

## **DETERMINANTS OF BATTLE PASS PURCHASE INTENTION IN GENSHIN IMPACT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Mobile gaming has been a part of people's daily activity, either as a leisure activity or a hobby. The demand for online games has been increasing because they can be played anywhere and anytime, but the mobile gaming industry still faces challenges in generating revenue because customers tend to only use the free features of the game. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of enjoyment, social value and continued use intention towards purchase intention of a virtual item in a mobile game, which is Battle Pass offered by Genshin Impact. This research is a descriptive study which describes the variables in a situation of interest of the researcher. Moreover, this is a cross-sectional study, whereas data was gathered once during a period from a specific group. This study collected data from 126 respondents in Jakarta who have purchased the Battle Pass, but only 98 data are valid for analysis. The questionnaires were distributed online and data analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. This study concluded that enjoyment, social value and continued use intention can predict purchase intention positively and significantly. Based on the results, researchers hope that Genshin Impact developer (Hoyoverse) can get more information to create a strategy to increase customers' battle pass purchase intention.

**Keywords:** enjoyment, social value, continued use intention, purchase intention

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The video game industry is believed to continue to be in demand, especially after the pandemic in 2020, which provided more opportunities for people to play video games. As a result, the industry is predicted to continue to grow until 2026, particularly in social/ casual gaming, which is expected to have an increase in revenue from \$148 billion in 2021 to \$242 billion in 2026 (PWC, 2022). Mobile gaming has been a famous kind of social/ casual gaming, which has been gaining popularity since 2014 (Moreira *et al.* 2014). This behavior is supported by the shift of consumers who previously played console games to mobile gaming, which can be played anytime and anywhere via smartphones (Moreira *et al.* 2014).

However, even though the industry is predicted to continue growing, the mobile gaming industry still faces challenges in generating revenue. One strategy used by video game companies to generate revenue is microtransactions, which, according to Tomic (2017), are in-app payments for purchasing additional content, such as features that make it easier for consumers to play or visual elements that are not available for free, thereby enhancing the user experience. The challenge faced by video game companies on increasing microtransactions is the current fluctuating economic conditions. Microtransactions for video games are considered a secondary need, so in such economic conditions, consumers are more likely to save their money and not use it for microtransactions in video games.

Furthermore, consumers who play video games as a leisure activity or to play with friends often do not have a strong interest to make microtransactions, thereby only professional gamers or consumers with a high disposable income who have interest for microtransactions. Therefore, this research aims to examine the factors that can increase consumers' intention to make microtransactions.

This study will be conducted on consumers of Genshin Impact which was released on September 28, 2020 and has become the highest-grossing gacha-based mobile game in 2022 (Sensor Tower, 2022). The primary source of revenue for Genshin Impact is microtransactions or in-game purchases, where players can buy in-game characters, character skins, and battle pass that can provide advantages over other players by granting additional resources (Shaukat, 2023). Therefore, this research focuses on the factors that can influence purchase intention of the battle pass offered by Genshin Impact.

Gianto (2020) concluded that perceived enjoyment and continuous use intention have a positive and significant impact on purchase intention in mobile games. Perceived enjoyment means that Genshin Impact players are enjoying their gaming experience, and this enjoyment becomes a motivation for making a purchase because they believe that the products obtained will either enhance their gameplay or improve their gaming experience.

Meanwhile, continued use intention refers to a player's intention to keep playing Genshin Impact. When players have this intention, they perceive that purchasing the battle pass can be used for the long term, which then motivate their purchase intention. Moreover, Wahyuni and Darma (2019) showed that social value has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention. Social value relates to the social aspects associated with playing Genshin Impact, such as character collections or having more comprehensive features compared to one's social environment. A player is more likely to purchase the battle pass when they want to have a Genshin Impact game environment that surpasses their social environment.

### **Enjoyment**

Enjoyment can be understood as a psychological state that motivates an individual to behave and is associated with various positive emotions (Abuhamdeh, 2020). Enjoyment can also be explained as the state in which all intrinsic needs are perceived as fulfilled (Kneer *et al.* 2022). These needs can encompass the need for pleasure, meaning, security, sustenance, the need to be valued, a sense of belonging, and affection.

This research concludes that enjoyment is the pleasure experienced when one's desires, goals, or individual needs are fulfilled, thus motivating the individual to engage in specific behaviors. In the context of playing online games, this enjoyment can manifest as the comfort of leisurely gaming or the satisfaction of performing well in the game.

### **Social value**

According to Hamari, Hanner, and Koivisto (2020), social value of a game is defined as its potential to enhance an individual's social self-concept, which is how someone perceives themselves in relation to others. When someone plays a game with social aspects, they will often experience a sense of attachment or bonding, according to Zhao and Lu (2012), this attachment refers to the relationships with other players that are felt through sharing experiences while playing the game.

This research defines social value as how an individual perceives themselves in relation to others and how these relationships create a sense of attachment felt through sharing experiences while playing games.

### **Continued use intention**

Hamari *et al.* (2020) described continued use intention as an individual's intention to continue using a product or service. According to Sugiyono (2017), continued use intention means that a consumer has plans to engage in a behavior repeatedly in the future. Meanwhile, Kotler and Keller (2016) defined continued use intention as a continuous interaction with a product.

This research concluded that continued use intention is the consumer's plan to engage in continuous interaction with a product in the future. In this context, the intention means that a player will continue to play the online game and stay updated with the updates and developments introduced by the game in the future.

### **Purchase intention**

According to Takaya (2019), purchase intention indicates the likelihood of someone making a transaction based on their desire for the product. Additionally, Kotler and Keller (2016) stated that purchase intention arises after evaluating alternatives, and during the evaluation process, consumers make a series of choices about the products they intend to purchase based on brands or interests. Keni *et al.* (2022) defined purchase intention as consumers' interest and feeling on whether or not they'll purchase a product or service from a certain company, and how it would differ from buying a similar product or service from another company.

This research defines purchase intention as an individual's interest to buy a product after evaluating alternatives. In the context of online games, this interest typically increases with usage. Subsequently, players will attempt to evaluate whether in-game purchases are necessary.

### **The relationship between enjoyment and purchase intention**

Sakina and Ali (2021) indicated that enjoyment has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention for online shopping. Rusiyati *et al.* (2021) concluded that enjoyment has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention in online retail stores in Jakarta. Furthermore, Gianto (2020) showed that enjoyment has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention.

However, Hamari (2015) presented contrasting results, indicating that enjoyment has a negative and significant impact on purchase intention. This research suggested that when a player is already comfortable with a free-to-play online game (freemium) and finds it enjoyable, they may not be interested in making purchases because they already feel satisfied with the game.

**H1: Enjoyment positively predicts and has significant effect on purchase intention.**

### **The relationship between social value and purchase intention**

Hamari *et al.* (2020) concluded that social value has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention for online games in Finland. Additionally, Wahyuni and Darma (2019) demonstrated that social value has a positive and significant influence on the purchase intention of students in Bali regarding mobile advertising.

Those studies supported the idea of Kuo, Wo, and Deng (2009) who suggested that virtual products, such as in-game purchases, have cultural implications similar to the real world.

Therefore, when a player makes in-game purchases, these transactions are motivated by the expected social status enhancement from the acquired products, similar to how someone purchases luxury items in the real world

**H2: Social Value positively predicts and has significant effect on purchase intention.**

### **The relationship between continued use intention and purchase intention**

Continued use intention in freemium services can predict purchase intention for premium content (Hamari *et al.* 2020). Loa and Berlianto (2022) also concluded that continued use intention has a significant impact on the purchase intention for online games in Indonesia. Those findings are consistent with the perspective of Venkatesh and Agarwal (2006) who suggested that for customers to purchase premium products in games, they must first become accustomed to the game and estimate how long they will continue to play it. Players are more likely to make purchases if they believe they will continue playing the game.

**H3: Continued Use Intention positively predicts and has significant effect on purchase intention.**

Based on the hypotheses above, this study developed research model as illustrated in Figure 1.

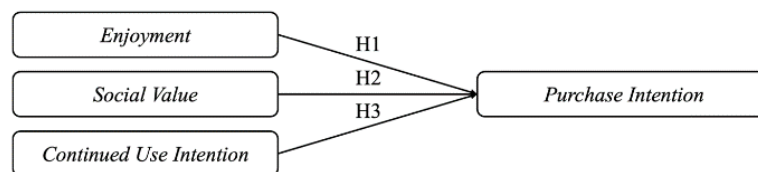


Figure 1. Research Model

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a descriptive research design with the aim of examining the factors that can influence purchase intention. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), descriptive research describes the variables in a situation of interest to the researcher, which helps in understanding the relationships between the observed variables. Furthermore, this study conducted the cross-sectional method, whereas data are gathered just once perhaps in a period of days or weeks or months, to answer a research question (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). This research was conducted since June 2023 until October 2023.

The collected data are primary data. According to Malhotra (2009), primary data is obtained directly from the data source or respondents. The data collection method used is a questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. According to Malhotra (2009), a questionnaire is a structured technique for obtaining data that consists of a series of questions answered by respondents.

The data source for this research is Genshin Impact players in Jakarta who have purchased a battle pass. This study focuses on these subjects to understand the factors that can influence the intention to purchase virtual items. The sampling method used is non-probability sampling, which involves selecting a sample based on specific characteristics. The sampling technique used is convenience sampling. According to Malhotra (2009), convenience sampling means selecting a sample that is easy for the researcher to gather information and data.

This study used 7-point-likert-scale to measure the variables, whereas 1 means strongly disagree to 7 which means strongly agree. From the 126 questionnaires distributed, 98 respondents can be analyzed. Indicators for each variable can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Indicators of variable

Variables	Code	Indicator	Reference
Enjoyment	ENJ1	Playing this game is enjoyable.	Sweeney & Soutar (2001); Van der Heijden (2004)
	ENJ2	Playing this game is fun.	
	ENJ3	Playing this game is exciting.	
	ENJ4	Playing this game is interesting.	
Continued Use Intention	CUI1	I think I will keep playing this game, at least as frequent as now.	Bhattacharjee (2001)
	CUI2	I intend to play this game next month, at least as frequent as now.	
	CUI3	I plan to play this game in the future.	
Social Value	SOC1	People who I respect, like to play this game.	Ajzen (1991); Sweeney & Soutar (2001)
	SOC2	My friends think that playing this game is a good idea.	
	SOC3	Playing this game improve other people's perception about me.	
	SOC4	Playing this game make good impression on me.	
Purchase Intention	PURCH1	I think I will spend my money to purchase virtual products in this game next month, at least as much as I previously spent.	Bhattacharjee (2001)
	PURCH2	I intend to purchase virtual products in this game next month, at least as much as I previously spent.	
	PURCH3	I plan to spend my money for this game in the future.	

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

98 valid data were analyzed to evaluate the relationship between variables. For the measurement of validity, this study uses convergent validity and discriminant validity, while for reliability measurement, this study uses Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability measurements. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Square -Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with the help of SmartPLS 4 software. Validity and reliability testing can be seen in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4.

Table 2. Result of Loading Factor Analysis

Variables	Items	Loading Factor	AVE
Enjoyment	ENJ1	0.678	0.590
	ENJ2	0.783	
	ENJ3	0.822	
	ENJ4	0.782	
Continued Use Intention	CUI1	0.888	0.758
	CUI2	0.863	
	CUI3	0.861	
Social Value	SOC1	0.723	0.675
	SOC2	0.863	
	SOC3	0.863	
	SOC4	0.830	
Purchase Intention	PURCH1	0.931	0.839
	PURCH2	0.951	
	PURCH3	0.863	

Hair *et al.* (2022) suggested that convergent validity is considered valid if the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value is  $\geq 0.50$ , Sekaran & Bougie (2020) suggested that the loading factor value should be  $> 0.5$ . Table 2 implied that all variables have fulfilled the criteria.

Table 3. Result of Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Analysis

Variable	Continued Use Intention	Enjoyment	Purchase Intention	Social Value
Continued Use Intention				
Enjoyment	0.479			
Purchase Intention	0.740	0.535		
Social Value	0.839	0.573	0.720	

Furthermore, the fulfillment of discriminant validity criteria can be seen based on Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Hair *et al.* (2014) mentioned that a construct has good discriminant validity if the HTMT value  $< 0.9$ . Based on Table 3, all variables have HTMT value lower than 0.9. Hence, all variables can be considered as valid.

Table 4. Result of Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Continued Use Intention	0.841	0.849
Enjoyment	0.774	0.798
Purchase Intention	0.904	0.925
Social Value	0.838	0.837

Based on Table 4, all variables have Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.6 and composite reliability values greater than 0.7. Therefore, all variables can be considered reliable and an inner-model analysis was performed to examine the relationships between variables. The results of inner model assessment and hypothesis testing are shown in Table 5, 6, and 7.

Table 5. Result of R-Squared Analysis

Variable	R <sup>2</sup>	Result
<i>Purchase Intention</i>	0.515	Moderate

Based on Table 5, purchase intention has an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.515, meaning that 51.5% of the variation in the purchase intention variable can be explained by enjoyment, continued use intention, and social value, while the remaining 48.5% can be explained by other variables. This value falls into the moderate category as it is more than 0.25.

Table 6. Result of Predictive Relevance Analysis

Variable	Q <sup>2</sup>
<i>Purchase Intention</i>	0.475

Table 6 indicates that purchase intention variable meets the criteria for predictive relevance as it produces a Q-Square value greater than 0, specifically at 0.475. This suggests that the variable can predict the research model effectively and falls into the moderate category since it is greater than 0.15.

Table 7. Result of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Original sample	p-values	t-statistics	Result
H1: <i>Enjoyment -&gt; Purchase Intention</i>	0.186	0.018	2.375	Positive Significant
H2: <i>Social Value -&gt; Purchase Intention</i>	0.276	0.018	2.377	Positive Significant
H3: <i>Continued Use Intention -&gt; Purchase Intention</i>	0.378	0.001	3.196	Positive Significant

Based on Table 7, the results of the hypothesis testing are as follows, Hypothesis 1 (H1) has a p-value of 0.018 and a t-statistics value of 2.375. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted, meaning that enjoyment has a significant influence on purchase intention because the p-value is less than 0.05, and the t-statistics value is greater than 2.375. Furthermore, the original sample value is 0.186, indicating that enjoyment has a positive impact on purchase intention since the original sample value is greater than 0.

This result is consistent with May and Immanuel (2022), Kian *et al.* (2017), and Mäntymäki & Salo (2015) who suggested that enjoyment has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention. These results indicate that if respondents enjoy their time playing Genshin Impact, it can have an impact on their intention to make transactions for premium content, such as the battle pass. This intention arises because customers perceive that such purchases can enhance the satisfaction they experience while playing the game.

Moreover, hypothesis 2 (H2) has p-value of 0.018 and t-statistic value of 2.377, so the hypothesis is accepted. This means that social value has a significant influence on purchase intention. Furthermore, the original sample value is 0.276, which indicates that social value has a positive impact on purchase intention.

This result aligns with Oestreicher-Singer and Zalmanson (2013), Vock *et al.* (2013), and Wijayanti and Budiarti (2023) who concluded that social value has a significant impact on purchase intention. These results indicate that respondents can be influenced by their social environment to purchase the battle pass. This influence may come in the form of recommendations from friends or family, encouraging the respondents to gain the benefits offered by the battle pass and enhance their gaming quality to outperform other players and complete game content more easily.

Lastly, hypothesis 3 (H3) has a p-value of 0.001 and a t-statistic value of 3.196, so the hypothesis is accepted. This means that continued use intention has a significant influence on purchase intention. Furthermore, the original sample value is 0.276, which indicates that continued use intention has a positive impact on purchase intention.

This result is consistent with Suryawirawan, Suhermin, and Shabrie (2022), Hamari (2015), and Hamari *et al.* (2020) who indicated that continued use intention can predict purchase intention. A player who wishes to continue playing a game is likely to have a high intention to purchase virtual items. This inclination is because they believe they will need those virtual products to enhance their gaming experience. In such scenario, the purchase of virtual items is perceived as a long-term investment because they believe that they will feel greater satisfaction from playing the game after acquiring those virtual items, as opposed to using only the free services.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the result of this study, several conclusions can be drawn as follows: enjoyment significantly and positively predicts the purchase intention of the battle pass in the game Genshin Impact. Therefore, this research suggests that Hoyoverse should offer the battle pass at a lower price with benefits that match that price. It is expected that players who already enjoy Genshin Impact will be more inclined to purchase the battle pass at a lower price, experience the benefits of the battle pass, and eventually buy the battle pass at a higher price.

Next, this study concluded that social value significantly and positively predicts the purchase intention of the battle pass in the game Genshin Impact. Therefore, Genshin Impact can provide additional benefits from the battle pass that can be shared with players who have never purchased a battle pass. This way, other players can experience the benefits of the battle pass. After learning about these benefits, it is expected that these players will also make a purchase.

Lastly, continued use intention significantly and positively predicts the purchase intention of the battle pass in Genshin Impact. Therefore, this research suggests that Hoyoverse should offer more benefits in the battle pass, such as providing new exclusive items that can enhance the player's experience and increasing the number of items obtained from the battle pass. This will make the battle pass more attractive for customers.

There are several limitations in this study, which are: the sample size is limited to 98 because out of 126 respondents, 28 respondents did not meet the criteria, and this research only analyzed the influence of three independent variables: enjoyment, continued use intention, and social value on purchase intention. These three variables can only explain 51.5% of the variance in the purchase intention variable, while the remaining 48.5% is explained by other variables.

Based on the limitations of this research, future research needs to increase the sample size with a broader range of respondent criteria, testing the research model on players of other games, so that this research can be a reference for other games that offer battle pass features, and adding more variables that can influence purchase intention in online games, such as perceived risk based on Jundrio & Keni (2020) and perceived quality based on Fenetta and Keni (2020).

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