Now I’M Curious! Boosting Innovation Adoption Through Gamified Information Release

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Evidence from four experiments shows that construing the presentation of information about product innovations in part as a game that consumers must complete successfully increases innovation adoption relative to the unrestricted presentation of the same information. This effect is sequentially mediated by the state of playfulness via an increased curiosity.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Innovations are a key driver of firm performance (Henard and Dacin 2010). However, failure rates of innovations are high (Min, Kalwani, and Robinson 2006). A key reason for this is that consumers often lack the motivation to learn about an innovation (Wood and Lynch 2002). Therefore, firms are not able to effectively communicate the advantages of these innovations to consumers, and, thus, consumers are often not willing to adopt the innovations (Rogers 2003). To increase innovation adoption, practitioners have started to implement gamification. Yet, evidence is anecdotal so far and conclusive consumer research on the psychological processes and behavioral consequences of gamification for presenting innovations is missing.

In this article, we seek to close this gap by examining when the gamified presentation of information about an innovation enhances consumers’ tendency to adopt an innovation and what psychological process underlies this effect. The central hypothesis of this research is that a gamified presentation of information elicits a state of playfulness, which induces curiosity and thus increases consumers’ innovation adoption. We offer empirical evidence from four experiments on the effect of a gamified information presentation on adopting innovations and the underlying psychological process. We define the gamified information presentation as presentation of information about a product in a format that incorporates a game that a consumer must play if s/he wishes to obtain additional information. This stands in contrast to the standard information presentation (without games) which places product information in the foreground. The findings of four experiments demonstrate that designing the presentation of information about innovations in part as a game that consumers have to complete successfully increases consumers’ innovation adoption relative to the standard information presentation.

In experiment 1, we assigned participants to either a control or a game condition. Participants assigned to the control condition read information texts about five product features of an in-car multimedia system. In the game condition participants received the same information about the innovation, but they could receive it in form of a quiz. We measured significantly higher purchase intentions for participants in the game condition than for those in the control condition and could opt-out of more information. Moreover, we will test whether the radicalness of the innovation is a boundary condition to the effect. We ran a 2 (innovation: incremental vs. radical) x 2 (game: control vs. video game) between-subjects design. All participants received information about the same two product features of the in-car multimedia system. After reading the information, participants were assigned to either the game or the control condition and could opt-out of more information. Participants who decided to receive more information received information about three more product features (radical vs. incremental) in the control group, or played a car racing game to receive the additional information (radical vs. incremental) in the game condition. A moderated mediation analysis indicated that curiosity partially mediates the effect of gamified information presentation.

The conditional direct effect was significant for incremental innovations but was insignificant for radical innovations ($β_{Total;Incremental} = .44, p < .05; β_{Direct;Radical} = .25, p > .10$). The conditional indirect effect for incremental innovations is significant ($β_{Indirect;Incremental} = .35, 95% CI = .05 to .70$), but not for radical innovations ($β_{Indirect;Radical} = -.17, 95% CI = -.49 to .14$). The conditional effect of a gamified information presentation on purchase intention is significant for incremental innovations ($β_{Total;Incremental} = .79, p < .01$), but not for radical innovations ($β_{Total;Radical} = .08, p > .10$).

The aim of experiment 3 was to provide evidence that playfulness is the underlying cause of the effects. The innovation and the experimental set-up mirrored the incremental innovation condition of experiment 2 with exception of the playfulness measure which was added in this experiment. Results of a sequential mediation analysis showed that the relationship between a gamified information presentation and purchase intention was sequentially mediated via the participants’ induced state of playfulness and their curiosity ($β_{Total} = .61, p = .06; β_{Direct} = .25, p > .10; β_{Indirect;Curiosity} = .24, 95% CI = .06 to .56$).

Experiment 4 corroborates and extends the preceding experiments by demonstrating that the gamified information presentation increased actual purchases ($β_{Total} = 1.32, p < .01; β_{Direct} = 1.11, p < .05; β_{Indirect} = .39, 95% CI = .05 to 1.05$). Additionally, experiment 4 demonstrated that the increased curiosity translated into more information acquisition, which increased participants’ recall of product advantages ($β_{Total} = .19, p > .10; β_{Direct} = -.19, p > .10; β_{Indirect;Curiosity} = .24, 95% CI = .026 to .628; β_{Indirect;CuriosityInfo} = .08, 95% CI = .004 to .273$). Moreover, by giving the control group the same motoric task, we ruled out an alternative explanation, which is the difference in the motoric actions of the participants.

The article mainly contributes to recent work on how different formats of information presentation prompt consumers’ innovation adoption. Designing the presentation of information in part as a game that consumers must play successfully to receive more information boosts subsequent innovation adoption relative to a standard information presentation. Additionally, the findings of this research advance our understanding of consumers’ state of playfulness and curiosity in the adoption of innovations. We find that a gamified information presentation may elicit a state of playfulness in consumers which induces curiosity and increases innovation adoption. Moreover, we find that the effect is attenuated by the degree of radicalness of the innovation.

REFERENCES


