


Chapter 1

Perceptions, Criticalities, and Potentials of Game-Based Trainings for Inclusion: A Literary Review and Evidence From the Field

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ABSTRACT

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) are pivotal in cultivating a favorable society, profoundly influencing both individual and collective welfare within educational and occupational contexts. Contemporary studies underscore the role of gaming as a potent medium for advancing D&I principles, thereby bolstering collaboration and personal growth. Furthermore, proficient management of diversity within work environments not only adheres to legal standards but also yields economic advantages, such as heightened job satisfaction. To explore significant dimensions of the D&I research domain related to the lens of pedagogical gaming, the authors propose (a) a comprehensive review of the literature, also considering a historical developmental overview of the concepts of diversity and gaming; (b) an empirical field study aimed at assessing the primary potentials, along with positive and negative perceptions, as well as critical challenges associated with pedagogical gaming methodologies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) represent fundamental values for building an equitable and sustainable society (Winters, 2013). These principles are inextricably intertwined with the world of education, training, and work, influencing individual and collective well-being at personal and working level (Roberson, 2006; Farndale et al., 2015; Garg & Sangwan, 2021; Kirton, 2020). In this scenario, gaming emerges as a valuable tool for promoting the values of diversity and inclusion, encouraging learning, collaboration, and personal growth (Shliakhovchuk, 2018; Lehan, Hussey & Babcock, 2020; Modarelli, Rainero, & Amelio, 2024; Cole & Zammit, 2020). Workplace diversity management has recently garnered attention, with organizations striving to establish an equitable environment that is considerate, respectful, and supportive of individuals from diverse backgrounds (Patrick & Kumar, 2012; Davis, Frolova & Callahan, 2016). The goal of diversity management is to develop policies, practices, and strategies that ensure the inclusion of individuals with varied identities in the workplace. Apart from meeting legal obligations, diversity management also offers economic advantages, such as enhanced job satisfaction and organizational appeal (Chakraborty & Chatterjee, 2020). Research has shown that workplace diversity policies are most effective when endorsed by both top management and employees themselves (Scarborough et al., 2019).

Gender diversity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, disability etc., represent only a few dimensions of diversity. In today's global economy, companies must prioritize creating inclusive workplaces for innovation, problem-solving and employee happiness. Game-based pedagogies offer a potential solution to address diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Employers can design dynamic learning experiences that promote empathy, teamwork, and interchanging solutions for communication and team building (Wolfe, Bowen & Roberts, 1989). Organizations are promoting inclusive spaces for individuals with disabilities, emphasizing support and adjustments for equal opportunities. Leadership plays a crucial role in fostering change and implementing best practices (Vito & Sethi, 2020). Ethnicity, gender, disability, religion etc., diversity management is essential for fostering inclusive workplaces, addressing disparities, and balancing diversity initiatives. Research on employee relations in diverse environments can reveal obstacles and facilitators for enhancing positive interactions.

Gamification is a popular tool, approach, and method for enhancing motivation, fostering competition, and improving learning outcomes in various settings. It has been used in education, customer engagement, and business applications. Gamification strategies focus on understanding user preferences and promoting economic and performance-oriented approaches. It has been shown to improve learning activities, enhance assessment feedback, and enhance computational thinking among young

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