

When News Becomes a Game: What will happen to Journalism?

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: The rate of evolution of digital and interactive technologies has transformed the way of how the news is consumed by audiences. With the shrinking attention spans getting out of concern and information overload threatening to put their dark clouds over traditional journalism, the use of gamification as a technique that suggests the introduction of game-like behaviors such as points, badges, interactivity, and stories to the news platforms is also something being looked at by the news organizations. Despite the fact that gamification has been more involving, interactive, and engaging to the listener, there exist concerns of de-professionalizing serious news information, thus losing credibility, and altering the view of journalism as being a civic profession among the experts. This paper discussed gamification implementation on Pakistani online news sources and its implications for the seriousness and credibility of journalism.

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six media practitioners to study the impact of gamified features on the audience, the sustainability of their newsroom, and its effect on credibility of this profession. It is discussed in the context of Media Effects Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory, as the gamification had two consequences: more people have participated and learned, and, on the other hand, serious content may be trivialized.

Findings: The results reveal that gamification strengthens the audience retention and youth involvement but can be incompatible with the normative journalistic values especially when the entertainment gratifications overpower the informational or civic agendas.

Conclusion: It ends up concluding that strategic execution, informed by editorial structures, is necessary to maintain a balance between the innovation and credibility and present implications to media practice and research in new digital news ecosystems.

Keywords: Interactive Media, Gamification, Digital Journalism, News Credibility, Audience Engagement, Uses and Gratification Theory, Media Effect Theory, Infotainment.

Article History

Received:
November 17, 2025

Revised:
January 19, 2026

Accepted:
January 23, 2026

Online:
January 27, 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

The digitization of the media space has played immense roles in transforming the manner in which the audiences receive, interact, and respond to the news (Klouvidaki et al., 2025). The old journalism that has been founded on the power of the print and broadcast media finds itself under a different environment of overload of information, caustic circulation of content and shifting consumer trends. The news organizations are also facing an increase in competition to attention on the social media networks, through the mobile applications, as well as the interactive technologies that make news organizations be innovative both in content and delivery (García-Avilés, et al., 2022; Safdar and Fatima, 2024; Shabir et al., 2015). The immersive technologies will reshape the way we give news to the audience. Technologies like augmented reality, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence will transform the patterns of news giving and consumption by revolutionizing storytelling and adding the element of entertainment to keep the audience engaged with the content (Alshawish, 2023).

Gamification as an approach to drawing the attention of the audience, stimulating the interest and making them more loyal has become a strategy in this framework as the concept of applying game design to non-games (Mitchell, *et al.*, 2020). Gamification is not a new concept in news media. Apart from these gaming techniques, information depicted in the form of infographics also helps to engage the audience and increase their interactivity level as they feel more empowered. Gaming techniques and infographics not only helps to create awareness but also play an important role in engaging the audience and increasing interactivity with the content (Chowdhury & Rahman, 2023). Gamification also helps to enhance critical thinking and skeptical skills while processing some information (Koutsikou & Antonopoulos, 2025)

However, the nature of gamification has taken on a more sophisticated direction through the introduction of algorithmic personalization or data analytics and interactive design. To encourage increased engagement among the viewers, news companies also use badgers, leaderboards, points, progress, scenario-based simulations, and interactive storytelling (Kim & Ahn, 2017). These proponents allege that these processes are led by the changing trends in cognitive and behavior patterns of the contemporary audience, particularly, the younger generations of viewers who have experienced the interactivity in the sphere of entertainment, education and the social network.

At the same time, the gamification is an oxymoron. Even though it has been shown to have the potential of making the experience more interesting, captivating, and engage users in it, it questions its implications to the democratic and civic role of journalism. A risk of exaggerating a small problem to a big one, oversimulating complex stories or elevating entertainment above fact has been debated extensively (and has been the theme of numerous arguments). Gamified news may lead to the loss of credibility, solemnity and reliability of news, depending on the perceptions that critics may hold on the issue (LaPierre, 2025).

The blistering digitization of news has revolutionized how audiences access, experience and process information. The digital news platforms, are under the growing pressure due to the social media, entertainment applications, and other sources of information. Some news companies in turn have started to experiment with gamification, or the incorporation of game elements like quizzes, badges, streaks, and interactive plots into journalism to increase the level of engagement and retention (Badreldin, *et al.*, 2025).

Although there are possible positive effects of gamification, such as higher participation, younger audience interest, and addiction, the severity, validity, and civic role of journalism might be questioned as well (Campos, 2021). The opponents of it claim that formats of play or rewarding can trivialize the complex questions of politics, economy, or security, and that the emphasis is made on the normative editorial standards instead of the focus on entertainment driven engagement (Abadi, *et al.*, 2022). This dispute highlights wider debates on digital media studies regarding how this all impact journalistic values.

The paper explores the application, opportunities and threats of gamification, uses of gamification in Pakistani online news using semi-structured interviews with six media practitioners (four journalists and

two developers). The Media Effects Theory of the influence of media content on cognition and attitudes and the Uses and Gratifications Theory of media as an activity to fulfill informational, social, and entertainment requirements are the frames used in the analysis. Through a combination of these two viewpoints, the study will serve the purpose of offering a subtle approach to the matter of how gamification serves to both captivate the audiences and, perhaps, transform the journalistic practices in the newer digital news systems.

1.1 Problem Statement

The present flexibility of gamification towards the virtual news system is both an opportunity and a threat to the contemporary journalism. The gamified components, including points, badges, interactivity and simulations, on the one hand, have been shown to spur on an increased number of the audience to participate, pay attention, and be loyal in media environments where the user experience has become more and more difficult to sustain. Conversely, the use of such methods on serious journalism material is problematic for the credibility, trivialization, and the erosion of boundaries between news and entertainment.

Although gamification has been thoroughly explored in other contexts (such as education, marketing, and health communication), the application of gamification to journalism has not been well studied (Parra-Valcarce & Gómez-García, 2024). A good portion of the current research in media studies has been on the more general phenomena of infotainment, participatory culture, and digital interactivity, and little has been done to systematically examine how gamification itself influences audience belief, how serious it is perceived to be, and how well it is perceived to comprehend news content.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The study is valuable to media and communication research because it will enhance the academic knowledge on the intersection of gamification with journalism. Although gamification is well researched in education, health, marketing, and various other areas, the ways of using gamification in news consumption have not been thoroughly investigated. The implementation of the media effects theory, uses and gratifications theory, and game studies into the study will not only add to the existing theoretical frameworks but also create new links between the audience perception, credibility, and seriousness in journalism.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To find out and evaluate the gamification use in digital news platforms.
2. To determine the influence of gamified news on readership, understanding, and trust.
3. To interview journalists, editors, and developers about the perceived threats to seriousness of journalism due to gamification of news.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ1: How digital media platforms are using gamification technique in their news content?

RQ2: How the application of gamification in news is an opportunity to engage and sustain the audience in the digital newsrooms?

RQ3: What are the perceived threats associated to gamification of news with respect to seriousness and credibility of digital journalism?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of the design of games on non-games is what is usually implemented to make participation be an endeavor that is encouraged through gamification (Deterding, *et al.*, 2011). The term news gamification refers to interactive documentaries, infographics and other immersive technologies that have the ability

to add the element of entertainment in the news. The emergence of Metaverse and immersive technologies indicates that the future of journalism will not only be dependent on news articles (Davidow, 2024).

Researchers refer to it as applying points, badges, a leaderboard, storylines, and challenges, and so on to engage users and make it enjoyable beyond games. In the context of journalism, gamification has been seen to mean the application of video-game concepts (quizzes, puzzles, scoring, etc.) to news settings and situations to make news consumption more engaging and participatory, which brings in reader attraction and retention (Linares, 2023).

Using the content analysis technique, the impact of immersive journalism was studied regarding the creation of climate change information. This interactive documentary was created to make audience learn about climate change and combat misinformation regarding the issue. Results revealed that it helped the audience to reduce their sensitivity and vulnerability towards misinformation regarding climate change (Brannon, *et al.*, 2024). An experiment was conducted on 164 individuals, and participants were observed over the period of five months. The findings listed badges, rankings, leaderboards, and points as the most powerful news gaming techniques for increased engagement in the news content (Badreldin, *et al.*, 2025; Shabir *et al.*, 2015a). The developmental technology has changed the ways audiences look at the news and consume it. The case studies of several newspapers in South Africa such as Daily Sun, News 24, The Sowetan, and TimesLive demonstrated the influence of artificial intelligence-driven gamification content in motivating and engaging the readers. Findings revealed that the tailored storytelling using the immersive technologies is a great way to achieve sustainability in the digital newsrooms (Mututwa, 2025).

Examples of common game elements are point system (to reward reading or commenting), badges/levels (to indicate milestones), leaderboard (to encourage competition), and interactive narratives or quizzes (to entertain and educate viewers/readers). Both of them are supposed to exploit the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of players (entertainment, achievement, social connection) to maintain their interest in news content. There are numerous gamified features that media organizations have tried out in order to attract readers. As an illustration, most news websites have introduced point-collection systems, badges, and quizzes with the aim of promoting repeat traffic. According to the experimental studies, the methods can significantly boost the duration at the site and visits. (Klouvidaki, *et al.*, 2025).

Several studies indicate that the level of audience engagement can be of great improvement with the use of gamified journalism. In practical cases, the introduction of game elements has a tendency of causing a reader to spend increased time on a piece of literature, engage more and come back more. As an example, Thulin (2022) concluded that news games can make FB more engaged and loyal and are extensively shared on social media, which elevates the quality of news branding and empathy (Thulin, 2022). Empirical studies also demonstrate that gamification can enhance the understanding and retention of complicated issues, and dense studies are more accessible (e.g. simplification of policy issues through interactive quizzes) (JA, *et al.*, 2025).

The literature continues to raise a uniform question as to whether playfulness is weakening the credibility of journalism. Studies have discovered that when news becomes a game by appearing to be a game, it will only continue to destroy its social relevance and trustworthiness among the people. As the means of providing a more personalized news experience and an entertaining content, news gamification appeared, utilizing such tools as badges, points, and leaderboards. The impact of the gamification on the techniques of news reporting and the structures of news delivery is the only issue that is not completely investigated as we are starting to realize the advantages of the gamification and its drawbacks (Arafat, 2020).

The majority of newsroom managers recognize the ability of gameful features to engage. As an example, Greek editors have written that point systems, such as like/dislike buttons and quizzes, can help people spend more time on the site when used professionally. Nonetheless, there are also concerns by media professionals. This is indicated by the editors, who note that younger readers are into gamification,

whereas older readers could disregard it due to generational and cultural differences. They fear that buying gamified content (selling point or premium badge) is going to be like commercializing media (Klouvidaki, *et al.*, 2025).

The discourse analysis of Vos and Perreault (2020) argues that journalists settle on a source of innovation and tradition; some argue that gamification is a serious news anchored in the audience engagement norms, whereas others do not believe that news should be transformed into entertainment (Vos & Perreault, 2020).

One of the studies outlined the risks that might be encountered such as manipulation, oversimplification, distortion of sober matter in a light-hearted package, and the prevalence of the algorithmic, which is more about interaction than information. Gamified journalism is a rhetorical innovation that has the potential to transform, integrating persuasion, education and interactivity in such a way as to have a positive impact on civic engagement and media literacy, assuming it is done in a manner that is transparent and ethical (Tetiana & Yakubovska, 2025). Journalism in present times is swinging between the culture of gamification to persuade the audience and keeping the ethical standards, seriousness of professionalism, and credibility intact. Journalists need to develop a mechanism through which they can keep a balance between both to sustain in a dignified manner in the age of immersive technology (García-Avilés, *et al.*, 2022).

In general, there are still gaps in the research concerning mapping newsroom attitudes across the world. The bulk of the investigation has been on early adopters or innovators; more comprehensive surveys are required to reflect the attitudes of large media companies and legacy journalists towards elements of the game.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The framework adopted in this research is the Media Effects Theory and The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to explain the differences in the way gamification is used in both the audience engaging and journalistic practices in Pakistani digital news outlets.

The Media Effects Theory offers an approach to comprehending the effects of media content on cognition, attitude, and behavior (Shah, *et al.*, 2008). Within gamified journalism, digital news no longer remains a one-way consumption process; interactive features like quizzes, streaks, and branching stories provide chances to engage and participate in the processes, experiment and receive feedback instantly.

In this respect, gamification will be able to produce two effects. On the one hand, interactive characteristics have a beneficial effect on learning, recollection, and political awareness, as they require a user to interact with content. Conversely, learning can also be boosted through these mechanics, as far as elections, and policy debates etc. This duality was reflected by the six people interviewed: whereas developers reported on the potential of gamified features to engage viewers, journalists were concerned because of the risk of losing the seriousness of news.

This has positioned gamification as a mediated influence with cognitive and normative outcomes, showing the conflict between the efficacy of the information and the engagement with entertainment.

UGT views audiences as active participants who choose the media to fulfill certain informational, social and emotional needs (Rubin, 2008). UGT can be used to justify why gamification is effective to engage younger, mobile-first consumers and elicit habitual engagement. Nevertheless, responses showed that the entertainment gratifications of journalism can subvert the civic and informational value of journalism. This combined paradigm describes why the participants have two-way perceptions of gamification: on the one hand it is an opportunity of retention, habit making and socialization of youth in politics, on the other hand it produces a possible threat of credibility, seriousness and trust of the people in journalism.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research design is qualitative because a study is conducted in Pakistani digital news to explore the application, opportunities, and challenges of gamification. Qualitative research using interview technique was selected to reflect the complex nature of the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of media professionals who are directly related to the production of news and design news platforms (Oun & Bach, 2014).

Purposive sampling was used to select the six participants. The goal behind the selection of participants was having relevant expertise and variety of perspective within digital news ecosystems. Participants included, four online newsroom reporters (senior reporters and online editors) and two developers on product design and improvement of user experience through gamified news features.

These roles have been chosen to include editorial and technical perspectives, hence, the interconnectedness between the news production, the gamified design, and the audience engagement strategies. The sample was chosen according to their active use of digital news platforms that had used or tried gamification.

The semi-structured interviews of (n=6) respondents were an online method used to collect data, which was done using video conferencing platforms because of the geographic and logistical constraints. Thematic analysis was applied to interview transcription and analysis with the help of inductive approach. The duration of interviews was between 15 and 30 minutes. Semi-structured format was flexible: the researchers led discussions with the use of the core research questions; however, the participants were encouraged to expound on the emergent themes, examples, and challenges according to their work experiences.

3.1 Demographics

Table 1: *Demographics of Respondents (N=6)*

Participants	Age	Gender	Occupation	Years of Experience
P1	35 years	Male	Journalist	4
P2	27 years	Male	Developer	2
P3	39 years	Male	Journalist	7
P4	31 years	Male	Journalist	5
P5	29 years	Male	Developer	3
P6	33 years	Male	Journalist	5

Themes were also viewed in the frames of Media Effects Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory which made it possible to examine the effect of gamified mechanisms on the audience behavior and motivation as well as news credibility. Direct quotes were used as they were chosen to demonstrate a theme and keep the originality of the views of the practitioners.

4. FINDINGS

4.1: *The Use of Gamification Technique in Digital News Dissemination*

4.1.1 *Use of Gamification Technique for Digital Engagement*

Throughout the interview records, participants have mentioned that gamification in Pakistan news ecosystem is largely linked to the activities aimed at increasing digital interaction, particularly among the younger generation as well as mobile-first generation. It was mentioned that instead of fundamentally changing the content in the news, gamification was a veneer placed on the already existing digital products with the aim of making them more engaging and retentive to the user. The majority of the mentioned cases involved badges, streaks, quizzes, interactive explainers, and loyalty systems based on notifications.

“It reported that individuals enjoy the idea of playing with information, as opposed to merely consuming it.” (Developer)

“Younger readers do not simply want to scroll. They desire to swipe, answer, tap, and vote. It makes them feel that they are a part of the story and not the spectators.” (Journalist)

These remarks suggest that gamification can be taken as something less of a transformation of journalism and more as a practical tool of creating digital habits and stickiness of products. Nonetheless, it was also noted during the interviews that application of gamification is still experimental and somewhat subsidiary among Pakistani digital newsrooms.

4.1.2 Incentives to Reward News Consumption.

Respondents revealed that gamification offers a framework of incentives that facilitate repetition, loyalty and participation. Some of these incentives are reading streak rewards, rewarding to complete quizzes or rewarding to share stories. These processes have been termed as an effort to compete in a world where attention duration is limited and entertainment media is supreme.

“Badges, streaks and points might reek of gimmicks, they are keeping people returning. News is catching up with TikTok - either innovate or die.” (Developer)

“Nobody waits in the morning to see a paper. You must compensate people to remain updated.” (Journalist)

The framing of information as a habit underscores a newly emerging trend in digital news operations, in which audience retention is viewed as a quantitative and game-based task, as opposed to an editorial obligation.

4.1.3 Energizing Political and Civic Engagement to Interactive Content.

One of the themes that were repeated in the interviews was the association of gamification with civic or political education. Respondents claimed that interactive forms of news, quizzes, and policy simulators can reduce fear of intimidation of users on a complicated political issue, especially among young people.

“We had a simulator of taxes policy, where the user could modify the tax rates and observe the results. Individuals claimed that it helped better clarify what policy decisions they had read in any article.” (Journalist)

“The most shared content is political quizzes. Articles do not generate the same level of debates as they do.” (Journalist)

Such descriptions indicate that gamification can support a more interactive form of political communication. Instead of just informing citizens, gamified tools seem to be motivating to decide, experiment, and reflect.

4.1.4 Incoherent Adoption and Weak Institutional Strategy.

Although experimentation is being excited upon, lack of institutional planning as regards gamification was also highlighted in the interviews. Respondents observed that innovations are usually the results of side projects, interns, or developers and not newsroom leaders, and are not in most cases part of a long-term editorial plan.

“In most occasions, we develop gamified functionality without having a roadmap. It’s experimental. If it works, fine.” (Developer)

Top editors are not very aware of gamification. The reason they are okay with it is that it is modern and does not have any strategic planning behind it. (Journalist)

This indicates that gamification is at a fairly infantile stage of the news business in Pakistan, being a trial and error activity instead of being a component of the system.

The statistics show that gamification of Pakistani digital newsrooms is more of a digital engagement mechanism, influenced by market factors, rivalry with entertainment solutions, and the desire to appeal to the younger population. Its application is not transformative, but incremental, and highly interactional, loyal and participatory as opposed to editorial redesign. The interviews also demonstrate that as much as gamification does present new opportunities in civic and political participation, it is strategically undeveloped being dependent on experimental activity, as opposed to organizational outlook.

4.2 Gamification as an Opportunity to Engage and Sustain Digital Audience

4.2.1 Gamification Enhancing the News Engagement and Retention

The main point presented by the participants was always that the main potential that gamification offers is that it can expand the scope of the user interaction and promote the news as a habit. Gamified functions were termed as a way of drawing audiences back, particularly in a saturated online space that is dominated by non-news entertainment systems.

“Unless we provide the users with the reason why they would go back, they will not. Gamification provides them with small rewards to keep them longer and come back tomorrow.” (Developer)

“Simple-looking as they may appear, quizzes and polls generate a loop. Citizen do visit the pages for monitoring and comparing their performance and results.” (Journalist)

These lessons provide an indication that gamification has a practical benefit regarding retention that makes news outlets more competitive in attention economies.

4.2.2 Appealing to the Younger and Mobile-First Audience

According to the interviewees, who are more likely to be engaged via smartphones and social media, younger age groups are more receptive to gamified formats compared to older ones. Gamification has been discussed as a means of reaching these audiences according to their own terms, through application of well-known digital mechanics to break down something complicated into an interactive form.

“Young users are more inclined towards the content that is engaging and keeps their interest alive. In fact, they even like it more than long text.” (Journalist)

“Gen Z doesn’t want lectures. They desire to investigate, amuse, and experiment even in serious issues.” (Journalist)

This supports larger suppositions that gamification is consistent with modern trends in digital literacy, which open chances to socialize politically and educate civically.

4.2.3 Business Model Innovation and Monetization

Though not brought into focus just as much as engagement, a number of participants associated gamification with revenue experimentation. Loyalty scheme, reward-based membership, and sponsored quizzes were mentioned as the means that might help to diversify revenues in digital journalism.

“That already is considered a victory when badges and streaks turn even a marginal percentage of non-paid followers or members into paid ones.” (Journalist)

“Customized quizzes could sound odd at this point, but the brands enjoy interaction. Selling is much easier than banner ads.” (Developer)

These remarks reflect a possible direction to sustainability, in particular in the scenarios when traditional advertising paradigm is crumbling, and subscription models are not yet well-developed.

4.2.4 Gamification Reforming the Traditional News Patterns

The gamification was also framed by the participants as a differentiation opportunity. In a landscape where content is extremely similar, interactive storytelling and reward-based loyalty were perceived as a possible differentiator that could be used to set digital-first outlets off of the legacy competitor and informal news sources.

“The same headlines are published by everybody. The experience does not necessarily have to be the content, but something different with gamification.” (Journalist)

“People will remember your platform due to interactivity. It is no longer the case that articles do not do that anymore.” (Journalist).

The differentiation was considered especially applicable in the Pakistani media ecosystem, in which digital startup players compete not only with the traditional networks but also with informal influencers who affect the media field beyond the formal rules of the journalism industry.

These opportunities are aimed at a more comprehensive strategic objective: allowing news companies to survive in platform economics based on attention. Although the process of monetization is still in its early stages, interviewees were hopeful that gamification would help newsrooms to become sustainable, particularly in the cultivation of younger audiences and as an additional source of revenue.

4.3 Threats Associated to the Gamification of News

4.3.1 Risk of Trivializing Serious News

Respondents were quite concerned with the fact that gamified formats could water down or trivialize serious political, economic or conflict-related journalism. Some of them claimed that the gameplay logic, which revolves around the idea of entertainment and reward, can be at odds with the norms of games journalism, such as seriousness, credibility, and accuracy.

“Politics as entertainment: election makes politics look like another entertainment.” (Journalist)

“Everything cannot be interactive or fun. There are certain things that should be taken seriously.” (Journalist)

The conflict points to centuries of controversy around infotainment in digital journalism where commercial measures may override editorial ones.

4.3.2 Credibility and Ethical Issues

The participants raised the issue of whether gamification can destroy audience trust. The editorial credibility is weak, like quizzes or streaks and is so susceptible to any perceived gimmicks. There was a question of the perceived meaning of gamified news by the users and whether the playful mechanics undermine the seriousness of the factual reporting.

“When news is made a game, the public can begin to wonder about whether news should be taken seriously.” (Journalist)

“It is already a weak environment in terms of credibility. It may be destroyed by over-gamification further on its part.” (Developer)

These anxieties were based not in the antagonism to innovation, but in the knowledge of journalism being a state institution.

4.3.3 Mismatch between Editorial Values and Engagement Metrics

The respondents identified a more general philosophical battle between editorial responsibility and engagement-oriented reasoning. Gamification tends to depend on metrics, including clicks, participation,

shares, whereas journalism depends on normative values including accountability, accuracy and independence.

“The metrics drag you to have fun, interactive content even in cases where it is not the most significant story.” (Journalist)

“The editors begin to pursue the user activity in place of the public interest journalism.” (Journalist)

This friction is an indication of a systemic change in online journalism whereby newsroom choices are more controlled by data at the cost of civic priorities.

4.3.4 Agenda Sensitivity and Political Manipulation

Respondents warned that gamification of hot-button topics such as elections, security, sectarian wars, or foreign politics may unintentionally affect politics. The issues that need to be subtle may be ordinary as a result of mischievous framing.

"In case of you geopoliticizing or sectarian warfare, you are either distorting reality or spreading naive beliefs." (Journalist)

“Not everything should be turned into a quiz or simulation to be learned about.” (Journalist)

These issues imply that gamification is not going to integrate well with the complicated political life in Pakistan.

The gamification has been seen to pose a serious threat to the seriousness of journalism, credibility of journalism, and civic responsibility of journalism. The participants revealed the mechanisms according to which these threats can be actualized: dilution of political or sensitive material, incidents of sabotage of editorial credibility, lack of congruence with the public interest journalism, and streamlining of complicated problems.

Such perceived threats are not a rejection of gamification as such. Instead, they express concern that in the absence of editorial protection, gamification can reward logics of entertainment as opposed to democratic information.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The paper concludes that gamification in digital Pakistan-based news sources has its opportunities and challenges and this is seen through the views of six interviewees (two developers and four journalists).

The main results included the gamification as a way to make news digestible, which makes people want to consume news consistently because of interactive elements like quizzes, badges, and streaks. It helps to aid the growth of the audience, especially younger mobile-first users who perceive the need to be entertained, challenged, and recognized. Gamification offers the prospects of newsroom sustainability through differentiation and experiment-based revenue approaches (e.g., sponsored quizzes, loyalty programs).

Gamified systems can render serious news, especially sensitive news such as elections, security or policy discussion trivial. When informational or civic gratifications are not dominant over the entertainment ones, the credibility and perceived seriousness of journalism can be influenced. Innovation based on metrics and normative journalism are in conflict with each other, and these tensions may arise when there is an engagement-oriented priority.

The paper highlights the importance of editorial rules and ethics in applying gamification. The newsrooms must be quite specific about the content that can be treated playfully or interactively, and those that need to be treated in a traditional manner. Gamification is to be incorporated in a strategic

approach keeping in mind the political, ethical, and civic sensibilities especially in rich media such as in Pakistan.

The results indicate the importance of combining Media Effects Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory to comprehend the two-sided effects of gamification: on the one hand, motivations of users to use the media make them interested in the process, on the other hand, the perception of credibility, seriousness, and civic awareness is formed due to the media impact. Future studies may involve the researcher examining the meaning that the audience forms about gamified news experiences and comparing the outcomes of the gamification in different cultural and regional settings.

Digital news Gamification in Pakistani is not an activity that is either positive or negative. Its effects are determined by the degree of audience gratifications, editorial control as well as institutional interests. As this paper points out, gamification is at the crossroads of market forces, audience needs and journalism conventions, which provides chances as well as threats that should be negotiated. Gamification must be introduced in newsrooms in a strategic manner whereby there must be editorial directions to make sure that serious issues are handled. Moreover, the features of audience engagement must be tailored in the way that would not harm the credibility and the trust of people, but rather balance the entertainment aspect with the civic and informational one.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declared NO conflict of interest.

Funding Source

The authors received NO funding to conduct this study.

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