Factors Affecting Expectancy for Character Growth in Online Games and Their Effect on Gamers' Loyalty

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A R T I C L E I N F O

A B S T R A C T

This study aims to understand the effect of expectancy for character growth (learning, novelty, escapism, enjoyment, social value, audio-visual value, and value for money) on online games towards online gamer loyalty. This quantitative research uses a purposive sampling method with a sample of 375 respondents. The data were processed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method. The results showed that learning, escapism, audio-visual value, and value for money have a positive effect on expectancy for character growth. However, novelty, enjoyment, and social value do not have an effect on expectancy for character growth. Furthermore, expectancy for character growth has a positive effect on online gamer loyalty. Therefore, game developers need to know the fantasy of gamers, improve the quality of graphics, and provide discounts to increase gamers' loyalty

A B S T R A K

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami pengaruh expectancy for character growth (learning, novelty, escapism, enjoyment, social value, audio-visual value, dan value for money) pada game online terhadap online gamer loyalty. Penelitian kuantitatif ini menggunakan metode purposive sampling dengan jumlah sampel 375 responden. Data diolah dengan menggunakan metode Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa learning, escapism, audio-visual value dan value for money berpengaruh positif terhadap expectancy for character growth. Sedangkan novelty, enjoyment dan social value tidak memiliki pengaruh terhadap expectancy for character growth. Selanjutnya, expectancy for character growth memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap online gamer loyalty. Oleh karena itu, pengembang pemainan perlu mengetahui fantasi dari pemain, meningkatkan kualitas grafis, dan memberikan diskon guna meningkatkan loyalitas pemain

1. INTRODUCTION

The video game is one of the promising-potential industries. According to the data compiled by Clairfield International (2018), from 2011 to 2018, the world video game market value grew from 54.2 billion USD to 82.4 billion USD. That number is still predicted to increase to 90.1 billion USD in 2020. It indicates that the world video game market value has almost doubled in 10 years. According to the Capital Management Coordinating Board (BKPM) at the 2018 Regional Investment Forum (RIF) in Jogjakarta, Indonesia is the 2nd largest video game market in Southeast Asia and the 16th in the world. With a total of 43.7 million gamers, Indonesia created a profit for the industry totaling 879.7 million USD.

One sub of video games is online games. The online game refers to a game that is played through an internet network that allows two or more players to participate simultaneously from different locations. Online games can range from simple text-based games to those that combine complex graphics and virtual worlds that are inhabited by many players simultaneously. According to the data from Statista (2018), in 2019 — with the number of players reaching 532 million people worldwide — the revenue from online games would be 11.9 billion USD. For Indonesia, according to Statista (2018), online games will generate a profit of 182 million USD in 2019. It means that Indonesia ranks 14th in the world.

Based on research conducted by Liao and Teng

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(2017), expectancy for character growth has been shown to positively affect online gamer loyalty. Therefore, (Teng, 2018a) also conducted further research to find out what variables can affect expectancy for character growth so as to increase online gamer loyalty. The study used seven variables, namely learning novelty, escapism, enjoyment, social value, audio-visual value, and value for money. Based on the results of the study, there are four variables that have been proved to affect expectancy for character growth. They are learning, novelty, enjoyment, and social value. The research is the first study that discusses the antecedent of expectancy for character growth. Therefore, Teng (2018b) suggested of testing the model he had built towards different respondents.

Furthermore, there are several reasons why this research needs to be done. First, it is important to understand the variables that affect expectancy for character growth and ultimately becoming an online gamer loyalty. It is also an important point in determining the success or failure of online gaming (Moon, Hossain, Sanders, Garrity, & Jo, 2013). For online games, the player base is everything because the world or environment in the game is determined by the interaction between the players (Adams, 2014). Character growth is also one of the main features and advantages of online games compared to other types of games (Adams, 2014). For this reason, this research was conducted to help online game developers maintain online gamers' loyalty from their players by analyzing the factors that affect expectancy for character growth. Second, the research model conducted by Teng (2018b) has only been tested once in Taiwan. Therefore, further research is needed to test the model he has built. It aims to determine whether the relationship in the model is the same if applied in other countries with different profiles of gamers. By doing so, the application in company management can be more above the target. Third, there have not been any studies on expectancy for character growth, which further affect online gamer loyalty (Teng, 2018a), even in Indonesia. Of course, this is beneficial information for game publishers who have already existed or those who want to explore the online gaming market in Indonesia (Teng, 2018b). Fourth, it is expected that the results of this study can be beneficial for the developers and the players, namely by creating games that can maintain the players' loyalty. The players will also get the benefit of having a game that is in accordance with their wishes, and they can play it continuously with many other players.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Online Gamer Loyalty

People want to regularly play certain online games because they have a high level of customer loyalty to the game. In marketing, customer loyalty is characterized by the repeated use of services or products of a particular company, store, or brand by customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). The concept of customer loyalty is used in marketing research to measure customers' tendency to use the same product or service (Ruyter, Wetzels, & Bloemer, 1998). It has been verified that customers want to continue to use specific services, despite the introduction of new services or products if they have a strong loyalty to their current service or product (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016).

The higher the customer's loyalty to certain online games, the more he continues to play the game. Although there are various factors that affect customer loyalty, this research focuses on the quality of customer experience because digital content, including online games, is primarily an experience of using the goods (Shapiro, Varian, & Becker, 1999). This is because people play online games primarily to have a pleasant experience, and the value of online games can only be determined after they actually play them (Pine, Pine, & Gilmore, 1999). For example, people sometimes experience a life of being a hero or being a storyteller who experiences a new history of the kingdom in online games and tells their experiences to others.

In the context of online gaming, loyalty is defined as the desire to repeatedly play online games (Teng, Chen, Chen, & Li, 2012). This desire is important for increasing the sustainability of game providers because gamers' engagement contributes to sales (Cheung, Shen, Lee, & Chan, 2015). Online gamer loyalty has a related but different term, which is addiction. Addicted gamers have been shown to show symptoms of conflict and withdrawal; thus not all players with high engagement can be said to be addicted (Charlton & Danforth, 2007). Addiction is used as a different construct from online game loyalty in a study conducted by Lu and Wang (2008). It supports that addiction is different from loyalty. This research focuses on the intention to play games repeatedly (i.e., loyalty). It is the basis for using the term loyalty in this study.

Expectancy for Character Growth

Outcome expectation was defined as the expectation of a person to obtain certain outcomes as a function of behavioral performance (Atkinson, 1957). The

concept of expectancy is further developed as an expectation for success, that is, personal anticipation or performance expectations of future assignments (Wigfield, 1994). In the context of online gaming, gamers are motivated to learn skills and solve game problems (Teng & Chen, 2014), and therefore, they form some expectations for the game achievements, the so-called expectancy. In particular, increasing the level of the game is very important to evaluate the performance of gamers (Kim, Yoo, & Kauffman, 2013). Therefore, online gamers should shape up their expectancy for growth.

Learning
The theory of consumption values defines epistemic value as a perceived utility derived from alternative capacities to satisfy the desire to learn (Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991). Online games provide a great opportunity for the players to go beyond their daily life experiences and engage in social learning, which is made possible through extensive access and conversation with online communities (Bingham & Conner, 2010). By using online games, gamers can meet new friends and join group activities to appreciate different cultural values, personal perspectives, and other players' life stories. Online games, therefore, encourage knowledge transfer and allow gamers to share and explore in a nonstop way. Learning through online games not only obtains knowledge gained through daily routines but also complements the knowledge that can rarely be obtained through daily life. When someone feels that an online game satisfies his desire to learn, his ability to play the game will increase. By doing so, his expectation of increasing the game level will increase, either (Liao & Teng, 2017).

The theory of consumption values has been contextualized to identify learning as one of the important value components (Chen & Sharma, 2013). Learning can help improve the attitude and use of social networking sites (Chen & Sharma, 2013). It indicates that learning affects the activation of positive responses from users. Besides that, learning fulfills the need of the user to gain new knowledge. In other words, users undergoing intense learning will feel a lot of information they have learned.

Novelty
Perceived novelty is defined as the degree to which users feel innovation is new and interesting compared to the existing technology. When using online game services, users receive new content and have more new experiences. Although online gaming functions that are frequently updated may be annoying to users, many updates bring new experiences to users, such as interface changes, performance improvements, and added functions and features.

Novelty has been identified as an essential component value by the theory of consumption values because it strengthens the intention to use location-based services (Yang & Lin, 2017). The reason is that novelty stimulates the users to explore further. Exploration can meet the users' needs to gain new knowledge (Sheth et al., 1991). In the context of online gaming, exploration of the game world gives players higher knowledge. Such knowledge can help them improve their avatars and instill expectancy for character growth (Liao & Teng, 2017).

Escapism
Escapism can be interpreted as relieving stress or getting out of daily routines (Warmelink, Harteveld, & Mayer, 2009). In order to escape from the unpleasant facts and distract themselves from stressful things, users may engage in online games. For example, those who like to be farmers but do not have the ability, time, or any other factor that prevents them from achieving this desire, can choose to play online games where they can become farmers. By doing so, they can achieve a certain level of enjoyment they cannot achieve in real life. Another example can be differentiated from daily world demands like school, work, etc.

Enjoyment
Enjoyment can be defined as the extent to which an activity is considered as giving pleasure and excitement for oneself, no matter how the consequences of these activities are (Venkatesh, 2000). As a state of positive emotional experience, enjoyment not only occurs in the pursuit of physical activities such as dancing but also in the pursuit of mental activities such as playing chess. According to flow theory, enjoyment is one of the five essential dimensions of flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikzentmihaly, 1991).

Enjoyment comes from an appreciation of the experience for one's own sake, regardless of other consequences that may occur (Holbrook, 1994). Besides, enjoyment has been demonstrated as an inherent motivating factor as an effective predictor of various IT developments. Van Der Heijden (2003) first applied this construct to the TAM model and used it extensively in studies of IS literature and online games. In the study of mobile game adoption,

Ha, Yoon, and Choi (2007) argue that the perceived enjoyment must be part of the nature of the game. They found that pleasure affects users' adoption in a positive way.

Social Value

The word *social* is defined as the utility felt by someone when associated with one or more specific social groups. Social value is obtained through positive or negative associations with specific demographic, socio-economic, and ethnic-cultural stereotypes (Sheth et al., 1991). According to Turel, Serenko, and Bontis (2010), social value in the digital world is the social gain derived from the use of digital artifacts. Social need is the need for acceptance and affiliation (Maslow, 1970). Lu and Wang (2008) stated that solid interpersonal relationships and social relationships could motivate online gamers to play the same game over and over again.

Audio-visual Value

Turel et al. (2010) define visual and musical appeal as an aesthetic response that can be an important element of a digital artifact. Visual attraction is defined as aspects of the online environment that reflect the 'look and feel' or perception of the attractiveness of a website (Montoya-Weiss, Voss, & Grewal, 2003). For users, the first impression of a visual appearance is a key prerequisite of the value of the experience they feel later (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2001). In other words, visual appeal, like pictures and colors, reflects the website's attractiveness (Loiacono, Watson, & Goodhue, 2007). In a study related to e-retailing, Wang, Minor, and Wei (2011) found that creating an aesthetic website that allows consumers to enjoy the online shopping environment is very important. This rule can also be applied to online games because it is played online on the website. Aesthetic design and an object's physical attraction usually drive visual appeal.

The information system features, images, animations, and sounds (audio) are important design elements that create audio-visual value (Morana, Schacht, Scherp, and Maedche (2017)). Audio-visual value refers to game elements that provide a satisfying audio-visual experience.

Value for Money

Value for money is the rate at which a transaction provides more significant benefits than the cost. The previous studies have shown that value for money is an important value dimension of virtual items in online games (Park & Lee, 2011). Also, another study by Turel et al. (2010) with seven variables, namely learning: novelty, escapism, enjoyment, social value, audio-visual value, and value for money—consider value for money as a component that contrasts with non-instrumental advantages in making decisions. Users who feel that digital artifacts are inexpensive compared to their benefits tend to adopt them. Value for money from a digital artifact is positively related to the overall perceived value.

Sweeney and Soutar (2001) state value for money is the utility that comes from products related to reducing the perception of short-term and long-term costs. The two components (quality and price) have different effects on the perception of value for money. Zeithaml (1988) argues that some consumers feel more value when prices are low; others feel more value when there is a balance between quality and price. So, for different consumers, the perceived value components may also be different. In addition, Zeithaml (1988) found that some consumers gained more value from all the relevant 'can' and 'give' components, which led to the definition of perceived value.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was carried out with this research replicating the same model as Teng (2018a) to do testing on the model he built. The models and hypotheses in this study are shown in Figure 1.
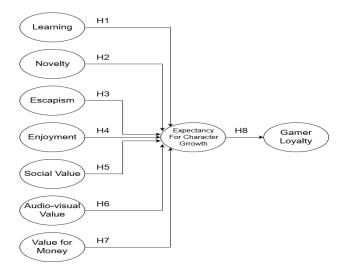

Figure 1: The Models and Hypotheses of the Research

This research design is the conclusive research design. It is used to test hypotheses and describe a relationship between phenomenon and characteristics. Descriptive research is used in this

study, with the aim of describing information, estimating the proportion of the population, as well as systematically describing the facts and characteristics of the object under study. Furthermore, this study uses a single cross-sectional study, where information gathering from one type of respondent sample is carried out only once in a period (Malhotra, 2019). This study used primary data obtained by surveys using online structured questionnaires, filled in by the respondents themselves (self-administered questionnaire). This questionnaire uses a Likert scale, which consists of six points, which range from (1) for "strongly disagree" to (6) for "strongly agree."

In this study, the researchers used a non-probability sampling method, which is a sampling technique that depends on the personal judgment of the researcher, not on the opportunity to choose sample elements (Malhotra, 2019). The non-probability sampling technique used is purposive judgment; namely, the sampling technique for data sources with consideration of the information needed is available or according to criteria (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

Furthermore, pretest data is processed using SPSS software, and the main test data is processed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method with LISREL 8.51 software. Previous researchers conducted a pretest on 33 respondents with the same characteristics as respondents in the actual study. Researchers obtained 375 respondents from distributing questionnaires to the main test data.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study, as presented in Figure 2, the t-value for H1 is 3.28. This value is above the critical value of 1,645, meaning that H1 is accepted, namely learning has a positive effect on expectancy for character growth. This result is the same as that of the research conducted by Teng (2018a). This is also supported by Lee et al. (2016) in their research stating that one of the motivations for knowledge owners to share their knowledge and keep learning is the expectation for recognition and appreciation from the knowledge they have. This is also called the reputation-seeking mindset. The mindset effect will increase if it is in a large group or group (Haidt, 2012). This is supported by the nature of online games, where we are in a community with many other players. The higher the level of character in online games, the knowledge or ability possessed is also higher. Then, the motivation of online game players to increase their level or ability will increase

because they want to get recognition and appreciation from other players. Motivation to increase this level is closely related to expectancy for character growth.

Learner engagement is facilitated in part by various ways of making a game that is adaptive, can be customized by the player, or personalized (Andersen, 2012; Leutner, 1993; Plass, Homer, & Kinzer, 2015; Turkay & Kinzer, 2014). Adaptivity is the ability of a game to engage with each player who is learning in a way that reflects a specific situation. This is also related to the level or level of the player who is learning (Plass et al., 2015). With the happiness of the game player getting new knowledge or abilities, he will increasingly want to improve his character. That is because, with the increase in the level of the character, it will open more features or options that can be accessed by gamers.
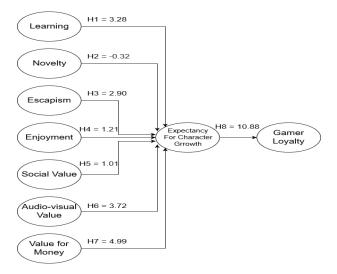
Figure 2: Results of Statistical Analysis for the Hypotheses

Again, the t-value for H2 is -0.32. This value is below the critical value of 1,645. It means that H2 is not accepted. The results of testing this hypothesis are different from the results of research conducted by Teng (2018a). Benner and Tushman (2003) and Ikuine (2006) discuss excessive exploitation in product development. They found that excessive exploitation tends to occur in the software industry, where there are almost no production processes to exploit anymore. Ikuine (2006) shows that in the Japanese video game industry, companies accumulate development knowledge and exploit it. Furthermore, the company focused on developing sequels such as Final Fantasy, Call of Duty, and others.

Ikuine (2006) termed the trade-off between exploiting know-how and exploring new products as a productivity dilemma in development. Furthermore, he pointed out that excessive exploitation in development would reduce the novelty of a video game and shrink the Japanese video game market. Therefore, if the company finds a successful and well-liked game series, the company will exploit it, they will develop a new video game that is almost the same as before. This does not only occur in the gaming industry but also in the film industry. For that reason, one of the causes of novelty does not have a positive influence on expectancy for character growth is because the video game industry prefers exploitation rather than exploration, causing loss of novelty and originality of the latest games produced. According to Rogers (2010), if the difference between a new product and an existing product is only slightly, the user can measure the value of the new product, and the time to adopt it becomes shorter. This is supported by the rise of video game pre-order systems or video game purchases before the game is launched. This shows that game players have been able to assess the value of the new game because of the slight difference with the previous game.

Another thing that causes this study different from the previous ones is the profile of the research respondents. In the previous studies, the respondents who had experience playing online games were less than 24 months; there was 51.3%, and those who had more than 121 months of playing experience was only 2.6%. Yet, in this study, the respondents who have experience playing online games are less than 24 months, which is only 6%, or it is more than 121 months as many as 38%. From this data, the researchers can assess that in the previous studies, there were many beginner gamers and few experienced gamers or veterans. Meanwhile, in this study, it is the opposite. Of course, for novice players, the novelty value of a game is still very pronounced and thick; therefore, it becomes one of the influences to continue improving their character. Again, for veteran players, the novelty of a game will be of little value so that it does not contribute to expectancy for character growth.

The t-value for H3 is 2.90. This value is above the critical value of 1,645, meaning that H3 is accepted; namely, escapism has a positive influence on expectancy for character growth. The result of testing this hypothesis is the same as that of the results of research conducted by Teng (2018a). Escapism is seen as avoidance of reality, in its various manifestations: real work, real friends, real facts, in other words, the real world (Evans, 2001; Tuan, 1998). Kaczmarek and Drążkowski (2014) found that escapism predicted time spent in a virtual environment and a stronger belief that the environment in the game was as realistic as the real world. Because they perceive that the game world is as realistic as the real world, they will have the desire to make their characters successful in ways such as raising the level of their characters and collecting more virtual money. In other words, their expectancy for character growth increases.

Research conducted by Yee (2006) found that playing games can often feel like a second job. Many of the gamers have full-time jobs. Every day they go to work and do their work in the office, and then they go home and do the same thing in the game. Of course, if we have a job, we have career expectations, we will be even more successful in the future. Likewise, in the game, those who consider playing the game like their second job, they want their character to be more successful too. That is because the game can attract players who have the interest to undergo specifically packaged experiences such as Formula One racers, a sniper in World War II, manager of a soccer team, or anything else that they cannot feel in the real world (Calleja, 2010).

The t-value for H4 is -1.21. This value is below the critical value of 1,645. It means that H4 is not accepted. The results of testing this hypothesis are different from the results of research conducted by Teng (2018a). Hamari et al. (2017) found that enjoyment has a negative influence on purchases of virtual goods in the game. This means that players who are satisfied and enjoy the game will have fewer purchases of virtual goods sold in the game. Therefore, one of the game developer strategies is not to directly make the maximum enjoyment of the game produced from the start but to offer additional virtual items that can be purchased to add to the enjoyment of the game. That way, the company can get greater profits.

Loftus and Loftus (1983) revealed that a good game is not too easy because it will cause players to get bored. A good game must be at the right point where players can feel hardship and frustration and success. Furthermore, Bonus, Peebles, and Riddle (2015) found that frustration, which is inversely proportional to enjoyment, encourages gamers to advance further in video games. Having difficulty playing the game makes the players feel challenged and want to increase their level even further or expectancy for character growth. One example is the game Dark Souls III which, according to IGN is one

of the most difficult games of all time recording fantastic sales and breaking records as the best-selling game in the history of Bandai Namco—sold with more than three million copies worldwide a month after release.

The t-value for H5 is -1.01. This value is below the critical value of 1,645. It means that H5 is not accepted. The results of testing this hypothesis are different from the results of research conducted by Teng (2018a). Video games are often seen as a bad thing, such as wasting time and causing aggressive behavior (Mlimperos, Downs, Divory, & Davidbowman, 2013). That is also what happened in Indonesia; the bad stigma of online games is very close, especially to our parents' generation. Our parents always forbid and keep reminding the dangers of online games. Even in 2013, the Regent of Purwakarta, Dedi Mulyadi issued a regulation prohibiting the operation of internet cafes and online game rentals. That is what Eddy Lim, one of the initiators of the founding of the Indonesia eSports Association (IeSPA), wants to change. According to Eddy Lim, IeSPA is one of the efforts to introduce online games to the government and also the people of Indonesia so that the bad views about online games can be reduced. For this reason, in Indonesia, expectancy for character growth is difficult to achieve through social value.

Furthermore, Kaczmarek and Drążkowski (2014) found that the more people playing online games, the offline social support they get will decrease while online social support will increase. This has an impact if someone gets social value, then that person will get more acceptance in his social environment. Acceptance and socialization in the environment will make the time he uses to play online games less. Then, expectancy for character growth will decrease because it is not too significant for them; more important is that they play games and have gained social value. That is also because high levels of character will only be understood and appreciated by fellow game players (Cole & Griffiths, 2007). Therefore, ordinary people in our social environment cannot judge how great our character's abilities are in the game. They can only judge from the surface only limited to whether the person is playing a game or not.

The t-value for H6 is -3.72. This value is above the critical value of 1,645. It means that H6 is accepted; that is, audio-visual value has a positive effect on expectancy for character growth. The result of testing this hypothesis is different from that of the result of research conducted by (Teng, 2018a). The visual aesthetic design includes visual elements such as the overall look and feel of the game, the character of the game, and also important information in the game. The musical effects of a game provide background noise used to direct the player's attention to certain important events or moments in the game, signifying a danger or opportunity, trigger positive or negative emotions, or signify the success or failure of a mission (Plass et al., 2015). These features, images, animations, and sounds are among the most important design element factors that create audio-visual value (Morana et al., 2017).

Audio-visual value creates a satisfying game experience. Audio-visual value can increase the perception of gaming achievement, which is to strengthen positive feedback related to the achievement of the game, and thus strengthen the confidence of the game to gain other achievements in the future (Teng, 2018a). Anticipating future achievements is the essence of expectancy for character growth. For online games, due to sensory input, audio-visual value creates a positive attitude for the player. Sensory stimuli reinforce the significance of the perception of gaming achievement, increase the perception to move to the next level, and form anticipation to increase the level of the game (Liao & Teng, 2017). Therefore, by presenting a satisfying audio-visual effect, gamers anticipate more audio-visual in the next stage or level. The example is the visual effects of our characters that get cooler through evolution when our levels increase in Digimon and Pokemon games or satisfying commentators' sounds when we kill the opponents in the Dota 2 game.

The t-value for H7 is -4.99. This value is above the critical value of 1,645. It means that H7 is accepted; that is, value for money has a positive effect on expectancy for character growth. The result of testing this hypothesis is different from that of the result of research conducted by Teng (2018b). Good value for money is important for a purchase as well as in-game asset purchases (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Most of the virtual items sold in the game can improve the performance or ability of players (Hamari et al., 2017), help increase game levels, and thus build anticipation of further game level increases, ie, expectations of future achievements that are part from expectancy for character growth (Liao & Teng, 2017).

Kim, Gupta, and Koh (2011) found that price utilities have a positive influence on purchases of digital goods such as online games. One type of online game sales is the subscription model. Players must pay an amount of money regularly every

month in order to play the game. Therefore, if the game is considered to have bad value for money, the player will not continue to subscribe, and it will turn off the anticipation of an increase in character level or expectancy for character growth. Moreover, Indonesia, to consumer reports Deloitte is a price-sensitive country.

The t-value for H8 is 10.88. This value is above the critical value of 1,645, meaning that H8 is accepted, namely expectancy for character growth has a positive effect on online gamer loyalty. The results of testing this hypothesis are the same as the results of research conducted by Teng (2018a). Confirmation of user expectations can increase loyalty to online services (Bhattacherjee, 2001), indicating the probability of expectations determining game player loyalty. In addition, game player loyalty (or intentions of continuation) comes from expectations of positive results (Chang, Liu, & Chen, 2014). The results of playing games usually require gamers to improve their ability or level. Increasing the level can help gamers to fulfill their motivations, such as getting achievements or awards by completing missions or tasks in the game. This is one of the main motivations for playing online games (Yee, 2006). Therefore, expectancy for character growth becomes vital for creating online gamers' loyalty. Huang and Hsieh (2011) also found that challenges can increase online gamers' loyalty. The challenges faced by the game players are certainly directly proportional to the level of players, the higher the level of players, the more challenges they have. Therefore, the greater the anticipation of increasing the level of character, the more challenges the online gamers' has, which can increase loyalty.

5. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGES-TION, AND LIMITATIONS

After collecting, processing, and analyzing data from the respondents collected, it is known that this study has different results from the results of previous research conducted by Teng (2018a). The difference is caused by several things such as differences in the place or area of research implementation, games, and types of games played, and the characteristics of respondents who participated in the study. As it is known that the characteristics and behavior of consumers are unique so as to allow differences in the results of research conducted.

Based on the results of research and data analysis in this study, the following is a concise conclusion from testing the research hypotheses. The expectancy for character growth can contribute

to online gamer loyalty. Therefore, online game providers can encourage gamers to have high targets in the game and include messages that can inspire to increase players' confidence in their ability to complete the tasks that will come in the game. Encouraging and giving them guidance and guidance can also help instill confidence. Online game providers can also create incentives that can motivate experienced gamers to form a team with beginners. These incentives can encourage experienced players to help beginners, thereby increasing hopes of increasing levels among novice players and increasing their loyalty to the game. This study also found that learning has a positive effect on expectancy for character growth. This shows that the company must design its game with the right learning curve, not too steep and not too gentle. That way, players can enjoy the learning process and gain skills throughout playing the game.

The results of this study indicate the importance of escapism to increase expectancy for character growth. Therefore, game developers should research to find out the fantasy of their players in order to design games that can fulfill fantasy or develop the wishes of their players that they cannot achieve in their daily lives. This study also shows that audio-visual value is a significant determinant of expectancy for character growth for gamers. This requires game designers to continue to improve the quality of graphics rendering in games such as implementing RTX technology or ray tracing that was recently developed by NVIDIA. In addition, game designers also cannot ignore the aspects of music and sound effects used in games. Companies can hire professional composers to create sound effects that integrate with what is happening in the game. The results of this study also indicate that good value for money can increase expectancy for character growth. Therefore, companies should create attractive offers such as discounts and bundling so that gamers can perceive the purchase of the game has a high value. In addition, companies can use thinner profit margins to retain consumers and get greater profits in the long run.

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