

Digital Comic Strip as an Attempt for Self-Control Against Impulsive Buying among Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

Generation Z has a close relationship with social media, which influences the emergence of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Uncontrolled FOMO can result in a lifestyle that prioritizes wants over needs. This type of lifestyle eventually has an impact on impulsive buying behaviors often seen in Generation Z. To prevent impulsive buying in Generation Z, good self-control is necessary. Based on this, the research aims to design a digital comic strip as an effort for self-control and prevention of impulsive buying in Generation Z. The digital comic strip is designed to send educative informations for the target audience. The research uses a qualitative method and the design process using a design thinking method. The results of the data collection in the form of observations, interviews, documentation, and literature studies indicate that many Generation Z have engaged in impulsive buying. In addition, data collection also shows that Generation Z is interested and easily accepts information from digital comic strips because of the simple language, easily understandable content, easy access, and attractive features, such as illustration style, character design, and story flow. Therefore, it is concluded that a digital comic strip is needed that can be used as an effort for Generation Z's self-control over impulsive buying.

KEYWORDS

Digital Comic Strip
Impulsive Buying
Self-Control

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INTRODUCTION

Generation Z refers to individuals born between 1995 and 2012 (Nurmalia et al., 2024). This generation exhibits a higher consumption tendency compared to other generations due to their close connection with technology, making them more susceptible to the conveniences of technology and more inclined to follow trends influenced by technological exposure (Sukma, 2023). Generation Z's desire to keep up with trends is also driven by FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), which is the fear of missing out on experiences and trends that others have already embraced. FOMO is one of the most significant factors influencing Generation Z in shaping their modern lifestyle and shopping behavior, compelling them to constantly follow trends or viral phenomena and imitate others (Populix, 2024). According to Pusenius (2023), this also diminishes Generation Z's self-control in making purchasing decisions (Rana Deliana et al., 2024). Consequently, Generation Z tends to prioritize desires over needs in their lifestyle. This is evident in behaviors such as purchasing items to display social status, and trying out trending clothes, skincare products, food, or beverages (Bado et al., 2023). Data from the Populix Outlook Report: Indonesia Digital Economy in 2024 also indicates that Generation Z places a higher priority on leisure activities, such as hanging out with friends and traveling, as their

primary focus (Populix, 2024). These actions are driven by the desire to fulfill wants rather than needs. This lifestyle can prompt Generation Z to engage in impulsive buying, which is characterized by irrational and unplanned purchases, according to Verplanken and Herabadi (2001). Such purchases occur spontaneously and are accompanied by mental conflict and emotional impulses (Ainaa, 2022). This behavior can lead to excessive consumption and eventually result in wastefulness. The tendency of Generation Z to prioritize wants is evident from a survey conducted by Anak Bangsa Indonesia and the Analytics Team of KG Media, in collaboration with Litbang Kompas, which found that 52% of Generation Z enjoy gathering or hanging out in cafes or eateries as a lifestyle choice that prioritizes desires (Sutomo, 2022). Furthermore, 51% (online shopping) and 52% (offline shopping) of the population occasionally purchase items beyond their needs, with 53% of these purchases made by individuals aged 18-25, representing Generation Z (Populix, 2023). Generation Z tends to spend money to satisfy lifestyle desires rather than essential needs, which leads to impulsive buying (Populix, 2024). The most common reasons for Generation Z shopping beyond their needs are the desire to buy something they can finally afford (40%) and self-satisfaction (39%) (Populix, 2023). This indicates that purchases beyond needs are often not well-considered.



Figure 1. Types of Online and Offline Shopping (Source: Populix, 2023)

Impulsive buying among Generation Z is the primary focus of this study. To prevent impulsive buying behavior, self-control is essential. According to Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone (2004) in (Prianingrum, 2023), self-control is the ability of an individual to regulate, alter, and inhibit undesirable reactions and behaviors in response to specific situations. Good self-control can help Generation Z avoid impulsive buying. Therefore, this study aims to design a digital comic strip as a means of promoting self-control and preventing impulsive buying among Generation Z.

Comic strips are used as a medium to convey information due to several advantages. Illustrations in comics can help convey stories more clearly and make them easier to understand (Abdillah, 2021). Additionally, the text in comics facilitates the delivery of information by using simple language (Wardana, 2018). According to Millward Brown (2017), this combination is particularly suitable for Generation Z, who tend to prefer visual content over text-only content. Furthermore, Wijaya (2021) explains that the combination of text and illustrations can enhance reading interest among the younger generation (Soerjo, 2022). Angkowo and Kosasih (2007:22) also note that the use of color in comics has an appeal that can effectively boost readers' motivation, while the storyline, which often mirrors everyday situations and challenges faced by readers, further engages them (Danaswari et al., 2013). The comic strip format can deliver information concisely yet comprehensively, making it ideal given studies indicating that Generation Z has a short attention span and requires media that presents information in a brief manner without demanding much time to process (Kompasiana, 2023). Digital comic strips have the added advantage of being combined with motion (Ramadhan & Rasuardie, 2020), which can enhance the communication of messages in a more engaging and

effective way (Kurniati, 2020). Consequently, the design of the digital comic strip will incorporate motion elements. Moreover, digital comic strips can be easily accessed by Generation Z, who are avid users of technology.

Previous research is used as a reference and comparison that is relevant to this research. The previous research used is “Perancangan Komik Strip sebagai Media Edukasi Gaya Hidup Minimalis untuk Generasi Muda” by Kresna Girindra (Girindra, 2021). The main objective is to educate the younger generation about the minimalist lifestyle as a form of preventing consumptive behavior. The main media is a printed comic strip with the main content focused on the minimalist lifestyle and targeting the younger generation.

This study aims to prevent impulsive buying by promoting self-control through a healthy lifestyle, such as frugal living, using engaging digital comic strips as a medium. The digital comic strips are enhanced with motion elements, providing a distinctive appeal. Additionally, the digital format allows for easy access from anywhere and at any time. The content of these digital comic strips covers general information on impulsive buying as well as specific strategies for self-control prevention. The target audience is Generation Z, particularly those aged 18-24. It is hoped that these digital comic strips will be utilized and applied by Generation Z as a means to prevent impulsive buying, which often results from a lifestyle that prioritizes wants over needs, and to help them develop better self-control.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach, which, according to Moleong (2008:6), is designed to understand phenomena experienced by the subject, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions, by describing them comprehensively and in detail through words (Muhammad, 2020). Data collection methods include offline observations at locations frequently visited by Generation Z, such as malls and cafes, as well as online observations on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, and the Shopee marketplace. Additionally, interviews were conducted with Generation Z individuals aged 18-24, YouTubers, and members of the frugal living lifestyle community. Documentation was carried out by collecting research data on impulsive buying and Generation Z from surveys conducted by Anak Bangsa Indonesia and the Analytics Team of KG Media, in collaboration with Litbang Kompas and Populix. Literature reviews were gathered from journals and books concerning Generation Z, impulsive buying, self-control, and frugal living.

The design process employs the design thinking methodology, which is an iterative process aimed at understanding users, testing assumptions, and redefining problems. The stages of design thinking include:

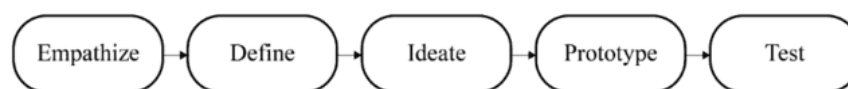


Figure 2. Design Thinking Flow
(Source: Researcher, 2024)

1. Empathize: This stage involves data collection through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review to identify problems. It can also help researcher understand the needs and views of the target audience (Faradita et al., 2023).
2. Define: This is the data analysis stage, using the analytical techniques proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992), which include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Pradita, 2013).
3. Ideate: At this stage, alternative solution ideas are identified based on problem statements. This involves several analyses:
 - a. STP analysis according to Kotler (2008) includes segmentation, targeting, and positioning to identify the target audience, specifically Generation Z aged 18-24 years (Mujahidin & Khoiraningrum, 2019)

- b. Unique Selling Proposition (USP) as the unique and differentiating point (Kotler & Keller, 2012)
 - c. SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) as proposed by Pearce and Robinson (2008) to create a general strategic overview by aligning internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) with external factors (opportunities and threats) (Chairunnas, 2012)
 - d. Key Communication Message (KCM) as the core message (Jefkins, 1998)
 - e. Designing a concept that aligns with the problem and the characteristics of Generation Z.
4. Prototype: This stage involves creating a version of the work based on the identified solutions. The stages in designing a digital comic strip include determining the concept and theme, which encompasses ideas such as characters, plot, and messages; planning the storyline, panels, scenes, and dialogue; sketching; panel placement; illustrating (characters, backgrounds, dialogue, objects, and coloring); and editing (Hart, 2013).

Test: This is the stage where the prototype is tested on a small group of the target audience. This test will also result in an evaluation (Yusuff et al., 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The collected data will undergo a process of reduction and presentation. Based on the results of this process, it can be concluded that Generation Z is prone to impulsive buying due to the influence of social environments, trends, as well as emotional and cognitive factors. Other contributing factors include the influence of social media, fear of missing out (FOMO), the pricing of new products, and a lifestyle that prioritizes personal desires. Impulsive buying has a negative impact on personal finances due to a lack of self-control. Therefore, education on a frugal living lifestyle through digital comic strips is necessary as a form of self-control against impulsive buying. This aims to enhance Generation Z's understanding and awareness of managing their finances more wisely.

From **STP (Segmenting, Targeting, Positioning) Analysis**, the segmentation analysis is divided into three categories. The first is geographical, focusing on Indonesia, specifically Java Island and Surabaya. The second is demographic, targeting males and females aged 18-24 who are students, college students, or workers. The third category targets Generation Z with a lifestyle that prioritizes desires, FOMO, and a tendency to follow viral trends. Additionally, they enjoy shopping, hanging out, and using social media. The targeting strategy focuses on Generation Z aged 18-24, both males and females, who prioritize wants over needs. The positioning of this digital comic strip is as an educational medium that is engaging, easily accessible, and easy to understand. This work is also intended as an educational media to help them understand how to utilize self-control against impulsive buying.

From **USP (Unique Selling Proposition) Analysis**, the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of this digital comic strip is the use of a consistent character as the face of the comic, allowing readers to feel connected to the storyline. Additionally, the incorporation of motion enhances the reader's experience and serves as an attraction. This work is tailored to Generation Z's preferences based on the data, using a simple art style and cool tone color palette.

And from **SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis**, the main conclusions and strategies are derived from the SWOT analysis and its strategies, which include designing a digital comic strip with simple language, concise content, easy comprehension, and accessibility, aimed at Generation Z to promote a frugal living lifestyle as a form of self-control in facing impulsive buying.

1. Keyword

The results of the STP, USP, and SWOT analyses are then re-examined to identify the main keyword that can assist in the conceptual design of the work. The keyword identified is "Improvement," meaning the process of making something better. The significance of keyword "Improvement" in the design is to encourage Generation Z to make positive changes within themselves to be wiser in self-control by adopting a frugal living lifestyle as an effort to counteract the negative impacts of impulsive buying.

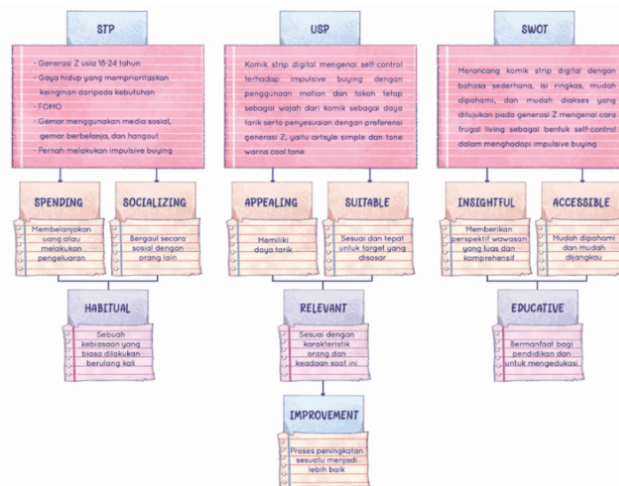


Figure 3. Keyword Analysis
 (Source: Researcher, 2024)

2. Concept

The final title for the digital comic strip is "To Be A Better Me," symbolizing the main character's journey toward self-improvement, with a theme centered around personal development. "To Be A Better Me" consists of nine subchapters that depict the main character and their friends. The comic addresses topics on how to prevent impulsive buying through self-control, such as adopting frugal living practices like saving, budgeting, creating a needs vs. wants list, and more. These topics are conveyed through the storyline of the main character's impulsive habits, which gradually lead to positive growth with the help of their friends.

3. Typography

Two types of typography are employed in this work. The first one is Quicksand, a sans-serif typeface used for the main speech balloons of the characters and narration. This typeface was chosen because it appears modern and is easy to read, making it suitable for Generation Z.



Figure 4. Quicksand Typeface
 (Source: Google Fonts, Quicksand by Andrew Paglinawan, 2008)

The second typeface is Light Stories, a script handwriting style used for supplementary text. This typeface conveys a personal touch, intended to make readers feel a connection when reading the digital comic strip, and also serves to differentiate it from the main speech balloons.



Figure 5. Light Stories Typeface
 (Source: Dafont.com, Light Stories by Khurasan, 2024)

4. Color

The final color palettes consist of cool tones, aligned with Generation Z's preferences, with color selections that correspond to the meaning of each hue. The meanings of the selected colors for this comic are as follows:

- a) Blue : Represents the main character's trust in their friends
- b) Purple : Symbolizes well-being
- c) Pink : Reflects the care of the main character's friends
- d) Red : Denotes drive and courage
- e) Orange : Indicates positive feelings, motivation, and change
- f) Yellow : Represents positivity



Figure 6. "To Be A Better Me" Color Palette (Source: Researcher, 2024)

5. Logo

The logo incorporates visual elements such as leaves and flowers, symbolizing growth or self-growth. Additionally, the logo also represents the small-town setting of the comic. A cat's paw print symbolizes the main character's journey of self-growth and improvement.



Figure 7. "To Be A Better Me" Logo (Source: Researcher, 2024)

6. Character

Character design is important because it can convey the storyline to the audience (Rotama et al., 2024). There are five characters with a simple style, depicted as humanoid cats, designed based on Generation Z's preferences obtained through interviews. These five characters are also inspired by research identifying five cat personality traits, known as The Feline Five, which include neuroticism, impulsiveness, dominance, agreeableness, and extraversion. These traits are typically used as a reference in research or for categorizing cat personality types. Thus, the five characters are used to represent these five traits, facilitating the design and roles of each character. The character design process began with sketching.



Figure 8. "To Be A Better Me" Character Sketch (Source: Researcher, 2024)

The sketches were then developed into character designs, undergoing revisions and refinements until the final character designs were achieved. Each character is also colored in cool tones, consistent with the color palette. The main character is Tio, who is cheerful and kind but easily impulsive, and is based on the American Shorthair breed. The second character is Momo, who is gentle, calm, and always willing to help friends in need, inspired by the Scottish Fold breed. The third character is Ziki, an extroverted, outgoing, lazy Siamese who enjoys spending time with friends. The fourth character is Kana, a Bengal who is very diligent, active, has a leadership spirit, and is someone whom friends easily trust and rely on. The final character is Biu, a Russian Blue, who is shy, anxious, and easily panicked, especially when worried about a friend's well-being. As previously mentioned, their personalities represent "The Feline Five." Their breeds were also selected based on those most likely to exhibit these five traits.



Figure 9. Final Character Design of Kana, Biu, Tio, Momo, Ziki (order from left to right)
(Source: Researcher, 2024)

7. "To Be A Better Me" Digital Comic Strip Result

"To Be A Better Me" is publicized via the Instagram platform @tobea.betterme to reach its target audience, Generation Z. The Instagram account @tobea.betterme features digital comic strips and motion elements.

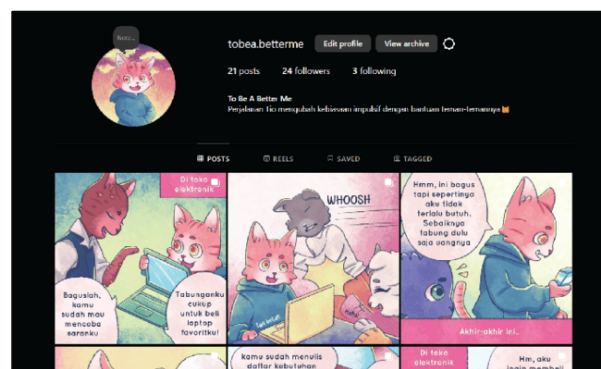


Figure 10. @tobea.betterme Instagram
(Source: Researcher, 2024)

"To Be A Better Me" consists of nine sub-chapters, each based on research findings. The first chapter, "Worried," depicts Tio's impulsive habits, which always end in regret for Tio and concern from his friends. The second chapter, "Failed Again," tells of a vacation where Tio and his friends divide expenses for various activities, but Tio runs out of money due to his impulsive behavior, so his friends cover his share. The third chapter, "First Step," focuses on Biu, who is worried about Tio after the previous incident. Biu takes Tio shopping and buys him a desired pencil case in exchange for Tio's promise to learn self-control and avoid unplanned purchases. The fourth chapter, "Need or Not?" shows Tio feeling down after failing to eliminate his bad habits, leading Ziki to advise and remind him that it's okay to fail, as long as he's willing to try again and learn. The fifth chapter, "50:30:20," explores Tio's curiosity about how Kana, who lives alone, can always buy what she wants without running out of money. Momo explains that Kana practices budgeting techniques and

often restrains herself from buying things she desires. The sixth chapter, "Save First," revolves around Tio wanting to buy something he has long desired, but lacking enough money. Kana advises him to save first and practice mindful spending. The seventh chapter, "Buy or Cook?" shows Momo suggesting meal preparation instead of takeout during a group project at her house, so they don't have to spend extra money. The eighth chapter, "Something Has Changed," highlights Tio's friends noticing a positive shift in his daily habits. The final chapter, "A Better Me," depicts Tio's laptop being damaged by someone else, but thanks to his savings, he can buy a new one himself. This last chapter illustrates Tio's positive behavioral changes after learning from his friends.



Figure 11. Final Results Preview
(Source: Researcher, 2024)

CONCLUSIONS

The issue of impulsive buying is commonly encountered by Generation Z, and it needs to be addressed to prevent negative impacts on them. Effective self-control, which can be integrated into Generation Z's lifestyle, such as through frugal living, is an effective solution. To convey the message of self-control, it is essential to use a media that is appealing, easy to understand, and enjoyable for Generation Z. The digital comic strip "To Be A Better Me" is designed as an educational media on effective self-control, based on frugal living practices such as saving, budgeting, and creating prioritized needs and wants lists. The comic features attractive illustrations, engaging colors, and content that is easy to grasp. It also includes motion elements and character introductions on Instagram, allowing readers to fully understand the comic's content. The comic is delivered through Instagram, a platform that can be easily accessed anywhere and anytime. Since many Generation Z individuals are Instagram users, the comic can effectively reach its target audience. It is hoped that "To Be A Better Me" will assist Generation Z in preventing impulsive buying, developing self-control, and adopting positive lifestyle habits in their daily lives.

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