



Binge-Watching and Continuation Intention in VoD Services: The Mediating Role of Cliffhangers Among Young Viewers

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Abstract : *The impact of binge watching is an evolving phenomenon affecting consumers' continuation intention on video-on-demand (VOD) platforms, mediated by cliffhangers. This study targets a population of young individuals aged 17-25 years. The research design is quantitative, aiming to demonstrate the cause-and-effect relationship between binge watching and continuation intention, mediated by cliffhangers. The novelty of this research lies in not only examining the direct relationship between binge watching and continuation intention but also investigating the mediating effect of cliffhangers, providing deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms of consumer behavior. Data analysis was conducted using the Smart PLS application, utilizing primary data for the study. The findings indicate that cliffhangers directly have a positive and significant impact on the continuation intention for video-on-demand and also significantly influence binge watching. Additionally, binge watching has a positive and significant effect on the continuation intention for video-on-demand. However, indirect, binge watching has a positive but not significant effect on the continuation intention for video-on-demand when mediated by cliffhangers.*

Keywords: *Binge Watching, Continuation Intention, Cliff Hanger, Video on Demand*

1. INTRODUCTION

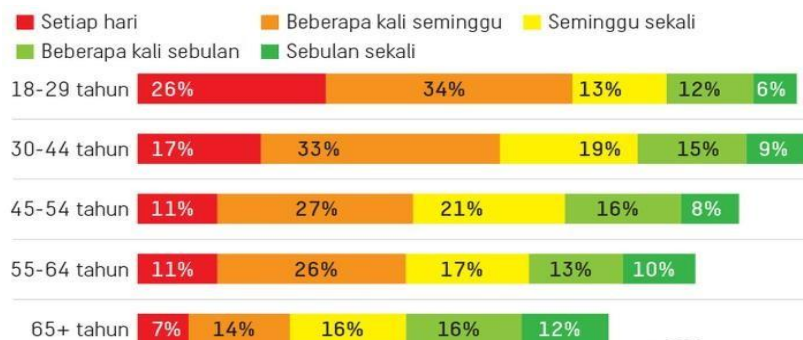
Advances in communication technology and *the internet of things* have changed the way humans interact with media. Media convergence has blurred the boundaries between various technologies, creating new concepts and definitions. Television, as an audiovisual medium, has undergone drastic changes in recent decades, starting from videos and DVDs, to finally becoming the *video on demand service* that is now widely used (Zahara, et.al.2020).

The presence of VOD service providers offering films and series has changed the way consumers enjoy shows. The words "To be continued..." at the end of an episode are no longer an obstacle to waiting for the next episode. By subscribing to VOD services on various platforms, consumers can enjoy thousands of films and television series whenever and wherever they want. Without ad interruptions and without limits on the number of episodes that can be watched at one time. This VOD service makes many people spend hours watching without a break, a phenomenon known as *binge watching* and can occur in various age groups. This shows that addiction to watching has become common in the era of advances in communication media technology today (Kompas.com , Life Style Feel Good, 2019).

The ease of technology in pausing, speeding up, or slowing down media gives viewers autonomy that enhances the viewing experience. This autonomy allows viewers to finish watching immediately and not miss anything. The variety of choices available in VOD applications is a technological accessibility that is not found in conventional television viewing (Zahara, et.al.2020)

In 2018, a survey conducted by Morningconsult in the United States confirmed this phenomenon. The institution conducted a survey on October 25-26, 2018 involving 2,044 television viewers aged 18 and over through online interviews. The Morningconsult survey revealed that the majority of respondents binge-watched *several* times a week or even every day. The survey results showed a consistent pattern across several age groups (Kompas.id. Research, 2021).

Table 1. Percentage of Morningconsult Survey Results Regarding Frequency of Watching Television Shows Non-Stop



Data Source: (Kompas.id. Research, 2021).

Binge watching activities, there are several motives obtained, namely as a filler of free time, relaxation, entertainment, escape, and increasing knowledge. However, one of the factors that allows film producers to make someone watch films for hours is related to psychological tendencies in the brain. There is a *zeigarnic* effect, which is the tendency to remember things that have not been completed. This can be realized in a show. The audience will also continue to be influenced **by the effect** which is a feeling of curiosity in the mind or *cliffhanger* (Kompas.id. Research, 2021).

Usually, *cliffhangers* appear at the end of an episode, chapter/part, or section of a story, where there is a big or mysterious event that makes people curious about what will happen next. This concept is often used by film producers to make the audience interested in watching further for hours. The curiosity generated by *the cliffhanger* is what makes the

audience not have to wait long to find out the continuation of the story (Cendiia et.al, 2020).

The nature of a *cliffhanger* is to provide a clue that the main character in a TV series will face something unexpected, such as a dangerous event or a controversial dilemma (Michelin, 2011). The ending of the plot can make the audience angry, which then stimulates cognitive elaboration to understand the clues and predict the development of the story. *Cliffhangers* are considered as triggers that make someone watch more episodes and can also create excitement, thus encouraging the audience to continue *binge-watching* (Van den Brandt, 2019).

The continuous activity of viewers watching films on VOD platforms results in *continuation intention behavior*, which increases the strength of an individual's intention to carry out continued activities (Tekagnetha et.al 2020) which refers to continued use, when the decision to continue follows the initial acceptance decision (Bhattacharjee.2015).

With the phenomena that have been explained, this study is interesting to analyze the relationship between *cliffhanger* and *binge watching* and *continuation intention* on VOD platforms among young viewers. in understanding the concepts of business sustainability and consumer behavior.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Binge Watching

Binge watching can be considered as a modern behavioral phenomenon that involves watching between two and six episodes of a TV show in a single session. The definition of binge watching also includes “watching at least two episodes in a single session, with each session averaging two or three episodes” (Jenner, 2020). Over the past decade, online streaming services and similar viewing platforms have become a means for viewers to enjoy shows for hours on end. Binge watching has changed the way people watch television and may also affect economic mechanisms (Moore, 2015). Generally, this behavior is associated with very high, consistent, and very time-consuming involvement. The amount of time spent, frequency, and level of involvement are important indicators of viewing habits (Sung et al. 2018). Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

H1: Binge-watching has a significant influence on the continuation intention of video-on-demand services.

Cliffhanger

The film industry stimulates the audience's curiosity about what will happen in the next episode by using cliffhangers (Van den Brandt, 2019). *Cliffhangers* are one form of endings that are often used in TV series. This technique increases the plot's appeal by delaying the resolution of the problem, thus raising questions in the audience's mind and increasing their interest (Cendikia et al. 2020). Hanging endings can make the audience feel curious and try to understand the clues and predict the continuation of the story. *Cliffhangers* are considered an effective way to get viewers to watch more episodes, thus encouraging viewers to *binge-watch* (Van den Brandt, 2019). Based on the explanation above, the following hypotheses can be proposed:

H2: Cliffhangers have a significant impact on continuation intention in video-on-demand platforms.

H3: Cliffhangers have a significant impact on binge-watching behavior in video-on-demand platforms.

Continuation Intention

Kotler and Keller (2016) stated that consumer behavior needs to be well understood because if the product consumed meets expectations and provides satisfaction and pleasure, then consumers will have the intention to buy back (*repurchase intention*) or continue to interact with the product (*continuance intention*). Bhattacharjee (2015) provides the Perception that user continuation intention (*continuance intention*) is similar to repurchase intention (*repurchase intention*). *Continuity intention* describes how much consumers want to continue using the information system and refers to the individual's intention to continue participating in activities after adopting the product (Chen, 2015).

Based on the explanation above, the conceptual framework of this study is depicted in the figure below.

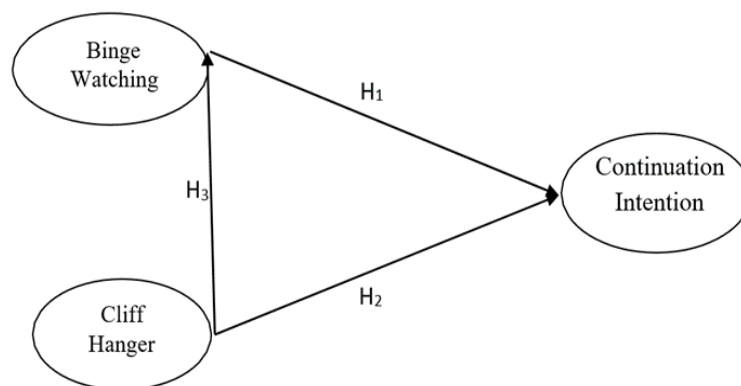


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Model of the Research

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses an explanatory quantitative design to explain how exogenous variables affect endogenous variables. The focus of the study is the young generation in Jakarta, aged 17-25 years, who have watched on VOD services. This generation is very active in watching on VOD services. The number of the young generation population who have watched on VOD services is not known for sure or infinite. The sample size in this study was set between 5 and 10 times the number of indicator items of the research variables (Hair et al., 2017). The sampling technique used was *non-probability sampling*, namely a sampling technique that does not provide equal opportunities or chances for each member of the population to be selected as a sample, with a sampling determination technique using *Purposive Sampling*. The number of samples in this study was 120 respondents. The types and sources of data used were from primary data obtained through the distribution of questionnaires using a Likert scale. Data processing and analysis were carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) statistical tool.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analyzing the characteristics of respondents helps researchers ensure that respondents can understand and respond to research issues appropriately. This is also the basis for deepening the discussion of research results. From the analysis of respondent characteristics data, it can be seen that this study was dominated by women, namely 74 people (62%), while men were 46 people (38%). This shows that the research objects were mostly followed by women.

Based on the age data, the majority of respondents were aged 17-19 years, namely 52 people (43%). Respondents aged 20-22 years numbered 43 people (36%), and respondents aged 23-25 years numbered 25 people (21%). Based on occupation, the majority of respondents were students, as many as 71 people (59%). As many as 31 respondents (26%) worked as employees, and 18 respondents (15%) were entrepreneurs.

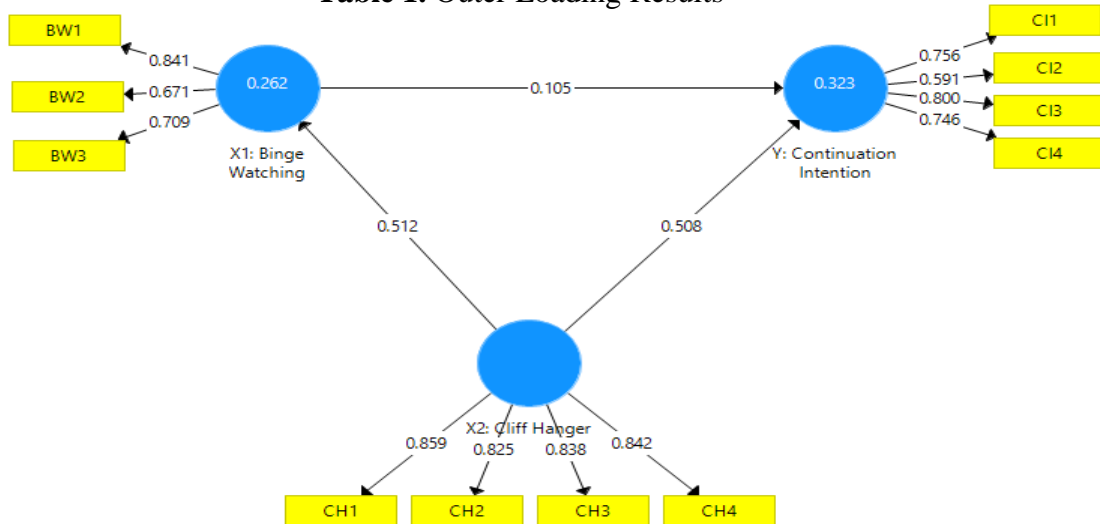
Convergent Validity

In this study, the convergent validity of the model is measured through outer loadings. A loading factor is considered valid if it has a value > 0.6 which is then set as the standardized loading estimate. The results of the first outer loading validity test,

presented in table 1, show that several indicators have outer loading values < 0.6. These indicators are BW4, BW5, BW6, BW7 which are then eliminated. Furthermore, the outer loading test was carried out again and the results showed that all indicators had met the established outer loading criteria.

| Variables | Indicator | Outer Loading 1 | Outer Loading 2 |
|-------------------------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Binge Watching | BW1 | 0.746 | 0.841 |
| | BW2 | 0.610 | 0.671 |
| | BW3 | 0.646 | 0.709 |
| | BW4 | 0.344 | - |
| | BW5 | 0.458 | - |
| | BW6 | 0.572 | - |
| | BW7 | 0.407 | - |
| Cliffhanger | CH1 | 0.860 | 0.859 |
| | CH2 | 0.822 | 0.825 |
| | CH3 | 0.840 | 0.838 |
| | CH4 | 0.841 | 0.842 |
| Continuation Intention | CI1 | 0.761 | 0.756 |
| | CI2 | 0.591 | 0.600 |
| | CI3 | 0.803 | 0.800 |
| | CI4 | 0.739 | 0.746 |

Table 1. Outer Loading Results



Thus, the validity of the model based on outer loadings has been met. In addition to relying on the outer loadings value, the convergent validity test was also carried out using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. The test results show that each latent variable has an AVE value > 0.5 according to the established standards.

Table 2. Results of Average Variance Extracted

| Variables | Binge Watching | Cliff Hanger | Continuation Intention |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Average Variance Extracted | 0.553 | 0.707 | 0.529 |

Discriminant Validity

Based on the results of table 3, the cross-loading value of each construct is evaluated to ensure that the correlation between the construct and its measurement items is greater than that of other constructs. Since all indicators have loading values for their constructs greater than their cross-loading, this model has met the requirements of discriminant validity.

Table 3. Cross - loading results

| Indicator | Binge Watching | Cliff Hanger | Continuation Intention |
|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| BW1 | 0.841 | | |
| BW2 | 0.671 | | |
| BW3 | 0.709 | | |
| CH1 | | 0.859 | |
| CH2 | | 0.825 | |
| CH3 | | 0.838 | |
| CH4 | | 0.842 | |
| CI1 | | | 0.756 |
| CI2 | | | 0.691 |
| CI3 | | | 0.800 |
| CI4 | | | 0.746 |

Reliability

The results of the reliability test shown in Table 4 show that the Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability coefficient values for each latent variable are > 0.6 , in accordance with the established standards, so the construct reliability is met.

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability Results

| Variables | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Binge Watching | 0.601 | 0.786 |
| Cliff Hanger | 0.862 | 0.906 |
| Continuation Intention | 0.707 | 0.816 |

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The results of table 5 show that the coefficient of determination (R²) for the Continuation Intention variable (endogenous) which is directly influenced by the Binge Watching and Cliff Hanger variables is 0.323 or 32.3%. This indicates that this model is categorized as a moderate model. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination (R²) for the Binge Watching variable which is influenced by the Cliff Hanger variable is 0.262 or 26.2%, which indicates that this model is categorized as a weak model.

Table 5. Results of the Determination Coefficient (R²)

| Variables | R Square | R Square Adjusted |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Binge Watching | 0.262 | 0.256 |
| Continuation Intention | 0.323 | 0.312 |

Path Coefficient

The results of table 6 show that directly (Direct Effect), the Cliff Hanger variable has a positive relationship with Binge Watching of 0.512 and also has a positive relationship with Continuation Intention of 0.561. In addition, Binge Watching also shows a positive relationship with Continuation Intention of 0.105. While indirectly (Indirect Effect), the Binge Watching variable has a positive relationship with Continuation Intention of 0.054, which is mediated by the Cliff Hanger variable.

Table 6. Path Coefficient Results

Direct Effect:

| Variables | Original Sample (O) |
|--|---------------------|
| Binge Watching -> Continuation Intention | 0.105 |
| Cliff Hanger -> Binge Watching | 0.512 |
| Cliff Hanger -> Continuation Intention | 0.561 |

Indirect Effect:

| Variables | Original Sample (O) |
|---|---------------------|
| Cliff Hanger -> Binge Watching -> Continuation Intention | 0.054 |

Hypothesis Testing

From the results of table 7, it can be seen that directly (Direct Effect), the Cliff Hanger variable has a significant effect on the Binge Watching variable (p-value = 0.000) and also on the Continuation Intention variable (p-value = 0.000). In addition, the Binge Watching variable has a significant effect on the Continuation Intention variable (p-value

= 0.000). However, indirectly (Indirect Effect), the Binge Watching variable does not have a significant effect on Continuation Intention mediated by the Cliff Hanger variable (p-value = 0.289).

Table 7. Hypothesis Test Results

| Direct Effect: | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------|-----------------|
| | Variables | T Statistics | P Values |
| | Binge Watching -> Continuation Intention | 3.658 | 0 |
| | Cliff Hanger -> Binge Watching | 6.655 | 0 |
| | Cliff Hanger -> Continuation Intention | 9,647 | 0 |
| Indirect Effect: | | | |
| | Variables | T Statistics | P Values |
| | Cliff Hanger -> Binge Watching -> Continuation Intention | 1,061 | 0.289 |

Fit Model

To meet the model fit criteria, the SMSR value must be less than 0.05. Based on the SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) value, which is 0.088 (<0.10), it can be concluded that the model fits the data and has a good model fit.

Table 8. Model Fit Results

| | Saturated Model | Estimated Model |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| SRMR | 0.088 | 0.088 |

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results obtained from statistical analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a. Binge watching has a positive and significant effect on continuation intention on video on demand due to increased user satisfaction, emotional attachment to content, higher engagement, formed viewing habits, social influence, and effectiveness of content recommendations. All of these factors together create a satisfying viewing experience and encourage users to continue using video on demand services.
- b. Cliffhanger has a positive and significant effect on continuation intention in video on demand. By utilizing cliffhangers effectively, video on demand platforms can increase audience engagement, extend viewing duration, and ultimately increase user intention to continue subscribing and using the service. This shows that cliff-hangers are a powerful narrative tool to retain and expand the user base in video on demand services.

- c. Cliffhangers have a positive and significant effect on binge watching on video on demand. By creating a sense of curiosity and high emotional engagement, cliffhangers make viewers more likely to continue watching multiple episodes in a row, which benefits video on demand platforms in terms of viewing duration and user retention.
- d. Indirectly, binge watching has a positive but insignificant effect on continuation intention through cliffhanger mediation. Cliffhanger increases the user's desire to continue watching, but when analyzed further, it was found that the direct effect of binge watching on continuation intention was insignificant due to the existence of cliffhangers that were ineffective and not used consistently.

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