

More Than Just Playing: Can Gamification Advertising Targeting Children Be Used for A Good Cause?

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Abstract

The widespread use of gamification in advertising has raised critical questions about its influence on children, particularly when employed for commercial gains. However, gamification also holds the potential to foster prosocial behaviors and promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This paper investigates whether gamified advertising targeting children can be leveraged for positive societal causes, synthesizing insights from Saleme et al. (2020), Kuswandi and Fadhli (2022), Gkintoni et al. (2024), and established best practices in gamified content design. By integrating game mechanics with educational and social messages, gamification has demonstrated efficacy in enhancing empathy, improving cognitive development, and encouraging healthier behaviors among children and adolescents. This research contributes to the growing discourse on ethical advertising practices, offering actionable insights for stakeholders—including educators, marketers, and policymakers—on leveraging gamified approaches responsibly. It highlights the potential for gamification to address pressing societal challenges, such as improving early learning outcomes, fostering emotional intelligence, and promoting healthier lifestyles. By bridging the gap between commercial objectives and societal benefits, this study underscores the transformative power of gamified advertising in creating meaningful, positive impacts for future generations.

Keywords: Gamification, digital marketing, marketing to children, Generation Z