2019), prompt, ability and motivation are three factors that must be addressed simultaneously to push a person towards desired outcomes. In relation to this research, “ability” trigger remains rather unexploited, as work tasks do not vary much, and we may assume that all employees are capable of coping with work tasks. The “prompt” is the target or a goal that comes in a form of clearly stated message so that an employee would be prompted and reminded

about fulfilling the required task – how exactly a prompt will look like and whether it will have a form of a pop-up message at the desktop screen or something else is the matter of consideration. “Motivation” refers to how exactly a person is motivated to do the task – it may be an intrinsic motivation, which the author tries to stimulate in her proposal by giving a meaning to work tasks and promoting social bonding, extrinsic motivation in a form of virtual rewards or probably the combination of both options.

In the same way, there is a connection to other theories as well. For instance, *Operant Conditioning Theory*'s focus is on reinforcements that stimulate desired behavior (Wu, 2011). In C9's case, they are points, badges or other rewards. *Goal Setting Theory* builds on three principles of the goal – difficulty, specificity, proximity (Karimi & Nickpayam, 2017, p.38). As the author suggests, the goals should be clear and specific – as an example, “aim for zero negative reviews during the week”. Such goals also conform to other principles of this theory – there is a right level of difficulty, not too difficult and not too simple. It does not also take too long to achieve an objective – only a week. Similarly, other gamified work tasks may be formulated.

The practical solution offered by the author strongly builds on the assumption that there is a positive impact of work gamification on employee performance – the hypothesis, which is confirmed by many researchers (e.g. Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.97). A gamification framework, which was adapted for the case company's needs and proposed as an affecting employee motivation solution, was developed in accordance with this principle – to make work activities fun and enjoyable whilst at the same time target business needs and focus on work efficiency. Various game techniques and game elements primarily serve this main purpose. Various types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic, have been taken into use for two reasons: to pursue a deeper connection with the scope of employees' work tasks and at the same time incorporate various means of addressing employee motivation, since some employees may respond more positively to intrinsic motivators, whereas the others – to extrinsic ones.

As another positive moment, proposed gamification framework may be easily adjusted to suit the changing needs of the company. Some motivators may turn out to be more useful, whereas others may not result in desirable behavior. Some new ideas, game

techniques may be taken into consideration. It is important that, even though within the framework of this research paper a proposed gamification solution is considered potentially useful and gainful way to increase employee motivation and consecutively staff performance, there must be also a way of “playing” with that system, making it more appealing to its users.

On the top of that, while the focus was specifically on improving case company’s operations, the author firmly believes that the same ideas and know-hows could be also useful and valuable for other similar service organizations, which are involved in dealing with customers on a daily basis and experience problems with motivating workers to perform tedious and bland work tasks.

5.1 Limitations

In connection with this research, limitations have been already shortly discussed in the section 2.5. Theoretical limitations mainly refer to the vastness of the concepts of motivation and gamification. Some inevitable limitations regarding the literature sources choice had to be done. However, the author would like to draw specific attention to limitations of the empirical part, which is Chapter 4 of this paper.

First of all, it must be remembered that gamification framework proposal is not a final solution. In some way, it is more of a guide or a set of instructions required to build an effective game in a particular context, but it is not by any means a final game. Defining implementation details was not meant to be a part of this work. In practice, though, many things have to be considered prior to adopting gamification practices: rules of rewarding have to be concretized, the responsible person(s) who will take care of the project have to be allocated. Many gamification researchers and practitioners (e.g. Kumar & Herger, 2013) mention that is also important to be aware of technical moments. The counting mechanisms should work perfectly, because employees will not long for participating in the game if they constantly get wrong amount of points or are mistakenly not rewarded at all.

Game budget and game design are important as well. In case of C9, at least at the first stage, while testing out the concept and its applicability, financial costs of its realization could be almost non-existent. For instance, one possible suggestion is to modify software to support gamification activities. At the same time, it is also one of the ways to cut the costs. Would it be appealing long enough? This is the question to be answered. Perhaps, it would be more beneficial to invest in designing a customizable mobile application, so that employees could easily track their own achievements in real-time and business owners could monitor how staff are progressing on a constant basis. It is advisable to think about it once the positive effect of gamification system has been noted, since all these questions were left beyond the scope of this paper.

In addition to that, gamification framework was proposed for one particular group of employees in a particular company. Thus, the focus is mainly on improving performance of sales and customer service workers. The same solution may not work for other staff members. It is therefore suggested to discuss a possibility of expanding gamification system to other employees whose work may be at least partially gamified – in case of C9 that would be instructors.

Finally, whether a gamification solution will be adopted by the case company is unknown. However, the author is curious and personally would be interested to see how her idea would fit into company's operations and how it would work in practice.

5.2 Practical recommendations

In relation to building the effective gamification framework and based on theoretical findings, the following practical recommendations were defined:

1. Gamification system has to be **appealing** to its users (Symons, 2018; Werback & Hunter, 2012). A suggestion of developing mobile app, mentioned in the previous section, is clearly linked to this principle, since people are more attached to their mobile phones than to office computers. A well-designed app could potentially make the game more interesting for employees.

2. Gamification system as well as its purposes have to be **transparent** (Kumar & Herger, 2013). Otherwise, while in the initial stage employees may be driven by their curiosity and interest, that interest will quickly fade as soon as employees realize they have no idea what is the purpose, what are the rules of the game and what should be done in order to excel in it. Moreover, the principle of **voluntary participation** should be implemented (Chou, 2016; Zichermann & Linder, 2013). If people do not want to play some game, there is definitely something wrong with that game. Similarly, employees cannot be forced to participate in gamified activities. If it is the case, then gamification system has to be adjusted to motivate staff to take a part in the game.

3. Gamification system has to be **monitored** (Kumar & Herger, 2013). It has been already mentioned that it is important to be able to adjust activities to ever changing needs of employees. In the same way, employee progress has to be measured. There should be at least some improvement in desirable behavior – otherwise, gamification system is not efficient at all. With regard to C9's case and empirical research of this paper in particular, it is required to manage employee performance. For instance, sales performance may be measured by comparing sales data prior to adopting gamification practices and after that. Quality of customer experience and customer satisfaction may be, for example, measured through the number of positive reviews left by the clients and data on customer complaints. The higher number of returning customers also indicates that customer experience has improved. Obviously, if measurement results are less than satisfactory, it means that some modifications have to be done or, probably, gamification system even has to be redesigned completely. After all, the best system is the one that works.

4. Gamification system may be as well **expanded**, so as to take it to another level. One obvious suggestion – propose a framework aiming at improving instructors' work – has been already suggested. Secondly, as Chou advocates (2019), Octalysis Framework may be advanced to incorporate more sophisticated principles. For instance, the framework may be optimized to take into account various needs of employees, depending on the current state of their "journey". Evidently, new employee during the induction phase may not be that motivated as an employee that has been working in the company for a long time, which leads to an idea that different game techniques should be prioritized.

Perhaps, such a differentiation would not currently be a reasonable decision for C9. On the other side, it points to the direction for future development.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

Surprisingly, research on gamification is still very much limited to a common topic of applying badges, points, leaderboards to various contexts, but more specific scientific articles and even practice-oriented resources are the real gems. It is indeed important to systematize existing knowledge and provide guidelines for applying gamification to practical cases. However, amount of research on applicability of gamification to various business fields is still relatively small. In this paper, the author addressed the details of applying gamification in a service company, with particular focus on C9, which is a trampoline center providing sports and entertainment services. However, it would be valuable to conduct similar research in other contexts by applying gamification to different fields – banking or insurance, for example. Besides, existing scientific papers are mainly exploratory (see Hamari et al., 2014), whereas it would be useful to conduct experimental research, such as, for example, investigate various factors that determine success or failure of gamification initiatives.

6 CONCLUSION

Gamification brings fun into the process. Digitalization and technology advancements have paved the way for gamification to enter the market, as it became easy to adopt gamification techniques. Consequently, gamification popularity started rising, and, at some point, the concept was applied to employee motivation. Well-designed gamification system is, indeed, a powerful tool, but it should be also noted that it cannot motivate an individual if he is not interested in activity at all. As Chou (2016) advocates, “good gamification design motivates those who are on the fence - those who are interested [...] but need a bit more motivation to push through”. Therefore, gamification is not a magical tool. It is only one out of many ways to motivate the staff, and it should not be seen as a motivation strategy on its own. Instead, it may be more useful to combine it with other motivational activities, such as work recognition, employee development, empowerment with greater responsibilities and more autonomy, encouraging work environment and others (Delves, 2011; Wikipedia, 2019). As long as there are various motivation solutions involved, it is more likely that company’s staff is highly motivated. Not to mention the fact that motivated employees are less likely to resign from the job (Murphy, 2019).

By this research, the author tried to summarize existing knowledge as well as draw further attention to the concept of gamification and its applicability as a motivational tool. There are definitely different opinions regarding gamification as well as there are various concerns regarding its usefulness. For example, some researchers specifically highlight the fact that gamification programs have to be carefully designed and aligned with organization strategy (Klasen, 2016; Sarangi & Shah, 2015). It seems a reasonable suggestion, as the focus should be on employee motivation and engagement, but not at the expense of reaching organization goals (see Klasen, 2016). In other works, also potential for abuse is mentioned – this is the situation when employees find a way to gain more points, badges or any other rewards without any effort to do their actual work tasks. Kamasheva et al. (2015) in their research refer to this situation as “fake motivation”.

However, the fact that many global companies – Xerox, L’Oreal, Deloitte, Google and others – have created multiple gamification successful stories is a positive sign, which favors further growth of gamification industry globally (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, pp.97-99). As per today, gamification examples may be found in different countries all over the world, and, even though not all cases are known to the wider public, with each year more and more gamification solutions are integrated in various contexts (Yle, 2017b). For instance, one interesting example of applying gamification to workplace context is Finnish Tuottava Esimies simulation game, which supposedly helps improve leading skills through the concept of individual learning or – as game developers call it – “intuitive leadership” (PlayGain, 2019).

Based on the assumption that gamification industry success will continue into the future, it becomes essentially important to continue analyzing the phenomenon of gamification. Both businesses and researchers should continue monitoring the impacts of gamification on workplace and, in the same time, think of the other ways of practical applications of gamification methodology both in the previously studied areas and in the new contexts. (Desai & Nagaraju, 2018, p.94; Lowman, 2016)

Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that people’s priorities have changed and they keep changing. The author’s personal opinion is that in the future more and more businesses will be required to gamify their operations, since it will meet the business needs as well – most of the companies would be willing to invest their time and resources to make work activities more engaging and appealing to their workers. Gamification experts in their predictions go even further. For example, according to Juho Hamari (Yle, 2017a), gamification as a word may disappear in the future but instead becomes a natural part of one global design. Yu-Kai Chou (2019) advocates that “if the world adopts good gamification principles [...], then it is possible to see a day where there is no longer a divide between things people must do and the things they want to do”.

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APPENDIX. EMPLOYEE ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

Core Drive /Rank	Drive 1	Drive 2	Drive 3	Drive 4	Drive 5	Drive 6	Drive 7	Drive 8
Respondent 1	3	9	2	2	5	5	5	3
Respondent 2	8	9	6	3	2	8	2	1
Respondent 3	9	10	6	10	10	5	6	1
Respondent 4	9	10	8	10	10	8	7	2
Respondent 5	3	3	3	8	8	8	6	3
Respondent 6	6	7	6	8	7	8	8	1
Respondent 7	5	5	5	5	10	5	10	6
Respondent 8	3	3	5	9	10	6	1	1
Respondent 9	9	10	8	7	8	8	5	3
Respondent 10	8	9	7	10	8	8	5	5
Average Mean	6	8	6	7	8	7	6	3