



The Effect of Hedonic and Utilitarian Values on the Purchase Intention of Skins in Mobile Legends: A Case Study of Players in Kupang City

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ABSTRACT

The monetization of cosmetic virtual goods has reshaped digital gaming economies, raising questions about the evaluative mechanisms underlying non-functional purchases. This study examines the relative influence of hedonic and utilitarian values on the purchase intention of skins in Mobile Legends among players in Kupang City, Indonesia. Grounded in dual-value consumption theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the research employs a quantitative explanatory design using multiple linear regression analysis on survey data from active players. The findings reveal that both hedonic and utilitarian values significantly influence purchase intention; however, utilitarian value demonstrates a stronger effect. This result challenges the assumption that cosmetic digital consumption is predominantly hedonic and suggests that rational cost-benefit evaluation plays a decisive role, particularly in non-metropolitan contexts. The study contributes to digital consumer behavior literature by highlighting the contextual hybridity of symbolic and economic value in virtual goods markets.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of the digital entertainment industry has fundamentally transformed contemporary consumption patterns, particularly among younger demographics in emerging economies. The mobile gaming sector, once perceived merely as a leisure segment, has evolved into a sophisticated digital marketplace characterized by microtransactions, symbolic consumption, and complex value creation mechanisms. According to Newzoo (2023), mobile games account for more than half of global gaming revenue, reflecting not only technological diffusion but also the institutionalization of in-game purchases as a dominant monetization model. In this context, virtual goods—especially cosmetic items such as skins—have become central revenue drivers despite offering no direct functional advantage in gameplay performance. This phenomenon raises an important theoretical and managerial question: why are consumers willing to allocate real financial resources to acquire purely virtual and often non-functional digital items?

The purchase of virtual goods challenges classical economic assumptions that consumption is primarily utility-driven in a functional sense. Traditional consumer theory posits that individuals seek to maximize tangible benefits and minimize costs (Kotler & Keller, 2016). However, digital environments blur the boundary between functional utility and symbolic gratification. Skins in games such as *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang* do not enhance competitive mechanics directly, yet they generate significant purchase volumes. This paradox suggests that consumption decisions in digital gaming ecosystems may be shaped by dual value structures—hedonic and utilitarian—operating simultaneously but potentially with different degrees of influence. Understanding this duality is critical because it reflects a broader transformation in digital

consumer behavior, where experiential and symbolic value coexists with rational evaluation (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

From a hedonic perspective, consumption is driven by pleasure, fantasy, enjoyment, and emotional stimulation (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). In digital gaming, hedonic value manifests through aesthetic appreciation, identity construction, exclusivity, and emotional excitement associated with ownership of rare items. Recent studies highlight that digital goods function as instruments of self-expression and social signaling within online communities (Mäntymäki & Islam, 2016; Hamari, 2017). Players often interpret skins as markers of prestige, competence, or loyalty, thereby embedding consumption within social identity processes. In massively multiplayer online environments, symbolic differentiation becomes a powerful motivator because visibility to peers amplifies the experiential payoff of ownership. Thus, hedonic value in gaming is not merely about enjoyment but about the construction of digital identity and emotional immersion.

Conversely, utilitarian value emphasizes rational assessment, functionality, efficiency, and cost-benefit considerations (Batra & Ahtola, 1991). Although skins are primarily cosmetic, utilitarian reasoning may still operate through perceived value for money, discount opportunities, bundled offers, or long-term digital asset collection. Digital consumers are increasingly sophisticated and price-sensitive, particularly in emerging markets where purchasing power varies significantly (Deloitte, 2022). Promotional events, limited-time offers, and reward systems may trigger calculated decision-making processes. Thus, even in hedonic product categories, rational evaluation mechanisms remain relevant. This coexistence challenges the assumption that digital entertainment consumption is purely emotionally driven.

Empirical research on virtual goods purchasing has produced mixed findings regarding the relative dominance of hedonic versus utilitarian drivers. Chuang (2020) found that hedonic motivations significantly influence virtual item purchases, particularly where aesthetic differentiation and emotional gratification are salient. Similarly, Hamari et al. (2017) argued that enjoyment and immersion strongly predict willingness to spend in online games. However, other studies demonstrate that utilitarian considerations such as perceived value, price fairness, and promotional attractiveness also exert significant influence (Izzah et al., 2021; Berlianto, 2022). In some contexts, utilitarian evaluation even outweighs emotional impulses when consumers perceive financial constraints or opportunity costs. This inconsistency in empirical findings suggests that the dominance of either value dimension may depend on contextual and demographic factors.

One critical limitation in existing literature is its predominant focus on metropolitan or technologically advanced regions. Many studies examining digital purchase behavior are conducted in large urban centers with relatively high digital literacy and purchasing capacity. Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence from secondary cities or developing regional contexts where socio-economic characteristics differ significantly. Kupang City, located in Eastern Indonesia, represents such a context. While mobile gaming penetration is substantial, disposable income levels, digital infrastructure access, and socio-cultural consumption norms may shape distinct value orientations. Without contextual investigation, theoretical generalizations risk overestimating hedonic dominance or underestimating rational economic considerations in non-metropolitan settings.

Moreover, prior studies often conceptualize hedonic and utilitarian values as independent predictors without sufficiently examining their comparative strength within a single analytical model. Theoretical frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and the Value-Based Adoption Model (Kim et al., 2007) imply that behavioral intention results from integrated evaluations rather than isolated motivations. Yet, empirical research sometimes isolates emotional and rational factors without assessing their simultaneous explanatory power. This methodological fragmentation creates a theoretical gap: the need for integrative analysis that evaluates both value dimensions concurrently within a specific digital consumption environment.

Another research gap concerns the type of digital product examined. Many studies investigate functional in-game purchases that directly enhance gameplay performance, such as weapons, power-ups, or subscription upgrades. Skins, however, represent a purely cosmetic category. Their lack of functional impact provides a unique opportunity to isolate symbolic and perceived value drivers. If utilitarian value remains significant in a non-functional product category, this would challenge simplistic assumptions that cosmetic goods are exclusively hedonic. Therefore, examining skins in *Mobile Legends* provides theoretical leverage to reassess the balance between rational and emotional motivations in virtual consumption.

The urgency of this investigation is further reinforced by the economic implications of microtransaction models. Game developers increasingly rely on cosmetic monetization strategies to sustain

revenue without compromising competitive fairness. Understanding what drives purchase intention in such contexts is strategically relevant for sustainable digital business models. However, from an academic perspective, the objective is not to promote technological consumption but to critically examine the psychological and evaluative mechanisms underlying decision-making in digital environments. By clarifying whether emotional gratification or rational assessment exerts stronger influence, scholars can refine theoretical models of digital consumer behavior.

In addition, the Indonesian gaming market presents a compelling empirical setting. Indonesia ranks among the largest gaming populations in Southeast Asia, with rapid smartphone adoption and expanding digital payment infrastructure (Statista, 2024). Nevertheless, income distribution disparities persist, potentially intensifying utilitarian evaluation processes. Players in Kupang City may experience different motivational structures compared to those in Jakarta or Surabaya. Socio-cultural values emphasizing community belonging and peer recognition may amplify hedonic motives, while economic considerations may simultaneously strengthen rational calculation. This dual pressure creates a theoretically rich environment for empirical testing.

Conceptually, this study is anchored in the dual-value consumption framework, which posits that consumer decisions are shaped by both experiential (hedonic) and functional (utilitarian) evaluations (Babin et al., 1994). Rather than treating these dimensions as mutually exclusive, the framework recognizes their interactive coexistence. In digital goods consumption, hedonic value may stimulate initial desire, while utilitarian value legitimizes final purchase decisions. This layered mechanism aligns with contemporary interpretations of consumer decision-making as a hybrid cognitive-affective process (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). By empirically testing both constructs simultaneously, this study contributes to refining the explanatory power of dual-value theory within digital contexts.

The novelty of this research lies in three dimensions. First, it empirically examines cosmetic virtual goods—skins—in a regional Indonesian context rarely explored in prior international literature. Second, it compares the relative magnitude of hedonic and utilitarian effects within a single regression model, thereby addressing theoretical ambiguity regarding dominance patterns. Third, it provides contextual insight into digital consumption behavior in emerging urban settings, contributing to the diversification of empirical evidence beyond major metropolitan samples. These contributions collectively strengthen both theoretical generalization and contextual specificity.

Importantly, this study does not assume that digital consumption is inherently irrational or emotionally excessive. Instead, it adopts a balanced analytical stance that acknowledges the legitimacy of both pleasure-seeking and rational evaluation as integral components of modern consumer behavior. In doing so, it responds to calls for more nuanced interpretations of digital marketplace dynamics (Kannan & Li, 2017). By situating the analysis within a structured quantitative framework, the study aims to produce empirically grounded conclusions rather than speculative assertions.

Based on the theoretical foundation and identified research gaps, this study seeks to answer the following central question: To what extent do hedonic and utilitarian values influence the purchase intention of skins in *Mobile Legends* among players in Kupang City, both partially and simultaneously? Accordingly, the objective of this research is to empirically analyze (1) the partial effect of hedonic value on purchase intention, (2) the partial effect of utilitarian value on purchase intention, and (3) the simultaneous effect of both value dimensions on purchase intention. By addressing these objectives, this study aspires to enrich the theoretical discourse on digital consumer behavior while providing contextually grounded insights into virtual goods consumption in emerging regional markets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hedonic Value.

Hedonic value is defined as the value derived from the fun, pleasure, and emotional experiences obtained during consumption. According to Naibaho et al. (2024), hedonic value is related to aesthetic appreciation, entertainment, exclusivity, and excitement in acquiring products. In the context of gaming, hedonic motivation occurs when players purchase skins not because of functional needs but because of the enjoyment and personal satisfaction associated with ownership. For example, owning a rare or limited skin can provide a sense of pride and distinctiveness compared to other players.

Several studies support the importance of hedonic value in shaping consumer behavior. Chuang (2020) found that players of online games are more influenced by emotional and symbolic satisfaction than by rational considerations when deciding to purchase virtual goods. Similarly, Afif et al. (2022) stated that hedonic motivation significantly increases purchase intention in digital entertainment platforms, where players see purchases as part of self-expression and enjoyment.

Utilitarian Value.

In contrast, utilitarian value refers to rationality, practicality, and functional benefits in consumption. Hartuti (2018) defines utilitarian value as consumption that emphasizes usefulness, efficiency, and tangible benefits. In Mobile Legends, utilitarian motivations may include discounted bundles, additional bonuses, or long-term investment value of skins. Players with utilitarian orientation often make purchases based on logical evaluations, such as price-to-benefit ratio or perceived efficiency in maximizing their gaming experience.

Berlianto (2022) found that utilitarian motives remain influential in online shopping behavior, especially when consumers face attractive price offers or functional bundles. In the case of Mobile Legends, utilitarian motives can be seen in players who purchase skins because of promotions, seasonal discounts, or because they view skins as a digital collection with potential value in the future.

Purchase Intention.

Purchase intention is a consumer's tendency or plan to buy a product in the future, influenced by internal motivations and external stimuli. According to Mirella et al. (2022), purchase intention arises when consumers perceive that a product meets their needs, whether emotional or functional. In the digital gaming context, purchase intention is not only influenced by game mechanics but also by social norms, peer influence, and the marketing strategies of developers.

Several studies show that hedonic and utilitarian values both contribute to purchase intention. Afif et al. (2022) argue that while hedonic motives often dominate in entertainment-related purchases, utilitarian considerations cannot be ignored because they act as a rational balance for consumer decisions. This duality creates a complex pattern of consumer behavior where emotional satisfaction and rational benefits interact in shaping purchase intention.

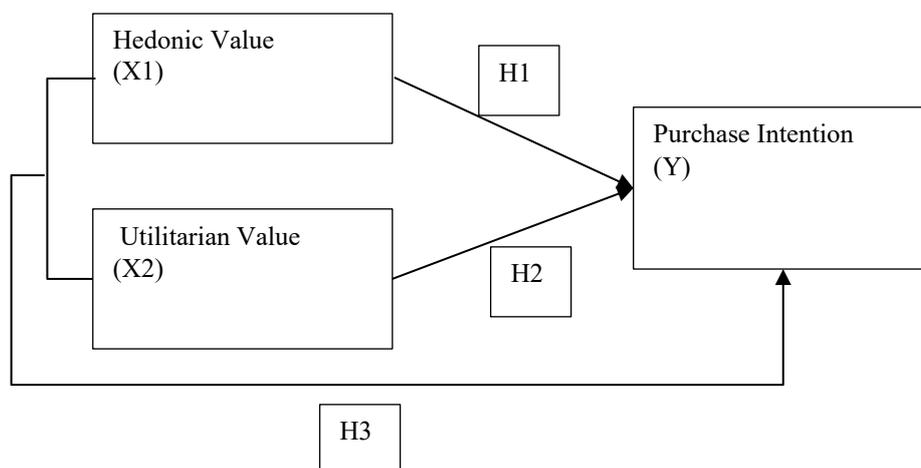


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Previous research has shown mixed findings on the dominance of hedonic versus utilitarian values. Chuang (2020) emphasized hedonic motives as the stronger driver, especially in the purchase of cosmetic items in games. On the other hand, Berlianto (2022) highlighted that utilitarian motives also play a crucial role, especially when purchase decisions involve economic considerations such as discounts and promotions.

From this literature, it can be concluded that both hedonic and utilitarian values are relevant in explaining consumer purchase intention. In the context of Mobile Legends in Kupang City, it is hypothesized that both hedonic and utilitarian values positively influence the purchase intention of skins, with hedonic motives likely having a stronger influence.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative explanatory design grounded in the positivist tradition, where theoretical constructs are operationalized into measurable indicators and tested through statistical inference (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The deductive approach ensures coherence between theoretical propositions derived from dual-value consumption theory and empirical testing procedures.

The population comprises active *Mobile Legends* players in Kupang City. Due to the absence of an official sampling frame, the population is treated as unknown, and convenience sampling is employed. Respondents were selected based on active gameplay within the last three months and familiarity with skin purchasing mechanisms. A total of 45 respondents participated. While limited in size, this sample satisfies minimum regression requirements for models involving two predictors (Hair et al., 2019).

Hedonic value is operationalized through indicators capturing enjoyment, aesthetic satisfaction, exclusivity perception, and emotional excitement. Utilitarian value reflects rational evaluation of price fairness, promotional attractiveness, economic efficiency, and perceived value optimization. Purchase intention captures willingness and likelihood of future purchasing behavior. All variables are measured using a five-point Likert scale.

Instrument validity is confirmed through Pearson correlation analysis, while reliability is established via Cronbach's Alpha exceeding acceptable thresholds. Multiple linear regression analysis is employed to estimate partial and simultaneous effects, with significance tested at the 5 percent level. The methodological structure enables direct comparison of the relative explanatory strength of affective and cognitive value dimensions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

Validity Test

The validity test was performed using Pearson's product-moment correlation in SPSS by comparing the corrected item-total correlation (r -count) with the critical r -table value at $\alpha = 0.05$. The results show that all measurement items have r -count values exceeding the r -table threshold, indicating that each item is significantly correlated with the total score. Therefore, all indicators are considered valid and appropriate for subsequent reliability and regression analyses.

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Item	R-calculated	R-table	Status
X1			
1	0,657	0,294	Valid
2	0,459	0,294	Valid
3	0,498	0,294	Valid
4	0,730	0,294	Valid
X2			
5	0,711	0,294	Valid
6	0,577	0,294	Valid
7	0,595	0,294	Valid
8	0,575	0,294	Valid
Y			
9	0,513	0,294	Valid

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2025

The validity test results indicate that all measurement items for constructs X1, X2, and Y have r -calculated values exceeding the critical r -table value of 0.294 ($\alpha = 0.05$). The correlation coefficients range from 0.459 to 0.730, demonstrating adequate item-total correlations. Since all items meet the established threshold, the instrument is considered empirically valid and suitable for subsequent reliability and structural analyses.

Reliability Test

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS to assess the internal consistency of the measurement instrument. The results show that all constructs obtained Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability. This finding confirms that the measurement items are consistently able to capture their respective constructs and are therefore suitable for further statistical analysis.

Table 2. Reliability Test
Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.764	9

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2025

Table 2 presents the reliability test results using Cronbach's Alpha. The analysis shows a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.764 for the nine measurement items. Since this value exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, the instrument demonstrates satisfactory internal consistency. This indicates that the items consistently measure the intended constructs and that the overall scale is reliable for subsequent statistical analyses.

Hypothesis Testing (Partial Test / T-Test)

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the partial t-test in SPSS to examine the individual effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The decision criterion was based on the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and the comparison between the calculated t-value and the critical t-table value. A variable is considered to have a significant effect if the significance value is less than 0.05 and the t-calculated exceeds the t-table threshold. The results indicate that the variables with p-values below 0.05 have a statistically significant partial effect on the dependent variable, thereby supporting the proposed hypotheses.

Table 3. Partial Test Result

Coefficients ^a		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.691	.919		4.014	.000
	Nilai Hedonis	.533	.162	.462	3.290	.002
	Nilai Utilitarian	.741	.204	.511	3.637	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2025

Table 3 presents the regression coefficients and t-test results examining the effects of Hedonic Value and Utilitarian Value on Purchase Intention. The results indicate that Hedonic Value has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.462$; $t = 3.290$; $p = 0.002$). Similarly, Utilitarian Value also demonstrates a positive and statistically significant influence ($\beta = 0.511$; $t = 3.637$; $p = 0.001$). Since both p-values are below the 0.05 significance threshold, the proposed hypotheses are supported.

Moreover, the standardized coefficients show that Utilitarian Value ($\beta = 0.511$) exerts a slightly stronger effect on Purchase Intention compared to Hedonic Value ($\beta = 0.462$). These findings suggest that both emotional and functional value perceptions play a critical role in shaping consumers' purchase intentions, with utilitarian considerations having a relatively greater contribution.

Hypothesis Testing (Simultaneous Test / F-Test)

The F-test was conducted using ANOVA in SPSS to examine the simultaneous effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The decision criterion was based on a significance level of 0.05. The regression model is considered statistically significant if the calculated F-value exceeds the critical F-table value and the significance value (p-value) is less than 0.05. A significant F-test result indicates that

the independent variables jointly explain a meaningful proportion of variance in the dependent variable, confirming that the regression model is fit and appropriate for hypothesis testing.

Table 4. Simultaneous Test Result

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.806	2	1.903	8.713	.001 ^b
	Residual	9.172	42	.218		
	Total	12.978	44			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Utilitarian Value, Hedonic Value

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2025

Table 4 presents the results of the simultaneous (F-test) analysis using ANOVA in SPSS. The findings show that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 8.713$; $p = 0.001$). Since the significance value is below the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that Hedonic Value and Utilitarian Value jointly have a significant effect on Purchase Intention.

Furthermore, the model explains a meaningful proportion of variance in the dependent variable, as reflected by the regression sum of squares (3.806) relative to the total sum of squares (12.978). These results confirm that the proposed regression model is fit and appropriate for further interpretation of individual predictor effects.

Correlation Coefficient (R)

The correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. Commonly represented by Pearson's correlation (r), its value ranges from -1 to $+1$. A positive coefficient indicates that the variables move in the same direction, whereas a negative coefficient reflects an inverse relationship. The closer the value is to ± 1 , the stronger the relationship; values near zero indicate a weak or no linear association. Statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) further confirms whether the observed correlation is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 7. Correlation Coefficient (R) Result

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.623 ^a	.388	.359	.25671

a. Predictors: (Constant), Utilitarian Value, Hedonic Value

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2025

Table 7 reports the correlation coefficient (R) value of 0.623, indicating a moderately strong positive relationship between the independent variables (Hedonic Value and Utilitarian Value) and Purchase Intention. This suggests that increases in hedonic and utilitarian value perceptions are associated with higher levels of purchase intention.

Furthermore, the R Square value of 0.388 implies that 38.8% of the variance in Purchase Intention is explained by the two predictor variables included in the model, while the remaining 61.2% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.359 confirms the model's explanatory stability after accounting for the number of predictors. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the model possesses moderate explanatory power and meaningful predictive relevance.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that both hedonic value and utilitarian value exert positive and significant effects on purchase intention of skins in *Mobile Legends* among players in Kupang City. More importantly, the regression coefficients indicate that utilitarian value shows a stronger influence compared to hedonic value. These results offer several theoretical implications that extend beyond descriptive statistical confirmation and contribute to ongoing debates in digital consumer behavior literature.

From a dual-value consumption perspective (Babin et al., 1994), consumer decision-making is shaped by both experiential (hedonic) and instrumental (utilitarian) evaluations. The significant effect of

hedonic value in this study confirms that digital cosmetic purchases are deeply embedded in affective and experiential processes. In online gaming environments, skins function not merely as aesthetic enhancements but as symbolic assets that reinforce identity, social positioning, and emotional immersion. This finding aligns with the experiential consumption theory proposed by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), which argues that consumption in entertainment-oriented contexts is often driven by fantasy, fun, and emotional arousal rather than functional necessity.

Within *Mobile Legends*, players may perceive rare or exclusive skins as markers of distinction, thereby reinforcing their digital identity within peer networks. This dynamic corresponds with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), where visible attributes contribute to in-group recognition and status differentiation. In multiplayer ecosystems where interaction is continuous and competitive, the symbolic visibility of skins amplifies hedonic payoff. Therefore, the positive effect of hedonic value observed in this study confirms that emotional gratification remains a core driver of cosmetic virtual goods consumption.

However, the more striking finding is the stronger coefficient of utilitarian value. Contrary to assumptions that cosmetic items are predominantly hedonic products, the results indicate that rational evaluation plays an even more dominant role in shaping purchase intention in this context. This suggests that players in Kupang City do not approach skin purchases purely as emotional indulgence but as decisions subject to cost-benefit considerations, perceived value, and financial rationality.

This pattern can be interpreted through the lens of the Value-Based Adoption Model (Kim et al., 2007), which posits that behavioral intention arises from a trade-off between perceived benefits and perceived sacrifices. Even though skins do not enhance gameplay mechanics, players may perceive utilitarian benefits in terms of discount opportunities, bundled offers, or perceived long-term collection value. Promotional events and limited-time pricing strategies may strengthen perceived economic advantage, thereby legitimizing the purchase decision cognitively. In emerging urban contexts where disposable income may be constrained, utilitarian justification becomes an important mechanism to reduce cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) associated with spending on non-essential digital goods.

The dominance of utilitarian value also reflects the rationalization process described in contemporary digital commerce research. Lemon and Verhoef (2016) argue that modern consumers often integrate emotional desire with rational validation before completing transactions. Hedonic attraction may trigger initial interest, but utilitarian reasoning provides final justification. In this study, although hedonic value significantly stimulates purchase intention, utilitarian considerations appear to serve as the decisive evaluative filter. This layered decision-making process suggests that digital cosmetic consumption cannot be simplistically categorized as purely pleasure-driven.

Contextual factors further clarify this outcome. Kupang City represents a non-metropolitan setting where economic conditions, purchasing power, and digital infrastructure differ from larger Indonesian cities. In such environments, financial prudence may be more salient. The stronger utilitarian coefficient may therefore reflect localized socio-economic realities rather than a universal pattern. This finding addresses a contextual gap in prior literature, which often assumes hedonic dominance based on metropolitan samples (Chuang, 2020; Hamari, 2017). By demonstrating utilitarian predominance in a regional context, this study contributes to a more differentiated understanding of digital consumer motivations.

The simultaneous significance of both variables also reinforces the integrative perspective suggested by the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Behavioral intention is influenced by attitudes formed through evaluative beliefs. Hedonic and utilitarian values can be interpreted as distinct belief structures shaping overall attitude toward purchasing skins. Hedonic value strengthens affective attitude, while utilitarian value strengthens cognitive attitude. The statistical significance of both predictors suggests that purchase intention emerges from a hybrid cognitive-affective formation rather than a single motivational source. This integrative mechanism enriches theoretical understanding of digital purchase intention in gaming contexts.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.388$) indicates moderate explanatory power, meaning that 38.8% of the variance in purchase intention is explained by hedonic and utilitarian values. While this confirms their relevance, it simultaneously highlights the presence of other influential factors not examined in this model. Social influence, perceived scarcity, brand loyalty, fear of missing out (FOMO), and peer competition may also contribute to purchase intention. This observation aligns with recent studies emphasizing the multidimensionality of virtual consumption behavior (Kannan & Li, 2017; Mäntymäki &

Islam, 2016). Therefore, while dual-value constructs are significant, they represent only part of a broader motivational ecosystem.

Another important theoretical implication concerns the categorization of digital cosmetic goods. Traditional classification frameworks tend to label cosmetic items as purely hedonic products. However, the empirical evidence from this study challenges this binary classification. Even in the absence of functional gameplay impact, consumers still apply rational economic logic. This finding suggests that product typology in digital environments should be reconsidered. Virtual goods may embody “symbolic-utilitarian hybridity,” where perceived usefulness is reconstructed not through functional performance but through economic efficiency and value optimization. Such reinterpretation expands existing consumer value theory in digital contexts.

In addition, the stronger utilitarian influence may reflect increasing maturity of digital consumers. As mobile gaming ecosystems become more commercialized, players may develop greater awareness of pricing strategies, promotional cycles, and monetization mechanics. This strategic awareness can foster calculative purchasing behavior. Thus, the results may indicate a shift from impulsive hedonic consumption toward more informed and rationalized decision-making in digital markets. This evolution aligns with broader discussions about consumer empowerment and information accessibility in digital economies (Deloitte, 2022).

Nevertheless, the persistence of hedonic significance confirms that emotional engagement remains indispensable. Without enjoyment, aesthetic appeal, and symbolic differentiation, utilitarian justification alone would likely be insufficient to motivate purchase. Therefore, rather than interpreting utilitarian dominance as a replacement of hedonic motives, the findings suggest a complementary interaction where emotional attraction and rational validation co-produce purchase intention. This nuanced interpretation avoids reductionist conclusions and preserves theoretical balance.

Collectively, the discussion advances three main theoretical contributions. First, it empirically supports the dual-value framework in a cosmetic virtual goods context, demonstrating that both dimensions are statistically relevant. Second, it reveals contextual variation in value dominance, with utilitarian value exerting stronger influence in a regional Indonesian setting. Third, it challenges simplistic hedonic-product assumptions by demonstrating the persistence of rational evaluation even in non-functional digital consumption.

By grounding interpretation in established theoretical frameworks and contextual analysis, this study moves beyond descriptive confirmation toward conceptual refinement. The findings underscore that digital consumption behavior is neither purely emotional nor purely rational but represents a structured interplay between affective desire and cognitive evaluation shaped by socio-economic context. Future research should further explore additional variables and comparative regional settings to deepen theoretical generalization.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine whether the purchase intention of cosmetic virtual goods—specifically skins in *Mobile Legends*—is primarily shaped by hedonic gratification or by utilitarian evaluation within a non-metropolitan Indonesian context. The empirical findings demonstrate that both hedonic and utilitarian values significantly influence purchase intention, yet utilitarian value exhibits a comparatively stronger effect. This result challenges the widely held assumption that cosmetic digital products are inherently hedonic-dominant and instead reveals a more complex evaluative structure underpinning virtual consumption decisions.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings reinforce the robustness of dual-value consumption theory by confirming that affective and cognitive evaluations coexist in shaping behavioral intention. However, the relative dominance of utilitarian value suggests that digital cosmetic purchases are not merely impulsive or emotionally driven acts. Rather, they are embedded in rational cost-benefit considerations, even when the product category lacks functional performance enhancement. This indicates that the utilitarian dimension in digital environments may not be confined to technical usefulness but may extend to perceived economic optimization, pricing fairness, and strategic purchasing timing.

By situating the analysis within Kupang City, this study contributes contextual nuance to the digital consumer behavior literature. The stronger utilitarian influence may reflect localized socio-economic *Sir & Giri: The Effect of Hedonic and Utilitarian Values on the Purchase Intention of Skins in Mobile Legends: A Case Study of Players in Kupang City*

conditions in which discretionary spending is subject to heightened scrutiny. Consequently, value dominance patterns appear context-sensitive rather than universally fixed. This insight invites reconsideration of generalized claims derived from metropolitan samples and underscores the importance of examining digital consumption across diverse socio-economic landscapes.

Conceptually, the findings support an integrative interpretation of purchase intention formation consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior. Hedonic value strengthens affective attitude toward purchasing, while utilitarian value strengthens cognitive evaluation, and both jointly shape intention. Rather than operating as competing forces, these dimensions appear to function sequentially or complementarily, where emotional attraction initiates desire and rational assessment legitimizes commitment. This layered decision-making process refines existing theoretical narratives that portray digital cosmetic consumption as predominantly experiential.

At a broader level, this study contributes to ongoing debates concerning the nature of value in digital economies. Virtual goods, although intangible and non-functional, may still undergo structured economic reasoning. Thus, digital cosmetic products can be conceptualized as symbolically hedonic yet economically rationalized commodities. Recognizing this hybridity advances theoretical understanding of how consumers construct value in digitally mediated environments.

While the explanatory power of the model is moderate, indicating the relevance of additional psychological or social variables, the findings affirm that hedonic and utilitarian evaluations remain central pillars in understanding purchase intention within gaming ecosystems. Future research may extend this inquiry by incorporating social influence, perceived scarcity, or longitudinal behavioral data to further refine theoretical generalization.

In sum, this study demonstrates that virtual cosmetic consumption is neither purely pleasure-seeking nor purely rational but represents a structured interplay between emotional engagement and cognitive evaluation shaped by contextual realities. By illuminating this interplay, the research offers a more balanced and conceptually grounded interpretation of purchase intention in contemporary digital markets.

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