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The Association Between Watching Intensity and Purchase Intention Through Parasocial Relationship and Perceived Source Credibility in an EdTech Program

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of digital education has transformed the learning process into a competitive, content-driven platform ecosystem. This study examines the association between watching intensity and purchase intention in the Clash of Champions program produced by Ruangguru. Grounded in Media Psychology Theory, Parasocial Relationship Theory, Source Credibility Theory, and the Elaboration Likelihood Model, this research tests a statistical parallel mediation model involving parasocial relationships and perceived source credibility. A quantitative online survey of 406 Indonesian high school and university students was conducted and analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that watching intensity is positively and significantly associated with purchase intention, parasocial relationships, and perceived source credibility. Parasocial relationships and perceived source credibility are also positively associated with purchase intention. Furthermore, parasocial relationships show a significant indirect association between watching intensity and purchase intention, whereas perceived source credibility does not. Although perceived source credibility is directly associated with purchase intention, its small effect size and non-significant indirect association suggest that credibility functions more as a supporting evaluative factor than as a strong mediating mechanism. These findings indicate that emotional-relational mechanisms may be more salient than credibility evaluations in explaining subscription-related intention within competition-based EdTech platforms.

Keywords: *Purchase Intention, Watching Intensity, Parasocial Relationship, Perceived Source Credibility*

ABSTRAK

Pertumbuhan pesat pendidikan digital telah mentransformasi proses belajar menjadi ekosistem platform yang kompetitif dan berorientasi pada konten. Penelitian ini menganalisis hubungan antara watching intensity dan purchase intention pada program Clash of Champions yang diproduksi oleh Ruangguru. Berlandaskan Media Psychology Theory, Parasocial Relationship Theory, Source Credibility Theory, dan Elaboration Likelihood Model, penelitian ini menguji model mediasi paralel secara statistik yang melibatkan parasocial relationship dan perceived source credibility. Survei daring kuantitatif terhadap 406 pelajar dan mahasiswa Indonesia dianalisis menggunakan PLS-SEM melalui SmartPLS 4. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa watching intensity berasosiasi positif dan signifikan dengan purchase intention, parasocial relationship, dan perceived source credibility. Parasocial relationship dan perceived source credibility juga berasosiasi positif dengan purchase intention. Selain itu, parasocial relationship menunjukkan asosiasi tidak langsung yang signifikan antara watching intensity dan purchase intention, sedangkan perceived source credibility tidak menunjukkan asosiasi tidak langsung yang signifikan. Meskipun perceived source credibility berasosiasi langsung dengan purchase intention, ukuran efeknya yang kecil dan asosiasi tidak langsung yang tidak signifikan menunjukkan bahwa kredibilitas lebih berperan sebagai faktor evaluatif pendukung daripada sebagai mekanisme mediasi yang kuat. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa mekanisme emosional-relasional dapat lebih menonjol dibandingkan evaluasi kredibilitas dalam menjelaskan niat berlangganan pada platform EdTech berbasis kompetisi.

Kata kunci: *Purchase Intention, Watching Intensity, Parasocial Relationship, Perceived Source Credibility*

INTRODUCTION

The digital education ecosystem has experienced rapid expansion alongside the increasing global adoption of educational technology (EdTech) over the past decade, fundamentally transforming how institutions and learners access education (Laufer et al., 2021; C. Wang et al., 2024). This shift marks a transition from traditional classroom-based learning to digital educational ecosystems that function simultaneously as both infrastructure and a global education marketplace (Williamson & Komljenovic, 2023). Industry evidence indicates that e-learning has been widely adopted as a primary mode of instruction, dominated by video-based content and flexible, continuous digital learning experiences, with very high levels of acceptance; approximately 75–90% of learners, educators, and institutions report improvements in performance and the quality of learning experiences (Jagtap, 2026). Within an increasingly competitive environment, EdTech platforms no longer merely deliver instructional content but adopt content-driven engagement formats that integrate elements of competition, entertainment, and serialization to sustain audience engagement (Bedenlier et al., 2020; Muir et al., 2022). One manifestation of this trend is *Clash of Champions* (COC), a YouTube-based educational competition program produced by Ruangguru. Although COC provides the empirical context for this study, the analysis focuses on the broader psychological mechanisms underlying competition-based EdTech formats.

From an economic perspective, EdTech platforms operate in a digital service market characterized by consumer choice, information asymmetry, and competition for user attention (Williamson & Komljenovic, 2023). Potential users often face uncertainty because the quality and usefulness of paid educational services cannot be fully evaluated before purchase. As a result, subscription-related intention may depend not only on price and functional benefits, but also on informational cues, perceived trust, and the way platform content helps consumers evaluate service value (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). In this context, competition-based educational programs such as Clash of Champions can be understood as content-based informational cues that may shape how exposed audiences perceive the educational value and credibility of a platform. However, this study does not claim that such programs directly influence actual market demand or purchasing behavior. Instead, it examines whether watching intensity is statistically associated with purchase-related behavioral intention among surveyed viewers through relational and evaluative psychological mechanisms.

The emergence of episodic and streaming-based formats has directed attention to watching intensity as a key indicator of user engagement (Ameri et al., 2024). Conceptually, watching intensity reflects repeated and sustained exposure that shapes audiences' cognitive and emotional experiences (Flayelle et al., 2022). However, within the EdTech literature, this variable is often treated as a direct predictor of purchase intention without adequately explicating the underlying psychological mechanisms that mediate this relationship. Such a direct-effect approach limits the explanatory power of digital engagement models. Persuasion in digital environments may operate through multiple cognitive pathways, particularly when users evaluate educational services that involve financial costs and academic consequences. In line with the Elaboration Likelihood Model Petty & Cacioppo (1986), decisions to subscribe to EdTech services are likely to involve both cognitive evaluations of service benefits and responses to relational cues and source characteristics. Therefore, the effect of watching intensity on purchase intention is unlikely to be purely direct; instead, it operates through both relational and evaluative pathways.

Within media psychology, a key mechanism is the parasocial relationship, defined as a one-sided relationship characterized by emotional closeness and cognitive familiarity with media figures (Hoffner & Bond, 2022). Although originally rooted in entertainment research, this concept has become increasingly relevant in the EdTech context, where educational content is continuously presented to audiences (P. L. Breves & Van Berlo, 2025). Repeated exposure can facilitate the development of relational bonds that shape audience evaluations and behavioral responses (Yang et al., 2025). The source credibility literature has traditionally positioned credibility as an exogenous attribute of the communicator (Ismagilova et al., 2020). However, in digital EdTech environments, perceptions of expertise and trustworthiness develop progressively through accumulated experience and repeated exposure (Almaiah et al., 2022). Conceptually, parasocial relationships represent a relational–affective mechanism, whereas perceived source credibility reflects a cognitive evaluation of the source. Both constructs correspond to distinct persuasion routes, as proposed by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

Based on the literature review, three primary gaps are identified. First, parasocial relationship research remains dominated by entertainment and commercial influencer contexts, with limited attention to

competence-based educational figures within competition-driven EdTech formats. Second, the effects of watching intensity and source credibility are frequently treated as direct predictors, with insufficient exploration of the underlying psychological mechanisms. Third, the literature has not explicitly conceptualized how viewing engagement translates into purchase intention through parallel relational and evaluative pathways. This study advances direct-effect models of digital engagement by demonstrating that the association between watching intensity and purchase intention operates through both relational and evaluative mechanisms in parallel.

This study develops and tests an explanatory framework that positions watching intensity as an initial engagement variable statistically associated with purchase intention through two parallel psychological mechanisms: parasocial relationship and perceived source credibility. Clash of Champions is analytically important in the broader EdTech context because it represents a hybrid format that integrates educational content, competition, entertainment, and platform promotion within a serialized digital program. Unlike conventional online learning content, this format presents high-achieving educational figures as both knowledge performers and persuasive media figures, making it a relevant case for examining how audience engagement may be translated into subscription-related intentions. Therefore, this study does not treat Clash of Champions merely as an accessible Ruangguru case, but as an example of competition-based EdTech content that illustrates broader psychological mechanisms in platform-based educational marketing.

Accordingly, this study integrates communication and media psychology perspectives into the analysis of consumer behavior in digital service markets. While parasocial relationship and source credibility have often been examined in media and communication studies, this research positions these mechanisms within the context of EdTech consumer decision-making under uncertainty. In paid digital education services, potential users often cannot fully assess service quality before purchase; therefore, non-price cues embedded in platform content may become part of the consumer evaluation process. By examining watching intensity, parasocial relationship, and perceived source credibility in a competition-based EdTech program, this study contributes to the economic literature on digital consumer choice by explaining how content-based engagement is statistically associated with subscription-related behavioral intention among exposed audiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Media Psychology Theory

The utilization of digital platforms expands reach and enhances audience engagement, ultimately influencing consumption behavior and purchase intention (Widiaini et al., 2024). From a media psychology perspective, digital media consumption is understood as a process of psychological engagement involving attention allocation, cognitive involvement, and emotional investment, rather than merely the frequency of use (Nahum-Shani et al., 2022; Ross et al., 2021). In line with Uses and Gratifications Theory Katz et al. (1973), audiences actively select and consume media to satisfy specific cognitive and affective needs, such that consumption intensity reflects a deeper level of psychological investment than momentary exposure (Özkoçak & Tuna, 2025).

In episodic and streaming-based digital media, watching intensity reflects sustained engagement, as evidenced by duration, frequency, consistency, and a tendency toward repeated viewing (Ameri et al., 2024; Flayelle et al., 2022). This intensity not only captures the quantity of access but also indicates the depth of engagement that may trigger the development of subsequent psychological mechanisms. Accordingly, this study positions watching intensity as a media psychology–based antecedent that creates the conditions for the emergence of relational and evaluative processes within the digital EdTech context.

Parasocial Relationship Theory

Parasocial relationship (PSR) refers to a relatively stable one-sided psychological relationship between audiences and media figures, characterized by perceived closeness, emotional intimacy, and cognitive familiarity despite the absence of direct interaction (Hoffner & Bond, 2022; Horton & Richard Wohl, 1956). Contemporary literature conceptualizes PSR as a relationship that develops gradually through consistent exposure to the same figure, forming sustained affective and cognitive representations (Boyd et al., 2024). In digital environments, interactive features such as responses to comments and participation in trends can strengthen the perceived closeness between media figures and audiences. Although the relationship remains inherently one-sided, these elements of symbolic communication

enhance the sense of social presence and users' psychological engagement (Fauzan & Aisyah, 2023). Digital interactivity thus provides a contextual condition that accelerates the development of parasocial relationships on content-based platforms. While PSR has been extensively examined in entertainment and commercial influencer contexts, it is becoming increasingly relevant in EdTech, particularly as learners are consistently exposed to educational figures within digital learning ecosystems (P. L. Breves & Van Berlo, 2025). In this context, repeated exposure not only increases familiarity but also strengthens relational bonds that may influence audiences' evaluative responses and behavioral outcomes (Witkowska et al., 2025).

Source Credibility Theory

Source credibility theory posits that persuasive effectiveness is shaped by audience perceptions of a message source's expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990). Credibility is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing three dimensions that have been consistently linked to attitude formation and behavioral intentions, particularly under conditions of uncertainty (Ismagilova et al., 2020). However, in digital environments such as technology-based educational services, the credibility of educational figures does not emerge automatically. However, it develops through perceived experience, consistency in interaction, and repeated exposure over time (Almaiah et al., 2022). Conceptually, credibility represents a cognitive evaluation of the legitimacy and competence of the source, distinct from, yet potentially interacting with, relational mechanisms such as parasocial relationships (Mang et al., 2024).

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The Elaboration Likelihood Model Petty & Cacioppo (1986) explains that persuasion occurs through two distinct routes: the central route, which involves in-depth cognitive evaluation of argument quality, and the peripheral route, which relies on heuristic cues such as source characteristics (Liu & Zheng, 2024). In relatively high-risk decisions, such as subscribing to paid educational services, these two routes may operate simultaneously. Within this framework, relational mechanisms such as parasocial relationships reflect affective processes aligned with peripheral processing, whereas perceived source credibility represents cognitive evaluation associated with central processing. The ELM thus serves as an integrative framework that explains how media engagement is translated through distinct yet complementary relational and evaluative pathways.

Consumer Decision-Making Theory

In the consumer decision-making literature, purchase intention in high-involvement contexts is understood as the outcome of trust-based evaluations and perceptions of legitimacy, rather than merely a spontaneous response to media exposure (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). Information-processing and trust-based decision-making perspectives suggest that, in digital decisions characterized by uncertainty, perceptions of source credibility play a crucial role in reducing perceived risk and strengthening decision confidence (J. Wang et al., 2022). In this study, purchase intention is measured using indicators of purchase intention, certainty of future purchase, preference as a primary choice, and willingness to recommend to others (Cao et al., 2025; Habib et al., 2022; C. Wang et al., 2023; Wu & Huang, 2023). Although willingness to recommend is included as an indicator of purchase-related behavioral tendency, this item may conceptually overlap with word-of-mouth or advocacy intention. Therefore, the purchase intention construct in this study is interpreted cautiously. In the EdTech context, where service quality is difficult to evaluate prior to purchase, purchase intention is strongly influenced by evaluative processes related to perceived legitimacy and trust in educational figures (Almaiah et al., 2022).

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives form an integrated framework for understanding subscription-related evaluation in competition-based EdTech content. Consumer decision-making provides the broader economic lens by situating potential users as consumers who evaluate paid digital education services under uncertainty, whereas the Elaboration Likelihood Model explains how media engagement may be associated with evaluation through distinct persuasive routes. Within this framework, watching intensity reflects audience engagement, parasocial relationship represents a relational-affective pathway, and perceived source credibility functions as an evaluative-cognitive cue. This theoretical distinction explains why parasocial relationship may be more salient than perceived source credibility in this study, as repeated exposure to educational figures may generate familiarity, emotional closeness, and academic inspiration that are more directly linked to subscription-related evaluation than credibility assessment alone.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Watching Intensity and Purchase Intention

Watching intensity reflects the frequency, duration, and consistency of exposure to content over a given period (Ameri et al., 2024; Flayelle et al., 2022). From a media psychology perspective, repeated exposure reinforces cognitive and affective activation toward narratives, figures, and brand elements, thereby enhancing positive attitudes and behavioral tendencies (Lin et al., 2022). A growing body of research indicates that watching intensity positively influences behavioral intentions, including purchase intention in the contexts of live streaming, short-video platforms, and digital commerce (Ameri et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025; Lv et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2024). Intensive exposure enhances immersive experiences, a sense of social presence, and trust in content (Li et al., 2025; Zheng et al., 2023). The expertise and attractiveness of public figures have also been shown to shape purchasing decisions, as higher watching intensity of influencers in digital environments strengthens message exposure and increases purchase intention (Adawiyah et al., 2022). However, studies on binge-watching and media persuasion suggest that exposure effects are not always direct, as they may be influenced by psychological factors such as motivation, emotional engagement, and how audiences evaluate information (Kresovich & Noar, 2020; Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). This indicates that, although a direct relationship may exist, mediating mechanisms remain important to examine. In the EdTech context, where subscription decisions involve considerations of academic benefits and financial costs, watching intensity is likely to increase purchase intention, both directly and through subsequent psychological mechanisms.

H1. Watching intensity is positively associated with purchase intention on EdTech platforms.

Watching Intensity and Parasocial Relationship

Parasocial relationship (PSR) develops through repeated exposure to the same media figures, enabling audiences to form perceptions of closeness and emotional intimacy (Hoffner & Bond, 2022; Horton & Richard Wohl, 1956). Watching intensity increases the likelihood of developing familiarity and psychological attachment (Flayelle et al., 2022; Yıldırım, 2025). Prior studies indicate that the frequency and duration of exposure are positively associated with the formation of PSR across television, YouTube, and social media contexts (Vazquez et al., 2020). However, some studies suggest that this relationship is not automatic; the effects of exposure may depend on factors such as the figure's attractiveness, audience motivation, or content quality (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). This implies that the intensity of watching provides the structural conditions for PSR development, while its strength remains context-dependent. In EdTech environments featuring educational figures, consistent episodic exposure creates opportunities for learners to develop a sense of psychological closeness with tutors or edutainers.

H2. Watching intensity is positively associated with parasocial relationships on EdTech platforms.

Parasocial Relationship and Purchase Intention

Parasocial relationship (PSR) refers to a one-sided relational bond encompassing affective, cognitive, and behavioral tendencies (Witkowska et al., 2025). In digital marketing contexts, parasocial relationships have been shown to enhance trust, foster positive attitudes, and increase purchase intention toward products or services associated with the media figure (Aw et al., 2023; Boyd et al., 2024; Liu & Zheng, 2024; Muhsina Jannat & Nayeema Ahmed, 2025). However, some studies suggest that the effect of PSR on purchase intention may be weak or context-dependent, depending on factors such as product relevance and perceived authenticity of the figure (Cao et al., 2025; Kresovich & Noar, 2020). In the EdTech context, where educators are perceived as sources of knowledge and inspiration, PSR is likely to enhance perceived learning value and increase subscription intention.

H3. Parasocial relationships are positively associated with purchase intention on EdTech platforms.

Watching Intensity and Perceived Source Credibility

Perceived source credibility encompasses audience perceptions of a source's expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990). Repeated exposure enhances familiarity and processing fluency, which can strengthen perceptions of truthfulness and credibility (Hassan & Barber, 2021). Studies in influencer marketing indicate that exposure intensity is positively associated with perceived credibility, particularly when content is consistent and informative (Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia et al., 2020). However, other research suggests that repetition effects may weaken when audiences process information critically or become alert to potential commercial bias (Nadarevic et al., 2020). This

indicates that the relationship between exposure and credibility is not entirely deterministic. In the EdTech context, where service quality is difficult to evaluate prior to use, repeated exposure to educational figures may enhance perceptions of their competence and trustworthiness.

H4. Watching intensity is positively associated with perceived source credibility on EdTech platforms.

Perceived Source Credibility and Purchase Intention

In the trust-based decision-making literature, source credibility functions as a quality cue that reduces uncertainty and perceived risk (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Muda & Hamzah, 2021). A substantial body of research shows that expertise and trustworthiness positively influence purchase intention in the contexts of eWOM, influencer marketing, and social commerce (Rungruangjit, 2022; Weismueller et al., 2020). However, some studies report relatively weak or non-significant effects, particularly when audiences are highly involved and evaluate information more rationally (Cao et al., 2025; Leite & Baptista, 2022). In the EdTech context, the credibility of educational figures is especially critical, as the quality of learning services cannot be fully verified before purchase (Añaña & Barbosa, 2023; Lăzăroiu et al., 2020).

H5. Perceived source credibility is positively associated with purchase intention on EdTech platforms.

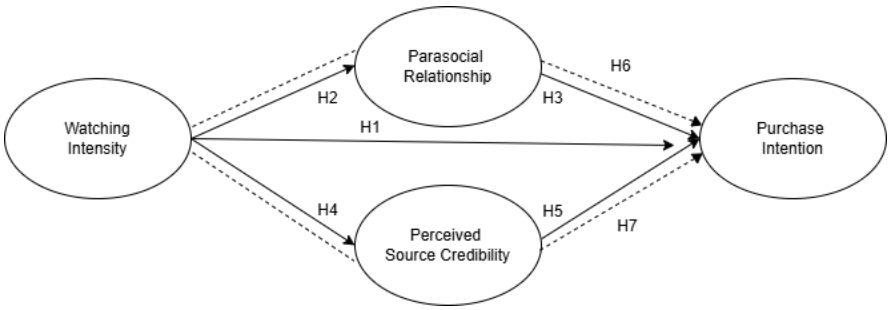
Parallel Mediation of Purchase Intention

The digital marketing literature indicates that the effects of communication and digital engagement on purchase intention are rarely direct; instead, they operate through specific psychological mechanisms (Lubis et al., 2024; Muhammad Sholeh Khan et al., 2024). Several studies also show that not all communication strategies lead to increased purchase intention without the presence of relevant mediating processes (Pasaribu et al., 2023). Consistent with the dual-route persuasion framework, parasocial relationship represents a relational–affective pathway that develops through emotional attachment to media figures (Boyd et al., 2024), whereas perceived source credibility reflects an evaluative–cognitive pathway grounded in assessments of source competence and trustworthiness (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Xu et al., 2022). Empirical studies support the mediating roles of both mechanisms across various digital contexts (P. Breves & Liebers, 2022; Liu & Zheng, 2024), although their significance may vary depending on contextual and audience characteristics. In the competitive and high-risk EdTech context, watching intensity provides the structural exposure that enables the simultaneous development of relational closeness and credibility evaluations. Therefore, the association between watching intensity and purchase intention is expected to operate through both mechanisms.

H6. Watching intensity is positively and indirectly associated with purchase intention through parasocial relationships on EdTech platforms.

H7. Watching intensity is positively and indirectly associated with purchase intention through perceived source credibility on EdTech platforms.

Figure 1. Research Model



Source: Author (2026)

METHOD

Population and Sample Characteristics

This study employed a quantitative, survey-based approach to test a mediation model examining the effects of watching intensity, parasocial relationship, perceived source credibility, and purchase intention in the EdTech context. The target population consisted of high school and university students in Indonesia who had watched the *Clash of Champions* (COC) program produced by Ruangguru. As no official data were available regarding the number of individuals meeting these criteria, the population size could not be precisely determined. Accordingly, purposive sampling was applied with the following inclusion criteria: (1) having watched COC, (2) having repeated viewing experience, and (3) being able to evaluate the educational figures featured in the program. The sample size was determined using the 10-times rule for PLS-SEM (Barclay et al., 1995; Hair et al., 2019), which recommends a minimum of 10 times the maximum number of structural paths directed to a single construct. In this study, the purchase intention construct included three paths, yielding a minimum sample size of 30 respondents. To enhance statistical power and ensure estimation stability in the mediation model, this study set a minimum target of 400 respondents. The final number of respondents exceeded the recommended minimum threshold for PLS-SEM analysis.

Although the final sample size exceeded the minimum threshold required for PLS-SEM estimation, the sampling strategy should be interpreted with caution. Because this study employed purposive sampling and relied on an online survey, the sample was not intended to be statistically representative of all Indonesian EdTech users. The respondent profile was dominated by female respondents, university students, and viewers of Episode 11 of the Clash of Champions program. Therefore, the findings are most appropriately interpreted within the context of respondents who were exposed to and engaged with the program, rather than generalized to the broader population of Indonesian students or EdTech consumers.

Data Collection

Data were collected via an online structured questionnaire administered to high school and university students in Indonesia. Screening questions were used to ensure respondents met the exposure criteria for the *Clash of Champions* (COC) program. Only complete responses that satisfied the inclusion criteria were retained for further analysis.

Instrument Development

The research instrument was developed based on previously validated scales in the media psychology and digital marketing literature. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (Koo & Yang, 2025). Watching intensity reflected the frequency and duration of exposure to the COC program. Parasocial relationships captured emotional closeness and psychological attachment to educational figures. Perceived source credibility encompassed perceptions of competence, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the figures. Purchase intention reflected the intention to use or subscribe to paid EdTech services introduced through the program. Purchase intention was measured using indicators of purchase intention, future purchase certainty, platform preference, and willingness to recommend. The willingness-to-recommend item was retained because, in the context of digital services, recommendation intention may reflect a broader purchase-related behavioral tendency and favorable evaluation of the service. However, this item is conceptually closer to word-of-mouth or advocacy intention than to purchase intention in a narrow sense. Therefore, the purchase intention construct in this study is interpreted cautiously as a purchase-related behavioral intention, and the inclusion of this item is acknowledged as a measurement limitation.

Perceived source credibility was measured using three indicators representing the main dimensions of source credibility: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. This parsimonious operationalization was used to reduce respondent burden in the online survey context while still capturing the core dimensions of the construct. Nevertheless, using a single item per dimension may limit the breadth of construct representation. Therefore, the findings related to perceived source credibility should be interpreted cautiously, and future studies are encouraged to employ more comprehensive, multidimensional scales with multiple items per dimension.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. This approach was selected for its prediction-oriented nature, suitability for complex models involving mediation, and flexibility in data distribution assumptions. The analysis was carried out in two stages: (1) evaluation of the measurement model to assess construct reliability and validity, and (2) evaluation of the structural model to test both direct and indirect relationships among variables. Path significance was assessed using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples.

PLS-SEM was selected over covariance-based SEM and ordinary mediation regression for several methodological reasons. First, the objective of this study is prediction-oriented and explanatory rather than primarily theory-confirmatory, as it examines how watching intensity is statistically associated with purchase intention through two parallel psychological mechanisms. Second, the model involves latent constructs measured by multiple indicators; therefore, PLS-SEM allows the measurement model and structural model to be evaluated simultaneously. In contrast, ordinary mediation regression using composite scores would not explicitly assess indicator reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and measurement error. Third, PLS-SEM is suitable for survey-based behavioral research using non-probability samples and does not require strict multivariate normality assumptions. Although the structural model is relatively parsimonious, PLS-SEM is considered appropriate because this study focuses on predictive relevance, latent construct estimation, and indirect associations within a mediation framework.

Given the cross-sectional online survey design and purposive sampling technique, this study does not claim causal inference. The structural paths estimated through PLS-SEM are interpreted as statistical associations among theoretically related constructs rather than evidence of causal effects. Therefore, the terms "association," "relationship," and "indirect association" are used to describe the empirical findings. This clarification is important because the design does not establish temporal ordering or experimental control among the variables.

Table 1. Operational Definition and Measurement

Variable	Operational Definition	Variable Measurement	Source
Watching Intensity	The level of audience engagement in media consumption is reflected by the frequency, duration, and consistency of viewing behavior.	**WI1:** I typically watch the *Clash of Champions* (COC) program for a relatively long duration in each session.	(Ameri et al., 2024)
		WI2: I watch the COC program regularly within a week.	
		WI3: I frequently rewatch certain episodes or segments of COC.	
		WI4: I rarely miss any episodes or sessions of COC.	
Parasocial Relationship	A one-sided psychological relationship between the audience and media figures, characterized by perceived closeness and familiarity without direct interaction.	**PSR1:** I feel emotionally invested in the educational figures at COC.	(Garcia, 2025; Rungruangjit, 2022; Witkowska et al., 2025)
		PSR2: I feel close to and comfortable with the educational figures in COC.	
		PSR3: I feel that I understand the thoughts and personalities of the educational figures in COC.	
		PSR4: I feel as if I have a friendship-like relationship with the educational figures in COC.	

		PSR5: I often think about the educational figures in COC even when I am not watching.	
Perceived Source Credibility	Audience perceptions of an information source's credibility based on expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness.	**PSC1:** The educational figures in COC demonstrate a high level of expertise in their field.	(Ismagilova et al., 2020; Rungruangjit, 2022)
		PSC2: I trust the information and recommendations provided by the educational figures in COC.	
		PSC3: The educational figures in COC are attractive and engaging to follow.	
Purchase Intention	An individual's intention to purchase a product or service as a result of a favorable evaluation.	**PI1:** I intend to purchase Ruangguru products or services promoted in COC.	(Cao et al., 2025; Habib et al., 2022; C. Wang et al., 2023; Wu & Huang, 2023)
		PI2: I am confident that I will purchase Ruangguru products or services in the future.	
		PI3: Ruangguru products or services are my primary choice compared to alternatives.	
		PI4: I am willing to recommend Ruangguru products or services to others.	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 406 respondents participated in this study through an online questionnaire. Based on demographic characteristics, the majority of respondents were female (86.7%), while males accounted for 13.3%. In terms of age, most respondents were in the 16–21 (51.23%) and 22–27 (46.80%) age groups, whereas those aged 10–15 accounted for 1.97% of the sample. Regarding educational background, respondents were predominantly university students (85.5%), followed by high school students (14.5%). In terms of content exposure, the largest proportion of respondents had watched Episode 11 (59.61%), while earlier episodes (Episodes 1–10) were viewed at lower proportions (1.23%–7.64%). These demographic and exposure patterns indicate that the sample primarily represents respondents who were highly exposed to the Clash of Champions program, particularly university students and viewers of Episode 11. However, the dominance of female respondents, university students, and Episode 11 viewers suggests that the sample is not evenly distributed across gender, educational level, and episode exposure. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as reflecting the perceptions of this specific respondent profile rather than being generalized to all Indonesian students or EdTech users. Detailed respondent characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Characteristics

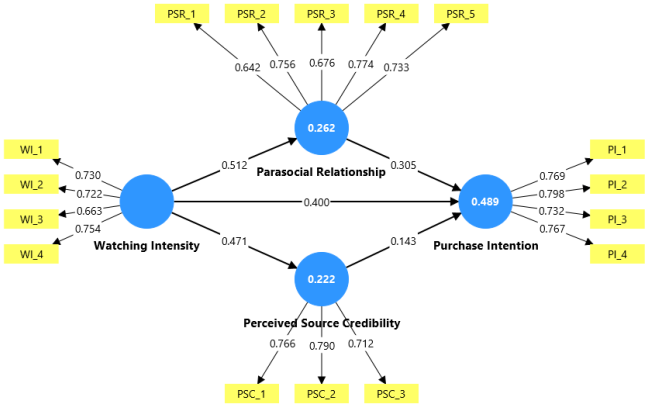
Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	54	13.3%
	Female	352	86.7%
Age	10–15 years	8	1.97%
	16–21 years	208	51.23%
	22–27 years	190	46.80%
	High school students	62	15.3%

Education Level	University students	344	84.7%
Episode Watched	1	5	1.23%
	2	5	1.23%
	3	7	1.72%
	4	10	2.46%
	5	15	3.69%
	6	22	5.42%
	7	31	7.64%
	8	29	7.14%
	9	16	3.94%
	10	24	5.91%
	11	242	59.61%

Source: Processed data by the authors (2026)

Measurement Model

Figure 2. Outer Model Assessment Results



Source: SmartPLS 4 Output (2026)

Table 2. Convergent Validity and Reliability Assessment

Construct	Item Code	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI_1	0.769	0.764	0.841	0.515
	PI_2	0.798			
	PI_3	0.732			
	PI_4	0.767			
	PSC_1	0.766	0.628	0.800	0.573

Perceived Source Credibility (PSC)	PSC_2	0.790			
	PSC_3	0.712			
Parasocial Relationship (PSR)	PSR_1	0.642	0.766	0.851	0.588
	PSR_2	0.756			
	PSR_3	0.676			
	PSR_4	0.774			
	PSR_5	0.733			
Watching Intensity (WI)	WI_1	0.730	0.686	0.810	0.516
	WI_2	0.722			
	WI_3	0.663			
	WI_4	0.754			

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output (2026)

Based on Table 3, all constructs demonstrate adequate reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.60 and ranging from 0.628 to 0.766, and Composite Reliability values above 0.70 ranging from 0.800 to 0.851. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are all above 0.50, ranging from 0.515 to 0.588, indicating that convergent validity is established (Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, all indicator outer loadings exceed 0.60, confirming that the indicators are valid representations of their respective constructs.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity: Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Parasocial Relationship	Perceived Source Credibility	Purchase Intention	Watching Intensity
Parasocial Relationship				
Perceived Source Credibility	0.602			
Purchase Intention	0.741	0.653		
Watching Intensity	0.696	0.712	0.860	

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output (2026)

Based on Table 4, all HTMT values are below 0.90 (Hair et al., 2019), ranging from 0.602 to 0.860, indicating that discriminant validity is established.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity: Fornell–Larcker Criterion

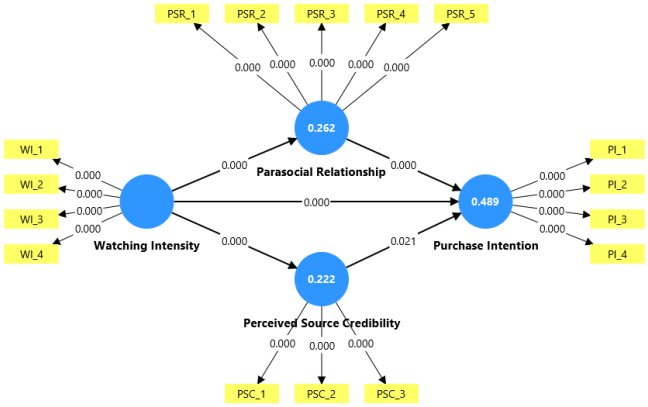
	Parasocial Relationship	Perceived Source Credibility	Purchase Intention	Watching Intensity
Parasocial Relationship	**0.718**			
Perceived Source Credibility	0.422	**0.757**		
Purchase Intention	0.570	0.460	**0.767**	
Watching Intensity	0.512	0.471	0.623	**0.718**

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output (2026)

As shown in Table 5, the square root of the AVE (diagonal values) for each construct exceeds the correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, the Fornell–Larcker criterion is satisfied, confirming discriminant validity.

Structural Model Assessment

Figure 3. Structural Model Assessment



Source: SmartPLS 4 Output (2026)

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Table 5. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	VIF
Parasocial Relationship → Purchase Intention	1.437
Perceived Source Credibility → Purchase Intention	1.362
Watching Intensity → Parasocial Relationship	1.000
Watching Intensity → Perceived Source Credibility	1.000
Watching Intensity → Purchase Intention	1.518

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output (2026)

Collinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) with a threshold of ≤ 5.0 (Hair et al., 2019). As shown in Table 6, all VIF values range from 1.000 to 1.518, indicating no evidence of multicollinearity among the predictor constructs. Therefore, the structural model satisfies the collinearity assumption.

R-Square (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Table 6. R-Square (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

	R-square	R-square adjusted	Q^2predict
Parasocial Relationship	0.262	0.261	0.251
Perceived Source Credibility	0.222	0.220	0.205
Purchase Intention	0.489	0.485	0.380

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output (2026)

The R^2 values indicate that watching intensity explains 26.2% of the variance in parasocial relationship (R^2 = 0.262), which is categorized as weak, and 22.2% of the variance in perceived source credibility (R^2 = 0.222), also classified as weak. Simultaneously, parasocial relationship, perceived source credibility, and watching intensity explain 48.9% of the variance in purchase intention (R^2 = 0.489), which approaches a moderate level according to the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2019). All Q^2predict

values are positive (ranging from 0.205 to 0.380), indicating that the model demonstrates predictive relevance and is capable of adequately predicting the endogenous constructs.

Although the model explains 48.9% of the variance in purchase intention, the remaining unexplained variance indicates that subscription-related intention may also be shaped by other factors not included in the model. In the EdTech context, variables such as household income, prior experience with Ruangguru, price sensitivity, parental influence, perceived learning benefits, perceived academic need, and comparisons with alternative platforms may also influence purchase intention. Therefore, the model's explanatory scope should be interpreted as partial rather than comprehensive.

Effect size (f^2)

Exogenous effects on endogenous constructs were assessed using effect size (f^2). According to the criteria proposed by Jacob Cohen (1988), values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively.

Table 7. Effect Size (f^2) Assessment

	Parasocial Relationship	Perceived Credibility	Source	Purchase Intention	Watching Intensity
Parasocial Relationship				0.126	
Perceived Source Credibility				0.029	
Purchase Intention					
Watching Intensity	0.356	0.285		0.206	

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output (2026)

Based on Table 8, the results indicate that the f^2 value for the association between watching intensity and parasocial relationship ($f^2 = 0.356$) is categorized as large. In contrast, the f^2 values for the associations between watching intensity and perceived source credibility ($f^2 = 0.285$) and between watching intensity and purchase intention ($f^2 = 0.206$) are classified as medium. The f^2 value for the association between parasocial relationship and purchase intention ($f^2 = 0.126$) is considered small, as is the f^2 value for the association between perceived source credibility and purchase intention ($f^2 = 0.029$), which also falls within the small category.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in PLS-SEM by evaluating path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Path coefficients indicate positive relationships with p-values < 0.05 or those falling outside the 95% confidence interval, whereas non-significant relationships are indicated by p-values > 0.05. A result is considered statistically significant when the t-value exceeds 1.96.

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing Results

		Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	t-statistics	p-values	Decision
Direct association							
H1	WI → PI	0.400	0.397	0.066	6.021	0.000	Supported
H2	WI → PSR	0.512	0.514	0.059	8.742	0.000	Supported
H3	PSR → PI	0.305	0.306	0.068	4.486	0.000	Supported
H4	WI → PSC	0.471	0.465	0.090	5.203	0.000	Supported

H5	PSC → PI	0.143	0.143	0.062	2.310	0.021	Supported, but weak effect.
Indirect association							
H6	WI → PSR → PI	0.156	0.157	0.040	3.876	0.000	Supported
H7	WI →PSC →PI	0.067	0.068	0.034	1.960	0.050	Not supported

Note: WI (*Watching Intensity*), PSR (*Parasocial Relationship*), PSC (*Perceived Source Credibility*), PI (*Purchase Intention*)

Table 9 summarizes the hypothesis testing results. H1–H6 are supported, while H7 is not supported because the indirect association through perceived source credibility does not meet the significance criterion. Although H5 is statistically significant, its small effect size indicates that perceived source credibility has a substantively weak association with purchase intention.

Discussion

H1 is supported, indicating that watching intensity is positively and significantly associated with purchase intention ($p = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.400$; $t = 6.021$; $f^2 = 0.206$). This finding suggests that respondents who reported more frequent and longer exposure to the COC program tended to report stronger purchase-related behavioral intention toward Ruangguru services. However, because this study relies on self-reported intention rather than actual subscription data, the result should be interpreted as an association with subscription-related evaluation rather than evidence of actual purchasing behavior. The medium effect size indicates that watching intensity is an important factor in shaping purchase intention, although it is not the sole determinant. From a theoretical perspective, this finding can be explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model, which posits that repeated message exposure enhances information processing, leading to more favorable evaluations and stronger purchase intention. This result is consistent with prior studies (Ameri et al., 2024; Li et al., 2025), which demonstrate that the intensity of digital media consumption positively influences purchase intention. Frequent exposure not only increases product familiarity but also strengthens immersive experiences and perceived social presence arising from digital interactions between media figures and audiences. These findings suggest that EdTech platforms may consider fostering sustained user engagement by implementing content strategies that increase both the frequency and duration of user interactions.

H2 is supported, indicating that watching intensity is positively and significantly associated with parasocial relationship ($p = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.512$; $t = 8.742$; $f^2 = 0.356$). The large effect size suggests that the intensity of watching is a strong predictor of parasocial relationship formation in digital EdTech contexts. From a theoretical perspective, this finding aligns with the concept of parasocial relationships introduced by Horton & Richard Wohl (1956), which posits that such relationships develop through repeated exposure to the same media figures. Consistent exposure enables audiences to build familiarity, identification, and the illusion of reciprocal interaction, so that, over time, media figures are no longer perceived merely as information providers but as individuals with whom audiences feel psychologically connected (Boyd et al., 2024). This finding is also supported by prior research (Vazquez et al., 2020), which demonstrates that repeated exposure to the same figures across television and digital platforms strengthens parasocial relationships. It further indicates that emotional bonds are not limited to entertainment contexts but also emerge within learning environments featuring educational figures. These results suggest that EdTech platforms may consider maintaining consistency in presenting educational figures while enhancing audience interaction to strengthen psychological closeness.

H3 is supported, indicating that parasocial relationship is positively and significantly associated with purchase intention ($p = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.305$; $t = 4.486$; $f^2 = 0.126$). This finding suggests that respondents who reported stronger psychological closeness with the educational figures in the COC program also tended to report stronger purchase-related behavioral intention toward Ruangguru services. However,

the relatively small effect size indicates that parasocial relationships function as a supporting factor rather than a primary determinant in purchase decisions. From a theoretical perspective, this finding is consistent with the concept of parasocial relationship proposed by Horton & Richard Wohl (1956), which posits that emotional closeness with media figures can shape audience attitudes and behavioral responses. Such closeness facilitates the transfer of trust and reduces resistance to persuasive messages, making recommendations conveyed by the figure feel more personal and convincing. This result aligns with prior studies (Aw et al., 2023; Liu & Zheng, 2024; Muhsina Jannat & Nayeema Ahmed, 2025; Rungruangjit, 2022), which demonstrate that parasocial relationships enhance purchase intention, as figures perceived as psychologically close are more likely to be trusted and their recommendations more readily accepted. These findings suggest that EdTech platforms may consider positioning educational figures as representative personas who foster emotional closeness and academic inspiration, while recognizing that subscription intention may also depend on other evaluative and economic factors.

H4 is supported, indicating that watching intensity is positively and significantly associated with perceived source credibility ($p = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.471$; $t = 5.203$; $f^2 = 0.285$). The medium effect size suggests that watching intensity is a reasonably strong predictor of perceived credibility of educational figures in the EdTech context. The more frequently audiences are exposed to the COC program, the more likely they are to perceive these figures as competent and trustworthy sources. Conceptually, watching intensity reflects repeated and sustained exposure that shapes audiences' cognitive and emotional experiences (Flayelle et al., 2022). Repeated exposure increases familiarity with the program's figures. Research by Mattavelli et al. (2025) on the repetition-induced source credibility effect suggests that repeated exposure to an information source enhances perceived credibility by increasing familiarity and cognitive processing fluency. When audiences consistently watch the same educational figures, the information they convey becomes easier to process, leading to more favorable evaluations of the source. Perceived credibility reflects the dimensions proposed by Ohanian (1990): expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, which collectively shape audience evaluations of the message source. This finding is also consistent with prior research Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia et al. (2020), which demonstrates that exposure intensity to content creators is positively associated with perceived credibility when messages are delivered consistently and informatively. In practice, these results highlight the importance of maintaining consistent visibility of educational figures in digital learning programs to strengthen perceptions of credibility among audiences.

H5 is supported, indicating that perceived source credibility is positively and significantly associated with purchase intention ($p = 0.021$; $\beta = 0.143$; $t = 2.310$; $f^2 = 0.029$). Although statistically significant, the small effect size suggests that source credibility functions as a supporting factor in the service evaluation process rather than a primary determinant of subscription decisions. This finding is consistent with Source Credibility Theory introduced by Carl Hovland and further developed by Ohanian (1990), which posits that perceptions of expertise and trustworthiness act as evaluative cues that enhance message acceptance and favorable evaluations of promoted objects. In the EdTech context, where service quality cannot be fully assessed before use, the credibility of educational figures helps audiences reduce uncertainty about platform quality. This aligns with the Elaboration Likelihood Model, which suggests that source credibility can influence decisions through the peripheral route when individuals do not engage in deep information processing. Under such conditions, figures perceived as competent and trustworthy can facilitate message acceptance and stimulate purchase intention. However, the magnitude of this influence remains limited, as subscription decisions are also shaped by factors such as perceived service benefits and relevance to user needs. Empirically, this result is consistent with prior findings (Cao et al., 2025; Leite & Baptista, 2022), which indicate that the effect of source credibility on purchase intention tends to be relatively small and context-dependent. This finding suggests that perceived source credibility may reduce uncertainty in evaluating EdTech services. However, its small effect size indicates that credibility is not a dominant explanatory factor of purchase intention. Consumers may still require stronger economic and functional considerations, such as perceived learning benefits, price suitability, prior platform experience, and academic needs, before forming stronger subscription-related intention.

H6 is supported, indicating that watching intensity has a significant indirect association with purchase intention through parasocial relationship ($p = 0.000$; $\beta = 0.156$; $t = 3.876$). This finding suggests that parasocial relationship represents a significant relational pathway linking watching intensity with purchase-related behavioral intention among COC viewers. The result indicates that higher exposure to the COC program is statistically associated with stronger parasocial relationship, which is in turn associated with stronger subscription-related evaluation. Rather than implying a causal mechanism, this indirect pathway should be interpreted as an associative pattern within the cross-sectional survey model. This result is consistent with prior studies (P. Breves & Liebers, 2022; Liu & Zheng, 2024), which identify emotional engagement with media figures as an indirect relational pathway connecting media exposure and purchase-related behavioral intention. From a theoretical perspective, this finding can be understood through the concept of parasocial relationship introduced by Horton & Richard Wohl (1956), in which repeated exposure to media figures may be associated with perceived closeness and familiarity. This process also aligns with the Elaboration Likelihood Model proposed by Petty & Cacioppo (1986), where relational cues may support message acceptance as part of audience evaluation. However, the magnitude of the indirect association suggests that parasocial relationship should be understood as one supporting pathway, while subscription-related evaluation may also be associated with perceived learning benefits, price suitability, prior platform experience, and academic needs. Practically, this finding implies that EdTech platforms may consider designing content that supports audience familiarity and emotional relevance while clearly communicating concrete learning benefits. These implications remain tentative because this study measures self-reported purchase-related intention rather than actual subscription behavior.

H7 is not supported, indicating that watching intensity does not have a significant indirect association with purchase intention through perceived source credibility ($p = 0.050$). This suggests that perceived source credibility did not emerge as a significant indirect pathway linking watching intensity with purchase-related behavioral intention among COC viewers. Statistically, the indirect association via perceived source credibility is relatively small ($\beta = 0.067$). Although audiences perceive the figures as competent and trustworthy, this perception exerts a limited influence on purchase intention and is insufficient to drive subscription decisions. This result should not be interpreted as evidence that source credibility is theoretically unimportant. Rather, it may indicate that credibility was not a strong indirect mechanism in this sample, while also reflecting the limited operationalization of credibility through a parsimonious three-item measure. This result is consistent with prior research Lou & Yuan (2019), which indicates that source credibility may influence purchase intention through consumer trust, but it may not be sufficient as a dominant factor, particularly for products requiring rational evaluation. This can be explained by the Elaboration Likelihood Model Petty & Cacioppo (1986), which distinguishes between central (e.g., program benefits) and peripheral (e.g., credibility or attractiveness of the figure) routes of persuasion. The level of consumer involvement determines the depth of message processing (Añaña & Barbosa, 2023), suggesting that COC audiences are more likely to rely on the central, rational route. Consequently, the indirect association through perceived source credibility remains relatively weak. Audiences may admire or trust the educational figures, yet still form subscription-related intention based on more rational evaluations.

Taken together, the findings indicate that perceived source credibility has a statistically significant but substantively weak association with purchase intention. Although the direct path from perceived source credibility to purchase intention is significant, its effect size is small, suggesting that credibility alone is insufficient to strongly explain subscription-related intention in this context. Moreover, the indirect association through perceived source credibility is not supported, indicating that credibility does not function as a strong mediating mechanism between watching intensity and purchase intention. This pattern suggests that audiences may perceive educational figures as competent and trustworthy. However, such evaluations do not necessarily translate into stronger subscription intention unless other considerations, such as perceived learning benefits, price suitability, prior experience with the platform, parental influence, or actual need for academic support accompany them.

From an economic perspective, this finding indicates that perceived credibility may help reduce information asymmetry in the evaluation of paid EdTech services, but it is not sufficient to strongly explain subscription-related evaluation on its own. In EdTech markets, consumers may still rely on more concrete value considerations, such as perceived learning benefits, price suitability, prior platform experience, and academic needs. Thus, source credibility should be understood as one supporting signal within a broader consumer evaluation process, rather than as the main determinant of subscription-related intention.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in extending the analysis of EdTech platforms beyond conventional digital marketing logic. Rather than treating Clash of Champions solely as promotional content for Ruangguru, this study positions it as a competition-based EdTech format that serves as an informational and relational signal in the digital education market. In this context, audience engagement is associated with subscription-related intention through mechanisms that reduce uncertainty and shape consumer evaluation. The findings suggest that relational-affective mechanisms may be more salient than credibility-based evaluations when consumers respond to educational platform content. This contributes to the literature on digital consumer choice by showing how non-price cues embedded in educational entertainment content may be associated with subscription-related evaluation of paid digital learning services.

Table 9. Importance-performance map analysis (IPMA)

	Performance
Parasocial Relationship	76.942
Perceived Source Credibility	83.814
Watching Intensity	78.066

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output (2026)

The Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) was employed to simultaneously assess the importance and performance of the variables. The results presented in Table 10 indicate that perceived source credibility has the highest performance score (83.814), followed by watching intensity (78.066) and parasocial relationship (76.942). This suggests that, from a perceptual standpoint, the audience already evaluates the credibility of educational figures positively. However, given its non-significant indirect association with purchase intention, credibility appears to function more as a supporting evaluative signal than as a strong mechanism linked to subscription-related intention. These findings suggest that EdTech platforms may consider communicating educational value and program advantages more clearly. From a platform strategy perspective, credible educational figures should not only be used to attract attention, but also to deliver clearer information about learning benefits, pricing relevance, service quality, and expected academic value. This may help reduce information asymmetry and strengthen consumer trust when potential users evaluate paid digital learning services under uncertainty. However, because this study measures self-reported purchase intention rather than actual subscription behavior, these practical implications should be interpreted as tentative.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that watching intensity is positively associated with purchase-related behavioral intention in the context of the Clash of Champions program. The findings indicate that a parasocial relationship serves as a more salient indirect pathway than perceived source credibility. Although perceived source credibility is significantly associated with purchase intention, its small effect size suggests that credibility functions more as a supporting evaluative factor than as a strong explanatory mechanism. The main contribution of this study lies in integrating communication and media psychology perspectives into the analysis of consumer behavior in digital service markets, particularly by showing how content-based engagement in competition-based EdTech programs is statistically associated with subscription-related evaluation among exposed audiences. This context illustrates how audience engagement with educational figures may be linked to subscription-related intention through both relational-affective and credibility-based mechanisms. This contribution is also relevant to the literature on digital consumer choice because it shows how non-price signals embedded in EdTech

content may be associated with subscription-related evaluation of paid digital learning services. Several limitations should be noted. The use of purposive sampling and an online survey limits the generalizability of the findings, particularly because the sample was dominated by female respondents, university students, and viewers of Episode 11. In addition, the model explains 48.9% of the variance in purchase intention, suggesting that other factors, such as income, prior experience with Ruangguru, price sensitivity, parental influence, and perceived learning benefits, may also be relevant. Finally, this study measured self-reported purchase intention rather than actual subscription or purchase behavior; therefore, practical implications should be interpreted cautiously.

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