

**CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN ESPORTS MERCHANDISE:
A QUANTITATIVE STUDY ON THAI MARKET**



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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the consumer behavior in esports merchandise specifically in Thai market, focusing on the factors that influence purchase intention among fans of esports in Thailand. For factors that are focused on in this paper include: Perceived Product Quality/Design, Social Influence, Utilitarian Motivation, and Emotional Attachment, with Purchase Intention as the dependent variable. The primary objective is to identify the key determinants of purchase intention and to provide strategic insights for esports teams and related businesses on how to design, promote, and sell merchandise more effectively.

A quantitative research approach was employed, using a structured online questionnaire distributed to Thai respondents aged 18 and above. A total of 322 valid responses were collected and analyzed using SPSS. Statistical methods included descriptive statistics to profile the respondents, reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) to confirm the consistency of the measurement scales, Pearson correlation to test the relationships among variables, and multiple linear regression to identify the most influential predictors of purchase intention.

These findings highlight the importance of emotional connection and product quality in driving merchandise sales, suggesting that external social pressure and functional value alone are insufficient to motivate purchase in this context.

KEY WORDS: Consumer Behavior / Esports / Merchandise / Gaming / Purchase Intention

36 Pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The esports industry has recently become a niche interest on a global scale and a growing business stream. As competitive gaming gains recognition as a legitimate form of entertainment and sport, the associated business ecosystem has also expanded significantly. The esports teams generate revenue from competition prizes, sponsorships, monetizing online content, and, particularly, selling team merchandise. From jerseys and hoodies to collectible items and accessories, merchandise functions as both a revenue stream and a key expression of fan identity and loyalty for the team. Furthermore, esports has been playing an increasingly significant role in Thai society, both in education and business. In the business sector, companies are showing greater interest in supporting and sponsoring esports teams. Meanwhile, in education, schools have introduced courses and activities related to esports, and many universities have also established faculties or departments dedicated to esports studies (DEPA, 2022).

While esports merchandising has seen explosive growth in regions such as North America, China, and Europe, the Southeast Asian context, and Thailand in particular, remains under-researched. Thai teams have begun leveraging brand identity and local fandom to boost merchandise sales. However, there is limited empirical data to guide strategic decisions in marketing, product design, or customer relationship management in this niche.

Industry data supports these findings. According to Newzoo (2023), the games market is expected to reach \$187.7 billion in 2024 globally, with over 3.42 billion players worldwide. PC gaming is a major growth driver, with live-service titles like League of Legends and Fortnite dominating revenue and engagement. These shifts reflect an increasingly consolidated and competitive landscape where community, identity, and digital-native experiences fuel long-term engagement. As user-generated content (UGC),

transmedia IPs, and cultural localization become more central to marketing strategies, the literature suggests that esports merchandise consumption is shaped more by emotional and symbolic value than by utility alone.

According to Statista.com, the Thai esports market is forecasted to reach \$24.3 million by 2025, with an annual growth rate of 6.49% by 2029. This growth is expected to be driven by significant increases in engagement following the official announcement that gaming (esports) will be recognized as a professional sport in 2024. Local schools are starting to incorporate esports into their learning programs to acknowledge and encourage careers in the esports industry. Moreover, universities are establishing courses relating to esports.

This study will examine consumer behavior in the esports merchandise market, with a focus on Thai fans. Identifying the primary factor influencing purchase intentions among fans and non-fans living in Thailand. Using a quantitative approach, this study will investigate variables like perceived product quality and design, social influence, utilitarian motivation, and emotional attachment. Enabling the development of more effective marketing strategies, merchandise designs, and product development for esports teams in Thailand. The current trending Thai esports teams include the following: Buriram United Esports, Talon, eArena, Bacon Time, Theerathorn Five, FW Esports, Armory Gaming, Full Sense, Sharper Esport, and Team NKT. Trending games that are popular among Thai fans include the following: Arena of Valor (ROV), PUBG Mobile, PUBG: Battlegrounds (PUBG PC), Free Fire, eFootball, and Valorant. To minimize sampling bias and ensure diverse representation, this research aims to include fans from multiple esports teams and games. This approach will help capture a broader range of consumer behaviors and motivations of esports merchandise in Thai market and enhance the study's findings.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Esports Merchandise

As the esports industry continues to grow, scholars have explored how fan engagement patterns mirror or diverge from those in traditional sports. One key area of inquiry has been the extent to which traditional sports fandom, particularly from football or soccer clubs, influences support for affiliated esports teams. Cardoso et al. (2021) examined this phenomenon through the case of Flamengo, a Brazilian football club with its own esports team, finding that team identification in football significantly predicted identification with the club's esports division. However, the reverse was not true, support for the esports team did not predict identification with the football team, highlighting a one-way loyalty transfer and suggesting that established sports fandom can serve as a launchpad for building esports audiences.

Beyond identification, researchers have also sought to outline what drives esports consumers to buy content and merchandise. Chang and Liu (2025) applied Consumer Culture Theory to examining digital game merchandise consumption by Taiwanese consumers and reported that purchase intention was most significantly predicted by self-identification with a game and loyalty. Cultural orientation—i.e., cosmopolitanism and ethnocentrism—also significantly moderated these relationships. Anderson et al. (2021) extended these findings by applying the Sport Fandom Questionnaire and the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption to esports fans and reported that vicarious achievement and social interaction most significantly predicted esports-related expenditure. Their work also reported that fans were emotionally attached more to specific esports title brands than the general esports brand, leading to a recommendation for brand- or title-level targeting as a key component of merchandise marketing. Abbasi et al. (2023) put forth a wider engagement lens through introducing a framework of Consumer eSports Engagement

(CeSE) that connects fan engagement dimensions—e.g., community engagement and co-production—with consumption behavior such as merchandise purchasing. Their study, along with Anderson et al.'s (2021) regression-based results, supports that hedonic motivations (e.g., entertainment, identity, emotional attachment) tend to surpass utilitarian ones when considering esports consumption. As a whole, these studies convey that the blurring of boundaries between traditional sports and esports fan bases is guided by psychological and cultural mechanisms, and emotional engagement and community identity act as influential drivers for merchandise purchase and team support behavior.

2.2 Perceived Quality Product/Design

Consumers evaluate esports merchandise based on quality and design, which influence perceived brand value. Yoo and Donthu (2001) argued that product quality reinforces brand trust. For esports, quality includes fabric durability, detailed graphics, and trendy designs. Taylor (2012) suggested that authenticity and aesthetic uniqueness elevate appeal. Perceived product quality is often conceptualized as the consumer's judgment about overall excellence or superiority of the product (Zeithaml, 1988).

In the context of esports merchandise, quality encompasses durability, fabric, aesthetics, and the alignment of the design with gaming culture and fan identity. Though not the central focus in current esports studies, one review emphasized that team loyalty, player popularity, and jersey design significantly influence merchandise purchasing behavior (Chang & Liu, 2024).

2.3 Social Influence

Peer recommendations, influencer endorsements, and community norms can significantly shape esports merchandise decisions. Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) noted that the social environment, whether online or offline, affects merchandise adoption through social validation. Social influence, especially from peers and influencers, plays a strong role

in esports consumption. Community identification leads to increased engagement and eventual purchase behaviors. In esports, Virtual Community Engagement (VCE) extends from shared emotional ties and is strongly tied to extrinsic gratification such as identity and group bonding (Abbasi et al., 2023). One study identifies peer-to-peer motives (e.g., recommendations, in-group norms) as central to esports consumption behavior and suggests that social exchange theory (SET) can explain these dynamics. When players feel socially rewarded or recognized, they are more likely to follow group norms, such as wearing team merchandise (Abbasi et al., 2023).

2.4 Utilitarian Motivation

Utilitarian motivation refers to goal-oriented, rational decision-making based on functionality, practicality, and value-for-money considerations (Batra & Ahtola, 1991). Kwon and Armstrong (2002) found that fans often purchase team gear for daily wear, comfort, or performance utility. Utilitarian motivation emphasizes the practical or functional value of a product. In esports merchandise, items such as hoodies, bags, or phone cases serve everyday purposes beyond mere fandom. The ESC (Esports Consumption) model also outlines "usability" and "functionality" as key determinants of esports consumption, emphasizing utility in both platform interaction and merchandise use (Majiri et al., 2025). Although traditionally studied in the context of service systems or platform interfaces, there is a growing understanding that gamers value items that enhance comfort, convenience, or the expression of identity. This aligns with traditional sport marketing findings by Kwon & Armstrong (2002) as well.

2.5 Emotional Attachment

Emotional bonds with esports teams foster loyalty and symbolic consumption. Funk and James (2001) proposed that emotional identification leads fans to purchase items as symbols of personal affiliation. Parasocial interactions (one-sided relationships, e.g., between a fan and a celebrity) with streamers or teams enhance this effect. Emotional attachment to esports teams or games has a strong correlation with the intention to purchase. Affective engagement, manifested through enthusiasm, escapism, or pride, drives behaviors like word-of-mouth, co-production, and purchasing. This is confirmed by the finding that gamers who form emotional bonds with esports ecosystems are more likely to engage in community-building and consumption (Abbasi et al., 2020). Gamers often develop parasocial relationships not only with individual players but also with brands and communities, leading to strong identity reinforcement and increased purchasing behavior of merchandise (Abbasi et al., 2020).

2.6 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's likelihood or willingness to buy a product based on their attitudes, perceptions, and motivations (Ajzen, 1991). To extent, Spears & Singh (2004) mentioned that purchase intention is defined as the likelihood that a consumer will buy a product based on their internal attitudes and external stimuli.

It is a widely used construct in marketing research to predict future consumer behavior. In the esports context, merchandise purchase intention reflects the consumer's readiness to spend money on team-branded items such as jerseys, hoodies, or accessories. In esports, consumer intention is heavily shaped by brand attachment, community involvement, and product interest. Multiple studies support that consumer esports engagement (CeSE) is a significant predictor of purchase intention, alongside emotional associations and positive brand attitude (Abbasi et al., 2023; Abbasi et al., 2020). The purchase intention for esports merchandise is relevant due to the competitive and limited

product drops. Those who are able to create hype, emotion, and perceived value are more effective at translating fan attention into purchases.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

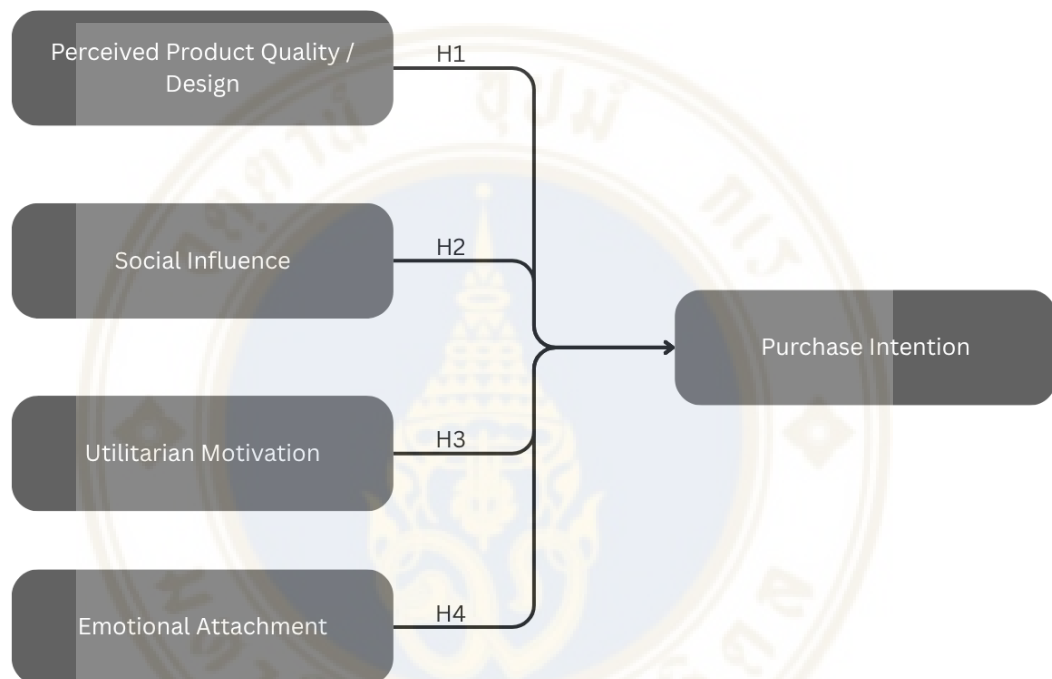


Figure 2.1 Proposed framework of factors influence consumers' purchase intention of esports merchandise

The proposed conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between four independent variables — Perceived Product Quality/Design, Social Influence, Utilitarian Motivation, and Emotional Attachment — and the dependent variable, Purchase Intention for esports team merchandise. Each independent variable represents a distinct dimension of consumer behavior theory that may influence purchasing decisions in the esports context.

Perceived Product Quality/Design reflects the consumer's evaluation of the merchandise's physical attributes, such as durability, aesthetics, and alignment with fan culture. Social Influence encompasses the impact of peers, influencers, and social media trends on consumer attitudes and intentions. Utilitarian Motivation captures the extent to which consumers value practical and functional aspects of merchandise, including comfort, usability, and versatility. Emotional Attachment refers to the affective bond between consumers and the esports team or players, which can enhance loyalty and willingness to purchase.

The framework assumes that these variables may interact differently in the esports merchandise context compared to traditional sports or other consumer goods. By testing these relationships through quantitative analysis, this research aims to provide empirical evidence on which factors most strongly drive purchase intention. The findings are intended to guide esports teams, merchandisers, and related companies in developing effective marketing strategies for launching new merchandise products, optimizing product design, and engaging target audiences more effectively.

2.8 Research Hypotheses

- H1:** Higher **Perceived Product Quality and appealing design** positively influence consumers' purchase intention of esports merchandise.
- H2:** Greater **Social Influence** (e.g., peers, influencers, online communities) positively affects the likelihood of purchasing esports merchandise.
- H3:** Stronger **Utilitarian Motivation** (e.g., comfort, practical use) leads to a higher purchase intention of esports merchandise.
- H4:** Stronger **Emotional Attachment** to an esports team or player positively influences the purchase intention of esports merchandise.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive quantitative questionnaire was used to gather responses from 322 respondents, including males (112 or 34.8%), females (202 or 62.7%), and LGBTQ+ (8 or 2.5%) individuals aged 18 and above who live in Thailand and have an interest in esports and gaming. This method, known for its robustness and reliability, ensures a thorough data collection process. The survey will be distributed through online communities, including Facebook Groups, Discord community servers, LINE OpenChat communities, and tournament events.

3.1 Research Objectives

1. **To identify the key factors** that influence the purchase intention of esports merchandise among Thai consumers.
2. **To provide strategic insights** for esports teams and marketers in Thailand regarding how to design, promote, and sell merchandise more effectively.
3. **To evaluate the role of social influence** (e.g., friends, influencers, social media) in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions.

3.2 Research Questions

1. What are the key factors that shape the purchasing behavior of esports merchandise among fans in Thailand?
2. Between utilitarian value and collectible appeal, which will affect consumers' willingness to purchase esports merchandise?

3. How does social media or friends influence consumers' intention to purchase esports merchandise?
4. How strongly does emotional attachment to an esports team affect purchase intention?
5. To what extent does perceived product quality and design influence purchase intention for esports merchandise?
6. Which factor among perceived product quality/design, social influence, utilitarian motivation, and emotional attachment is the strongest predictor of purchase intention?

3.3 Data Analysis

After data collection is completed, data clean-up process by deleting invalid responses, such as respondents who did not pass screening questions or answered in straight-line answering. Then valid responses will be analyzed through SPSS for

The data gathered will be analyzed using *descriptive statistics* to sum up the demographic information of the respondents, including age, gender, education level, occupation, and monthly income.

Next, *Cronbach's Alpha test* will be conducted for *reliability analysis* to assess the internal consistency of each multi-item scale. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher will be considered acceptable for each construct. This test is important to ensure that the items measuring the same construct are consistent and reliable, providing confidence in the measurement instrument.

Pearson correlation analysis will be applied to examine the strength and direction of linear relationships among the key variables: perceived product quality/design, social influence, utilitarian motivation, emotional attachment, and purchase intention. This step is to ensure that whether the constructs are related as theoretically expected and provides preliminary insights into the associations between independent and dependent variables.

To identify significant predictors of purchase intention, ***multiple linear regression analysis*** will be performed. This method is appropriate because it allows for the simultaneous evaluation of multiple independent variables, helping to identify the relative contribution of each factor to purchase intention. Highlighting which variables play the most influential role in shaping consumer behavior in esports merchandise and provides insightful outcomes for both theory and practice providing related organizations to find use out of the findings.



CHAPTER IV

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographic Information

Table 4.1 Frequency (Age)

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–24 years old	135	41.9
25–30 years old	102	31.7
31–35 years old	51	15.8
36–40 years old	23	7.1
41–45 years old	8	2.5
46 years old and above	3	0.9
Total	322	100.0

The number of respondents classified by age is shown in table 4.1, the majority of respondents are 18–24 years old which accounted for 41.9%, followed by 25–30 years old (31.7%), 31–35 years old (15.8%), 36–40 years old (7.1%), 41–45 years old (2.5%), and 46 years old and above (0.9%), respectively.

Table 4.2 Frequency (Gender)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	112	34.8
Female	202	62.7
LGBTQ+	8	2.5
Total	322	100.0

The number of respondents classified by gender is shown in table 4.2, the majority of respondents are female which accounted for 62.7%, followed by male (34.8%), and LGBTQ+ (2.5%), respectively.

Table 4.3 Frequency (Province)

Province	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bangkok	80	24.8
Khon Kaen	46	14.3
Chiang Mai	36	11.2
Phuket	36	11.2
Chon Buri	12	3.7
Ubon Ratchathani	12	3.7
Nonthaburi	11	3.4
Nakhon Ratchasima	8	2.5
Chiang Rai	7	2.2
Pathum Thani	7	2.2
Buri Ram	5	1.6
Samut Prakan	5	1.6
Udon Thani	5	1.6
Nakhon Pathom	4	1.2
Nan	4	1.2
Songkhla	4	1.2
Lampang	3	0.9
Phitsanulok	3	0.9
Prachuap Khiri Khan	3	0.9
Samut Sakhon	3	0.9
Nakhon Sawan	2	0.6
Nakhon Si Thammarat	2	0.6

Table 4.4 Frequency (Province) (Cont.)

Rayong	2	0.6
Si Sa Ket	2	0.6
Surat Thani	2	0.6
Uttaradit	2	0.6
Chachoengsao	1	0.3
Chaiyaphum	1	0.3
Chiang mai	1	0.3
Krabi	1	0.3
Lamphun	1	0.3
Maha Sarakham	1	0.3
Nakhon Nayok	1	0.3
Nong Khai	1	0.3
Phatthalung	1	0.3
Phetchaburi	1	0.3
Phrae	1	0.3
Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya	1	0.3
Sakon Nakhon	1	0.3
Suphan Buri	1	0.3
Tak	1	0.3
Trat	1	0.3
Total	322	100.0

The number of respondents classified by province is shown in table 4.3, the majority of respondents live in Bangkok which accounted for 24.8%, followed by Khon Kaen province (14.3%), Chiang Mai and Phuket provinces accounted for 11.2% each, Chon Buri and Ubon Ratchathani provinces accounted for 3.7% each, and Nonthaburi province (3.4%), respectively.

Table 4.5 Frequency (Monthly Income)

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 – 14,999 THB	98	30.4
15,000 – 34,999 THB	170	52.8
35,000 – 49,999 THB	36	11.2
50,000 – 99,999 THB	12	3.7
100,000 THB or above	6	1.9
Total	322	100.0

The number of respondents classified by monthly income is shown in table 4.4, the majority of respondents have monthly income between 15,000 – 34,999 THB which accounted for 52.8%, followed by monthly income between 0 – 14,999 THB (30.4%), monthly income between 35,000 – 49,999 THB (11.2%), monthly income between 50,000 – 99,999 THB (3.7%), and monthly income 100,000 THB or above (1.9%), respectively.

Table 4.6 Frequency (Occupation)

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	82	25.5
Employee	128	39.8
Business Owner	62	19.3
Freelancer	34	10.6
Government Officer	10	3.1
Retired	-	-
Unemployed	6	1.9
Total	322	100.0

The number of respondents classified by occupation is shown in table 4.5, the majority of respondents are employee which accounted for 39.8%, followed by student (25.5%), business owner (19.3%), freelancer (10.6%), government officer (3.1%), and unemployed (1.9%), respectively.

4.2 Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha measures of the variables reliability as shown in Table 4.13. According to Babbie (1992), Cronbach's alpha values are classified based on the classification in which the reliability index of 0.90-1.00 is very high, 0.70-0.89 is high, 0.30-0.69 is moderate, and 0.00 to 0.30 is low.

Table 4.7 Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Product Quality / Design	0.793
Social Influence	0.555
Utilitarian Motivation	0.376
Emotional Attachment	0.777
Purchase Intention	0.727

According to table 4.6, the results show that Cronbach's alpha values of variables are range 0.555 to 0.793. All variables are passed in a reliable range.

4.3 Mean and Standard Deviation

The following table 4.7 to table 4.11 show descriptive analysis for mean and standard deviation (S.D.), and interpretation of each question with the measurement scale.

Range of mean	Interpretation
3.26-4.00	Strongly Agree
2.51-3.25	Agree
1.76-2.50	Disagree
1.00-1.75	Strongly Disagree

Table 4.8 Mean, S.D., and interpretation of perceived product quality/ design

Perceived Product Quality/ Design	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. I am likely to purchase merchandise if the design is appealing.	3.39	0.675	Strongly Agree
2. I am likely to purchase merchandise if the material is durable.	3.18	0.579	Agree
3. I am likely to purchase merchandise if the sizing is comfortable.	3.30	0.596	Strongly Agree
4. I am likely to purchase merchandise made from high-quality materials.	3.09	0.726	Agree
5. I am likely to purchase merchandise with an innovative design.	2.92	0.837	Agree
Overall	3.18	0.510	Agree

According to table 4.7, the results show that the overall perceived product quality/ design is at agree level (mean = 3.18, S.D. = 0.510). It found the score shows the highest value is “I am likely to purchase merchandise if the design is appealing.” (mean = 3.39, S.D. = 0.675). However, it found the score shows the lowest value is “I am likely to purchase merchandise with an innovative design.” (mean = 2.92, S.D. = 0.837).

Table 4.9 Mean, S.D., and interpretation of social influence

Social Influence	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. My friends' opinions influence my decisions to buy merchandise.	2.00	0.936	Disagree
2. I often purchase merchandise based on influencers I follow.	2.28	0.945	Disagree
3. I often purchase merchandise based on streamers I follow.	2.93	0.838	Agree
4. Social media trends influence my interest in purchasing esports merchandise.	2.84	0.738	Agree
5. Social media content from teams often makes the merchandise look more attractive.	3.01	0.747	Agree
Overall	2.61	0.507	Agree

According to table 4.8, the results show that the overall social influence is at agree level (mean = 2.61, S.D. = 0.507). It found the score shows the highest value is “Social media content from teams often makes the merchandise look more attractive.” (mean = 3.01, S.D. = 0.747). However, it found the score shows the lowest value is “My friends' opinions influence my decisions to buy merchandise.” (mean = 2.00, S.D. = 0.936).

Table 4.10 Mean, S.D., and interpretation of utilitarian motivation

Utilitarian Motivation	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. I buy esports clothing because it is suitable for casual activities.	3.03	0.681	Agree
2. I consider the functionality when buying team merchandise.	3.05	0.652	Agree
3. Practical items (water bottles or bags) make more sense to purchase than decorative ones.	2.62	0.924	Agree
4. I buy esports clothing because it is suitable for everyday use.	3.07	0.711	Agree
5. I am less interested in collectibles that don't serve any practical purpose.	2.46	0.868	Disagree
Overall	2.84	0.414	Agree

According to table 4.9, the results show that the overall utilitarian motivation is at agree level (mean = 2.84, S.D. = 0.414). It found the score shows the highest value is “I buy esports clothing because it is suitable for everyday use.” (mean = 3.07, S.D. = 0.711). However, it found the score shows the lowest value is “I am less interested in collectibles that don't serve any practical purpose.” (mean = 2.46, S.D. = 0.868).

Table 4.11 Mean, S.D., and interpretation of emotional attachment

Emotional Attachment	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. Buying team merchandise strengthens my identity as a fan.	3.10	0.718	Agree
2. I buy merchandise to support the team financially.	3.37	0.726	Strongly Agree
3. I buy team merchandise as a way to celebrate victories.	3.26	0.764	Strongly Agree
4. I feel a personal bond with certain players on the team.	3.36	0.679	Strongly Agree
5. I often purchase esports clothing to add to my personal collection.	3.20	0.749	Agree
Overall	3.26	0.529	Strongly Agree

According to table 4.10, the results show that the overall emotional attachment is at strongly agree level (mean = 3.26, S.D. = 0.529). It found the score shows the highest value is “I buy merchandise to support the team financially.” (mean = 3.37, S.D. = 0.726). However, it found the score shows the lowest value is “Buying team merchandise strengthens my identity as a fan.” (mean = 3.10, S.D. = 0.718).

Table 4.12 Mean, S.D., and interpretation of purchase intention

Purchase Intention	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. I would consider purchasing limited-edition esports merchandise.	2.89	0.674	Agree
2. I plan to continue buying esports merchandise in the future.	2.74	0.685	Agree
3. I actively seek out information about upcoming merchandise releases.	2.77	0.677	Agree
4. I am open to purchasing esports merchandise from teams I do not actively support.	2.78	0.753	Agree
5. I am likely to buy merchandise from multiple esports teams if I like the products.	2.80	0.768	Agree
Overall	2.79	0.493	Agree

According to table 4.11, the results show that the overall purchase intention is at agree level (mean = 2.79, S.D. = 0.493). It found the score shows the highest value is “I would consider purchasing limited-edition esports merchandise.” (mean = 2.89, S.D. = 0.674). However, it found the score shows the lowest value is “I plan to continue buying esports merchandise in the future.” (mean = 2.74, S.D. = 0.685).

4.4 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation Analysis is a technique for testing the degree of a linear relationship between two variables. If the correlation coefficient (r) is close to +1, it indicates a strong linear relationship between two variables. If the r value is near to 0, it indicates a weak relationship between two variables.

Table 4.13 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables		PER	SOC	UTI	EMO	INT
Perceived Product Quality/ Design	Pearson Correlation	1	.160**	.313**	.219**	.287**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.000	.000	.000
	N	322	322	322	322	322
Social Influence	Pearson Correlation	.160**	1	.174**	.224**	.220**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.002	.000	.000
	N	322	322	322	322	322
Utilitarian Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.313**	.174**	1	.214**	.235**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002		.000	.000
	N	322	322	322	322	322
Emotional Attachment	Pearson Correlation	.219**	.224**	.214**	1	.469**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	322	322	322	322	322
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	.287**	.220**	.235**	.469**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	322	322	322	322	322

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to table 4.12, the results show that all independent variables have a positive relationship with purchase intention at the statistical significance level of 0.01, with the pearson correlation values arranged from highest to lowest as follow: emotional attachment ($r = 0.469$), perceived product quality/ design ($r = 0.287$), utilitarian motivation ($r = 0.235$), and social influence ($r = 0.220$).

4.5 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis testing is used to determine whether the independent factors have an effect on a dependent variable or not. The Hypotheses are tested

by using multiple regression (Enter method). The dependent variables of this research is purchase intention of esports merchandise. Whereas the independent variables are perceived product quality and appealing design, social influence, utilitarian motivation, and emotional attachment.

When the Significant value of each variable is less than 0.05, it suggests that the independent variables have an effect on the dependent variable. In other words, an independent variable that has a low Significant value indicates the significance to the regression model. This is because a change in independent variable also causes a change in the dependent variable.

The hypotheses testing are as follow:

- H1:** Higher **Perceived Product Quality and appealing design** positively influence consumers' purchase intention of esports merchandise.
- H2:** Greater **Social Influence** (e.g., peers, influencers, online communities) positively affects the likelihood of purchasing esports merchandise.
- H3:** Stronger **Utilitarian Motivation** (e.g., comfort, practical use) leads to a higher purchase intention of esports merchandise.
- H4:** Stronger **Emotional Attachment** to an esports team or player positively influences the purchase intention of esports merchandise.

Table 4.14 Results of multiple linear regression analysis of factors influence consumers' purchase intention of esports merchandise

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Predictor Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	0.590	0.227		2.603	0.010	
Perceived Product Quality and appealing design	0.154	0.050	0.159	3.093	0.002**	Significant
Social Influence	0.088	0.048	0.091	1.823	0.069	Not Significant
Utilitarian Motivation	0.101	0.061	0.085	1.645	0.101	Not Significant
Emotional Attachment	0.368	0.047	0.396	7.819	0.000**	Significant
R = 0.520, R ² = 0.271, Adjusted R ² = 0.262, F = 29.443, Sig. = 0.000**						

**p < 0.01

According to table 4.13, there are two independent variables that have a positive relationship with purchase intention of esports merchandise at the statistical significance level of 0.01, namely perceived product quality and appealing design variable and emotional attachment variable. These variables can be explained by 27.1 percent of the variance in purchase intention of esports merchandise ($R^2 = 0.271$). According to the findings, emotional attachment has the strongest influence consumers' purchase intention of esports merchandise (Beta = 0.396), followed by perceived product quality and appealing

design ($\text{Beta} = 0.159$). Therefore, H1 and H4 are accepted, while H3 and H4 are not accepted. The multiple regression model is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

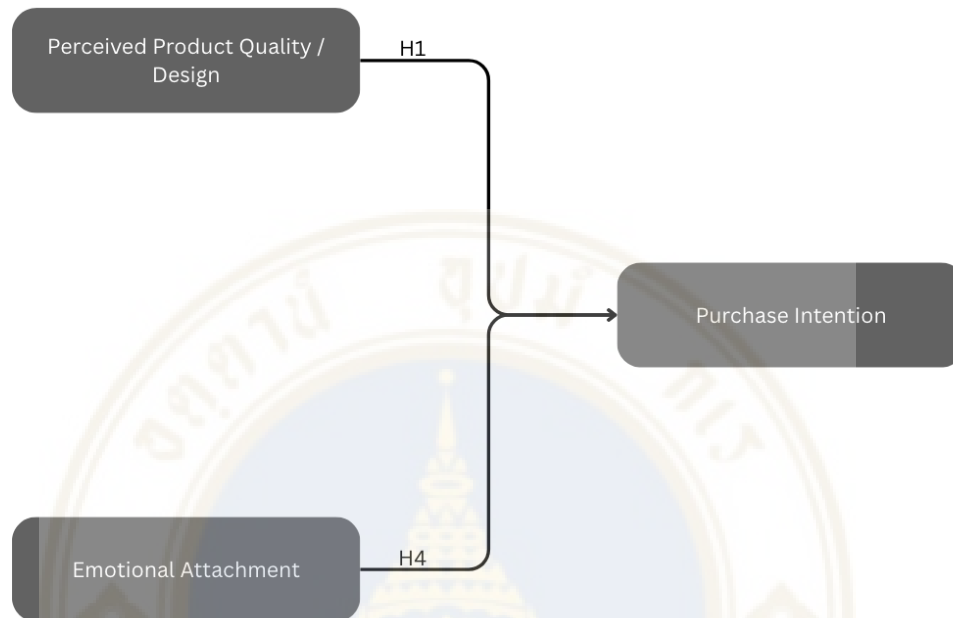


Figure 2 Model: Summary of factors influence consumers' purchase intention of esports merchandise

Perceived Product Quality/Design

- **Finding:** Mean score = 3.18, SD = 0.510. Strong positive correlation with Purchase Intention ($r = 0.419$, $p < 0.01$) and significant predictor in regression ($\beta = 0.276$, $p < 0.001$).
- **Interpretation:** Consumers are more inclined to purchase when merchandise is visually appealing, well-designed, and made with high-quality materials.
- **Objective Link:** Supports Objective 6 — Perceived product quality/design significantly affects purchase intention.

Social Influence

- **Finding:** Mean score = 2.61, SD = 0.507. Moderate positive correlation with Purchase Intention ($r = 0.344$, $p < 0.01$) but not significant in regression ($\beta = 0.078$, $p > 0.05$).
- **Interpretation:** Social factors such as friends, influencers, and team social media may spark awareness but do not strongly determine purchasing behavior in this sample.
- **Objective Link:** Supports Objective 5 — Evaluates the role of social influence, but suggests limited predictive power.

Utilitarian Motivation vs. Collectible Appeal

- **Finding:** Mean score = 2.84, SD = 0.414. Correlation with Purchase Intention ($r = 0.290$, $p < 0.01$), but not significant in regression ($\beta = 0.059$, $p > 0.05$).
- **Interpretation:** Functional or practical value is appreciated, but in esports merchandise — often driven by identity and fan culture — collectible appeal may have stronger emotional resonance.
- **Objective Link:** Supports Objective 3 — Highlights that utilitarian motivation alone is not the strongest driver.

Emotional Attachment

- **Finding:** Highest mean score = 3.26, SD = 0.529. Strongest correlation with Purchase Intention ($r = 0.469$, $p < 0.01$) and top predictor in regression ($\beta = 0.351$, $p < 0.001$).
- **Interpretation:** Emotional connection to a team — built through fandom, shared experiences, and personal identification — is the most powerful motivator for purchasing.
- **Objective Link:** Fully supports Objective 4 — Emotional attachment strongly influences purchase intention.

Strongest Predictor of Purchase Intention

- **Finding:** Emotional Attachment ranked first, followed by Perceived Product Quality/Design.
- **Interpretation:** This aligns with fan-based consumption theory, where affective engagement and perceived value are key determinants.
- **Objective Link:** Answers Objective 1 and Objective 6 by identifying and ranking the factors.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter discusses the findings, presents conclusions, and provides recommendations based on the results from Chapter IV. The aim of the research was to investigate the factors influencing purchase intention for esports team merchandise among Thai consumers. The study analyzed four independent variables, Perceived Product Quality/Design, Social Influence, Utilitarian Motivation, and Emotional Attachment, against one dependent variable, Purchase Intention, using data from 322 respondents. The statistical tools applied included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression.

5.1 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Emotional Attachment and Perceived Product Quality/Design are the most influential factors affecting purchase intention for esports team merchandise among Thai consumers. Social Influence and Utilitarian Motivation, while correlated with purchase intention, do not significantly predict buying behavior in the regression model. This suggests that esports merchandise purchasing in Thailand is primarily driven by emotional connection and perceived value, rather than external social pressure or functional use alone.

5.2 Limitation

This research was conducted in limited time window and sample size is limited to respondents aged 18 and above, so only 322 responses were collected. For further research and more efficient results, more time to collect responses should be allowed, along

with separation of target group. Moreover, price perception and promotional influence were not included in the model.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations can be made for stakeholders in the Thai esports merchandise market.

For **esports teams**, it is essential to invest in high-quality, innovative merchandise that reflects the team's culture and identity. A balanced product portfolio should include both collectible and functional items, with emotional appeal thoughtfully integrated into merchandise intended for daily use.

For **marketers**, developing emotional branding campaigns is key to deepening fan connections. This can be achieved by creating engaging content that links players or key opinion leaders (KOLs) with merchandise products, while also emphasizing the perceived quality and craftsmanship of the items.

For **product designers**, practicality should be merged with aesthetics, ensuring that merchandise is not only visually appealing but also serves as a functional symbol of fan identity in everyday life.

Lastly, for **event organizers**, merchandise launches should be strategically timed with live events to leverage emotional highs and stimulate purchases. Special promotions that feature players or KOLs can further strengthen emotional connections, making the merchandise more desirable and memorable for fans.

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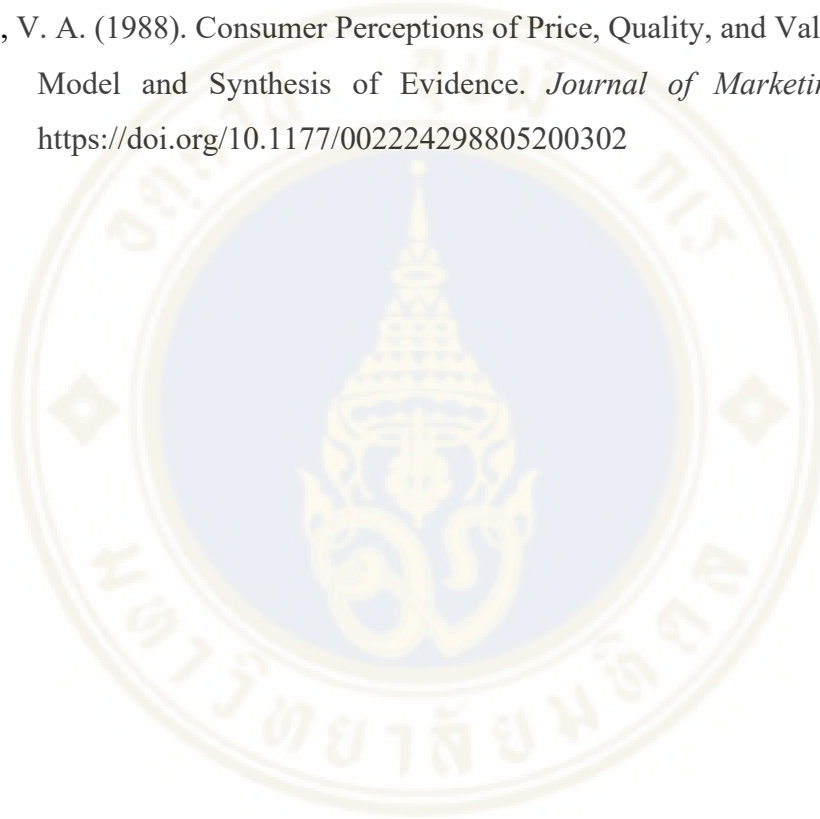
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Appendix A Questionnaire

Consent & Age Confirmation

1. Are you 18 years old or above? (คุณมีอายุ 18 ปีขึ้นไปหรือไม่)

Yes ใช่

No (Submit Form) ไม่ (ส่งฟอร์ม)

Screening Questions

Have you ever purchased merchandise from an esports team that you personally support or are a fan of?

(คุณเคยซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกจากทีมอีสปอร์ตที่คุณเชียร์หรือเป็นแฟนคลับหรือไม่?)

Yes เคย

No ไม่เคย

Have you ever purchased merchandise from an esports team that you do not actively support or consider yourself a fan of?

(คุณเคยซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกจากทีมอีสปอร์ตที่คุณไม่ได้เชียร์หรือไม่ได้ถือว่าตนเองเป็นแฟนคลับหรือไม่?)

Yes เคย

No ไม่เคย

1 — Strongly Disagree ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

2 — Disagree ไม่เห็นด้วย

3 — Agree เห็นด้วย

4 — Strongly Agree เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

Perceived Product Quality / Design

I am likely to purchase merchandise if the design is appealing.

(ฉันมีแนวโน้มที่จะซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกหากมีการออกแบบที่น่าสนใจ)

I am likely to purchase merchandise if the material is durable.

(ฉันมีแนวโน้มที่จะซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกหากวัสดุมีความทนทาน)

I am likely to purchase merchandise if the sizing is comfortable.

(ฉันมีแนวโน้มที่จะซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกหากขนาดใส่สบายเหมาะสมกับตัวฉัน)

I am likely to purchase merchandise made from high-quality materials.

(ฉันมีแนวโน้มที่จะซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกที่ผลิตจากวัสดุคุณภาพสูง)

I am likely to purchase merchandise with an innovative design.

(ฉันมีแนวโน้มที่จะซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกที่มีการออกแบบที่ล้ำสมัย)

Social Influence

My friends' opinions influence my decisions to buy merchandise.

(ความคิดเห็นของเพื่อนมีอิทธิพลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกของฉัน)

I often purchase merchandise based on influencers I follow.

(ฉันมักจะซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกตามอินฟลูเอนเซอร์ที่ฉันติดตาม)

I often purchase merchandise based on streamers I follow.

(ฉันมักจะซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกตามสตรีมเมอร์ที่ฉันติดตาม)

Social media trends influence my interest in purchasing esports merchandise.

(กระแสบนโซเชียลมีเดียมีอิทธิพลต่อความสนใจของฉันในการซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกอีสปอร์ต)

Social media content from teams often makes the merchandise look more attractive.

(คอนเทนต์บนโซเชียลมีเดียจากทีมอีสปอร์ตมักทำให้สินค้าที่ระลึกดูน่าสนใจยิ่งขึ้น)

Utilitarian Motivation

I buy esports clothing because it is suitable for casual activities.

(ฉันซื้อเสื้อไอสปอร์ตเพราะสามารถใส่ในกิจกรรมทั่วไปได้)

I consider the functionality when buying team merchandise.

(ฉันคำนึงถึงประโยชน์ในการใช้งานเมื่อเลือกซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกของทีม)

Practical items (water bottles or bags) make more sense to purchase than decorative ones.

(สินค้าสำหรับใช้งาน เช่น กระเป๋าหรือขวดน้ำ มีความน่าซื้อมากกว่าสินค้าที่เน้นตกแต่ง)

I buy esports clothing because it is suitable for everyday use.

(ฉันซื้อเสื้อไอสปอร์ตเพราะสามารถใช้ในชีวิตประจำวันได้)

I am less interested in collectibles that don't serve any practical purpose.

(ฉันไม่ค่อยสนใจสินค้าสะสมที่ไม่มีประโยชน์ในการใช้งาน)

Emotional Attachment

Buying team merchandise strengthens my identity as a fan.

(การซื้อสินค้าของทีมช่วยเสริมภาพลักษณ์ของฉันในฐานะแฟนคลับ)

I buy merchandise to support the team financially.

(ฉันซื้อสินค้าของทีมเพื่อสนับสนุนด้านการเงินให้กับทีม)

I buy team merchandise as a way to celebrate victories.

(ฉันซื้อสินค้าของทีมเพื่อเฉลิมฉลองชัยชนะของทีม)

I feel a personal bond with certain players on the team.

(ฉันรู้สึกผูกพันเป็นการส่วนตัวกับผู้เล่นบางคนในทีม)

I often purchase esports clothing to add to my personal collection.

(ฉันมักจะซื้อเสื้อไอสปอร์ตเพื่อสะสมเป็นคอลเลกชันส่วนตัว)

Purchase Intention

I would consider purchasing limited-edition esports merchandise.

(ฉันมีความตั้งใจที่จะซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกของไอสปอร์ตที่เป็นรุ่นลิมิเต็ด)

I plan to continue buying esports merchandise in the future.

(ฉันวางแผนที่จะซื้อสินค้าที่ระลึกของไอสปอร์ตอย่างต่อเนื่องในอนาคต)

I actively seek out information about upcoming merchandise releases.

(ฉันมักจะติดตามข่าวสารเกี่ยวกับการเปิดตัวสินค้าที่ระลึกใหม่ ๆ)

I am open to purchasing esports merchandise from teams I do not actively support.

(ฉันเปิดใจที่จะซื้อสินค้าของทีมอีสปอร์ต แม้ว่าจะไม่ใช้ทีมที่ฉันเชียร์ก็ตาม)

I am likely to buy merchandise from multiple esports teams if I like the products.

(ฉันมีแนวโน้มที่จะซื้อสินค้าของหลายทีม หากฉันชอบตัวสินค้า)

Demographic

Age range (ช่วงอายุ)

18–24 years old

25–30 years old

31–35 years old

36–40 years old

41–45 years old

46 years old and above

Province (จังหวัดที่อยู่ปัจจุบัน)

(short answer)

Monthly Income (รายได้ต่อเดือน)

0 – 14,999 THB (บาท)

15,000 – 34,999 THB (บาท)

35,000 – 49,999 THB (บาท)

50,000 – 99,999 THB (บาท)

100,000 THB or above (บาทขึ้นไป)

Occupation (อาชีพ)

Student (นักเรียน/นักศึกษา)

Employee (พนักงานบริษัท)

Business Owner (เจ้าของธุรกิจ / ธุรกิจส่วนตัว)

Freelancer (ฟรีแลนซ์)

Government Officer (ข้าราชการ / พนักงานรัฐ)

Retired (เกษียณ)

Unemployed (ว่างงาน)

Other, please specify ... (อื่น ๆ โปรดระบุ...)

