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Original Research Article

The Effect of Perceived Value on In-App Purchase Intention in Mobile Legends through Loyalty as a Mediating Variable

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Abstract: The research design used in this research is explorative research with a quantitative approach. The research location taken by the researcher is in Malang City. This study is intended to analyze the effect of perceived value which includes emotional value, social value, quality/performance, and price/value for money on in-app purchase intention through loyalty to Mobile Legends game players in Malang City. The population in this study is Mobile Legends game players from teenagers to adults in Malang City. The population in this study is Mobile Legends game players from teenagers to adults in Malang City. The number of samples in this research was 110 samples. Overall, it can be seen that the dominant influence on In-App Purchase Intention is Quality/Performance, Price/Value for Money, Loyalty, and Social Value. This proves that to increase the intention to make purchases in the application, it must increase social value, quality, and price according to the quality obtained in the Mobile Legends game and make players loyal to the game. Social Value, Quality/Performance, Price/Value for Money and Loyalty are variables that significantly influence In-App Purchase Intention. There needs to be development in further research such as variables that are more relevant in accordance with the times and indicators that are more diverse.

Keywords: Perceived Value, In-App purchase Intention, Loyalty.

INTRODUCTION

Playing games casually and playing games in the realm of e-Sports have different purposes in reality. Playing games casually is just a hobby, but playing in the realm of e-sports and competing with other players is a job. To find out who can get the most cash flow and become the most famous in this field, players from all over the world face each other. E-sports in general is connected to good quality computers, now increasingly popular on mobile phones due to mechanical advances that allow e-sports to be taken seriously on mobile phones. This mobile e-sport is very popular among gamers because all it takes to follow the realm is a smartphone that meets the minimum specifications on the device to be used such as CPU power and graphics card on the smartphone and a fast and stable internet connection. When compared to using devices such as PCs or laptops, the needs and costs are cheaper.

One of the largest markets in the world for the gaming business is Indonesia. Especially video games that are played on mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, or consoles. Based on the we are social study in 2022, Indonesia ranks third in the world in terms of the proportion of individuals who actively play games. Based on the results of the study, as of January 2022, almost 95% of internet activists in Indonesia aged between 16 and 64 years play video games. We are social reports that 83.6% of internet users in the world between the ages of 16 to 64 play video games on any device. Meanwhile, 68.1% of internet users play video games on their mobile phones.

Based on these data, many companies are competing to come up with new business concepts, such as establishing a game company. Mobile Legends: Bang Bang is a competitive Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) game produced by Chinese game development studio Moontoon. Based on statistical reports from activeplayer.io, there will be 80.76 million Mobile Legends players globally in December 2022. Compared to 81.25 million players in the previous month, the figure was down 0.6%. Based on data displayed on the Google Play Store, the Mobile Legends game has been downloaded 500 million times so there is a possibility

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that the number of Mobile Legends players is uncounted or there are each personal who has 2 accounts.

This game is a cooperative MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena) game where players try to defeat the opponent by using their abilities and tactics. In addition to interesting gameplay, Mobile Legends also offers various in-app purchases that can strengthen the player's character in the game. Therefore, the influence of perceived value on in-app purchased intention and loyalty is an interesting topic to be researched because the number of players globally amounts to 500 million users and among them are poor city students who are the object of this study.

Perceived value has different effects on in-app purchased intention in different contexts. Previous research has found that perceived values such as socio-emotional value, quality, and price/value for money have a positive influence on in-app purchased intention but only socio-emotional values are relevant to in-app purchase intention (Hsiao and Lu, 2010). Aman (2021) in his research stated that perceived value affects purchase intent, meaning that the greater the value felt by consumers for a product/service, the greater the intention to transact on the product/service. This happens because they consider emotional value and social value more because the price of services on the application gradually decreases but with quality and performance that remains stable. In addition, user loyalty can also strengthen the influence of perceived value on in-app purchase intention in Mobile Legends. This is evidenced by Setiawan (2019) in a study which states that price variables and product quality which are aspects/values of perceived value on customer loyalty have a significant influence.

Related to purchase intention, Amelia (2020) argues that consumer purchase intention will arise when they have obtained a certain amount of convincing information about a particular product or service offered, which then evaluates, assesses and carries out the purchase process. Hsu and Lin (2015) state that only value and price and emotional value have a significant direct effect on In-App purchased Intention. Therefore, the effect of Perceived Value on In-App Purchased Intention, especially on an application, may be different, so further exploration is needed.

This research was conducted to understand how perceived value impacts in-app purchase intention in Mobile Legends through loyalty. The size of the community of game players, especially among students in Malang City, is an urgency in this study because the impact of this study will explain how consumer behavior patterns among students towards the mobile game industry today, especially in virtual products where these products can provide perceived value that can affect social, economic life, and more.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceived Value

Sweeney & Soutar (2001) assert that there are four aspects that can be used to evaluate perceived value, namely: emotional value, social value, quality / performance and price / value for money. Emotional value is the value of profits generated through the emotional component, which is the positive emotions you experience when using the product. Social value is the value of profit obtained through the capacity of a product to add to the social representation of clients. Quality/performance is the value of excellence obtained from the impression of the quality of a product and anticipated performance. Price/value for money is the value of the profit received by an item as a result of the interaction between short-term and long-term expenses.

Loyalty

The term loyalty based on Griffin (2002) states that "loyalty is defined as non random purchase expressed over time by some decision making unit". Based on this understanding, we find that loyalty is most likely to be displayed by decision-making units in everyday purchases. Oliver (1999) details four aspects of loyalty, namely Cognitive Loyalty, Affective Loyalty, Conative Loyalty, and Behavioral Loyalty.

In-App Purchase Intention

According to Hsu & Lin (2016), In-app purchase intention is defined as a reason for customers to intend to buy goods or services in the application in the future. According to Hsu & Lin (2015) in a different journal, In-app purchase intention is the willingness of consumers to buy paid applications to remove ads and get more content and functionality than the free version after paying. He emphasized that In-app purchase intention is highly correlated with the length of time they use an application.

The Relationship between Perceived Value and Loyalty

Based on research conducted by Pura (2005) tested the impact of 6 aspects of perceived value, namely social, emotional, monetary, conditional, comfort, and epistemic values. In the aspect of attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, namely commitment and intention to behave, it is found that the intention to behave is motivated by conditional values. Along with this, it was also found that commitment can be increased by the presence of emotional and conditional values that focus on providing a good and pleasant service experience to clients. Perceived value can increase expectations to sell products and minimize the desire of clients to buy different products.

The Relationship between Loyalty and In-App Purchase Intention

Loyalty and in-app purchase intention are two concepts that are interrelated in the context of a mobile app. Loyalty refers to a user's tendency to continue using

and choosing a mobile app on a regular basis. Meanwhile, in-app purchase intention refers to a user's desire to make a mobile in-app purchase, such as buying upgrades or additional features. The more loyal a user is to a mobile app, the more likely they are to be more likely to make in-app purchases. This happens due to various factors, including the sense of trust and comfort felt by users towards the application, the quality and added value provided by the application, and the ability of the application to provide a satisfactory user experience.

The Relationship between Perceived Value and In-App Purchase Intention

Perceived value and in-app purchase intention are two concepts that are interrelated in the context of mobile applications. Perceived value is the user's perception of the value or benefit obtained from using a mobile application. While in-app purchase intention refers to the user's intention to purchase additional products or services offered in the mobile application. In the relationship between perceived value and in-app purchase intention, if users have a high perception of the value and benefits of using a mobile application, then they are more likely to be more likely to purchase additional products/services recommended on the application. This is because the user feels that the product or service provides A benefit that is worth the price paid. The conceptual framework in this study is described as follows:

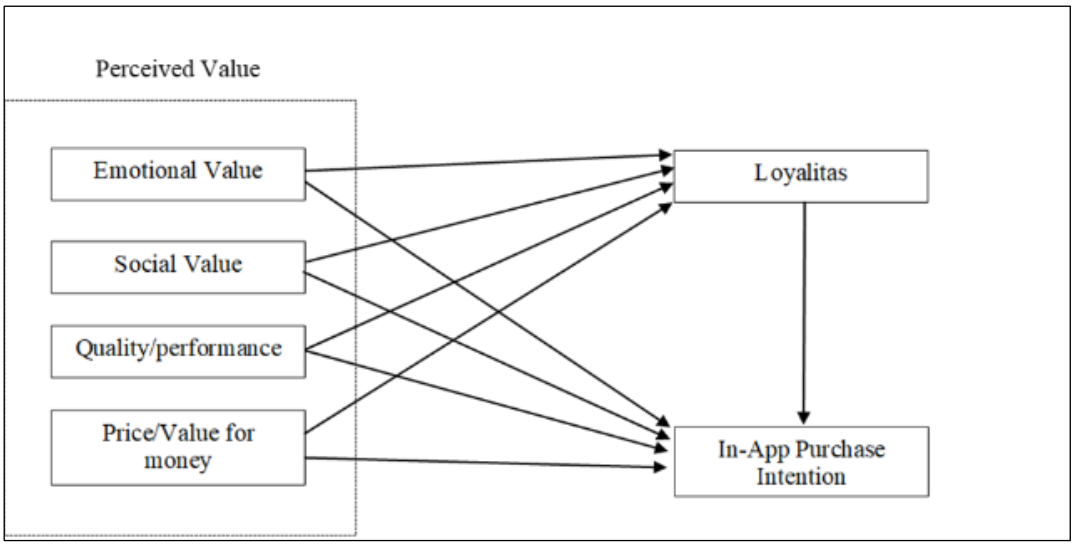

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of research
Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023

Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual framework of the study, the hypotheses in this study are as follows:

H_1: Emotional value has a positive effect on loyalty among Mobile Legends game players in Malang City.
H_2: Social value has a positive effect on loyalty among Mobile Legends game players in Malang City.
H_3: Quality/performance has a positive effect on loyalty to Mobile Legends game players in Malang City.
H_4: Price/value for money has a positive effect on loyalty to Mobile Legends game players in Malang City.
H_5: Emotional value has a positive effect on in-app purchased intention for Mobile Legends game players in Malang City.
H_6: Social value has a positive effect on in-app purchased intention in Mobile Legends game players in Malang City.
H_7: Quality/performance has a positive effect on in-app purchased intention for Mobile Legends game players in Malang City.
H_8: Price/value for money has a positive effect on in-app purchased intention for Mobile Legends game players in Malang City.
H_9: Loyalty has a positive effect on in-app purchased intention for Mobile Legends game players in Malang City.
H_{10}: Emotional value positively influences in-app purchased intention through loyalty.
H_{11}: Social value positively influences in-app purchased intention through loyalty.
H_{12}: Quality/Performance positively influences in-app purchased intention through loyalty.
H_{13}: Price/Value for Money positively influences in-app purchased intention through loyalty.

METHOD

The research design applied to this study is exploratory research through a quantitative approach. The purpose of this quantitative research is to develop through mathematical models and theories and hypotheses related to phenomena. The measuring process is one of the important aspects of quantitative research. This process describes or answers a

fundamental relationship from a quantitative relationship. This study is intended to analyze the effect of perceived value which includes socio-emotional values, quality / performance, and price / value for money on in-app purchased intention through loyalty to Mobile Legends game players in Malang City.

The location of the research taken by researchers is right in Malang City, more precisely in several coffee shops located in the campus area in Lowokwaru District, Malang City. The location of this research was chosen because the location was very much found by young people from teenagers to adults who played the Mobile Legends game with high intensity and became a community base for Mobile Legends game players.

Some of the variables used in this study are:

1) Emotional Value (X1) as an independent variable
2) Social Value (X2) as an independent variable
3) Quality/Performance (X3) as an independent variable
4) Price/Value for Money (X4) as an independent variable
5) In-app purchase intention (Y1) as dependent variable
6) Loyalty (Y2) as a mediating variable

The population in this study is Mobile Legends game players from teenagers to adults in Malang City. The quantity of samples used in this study is adjusted to the analysis technique carried out, namely the Structural Equation Model (SEM). In this method, the number of samples required is at least 5 times the number of indicator variables (Ferdinand, 2014). The number of indicators in this study is 22 indicators, so the number of samples in this study is 22*5 or 110 samples.

The instrument in this study is a questionnaire / distribution answered by respondents through the use of Likert scale. Respondents are asked for opinions according to their perception of a statement. In this study, the data collection method used a questionnaire survey containing a list of questions which were then given to respondents to answer these questions.

The data analysis technique in this study applies Partial Least Square (PLS). PLS is a model of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) equation that uses a variance approach or component-based structural equation modeling. SEM-PLS analysis is generally composed of 2 sub-models, namely the measurement model or commonly called outer and the structural model which can be called inner. The stages of PLS analysis are as follows:

1) Measurement Model / Outer Model

The measurement model shows how the observed variable or manifest corresponds to the latent variable to be measured (Ghozali &; Latan, 2015). The test stages in the outer model are through validity tests & reliability tests by paying attention to the value of loading factor, average variance extracted, and cronbach alpha.

2) Structural Model / inner model

The structural model shows power estimation between latent-construct variables (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The test stages in the outer model are through R-square, F-square, and collinearity tests. Testing the research hypothesis is carried out through the vision of statistical t values from each inner model that has been prepared. If the statistical t value > 1.96, then the correlation between latent variables can be said to be significant at $\alpha = 5\%$. The criteria for acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis are Ha accepted and H0 rejected when the t-statistic > 1.96. To reject or accept the hypothesis using probability, Ha is accepted if the p value < 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The analysis in this study was carried out in two stages, namely the analysis of the measurement model (outer model) to test validity and reliability by paying attention to the value of loading factor, average variance extracted (AVE), and cronbach alpha. Next is the analysis of the structural model (inner model) to see the coefficients between variables and determinant coefficient values by paying attention to the values of r-square, f-square, VIF, and path coefficients. The research data was processed using Smart PLS version 3.2.9 with the following chart:

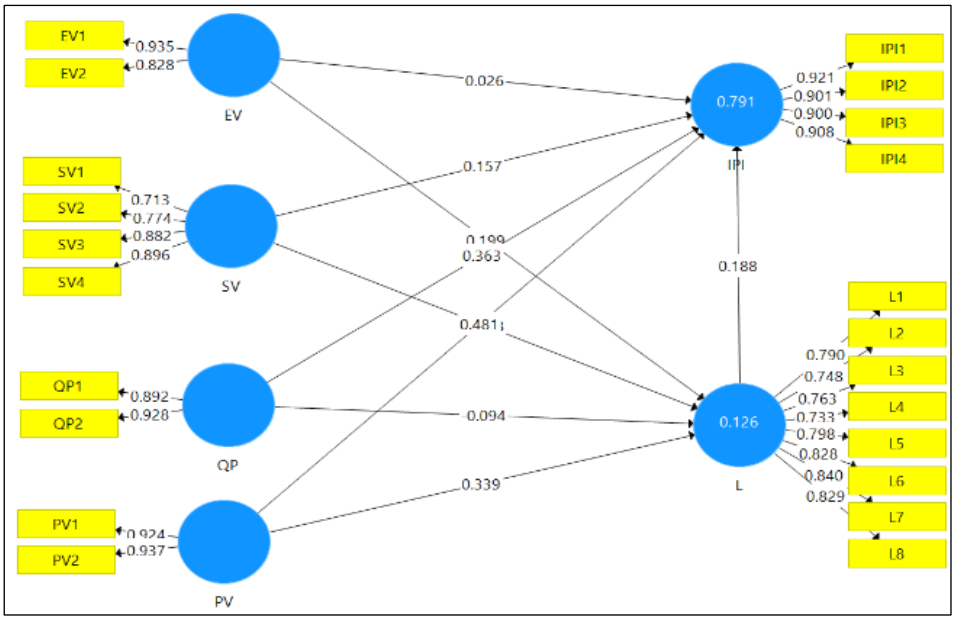

Figure 2: Design of the Outer Model
Source: Data processed by researchers, 2023

Table 1: Loading Factor Value of each Indicator

	EV(X1)	SV(X2)	QP(X3)	PV(X4)	IPI(Y1)	L(Y2)
EV1	**0,935**					
EV2	**0,828**					
SV1		**0,713**				
SV2		**0,774**				
SV3		**0,882**				
SV4		**0,896**				
QP1			**0,892**			
QP2			**0,928**			
PV1				**0,924**		
PV2				**0,937**		
IPI1					**0,921**	
IPI2					**0,901**	
IPI3					**0,900**	
IPI4					**0,908**	
L1						**0,790**
L2						**0,748**
L3						**0,763**
L4						**0,733**
L5						**0,798**
L6						**0,828**
L7						**0,840**
L8						**0,829**

Table 2: *Path Coefficients*

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistic (O/STDEV)	P-Values
EV -> IPI	0,026	0,022	0,048	0,544	**0,587**
EV -> L	0,199	0,194	0,106	1,872	**0,062**
SV -> IPI	0,157	0,157	0,048	3,283	**0,001**
SV -> L	0,048	0,071	0,103	0,463	**0,644**
QP ->IPI	0,363	0,367	0,084	4,320	**0,000**
QP -> L	-0,094	-0,082	0,179	0,523	**0,601**
PV -> IPI	0,481	0,472	0,074	6,461	**0,000**
PV -> L	0,339	0,338	0,139	2,439	**0,015**
L -> IPI	0,188	0,187	0,047	4,026	**0,000**

Testing the research hypothesis is carried out through observing the t-statistical value of each inner model that has been prepared. If the statistical t value > 1.96, then the relationship between latent variables can be said to be significant at $\alpha = 5\%$.

The first hypothesis tests whether emotional value significantly impacts loyalty. Based on the results of emotional value testing on loyalty has a beta coefficient value of 0.199 and t-statistics of 1.872. The first hypothesis was rejected based on these findings, which showed that the t-statistic was insignificant due to <1.96 with a p-value of >0.05.

The second hypothesis tests whether Social Value significantly impacts loyalty. Based on the test results, social value to loyalty has a beta coefficient of 0.048 and t-statistics of 0.463. Based on these findings, the second hypothesis was rejected because the t-statistic <1.96 with a p-value >0.05.

The third hypothesis tests whether Quality/performance significantly affects loyalty. Based on the test results, t-statistics were obtained of 0.523 and beta Quality/performance coefficient of Loyalty of -0.094. Based on these findings, the third hypothesis was rejected because the t-statistic <1.96 with a p-value >0.05.

The fourth hypothesis tests whether Price/value for money significantly affects loyalty. Based on the test results, the value of the beta price/value for money coefficient for loyalty is 0.339 and t-statistics is 2.439. Based on these findings, the fourth hypothesis is accepted because the t-statistic >1.96 with a p-value of <0.05.

The fifth hypothesis examines whether emotional value significantly affects in-app purchased intention. Based on the test results, a t-statistic of 0.544 and a beta emotional value coefficient of in-app purchased intention of 0.026 were obtained. Based on these findings, the fifth hypothesis was rejected because the t-statistic <1.96 with a p-value >0.05.

The sixth hypothesis examines whether social value significantly influences in-app purchased intention. Based on the test results, t-statistics were obtained of 3.283 and the value of beta social value coefficient against in-app purchased intention was 0.157. Based on these findings, the sixth hypothesis is accepted because the t-statistic is >1.96 and has a p-value of <0.05.

The seventh hypothesis tests whether quality/performance significantly affects in-app purchase intention. The test results showed that the t-statistic was 4.320 and the value of the beta quality/performance coefficient of in-app purchased intention was 0.363. Based on these findings, the seventh hypothesis is accepted because the t-statistic >1.96 with a p-value of <0.05.

The eighth hypothesis examines whether Price/value for money significantly affects In-app purchase intention. Based on the test results, a t-statistic of 6.461 was obtained and the value of the beta price/value for money coefficient of in-app purchasing intention was 0.481. Based on these findings, the eighth hypothesis is accepted because the t-statistic >1.96 with a p-value of <0.05.

The ninth hypothesis tests whether loyalty significantly affects in-app purchase intention. The test results showed a beta coefficient of loyalty to in-app purchased intention of0.188 and t-statistic of 4.026. Based on these results, the t-statistic is significant because it is >1.96 with a p-value of <0.05 which means that the ninth hypothesis is accepted.

The tenth hypothesis examines whether emotional value significantly influences in-app purchasing intention through loyalty. The value of the beta emotional value coefficient for in-app purchasing intention through loyalty was 0.037 and the t-statistic was 1.694. Based on these findings, the t-statistic is insignificant because it <1.96 with a p-value greater than 0.05 so the eleventh hypothesis is rejected.

The eleventh hypothesis examines whether Social Value significantly influences in-app purchasing intention through loyalty. The value of the beta social value coefficient of in-app purchasing intention through loyalty is 0.009, and the t-statistic is 0.459, based on the test findings. Based on these findings, the t-statistic is insignificant because it <1.96 with a p-value greater than 0.05 so the eleventh hypothesis is rejected.

The twelfth hypothesis examines whether Quality/Performance significantly influences in-app purchasing intention through loyalty. Based on the test findings, the value of the Beta quality/performance coefficient of in-app purchasing intention through loyalty is 0.018, and the t-statistic is 0.504. Based on these findings, the t-statistic is insignificant because it <1.96 with a p-value greater than 0.05 so the twelfth hypothesis is rejected.

The thirteenth hypothesis examines whether Price/Value for Money significantly influences In-app purchasing intention through loyalty. The value of the beta price/value for money coefficient on in-app purchasing intention through loyalty as a mediator variable is 0.064, and the t-statistic is 2.029. Based on these findings, t-is statistically significant because it <1.96 with a p<0.05 value, which means the thirteenth hypothesis is accepted.

Overall, it can be seen that the dominant influence on In-App Purchase Intention directly is

Quality/Performance, Price/Value for Money, Loyalty, and Social Value. Loyalty as a mediating variable changes part of the results of the influence of the four variables of Perceived Value on In-App Purchase Intention indirectly to be insignificant so that Loyalty acts as partial mediation. This proves that to increase people's intention to make purchases in the application, they must increase social value, quality, and prices that match the quality obtained in the Mobile Legends game and make players loyal to the game.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to determine which factor of the Perceived Value variable is the most influential on in-app purchasing intention through loyalty to Mobile Legends game players in Malang City. Considering the previous literature, this study uses four variables, namely emotional value, social value, quality / performance, and price / value for money to determine the effect on in-app purchase intention through loyalty.

Emotional value does not have a positive effect on loyalty. This happened because some respondents felt that they didn't have to be loyal to the Mobile Legends game even though they felt happy and challenged to play the game. For them, the pleasure in playing the game does not mean they feel loyal to the game by spending some costs to support their game. Playing for free to play is their choice in enjoying this game without having to spend money to improve the playing experience.

Social values do not have a positive effect on loyalty. Most respondents feel that the connections and social relationships formed by the Mobile Legends game are not enough to make them loyal to the game even though they benefit from communities, relationships from in-game friends and events that generate rewards for players.

Quality/performance has no significant effect on loyalty. Some respondents feel that Mobile Legends is no better than other similar games. Respondents think there are still other similar games that are better in quality but these games are not their main choice to play. With all its shortcomings, Mobile Legends is still the main choice to play even though the quality is not as good as other similar games such as Honor of Kings, Arena of Valor, LOL Wild rift, and so on.

Price/value for money has a positive effect on loyalty. This is due to the satisfaction of respondents with what they get by paying a certain amount of money to improve their gaming experience. By buying various virtual features such as skins on characters in the game makes their gaming experience better and in accordance with what they pay for and will make them make purchases in the future.

Emotional value has no significant effect on in-app purchasing intention so the fifth hypothesis is rejected. Although respondents feel happy and challenged in playing the Mobile Legends game, this does not make them always want to make purchases in the game. They feel quite happy and challenged without having to purchase various virtual features that can improve their gaming experience.

Social value has a significant effect on in-app purchase intention. This shows that the influence of other people such as friends, communities, and events carried out by game developers can influence respondents to make in-app purchases.

Quality/performance has a significant effect on in-app purchase intention so the seventh hypothesis is accepted. This shows that the quality of the content in the game will affect the respondents' interest in purchasing virtual features such as skins and various attributes that support the Mobile Legends gaming experience.

Price/value for money has a significant effect on in-app purchase intention. This proves that paid virtual features that have value or benefits that match the money spent can influence respondents' decisions in purchasing virtual features in the game. Money spent in large quantities should have great value or benefits as well and vice versa.

Loyalty has a significant effect on in-app purchase intention. This shows that high loyalty will encourage someone to make purchases within the application. Auser's ability can also influence their desire to interact more deeply with the mobile app, and therefore increase their likelihood of making in-app purchases. In other words, the more loyal users are to an app, the more likely they'll feel compelled to make an in-app purchase.

Emotional value does not significantly affect in-app purchasing intention through loyalty. Loyalty as mediation refers to how loyalty can be the link between the emotional value perceived by users and purchase intent within the app. That is, the positive emotional experience provided by the app can increase user loyalty to the app, which in turn increases the likelihood to make purchases within the app.

Social value does not significantly affect in-app purchase intention through loyalty. Loyalty to the Mobile Legends game does not make connections and social connections between players strong and increases in-app purchases. This means that social experience has no effect on loyalty because basically most respondents play this game solo so that the lack of social interaction affects making purchases in the application.

Quality/performance does not significantly affect in-app purchasing intention through loyalty. Some respondents felt that the quality of the Mobile Legends game was still not as good as other similar games and

respondents assessed objectively regarding the quality and performance of the game. This means that loyalty as mediation does not affect respondents' assessment of the quality of the game.

Price/value for money significantly affects in-app purchasing intention through loyalty. Loyalty can affect users' perception of value for money. Flexibility serves as a link between price/value for money and in-app purchase intention. High loyalty increases users' trust in the app and affects their likelihood of making a purchase despite price considerations. This means that if loyal users are satisfied with the app as a whole, they are more likely to believe that the asking price is worth the benefit or value they receive from an in-app purchase.

CONCLUSION

Most players give an objective assessment of the game even though they are players of the game. Most players feel that the quality obtained must match the price they have paid, especially when game developers often hold discount events so that players are loyal to the game because they feel they get attention from game developers. The influence of others and the benefits obtained from communities and events held by game developers have a positive influence on making purchases. Additional virtual features such as skins and various quality attributes provided by game developers also make game players interested in making purchases of these features, especially if the features are priced according to their quality.

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