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The Effect of Service Quality and Customer Experience on Membership Repurchase Intention on YouTube Gaming Channel with Brand Image as a Mediating Variable

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effect of customer experience and service quality on the membership repurchase intention on gaming YouTube creator channels in Indonesia, with brand image as a mediating variable. Along with the rapid development of the digital creator economy ecosystem, subscriber retention has become a critical challenge in maintaining the sustainability of channel membership monetization. This study adopted a quantitative approach. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to Generation Z respondents who have experience renewing their channel membership at least twice. The data analysis technique utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results show that customer experience and service quality have a positive and significant effect on brand image and repurchase intention directly. Furthermore, brand image is proven to significantly act as a mediating variable between service quality and repurchase intention. However, brand image does not significantly mediate the relationship between customer experience and repurchase intention.

Keyword: Brand Image, Service Quality, Customer Experience, Repurchase Intention, YouTube Membership, Gaming Content Creator.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid advancements in digital technology have triggered a fundamental shift in how society consumes entertainment content, particularly through social media platforms such as YouTube. The channel membership feature offered by YouTube allows viewers to provide direct financial support to content creators through recurring subscriptions in exchange for exclusive content and special interactions reserved for loyal audience members. In the context of digital business, customer retention is significantly more cost-effective than customer acquisition. Especially within the highly competitive YouTube ecosystem, a viewer's decision to renew their membership reflects their overall perception of value,

satisfaction, and experience. However, the primary challenge content creators face is retaining existing members to maintain recurring subscriptions, making repurchase intention a critical variable to investigate.

Indonesia ranks as the third-largest country in terms of YouTube user base globally, reaching 151 million users (Global Media Insight, 2026). Within this national market, the gaming segment stands out as one of the most popular categories, accumulating 721 billion video game views over the past 12 months.

This study examines key variables hypothesized to influence repurchase intention, with brand image serving as a mediating variable, alongside service quality and customer experience. Service Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied customer needs (Kotler et al., 2022). In the context of YouTube Membership, service quality is evaluated by how effectively creators meet members' expectations across the five SERVQUAL dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Research by Kakisina and Lego (2021) as well as Agung et al. (2026) indicates that Service Quality directly affects perceived value and customer loyalty. Consequently, delivering exclusive content that meets expectations alongside responsive service can enhance members' intention to renew their subscriptions.

Customer Experience is the aggregate of all user interactions throughout the customer journey, influenced by product-related knowledge, skills, and capabilities (Seligman, 2018). According to Schmitt (1999, as cited in Seligman, 2018), customer experience comprises five elements: sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, and social. Pasaribu et al. (2021) confirmed that Customer Experience serves as a vital mediator in driving customer loyalty, particularly within the digital retail sector. A positive experience fosters strong emotional attachment, which ultimately leads to repeat purchases.

Brand Image is defined as the perception or memory that arises in consumers' minds when hearing a brand name (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the context of YouTube gaming content creators, brand image represents viewers' deep impressions and positive associations with the creator's persona and content quality, measured through the dimensions of strong, favorable, and unique. Studies by Pratisthita et al. (2022) and Kakisina and Lego (2021) demonstrate that Brand Image significantly influences Repurchase Intention across both the service and product sectors. In the context of YouTube gaming, Brand Image encompasses the creator's reputation, content consistency, and personal communication style.

Repurchase Intention refers to a consumer behavioral tendency that arises in response to an object, reflecting the customer's desire to make repeated purchases (Ferdinand, 2014). In the context of YouTube Membership, repurchase intention includes four dimensions: transactional intention, referential intention, preferential intention, and explorative intention. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (2005, as cited in Purwanto et al., 2022), serves as the grand theory for this study. TPB explains that behavioral intention, including repurchase intention, is driven attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

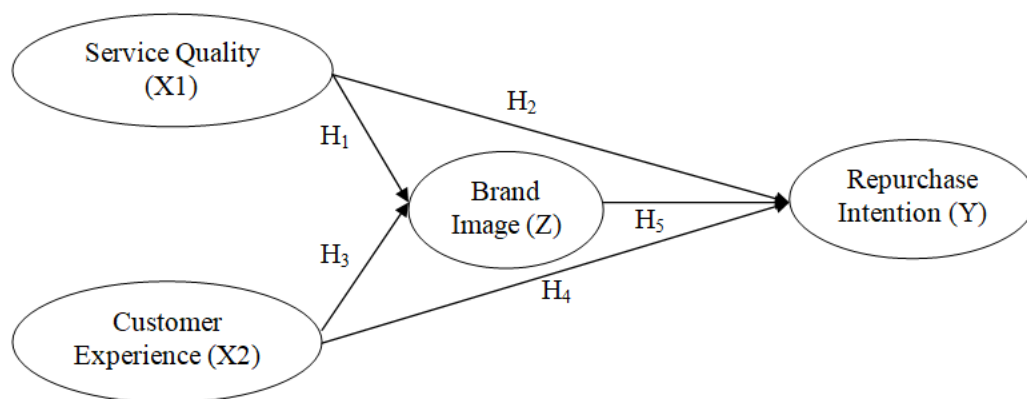
The uniqueness of this study lies in its focus on the gaming YouTube creator ecosystem in Indonesia, bridging digital marketing frameworks with subscription retention models in industrial engineering and management science. By investigating both direct and indirect relationships among these variables, this study aims to analyze the structural impact of service quality and customer experience on membership repurchase intention through the mediating role of brand image. The findings are expected to provide empirical contributions to the digital subscription literature and offer practical guidance for content creators in optimizing service delivery and member retention strategies.

Based on the background description, the main research questions addressed in this study are: Does service quality significantly influence brand image? Does customer

experience significantly influence brand image? Does brand image significantly influence membership repurchase intention? Does service quality significantly influence membership repurchase intention? Does customer experience significantly influence membership repurchase intention? Does brand image mediate the relationship between service quality and membership repurchase intention? Does brand image mediate the relationship between customer experience and membership repurchase intention?

Consequently, this study aims to analyze both the direct and indirect impacts of service quality and customer experience on membership repurchase intention on gaming YouTube creator channels in Indonesia, with brand image acting as a mediating variable. The findings are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the digital marketing literature and offer practical insights for content creators in formulating effective member retention strategies.

METHOD



Source: Research Results

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This study adopted a quantitative approach aimed at hypothesis testing and evaluating causal relationships among variables. The object of this research focuses on service quality and customer experience as independent variables, brand image as a mediating variable, and membership repurchase intention as the dependent variable. The population encompassed Generation Z YouTube users in the Greater Jakarta area (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi) who are currently or were previously subscribed to a membership feature on an Indonesian gaming content creator's YouTube channel at least twice.

Sampling was executed using a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling approach. The sample size was calculated using the Lemeshow formula for an unknown population, yielding a total of 100 respondents to ensure data representativeness. This research was conducted from July to August 2026 across the Greater Jakarta region through online data collection. Primary data were gathered through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4 software. The analytical procedure comprised a two-stage evaluation: the measurement model (*outer model*) and the structural model (*inner model*).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Demographic Profile of Respondents

This research gathered responses from 100 individuals across the Jabodetabek region who are digital media users belonging to Generation Z. All participants meet the specific sampling criteria, having renewed their subscription to a YouTube gaming content creator's

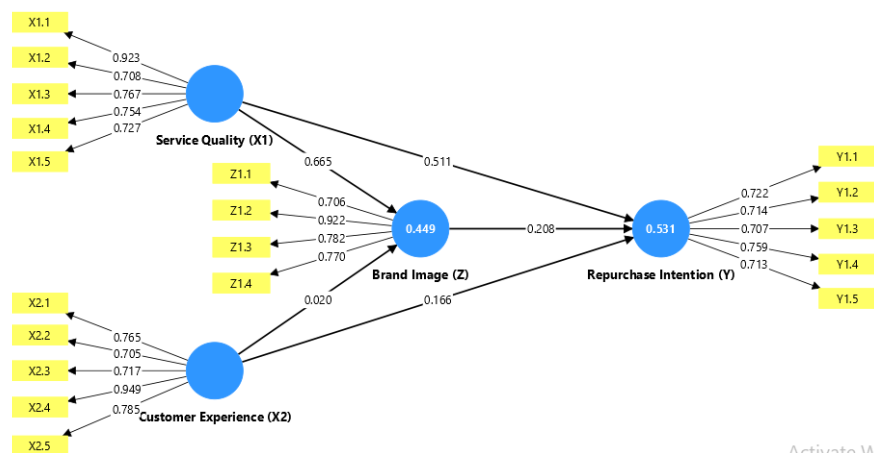
membership feature at least twice. The sample composition was dominated by female participants (64%), with the majority of respondents falling within the 21–25 age bracket (74%). In terms of geographic distribution, respondents residing in DKI Jakarta represented the largest group (42%), followed by other supporting areas within Jabodetabek. These demographic metrics confirm that the sample adequately reflects the active Generation Z digital entertainment audience targeted in this study.

Tabel 1. Overview of Respondent Profile

Profile	Category	Percentage
Age	18–21 years	15%
	22–25 years	74%
	26–29 years	11%
Gender	Male	36%
	Female	64%
Geographic Distribution	DKI Jakarta	51%
	Bogor	16%
	Depok	12%
	Tangerang	11%
	Bekasi	10%
Employment Status	University Student	53%
	Work	47%

Source: Primary data, processed by the researcher (2026).

b. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)



Source: Primary data, processed by the researcher (2026).

Figure 2. Algorithm Output

As displayed in the figure, construct validity is confirmed through the indicator loading factors displayed along the directional arrows connecting latent variables to their respective indicators. All indicator outer loadings along these arrows exceeded the recommended cutoff threshold of 0.70, demonstrating that all item indicators reliably measure their corresponding constructs namely service quality, customer experience, brand image, and repurchase intention. Complementing this visual representation, statistical tests further confirmed convergent validity ($AVE > 0.50$) and internal consistency reliability, as both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability surpassed the standard threshold of 0.70 across all constructs.

Tabel 2. Measurement Outer Model

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Result
Service Quality	0.835	0.867	0.608	Valid
Customer Experience	0.846	0.926	0.623	Valid
Brand Image	0.807	0.836	0.638	Valid
Repurchase Intention	0.772	0.773	0.523	Valid

Source: Primary data, processed by the researcher (2026).

c. Structural Model (Inner Model) and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was evaluated using R^2 , VIF, and bootstrapping hypothesis testing. The model achieved R^2 values of 0.531 (R^2 Adjusted = 0.517) for Brand Image (Z) and 0.449 (R^2 Adjusted = 0.438) for Repurchase Intention (Y). Hypothesis testing results based on path coefficients (β), t-statistics (> 1.96), and p-values (< 0.05) are summarized in.

Tabel 3. Measurement Inner Model and Direct Hypotheses Result

Hypotheses	Path Direction	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	Service Quality (X_1) $\rightarrow$ Brand Image (Z)	0.665	8.998	0.000	Supported
H2	Service Quality (X_1) $\rightarrow$ Repurchase Intention (Y)	0.511	4.890	0.000	Supported
H3	Customer Experience (X_2) $\rightarrow$ Brand Image (Z)	0.020	0.225	0.798	Not Supported
H4	Customer Experience (X_2) $\rightarrow$ Repurchase Intention (Y)	0.166	1.862	0.063	Not Supported
H5	Brand Image (Z) $\rightarrow$ Repurchase Intention (Y)	0.208	1.971	0.049	Supported

Source: Primary data, processed by the researcher (2026).

Service quality had a significant positive effect on brand image ($\beta = 0.665$, $t = 8.998$, $p < 0.000$), supporting H1. High-quality service provided through channel content consistency, response rate, and membership benefits enhances viewers' perception of the creator's brand. This result aligns with empirical findings demonstrating that service quality plays a foundational role in shaping favorable brand perceptions and evaluations (Kakisina & Lego, 2021).

Service quality also exerted a significant positive effect on repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.511$, $t = 4.890$, $p < 0.000$), supporting H2. Superior service quality directly encourages viewers to renew their YouTube channel memberships. This finding reinforces prior research confirming that service quality acts as a direct driver of repeat purchase behavior and customer retention in service platforms (Kakisina & Lego, 2021).

Conversely, customer experience showed no significant effect on brand image ($\beta = 0.020$, $t = 0.225$, $p = 0.798$), meaning H3 is not supported. Viewers' overall interactive experience does not directly alter their subjective perception of the creator's brand image.

Similarly, customer experience did not significantly influence repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.166$, $t = 1.862$, $p = 0.063$), rejecting H4. General customer experience alone is insufficient to directly drive membership renewal decisions, which contrasts with prior findings in different retail contexts (Liando & Keni, 2025; Pasaribu & Pasaribu, 2021).

Brand image demonstrated a significant positive effect on repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.208$, $t = 1.971$, $p = 0.049$), supporting H5. A strong and favorable brand image serves as a key foundation for viewers in deciding to continue their paid subscriptions, consistent with earlier studies connecting positive brand evaluation and brand positioning to repeat purchase intent (Pratisthita et al., 2022).

d. Mediating Role of Brand Image

The evaluation of indirect path coefficients revealed that brand image acts as a significant mediator in bridging service quality and repurchase intention (indirect effect = 0.139, $t = 1.958$, $p = 0.043$). Conversely, brand image showed no statistically significant mediating capacity in the relationship between customer experience and repurchase intention (indirect effect = 0.004, $t = 0.220$, $p = 0.826$).

Tabel 4. Specific Indirect Testing

Hypothesis	Mediated Relationship	Indirect Effect	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H6	Service Quality → Brand Image → Repurchase Intention	0.139	1.958	0.043	Accepted
H7	Customer Experience → Brand Image → Repurchase Intention	0.004	0.220	0.826	Not Accepted

Source: Primary data, processed by the researcher (2026).

In the context of YouTube channel memberships, these mediation results highlight how audience retention mechanisms operate in practice. The significant indirect effect for H6 demonstrates that service quality does not merely influence viewers directly, but also strengthens the creator's reputation and professional standing. When a gaming creator consistently delivers high-value exclusive perks, reliable live stream schedules, custom badges, and prompt community responses, viewers perceive the channel as a reputable and trustworthy brand. This enhanced brand image serves as a vital bridge that reinforces their decision to keep paying for monthly subscriptions.

Conversely, the non-significant outcome for H7 reveals the limitations of general audience engagement in driving long-term commitments. While interactive experiences such as live chat banter, playing games together, or casual Discord hangouts provide short-term entertainment, they do not automatically elevate the creator's broader brand image in the eyes of viewers. Because standard interactive features are widely expected in the live streaming ecosystem, customer experience alone fails to build brand equity or act as an indirect pathway to secure membership renewals.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that service quality serves as the primary driver in shaping brand image and fostering membership repurchase intention within the digital creator ecosystem. Brand image plays a vital structural role, effectively bridging operational service delivery such as streaming regularity and exclusive channel perks to long-term membership retention. Conversely, customer experience does not demonstrate a statistically significant direct or indirect capacity to drive subscription renewals or alter channel perception.

Scientifically, these findings expand industrial engineering and service management literature by adapting conventional service quality frameworks into non-traditional digital platform subscriptions. The study demonstrates that customer retention in algorithm-driven environments relies heavily on structured, dependable service execution rather than purely experiential or atmospheric engagement.

Practically, digital content creators must prioritize operational consistency over passive viewer experiences. Strategic efforts should be directed toward establishing strict

broadcasting schedules, maintaining clear channel positioning, and offering functional membership benefits that directly enhance perceived value and secure recurring revenue.

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