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Gamified strategy canvas

A novel concept for streamlining strategies through gamification

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ABSTRACT:

Gamification is a concept that has received some attention in the business world for some time now. Using game-like elements in the field of business could provide certainly many kinds of benefits for businesses when implemented correctly. It could provide more motivation among employees and encourage them to improve their skills and work harder. Gamification could also streamline processes and make the conceptualization of strategy clearer to people who are working with strategy. However, without a proper tool to think about the possibilities of gamification, organizations find it difficult to start thinking about the benefits that gamification could bring. The problem seems to be that there are no real tools that can help businesses think about their strategies from a gamification perspective. This study establishes a new tool that organizations can use to gamify their business processes, strategies, and plans. This research consists of a thorough literature review of the concepts of gamification, strategy, the method of strategy as practice, and the connection between these concepts. Then qualitative research via online interview survey was constructed in order to provide a practical view of what needs a new tool should include. The findings provide a concept of a new tool that is based on an existing strategy tool called the business model canvas but modified from it to be very easy to use for businesses and address all the needs that businesses could have based on the interviews. This study provides valuable insight for future research about the connections between gamification and strategy and contributes to the literature by presenting a qualitative analysis of the use of gamification and problems in strategy implementation as well as a thorough literature review of the existing literature about gamification and strategies and how they are connected.

KEYWORDS: Strategy as practice, gamification, strategy, concept, strategy tool, flow -theory, self-determination theory, goal-setting theory

VAASAN YLIOPISTO**Johtamisen akateeminen yksikkö**

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TIIVISTELMÄ:

Pelillistäminen on käsite, joka on saanut jonkin verran huomiota liike-elämässä viime vuosina. Pelillistämällä tarkoitetaan pelimäisten elementtien käyttöä liiketoiminnassa, joka voisi tuoda monenlaisia hyötyjä, kun sitä toteutetaan oikealla tavalla. Pelillistäminen voi lisätä työntekijöiden motivaatiota ja kannustaa heitä taitojensa parantamiseen, sekä ahkerampaan työskentelyyn. Pelillistäminen voi myös helpottaa prosessien virtaviivaistamisessa ja tehdä strategian hahmottamisesta selkeämpää niille, jotka työskentelevät organisaation strategian parissa. Kuitenkaan, ilman asianmukaista työkalua, pelillistämisen tuomien mahdollisuuksien hahmottamiseen, on organisaatioiden hankalaa ajatella mitä hyötyjä pelillistäminen voisi heille tuoda. Isoimpana ongelmana asian suhteen vaikuttaisi olevan, että tällä hetkellä ei ole olemassa erityisemmin työkaluja, jotka helpottaisivat organisaatioita ajattelemaan omaa strategiaansa pelillistämisen näkökulmasta. Tässä tutkimuksessa luodaan uudenlainen työkalu, gamified strategy canvas, jota organisaatiot voisivat käyttää liiketoimintaprosessiensa, strategioidensa ja suunnitelmiansa pelillistämiseen ja suoraviivaistamiseen pelillistämisen kautta. tutkimus koostuu kirjallisuuskatsauksesta pelillistämisen, strategian ja strategian toimeenpanosta, sekä siitä, miten nämä asiat linkittyvät toisiinsa. Kirjallisuuskatsauksen lisäksi työ koostuu laadullisesta tutkimuksesta, joka toteutettiin verkkohaastattelukyselyn avulla. Näin työhön saatiin nykypäivän käytännön näkemyksiä siitä, millainen työkalu olisi organisaatioille toimivin malli. Tutkimuksen lopputuloksena suunniteltiin uudenlainen strategiatyökalu, gamified strategy canvas, joka pohjautuu jo olemassa olevien strategiatyökalujen päälle. Canvas perustuu tarpeisiin, joita tutkimuksessa havaittiin. Tämä tutkimus antaa arvokasta näkemystä pelillistämisen ja strategian yhteyksistä tulevia tutkimuksia varten ja antaa panoksen jo olemassa olevaan kirjallisuuteen esittelemällä analyysin siitä, millaisia hyötyjä ja ongelmia pelillistämisen hyödyntämisestä strategian laadinnassa voisi olla ja mitä yhteyksiä pelillistämällä ja strategioilla voi olla.

AVAINSANAT: Strategy as practice, gamification, strategy, concept, strategy tool, flow -theory, self-determination theory, goal-setting theory

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	7
1.1	Motivation and background of the study	7
1.2	Research focus and conceptual contributions	9
1.3	Research problem	11
1.4	Delimitation of the study	12
2	Literature review	13
2.1	What is gamification	13
2.1.1	Overview of gamification and its importance in organizational strategy	15
2.1.2	Gamification concepts and theories	16
2.2	Motivational theories and psychological principles underlying gamification	18
2.2.1	Self-Determination Theory	18
2.2.2	Goal-Setting Theory	19
2.2.3	Flow Theory	21
2.3	Social Comparison and Competition	22
2.3.1	Individual differences and contextual factors	23
2.4	Ethical Considerations	24
2.5	Strategy as Practice (S-as-P) perspective.	26
2.5.1	Conceptual foundations and core tenets of S-as-P	26
2.6	Application of gamification in various organizational contexts	28
2.6.1	Benefits and challenges of gamifying work processes	30
2.6.2	Challenges and potential pitfalls of gamifying work processes	32
2.7	Conventional Approaches to Strategy Formulation and Implementation	34
2.8	New Practices and Tools for Strategic Management	37
2.8.1	Open Strategy	37
2.8.2	Strategic foresight and scenario planning	37
2.8.3	Strategic innovation and design thinking	38
2.8.4	Dynamic capabilities and strategic agility	38

2.9	Gamification in Strategy	39
2.10	Methodological approaches and findings of the literature review	42
2.11	Gaps and limitations in existing literature	45
2.12	Synthesis of findings and current state of knowledge	46
2.13	Theoretical implications of gamification and practice strategies.	47
2.14	Theoretical framework of literature review	50
3	Practical implications for organizations and strategy practitioners	52
4	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	55
4.1	Research approach	55
4.2	Data collection	56
4.3	Data analysis	59
4.4	Validity of the research	60
4.5	Reliability of the research	61
4.6	Findings	62
5	Discussions	68
5.1	Implications on the research questions	68
5.2	Suggestions for future research	70
6	Gamified strategy canvas	71
6.1.1	Quests and objectives	72
6.1.2	Key activities and skills	73
6.1.3	Game environment and rules	73
6.1.4	Game Mechanisms	73
6.1.5	Player segments	74
6.1.6	Feedback loops	74
6.1.7	Game adaptation	74
7	Conclusions	75
	References	76
	APPENDICES	89
	Appendix 1 – Interview questions	89

Figures

Figure 1. Research focus	10
Figure 2. Relationships of theoretical foundations in research on gamification (Krath et al. 2021. p11.)	14
Figure 3 Identification of the Flow State (adapted from Csikszentmihaly (1990.)	22
Figure 4. Conceptualization of phases of how the strategy tool could be taken into usage.	67

Tables

Table 1. Conceptual framework of the goal-setting theory (Tondello et al. 2018)	20
Table 2. List of interviews	59
Table 3. Gamified strategy canvas, a new tool that uses gamification methods for strategy.	72

Abbreviations

S-as-P	Strategy as practice
SME	Small- and medium-sized enterprize

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation and background of the study

Traditional processes used in strategy development are often seen as monotonous, rather boring and lack of engagement (Sioncke & Parmentier, 2007). This could lead to a lack of enthusiasm and commitment by employees to implement the strategy. The nature of strategic planning is also quite arduous and may result in fatigue and disinterest among members in charge of those initiatives, which could also affect the successful implementation of the strategy (Nivedhan & Priyadarshini, 2018). However, there are ways that could make strategic planning more meaningful to all employees and more interesting to everyone in a business. Integrating gamification methods into strategy work could present a unique opportunity to transform traditional approaches to strategic and business development.

Gamification is known as a concept of applying gamelike features to a non-game context, like work for example (Hamari, 2013; Papastergiou, 2009; de Marcos et al., 2014). However, this does not mean that gamification elements will transform work, strategy, or anything else into an actual real-life game. Gamification involves game features to give more direct and more energized and desired behavior among employees, customers, management, and other possible stakeholders that affect to a business. (Cardador et al. 2017)

This concept holds great promise for organizations that seek new innovative ways for streamlining their strategies and operational excellence. However, there is a challenge, namely, the lack of practical tools to facilitate gamification within strategic processes.

By infusing elements of gamification into strategic processes, organizations can create a more dynamic and interactive environment through increased employee engagement, motivation, and commitment. Gamification does offer a novel way to make strategy work more stimulating and rewarding (Hussain et al., 2018). This means that mundane

and boring tasks can be transformed into exciting challenges that encourage creativity and collaboration.

In this study, the aim is to introduce a novel concept called the gamified strategy canvas. This tool is designed to help organizations apply gamification methods in strategic planning. The gamified strategy canvas provides a practical framework for businesses to leverage the benefits of gamification.

From a practical perspective, gamification in strategy could not only enhance employee motivation but also improve collaboration and create a more goal-oriented culture within organizations. Gamification provides businesses with a way to increase employee skills and insights into common objectives within an organization. For example, a case study about this comes from software development team at a German e-commerce company OTTO, where integration of gamification measures found positive effects on employee motivation and team cohesion (Rometsch et al., 2022).

This study focuses on how gamification methods and methodologies can be used for businesses from the concept of strategy as practice. The gamified strategy canvas helps companies create their strategy through gamification methods and put the strategy into practice.

To achieve this research objective, this study employs a mixed-methods approach. This was achieved by conducting a literature review to identify existing research on this concept. Studies on the impact of gamification on business performance and its possible competitive advantage are of particular interest. Analyzing these studies and comparing them with interview answers from entrepreneurs and other decision-makers provided data that was used in developing the gamified strategy canvas.

1.2 Research focus and conceptual contributions

Research on gamification methods in strategy is a topic that has recently gained attention in the field of research, even though gamification and strategy have many similarities and concepts that can be used to help organizations better understand and implement their strategies. Research has been conducted from strategic and different strategic perspectives and has provided many strategic tools.

Gamification is a concept that can be used to utilize certain behavioral patterns in people (Hussain et al., 2018); therefore, it has the potential to be used in the creation of strategic tools to put strategy into practice. The gamified strategy canvas created in this study is a novel concept of this tool.

Although behavioral patterns and affections that have been born from gamification-based methods have received some attention in recent years, there is still much research to be done on how gamification method patterns can be established at an organizational level for all employees, stakeholders, or customers through certain actions or activities. However, strategy as a practice and strategic tool that helps in strategic decision-making has been in the field of research for a long time.

Studies on strategy have several schools of thought regarding what strategy is and what issues should be considered, as well as how strategies work (Khalifa, 2020)). Despite these high numbers of studies, studies that combine gamification and strategy are relatively limited, although some research has been conducted.

This provides proof that the topic of integrating gamification activities into strategy as practice has potential for future research because there is much that we do not know about combining these concepts.

This qualitative research study contributes by collecting research through a thorough literature review of the field of gamification and strategy and by examining how gamification can be used to implement strategies.

By synthesizing insights from the gamification literature and strategic management research, this study provides a new perspective on the integration of gamification and strategy practices. The gamified strategy canvas, which is developed in this study as a novel concept, seeks to address practical challenges that organizations may face in their gamification and strategy processes.

Part of this study will also include interviews with business decision makers in Finland to analyze how they would use gamification to put strategy into action and what they need from a strategy tool to do so. The proposed framework was used to develop the gamified strategy canvas. The research focus is also presented in Figure 1. New knowledge will be added to the research field through the insights gained from this study, which can create new research possibilities.

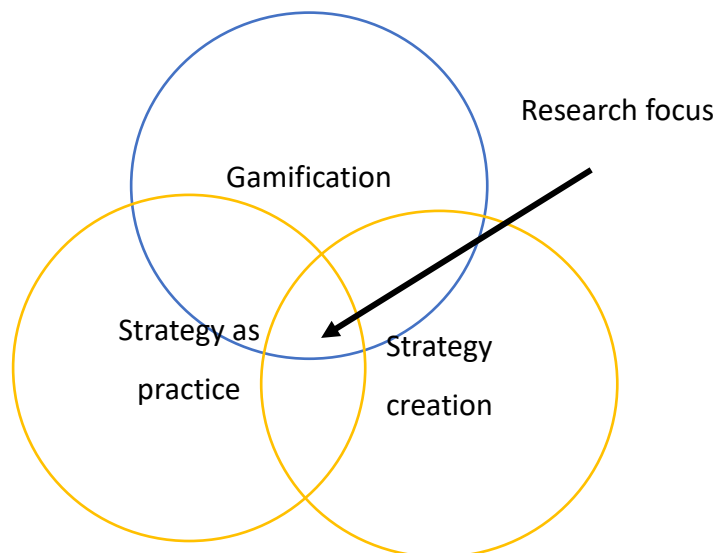


Figure 1. Research focus

1.3 Research problem

This study investigates how gamification and strategy as practice can be combined to benefit an organization. This combination forms the basis of the gamified strategy canvas.

The context of this study is the existing research on gamification and strategies, and the results research has shown on benefits of gamification. Gamification is a relatively new concept that has just recently been seen in the business world as a way to increase employee and customer interest in an organization and as a way to continuously develop their business through meaningful but cost-effective methods to increase employee interaction and customer satisfaction.

This study aims to extend the knowledge of gamification methods and theories as well as the positive and negative aspects of gamification that are crucial for businesses that are interested in implementing gamified methods into their strategies. This study focuses on the following research questions: *How can gamification be used in strategy as practice, and what tools can help businesses implement strategies through gamification?*

This study is essential because it provides new insights and practical ways for businesses to implement their strategies in practice. Many businesses have used methods of gamification without clearly intending to do so, and many businesses can develop new functioning processes and practices through methods of gamification. Strategic implementation through the concept of gamification is a relatively new approach to planning businesses that can provide strategic advantages to businesses regardless of industry.

A thorough literature review as well as creating a new kind of concept for a tool that helps businesses design methods that are based on gamification in their business practices and strategic planning are constructed to answer the research question based on this study.

1.4 Delimitation of the study

This study focuses especially on gamification and strategy as practice concepts and how gamification can be applied to strategy as practice. As the research question states, the focus is on establishing knowledge and new concepts for businesses to implement a strategy. This means that deeper aspects of strategies and theoretical schools of strategy are not studied, even though strategy as practice could mean using a specific school of strategic thinking in everyday business. This decision was made to provide as much practical information as possible and thus help businesses test them in real-life scenarios, which could improve future research on the subject.

The study population was limited to businesses in the Ostrobothnian area and from different industries. This was done to determine what local businesses need from a tool that attempts to establish gamification within their businesses.

The data collection method was also used in order to narrow down the data, as it was done in an online interview survey for these businesses, to make providing insights for the research as easy as possible. The collected data were qualitative and were considered the best option for this study by the author.

2 Literature review

2.1 What is gamification

Gamification is a concept that is used to determine means of increasing user engagement and positive patterns in the services or products used. This could mean several different things, such as used activity, user interaction, and knowledge sharing, or simply increased quality or productivity of certain actions by a certain pattern. These actions and patterns are ideally born because of a positive and motivating experience that feels like a game, which is provided by game-like affordance that is implemented for the service, activity, or other product (Hamari et al., 2014).

In other words, gamification means using elements of game design in contexts that are not games. The idea is to create a process that invokes a game-like experience that provides certain behavioral outcomes (Hamari, 2013).

On the other hand, similar to the determination of concepts, gamification involves several determination steps and goals. Deterding et al. (2011.) for example, emphasize the issue that the affordance that gamification methods imply should be the same kind of methods used in actual games, even if the outcomes are not the ones desired by the activities.

However, determining what kind of affordance is unique to specific games is difficult because some outcomes may be unexpected but may be unique to certain games (Hamari et al., 2014). This means that the concept of gamification is broad and difficult to define, and there is room for many studies. The general idea, however, seems to be that using the mechanics of games, people would have a certain kind of motivational affordance to a service, product, or activity that affects their thought process of the issue, which would result in a certain kind of behavior that could be controlled by the game, like mechanics.

Gamification, which is defined as the incorporation of game design features into non-game contexts, has seen growing interest and use over the past few years (Sailer & Homner, 2020; Saleem et al., 2022). This trend has been observed in different organizations. For instance, gamification has been seen as a valuable tool for boosting motivation, engagement, and productivity in educational institutions as well as healthcare (Saleem et al., 2022). According to Sailer and Homner (2020), this strong technique can be used for a variety of reasons, starting with the creation phases and continuing through the implementation phase in the organizational strategy area.

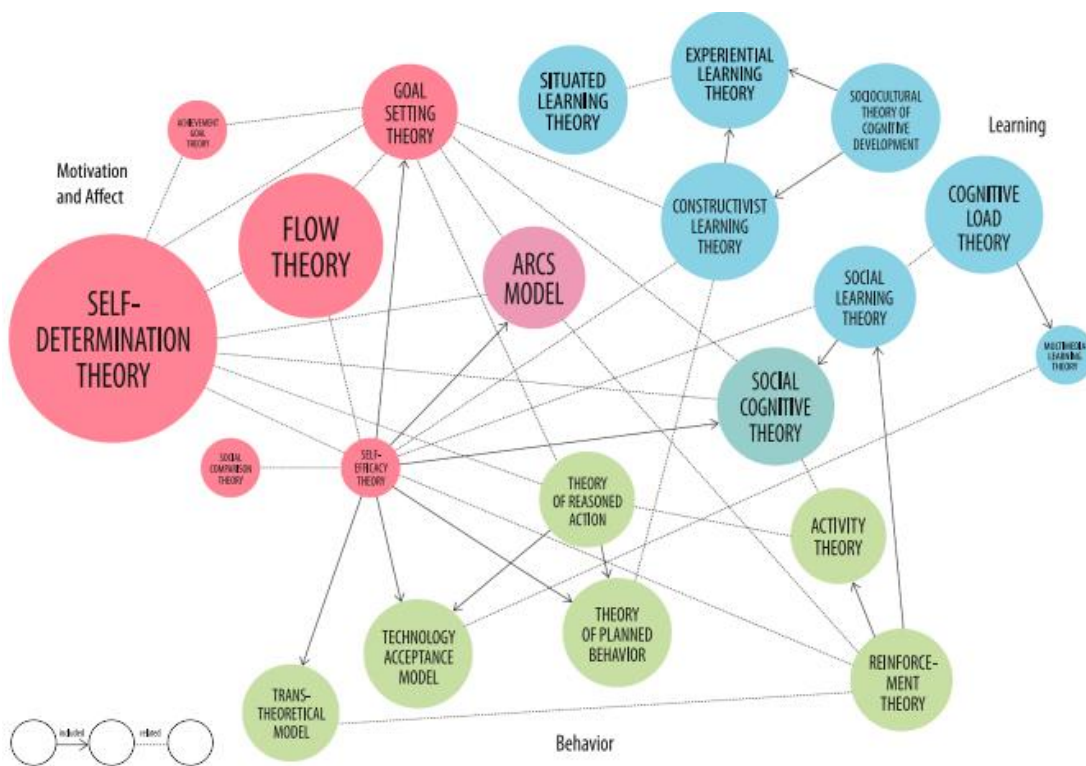


Figure 2. Relationships of theoretical foundations in gamification research (Krath et al., 2021, p. 11)

With a particular focus on the Strategy as Practice (S-as-P) approach, this study investigates the relationship that exists between gamification and strategy. In addition, S-as-P emphasizes the actions involved in strategizing and the participation of both individuals and groups in developing strategies. In addition, it investigates the ways in which game mechanics can be used to contribute to organizational strategy while simultaneously

emphasizing the possible possibilities and problems associated with the use of game design methods.

2.1.1 Overview of gamification and its importance in organizational strategy

Gamification is becoming an increasingly favored way to enhance motivation, engagement and efficiency in a variety of domains within a corporate environment (Christopoulos & Mystakidis, 2023). Gamification has become increasingly popular recently. According to Sailer and Homner (2020) and Saleem et al. (2022), gamification is an approach that aims to appeal to people's innate motivations and make them more desirable and rewarding. This is accomplished via the use of game elements such as points, badges, and leaderboard challenges.

For strategy work, gamification offers the benefits of collaboration that fosters strategic thinking and enhances strategic decision-making process (Klock et al., 2020; Zeybek & Saygi, 2024). By utilizing features found in games, or rather, the dynamics that drive them, organizations can have a greater impact on strategists by allowing them to investigate strategic scenarios, test various paths, and further their understanding of strategic issues and opportunities (Klock et al., 2020).

Objectives and scope of the literature review:

The primary aim of this literature review is to explore existing research on gamification in strategy work, with a specific focus on the S-as-P perspective. Specifically, this paper seeks to:

- Investigate the theoretical foundations and conceptual frameworks of gamification and S-as-P
- Integrate current empirical studies and case examples to investigate the use of gamification in strategic decision-making.
- Identify gaps or limitations in the authors' findings regarding what has been done thus far, which will be useful for future research.

- Discuss the meaning of integrating gamification with strategy as practice from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

This literature review encompasses studies from different fields, such as management, strategy, gamification, psychology, and HCI.

2.1.2 Gamification concepts and theories

Over recent years, one term that has gained much prominence is "gamification," which refers to the inclusion of game design elements in non-game contexts to enhance user engagement, motivation, and behavioral change (Hamari et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2020; Kalogiannakis et al., 2021). Gamification involves incorporating game mechanics, dynamics, esthetics, etc. into non-gaming environments, such as businesses, education, and healthcare.

The major components of gamification are divided into three main parts: game mechanics, game dynamics, and game esthetics (Hamari et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2020; Kalogiannakis et al., 2021). Game mechanics refers to the elements and regulations that guide a gaming system, such as points, badges, leaderboards, levels, challenges, and quests. The building blocks of the gamified experience are these mechanics, which provide a structured framework for user engagement and progression. Here, points are given as rewards to push people in the correct direction. When a user achieves a goal or performs a certain number of tasks, they obtain badges. Leaderboards display rankings so that everyone's competitive emerges out, forcing them to fight for the top spot (Hamari et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2020; Kalogiannakis et al., 2021).

Game dynamics are principles and patterns that arise from user behaviors and game mechanic interactions. Examples of this include competition-based systems, collaboration-based systems, feedback loops, resource acquisition-based systems, and reward schedules. Competition is usually sufficient motivation beyond personal means. Users

will work together with peers toward common interests to improve their relationships with one another and foster teamwork. Feedback loops keep users engaged through real-time updates or progress bars (Oliveira et al., 2023; Putz et al., 2020).

Game esthetics, on the other hand, are related to aspects of gaming that have nothing to do with winning or losing; instead, they focus on emotional and sensory factors such as visual design and overall appearance. Properly designed game esthetics can improve the immersion of a game, create an emotional bond between players and the game itself, and enhance enjoyment (Putz et al., 2020). Higher levels of engagement are also achieved inside gamified systems because of improved visual design. Narratives provide additional context to activities that, in their absence, would be considered mundane. The game can use the player's enthusiasm and sense of purpose by transforming these actions into missions or challenges that contain a compelling storyline. Putz et al., (2020) and Zainuddin et al., (2020) found that the presence of visuals, avatars, and animations contributes to an increase in visual appeal, which in turn leads to an increase in immersion.

Using game design ideas, effective gamification can combine all three components into a single, seamless experience. This is achieved by directing human behavior toward the intended results. According to Zainuddin et al.'s research published in 2020, it is essential to understand the reasons for the participation of a certain target audience in gamification when creating mechanics, dynamics, and esthetics for that audience.

According to Zainuddin et al. (2020), gamification can be achieved using point-based systems or by combining alternative reality games with complex simulations. Simple mechanics such as points and badges, can be added to existing platforms or processes, which will only require basic implementations; while more sophisticated ones require virtual environments containing narratives, challenging quests, and so on.

2.2 Motivational theories and psychological principles underlying gamification

There are several motivational theories and psychological principles that underpin the effectiveness of gamified techniques, including their ability to shape human behavior, motivation level, and engagement (Gilyazova & Zamoshchanskii, 2020; Sotos-Martínez et al., 2024). They exploit these well-known concepts to create memorable experiences where intrinsic motivation are leveraged for increased involvement, leading to anticipated consequences.

2.2.1 Self-Determination Theory

One of the most frequently referenced theories in gamification literature Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2022). According to SDT, people have an innate need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness that different environmental factors can either support or undermine. Autonomy is the desire to be self-governing with the capacity to choose freely and express oneself honestly (Ryan & Deci, 2022). This means that in terms of gamification, meaningful choices should be given to users so that their autonomy needs can be met. It helps users feel some kind of ownership over their actions, giving them a sense of responsibility (Ryan & Deci, 2022). For example, having the opportunity to customize of avatars, select quests or missions, or personalize experiences all foster a feeling of self-direction among players.

Competence is a person's wish to feel efficient and capable in whatever they do. Gagné et al. (2022) argued that game mechanics like goal-setting elements, can ignite this sense of competence by enabling learners to monitor their progress in developing mastery toward specific objectives within the system. Vasconcellos et al. (2020) identified clear goals regarding rewards available in the game environment as well as the provision of feedback on participants' achievements, such as points earned during different rounds, as important parameters for gauging achievement motivation. They meet these needs by employing such gamified resources as badges denoting completed levels and skill trees detailing level progression.

Relatedness is about having social ties, feeling like you belong, and receiving care from others. Social elements such as leaderboards, collaborative challenges, and virtual communities can meet relatedness needs through social connections, with some competition and a sense of fitting into the gamified world. Multiplayer experiences, team-based challenges, and social sharing features all facilitate a sense of community among users while also appealing to users' basic desire for connectedness.

By addressing these basic psychological needs, designers can capitalize on intrinsic motivation to create more engaging and self-sustaining experiences for users (Ryan & Deci, 2022; Vasconcellos et al., 2020). When a game satisfies these requirements, it becomes intrinsically motivating and does not require external rewards or incentives to keep players interested.

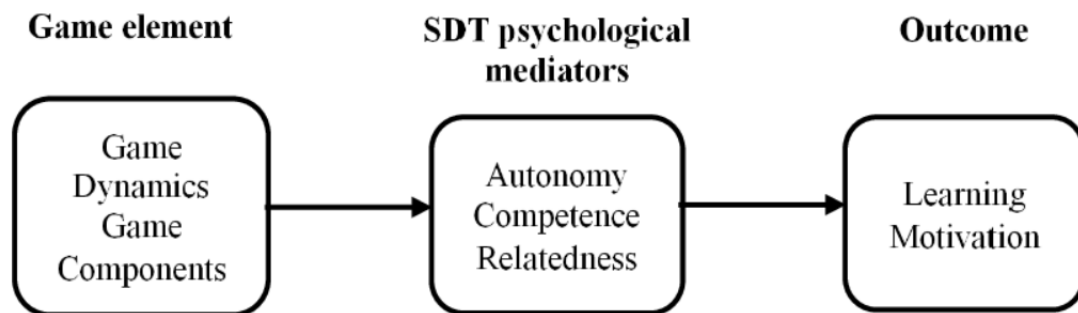


Figure 3 Self Determination theory-based gamification framework (Kahm & Umar. 2018. p4.)

2.2.2 Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-setting theory, which Locke and Latham (1990) proposed, is similarly compatible with gamification. According to them, setting specific, challenging, but doable goals can enhance motivation and persistence and be instrumental and improve performance. Jeong et al. (2023) noted that aspects of video games, such as quests, challenges, and progress bars, serve well-designed purposes of game elements in establishing specific

objectives for users and clearly showing them how much they have already completed (Jeong et al., 2023).

Gamified applications may facilitate goal attainment by breaking larger targets into smaller milestones that are relatively easy or possible for the target audience in question. For instance, a fitness application could help individuals break down running a marathon into smaller increments, such as by first completing a 5K race and then later increasing the distance up to a half-marathon, so that learners can feel as though they have accomplished something else even before attaining their main objective.

In addition, feedback loops, such as real-time progress updates or performance metrics, can help users keep track of their progress and tailor their strategies accordingly, thereby increasing their motivation levels and dedication to achieving the goals they have set (Swann et al., 2021). Gamification elements, for example, achievement progress bars and performance dashboards, could provide this valuable information to a person to enable them to make appropriate decisions regarding their approach.

Table 1. Conceptual framework of the goal-setting theory (Tondello et al., 2018, p. 1125)

Principle for goal setting	How gamification is explained	Gameful design guidelines	Related gameful design elements
<i>Basic principles</i>			
Specific goals	Goal specificity is achieved when gameful systems use clear goals	Goals should be specific to focus the user's attention and effort towards them	badges, leaderboards, levels, progress bars, rules, goals, challenges, conflict, points,
	User will be faced with difficult goals	Difficult goals should result in better	achievements, rewards, boss battles,

Difficult goals	if the design follows the recommendation of adjusting the challenge according to user skill	performance than easy goals; however, goal difficulty must not exceed user ability	certificates, collections, exploratory tasks, learning, quests, unlockable or rare content or advanced features
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2.2.3 Flow Theory

In addition, Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) flow theory and teachings are foundational to gamification. He proposed that being completely engrossed in and enthusiastic about something may provide a person with immense joy. According to Tse et al. (2020), this mental state may be described as "flow" and is attained when an individual's abilities are well-matched with the tasks given. With gamification, game-design features can be shaped into experiences that provide consumers with the perfect amount of difficulty without causing them to become bored or anxious. For example, adaptive difficulty levels and dynamic quest systems ensure that these fluctuations occur as users progress through the system. As their skills develop and they improve their skills, the challenges they take on will become more difficult as well (Tse et al., 2020). This ensures that players must stay focused on what they're doing to succeed; if things become too easy or too hard, then there is no point in playing anymore.

Furthermore, clear feedback mechanisms and progress tracking can help users evaluate their skill levels before engaging in new activities, leading to enhanced feelings of control and enabling them to enter flow states (Abuhamdeh, 2020). With real-time feedback given to players, or in a business, employees, and decision makers about their performance and visualizations provided about it while gaming, one can recognize when they are ready for more challenging games or need to work out some skills to remain in a state of continuous flow.

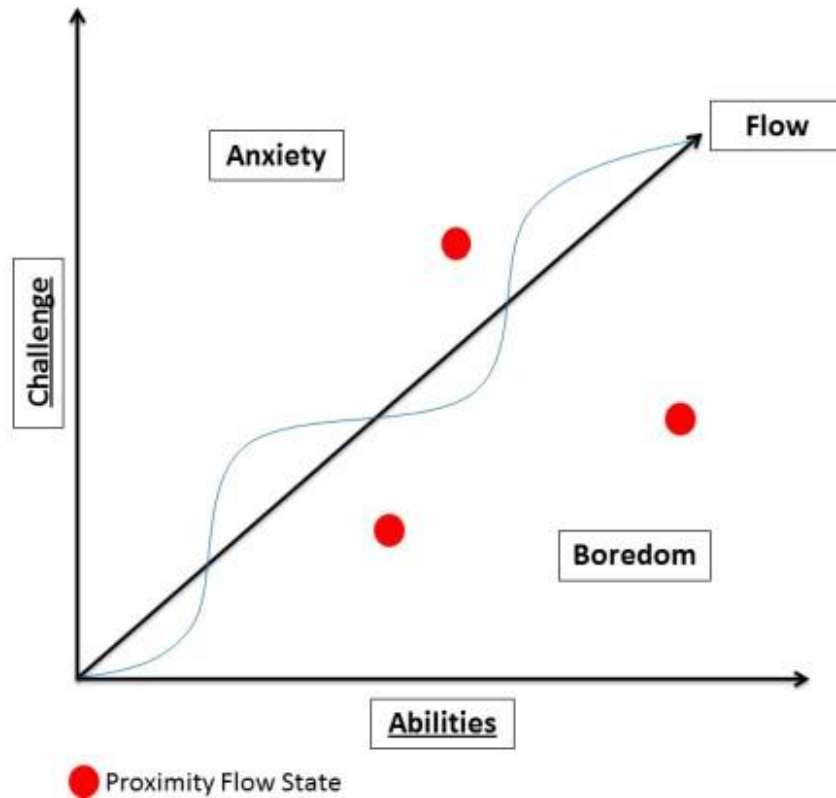


Figure 4 Identification of the Flow State (adapted from Csikszentmihaly (1990.)

2.3 Social Comparison and Competition

Gamification also incorporates social comparison and competition as ways to attract people's natural tendency toward recognition, achievement, and social status. These motivational factors can be tapped into through various social features like leaderboards, badges, and competitive challenges, which eventually enhance user engagement with the game, leading to high-performing players (Esteves et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2021).

Leaderboards, for example, can be powerful drivers by enabling users to measure themselves against others and work toward higher levels or accomplishments. This appeal to our innate need for social approval and position, compelling users to keep going and perform better. However, there must be a delicate balance between healthy rivalry and

adverse outcomes, such as immense strain, excessive pressure, or lack of motivation among those at the bottom of the leaderboard (Esteves et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2021).

In addition to facilitating social comparisons and acknowledgments, the visible nature of badges and accomplishments facilitates peer review and praise. These symbols represent users' knowledge and status in the gamified community; thus, users should be motivated to earn prestigious badges for rare achievements (Esteves et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Teams and collaborative challenges may also appeal to users' needs for companionship and a sense of purpose by encouraging them to work together toward common goals (Ho et al., 2022). Because of friendly competition between teams or working together toward similar objectives, users will get closer to one another and spend more time playing the game.

2.3.1 Individual differences and contextual factors

Although the theories and principles provide a strong foundation for understanding the motivational forces behind gamification, it is crucial to keep in mind that both individual differences and contextual factors may have impact the effectiveness of gamification. According to Ho et al.'s research from 2022, some people are more intrinsically motivated and responsive to gamification aspects, while others may place higher value on extrinsic rewards or find such game mechanics unattractive. For example, individuals who have a strong intrinsic desire for a certain activity or subject may experience demotivation or decreased performance when gamification features that emphasize social comparison or external rewards are present. On the other hand, individuals who rely, for the most part, on extrinsic motivation tend to react more favorably to gamification features that offer material awards, recognition, or social rank (Yang et al., 2021).

Moreover, the success of gamification initiatives can depend on organizational culture, task characteristics, and the overall implementation approach. In an organization, setting up gamification strategies in environments that encourage creativity, collaboration, and experimentation can be more effective than other environments (Cao et al., 2022). On

the flip side of this coin, in competitive cultures where hierarchical order is strictly adhered to, some gamified features focusing on individuals' accomplishments would not be welcome, as they would not improve healthy competition among colleagues but rather promote unhealthy rivalry in workplaces (Cao et al., 2022).

Furthermore, different game mechanics and dynamics can improve the effectiveness of various tasks being used to implement game mechanics. Tasks that involve repetitive procedures should have game features such as variety, challenge, and progressiveness, while creative duties require gaming practices like autonomy experimentation by participants themselves mixed with internal motivations (Khodabandelou et al., 2023; Rapp, 2020).

Gamification has also been used to increase student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes in educational systems. However, the efficiency of integrating these games into pedagogy depends on the student's age, the subject, and their learning preferences (Khodabandelou et al., 2023; Rapp, 2020). Consider young learners, for example. Some may be interested in a gamification device that tells a story and is playful. Older players, on the other hand, are more interested in ambitious gaming mechanics.

Different people have different opinions, which can cause them to react to different game elements in the gamified content. For instance, cognitive style, personality traits, and cultural background can all play a role in this (Fathian et al., 2020; Girdeuskiene et al., 2022). A highly competitive person will succeed in an environment that promotes leaderboards, whereas someone who is more sociable will prefer collaborative challenges or community-building aspects.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

Gamification as an engagement booster has ethical implications that need to be addressed. The first concern is the misuse of certain psychological vulnerabilities through

gamification. Additionally, we must watch out for unintended side effects associated with its use (Goethe & Palmquist, 2020; Larson, 2020). For example, game mechanics that heavily rely on variable reinforcement schedules or exploit loss aversion tendencies among gamers can easily make certain individuals develop compulsive gambling habits (Goethe & Palmquist, 2020; Larson, 2020). Furthermore, overreliance on social comparison through leaderboards can lead to feelings of demotivation, isolation, or one-upmanship when other colleagues consistently appear at the bottom end of these boards (Coelho & Reis, 2021).

Moreover, the privacy and data protection implications of gamification systems must be considered, including those that collect and use user data for personalization, behavioral analysis, or social comparison purposes (Coelho & Reis, 2021). Transparent communication about data collection and usage practices, and providing users with control over their data, is essential for maintaining ethical standards and user trust. Moreover, in healthcare, education, or work contexts, among others, it is important to evaluate if gamification does not indeed create stressors, pressures, or negative outcomes for users (Coelho & Reis, 2021). In areas where they are used, the focus should be on fostering internal motivation, self-development, and positive behavioral change rather than external rewards or competitiveness.

In essence, gamification taps into a wealth of motivation theories and psychological principles that serve as a basis for using game design elements to influence user behavior, motivation levels, and involvement in different settings. However, the successful implementation of gamified initiatives requires managers to have a deep understanding of the target audience's characteristics, such as the motivations behind their decisions, which would lead them to take action under changing conditions with time constraints in place (Fitzpatrick & Marsh, 2022). Thoroughly considering individual differences alongside contextual factors, including ethical implications, will enable designers to come up with engaging yet effective gamified experiences that, besides being aligned with ethical principles, lay the groundwork for responsible design ramifications.

2.5 Strategy as Practice (S-as-P) perspective.

2.5.1 Conceptual foundations and core tenets of S-as-P

S-as-P is a relatively new subfield in strategic management that emerged in the 20th century. This signifies a change away from the conventional emphasis on strategy content and toward an emphasis on the processes involved in strategizing (Kohtamäki et al., 2022). This viewpoint contends that strategy is not something exclusive to businesses simply because they possess it; rather, it is a course of action that people and groups choose when dealing with particular circumstances. It is this view that challenges the traditional top-down notion of strategy as something that is planned and imposed on others. This view has led to the concept of situated activity, where strategy can begin to be seen as a distributed, dynamic process unfolding through everyday actions and interactions between different members within an organization (Lavarda & Bellucci, 2022; Mukupa et al., 2023). Some of the most important ideas that have emerged from S-as-P are as follows:

Strategizing as practice: According to Lavarda and Bellucci (2022) and Pelletier and Raymond (2020), the S-as-P approach views strategy not only as a characteristic of organizations but rather as a collection of actions that are carried out by individuals and groups in the course of their day-to-day tasks and interactions with other people. Considering this, we shift our perspective from merely considering the consequences of strategizing, such as the decisions made or plans developed, to examining the acts that constitute these outcomes.

Situated activity: strategy practices are used in specific organizational settings, with social, cultural, and material factors impacting and being impacted. Therefore, the s-as-p view therefore argues against viewing strategic events outside contextual factors that affect how strategies' formation.

Praxis, practices, and practitioners: This approach explores the connections between praxis (the practice of strategizing), practices (the routines, tools, and techniques employed by strategists), and practitioners (those involved in such activities). This triad identifies the need to go beyond the actor to also consider her actions conducted through specific artifacts.

The S-as-P perspective thus shifts away from this conventional view of strategy as a logical, sequential decision-making process directly under the control of the top management team toward an understanding that strategy is a messier thing that can be emergent and socially constructed (Lavarda & Bellucci, 2022; Pelletier & Raymond, 2020). An important aspect of this approach is investigating how organizational members become involved in strategic work by practicing strategy daily or interacting with others at work.

Strategic planning processes and tools, another important area of research in the S-as-P domain, such as environmental scanning, scenario planning, and strategic planning frameworks (van Rheede & Lim, 2020), have been found to be helpful. These practices of strategic anticipation and reaction play a critical role. Likewise, S-asP scholars have expressed significant interest in strategy communication and sensemaking. These practices involve sending interpreting strategic messages throughout the business to show how different organizations' actors comprehend and carry out strategies (van Rheede & Lim, 2020).

The S-as-P perspective helps us understand how strategies are implemented in organizations by examining various strategizing practices and provides a tool for strategy making at any level. As per this understanding, what may seem like a linear top-down process is an emergent dynamic created by everyday actors within the organization (Dagnaud, 2020). Lastly, since strategizing occurs within unique contextual factors such as social context, researchers also take into account specific organizational contexts where this happens (Dagnaud, 2020). This enables them to see more complexities in strategy work and develop more nuanced theories of strategy.

Looking at strategizing practices from perspective of S-as-P has implications for academia as well as practitioners and organizations. By gaining more knowledge about how they can better shape and implement strategies, firms have the opportunity to enhance their strategic processes. In addition, it will foster greater collaboration among strategists, thereby enabling them to make sense of things and improve their decision-making skills toward the creation and execution of strategies.

2.6 Application of gamification in various organizational contexts

To increase motivation, engagement and, performance, gamification has been considered for use across businesses. On the flip side, clients have attempted to exploit employees' inherent motivation to deliver fun activities by introducing game elements into work platforms or procedures, such as intranet portals or project management software (Prakash & Manchanda, 2021; Wunderlich et al., 2020).

Research has been conducted by businesses to determine the most effective ways to implement gamified social networks within organizations for the purpose of fostering employee engagement and facilitating the exchange of information among employees (Prakash & Manchanda, 2021; Wunderlich et al., 2020). A significant number of these initiatives consist of point systems, badges, leaderboards, and progress tracking, all designed to reward and appreciate the contributions of workers and enhance their sense of self-worth. As an illustration, Miri and Macke (2022) conducted a study to investigate the benefits of incorporating gamification into a corporate social network within a large technology company. After conducting research, they discovered that the incorporation of badges into this platform, in addition to those on leaderboards that were directly tied to work, resulted in increased levels of employee participation and the sharing of information.

It is also effective in corporate training programs. By using instructional design models that make learning more immersive, organizations can improve knowledge retention, enhance skill acquisition, and link training with actual job performance (Khan et al., 2020). In a meta-analysis on work-related training, Thomas et al. (2022) reported an increased declarative knowledge base, like facts taught or overall skill acquisition through gamification techniques. Therefore, incorporating elements like points or badges along with a leaderboard can increase motivation, engagement, and persistence, leading to better learning experiences, which in turn will develop skills beyond normal expectations.

Simulation games are often used so that workers can virtually practice real-life situations in safe environments (Khan et al., 2020). Challenge quests most often serve as important features used for problem solving when playing games involving making decisions at every level during play, i.e., using the decision-point approach. This approach helps learners acquire new approaches in relation to situation analysis and find appropriate solutions when confronted with a problem.

Gamification has been employed in customer experiences and marketing (Jami Pour et al., 2021; Vdov, 2020; Worimegbe et al., 2020). In the latter case, it provides brands, products, or services that are more immersive and fulfilling. For instance, mechanisms that use points and badge levels to encourage repeat purchases are present in loyalty programs in which customers interact with the brand over time (Vdov, 2020). Gamified marketing campaigns and interactive experiences are another method that may be used to increase market share. These experiences attract new customers and enhance product acceptance, thus increasing market share. Among other things, they consist of game elements, such as trials, goals, and contests, that are included in an online campaign to generate buzz over social media, which ultimately results in viral influence on social networking sites (Vdov, 2020).

On another note, gamification has been used to stimulate ecological awareness and sustainability in individuals and businesses through gamification (Vdov, 2020). For example,

research has revealed that game-like online platforms, where customers can obtain points for switching off light bulbs or selecting bicycle options instead of driving, have proven most effective in promoting sustainable behaviors (Jami Pour et al., 2021; Vdov, 2020; Worimegbe et al., 2020). On the other hand, authors revealed other phone applications developed by scientists that included cash incentives and badges for learners who preferred walking or cycling rather than using vehicles like cars or busses (Jami Pour et al., 2021; Vdov, 2020; Worimegbe et al., 2020). These results will support forthcoming sustainability campaigns.

Although gamification may work in almost any business setting, it requires careful planning, execution, and alignment with user preferences and organizational goals to realize its full potential. Bad gamification practices can lead to unforeseen issues like poor intrinsic motivation, illogical relationships amongst coworkers, and so on (Wolf et al., 2020). As a result, organizations should always consider a number of factors when introducing gamification into the system: the culture and climate of the company at large; specific features of the job that are supposed to be enhanced; and differences between employees and customers (Wolf et al., 2020). Furthermore, regular assessments and amelioration of game-based strategies are very important in ensuring their utility as well as addressing new problems that might arise due to them.

2.6.1 Benefits and challenges of gamifying work processes

Enhanced motivation and engrossment: One of the primary benefits of gamification in industry is that it leverages game design principles to boost employee motivation and engagement among workers (Alhammad & Moreno, 2020). Gamification may, therefore, involve constructing things like progress bars, badges, points, and leaderboards, which are intrinsic motivators such as the need for achievement, competition, social recognition, and a sense of progress (Alhammad & Moreno, 2020; Hamari, 2013; Reis et al., 2020). Employing these gaming mechanics can make tasks more enjoyable and fulfilling, thereby helping to overcome the tedium or disinterest associated with routine jobs. For instance, having achievements visible at each level in a task bar can help employees feel

accomplished, thus demonstrating to them how to accomplish objectives without giving up because it encourages persistence and commitment (Alhammad & Moreno, 2020; Hamari, 2013; Reis et al., 2020).

Improved productivity and performance: Apart from motivation and engagement, gamification has also been linked to increased productivity and job performance within organizations (Alhammad & Moreno, 2020; Reis et al., 2020). Thus, relating to task management software or the workflow of an organization, employees receive tools that are more goal-oriented than any other tools because they have immediate feedback loops along with progressiveness, making it easier for them to concentrate on their responsibilities, use time efficiently, and accomplish tasks, leading to an expected outcome. Consequently, research has indicated that incorporating progress bars, achievement badges, and performance visualizations into task management applications can improve task completion rates, perceived productivity levels, and user engagement with software applications (Alhammad & Moreno, 2020; Reis et al., 2020). This is why the implementation of these game elements could be considered to increase employee satisfaction higher due to the fact that it promotes advancement.

Fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing: Knowledge sharing among an organization's workforce can be enhanced through collaborative games (Alhammad & Moreno, 2020; Reis et al., 2020). Therefore, companies will find it useful when games are introduced to their enterprise social networks, because they help recognize staff contributions through points, badges, leaderboards, and so on. In such a way, business owners can build up a sense of community where there is social recognition; hence, people want to take part in discussions together with workers from other divisions. Studies have revealed that gamifying enterprise social networks increases employee engagement, enhances knowledge-sharing activities, and improves the perceived value of these platforms (Alhammad & Moreno, 2020; Reis et al., 2020). Thus, gamification might facilitate information exchange among employees, which relies on best practices being spread,

thus leveraging such social motivators to enhance a fun working environment, and make work enjoyable.

2.6.2 Challenges and potential pitfalls of gamifying work processes

Although the advantages of gamification in organizational contexts are well-known, challenges and pitfalls remain during its implementation. Several concerns and issues have been identified by researchers and practitioners that should be addressed to ensure successful gamification initiatives. One of the main problems of gamification is overjustification, where extrinsic rewards and incentives can accidentally undermine intrinsic motivation (Alhammad & Moreno, 2020; Reis et al., 2020). If staff perceive the system as too controlling or manipulative, through which they play a game, it may lead to reduced autonomy and a shift from intrinsic to extrinsic motivation. As a result, this may have negative implications for long-term commitment, creativity, or overall well-being (Alhammad & Moreno, 2020; Reis et al., 2020). To minimize this risk, however, gamification performed cautiously to promote intrinsic motivation rather than depending only on extrinsic rewards or incentives. This might entail highlighting features that foster autonomy, competence, and connectedness, which are recommended by self-determination theory (Alhammad & Moreno, 2020; Reis et al., 2020).

Another challenge is that employees often perceive gamification as gimmicky or a superficial add-on, leading to disengagement or resistance (Fathian et al., 2020; Reis et al., 2020). Employees view these aspects themselves as just being added without any substantial meaning attached, hence trivializing them, resulting in a decreased buy-in level and less involvement. In order to overcome this obstacle, it is necessary for gamification initiatives to be developed based on a deep understanding of work processes, organizational culture, and user preferences. The game elements must naturally blend with the key functions of work processes, thereby creating real value and enhancing the participant's experience by design (Fathian et al., 2020; Reis et al., 2020).

The development and implementation of effective game systems require careful consideration of many factors, such as task characteristics, ethical implications, user preferences, and organizational culture, among many others (Fathian et al., 2020; Reis et al., 2020). There could be unintended consequences from poorly designed gamification initiatives, such as encouraging unhealthy competition, incentivizing negative behaviors, or creating a sense of unfairness or inequity among employees. For this reason, it is necessary to employ a user-centered approach that is also context-specific because not all users are the same. The involvement of endusers and stakeholders in designing and implementing gamification is thus important to realign gamification elements with their culture, values, and preferences. Additionally, the game system must be constantly monitored and improved by addressing the concerns that arise and adapting the system to new needs or circumstances (Fathian et al., 2020; Reis et al., 2020).

Gamification in an organizational setting gives rise to ethical and privacy concerns that require careful attention (Fathian et al., 2020; Reis et al., 2020). Gamification systems often involve collecting and analyzing data about employees. This includes metrics of performance, behaviors, and interactions. The collection of this information raises questions about whether it is a breach of privacy and how safe data security is. There is also the potential for misuse or unintended consequences. For example, gamification elements like leaderboards might put too much pressure on some employees or unfairly stigmatize others. Organizations must establish ethical guidelines, ensure transparency, and get informed consent from employees regarding the use of gamification so they know how their personal data will be used (Fathian et al., 2020; Reis et al., 2020).

The challenges and pitfalls of gamifying work processes are significant but not impossible to overcome. By adopting a thoughtful approach that involves end users and stakeholders, as well as continuously monitoring and refining initiatives for gamification, organizations can enjoy its benefits while mitigating risks and any negative consequences. Ultimately, success hinges on finding a balance between leveraging games while respecting

employee autonomy, fostering a positive organizational culture, and upholding ethical standards regarding privacy (Fathian et al., 2020; Reis et al., 2020).

2.7 Conventional Approaches to Strategy Formulation and Implementation

Traditional methods of strategic management often see strategy formulation and implementation as separate, sequential processes frequently directed by top leadership (Kaufmann et al., 2020), which typically rely on structured planning frameworks or analytical tools. Normally, the traditional model of strategy development follows a top-down approach in which strategy is formulated at the highest echelons of the organization, such as senior executives or dedicated strategic planning teams (Kaufmann et al., 2020). Consequently, this process involves environmental scanning, an assessment of the internal situation regarding strengths and weaknesses, and formulation of a long-term plan for positioning that will help in gaining a competitive advantage, allowing for stability and growth (Kaufmann et al., 2020).

Classical theories and frameworks such as Porter's Five Forces Model, SWOT Analysis, and Resource-Based View served as lenses for strategic decision-making processes and tools for developing strategies (Kaufmann et al., 2020). These approaches stress the need for thorough analysis and an objective review of industry dynamics, thus resulting in intentional strategies that can cascade down the organizational hierarchy. After developing strategic plans, the focus changes to the execution of the strategy, also known as the implementation phase, since it does not involve conceiving strategies but rather executing them. During this stage, companies begin implementing their strategic plans using structures within organizations, such as resource allocation, systems control, and performance management frameworks, to mention but a few mechanisms used by organizations to implement these plans. Traditional implementations recognize effective communication across unit levels across departments, like fill stations, where managers work together with subordinates to ensure success during execution.

Conventional approaches to strategy implementation highlight the necessity of effective communication throughout the firm to achieve successful outcomes of alignment purposes (Kaufmann et al., 2020). This requires either descending or hierarchical goals so that incentives are focused and become synonymous with the firm's plans, as well as establishing strong monitoring and control systems that are helpful in evaluating what has been accomplished. These structures are aimed at ensuring that organizational members cooperate in executing the organization's strategic plan.

While these traditional approaches have provided valuable frameworks and tools for strategy development and implementation, they have also faced criticism for being overly rigid, top-down, and disconnected from the realities of organizational dynamics and strategizing practices (Kaufmann et al., 2020). Critics argue that this approach reduces the decision-making process into simple terms while ignoring the concept of the emergent nature of strategy (Kaufmann et al., 2020). Strategy practice is seen as rational and analytic, thus failing to appreciate human agency, organizational politics, and the contextuality of strategies within different organizations. Moreover, there is a question about how much one can separate between the formulation of strategic objectives and the implementation of such plans. Often, change may be needed during the period of implementing these strategic plans due to unforeseen events, making it difficult to come up with a perimeter limit between execution per se or formulation.

In response to these criticisms, alternative perspectives on strategy emerged, emphasizing the socially constructed, practice-based, and emergent nature of strategizing. Notably, the Strategy as Practice (S-as-P) perspective has gained wide acceptance by shifting attention from what is contained in strategy toward doing strategy work itself (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020). This notion perceives strategy as a situated social practice defined by the inter-relationships of multiple actors across various organizations (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020).

Strategy is not only a result of top-down planning but also a dynamic process that occurs through the activities and strategizing practices of various members of an organization (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020). These include strategy meetings, workshops, communication activities, and issue-selling processes, among others (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020). The focus is on understanding how these practices shape strategic outcomes and are shaped by the social, material, and discursive contexts of organizations.

This perspective contradicts traditional thinking that treats strategy formulation and implementation as separate entities while viewing them as interwoven and cyclical processes (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020). Strategic plans do not stand still but continuously undergo interpretation, negotiation, and adaptation through the ongoing strategizing practices of organizational members (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020). This point also emphasizes agency and power dynamics in strategic practices and outcomes (Kardiansyah & Salam, 2020). It presupposes that no purely rationality is involved in strategizing, but political maneuvering, identity construction and a coalition of organizational actors with diverse interests.

Hence, taking a practice-based view allows scholars and practitioners to gain a nuanced understanding of the intricacies and micro-dynamics of strategy work beyond the usual analytical tools and planning frameworks. Thus, different strategies can be fully explored. Design thinking involves using games and other collaborative methods (Lavarda & Bellucci, 2022; Pelletier & Raymond, 2020).

The adoption of the strategy-as-practice perspective has eliminated the conventional linear way of creating a business plan with more lively and inclusive means that entail social constructionism and the natural formation of strategies, among others. The new approach has also led better ways to study strategies that are relevant in today's world and in strategic organizations' environments.

2.8 New Practices and Tools for Strategic Management

2.8.1 Open Strategy

Open strategy is a relatively new approach to strategic management that emphasizes transparency, inclusion, and collaboration in strategy formulation and implementation processes (Seidl et al., 2019). This involves opening up these processes to a broader set of participants, both internal and external, and leveraging digital technologies and platforms to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing (Tavakoli et al., 2017). Organizations often use online collaboration platforms, social media, crowdsourcing tools, and other digital channels to solicit ideas, share strategic information, and coordinate efforts among diverse stakeholders.

Some potential benefits of an open strategy include increased stakeholder engagement and commitment, access to a broader range of knowledge and perspectives, improved innovation and creativity, faster adaptation to changing environments and enhanced transparency and trust (Seidl et al., 2019). However, it also presents challenges, such as managing diverse inputs, maintaining strategic focus, dealing with potential conflicts or misalignments, and ensuring the protection of sensitive information (Adobor, 2019). Overall, an open strategy represents a shift toward more inclusive, transparent, and collaborative approaches to strategic management, enabled by digital technologies and platforms.

2.8.2 Strategic foresight and scenario planning

These two approaches are dedicated to expecting future uncertainty and disruption (Lavarda & Bellucci, 2022; Pelletier & Raymond, 2020). Techniques like environmental scanning aim at identifying trends and disruptive forces before they occur so that organizations can mitigate them if necessary. Scenario planning takes this approach one step further by preparing for multiple plausible futures (Lavarda & Bellucci, 2022; Pelletier &

Raymond, 2020). When you examine what these futures mean for your organization in advance, you can develop strategies that will be resilient regardless of the challenges or opportunities that may arise.

2.8.3 Strategic innovation and design thinking

To avoid becoming complacent with their current market position, organizations must continually reinvent themselves. Strategic innovation promotes reimagining value creation processes and business models. When an organization constantly questions its assumptions about how things should be done (and then acts on those questions), it's much less likely to become irrelevant (Lavarda & Bellucci, 2022; Pelletier & Raymond, 2020).

Design thinking focuses on solving problems in a human-centered manner (Rometsch et al., 2022). By engaging in iterative cycles of ideation, prototyping, and user testing, organizations can ensure that their strategic initiatives are as aligned with customer needs as possible. This method also ensures that very few mistakes are made.

2.8.4 Dynamic capabilities and strategic agility

The concept of dynamic capabilities captures an organization's ability to sense opportunities, seize them when they arise, and finally adapt its resources and capabilities to changing environments (Lavarda & Bellucci, 2022; Pelletier & Raymond, 2020). This perspective acknowledges that sustainable competitive advantage in today's fast-paced business landscape often exists within an organization's ability to constantly renew itself by being strategically agile (Williams, 1992). To cultivate dynamic capabilities, such practices have been recommended, including strategic resource orchestration, knowledge management, and organizational learning mechanisms that enable to continuously scan the environment, identify emerging trends, and then adapt their strategies and resource configurations accordingly (Lavarda & Bellucci, 2022; Pelletier & Raymond, 2020).

These emerging practices and tools reflect a broader shift in strategic management toward more iterative, inclusive, and adaptive approaches that better align with the dynamic and socially embedded nature of strategy work (Reeves & Deimler, 2011). Traditional analytical frameworks and planning processes still have their place but, are increasingly supplemented by practices aimed at fostering strategic agility, stakeholder engagement and, the co-creation of strategic initiatives. By adopting these emerging approaches, organizations can better navigate complexities and uncertainties in contemporary business environments, thus enhancing the quality and legitimacy of their strategic decisions while fostering higher commitment and alignment throughout strategy implementation (Edgeman et al., 2016).

2.9 Gamification in Strategy

Although gamification is a relatively new research field, multiple studies have been conducted in the area of gamification in strategy work. In some organizations, simulations are used that take the form of games, and players can be awarded points when they score high on particular objectives or tasks. Higher common interest among participants has been found to arise due to such approaches, which include collaboration in addressing challenges from them (Chans & Portuguez Castro, 2021). One thing with this is that it makes serious things fun; curiosity emerges as soon as you think about them, and creativity should be displayed. For one more time, when enough failure has taken place but, success stays within reach, no matter how long or tough the road ahead seems at some point during their strategic assignments, tenacity too will certainly appear here whenever needed most in life.

On the one hand, Gamarra et al. (2022) recently presented a case study for an Indian manufacturing company where they dealt with the implementation of gamified strategic planning processes; hence, there was greater employee participation, improved strategic alignment, and a more engaging experience in strategic planning, especially by incorporating elements like challenges, leaderboards, and virtual rewards. As a result of

implementing fun elements through game mechanics, employees were motivated to provide insights and ideas because efforts were recognized using virtual rewards, thus leading the company to receive many strategic proposals submitted by employees during this period, indicating people's ownership feelings at personal levels.

Strategy formulation and execution, according to Yasin & Abbas. (2021), can be gamified because they provide a framework built around mechanic variables, including quest accomplishments and progress tracking. By doing so, organizational thinking should become better if managers use these frameworks to process strategies because it involves members collaborating for their full acceptance. Moreso, it is made serious instead of being fun filled after creating funny experiences once there are challenging issues that need solutions; eventually, after asking themselves related questions, other alternatives may come out, hence resulting in being creative anyway, just like one's spirit might emerge from one's' soul. Since some individuals are so strong-willed, even if they are stuck at a particular point for a long time while looking to get things done among the strategic tasks, perseverance too will certainly be seen here at some critical place where it becomes necessary according to how well they are progressing through their strategic activities (Yasin & Abbas, 2021). The proposed framework also encourages instant feedback and recognition, thus increasing motivation and engagement.

Several researchers have explored different areas and applications of this approach to gamification in strategy work. An example is Saputra Rahmatia (2021), who studied the use of games in strategic foresight and scenario planning practice. In that study, elements such as narratives, challenges and, rewards were described as having the potential to enhance participants' engagement with the process, thus encouraging them to explore alternative futures and strategic options better than any other method employed before (Saputra & Rahmatia, 2021). When participants engaged in such planning exercises, it was seen that they felt more engaged in them, at least through their change of thinking as far as making divergent decisions simply by looking for future possibilities.

There is an interest in how gamification may play a role in strategic decision-making processes. Another study was conducted by Kodalle et al. (2021) on the application of gamified decision support systems in strategic decision-making. As for complex scenarios, game elements like points, badges, leaderboards, and so on. tend to be associated with increased motivation and enhanced decision-making quality among game players. This approach helped address biases that might arise during cognitive reasoning, thereby encouraging systematic analysis-related judgments instead of the typical heuristics used (Kodalle et al., 2021). This way, we can see how these two characteristics make applying analytical thinking to various problems possible within one's career.

In addition, researchers have discovered that the use of gamification can be beneficial for strategic alignment and communication within organizations. There was an argument by Strousopoulos et al. (2023) that suggested a strategy dissection using games that incorporated game mechanics like challenges, rewards, and progress tracking for staff involvement to effectively disseminate and comprehend strategic objectives. Strategic awareness among employees improved because of a gamified approach to strategic alignment and higher commitment levels toward achieving organization's strategic goals. The use of gamification for the purposes of other strategic management areas, such as strategic marketing and human resources management, has also been investigated (Carnero, 2020).

However, while these studies have shown promise, attention should be paid to several factors when gamifying strategies work successfully, including organizational culture, participant demographics, and the specific strategic objectives under scrutiny. In developing their arguments about gamification, they warn against unbalancing or thoughtless incorporation of this element, as it should be consistent with the firm's goals without depreciating the seriousness inherent in intricate strategies (Carnero, 2020). Also important is how researchers have stressed combining other approaches such as design thinking, systems thinking, and data analytics with gamification to create a holistic and comprehensive framework for managing strategies. Organizations can apply games to

motivate individuals but still hold a rigorous analytical approach regarding strategy formulation through combination with methodologies such as design thinking.

2.10 Methodological approaches and findings of the literature review

Several methods have been applied in previous studies on gamification in strategy work. These included simulation-based experiments, case studies, and action research. Case studies are one-way researchers that explore the implementation of gamified strategy tools and processes in specific organizational contexts (Carnero, 2020). They provide a good indication of the challenges encountered and the inhibitors and benefits of implementing strategy games. For instance, Cechella et al. (2021) employed a mixed-methods design including qualitative interviews, observations, and quantitative analysis to conduct their case study, The Gamified Strategic Planning Process at an Indian Manufacturing Company. With this approach, they were able to assess how gamification elements influenced employee involvement in strategic planning.

Another approach is through action research, where researchers collaborate with organizations to develop gamified strategy interventions together (De Jong et al., 2021). This enables them to actively participate in shaping such initiatives while assisting organizations in arriving at practical solutions. De Jong et al. (2021) worked closely with a multinational firm, where they developed and piloted a game-based framework for creating strategies. The authors' adoption of the action research methodology facilitated modification of the framework based on input from numerous stakeholders within the company.

Simulation-based experiments are used to investigate whether or not gamified tools can help people learn about strategic decision-making (De Jong et al., 2021). Often, these investigations take place under controlled circumstances that encourage participants' interactions with any type of simulation or scenario involving gaming to measure variables in many dimensions. The authors conducted several experiments using a videogame

simulation tool for teaching business strategies, thus testing how game elements such as points, leaderboards, and virtual rewards affected participants' engagement with the course material as well as the quality of their decisions (De Jong et al., 2021). Consequently, due to the systematic nature of their research, it was possible for them to identify and understand the impact of specific gamification aspects with certainty in the end.

In addition to these main methodological approaches, researchers have also explored mixed methods and new research designs to examine gamification in strategic management. Vardarlier (2021) applied qualitative content analysis as well as interviews and observation to study the application of gamification within the context of strategic foresight. Using multiple approaches makes this possible, because it considers both participants' subjective experiences and the observable effects interventions.

Moreover, design science research methodologies have been examined by scholars when developing and evaluating gamified strategy tools that are relevant for businesses (Vardarlier, 2021). This means going back to redesign something, such as a prototype or framework, and then testing it over time. The authors therefore consider what happens when different game mechanics are incorporated while simultaneously generating new tools specifically constructed for strategic management through the use of design science research techniques.

Some studies have found that including gamification enhances employee commitment, motivation, and engagement toward strategic initiatives (Vardarlier, 2021). In relation to the process of the gamified strategy, participants commonly showed great interest in different activities, making them think that they were being challenged, recognized, or received feedback. These games have also resulted in better strategic understanding and improved decision-making quality due to gamified strategy simulation and decision support tools (Vardarlier, 2021). Therefore, scholars argue that these interactive features are relevant for learning purposes and can enhance systematicity in complex decision-making.

Moreover, some studies have demonstrated that when implementing the principles of gamification in strategy dissemination and implementation within organizations, it improves communication as well as strategic alignment (Vardarlier, 2021). On the other hand, game mechanics, for instance, challenges, rewards, and progress tracking, aid employees' comprehension and internalization of strategic objectives, thereby leading to improved alignment and commitment.

However, not all studies have shown purely positive results. Several researchers have raised concerns about the possible risks related to implementing games in strategy work. For example, critics argue that because there is a possibility for these systems to simplify or trivialize complex aspects embedded in such processes (Vardarlier, 2021), designing and implementing gamification elements without care may serve distractive purposes, distracting users from intrinsic motivation. Others have revealed how important it is for the success of gamified strategies and interventions to consider organizational factors. Thus, Vardarlier (2021) argued that the organizational context matters most along with leaders' endorsement of achieving goals because success is based on whether it aligns with an organization's values as well as purposeful objectives.

Despite the challenges many organizations face in this area, some studies have demonstrated that gamification may be a way to enhance strategic work by increasing employee participation in activities, cooperation, and understanding strategy. More studies are needed to better understand how effective gamification can be implemented in strategic management and for it to be implemented with long-term rigidity, such as the one mentioned earlier. Foreseeing investigations regarding gamified strategy tools might involve investigating the possibilities of incorporating innovations like virtual and augmented reality (Vardarlier, 2021). Moreover, these new gadgets could make it more enjoyable, thus increasing the benefits of game-based management strategies.

The broad range of available research implies that gamification is a potentially powerful tool for enhancing the practice of strategy, particularly in promoting engagement and collaboration within teams and enhancing understanding. Still, there is a need for more robust and longitudinal studies that will facilitate further verification of its effectiveness within the context of strategic management and the development of principles governing its successful deployment. In addition, given advances in the field over recent years, future research may combine new ideas, such as virtual or augmented reality, with strategies and game tools (Pal et al., 2021). Thus, apart from being highly interactive, these devices may provide even more immersive experiences, which can provide other advantages if properly used throughout the process.

2.11 Gaps and limitations in existing literature

Existing research on games at work or within organizations in terms of business strategies has provided an insightful knowledge base; however, there is a lack of empirical studies that examine how exactly the principles of gaming are related to the strategy-as-practice (S-as-P) perspective. Most scholars concentrate on creating strategy planning processes or simulations concerning strategic decision-making game-like without recognizing that strategizing is done by people within their context based on various social relations, as argued in the S-as-P view.

To grasp the possibilities and challenges of employing game elements in strategy processes, further research is needed that explores how gamification can be incorporated into diverse strategizing practices like strategic meetings, communication channels, and issue-selling sessions (Pal et al., 2021). Empirical studies that examine how praxis, practitioners, and practices interact with gamification elements may provide a more sophisticated understanding of this intersection. For example, ethnographic or case study designs could help to reveal the implications of using game mechanics on social dynamics, power relations, and microactivities that affect strategic outcomes within organizations.

Research is also needed to understand how gamification affects strategic agency and identities involved in strategizing activities. According to Kohtamäki et al. (2022), the S-as-P perspective insists on the roles of individual and collective actors in' shaping strategy practices; thus, exploring whether the introduction of gamified elements can impinge upon practitioner behaviors, motivations, and self-perceptions in strategic contexts is valuable.

Additional studies could examine how gamification enables or constrains the adaptation and evolution of strategic practices as organizations respond to ongoing environmental shifts or changes in their internal dynamics. Strategizing seen through an S-as-P lens acknowledges its dynamicity (Kohtamäki et al., 2022); thus, research should determine whether it leads to the required suppleness in strategizing that facilitates or impedes these qualities through game-based approaches.

Adopting the strategy as practice approach allows scholars to delve into finer details about micro-processes and context nuances related to making strategy games far beyond what has been written so far, which are mainly aggregated outcome-centered studies. This knowledge will contribute to the academic comprehension of gamified interventions within the field of strategic management and will also serve as the basis for creating more applicable interventions

2.12 Sythesis of findings and current state of knowledge

Despite the limitations identified in the existing literature, there are some loopholes that need to be bridged, and the literature on gamification in strategy work is full of valuable insights. The results off different studies indicate that gamification improves involvement, motivation, strategic comprehension, and cooperation among people involved in strategic processes within organizations (Kohtamäki et al., 2022).

Gamification can create more immersive and rewarding experiences for strategists by leveraging game design elements and principles such as clear goals, feedback loops, challenges, and social interactions. This allows for greater commitment, strategic alignment, and a deeper understanding of strategic challenges and opportunities (Kohtamäki et al., 2022). However, it should be noted that the proper design and implementation of gamified interventions in an enterprise should consider user preferences' factors like organizational culture or ethical issues (Kohtamäki et al., 2022). Inappropriate use of game elements may lead to unintended consequences, such as disengagement, unhealthy competition, or even death of killing intrinsic motivation (Kohtamäki et al., 2022; Putz et al., 2020).

The current state of knowledge suggests that gamification holds promise as a tool for enhancing strategy work; however, its successful integration requires a nuanced understanding of specific strategizing practices within particular organizational contexts as well as the motivational and psychological aspects at play. This is considered in creation of the gamified strategy canvas, developed in this study. Further research is required to address these gaps identified earlier regarding the strategy-practice lens when viewed against the backdrop of the existing literature.

2.13 Theoretical implications of gamification and practice strategies.

Significantly, the combination of gamification principles into strategy as practice has far-reaching theoretical implications for both domains. From the perspective of gamification, applying game design elements to strategy work can offer a better understanding of how gamification can be applied to complex socially bound practices. By researching the interplay between gamification and strategizing practices, researchers can gain insight into the role of game mechanics and dynamics that shape praxis or practitioners who participate in any formulation or implementation process of strategies (Oliveira et al., 2023; Putz et al., 2020). Furthermore, this will complement existing theories and frameworks

involving gamification by emphasizing a more situated nature and the social accomplishment inherent in strategic work.

For instance, research could explore how specific game elements, such as narratives, challenges, or feedback loops influence the micro-activities and social interactions that underpin strategizing practices. This may lead to a better understanding of exactly how strategic behavior and outcomes can be influenced by gamification. In turn, studies could also examine how power politics change once there is an inclusion of game-like aspects, including symbolic capital, after which new voices may be heard during strategic discussions (Oliveira et al., 2023; Putz et al., 2020), while others might reinforce existing power imbalances or introduce new forms of symbolic capital (Oliveira et al., 2023; Putz et al., 2020).

Additionally, integrating S-as-P with gamified processes would reveal more about how gaming principles can facilitate strategic sensemaking activities among divergent stakeholders during issue-selling processes in organizations (Putz et al., 2020; Oliveira et al., 2023). This will enhance our understanding of how gaming can promote cognitive and social processes involved in strategizing activities. For example, one may want to understand how a strategic workshop can be conducted through a game-shaped framing, discussion, and negotiation of strategic issues among different people with different interests. It can also be revealed how gamification aspects influence the emotional experience of those involved in strategy processes as well as their perception of work (Oliveira et al., 2023; Putz et al., 2020).

From an S-as-P perspective, the inclusion of gamification elements provides a chance to explore alternative strategizing approaches and explore their effects on praxis, practices, and practitioners. By examining what happens when strategies are gamified learn more about how certain behaviors exhibited by strategists are influenced or even shaped by game design principles during the strategizing process (Oliveira et al., 2023; Putz et al., 2020). For instance, one could examine how a gamified strategy intervention evolves

over time through longitudinal studies that would also examine practitioners who have embraced it as well as the recursive relationship between gamification and strategy taking place daily (Oliveira et al., 2023; Putz et al., 2020).

Also, this is in line with the larger movement toward design thinking and user-centered approaches in strategy research and practice by incorporating them into s-as-p (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020). This demonstrates how integrating both aspects can enhance strategic practices and promote the co-creation of strategies while considering how design principles and game mechanics are related. The strategy as practice lens helps one understand what it feels like to be a strategist introduced to gamifying interventions; this is particularly important in shaping individuals' identities, motivations, and sense-making (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020).

Additionally, interlocking gamification-as-P integration might reveal the temporally recursive nature of strategizing practices (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020). Researchers should also consider longitudinal studies that trace the evolution over time of strategy interventions involving gaming and demonstrate the ways in which practitioners use or adapt elements of gamification. Moreover, there may be an opportunity for exploration within this domain around materials used in strategizing processes (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020). In fact, immersion into these activities is possible through socio-material entanglements, such as those brought about by gamified digital platforms and simulations, among other technological artifacts.

This could lead to theoretical innovation and empirical investigation through the marriage between gamification and strategy as practice. By combining these two domains, a better understanding of how the social cognitive materiality of strategy processes changes with gamification can be gained. In addition, it can help develop improved context-based strategies using games. Additionally, it bridges the gap between the theory formulation stage and the strategic management process, which requires more effective implementation methods when designing contextual-based strategies. Furthermore,

such research could contribute to a broader understanding of the socio-cognitive and socio-material perspectives underpinning strategic work, thereby highlighting personal motivations that are intertwined with social processes mediated by material tools toward strategic outcomes.

2.14 Theoretical framework of literature review

This chapter provides a theoretical framework for this study by exploring the theoretical concepts that provided specific insights in development of the gamified strategy canvas.

Gamification is determined as a method of incorporating game-like elements into non-game contexts to boost motivation for individuals and enhance engagement (Sailer & Homner, 2020; Saleem et al., 2022). Csikszentmihalyi's concept of Flow state (1990.) is central to this concept because in flow, individuals experience optimal engagement when challenges they receive match their skill levels. The flow theory especially forms the basis for understanding how gamification can boost motivation and productivity in organizational settings.

Self determination theory states that people have a need for autonomy and competence, that environmental factors can support or undermine. Giving the option to choose freely is a basis of autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2022). This means, that gamification should provide possibilities for interesting and meaningful choices for individuals.

Goal setting theory states that setting specific, doable yet challenging goals can enhance motivation and improve performance (Locke & Latham, 1990) Setting these kinds of goals and dividing them to smaller objectives, with addition of having a progress bar, can increase dedication towards achieving goal (Swann et al., 2021).

Strategy as practice (S-as-P) focuses on how strategies are formulated, put into action, and embedded within organizations. Through practical aspects of strategy development, S-asP demonstrates the role of individuals, relationships, and organizational culture in shaping strategic outcomes (Dagnaud, 2020). Scholars like Mintzberg (2008) and

Whittington (2002.) have provided how different strategic perspectives can influence the implementation of strategies in practice.

This literature review provides key findings from previous research on gamification and strategy. Studies by Tondello et al. (2018) and Krath et al. (2021) have examined the theoretical foundations and implications of integratind gamification into strategic processes. Through these insights, this study contributes to understanding gamification. in organizational contexts.

In the upcoming chapters, this study will detail more about the practical implications for organizations and strategy practitioners and propose the developed novel concept of the gamified strategy canvas as a conclusion. The aim is to provide practical guidance for organizations seeking ways to leverage gamification in their strategic planning and implementation efforts.

3 Practical implications for organizations and strategy practitioners

The results of gamification also suggest that its practical implications for organizational and strategic practitioners are significant. Organizations can thus provide a seamless experience with facilitators who motivate their teams more, ensure strategic congruence, and deepen their understanding of strategic problems and opportunities (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020). Another reason is the need to have gamified strategy tools that enhance collaboration among the strategists. This means that they can assess the assumptions made in their findings by through questioning, pondering multiple alternatives, experimenting with their results, or arriving at innovative conclusions supported by evidence from such environments, which allows safe-to-fail experiments. As a result, strategic agility and resilience can be increased, especially because they are crucial when dealing with dynamic and complex business environment (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020). For example, games could be employed as workshops or case studies where strategy testers can make different decisions without risk before committing themselves to an organization's resource base.

Moreover, gamification might work well for some strategies, like strategy meetings. This would mean incorporating game design elements into these activities in order to drive effective strategy formulation (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020). In addition, virtual platforms could include quests, challenges, and progress visualization options, allowing strategists below to grasp what organizational objectives imply. Furthermore, there are gamified strategy initiatives that help build the capacity of members to think strategically within an organization. Therefore, organizations may come up with board games that simulate situations whereby employees make decisions about strategy or else create activities meant to encourage them to think strategically (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020).

However, organizations and strategy practitioners must handle any attempts at introducing gaming tactics into the process delicately. For developing effective methods of strategy implementation through gamification, it is important that managers be aware of the organizational culture, staff preferences, and specific practices in strategic planning. The misalignment or shallowness of the play and work relationship can lead to disengagement and resistance, as well as infringing on intrinsic motivation (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020).

Hence, organizations should engage different players, such as strategists or users, during the design and application stages of gamified strategy interventions. Thus, these elements of gamification must be aligned with user needs and preferences, as well as meeting the organization's objectives for successful adoption and continued involvement (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020). Additionally, this might reduce some resistance or skepticism that may result from leaving out other members who have a role to play in those environments.

Another important thing that organizations should do is keep checking to see if their gamification strategies are effective. This way, they will be able to flexibly change them when necessary, thereby optimizing their usefulness as tools without neglecting the attendants. The ongoing data collection and analysis of gamified interventions can also be used in an iterative refinement process. It is also important for organizations to integrate other methodologies and frameworks, such as design thinking, systems thinking, or data analytics, with game-based strategies. Therefore, motivation from game-playing constructs needs to be combined with analytical techniques and user-centered principles for design in each field.

Moreover, there should be proper training and facilitation support for strategists and facilitators involved while using gamified strategy interventions in organizations. For instance, they should know what GBL tools are as well as how they work; they need skills to be facilitators of changes in organizations at large; and they should have knowledge

of the theoretical background of gamification and its possible influences on both organizations and strategic management in general. In addition, firms ought to encourage a culture that promotes innovation through experimentation and learning opportunities (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020). Consequently, a successful implementation of any gamified strategy approach may require some modification or shifting mindsets among staff members so that they are encouraged toward playful iterative collaboration between strategists. This culture allows people's mistakes to serve as inputs into decisions that help take business risks as well.

For example, businesses could benefit from incorporating games into their strategic work processes because this helps enhance the level of strategic engagement while simultaneously building internal capabilities in terms of mindsets towards more playful approaches. However, such benefits would only occur if the stakeholders got involved and continuously evaluated, refined, and created together with the right climate within the organization that was conducive enough to emphasizing innovation and leading experiments concerning matters pertaining to strategic management aspects only when context was taken into account involving stakeholder co-creation.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on presenting the approach within this study and introduce some samples of the research, data collection, and analysis methods. This chapter also assess the quality of the data to determine its reliability. As part of developing the gamified strategy canvas, a qualitative study approach was adopted to investigate integration of gamification and strategic practices.

4.1 Research approach

This study is based on qualitative research because this study wants to the research question of how gamification canbe utilized in strategy as practice and what is needed from a tool to help businesses implement gamification methods to their strategy. Qualitative research was chosen as a method for this study because it is well-suited for understanding the perceptions and experiences related to complex issues and phenomena (Jackson et al., 2007). Thus, qualitative research is an ideal choice for investigating the relationship between gamification and strategic management and strategy as practice.

There are a few methods that are used in qualitative research, and the most commonly used is interviewing using semistructured open-ended questions (Denny & Weckesser, 2022). This is a method that has been used in this research, besides the literature review for constructing the theoretical framework for the study.

Dudovskiy (2011) and Juhila (2022) state that research commonly uses qualitative research to understand perceptions of certain aspects and phenomena. This is why this study involves interviews with entrepreneurs and other decision-makers within businesses which are in charge of strategic planning and strategy implementation within their organization. The selected interviewees represent business owners and people in managerial positions from different industries, providing heterogeneous group of individuals who, might have experienced similar problems in strategy work, regardless of their field of business.

A good qualitative study is especially useful, when, the research topic is relevant, timely and significant. It demonstrates complex theoretical constructs, and it uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goal and interconnects literature, research questions, and findings with each other (Tracy, 2010). This study tries to fit in all these categories and provide a reliable basis for qualitative research.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the research approach in my qualitative study is thematic analysis, as the focus on analyzing the data is to find shared opinions and views on the needs of a business regardless of the interviewee's position or the industry that the person is working in. Thematic research approach for this study is suitable as the theoretical framework of gamification does not change based on industry and could provide similar positive and negative aspects for businesses that try to implement gamification methods in their business.

As the result of this study is developing a new novel concept and model for businesses to implement methods of gamification when implementing their strategy in practice, practice, the most practical research paradigm for this study is pragmatism. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), pragmatic researchers usually use mixed methods approaches, combining techniques from different research to gain a good understanding of phenomena's and emphasizes practical consequences of different actions, theories and beliefs.

4.2 Data collection

The research is arranged in three stages of implementation to answer the research questions and provide the goal of the research of creating a new tool that helps businesses think about their strategies through methods of gamification. The first stage focuses on the proposed research questions and research themes. Literature about gamification and strategy as practice with the main concepts are defined and analyzed.

The second stage of the research is followed by a pragmatic qualitative study where data were collected through an online interview survey with only open-ended questions, where a set of questions relating to the theme of gamification and topics was covered with an expectation of variations on businesses' ideas and needs for using gamification to boost their strategy in practice. Different answers from interview to interview were expected (Saunders et al., 2007). The method for interviewing people via an open ended survey was based on the requests of interviewees to participate in this research as they did not have time for face to face interview.

The third stage of this research is to finalize results and findings from both the literature review and the information collected from the data collection. Based on this data and insights, the gamified strategy canvas was conducted

This study collected data through an online interview survey. The biggest issue in collecting data through online interview survey was the setup of questions, which might provide issues in data and that could affect in analyzing the data itself. With poor question setting, the author might not get the results he needs researcher might not get he needs for making conclusions.

The online interview survey focused especially on open-ended questions because the concept of gamification is relatively difficult to determine simply, and entrepreneurs might have difficulties understand the concept and benefits of gamification. The idea behind open ended questions was for people to determine their own visualization of what gamification means There are at least two ways to analyze open-ended questions. This thesis is based on a pragmatism research approach and uses qualitative data analysis methods for that.

As the aim of this research is to establish a new kind of novel concept for a strategy tool via gamification methods, it was necessary to analyze the data through qualitative

methods to, base the data to understand common needs and problems in businesses using gamification. As the author was interested in finding common grounds from businesses from different industries in their strategy work and ways that gamification could help them, the interview survey focused on entrepreneurs to provide their own view of issues through open-ended questions and needs for gamification-based strategy tool.

The interviewees were selected by focusing on individuals with first-hand experience and expertise in strategic planning and implementation for their business from a diverse group of industries. The selection of interviewees aimed at capturing several perspectives and insights that would provide a better understanding how gamification can be effectively integrated into strategic processes and is suitable for businesses regardless of the industry.

The interviewees of this study are entrepreneurs and decision-makers who are responsible for shaping organizational strategies in their businesses as well as bring new knowledge and practical insights for the study. The selection criteria for interviewees were based on their direct position within the business. Therefore, they play a strategic decision-making role for their organizations. This ensures, that their perspectives are based on hands-on experience and a deep understanding of the needs of their business.

The experience of the interviewees in this study makes them a well-suited research group because, their insights and perspectives provide valuable contributions to the creation of the gamified strategy canvas, which was developed based on this study. Interviewees's firsthand understanding of organizational dynamics and strategic challenges enriched the research outcomes and offered practical implications that needed to be fitted within the gamified strategy canvas.

In total, five successful interviews were conducted, allowing the gathering of opinions and information from different perspectives and industries. Table 2 presents a summary

of the interviewees from entrepreneurial and strategy director position with diverse profiles and backgrounds. The interviewees were selected based on their business and position within their company. Some of the were chosen through personal contact and some reached through direct connection and message of asking interest of participating in this study.

Table 2. List of interviews

Position	industry of work
Strategy director	Construction
CEO/entrepreneur	Restaurant
CEO	Piping industry
CEO	Condition survey of buildings
Entrepreneur	Health care

All interviews were conducted using an online survey tool called Fillout. Questions had a determination of terminologies at the beginning of the questions with specific terminology to allow interviewees to have some better understanding of the idea behind the research.

4.3 Data analysis

Data collection for the research was difficult because many of the businesses contacted for the research did not respond to any inquiries to join the research, which made data collection difficult.

However, sufficient data for qualitative analysis were collected for this research ; further research with more data could be useful in the future. The data analysis was conducted by analyzing the interview answers question by question to find similarities and similar

needs as well as to identify issues that might be different based on the industry of the interviewees.

Based on the collected data, it was clear that many businesses do not have deep understanding of gamification and benefits it could provide for them. It was also clear that many businesses do not know how gamification can be used in strategy work and strategy as practice.

The second stage of the analysis was to understand the background of the interviewee's descriptions and compare them to data from the literature review.

Based on this data, the base framework and concepts for the gamified strategy canvas was conducted. The study then subjected the data to pragmatic analysis to describe the linguistic approach in answering the questions, as businesses from different industries might mean the same issue but, use different terminology based on their answers. This phase aims to identify similar needs of businesses for the best practical standpoint regardless of the industry in which the businesses operate.

In the fourth phase, the gamified strategy canvas based on the literature and the interview data was constructed. Table 3 demonstrates the final concept of the gamification strategy canvas.

4.4 Validity of the research

Validity as a term means that the findings of the study do actually represent all the findings of the study. Validity was ensured by gathering data from individuals who have the actual responsibility for strategic actions and strategic planning within their business. As the study was based on qualitative research, The data amount was limited and research with more research data through quantitative research methods in the future could be useful for gathering more information. However, careful selection of the

population helped address the validity issues of this study the validity issues of this study (Heikkilä, 2014, p. 27).

In this study, population for answering the interview survey was carefully limited and was selected. The research question for the study was carefully planned, which is one way to ensure the validity of the study as well as good data collection plan (Heikkilä, 2014, p. 27).

Many threats to validity arise from the extended data collection period. For example, participants may drop out of the study. This study minimizes this threat because the data collection happened in 3 weeks.

The internal validity of the study was ensured was ensured by the author's cautious review of the existing literature to derive a basic understanding of the research context. the research context. The questionnaire for the interview was designed to collect related data to provide helpful context for the gamified strategy canvas. The validity of the interview content was supported by concrete questions from topic areas (i.e., what concepts of gamification could be useful for business and what are the biggest issues currently facing strategy implementation for the business. The validity of this study was maintained by basing the collected data on the findings and theoretical framework of the literature review and comparing it with the gathered data from the interviews to be able to develop a concept for the new tool. External validity was ensured through a careful literature review and selection of interviewees based on the size of the study.

4.5 Reliability of the research

The reliability of the study is determined by the data collection techniques and analysis. Verification of reliability is verified through having similar conclusions based on the data from another researcher, which means that the data will provide similar if another researcher replicates the research (Heikkilä, 2014, 31 p. 178.). This study describes the

data collection and analysis process to better understand the process. This study describes the data collection and analysis process to understand the process.

In this study, the number of respondents was relatively small, which could be considered a problem if the study were to be replicated. However, the idea of the data gathering in this thesis was to see how selected businesses from different industries might have similar needs.

The objectivity of the study was ensured with careful planning of the questionnaire, which also allowed the interviewees the possibility of creating visions based on their specific needs in business. Reliability of accuracy and consistency in operationalization of the (Yin, 2009). All interviews in the study were collected through a method that prevented data loss, and the data collection process was consistent using the same method and channel for answering the interview.

4.6 Findings

Based on the gathered data and interview responses, there are several needs and challenges in strategy work, regardless of the industry, that could be solved through gamification.

The first commonality in the data seems to be the need for education for stakeholders and staff regarding of the business and their work. There appears to be a need for stakeholders to have a better understanding of many nuanced issues and changes based on the industry they are working in. Based on this, the gamified strategy canvas provides ways to think about how to incorporate educational components that help stakeholders, such as staff members, understand the concepts of the business and understand trends that affect their industries.

"It is going to be an education process with the client and business partners, regarding issues such as moisture levels and indoor air quality—things that

traditional methods generally don't address—and how to effectively include those in our strategy." (CEO of condition survey of buildings)

"One of the giant problems in strategy formulation, as far as our medical business is concerned, has been that of adequate training of our staff" (entrepreneur, health care industry)

The second commonality appears to be in maintaining the standard and quality of operations within the business. Several interviewees mentioned that they could face a challenge where scaling operations could affect the overall quality standards that the business has determined for itself. Based on this, the gamified strategy canvas attempts to establish concepts that can be used to spread best practices within the company and reward employees for maintaining the required quality level.

"We wrestle with trying to scale our health services as demand grows while maintaining standards of care and efficiency. Scaling operations too fast often means that we have to sacrifice from the quality of our work." (entrepreneur, health care industry)

"Scaling our business needs hiring more employees and teaching them our methods. This makes scaling our operations to new locations quite difficult as well, as we would like to maintain the quality of our food" (CEO/entrepreneur, restaurant industry)

"Our business has challenges in ensuring the safety and reliability of products, given that the materials they may contain are hazardous. Other challenges include remaining competitive from a constantly moving market and adapting to new regulatory requirements." (CEO of condition survey of buildings)

Other commonality regardless of the industry, was the ability to stay updated on business regulatory requirements. This was seen as a significant challenge across different industries. Gamification could help in this field through features that help staff and stakeholders staying updated on regulatory compliance as well as tracking their own

compliance and streamlining processes. The gamified strategy canvas takes this into consideration as well.

"Other strategic challenges include battling through a complex regulatory environment and finding partnerships with other health service providers. " (entrepreneur, health care industry)

"Regulations for restaurant industry are very bureaucratic and updates often, which makes it hard to make sure everything is done according to law" (CEO/entrepreneur, restaurant industry)

"Piping industry is quite often thought as something that is not regulated that much, but we need to keep improving our products regularly in order to stay ahead of the competition and fit into the environmental demands that are discussed more and more by lawmakers" (CEO piping industry)

Fourth, and if the business wants to grow, probably the most important need was the ability to adapt to changes in the market. Markets could often have unpredictable conditions and evolving landscapes in the industry. New innovations or business strategies and the gamified strategy canvas could help businesses through features that focus on issues like market analysis, trend forecasting, and providing help in scenario planning that could help people anticipate and effectively respond to any changes in the market.

"Definitely among the challenges lurking in would be ensuring our strategic planning to stay both agile and responsive to the very fast-changing landscape of restaurants. The next one might be the need to ripple innovative strategies into an aged tradition and values of the restaurant. " (CEO/entrepreneur, restaurant industry)

"Current challenges are mostly the overall market. The market is slow and unpredictable, which makes it hard to make a strategy and follow it. " (Strategy director, construction)

One of the interviewees also mentioned a specific need to be able to combine data driven analysis with insights from the people in the business. The developed Gamified strategy canvas can be useful in this regard by providing a holistic view for staff and management about their organization's current capabilities and future opportunities and current position of the organization.

Another commonality among the interviewees was the importance of agility and ability to respond in changing strategic planning. The interviewees made clear that the gamified strategy canvas should help people in understanding real-time analysis, collaboration among team members, and responding to feedback and changing circumstances more rapidly when implemented.

Interviewees also had similar ideas on gamification, where the gamified strategy canvas could help increase employee involvement in strategic planning by refining new kinds of analytical concepts. This can be achieved through gamification methods like challenges, rewards, progress tracking that are taken into consideration in the gamified strategy canvas.

Interviewees also emphasized that in order for gamification to provide effective aspects to their business, it should be, in general intergrated into their strategic planning processes in every aspect as possible, and the succession of gamification should be measured through different kinds of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), that provide other useful information for the businesses. These KPIs could included issues like client satisfaction scores, revenue growth and employee retention rates could include issues like client satisfaction scores, and employee retention rates.

"The KPIs for the overall successful gamified strategy creation would be market penetration rates, client satisfaction scores, revenue growth from new service offerings, employee retention rate, and innovation output metrics. Such indicators will show whether gamification can help drive strategy and linked organizational objectives by powering the motivation to achieve them. " (Strategy director, construction)

The biggest concerns that interviewees had on the elements of gamification addressed concerns of how gamification could suit their industry and how to train staff to avoid skepticism because the concept is new to them. However, the most common solutions for this concerns were transparent communications, training and demonstrations of the possible benefits of gamification.

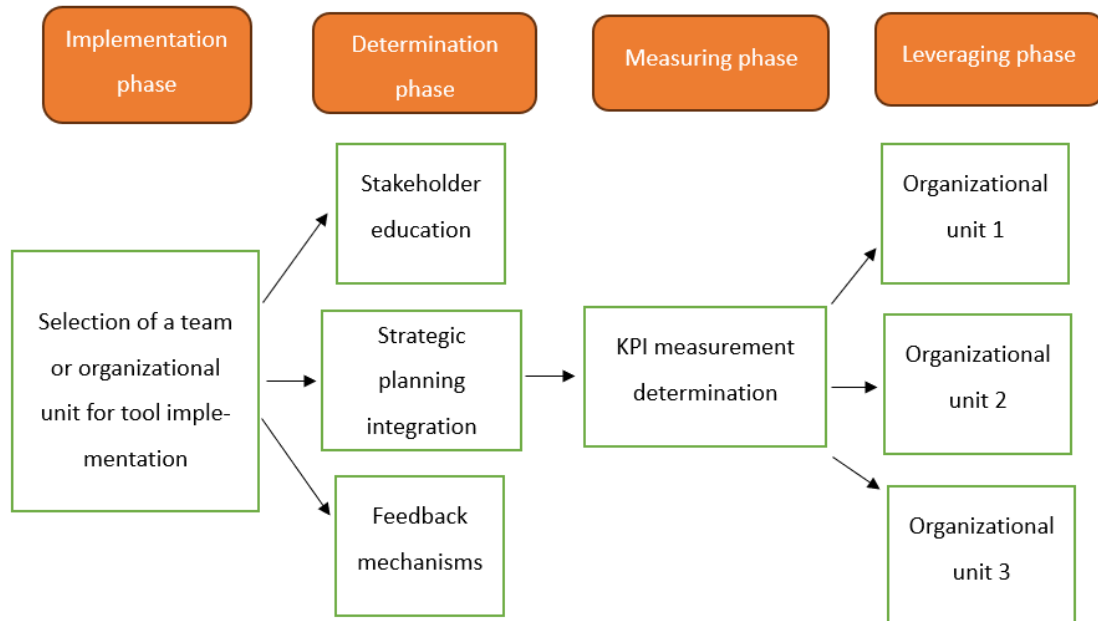
All interviewees shared the opinion that in order for gamified strategy canvas to be successful, there must be ways of giving continuous feedback and continuous improvement of methods, as these are a way for collecting insight of the possible problems as well as outcomes of the experiences people could have from gamified strategy tool.

Lastly there was a mention about gathering feedback from staff and customers with higher response rate if the gamified tool, could help in providing ideas that make crowdsourcing of ideas, feedback and insights from stakeholders in an easy and supporting

As a summary of the findings, the gamified strategy canvas offers ways that could use methods of gamification for businesses to put their strategy into practice and include at least thoughts on how to educate stakeholders, integrate gamification as part of other strategic approaches, and provide measurements of the succession of the methods. The canvas also provides ways to help leverage gamification to boost strategic abilities. Implementing effective feedback mechanisms to avoid skepticism and improve the tool however, should be considered. Based on this information, the author considers that the gamified strategy canvas should be taken into greater use in organizations one step

at the time. One possibility of how to do this is by going through different phases in the organization to be successful in the long term, as demonstrated in the figure 4.

Figure 4. Conceptualization of phases of how the strategy tool could be taken into usage.



5 Discussions

This chapter analyzes how well this study has answered the research questions presented in the study. After this, suggestions for future research are considered among the limitations of this study. Then, to conclude this paper, a presentation of the gamified strategy canvas presents the practical aspect of the research.

5.1 Implications on the research questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how gamification intersects with strategy work from a strategy-as-practice (S-as-P) perspective. The main background of this study was to analyze gamification as a methodology and how it could function as a tool for strategy and help businesses implement their strategies in practice.

The research had a thorough literature review and utilized qualitative research based on data collected through an open-ended interview survey. Pragmatic methods were used for data analysis to identify commonalities among interviewee answers.

However, the effective implementation of gamifying strategies requires the consideration of various factors, including organizational culture, user preferences, and ethical concerns (Hamari et al., 2023; Klock et al., 2020). Disappointing gamified projects can have unintended impacts like disassociation from assigned tasks or interference with intrinsic motivation because they focus mainly on extrinsic aspects. Other gaps identified by the literature review include a lack of empirical studies conducted specifically within the S-as-P approach on gamification usage and overlooked areas where potential drawbacks and individual variations exist, as well as inconsistent conclusions made about the efficacy of motivation in the long-term from the application of game principles.

One of the key contributions of this study lies in its focus of developing a new but, practical and functioning gamification -based tool, that can assist businesses in translating strategic plans into actual practices. Previous research has explored the theoretical

concepts of gamification and potential applications for its use in organizational settings; this study takes a more practical approach by designing a tool that provides a bridge between theory and practice.

Through knowledge derived from theoretical foundations on both S-as-P and gamification, along with existing evidence on how it has been used by different organizations during formulation processes in developing corporate strategies, there are opportunities as well as challenges associated with convergence between game design principles and managing strategy. According to the literature, gamification seems to be a promising instrument for boosting engagement, motivation, strategic vision, and collaboration among strategists. As a result, it is possible that constructivist approaches to games can lead to better experiences in strategy activities.

This research also addresses the gaps in the literature by considering issues like organizational culture and user preferences related to gamified strategies. This study highlights contextual factors and offers a new perspective on the challenges and opportunities associated with strategic management and gamification.

The research question for this research is as follows : How can gamification be used in strategy as practice and what kind of tool could help businesses in their strategy implementation through gamification ? be used in strategy as practice and what could help businesses in their strategy implementation through gamification? To answer these questions, it was crucial to construct a clear understanding of strategy and gamification and the connection between the two through a literature review. To understand what sort of tool could be useful for businesses, data from different industries were collected, as well as the author could. Had more businesses provided insights and answers to the interviews, there might have been more aspects to consider in terms of what aspects the gamification -based tool should include. However, certain clear commonalities were found during the research.

Overall, this study strengthens the results of previous studies by providing more practical insights and a practical tool for organizations that consider leveraging the power of gamification in their business. This study offers a perspective on the complexity of gamification in practice and aims to provide room for further research exploring how the implications of gamification can be used in strategic management.

5.2 Suggestions for future research

This study provides clear ways for future research on gamification in strategy. First, as the research shows, there is not much research on strategy as practice and gamification concepts combined together. Comparative studies on the connection between gamification and achieving strategic goals could also be very interesting. Case study research on successful and unsuccessful gamification in businesses could also provide more information on the aspects and connections of gamification in the field of strategy.

There is also a need for further research on gamification and its relation to the situation and socially performed nature of strategizing practices, as emphasized by the S-as-P views. In this regard, empirical studies exploring the potentialities of gamification in different strategies, including strategy meetings, communication activities, and issue-selling processes, are essential to better understand this intersection. Besides that, researchers must also bridge the identified gaps between these perspectives while examining their contradictions, such as the disadvantage attached to strategies' implementation involving gamification, possible effects of organizational culture and individual differences, and long-term effects on motivation and engagement.

Quantitative studies on businesses using gamification could also provide new insights on what is and is not working with gamification methods when constructing a new strategy. Research on the connections between gamification and servitization could also provide new information about organizational behavior and opportunities to find new business opportunities.

6 Gamified strategy canvas

This study is relevant to the field of strategy and all organizations planning new ways to implement their strategies. It attempts to provide a new way of thinking about S-as-P working within an organization through methods of gamification. The goal of the gamified strategy canvas is to provide ways for organizations to enhance their operations and streamline their processes by using a gam-like context within areas that are suitable.

However, as the data from the research shows, businesses do not often understand the meaning of gamification and what benefits gamification methods could bring to them. On the other hand, if gamification implementation is handled poorly, there may be issues that organizations should address in the future.

Therefore, the gamified strategy canvas attempts to provide simple, yet practical and concrete ways for organizations to think about how gamification could be of value to them. This means that not all solutions fit everyone, but there must be ways to modify gamification thinking if needed, within the organization.

On the other hand, there are areas, that organizations regardless of their industry, could use when implementing gamification methods in their work and strategy. These include transparent communications, measuring the results of gamification using key point indicators, and the ability to combine data analysis that staff members and managers might have in choosing strategic approaches for the organization.

Therefore, the author of this study thought that basing the new tool should be put together in a way that it provides possibilities for self-modification and spares businesses from thinking about their work through different mechanisms of gamification to provide practical usefulness or businesses. Therefore, the gamified strategy canvas is based on an already existing strategy tool in order to provide gamification elements for businesses in an simple and already known way. The concept is based on the structure of business

model canvas (Osterwalder et al., 2014). The finalized canvas concept can be found as abstract 2 of this thesis.

The gamified strategy canvas consists of several areas that are connected to each other ; however, at the same time it helps organizations think about their strategy and implementation through different types of gamified elements. To conclude this study for the canvas, each point from the canvas is explained separately.

Gamified Strategy Canvas

<p>Quests and objectives: What quests and objectives does the organization have or need to do in order to achieve strategic goals?</p> <p>Quests could be thought as a bigger projects that have several issues to be done, for example expanding business to new country. Objectives are issues that need to be solved in order to finish the determined quest.</p> <p>This section is to help businesses align gamification initiatives with their strategic objectives.</p>	<p>Key activities and skills What activities should be done in order to fulfill certain objectives or quests?</p> <p>What skills are needed in order to successfully complete those quests and objectives?</p> <p>Does the organization have enough resources to complete those objectives and quests? What resources are needed if not?</p> <p>This section is for organizations to think about their capabilities and resources based on organizational strategy.</p> <p>Feedback loops What are the indicators, that show that game mechanics function properly? How do we make sure game mechanics match with organizational quests and objectives?.</p> <p>This section would emphasize the importance of measuring the impact of gamification on strategic outcomes and seeing how the usage of gamification has worked within the organization</p>	<p>Game environment and rules Consider the unique context of the organization, including industry-specific challenges and opportunities, to tailor gamification methods effectively. What kind of game rules, for example bureaucracy and other regulations affect on the organization and their field of business.</p> <p>This section is to think there area of business as a game with certain rules, that might provide new ideas that they can adapt in their work</p>	<p>Game Mechanisms: What kind of gaming elements can be applied to organizationals strategic activities? For example points, badges, leaderboards, and challenges, rewards, etc.</p> <p>This section is to encourage organizations to think creatively about how to gamify their strategy and motivate employees to achieve strategic goals, and making sure all staff members understand objectives and quests the determined by the organization.</p> <p>Game adaptation Based on data collected through feedback loops, What are areas where adaptation is needed? How adaptation should be handled? How do we makes sure organization and player segments are able to develop their skills continuously?</p>	<p>Player Segments: What kind of different player segments are within the organization, such as employees, customers, or stakeholders?</p> <p>Determine what kind of role these segments have in order to achieve quests and objectives determined in this canvas.</p> <p>Which game mechanic fits best for each player segment? How could this help to complete set objectives and quests?</p> <p>This section is for organizations to determine the role of different stakeholders that affect in achieving strategic goals.</p>
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Table 3. Gamified strategy canvas, a new tool that uses gamification methods for strategy.

6.1.1 Quests and objectives

This section of the canvas is used for businesses and organizations to align their gamification initiatives. with their current strategic objectives. This includes separate strategic goals as quests that are needed to be completed by the organization. These quests could be expanding to a new market or achieving market leadership within the next 10 years and so on. Then the question is often asked : What should a business do to achieve this quest? These are usually smaller aspects of issues that need to be addressed to achieve bigger goals, and these are considered objectives within the canvas.

6.1.2 Key activities and skills

This section of the canvas allows businesses to think about their strategic and dynamic capabilities and skills. This is for organizations to clearly determine their strengths and the skills and capabilities that are needed to achieve the determined objectives and quests. This section also enables organizations to think about what concrete actions must be taken to achieve the determined quests and objectives.

6.1.3 Game environment and rules

This section of the canvas allows businesses to consider the unique aspects of their organization that might be associated with achieving set up quests and objectives. This section also encourages organizations to consider their industrial specific challenges and opportunities that affect their work. These challenges, I.e regulations and legislations, are considered as the game environment and rules within the canvas. This section helps organizations to set their thinking into a more game-like context, which could provide new kinds of ideas that can be adapted into work and thus provide a competitive advantage on the market.

6.1.4 Game Mechanisms

This section of the canvas is intended to encourage businesses to identify gaming elements that could be applied within the organization to achieve and perform strategic activities to motivate employees to work toward determined quests and objectives by providing better understanding of why certain are required and providing motivational metrics to employees to work toward the quests and objectives. These types of motivational metrics based on gamification include badges, leaderboards, rewards and so on. The freedom of choice is with the organization to determine these metrics.

6.1.5 Player segments

This section of the canvas explains how businesses should understand different stakeholders that have a certain part or role to help them achieve their goals and objectives. These types of player segments could be key competitors, certain staff members or units within an organization, and customers. This section also helps businesses to analyze what is the role of these segments to achieve the decided quests and objectives. There might be several segments that have affection, and in order to have each segment working toward the best of the organization, it is important to analyze which game mechanisms of the canvas also suit each player segment.

6.1.6 Feedback loops

This section of the canvas is for businesses to develop key point indicators on how they measure the proper if the gamified strategy actually works in practice. Emphasizing the importance of measuring the impact of gamification on strategic outcomes and observing how methods of gamification have worked within an organization through ways that could be considered under feedback loops. This is a way to quickly see if the planned game mechanics, for example, are not working.

6.1.7 Game adaptation

As the feedback loop determines the metrics on how to measure the success rate of the business, the game adaptation section on the other hand is for businesses to analyze what are the key areas that are not currently working and what kinds of actions or methods could be used to adapt to the problems so that, they would not escalate into a bigger problem within the business.

7 Conclusions

The integration of gamification with the S-as-P perspective has significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this integration can provide an in-depth understanding of how principles of game design affect praxis, practices, and individuals involved in strategy formulation or implementation, potentially redefining both S-as-P and gamification. On a practical side, however, organizations can adopt a gamified strategy approach, thereby helping to foster engagement among employees and creating strategic alignment within firms so that strategists have deep insights into what they are always doing. Nevertheless, successful implementation requires some knowledge about the context in which an organization operates, including user preferences and the types of strategic exercises taking place.

In view of businesses that are operating in increasingly complex situations that call for more dynamic responses, the introduction of gamification into strategic work provides a way to enhance organizational capabilities in terms of strategic agility, resilience and, co-creation. By combining elements from both areas which are-games-based learning theory (GBLT) and serious games (SG), it will lead to new techniques for formulation and carrying out company strategies, ultimately leading to improved effectiveness and commitment during such processes.

As gamification can be useful for businesses in their strategy work, a method of implementing gamification elements could provide value, and the gamified strategy canvas that was constructed based on this study could provide an easy, but useful way for businesses to adapt gamification methods in their strategies and strategy as practice approaches.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Interview questions

1. What are the current challenges or pain points in your organization's strategy creation and implementation processes?
2. How do employees currently engage with strategic planning activities within the organization?
3. Gamification is the application of game design elements and principles in non-game context to enhance engagement, motivation and participation. It involves incorporating elements such as challenges, rewards and progress tracking to make tasks more enjoyable. By leveraging gamification, organization can create interactive and engaging experiences to motivate employees and achieve strategic objectives. What specific objectives do you believe you could achieve through the implementation of gamification as part of your strategy?
4. What aspects of gamification do you believe would be most effective in enhancing employee engagement and motivation in strategic activities?
5. How do you envision integrating gamification elements into existing strategy creation tools or processes currently in use at your organization?
6. What are the key performance indicators (KPI's) that you would want to use to measure the success of a gamified strategy?
7. How the concept of new strategy creation tool should plan to ensure alignment between gamified strategy creation methods and the overall organizational strategy?
8. What level of training or support do you anticipate will be needed for employees to effectively use a gamified strategy tool?
9. Would you expect any potential resistance or skepticism from employees towards adopting gamification in strategy creation?
10. What feedback mechanisms or channels would you be willing to put in place to gather insights and iterate on the gamified strategy creation tool based on user experiences?