



Chapter 1

Cross–Cultural Gamification: Understanding Design and User Experience in Different Cultural Contexts

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ABSTRACT

Digital technologies have changed cultural production and consumption, making gamified apps important cultural artifacts. Despite their global reach, little is known about how cultural differences affect system design and user experience. Research has mostly ignored cross-cultural user interactions. We use Hofstede's cultural dimensions to analyze cross-cultural gamification to fill this knowledge gap. Our study shows that cultural differences considerably affect user engagement and gamified system effectiveness. In one culture, motivational affordances may work, but not another. We share case studies showing how culturally adaptive design improves user experiences. Our findings show that cultural sensitivity in design makes gamified apps more inclusive and effective. This has major ramifications for designers and researchers trying to maximize gamification tactics across cultures.

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INTRODUCTION

Computer games and gamified applications have become potent mediums that transcend geographical boundaries (Woods, 2021) (Kalpokas, 2022) (Di, 2020). Games are more relevant to intercultural communication and cultural studies as they become cultural artifacts as well as entertainment. These digital platforms are ideal for reaching multicultural, multilingual, and socioeconomic audiences worldwide. These platforms must consider user diversity to improve user experience (UX) and engagement (Li et al., 2024). Designers and researchers must explore how cultural differences affect user engagement with gamified apps.

Gamification, the use of game-design elements in non-game contexts to engage users and influence behavior, is a common strategy in education, healthcare, marketing, and workplace productivity (Ciuchita et al., 2023) (Schöbel et al., 2020). Gamification uses game motivations like prizes, challenges, and competition to improve user experiences and outcomes. However, designers' cultural preconceptions often shape gamified system design and execution (Lowry et al., 2020) (Cheng, 2020). These assumptions may not match users' cultural norms, attitudes, and expectations from other cultures, resulting in unsatisfactory user experiences. Motivational affordances that work in one culture may not work in another due to different values and behaviors. To achieve global efficacy and inclusivity, gamification design must include cross-cultural factors.

Despite its widespread use, a lack of research examines the relationship between culture and gamification (Ciuchita et al., 2023) (Oliveira et al., 2023). Previous research has shown that gamified apps work in certain cultures, but little is known about how cultural differences affect the design and user experience of gamified systems across cultures. Most research on gamification has concentrated on its technical features or the user experience in a single cultural context, ignoring the complex cultural dynamics that result from worldwide deployment (Marques et al., 2023) (Riar, 2022). This lack of cross-cultural analysis hinders designers and researchers from creating globally effective and culturally sensitive gamified apps. Addressing this knowledge gap is crucial to increasing gamification and improving its global applicability and success.

This study analyzes cross-cultural gamification, focusing on the design and user experience of gamified applications in different cultures, to fill the knowledge gap. We will study how Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Trompenaars' concept of cultural differences affect gamified system design, user engagement, and effectiveness. We'll go beyond identifying cultural differences to systematically integrating them into the design process to create more culturally adaptive and inclusive gaming tactics. Through case studies and empirical data, we hope to offer designers and academics actionable insights and recommendations to improve gamified apps' cross-cultural

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