

Analysis of User Satisfaction and Preferences in Choosing a Digital Game Platform (Study Case: Steam vs Epic Games Store)

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
Article History Received : May 6, 2025 Revised : May 28, 2025 Published : July 02, 2025	In the digital era, the gaming industry has expanded rapidly, influencing social, cultural, and economic aspects. This study examines user satisfaction and preferences between Steam and Epic Games Store using the End User Computing Satisfaction (EUCS) model. A quantitative approach with descriptive and explanatory methods was employed. The study aims to identify which technical factors most influence user satisfaction and preferences between Steam and Epic Games Store. Using the EUCS model, the research will provide insights for developers to enhance user experience and inform strategies for improving digital gaming platforms. The findings will contribute to understanding technical drivers of user behavior and offer recommendations for creating user-centered design strategies in the competitive gaming market. Data analysis reveals that Steam holds a significant advantage in Content, Ease of Use, and Timeliness, leading to higher satisfaction. Steam offers a broader game selection, better community features, and a more functional interface than Epic Games Store. Statistical tests confirm Steam's superiority. The study concludes that users prefer platforms with richer content, better experiences, and more efficient update systems, providing strategic insights for platform developers to improve competitiveness and user satisfaction.
Keywords: <i>Epic games store;</i> <i>EUCS;</i> <i>Game digital platform;</i> <i>Steam;</i> <i>User satisfaction.</i>	

INTRODUCTION

The digital gaming industry has grown significantly, driven by technological advancements and changing consumer behavior. A major shift in this sector has been the rise of digital game distribution platforms like Steam and Epic Games Store, which have transformed how users access and experience games. These platforms offer services beyond digital stores, including digital rights management (DRM), social interaction features, cloud gaming, and personalized recommendations, all enhancing the user experience (Goh et al., 2023; Mulachela, 2020; Nyoto, 2020). Steam, launched by Valve Corporation in 2003, remains a leader in the market, boasting over 120 million monthly active users by 2020. It has solidified its dominance with robust community features, reliable infrastructure, and a vast game library (Stanton, 2020). In comparison, Epic Games Store, launched in 2018, offers a developer-friendly profit-sharing model and frequent free game promotions, drawing users with exclusive content and giveaways (Suganda & Isololipu, 2023).

This study aims to identify which technical factors most influence user satisfaction and preferences between Steam and Epic Games Store. Using the EUCS model, the research will provide insights for developers to enhance user experience and inform strategies for improving digital gaming platforms. The findings will contribute to understanding technical drivers of user

behavior and offer recommendations for creating user-centered design strategies in the competitive gaming market.

RESEARCH METHODS

This section outlines the methods used in this study to assess user satisfaction and preferences between two popular digital gaming platforms: Steam and Epic Games Store. The methods ensure the data's validity, reliability, and replicability for future studies. The explanation covers the research approach, data collection techniques, analysis procedures, and the validity of the methods applied. The study uses a quantitative approach with both descriptive and explanatory research designs. Descriptive research helps understand user satisfaction and preferences, while explanatory research explores relationships between variables, such as satisfaction and preferences, based on the End-User Computing Satisfaction (EUCS) model (Hartawan, 2017; Taswin et al., 2022; U. Theresia Gobel, M. Rifai Katili, 2022). The research steps include problem formulation, developing a theoretical framework based on EUCS, data collection through literature review and questionnaires, statistical analysis, and drawing conclusions.

Studies have highlighted the importance of service stability and platform performance in user satisfaction and loyalty (Taylor, 2006). The End-User Computing Satisfaction (EUCS) model evaluates user satisfaction across five key dimensions: content, accuracy, format, ease of use, and timeliness (Muria & Hartomo, 2022; Setyowati et. al, 2024; Torkzadeh & Doll, 1991). These dimensions provide insights into how technical aspects impact user perceptions of a platform's quality. While much research has focused on the economic models and business strategies of these platforms (Bryan Arya Pangestu, 2022; Gumelar & Indriyanti, 2023; Perdana et al., 2021; Saputri & Alvin, 2020; Thorhauge & Nielsen, 2021), there is limited exploration into how technical features like content variety, user interface design, and system responsiveness influence user satisfaction. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the technical factors that shape user preferences between Steam and Epic Games Store. The following is a basic image of the EUCS model shown in Figure 1 below.

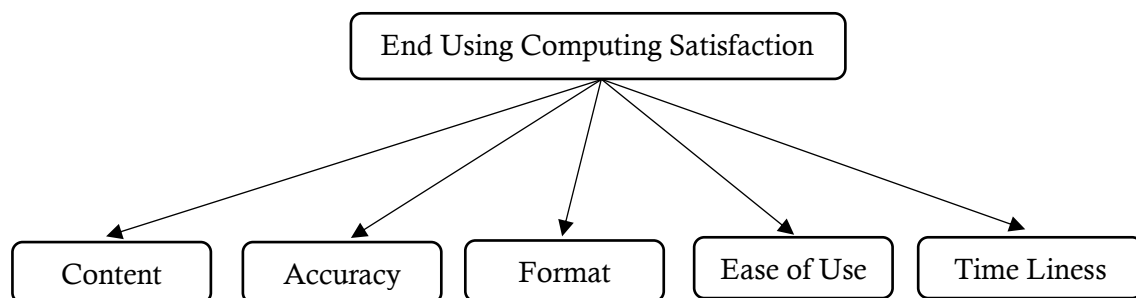


Figure 1. EUCS Basic Model

EUCS, developed by Doll and Torkzadeh in 1988, measures user satisfaction by comparing expectations with actual experiences. It evaluates satisfaction across five dimensions: content (relevance and usefulness of platform features), accuracy (reliability of information), format (visual presentation of content), ease of use (platform accessibility), and timeliness (platform responsiveness). These dimensions, identified by Torkzadeh & Doll (1991), serve as independent variables, with user satisfaction as the dependent variable.

Content assesses how well a platform meets user needs, while accuracy ensures the reliability of platform information. Format reflects the platform's design and clarity, enhancing navigation and engagement. Ease of use measures how intuitively users can interact with the platform, improving satisfaction by reducing barriers. Timeliness evaluates the platform's responsiveness to user needs, such as updates and content availability, which is crucial in fast-paced environments like digital gaming (Pibriana & Fitriyani, 2022; Setyoningrum, 2020; Yulianti & Widayanti, 2024).

The study analyzed user satisfaction and preferences for digital gaming platforms using literature reviews and questionnaires. The literature review examined relevant books and articles on user satisfaction and the EUCS model. A questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms and shared via WhatsApp and Instagram to a diverse group of participants. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to evaluate demographic variables and user satisfaction. Further statistical tests were applied to explore relationships between variables and factors influencing users' decision-making. The findings and practical recommendations for the digital gaming industry were based on these tests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Instrument Testing

The research uses the End User Computing Satisfaction (EUCS) model to assess user satisfaction with the Steam platform. The study uses data from active Steam users to understand their experiences. The normality test is used to determine if the data is normally distributed, which is crucial for selecting the appropriate statistical method. If the data is not normally distributed, non-parametric methods like Kruskal-Wallis, Mann-Whitney U, or Spearman's rho are more appropriate. The EUCS dimensions include Content, Accuracy, Format, Ease of Use, and Timeliness. Content refers to the variety and quality of games available on the platform, while Accuracy is the reliability of information provided. Format reflects the platform's visual design and interface, affecting navigation ease. Ease of Use measures user-friendliness, affecting overall satisfaction. Timeliness refers to the frequency of updates and new features, ensuring user engagement. The normality test, using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, confirms the need for non-parametric analysis. As for the normality test, the researcher used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro Wilk test below, with the formula:

(1) Formula of the Shapiro Wilk

$$W = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^n a_i x_{(i)})^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2} \quad (1)$$

(2) Formula of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov

$$D = \sup_x |F_n(x) - F_0(x)| \quad (2)$$

The following table is a collection of data that has undergone preprocessing at each step, this is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Tests of Normality (Include Pre-test)

Dimensions	Platform	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Content	Epic Game	.263	14	.009	.806	14	.006
	Steam	.399	33	.000	.604	33	.000
	Use both	.347	25	.000	.727	25	.000
Accuracy	Epic Game	.300	14	.001	.801	14	.005
	Steam	.311	33	.000	.741	33	.000
	Use both	.300	25	.000	.767	25	.000
Format	Epic Game	.435	14	.000	.599	14	.000
	Steam	.334	33	.000	.710	33	.000
	Use both	.260	25	.000	.785	25	.000
Ease	Epic Game	.253	14	.015	.821	14	.009

Dimensions	Platform	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Time	Steam	.392	33	.000	.677	33	.000
	Use both	.412	25	.000	.644	25	.000
	Epic Game	.502	14	.000	.438	14	.000
	Steam	.279	33	.000	.739	33	.000
	Use both	.412	25	.000	.648	25	.000
Satisfaction Total	Epic Game	.181	14	.200*	.908	14	.150
	Steam	.189	33	.004	.912	33	.011
	Use both	.243	25	.001	.851	25	.002

The study reveals a strong correlation between ease of use and format, content and accuracy, and timeliness and accuracy in gaming platforms. Ease of use and content are strongly correlated, while content and accuracy are moderately correlated. Timeliness and accuracy are significantly correlated, suggesting timely updates enhance perceived accuracy. Content and format have a weak correlation. Total satisfaction is moderately correlated, with users' preferences showing moderate correlations. Loyal users tend to be highly satisfied, suggesting that digital gaming platforms should focus on user-friendly systems and diverse, high-quality games. The Mann-Whitney U Test comparing Steam and Epic Games Store users showed that Steam users had higher satisfaction across all EUCS dimensions than Epic users. Below is table 2 to test the normality of the data being tested.

Table 2. Tests of Normality (Without Pre-test)

Tests of Normality									
Dimensions	Kolmogorov-Smirnova						Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.				Statistic	df	Sig.
Content	.317	76	.000				.740	76	.000
Accuracy			.281	76	.000	.763	76	.000	
Format			.323	76	.000	.743	76	.000	
Ease			.350	76	.000	.724	76	.000	
Time			.355	76	.000	.706	76	.000	
Total Satisfaction			.119	76	.010	.954	76	.008	

The table results indicate that the data in this study do not meet the normal distribution assumption. For example, the Ease-of-Use variable showed a Sig. value of 0.000 in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and 0.724 in the Shapiro-Wilk test, suggesting non-normality. This implies users have diverse experiences with platform ease of use, likely influenced by personal preferences, prior experience, and familiarity with features. External factors like customer support quality and platform stability may also play a role. Given the non-normal distribution, non-parametric methods such as Spearman's rho, Mann-Whitney U Test, and Kruskal-Wallis Test were used for further analysis. These methods are recommended for Likert scale data, which often does not follow normal distribution, especially with smaller sample sizes. Spearman's rho was used to assess correlations between the EUCS dimensions (Content, Accuracy, Format, Ease of Use, Timeliness) and Total Satisfaction and User Preference, revealing how platform design and functionality impact user satisfaction and preferences. The formula for the correlation test is below:

(3) Formula of the Correlation Test

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{n(n^2-1)} \quad (3)$$

In addition, a correlation test was conducted and the results obtained were as shown in Figure 2 below:

Correlations									
			Content	Accuracy	Format	Ease	Time	KepuasanTotal	Preferensi
Spearman's rho	Content	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.344**	.120	.522**	.293*	.734**	.409**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002	.300	.000	.010	.000	.000
		N	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
	Accuracy	Correlation Coefficient	.344**	1.000	-.010	.381**	.080	.488**	.194
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.	.931	.001	.494	.000	.093
		N	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
	Format	Correlation Coefficient	.120	-.010	1.000	.248*	.294**	.468**	-.022
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.300	.931	.	.031	.010	.000	.848
		N	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
	Ease	Correlation Coefficient	.522**	.381**	.248*	1.000	.375**	.814**	.361**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.031	.	.001	.000	.001
		N	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
	Time	Correlation Coefficient	.293*	.080	.294**	.375**	1.000	.636**	.341**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.494	.010	.001	.	.000	.003
		N	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
	KepuasanTotal	Correlation Coefficient	.734**	.488**	.468**	.814**	.636**	1.000	.392**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
	Preferensi	Correlation Coefficient	.409**	.194	-.022	.361**	.341**	.392**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.093	.848	.001	.003	.000	.
		N	76	76	76	76	76	76	76

Figure 2. Correlation Test

The study reveals a strong correlation between ease of use and format, content and accuracy, and timeliness and accuracy in gaming platforms. Ease of use and content are strongly correlated, while content and accuracy are moderately correlated. Timeliness and accuracy are significantly correlated, suggesting timely updates enhance perceived accuracy. Content and format have a weak correlation. Total satisfaction is moderately correlated, with users' preferences showing moderate correlations. Loyal users tend to be highly satisfied, suggesting that digital gaming platforms should focus on user-friendly systems and diverse, high-quality games. Steam users have higher satisfaction across all EUCS dimensions than Epic users. The Figure 3 below shows the rank distribution for each group:

Ranks				
	Preferensi	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Content	0	32	29.03	929.00
	1	44	45.39	1997.00
	Total	76		
Accuracy	0	32	34.00	1088.00
	1	44	41.77	1838.00
	Total	76		
Format	0	32	39.02	1248.50
	1	44	38.13	1677.50
	Total	76		
Ease	0	32	30.25	968.00
	1	44	44.50	1958.00
	Total	76		
Time	0	32	30.67	981.50
	1	44	44.19	1944.50
	Total	76		
KepuasanTotal	0	32	28.53	913.00
	1	44	45.75	2013.00
	Total	76		

Figure 3. Ranks

Based on the table above, in the Content dimension, the mean rank for Steam is 45.39, while for Epic it is 29.03. In the Accuracy dimension, the mean rank for Steam is 41.77, while for Epic it is 34.00. The Format dimension shows a mean rank for Steam of 38.13, while for Epic it is 39.02. Ease of use has a mean rank for Steam of 44.50, while for Epic it is 30.25. In the Time dimension, the mean rank for Steam is 44.19, while for Epic it is 30.67. Finally, Total Satisfaction shows that the mean rank for Steam is 45.75, while for Epic it is 28.53. Overall, Steam users have a higher mean rank on all dimensions than Epic users. To determine whether the differences in these ratings were statistically significant, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The results of the statistical test are presented in the following figure 4:

Test Statistics ^a						
	Content	Accuracy	Format	Ease	Time	KepuasanTotal
Mann-Whitney U	401.000	560.000	687.500	440.000	453.500	385.000
Wilcoxon W	929.000	1088.000	1677.500	968.000	981.500	913.000
Z	-3.542	-1.682	-.194	-3.127	-2.952	-3.394
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.093	.846	.002	.003	.001

Figure 4. Test Statistics

The study analyzed user satisfaction and preferences for digital gaming platforms using literature reviews and questionnaires. The literature review examined relevant books and articles on user satisfaction and the EUCS model. A questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms and shared via WhatsApp and Instagram to a diverse group of participants. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to evaluate demographic variables and user satisfaction. Further statistical tests were applied to explore relationships between variables and factors influencing users' decision-making. The findings and practical recommendations for the digital gaming industry were based on these tests. This aligns with previous research emphasizing the importance of content variety, ease of use, and timely updates for user satisfaction. It supports Smith et al. (2020), who prioritize user experience over non-technical factors. Developers could improve satisfaction by enhancing Ease of Use and Content, while Epic Games Store should focus on better navigation, diverse content, and timely updates. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to compare EUCS scores across Steam, Epic Games Store, and both user groups, with 76 respondents in total. Results are shown in the Hypothesis Test Summary Figure 5 below:

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Content is the same across categories of Platform.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.003	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Accuracy is the same across categories of Platform.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.394	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Format is the same across categories of Platform.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.389	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of Ease is the same across categories of Platform.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.011	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of Time is the same across categories of Platform.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.005	Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of KepuasanTotal is the same across categories of Platform.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.004	Reject the null hypothesis.

Figure 5. Hypothesis Test Summary

The study found a significant difference in satisfaction with game variety and quality between platforms, with Epic Games Store users being less satisfied than Steam users. However, there was no significant difference in satisfaction with information accuracy between platforms. The interface displayed no significant difference in satisfaction, while the ease-of-use dimension showed a significant difference. Epic Games Store users had the lowest level of satisfaction, while Steam users showed higher satisfaction. The results suggest that there is no significant difference in satisfaction with information accuracy between platforms, and that users should consider both

platforms when choosing a platform. Overall, the study highlights the importance of considering various factors when choosing a platform. The formula for calculating the Kruskal-Wallis test statistic in below:

(4) Formula of the Kruskal-Wallis Test

$$H = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{R_i^2}{n_i} - 3(N+1) \quad (4)$$

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary	
Total N	76
Test Statistic	11.958 ^a
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.003

Figure 6. Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary

Before going to the comparative results, an independent sample test was carried out using the Kruskal Wallist test and obtained results as in Figure 6. In the Time dimension (timeliness of updates), the test results show a Chi-Square value = 10.556, df = 2, Asymp. Sig. = 0.005 ($p < 0.05$). This result indicates that there is a significant difference in satisfaction with the timeliness of updates between platforms. Pairwise comparisons show that Epic Games Store users have the lowest satisfaction compared to Steam users, while "Use both platforms" users are in the middle position. In the Total Satisfaction dimension (overall satisfaction), the test results show the Chi-Square value = 10.913, df = 2, Asymp. Sig. = 0.004 ($p < 0.05$), which indicates that there is a significant difference in overall satisfaction between platforms. Pairwise comparisons showed that Steam users had the highest overall satisfaction, while Epic Games Store users had the lowest satisfaction. The last step is to conduct a comparative test of the platform, which then produces results as shown in Figure 7 below.

Pairwise Comparisons of Platfrom				
Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig. ^a
-18.043	6.468	-2.790	.005	.016
-21.568	6.339	-3.402	.001	.002
3.525	5.059	.697	.486	1.000

Figure 7. Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary

Pairwise comparisons revealed that Epic Games Store users were less satisfied than Steam users in Content, Ease of Use, Time, and Total Satisfaction. Users of both platforms had intermediate satisfaction, closer to Steam's, except in a few dimensions. Steam users were significantly more satisfied in four out of six EUCS dimensions. No significant differences were found in Accuracy and Format. Steam outperformed the Epic Games Store in game variety, ease of use, and update timeliness. Users of both platforms had satisfaction levels between Steam and Epic Games Store users, supporting prior research that emphasizes user experience factors. Developers should focus on improving Ease of Use, Content, and Timely Updates for the Epic Games Store, which would boost user loyalty. Steam's technical advantage influences overall satisfaction, and ease of use and game variety are key to enhancing user experience.

Research Discussion

Users' preference for digital gaming platforms is influenced by factors like Content, Accuracy, Format, Ease of use, and Timeliness. The study used the End User Computing

Satisfaction (EUCS) model to measure user satisfaction. Steam outperformed the Epic Games Store in several key areas. Non-parametric analysis was performed due to non-normally distributed data, using Spearman's rho, Mann-Whitney U, and Kruskal-Wallis tests. In the Content dimension, Steam users were more satisfied with the variety and quality of games than Epic Games Store users (Mean rank Steam: 45.39 vs. Epic: 29.03, $p = 0.000$). Steam offers a larger game catalog, including indie and AAA games, and features like Steam Workshop for customization. In contrast, Epic Games Store relies on exclusivity and free game promotions but has a limited game selection, affecting long-term user satisfaction.

In ease of use, Steam was superior (Mean rank Steam: 44.50 vs. Epic: 30.25, $p = 0.002$), thanks to its mature, feature-rich user interface, game search system, and social features. Epic Games Store, while simpler, lacks many features that would improve user experience. In Timeliness of updates, Steam again led (Mean rank Steam: 44.19 vs. Epic: 30.67, $p = 0.003$) with its efficient auto-update system, cloud save, and device synchronization. Epic Games Store struggles with update speed, especially for large games, affecting user experience.

Regarding Accuracy ($p = 0.093$), there was no significant difference. Steam's community review system is more comprehensive, whereas Epic Games Store's review system is still developing. In Format ($p = 0.846$), user preferences varied: some prefer Epic's simplicity, while others favor Steam's feature-rich interface. Overall, Steam users were more satisfied, especially with Content, Ease of use, and Timeliness, confirming that these technical factors impact user preferences more than accuracy or interface appearance. To improve competitiveness, platforms like Epic Games Store should focus on enhancing navigation, game variety, and update efficiency, as these factors directly affect user satisfaction. This study offers insights for platform developers to design more effective strategies for boosting user satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The research reveals that user satisfaction in choosing a digital game platform is significantly influenced by the main factors in the End User Computing Satisfaction (EUCS) model, namely Content, Accuracy, Format, Ease of use, and Timeliness. Steam has a significant advantage over Epic Games Store in these areas, contributing to higher levels of satisfaction. Steam users are more satisfied with its wider variety of games and community features, such as Steam Workshop, compared to Epic Games Store, which has limitations in game variety. Steam's more complex but functional navigation system is rated superior in ease of use, while Epic Games Store faces challenges in providing an optimized user experience. Steam is faster and more responsive in providing game updates, while Epic Games Store suffers from issues in speed and efficiency. The findings provide strategic implications for developers, particularly Epic Games Store, to improve competitiveness by optimizing aspects of user navigation, content variety, and efficiency in system updates. Users are more likely to choose a platform that offers more extensive content, a better user experience, and a more efficient update system. Improving these aspects is an important step in increasing user satisfaction and strengthening competitiveness in the digital game industry. Future research could explore further factors such as the impact of customer service, platform loyalty programs, and the role of social features in enhancing user satisfaction. This could offer valuable insights into improving user engagement and retention strategies for digital game platforms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Universitas Amikom Yogyakarta for their support throughout this research. Special thanks to my lecturer, Dhani Ariatmanto, for his invaluable guidance and assistance. I also appreciate the participants for their cooperation in completing the surveys.

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