DOI 10.17977/UM

Qualitative Case Study – Research Article

Driving National Economic Growth through the Digital Creator Economy: A Case Study of Indonesia's '1001 Content Creators' Initiative and Policy Implications for Developing Countries

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Abstract: The rapidly expanding global digital creator economy presents significant opportunities for economic diversification and growth, particularly in developing countries. This paper aims to examine the contribution of Indonesia's state-supported "1001 Content Creators" initiative to national economic development and to derive policy lessons for similar contexts. Employing a qualitative case study methodology grounded in official documents, program reports, and stakeholder interviews, this study explores the program's achievements in areas such as intellectual property rights (IPR) protection, digital job creation, content monetization, and the pivotal role of public, private partnerships, particularly between the Ministry of Creative Economy and the Multi-Channel Network (MCN) 13 Nadi Group. The findings suggest that a strategically developed digital creator ecosystem, supported by targeted policy interventions and collaborative governance frameworks, can serve as a viable model for inclusive and sustainable economic development in the digital era, especially within developing nations.

Keywords: Digital Economy, Creative Economy, Content Creators, Creator Economy, Indonesia, Developing Countries, National Economic Growth, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Multi-Channel Networks (MCN), Public–Private Partnerships, Digital Policy, Economic Development.

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has fundamentally altered global economic structures, with digital transformation reshaping industries at an unprecedented pace. Projections for the digital economy's growth are substantial, particularly in Southeast Asia, where Indonesia's digital economy value is projected to reach USD 130 billion by 2025. Within this landscape, the "creator economy" has emerged as a dynamic segment, fueled by the evolution of social media and new monetization channels, with a global market size projected to hit USD 480 billion by 2027.

This study addresses a critical research question: How can a state-supported initiative aimed at developing a digital creator ecosystem, as exemplified by the "1001 Content Creators" program in Indonesia, contribute to national economic growth, and what policy

Received: XX January 2024; Revised: XX February 2024; Accepted: XX March 2024
E-ISSN XXX-XXXX/

lessons can be drawn for other developing countries? While the potential of the creator economy is widely acknowledged, empirical case studies analyzing the impact of structured, state-led interventions in developing countries remain limited. This paper aims to fill that gap by providing an in-depth case study of a targeted government intervention in a major emerging market, offering empirical evidence and policy insights for other nations facing similar challenges and opportunities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The digital economy encompasses economic activities driven by digital technologies, including internet-based production, distribution, and consumption. In developing countries, this transformation is a key driver of economic growth. The creative economy, defined by UNCTAD as a process generating economic value through creativity and technological innovation, is a vital sub-sector. It offers a path for economic diversification, contributing between 0.5% to 7.3% to the GDP of various nations.

The creator economy itself is an ecosystem where creators utilize various monetization strategies, including ad revenue, brand sponsorships, and integrated e-commerce features like the YouTube Shop and Shopee affiliation model. However, this space is highly competitive, with a significant income disparity often described by the "80/20 rule," where a small fraction of creators earn the majority of the revenue. A study in China found that 95.2% of social media creators earned less than 5000 yuan per month, underscoring the need for diversified income streams.

Multi-Channel Networks (MCNs) act as intermediaries, providing creators with support in production, promotion, and monetization. While they can offer crucial infrastructure, they also hold the potential to standardize content and create power imbalances. The partnership between a government body like Ekraf and an MCN offers a model to leverage MCN benefits while mitigating risks.

A cornerstone of the creator economy is Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). IPR is critical for protecting creators' rights and fostering economic growth. The digital age, however, presents challenges like rampant piracy and enforcement difficulties. For developing countries, a well-implemented IPR framework is essential to attract investment and spur innovation.

METHOD

Research Design This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. This design was chosen for its suitability in conducting an in-depth investigation of the "1001 Content Creators" program within its real-life context, allowing for an exploration of nuances that quantitative methods might not capture.

Case Selection The "1001 Content Creators" program was selected as the case for this study due to its strategic significance as a government-backed initiative aimed at fostering the digital creator economy in Indonesia. Its public-private partnership model, involving the Ministry of Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf/Ekraf) and the 13 Nadi Group MCN, made it a compelling case for analyzing collaborative models.

Data Collection for this study was conducted by analyzing the program's implementation and outcomes, which took place between January and May 2025. The data sources included :

- **Documentation:** Official reports from Ekraf and the 13 Nadi Group were analyzed, including the "1001 Content Creators Program Report (Internal Document)".
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants who were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in the program. These included officials from Ekraf responsible for the initiative and senior managers from the 13 Nadi Group, to gain perspectives from both the public and private sector implementers.

Data Analysis Data analysis was conducted through a thematic interpretation of the program's achievements and its potential impact on the national economy. This process involved identifying key recurring themes from the collected data related to IPR protection, job creation, content monetization, and the effectiveness of the collaboration.

RESULTS

The "1001 Content Creators" program demonstrated promising results in a short period. The program successfully engaged a total of 78 creators, comprising 18 general creators and 60 music creators. This participation resulted in the production of 22,232 videos, all of which were protected by IPR. Collectively, these creators reached an audience of 41,142,460 subscribers.

A key feature of the program was its emphasis on IPR management. The effectiveness of the digital protection system was demonstrated by the successful takedown of 35 instances of copyright infringement, showcasing a shift from simple registration to active enforcement.

From an economic perspective, the program generated a potential revenue of IDR 1.2 billion over two months. This result supports the argument that digital content can serve as a "new economic engine". While specific job creation data was not detailed, the program's role in fostering new informal employment opportunities for youth was a significant qualitative impact. The success of the program was strongly tied to the public-private partnership between Kemenparekraf (Ekraf) and the 13 Nadi Group, whose MCN expertise was crucial for IPR management and monetization.

Table 1 Summary of "1001 Content Creators" Program Outcomes (Two-Month Period)

Metric	Value
Number of Participating General Creators	18
Number of Participating Music Creators	60
Total Participating Creators	78
Number of Videos Produced & IPR Protected	22,232
Total Subscribers Reached (Combined)	41,142,460
Copyright Infringement Takedowns	35
Estimated Revenue Generated (2 months)	IDR 1.2 Billion

Source: Ekraf & 13 Nadi, 2025

DISCUSSION

The initial success of the "1001 Content Creators" program can be attributed to several key factors. First, the synergy between government support via Ekraf and private-sector expertise from the 13 Nadi Group MCN proved to be a critical driver. This public-private partnership (PPP) model allowed the program to leverage governmental legitimacy with the market agility and specialized knowledge of an MCN.

Second, the program's holistic approach—combining capacity building, IPR protection, and facilitation of diverse monetization channels—addressed the comprehensive needs of creators. The program's success in generating IDR 1.2 billion for 78 creators provides a compelling counter-narrative to the income-disparity issue highlighted by He (2024) in China. This suggests that structured interventions that provide training and monetization support can potentially mitigate the "80/20 rule" and help build a more sustainable "creator middle class," a trend also noted by Mozaic (2025).

The program's strong emphasis on IPR protection aligns with international calls for robust frameworks to ensure creators benefit from their work. This is fundamental for incentivizing the production of high-quality, original content and building a valuable creative economy. However, challenges related to long-term sustainability and scalability persist, including the need for continued funding and ensuring the program's benefits reach beyond urban centers to address digital inclusion.

CONCLUSION

The "1001 Content Creators" initiative successfully demonstrated that a targeted, collaborative intervention can be a viable driver of national economic growth in the digital creator economy. The program effectively nurtured creators, generated significant content and revenue, and implemented robust IPR protection, with the innovative public-private partnership between Kemenparekraf (Ekraf) and the 13 Nadi Group MCN being a critical success factor.

Implication Based on the findings, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

1. **Develop Sustainable Funding Mechanisms:** Explore diverse financing models beyond initial grants, including microloans, venture capital for creator-led startups, and public-private co-investment funds.
2. **Integrate Digital and Creative Economy Literacy into Education:** Embed content creation, digital entrepreneurship, and IPR into the national curriculum to build a skilled talent pipeline.
3. **Strengthen and Simplify IPR Registration and Enforcement:** Create accessible digital platforms for IPR registration and establish robust enforcement mechanisms in collaboration with digital platforms.
4. **Scale and Replicate the Collaborative Model:** Adapt and expand the Ekraf-MCN partnership model to other regions and creative sub-sectors, ensuring local customization.
5. **Enhance Measurement of the Digital Creative Economy's GDP Contribution:** Implement a robust statistical framework, potentially including Creative Industries Satellite Accounts (CISAS), to accurately measure the sector's economic impact.

Limitations and Future Direction: This study has limitations. As a single case study, its findings may not be directly generalizable. The reliance on data from program implementers presents a potential for bias. Furthermore, the study could not access data on the specific selection criteria for the creators who participated in the program, which limits the analysis of its inclusivity.

Future research should conduct longitudinal studies on the long-term economic impacts of such programs. A quantitative analysis of the program's impact on creator income using larger datasets is needed. Finally, comparative studies of different creator support models across various developing countries would be beneficial to identify best practices and inform more adaptive, effective policy frameworks.

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