

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PURCHASE INTENTION OF VIDEO GAMES IN PHYSICAL FORMAT AMONG THAI PLAYSTATION 5 OWNERS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *The purpose of this research is to identify factors that influence Thai PlayStation 5 owners' purchase intention of video games in physical format. along with identifying which factors have the most influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format.*

Research Design, Data and Methodology: *This research utilized secondary data to construct new conceptual frameworks based on frameworks and theories from previous researches. This research also gathers primary data from 387 Thai PlayStation 5 owners who prefer purchasing video games in physical format.*

Findings: *Product aesthetics and sentimental value are found to have a significant influence on purchase intention of Thai PlayStation 5 owners on video games in physical format. On the other hand, sense of ownership and social influence do not have an influence on purchase intention in this research.*

Research limitations: *The scope of this research is limited as the researcher only focuses mainly on PlayStation 5 owners in Thailand which future research could expand and explore on other variables and consumers in different countries and cultural backgrounds.*

Originality: *While many research focuses on digital consumption for video games, this research explores how sense of ownership, product aesthetics, social influence, and product aesthetics influence the purchase intention of Thai PlayStation 5 owners and provide insights on consumer behavior which will benefit game developers and marketers.*

KEYWORDS: *Video Games, Physical Format, Digital Format, Purchase Intention.*

Introduction

In recent years, the gaming landscape has shifted dramatically, with digital distribution of video games gaining prominence worldwide. However, despite the rise of digital platforms, many consumers continue to prefer physical copies of games despite digital copies offering convenience, instant access, and sometimes lower price.

In the past, video games were distributed in a form of physical discs in boxes but due to the rapid growth of the gaming industry, the distribution has shifted from distributing physical copies to digital copies especially on PC but consoles like Xbox and PlayStation still offer physical copies of their games as there are still a demand for this format. A research by Farhana & Swietlicki (2020) has found that

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Swedish consumers' who play games on PC preferred digital copies of the games where game console users preferred purchasing physical copies through visiting the retail stores or purchasing online. Additionally, the main reason why console users in Sweden still prefer physical copies is the nostalgic feelings of purchasing video games in the past (Farhana & Swietlicki, 2020).

Another research by Atasoy & Morewedge (2018) has shown that despite digital products having benefits in convenience and consumers' still willing to pay more for the physical version of the products. Furthermore, the findings of this research has found that consumers still prefer physical products over digital products due to the sense of ownership as consumers perceive physical products to be higher value than digital products which is the result of consumers' cognition towards ownership (Atasoy & Morewedge, 2018).

In Thailand, there are still people who prefer to purchase their games in the disc format which means there is still a demand for the physical format. This research aims to explore the factors influencing the purchase intention for physical copies of video games over digital copies among Thai PlayStation 5 owners. The insights and findings of this research can help in understanding consumers' behavior towards purchasing a physical version of a video game which can be beneficial for game companies in identifying the demand for physical copies of games.

Literature Review

• **Purchase Intention**

According to Morwitz (2014) purchase intention refers to a consumer's stated likelihood of purchasing a product or service where this intention does not always result in actual buying behavior. Additionally, while purchase intentions can serve as useful indicators for businesses, there is often an intention-behavior gap, where consumers express interest in a product but fail to follow through with the purchase. Factors such as unexpected financial constraints, changes in preferences, or the availability of better alternatives can weaken the link between intention and action. Additionally, psychological barriers, such as procrastination or decision fatigue, may prevent consumers from completing their purchases. Marketers can mitigate this gap by reinforcing purchase intentions through strategies like targeted advertising, reminders, and personalized incentives.

Morwitz and Munz (2022) further explore the power of purchase intentions, which showed the strength depends on various internal and external factors. Consumers with specific and time-bound intentions are more likely to complete their purchases compared to those with vague or uncertain intentions. Additionally, external factors such as social influences, economic conditions, and marketing strategies play a crucial role in converting intention into action. The study also emphasizes the role of digital marketing in bridging the gap, as personalized recommendations, retargeted ads, and promotions tailored to consumer preferences can effectively nudge hesitant buyers toward completing their transactions. By understanding these dynamics, businesses can create strategies that increase the likelihood of turning purchase intention into actual sales.

• **Sense of Ownership**

According to the research by Knabben et al., (2011), they defined the concept of sense of ownership as a psychological feeling of owning a product. Another research by Wang, Ong, and Tan (2015) has defined a concept of ownership as a psychological state in which individuals feel as though an object, property, or resource belongs to them, even in the absence of legal ownership. According to this research, ownership experience plays a crucial role in shaping how people value objects. Ownership is not just about possession but also about the process through which ownership is acquired, lost, or regained. Furthermore, individuals tend to place a higher value on items that they have temporarily lost and regained compared to those they have consistently owned or never owned at all. This valuation effect is linked to psychological ownership, which includes feelings of attachment, familiarity, and identity association with an object.

• **Product Aesthetics**

Product aesthetics refers to the visual and sensory appeal of a product, encompassing elements like shape, color, texture, material, and overall design language. It is how a product looks and feels, influencing how consumers perceive its quality, functionality, and emotional impact (Hekkert & Leder, 2008). Sambe & Haryanto (2021) also refers to this concept as the subjective judgement based on individual preferences where the product characteristic has the ability to meet individual needs and preferences which fulfill the customers' needs.

- **Social Influence**

Social influence is defined as the ways in which individuals' thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors are influenced by the presence or actions of others (Rashotte, 2007). Additionally, Rashott (2007) also refers to social influence as a process where individuals make changes to their feelings and behavior based on the interaction between others who they feel in the aspect of psychological principle. Another research by Hu, Chen, and Davidson (2019) also refers to social influence as how individuals alter their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behavior based on influence from peers. Furthermore, emotional social support from peers is also a main factor of social influence which has an impact on consumers' behavior.

- **Sentimental Value**

Kuo and Wang (2017) refers to the concept of nostalgia or sentimental value as a perceived memory which has a deep social and political meaning. Furthermore, Huang, Xu, and Jiang, (2023) refer to sentimental value as the emotional significance individuals attach to objects due to their associations with special people, events, or experiences. Sentimental value is deeply personal and often linked to cherished memories, making objects irreplaceable despite their physical worth. According to this research, when a product is imbued with sentimental value, consumers exhibit a heightened desire for memorability. This desire influences purchasing behavior, leading individuals to prefer products with high-intensity visual stimuli, as they recall and create a lasting impression. The study also suggests that the effect of sentimental value on consumer preferences weakens when the expected longevity of a product is short, highlighting the importance of durability in preserving sentimental associations.

Research Purpose

The main objective of this research is to identify factors that influence Thai PlayStation 5 owners' purchase intention of video games in physical format. After identifying the factors, the research also aims to identify which factors have the most influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format. The research questions are listed as follows:

- What are the factors that have an influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format?
- Which factors have the most influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format?

Research Methods

This research is based on quantitative research based on deductive reasoning by using a questionnaire as a main tool of collecting the primary data. The target respondents of this research are people who currently own a PlayStation 5 in Thailand and the sampling unit of this research is someone who currently owns a PlayStation 5 with the preferences of purchasing video games in physical format over digital format. The researcher utilized an online sample size calculator to determine the optimal number of the sample size. By using the online calculator from "Calculator.net" the suitable number of respondents for this research is 385 respondents at the confidence level of 95%, margin of error at 5%, and the population proportion of 50%. This research utilized a non probability sampling method through the use of convenience sampling where the data can be collected from people around the research and the respondents can pass along the questionnaire to their peers. The questionnaire used in this research consists of three parts, screening questions, demographic profile, and measuring variables. The researcher conducted Cronbach's Alpha test with the sample size of 30 to test the reliability of the questionnaire before distribution. Furthermore, multiple-linear regression analysis is used for identifying the level of influence of sense of ownership, product aesthetics, social influence, and sentimental value on purchase intention. The hypotheses are developed and shown in Table 1.

Results and Discussions

Overall, from 387 respondents, the majority of the respondents are male (328, 84.8%), age between 20 - 35 years old (371, 95.9%), with bachelor's degree (331, 85.5%), a monthly income of 25,000 - 35,000 Baht (271, 70%), owning 5 or more copies of games (362, 93.5%) and 5 or more copies of physical games (340, 87.9%), and spent 2,001 - 3,001 Baht a month on games. For the mean score and standard deviation, the highest mean score is 3.49 from product aesthetics and the lowest mean score is 3.03 from social influence. The highest standard deviation is 0.506 from social influences and the lowest standard deviation is 0.389 from product aesthetics. For the result of multiple linear regression, hypothesis 1 and 3 have the significant values of more than 0.05 which sense of ownership and social influence do not have an influence on purchase intention, therefore, the null hypotheses are not rejected. On the other hand, hypothesis 2 and 4 have the significant value less than 0.05 which means product

aesthetics and sentimental value have an influence on purchase intention, and the null hypotheses are rejected. The summary of the hypotheses test is shown in Table 2.

Conclusion

The objective of this research is to identify factors that have an influence on purchase intention of physical video games among Thai PlayStation 5 owners along with identifying which factors have the most influence on purchase intention. From the findings, product aesthetics and sentimental value are the factors that influence purchase intention of physical video games whereas sense of ownership and social influence are not. The summary of the conceptual framework is shown in Figures 1.

- **Sense of Ownership does not have an influence on Purchase Intention**

The findings showed that sense of ownership does not influence purchase intention of physical video games among Thai PlayStation 5 owners. Hypothesis 1 is not rejected which is supported by p-value = 0.38, $\beta = 0.0416$. This implies that the findings in this research do not align with the research "Media format matters: Users' perceptions of physical versus digital games." by Farhana, M., & Swietlicki, D. (2020) and another research by Toivonen, S., & Sotamaa, O. (2011) on the topic of "Of discs, boxes and cartridges: the material life of digital games."

- **Product Aesthetics has an influence on Purchase Intention**

From the findings, product aesthetics has an influence on purchase intention of physical video games among Thai PlayStation 5 owners where hypothesis 2 is rejected. This is supported by p-value = 0.005 and $\beta = 0.1347$. This result is aligned with the research "Media format matters: Users' perceptions of physical versus digital games." by Farhana, M., & Swietlicki, D. (2020) and "The Development of Social Influence and Aesthetic on Purchase Intention" by Sambe & Haryanto (2021).

- **Social Influence does not have an influence on Purchase Intention**

The results reveal that social influence does not have an influence on purchase intention of Thai PlayStation 5 owners on physical video games. The findings show that p-value is 0.279 and $\beta = 0.0505$. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not rejected which means that this finding does not align with the research "Consumer decision factors of choosing to buy A digital form or physical form of video game." by Napakornwattananon, T., & Sriphaew, K. (2022) and "The Development of Social Influence and Aesthetic on Purchase Intention" by Sambe & Haryanto (2021).

- **Sentimental Value has an influence on Purchase Intention**

From the results, it's revealed that sentimental value does have an influence on purchase intention of PlayStation 5 owners in Thailand on physical video games. Hypothesis 4 is rejected which is supported by p-value = < .001 and $\beta = 0.3666$. Therefore, this finding is aligned with the research "Digital game downloads as a way to reduce waste." by Barber, D. A. (2019) and "Of discs, boxes and cartridges: the material life of digital games." by Toivonen, S., & Sotamaa, O. (2011).

Table 1: Statistical Technique for Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Description	Statistical Technique
H1o	Sense of ownership does not have an influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format.	Multiple Linear Regression
H1a	Sense of ownership has an influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format.	
H2o	Product Aesthetics does not have an influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format.	
H2a	Product Aesthetics has an influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format.	
H3o	Social Influence does not have an influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format.	
H3a	Social Influence has an influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format.	
H4o	Sentimental Value does not have an influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format.	
H4a	Sentimental Value has an influence on purchase intention of video games in physical format.	

Source. Constructed by the author

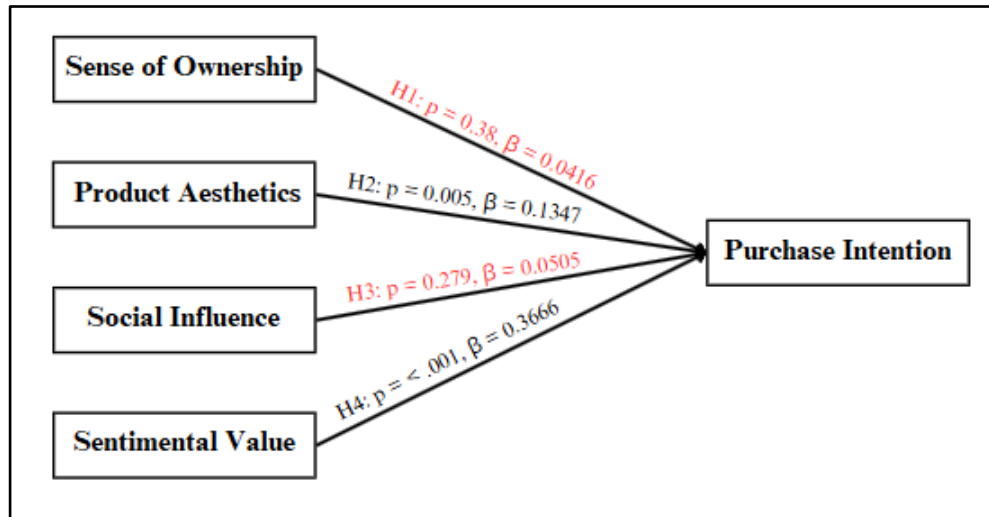


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework and Results

Source. Constructed by the author

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	B	SE B	β	t	p	VIF	Decision Ho
H1	0.0425	0.0484	0.0416	0.878	0.38	1.06	Fail to rejected
H2	0.1784	0.0632	0.1347	2.824	0.005	1.07	Rejected
H3	0.0514	0.0474	0.0505	1.085	0.279	1.02	Fail to rejected
H4	0.4304	0.0570	0.3666	7.556	< .001	1.11	Rejected
R²	0.191						
Adjusted R²	0.182						
F(4, 382)	22.5						

Source. Constructed by the author

Recommendations

From the findings of this research, factors that have an influence on purchase intention of Thai PlayStation 5 owners on physical video games are product aesthetics and sentimental value. On the other hand, sense of ownership and social value does not have an influence on the dependent variable which is supported by the result of multiple linear regression analysis. Based on these findings, the research provided recommendation as follows:

- **Sense of Ownership**

The findings revealed that sense of ownership does not significantly influence the purchase intention of physical video games among Thai PlayStation 5 owners. Therefore, any marketing campaigns that aim to promote physical games based on the idea that owning a tangible item may not be effective in this context. However, this does not mean that marketing campaigns promoting sense of ownership should be entirely disregarded. It may be beneficial to explore alternative interpretations of ownership, such as the ability to lend or resell, which may resonate more with niche consumer segments. Future studies could also investigate whether cultural or generational differences can affect how ownership is perceived in the gaming community.

- **Product Aesthetics**

The findings have indicated that product aesthetics does have a significant influence on purchase intention. So, it is recommended that game publishers who aim to promote physical video games of PlayStation 5 in Thailand should focus on enhancing product aesthetics in terms of visual and design elements of the physical packages. Additionally, game developers and publishers could invest in premium packaging, limited edition designs, and collectible features. Lastly, retailers should consider how physical games are displayed in-store or marketed online, so it can reinforce visual impact and influence buying behavior.

- **Social Influence**

In this research, the findings indicated that social influence does not significantly influence the purchase intention of physical video games among Thai PlayStation 5 owners. This can imply that the intention to purchase physical games are likely made independently rather than being influenced by peers, online communities, or social media trends. This suggested that marketing campaigns that rely on peer pressure, user reviews, or influencer endorsements may not be effective in promoting physical game formats in this context. Marketers could focus on individual motivations, such as personal enjoyment, nostalgia, or aesthetic appreciation, which are found to be influential in this research.

- **Sentimental Value**

Based on the findings, sentimental value does have a significant influence on purchase intention which indicates that emotional connections, nostalgia, and personal significance attached to physical games are the key drivers behind consumer behavior. For recommendation, marketers and game publishers should focus on creating and reinforcing emotional narratives around physical games by creating campaigns that highlight childhood memories of gaming which can be effective and resonate with Thai consumers.

Further studies

In this research, the researcher only explored the factors influencing the purchase intention of physical video games among Thai PlayStation 5 owners, there are several opportunities for future research to expand and build upon.

First, the scope of this study was limited to PlayStation 5 users in Thailand, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. Future studies could broaden the sample size to include owners from other brands of game consoles such as Xbox, Nintendo Switch as well as consumers from different countries and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, future researches could also explore on other independent variables that may have an influence on purchase intention such as perceived value,

Lastly, future studies could benefit from comparing physical and digital game formats across various dimensions directly, including purchase intention, user satisfaction, or perceived value. This can highlight how different formats fulfill different consumer needs which can help game publishers and marketers develop strategies that align with consumers preferences.

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