

Motivation in Gamification

An investigation by



In this article Mindflow in partnership with the University of Leeds will answer **2 questions**:

- 1.** When the purpose of Gamification intersects with the fun of the game, how does this affect the motivation profile of the users of the gamified system?
- 2.** Gamification elements do not influence everyone in the same way. But are there any that increase engagement in the game the most?



To answer to the **first question**, the University of Leeds and Mindflow have developed a research partnership.

This team, led by Joana Pereira, published in **2018** the results of their research with students from the University of Leeds Business School.

The result of the study revealed 3 types of profiles:

LEARNERS



LEARNERS: Represent those players who show more intrinsic motivation for learning, focusing mainly on reaching the next level to unlock a new set of questions in order to continue learning. They were observed to often ignore the other gamification elements.

"I play the game to learn, I don't care about the medals, I just want to play. I know people play just to get the achievements, but I'm not like that (...) I didn't challenge my classmates; I just wanted to play by myself."

GAMERS: The main motivation for installing and using the App was that they liked the 'fun' of the games and the challenge of the competition. Very motivated by rankings, points and medals, they like to challenge players and even wake up early to win certain time-based medals. Overall, they are the ones who promote the game the most. Gamers can also lose motivation if the distance with the players on the "podium" gets too big and the competition becomes less realistic.

"The medals motivated me a lot. They changed when I used it and the way I used it. I would play at night to achieve the Night Owl medal, for example (...) And I was really determined to get the 'Sprinter', I really tried hard, and it made me frustrated."

GAMERS



HYBRIDS



HYBRIDS: Motivated by both learning and competitive goals. Although their intrinsic motivation was learning, throughout the game they appreciated the gamification elements (calling them fun and "enjoyable"), which raised their levels of engagement throughout the game. They adhere to both visual and verbal elements.

"I played to review the course content because you can answer the questions and know right away if it's right or not, but I used to stop playing during the day and resume at 7pm, just to get Night Owl medal."

Curiously, in our research, the person who came in first place had a **Hybrid profile** and particularly valued the recognition, which gamified learning allowed him to achieve.



"I felt very motivated with the prize, thank you for the chocolates! (...) I always need to be motivated, no matter what the motivation is, even a 'thank you' is fine. On the bag they gave me, where it was written 'FIRST', I wrote the date, the name of the course unit and your name (teacher's name) and I stapled it to the bag and will keep it."



From this feedback, the teachers involved were inspired by the importance given to the experience. Because of this, the following year they created an event with students from Leeds University, where 'diplomas' were awarded to all those who had distinguished themselves in the gamified activity.

2. Gamification elements do not influence everyone in the same way. But are there any that increase engagement in the game the most?

To answer this question, Mariana Gonçalves used data from hundreds of students at the Mindflow Academy of IPAM (European University Institute of Management and Marketing) course was used to analyse the amount of time people played immediately after a gamification element occurred.



The results showed that "Power ups" were the gamification element with the greatest engagement power.



Help Use Powerup



What characteristics of this gamification element might have contributed to an increased desire to continue playing?

- They appear randomly (ensuring the surprise factor)
- They support learning (they help you to answer, give you more time to think about your answer or give you an extra bonus when you are sure of your answer)
- They guarantee autonomy (the person is free to use the special power at different times or not use it if they don't want to)



These results underline the difference between motivation in a game context and motivation in gamified learning. When there is a purpose beyond fun, the elements directly related to that purpose may have a stronger power than elements that only promote fun.