EasyChair Preprint

№ 8715

Willingness to Pay of Filipino Spotify Users: Role of E- Subscription Service Quality and Perceived Value

Jeren Quipia, Mary Devine Sablas, Karl Kristopher Trampe and Lizel Tumali

August 28, 2022

JGB 2022

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Abstract

A new era of Filipino consumerism arose brought about by the continuous advancement in technology introducing various music streaming service providers including Spotify. Having the option to avail of either free or premium-based subscription paves way to this study's objective to examine the e-service quality and perceived value of Spotify-users, its direct effects in willingness to pay, and the role of customer satisfaction as a mediator. A total of 253 Spotify-users participated in this study, aged 18 years old and above and residing in the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines. A quantitative research approach and a predictive-causal design was applied in this study which was assessed through a partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the relationships of the proposed model.

The results revealed that e-service quality and perceived value significantly influences customer satisfaction and willingness to pay. Besides, the relationship between customer satisfaction and willingness to pay is also supported. Also, the study shows that customer satisfaction also affects willingness to pay. However, the findings uncovered that there is no connection between customer satisfaction as a mediator between e-service quality and perceived value leading to the user's willingness to pay.

This study has implications to Spotify and other companies providing music streaming services. From a managerial standpoint, this study shows that branding, subscription pricing, mode of payment, and variety of songs and artists directly influences the user in continuously availing of a subscription and a non-user to avail of a premium subscription. Application developers on the other hand will have a broad theoretical basis that designing a successful music streaming platform should specifically emphasize user interface design and security features.

Keywords: *E-service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, willingness to pay, and Spotify.*

Introduction

Advancement in technology has invaded our lives and transformed everything we do with an intelligent assistant of new technologies. Knowing the impact of digitalization, consumers have greater access to lawful music services and can listen to music, anywhere, anytime, and on any devices (De Posson, 2019). Wikstrom (2014) identifies the changes in music listening experience in the digital age of music from "playing music to playing with music" emphasizing the role of social media. Moreover, the music industry shifts its production and music distribution to a new concept of technology advancement, namely streaming platforms (Barata & Coelho, 2021). From the physical distribution of music (i.e. vinyl, cassette tapes and CDs) to digital transformation with an increasing use of technology through smartphones and gadgets, music can easily be accessed (Sinclair & Tinson, 2017)

Music streaming services rapidly transformed the way the consumers listen to and purchase music by offering millions of available songs and albums from different artists globally (VanDyke, 2021). According to Tricarico et al., (2022), Spotify is one of the best music streaming services consumers must subscribe to in 2022. Spotify offers lots of songs and podcasts compatible with any device and with a free streaming option. Furthermore, consumers enjoy two available choices in subscribing to Spotify — freemium and premium subscription. In a digital world, most businesses offer a freemium business strategy to attract massive numbers of users and achieve a higher company valuation (Holm & Gûnsen-Jensen, 2017). To illustrate, in a free Spotify, ads interrupt playback frequently, can only skip six tracks per hour, can't download music for offline listening, and plays in a shuffle mode (Tolcheva, 2022). On the other hand, based on Spotify, subscribing at premium enables customers unlimited skips, play and like preferred songs, add-free music listening, and download music available even for offline listening. These premium subscriptions are available in several plans — Premium Mini, Premium Individual, Premium Duo, and Family Premium — with various features and monthly fees.

According to Gotting (2022), worldwide Spotify premium subscribers for the first quarter of 2022 reached 182 million paying subscribers. In addition, Spotify garnered the greatest number of users than Apple Music, Amazon Music, and Youtube Music from 2016 to 2021 (Iqbal, 2022). In Asia, Philippines was considered as its biggest music streamlining market since its entrance in 2014 (Desiderio, 2019). A total of 4.2 million users were recorded in 2021 for the Philippines based on Statista. In 2021, Filipino artists dominated Spotify's top charts in the Philippines bringing Ben&Ben into the most streamed artist and the song titled *Binibini*.by Zack Tabudlo as most streamed song (Escanillas, 2022).

Several studies proved the mediating effect of customer satisfaction. The construct customer satisfaction was used as an intervening variable in the following: between service quality and customer loyalty (Osman & Sentosa, 2013; Srivastava & Rai, 2013, Yadav & Rai, 2019), between e-banking service quality and purchase intention (Khatoon et al., 2020). Also, there is study on the role of service quality and perceived value on the customer satisfaction and willingness to pay in the entertainment service industry in Indonesia (Azzahro et al., 2020). From these studies, it can be viewed that there is a lack of study of customer satisfaction as an intervening variable between e-service quality, perceived value, and willingness to pay. Moreover, there is no published research yet in the Philippines regarding e-services in the music industry. Thus, the

present study was conducted to address this gap in literature. Spotify would be the subject of this study due to its increasing number of users on digital music platforms.

Research Theories and Framework

The present study was founded on a technology acceptance model (TAM). TAM assesses the factors that impact the user's acceptance of new technologies and information systems (Surendran, 2012). Furthermore, TAM identifies the perceived usefulness of a system and the perceived ease of use of its various components. The concept of perceived usefulness expresses the likelihood that a potential user will use a given program or service in order to improve its performance. On the other hand, the perceived ease of use is defined by how easy it is to use (Davis et al.,1989). In a separate study conducted by Abdulla and Ward (2016), the data shows that individual beliefs, instinctive norms, fun, digital engagement, and experience are the most widely used external factors connected with TAM.

E-service Quality

The expansion of the internet and its application in business gave rise to the notion of "e-service" (Omoyele, 2022). Traditional channels are being dominated by e-channels in terms of purchasing and consumption (Blut et. al, 2015). For instance, subscription services are now provided via the internet using a computer or electronic devices without the need for personal interaction with the service provider (Odu & Nmehielle, 2020). Along with this, there is a transition from service quality to e-service quality (Omoyele, 2022). According to Parasuraman et al. (2005), e-service quality serves as the degree of efficiency and effectiveness when it comes to facilitating customers in shopping, purchasing, and delivery.

Several measurements have been developed to determine e-service quality. An example of this is SERVQUAL which deals with five dimensions, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Other examples are SITEQUAL (Yoo & Donthu, 2001), eTailQ (Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003), and ESQUAL and E-ResQual (Parasuraman et al., 2005). These measurements assess the e-service quality, which has a great impact on e-commerce (Ladhari, 2010).

Perceived Value

One of the most important components in the success of service providers is perceived value, which is a strategic weapon in enticing and acquiring customers and gaining a competitive advantage (Tabaku & Kushi, 2013). According to Zeithaml (1988), perceived value is the general evaluation of the product's usefulness based on the experience of what is obtained and offered. It is viewed as the most important result in the model of consumer experiences and is given when the product or service has the potential to meet the needs of the customers (Chen & Chang, 2012).

As any business top priority is to provide value for customers while extracting revenue for the company (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016), perceived value acquired a great significance in the field of consumer behavior and marketing (Konuk, 2018). Relative to this, perceived value is taken to have an impact on satisfaction (Kuo et al., 2009; Milfelner et al., 2011; Omar et. al, 2011; Samudro et al., 2020; Ullah, 2012), willingness to pay (Chen et al., 2021; Duong et al., 2021) and other vital

results (Chen & Tsai, 2008). Hence, perceived value is regarded as critical to a company's success (Karjaluoto et al., 2019) and to a customer's behavioral intention (Tuncer & Cobanoglu, 2021).

Customer Satisfaction

The primary goal in maintaining a company's existence and sustainability is to create customer satisfaction (Pragunadi et al., 2018; Subaebasni et al., 2019; Wan & Cheng, 2011; Wirapraja et al., 2021). According to Kotler & Keller (2016), customer satisfaction is defined as a customer's feeling of pleasure or disappointment towards using a product or service versus their performance expectation. Moreover, it also assessed whether it met the customer's needs and expectations of the service (Zeithaml et al., 2006). Meanwhile, past studies show that customer satisfaction is a unidimensional theory that measures overall satisfaction and shows a primary function of perceived service quality (Chen & Tsai, 2008; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Yang & Peterson, 2004). Among the studies on customer satisfaction in mobile services, customer satisfaction and perceived value positively influence post-purchase intention (Kuo et al., 2009). In addition, perceived value and behavioral intentions in a quick-casual restaurant create a relationship through customer satisfaction as a mediator (Ryu et al., 2008).

Willingness to Pay

To attain a higher profitability and a sustainable advantage for the business, a common goal of every businessman, the consumer's willingness to pay premium prices plays an important role (Casidy & Wymer, 2016). The price of a product or service is the key driver in determining a consumer's willingness to pay (Bhatt et al., 2020; Mukherjee et al., 2017). Furthermore, in a study of Davcik and Sharma (2015), prices set consumer's perception of the value and quality of the product or service and thus it assesses one's willingness to pay.

In addition, various studies explored different factors influencing willingness to pay including consumer's attitudes, subjective norms, and personal characteristics (Lombardi et al., 2017); satisfaction (Homburg et al., 2005); quality (Katt & Meixner, 2020); and consumer's income, risk perception, and ethics (Chiang & Assane, 2009). Prior research has shown that in marketing management, marketers must understand the factors and mechanisms influencing consumer's willingness to pay for a product or service over the other alternatives specially that there are increasing competitors in a service sector (Ligas & Chaudhuri, 2012).

It has been acknowledged that service quality is one of the contributing factors to the success and failure of a business (Santos, 2003). Undeniably, service has become the basis of competition among businesses and has become significant in building customer impact (Bitner et al., 2000). As a matter of fact, several studies have linked service quality to customers' willingness to pay. For instance, Dean et al. (2002) analysis of service quality and customers' willingness to pay more for travel services reveals the positive association of service quality and its dimension to selected items of willingness to pay more. Fassnacht and Köse (2007) emphasized the positive effect of service quality on behavioral intentions which includes the willingness to pay more for Web-based services. Also, Wang et al. (2005) found out that service quality, together with convenience, essentiality, and added value, are positively related to willingness to pay for online content or services.

Many research studies have also identified the importance of e-service quality in customer satisfaction. Amin (2016) investigates the implication of service quality of internet banking to e-customer satisfaction and e-customer loyalty. The study revealed that there is a high level of e-customer satisfaction for higher levels of internet banking service quality. Another study by Vos et al. (2014) conducted in Athen Greece revealed that dimensions of e-service quality are linked to e-loyalty and e-satisfaction. Further, Khan et al. (2019) assessed e-service quality, e-satisfaction, and e-loyalty of online shopping in Pakistan. The authors found out that service quality has a crucial role that positively affects e-satisfaction and e-loyalty. Moreover, according to the study by Rita and Farisa (2019), there is a positive relationship between overall e-service quality and customer satisfaction. In contrast, the study of Demir et al. (2020) found that there are no significant effects on e-service quality of online meeting platforms and willingness to pay. Therefore, we proposed that,

H1a. E-subscription service quality significantly and positively affects willingness to pay

H1b. E-subscription service quality significantly and positively affects customer satisfaction

Several studies show that perceived value significantly and positively affects willingness to pay. For instance, Han and Windsor (2011), investigate the user's willingness to pay on social network sites. The results indicated that aside from the user's perceived playfulness, the user's perceived value has also a significant and positive effect on their willingness to pay other members of social networks sites. It also positively affects the willingness to pay for online learning of the parents of the middle school students (Chen et al., 2021). According to the study of Winter et al. (2021), perceived value is one among the factors that are positively and significantly associated with willingness to pay. Moreover, Ye et al. (2004) study suggests that willingness to pay is likely influenced by the perceived value.

Customer perceived value results in customer satisfaction (Demirgüneş, 2015). Karjaluoto et al. (2019) examined the relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction with the use of mobile financial services apps. The result showed that perceived value yields strong positive influences on customer satisfaction. Tran and Le (2020) also explored how perceived value influences customer satisfaction among convenience stores in Vietnam. The authors found out that perceived value has a direct effect on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the study of Slack and Sharma (2020), in relation to the impact of perceived value on supermarket customers in developing countries, revealed that there is a significant relationship between perceived value and customer satisfaction as well. Thus,

H2a. Perceived value significantly and positively affects willingness to pay

H2b. Perceived value significantly and positively affects customer satisfaction

Saha et al. (2020) also found that customer satisfaction enhanced willingness to pay. Additionally, Azzahro et al. (2020) examined the factors that affect the willingness to pay for subscription-based on-demand streaming service users. The results revealed that users' willingness to pay is affected by customer satisfaction. In the study of Setya and Soni (2018), the authors revealed that customer satisfaction with Coffee Beans influences their willingness to pay. Therefore,

H3. Customer satisfaction significantly and directly influences willingness to pay

Several studies have identified that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between different constructs and willingness to pay. For instance, Fullerton and Taylor (2009) found that customer satisfaction mediates in the relationship between service quality and willingness to pay in the auto-repair services and hair-styling services in Canada. Also, Homburg et al. (2005) revealed in their studies that customer satisfaction completely mediates between the relationship of quality of food and willingness to pay in an Italian restaurant. In online shopping in India, website service quality significantly affects repurchase intention by enhancing customer satisfaction as a mediator. Hence, we hypothesize that:

H4a. Customer satisfaction mediates the significant relationship between e-service quality and willingness to pay

H4b. Customer satisfaction mediates the significant relationship between perceived value and willingness to pay

From the identified research hypotheses, the proposed model is presented in Figure 1. The proposed model examines the effect of e-service quality and perceived value on the willingness to pay. Furthermore, the present study also explores the mediating role of customer satisfaction on the relationship between e-service quality and perceived value to the willingness to pay. The full lines show the direct effects of the hypothesized relationships while the dashed lines indicate the indirect effects.

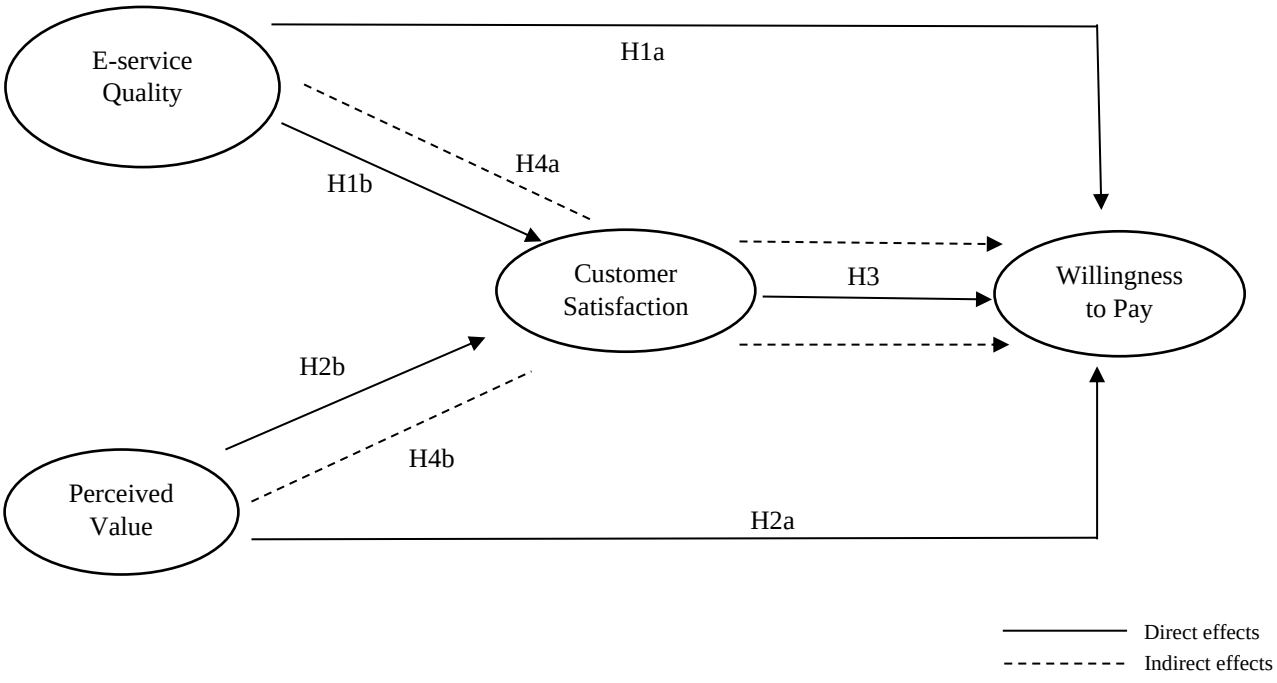

Figure 1. Proposed Research Framework

Methods

Participants of the Study

Purposive sample technique was applied in selecting the participants of this study. Gathering of data was done from May 5, 2022 to June 26, 2022 through an online survey. There were assessments made in the survey to validate the target participants. First, participants were asked if they are Spotify-users and their respective subscriptions. Then, participants were asked about their age to identify those 18 years old and above. Finally, their residences were sought to find those residing in the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines. After these assessments, only those participants that met the criteria will answer the main survey questionnaire. A total of 303 participated in this study wherein only 253 were qualified and answered completely with a response rate of 83.49%.

The sample size was computed using a priori power analysis via GPower. With an effect size of 0.15, alpha level of 0.05, power level of 0.95, and three predictors, the minimum sample size for this type of model is 119. The present study has 253 respondents, more than the minimum sample size, hence, the model has a sufficient size of the participants to support the results of hypothesis testing.

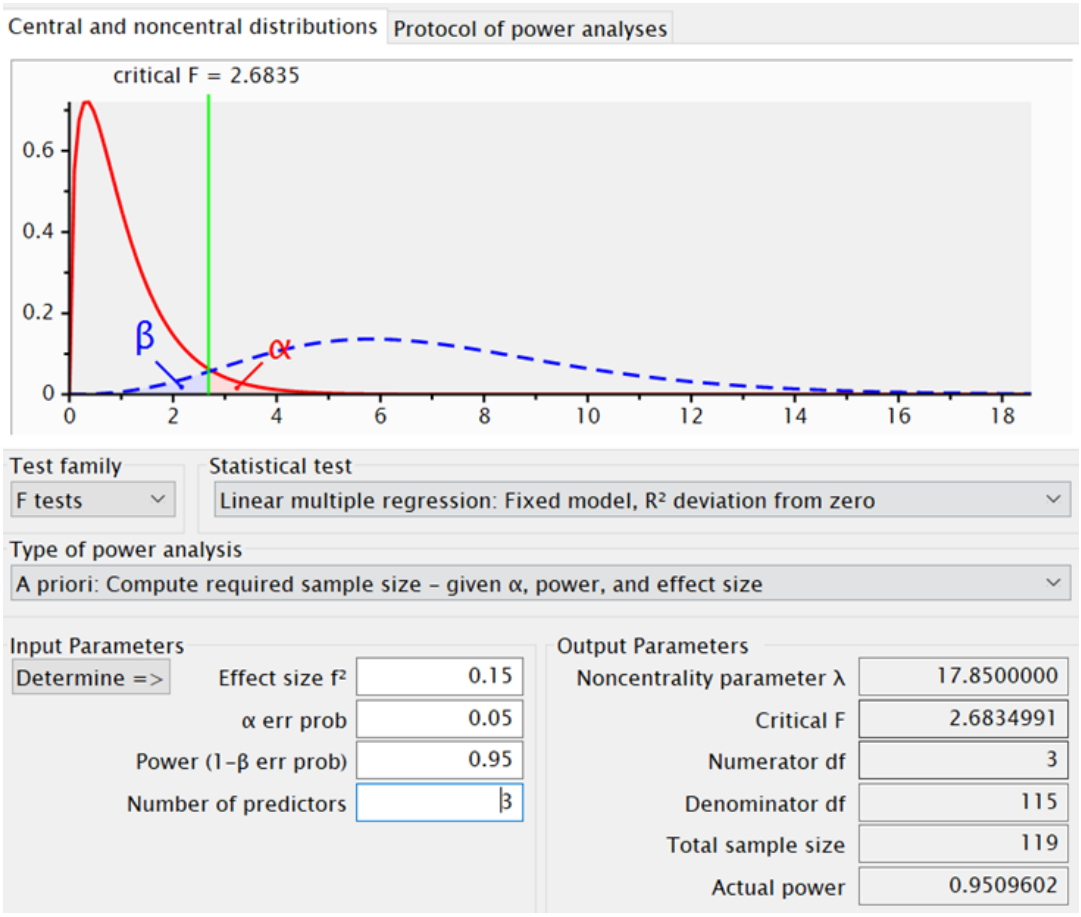

Figure 2. Result of Priori Power Analysis via GPower

Table 1 presents that most of the participants are aged 21-30 years old which corresponds to 61.66% of the respondents. In terms of gender, 53.75% were female. Additionally, according to their residency in NCR, 22.53% are from Manila. Moreover, 83.79% were single. Concerning their highest educational attainment, 7+4.31% were college/bachelor's degree holders. And according to their occupational status, 68.38% were employed. Furthermore, most of the participants were premium users, garnering 64.03% of the 253 total respondents.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents*

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-20	19	7.51
21-30	156	61.66
31-40	62	24.51
41-50	14	5.53
51-above	2	0.79
Gender		
Male	96	37.94
Female	136	53.75
LGBTQIA+	21	8.30
Civil Status		
Single	212	83.79
Married	38	15.02
Separated/Annulled	3	1.19
Widow/Widower	0	0.00
Highest educational attainment		
Elementary	0	0.00
High School/Secondary	37	14.62
College/Bachelor's Degree	188	74.31
Master's/Doctorate Degree	28	11.07
Occupation		
Senior HS student	3	1.19
College Student	59	23.32
Employed	173	68.38
Self-employed	11	4.35
Unemployed	7	2.77

Residency in NCR	Frequency	Percent
Caloocan	26	10.28
Las Piñas	4	1.58
Makati	20	7.91
Malabon	5	1.98
Mandaluyong	34	13.44
Manila	57	22.53
Marikina	2	0.79
Muntinlupa	10	3.95
Navotas	3	1.19
Parañaque	6	2.37
Pasay	10	3.95
Pasig	10	3.95
Pateros (Municipality)	1	0.40
Quezon City	49	19.37
San Juan	3	1.19
Taguig	8	3.16
Valenzuela	5	1.98
Users' Subscription		
Freemium	91	35.97
Premium Mini	7	2.77
Premium Individual	55	21.74
Premium Duo	6	2.37
Premium Family	76	30.04
Premium Student	18	7.11

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a self-administered online survey questionnaire using Google forms. It consists of demographic characteristics and the research's constructs. The demographic characteristics include the respondents' age, residency, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, and occupation. On the other hand, the constructs consist

of e-service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and willingness to pay. The e-service quality was measured using 13 items adapted from the study of Parasuraman et. al. (2005) and Demir et al (2020). On the assessment of perceived value, 11 questions were administered, and they were adapted from the study of Che-Hui et al. (2011). In terms of customer satisfaction, out of six items, five were adopted in the study of Leninkumar (2017) and 1 item was adapted in the study of Lee et al. (2018). And for the willingness to pay, the three items were adapted from the study of Augusto et. al (2020). The 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) was used in measuring all items in the four constructs. The validity and reliability of the said constructs were measured as shown in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

Data Analysis

In assessing the interrelationships of the four constructs — e-service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and willingness to pay — the predictive-causal research design was employed in the study. The partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using WarpPLS 7.0 software was applied.to gauge the relationships of the proposed model with latent variables. PLS-SEM is a causal modeling method (Hair et al., 2011) that intends to increase the explained variance of the dependent variables (Hair et al., 2012). Moreover, the present study also applied mediation analysis to test how the relationship between dependent and independent variables is impacted by the mediator (MacKinnon, et al., 2007).

Results

Assessment of the Measurement Model

The validity and reliability of the latent constructs – e-service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and willingness to pay – were measured as part of the evaluation of the measurement model. To establish the reliability of the latent construct, composite reliability (CR) was gauged. According to Kock (2014) and Kock and Lynn (2012), the requirement for the internal consistency of the items must be at least 0.70. Based on the results in Table 2, all variables – e-service quality (CR = 0.918), perceived value (CR = 0.922), customer satisfaction (CR = 0.952), and willingness to pay (CR = 0.890) – are reliable.

In terms of convergent validity, factor loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE) were measured. According to Amora (2021), each factor loading must be at least 0.50, and be significant ($p < 0.05$). In cases where the factor loading is below 0.50, the item must be removed as this item is considered an offending item (Kock, 2022). As seen in Table 2, all items exhibited factor loadings of 0.50, except for perceived value item 3 (PV3) where the load is below the threshold, hence it was deleted.

Moreover, the AVE of each latent construct must be at least 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In situation where the AVE is below the threshold, the corresponding reliability coefficient of that latent construct must be at least 0.60 for the AVE to be acceptable (Lam, 2012). As seen in Table 2, all latent constructs are within the threshold for AVE, therefore convergent validity was established.

Table 2. Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Latent Constructs

Construct	Item	Factor loading	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability
E-service quality			0.464	0.918
	ESQ1	0.671		
	ESQ2	0.671		
	ESQ3	0.651		
	ESQ4	0.690		
	ESQ5	0.692		
	ESQ6	0.657		
	ESQ7	0.728		
	ESQ8	0.627		
	ESQ9	0.723		
	ESQ10	0.714		
	ESQ11	0.686		
	ESQ12	0.622		
	ESQ13	0.712		
Perceived value			0.545	0.922
	PV1	0.685		
	PV2	0.842		
	PV3	D		
	PV4	0.726		
	PV5	0.873		
	PV6	0.722		
	PV7	0.585		
	PV8	0.815		
	PV9	0.734		
	PV10	0.774		
	PV11	0.564		
Customer satisfaction			0.768	0.952
	CS1	0.862		
	CS2	0.881		
	CS3	0.877		
	CS4	0.900		
	CS5	0.886		
	CS6	0.853		
Willingness to pay			0.669	0.890
	WTP1	0.823		
	WTP2	0.804		
	WTP3	0.832		
	WTP4	0.813		

D=deleted due to low loading. All factor loadings are significant at <0.001.

Discriminant validity of the variables was also measured by assessing the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). According to Henseler et al. (2015), the HTMT ratios must be at most 0.85. As seen in Table 3, all latent constructs were loaded below the 0.85 HTMT ratios, hence, discriminant validity was established.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity using HTMT Ratios

	ESQ	PV	CS	WTP
ESQ				
PV	0.773			
CS	0.807	0.821		
WTP	0.651	0.811	0.664	

ESQ – e-service quality; PV – perceived value; CS – customer satisfaction; WTP – willingness to pay.

Evaluation of the Structural Model

Figure 3 and Table 4 present the assessment of the structural model. Data analysis showed that e-service quality has a significant and positive influence on willingness to pay ($\beta = 0.109$; $p = 0.040$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.443$; $p < 0.001$). Hence, H1a and H1b are both supported.

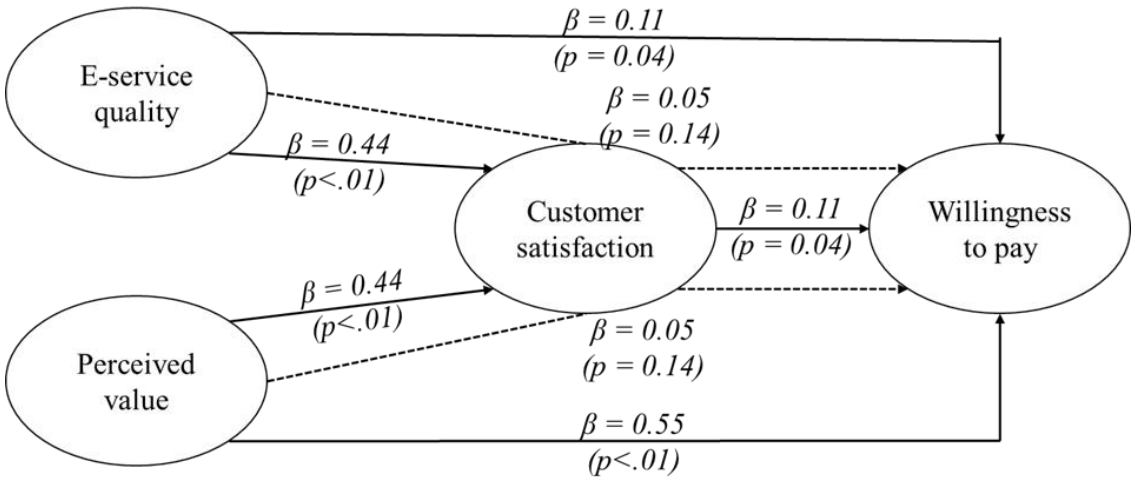

Figure 3. The Structural Model

Moreover, the results revealed that perceived value is significantly and directly related to willingness to pay ($\beta = 0.553$; $p < 0.001$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.439$; $p < 0.001$). Hence, H2a and H2b are as well supported.

With regard to the link between customer satisfaction and willingness to pay, the findings showed that the two latent variables are significantly and positively related ($\beta = 0.109$; $p = 0.039$). Therefore, H3 is supported.

Effect sizes of the direct effects links were measured using the guidelines set by Cohen (1988) where 0.02 means weak, 0.15 means moderate, and 0.35 means substantial effect. The results revealed that ESQ WTP exhibited weak magnitude of effect ($f^2 = 0.064$) while ESQ CS

showed moderate effect (f^2 = 0.331). Additionally, PV WTP magnified large effect size (f^2 = 0.394) while PV CS showed moderate effect (f^2 = 0.328). When it comes to CS WTP, the effect size is weak (f^2 = 0.065).

Table 4. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	p-value	Standard error	Effect size	Decision
Direct effects					
H1a. ESQ → WTP	0.109	0.040	0.062	0.064	S
H1b. ESQ → CS	0.443	<0.001	0.058	0.331	S
H2a. PV → WTP	0.553	<0.001	0.057	0.394	S
H2b. PV → CS	0.439	<0.001	0.058	0.328	S
H3. CS → WTP	0.109	0.039	0.062	0.065	S
Indirect effects					
H4a. ESQ → CS → WTP	0.048	0.138	0.044	0.028	NS
H4b. PV → CS → WTP	0.048	0.140	0.044	0.034	NS

S – supported; NS – not supported.

In terms of the mediation analysis, the results showed that customer satisfaction has no indirect effect on the relationship between e-service quality and willingness to pay (β = 0.048; p = 0.138), and between perceived value and willingness to pay (β = 0.048; p = 0.140). Therefore, H4a and H4b are unsupported.

The full-collinearity variance inflation factor (FCVIF) was also measured as part of the common method bias test. According to Kock (2015), to say that a collinearity exists in the model, the FCVIF of each latent construct must be at most 3.30. As seen in Table 5, all variables have FCVIF below 3.30. Therefore, there are lateral and vertical collinearities in the structural model.

Coefficient of determination (R^2) was also gauged. Chin (1988) recommended the following in interpreting R2: 0.67 – substantial; 0.33 – moderate; and 0.19 – weak. Based on the results, the structural model exhibited moderate (customer satisfaction R^2 = 0.658; willingness to pay R^2 = 0.523) coefficients of determination.

Predictive validity was also gauged using Stone-Geisser Q^2. Kock (2022) suggested that Q^2 must be greater than zero to conclude that predictive validity is present in the structural model. Based on the results, the model passed this requirement (customer satisfaction Q^2 = 0.659; willingness to pay Q^2 = 0.522).

Table 5. FCVIF, R^2, and Q^2

Construct	FCVIF	R^2	Q^2
E-service quality	2.505		
Perceived value	3.127		
Customer satisfaction	2.906	0.658	0.659
Willingness to pay	2.040	0.523	0.522

Discussion

Analysis of the result revealed that e-service quality has a significant and positive effect on willingness to pay and customer satisfaction. The results signify that when the respondents experienced an e-service quality in Spotify, they turned out to be willing to pay for the service. Moreover, as they experienced an e-service quality, respondents became satisfied with Spotify. Prior studies also showed that e-service quality is notably related to willingness to pay (Fassnacht & Köse, 2007; Wang et al., 2005) and customer satisfaction (Amin, 2016; Khan et al., 2019; Vos et al., 2014)

The result also showed a significant and positive relationship between perceived value and willingness to pay and customer satisfaction. The findings suggest that respondents are willing to pay for Spotify whenever they perceive its usefulness based on the acquisition and transaction experience they had with the service. Also, the perceived value of the respondents has a great role in forming their satisfaction with Spotify. Several studies also illustrate the significant effect between the perceived value and willingness to pay (Chen et al., 2021; Han & Windsor, 2011; Winter et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2004), and between perceived value and customer satisfaction (Karjaluoto et al., 2019; Slack & Sharma, 2020; Tran & Le, 2020).

Moreover, the result found that customer satisfaction has a significant and direct effect on willingness to pay. When customers are satisfied with the service Spotify provides, they are willing to pay for the service. This present study may relate to past studies that also show the positive relation of customer satisfaction to the willingness to pay (Azzahro et al., 2020; Saha et al., 2020; Setya & Soni 2018).

However, the mediation analysis uncovered that customer satisfaction doesn't have a significant effect as a mediator between e-service quality and willingness to pay; also between perceived value and willingness to pay. The findings revealed that the mediating role of customer satisfaction to e-service quality and the perceived value that leads to the willingness to pay has no connection. Anytime Spotify users are satisfied with the service, they are willing to pay. However, Spotify users are still prepared to pay for the service as long as they receive e-service quality and understand its value.

Conclusions, Limitation, and Future Research Directions

The present study highlights the e-service quality and perceived value, its direct effects in willingness to pay and the role of customer satisfaction as a mediator. Spotify's e-service quality as to its efficiency, system availability, fulfillment, and privacy (Parasuraman et al., 2005) proves that it creates willingness to pay a premium subscription and high customer satisfaction. This implies that the company must continue to improve their services by ensuring that the app is efficient; has an aesthetic design; strong privacy policy ensuring the security of customer data/information; etc. In enticing and gaining customers, and having a competitive advantage towards competitors, the result proves that perceived value has a great impact to customer's satisfaction and willingness to pay. Thus, it entails that the company must continue to improve the value of Spotify targeting the needs of its customers.

It can be noted in the present study as well that the decision of Spotify users to pay premium subscriptions relies on the e-service quality and perceived value and it is not mediated by customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction as a mediator does not provide a favorable result on willingness to pay. Thus, in order to attract customers, it serves as an insight to marketers, managers, and the company as a whole that they must focus on branding, subscription pricing, mode of payment, the variety of songs and artists, etc. Moreover, application developers will have a broad theoretical basis that designing a successful music streaming platform should specifically emphasize user interface design and security features.

A key theoretical contribution of this study establishes the importance of e-service quality and perceived value to directly influence willingness to pay. The findings support the technology acceptance model wherein the perceived usefulness of Spotify in today's advancement in technology, and the efficiency, effectiveness, and performance of Spotify suffice in influencing consumers to subscribe. It further suggests music streaming platforms to continuously develop and enhance their services by adapting to changes in the future of technology like entering the metaverse, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and virtual reality. These technologies would further change the landscape of music in the near future, bringing a live streaming experience to its users (Musicians Institute, 2022).

There are several limitations in this study. First, it focuses on the music streaming platform, Spotify. Hence, future researchers may conduct other industries or platforms that use electronic services like e-banking, electronic meeting platforms, online shopping, etc. Second, the study targets Spotify users in the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines only. Thus, future researchers may conduct in-depth studies around the Philippines or other countries as Spotify is available in the Philippines as a whole and in other countries. Finally, one mediator was utilized, which is customer satisfaction, in assessing the willingness to pay premium subscriptions of Spotify users. Therefore, future researchers may also explore other mediating variables, i.e. attitude toward a brand, brand credibility, perceived uniqueness, perceived risk, etc. leading to willingness to pay.

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