

The Impact of Gamification on Cognitive Dissonance and Brand Image in Fast-Fashion Consumption: Evidence from SHEIN Users

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Abstract

Gamification has become an effective tool for increasing user engagement in digital consumer environments. Fast-fashion platforms like SHEIN use playful elements to stimulate interaction and purchasing behavior, raising concerns about cognitive dissonance and the masking of negative feelings like shame or guilt. This study examines how gamified brand engagement (GBE) affects brand image and how cognitive dissonance and self-conscious emotions mediate this relationship. Using a quantitative study with SHEIN users, a structural equation model captures the psychological mechanisms between GBE, emotions and brand evaluation. Results show that only the highest form of GBE – creation – significantly enhances brand image and reduces dissonance and self-conscious emotions, while consumption and contribution show no positive effects and partly reinforce negative emotions. Overall, the model highlights the central role of moral-psychological processes and the ambivalent impact of gamification.

Track: Retailing & Omni-Channel Management