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# MOTIVATION FACTORS AFFECTING FOR ESPORT PLAYERS IN THAILAND

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## ABSTRACT

Esports in Thailand were recognized as a professional sport in 2021, influencing the increase of a number of esports players. This study “Motivation Factors Affecting for Esport Players” aims to investigate esports behavior and motivations influencing decision-making to participate in esports. This is quantitative research. The sample consists of 400 esports players in Bangkok. The sample was collected using stratified sampling, simple random sampling, and a questionnaire. The data was analyzed using frequency, mean, percentage, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient, and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

The results showed that most of the samples were male 70.5 %, average age 19.65 years, average of playing hour per day was 6.03 hours per day. Most popular game genres include: 1) Adventure Game, 2) FPS (Action First Person Shooter Game), and 3) Fighting Game. The level of total motivation influencing the decision to participate in esports was high (=3.45). Esports graphics (=3.92) were the most important factor of extrinsic motivation, followed by esports content (=3.86). The intrinsic motivation was the desire to win the competition (=3.81), and the intention to participate in esports was moderate (=3.04). The results of the analysis using multiple linear regression showed that all of the independent variables in the equation were predictive variables, accounting for 65.6% of the variation in the dependent variables, with the remaining 34.4% due to other causes.

The research findings can be used in marketing planning. Based on the information of esports players, it can be used as a guideline for planning game development. Organizations related to esports have established a policy to support players esports to professional sports in the future. Furthermore, this research suggests that organizations involved in esports should have a plan or policy in place to promote Thailand as a center for organizing both national and international competitions, as well as prepare a manual of the pros and cons of esports in order to create a positive attitude for those involved directly and indirectly.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Esports players, Esports

## INTRODUCTION

In the past, “games” were played for entertainment during leisure time and later the games developed into “ESports” that were played for both individual and team competitions. Now the games can be played at the same time by many people from all over the world in real-time (David Gil and Smith, 2021). Esports has a wide range of rules for players, followers, fans, and others who are in this area. There are also institutions who is responsible to cover and take care the games. It is a competition where there were losers or winners. In addition, players are intrinsically motivated to develop their skills and movement (Jenny et al , 2017). According to Data Reportal, there are currently approximately 1 billion people worldwide who watch

Esports. It was also found that the country that has the highest percentage of internet users who watched the competition the most in the world was China which contains around 40 percent, following by Vietnam, 33 percent, the Philippines, 29 percent, and Thailand. 25 percent (Digital 2019 Q3 Global Digital Statshot, 2022).

In Thailand there is an E-Sports Association of Thailand who is responsible for creating promote e-sports program to meet international standards which can strengthen athletes to be in the global level in the future. E-Sports Association of Thailand is also a member of the International Esports Federation and the Asian Esports Federation responsible for organizing E-sports competitions in Thailand. It is under the supervision of the policy of the Sports Authority of Thailand as well (E-Sports Association, 2022). For E-sports in Thailand, it was officially classified as a professional sport by the professional committee in 2021. By Being as E-sports Association of Thailand, E-sports industry in Thailand can get promoted and more support from all sectors, both public and private sectors. More over E-Sports players are under 18 years old can be more acceptance from their parents which will result in increasing in the number of E-sports players. It can change the negative perspective that sees e-sports as a child addicted to games to a sport that can generate income such as income from the agency, competitive prizes, broadcasting revenues, sponsorships, products, and etc. (Garena Academy, 2021). In addition, educational institutions have opened courses related to E-sports in the areas of game development, management, marketing, management event, and more to support various careers to support the Esports industry such as E-sport player, manager, game analyst and designer, game developer, digital media developer, game reviewer, game reviewer E-sport league, E-sport athlete manager and game entrepreneur and etc.

From the above reasons, it can be seen that e-sports has become popular and has gained widespread acceptance in Thailand. There are more ecosystems with more people involved. The researcher therefore saw the importance and wanted to study the motivation consisting of extrinsic and intrinsic motives that affect esports players. To be a guideline for the development of the Thai e-sports industry in the future.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

To study the behavior of e-sports players and motivations that affect esports players

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

INTERNATIONAL ESPORTS FEDERATION (2022) has defined the meaning of esports. Esports (Electronic Sports) is a competitive sport in which players use their physical and mental abilities to compete in various games. In a virtual electronic environment with an e-sports ecosystem, the consists of seven key stakeholders: players, teams and franchises, leagues, events and tournaments, game publishers and distributors. Streaming and Broadcasting Services Investors, Fans and Brands (Esports Business Management, 2021, p.31)

Kotler (2000) defines “products” as tangible things. (Product) Services, experiences, events, people, places, organizations, information, and ideas. Products presented to consumers in order to meet their needs for maximum satisfaction. Products are classified into three levels: generic product, specific product, and total product.

Maslow's Theory of Motivation (Maslow, 1970) has a sequence of basic human needs in 5 steps as follows: 1. Physical needs. (Physiological needs) 2. Safety needs (Safety needs) 3. Affiliation or acceptance needs (Affiliation or acceptance needs) 4. Esteem needs (or Egoistic needs) 5. Self-esteem needs Need for success in life (Need for self-actualization)

Principles of consumer behavior Analyzing consumer behavior to understand all the factors that affect buying decisions. select products and services to purchase that is, to

comprehend the factors that affect or guide a consumer's choice of a product to be purchased. help marketers successfully respond to consumer needs by motivating and persuading customers to buy items and to be loyal enough to make additional purchases in the future. (Pahasing,B.,Girdwichai,P.,Kulwanich, A., Siriyanun, S.,2022)

Concepts and theories about repeat purchase intentions representing the choice of product and service are some of the most important things for purchasing and are also some of the most important dimensions of customer loyalty. Loyalty has four dimensions (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1990).

1. Purchasing intention is the way consumers choose to use the product and service is the first choice that can reflect the purchasing behavior of consumers.

2. Word of mouth communication happens when consumers talk only about good things about products and services, including recommending and stimulating other people to be interested and use the product and service which can be used to analyze the loyalty of consumers.

3. Price sensitivity is the absence of problems with consumers when prices of goods and services increase. Consumers are willing to pay higher than others if the products and services can meet satisfaction.

4. Complaining behaviors happens when consumers complain. They may complain to the service provider, tell someone else, or send the matter to the newspaper. This is a measure of how consumers respond to problems.

Zeithaml, Barry, and Parasuraman (1996) proposed a pattern of willingness to return to service. Positive word of mouth about product or services can be sprayed to others to be informative information for maintaining and increasing customers loyalty to the company and also create solid service to recruit more customers and to make them willing to pay more for a better product or service.

Hellier et al. (2003) defined that willingness to come back to buy again is the process of buying goods or services from the same company based on previous experience which is still satisfied.

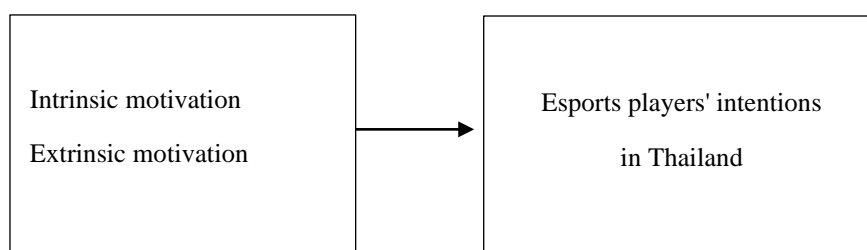
Ajzen (2005) defined the intention is an indication of the consumer's desire to purchase a product. or repeated services that consumers used to use the product or received service before.

## **METHODS**

Subject research “Motivation Affecting Esports Players in Thailand” is quantitative research. The sample group were 400 Esports players who lived in Bangkok. The questionnaires were sent and collected by stratified sampling method according to district and using simple sampling. The data was analyzed by using frequency, mean, percentage, standard deviation Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

**Figure 1** Presents a conceptual framework of “Motivation Affecting E-Sports Players in Thailand”.



## RESULTS

### Part 1 General information and e-sports behavior of the sample group

Most of the samples, 70.5%, were male, average age 19.65 years old, played an average of 6.03 hours per day. In terms of game type, there are 3 popular types of games sorted from the following order:

- No. 1 Adventure Game
- No. 2 FPS (Action First Person Shooter Game)
- No. 3 Fighting Game

### Part 2 Results of the study of the motivation of esports players

**Table 1** Mean and Standard Deviation The level of opinions of the sample in the motivation factor of e-sports players. (n = 400)

| Motivation factors of esports players | $\bar{X}$   | <i>SD</i>   | Interpret   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Intrinsic motivation</b>           |             |             |             |
| Side of ambition                      | 2.88        | 1.33        | Moderate    |
| Aspect of pride                       | 2.92        | 1.33        | Moderate    |
| Desire for victory                    | 3.81        | 1.17        | More        |
| Aspect of self-discovery              | 3.78        | 1.04        |             |
| Wanting to be like an idol            | 2.96        | 1.32        | Moderate    |
| <b>Extrinsic motivation</b>           |             |             |             |
| Game character side                   | 3.48        | 1.28        | More        |
| Graphics                              | 3.92        | 1.08        | More        |
| Plot of the game                      | 3.86        | 1.10        | More        |
| Social aspect of the game             | 3.53        | 1.22        | More        |
| <b>Total Motivation</b>               | <b>3.45</b> | <b>0.88</b> | <b>More</b> |

From Table 1, it was found that the sample had a level of opinions, motivation factors of e-sports players, in overall, it was at a high level. The mean was 3.45 and the standard deviation was 0.88, with the motivation in descending order as follows: The mean was 3.92 and the standard deviation was 1.08. The mean was 3.86 and the standard deviation

was 1.10. The mean was 3.81 and the standard deviation was 1.17. The mean was 3.78 and the standard deviation was 1.04. The mean was 3.53 and the standard deviation was 1.22 in the game character aspect. The mean was 3.48 and the standard deviation was 1.28. The mean was 2.96 and the standard deviation was 1.32. with a mean of 2.92 and a standard deviation of 1.33 and aspiration the mean was 2.88 and the standard deviation was 1.33.

**Table 2** Mean and Standard Deviation The level of the sample's opinion on the player's e-sports intention factor (n = 400)

| <b>Factors of players' willingness to Play e-sports</b>  | <b><math>\bar{X}</math></b> | <b>SD</b>   | <b>Interpret</b> |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Use your free time to make plans and practice with others.   | 3.32                        | 1.24        | Moderate         |
| Keep playing even after expenses are incurred. or obstacles  | 3.04                        | 1.33        | Moderate         |
| Recommend and tell others to play games together.  | 3.42                        | 1.19        | More             |
| If a new e-sports game is launched, it will begin to study that online game information immediately. | 3.10                        | 1.29        | Moderate         |
| Develop yourself to become a professional esports athlete.   | 3.13                        | 1.33        | Moderate         |
| Will develop into a career for themselves in the future  | 2.89                        | 1.32        | Moderate         |
| Will compete in e-sports in various programs in the future   | 2.76                        | 1.32        | Moderate         |
| Will be selected to represent the country's e-sports athletes in the future                          | 2.72                        | 1.33        | Moderate         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>3.04</b>                 | <b>1.07</b> | <b>More</b>      |

From Table 2, it was found that the sample had an opinion level on the player's intention to play e-sports. The overall picture was at a moderate level with a mean of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 1.07, with intentions arranged in descending order as follows: Introducing and telling others to play games together. The mean was 3.42 and the standard deviation was 1.19. The use of free time to plan and practice with others. The mean was 3.32 and the standard deviation was 1.24. with an average of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 1.33. If a new e-sports game is launched, it will start studying that online game immediately. with a mean of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 1.29 on the playing side. even if there are expenses or obstacles with a mean of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 1.33. The aspect will be developed into a career for themselves in the future. with a mean of 2.89 and a standard deviation of 1.32. The aspect will compete in e-sports in the future. with a mean of 2.76 and a standard deviation of 1.32, and the side will be selected to represent the country's e-sports athletes in the future The mean was 2.72 and the standard deviation was 1.33.

**Table 3** Shows the correlation coefficients between motivation factors affecting esports players' intention

(n = 400)

| Variable | M1     | M2     | M3     | M4     | M5     | M6     | M7     | M8     | M9     | Y     |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| M1       | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |       |
| M2       | .921** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |       |
| M3       | .368** | .411** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |        |       |
| M4       | .464** | .478** | .542** | 1      |        |        |        |        |        |       |
| M5       | .760** | .758** | .345** | .467** | 1      |        |        |        |        |       |
| M6       | .374** | .429** | .437** | .542** | .421** | 1      |        |        |        |       |
| M7       | .233** | .273** | .517** | .524** | .275** | .602** | 1      |        |        |       |
| M8       | .184** | .228** | .378** | .495** | .242** | .530** | .747** | 1      |        |       |
| M9       | .379** | .407** | .315** | .494** | .417** | .482** | .432** | .469** | 1      |       |
| Y        | .761** | .754** | .391** | .522** | .683** | .458** | .353** | .327** | .475** | 1     |
| x        | 2.88   | 2.92   | 3.81   | 3.78   | 2.96   | 3.49   | 3.92   | 3.86   | 3.53   | 3.04  |
| SD       | 1.332  | 1.333  | 1.173  | 1.039  | 1.319  | 1.284  | 1.084  | 1.095  | 1.218  | 1.071 |

\*\* p< 0.01

From Table 3, it was found that the motivation factors affecting the intention of e-sports players were significantly related at the 0.01 level with the correlation coefficient between 0.921 – 0.184. The highest correlation was the aspiration aspect with the pride aspect with a correlation coefficient of 0.921, followed by the aspiration and intention of e-sports players with a correlation coefficient of 0.761 and the aspiration and wanting to be like idols with a correlation coefficient of 0.760. The factor which has the lowest correlation coefficient was the aspiration and story of the game.

### Part 3 Data analysis results using multiple regression analysis

**Table 4** presents the stepwise multiple regression correlation coefficients. of the predictive variables used to predict the intentions of esports players (n = 400)

| Variable                   | B           | Beta        | t           | p-value      |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Constant                   | <b>0.36</b> |             | <b>2.63</b> | <b>0.009</b> |
| Side of ambition           | <b>0.30</b> | <b>0.38</b> | <b>4.80</b> | <b>0.000</b> |
| Social aspect of the game  | <b>0.10</b> | <b>0.11</b> | <b>3.00</b> | <b>0.003</b> |
| Aspect of self-discovery   | <b>0.10</b> | <b>0.10</b> | <b>2.42</b> | <b>0.016</b> |
| Wanting to be like an idol | <b>0.12</b> | <b>0.14</b> | <b>2.99</b> | <b>0.003</b> |
| Aspect of pride            | <b>0.15</b> | <b>0.19</b> | <b>2.38</b> | <b>0.018</b> |
| Plot of the game           | <b>0.08</b> | <b>0.08</b> | <b>2.25</b> | <b>0.025</b> |

R2 = 0.656 Adjust R2 = 0.651 SEE = 0.633 F = 124.89 p < 0.000

From Table 4, It was found that ambition motivation factor was the most influential variable (Beta = 0.38) with a positive influence, followed by pride motivation factor (Beta = 0.19) with a positive influence. The motivation factor of wanting to be like an idol (Beta = 0.14) with a positive influence. The social motivation factor in the game (Beta = 0.11) with a positive influence. Self-discovery motivation factor (Beta = 0.10) with positive influence

and the motivation factor of the story of the game ( $\beta = 0.08$ ) with a positive influence, respectively.

All independent variables included in the equation were predictive variables that could explain 65.6% of the dependent variable variation, the remaining 34.4% as a result of other causes. The F value used for the overall regression wind fitness test was 124.89. At  $p < .000$ , the regression equations were found to be suitable for forecasting.

## DISCUSSION

1. For behavior of e-sports players in Thailand, 70.5% of the samples were male, average age 19.65 years old, played an average of 6.03 hours per day. In terms of game type, there are popular types of games ranked in order as follows: No. 1 Adventure Game, No. 2 FPS (Action First Person Shooter Game), No. 3 Fighting Game This is because Esports is a sport in the age of the internet and technology that makes sports interesting and fun and can be played on many platforms. There are a variety of game styles and genres that can be played by all ages and can play alone or with multiple players at the same time whether they are in each other's places. More over players can earn money and able to make their careers such as e-sports athletes e-sports trainer, game animator, game artist, game developer, game journalist, game marketer, game commentator, streamer, gamecaster, AR/VR game developer, game master, media and broadcast production team. In line with David Gil and Smith (2021), esports is described as a game that people can play on personal computers (PCS), portable devices (e.g. mobile phones, tablets), video game consoles, (e.g. Microsoft Xbox, Sony PlayStation) and hybrid portable consoles (e.g. Nintendo Switch), which in the near future gaming is available with virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR) devices. With current technology, individuals and teams from all over the world are connected in real time and be able to play esports at their leisure for entertainment and competition. Electronic games played by individuals and teams, games played on a single device or multiple connected devices, and several types of games (such as sports, fighting games, and shooting games) can make people have fun together. According to Maria Törhönen et al. (2019) who studied Fame and fortune, or just fun? He studied on why people create content on video platforms. The results of the study showed that e-sports were developed to be used as leisure activities. Including in line with Pitikorn (2021) who conducted a study on any factors that influence behavior in watching e-sports (FACTOR INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR OF ESPORT WATCHING), which the research has found that E-sports are extremely popular. high at present, both among adolescents and working people in Thailand, E-sports is still in its beginning level. With the advancement of technology, access to e-sports today is relatively easy, consistent with Andreas Hebbel-Seeger (2012) who has studied the relationship between real sports and digital adaptation in e-sport gaming, the study has found that the relationship between physical sports and digital adaptation is greatly influenced by technological advances.

2. For "Motivation Affecting E-sports Players, the results showed that the sample group had high opinion levels on motivation factors of e-sports players. Overall, there was a high level, with the top 3 motivations ranked from descending in order as follows: First, Picture and Graphic, E-sports players pay attention a lot to the products (e-sports games) so they have been played across the screens of different platforms. Beautiful graphic design with three-dimensional animation scenes and stages for the game can be a big factor for them to motivate their interests. Second the content of the games can drive the players to have more interested in E-sports as well. When their skills are good enough, they want to develop their skills more so they can do their planning and playing as a team and have more fun. Third when they have their skill until they becoming an expert, then they want to win the



competition. In line with Kotler (Kotler, 2000 p. 394) he gave the idea that the products are presented to consumers in order to meet their needs for maximum satisfaction such as product composition, product appearance, quality level, features, and design which are the value that consumers receive from using the service. More over Wooyoung (William) Jang and Kevin K. Byon (2019) who studied Antecedents and consequences associated with esports gameplay has found that there are 4 factors (e.g., emotional motivation, price value, effort expectation, and flow) which were identified as the major factors influencing esports consumers' willingness to play esports games.

3. The intention of esports players in 3 descending orders are as follows: recommending and telling others to play games together, the use of free time to plan and practice with others, and self-development towards becoming a professional esports athlete. It is because the age of players and e-sports are easily accessible from mobile phones and the internet which makes it possible to play anywhere, anytime, with anyone, anywhere. Esports is therefore a part of everyday life. It can create multiplayer to play in a group of friends which can make them and their friends telling and recommending to more friends and others. After that the players will have more desire to compete the game and plan to win more game and tournament which will require more time to plan and practice with others. It will also motivate the players to improve their self-development towards and becoming a professional e-sports athlete which can be explained by Zeithaml, Barry, and Parasuraman (1996) who presented that the behavioral pattern of willingness to return for service was positive word of mouth about company introduction or services, loyalty to the company, or solid service can create more spending from customers who are willing to pay more for a better product or service.

For factors affecting the intention of e-sports players in Thailand, there are 5 independent variables in the equation which are predictive variables and can explain 65.6% of the dependent variable variation. The remaining 34.4% are the result of other causes, namely

- 1) Ambition motivation factor
- 2) Pride motivation factor
- 3) The motivation factor for wanting to be like an idol
- 4) Social Motivation Factors in Games
- 5) Self-discovery motivation factor
- 6) Game Story Motivation Factors

## **SUGGESTIONS**

Suggestions for applying the research results

- 1) Behavior information of esports players give a good knowledge and ideas for several sectors such as marketing planning and development planning of e-sports products (games) or services
- 2) E-sports related organizations has established a policy to support players to play more e-sports into professional sports in the future
- 3) Organizations related to e-sports should have plans or policies to promote Thailand as a center for hosting both national and international competitions
- 4) Government agencies, private sectors and educational institutions related to eSports should prepare a manual of advantages and disadvantages of e-sports to create a positive attitude for those directly and indirectly involved.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- 1) There should be the study on the factors that affect e-sports game players in each game or competition.
- 2) There should be the study of Sports tourism management for e-sports.
- 3) There should be the study of the factors affecting the satisfaction of watching e-sports.

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