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Interviews as the Basis for Developing a Content Creation App for Generation Z Creators

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ABSTRACT

The rise of digital platforms has enabled Generation Z to become content creators, using social media to express themselves, develop personal brands, and monetize their creativity. Maintaining consistency, navigating algorithm-driven competition, and juggling time constraints with creative output presents unique challenges for this generation. Through in-depth qualitative interviews with ten representative respondents, this study investigates the needs and preferences of Generation Z creators in facing these challenges. The study seeks to understand their creative processes, motivations, problems, and expectations for optimal content creation applications. The results show that the target users prioritize features such as trend analysis, audience research tools, and monetization insights. Performance analysis is one of them. Along with community forums for collaboration and inspiration, they also emphasize the need for organizational tools including moodboards, timelines, and integrated notes. Interestingly, most users prefer mobile-first applications with simple and intuitive designs over desktop-based solutions. They also value paid applications free of ads more than ad-supported free applications. These observations guide this paper to explain the Agile thinking process and design of content creation app development. Prioritizing user-centered design concepts, iterative feedback loops, and adaptability help the proposed app empower Generation Z creators by providing relevant, easy-to-use, and effective tools tailored to their needs.

KEYWORDS

Creator of Generation Z Content Creation Applications Mobile Application

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INTRODUCTION

Driven by technological advancements, the emergence of social media platforms, and the creative ingenuity of a new generation of content creators, the digital content industry has experienced unprecedented growth in recent years. With the democratization of content creation, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have provided creators with unprecedented access to reach a global audience. With 5.4 billion social media users worldwide spending an average of 23 minutes to 2 hours daily on these platforms (We Are Social, 2024), the role of content creators has shifted from a hobby to a legitimate career. Generation Z, with their lifestyle prioritizing desires, FOMO, and a tendency to follow viral trends. Additionally, they enjoy shopping, socializing, and using social media (Imanda et al., 2024). Generation Z, who are leading this digital revolution, are actively redefining the digital media landscape, influencing cultural trends, social movements, and shaping a new economic ecosystem with high creativity and adaptability.

Despite their enthusiasm and innovation, Generation Z creators face a number of significant challenges that hinder the sustainability of their creative activities. One of the main problems is the

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difficulty of maintaining a consistent flow of fresh ideas. The fast-paced nature of social media demands constant creativity; research shows that excessive exposure to platforms such as TikTok can trigger pressure to always appear new, leading to mental fatigue (Ferniansyah et al., 2021). The intensity of TikTok usage affects Gen Z's creative thinking, but duration and frequency do not always have a positive impact (Ferniansyah et al., 2021). Additionally, they often struggle with time management due to the need to balance creative processes with personal obligations and other work. A study by Maharani et al. (2025) states that while technology supports Gen Z's creative expression, the lack of time management and clear structure can hinder their productivity. Another challenge stems from the platform's algorithm, which does not always ensure fair visibility of content, as it depends on who is more well-known or receives high engagement, creating an unbalanced competition. Without an understanding of monetization strategies such as affiliate marketing, sponsorship, or audience analysis. Many creators struggle to achieve stable income.

It is essential to have a direct understanding of the experiences, behaviors, and aspirations of Generation Z creators in order to address complex issues and create relevant solutions. Therefore, the first step in this research is to conduct in-depth interviews, preceded by a screening questionnaire to explore rich qualitative data. This process reveals the creators' perceptions of their activities, their motivations for producing content, and the features or tools they consider to be conducive to productivity and satisfaction in their work. This approach refers to the principles of User-Centered Design (UCD), a methodology based on the real needs of users. UCD emphasizes direct user involvement in every stage of design, from identifying needs to evaluating prototypes (Rubin & Design) involvement in every stage of design, from identifying needs to evaluating prototypes (Rubin & Design) involvement in every stage of design, from identifying needs to evaluating prototypes (Rubin & Design) involvement in every stage of design, from identifying needs to evaluating prototypes (Rubin & Design) involvement in every stage of design involvement involvement involvement in every stage of design involvement involv Chisnell, 2011). A study by Zahara & Samp; Widodo (2025) shows that the application of UCD in the development of mobile-based cashier applications can significantly improve the usability of the application. Similarly, research by Zardan et al. (2024) shows that redesigning an application using the UCD approach and evaluating the System Usability Scale (SUS) can result in a better user experience. Additionally, the basic understanding of an application as a digital tool serves as the foundation for this study. An application is a ready-to-use program designed to perform specific functions to meet the needs of specific users (Bukharla & Nursyirwan, 2020). By combining this theory and the UCD approach, this study ensures that the designed application is not only technically functional but also has a tangible impact on the needs of Generation Z creators. Theoretical literature confirms that UCD combined with in-depth interviews enhances the effectiveness of application design because it is based on users' real needs (Lowdermilk, 2013). Through the insights gained from these direct interactions, the study aims to design effective digital tools to address the challenges faced by content creators, both in terms of creativity, collaboration, and monetization. This will enable them to achieve their artistic and professional goals in an increasingly competitive digital ecosystem.

Driven by additional income opportunities and technological literacy, Indonesia's Generation Z is showing a high level of interest in becoming content creators in 2024. They view content as a medium for creative expression and a potential source of income. The creative process—from research, idea development, production, to publication—is a methodical process that supports the creation of fresh content (Ghulam, 2022). Globally, a survey by Morning Consult indicates that 57% of Gen Z in the US identify themselves as content creators, and in Indonesia, the creator industry is estimated to reach a value of Rp 7 trillion (Burhan, 2022). However, this process is not without challenges. Studies by Utomo et al. (2025) and Fachrurazi et al. (2023) show that while platforms like YouTube and TikTok open up opportunities for creative entrepreneurship, many Gen Z creators have not fully grasped digital business strategies or the necessary production skills. The pressure from algorithms demanding consistent uploads, high engagement, and transparency in monetization also causes stress and burnout among creators (Prasetyo Harisandi, 2025). Furthermore, Gen Z creators' mental health challenges as content creators are also a major concern. Maulidya (2024) describes how social pressure and audience expectations on social media can trigger anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and demands for perfection—which simultaneously become significant psychological burdens. With this theoretical foundation and empirical evidence, the research is designed to develop a mobile application that not only supports the creative process but also addresses aspects of monetization, mental well-being, and career sustainability for Gen Z creators. The application is Gorga: Jurnal Seni Rupa Vol 14. No 2, (2025) 635-642

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expected to serve as a tool that facilitates the functional and strategic needs of creativity, collaboration, and financial sustainability.

Previous research has examined many aspects of content creation, including how algorithms affect creator visibility, how monetization policies help retain creators, and the psychological consequences of sustained content creation. Studies by Danusantoso (2023) and Sinambela et al. (2024), for example, highlight the economic potential of the content production sector, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia. Other research has concentrated on the technical elements of content creation, including trend analysis using artificial intelligence tools or video format optimization tailored to specific platforms. Research addressing the specific needs of Generation Z creators, particularly in terms of creating comprehensive digital tools that support their entire creative process—from idea to monetization—remains scarce. While some researchers have focused on individual components, such as trend analysis or performance analysis, none of them have shown interest in combining these components into a single user-friendly application specifically designed for Generation Z creators who prioritize mobile devices.

Although Generation Z creators are highly enthusiastic and innovative, they face complex challenges that can hinder the sustainability of their creative activities. First, difficulty in maintaining a consistent flow of new ideas is a major obstacle. In this fast-paced era, creativity is a key asset for Gen Z in entrepreneurship and digital differentiation. However, the pressure to produce consistent content and mental fatigue caused by rapidly changing algorithms and trends present real challenges (Akmalia & Novita, 2025). This phenomenon is reinforced by Maharani et al. (2025), who emphasize the need for digital literacy and time management for Gen Z to ensure creativity can thrive without burnout. Furthermore, the intensive use of social media platforms like TikTok influences Gen Z's creative thinking. Research by Ferniansyah et al. (2021) shows that deep attention and engagement with digital platforms significantly impact creativity, while the duration and frequency of use are not always relevant to increased creativity. In addition to creativity challenges, many creators face difficulties in time management as they must balance content creation with personal obligations or other jobs. Platform algorithms also often create uneven visibility, intensifying competition among creators. Without adequate understanding of monetization strategies such as affiliate marketing, sponsorship, or audience research. Many creators are unable to maximize their income potential. Therefore, this research focuses on developing a mobile application that addresses these challenges: supporting productivity, creativity, team collaboration, and financial sustainability through strategic data-driven features. By combining insights from qualitative interviews and an iterative design approach, the expected outcomes are not only useful prototypes but also contributions to theory and practice in contemporary digital content production, particularly within the Gen Z context.

METHOD

To investigate the requirements, challenges, and preferences of Generation Z content creators, this study employs a qualitative methodology. Pre-screening questionnaires and in-depth interviews are the primary techniques used to collect data. Based on their active participation in content creation on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, ten representative respondents were selected in total. Participants were chosen to represent various creative goals, such as monetization, personal branding, and educational purposes. In addition to allowing for open conversation, the semi-structured interview process ensured that important topics such as challenges faced, desired app features, and creative workflows were covered. Background data on participants' motivations, preferred tools, and content creation practices were collected through a pre-screening questionnaire. With consent, interviews were recorded, either in person or virtually, and then transcribed for analysis.

To identify recurring themes and patterns, transcripts were methodically coded as part of the descriptive qualitative data analysis process. Key themes included challenges faced by creators (consistency, algorithmic pressure), features they wanted in their apps (trend analysis, monetization tools), and design preferences (minimalist UI, mobile-first). To ensure a recurring feedback loop and user-centered adaptability, the Agile methodology was then implemented during the application development phase. The real-world needs of Gen Z creators were thoroughly understood thanks to

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this qualitative approach, which also served as the foundation for creating a user-centered application tailored to meet their unique needs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Pre-screening Questionnaire

Respondents for this study were selected using an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms as a pre-screening tool to identify individuals who met certain criteria: male or female, members of Generation Z, living in large cities, actively involved in content creation as either novice or experienced creators, and demonstrating smartphone usage intensity at or above average levels. The data collection process took place from February 20, 2025, to February 28, 2025, with a focus on customers in urban areas across Indonesia. The survey involved 66 respondents, with a notable gender distribution as follows:

Table 1. Respondent Data

| Category | Subcategory | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Gender | Female | 74.2% |
| | Male | 25.8% |
| Age | 17-20 years | 7.6% |
| | 21-24 | 45.5% |
| | 25–28 years | 47.0% |
| Highest level of education | High School/Equivalent | 19.7% |
| | Bachelor | 69.7% |
| | Master | 10.6% |
| Employment | Private employee | 63.6% |
| | Freelancer | 19.7% |
| | Students/College Students | 15.2% |
| | Others | 1.5% |
| Respondent's Residence | Jakarta | 28% |
| | Bandung | 28% |
| | Medan | 16.7% |
| | Surabaya | 4.5% |
| | Other cities (Combined: Garut, | 21.2% |
| | Yogyakarta, etc.) | |
| Status as Creator | Active creator | 81.8% |
| | Want to become a creator | 10.6% |
| | Not interested | 7.6% |
| Intensity of mobile phone usage | Very high | 38% |
| | High | 38.9% |
| | Moderate | 18.5% |
| | Low | 3.7% |
| Duration as a Creator | < 1 year | 74.1% |
| | 1–3 years | 18.5% |
| | > 3 years | 7.4% |
| | | |

These findings offer a broad profile of the target demographic, emphasizing gender distribution, age range, educational background, job diversity, geographic representation, and technology engagement, all of which are important for understanding the needs and behaviors of Generation Z content creators and guiding the development of user-centered applications tailored to their specific needs.

2. In-Depth Interviews

The creative process of Generation Z content creators, as demonstrated through interviews, shows a varied yet cohesive approach to content creation, highlighting this demographic's adaptability and creativity. In response to the question about their creative process, "How is your creative process when creating content (from idea to execution)?" This question was key in exploring Generation Z content creators' approach to their creative process. Based on the interview results, it

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was revealed that the process varied but still showed a cohesive pattern, reflecting the strong adaptability and creativity of this demographic. Source 1 emphasized the importance of trend analysis, stating, "I usually start with trend research through social media and algorithms." This strategy highlights the significant influence of external factors in shaping content ideas, as maintaining relevance in a dynamic digital ecosystem often requires alignment with trending topics. In contrast, Narasumber 2 describes a more spontaneous approach, saying, "Sometimes, content emerges from brainstorming and concepts that come up spontaneously." This highlights that while some creators rely on systematic planning, others prioritize flexibility and intuition in generating new ideas. Meanwhile, Narasumber 3 reveals a more structured method by stating, "I must first develop a concept and create a mood board to ensure my content is conceptual." This approach underscores the importance of organization and pre-visualization in producing polished content.

When asked about their goals as content creators, "What is your goal as a content creator?", Resource 5 expressed a nuanced perspective that encompassed both personal and professional ambitions. He articulated, "My goals as a content creator include building a personal brand, focusing on monetization through sponsorship or affiliate marketing, and emphasizing educational or knowledge-sharing objectives." This response highlights the diverse motivations of Gen Z content creators, where the pursuit of self-expression and identity formation through personal branding is accompanied by practical goals such as financial sustainability through sponsorship and affiliate marketing. The focus on educational goals and knowledge dissemination highlights a broader social contribution, demonstrating an intention to engage audiences while providing value and insights through their content. This strategy aligns with current digital media trends, where creators are increasingly seen as influencers and educators, using their platforms to achieve interconnected goals.

When asked about the main issues faced in the idea and content creation process, "What are the biggest challenges you face when developing ideas or creating content?" Respondent 1 offered a broad perspective that encapsulated the various difficulties faced by Gen Z content creators. He articulated, "My main challenges are maintaining consistency in ideas and innovative creativity, time constraints, and pressure from platform algorithms and content competition." This response highlights the complex balance that creators must maintain between sustaining creative productivity and overcoming external constraints related to digital platforms. The focus on maintaining a steady flow of innovative concepts underscores the intellectual and creative pressures faced by creators, especially in a content-rich world where originality is often linked to audience engagement. The reference to time constraints underscores the broader challenge of aligning content creation with personal or professional obligations, a common concern for those juggling multiple roles. Additionally, the mention of platform algorithms and content competition highlights structural issues inherent in the digital ecosystem, where exposure and success are significantly determined by algorithmic biases and the volume of competing content. These insights collectively reveal the complex interplay between internal and external factors influencing the creative process for contemporary content creators, highlighting the need for tools and techniques that help mitigate these barriers while promoting creativity and efficiency.

This was followed by the questions, "If there is an app designed specifically to help the creative process, what features are most important to you?" and "Do you need features that help organize ideas (such as mood boards, timelines, or creative notes)?" These two questions were asked to the interviewees to explore their needs for features in apps that support the creative process. Respondent 8 highlighted the importance of features that cover both practical and strategic dimensions in content development. They stated that features such as monetization information, audience research tools, and idea recommendations and trend analysis are highly needed. This shows that creators are not only focused on the creative aspects but also on financial sustainability and data-driven strategies. Monetization features help creators manage revenue opportunities in a more structured way, while audience and trend research enables them to create content that is relevant and in line with market needs. Idea recommendations are also seen as a solution to help overcome creative blocks, while reflecting the role of technology in driving productivity. Beyond strategic aspects, all respondents also emphasized the importance of features that help organize ideas. They highlighted the need for moodboards, timelines, and creative notes as essential elements in the content planning process. One

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respondent added that cloud synchronization features are a significant value-add, as they enable cross-device access and more efficient collaboration.

During the preference analysis for collaboration elements in the program with the question, "What are your preferences regarding collaboration features in the application?", Respondent 9 articulated a definite opposition to real-time co-creation, stating, "Real-time co-creation is not useful." Develop more useful additional features. This reaction underscores significant skepticism toward direct collaboration solutions, suggesting that this feature may not align with the actual requirements or processes of Gen Z producers. Participants' focus on creating more effective alternative features indicates a priority for functionality that directly improves productivity or addresses specific challenges in the creative process. This perspective emphasizes the importance of understanding user preferences and ensuring that collaborative tools are creative and tailored to the intended audience. It underscores the need for developers to thoroughly evaluate which features are truly appealing to users, rather than simply following trends that may lack practical value. When asked, "Do you need additional features such as monetization information (endorsements, paid promotions, brand collaborations)?" The majority of target users expressed significant demand for tools that offer insights into support, paid promotions, and brand collaborations when asked about the need for additional features such as monetization information. This underscores the importance of monetization in facilitating the professional ambitions of Gen Z content creators, who consider these aspects crucial for achieving financial sustainability and enhancing their creative activities. Additionally, when asked about the prospective usefulness of AI-driven functions with the question, "Would AI features (idea recommendations, automatic templates, trend analysis) help your creative process?", Respondent 9 commented, "AI features can be beneficial, especially in recommending ideas based on trends and analyzing content performance." This statement highlights the growing recognition of AI as a valuable asset in enhancing creativity and optimizing workflows. These findings underscore the importance of integrating monetization tools and AI-driven features into app design. By prioritizing these objectives, developers can build a system that not only facilitates artists' financial aspirations but also enables them to deliver relevant, high-quality content through datadriven insights and trend research.

When asked about the importance of integration with platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube with the question, "How important is integration with other platforms (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc.)?" All interviewees agreed that such integration was not a priority. This indicates that Gen Z producers prioritize the functionality and usefulness inherent in a program over its capacity to interact directly with external platforms. Users seem to prioritize functionality that enhances their creative workflow and productivity within the application. In terms of interface design preferences, when asked, "What are your preferences regarding the appearance of the application interface (minimalist, playful, professional)?", opinions varied but were informative: 6 out of 10 respondents preferred a simple and intuitive design, while the other 4 liked a lively and graphic appearance. Despite these differences, there is strong agreement on the importance of easily understandable symbols as an important visual component, indicating a collective aspiration for clarity and accessibility in the user experience. Additionally, the question, "Are you more comfortable using mobile-based or desktop-based apps?" was posed, with all participants showing a preference for mobile apps over desktop apps, underscoring the importance of smartphones in their daily routines and processes. These findings underscore the need for mobile-first strategies in app design, prioritizing simplicity, adaptability, and user-friendliness to meet the diverse specific requirements of Generation Z content creators.

When analyzing user preferences for collaboration and monetization features with the question "Are community features (forums or groups) important in this app?", the second respondent expressed disinterest in real-time collaboration tools, saying, "It's not important," which suggests that such functionality may not fit their workflow or creative goals. The respondent expressed a preference for premium apps when responding to the question, "What are your preferences regarding app monetization models (free with ads or paid)?" stating, "I prefer paid apps to reduce ads within the app." This statement underscores the growing dislike of ad-heavy experiences among Gen Z users, who prefer seamless and continuous interactions within programs. Further investigation into

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personalization and analytics features revealed a strong consensus on the importance of these " " features. When asked, "Do you need personalization features (content recommendations based on interests or trends)?" all respondents emphasized the need for recommendations tailored to current interests and trends, highlighting the importance of personalized tools in enhancing relevance and engagement. When asked, "How important are content performance analytics features (views, engagement, etc.)?", all participants viewed performance analytics that include views, engagement, and various metrics as an important component, illustrating the data-driven mindset of contemporary producers who rely on insights to improve strategies and outcomes. When asked, "What is the biggest obstacle for you to try new apps?", the majority of users indicated no significant barriers when experimenting with new apps, implying a willingness to embrace new technology. The 10th respondent identified an exception, saying, "I sometimes ponder file size and internet requirements," highlighting the need for developers to align feature-rich designs with accessibility and resource efficiency. These findings underscore the importance of prioritizing personalization, analytics, and user-centered design while reducing technical limitations to facilitate broader adoption and enjoyment.

Following up on the previous question, "If this app were actually created, how interested would you be in using it?", all respondents expressed considerable enthusiasm for the potential use of the proposed app, indicating significant interest in adopting it once released. This significant response underscores the substantial desire for a solution tailored to the unique needs of Gen Z content creators, confirming the potential for widespread user adoption. In response to the question, "What suggestions or additional features would you like to see added?", Respondent 1 provided constructive feedback by recommending the integration of backup and automatic preview functions across various platforms. This suggestion highlights the importance of addressing practical issues such as data security and cross-platform compatibility, which are critical for producers managing diverse digital workflows.



Figure 1. Prototype Sketch (Source: Pambudi, 2025)

CONCLUSION

Discussions with Gen Z content creators yielded important insights that will inform app design. Users emphasized the importance of features such as trend analysis, monetization tools, audience research, and concept recommendations to improve their creative process and professional goals. Organizational tools, including mood boards, schedules, and cloud synchronization, were deemed essential for efficiency, while customized content analysis and recommendations were highlighted as important for data-driven decision-making. A significant majority preferred simple and user-friendly designs, indicating a clear preference for paid apps over ad-supported options. The significance of real-time collaboration features is considered minimal, while automatic backup and cross-platform previews are identified as beneficial enhancements. These findings underscore the importance of a user-centric and mobile-centric approach that prioritizes personalization,

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monetization, and accessibility to meet the evolving needs of modern producers.

Based on the above conclusions, the author can extract keywords and develop a prototype sketch that aligns with the identified needs and preferences of Gen Z content creators, focusing on features such as trend analysis, monetization tools, organizational tools, personalization, and mobile-first design to address their creative challenges and improve productivity.

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