

# Gamification and neuromarketing: A unified approach for improving user experience

Abhishek Behl<sup>1</sup>  | Nirma Jayawardena<sup>2</sup> | Amit Shankar<sup>3</sup> | Manish Gupta<sup>4</sup> | Le Dang Lang<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, India

<sup>2</sup>O P Jindal Global University, Sonipat, India

<sup>3</sup>Indian Institute of Management, Vishakhapatnam, India

<sup>4</sup>School of Management, Mahindra University, Hyderabad, India

<sup>5</sup>Ho Chi Minh City Open University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

## Correspondence

Abhishek Behl, Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, India.

Email: [abhishekbehl27@gmail.com](mailto:abhishekbehl27@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Neuroscience and its offshoot as neuromarketing have helped marketers understand neuroscientific aspects of customers while gamification has helped them understand the psyche of consumers. Despite neuromarketing's many potential benefits to businesses, little academic work has been done on the field so far. Most studies have examined consumer shifts during and after pandemics without analyzing them from two critical perspectives: neuroscientific theories and psychology theories. As the two streams of knowledge lean on each other, their interdependence in the field of e-engagement needs exploration. The purpose of this study is to answer an important question – “How do marketers use gamification and neuromarketing to understand online engagement of consumers?”. We used a quantitative empirical research approach to assess the inter-relationship between neuromarketing and gamification. The study collected data from digital marketing strategists of retail firms to propose a theoretical framework for self-determination theory in successfully implementing new age technologies by plugging the cues of gamification and neuromarketing. The framework would be useful for retail firms to design digital marketing strategies for capturing the attention of consumers across different geographies. Findings indicated that, marketers are interested in neuromarketing for two main reasons: first, they think it can help them save money and improve their marketing plans, and second, they think that cutting-edge research techniques such as brain imaging can help them get more accurate findings.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Neuroscience is rooted in the technological boom that led to the development of technologies to scan and image the human body (Antoniak, 2020; Levallois et al., 2021; Shiv et al., 2005). Marketers play a crucial role in developing not only businesses' profits but, most importantly, their social contribution in today's world of consumerism and globalization (Schmitt, 2012). As a research method, neuromarketing bridges consumer science and neuroscience, creating opportunities for new, innovative studies (Shiv et al., 2005). These days, consumers are not paying for products or services by themselves, but for the experiences they receive (Schmitt, 2012).

The variety and attractiveness of products and services require marketers to go beyond the expressed needs and desires of consumers and identify the mental processes that lead to a choice (Evans, 2010). Gaming is a key customer engagement marketing strategy for businesses around the world. Gamification has enhanced customer engagement and business performance are plentiful, but they are accompanied by as many ineffective ones (Eisingerich et al., 2019; Smith & Zook, 2019). Designers and developers generally think of gamification as using game mechanics, technology, and development techniques in non-game spaces, while those outside the industry usually think of it as adding points, leaderboards, and badges to nongame activities (Law et al., 2011). A better understanding of the psyche of