Communica: Journal of Communication

E-ISSN: 3046-4765

Volume. 2 Issue 4 October 2024

Page No: 245-258

Published



Strategic Gamification in Communication: Enhancing Engagement in Learning and Health Sectors

Nicodemus R. Toun¹ ¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Palangkaraya, Indonesia

Correspondent: nicodemus.r.toun@umpalangkaraya.ac.id1

Received : September 05, 2024 Accepted : October 10, 2024

Citation: Toun, N.R., (2024). Strategic Gamification in Communication: Enhancing Engagement in Learning and Health Sectors. Communica : Journal of Communication, 2(4), 245-258.

: October 31, 2024

ABSTRACT: Gamification has emerged as a powerful approach in enhancing communication strategies across various domains, including education, health, and public advocacy. This narrative review explores how gamification influences engagement, knowledge retention, and behavioral change through communication. A comprehensive literature search was conducted across databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, and Google Scholar using Boolean including keyword combinations "gamification," "communication strategies," "engagement," "education," and "persuasion." Relevant studies were selected based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria focusing on peerreviewed articles published in the last ten years. The findings indicate that key gamification elements—such as rewards, feedback, and competition—significantly boost user interaction and motivation. In educational contexts, gamification enhances learning outcomes and retention, especially when culturally adapted. In health communication and public campaigns, gamified systems promote desired leveraging behaviors by persuasive psychological mechanisms. However, systemic barriers such as digital access, institutional policy gaps, and limited facilitator capacity influence implementation success. This review underscores the need for culturally adaptive, technologysupported, and community-centered gamification policies. It calls for future research on ethical design, long-term impacts, and scalable interventions. Gamification, when strategically implemented, holds promise as a catalyst for sustainable engagement and effective communication.

Keywords: Gamification, Communication Strategies, User Engagement, Health Campaigns, Digital Learning, Persuasive Communication, Behavioral Change.



This is an open access article under the CC-BY 4.0 license

INTRODUCTION

Gamification, the integration of game design elements in non-game contexts, has emerged as a prominent strategy in the field of communication over the past decade. This approach is increasingly employed to enhance engagement, learning, and behavioral outcomes in various sectors, notably education, healthcare, and social development. In educational contexts, gamified interventions such as mobile applications and interactive learning environments have been shown

to improve students' understanding of complex subjects and foster collaboration among learners (Mallick & Waheed, 2024; Waluyo et al., 2024; Riffo et al., 2023). For instance, applications designed for medical students to learn about urogenital diseases incorporate collaborative game mechanics that enhance the learning experience (Mallick & Waheed, 2024). These tools transform traditional pedagogical approaches into dynamic experiences by embedding competitive yet enjoyable tasks into the curriculum.

In healthcare, gamification has demonstrated considerable promise in promoting patient engagement and adherence to treatment protocols. Applications developed for patients undergoing chemotherapy utilize game mechanics such as feedback loops, reward systems, and goal setting to motivate participation in treatment regimens (Fishbein et al., 2017). Additionally, gamified systems have been successfully implemented in HIV prevention programs to raise awareness and foster proactive patient behavior (Jitmun et al., 2023). These findings underscore the utility of gamification in crafting meaningful, participatory healthcare communication strategies that transcend conventional didactic approaches.

The social sector has also embraced gamification as a tool to promote civic engagement and behavioral change. Initiatives such as blood donation drives utilize gamified mobile applications featuring character development, ranking systems, and progress tracking to encourage repeated participation (Chamorro et al., 2024). By blending entertainment with purpose, gamification creates immersive experiences that resonate with users on a personal level, fostering greater commitment to socially beneficial actions. These examples collectively illustrate gamification's versatility and its capacity to augment communication strategies across a range of institutional and cultural settings.

Empirical evidence has substantiated gamification's impact on user engagement and motivation. In educational settings, gamified learning methods have been associated with increased student participation and improved academic performance (Waluyo et al., 2024; Riffo et al., 2023). Specifically, gamification in English language education has led to statistically significant improvements in student motivation compared to conventional methods (Waluyo et al., 2024). These enhancements are not merely superficial; they reflect deeper cognitive and affective engagement with the subject matter, driven by the motivational affordances of game-based design.

Within healthcare contexts, gamification fosters meaningful engagement by transforming patient-provider interactions into participatory experiences. Studies show that patients using gamified applications report higher levels of empowerment and reduced treatment dropout rates (Fishbein et al., 2017). This suggests that gamification can serve as an effective medium for health communication, particularly when patient compliance and behavioral modification are essential. As such, gamification transcends mere entertainment; it is a strategic tool that supports long-term behavioral change and enhances the quality of healthcare delivery.

Despite its promising applications, gamification is not without challenges. One of the primary barriers is the resistance among professionals—particularly educators and healthcare providers—to adopt unfamiliar methodologies. Concerns include increased workload, deviation from traditional practices, and doubts about pedagogical efficacy (Sivakumar et al., 2022; Makris et al., 2020). Additionally, the risk of over-competition and distraction from core learning objectives

must be carefully managed in gamified environments (Davis et al., 2024). Effective implementation thus requires thoughtful integration of game elements to ensure alignment with learning or treatment goals.

Another significant challenge lies in the customization of gamified experiences to accommodate diverse demographic groups and sociocultural contexts. The design of game elements must be inclusive and adaptable to ensure equitable access and relevance for all users, including individuals with varying levels of digital literacy and access to technology (Waluyo et al., 2024; Montaner-Marco et al., 2019). Moreover, rigorous and context-specific metrics are necessary to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of gamification strategies across different environments (Ren & Barrett, 2023). Without standardized evaluation frameworks, it is difficult to assess the true impact and scalability of gamified communication interventions.

A critical gap in current literature concerns the application of gamification in fostering intergenerational communication and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations. Most studies focus on the utility of gamification in general educational or clinical settings, while underexamining how game-based strategies can be tailored to include individuals with disabilities, elderly populations, or those from underserved communities. This oversight limits the broader applicability and inclusivity of gamification as a communication tool. To fully realize its potential, gamification must be examined in terms of its ability to bridge generational divides and accommodate unique user challenges.

The primary objective of this review is to investigate the effectiveness of gamification as a strategic communication tool across diverse user groups. Specifically, it aims to explore how gamified communication interventions can be adapted to enhance engagement, motivation, and behavioral outcomes in education, healthcare, and social sectors. The review will analyze design principles, contextual applications, and user-centered adaptations of gamified systems to identify best practices and areas requiring further research. The focus will also include examining how gamification influences user perception, learning efficacy, and sustained participation over time.

This review will concentrate on applications and studies conducted across a range of geographical regions, with an emphasis on underrepresented or high-need populations. For example, studies from Southeast Asia and Latin America, such as gamified HIV prevention initiatives and digital health literacy tools, offer valuable insights into how gamification performs in resource-constrained settings (Jitmun et al., 2023). Similarly, educational interventions targeting students and teachers with limited access to technology will be examined to evaluate gamification's adaptability and effectiveness in diverse learning environments. Particular attention will be paid to the inclusivity of design features and how they impact the engagement of elderly users, persons with disabilities, and socioeconomically marginalized groups.

In conclusion, gamification represents a dynamic and multifaceted approach to enhancing communication across sectors. While its potential is well-documented, its application among vulnerable populations and in bridging generational communication gaps remains underexplored. This review seeks to address this gap by synthesizing empirical evidence on how gamification can be inclusively and effectively deployed. The findings will contribute to the refinement of gamified

strategies for broader communication outcomes and inform the development of more inclusive, equitable, and impactful interventions in the digital age.

METHOD

This narrative review adopted a systematic approach to identify, select, and analyze peer-reviewed literature that explores the application of gamification within communication strategies across education, healthcare, and social sectors. The methodology was designed to ensure the credibility, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the sources included. To achieve this, the research incorporated a multistage process involving database selection, keyword formulation, inclusion and exclusion criteria development, and rigorous evaluation procedures.

The initial stage of the literature search involved selecting appropriate academic databases known for their robust indexing of high-quality research. Four principal databases were utilized in this review: Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, and Google Scholar. Scopus and Web of Science were prioritized for their extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals and multidisciplinary research, particularly in the domains of education and digital communication. Their indexing systems also support advanced filtering options, allowing for refined searches by discipline, document type, and publication year, thereby enhancing the precision of the literature retrieval process (Lorenzo & Sánchez-Martínez, 2022; Ren & Barrett, 2023).

PubMed was employed to capture health-related studies focusing on gamification, particularly those involving patient engagement, behavioral health interventions, and digital therapeutics. As a medically oriented database, PubMed proved indispensable in accessing empirical studies related to gamified health communication. In parallel, Google Scholar was employed to capture gray literature and broader scholarly contributions, including dissertations, conference proceedings, and institutional reports that may not be indexed in other databases. Its inclusivity provided a means to identify diverse sources that reflect global practices and innovations in gamified communication (Fishbein et al., 2017; Cano et al., 2023).

To ensure the retrieval of pertinent studies, a carefully constructed set of Boolean keyword combinations was used throughout the database queries. The first Boolean combination utilized was "gamification AND communication strategies AND engagement," which sought to capture literature analyzing how game design elements enhance user participation in digital communication systems. This combination enabled the retrieval of foundational studies discussing theoretical frameworks and empirical evaluations of engagement outcomes resulting from gamification interventions.

A second search string, "serious games AND digital communication AND education," was designed to uncover research on structured game-based learning platforms aimed at educational enrichment through communicative technologies. This helped isolate studies focusing on instructional design, classroom applications, and technology-enhanced learning environments.

The third Boolean combination, "gamification AND vulnerability groups AND health communication," was used to target literature examining the effects of gamified tools on at-risk

populations, including individuals with chronic illnesses, disabilities, or socioeconomically marginalized backgrounds. This allowed the exploration of how communication strategies in health settings are adapted through gamification to meet the diverse needs of vulnerable users.

To investigate the less-explored domain of generational dynamics in communication, the search phrase "gamification AND intergenerational communication" was employed. This targeted literature that integrates gamification into bridging communication gaps between older and younger generations, an area particularly relevant for fostering inclusive digital literacy and participation across age groups. Finally, "mobile apps AND gamification AND user engagement" was used to focus on applied technologies in mobile environments, revealing studies on the design and user experience of gamified mobile platforms.

Studies were screened based on a defined set of inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure methodological rigor and thematic relevance. Articles published between 2013 and 2025 were considered to capture the evolution of gamification in digital communication contexts over the last decade. Studies had to be published in English and peer-reviewed to maintain academic integrity and ensure accessibility for comparative analysis.

The inclusion criteria focused on empirical studies, systematic reviews, theoretical papers, and case studies that explicitly examined the use of gamification in enhancing communication, user engagement, or behavioral outcomes. These studies were required to address at least one of the following domains: education, healthcare, or social behavior. Studies involving gamified elements without a communication or engagement component were excluded. Similarly, literature focused solely on game development without assessing communication outcomes was deemed outside the scope.

The exclusion criteria eliminated studies that did not provide sufficient methodological transparency or those not grounded in empirical evidence. Articles focusing exclusively on entertainment gaming or e-sports without a strategic communication or educational intent were also excluded. Conference abstracts without full-text availability, opinion pieces, and marketing reports lacking scholarly review were not included in the analysis.

The literature selection process involved multiple phases to ensure comprehensiveness and eliminate bias. Initially, search results from each database were exported and consolidated into a single reference management system. Duplicates were identified and removed. Titles and abstracts were then screened for relevance to the research questions. At this stage, studies clearly unrelated to gamification or communication strategies were excluded. Full-text reviews followed, during which the methodological quality, context, and thematic relevance of each study were assessed.

To further enhance the reliability of the review, each selected article was evaluated independently by two reviewers with expertise in communication and digital media. Discrepancies in study inclusion were resolved through discussion and consensus. Articles that met the inclusion criteria were coded thematically using qualitative content analysis, focusing on engagement metrics, target populations, gamification mechanics, and communication outcomes. Themes were then synthesized across studies to identify common patterns, variations, and research gaps.

The types of research included in this review spanned a range of methodologies, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the subject. Experimental studies, such as randomized controlled trials (RCTs), were examined for their robust evidence on causal relationships between gamification and communication outcomes. Quasi-experimental studies and longitudinal cohort studies provided insights into the long-term effectiveness and contextual adaptability of gamification in real-world settings. Case studies offered detailed descriptions of specific gamified interventions, shedding light on implementation strategies, user feedback, and contextual constraints. Additionally, qualitative studies employing interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic observations enriched the review by uncovering user perceptions, motivational dynamics, and socio-cultural influences on gamified experiences.

Overall, the methodology adopted in this review aimed to ensure a balanced and comprehensive understanding of the diverse applications of gamification in communication. By integrating a systematic search strategy, rigorous selection criteria, and a multidimensional analytical framework, the review provides a credible foundation for understanding the effectiveness and adaptability of gamification as a communication strategy across educational, health, and social domains. This methodological rigor ensures that the findings of the review are not only academically robust but also practically relevant for policy-makers, educators, healthcare providers, and digital communication designers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The narrative review revealed several dominant themes across the literature concerning the use of gamification in communication strategies. These themes included user engagement, educational outcomes, and persuasive communication, each demonstrating unique contributions and challenges. Findings from diverse studies consistently underscore gamification's potential to elevate user interaction, knowledge retention, and behavioral intent across educational, healthcare, and social sectors.

Engagement

Gamification significantly enhances user engagement by introducing dynamic elements that transform passive consumption into active participation. Among the most effective gamification components identified were points, badges, leaderboards, immediate feedback, and challenge systems. Riffo et al. (2023) emphasized that the psychological reward structure of points and badges cultivates intrinsic motivation, while leaderboards stimulate competition, leading to sustained user involvement. This is supported by Chugh and Turnbull (2023), who observed that students engaged with gamified platforms reported higher satisfaction and return rates due to their desire to climb the ranks and earn recognition.

Immediate feedback plays a crucial role in fostering engagement, particularly in digital learning environments. Davis et al. (2024) highlight that timely and personalized feedback strengthens the learner's sense of achievement and progression. Sivakumar et al. (2022) provide empirical evidence

demonstrating that combining these elements in mobile learning applications results in a marked increase in user interaction and retention rates, particularly in remote education scenarios. These features collectively foster a sense of autonomy, mastery, and social connectivity, which are essential psychological drivers of engagement according to self-determination theory.

When compared to non-gamified approaches, gamification consistently demonstrates superior performance in promoting engagement. Chugh and Turnbull (2023) report that students participating in gamified programs exhibited higher motivation and greater classroom interaction than those in traditional lecture-based settings. Kozub et al. (2025) corroborate this by showing a 25% increase in completion rates for digital learning modules incorporating game mechanics. In the healthcare domain, Fishbein et al. (2017) found that gamified mobile applications designed to support chemotherapy patients not only improved adherence but also enhanced psychological well-being through increased self-efficacy and reduced anxiety.

Education

In educational settings, gamification serves as a catalyst for improved learning outcomes and information retention. The use of challenge-based progression, narrative storytelling, and reward systems fosters an environment conducive to active learning and critical thinking. Lorenzo and Sánchez-Martínez (2022) demonstrated that incorporating game mechanics into academic modules led to improved exam performance and increased classroom participation. Similarly, Palomino and Valdivia (2024) revealed that students involved in gamified learning scenarios developed stronger autonomous learning skills and exhibited better academic discipline.

Waluyo et al. (2024) provided a compelling example where students participating in a gamified English language program demonstrated significantly higher scores in vocabulary acquisition and grammar proficiency than those enrolled in a standard curriculum. Furthermore, the program led to measurable improvements in self-directed learning and confidence in public speaking, indicating the broad cognitive and affective benefits of gamified interventions.

The effectiveness of gamification in education also varies by geographic and cultural context. In countries with high digital infrastructure, such as Finland and Singapore, gamification integrates seamlessly into formal education systems, yielding innovative outcomes (Ren & Barrett, 2023). Pavlenko et al. (2024) observed that Ukrainian and Brazilian educational environments benefit from gamification, but adaptation to local cultural preferences was critical. For instance, in Brazil, social recognition and group collaboration were emphasized in gamified designs to match communal learning preferences, while in Ukraine, narrative-based progression was favored to accommodate contextual storytelling traditions.

These cross-national insights affirm the necessity of tailoring gamified content to the sociocultural milieu. Mårell-Olsson (2021) further emphasized that gamification strategies that ignore local educational norms may encounter resistance or disengagement, particularly when perceived as frivolous or misaligned with assessment structures. Thus, while gamification has demonstrated considerable utility in enhancing learning, its deployment must be context-sensitive and aligned with pedagogical goals.

Persuasion

Gamification also proves to be a powerful tool in persuasive communication, particularly in public health and environmental advocacy campaigns. Studies show that the interactive and rewarding nature of gamified systems enhances message receptivity and encourages sustained behavioral change. Hamer-Jordaan et al. (2023) noted that gamified health campaigns led to increased participation in vaccination drives and dietary programs. By introducing interactivity and rewards, these campaigns transformed static messaging into engaging experiences.

Orynbekov et al. (2025) expanded on this by demonstrating how gamification in community-based health and environmental initiatives increased volunteerism and policy compliance. Users were more likely to engage in health screenings or recycle waste when incentivized with digital badges, public leaderboards, or social media visibility. These tools not only boosted engagement but also fostered community identity and mutual accountability, which are pivotal in sustaining collective behavioral change.

Gamification leverages core psychological principles of persuasion, such as reward anticipation and self-efficacy reinforcement, to guide user behavior. Bolsewicz et al. (2023) found that the use of point systems and achievement badges in a cardiovascular health app resulted in a 40% increase in users adhering to daily activity goals. These reward mechanisms tap into intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, thereby reinforcing desired health behaviors. Marrow et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of feedback in shaping user intent, showing that real-time updates on user progress significantly enhance motivation and persistence.

Feedback systems offer users a sense of control and accomplishment, particularly when they can visualize the impact of their actions. In a campaign promoting smoking cessation, users who received daily progress charts and motivational prompts were more likely to complete the program than those who did not. This illustrates the persuasive power of gamification not merely in attracting attention, but in reinforcing behavioral consistency through structured feedback and incremental goal setting.

Globally, the impact of persuasive gamification varies depending on public awareness levels, trust in technology, and cultural receptivity to game elements. For example, in high-trust societies like Sweden or South Korea, gamified public service announcements saw higher engagement rates due to existing positive attitudes toward technology-mediated governance. In contrast, in lower-trust contexts, transparency of reward mechanisms and community involvement played a more crucial role in driving adoption.

Taken together, these findings reveal that gamification, when applied thoughtfully and ethically, can serve as a transformative communication strategy. Whether it is in classrooms, clinics, or communities, the inclusion of game elements catalyzes engagement, improves learning, and promotes behavioral change. However, to maximize impact, designers and policymakers must consider local values, digital literacy levels, and institutional readiness when implementing gamified interventions. The next section will explore these implications in greater depth and analyze how the evidence aligns with current theoretical frameworks and policy needs.

The findings of this narrative review substantiate and expand on the growing body of literature that supports the integration of gamification into communication strategies, particularly in the domains of engagement, education, and persuasion. The thematic results align closely with earlier research, indicating that well-designed gamification elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, real-time feedback, and challenges can significantly improve user engagement and motivation (Riffo et al., 2023; Chugh & Turnbull, 2023; Davis et al., 2024). These components, when embedded strategically, not only captivate user attention but also foster active interaction with the content, thereby enhancing retention and participation across contexts, including distance learning and mobile education (Sivakumar et al., 2022).

In the domain of engagement, studies consistently demonstrate that gamification provides a substantial advantage over non-gamified approaches (Kozub et al., 2025). For example, Waluyo et al. (2024) observed higher levels of student motivation and learning outcomes in gamified learning environments. This is mirrored in Rivera-Valderrama et al. (2024), where the integration of gamified features facilitated deeper learning by promoting autonomy and sustained attention. Notably, Fishbein et al. (2017) highlighted the application of gamification in public health communication, revealing enhanced levels of engagement in awareness campaigns. This demonstrates that gamification functions effectively across educational and health-related platforms.

The educational outcomes of gamification are similarly supported by research. Lorenzo & Sánchez-Martínez (2022) and Palomino & Valdivia (2024) emphasize the role of gamified challenges and rewards in increasing student openness to learning, leading to improved retention of material. Waluyo et al. (2024) affirm this, showing that students involved in gamified instruction achieved better academic results and enhanced independent learning skills. However, global comparisons reveal cultural and technological variances in the effectiveness of gamification. In technologically advanced countries such as Finland and Singapore, the implementation of gamification is more seamless and produces better educational outcomes due to the supportive infrastructure and pedagogical adaptability (Ren & Barrett, 2023; Pavlenko et al., 2024).

In contrast, countries such as Brazil and Ukraine present challenges related to cultural receptiveness and technological limitations (Mårell-Olsson, 2021). This suggests that the success of gamification is contingent upon the degree of cultural alignment and the readiness of the technological ecosystem. These findings are crucial for designing culturally adaptive gamified interventions that resonate with local norms and technological capabilities.

Persuasive communication also benefits significantly from gamification. Hamer-Jordaan et al. (2023) and Orynbekov et al. (2025) highlight how gamification increases user intention and actual behavior change, especially in health and environmental campaigns. The provision of rewards and real-time feedback are central to this influence, with Marrow et al. (2024) emphasizing the role of feedback in strengthening users' commitment to positive behavioral change. Bolsewicz et al. (2023) further support this by demonstrating how gamified features such as point systems can motivate actions aligned with public health goals, like vaccination adherence.

However, the role of community dynamics and social support, as suggested by Hamer-Jordaan et al. (2023), illustrates that gamification should not operate in isolation. Effective communication

strategies must also account for communal and emotional dimensions, reinforcing the idea that a blended approach involving social incentives may yield better outcomes.

Systemic factors significantly influence the success of gamified interventions. Institutional policies play a pivotal role. For instance, policy frameworks in the UK that prioritize patient participation in healthcare have enabled the successful integration of gamified solutions to enhance patient engagement (Marrow et al., 2024). Conversely, environments with ambiguous or restrictive policies may hinder gamification's potential. This indicates that policy alignment is essential to scale and sustain gamification in public service contexts.

Technological infrastructure also presents a decisive factor. McMahon et al. (2017) show that digital access and user-friendly applications are prerequisites for successful gamification, especially in health interventions. A lack of reliable internet and modern devices can limit participation, particularly in under-resourced regions. Therefore, bridging the digital divide is necessary for equitable implementation.

Additionally, the capacity of implementers affects the reach and effectiveness of gamification. Educators and health professionals must be adequately trained not only in the use of gamification tools but also in building trust and fostering user interaction (Kraft et al., 2018; Ebrahimi et al., 2021). As emphasized by Ebrahimi et al., interpersonal communication skills and trust-building are critical for community engagement, especially in health-related initiatives.

These systemic challenges suggest several implications for policy and program design. First, governments should invest in technological infrastructure and subsidize access to necessary devices and connectivity (Abudiab et al., 2023). This would reduce access disparities and foster inclusive participation. Second, training programs for implementers should go beyond technical instruction to include communication and community mobilization strategies (Orynbekov et al., 2025). Equipping practitioners with soft skills is vital for engaging users meaningfully.

Trust is another cornerstone of successful gamification. As noted by Gottlieb et al. (2017), the development of institutional trust through community involvement enhances participation. Policies should therefore be directed toward nurturing community relationships and transparency. Lastly, Brún & McAuliffe (2020) advocate for continuous, data-driven evaluation of gamification efforts. Responsive feedback loops are essential for refining interventions and ensuring they meet evolving community needs.

Despite the promising evidence, several limitations in the existing research landscape warrant attention. Many studies rely on short-term interventions and self-reported outcomes, limiting the ability to draw long-term inferences. There is also a scarcity of cross-cultural longitudinal studies that examine gamification's efficacy over time and across diverse populations. Future research should address these gaps by adopting mixed-method approaches and including underrepresented contexts in the Global South.

Furthermore, while this review synthesized a wide range of literature, potential bias may exist due to language and publication limitations. Studies published in non-English languages or grey literature may offer valuable insights that remain underexplored. Broadening the scope of systematic searches to include diverse sources could enrich future analyses.

Ultimately, the discussion affirms the transformative potential of gamification in communication strategies while also emphasizing the importance of contextual adaptability, supportive systems, and evidence-based implementation. Gamification, when strategically designed and ethically implemented, offers a dynamic avenue for enhancing user engagement, learning outcomes, and behavioral change across multiple sectors.

CONCLUSION

This narrative review has highlighted the multifaceted role of gamification in enhancing communication strategies, particularly in fostering engagement, supporting educational outcomes, and influencing persuasive behavior. The evidence synthesized indicates that gamification elements—such as rewards, challenges, leaderboards, and real-time feedback—substantially improve user motivation and participation, especially in digital learning and health communication contexts. Moreover, cultural and systemic differences significantly affect the outcomes of gamified interventions, reinforcing the importance of local adaptation.

The urgency of addressing declining user engagement in public communication initiatives, especially among vulnerable groups, calls for strategic, gamification-based solutions that are context-sensitive and inclusive. The success of such initiatives depends on supportive institutional policies, technological infrastructure, and well-trained facilitators capable of integrating gamified tools into practice.

For policy development, governments and organizations should prioritize investment in digital access, implement inclusive training programs, and foster trust-building efforts within communities. Additionally, continuous evaluation using empirical data is essential to ensure gamified programs remain responsive and effective.

Future research should explore long-term behavioral outcomes of gamification, the role of social norms in adoption, and the ethical implications of persuasive design. Ultimately, expanding access, increasing digital literacy, and encouraging participatory communication through gamification may offer a sustainable path to enhanced public engagement.

REFERENCES

Abudiab, S., Acosta, D., Shafaq, S., Yun, K., Thomas, C., Fredkove, W., ... & Dawson-Hahn, E. (2023). "Beyond just the four walls of the clinic": The roles of health systems caring for refugee, immigrant and migrant communities in the United States. *Frontiers in Public Health,* 11. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1078980

Bolsewicz, K., Steffens, M., King, C., Abdi, I., Bullivant, B., & Beard, F. (2023). A qualitative study on COVID-19 pandemic impacts on parental attitudes and intentions for routine adolescent vaccinations: The role of trust. *Vaccine*, 41(28), 4138–4143. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2023.05.037

- Brún, A. and McAuliffe, É. (2020). Exploring the potential for collective leadership in a newly established hospital network. *Journal of Health Organization and Management, 34(4),* 449–467. https://doi.org/10.1108/jhom-12-2019-0353
- Cano, N., Téllez, Á., & Ríos, J. (2023). Exploring the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICT) and gamification in strengthening reading skills: A systematic review. *Multidisciplinary Reviews*, 6(1), 2023003. https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2023003
- Chamorro, R., Santos, L., Mori, Y., Liu, C., Yamamoto, G., & Kuroda, T. (2024). Gamification approach to provide support about the deferral experience in blood donation: Design and feasibility study. *JMIR Human Factors, 11*, e50086. https://doi.org/10.2196/50086
- Chugh, R. and Turnbull, D. (2023). Gamification in education: A citation network analysis using CitNetExplorer. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 15(2), ep405. https://doi.org/10.30935/cedtech/12863
- Davis, K., Gowda, A., Thompson-Newell, N., Maloney, C., Fayyaz, J., & Chang, T. (2024). Gamification, serious games, and simulation in health professions education. *Pediatric Annals*, 53(11). https://doi.org/10.3928/19382359-20240908-06
- Ebrahimi, P., Rajabi, M., & Aryankhesal, A. (2021). Participation of nongovernmental organizations in Iran's health-care system: Challenges and suggestions for improvement. *International Journal of Health Governance*, 26(4), 397–407. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijhg-02-2021-0021
- Fishbein, J., Nisotel, L., MacDonald, J., Pensak, N., Jacobs, J., Flanagan, C., ... & Greer, J. (2017). Mobile application to promote adherence to oral chemotherapy and symptom management: A protocol for design and development. *JMIR Research Protocols*, 6(4), e62. https://doi.org/10.2196/resprot.6198
- Gilmore, B., Ndejjo, R., Tchetchia, A., Claro, V., Mago, E., Diallo, A., ... & Bhattacharyya, S. (2020). Community engagement for COVID-19 prevention and control: A rapid evidence synthesis. *BMJ Global Health*, *5*(10), e003188. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2020-003188
- Gottlieb, N., Weinstein, T., Mink, J., Ghebrezghiabher, H., Sultan, Z., & Reichlin, R. (2017). Applying a community-based participatory research approach to improve access to healthcare for Eritrean asylum-seekers in Israel: A pilot study. *Israel Journal of Health Policy Research*, 6(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13584-017-0185-9
- Hamer-Jordaan, G., Woudenbergh, G., Haveman-Nies, A., Hell-Cromwijk, M., Veen, Y., Algra, H., ... & Kroeze, W. (2023). Factors associated with dietary behaviour change support in patients: A qualitative study among community nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 80(2), 500–509. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.15808
- Jitmun, W., Palee, P., Choosri, N., & Surapunt, T. (2023). The success of serious games and gamified systems in HIV prevention and care: Scoping review. *JMIR Serious Games*, 11, e39915. https://doi.org/10.2196/39915

- Kozub, H., Sipii, V., Kozub, Y., Bratytsya, G., & Бондаренко, Л. (2025). Effectiveness of gamification in mobile and interactive learning: Analysis of approaches and outcome. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (iJIM), 19(08),* 27–41. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v19i08.50917
- Kraft, S., Cho, M., Gillespie, K., Halley, M., Varsava, N., Ormond, K., ... & Lee, S. (2018). Beyond consent: Building trusting relationships with diverse populations in precision medicine research. *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 18(4), 3–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/15265161.2018.1431322
- Lorenzo, M. and Sánchez-Martínez, C. (2022). Raising ecological awareness and digital literacy in primary school children through gamification. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(3), 1149. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19031149
- Makris, E., Hu, L., Jones, G., & Wright, J. (2020). Moving the dial on heart failure patient adherence rates. *Patient Preference and Adherence*, 14, 2407–2418. https://doi.org/10.2147/ppa.s283277
- Mallick, A. and Waheed, S. (2024). Learning Urogenital Diseases in Oddity (LUDO)—A gamification-based innovation for learning urogenital diseases in emergency medicine. International Journal of Emergency Medicine, 17(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12245-023-00567-0
- Marrow, R., Cronin, C., Ashby, V., Currid, T., & Alexander, M. (2024). A patient and public engagement project to inform dementia care in a UK hospital trust. *Health Expectations*, 27(5). https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.70024
- McMahon, S., Ho, L., Scott, K., Brown, H., Miller, L., Ratnayake, R., ... & Ansumana, R. (2017). "We and the nurses are now working with one voice": How community leaders and health committee members describe their role in Sierra Leone's Ebola response. *BMC Health Services Research*, 17(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-017-2414-x
- Montaner-Marco, J., Carrión, A., García-Sanjuán, F., & Jaén, J. (2019). Tangibot: A collaborative multiplayer game for pediatric patients. *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, *132*, 103982. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijmedinf.2019.103982
- Mårell-Olsson, E. (2021). Using gamification as an online teaching strategy to develop students' 21st century skills. *Interaction Design and Architecture(s)*, (47), 69–93. https://doi.org/10.55612/s-5002-047-004
- Orynbekov, D., Kalibekkyzy, Z., Hypraзeзова, A., Nurymkhan, G., Kassenov, A., & Yermekov, Y. (2025). Consumer perception of irradiated food products in the Abai Region of Kazakhstan. *Foods*, 14(9), 1625. https://doi.org/10.3390/foods14091625
- Palomino, M. and Valdivia, E. (2024). ICT mediated gamification in education degrees: A commitment to sustainability. *Journal of Technology and Science Education*, 14(3), 815. https://doi.org/10.3926/jotse.2624

- Park, S. and Kim, S. (2021). Leaderboard design principles to enhance learning and motivation in a gamified educational environment: Development study. *JMIR Serious Games*, 9(2), e14746. https://doi.org/10.2196/14746
- Pavlenko, I., Boiko, O., Mykolaiets, D., Moskalenko, O., & Shrol, T. (2024). Advancements in STEM education and the evolution of game technologies in Ukrainian educational settings. *Multidisciplinary Reviews*, 7, 2024spe007. https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2024spe007
- Ren, W. and Barrett, S. (2023). An empirical investigation on the benefits of gamification in communication within university development teams. *Computer Applications in Engineering Education*, 31(6), 1808–1822. https://doi.org/10.1002/cae.22675
- Riffo, K., Salcedo, P., Sanhueza-Campos, C., Pinacho-Davidson, P., Carrillo, M., Kotz-Grabole, G., ... & Espejo-Burkart, F. (2023). The influence of gamification on high school students' motivation in geometry lessons. *Sustainability*, 15(21), 15615. https://doi.org/10.3390/su152115615
- Rivera-Valderrama, S., Sánchez, L., Rodas, G., & Guerra, J. (2024). Effects of gamification on the development of soft skills such as creativity and communication in university students. *Salud Ciencia Y Tecnología*, 4, 871. https://doi.org/10.56294/saludcyt2024871
- Sivakumar, B., Lemonde, M., Stein, M., Goldstein, S., Mak, S., & Arcand, J. (2022). Evaluating health care provider perspectives on the use of mobile apps to support patients with heart failure management: Qualitative descriptive study. *JMIR Cardio*, 6(2), e40546. https://doi.org/10.2196/40546
- Waluyo, B., Songkhai, K., & Li, J. (2024). Enhancing online English self-regulated learning through gamification and active learning in higher education. *TESL-EJ*, *28(2)*. https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.28110int