The Impact Gamification on User Engagement on Shopee (Analysis)

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Abstract: Shopee, one of the leading e-commerce platforms, has successfully utilized gamification to enhance user engagement and satisfaction. Gamification applies game design elements such as points, leaderboards, and rewards to motivate user interactions and loyalty. This study examines the impact of gamification on user engagement in Shopee through a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 100 active Shopee users, collecting data on user behavior, satisfaction, and the influence of gamification features. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression, while qualitative responses were thematically analyzed. The results reveal that gamification features, particularly rewards and competitions, significantly increase platform visits, user satisfaction, and purchase likelihood. However, personalization and social interaction present opportunities for improvement. This study concludes that gamification enhances user loyalty and engagement, with recommendations for further personalization and interactive features to sustain its effectiveness.
Keywords: Gamification, User Engagement, E-commerce, Shopee, Rewards, Loyalty

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1. INTRODUCTION

Based on data obtained in 2021, Shopee was ranked as the second among e-commerce-based applications with a total of 127.5 million users, the number of Shopee users reached 191.6 million (M. Azmi et al., 2022). Gamification is the application of game design elements and principles in non-game contexts to engage and motivate people to achieve their goals (Xu et al., 2020). Gamification in e-commerce aims to boost user engagement and shopping satisfaction by tapping into individual natural drives for achievement, competition, and social interaction, enhancing the online shopping experience (Behl et al., 2020). Gamification in e-commerce refers to the use of game design elements and mechanics in non-game contexts, such as online shopping platforms, to engage and motivate users to perform certain actions (Tsou & Putra, 2023). These game-like features can include points, badges, leaderboards, challenges, and rewards.

The phenomenal aspect of gamification in the marketplace involves the strategic implementation of gaming elements (Halim et al., 2022). This includes features like points, rewards, competition, and levels within e-commerce platforms (Xu et al., 2020). Such elements are utilized to enhance user engagement, incentivize active participation, and foster customer loyalty (Bitrián et al., 2021). Through gamification, these platforms create interactive and dynamic shopping experiences for users, leading to increased involvement and stronger connections between the marketplace and its consumers (Behl et al., 2020). Gamification in the marketplace means using fun game-like stuff, like points or rewards, in online shopping sites. They do this to make people more interested, involved, and loyal (Zhang et al., 2021). By using these game-like features, the shopping websites make buying things more exciting and interactive for users (Patharia & Jain, 2024). This makes people more interested and connected to the online store they're shopping (Widjaja et al., 2021).

The impact of gamification on user engagement in e-commerce platforms like Shopee is undeniable (Al-Zyoud, 2021). By incorporating game design elements such as points, rewards, and competition, Shopee has successfully enhanced user engagement and incentivized active participation (M. Azmi et al., 2022). This strategic implementation of gamification has led to a dynamic and interactive shopping experience, ultimately fostering customer loyalty and satisfaction (Behl et al., 2020). Furthermore, Shopee uses gamification not just to engage users, but to meet the specific needs of its customers in Southeast Asia. By offering reward, challenges, and social features, Shopee taps into users' desire for achievement and interaction with the other (Xu et al., 2020). These gamified elements, like daily check-ins and time-limited challenges, make shopping more fun and rewarding. This has resulted in a significant improvement in the competitiveness among buyers, ultimately benefiting Shopee as an online marketplace (M. Azmi et al., 2022). Incorporating game mechanics such as challenges, leaderboards, and rewards has proven to be an effective strategy in enhancing user engagement and satisfaction, ultimately setting Shopee apart as a dynamic and interactive online shopping platform.

However despite the widespread application of gamification in e-commerce platforms, the phenomenon of using game elements to enhance user engagement remains insufficiently understood, particularly in the context of e-commerce platforms in Southeast Asia such as Shopee. Previous research has largely focused on the global application of gamification (Behl et al., 2020) but there has

been limited exploration of its impact on e-commerce platforms operating in Southeast Asia. Some existing studies have primarily focused on general gamification elements without delving into how these elements specifically influence user behavior within the local and cultural context (Azmi et al., 2022).

This research aims to fill this gap by specifically exploring the impact of gamification on user engagement on Shopee focusing on features such as rewards, competition and personalization implemented on the platform. By employing a mixed-methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative data, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how gamification influences user experience, satisfaction, and loyalty on Shopee as well as to identify areas for improvement in enhancing user engagement. This study is significant as it provides insights into the role of gamification in improving user interaction and fostering long-term customer loyalty which is crucial in the highly competitive e-commerce industry. Moreover the results could contribute to the development of more personalized and engaging e-commerce strategies that align with the unique preferences of Southeast Asian consumers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gamification is widely used in e-commerce to engage users and encourage them to interact more with the platform (Wang & Peng, 2023). By adding games like points, badges, leaderboards, and rewards can significantly influence user behavior and satisfaction (L. F. Azmi et al., 2021). In Shopee, gamification appears in various forms, each strategically designed to engage users by making the shopping process more interactive and rewarding.

Points and rewards: Users earn points for completing specific actions, like making purchases or participating in daily check-ins (Putra Rahmadhan et al., 2023). These coins can be redeemed for discounts on future purchases, providing users with tangible benefits and encouraging repeated interactions with the platform. Studies indicate that points-based systems enhance user engagement by providing immediate gratification and long-term value.

In comparison, Tokopedia also employs a points-based system but limits earning opportunities primarily to purchases. While effective, This approach lacks the interactively and variety provided by Shopee's gamified challenges, which may reduce engagement over time (M. Azmi et al., 2022).

Leaderboards are one of the most common gamified features in e-commerce. They create a sense of competition by showing users' rankings based on their activity, such as points earned or purchases made. This motivates users actively engage with the platform to improve their standings and win rewards.

Lazada, another e-commerce platform, also uses leaderboards but mostly during specific events (Santy & Iffan, 2023). While effective for short term engagement, this approach may not encourage as much ongoing use compared to Shopee's regular leaderboard update, which maintain user interest beyond promotional periods (Zhang et al., 2021).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a multi-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the impact of gamification on Shopee user engagement. This approach ensures a balanced understanding of user behavior and satisfaction by integrating measurable data with in-depth insights.

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 100 active Shopee users. The questionnaire was designed to capture both qualitative and quantitative data.
1. Collected through close-ended questions with a 1-5 Likert scale to measure
2. Collected through open-ended questions to explore user experiences and suggestions.
3. Frequency of interaction with gamified features
4. User satisfaction with reward and games
5. Behavioral impact, such as increased purchase

Table 1. Likert scale

Description	Statement Answer	Score
SS	*Strongly Agree*	5
S	*Agree*	4
N	*Neutral*	3
TS	*Disagree*	2
STS	*Strongly Disagree*	1

Source: Suasapha (2020)

Data analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in this study. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), while qualitative data was analyzed thematically to complement the numerical findings.
a) Quantitative Analysis with SPSS:
  - Descriptive statistics were used to summarize user engagement and satisfaction levels.
  - Pearson's correlation the relationships between satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty.
  - Regression analysis was applied to predict the influence of gamified features on user behavior.
b) Qualitative Analysis:
  - Open-ended responses were grouped into themes using thematic analysis.
  - These themes provided additional insight into user experiences, such as the perceived value of rewards and challenges.

Validation

Ensure the reliability and accuracy of the research findings, the following validation methods were employed:

a) Quantitative validation:
- Reliable testing, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to measure the internal consistency of the survey questions. A value of 0.6 indicated high reliability. Reliability is the extent to which the measurement of a test remains consistent after being repeated on the same subject and under the same conditions.(Sanaky, 2021)
- Data assumptions, Normality and linearity were tested to ensure the suitability of the data for correlation and regression analysis.
- Triangulation, quantitative findings were compared with qualitative insights to confirm consistency. for instance, high satisfaction rating with Shopee coins were supported by user comments highlighting their ease of use and tangible benefits.

b) Qualitative Validation:
- Thematic Saturation, analysis continued until no new themes emerged, ensuring that data collection was sufficient.
- Member checking, Key themes were shared with subset of respondents to confirm the accuracy of interpretations.

Triangulation, Themes for qualitative data were compared with quantitative results to provide a comprehensive view.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings derived from the analysis of data collected through questionnaires and discusses their implications in the context of gamification on Shopee. The results focus on user engagement, satisfaction, and behavioral impacts facilitated by gamification features such as daily check-ins, rewards, and leaderboards. By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, this discussion aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how gamification influences user behavior and loyalty. The insights gathered highlight the strengths of Shopee's gamification strategies and identify areas for improvement to enhance user experience further.

Table 2. SPSS Result

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
I often interact with gamification features such as daily check-ins and games on Shopee	3.00	1.414
I actively participate in leaderboards to improve my ranking.	2.99	1.554
I feel satisfied with the rewards offered by Shopee, such as Shopee Coins or discounts.	3.31	1.368
Elements of competition, such as leaderboards, motivate me to use the Shopee app more	3.00	1.484
Personalized gamification features that match my preferences increase my interest in the app.	2.97	1.501
I feel satisfied with my experience using Shopee thanks to its gamification features.	2.92	1.542
I prefer using Shopee over other platforms because of its gamification features.	2.98	1.544
Gamification makes my shopping experience on Shopee more enjoyable.	2.88	1.533
I often interact with friends or other users through social features on Shopee.	2.93	1.572
I have a habit of visiting the Shopee app every day because of its gamification features.	2.88	1.591
I feel more engaged with the Shopee app because of its attractive gamification features.	2.84	1.489
I am more likely to make purchases on Shopee because of incentives like points and rewards.	3.02	1.511
I feel more loyal to Shopee compared to other platforms because of its gamification features.	3.00	1.443
I continue to use Shopee in the long term because of the gamification features it offers.	2.84	1.496
Gamification on Shopee encourages me to shop more than before.	3.00	1.550

Source: Research, 2025

Based on the results of descriptive statistics, the average score of the statements regarding gamification features in Shopee ranges from 2.84 to 3.31 with a standard deviation that shows a level of variation between 1.368 to 1.591. The statement with the highest average score is related to user satisfaction with the rewards offered by Shopee (3.31), indicating that incentives such as Shopee Coins or discounts have significant appeal to users. In contrast, the lowest average was found in the statement regarding user engagement with gamification features that enhance the shopping experience (2.84), indicating the potential for improvement in this feature to make it more engaging. The relatively high standard deviation across most of the statements indicates that there is a considerable difference in perception among respondents regarding gamification in Shopee. Overall, these results show that gamification features in Shopee have a moderate influence on user engagement, but there is an opportunity to improve the personalization and competition elements to encourage more user interaction and loyalty. The findings highlight several key impacts of gamification on Shopee user engagement:

1. Increased Frequency of Platform Visits: Gamified features, such as daily check-ins and limited-time events, encourage users to visit the app regularly. For example, users often return to the app multiple times a day to participate in Shopee's Daily check-in or Shopee gems like the Shopee Farm, where users complete tasks to earn rewards. This daily interaction creates habitual engagement, as users are motivated by the prospect of earning points or rewards.
2. Enhanced User Satisfaction: Rewards and achievements provide users with a sense of progress and satisfaction. The anticipation of rewards motivates users to complete tasks, For instance, Shopee Coins, which users earn by completing challenges or making purchases, can be redeemed for discounts or exclusive offers. Many users expressed that these features make their shopping experience not only more rewarding but also more enjoyable, as they feel they are getting more value from their time spent on the platform.
3. Higher Levels of User Retention and Loyalty: The combination of rewards, competition, and social elements creates a more immersive experience, encouraging users to spend more time on the platform and return regularly. For example, leaderboards during events like Shopee 11.11 Sale incentivize users to complete challenges to climb the ranks and win prizes. This sense of competition and achievement helps foster a sense of loyalty, with many users preferring Shopee over other platforms because of these engaging gamified elements.
4. Increased Purchase Likelihood: Gamified incentives play significant role in influence purchasing behavior. Users reported that points and rewards like Shopee Coins encourage them to make purchases. For example, users are motivated to complete transactions to earn additional points or unlock special rewards, such as free shipping or exclusive discounts during flash sales. These gamified incentives increase the likelihood of a user completing a purchase, as they feel they are getting more out of their shopping experience.

The findings suggest that personalized gamification features are an area for improvement. Shopee could enhance user engagement by offering challenges and rewards based on individual shopping habits or preferences. This could involve personalized product recommendations as part of gamified challenges or offering rewards for specific purchase behaviors such as buying favorite products or completing certain activities. Another area for improvement identified in this study is the integration of more social features. Users reported limited interaction with friends or other users on the platform. Expanding social gamification elements, such as friend referrals sharing achievements, or competing with others on leaderboards could further increase engagement. According to Wang & Peng (2023) integrating social elements in gamification could lead to more sustainable and enjoyable user experiences, making it a valuable strategy for Shopee. Furthermore while Shopee's gamification strategy successfully boosted short-term user engagement, it needs to be refined for long-term loyalty. Features such as personalized challenges and rewards should be continuously updated to create a deeper, ongoing connection with users. Santy & Iffan (2023) emphasized that long-term engagement in e-commerce can be sustained through dynamic rewards systems and continuous updates to gamified features, which Shopee could incorporate into its platform to enhance long-term user retention.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Shopee's gamification strategy has greatly improved user engagement. By adding game-like elements, Shopee taps into users' motivations that keep users engaged, satisfied, and loyal. This study shows that gamified features help user enjoy their experience more, use the platform more often, and increase their chance of making purchases. To make Shopee's gamification even more effective, here are some practical recommendations:

1. Personalize Gamification, Shopee could offer challenges and rewards baes on individual shopping habits. For example, users could earn rewards for buying their favourite products or brands, making the experience feel more personal.
2. Boost social interaction, adding features where users can play together or challenge their friends could increase engagement. Features like friend referrals, sharing achievements, or competing with friends on leaderboards would make the app more social and fun.
3. Create tiered rewards, Shopee could introduce different levels of rewards, where more active users get better perks, such as exclusive discounts or early access to sales. This would encourage users to stay engaged and aim for higher levels.
4. Gamify the shopping process, instead of limiting gamification to specific features, Shopee could make the whole shopping experience fun. Users could earn rewards for browsing products, sharing items, or leaving reviews, making the entire process feel like a game.
5. Listen to user feedback, to keep things fresh, Shopee should regularly collect feedback from users and make improvements based on their suggestions. This ensures the gamified experience stay relevant and exciting.

This research primarily focused on a sample of 100 active Shopee users, which limits the generalizability of the findings to the entire user base especially considering the diversity of user behavior across different regions and demographics. The study was also conducted within a limited time frame, meaning it does not capture the long-term effects of gamification on user engagement and loyalty. The study did not explore the impact of external factors, such as marketing campaigns or competitive strategies from other e-commerce platforms which could also influence user engagement. Future research could consider a larger and more diverse sample as well as longitudinal studies to assess the sustained impact of gamification on user behavior. For future research, studying the long-term impact of gamification and how different groups of users engage with it could provide even more valuable insights. This analysis shows that gamification is a powerful tool for increasing user engagement and loyalty in e-commerce.

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