

## BUILDING BRAND EQUITY THROUGH GAMIFICATION

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### Abstract:

This study examines the relationship between gamification, brand engagement, value co-creation, and brand equity in digital platform services such as Gojek and Grab. Unlike previous studies that used highly complex research models, this article simplifies the framework into four main hypotheses to better explain the process of value creation in digital platforms. Data were collected from 100 active users of Gojek and Grab and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that gamification significantly influences brand engagement, while brand engagement significantly affects value co-creation. However, value co-creation and brand engagement were not found to significantly influence brand equity directly. These findings suggest that although digital platforms successfully create engagement and interaction, such interactions do not automatically translate into stronger brand value. The study contributes to digital marketing literature by presenting a simpler and more focused process-based model of customer interaction in platform ecosystems.

**Keywords:** Gamification; Brand Engagement; Value Co-Creation; Brand Equity; Digital Platforms.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini meneliti hubungan antara gamifikasi, *brand engagement*, *value co-creation*, dan *brand equity* dalam layanan platform digital seperti Gojek dan Grab. Berbeda dengan studi sebelumnya yang menggunakan model penelitian yang sangat kompleks, artikel ini menyederhanakan kerangka kerja menjadi empat hipotesis utama untuk menjelaskan proses penciptaan nilai dalam platform digital dengan lebih baik. Data dikumpulkan dari 100 pengguna aktif Gojek dan Grab dan dianalisis menggunakan *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa gamifikasi secara signifikan memengaruhi *brand engagement*, sementara *brand engagement* secara signifikan memengaruhi *value co-creation*. Namun, *value co-creation* dan *brand engagement* tidak ditemukan secara signifikan memengaruhi *brand equity* secara langsung. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa meskipun platform digital berhasil menciptakan keterlibatan dan interaksi, interaksi tersebut tidak secara otomatis diterjemahkan menjadi nilai merek yang lebih kuat. Studi ini berkontribusi pada literatur pemasaran digital dengan menyajikan model berbasis proses yang lebih sederhana dan lebih terfokus tentang interaksi pelanggan dalam ekosistem platform.

**Kata Kunci:** Gamifikasi; Brand Engagement; Value Co-Creation; Brand Equity; Platform Digital.

### 1. Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way companies interact with customers. In the contemporary digital economy, firms no longer rely solely on transactional marketing approaches but increasingly prioritize interactive and experiential engagement strategies to build long-term customer relationships (Brodie et al., 2011). Digital service platforms such as Gojek and Grab represent prominent examples of this transformation, where customer interaction is continuously facilitated through integrated digital ecosystems consisting of ride-hailing, food delivery, digital payment, and lifestyle services. These platforms compete not only through pricing and service efficiency but also through their ability to create engaging user experiences that encourage repeated interaction and participation.

One of the most widely adopted strategies in digital platforms is gamification. Gamification refers to the application of game design elements in non-game contexts to enhance user motivation, participation, and engagement (Deterding et al., 2011). Through features such as points, badges, reward systems, missions, challenges, and loyalty tiers, digital platforms attempt to create more enjoyable and

interactive customer experiences. Previous studies suggest that gamification positively influences customer behavior by increasing participation, enjoyment, and emotional attachment toward the platform (Hamari et al., 2014; Hofacker et al., 2016). In highly competitive digital markets, gamification has become an important strategic tool for maintaining user retention and stimulating customer activity.

In addition, customer brand engagement has emerged as a critical construct in digital marketing literature. Customer brand engagement reflects customers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in their interactions with a brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Engaged users tend to interact more frequently with platform features, participate in brand-related activities, and develop stronger psychological connections with the brand. In platform ecosystems such as Gojek and Grab, engagement is reflected through behaviors such as participating in reward programs, completing platform missions, sharing experiences, and interacting with digital communities.

Beyond engagement, digital platforms increasingly depend on value co-creation processes. According to Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), value is not created solely by firms but emerges through collaborative interactions between companies and customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). In digital environments, customers actively contribute to value creation by providing ratings, reviews, feedback, recommendations, and social interaction. Such participatory activities help platforms improve service quality, strengthen customer experience, and enhance overall platform value. Therefore, value co-creation becomes an essential mechanism in understanding how digital interaction contributes to organizational outcomes.

Another important outcome in digital platform competition is brand equity. Brand equity refers to the value of a brand as perceived by customers and is reflected through dimensions such as brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and loyalty (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Strong brand equity enables firms to maintain customer loyalty, achieve competitive advantage, and improve long-term business sustainability. In digital platforms, brand equity is increasingly shaped not only by traditional marketing communication but also by interactive customer experiences and participation within the platform ecosystem.

Although prior studies have examined the relationships among gamification, engagement, and brand-related outcomes, most previous research employed highly complex frameworks involving multiple mediators and moderators (Xi & Hamari, 2020). While these studies provide important theoretical contributions, they often create conceptual overlap and make the research model difficult to explain practically. Furthermore, many studies focus on direct relationships while neglecting the sequential process through which customer interaction evolves into value-generating activities and eventually influences brand outcomes.

Another important issue is that engagement does not always lead to sustainable brand value. In many digital platforms, users may actively interact with gamified features simply because of temporary rewards, promotions, or functional benefits rather than genuine attachment to the brand. As a result, customer engagement may become transactional and short-term in nature. Similarly, value co-creation activities such as ratings or reviews may improve operational efficiency but may not necessarily strengthen customers' emotional attachment or loyalty toward the platform. This indicates that the relationship between engagement, co-creation, and brand equity remains theoretically and empirically unclear.

To address these issues, this study simplifies the research framework by focusing on four key constructs: gamification, brand engagement, value co-creation, and brand equity. By reducing the complexity of the model, this study aims to provide a clearer and more focused explanation of how gamification-driven interaction influences customer behavior and brand outcomes in digital platforms. The simplified framework is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically by offering a more parsimonious understanding of customer interaction processes in digital ecosystems.

This study specifically focuses on Gojek and Grab because both platforms intensively implement gamification strategies to encourage user participation and retention. Features such as reward points, cashback programs, missions, and loyalty memberships are widely integrated into their service systems. These platforms therefore provide an ideal empirical context for examining how gamification mechanisms influence customer engagement, value co-creation, and brand equity within digital platform ecosystems.

## 2. Literature Review

### Gamification and Brand Engagement

Gamification has become one of the most widely adopted strategies in digital marketing to stimulate user interaction and participation. Gamification refers to the application of game design elements in non-game contexts to influence user behavior and enhance user experiences (Deterding et

al., 2011). In digital platforms, gamification commonly appears in the form of points, badges, rewards, missions, leaderboards, loyalty tiers, and interactive challenges. These elements are designed to create enjoyable, competitive, and motivating experiences that encourage users to interact more frequently with the platform. From the perspective of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), users are more likely to engage with a system when they perceive it as useful and enjoyable (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2012). Gamification enhances both utilitarian and hedonic value by making digital interaction more entertaining and interactive. Users who perceive gamified systems as enjoyable tend to spend more time on the platform and develop stronger emotional involvement with the service. In addition, Self-Determination Theory explains that gamification can satisfy users' intrinsic psychological needs, particularly competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Features such as challenges and achievement systems create a sense of accomplishment, while social interaction features strengthen users' sense of connection with others. Consequently, gamification increases users' intrinsic motivation and encourages deeper engagement with the brand.

Customer brand engagement reflects customers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attachment toward a brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Engaged users tend to interact more actively with platform features, participate in promotional activities, and maintain continuous interaction with the platform. In digital service ecosystems such as Gojek and Grab, gamification mechanisms such as reward points, cashback programs, and loyalty missions are specifically designed to increase user interaction and encourage repeated usage behavior. Previous studies consistently found that gamification positively influences customer engagement by increasing emotional involvement, participation, and interaction intensity (Hamari et al., 2014; Xi & Hamari, 2020). Therefore, gamification is expected to strengthen customer brand engagement in digital platforms.

H1: Gamification positively affects Brand Engagement.

### **Brand Engagement and Value Co-Creation**

Customer brand engagement is considered a central mechanism in creating interactive relationships between customers and firms. Brand engagement reflects the extent to which users invest cognitive, emotional, and behavioral resources in their interactions with a brand (Brodie et al., 2011). Highly engaged users are not only passive consumers but also active participants within the platform ecosystem. From the perspective of Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), value is co-created through interactions between firms and customers rather than being produced solely by companies (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Customers become operant resources who actively contribute to the creation of value through participation, collaboration, and interaction. In digital platforms, value co-creation occurs when users provide reviews, ratings, recommendations, feedback, and shared experiences that help improve service quality and customer experience. Engaged customers are more likely to participate in these co-creation activities because they develop stronger attachment and involvement with the platform. Users who frequently interact with the platform tend to contribute more actively to discussions, evaluations, and user-generated content. Such behaviors create mutual value both for the company and for other platform users. Previous empirical studies demonstrate that customer engagement significantly influences participatory and co-creative behaviors in digital environments (Hollebeek et al., 2016; Vivek et al., 2014). In platform ecosystems such as Gojek and Grab, engaged users often share experiences, provide ratings, and participate in reward programs that contribute to the development of the platform ecosystem. Therefore, stronger customer engagement is expected to encourage higher levels of value co-creation.

H2: Brand Engagement positively affects Value Co-Creation.

### **Value Co-Creation and Brand Equity**

Value co-creation refers to collaborative activities between firms and customers in generating value through interaction, participation, and shared experiences (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004). In digital service platforms, customers actively contribute to platform development through reviews, ratings, recommendations, and social interaction. These contributions help companies improve service quality, enhance customer experience, and strengthen platform performance. According to Service-Dominant Logic, value is created collectively through resource integration among multiple actors in the service ecosystem (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Therefore, value co-creation becomes an important mechanism in shaping customers' perceptions and experiences toward the brand. Through active participation, customers become more familiar with the platform and develop stronger interaction with the company. Brand equity refers to the value of a brand as perceived by customers and is reflected through dimensions such as brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and loyalty (Aaker,

1991; Keller, 1993). In digital platforms, positive user experiences and active customer participation are expected to strengthen customers' perceptions of brand value.

However, participation alone may not always improve brand perceptions significantly. Some users may contribute to platform activities only because of temporary incentives or functional benefits rather than emotional attachment to the brand itself. As a result, value co-creation activities may improve operational interaction without necessarily strengthening long-term brand loyalty. Despite this limitation, previous studies suggest that value co-creation contributes positively to customer experience and brand relationships (France et al., 2016; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2016). Therefore, value co-creation is expected to positively influence brand equity in digital platforms.

H3: Value Co-Creation positively affects Brand Equity.

### **Brand Engagement and Brand Equity**

Customer brand engagement plays a critical role in strengthening customer relationships and building long-term brand value. Engagement reflects the degree of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral attachment customers develop toward a brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Highly engaged users are more likely to interact continuously with the platform, develop emotional connections, and maintain loyalty toward the service. From the perspective of customer-based brand equity theory, stronger interaction and emotional attachment toward a brand contribute to higher brand awareness, favorable brand associations, and customer loyalty (Keller, 1993). Engaged users tend to develop stronger trust and commitment toward the company because they continuously interact with the platform and experience its services.

In digital platform ecosystems such as Gojek and Grab, engagement is reflected through repeated interaction with gamified features, participation in loyalty programs, and involvement in platform communities. Users who are highly engaged often become loyal customers and are more willing to recommend the platform to others. Previous studies found that customer engagement positively influences brand equity by strengthening customer-brand relationships and increasing customer loyalty (Xi & Hamari, 2020; Wirtz et al., 2013). Therefore, higher levels of customer engagement are expected to improve brand equity in digital platforms.

H4: Brand Engagement positively affects Brand Equity.

## **3. Research Methods**

### *3.1. Object, time and Place*

This study used a quantitative approach with survey data collected from 100 active users of Gojek and Grab between January and March 2026. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, where only users who actively interacted with gamification features were included.

### *3.2. Data Collection Techniques*

All variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Gamification was measured through reward systems, challenges, and interactive features. Brand engagement was measured through emotional, cognitive, and social interaction dimensions. Value co-creation was measured using participation behaviors such as reviews and feedback, while brand equity was measured using brand awareness and loyalty indicators.

### *3.3. Data Analysis Techniques*

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Reliability and validity tests confirmed that all constructs met the required criteria, with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.90 and AVE values above 0.80.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### *4.1. Research Results*

The measurement model showed satisfactory validity and reliability. All outer loading values exceeded 0.90, indicating strong convergent validity. The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory levels of validity and reliability. All indicator outer loading values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, with most indicators showing loading values above 0.90. These results indicate strong convergent validity and confirm that all measurement items appropriately represent their respective constructs (Hair et al., 2017). In addition, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs exceeded 0.90, indicating excellent internal consistency reliability.

**Table 1 Structural Model Results**

Hypothesis	Relationship	$\beta$	p-value	Result
H1	Gamification $\rightarrow$ Brand Engagement	0.484	$< 0.001$	Supported
H2	Brand Engagement $\rightarrow$ Value Co-Creation	0.815	$< 0.001$	Supported
H3	Value Co-Creation $\rightarrow$ Brand Equity	0.112	$> 0.05$	Not Supported
H4	Brand Engagement $\rightarrow$ Brand Equity	0.095	$> 0.05$	Not Supported

The structural model results indicate that gamification has a significant positive effect on brand engagement ( $\beta = 0.484$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding suggests that gamification mechanisms such as rewards, points, challenges, and promotional missions successfully stimulate customer interaction and emotional involvement with digital platforms. Users who actively interact with gamified features tend to become more engaged cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally with the platform. This result is consistent with previous studies which found that gamification enhances customer participation and interaction by creating enjoyable and immersive experiences (Hamari et al., 2014; Xi & Hamari, 2020). Furthermore, Hofacker et al. (2016) explained that gamification increases user motivation because game-like elements generate hedonic value and interactive experiences that strengthen customer involvement with digital brands.

The results also reveal that brand engagement has a very strong positive effect on value co-creation ( $\beta = 0.815$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding indicates that highly engaged users are more likely to participate in co-creation activities such as giving ratings, writing reviews, sharing experiences, and interacting with other users within the platform ecosystem. In digital platforms such as Gojek and Grab, customer engagement encourages users to become active contributors rather than passive consumers. This finding supports the Service-Dominant Logic perspective, which argues that value is created collaboratively through interaction between firms and customers (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). The result is also in line with previous empirical studies showing that customer engagement significantly increases participatory behaviors and value co-creation activities in digital environments (Hollebeek et al., 2016; Vivek et al., 2014). Engaged users tend to contribute more actively because they feel psychologically connected to the platform and are more willing to participate in activities that improve platform value.

However, the relationship between value co-creation and brand equity was found to be insignificant ( $\beta = 0.112$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). This finding indicates that although users actively participate in platform activities, such participation does not automatically strengthen customers' perceptions of brand value. One possible explanation is that users may engage in co-creation activities primarily because of functional benefits, convenience, or promotional incentives rather than emotional attachment to the brand itself. As a result, value co-creation improves operational interaction but may fail to generate stronger loyalty or long-term brand attachment. This finding supports several previous studies suggesting that co-creation activities do not always directly translate into stronger brand equity, particularly in highly transactional digital service environments (France et al., 2016). In platforms such as Gojek and Grab, users may focus more on practical utility, discounts, and service efficiency than on developing deeper emotional relationships with the platform brand.

Similarly, the direct relationship between brand engagement and brand equity was not supported ( $\beta = 0.095$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). Although users actively engage with gamified features and platform activities, such engagement may remain temporary and transaction-oriented. Customers may interact intensively with the platform because of rewards, cashback, or convenience, but these interactions do not necessarily create stronger loyalty or positive brand associations. This finding differs from several prior studies that found a positive relationship between customer engagement and brand equity (Xi & Hamari, 2020; Wirtz et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the result suggests that engagement in digital platforms may not always reflect genuine emotional attachment toward the brand. In highly competitive platform ecosystems, users can easily switch to competing platforms when alternative promotions or incentives are offered. Therefore, engagement alone may be insufficient to strengthen long-term brand value unless it is supported by deeper relational and experiential mechanisms.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) values indicate that the model possesses substantial explanatory power. The R-square value for Brand Engagement was 0.833, indicating that gamification explains 83.3% of the variance in brand engagement. This demonstrates that gamification is a dominant predictor of customer engagement in digital platforms. Meanwhile, Value Co-Creation showed an R-square value of 0.664, suggesting moderate to strong explanatory capability. Brand Equity showed an R-square value of 0.478, indicating moderate explanatory power. These findings suggest that although the model effectively explains engagement and co-creation behaviors, additional factors outside the model

may influence brand equity in digital platform ecosystems. The R-square value for Brand Engagement was 0.833, indicating strong explanatory power. Value Co-Creation showed an R-square value of 0.664, while Brand Equity showed a moderate value of 0.478.

#### 4.2. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that gamification is highly effective in increasing customer brand engagement. Users who interact with reward systems, missions, and platform challenges become more emotionally and behaviorally connected with digital platforms. This finding supports previous studies that emphasize the importance of interactive experiences in digital marketing. The study also confirms that brand engagement strongly influences value co-creation. Engaged users are more willing to provide reviews, share experiences, and participate in platform activities. This indicates that engagement serves as an important mechanism in transforming passive users into active contributors. However, the results reveal that value co-creation does not significantly influence brand equity.

This suggests that customer participation alone is insufficient to improve customers' perception of brand value. Many users may participate in platform activities without developing deeper loyalty or emotional attachment toward the brand. Similarly, brand engagement was not found to directly influence brand equity. Although users actively interact with the platform, such interaction may remain temporary and transaction-oriented. In digital service ecosystems such as Gojek and Grab, users may prioritize functional benefits such as discounts, convenience, and promotions rather than emotional attachment to the brand itself. These findings indicate that digital platforms successfully create interaction and engagement but still face challenges in transforming engagement into sustainable brand value. Therefore, companies should focus not only on increasing participation but also on creating meaningful experiences that strengthen long-term customer relationships.

The findings demonstrate that gamification is highly effective in increasing customer brand engagement, particularly within digital transportation and service platforms such as Gojek and Grab as the objects of this research. Users who interact with reward systems, missions, loyalty points, cashback programs, and promotional challenges available on these platforms become more emotionally and behaviorally connected with the application. In the context of Gojek and Grab, gamification can be seen through features such as point accumulation, discount vouchers, referral bonuses, subscription rewards, and interactive campaigns that encourage customers to continue using the platform. These features create enjoyable and competitive experiences that motivate users to engage more intensively with the application. This finding supports previous studies stating that gamification enhances user involvement and strengthens engagement because customers perceive the platform as interactive and rewarding. According to Hamari Juho et al. (2014), gamification increases user motivation and participation by integrating game-like elements into non-game contexts. Similarly, Brodie Roderick et al. (2011) explained that customer engagement emerges through interactive experiences and repeated interactions between customers and brands.

The study also confirms that brand engagement strongly influences value co-creation in the context of Gojek and Grab users. Customers who actively engage with these applications tend to participate in activities such as giving ratings and reviews, sharing experiences on social media, recommending the platform to others, and interacting with various platform services. In digital ecosystem businesses like Gojek and Grab, customers are not merely service consumers but also contributors who help improve platform quality through feedback and participation. For example, users contribute to service improvement by evaluating drivers, reporting service problems, and sharing recommendations that influence other customers' decisions. This phenomenon reflects the concept of value co-creation proposed by Vargo Stephen and Lusch Robert (2004), which emphasizes that value is jointly created through interactions between companies and customers. The stronger the engagement experienced by users, the greater their willingness to collaborate and contribute to the platform ecosystem.

However, the results reveal that value co-creation does not significantly influence brand equity in the context of Gojek and Grab. This finding indicates that although users actively participate in platform activities, such participation does not automatically strengthen their perception of brand value. Many customers may provide reviews, ratings, or referrals simply because these activities are integrated into the platform system and often associated with incentives or rewards. In highly competitive digital transportation markets, customers tend to prioritize practical benefits such as lower prices, promotional discounts, delivery speed, and service convenience rather than emotional attachment to a particular brand. As a result, customer participation may only generate short-term transactional value without creating deeper loyalty or stronger brand associations. Users may easily switch between Gojek and Grab depending on which platform offers more attractive promotions at a particular moment. This condition explains why value co-creation activities are insufficient to directly strengthen brand equity.

Similarly, brand engagement was not found to directly influence brand equity. Although users frequently interact with the Gojek and Grab applications, such interaction may remain functional and temporary. Customers may intensively use the applications because they fulfill practical daily needs such as transportation, food delivery, digital payments, and logistics services. However, repeated usage does not necessarily indicate emotional closeness or long-term commitment toward the brand. This finding reflects the characteristics of digital platform competition in Indonesia, where consumers often demonstrate low switching barriers and high sensitivity to price promotions. Consequently, users can remain highly engaged with the platform while simultaneously lacking strong brand loyalty. This result supports the argument that engagement alone cannot guarantee the formation of sustainable brand equity unless accompanied by emotional experiences, trust, satisfaction, and consistent service quality.

Furthermore, the findings imply that Gojek and Grab have successfully implemented gamification strategies to increase user interaction and participation, but they still face challenges in transforming engagement into long-term brand value. The platforms have been effective in attracting users through rewards, promotions, and interactive features; however, these strategies may predominantly encourage transactional behavior rather than emotional relationships. Therefore, both companies should focus not only on increasing application usage and participation but also on creating meaningful customer experiences that foster emotional attachment and trust. For instance, improving personalized services, strengthening customer relationship management, maintaining consistent service quality, and developing community-based engagement programs may help transform short-term engagement into stronger and more sustainable brand equity. In increasingly competitive digital ecosystems, companies that successfully combine functional benefits with emotional branding strategies are more likely to achieve long-term customer loyalty and competitive advantage.

## 5. Conclusion

This study contributes to the growing literature on gamification and digital marketing by proposing a simplified yet comprehensive framework that explains how gamification mechanisms influence customer interaction outcomes within digital platform ecosystems. Unlike previous studies that often incorporate highly complex models with numerous mediating and moderating variables, this research focuses on four core constructs: gamification, brand engagement, value co-creation, and brand equity. By concentrating on these essential relationships, the study offers a clearer understanding of the customer behavioral process in digital environments, particularly in platform-based services such as e-commerce, digital applications, and online communities.

The findings demonstrate that gamification has a significant positive effect on brand engagement. Features such as reward systems, missions, points, badges, and interactive challenges encourage users to participate more actively and emotionally with the platform. Gamification stimulates user motivation, enjoyment, and interaction intensity, which ultimately strengthens customers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attachment toward the brand. This result confirms that interactive digital experiences play an important role in increasing user involvement and maintaining customer attention in highly competitive digital markets.

Furthermore, the study reveals that brand engagement significantly influences value co-creation. Engaged users are more likely to contribute ideas, provide feedback, share experiences, create reviews, and participate in collaborative activities within the platform ecosystem. This finding indicates that customers are no longer passive recipients of value but active participants in creating value together with companies. In the context of digital platforms, highly engaged users contribute not only to transactional activities but also to social interaction, innovation, and community development that benefit the brand ecosystem as a whole.

However, the study also finds that neither brand engagement nor value co-creation significantly affects brand equity. This result suggests that short-term engagement activities and co-creation experiences may not automatically translate into stronger long-term brand value. Brand equity is likely influenced by broader and more complex factors such as customer trust, brand reputation, service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, emotional loyalty, and long-term brand consistency. In many digital platforms, users may actively engage with gamified features simply for entertainment or rewards without necessarily developing deep brand attachment or loyalty. Therefore, although gamification can effectively stimulate interaction and participation, companies still need long-term strategic efforts to transform engagement into sustainable brand equity.

Theoretically, this study contributes by extending the understanding of gamification within the service-dominant logic and customer engagement literature. The proposed framework emphasizes a process-based perspective in which gamification serves as an antecedent of engagement, engagement acts as a driver of co-creation behavior, and co-creation is expected to support brand outcomes. The

simplified model provides a more focused explanation of customer interaction processes in digital ecosystems and can serve as a foundation for future studies exploring digital consumer behavior.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide important implications for digital companies and platform managers. Businesses should not rely solely on superficial gamification elements aimed at increasing temporary activity metrics such as clicks, visits, or participation rates. Instead, firms should design meaningful gamified experiences that foster emotional connection, trust, and long-term customer relationships. Companies need to integrate gamification strategies with customer experience management, personalization, community-building initiatives, and value-driven interactions to strengthen sustainable brand equity. This is particularly important in highly competitive digital industries where user attention can shift rapidly between platforms.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research uses a relatively limited sample size, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings across different industries and demographic groups. Second, the cross-sectional research design only captures customer perceptions at a single point in time and cannot fully explain how engagement and brand relationships evolve over the long term. Third, the model does not include additional psychological or contextual variables that may influence the relationship between engagement and brand equity, such as trust, satisfaction, customer experience, emotional attachment, perceived enjoyment, or platform loyalty.

Therefore, future research is encouraged to employ larger and more diverse samples, apply longitudinal approaches, and incorporate additional mediating or moderating variables to better understand the transformation of short-term engagement into long-term brand equity. Future studies may also compare different digital platform contexts, such as e-commerce, gaming applications, fintech services, or social media platforms, to identify whether the effectiveness of gamification differs across industries and customer segments.

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