CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A video game is a computer game designed for entertainment purposes (Nancy, 2008). It has progressed from their basic movement in the industry, mainly coin-operated games to the worldwide games (Whalen & Taylor, 2008). Video game nowadays is not only a medium that can be used to make someone happy or refreshed their minds but also can be the main job or the occupation of someone who wants to gain the salary from playing a video game. They become an active player by spending a lot of their time to consume the game. One of the factors that bring everyone going to consume the game is the model of video games that can build a social community over the computer network, called as online games. It builds the virtual worlds by many players simultaneously (Joseph, 2009).

Online games are one of the best past time that they acquire specially for teenagers, youngsters and students. Teens who play online games are just having fun. They do not just actually play because of some sort of seriousness, but also because they just want to feel relief (Kuss and Griffiths, 2012). Online games are not just video games that are played for single-player arcade, but it can be played with someone inside and outside your circle, such as your family, your friends, and the other players from all over the world who plays the same video game. Many

kinds of video games have their online features to help the players gain more friends, build the new community, and compete against the other players. Video games nowadays are evolving according to the technology that evolves rapidly. The graphics, the design, the gameplay, and the other part of video games is growing rapidly followed by the update of the technology.

One of the popular video games that have been played by any artist and singer in the world is Fortnite. Fortnite has reached up in global popularity and was recently labeled as the world's most popular video game (Sloan, 2018). It gets more popular because everyone streamed how they play the game itself plus who are the guy is playing the games. The most popular nickname of the entertainer or a celebrity that can be found in the Fortnite is Ninja, Marshmello, and Drake is the example of the players on Fortnite who are the famous people before they play and streamed themselves while playing Fortnite. Fortnite is a battle royale game and one of the freemium video games with a third person military perspective, in which gamers are dropped via parachute into an island with 99 other players and fight each other to reach a victory royale. Fortnite is exclusively positioned to continue as the top gaming platform because it is constantly updated and surprising features that give players new opportunities to reinvent their involvement in gaming (Bandlamudi, 2018). It becomes the most popular video game after Playerunknown's Battlegrounds release, becoming a rival, Fortnite won a lot of positive feedback from the players all around the world. No bug, luxury items, addicting gameplay, easy gameplay, updates every week, and a lot of benefits than

Playerunkown's Battlegrounds. The significance of Fortnite than the other games is Fortnite can be played with multiplayer mode, which is can be cross-platform. Someone who is playing Fortnite in their personal computer can play with their friends who play Fortnite in the PlayStation, mobile phone, and Xbox. This is the difference between Fortnite than the other game who has the same genre, Battle Royale. With the 78.3 million players online monthly, Fortnite beat the other games and prove that Fortnite is the most popular game in the world in 2017.

Video game players around the world are changing their dreams to have a formal occupation or a job because of a video game (David, 2019). Hardcore gamers will try so hard to get their achievements in any tournaments local or international with the games they played. They try their best to get the attention of their achievement which is joining the big team national or international. Soft skills that players gain in playing video games are useful to be applied in their real-life (David, 2019). Teamwork on online games, problem-solving, and new strategic planning is a soft skill that can be sharpened through playing video games. Today, video games are a kind of thing that can be played by everyone, paid or free. We can call it premium video games and freemium video games. The premium video game is a game that pushes someone to purchase the video game before it can be played. It means that video games are more concerned in the gameplay not on the cosmetic of the video game. On the other side, a freemium video game is the model of video game that focuses on how the players are spending their money on the

virtual items inside the game. Before video games changed a lot, premium and freemium video games have no difference.

Freemium games are games that have been monetized in a particular way: They are free to download and play but attempt to get the player to spend real money to obtain some kind of in-game item or advantage (Erica, 2019). Nowadays, freemium video games have been changed in a particular way. It is no longer be a game that only has a purpose to play, but the freemium video games changed the player mindset that they need to buy an item in the virtual market inside the games. All of the features in the freemium video games have a lot of differences from the premium video games. They sell the features of the freemium video games in the virtual market to attract the players to spend their money inside the game, not pay for buying the games itself. It changed the game experienced from the freemium video game itself because by paying the items inside the game, the players have more powerful characters or avatars in the gaming experiences, even it is not all of the freemium video games change their concept become like this.

Different from freemium, premium video games has their benefit to playing. They have their features when the players bought the video games than the freemium video games. Nowadays, in the premium video games, they do not need to work hard to reach the high gaming experience as freemium video games. When they bought the game, they got their features of the game without any efforts, the potential prosocial and beneficial effects of gameplay in the premium video games (Greitemeyer and Osswald, 2010). Premium video games have their ways to get

claimed or purchased, pre-order and backlog purchasing. Pre-order purchase has the benefit to own the games before anyone else who will buy the game in the date release, while the backlog purchasing is waiting for the premium video games is on sale with a discount which means is cheaper prices but losing the gaming experiences with the players who already bought the games in the pre-order purchase or on the release date. The addiction to playing video games is not only felt by ordinary people, but the artists, singers, football players, and all elements of the society itself shows that not only gamers who enjoyed playing video games.

With the title of most popular games, the Fortnite community has grown up. The streamer, artist, and everyone who is playing Fortnite builds their community. Not only in the real-life community, but they made some community on the internet with the application called Discord. Ninja as the most popular streamer in Fortnite, made the community in the discord application, inviting his viewers to join the discord community. Inside the community, they will get a notification about Fortnite updates, when Ninja will be streaming the game, and every single thing about Fortnite is going to be shared in the discord community. Not only Ninja, Indonesian streamer, or entertainer has a lot of community that has been made through discord application. To share the knowledge about the gameplay of the game, selling some items, selling avatars, and the other stuff related to the game. In Indonesia, the community sometimes have their differences between the others, make some room to practice together, sharing sessions, looking for a team or build a new team, and the invite link can be found easily in the channel of the streamer

on their streaming platform. The streamer will mention the address of the discord community in their streaming description. Any players can join the community without any charge to join.

The biggest social online community of video games in Indonesia is Nest-Clan. This community was established on 11 July 2017 with more than 100 active members. Nowadays, Nest-Clan Community is growing rapidly with 2998 members active inside the community. This community is not only about sharing their gameplay or some news of the game, but they also aim to filter the talented players of their members and put them into their team as Nest-Clan Teams.

Nest Clan is a community based on the social community that was built by the discord application. It does not have any based region for the community, because any players all over Indonesia can join the community without being classified from their region. They have their differences between the other communities that one community stand as the same passion, but Nest-Clan is made not just about the same passion, they want some talented players from their members are going to follow the competitions or some tournaments, have a salary and some sponsorship for playing video games.

Beside the combability was built by the players from the streamers and players, there is one more factor that made a player addicted to a game, the virtual items. Virtual items are non-physical objects for use in online communities to add the value of the avatar inside the game (Rina, 2017). The virtual items make the player consume it over time, depends on what updates bring the item to the game.

It is like a fashion in real life. The addicted ones will try to imitate the idols for what they wear or have inside the game. The consumption of virtual items in the world already like the consumption of daily needs. Ninja is the role model of all the Fortnite players around the world. Such as an advertisement, he always had the new skins every week. It made the fans of Ninja triggered and wants to have every single item Ninja had.

It becomes the same in Indonesia, all players in Indonesia will try to have a virtual item like their idol have. For example, one of the idols in Indonesia on Fortnite game is "Reza Arap". Every single time Reza streamed for his game and used the new items that just released, the viewers or the players who adore Reza Arap will talk about the virtual items that are worn by Reza Arap in Fortnite. Then, they will try to buy the items after they know there is a new item in the virtual market in-game of Fortnite. The virtual items of Fortnite are unique ones. This factor made the Fortnite players addicted to the virtual items inside the game. Fortnite always has the new items for every week and the new skins always following the theme of the season. The virtual items of Fornite just going to be sold in 24 hours and the special items are going to be sold for 36 hours. The players will miss the new items and should be waiting for a long time to get a chance to meet the items that cannot be bought at that time.

Consumption in the game is always being the last stop desire for any gamers around the world. They will become addicted to spending their money on the virtual market than spending money for their daily needs. Virtual items in the Fortnite

always attracted the players to consume over and over continuously. One of the factors that make someone spending their money inside the virtual market of Fortnite is the skins and effects. Skins that reflected their identity is becoming so powerful for Fortnite to attract the players to consume it every day when it was released. Fortnite is updating their items in the virtual market to attract the player to buy a virtual item. Fortnite games attract the players to buy and spending their money with the offers of the skins with the limited time. The players are using avatars or spending their money to buy the avatars is to represent their racial and ethnic (Passmore, 2018). One of the reasons how Fortnite can attract the players to consume the virtual items is offering the skins who represented their nationality, even tough it is only a certain country. The skins who represent the nationality is the skins who are using the clothes with the flag of certain country. The players of video games are always having their role model as a player. With the collaborations with some artist and professional players, Fortnite made them a skin with the shape of them or can be called as "Icon Series". According to Hart, the players use avatars to explore the alternate versions of themselves as opposed to reflection of themselves (Hart,2017). Fortnite attract the players to buy the skins for the fans of some professional players to made the players thinks that they are the same with the original players or the professional players itself.

Fortnite has its currency, the players called it V-bucks. V-bucks is Fortnite currency to buy the virtual items by changing the real money of the players then exchange to the V-bucks. Some of the regular skins on Fortnite is spent 700 until 900 V-bucks for one skin. It is equivalent to 100.000 rupiahs for one regular skin

in Fortnite. On the other hand, Epic Games have their different ways to attract the players spending a lot of money more than one regular skin, The Battle Pass, and the weekly skins. The battle pass is a virtual item that pushes the players to get a hundred level to gain a lot of skins on every level, and it should be played and complete some missions to reach the highest level of Battle Pass. Epic Games offer the shortcut to the players who want to gain the fastest levels of Battle Pass, by spending a lot of V-bucks to buy levels. However, weekly skins are a kind of virtual item that has a higher value than regular skins. It spends 2000 V-bucks for only one skin, and it is equivalent to around 200.000 rupiahs.

To analyze this issue, the researchers used the consumerism approach to analyze its pattern. One of the approaches to look at the consumers' consumption activity is by analyzing its pattern. This research aimed to get the consumption pattern on the Nest-Clan game community using the theory of consumerism by Mike Featherstone about lifestyle and consumer culture. This research used the qualitative method with an ethnography approach.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

How does the member of the Nest-Clan community consume the virtual item in the Fortnite game?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The research is conducted to identify the consumption pattern of the members inside the virtual community of Nest Clan and the meanings they manifested their money toward the in-game items that they buy inside the game.

1.4 Significance of the Research

The benefit of the study is to inform the readers about the consumption pattern of virtual items in the video games and how the virtual items can fulfill the player desire and pleasure from consuming these items. In addition, the study may educate the reader about what factors encourage them to consume the virtual items continuously without thinking about their primary needs or the purpose of consumption. In another part, this research informs about the researcher what is important things of buying virtual items, because the researcher is a part of the player who is playing video games. For the last part of the benefit, this research may give some involvement to the previous study of the consumption pattern and who are going to observe gaming and the culture as the object.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms:

Consumption : Consumption defines as the level where the commodity is immediately produced as a sign, sign as value, and a sign are produced as commodities (Baudrillard 1993).

Fortnite : A third-person game perspective in which players are dropped onto combative terrain by parachute along with 99 other players and compete to win victory royal (Rick 2019).

Freemium game : 'casual' games that promote shorter periods of gameplay, free to download but structured around micropayments, and raise the complex relationship between game design and commercial strategies (Evans, 2005)

Virtual items : Non-physical objects for use in online communities or online games to add the value of the avatar inside the game (Rina 2017).

Virtual ethnography : research approach for exploring the social interactions that take place in virtual environments to meet their cultural and social needs to study online interactions (Lisa, 2008).

Consumption pattern : Income community purchasing trends across or within product categories, such as food, clothing and discretionary products (Braudel 1992; Campbell 1987; Slater 1999).