

## SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY



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Original article



### Problems of Gamification Ambivalence in Social and Cultural Service

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#### Abstract

**Introduction.** The article is devoted to the development of modern technologies – gamification, ambiguity of its application in various areas of service, as well as the attitude of student youth and teachers of the social and cultural direction of higher education to the introduction of this method of education.

**Materials and methods.** The complexity of the used methods is explained by the topic of work extrapolating the methodology of sociology, pedagogy, philosophy and a number of economic disciplines related to the introduction of modern directions of human activity. The object of the study is the specifics of gamification usage in all its manifestations, since today this has become one of the ways to increase the interest in working activities and the cognitive interest of students in getting education. However, this type of involvement in the learning process, including the socio-cultural direction, is ambiguous, since it is possible to lose the quality of the gained knowledge. If gamification is used inadequately, the ease of material acquisition borders on the superficiality of learning.

**Results.** The need to optimize the process of implementation of gamified forms of training is emphasized, identifying specific goals and stages of gradual implementation. At the same time, it is indicated that it is necessary to specify the existing and necessary base for adequate implementation, taking into account not only the technical equipment, but also the readiness of the relevant specialists (teachers, IT-developers, university psychologists). Ultimately, using gamified training methods, one should not forget about psychological control, end-to-end analytics and the consequences of implementation, risk management, especially regarding the qualitative results of the entire training process.

**Discussion and conclusion.** In the course of the study, the rating of behavioral factors in the student environment and among teachers of the socio-cultural direction of higher education acting as motivators in gamification was determined, which may allow more targeted determination of the gamification application point in the socio-cultural sphere as a whole.

**Keywords:** gamification, marketing, the practice-oriented training, motivation, game methods of training, loyalty, social-cultural service

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Научная статья

### Проблемы амбивалентности игрофикации в социально-культурном сервисе

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#### Аннотация

**Введение.** Статья посвящена актуальному направлению развития современных технологий – игрофикации, неоднозначности применения ее в различных направлениях сервисной деятельности, а также отношению студенческой молодежи и преподавателей социально-культурного направления высшей школы к внедрению данного способа обучения.

**Материалы и методы.** Комплексность примененных в данном исследовании методов объясняется тематикой работы, экстраполирующей методологию социологии, педагогики, философии и ряда экономических дисциплин, связанных с внедрением современных направлений человеческой деятельности. Объектом исследования является специфика применения геймификации во всех ее проявлениях, поскольку сегодня это стало одним из способов повышения заинтересованности в рабочей деятельности и познавательного интереса обучающихся к получению образования. Однако такой вид привлечения к процессу обучения, в том числе социально-культурного направления, является неоднозначным, поскольку возможна потеря глубины и качества полученных знаний. При неадекватном применении игрофикации легкость усвоения материала граничит с поверхностностью обучения.

**Результаты исследования.** Подчеркивается необходимость оптимизации процесса внедрения игрофицированных форм обучения, обозначив конкретные цели и этапы постепенного внедрения. При этом указывается на необходимость конкретизации существующей и необходимой базы для адекватного внедрения, принимая во внимание не только техническое оснащение, но и готовность соответствующих специалистов (преподавателей, IT-разработчиков, вузовских психологов). Используя игрофицированные методы обучения, не следует забывать о психологическом контроле, сквозной аналитике и последствиях внедрения, риск-менеджменте, особенно в части качественных итогов всего процесса обучения.

**Обсуждение и заключение.** В процессе исследования определен рейтинг поведенческих факторов в студенческой среде и среди преподавателей социально-культурного направления высшей школы, выступающих мотиваторами в игрофикации, что может позволить более прицельно определить точки приложения игрофикации в социально-культурной сфере в целом.

**Ключевые слова:** игрофикация, маркетинг, практико-ориентированность обучения, мотивация, игровые методы обучения, лояльность, социально-культурный сервис

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**Introduction.** The dynamic development of information and communication technologies currently contributes to the rapid implementation of innovative solutions in different spheres of society's life. Gamification is an effective solution intriguing children and adults by hooking them. One of the most common reasons for the widespread introduction of gamification in many areas of modern society is the desire to increase people's motivation for certain types of activities.

Gamification is not a game in the direct sense of the word. This term carries the meaning of using the main attributes of the game in the non-game field of human activity, the desire to place a person in a game situation in a routine environment of ordinary work or educational activities, as a result, the opportunity to enjoy the routine.

**Materials and methods.** In this study, the methodology is complex due to the versatility of the topic. A variety of general scientific methods was used in combination with conceptual-logical and comparative analysis of the data obtained during the study. In the work, the authors relied on researches of domestic and foreign scientists, who described the possibility of game elements usage in various fields. Authors A.V. Tsvetsikh, A.V. Redkina and A.M. Bessmertny consider gamification from the point of view of an effective tool in the process of increasing motivation and self-development of users [1]. The views of A.L. Mazelis are of great interest. In his opinion, mastering functionality and providing feedback from the user is the main principle of gamification. In his works, the author identified the main features of gamification such as mechanics, aesthetics, social interaction and dynamics [2]. L.P. Varenina writes in her works about the possibility of developing the creative abilities of users using gaming technologies. Game strategies increasing the interest of students in the learning process can simultaneously act as a means and form of self-control in the educational process [3]. According to S.I. Nikitin, gamification (specialized games created specifically for educational purposes) will take key positions among additional educational technologies in the near future [4]. The works of the Dutch historian and cultural scientist J. Heising are devoted to the game as a cultural factor of history as well as to the human interaction with games. His game concepts of culture occupy a significant place in modern cultural studies [5].

**Results.** Gamification was widely discussed only in 2008–2010 in connection with the widespread introduction of computer technologies into all areas of human activity.

Introduction of gamification often becomes an end in itself for companies wishing to be “on the crest of the wave”, striving to keep up with competitors. The pendulum of introduction of innovation called “gamification” is launched on a grand scale and strives for the maximum of its movement amplitude. Today, the main areas of gamification application in business practice have already been determined. The pace of game methods application in the practice of modern life is

growing rapidly, filling all possible niches for adequate usage. These areas of gamification application, for the most part, relate to the areas of marketing and training (Fig. 1) [6].

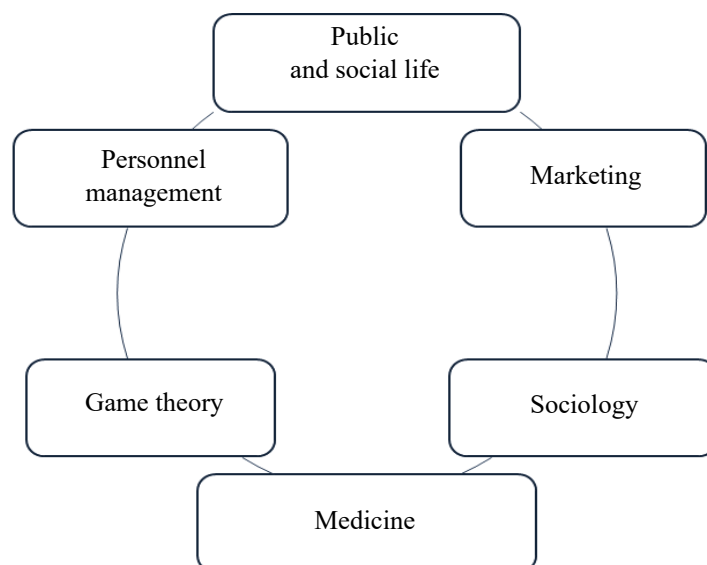


Fig. 1. Areas of gamification application

Based on the above-mentioned information, it is possible to determine the points of gamification application in the socio-cultural service.

Marketing directions for the use of gamification are most often reflected in such areas as food industry, household, housing and communal, legal, research, consulting, financial services, radio and television broadcasting, publishing and journalism, communications and others.

Today the scope of gamification in marketing in the territory of Russia can be defined by the framework of using this technology to attract customers, conduct various surveys, personnel management (especially in terms of adaptation and advanced training of employees), create loyalty programs, solve various business problems, that is to increase sales. You can list for a long time the educational benefits of gamification in such areas of social and cultural service as education and upbringing, tourism industry, physical culture and sports, social service and others.

The benefits of introducing gamification in a socio-cultural service are undeniable and multifaceted, which is connected with a great number of factors.

In particular, marketing specialists note that gamification stimulates loyalty and involvement in work. Introducing elements of gamification, achievements are visualized, which activates labor activity, providing an opportunity for talented employees to show their capabilities, demonstrate existing experience and knowledge in the professional field, for young and less successful to learn and gradually earn the respect of colleagues by gaining the necessary experience in a relaxed atmosphere of educational situations.

If the marketing direction of gamification is already relatively defined, specified and does not require special restrictive barriers, since it is quite clearly regulated by the laws of the market, then in terms of school, pre-university and university education, the use of gamification is not so clearly positive in all its aspects.

In real life, learning and entertainment are eternal competitors for people's attention. Each person is constantly faced with the need for choice between "useful" and "pleasant". This is precisely the relevance of attempts to make learning play-based, transferring it from the sphere of "useful" to the side of "pleasant".

Taking into account the immersion of modern youth in computer technology, in all their diversity, the logic of introducing these technologies into the learning process should be noted. At the same time, one of the main lines of modern education actualization is the practical orientation of training, in which the foundations of classical fundamental knowledge and applied training should be optimally combined with elements of mastering professional skills.

However, modernity dictates the need to pay attention to the psychological features and educational needs of modern student audiences. The specifics of presenting information in a modern educational institution should be designated as a student-oriented, that is, taking into account the very psychological features and needs of young people that are reflected in the game orientation of their reality perception due to their significant immersion in the computer model of reality.

The use of information and communication technologies is now becoming a prerequisite for higher education and takes the teaching process to a new level that meets the requirements of rapidly changing modernity.

The teacher of higher education should not only attract students to gain knowledge, but teach them to gain knowledge themselves using the available current methods.

The tasks of gamification in training can be indicated in the following form:

- activation of students' cognitive activity;
- development of skills allowing to receive and transmit the necessary information without loss;
- development of students' skills to navigate in a huge information flow coming from different sources;
- development of skills to structure the received information and highlight the main thing in the mass of available knowledge;
- development of skills to adequately apply structured knowledge in practical activities.

For a high school teacher, it becomes professionally necessary to learn how to combine your own teaching experience with the new technical capabilities that computer technology provides us today. The most important condition for this is the preservation of traditions of a high level of teaching culture both professional and creative.

Among the main advantages of using gamification in digital education there are:

- increased motivation and interest;
- broadening the horizons through visualization, description, narrative with using graphics and music;
- ease of displaying public reality;
- additional support resource of mastering information [7].

The negative sides of the hasty and widespread introduction of gamification into the educational process may be the following.

Firstly, this is the possible appearance of behavior's addictive forms, in particular, formation and consolidation of addiction to virtual reality and game orientation of reality perception.

It remains important to maintain a balance of addiction to the virtual reality of computer technologies. In such a situation, there is a special responsibility on the part of professional groups of people working with youth audiences who need to develop a new approach to solving the problems of preventing addictive behavior associated with too deep immersion in the game. In this aspect, the deep work of university psychologists is necessary, the activities of which should be applied at all stages of the work of introducing a new way of knowledge presentation – starting from the discussion of the introduced training programs with the elements of gamification, then, during the training process (psychological status of students), as well as in connection with the analysis of the results of training after the introduction of gamified programs.

Secondly. The usual game involves wins and losses, “sticks” and “carrots”. Gamification is more a carrot approach than a stick. In the event of gamification, the “stick” should be an unearned “carrot”: lost points, points, “achievement”, “badge”, unmet levels and various ratings. The desire to accumulate/achieve them can lead to the activation of the students' abilities to “get around” the rules, act “over the head” of other participants in order to receive more rewards, achieve more within the framework of the game, using atypical, including deviant and immoral methods.

Thirdly. As foreign practice shows, the effect of stimulation by gamification in marketing is short-term. Due to insufficient data on the effectiveness of gamification training (short observation period), extrapolating the use of this method from marketing to training processes, a similar effect can be expected in training.

Fourthly. A properly composed common game (for both children and adults) aims to create the illusion of seriousness and importance for frivolous actions. At the same time, in contrast to the common game, in the gamification field of real activity, the game component strives to achieve another task, that is to give a serious business playfulness and easiness. Can this become a problem of too simplified perception of reality, “playful”, easy attitude to real study, and in the future to work?

Within the framework of this work, an opinion study was conducted among students in such fields of education as “Service”, “Tourism” and “Hospitality”, as well as their teachers, including issues of attitude to the introduction of gamification elements in the process of training various fields of social and cultural profile.

The study also used elements of the Yu-kai Chou game octalysis to create and analyze game systems [8].

Octalysis is a high-level review of the main motivational directions of human activity in the process of using game technologies, built by the author in the form of an octagon with a description of each of the eight sides (Fig. 2).

The incentives or behavioral factors that act as motivators of gamification in octalysis are:

- Mission – the user feels he is “the chosen one”. This incentive acts when the player assumes that they are determined for a particular mission by accomplishing something particularly important;
- Achievement – an incentive to strive for a new level, growth, leadership;
- Creativity – unlocking creative, constructive potential;

- Possession – motivation of collectors;
- Social impact – mutual influence of society and a person;
- Deficit – desire to possess unique things, properties;
- Curiosity – manifestation of inquisitiveness;
- Security – based on preventing negativity or loss of security. Including, likely new opportunities that can be lost take the form of loss or danger.

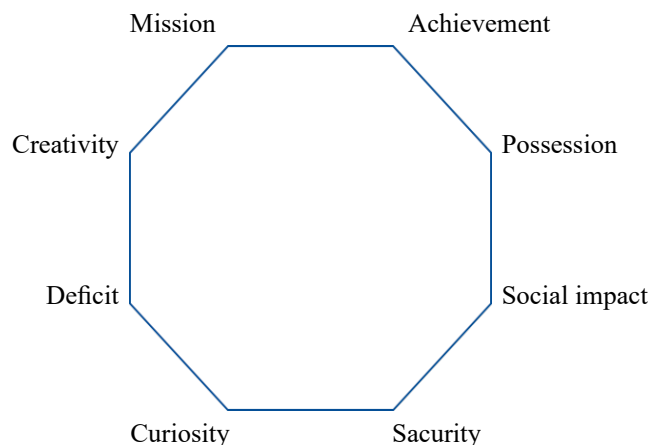


Fig. 2. Octalysis (gamification)

The survey was conducted anonymously after students and teachers studied the Yu-kai Chou Octalysis Scheme.

As a result of the survey, students have the following rating of behavioral factors that act as motivators in gamification (according to the Yu-kai Chou Octalysis) (Fig. 3).

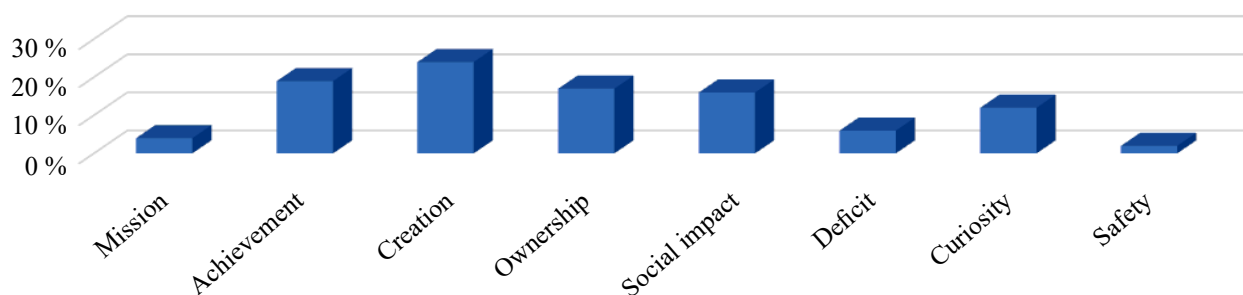


Fig. 3. Behavioral Factors Rating

According to the teacher's questionnaires the motivational incentives of students of socio-cultural areas of study lie, for the most part, within the framework of factors such as achievement, creativity, possession and social impact, in approximately equal parts.

Both teachers and students have one and the same point of view. There is the need to use elements of gamification in the process of studying at higher school. They definitely consider gamification to be implemented necessarily.

At the same time, teachers noted the need for a metered and point implementation of gamification, with the involvement of IT-specialists for end-to-end analysis and analysis of data based on the results of implementation.

Students stated that they should be involved in the creation of game elements and forms of education.

**Discussion and conclusion.** The main conclusions of the study are the following.

Firstly, speaking about goal setting it should be understood exactly why it is necessary to implement game forms of education in the socio-cultural sphere "here and now". Is it necessary to gamify the entire training process? May be gradual introduction of certain game elements, with the involvement of the students themselves in their creation, will bring the optimal effect.

Secondly, speaking about implementation it is necessary to determine whether there is a solid basis for the adequate introduction of gamification into the educational process, bearing in mind not only the technical equipment of the educational institution, but also the readiness of the relevant specialists (teachers, IT-specialists, university psychologists) at the proper level to create and introduce new forms of education into the practice of the educational institution.

Thirdly, we should think about the possible result, including positive and negative consequences of implementation. All aspects of risk management should be considered at each stage of gamification production and implementation. Ultimately, the effectiveness of training should be studied in detail, including the socio-cultural direction conducted using game methods.

This approach will make it possible to specifically determine the points of gamification application, not only in educational activities, but also in the socio-cultural sphere of the country's economy as a whole.

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## Conflict of interest statement

The authors do not have any conflict of interest.

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