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Gamification as a Strategy to Improve Sales Marketing Performance with Work Motivation as a Mediating Variable

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Abstract: The increasing intensity of competition in the financing industry requires companies to implement innovative human resource management strategies to sustain employee performance. This study investigates the effect of gamification on sales marketing performance, with work motivation acting as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was employed by collecting survey data from 132 sales marketing employees of PT Adira Dinamika Multi Finance Tbk, Jambi Branch, using a census technique. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software. The results indicate that gamification does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance. However, gamification has a positive and significant effect on work motivation, which in turn significantly influences sales marketing performance. Furthermore, work motivation is proven to fully mediate the relationship between gamification and employee performance. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of gamification initiatives in sales-oriented organizations depends on their ability to enhance employees' motivational states rather than serving as a direct performance driver. This study provides empirical insights for managers in designing motivation-based gamification systems to improve sustainable sales performance in the financing industry.

Keyword: Gamification, Work Motivation, Employee Performance, Sales Marketing, Financing Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation is accelerating changes in the financial industry landscape and increasing the intensity of competition between companies. These conditions require financing companies to develop innovative strategies in human resource management in order to maintain sustainable business performance. The role of the sales and marketing team has become increasingly strategic because the achievement of sales targets directly determines the growth of the company's portfolio and competitiveness. High target pressure, an increasingly saturated market, and dynamic consumer behavior make the motivation of the sales force a key factor in maintaining optimal performance (Ahearne et al., 2025).

Gamification has emerged as a managerial approach that integrates game design elements into work activities to increase employee engagement and experience. This approach utilizes mechanisms such as points, leaderboards, challenges, reward systems, feedback, and

progress tracking to shape work behavior in a structured manner. (Buil et al., 2021; Murawski, 2021). The application of gamification in human resource management is becoming more widespread because it is considered capable of influencing employee attitudes and responses to work targets and performance evaluation systems (Landers et al., 2017).

The effectiveness of gamification is closely related to its role in shaping work motivation. Work motivation reflects internal and external drives that influence the intensity, direction, and persistence of employee work behavior (Liu & Gao, 2025). The fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and social connectedness needs in the work system has been shown to contribute to the formation of more sustainable motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Gamification elements are considered effective when they can strengthen intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in a balanced manner through challenging and meaningful work experiences (Sailer et al., 2017).

Employee performance, especially in sales and marketing functions, reflects the level of individual success in achieving targets and carrying out work responsibilities. Performance is understood through the dimensions of task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance, which collectively describe employee contributions to the achievement of organizational goals (Lousã et al., 2024). The target-oriented characteristics of the financing industry make sales and marketing performance a key indicator of organizational success (Rodríguez et al., 2024).

The effect of gamification on employee performance is not always immediate. The impact of gamification on performance often works through psychological mechanisms such as motivation and engagement, so its effectiveness is greatly influenced by the quality of the design elements and the suitability of the implementation to user needs (Buil et al., 2021; Krath et al., 2021). The application of gamification that is not integrated with work objectives and organizational systems has the potential to produce limited effects on performance outcomes (Capatina et al., 2024). The competitive work environment of financing companies requires a well-planned and integrated gamification design to encourage productivity without triggering counterproductive negative responses.

This study integrates the dimensions of gamification, work motivation, and sales marketing performance into a single empirical framework in financing companies in Indonesia. The focus on PT Adira Dinamika Multi Finance Tbk provides an overview of the application of gamification in a structured and target-oriented sales system. This approach is in line with the view that the effectiveness of management practices is greatly influenced by their suitability to organizational characteristics and work culture (Palumbo & Douglas, 2024; Yao et al., 2023).

The objectives of this study are to analyze the effect of gamification on sales and marketing performance, examine the effect of gamification on work motivation, analyze the effect of work motivation on sales and marketing performance, and examine the role of work motivation as a mediating variable in the relationship between gamification and sales and marketing performance at PT Adira Dinamika Multi Finance Tbk.

Based on the conceptual framework and research objectives, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H1 : Gamification has a positive and significant effect on sales marketing performance.

H2 : Gamification has a positive and significant effect on employee work motivation.

H3 : Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on sales marketing performance.

H4 : Work motivation mediates the effect of gamification on sales marketing performance.

METHOD

This study adopts the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach using AMOS software to test the causal relationship model between gamification, work motivation, and employee performance (Kline, 2016). SEM was chosen for its ability to analyze direct and indirect effects and to test the validity and reliability of instruments simultaneously (Hair et al.,

2022). The analysis was conducted in two stages: (a) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test validity and reliability, and (b) structural model analysis to test hypotheses and path significance, including mediation analysis with bootstrapping (Hayes, 2022). This approach empirically aims to confirm the role of work motivation as a link between the application of gamification and improved employee performance.

The research population consisted of all sales and marketing employees at PT Adira Dinamika Multi Finance's Jambi branch, totaling 132 people. Given the manageable number, this study used a census technique. Data were collected over three months (May–July 2025) using a structured questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale. To maximize participation from highly mobile sales personnel, a mixed-mode method was applied, combining face-to-face surveys at branch offices with the distribution of online questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

A comprehensive overview of the profiles of 132 sales and marketing employees of PT Adira Dinamika Multi Finance Jambi Branch who participated in the study is presented in Table 1. The data covers demographic characteristics such as gender, age, length of service, and highest level of formal education.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Presentation
Age (Year)	< 25	35	26,5%
	25-30	55	41,7%
	31-35	25	18,9%
	> 35	17	12,9%
Gender	Male	111	84,1%
	Female	21	15,9%
Working Period (Year)	< 1	40	30,3%
	1-3	50	37,9%
	4-6	25	18,9%
	> 6	17	12,9%
Level of Education	High School	20	15,2%
	Bachelor	106	80,3%
	Master	6	4,5%

Source : Research Data

The majority of respondents were male, numbering 111 people or 84.1%, with females numbering 21 people or 15.9%. The largest age group was 25-30 years old, reaching 55 people or 41.7%, followed by under 25 years old with 35 people or 26.5%, while the group above 35 years old was the smallest with 17 people or 12.9%. The highest level of education was bachelor's degree, with 106 respondents or 80.3%, followed by high school with 20 respondents or 15.2%, and master's degree with only 6 respondents or 4.5%. In terms of work experience, most respondents had 1-3 years of experience, totaling 50 people or 37.9%, and less than 1 year, totaling 40 people or 30.3%, while those with more than 6 years of experience were the fewest, totaling 17 people or 12.9%.

Measurement Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test the validity and reliability of the research instruments for each construct. The results include factor loading values (>0.70), Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.50), Composite Reliability (CR > 0.70), and model fit tests, as presented in the following table. This evaluation is a prerequisite before conducting structural model analysis (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Construct	Dimension	Indicator	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Gamifikasi	Points	GM1; GM2	0.82; 0.85	0.89	0.65
	Leaderboards	GM3; GM4	0.78; 0.81		
	Challenges	GM5; GM6	0.76; 0.79		
	Rewards	GM7; GM8	0.88; 0.84		
	Feedback	GM9; GM10	0.71; 0.73		
	Progress Tracking	GM11; GM12	0.69; 0.75		
Work Motivation	Intrinsic Motivation	MK1; MK2	0.79; 0.83	0.92	0.67
	extrinsic motivation	MK3; MK4	0.81; 0.77		
	Autonomy	MK5; MK6	0.85; 0.80		
	Competence	MK7; MK8	0.74; 0.76		
	Relatedness	MK9; MK10	0.82; 0.78		
Employee Performance	Task Performance	KK1; KK2	0.84; 0.80	0.82	0.61
	Contextual Performance	KK3; KK4	0.77; 0.81		
	Adaptive Performance	KK5; KK6	0.75; 0.79		

Chi Square=245.732; df= 174; P-value= 0.067; RMSEA= 0.045; GFI= 0.92; CFI= 0.96; TLI= 0.95

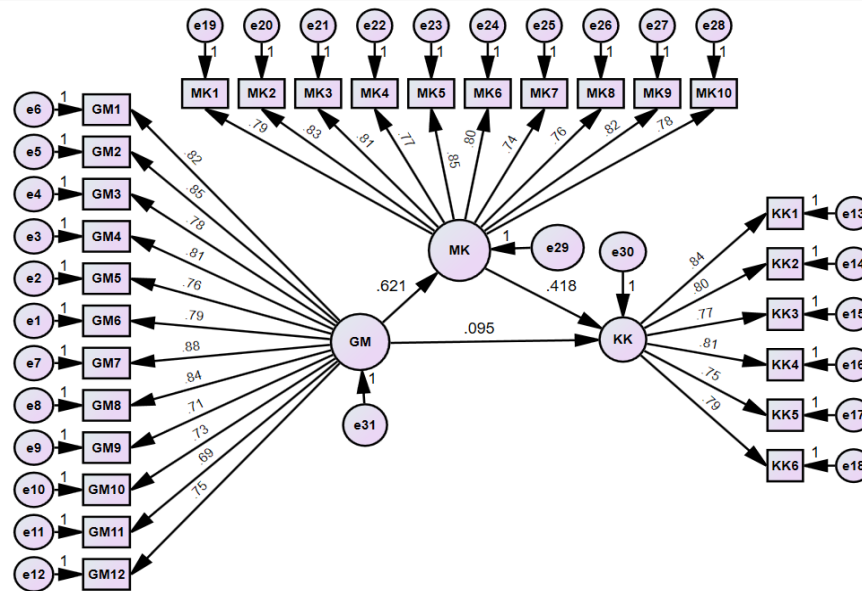
Source : Data Analysis (AMOS 22)

The results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) show that all constructs in this study have valid and reliable indicators. The gamification construct is most strongly represented by the rewards dimension, with indicators GM7 and GM8 having the highest factor loadings of 0.88 and 0.84, confirming the role of the reward system in shaping target-oriented work behavior. The dimensions of points, leaderboards, challenges, feedback, and progress tracking also meet the validity criteria with factor loadings above 0.60. The Composite Reliability value of 0.89 and Average Variance Extracted of 0.65 confirm the internal consistency and convergent validity of the gamification construct. The work motivation construct is most dominantly represented by the dimensions of autonomy and intrinsic motivation, with the highest factor loadings on indicators MK5 and MK6 of 0.85 and 0.80. All work motivation indicators show excellent reliability with a Composite Reliability value of 0.92 and an Average Variance Extracted value of 0.67.

The employee performance construct is most strongly represented by the task performance dimension with indicators KK1 and KK2 having factor loadings of 0.84 and 0.80, thus confirming the importance of target achievement and core task implementation in assessing sales marketing performance. The contextual performance and adaptive performance dimensions also show significant contributions with consistent factor loadings. The goodness of fit index shows a good level of model suitability with a Chi Square value of 245.732 and a probability value of 0.067 and an RMSEA value of 0.045. The GFI value of 0.92, CFI of 0.96, and TLI of 0.95 indicate that the measurement model is suitable for structural analysis and further hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis Testing

The research hypothesis was tested through structural model analysis. This analysis aimed to determine the effect of gamification on employee performance, both directly and indirectly through work motivation as a mediating variable. The complete results of the structural model testing are presented in Figure 1 below.



Source : Data Analysis (AMOS 22)

Figure 1. Full Structural Model

Figure 1 shows the structural model tested to analyze the relationship between gamification, work motivation, and employee performance. The results of testing the hypotheses for direct and indirect effects are presented comprehensively in Table 3. The table presents the standardized path coefficients (β), critical ratios (C.R.), and p-values for each of the four proposed hypotheses.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results

Variable	Standardize (β)	C.R	P-Value	Results
Direct Influence				
GM → KK	0.095	1.242	0.214	H ₁ Rejected
GM → MK	0.621	4.578	****	H ₂ Accepted
MK → KK	0.418	3.112	0.002	H ₃ Accepted
Indirect Influence				
GM → MK → KK	0.260	2.678	0.007	H ₄ Accepted

Source : Data Analysis (AMOS 22)

The results of hypothesis testing in Table 3 show that the relationship between gamification and sales marketing employee performance is fully mediated by work motivation. The direct effect of gamification on employee performance is not significant, so Hypothesis 1 is rejected with a path coefficient of 0.095 and a p-value of 0.214. This finding indicates that the application of gamification does not directly improve performance without going through certain psychological mechanisms.

The effect of gamification on work motivation is proven to be positive and significant with a path coefficient of 0.621 and a p-value of less than 0.001, so Hypothesis 2 is accepted. The effect of work motivation on employee performance also shows positive and significant results with a path coefficient of 0.418 and a p-value of 0.002, confirming the acceptance of Hypothesis 3. The indirect effect of gamification on performance through work motivation shows a coefficient value of 0.260 with a p-value of 0.007, thus accepting Hypothesis 4 and confirming the significant role of work motivation as a mediating variable.

Research findings indicate that the application of gamification to sales and marketing employees does not directly improve performance. The presence of game elements in the work system does not automatically result in improved work outcomes if they are not internalized

through individual psychological mechanisms. The impact of gamification on performance is greatly influenced by employees' motivational and affective responses, so that the resulting effects tend to be indirect (Koivisto & Hamari, 2019). Gamification in the work environment functions more in shaping the work experience than as a direct determinant of performance (Murawski, 2021). The characteristics of sales work, which is fraught with pressure to meet targets, further emphasize that the psychological condition and internal drive of individuals play an important role in determining the performance of salespeople (Ahearne et al., 2025).

The role of gamification appears to be more significant in increasing employee work motivation. The elements of reward, challenge, and feedback create a more engaging and structured work experience that encourages employee involvement in sales activities (Buil et al., 2021). The effectiveness of gamification is highly dependent on a system design that emphasizes the meaning of work and engagement, rather than simply competition between individuals (Werbach & Hunter, 2020). The dominance of autonomy and intrinsic motivation aspects indicates that fulfilling basic psychological needs is the main foundation in building sustainable work motivation in accordance with the Self Determination Theory framework (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Gamification elements that strengthen a sense of competence and self-control have been proven to significantly increase employee work motivation (Sailer & Homner, 2020).

Work motivation plays an important role in explaining variations in sales marketing employee performance. Motivation determines the intensity, direction, and persistence of work behavior that directly impacts work performance (Tegor et al., 2025). High levels of motivation are associated with greater engagement and focus on achieving sales targets (Gokhale, 2023). Employee performance appraisal in modern organizations continues to rely on the achievement of core tasks as the main indicator of individual work effectiveness (Lousã et al., 2024). The ever-changing dynamics of the sales environment also demand a high level of adaptability, making adaptive performance an important component in achieving target-based performance (Rodríguez et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that gamification does not have a direct effect on the performance of sales and marketing employees at PT Adira Dinamika Multi Finance's Jambi branch. Gamification has been proven to significantly increase employee work motivation. Work motivation plays a decisive role in improving employee performance. These findings confirm that the effect of gamification on performance is indirect and works through motivational mechanisms. Work motivation is a key element that bridges the relationship between gamification design and employee performance achievement.

This study has important implications for management practices. Gamification should not be considered an instant performance improvement tool, but rather a strategic component in a performance management system that operates through psychological mechanisms, especially work motivation. Its success depends on the alignment between system design, employee psychological needs, and unique organizational characteristics. Particularly in target-oriented sales divisions, gamification designs that reinforce autonomy, competence, and constructive feedback have great potential to increase engagement and adaptive performance in a sustainable manner. This confirms that the effectiveness of technology-based interventions cannot be separated from the organizational context and the consistency of human resource policies implemented.

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