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Enhancing Employee's Engagement through Gamified Training: A Psychological Perspective from Indian SME's, Bangalore

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on how gamified training can help improve employee engagement in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Bangalore, India. Gamification means using game like elements such as points, badges, levels, and rewards in training programs to make learning more fun and interactive. The study looks at this topic from a psychological angle, considering how people feel, think, and stay motivated at work. A total of 205 employees from different SMEs participated in an online survey. The results show that gamified training can make employees more involved and interested in their jobs, especially when the training is well-designed and supported by management. The study also found that using gamified methods helps employees learn faster, feel more motivated, and stay committed to their work. This research suggests that SMEs should try adopting gamified training tools to build a more engaging and productive work environment.

KEY WORDS: *Gamified Training, Employee Engagement, Small and Medium Enterprises, Psychological Empowerment, Digital Learning, Work Motivation.*

INTRODUCTION

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of India's economy, especially in a city like Bangalore, which is known for its fast-growing businesses and tech startups. In such a competitive environment, keeping employees motivated and engaged is one of the biggest challenges faced by companies. Traditional training methods often fail to connect with today's workforce, especially the younger generation who prefer interactive and digital learning experiences.

This is where gamified training comes in. It uses game-like elements such as points, badges, levels, and leaderboards in employee training programs to make learning more fun, engaging, and meaningful. When employees enjoy the training process, they tend to be more involved in their work and perform better. Gamification doesn't just make training exciting—it also taps into psychological factors like motivation, focus, and a sense of achievement, which are all important for improving employee engagement.

This research focuses on understanding how gamified training can improve employee engagement in SMEs in Bangalore. A total of 205 employees from various SMEs participated in a survey to share their experiences and views. The study looks at how gamified learning influences their mindset, emotional connection with their work, and overall involvement. With the right approach, gamified training can become a powerful tool for SMEs to boost productivity, job satisfaction, and employee retention in the long run.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How does gamified training influence employee engagement in SMEs in Bangalore?

- What psychological factors play a role in improving engagement through gamified learning?

- How do employees perceive gamified training methods compared to traditional training?

- What challenges do SMEs in Bangalore face while implementing gamified training programs?

- Is there a relationship between gamified training and employee motivation, focus, and job satisfaction?

- What role does leadership and organizational support play in the success of gamified training?

- Can gamified training improve long-term learning and retention among SME employees?

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

- To study how gamified training improves employee engagement in Indian SMEs.

- To explore the impact of digital training on employees' psychological comfort and motivation.

- To compare the effect of gamified and traditional training on job satisfaction.

- To analyze how employee feedback influences the success of gamified training systems.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Stimulating employee ambidexterity and employee engagement in SMEs - Oluseyi Moses Ajayi, Kayode Abiodun Odusanya (2017). The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the emerging theory of ambidexterity by developing measures to assess employee ambidexterity. Specifically, it identifies and tests the importance of the relationship between the organisational context and employee ambidexterity within small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Design/methodology/approach. The research used a survey method to investigate SMEs in Nigeria. Two hundred SMEs were selected from across Nigeria to participate in the study and 72 companies responded, representing a 36 percent response rate. The study sample comprised 398 shop-floor employees from 72 small and medium-sized manufacturing and service organisations.

Foundational competencies for enhancing work engagement in SMEs Malaysia - Aliyu Haruna (2017). This study aims to examine the impact of foundational competencies on work engagement in the context of the Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) service sector. Design/methodology/approach This is a cross-sectional study conducted in Malaysia, and data were gathered via a survey on 312 employees representing SMEs service sectors. Partial least squares techniques were used in testing the hypothesized linkages. Findings The findings indicated that foundational competencies have a significant positive effect on work engagement.

Innovation in SMEs: the role of employee training in German SMEs - Irem Demirkan, Ravi Srinivasan (2021). This paper explores the role of effective resource and knowledge management capabilities on product innovation capabilities of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Specifically, the authors research the role of the human resource investments in the form of employee training in developing firm's innovation capabilities and how SMEs manage these investments when we account for the boundary conditions such as the level of employee education, SME size and the frequency of investments in research and development (R&D).

The Effect of Digital Training Transformation and Psychological Comfort on Employee Performance and Engagement - Garima Sainger Palak Dev (2023). At work place, as the management practices are changing rapidly. Simultaneously, employee engagement is an important variable which express and employ person emotionally, cognitively and physically. It enables people to perform the work roles very effectively in the organisation. Transformation of the training also affects the engagement. In comparison of traditional training, digital training is more comfortable. Thus, the aim of this research is to examine the impact of comfort on employee engagement.

The Role of Compensation, Job Rotation, Employee Engagement and Employees Performance of SMEs - Titiek Ambarwati, Madziatul Churiyah (2023). The paper examine of this study is to analyze the relationship between compensation and employee performance, analyze the relationship between job rotation and employee performance, and analyze employee engagement on employee performance in SMEs. Design/Methodology/Approach: The method used in this study is quantitative to test the hypothesis taken from the research variables in numbers and then the data is analyzed using statistical procedures. This study explains the causal relationship between variables through hypothesis.

From sharing to success: enhancing innovative work behaviour through psychological empowerment and kinship employee engagement - Adriana Madya Marampa, Althon K. Pongtuluran (2024). This study aims to explore the distinctive dynamics of knowledge sharing, empowering leadership, psychological empowerment, innovative work behavior, and the moderating impact of kinship employee engagement in the creative industries of SMEs in Tana Toraja, Indonesia. Design/methodology/approach Using structural equation modelling, this research analyzes quantitative data collected from 512 employees in creative industry SMEs. Findings Knowledge sharing is not found to be associated with psychological empowerment but is positively related to innovative work behavior.

The Role of Transformational Leadership in Enhancing Employee Engagement in SMEs - Tolamise Olasehinde (2024). Employee engagement plays a pivotal role in the success and sustainability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), especially in dynamic and competitive business environments. Transformational leadership, characterized by vision, motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, has been identified as a critical factor in fostering high levels of employee engagement. This paper examines the impact of transformational leadership on employee engagement in SMEs, analyzing how leaders who inspire, challenge, and support employees can create a more committed, innovative, and productive workforce.

SME Risk Reduction Strategies: Leveraging Analytics and Employee Training for Enhanced Security and Stability - Nadir Hussain, Jackie Mackie (2024). Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) face a range of risks that can hinder their growth, stability, and security. To ensure long-term success, SMEs must adopt proactive risk reduction strategies that focus on both technological and human factors. Leveraging analytics, such as predictive modeling and data-driven insights, can help SMEs identify and mitigate potential risks before they escalate. Analytics tools allow businesses to monitor patterns, forecast risks, and make informed decisions, ensuring that operational, financial, and cybersecurity risks are managed effectively.

Game On: Enhancing Customer Engagement Through Influencers' Gamified Messages – Payal S. Kapoor, M S Balaji (2024). Effective customer engagement with tourism brands is crucial for influencer marketing and can be significantly enhanced through creative and innovative message strategies that capture customer attention. This paper examines the impact of gamified messages a novel message modality on customer engagement with tourism brands. The results of the four studies herein show that gamified messages lead to higher customer engagement with tourism brands than traditional text messages, with flow experience identified as the underlying mechanism explaining this effect.

Leadership Training and Development as a Catalyst for Employee Engagement in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) – Emmanuel Badmus (2024). In small and medium enterprises (SMEs), leadership training and development play a pivotal role in fostering employee engagement, which is a critical determinant of organizational success. This study explores the impact of leadership development programs on employee engagement levels within SMEs, examining how structured training initiatives enhance motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction.

Psychological capital of employee and innovativeness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) - Prince Lenard R. Salubre, Ronald Almagro (2024). This study explores the association between employees (PsyCap) and the innovation ability of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). Research methodology: A descriptive correlational research design was employed, involving 150 respondents selected through simple random sampling. Two adapted questionnaires were used to measure PsyCap and innovation outcomes.

Employee Cybersecurity Awareness Training programs customized for SME contexts to reduce Human-error related Security Incidents - Friday Ugbebor, Olushola Aina (2024). Employee cybersecurity awareness training programs in Small and Mediumsized Enterprises (SMEs) have become increasingly critical as organizations face mounting cyber threats and security challenges. Studies have shown that human contribution is a major risk factor in security incidents hence the imperative need for proper training. SMEs are especially at risk since they are compared to large enterprises characterized by less resources and poorer technical knowledge and security equipment. Research has further shown that organisational context specific and targeted training programs could go a long way in enhancing the security awareness, and the overall incidence rates through modifications in behaviour and perceived security risks.

The impact of gamification on training, work engagement, and job satisfaction in banking - Marcelo Magioli Sereno (2024). This study contributes to the comparative analysis of outcomes between gamified and traditional training systems in the banking sector. On-the-job training is a vital aspect of the process of enhancing work performance within organizations. Thus, by employing a case-based asymmetric configural approach rooted in nonlinear and contrarian case analysis, this research investigates the impact of gamified training on human resource development. A global empirical survey of 388 banking employees revealed that a combination of complexity theory and configural analysis provides valuable insights into the outcomes of both gamified and conventional training methods. In the face of increasing competition, banks are compelled to enhance their professionalism by boosting employee motivation.

Enhancing Employee Engagement in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) through Leadership, Compensation and Appraisals - Syed Shahid Mazhar, Arti Awasthi (2025). Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are pivotal to the financial growth of any country, functioning as labour-intensive units whose success relies heavily on employee productivity. Consequently, employee engagement is a critical determinant of success for SMEs, where each employee's contribution is important. This empirical study aims to enhance employee engagement by examining HRM Practices such as leadership, pay practices, performance appraisal, and training and development in Indian SMEs.

Enhancing Customer Engagement Through the Metaverse: Opportunities and Challenges for Indian SMEs - Arpan Anand (2025). This chapter examines the transformative potential of the Metaverse in enhancing customer engagement for Indian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). As digital technologies evolve, the Metaverse—a combination of virtual and augmented realities—offers innovative ways for businesses to interact with customers, transcending traditional marketing channels. Indian SMEs play a critical role in the economy, yet face challenges in adopting new technologies due to limited resources and technical expertise.

Employee Commitment and Organizational Performance of SMES in Delta State - Eruteya Ejiro Ernest, Edewhor Vincent (2025). The study Employee Commitment and Organizational Performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Delta State explores the relationship between, job satisfaction, organizational climate, and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Delta State, Nigeria. The primary objectives were to determine if job satisfaction affects SME performance and examine organizational climate's influence on SME outcomes. A descriptive research design was employed to achieve these objectives, involving 269 respondents from various SMEs across the state. Data were collected using structured questionnaires targeting employees and managers.

The Role of Inclusive Leadership in Enhancing Employee Engagement - N.Deepalakshmi Lakshmi N (2025). In today's diverse and dynamic workplace environments, the importance of inclusive leadership has grown significantly, especially in fostering employee engagement. This research paper explores the critical role of inclusive leadership in enhancing employee engagement across organizations. Inclusive leadership, characterized by openness, accessibility, and the active appreciation of individual differences, has emerged as a transformative leadership style that cultivates trust, belonging, and motivation among employees.

Human Resource Practices as Drivers of Employee Attitudes-Evidence from the Indian it Sector - M. Sudheer Kumar M. Madhu (2025). This study investigates the impact of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices on employee attitudes within the Indian Information Technology (IT) sector, with particular emphasis on gender-based differences. The research explores five key HR practices—Recruitment and Selection, Compensation and Rewards, Work-Life Balance Initiatives, Employee Involvement in Decision-Making and Information Sharing, and Extensive Training, Learning and Development—as independent variables. The dependent variables representing employee attitudes include Job Satisfaction, Organizational

Commitment, Employee Engagement, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior. A structured questionnaire was administered using a convenience sampling method. Out of 424 distributed questionnaires, 344 responses were deemed valid and used for analysis.

Upskilling Service Employees for Digital Transformation Using Gamified Training – Rohit Yadav, Mohit Yadav (2025). The rapid pace of digital transformation necessitates continuous employee reskilling, presenting challenges for organizations seeking effective training solutions. Gamified learning, which integrates game mechanics into educational programs, has emerged as a powerful approach to enhance employee engagement, knowledge retention, and skill acquisition. This chapter explores the impact of gamified learning on reskilling service employees for digital transformation, addressing its role in overcoming reskilling challenges and fostering a culture of continuous learning.

Gamification at the workplace: a theoretical perspective on training and development- Aaradhana Rukadikar (2025). The purpose of this research is to conduct a thorough investigation of the theories that support the phenomenon of gamification in training and development within organizational settings. Practical training and development plans are now crucial for improving employee performance, promoting continuous learning and preserving a competitive advantage. Design/methodology/approach This study examines the underlying theories of gamification in organizational development and training by evaluating earlier studies and highlighting key theories. Comprehending the theoretical foundations of the training materials provided by gamification-related organizations creates a conceptual model.

RESEARCH GAP

Sl. No	Citations	Design of Research	Objective of Research	Findings
1	Ajayi & Odusanya (2017)	Survey-Based Research	To measure how organizational context affects employee ambidexterity and engagement.	Ambidexterity enhances engagement, yet the psychological link of gamified training is missing.
2	Haruna (2017)	Survey Method	To understand how basic competencies affect work engagement in Malaysian SMEs.	Competencies drive engagement, but interactive training formats are not analyzed.
3	Demirkan & Srinivasan (2021)	Empirical Study	To explore how training improves innovation in German SMEs.	Employee training drives innovation, but gamification as a training tool is not considered.
4	Sainger & Dev (2023)	Comparative Analysis	To study the comfort and engagement level of digital vs. traditional training.	Digital training enhances comfort and engagement, but gamification is not clearly separated.
5	Ambarwati & Churiyah (2023)	Quantitative Study	To analyze how compensation, rotation, and engagement affect employee performance.	All factors impact performance, but gamified approaches are not studied.
6	Marampa & Pongtuluran (2024)	Quantitative Analysis (SEM)	To study the role of leadership and knowledge sharing in promoting innovative behavior and engagement in SMEs.	Engagement is improved by leadership and kinship, but gamified learning isn't considered.
7	Olasehinde (2024)	Conceptual Study	To assess the impact of transformational leadership on engagement in SMEs.	Leadership boosts engagement, yet the integration of gamification into leadership is not discussed.
8	Hussain & Mackie (2024)	Strategic Review	To suggest risk reduction via training and analytics in SMEs.	Analytics and training help with security, but gamification for risk awareness is not studied.
9	Kapoor & Balaji (2024)	Experimental Study	To see how gamified influencer messages boost customer engagement.	Gamified messages help in marketing, but not applied to employee learning in SMEs.
10	Badmus (2024)	Qualitative Review	To explore how leadership training helps improve employee motivation and commitment.	Leadership training helps in engagement, but gamification as a method is missing.

11	Salubre & Almagro (2024)	Correlational Study	To examine how employees' psychological capital impacts innovation.	Positive link found, but no mention of gamified learning's role in boosting PsyCap.
12	Ugbebor & Aina (2024)	Case-Based Analysis	To assess SME-specific cybersecurity training for reducing human errors.	Customized training improves awareness, yet gamified cyber-training is unexplored.
13	Mazhar & Awasthi (2025)	Empirical Study	To examine how HR practices like leadership, pay, appraisal, and training affect employee engagement in Indian SMEs.	HR strategies have a strong influence on engagement, but customized gamified training is not explored.
14	Anand (2025)	Thematic Study	To assess how Indian SMEs can use the Metaverse for customer engagement.	Metaverse improves external engagement, not internal employee training.
15	Ernest & Vincent (2025)	Descriptive Study	To assess job satisfaction and climate impact on SME performance.	Job satisfaction supports performance, but training formats are not considered.
16	Deepalakshmi (2025)	Conceptual Paper	To explore the influence of inclusive leadership on engagement.	Inclusive leadership enhances engagement, but lacks insight on gamified methods.
17	Kumar & Madhu (2025)	Quantitative Study	To study HR practices and attitudes in the Indian IT sector.	HR practices affect engagement, but gamification is not focused in the training aspect.
18	Yadav & Yadav (2025)	Thematic Review	To study how gamified training helps in reskilling service employees.	Gamification supports reskilling, but SME-specific psychological benefits are not emphasized.
19	Rukadikar (2025)	Theoretical Review	To explore the theories behind gamified training in organizations.	Strong conceptual base found, but lacks direct SME psychological context.
20	Sereno (2025)	Comparative Study	To compare gamified vs. traditional training on engagement and satisfaction in banking.	Gamified training is more effective, but not focused on SME-specific needs or psychological views.

Conceptual Model:
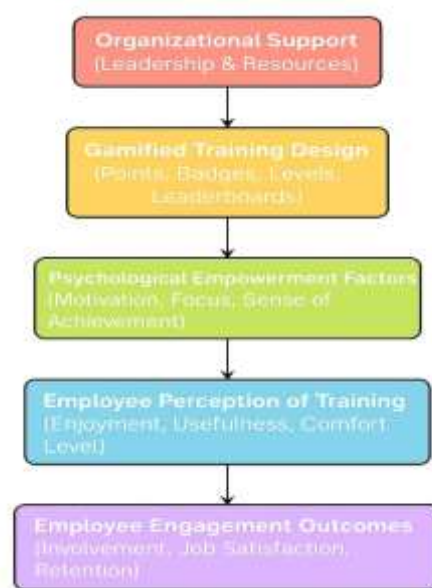
Figure No. 1 Showing Conceptual Model of Gamified Training

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Even though digital tools and modern training methods are available today, many small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Bangalore still follow traditional ways of training their employees. These old methods are often boring and fail to keep employees interested or motivated. While employee engagement is important for business growth, most SMEs do not use fun or interactive methods like gamified training in their learning programs.

There are a few main issues seen in these companies:

● Very few SMEs use game-based or interactive training methods.

● Most employers are not aware of how psychology affects learning and motivation.

● Leaders and managers don't give enough support to creative training ideas.

● There are no clear plans or policies to promote gamified learning in workplaces.

Because of this gap, employees may lose interest in their work, feel less motivated, and are more likely to leave the company. This affects both the growth of the employee and the success of the business.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a. Method Used

This study follows a mixed-method approach, which means it uses both numbers (quantitative) and personal opinions (qualitative) to understand the topic better.

- **Quantitative Method:**

A survey was shared with 205 employees from different small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) in Bangalore. The survey included questions using a 5-point scale to find out how they feel about their training, motivation, and job engagement.

- **Qualitative Method:**

Along with the survey, short interviews were conducted with some HR managers. These conversations helped us understand how gamified training is planned and what challenges are faced while using it.

b. Description of Variables

Type of Variable	Name	What it Means
Independent	Gamified Training	Whether the company uses game-like features in training
Dependent	Employee Engagement	How involved and interested employees are in their work
Dependent	Job Satisfaction	How happy employees feel with their jobs
Mediator	Psychological Factors	Things like motivation, enjoyment, and attention during training
Control	Company Info & Employee Role	Things like company size, job role, and how long the employee has worked

c. Sampling Method

To choose who would take part in the study, stratified random sampling was used. This helped in selecting employees from different types of companies fairly.

We included:

- Different SME types (like IT, Manufacturing, Services)

- Companies of different sizes

- Employees from different departments

d. Sampling Technique

The study used a stratified random sampling method. This means the sample was chosen by dividing the companies into groups based on type (like IT, manufacturing, services) and then randomly selecting employees from each group. This way, all types of SMEs got fair representation.

e. sample size

- 5 companies were included from Bangalore

- 205 employees responded to the survey

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

205 responses
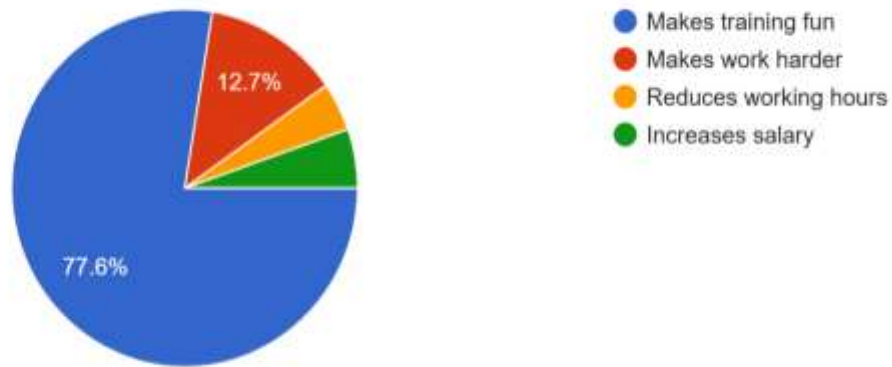
Figure. No. 2 Showing gamified training help employees

Interpretation: Most respondents (77.6%) said that gamified training makes learning fun. A smaller number felt it makes work harder, reduces working hours, or increases salary. This shows that employees enjoy training more when it includes fun elements like games.

205 responses
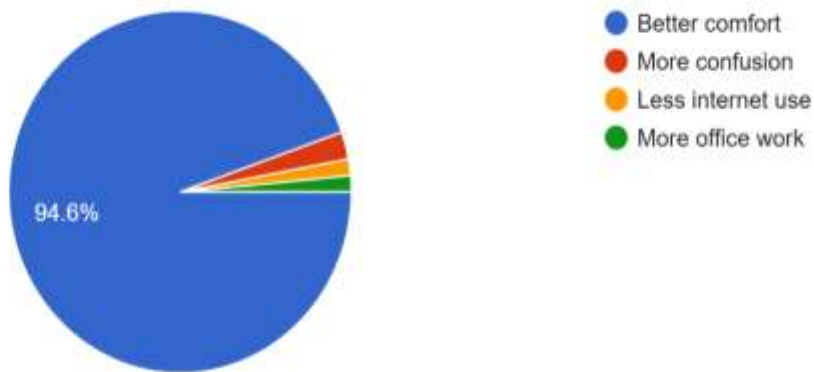
Figure. No. 3 Showing the benefit of digital training.

Interpretation: A large majority (94.6%) of employees feel that digital training provides better comfort. Very few found it confusing or linked it to less internet use or more office work. This means digital training is widely accepted as a convenient method of learning.

205 responses
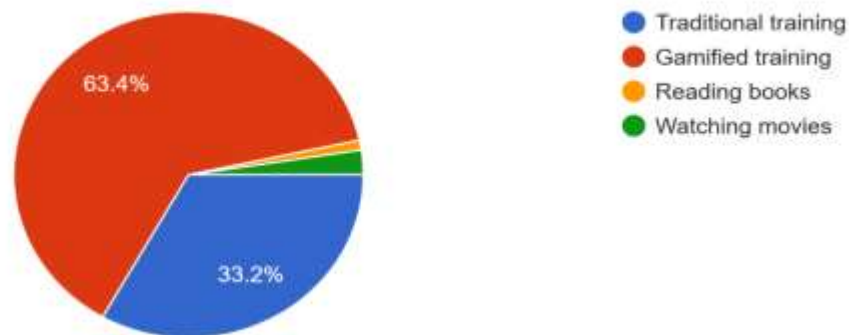
Figure. No. 4 Showing the most enjoyable method for training.

Interpretation: About 63.4% of participants chose gamified training as the most enjoyable method, while 33.2% preferred traditional training. Very few picked reading books or watching videos. This shows that employees enjoy game-based learning more than traditional methods.
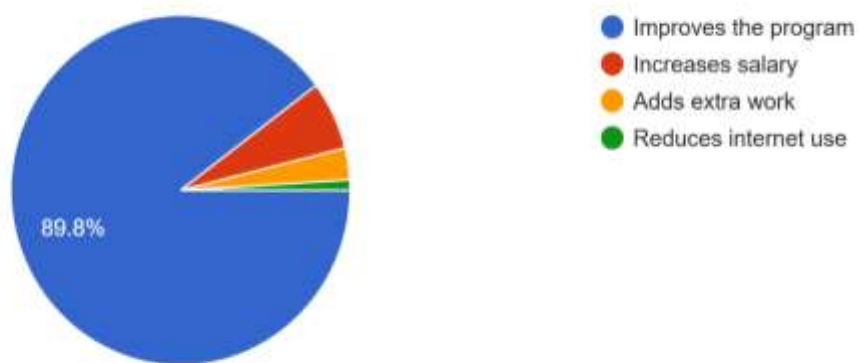
205 responses

Figure. No. 5 Showing the feedback which helps in gamified training.

Interpretation: Around 89.8% of the employees believe feedback helps to improve the training program. Only a few felt it increases salary or adds extra work. This highlights that feedback is important to make gamified training more effective and useful.
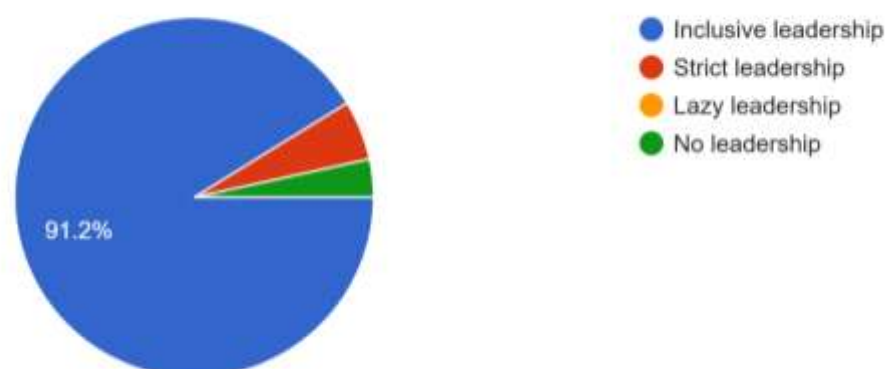
205 responses

Figure. No. 6 Showing the leadership kinds which increases employee engagement.

Interpretation: An overwhelming 91.2% of employees said that inclusive leadership boosts their engagement. Only a small number preferred strict, lazy, or no leadership. This shows that employees respond better to supportive and inclusive leaders.
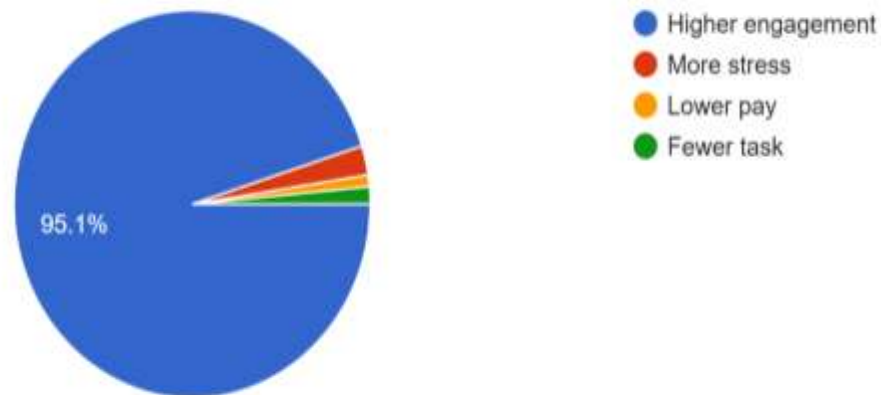
205 responses

Figure. No. 7 Showing the possible result of gamified learning.

Interpretation: A majority of participants (95.1%) believe that gamified learning leads to higher engagement. Very few think it causes stress, reduces pay, or results in fewer tasks. This shows that gamified learning is strongly seen as a positive and engaging method.
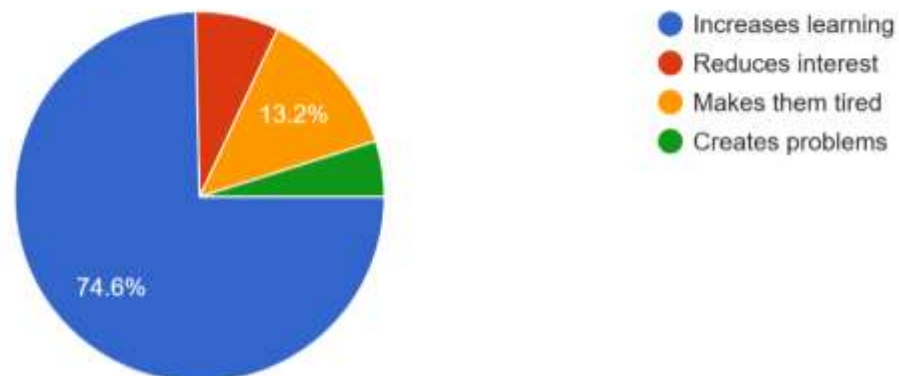
205 responses

Figure. No. 8 Showing how the job rotation affect employees.

Interpretation: About 74.6% of the responses say that job rotation increases learning. A smaller number felt it reduces interest or makes employees tired. This means most employees see job rotation as a useful way to grow their skills.
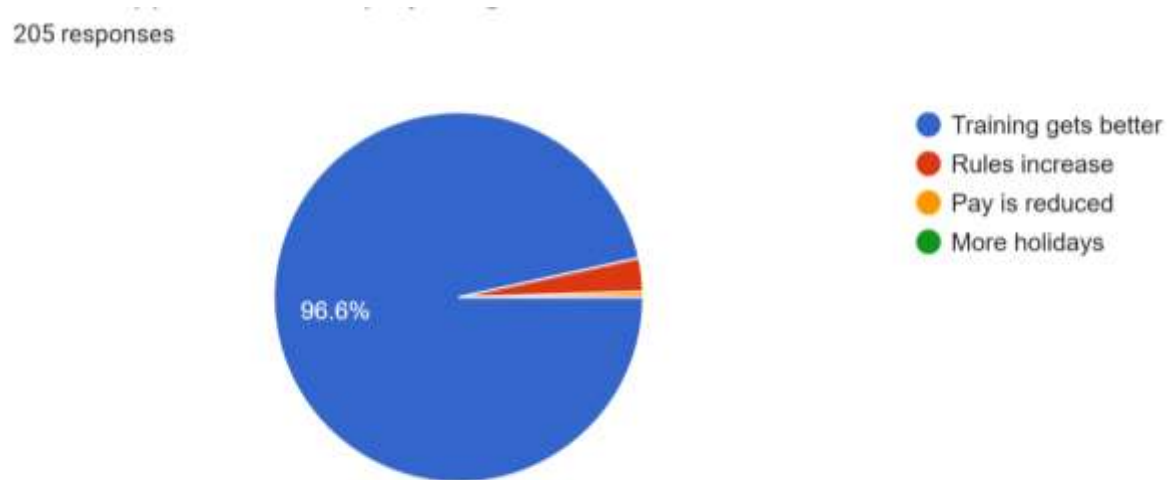
205 responses

Figure. No. 9 Showing the effect of employee feedback.

Interpretation: Most participants (96.6%) agree that giving feedback helps improve training. Only a small group felt it causes more rules or changes in salary. This shows that employees believe their input can make training better and more effective.
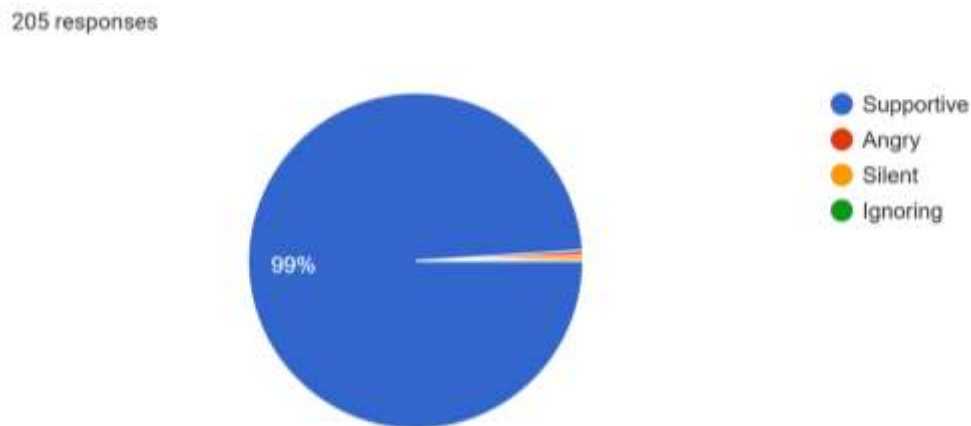
205 responses

Figure. No. 10 Showing the leadership style supporting training.

Interpretation: Almost all respondents (99%) chose supportive leadership as the best for training. Very few picked angry, silent, or ignoring leadership. This proves that employees value leaders who guide, encourage, and support learning.
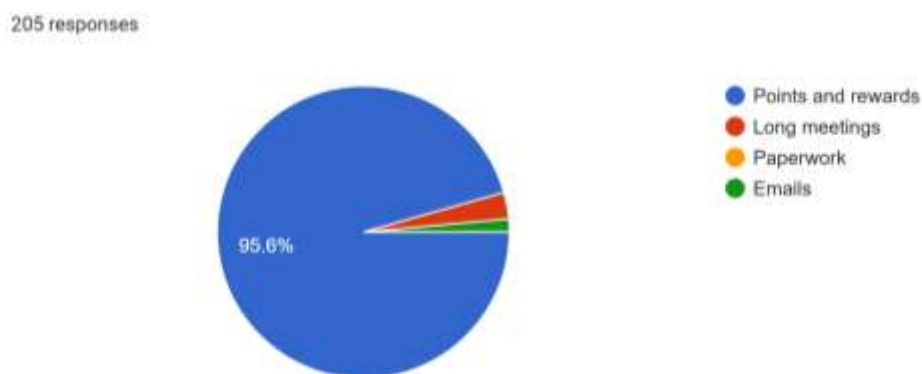
205 responses

Figure. No. 11 Showing the which game element would be good for training.

Interpretation: According to 95.6% of employees, points and rewards are the most helpful game elements in training. Only a few selected long meetings, paperwork, or emails. This shows that reward-based systems make training more motivating and interesting.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study shows that gamified training really helps employees feel more involved and excited about their work. Most of the people who answered the survey said that game-like training made learning more fun, easier to understand, and kept them more focused. Many also shared that rewards and points made them feel motivated. The research found that supportive leadership and regular feedback made the training even better. So, we can say that gamified training can be a great way for SMEs to improve employee engagement and job satisfaction.

Limitations

- This study was done only in Bangalore, so results may be different in other cities or states.

- Most of the people who took part were young (21–30), so the opinions of older employees are not fully covered.

- The answers were based on what people felt, so some responses might be biased or not fully accurate.

- The survey included only 205 people from five companies, which is a small group compared to the whole SME sector.

Implications

- Using gamified training can make learning more interesting and help employees stay motivated in the company.

- Adding simple elements like badges, scores, and feedback can make training programs more effective for HR teams.

- Giving support and encouraging feedback can increase employee involvement and learning outcomes for Managers.

- Focus on making learning more interactive and fun, especially for younger employees for trainers.

Future Recommendations

- More studies should be done in other places to understand if the results are similar across India.

- Future research can focus on how older employees or different job levels respond to gamified training.

- Long-term research is needed to see how gamified training affects performance over time.

- SMEs can try building their own simple digital training tools with game elements.

- Support from the government or business groups can help small companies start gamified training programs.

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