# ANALYZING THE CONSUMER PURCHASING INTENTION OF VIRTUAL GOODS IN ONLINE GAME

by:
**Elfan Frederick Hizkia Warouw**[1]

[1]Faculty of Economics and Business
International Business Administration (IBA) Program
University of Sam Ratulangi Manado

email: [1]elfanwarouw@hotmail.com

***ABSTRACT***

Online game is a virtual world environment that many people called as gamer joins to find pleasure of gaming. In purpose to reach the gamers goal, they need to improve the competency of their character by using virtual goods. Three consumer value such as functional value with price utility and quality as it variables, emotional value with aesthetics and playfulness as it variables, and social value with social self-image and social relationship had involved in this research in order to get the result. This study objective is to find out what factor that affected the intention of the gamer to purchase the virtual goods. Gamers in Manado city are the purpose of this study. This research is a quantitative research that associative with multiple linear regression analysis technique. The population of the sample is the active only gamer in Manado city that the numbers of the online gamers are unidentified. This research used accidental sampling as the method with 100 respondents. The result of the research then shows that three from six variables which are Aesthetics, Playfulness, and Price Utility has significant effect to Purchasing Intention.

***Keywords:*** *functional value, emotional value, social value, purchasing intention, virtual goods.*

## INTRODUCTION

Virtual goods are non-physical objects and money purchased for use in online communities or online games. In online games, this virtual goods or virtual item is a stuff that helps the user to advance faster at the virtual worlds. The gamers do not hesitate to spend big number of money to buy these virtual goods. Because in online game, every gamer need to develop faster and stronger to become the best player at their virtual world. This research considered as important to find out what kind of virtual goods that influence the intention of the gamer, so the game developer may offer that kind of virtual goods to the gamers.

Player intention in purchasing this virtual goods in online game affected by the customer value of purchasing, which is this consumer value divided in three type of value. First is Functional value which is containing two variable, price utility and product quality. Second is Emotional value which is also containing two variable, aesthetics and playfulness. The last is Social value with social self-Image and social relationship as it variables. The transaction of virtual goods also happens in Manado city which becomes the purpose of this study.

This research is a quantitative research using multiple linear regression analysis technique. Online gamers in Manado are the purpose of this study. The researcher then used accidental sampling as the research method. This research choose 100 online gamer in Manado city as the respondents. The questioner was spread in order to found some result. The researcher will investigate what kind of virtual goods that attract the intention of the online gamer in Manado city. The result of the research shows that price utility, aesthetics, and playfulness has significant influence to the customer purchasing intention. Meanwhile, quality, social self-image and social relationship has no significant influence to their purchasing intention. Emotional value then becomes the most important factors that influence the gamer purchasing intention. Gamer in Manado city pay more attention to the experience of the virtual goods. Emotional value has become an important part that affects the intention of gamer. They prefer a good display and good experience of using the virtual goods. The game developer should increase many kind of item that offers emotional value forward to the gamers in Manado city.

**Research Objectives**

The objective of this research is to find out the influence of:

1. Price utility, quality, aesthetics, playfulness, social self-images, and social relationship simultaneously to consumer purchasing intention.
2. Price utility to consumer purchasing intention partially.
3. Quality to consumer purchasing partially.
4. Aesthetics to consumer partially.
5. Playfulness to consumer purchasing intention partially.
6. Social self-images to consumer purchasing intention partially.
7. Social relationship to consumer purchasing intention partially.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

**Virtual Goods**

Virtual goods are non-physical objects and money purchased for use in online communities or online games. Sales of virtual goods are sometimes referred to as micro transactions, and the games that utilize this model are usually referred to as freemium (free + premium) games. Lin and Sun (2007) describes two types of virtual goods: functional props and decorative props. Functional props enhance the competency of the game user; decorative props that change the in-game appearance of the game user.

**Customer Value**

Customer value is often found to be an important prediction of buying behavior and a significant influencer of customers purchase decision. The value framework discussed by Sheth et al. (1991), Sweetney and Soutar (2001) and Rintamaki et al. (2006) all incorporated three pertinent dimensions of customer consumption values, namely functional value, emotional value, and social value. All of them found that functional, emotional and social values were key influencers to consumer behavior in each of their context.

**Purchase Intention**

Intention is motivation of people in the sense of his or her intention to purchase. People start the assessment and evaluation process, and make a purchase decision after comparison and judgment. Rezvaniet al (2012) stated that purchase intention is the buyer forecast of his choice sometime in the future. It involves assumptions about future events including the like hood of any perceive inhibitors creating barriers over the buyer's planning horizon.



**Previous Research**

Ho and Wu (2012) investigate the issue and found that this study has two kind of result. For the role-playing game users, the gamer are affected by functional theory of consumption values which are functional quality, playfulness and social relationship support. The result is different with the war strategy game users. For the war strategy game users they are affected by the satisfaction with the game, identification with the character, and functional theory of consumption values which is: price utility and playfulness. This study also shows that a type of a game is a moderating variable for character competency, price utility, and social relationship support. Kim et al. (2009) found another result. They found result that provides empirical evidence that perceived quality, playfulness, and social self-image are three factors that significantly influence the online consumer purchasing intention in context of social networking communities. Another research from Chou and Kimsuwan (2013) found that the result shows that the gamer purchase prepayment card mainly for the enjoyment value. So the online game company should increase the virtual goods product that supports the enjoyment value of the consumer.

**Conceptual Framework**

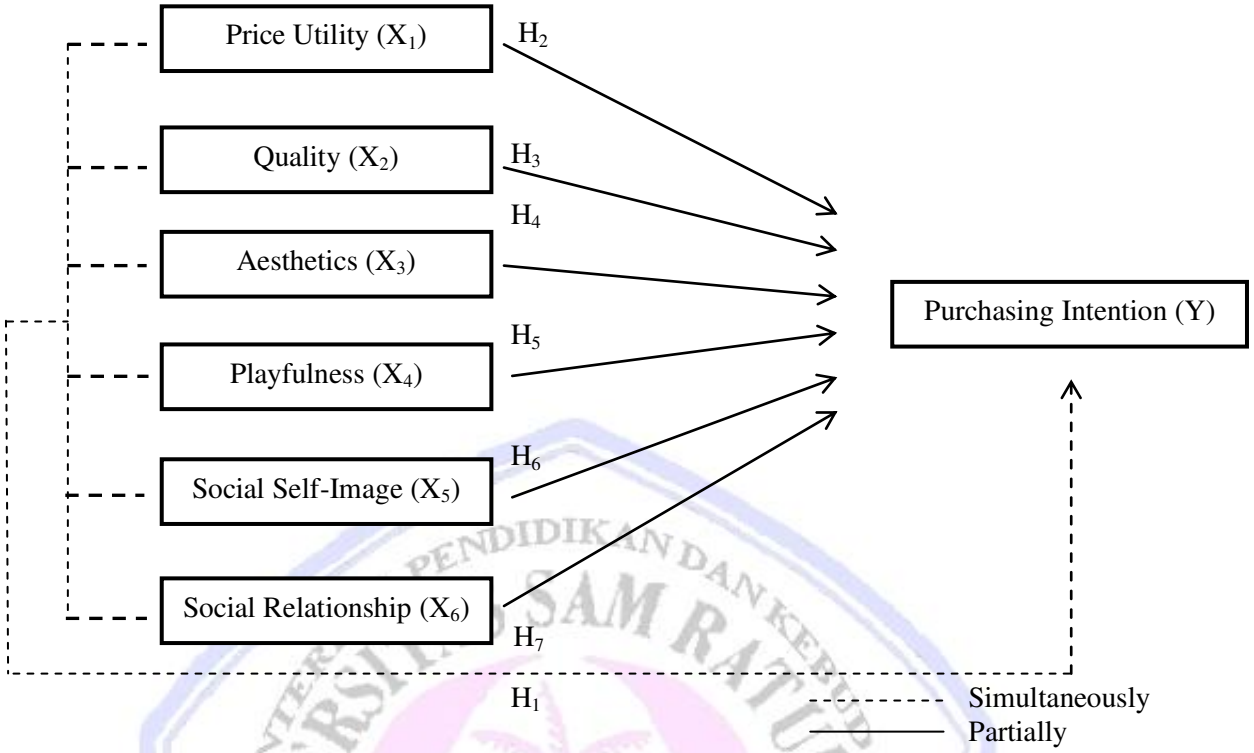


**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**
*Source: Research Procedure*

**Research Hypothesis**

$H_1$ : Price utility, quality, aesthetics, playfulness, social self-images, and social relationship simultaneously influence consumer purchasing intention.
$H_2$ : Price utility significantly influences consumer purchasing intention
$H_3$ : Quality significantly influences consumer purchasing intention
$H_4$ : Aesthetics significantly influences consumer purchasing intention
$H_5$ : Playfulness significantly influences consumer purchasing intention
$H_6$ : Social Self-images significantly influences consumer purchasing intention
$H_7$ : Social Relationship significantly influences consumer purchasing intention

## RESEARCH METHOD

**Type of Research**

The purpose of this research is to know the consumer intention of purchasing virtual goods in online game, with the purpose of study are the online gamer in Manado. This research is causal type. Causal since the purpose is to determine if one or more variables cause another variable to occur or change. This research is a quantitative method since using questionnaire as a tool to gather data and analysis.

**Place and Time of Research**

The study was conducted in Manado with the subject of this study are the gamer in Manado city who playing online games. That field is a perfect location to do this research and to investigate the consumer purchase intention of virtual goods in online game. This research regarding all online gamer as respondents from July – September 2014 and the survey started on July 2014.

**Population and Sample**

Population is the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekaran and Bougie 2009;262). The population in this research is the online gamer that active playing online game at Manado city. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009;263) sample is a subset of a population that comprises some members selected from it. The sample in this research is the online gamer that actively playing online game at Manado city. For calculating sample size, there will be used accidental sampling method, and use 100 gamers as the respondents.

**Data Collection Method**

The data used in this research consist of two types between primary data through questionnaires and secondary data taken from books, journals and relevant literature from library and internet to understand of theoretical support on this research.

**Operational Definition of Research Variables**

The general explanations about variables in this current study are stated as follows:

1. Price Utility ($X_1$) is defined in our context as the utility derived due to the perceived efficient use of money to minimize what is sacrificed to obtain the product (Kim et al., 2009)
2. Quality ($X_2$) is related to the increase in character competency received for purchasing virtual goods with higher quality function (Ho and Wu, 2012)
3. Aesthetics ($X_3$) representing visual appeal of focal virtual goods, could attract the interests of potential buyers (Kim et al.,2009).
4. Playfulness ($X_4$) and enjoyment are related to the increase in fun, attention, and imagination received for purchasing virtual goods. (Park and Lee,2012)
5. Social Self Image ($X_5$): The purchase and use of products is a means by which an individual can express self-image socially to others(Kim et al.,2009)
6. Social Relationship ($X_6$) is a factor that can lead gamer's motivation to purchase them in case of building relationship with other gamers (Baumeister, 1995)
7. Purchase Intention (Y) means a subjective inclination consumers have towards a certain product (Bhakar et al., 2013)

**Validity and Reliability**

Validity is a test of how well an instrument that is developed measures the particular concept it is intended to measure. To analyze the validity of questionnaire, Pearson Product Moment is used. The instrument will valid if the instrument is able to fill the requirement in validity test. Validity for each variable is good where the values are above minimum level of 0.30. Reliability test is established by testing for both consistency and stability of the answer of questions. Consistency indicates how well the items measuring a concept hang together as a set; Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another, the questionnaire is reliable if the value of Cronbach's Alpha more than 0.6 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009:162).

**Multiple Regression Analysis Method**

The method of research used in this study is multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis is the process of calculating a coefficient of multiple determination and regression equation using two or more independent variables and one dependent variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009:348). The equation model of multiple regression analysis used in this research can be formulated as shown below:

$$\mathbf{Y = \alpha + \beta\ 1X1 + \beta\ 2X2 + \beta\ 3X3 + \beta\ 4X4 + \beta\ 5X45 + \beta\ 6X46 + e}$$

Where :

Y = Purchasing Intention (Dependent Variable)
α = The constant, when all independent variable equal to 0
$X_1$ = Price Utility (independent variable)
$X_2$ = Quality (independent variable)

$X_3$ = Aesthetics (independent variable)
$X_4$ = Playfulness (independent variable)
$X_5$ = Social Self-Images (independent variable)
$X_6$ = Social Relationship (independent variable)
β = The slope for each independent variable
e = Error

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Validity and Reliability

Validity test is used to know whether the instrument is valid or not. The instrument is valid if the value of variable is positive and more than 0.3 (r > 0.3). The result of Price Utility ($X_1$) 0.820, Quality ($X_2$) 0.955, Aesthetics ($X_3$) 0.895, Playfulness ($X_4$) 0.924, Social Self Image ($X_5$) 0.619, and Social Relationship ($X_6$) 0.807, It shows that the indicators are valid. Reliability test to measure if one item of question was tested several times would give consistent value. Reliability analysis use Alpha Cronbach (0.6). The value of Alpha Cronbach is in this research is 0.964, which is above the acceptance limit of 0.6; therefore, the research instrument for relationships among the variables indicates good consistency and the data is reliable.

### Classical Assumption
### Multicollinearity

**Table 1.Multicollinearity result**

| | Model | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | Price Utility | 0.239 | 4.182 |
| | Quality | 0.396 | 2.523 |
| | Aesthetics | 0.289 | 5.292 |
| | Playfulness | 0.227 | 4.414 |
| | Social Self-Image | 0.537 | 1.864 |
| | Social Relationship | 0.228 | 4.387 |

a. Dependent Variable: SMEs DEV
Source: SPSS data analysis, 2014



Table 1 above shows that the Tolerance of Price Utility is 0.239; Quality is 0.396; Aesthetics is 0.289; Playfulness is 0.227; Social Self Image is 0.537; Social Relationship is 0,228 meaning the tolerance value of each variable is more than 0.2. The VIF value of Price Utility 4.182, Quality is 2.523, Aesthetics is 5.292, Playfulness is 4.414, Social Self Image is 1.864, and Social Relationship is 4.387 meaning the VIF value of each variable is less than 10. Since all the tolerance value is more than 0.2 and VIF value is less than 10 of each variable independent, so this research is free from multicollinearity.

**Heteroscedasticity**

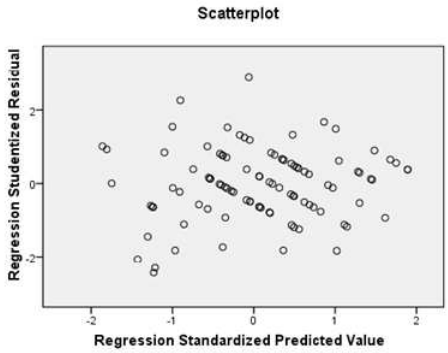


**Figure 2.Heteroscedasticity result**

Source: SPSS data analysis, 2014

The Figure 2 shows that the pattern of points is spreading. The points are spreading above and below of zero point in ordinate. This is proved that there is no heteroscedasticity in this regression.

**Normality**

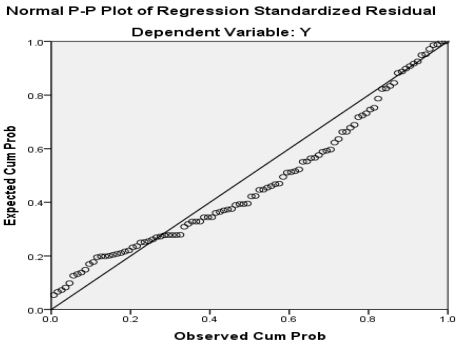


**Figure 3. Normality result**

Source: *SPSS data analysis, 2014*

Figure 3 shows that the data spreads near the diagonal line and follow the direction of diagonal line. Therefore, the normality test is accomplished.

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

**Table 2. Multiple Regression Result**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **B** | **Std. Error** | **Beta** | **t** | **Sig.** |
| 1 | (Constant) | 0.969 | 0.708 | | 1.369 | 0.174 |
| | Price Utility ($X_1$) | 0.216 | 0.094 | 0.229 | 2.3 | 0.024 |
| | Quality ($X_2$) | 0.143 | 0.078 | 0.142 | 1.838 | 0.069 |
| | Aesthetics ($X_3$) | 0.263 | 0.108 | 0.272 | 2.431 | 0.017 |
| | Playfulness ($X_4$) | 0.345 | 0.104 | 0.339 | 3.313 | 0.001 |
| | Social Self-Image ($X_5$) | 0.015 | 0.056 | 0.017 | 0.261 | 0.794 |
| | cial Relationship ($X_6$) | 0.033 | 0.105 | 0.032 | 0.316 | 0.753 |

a. Dependent Variable: SMEs DEV

Source: SPSS data analysis, 2014

The calculation is conducted by using the SPSS software. The computerized calculation ensures the accuracy of the analysis. From the result in table 2, the multiple regression models can be defined as:

$$\mathbf{Y = 0.969 + 0.216X_1 + 0.143X_2 + 0.263X_3 + 0.345X_4 + 0.015X_5 + 0.033X_6 + e}$$

From the multiple linear regression equation above, it can inform the interpretation as follows:

1) Constant value of 0.969 means that if the variables in this research of Variable $X_1$, $X_2$, $X_3$, $X_4$, $X_5$, and $X_6$ simultaneously increased by one scale or one unit will increase the Y at 0.969 point.
2) Coefficient value of 0.216 means that if the variables in this research of $X_1$ increased by one scale or one unit, it will improve and increase Y at 0.216.
3) Coefficient value of 0.143 means that if the variables in this research of $X_2$ increased by one scale or one unit, it will improve and increase Y at 0.143.
4) Coefficient value of 0.263 means that if the variables in this research of $X_3$ increased by one scale or one unit, it will improve and increase Y at 0.263.
5) Coefficient value of 0.345 means that if the variables in this research of $X_4$ increased by one scale or one unit, it will improve and increase Y at 0.345.
6) Coefficient value of 0.015 means that if the variables in this research of $X_5$ increased by one scale or one unit, it will improve and increase Y at 0.015.
7) Coefficient value of 0.033 means that if the variables in this research of X6 increased by one scale or one unit, it will improve and increase Y at 0.033.

**Multiple Regression Coefficient of Correlation & Determination**

**Table 3. Table R and Table $R^2$**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.883[a] | 0.779 | 0.765 | 0.754 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), GP, FIS, HCB, FA

b. Source: SPSS data analysis, 2014

The interpretation of coefficient correlation (R) that shown in Table 3 means there is significant relationship between the six independent variables with dependent variable. It is because the value of R is 0.883 which proved that the relationship among variable independents and dependent is very strong. The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) according to the Table 3 is 0.779, it shows that the linear relationship in this model is able to explain the purchasing intention (Y) for 77.9% while the rest 22.1% is explained by other factors not discussed in this research.

**Hypothesis Testing F-test**

F-test is used to determine the simultaneous effect of all independent variables to dependent variable. This test is conducted by comparing the $f_{count}$ and $f_{table}$. If $f_{count}$ is higher than $f_{table}$, $H_0$ is rejected and $H_1$ is accepted.

**Table 4. F-test**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 187.043 | 6 | 31.174 | 54.787 | .000[b] |
| | Residual | 52.917 | 93 | 0.569 | | |
| | Total | 239.96 | 99 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Y

b. Predictors: (Constant), $X_6$, $X_5$, $X_4$, $X_3$, $X_2$, $X_1$

With the level of significant of 0.05 and degree of freedom (df) of 6; 100, the $F_{table}$from F distribution table is $F_{6;\ 100;\ 0.05} = 2.19$, while $F_{count}$from Table 4 is 54.787 then the result is$F_{count} > F_{table}$ : 54.787 > 2.19. Since the $F_{count}$ is greater than $F_{table}$, $H_0$ is rejected and $H_1$ is accepted. It means that the independent variables significantly affect the dependent variable simultaneously.

**T-test**

T-test is used to determine the partial effect of each independent variable to dependent variable. T-test value is obtained by comparing value of $T_{count}$ with $T_{table}$. If $T_{count}$ is higher than $T_{table}$, then $H_0$ is rejected and $H_1$ is accepted.

**Table 5. T-test**

| | Model | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.369 | 0.174 |
| | Price Utility ($X_1$) | 2.3 | 0.024 |
| | Quality ($X_2$) | 1.838 | 0.069 |
| | Aesthetics ($X_3$) | 2.431 | 0.017 |
| | Playfulness ($X_4$) | 3.313 | 0.001 |
| | Social Self-Image ($X_5$) | 0.261 | 0.794 |
| | Social Relationship ($X_6$) | 0.316 | 0.753 |

a. Dependent Variable: SMEs DEV
Source: SPSS data analysis, 2014

1. Price Utility ($X_1$) on Purchasing Intention (Y)
   In Table 5 the $T_{count}$ of Price Utility ($X_1$) is 2.300. Comparing $T_{count}$with $T_{table}$: 2.300 > 1.984. Since the $T_{count}$is greater than $T_{table}$, $H_0$ is rejected and $H_1$ is accepted. Therefore, Price Utility has very significant influence to Purchase Intention.
2. Quality ($X_2$) on Purchasing Intention (Y)
   In Table 5 the $T_{count}$ of Quality ($X_2$) is 1.838. Comparing $T_{count}$with $T_{table}$: 1.838< 1.984. Since the $T_{count}$is weaker than $T_{table}$, $H_0$ is accepted and $H_1$ is rejected. Therefore, Quality has no significant influence to Purchasing Intention.
3. Aesthetics ($X_3$) on Purchasing Intention (Y)
   In Table 5 the $T_{count}$ of Aesthetics ($X_3$) is 2.431. Comparing $T_{count}$ with $T_{table}$: 2.431>1.984. Since the $T_{count}$is greater than $T_{table}$, $H_0$ is rejected and $H_1$ is accepted. Therefore, Aesthetics has very significant influence to Purchase Intention.
4. Playfulness ($X_4$) on Purchasing Intention (Y)
   In Table 5 the $T_{count}$ of Playfulness ($X_4$) is 3.313. Comparing $T_{count}$ with $T_{table}$: 3.313> 1.984. Since the $T_{count}$is greater than $T_{table}$, $H_0$ is rejected and $H_1$ is accepted. Therefore, Playfulness has very significant influence on Purchase Intention.
5. Social Self Image ($X_5$) on Purchasing Intention (Y)
   In Table 5 the $T_{count}$ of Social Self Image ($X_5$) is 0.261. Comparing $T_{count}$with $T_{table}$: 0.261 < 1.984. Since the $T_{count}$is weaker than $T_{table}$, $H_0$ is accepted and $H_1$ is rejected. Therefore, Social Self Image has no significant influence to Employee Performance.
6. Social Relationship ($X_6$) on Purchasing Intention (Y)
   In Table 5 the $T_{count}$ of Social Self Image ($X_6$) is 0.316. Comparing $T_{count}$with $T_{table}$: 0.316 < 1.984. Since the $T_{count}$is weaker than $T_{table}$, $H_0$ is accepted and $H_1$ is rejected. Therefore, Social Relationship has no significant influence to Purchasing Intention.

## Discussion

### Price Utility on Purchasing Intention

Price utility contained item efficiency, item classification, and item rarity as the indicators. The gamers pay more attention with the price according the item efficiency. This result is similar with the previous research made by Ho and Wu (2012). The higher efficient the item value, the more higher the price of the item. The gamer consider this as an important thing in online game. Therefore result shows that the price utility has significant effect to gamers purchasing intention.

### Quality on Purchasing Intention

In this research the researcher found that Quality has no significant influence towards Purchasing Intention. The respondents don't feel the quality of the virtual goods as important factors that influence their progress in the game. They pay more attention with the satisfaction of playing the game. This result is different with the previous research by Ho and Wu (2012) about the war-strategy game user that quality has a significant effect.

### Aesthetics on Purchasing Intention

Aesthetics is one of the variables that got the highest influence to purchasing intention alongside with playfulness. The item attractiveness, item color, and the visual effect of the item have a strong influence to the gamers according to the result. The gamer in Manado city prefer a nice from the virtual goods. This result is different with the previous research by Ho and Wu (2012) and by Kim et al. (2009). The different of culture and population might be the factors that affected the result.

### Playfulness on Purchasing Intention

The result of this research is similar with the last research by Ho and Wu (2012). Ho and Wu found that the role playing gamer consider playfulness as one of the strongest indicator that affect the purchasing intention. Playfulness plays an important role in affecting the consumer purchasing intention. The same situation also happens in this research that shows the gamers in Manado city consider the experience of enjoyment that influence their purchasing intention.

### Social Self Image on Purchasing Intention

The result shows that there is no significant influence between social self-images on purchasing intention in this research. It's different with the previous research by Kim et al. (2009). The different of population and culture of the respondent in this research with the previous one believed have an effect with the result. The gamer in Manado city think there is not important to represent their self-image to the game that they played.

### Social Relationship on Purchasing Intention

This result also has shown different result with the previous result by Ho and Wu (2012). Majority of the respondent disagree with the statement that social relationship affected their intention to purchase the virtual goods. The differences between the population and the culture also believed have the major effect with the different result.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Conclusion

The final conclusions in this research are:

1. Price Utility, Quality, Aesthetics, Playfulness, Social Self Image, and Social Relationship influence Consumer Purchasing Intention of virtual goods simultaneously.
2. Price Utility has a significant influence to Purchasing Intention partially.
3. Quality has no significant influence to Purchasing Intention partially.
4. Aesthetics has a significant influence to Purchasing Intention partially.
5. Playfulness has a significant influence to Purchasing Intention partially.

6. Price Utility has no significant influence to Purchasing Intention partially.
7. Social Relationship has no significant influence to Purchasing Intention partially.

**Recommendation**

The researcher then found that there are four recommendations for the online gamers in Manado city and online game developers.

1. Online gamers in Manado consider the Aesthetics and Playfulness factors that increase their intention to buy the virtual goods. Increasing emotional value to the virtual goods will have a good result.
2. Playfulness is the strongest factor that affected the intention of the gamers. Creating items by considering Playfulness factor should be a good way to attract the online gamer's intention.
3. Functional value such as price utility also play important role in attract gamer's intention to purchase the virtual goods. The game creator or the virtual goods dealer should consider so sell this kind of item.
4. Social value such as social self-images and social relationship has no significant effect to influence purchasing intention of virtual goods among the gamers in Manado city. Concentrating to functional value and emotional value will help the item attractiveness to the online gamers in Manado city.

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