

MAPPING IDEA & LITERATURE FORMAT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Application Quality, User Experience, and Digital Promotion on the Decision to Subscribe to Spotify Premium in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The subscription economy model, which has become increasingly dominant amid digital disruption, positions subscription-based services as a primary revenue source for digital companies, while converting free (freemium) users into paying subscribers remains a strategic challenge. This study employed purposive sampling, a survey method, and a quantitative approach targeting active Spotify users in Indonesia. Data was analyzed using PLS-SEM to examine the relationships among variables. The results indicate that User Experience has a positive and significant effect on Subscription Decision, with a path coefficient of 0.637 and a p-value < 0.05, making it the most dominant variable influencing subscription decisions. Meanwhile, Application Quality and Digital Promotion have positive but insignificant effects on Subscription Decision. These findings suggest that the decision to subscribe to Spotify Premium is more strongly influenced by direct user experience encompassing cognitive, emotional, and functional aspects than by perceived application quality or exposure to digital promotions. The practical implication of this study highlights the importance of delivering superior user experience as a primary strategy to increase subscription decisions in digital application-based services.

Keywords: App Quality, User Experience, Digital Promotion, Spotify Premium.

I. Introduction

As the third decade of the 21st century approaches, the global business environment is undergoing a fundamental shift driven by digital disruption, which has transformed the economic paradigm from ownership-based models to an access-based system known as the subscription economy (Sukoco et al., 2025). In this model, consumers pay to maintain continuous access to services, while companies prioritize recurring revenue streams and long-term customer loyalty. This phenomenon has grown rapidly in Indonesia, driven by increasing internet penetration, which has reached 79.5%, as well as the high level of public participation in digital activities (APJII, 2024). One sector that represents this model is music streaming services, where music consumption has shifted from ownership-based purchases to streaming-based access. In Indonesia, the adoption rate of music streaming services has reached 56.07% (APJII, 2024), with Spotify leading the market, outperforming other platforms such as YouTube Music, Joox, and Resso (GoodStats, 2024). More specifically,



the growing number of premium users reflects the rapid development of the online music entertainment sector. YouTube Music, which is bundled with YouTube Premium, has successfully accumulated more than 100 million paying subscribers globally by 2024. On the other hand, Joox and Resso have not officially disclosed their numbers of premium subscribers. However, studies indicate that willingness to pay is influenced by perceived benefits, ease of use, and consumers' willingness to pay (Ang et al., 2025). Service segmentation studies indicate that digital service users are not a homogeneous group. Certain groups, such as "potential switchers," may pose a significant challenge for service providers due to their higher tendency to switch between platforms (Calvo-Porrall & Otero-Prada, 2020). However, high user adoption does not automatically translate into an increase in paying subscribers. Therefore, the decision to subscribe has become an urgent strategic issue that requires further investigation.

The dominance of Spotify is supported by a freemium business model that enables large-scale user acquisition through free services, which subsequently encourages conversion to its Premium subscription (Boudreau et al., 2023). Spotify (2025) It is reported that more than 60% of global Premium subscribers originate from free users. However, various studies indicate that this conversion is influenced by several factors. Application quality which includes system stability, access speed, and audio quality represents the system quality dimension within the e-service quality framework and has been shown to significantly affect willingness to pay (Romadoni et al., 2024). In addition, user experience which includes emotional aspects such as comfort, ad-free usage, and the accuracy of playlist recommendations, plays an important role in shaping perceived value (Aryani, 2021). This is consistent with previous findings Kakkar et al. (2025) which confirms that system quality and trust significantly enhance perceived value, which ultimately influences purchase intention in the context of digital commerce. In line with the context of streaming services, Kalra et al. (2024) which emphasize that customer experience on OTT platforms is influenced by user-related factors, content, and platform quality, and has a direct impact on attitudes and subscription behavior.

Empirical studies indicate that personalization and satisfaction significantly influence continuance intention (Soaloon & Handayani, 2025). Meanwhile Ahmed & El Sheikh (2025) found that customer experience mediates the effect of recommendation quality on subscription intention. On the other hand, digital promotions such as free trials, student discounts, social media marketing, and viral campaigns also play a crucial role in driving the transition from free to paid services (Zhang & Duan, 2025). Although it has been widely studied, subscription behavior for Spotify Premium in Indonesia still presents several research gaps. First, there are inconsistencies in empirical findings, where Pramadani & Hidayat (2025) found that a significant effect of service quality on willingness to pay. Meanwhile, Putra et al. (2020) whereas they argue that subscription intention is not strongly influenced by attitudes formed from perceived quality and user experience. A similar discrepancy is also found in the e-commerce field, where studies report differing conclusions regarding the factors influencing consumer purchase intention Ashiq (2023) indicate that e-service quality and e-trust can directly influence loyalty even though this effect does not always occur through satisfaction as a mediating variable. Second, several prior studies have focused more on initial technology adoption rather than the conversion mechanism from freemium users to premium subscribers, whereas in reality, reports that Binus (2025) emphasize that the conversion gap remains a major challenge for Spotify. Third, there is still no research that simultaneously examines functional factors (application quality), emotional factors (user experience), and external factors (digital promotion) within a single integrated framework, particularly in the Indonesian context, which has unique characteristics such as price sensitivity, the dominance of free alternatives, and widespread use of modified applications.

The percentage of Monthly Active Users (MAU) who convert into premium subscribers in music streaming services indicates a relatively stable upward trend. In Q4 2024, the conversion rate was recorded at 38.96%, then increased to 39.53% in Q1 2025, and rose again to 39.66% in Q2 2025. Although there was a slight decline to 39.41% in Q3 2025, this figure still shows that nearly 40% of active users have transitioned to premium services (Spotify, 2025). The consistency of this conversion rate illustrates that the subscription-based business model is becoming increasingly effective in encouraging users to shift from free-tier services to paid premium tiers. The growth in premium subscribers suggests that users no longer view Spotify merely

as a source of entertainment, but increasingly recognize the added value offered by its premium features. This condition reflects the company's ability to build strong perceived value in the minds of consumers, thereby motivating users to pay for a more optimized music listening experience. On the other hand, this relatively high conversion rate also demonstrates Spotify's success in creating and sustaining competitive advantage through continuous service innovation. The added value perceived by users includes an ad-free listening experience, higher audio quality, unlimited access to millions of songs and podcasts, personalized recommendation features that align with user preferences, and seamless account synchronization across multiple devices. These features provide greater convenience, efficiency, and a more personalized user experience, ultimately contributing to sustained customer satisfaction.

In addition, Spotify's success in converting free users into premium subscribers also indicates the company's strong ability to understand consumer needs and behavior. By leveraging algorithmic technology and user data analytics, Spotify is able to deliver content that is relevant and aligned with individual preferences. This creates an emotional attachment between users and the platform, which in turn fosters customer loyalty. Users who have experienced the benefits of premium services tend to have a stronger intention to continue using the service rather than switching to other music streaming platforms.

Table 1. Trade-off Between Premium and Free Subscription in Music Streaming Services in Indonesia (2025)

Main User Motivations (Reasons for Subscribing to Premium Services)	Percentage	Main Barriers for Non-Users (Reasons for Staying on Free Tier)	Percentage
Ad-free / without interruptions	53,9%	Habitual use of free platforms (e.g., YouTube)	61,0%
Higher audio quality	48,6%	The free version (Spotify Free) is already sufficient	58,5%
Download feature for offline listening	45,0%	Subscription price is too high	26,5%
Personalized recommendations / playlists	42,2%	Rarely listen to music	24,0%

Source: GMO Research (2025)

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to integrate three key determinants Application Quality, User Experience, and Digital Promotion in explaining the decision to subscribe to Spotify Premium in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies that examined these variables in isolation, this research combines technical, emotional, and promotional aspects within a single framework that specifically highlights the phenomenon of the conversion gap from free users to premium subscribers. In addition, this study strengthens the empirical analysis by incorporating secondary data support, including comparisons between Monthly Active Users (MAU) and Spotify Premium subscribers, as well as a trade-off analysis between free and paid services presented in Table 1. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of subscription decision-making in the Indonesian context. The consistency of the conversion rate indicates that the subscription-based model is increasingly being accepted. However, the data in Table 1 suggests a strategic challenge for Spotify in Indonesia, particularly in maximizing Premium service penetration. Although the main motivations for subscribing include ad-free listening (53.9%), higher audio quality (48.6%), and offline download features (45.0%), the most significant barriers among non-users are habitual use of free platforms such as YouTube (61.0%) and the perception that Spotify Free is already sufficient (58.5%). This indicates that the Premium value proposition is still not strong enough to shift consumers who are already comfortable with free alternatives.

Thus, the main problem is not merely competitive disadvantage in terms of features, but rather the suboptimal conversion from free users to Premium subscribers. The dominance of free platforms and the perception that the free version is already sufficient indicate a challenge in creating urgency and a stronger perceived value for paid packages. In addition, price factors (26.5%) also represent a significant barrier, reflecting price sensitivity in the Indonesian market. From a competitive perspective, this condition shows that Spotify faces strong pressure from a robust free-content ecosystem. Therefore, strategies such as experience

differentiation, pricing bundling, and strengthening the Premium value proposition become crucial to improving competitiveness and subscription conversion rates. Based on a Lokadata survey of 1,356 respondents aged 18–34 during the August 2025 period, the following data shows audio applications (OTT Audio) installed on users' smartphones in Indonesia:

Table 2. Audio Streaming Preferences in Indonesia

No	Audio Applications	User Percentage
1	Spotify	77%
2	YouTube Music	61%
3	JOOX	23%
4	Apple Music	18%
5	SoundCloud	13%
6	Noice	11%
7	Trebel	9%
8	Tidal	7%

Source: Lokadata Survey (2025)

The survey results show that Spotify is the most dominant audio application among young users in Indonesia, with a percentage of 77%. This figure is significantly higher than its closest competitor, YouTube Music, which recorded 61%. This dominance indicates that Spotify has very strong levels of acceptance, popularity, and user loyalty in the Indonesian market, particularly among the younger age segment. The development of digital technology has transformed patterns of entertainment consumption, particularly in audio streaming services. Based on a 2025 Lokadata survey of 1,356 respondents aged 18–34, Spotify is the most widely installed audio application among young users in Indonesia, with a percentage of 77%, surpassing YouTube Music at 61% and other audio platforms. This high level of usage indicates that Spotify has strong appeal among Indonesia's younger generation. Its dominance reflects the company's success in building user experience, brand image, and effective digital marketing strategies in maintaining customer loyalty. Therefore, Spotify serves as a relevant object for studying digital consumer behavior in Indonesia.

The objective of this study is to examine how application quality, user experience, and digital promotion influence the decision of Indonesians to subscribe to Spotify Premium. The expected findings are anticipated to provide practical implications for Spotify Indonesia management and OTT industry players in designing more effective monetization strategies, including improving technical application quality, optimizing user experience design, and strengthening digital promotion strategies that align with local consumer characteristics. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of marketing management literature by enriching research on consumer behavior within the subscription economy, testing the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in the music streaming context, and providing empirical references for future studies on freemium models and digital subscription decision-making.

This study employs three independent variables, namely application quality, user experience, and digital promotion, as these factors are considered capable of significantly influencing subscription decisions for Spotify (Romadoni et al., 2024). Application quality is an important factor because digital service users tend to prefer applications that are easy to use, stable, fast, and feature-rich. Previous studies have shown that system quality and application ease of use significantly influence user satisfaction in digital services (Ariadanang & Chusumastuti, 2022). In addition, user experience is also an important factor because Spotify offers personalized playlists, automatic music recommendations, and a comfortable user interface that can strengthen users' attachment to the application (Hutahaeon, 2022). On the other hand, digital promotion—such as social media advertising, free trial programs, student discounts, and digital campaigns also serves as a key strategy for Spotify in attracting Premium subscribers (Romadoni et al., 2024).

However, there are still inconsistencies in previous research findings (research gap). Several studies indicate that application quality, user experience, and digital promotion have a positive influence on subscription (Ariadanang & Chusumastuti, 2022). However, other studies have found that these factors do not always have a direct effect, as their influence may be mediated or moderated by other variables such as price,

user satisfaction, and brand image (Sutriningsih, 2025). These differences in research findings indicate that the factors influencing subscription decisions for Spotify still require further investigation, particularly among young users in Indonesia. The inconsistencies in previous research findings indicate that there is still a research gap regarding the factors influencing subscription decisions for Spotify in Indonesia, particularly among young user segments. Therefore, this study is important to analyze the influence of application quality, user experience, and digital promotion on subscription decisions, in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in digital music streaming services in Indonesia.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) Perspective

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991) explains that individual behavior is driven by behavioral intention, which is formed through three main components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this study context, the decision to subscribe to Spotify Premium is understood as a manifestation of subscription intention that is shaped by users' rational and social evaluations. Application quality and user experience contribute to forming attitude toward the behavior, as both reflect users' assessment of the technical benefits, convenience, and emotional experience derived from using Spotify. The more positive the evaluation of system quality and user experience, the more favorable the attitude toward subscribing becomes. Meanwhile, digital promotion is associated with perceived behavioral control, as promotional information, discounts, and pricing packages can reduce perceived barriers such as cost and risk, thereby increasing the perceived ease of subscribing. Thus, the three independent variables in this study align with the TPB framework in explaining how attitudes and perceived control shape subscription decisions as actual behavior.

2.2. Subscription Decision

Subscription decision is a systematic process in consumer behavior that involves both cognitive and emotional stages, ranging from need recognition, information search, and evaluation of alternatives, to final choice and transaction action (Yusran et al., 2025). This decision is influenced by consumer preferences, attitudes, and evaluations of brands and services perceived as most capable of fulfilling their needs (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In addition to rational aspects, subscription decisions are also influenced by emotional factors, habits, and prior experiences (Ferrinadewi, 2021). In line with this,, Palaniappan et al. (2025) indicate that digital application quality, including ease of use, visual quality, and service quality, shapes user attitudes which ultimately strongly influence purchasing decisions. Factors driving subscription decisions consist of internal factors such as motivation, lifestyle, perception, experience, learning, and emotions, as well as external factors such as economic conditions, market trends, technological developments, and socio-cultural influences (Risanti et al., 2020). Indicators of subscription decisions include product choice, brand choice, distributor choice, purchase timing, and purchase quantity, which illustrate how consumers ultimately decide to use and continuously pay for a service such as Spotify Premium (Boleng et al., 2023).

2.3. Hypotheses

a. The Influence of Application Quality on Subscription Decision

Application quality is a fundamental element in digital services that reflects the overall system performance in meeting users' needs and expectations (Pradipta et al., 2024). Application quality is understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing technical, design, and usability aspects, where the system must be stable, reliable, easy to operate, and free from technical disruptions (Ariadanang & Chusumastuti, 2022). Application quality plays a strategic role as a brand differentiator and a determinant of

success in online services, as it can enhance user attractiveness and trust (Aulia, 2024). The indicators of application quality include Information Quality, Ease of Use, Responsiveness, Level of Security, Privacy, Trust, Interactivity, Personalization, and Fulfillment (Hidayahtullah & Asteria, 2023). In this study, not all indicators are used. The selection of five indicators is based on considerations of contextual suitability, relevance to the variables under investigation, and adaptation from previous studies that adjusted the measurement model to empirical needs, namely Information Quality, Ease of Use, Responsiveness, Level of Security, and Personalization. Based on the research findings, Amnas & Selvam (2025) emphasize that digital service quality plays a crucial role in enhancing perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, which ultimately drives adoption and continued use of application based services.

H1: Application quality has a positive and significant effect on the Subscription Decision to Spotify Premium in Indonesia.

b. The Influence of User Experience on Subscription Decision

User Experience (UX) is a multidimensional concept that reflects users' perceptions, responses, and subjective evaluations formed through interactions with a system, product, or service, both before, during, and after use (Wiwesa, 2021). In the context of digital applications, User Experience encompasses the overall feelings, emotions, comfort, and ease experienced by users when interacting with an application (Nababan, 2022). UX is not only focused on technical aspects but also includes psychological and emotional dimensions as consumers' internal and subjective responses to interactions with a company (Jamilah & Padmasari, 2022). From a marketing perspective, user experience functions to build emotional relationships, loyalty, and continued interest in a service (Rini, 2022). Thus, a positive and meaningful user experience plays a crucial role in encouraging users' decisions to continue using or subscribing to services such as Spotify Premium. Based on the research findings, Mukhlisin & Yuana, (2023) user experience has a positive influence on subscription decisions. Similar results were found in the study conducted by Skudien (2024) found that performance expectancy, brand strength, and social media influence significantly contribute to digital subscription retention among Generation Z, reinforcing the role of user experience in subscription continuity.

H2 : User Experience has a positive and significant effect on the Subscription Decision to Spotify Premium in Indonesia.

c. The Influence of Digital Promotion on Subscription Decision

Digital promotion is a contemporary marketing approach that communicates, advertises, and distributes goods and services through digital technologies and the internet to target markets (Tanjung & Nasution, 2025). The advantage of digital promotion lies in its ability to reach a broad audience at a relatively lower cost compared to traditional marketing, while still potentially generating significant impact (Ananda et al., 2025). The effectiveness of digital promotion is influenced by target market accuracy, the use of technology, content quality, budget management, and the strategic use of social media. The indicators of digital promotion include accessibility, interactivity, entertainment, credibility, and informativeness, which collectively shape consumer perceptions and encourage purchasing or subscription decisions (Lombok & Samadi, 2022). Based on the research findings, Ananda et al., (2025) digital promotion has a positive and significant effect on Subscription Decisions. Similar results were found in studies conducted by Tanjung & Nasution, (2025), digital promotion is able to enhance subscription decisions in the use of digital product services.

H3 : Digital promotion has a positive and significant effect on the Subscription Decision to Spotify Premium in Indonesia.

This study investigates how digital marketing impacts the Subscription Decision to Spotify Premium in Indonesia. The study is based on the following hypotheses:

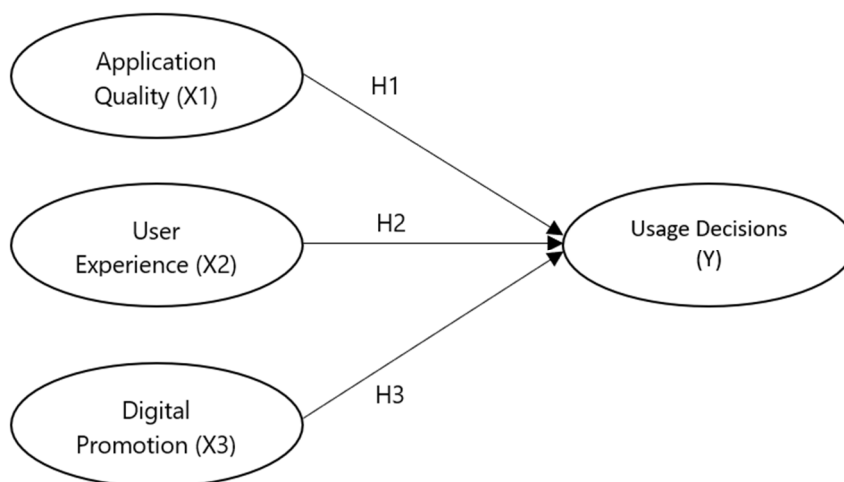


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Design

This study uses a quantitative research approach. The quantitative approach is chosen because this research aims to test the relationships and effects between variables empirically through the processing of numerical data (Sugiyono, 2019). A survey approach is used in this study, and a questionnaire is developed as the research instrument based on the indicators of each research variable. The indicators of the studied variables are used to formulate statements in the questionnaire. There are four variables in this study: one dependent variable, namely the Subscription Decision (Y), and three independent variables, namely Application Quality (X1), User Experience (X2), and Digital Promotion (X3).

Table 3. Operational Definitions and Indicators

Variable	Indicator	Source
Application Quality (X1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information quality 2. Ease of using 3. Responsiveness 4. Level of security 5. Personalization 	(Hidayahtullah & Asteria, 2023)
User Experience (X2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sense experience 2. Feel experience 3. Think experience 4. Action 5. Relation experience 	(Utomo et al., 2022)
Digital Promotion (X3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessibility 2. Interactivity 3. Entertainment 4. Credibility 5. Informativeness 	(Aryani, 2021)
Subscription Decision (Y)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need recognition 2. Information search 3. Evaluation alternative 	(Setra & Puspitasari, 2021)

	4. Purchase decision 5. Purchase behavior	
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3.2. Research Location and Time

This study focuses on users of Spotify Premium in Indonesia. The research was conducted from January 13, 2026 to January 25, 2026 to obtain relevant and up-to-date data regarding the phenomenon of subscription decisions for Spotify Premium.

3.3. Population and Sample

A population is the entire set of objects of interest, both in terms of quality and characteristics, that are studied and from which conclusions are drawn (Sugiyono, 2019). The population in this study includes all users of Spotify Premium in Indonesia. Since the exact number of the population is unknown and very large, this study uses a sampling technique, namely purposive sampling, where respondents are selected based on specific criteria to match the research objectives and object. The sample size is determined based on the opinion of Hair et al. (2019):

$$\text{Number of indicators} \times 5 = 20 \text{ indicators} \times 5 = 100$$

Based on the calculation in this study, there are 20 indicators, so the total sample size used is 100 respondents. The type of data used in this study is primary data collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The respondent criteria in this study are as follows:

- a. Respondents are active users of Spotify in Indonesia.
- b. Respondents are active users of Spotify Premium, with at least three months of usage within the last period; and
- c. Respondents are at least 17 years old.

3.4. Data Collection

Data were collected using a questionnaire with a 1 to 5 Likert scale and distributed online through Google Forms, allowing respondents to evaluate various statements related to factors influencing their behavior.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS 4 software. The analysis consists of the inner model test, outer model test, and hypothesis testing. Through the SEM method, the researcher is able to examine both direct and indirect effects of various factors on the studied variables, thereby providing deeper insights into the interactions among variables within a theoretical model. Instrument testing in this study is conducted through the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). The outer model is used to assess construct validity and reliability, including convergent validity (loading factor > 0.70 and AVE > 0.50), discriminant validity (cross loading > 0.70), and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (> 0.70) (Ghozali, 2021). Meanwhile, the inner model is used to analyze causal relationships between latent variables by examining the R-square values (0.75 = strong, 0.50 = moderate, 0.25 = weak). Hypothesis testing is conducted by comparing the T-statistic value with the T-table value of 1.96 at a 0.05 significance level, where a higher T-statistic indicates a significant effect. If the model involves a mediating variable, path analysis is used to examine both direct and indirect effects among variables within the research model.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

In this study, ethical considerations are highly important to ensure that all respondents provide information voluntarily and that the collected data remains confidential. The researcher also ensures that participation in this study does not have any negative impact on respondents and that all research methods comply with applicable research ethical standards.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Respondent Demographic Data

Respondent demographic data is information that describes the general characteristics of respondents involved in the study. These characteristics include aspects such as gender, age, education level, occupation, income, and other relevant attributes in accordance with the research objectives. The presentation of demographic data aims to provide an overview of the respondent profile so that the suitability between the sample characteristics and the studied population can be identified.

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics Results

No	Description	Characteristics	Total	%
1	Gender	Male	40	40%
		Female	60	60%
2	Age	17–20 year	16	16%
		21–23 year	65	65%
		24–26 year	19	19%

The respondent characteristics for this study are presented in Table 4. Regarding gender distribution, 60 respondents (60%) were female, while 40 (40%) were male, indicating that the majority of Spotify Premium subscribers in this survey were women. In terms of age, the largest group of respondents fell within the 21–23 age range, comprising 65 individuals (65%), followed by those aged 24–26 (19 respondents/19%) and 17–20 (16 respondents/16%). These findings suggest that the majority of respondents are young adults specifically Generation Z and early Millennials who are typically active users of digital music streaming services. The inclusion of both Generation Z and early Millennial cohorts ensures that the data captures a broader spectrum of user perceptions, thereby strengthening the analysis of how Application Quality, User Experience, and Digital Promotion influence subscription decisions in Indonesia.

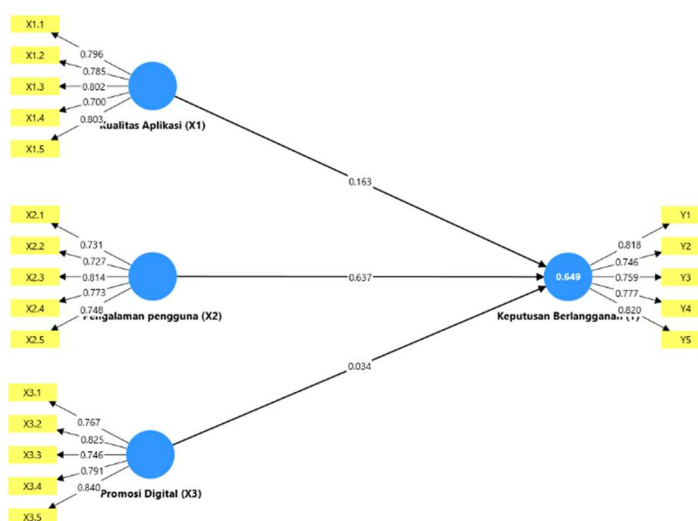


Figure 1. Measurement Model

Figure 2 illustrates the SEM-PLS structural model, which examines the impact of Application Quality (X1), User Experience (X2), and Digital Promotion (X3) on the Subscription Decision for Spotify Premium in Indonesia (Y). All indicators exhibit loading factors > 0.70, confirming their convergent validity. The structural model analysis reveals that User Experience is the most dominant factor influencing the Subscription Decision, with a path coefficient of 0.637. Additionally, Application Quality exerts a positive influence with a coefficient of 0.163, followed by Digital Promotion with a coefficient of 0.034. The R2 value of 0.649 indicates that 64.9% of the variance in the Subscription Decision is explained by these three independent variables, while the remaining 35.1% is attributed to external factors, suggesting that the model possesses strong predictive power.

4.2. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity tests are used to measure the extent to which the indicators used in a study are able to reflect or explain the construct being measured. An indicator is considered to have good convergent validity if it has an outer loading value greater than 0.70. However, in exploratory research, outer loading values between 0.60 and 0.70 are still acceptable if they do not compromise the overall quality of the model.

Table 4. Validity Evaluation Results

	Subscription Decision (Y)	Application Quality (X1)	User Experience (X2)	Digital Promotion (X3)
Y1	0.818			
Y2	0.746			
Y3	0.759			
Y4	0.777			
Y5	0.820			
X1.1		0.796		
X1.2		0.785		
X1.3		0.802		
X1.4		0.700		
X1.5		0.803		
X2.1			0.731	
X2.2			0.727	
X2.3			0.814	
X2.4			0.773	
X2.5			0.748	
X3.1				0.767
X3.2				0.825
X3.3				0.746
X3.4				0.791
X3.5				0.840

According to Hair et al. (2019) The loading factor values of ≥ 0.70 in Table 5 indicate that all indicators App Quality (X1), User Experience (X2), Digital Promotion (X3), and Subscription Decision (Y) are valid, and none were eliminated. The Application Quality indicators have loadings of 0.700–0.803, User Experience 0.727–0.814, Digital Promotion 0.746–0.840, and Subscription Decision 0.746–0.820, confirming that all indicators are capable of strongly representing the constructs. Thus, the measurement model has met the criteria for convergent validity and is suitable for proceeding to structural equation modeling.

4.3. R² Test

The following are the R-squared values obtained from data analysis using SmartPLS 4.0. The R-squared value is used to measure the ability of the independent variables to explain the variation in the

dependent variable within the research model. The higher the R-squared value, the greater the ability of the independent variables to explain the dependent variable. Conversely, a lower R-squared value indicates that there are still other factors outside the research model that influence the dependent variable. Below are the R-squared values for the dependent variables obtained from the SmartPLS 4.0 output.

Table 5. R² Test Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Subscription Decision (Y)	0.649	0.638

The R-squared value in Table 6, which is 0.649, indicates that 64.9% of the variation in the decision to subscribe (Y) to Spotify Premium in Indonesia is explained by App Quality (X1), User Experience (X2), and Digital Promotions (X3), while 35.1% is influenced by other factors outside the model. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.638 confirms that the model's explanatory power remains high and stable after accounting for the number of independent variables. Thus, the structural model is deemed valid, accurate, and has good predictive power for further analysis and hypothesis testing.

4.4. Discriminant Validity Test

Discriminant validity testing is used to determine the extent to which a construct can be clearly distinguished from other constructs in a research model. In other words, discriminant validity indicates that each latent variable has unique characteristics and is capable of measuring a concept that differs from that of other latent variables. This test is important to ensure that the indicators of a construct do not have a higher correlation with other constructs than with the construct they are intended to measure.

Table 6. Results of the Discriminant Validity Test

	Subscription Decision (Y)	Application Quality (X1)	User Experience (X2)	Digital Promotion (X3)
Subscription Decision (Y)	0.785			
Application Quality (X1)	0.720	0.778		
User Experience (X2)	0.799	0.832	0.759	
Digital Promotion (X3)	0.660	0.808	0.775	0.795

According to the Fornell-Larcker criteria, discriminant validity is met when the square root of the AVE value for each construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs. Referring to Table 7, Subscription Decision (Y) has an AVE of 0.785, which is higher than its correlations with App Quality (0.720), User Experience (0.799), and Digital Promotion (0.660). App Quality (X1) has an AVE root of 0.778, which is greater than its correlation with Digital Promotion (0.808), User Experience (0.832), and Subscription Decision (0.720). With an AVE of 0.759, User Experience (X2) has a stronger association than Subscription Decision (0.799), App Quality (0.832), and Digital Promotion (0.775). Furthermore, compared to its correlations with Subscription Decision (0.660), App Quality (0.808), and User Experience (0.775), Digital Promotion (X3) has a higher AVE root of 0.795. Consequently, each construct meets the criteria for discriminant validity, allowing for clear differentiation of each latent variable and making them suitable for use in structural equation modeling (inner model).

Table 7. AVE Score Results

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Subscription Decision (Y)	0.616
Application Quality (X1)	0.605
User Experience (X2)	0.576
Digital Promotion (X3)	0.632

Based on Table 8, all constructs have AVE values above 0.50, namely Subscription Decision (Y) 0.616, App Quality (X1) 0.605, User Experience (X2) 0.576, and Digital Promotion (X3) 0.632. Referring to Hair et al. (2019), an AVE value > 0.50 indicates that each construct has met the criteria for convergent validity, as the indicators account for more than 50% of the construct's variance. Digital Promotion (X3) has the highest AVE, while the other constructs also indicate adequate values. Thus, all constructs are deemed to have convergent validity, and the measurement model (outer model) is suitable for proceeding to structural equation modeling (inner model).

4.5. Reliability Test

Reliability testing is conducted to determine the level of consistency and reliability of a research instrument in measuring a construct. A reliable instrument will produce consistent data when used repeatedly under relatively similar conditions. Thus, reliability testing aims to ensure that the indicators used are capable of measuring the research variables in a stable and trustworthy manner.

Table 8. Reliability Test Results

	Composite reliability (rho_a)
Subscription Decision (Y)	0.859
Application Quality (X1)	0.838
User Experience (X2)	0.821
Digital Promotion (X3)	0.868

The results of the reliability test indicate that all variables have a Composite Reliability (rho_A) value above 0.70, in accordance with the criteria, according to Hair et al. (2019) Based on Table 9, the rho_A values for each variable are: Subscription Decision (Y) 0.859, App Quality (X1) 0.838, User Experience (X2) 0.821, and Digital Promotion (X3) 0.868. These results confirm that all constructs meet reliability criteria with good internal consistency, with Digital Promotion (X3) having the highest reliability, followed by Subscription Decision (Y), Application Quality (X1), and User Experience (X2). Therefore, all constructs are considered reliable and suitable for use in structural equation modeling (internal model). Using the Cronbach's Alpha method, the results obtained further support the reliability test, namely:

Table 9. Cronbach's alpha

	Cronbach's alpha
Subscription Decision (Y)	0.845
Application Quality (X1)	0.836
User Experience (X2)	0.816
Digital Promotion (X3)	0.854

According to Hair et al. (2019) Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess the internal consistency of indicators, with an ideal range of 0.70–0.90. Based on Table 10, all variables have values above 0.70, namely Subscription Decision (Y) 0.845, App Quality (X1) 0.836, User Experience (X2) 0.816, and Digital Promotion (X3) 0.854. These values indicate that all indicators exhibit high internal consistency, with Digital Promotion (X3) being the most reliable variable, followed by Subscription Decision (Y), App Quality (X1), and User Experience (X2). Thus, all variables are deemed reliable and suitable for use in structural equation modeling (inner model).

4.6. Hypothesis Testing

In the PLS-SEM analysis, significance testing was conducted by comparing the T-statistic value with the T-table value at a 5% significance level (two-tailed), which is 1.96. A hypothesis is accepted if the T-statistic value is > 1.96 and the P-value is < 0.05 . Conversely, if the T-statistic is < 1.96 and the P-value is > 0.05 , the

hypothesis is rejected. This test aims to determine whether the independent variables have a significant effect on the dependent variables in the research model (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 10. Direct Effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
App Quality (X1) -> Subscription Decision (Y)	0.163	0.165	0.135	1.206	0.228
User Experience (X2) -> Subscription Decision (Y)	0.637	0.637	0.113	5.620	0.000
Digital Promotions (X3) -> Subscription Decision (Y)	0.034	0.038	0.114	0.297	0.766

The results of the direct effect test indicate that Application Quality (X1) has no effect on the Subscription Decision (Y). This is demonstrated by a T-statistic value of $1.206 < 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.228 > 0.05$, so Hypothesis 1 is rejected. User Experience (X2) was found to have a positive and significant effect on Subscription Decision (Y). This is evidenced by a T-statistic value of $5.620 > 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$; therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted. Digital Promotions (X3) were found to have no effect on the Subscription Decision (Y). This is indicated by a T-statistic of $0.297 < 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.766 > 0.05$, so Hypothesis 3 is rejected.

4.7. Discussion

a. The Effect of App Quality on Subscription Decisions

The test results indicate that Application Quality (X1) has a positive but insignificant effect on the Subscription Decision (Y), with a path coefficient of 0.163, a t-value of $1.206 < 1.96$, and a p-value of $0.228 > 0.05$; therefore, Hypothesis 1 is rejected. These results can be explained by the concept of hygiene factors. In today's digital applications, app quality such as ease of use, access speed, system stability, and a responsive interface has become the minimum standard expected by users. Spotify, in both its free and premium versions, provides relatively good app quality, leading users to view these aspects as a given (must-have features). Consequently, app quality is no longer a strong enough differentiating factor to drive subscription decisions.

Furthermore, users' decisions to switch to Spotify Premium tend to be more influenced by exclusive benefits not available in the free version, such as an ad-free listening experience, the ability to download songs for offline listening, better audio quality, and the freedom to choose songs without limits. In other words, users do not subscribe because the Spotify app is of high quality, but because they want to obtain the perceived value offered by the premium service. These findings indicate that in the increasingly competitive music streaming industry, app quality serves as a basic requirement for maintaining user satisfaction but is not necessarily the deciding factor in purchase or subscription decisions. Therefore, companies need to place greater emphasis on providing unique and valuable premium benefits to users to increase subscription rates.

In line with research from Yulianto et al. (2021) which indicates that technical variables such as app quality and digital promotions are not directly significant. This finding supports the argument that, in the context of digital services, users' personal experiences are often the primary determinant of subscription decisions or service loyalty. It is also consistent with research from Shafwah et al. (2025) It is evident that perceptions of digital service aspects (including perceived value and quality of use) strongly influence subscription decisions, even though digital promotion variables themselves do not indicate a direct, significant influence. This research provides an empirical basis for the conclusion that psychological factors and users' perceptions of the benefits of a service are crucial in driving consumers' decisions to subscribe to digital services.

b. The Impact of User Experience on Subscription Decisions

The test results indicate that User Experience (X2) has a positive and significant effect on the Subscription Decision (Y), with a path coefficient of 0.637, a t-value of 5.620 > 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000 < 0.05; therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted. These findings indicate that the better the user experience, the greater the tendency to subscribe to Spotify Premium. User experience encompasses sensory, emotional, cognitive, habitual, and social relationship aspects, with the most dominant indicator being the "think experience."

Many users stated that features such as song recommendations tailored to their preferences, mood-based playlists, and insights like Spotify Wrapped make them feel that the app "understands" their musical tastes. Respondents also cited the ad-free experience and the ease of exploring content as factors that enhance their comfort and satisfaction when using Spotify. This suggests that when users experience a personalized, relevant, and cognitively and emotionally valuable experience, their likelihood of deciding to subscribe becomes stronger.

This research is consistent with Ahadiin et al. (2024) which indicates that user experience has a positive and significant influence on subscription decisions, in line with the theoretical framework that a user's personal experience is a crucial factor in the decision-making process for subscribing to digital services such as Spotify Premium, particularly among younger consumers. This is also consistent with research from Nurul et al. (2025) user experience has a significant impact on the decision to subscribe to digital services, as consumers tend to make decisions based on their interactions with apps. This reinforces the assumption that user experience is a crucial factor in the consumer decision-making process for digital services in general, including in the case of Spotify.

c. The Impact of Digital Promotions on Subscription Decisions

The test results indicate that Digital Promotion (X3) has a positive but insignificant effect on the Subscription Decision (Y), with a path coefficient of 0.034, a t-value of 0.297 < 1.96, and a p-value of 0.766 > 0.05; therefore, Hypothesis 3 is rejected. This finding does not necessarily imply that Spotify's digital promotion budget is ineffective. Rather, the results suggest that the effectiveness of digital promotion plays a greater role in the early stages of the customer journey specifically, in building brand awareness, capturing attention, and encouraging consumers to try Spotify's service.

Digital consumer behavior in Indonesia promotions such as social media ads, subscription discounts, bundled packages, and free trial programs can indeed boost users' initial interest in Spotify Premium. However, the decision to continue subscribing after the promotional period ends is generally determined not only by the intensity of the promotions received but also by users' assessment of the benefits they derive from the service. The relatively price-sensitive nature of Indonesian consumers may also explain these findings. Many users are drawn to free trial offers or discounts as an opportunity to try the premium service without significant financial risk. However, when the promotional period ends and full subscription fees are charged, some users choose to cancel their subscriptions if they feel the benefits they receive are not sufficiently commensurate with the costs incurred. Thus, digital promotions succeed in attracting users to try the service, but they are not necessarily effective in converting them into long-term paying customers. Therefore, the decision to subscribe to Spotify Premium is influenced more by the user experience, the perceived value gained, and the exclusive benefits of the premium service than by the digital promotions themselves.

This research is consistent with Romadoni et al. (2024) found that digital promotions do not have a significant impact on the decision to subscribe to Spotify Premium, indicating that not all forms of digital promotion automatically drive purchasing or subscription behavior. This is also consistent with research from Ahza et al. (2025) These findings suggest that engagement through digital promotions can influence purchasing decisions when the content is able to strongly captivate the audience. This provides insight into the fact that the effectiveness of digital promotions depends heavily on the quality of the content, including its entertainment value, creativity, and relevance to the audience.

V. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that User Experience (X2) is the factor that most influences the decision to subscribe to Spotify Premium (Y), with a positive and significant effect. This indicates that an experience that is personalized, convenient, relevant, and provides added value to users can increase the likelihood of subscribing to the premium service. Meanwhile, App Quality (X1) and Digital Promotions (X3) were found to have a positive but insignificant effect on the decision to subscribe. Good app quality has become a basic standard (hygiene factor) that users expect, so it is no longer a differentiating factor in driving the decision to subscribe. On the other hand, digital promotions play a greater role in building brand awareness and attracting users' initial interest, but they have not yet been able to drive sustainable conversion into paying customers. Thus, the decision to subscribe to Spotify Premium is influenced more by the user experience and the perceived benefits than by the app's technical aspects or digital promotional activities.

User experience is the most influential factor in the decision to subscribe to Spotify Premium, while app quality and digital promotions have no significant impact. Therefore, the practical and strategic recommendation for Spotify Indonesia's management is to focus on improving the user experience and creating tangible added value for free users. Spotify Indonesia is advised to focus its strategy for converting free users to premium subscribers more on strengthening the user experience rather than solely on increasing digital promotions or improving app quality. Spotify needs to continue developing personalization features, relevant music recommendations, and playlists based on user preferences, as well as highlighting exclusive premium benefits such as ad-free listening, better audio quality, and offline access. Additionally, given that Indonesian consumers tend to be price-sensitive, Spotify can offer more flexible subscription plans and optimize its free trial program so that users can fully experience the benefits of the premium service. Thus, a strategy focused on user experience and the value of the service will be more effective and sustainable in driving decisions to subscribe to Spotify Premium.

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