Integrating Five Theories in Pursuit of Marketing Success in Gamification Interventions: A Conceptual Paper

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ABSTRACT

The study was motivated by the novelty of gamification and the possible impact of its growth in the marketing space. It synthesizes information gleaned from gamification literature, to isolate common themes in order to produce a set of researchable propositions that can in turn be quantitatively tested, and to link those common themes to well-known academic grounding theories in order to advance further understanding of the concept. The study was based on the review of available literature on gamification and on the five theories that are deemed relevant for better understating of the gamification industry, and concludes by giving a list of propositions and suggesting a research framework which shows the linkages between access to gamification technology, customization of technology, congruence between expectations of gamification instigators and users, communication between companies with gamified interventions and customers, the attractiveness of the gamification technology, and the feelings of reciprocity as perceived by customers. The proposed framework, in turn, shows how these variables are related to getting people motivated to adopt gamification as a marketing tool. As the study was based on available literature, it shares the limitations contained therein.

Keywords: Gamification, Grounding Theories, Customization, Motivation, Congruence, Reciprocity, Attractiveness
JEL Classifications: L86, M3, M16

1. INTRODUCTION

Interests in digital technology and mobile marketing are important trends in the future of marketing (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2012), as digital technology is reshaping the entire marketing mix (Jobber, 2009). This can be due in part to the proliferation of mobile devices (Hofacker et al., 2016; Venkatesh and Balasubramanian, 2009). In parallel with the growth of mobile marketing is the growing interest in gamification (Marchand and Hennig-Thurau, 2013; Terlutter and Capella, 2013). Gamification is a significant emerging business practice and offers a potentially new type of marketing opportunity (Xu et al., 2016), as it adds more fun and personal experience to marketing the product through virtual experiential marketing (Middleton et al., 2009. p. 260).

GM has significant potential in turning customers to fans, work to fun and learning to enjoyment (Burke, 2011). Use of GM is expected to grow exponentially as the following predictions prove. Gartner predicted that 40% of global 1000 companies will use GM to transform business (Pettey, and Van der Meulen, 2012), 2.2 billion dollars will be spent on GM solution in 2013 (Meloni and Gruener, 2012); and GM market will reach 2.8bdollars by 2016 (Kumar and Herger, 2013). Gartner (2011) predicted that by 2015 a full 50% of organizations will have gamified their processes. And the size of the industry in 2018 would be about 5.5 Billion dollars, with an annual increase of 67%). The novelty and potential of gamification along with the lack of research in this area motivated this study.

2. PROBLEM AREAS AND PURPOSE STATEMENT

Despite the growing attention to gamification, few studies have theoretically explained how and why adopting game elements

influences user engagement, there is still little empirical evidence about its real impact (Hamari et al., 2014), and worldwide, there is a general dearth of academic literature examining the expected adoption of gamification marketing campaigns (Lucassen and Jansen, 2014). It is generally accepted that GM comes with its own failures (Berkling and Thomas, 2013), and in its' execution, it can be done well and can be done poorly (Paharia, 2013). It is estimated that about 80% of the GM application will fail to meet business objectives (Pettey and Van der Meulen, 2012). Some of the problems associated with GM come about due to the fact that desired actions in gamified applications are determined by the perpetrator of the GM (Guhl and Gordeiro, 2017), and that value seems to only accrue to the organization and not to users/players (Conill, and Karlsson, 2016). Sometimes, organizations are seen as only being interested in spreading propaganda, and extracting value from users in return for mere virtual tokens (Deterding), and that GM makes people do things that they do not want to do (Paharia, 2013; Kim, 2015; Chou, 2015). Furthermore, a great deal of personal information gathering in gamified applications opens up possibilities of unethical practices by organizations (Kastner, 2013; Pettey, and Van der Meulen, 2012). Consequently, GM can be perceived to be exploitative, and manipulative (Conill, and Karlsson, 2016), and these might lead to people resisting it (Callan et al., 2015). The situation just described would elicit feelings of vulnerability, and of not getting enough rewards from participating in gamified applications. A problem of a lack of reciprocity, a situation in which a party does not only take but also give something in return seem to prevail. Protection of consumer data and codes for it' use should go a long way towards mitigating such concerns (Burke, 2013; Raftopoulos, 2014). Alternatively, properly communicating the benefits of playing the "games" should be considered in order to address some of the concerns shown above.

Organizations also have to contend with the differences in the consumption behavior of GM services by target audiences. For instance, millennials are heavy users of GM technology and mobile phones (Zickuhr, 2011), the importance of different game features is different for older versus younger consumers (Park and Lee, 2011), the motivation for different genders and age-groups may differ (Czaja et al., 2006), and older people are more concerned with the ease of use of technology than with the usefulness thereof (Arning and Ziefle, 2007). For people who already use GM, retaining their interest can be a big challenge as they can experience reward fatigue, and this can be a loyalty limitation issue (Arakawa, and Matsuda, 2016). This argument suggests that customization of GM applications should be an important consideration when using gamification technology.

Furthermore, organizations using GM need to create experiences that engage users while accomplishing organizational goals (Paharia, 2013), in situations where possibilities of misalignment of motivation and organizational objectives exist (Callan et al., 2015. p. 2), desired outcomes for the company, may not align with desired outcomes for the participant) (Patel, 2015), and this can, in turn, lead to experience that fails to engage and damage existing interest and engagement (Rigby and Ryan, 2011; Muntasir et al., 2015). In any GM intervention, the organization's success

is dependent on the success of gamification in furthering an individual's own goals, and adherence to business goals which can create a conflict of interest that leads to the perception of exploitation (Raftopoulos, 2014).

This argument highlights another serious challenge for GM, that of possible lack of congruence, between the different interests that need to be properly balanced in order to keep the motivation levels at the ideal position. In the whole process, players are supposed to be allowed to create meanings for themselves as this would have the added benefit of utilizing intrinsic, versus extrinsic, motivation (Nicholson, 2012). One of the reasons that gamification works incredibly well in apps such as Nike+ is that it relies on self-set priorities and goals that come from intrinsic motivations, such as a desire to increase fitness (Burke, 2013. p. 20).

Behavior change and enhancement of marketing effectiveness are the key success factors of GM (Lloyd-Williams et al., 2017), but sometimes GM mechanics can fail to influence the minds of game players (Conill and Karlsson, 2016). The gamified application can lack that motivating element that can lead to the adoption of target attitudes and behaviors.

In the light of the above-highlighted problems and the empirical literature review (below), the author identified: Access to GM, customization of GM, congruence of interest, flow communication, gamified application attractiveness, and motivation as antecedents of the adoption of the GM intervention. The study developed a theoretical framework that predicts the adoption of GM application using these variables and by linking them to five grounding theories listed in Table 1.

Toward that end, a brief description of the five grounding theories, highlighting relevant features that can be used in designing the proposed research framework is given. This will be followed by a subsection of an empirical literature review on GM. The discussion on GM also points out common issues in current definitions, and those relevant features of the theories (grounding theories) are thereafter linked to the common themes in GM literature by using a stream of propositions and a proposed research framework to help drive future research and practice. To the author's knowledge, no other study has ever been done which combines these theories to develop a model for use by the industry and lays the basis for further academic pursuit in the marketing gamification industry. The study, therefore, contributes to knowledge by suggesting ways of designing GM interventions that can reach target audiences, and by initiating a new research model for marketing academics. It is hoped that giving attention to these aspects will assist both

Table 1: Grounding theories that can aid the adoption of GM

Grounding theory	Variable
FTT	Customization
AT	Accessibility
SET	Congruence and reciprocity
PTT	Communication and motivation
SPT states	Adoption

FTT: Flow technology theory, AT: Attractiveness theory, SET: Social exchange theory, PTT: Persuasion technology theory, SPT: Social penetration theory

academics and organizations in further understating how best to deal with both the potential of GM and the challenges inherent in introducing it in their marketing campaign. The rest of the article is organized as follows. Theoretical background and propositions, an empirical literature review on GM, problems inherent in GM, propositions for GM, research framework in GM, limitations of the paper, and lastly, conclusion.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND PROPOSITIONS

This subsection is organized as follows. First, a brief historical background of GM will be given. This will be followed by brief descriptions of theories that ground the study in order to aid the formulation of propositions. Thereafter, empirical literature that deals with current thinking on GM is explored, and the last part will be dedicated to both propositions and the suggested research framework to advance further research in gamification.

3.1. Brief GM History
The reason this history is important is that early successes often define the future of a movement, and gamification is no different (Christians, 2018). Gamification capitalizes on people's innate enjoyment of play (Kumar and Herger, 2013). The root of gamification is the word game, which is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, interactivity, and feedback that result in a quantifiable outcome (Zimmerman and Salen, 2003). Even before the term gamification was invented, the principles behind it were not completely unknown as primitive forms of gamification have existed since the beginning of the last century (Laaksonen, 2018). The first documented instances of games for serious purposes date back to the China of the warring states period around 475 BC game "Go" began to be used to school's strategic cunning for the art of war (Halter, 2006). One of the oldest uses of gamification was in 1875 by Allen and Ginter, a tobacco company (Davie, 2012). Accumulated cards and given to someone to get the bigger prize. Another player most notable of the early gamifiers is Sperry and Hutchinson Company, which started their Green Stamp program in 1892 (Hatala, 2013). The idea was simple: Customers received S and H stamps when they purchased S and H products and could then exchange them into products they wanted in S and H redemption centers, which totaled over 600 at their peak. Most people on GM the industry credit nick pelling for coming up with the term in 2003 (Laaksonen, 2018) whilst others claim that the term "gamification" was first used in 2008 (Terrill, 2008). In 2010, the term entered more widespread use in the industry (Deterding et al., 2011) and in academia (Hamari et al., 2014).

3.2. Relevant Grounding Theories for Proposed GM Framework
This study develops a framework on GM which is based on five selected theories which are flow technology theory (FTT), attractiveness theory (AT), social exchange theory (SET), persuasive technology theory, and social penetration theory (SPT). All of these theories discuss ways of persuading people by use of technology to adopt certain attitudes and behaviors. They also highlight issues that have been identified as common themes found in a number of Gamification academic articles.

For instance, there is an overlap between gamification and persuasive technology goals which are attitude and behavior changes (Hamari, and Koivisto, 2013). One of the major issues covered by these theories has to do with persuasion as will be shown below. Furthermore, the potential of gamification is based on comprehensive motivational support and on invoking flow experiences (Ryan, and Deci, 2000. p. 56-65), an issue addressed by the FTT. Lastly, Gamification translates the objectives of a core offer provider into a target system that is compatible with individual user motives (Blohm and Leimeister, 2013). This is clearly aimed at "motivation outcomes" which is also addressed by the persuasion technology theory (PTT). Clearly, there are interlinks between these grounding theories and GM.

FTT provides a theoretical framework for consumers' engagement that is associated with using technology (Hoffman and Novak, 2009), as it deals with, seamlessness when engaging with new technology, customizability of technology, participative and interactivity of any new technology use (Shin and Kim, 2008). According to Marci (2006), engagement is the combination of audience attention and emotion. Also, Jones (2003) found that "when an individual is in flow, they lost themselves. Flow can be seen as reinforcement that user intention is strengthened, directed, and moderated (Shin, and Kim, 2008). According to FTT, users knowingly and unknowingly have flow feelings, and flow increases the intention to use any technology as users in a flow experience may be deeply immersed in the process of activities. FTT, therefore, deals with flow feelings, customizability of technology, increase/decrease, and reinforcement of intention to use any technology. Flow and motivation.

AT deals with four elements of technology adoption which are appearance, proximity, similarity, and reinforcements. It deals with the visual appeal of product attributes (Bloch, 1995; Creusen and Schoormans, 2005), and the product context attractiveness (Schnurr et al., 2017). According to this theory, the attractiveness of gamification will depend on consumers' existing game use, whether this use is habitual or occurs across different contexts, and consumers' addictive tendency to play the games (Hartmann et al., 2012). The theory also claims that technology accessibility positively affects the perception of the of the target audience (Stapels, and Webster, 2008). AT contend that technology is attractive if the product's appearance is aesthetically appealing, easily accessible, and has a strong addictive tendency. But, the attractiveness of gamification features will depend on consumers' existing game use, whether this use is habitual or occurs across different contexts, and consumers' addictive tendency to play games (Hartmann et al., 2012). The main issues from the AT are that the technology needs to be accessible, reinforcing, and addictive to users.

SET has rewards and costs as the main elements. SET sees the social exchange as an interdependent relationship between two parties which is a bi-directional transaction and requires something to be given and something returned. The social exchange begins when one is taking the initiative to show kindness and offer benefits and another party reciprocates by returning the favor (Moore and Cunningham, 1999; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). SET is, therefore, a theory that deals with the bidirectional nature of social exchange and the reciprocity of any transaction.

PTT has been viewed as a major strategy for influencing people to change their attitude or behaviors (Yeo et al., 2008; Schätzl, 2015). Persuasive technology is the type that is designed to change attitudes or behavior of users through persuasion and social influence (Bogost, 2007; Fogg, 2003). Technology is deemed persuasive if it makes target behaviors easier or more efficient to perform, guides people through a predetermined sequence of actions that motivate them, enables people to explore the causal relationships between a behavior and its outcome, and rewards them with positive feedback, modeling a target behavior or attitude or providing social support (Lin, 2016). The major themes of PTT are product interactivity, the efficiency of target behaviors, guidance to follow the sequence of actions, the link between actions and outcomes, and motivation. Technology has to give feedback to players (Schätzl, 2015). Persuasive applications are often computerized software or information systems designed to reinforce, change, or shape attitudes or behaviors or both, without using coercion or deception (Oinas-Kukkonen and Harjumaa, 2008). The main issues addressed by PTT are persuasiveness, ease of engagement, rewards, and getting feedback. This element seems to emphasize the issue of communicating with target customers.

SPT states, "people assess interpersonal rewards and costs, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, gained from interaction with others, and that the advancement of the relationship is heavily dependent on the amount and nature of the rewards and costs (Tang and Wang, 2012). The costs may take the form of increased vulnerability and risks related to others (Tang and Wang, 2012. p. 246). SPT can be succinctly described as a theory that deals with how people deal with costs, rewards, satisfaction or dissatisfaction gained from interactions with other people and with technology. In order to justify the link between these theories and GM, definitions and descriptions of GM is given below. Of specific interests to the present study is the use of GM in marketing, as GM for all means and purposes, has become a marketing buzzword (Schrape, 2014). The link between these theories and GM are contained in the propositions which only come after GM literature review.

3.3. Gamification in Business and in Marketing and the Common Themes

GM has been conceptualized as: The use and application of game thinking, mechanics and psychology in activities other than entertainment (Hofacker, et al., 2016), the use of game design elements to enhance non-game goods and services by increasing customer value and encouraging value-creating behaviors (Blohm and Leimeister, 2013; Zichermann and Cunningham, 2011), and as the process of game-thinking and game mechanics to engage the consumer in the non-gaming context of shopping (Donato and Link, 2015).

The objectives of GM are to change behavior (Hofacker et al., 2016), to drive a set of specific desired behaviours by the user (Cramer, 2014), to make mundane tasks enjoyable (Lloyd-William, et al., 2017), to enhance a service with affordances for gameful experiences (Huotari and Hamari, 2012), to enhance non-game activities such as achieve higher levels of engagements, stimulate innovation (Singh, 2012; Hofacker, et al., 2016), to support a user's overall value creation (Huotari and Hamari, 2012), and to engage

users in problem-solving (Zichermann and Cunningham, 2011), to support a user's overall value creation (Huotari and Hamari, 2012), to engage the consumer in the non-gaming context of shopping in order to drive engagement and enhance the process of behavioral shift (Koster, and Wright, 2004), to create an engaging and compelling experience for the consumer (Donato and Link, 2013), and to encourage value-creation for a customer such as create their story, play at their own time and make purchase decisions (Hofacker et al., 2016). Some of the envisaged outcomes from GM are increased consumption, greater loyalty, customer engagement, motivation, and product advocacy (Blohm and Leimeister 2013; Zichermann and Cunningham, 2011).

It is further accepted that GM can aid mobile marketing and advertisement (Grewal et al., 2016), mobile promotion (Pancras et al., 2016), and mobile shopper marketing (Shankar et al., 2015). Other applications of GM in the marketing environment are in sales personnel training (Moise, 2013), information gathering on prospective users, selling of more products or services, and to increase brand awareness (Ayupova, 2016), customer retention (Singh, 2012, 110), enabling business to understand the thought process behind consumers' willingness to participate in and comply with consumer behavior and attitude measurement factors (Donato and Link, 2015), and persuading customers (Ayupova, 2016). Some of the common themes contained in the descriptions of GM above are consumer engagement or involvement, efficiencies, the fun of playing the games, brand awareness, customer retention, customer loyalty, and customer advocacy.

Conditions for successful gamification are given as GM must be likable, trustworthiness, quality, deep, intelligent, empowering and elegant (Moise, 2013), games should offer users the excitement of competing, create a fun experience, and a feeling of satisfaction when achieving goals (Ayupova, 2016), the gaming mechanics deployed should be relevant, motivational, and appropriate for both the brand and the audience (Davie, 2012), and GM actions are tracked and measured (Cramer, 2014). The conditions for success for any GM application can be summarized as the appropriateness of GM, motivational elements in GM, the trustworthiness of the game, and the empowering element of GM applications. It is proposed that if the right gamification elements are in place, customer attitudes will be easy to modify, and it well-known that attitudes are strong predictors of behavioral intentions (Lin and Bhattacherjee, 2010; Bock et al., 2005; Baker, and White, 2010; Hamari and Koivisto, 2013).

Some of the possible causes of failure of any GM campaign are differences in what motivate people and the short-liveness the motivating effects of GM applications (Mollick and Rothbard 2012; Suh et al., 2015), perceptions of possibilities of exploitation (Laaksonen, 2018), counterproductive interventions, the undesirability of rewards offered in gamified applications, misalignment of goals with business objectives, the question of motivating the desired behavior, pull focus from, and the sustainability of motivations produced by gamified applications.

Major issues of interest to the present discussion can be summarized as follows:

- GM is expensive and time-consuming compared to traditional ways of advertising (Lucassen and Jansen, 2014), and the growth of GM gamification has been linked to the growth in cellular technology, mobile phones (Christians, 2018), mobile games for which there is limited research (Schønau-Fog, 2011). The other issue to be considered is the attractiveness of the GM platform. Furthermore, as shown under the attractive technology theory above, GM technology has to be accessible and aesthetically pleasing as, looks and feel instill games with some sense of purpose and strengthen the development of the storyline (Hofacker, et al., 2016), and attractiveness affects people's perceptions (Staples, and Webster, 2008). Also, visual imagery and presentation are important to create an immersive experience (flow feelings) (Hofacker, et al., 2016). Furthermore, the attractiveness of gamification features depends on consumers' existing game use, whether this use is habitual or occurs across different contexts, and consumers' addictive tendency to play the games (Hartmann et al., 2012). It makes sense, therefore, to suggest that accessibility becomes an integral part of GM marketing. The expense of mobile games use and their attractiveness would most probably affect the accessibility and the adoption of GM application by the target market. Indeed, Kapp (2012) hinted at the importance of GM accessibility as being a very important issue for the success of a gamified marketing intervention.

- FTT provides a theoretical framework for consumers' engagement that is associated with using technology and the customization thereof (Hoffman and Novak, 2009). It is generally accepted that there is no unique gamification system that can fit all users (Morschheuser et al., 2017; Ruhi, 2015; Hamari, 2015; Nacke and Deterding, 2017). So, when bringing a gamified intervention, contexts, meanings, and differences have to be considered (Houtari, and Hamari, 2012). Furthermore, the importance of different game features is different for older versus younger consumers in other contexts (Park and Lee, 2011). Also, the motivation for different genders and age-groups may differ (Czaja et al., 2006). As an illustration, older people are more concerned with the ease of use of technology than with the usefulness thereof (Arning and Ziefle, 2007). Customization of GM interventions is therefore necessary. GM technology needs to be appropriately customized for the target audience in order to have a positive effect on the target population. The influence of customization on motivation (more time playing the games) has been shown to be positive (Kapp, 2012; Nah et al., 2014), even in a learning environment (Eleftheria et al., 2013).

- When GM applications are introduced, there are possibilities of misaligning organizational goals and target customer desired rewards (Pettey and Van der Meulen, 2012; Patel, 2015). To illustrate, the most common start for a game design is the basic idea of enjoyment, which may be at odds with business objective (Hofacker et al., 2016). Therefore, the organization's GM intervention success is dependent on the success of gamification in furthering an individual player's own goals which can create a conflict of interest that leads to exploitation (Raftopoulos, 2014). There has to be a congruence between GM and marketing goals (Shapiro et al., 1997). One other example of the necessary congruence is the one between the

story in the game and the marketing thrust intentions, as this enhances marketing effectiveness (Cramer, 2014). However, caution needs to be exercised as 'blending of GM and advert can also diminish add recall' (Hofacker et al., 2016). The advertisement has to be less disruptive and be pitched at an ideal level (not to overwhelm psychological and attentional resources) in order to create immersion as suggested by the FTT (Vohs and Heatherton, 2000). Unconscious persuasion takes place when people are transported (Hofacker et al., 2016. p. 8). Congruence, therefore, both between organizational objectives and individual goals and between the story and marketing objectives have to be properly balanced.

- Gamification aims to encourage value-creation for a customer such as create their story, play at their own time and make purchase decisions (Hofacker et al., 2016). But in the general gamified environment, all the desired actions are determined by the perpetrator of the GM (Guhl and Gordeiro, 2017). This might create suspicions of players' exploitation by organizations. This, in turn, needs to be mitigated through transparency (Raftopoulos, 2014; Kim, 2015; Nicholson, 2012), the protection of data and a code for its use to be set in place prior to the implementation of the system (Burke, 2013. p. 13), and the incorporation of 'meaningful' value for players (Nicholson, 2012). Furthermore, in order to avoid exploitation, gamification participants must be protected against the mismanagement of their data (Raftopoulos, 2014). The risks of playing the game should properly balance with the rewards that accrue to gamification target customers. The costs and reward balancing (reciprocity) are addressed in the Social penetration theory. Furthermore, the PTT also highlights the importance of feelings of reciprocity in order for the message to be persuasive (Nah et al., 2014). Perceived reciprocal benefit can be viewed as a form of social usefulness of the service - i.e. contributing and, in turn, receiving benefit from the social community (Preece, 2001; Lin, 2008).

- Well executed gamification interventions that induce flow need to get the level of challenge, the skills available to deal with the game (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), and rewards right (Hofacker et al., 2016), as increased difficulty in more advanced levels leads to game abandonment (Albuquerque and Nevskaya 2015). It makes sense, therefore, to design a GM application in a way that targets individuals rather than groups (Rose and Meyer, 2002). Clearly then, gamified interventions need to be user-centered in order to be motivating (Seaborn and Fels, 2015). This point also addresses issues of effective communication with the target audience and of keeping them motivated enough to continue playing the game. This will further aid the feelings of fluency, and thus impact preference formation for the advertisement (Novemsky et al., 2007). Correct GM communication, pitched at the right level for the right target audience would most probably produce the desired outcomes.

- One of the challenges GM is in identifying people who might be motivated by GM systems (Kastner, 2013). Intrinsically motivated players will be more attentive to a message and more willing to spend time playing (Hofacker et al., 2016; Burke, 2011). One of the ways of motivating people to engage is to allow them to create meaning for themselves by setting their own priorities (Nicholson, 2012; Burke, 2011). Finding

Figure 1: Proposed model of GM
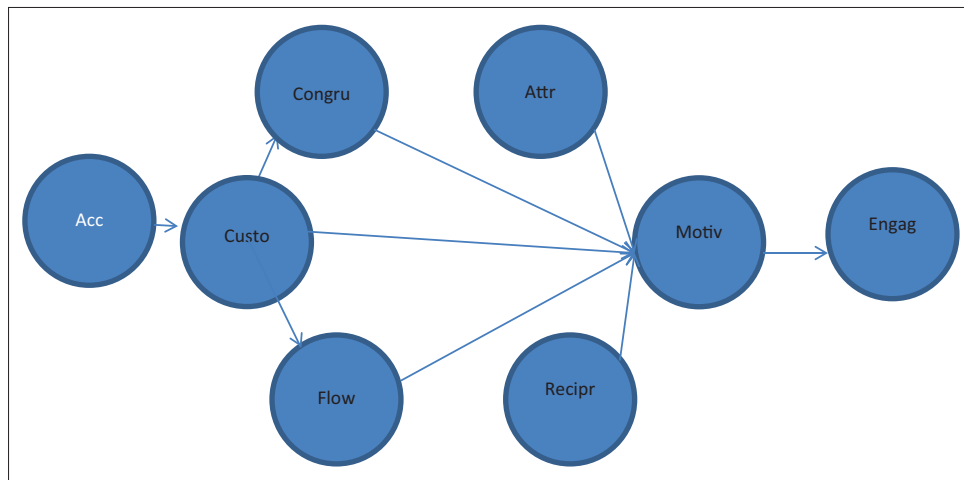
ways of tapping into target audience intrinsic motivation (like their need for fitness in the case of Nike+) makes sense. Possible ways of achieving that are to introduce features to sustain novelty and interests and allowing players to graduate to more challenging levels (Kumar and Herger, 2013). Fogg (2003) states that for a probability of future interaction, and repetition of interaction to happen, you need motivation, reciprocity, and cooperation.

4. PROPOSITIONS AND RESEARCH MODEL

On the basis of the above discussion and in the light of the grounding theories, the following propositions are put forth:
• Proposition 1: Accessibility (Acc) of gamified applications has a positive effect on the customization of gamified applications;
• Proposition 2: Customization (Custo) of GM has a positive effect on the congruence and flow communication in GM;
• Reciprocity 3: The feelings of reciprocity (Recipr) will motivate target customers to continue engaging with gamified applications;
• Proposition 4: Both congruence perceptions (Congru) and flow communication have a motivating effect on GM;
• Proposition 5: Both congruence (Congru) and flow communication (flow) mediates the relation between customization and the motivation levels of target customers;
• Proposition 6: When the technology is attractive (Attr), it has a motivating effect on its users;
• Proposition 7: An ideal balance between costs of use of gamified games and the rewards accruing to customers (Recipr) therefrom will motivate them to play the games;
• Proposition 8: When target customers are motivated and engaged (Motiv), they are more likely to improve their intentions to engage with GM; and
• Proposition 9: Customization (Custo) of GM will have a direct positive influence on the motivation to engage with the application.

All the above propositions can be arranged in a form of a model as shown in Figure 1.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study provides a detailed overview of the contemporary attitudes towards gamification. It has several implications for both academics and management practitioners. For academics, the proposed framework opens up new avenues for future research to either prove or refute the veracity of the model. It also lays the basis for a systematic literature review on how the organization of the major themes in this area of study should be approached. For managers, the study holds attractive prospects for people involved in marketing departments for companies that use GM as a tool. It provides them with tools for possible use in accessing new markets by giving them common elements that need to be considered before launching a GM campaign.

Furthermore, the study provides them with a well-reasoned approach to tailoring GM applications in order to further enhance success possibilities. It must also be mentioned that, as a conceptual study, the article suffers from all well-known shortcomings like lack of empirical testing of the model. In conclusion, gamification provides interesting prospects for both marketing practitioners and academics. However, it should not be seen as a goal in itself. It should be harnessed with other marketing insights to facilitate the achievement of organizational goals.

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