

Netflix Purchase Decisions among University Students: The Role of E-WOM, Price, and Brand Image

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), price, and brand image on Netflix streaming service purchase decisions among Management students at Universitas Pelita Bangsa. A quantitative associative approach was used, involving 127 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed with SPSS 25 through validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression, t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination. The results show that E-WOM and price have positive and significant effects on purchase decisions, while brand image has a positive but non-significant effect. Simultaneously, E-WOM, price, and brand image significantly influence Netflix purchase decisions, with an adjusted R-square value of 0.647, indicating that 64.7% of purchase decisions are explained by the three variables. These findings highlight that online consumer recommendations and perceived price value are more decisive than brand image in shaping students' subscription decisions. This study contributes to digital marketing literature by emphasizing the importance of E-WOM and pricing strategies in subscription-based streaming services.

Keywords: brand image, E-WOM, Netflix, price, purchase decision

Introduction

Film consumption in Indonesia has changed markedly as internet access, smartphone use, and digital entertainment platforms have become embedded in daily life. The growth of video-on-demand services has reduced dependence on conventional television schedules and physical media, giving consumers more flexible access to films and series. Netflix is one of the most visible subscription video-on-demand services in this environment. It offers tiered subscription packages, varied content, and multi-device access, but it also operates in a market where users compare price, payment convenience, content value, and service quality across competing platforms.

The phenomenon is not limited to the growth of paid subscribers. Consumer conversations on social media, application stores, and personal blogs increasingly shape the reputation of streaming platforms. Positive online recommendations can strengthen curiosity and trial, while negative comments about internet speed requirements, subtitles, and payment procedures may discourage subscription decisions. This condition makes E-WOM relevant because digital consumer-to-consumer communication can influence perceived usefulness, trust, and purchase intention before a consumer pays for a subscription.

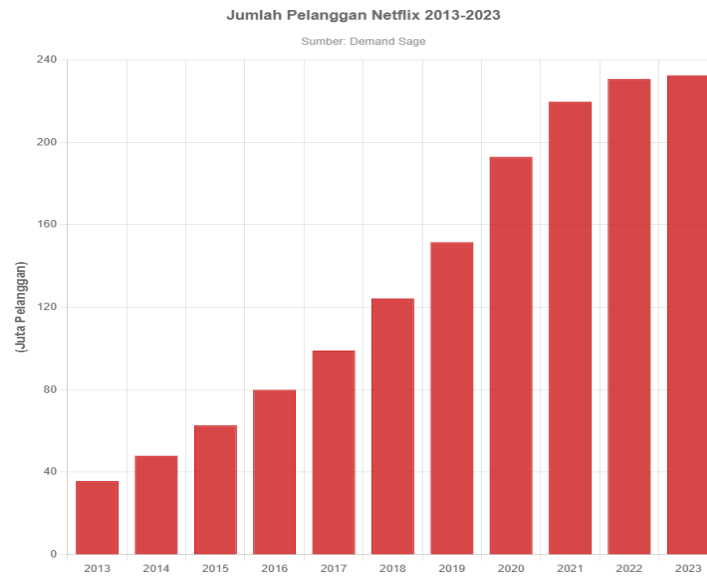
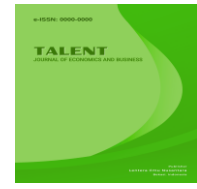


Figure 1. Netflix Paid Subscriber Statistics (2013-2023)

Source: Demand Sage, 2023

Figure 1 shows that Netflix paid subscribers increased consistently during 2013-2023 and reached 232.5 million subscribers. The trend illustrates strong global market acceptance, yet growth alone does not remove the need to understand why specific consumer segments decide to purchase or continue a streaming subscription.



Figure 2. Number of Likes on an Instagram Post by @Netflix.id

Source: Official Netflix Instagram, 2023

Figure 2 shows that Netflix-related social media content attracts visible engagement. The engagement reflects the relevance of E-WOM because users encounter recommendations, reactions, and informal evaluations through digital networks before making subscription decisions.

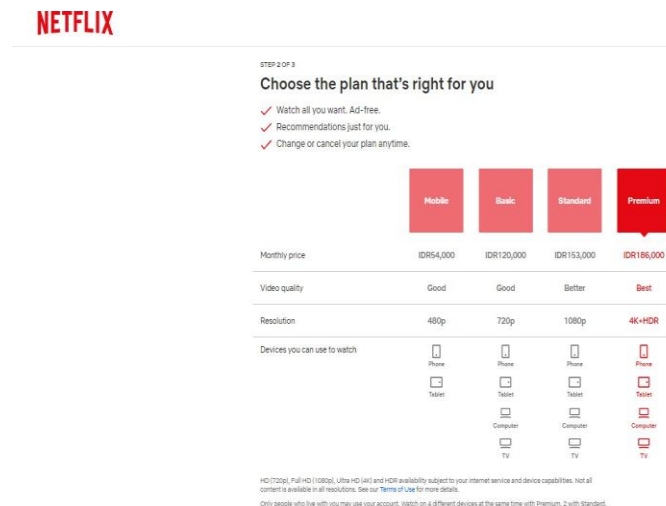


Figure 3. Netflix Price and Features
Source: Netflix.com, 2023

Figure 3 shows that Netflix subscription packages differ in price and features, such as resolution and device access. This structure makes price evaluation important because consumers assess whether the subscription fee is justified by the service benefits they receive.

Previous studies have examined the influence of E-WOM, price, and brand image on purchase decisions in various product and service contexts. However, the findings remain inconsistent. In the context of E-WOM, Fandi and Juwita (2022) found that E-WOM had a positive and significant effect on Netflix purchase decisions, while I Gusti et al. (2022) reported that E-WOM had a negative effect on purchase decisions in the Tokopedia e-commerce context. These different findings indicate that the influence of E-WOM may vary depending on the type of platform, consumer characteristics, and digital consumption behavior.

Similar inconsistencies are also found in price and brand image variables. Pratiwi et al. (2019) found that price had a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, whereas Woen (2021) showed that price had a negative effect on consumer decisions. In relation to brand image, Gifani and Syahputra (2017) found that brand image had a positive and significant effect on smartphone purchase decisions, while Ernawati (2021) reported that brand image had a negative effect on purchase decisions. These findings show that E-WOM, price, and brand image do not always produce the same influence across different research objects and consumer segments.

In the context of subscription-based streaming services, particularly Netflix, purchase decisions among students require further attention. Although Netflix has a strong brand image and broad market recognition, student consumers may prioritize more practical considerations, such as online recommendations, subscription affordability, content value, payment convenience, and comparison with other streaming platforms. Therefore, the research gap in this study lies in the

limited empirical evidence explaining how E-WOM, price, and brand image influence Netflix purchase decisions among university students, particularly students at Universitas Pelita Bangsa.

Based on this research gap, this study aims to analyze the partial and simultaneous effects of E-WOM, price, and brand image on Netflix streaming service purchase decisions among Universitas Pelita Bangsa students. The urgency of this research is to provide a clearer understanding of the main factors that shape student subscription decisions in the digital entertainment market. Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on consumer behavior in subscription-based digital services. Practically, the findings can help digital entertainment marketers develop more effective strategies by strengthening online consumer engagement, improving perceived price value, and managing brand perception among student consumers.

Method

This study used a quantitative associative approach to examine the influence of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), price, and brand image on Netflix streaming service purchase decisions. E-WOM (X1), price (X2), and brand image (X3) were treated as independent variables, while purchase decision (Y) was the dependent variable. This approach was selected because the study aimed to determine the statistical influence of these variables both partially and simultaneously. The research object was Netflix streaming services, while the respondents were 2019 Management students at Universitas Pelita Bangsa, Bekasi. The population consisted of 2,249 students, and 127 respondents were selected using purposive sampling. The respondent criteria included active students of the 2019 Management Study Program, students who had knowledge of Netflix streaming services, students who had accessed information or reviews about Netflix through digital media, and students who had used or considered using Netflix subscription services. These criteria were applied to ensure that the respondents had sufficient knowledge and experience relevant to the research variables.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured with a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was used to measure respondents' perceptions of E-WOM, price, brand image, and purchase decisions. Before hypothesis testing, the research instrument was evaluated through validity and reliability tests to ensure that each item was appropriate and consistent in measuring the intended variables.

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. The analytical process included classical assumption tests consisting of normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. Multiple linear regression analysis was then used to examine the influence of E-WOM, price, and brand image on purchase decisions. The partial t-test was applied to assess the individual effect of each independent variable, while the simultaneous F-test was used to evaluate their joint effect. The coefficient of determination was also calculated to determine the proportion of variation in Netflix purchase decisions explained by the research model. A significance level of 0.05 was used as the basis for statistical decision-making.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Validity Test

Variable	Item	r-count	r-table	Information
E-WOM (X1)	X1.1	0.581	0.17428	Valid
	X1.2	0.663	0.17428	Valid
	X1.3	0.685	0.17428	Valid
	X1.4	0.651	0.17428	Valid
	X1.5	0.568	0.17428	Valid
	X1.6	0.596	0.17428	Valid
	X1.7	0.580	0.17428	Valid
	X1.8	0.765	0.17428	Valid
Price (X2)	X2.1	0.576	0.17428	Valid
	X2.2	0.661	0.17428	Valid
	X2.3	0.563	0.17428	Valid
	X2.4	0.707	0.17428	Valid
	X2.5	0.767	0.17428	Valid
	X2.6	0.684	0.17428	Valid
	X2.7	0.457	0.17428	Valid
	X2.8	0.644	0.17428	Valid
Brand Image (X3)	X3.1	0.753	0.17428	Valid
	X3.2	0.837	0.17428	Valid
	X3.3	0.814	0.17428	Valid
	X3.4	0.626	0.17428	Valid
	X3.5	0.680	0.17428	Valid
	X3.6	0.806	0.17428	Valid
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y.1	0.486	0.17428	Valid
	Y.2	0.441	0.17428	Valid
	Y.3	0.516	0.17428	Valid
	Y.4	0.591	0.17428	Valid
	Y.5	0.629	0.17428	Valid
	Y.6	0.550	0.17428	Valid
	Y.7	0.575	0.17428	Valid
	Y.8	0.450	0.17428	Valid
	Y.9	0.410	0.17428	Valid
	Y.10	0.490	0.17428	Valid
	Y.11	0.466	0.17428	Valid
	Y.12	0.500	0.17428	Valid

Table 1 presents the validity test results for all questionnaire items used in this study. The results show that all items measuring E-WOM (X1), Price (X2), Brand Image (X3), and Purchase Decision (Y) have r-count values greater than the r-table value of 0.17428. The E-WOM items show r-count values ranging from 0.568 to 0.765, Price items range from 0.457 to 0.767, Brand Image items range from 0.626 to 0.837, and Purchase Decision items range from 0.410 to 0.629. Since all r-count values exceed the r-table value, all questionnaire items are declared valid. Therefore, the research instruments used in this study are appropriate for measuring each variable and can be continued to the reliability testing stage.

Table 2. Reliability Test Summary

No.	Variable	Reliability coefficient	Number of items	Information
1	E-WOM (X1)	0.7579	8	Reliable
2	Price (X2)	0.7555	8	Reliable
3	Brand image (X3)	0.7824	6	Reliable
4	Purchase decision (Y)	0.7590	12	Reliable

Table 2 presents the reliability test results for each research variable. The reliability coefficients for E-WOM (X1), Price (X2), Brand Image (X3), and Purchase Decision (Y) are 0.7579, 0.7555, 0.7824, and 0.7590, respectively. These values indicate that all variables have reliability coefficients above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70, meaning that the questionnaire items used to measure each variable are consistent and reliable. Therefore, the instruments for E-WOM, Price, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision can be considered suitable for further statistical analysis.

Table 3. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test

Statistic	Value
N	127
Mean	0.0000000
Std. deviation	2.58648390
Absolute	0.058
Positive	0.058
Negative	-0.039
Test statistic	0.058
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.200

Table 3 presents the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test for the regression residuals. The test was conducted using 127 data points, with a mean value of 0.0000000 and a standard deviation of 2.58648390. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test statistic is 0.058, while the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.200. Since the significance value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the residual data are normally distributed. Therefore, the normality assumption in the regression model is fulfilled, and the data are appropriate for further regression analysis.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test

No.	Independent variable	Tolerance	VIF	Information
1	E-WOM (X1)	0.766	1.305	No multicollinearity
2	Price (X2)	0.601	1.664	No multicollinearity
3	Brand image (X3)	0.676	1.479	No multicollinearity

Table 4 presents the multicollinearity test results for the independent variables used in the regression model. The tolerance values for E-WOM (X1), Price (X2), and Brand Image (X3) are 0.766, 0.601, and 0.676, respectively, while the VIF values are 1.305, 1.664, and 1.479. Since all tolerance values are greater than 0.10 and all VIF values are below 10, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity among the independent variables. This means that E-WOM, Price, and Brand Image do not have excessive correlations with each other, so all variables are suitable to be included in the multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test Using the Glejser Method

Model	Variable	B	Std. error	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	6.245	1.602	3.897	0.000
	E-WOM (X1)	-0.044	0.037	-1.181	0.240
	Price (X2)	-0.083	0.057	-1.463	0.146
	Brand image (X3)	0.002	0.055	0.028	0.977

Table 5 presents the heteroscedasticity test results using the Glejser method. The significance values for E-WOM (X1), Price (X2), and Brand Image (X3) are 0.240, 0.146, and 0.977, respectively. Since all significance values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity problem in the regression model. This means that the residual variance is constant across observations, so the regression model meets the heteroscedasticity assumption and is appropriate for further analysis.

Table 6. Partial t-Test Results

Model	Variable	B	Std. error	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	11.548	2.709	4.263	0.000
	E-WOM (X1)	0.469	0.063	7.457	0.000
	Price (X2)	0.627	0.096	6.554	0.000

Model	Variable	B	Std. error	t	Sig.
	Brand image (X3)	0.098	0.093	1.053	0.294

Table 6 presents the partial t-test results showing the individual effect of each independent variable on Netflix purchase decisions. The results indicate that E-WOM (X1) has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, with a coefficient value of 0.469, t-value of 7.457, and significance value of 0.000. Price (X2) also has a positive and significant effect, with a coefficient value of 0.627, t-value of 6.554, and significance value of 0.000. Meanwhile, Brand Image (X3) has a positive coefficient of 0.098, but its significance value is 0.294, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that brand image does not have a significant effect on purchase decisions. Therefore, it can be concluded that E-WOM and Price partially influence Netflix purchase decisions, while Brand Image does not significantly influence purchase decisions among the respondents.

Table 7. Simultaneous F-Test Results

Model	Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1599.781	3	533.260	77.813	0.000
	Residual	842.927	123	6.853		
	Total	2442.709	126			

Table 7 presents the simultaneous F-test results showing the joint effect of E-WOM, Price, and Brand Image on Netflix purchase decisions. The results show an F-value of 77.813 with a significance value of 0.000. Since the significance value is lower than 0.05, it can be concluded that E-WOM (X1), Price (X2), and Brand Image (X3) simultaneously have a significant effect on Purchase Decision (Y). This means that the three independent variables, when tested together, are able to explain changes in students' decisions to purchase Netflix streaming services. Therefore, the regression model used in this study is considered feasible and statistically significant for analyzing Netflix purchase decisions.

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.809	0.655	0.647	2.61784

Table 8 presents the coefficient of determination results, showing how well the independent variables explain the dependent variable. The R value of 0.809 indicates a strong relationship between E-WOM, Price, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision. The R-square value of 0.655 means that 65.5% of the variation in Netflix purchase decisions can be explained by E-WOM, Price, and Brand Image. Meanwhile, the adjusted R-square value of 0.647 indicates that, after adjusting for the number of variables in the model, 64.7% of purchase decisions are influenced by these three variables, while the remaining 35.3% is explained by other factors outside this study, such as content quality, promotion, payment convenience, trust, lifestyle, or competitor comparison.

Therefore, the regression model has a strong explanatory power in predicting Netflix purchase decisions among respondents.

Table 9. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Model	Variable	B	Std. error	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	11.548	2.709	4.263	0.000
	E-WOM (X1)	0.469	0.063	7.457	0.000
	Price (X2)	0.627	0.096	6.554	0.000
	Brand image (X3)	0.098	0.093	1.053	0.294

Table 9 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis. Based on the coefficient values, the regression equation can be written as $Y = 11.548 + 0.469X1 + 0.627X2 + 0.098X3$. This means that when E-WOM, Price, and Brand Image are constant, the purchase decision value is 11.548. The E-WOM coefficient of 0.469 indicates that an increase in E-WOM can increase Netflix purchase decisions, and this effect is significant because the significance value is 0.000. The Price coefficient of 0.627 also shows a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, with a significance value of 0.000, making price the strongest variable in the model. Meanwhile, Brand Image has a positive coefficient of 0.098, but its significance value is 0.294, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that Brand Image does not significantly affect Netflix purchase decisions. Therefore, E-WOM and Price are proven to have significant positive effects, while Brand Image has a positive but non-significant effect on purchase decisions.

Discussion

The positive and significant effect of E-WOM confirms that students' Netflix purchase decisions are shaped by digital conversations. Instagram engagement, reviews, comments, and recommendations help consumers evaluate whether a subscription is worth purchasing. This finding is consistent with studies showing that E-WOM can influence purchase decisions in restaurants, digital services, travel platforms, and streaming services (Adeliasari et al., 2020; Badriah & Purnama, 2022; Fandi & Juwita, 2022; Sindunata, 2018). It also differs from evidence in other e-commerce contexts where E-WOM did not always generate a positive effect (I Gusti et al., 2022).

The positive and significant price effect suggests that respondents consider Netflix's subscription fee acceptable when compared with perceived benefits. The package structure allows consumers to evaluate affordability, feature access, and service quality before subscribing. This result aligns with studies that found price to be a significant purchase-decision driver (Mulyana, 2021; Nasution, 2019; Pratiwi et al., 2019), yet it differs from studies where price was not significant or had a negative relationship (Lapian & Mandagie, 2018).

Brand image did not have a significant effect, even though the coefficient was positive. This finding indicates that Netflix's strong brand recognition may already be assumed by respondents and therefore does not differentiate the final purchase decision as strongly as E-WOM and price do. In a student segment, subscription decisions may depend more on practical value,

peer information, content interest, and payment convenience than on brand reputation alone. The result contrasts with studies that found brand image significant (Akbar et al., 2021; Gifani & Syahputra, 2017; Supriyadi et al., 2017), but it is consistent with evidence showing that brand image does not always determine purchase decisions when other factors dominate consumer evaluation (Ernawati, 2021; Lopian & Mandagie, 2018).

The simultaneous effect confirms that purchase decisions for streaming services are multi-dimensional. Consumers evaluate online recommendations, perceived subscription value, and brand associations as a combined decision set. The adjusted R-square value of 64.7% demonstrates that the model has substantial explanatory power for the sampled students, although other factors such as content variety, payment access, internet quality, perceived risk, trust, promotion, and lifestyle may still contribute to purchase decisions.

Conclusion

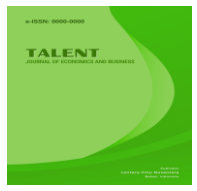
This study concludes that E-WOM and price have positive and significant effects on Netflix streaming service purchase decisions among Universitas Pelita Bangsa students, while brand image has a positive but non-significant effect. Simultaneously, E-WOM, price, and brand image significantly influence purchase decisions, with an adjusted R-square value of 0.647, indicating that 64.7% of purchase decisions can be explained by these three variables. These findings show that students' decisions to subscribe to Netflix are more strongly shaped by online recommendations and perceived price value than by brand image alone. Practically, streaming service providers should strengthen digital engagement through positive user reviews, social media interaction, and word-of-mouth strategies, while maintaining subscription prices that are perceived as affordable and proportional to the benefits offered. Future research may include other factors such as content quality, promotion, payment convenience, trust, and lifestyle to provide a broader understanding of streaming service purchase decisions.

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