

Midocean University
College of Media and Marketing
Master of Digital Marketing



“Proposed Research Survey”

The Impact of Gamified Reward Mechanisms on Player Loyalty and In-Game
Spending: A Field Study

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Problem statement:

The rapid growth of digital gaming and interactive media has transformed how companies design experiences that attract and retain consumers. In recent years, gamified reward mechanisms—such as points, achievements, badges, and randomized rewards—have emerged as powerful tools to encourage continued participation and increase in-game spending. Although these mechanisms are widely implemented across gaming and marketing platforms, their true effectiveness in cultivating long-term player loyalty and sustainable revenue generation remains unclear.

Previous research has primarily examined gamified rewards from psychological or design perspectives, emphasizing short-term enjoyment, excitement, or motivation. However, limited studies have investigated their strategic marketing implications, particularly how reward structures influence loyalty formation and ongoing spending behavior.

Most available findings originate from Western or East-Asian contexts, which differ culturally and economically from local digital markets. Consequently, there is a lack of empirical evidence that connects specific reward mechanisms to measurable marketing outcomes such as retention, lifetime value, and spending consistency.

This study therefore aims to address this gap by conducting a field study to examine the impact of gamified reward mechanisms on player loyalty and in-game spending. By empirically exploring how different types of reward designs affect both behavioral and financial outcomes, the research seeks to contribute actionable insights for marketers, developers, and digital strategists interested in optimizing gamified engagement systems.

Significance of the Study:

This research carries importance across academic, practical, and national dimensions.

Academically, the study contributes to the growing literature on gamification and digital marketing by analyzing gamified reward mechanisms through the lens of player loyalty and in-game spending. While prior research has primarily addressed psychological or entertainment perspectives, this study integrates marketing and behavioral insights to understand how reward design shapes long-term consumer relationships. By connecting gamified systems with measurable marketing outcomes such as loyalty and spending, it expands theoretical understanding of how reward-based marketing strategies influence consumer behavior in digital environments.

Practically, the findings provide data-driven insights for marketers, game developers, and digital-business strategists. Understanding which types of reward mechanisms—structured, transparent, or randomized—best encourage loyalty and repeated spending will help organizations design more effective and ethical gamified marketing campaigns. The study also supports companies in improving customer lifetime value (CLV), retention rates, and sustainable monetization without relying on manipulative reward structures. These practical insights enable marketing professionals to make evidence-based decisions when integrating gamification into customer-engagement programs.

Nationally, this research aligns with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030, which emphasizes digital innovation, entertainment, and economic diversification. Saudi Arabia's gaming and digital-marketing sectors are expanding rapidly, driven by a young, connected population and significant government investment in esports and digital content creation. By conducting a field study within this emerging market, the research offers localized empirical evidence that can guide national efforts to develop a competitive, innovation-based digital economy. The study's results can help Saudi and regional firms craft marketing

strategies that resonate with local consumers' cultural values—such as fairness, transparency, and social recognition—while maintaining international standards of ethical marketing practice.

Study Questions:

RQ1. How do gamified reward mechanisms relate to player loyalty in digital gaming environments?

RQ2. To what extent do different reward types (e.g., fixed/transparent vs. randomized/chance-based) influence in-game spending?

RQ3. Which reward attributes—such as fairness, predictability, and perceived value—most strongly predict player loyalty?

RQ4. Do ethical and transparent reward designs enhance player trust, and does that trust translate into repeat-purchase intention?

RQ5. How do player demographics and play patterns (e.g., age, platform, weekly playtime) moderate the relationships between reward mechanisms, loyalty, and spending?

RQ6. What actionable design guidelines can be derived to help marketers and developers optimize gamified reward systems for long-term loyalty and sustainable in-game spending?

Study Objectives:

1. To examine the overall relationship between gamified reward mechanisms and player loyalty within digital gaming environments.
2. To analyze the influence of different types of reward mechanisms (e.g., transparent vs. randomized systems) on players' in-game spending behavior.

3. To identify the key reward attributes—such as fairness, predictability, and perceived value—that most strongly contribute to sustaining player loyalty over time.
4. To evaluate the extent to which ethical and transparent reward designs enhance both user trust and repeat-purchase intention.
5. To provide practical recommendations for marketers, developers, and digital-strategy managers seeking to optimize gamified marketing campaigns for long-term profitability and consumer satisfaction.

Proposed Survey Questions:

Study Title:

The Impact of Gamified Reward Mechanisms on Player Loyalty and In-Game Spending: A Field Study

Instructions:

Please answer the following questions based on the main game you play most frequently that includes a reward system (e.g., PUBG Mobile, Fortnite, EA FC, COD Mobile, Genshin Impact, etc.).

Your responses are anonymous.

Response Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

- Demographic Information

1 - Age:

- 18–24
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45 or above

2 - Gender:

- Male
- Female

3 - Primary gaming platform:

- Mobile
- PC
- PlayStation
- Xbox
- Nintendo
- Other

4 - Weekly gaming hours:

- Less than 5 hours
- 5–10 hours
- 11–20 hours
- More than 20 hours

5 - Monthly in-game spending:

- None
- Less than 50 SAR
- 50–200 SAR
- 200–500 SAR
- More than 500 SAR

6 - What is the main game you play that includes a reward system?

(Open-ended)

- Axis 1: Gamified Reward Mechanisms:

(Use the 1–5 scale for all statements below)

General Perception of Reward Systems

1. The reward system in the game motivates me to continue playing.
2. Rewards make the gaming experience more enjoyable.
3. The reward system gives me a sense of progress in the game.

Fairness & Transparency

4. I feel the game's reward system is fair to all players.
5. The process of earning rewards is clear and easy to understand.
6. I do not feel the reward system is misleading or manipulative.
7. The probability of receiving rewards is predictable and not excessively random.

Value & Motivation

8. The rewards I receive are worth the effort I put into the game.
9. The value of the rewards feels appropriate compared to the time I spend.
10. The reward system encourages me to return to the game regularly.

Ethical Design & Trust

11. I believe the reward system is transparent and not deceptive.
12. I trust the game to distribute rewards fairly.
13. I feel safe spending money in the game because the reward system is clear.

-Axis 2: Player Loyalty & In-Game Spending:

(Use the 1–5 scale for all statements below)

General Loyalty

1. I intend to continue playing this game for a long time.

2. I enjoy spending time in this game.
3. I often recommend this game to my friends.

Trust-Based Loyalty

4. My trust in the reward system makes me more committed to the game.
5. I feel the game deserves my loyalty because its rewards are fair.

In-Game Spending Behavior

6. I purchase in-game items to enhance my gaming experience.
7. I have spent money in the game to obtain rewards.
8. I would be willing to spend more if rewards were clearer and more transparent.
9. The reward system encourages me to buy battle passes or special offers.