

RESEARCH GROUP
**EUROPEAN VALUES AND
SOCIAL CHALLENGES (EUVAS)**
RESEARCH AREA: SOCIAL SCIENCES (POLITICAL SCIENCES, LAW, EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES)

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GAMIFICATION IN EDUCATION AND THE WORKPLACE



RESEARCH OUTPUT & IMPACT

- 9 indexed publications (Web of Science / Scopus)
- 3 additional publications pending indexation
- Active participation in international scientific conferences (WoodEMA, IEEE Automatics & Informatics, ICED, ISCME, E-Governance & E-Communications)
- International collaborations (Colombia, USA, Croatia)
- Integration of young researchers: postdoctoral fellows, PhD candidates, and students Independent WoS-indexed publication by a doctoral student
- All publications acknowledge funding under the EU NextGenerationEU Recovery and Resilience Plan

CONTRIBUTION

The project demonstrates that gamification is not merely a pedagogical technique, but a strategic, interdisciplinary instrument for designing and managing engagement in complex learning and organizational contexts. By combining behavioral insights, user experience principles, and evidence-based evaluation, gamification can be applied across education, business, and public-facing initiatives to generate measurable value.

In particular, the project confirms gamification's capacity to:

- Enhance motivation and engagement by structuring learning and work activities through clear goals, feedback loops, meaningful challenges, and progression pathways that sustain participation over time.
- Support sustainable behavioral change by embedding desired habits into everyday routines, using reinforcement mechanisms, commitment devices, and social dynamics in ways that encourage persistence and self-regulation.
- Improve business communication by strengthening interaction quality—internally within teams and externally with customers—through narrative framing, transparent incentive systems, and experience design that reduces friction and increases trust.
- Create innovation-driven educational ecosystems by enabling collaboration between universities, learners, and organizations, and by translating research outcomes into reusable models, templates, and scalable digital learning environments.

Overall, the project positions gamification as a transformative mechanism aligned with the digital transition and the integration of AI-enabled solutions, in line with Industry 5.0 principles. It emphasizes human-centered design, responsible innovation, and the development of adaptive systems that can respond to changing learner and stakeholder needs while maintaining ethical standards and impact accountability.

CONCLUSION

The project grew out of a concrete academic encounter: the SUMMIT poster session created a high-trust space for dialogue, where researchers from diverse disciplinary communities met, challenged assumptions, and identified shared questions around the unrealized potential of gamification.

This exchange did more than validate an existing research interest – it catalyzed a new research trajectory. It confirmed that when innovation and scholarship meet in an environment built on collaboration and an interdisciplinary mindset, ideas emerge with the capacity to move beyond conceptual discussion and into meaningful transformation.

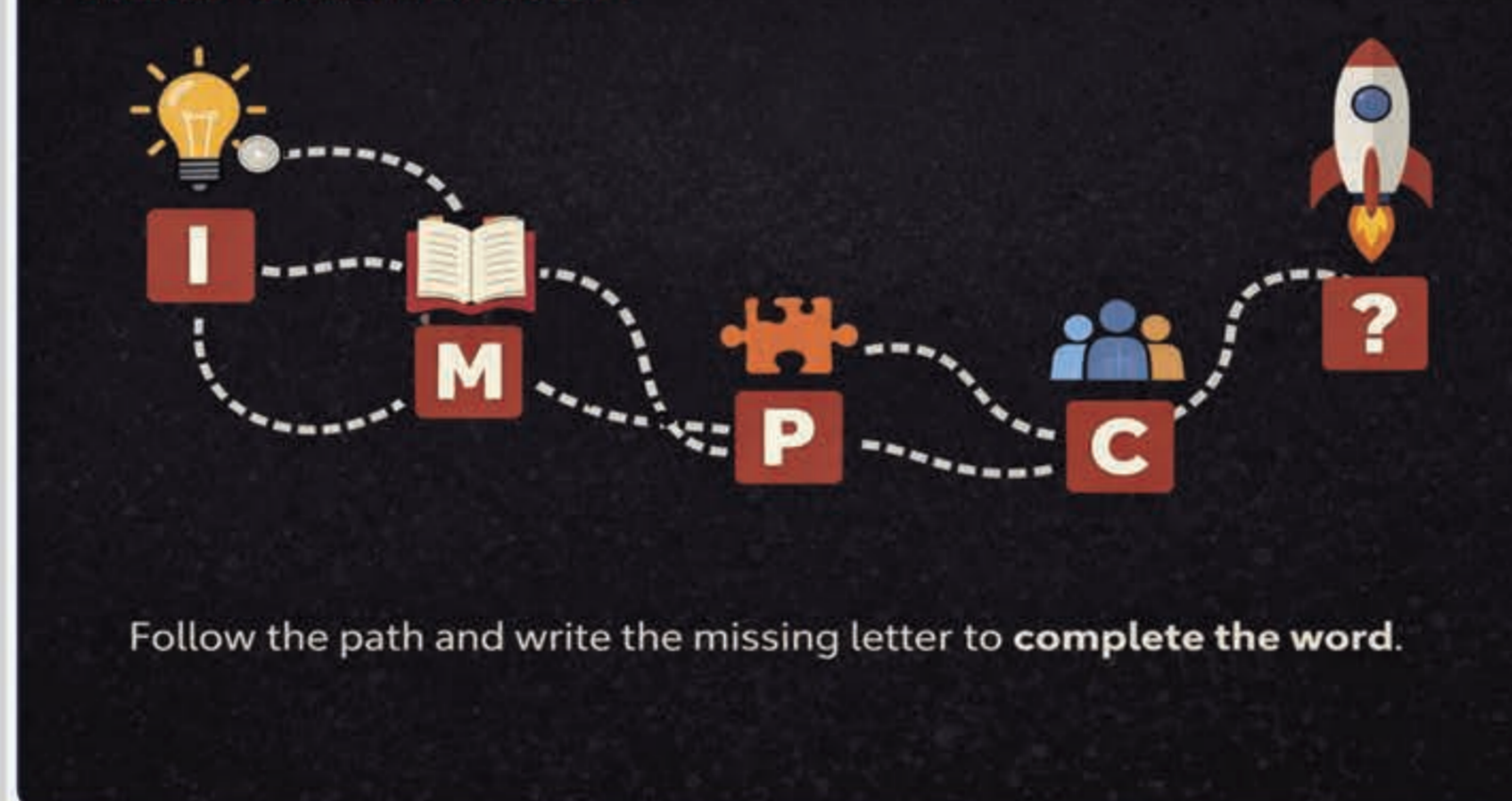
Building on this momentum, the project investigates how gamification can contribute to competency development and adaptive learning in the context of Industry 5.0 – where technology, human agency, and purposeful learning are increasingly interwoven. The guiding premise is that gamification, when designed responsibly and evaluated rigorously, can become an applied framework for developing skills, supporting engagement, and strengthening resilience in rapidly changing environments.

In this sense, the project is also a commitment to continuity. It frames gamification not as a one-off innovation, but as a sustained research line—one that matures through community, shared evidence, and iterative experimentation. The experience of SUMMIT illustrates a simple but powerful insight: sometimes a single meeting or a single conference becomes the turning point that redefines the direction of an entire project.



FROM
RESEARCH TO
IMPACT:
OUTPUTS,
CONTACTS,
RECOGNITION!

MINI CHALLENGE



In 2025, the project led to the establishment of the:

TRANSFORMATIONAL GAMIFICATION LABORATORY

Registered as an innovation service provider, the laboratory offers a structured environment for co-creation, applied research, and implementation of gamification-driven solutions. It supports organizations and project teams across the full development cycle – from concept and design to testing, evaluation, and scaling – while ensuring methodological rigor and measurable outcomes.

Its core services include:

- A methodological and project partnership environment, providing research-informed frameworks, evaluation instruments, and collaboration formats for joint pilot projects with academic and industry partners.
- Business consulting for gamified product development, including user research, engagement design, behavioral mechanics, prototyping, and validation of value propositions for both digital and hybrid solutions.
- Training programs and workshops tailored to different audiences (students, professionals, and organizational teams), focusing on practical competencies in gamification, instructional design, digital engagement, and ethical intervention strategies.
- Support for SMEs under innovation grant schemes, offering guidance on project scoping, partner matchmaking, evidence-based design, impact metrics, and documentation required for innovation calls and funding instruments.

Overall, the laboratory functions as a bridge between academic research and applied business solutions by translating evidence, models, and experimental results into practical tools and services that can be adopted by organizations. It enables knowledge transfer, accelerates innovation uptake, and contributes to sustainable capacity building in the field of gamification and digital engagement.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Academic round tables and workshops on gamification, bringing together researchers, practitioners, and students to discuss evidence-based design, ethical engagement strategies, and measurement of learning and behavioral outcomes.
- Student-led gamified marketing simulations, in which learners work with role-based scenarios (e.g., marketing manager, analyst, strategist), develop campaign solutions, and present results in structured short pitches followed by peer discussion and instructor feedback.
- Public dissemination through university platforms, ensuring visibility of activities and results via institutional channels, open educational resources, and communication materials that support broader adoption and knowledge transfer.
- Development of a pilot gamified platform (prototype later continued) that consolidates learning materials, templates, and demonstration scenarios for gamification in marketing education:
<https://sites.google.com/view/edumarketing5/platform>

(Scan the QR code to access the platform.)

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Project period: Feb 2024–Mar 2026
Funding: BGN 45 819
EU NextGenerationEU (NRRP Bulgaria) – SUMMIT BG-RRP-2.004-0008-C01 project contract 70-123-190/ 12.02.2024.
From evidence to implementation: the project translates rigorous research into gamification-driven solutions with measurable impact across education and business.
Laying the foundations for lasting, evidence-based gamification in Bulgaria's education system.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project "Gamification in Education and the Workplace" explores the application of game-based mechanisms as strategic tools for enhancing learning processes, marketing communication, organizational engagement, and business innovation.

The research integrates perspectives from economics, behavioral psychology, marketing, education sciences, and digital transformation (Industry 5.0), aiming to develop scientifically grounded and practically applicable gamification models.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze theoretical foundations and behavioral mechanisms of gamification
- To design and test gamified models in university education
- To explore gamification applications in marketing, retail, tourism, and cultural heritage
- To develop a methodological framework for business implementation
- To support knowledge transfer between academia and industry



KEY RESEARCH AREAS

1. Gamification in Higher Education
 - a) Business education and team role modelling
 - b) Marketing and consumer behavior learning games
 - c) Competency development through digital learning environments
 - d) Development of sustainable habits via non-formal gamified education
2. Gamification in Business and Retail
 - a) E-commerce and furniture retail applications
 - b) Gamified marketing campaigns
 - c) Salesperson – customer interaction improvement through game mechanics
 - d) IKEA case study: online and offline gamification strategies
3. Gamification, AI and Industry 5.0
 - a) Integration of AI-driven models in education and tourism
 - b) Business transformation models in the context of Industry 5.0
 - c) Application of behavioral frameworks (e.g., Octalysis) in FMCG campaigns
4. Cultural Heritage and Tourism
 - a) Gamification of traditional Bulgarian woodcarving as a tourism product
 - b) Digital engagement strategies for heritage preservation