

THE ROLE OF CREATIVE ECONOMY IN IMPROVING SOCIAL WELFARE AMONG MILLENNIALS

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of the creative economy in improving social welfare among the millennial generation through a literature review approach. The creative economy as a sector that relies on ideas, creativity, and innovation has great potential in creating inclusive and sustainable economic opportunities, especially for the younger generation. The millennial generation who are adaptive to technology and dynamic in their work make them the main actors in the development of the creative economy. Through a search of various scientific literature, articles, and policy reports, this study found that the creative economy not only contributes to economic growth, but also plays a role in expanding employment opportunities, increasing social participation, and strengthening cultural identity. In addition, the creative economy encourages millennials to become independent and innovative economic actors, which has a direct impact on improving social welfare both individually and as a community. These findings indicate that the development of a creative economy that is targeted and based on local potential can be an effective strategy in improving the quality of life of the millennial generation in Indonesia, especially in areas with high creative potential.

Keywords: Creative Economy, Social Welfare, Millennials, Innovation

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization marked by technological advances and the dynamics of social change, the creative economy has emerged as a new force that not only redefines the forms of economic activity but also becomes a strategic means of promoting social welfare, especially for the millennial generation. This generation, born between the early 1980s to the mid-1990s and early 2000s, is known as a generation that is adaptive to technology, has

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wide access to information, and tends to have an innovative and independent spirit. These characteristics make millennials have great potential to become key players in the development of the creative economy. Amid various social and economic challenges, the creative economy not only offers solutions to the limitations of formal employment, but also opens up new opportunities to improve the standard of living and strengthen social solidarity among millennials (Puspita et al., 2021). In Indonesia, including in developing areas such as in many areas of Kalimantan, Sumatra, and Eastern Indonesia, the development of the creative economy has begun to show its influence on the social welfare of the community, especially for the younger generation. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia has even designated the creative economy as one of the leading sectors in national development. This shows that the state is paying serious attention to the development of this sector as a new pillar of inclusive and sustainable economic growth. For millennials, the creative economy is not just a source of income, but also a medium for self-expression, actualization of creativity, and a means of building a wider social network. Activities such as graphic design, digital application development, content creation, performing arts, regional culinary specialties, local fashion, and cultural-based handicrafts are real examples of the contribution of the creative economy that is growing in various regions and reaching various social strata (Kramarenko, 2021).

One important aspect of the creative economy is its nature which is based on ideas and innovation, not solely on natural resources or large capital (Pangesti et al., 2023). Therefore, the creative economy offers relatively equal opportunities for every individual, including the millennial generation who may not have large capital but have high creative capacity. This is where the creative economy can be a catalyst for increasing social welfare, because it opens up space for wider economic participation, reduces dependence on conventional employment, and encourages the growth of an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem. By utilizing digital technology, millennials can market their creative products and services globally without being bound by geographical boundaries. This digital transformation also strengthens connectivity between regions and expands the socio-economic impact generated by the creative economy sector.

However, it is undeniable that in order to play an optimal role in the creative economy sector, the millennial generation also faces a number of challenges. Limited access to training, minimal financial literacy, lack of support for a beginner-friendly business ecosystem, and uneven digital

infrastructure in several regions are real obstacles that must be overcome systematically. The government and various other stakeholders need to be present as facilitators and enablers, creating policies that support the development of the creative economy potential of millennials (Nasution et al., 2021). In this context, collaboration between the public, private, and civil society sectors is important to build a sustainable, equitable, and socially impactful creative economy ecosystem.

On the other hand, the role of the creative economy in improving social welfare is not only measured from the material or economic aspect alone, but also from its contribution in building identity, increasing social participation, and strengthening community solidarity (Rosyadi et al., 2020). Through creative activities based on local culture and values, millennials can strengthen their identity while maintaining the sustainability of the nation's cultural heritage. The creativity possessed by these young people becomes a bridge between traditional values and the demands of modernity, creating a new space for social inclusion and community empowerment. Thus, the creative economy is not only a tool to achieve individual welfare, but also an important instrument in strengthening social cohesion and community-based development.

In a global context, many countries have shown that the creative economy can be an effective driving force for development. The UK, South Korea, and the United States are examples of countries that have succeeded in making this sector an important part of their economic growth strategy. Indonesia also has great potential to follow in these footsteps, especially with its cultural diversity and large and creative young generation. At the local level, such as in various cities and districts in Indonesia, creative communities driven by millennials have begun to emerge, who not only create economic value but also contribute to social and cultural development. This phenomenon shows a paradigm shift in viewing the role of the younger generation in development, from objects of development to active, innovative, and empowered subjects (Nurani et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to position the creative economy as an integral part of a sustainable social development strategy, by placing millennials as the main actors in it. Strengthening capacity, providing access to resources, creating collaborative spaces, and developing adaptive and inclusive regulations are key to ensuring that the role of the creative economy is able to have a real impact on the social welfare of the younger generation. In this way, the creative economy is not only an alternative economic solution, but also a new path for millennials

to achieve a better, more meaningful, and more prosperous life in a broader social context.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is the literature review method, which aims to explore and analyze various relevant library sources in order to understand the role of the creative economy in improving social welfare among millennials. The literature review was conducted by tracing, reviewing, and synthesizing various scientific journals, books, research reports, articles, and policy documents that discuss the topics of the creative economy, social welfare, and the millennial generation. These sources were obtained from various academic databases and trusted digital repositories to ensure the validity and relevance of the information collected. With this approach, researchers can develop a theoretical framework and find patterns of findings that have been identified by previous studies.

The study procedure was carried out systematically through the stages of identifying relevant literature, evaluating the quality of sources, and thematic analysis of the content obtained. Researchers emphasize the selection of literature related to the development of creative economy sub-sectors such as design, culinary, performing arts, and digitalization, as well as their relationship to aspects of increasing income, social participation, and empowering millennial youth. This analysis does not only focus on economic contributions alone, but also on social and cultural aspects that emerge as an impact of creative economy activities. With this qualitative-descriptive approach based on literature, it is hoped that the research will be able to provide a comprehensive picture of the extent to which the creative economy can be a strategic instrument in improving the social welfare of Indonesia's young generation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Creative Economy, Social Welfare, and the Millennial Generation

In the era of rapid globalization and digital transformation, the concept of the creative economy is becoming increasingly relevant as a driving force for inclusive and sustainable economic development. The creative economy is no longer seen as an additional sector, but rather as a strategic sector capable of creating high added value, absorbing a large workforce, and encouraging cross-sector innovation. The creative economy refers to economic activities

that originate from individual creativity, skills, and talents that have the potential to create prosperity and employment through the creation and utilization of intellectual property. Sectors such as design, art, music, film, culinary, fashion, digital applications, and architecture are integral parts of the creative economy that continues to develop following the dynamics of the times (Kurniawan & Rusmana, 2025). The main key in the creative economy lies in the utilization of ideas and innovation as the main commodity. This is different from the conventional economy which relies more on natural resources or physical capital (Anggarini, 2022). In the context of the creative economy, original thinking, cultural expression, and the ability to adapt to technological developments are very valuable assets. This makes the creative economy an inclusive platform, allowing anyone with ideas and access to technology to actively participate in economic activities. Furthermore, the creative economy contributes to building a nation's cultural identity, strengthening local values, and at the same time opening up a global market for local creative products.

Social welfare is an important dimension that cannot be separated from the development of the creative economy. Social welfare refers to conditions in which people can live decently, have access to basic needs such as education, health, and dignified work (Hasan et al., 2021). In relation to the creative economy, there is great potential to create an ecosystem that supports equal welfare through community empowerment, especially vulnerable or previously marginalized groups. The creative economy opens up space for those who may not have a high level of formal education, but have talents, skills, and creativity that can be developed into sustainable sources of income.

One concrete example of the creative economy's contribution to social welfare is through empowering local communities based on culture and local wisdom (Mursalim, 2019). For example, the development of traditional handicraft or performing arts industries that are repackaged with a modern approach can be a major source of income for rural communities. In addition to providing economic benefits, these activities also function as an effort to preserve culture which is increasingly important amidst the flow of global homogenization. Thus, the creative economy plays a dual role as a driving force for the economy and as a tool to strengthen social cohesion and preserve cultural values that are fundamental to national identity.

The millennial generation has a central role in the development of the creative economy today. As a productive age group born between 1981 and

1996, this generation is known for its characteristics that are familiar with digital technology, have a high entrepreneurial spirit, and a tendency to seek meaning in the work they do. Millennials are not only the main actors in the creative economy sector, but also the main consumers of creative products. Their habits in accessing information quickly, utilizing social media as a communication and promotion channel, and their love of authentic experiences make them important catalysts in shaping the direction of the development of the creative industry.

In practice, many young entrepreneurs from the millennial generation are building businesses in the creative economy, ranging from digital startups, local fashion businesses, visual content production, to technology-based educational platforms. They bring a fresh and innovative approach, combining traditional values with modern aesthetics, and are oriented towards social impact. These characteristics show that the millennial generation is not only interested in financial gain, but also in social contribution and sustainability. This is what distinguishes the millennial-based creative economy from conventional forms of entrepreneurship in previous generations (DeVaney, 2015).

Moreover, millennial participation in the creative economy also drives the transformation of socio-economic structures in various regions. When the younger generation chooses not to rely on formal employment, but to create jobs through creative businesses that they build themselves, a paradigm shift occurs in economic development. This encourages the creation of a society that is more independent, innovative, and resilient to global challenges. However, the active participation of the millennial generation in the creative economy still requires support from various parties, including the government, educational institutions, and the private sector, in the form of supportive regulations, access to funding, digital skills training, and adequate infrastructure development.

With the involvement of the millennial generation, the creative economy can be a strategic instrument in realizing more equitable social welfare. When creativity and technology are used to create solutions to social problems, new models of participatory and inclusive community-based development are born. This opens up new opportunities to address inequality, encourage social mobility, and strengthen local capacity in facing global challenges such as climate change, digital disruption, and economic crises. In this context, the creative economy not only functions as a driver of economic growth, but also as a foundation for a sustainable and prosperous future society.

The Relationship Between Creative Economy and Social Welfare

The creative economy is one of the sectors that has experienced significant growth in the last two decades and has become a major driver of social and economic transformation in various countries, including Indonesia (Boža & Topcu, 2020). This economy relies on ideas, creativity, and innovation as the main source in creating added value, both in terms of products, services, and culture. In this context, the creative economy is not only seen as an effort to increase economic growth, but also has a close relationship with the social welfare of the community. Social welfare refers to the level of quality of life of the community which includes aspects of income, health, education, social participation, and security. Therefore, the relationship between the creative economy and social welfare is very important to discuss as a foundation in formulating development policies that are oriented towards sustainability and social justice. The growth of the creative economy sector is able to open up new inclusive and flexible employment opportunities, especially for groups of people who were previously marginalized from the mainstream economy. Industries such as design, music, film, fine arts, crafts, digital applications, and culinary have created an economic ecosystem that is able to absorb workers from various backgrounds, both formal and informal. This provides greater opportunities for people to earn income, improve their standard of living, and escape the cycle of poverty. In addition, because of its nature which is based on the uniqueness and identity of local culture, the creative economy also provides opportunities for local communities to maintain traditional values while remaining involved in the process of modern economic development. Thus, this sector plays an important role in empowering people socially and economically (Shin, 2016).

Furthermore, the creative economy has a strong social dimension because it encourages active community participation in the process of production and distribution of cultural values. Creativity is not only monopolized by certain groups, but can grow in all levels of society that have the potential, ideas, and willingness to innovate. This community participation creates a sense of belonging and increases social cohesion because economic activities are no longer focused only on the large industrial sector, but also penetrate the micro, small, and medium scales spread across various regions. When people are involved in the creative process, they become part of a system that recognizes their existence, potential, and contribution. This has a direct impact on increasing self-confidence, social identity, and feelings of meaning in community life. Therefore, the creative economy not only spurs

economic growth but also strengthens social structures in a sustainable manner. The relationship between the creative economy and social welfare is also evident in its role in improving the quality of education and skills development. In the creative ecosystem, the need for workers with special competencies is very high. This encourages education providers, both formal and informal, to adjust their curriculum and training programs to be able to produce adaptive and innovative human resources. The community is encouraged to continue learning, exploring their potential, and creating works that are not only of economic value but also have a social impact. Creativity-based education fosters critical, collaborative, and problem-solving attitudes, which are important elements in realizing a prosperous and competitive society. In the long term, improving the quality of human resources through the creative economy will form an economically independent society and contribute positively to national development (Gouvea et al., 2021).

On the other hand, strengthening the creative economy is also closely related to the creation of an inclusive and sustainable environment. Many creative economy actors raise social and environmental issues as part of their work, such as recycling waste into artistic products, promoting an environmentally friendly lifestyle, and social campaigns through digital media. These activities not only create added economic value, but also foster collective awareness of the importance of maintaining harmony between humans and nature. When society begins to be aware of the values of sustainability, a more caring, responsive, and responsible social environment is created for others (Grefe, 2016). Thus, social welfare is not only viewed in terms of material, but also from the quality of social interaction, sense of security, and the sustainability of the ecosystem in which they live.

However, although the contribution of the creative economy to social welfare is quite large, there are still various challenges that need to be overcome. One of them is the inequality of access to infrastructure, technology, and capital which is still an obstacle for many creative actors, especially in remote areas. This inequality has the potential to widen the social gap if not addressed seriously through affirmative policies and support from the government and the private sector. In addition, protection of intellectual property rights is also an important issue so that creative actors get fair recognition and benefits from their work. Empowerment of the creative economy must be accompanied by strengthening institutions, education, and supporting regulations so that the potential of this sector can truly be optimized to achieve equitable social welfare (Ausat et al., 2023a). By

understanding the relationship between the creative economy and social welfare, we can see that development is not only determined by the growth of economic figures, but also by how much society is involved and feels the benefits of that growth. The creative economy offers a more humanistic and inclusive approach, where human creativity is at the center of development. Through cross-sector collaboration, appropriate policy support, and active community participation, the creative economy can become a main pillar in realizing social welfare that is not only material, but also touches the spiritual, emotional, and cultural dimensions of human life.

The Role of Creative Economy in Improving Social Welfare

The creative economy has become one of the important driving forces in social and economic development in various countries, including Indonesia. In the midst of changing times marked by digital transformation, globalization, and demands for innovation, the creative economy has emerged as a sector that relies on creativity, knowledge, and cultural values in creating added economic value (Agustiani et al., 2023). The uniqueness of the creative economy lies in its ability to empower communities through the development of individual and community potential, without having to rely on limited natural resources. In fact, this sector emphasizes the importance of creative and innovative human resources as the main asset in development. Therefore, the creative economy has a significant role in improving social welfare, especially in the context of community empowerment, job creation, and strengthening local cultural identity. One of the main contributions of the creative economy to social welfare is its ability to create inclusive and sustainable employment opportunities (Ausat et al., 2023b).

Unlike traditional economic sectors that tend to be capital-intensive or labor-intensive, the creative economy provides more space for individuals from various backgrounds to get involved and contribute. Creative industries such as performing arts, culinary, design, fashion, crafts, and film open up many new job opportunities that are not only limited to big cities, but also spread to remote areas. This encourages economic decentralization and reduces development disparities between regions. When local communities are empowered through economic activities that are in accordance with their cultural and creative potential, the community's income and standard of living increase significantly. Active community involvement in the creative economy also encourages a sense of ownership and responsibility for economic development in their own environment. In addition to creating jobs, the

creative economy also plays an important role in strengthening social cohesion through the preservation and development of local culture. Products and services produced by the creative economy sector are often rooted in cultural heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation. When these cultural elements are packaged in a form that is attractive and relevant to the current market, it not only creates economic value but also maintains the existence of the culture amidst the flow of globalization. This process allows communities to remain rooted in their identity, while opening up wider market access through innovation and creativity (Fazlagić & Skikiewicz, 2019). In this context, the creative economy becomes a bridge between tradition and modernity, as well as between economic needs and cultural preservation efforts. Its impact is not only felt materially, but also socially and psychologically, because people feel appreciated for their identity and local wisdom.

Furthermore, the creative economy encourages the creation of a community-based entrepreneurial ecosystem. Economic activities in this sector often start from small initiatives born from local communities, which then develop into micro, small, and medium enterprises. Support for creative MSMEs not only contributes to economic growth but also strengthens social networks at the local level. Collaboration between business actors, communities, government, and the private sector is an important element in building solidarity and social trust. In an environment that supports creative entrepreneurship, people are encouraged to help each other, share knowledge, and create solutions to common problems. This has a positive impact on improving the quality of life collectively, because people are not only objects of development, but also active subjects in the process of social and economic transformation (Павлюк & Pavliuk, 2023). On the other hand, the integration of technology in the creative economy sector opens up wider opportunities for people to access global markets and earn higher incomes. Digitalization allows creative actors to market their products and services without geographical boundaries, while utilizing digital platforms for promotion, distribution, and transactions. In this context, the creative economy becomes a means of digital empowerment that is not only relevant for the younger generation, but can also reach vulnerable groups such as women, people with disabilities, and indigenous communities. With the right training and adequate access to technology, these groups can develop their creative businesses independently and sustainably. Increasing digital inclusion

through the creative economy not only impacts individual income, but also strengthens the social and economic resilience of society as a whole.

However, the role of the creative economy in improving social welfare does not happen automatically. Supportive policies are needed from the government, including the provision of adequate infrastructure, affordable financing, and legal protection for intellectual property rights. In addition, strengthening the capacity of creative economy actors through training, education, and access to market networks is also a key factor. Without strategic intervention from various stakeholders, the great potential of the creative economy in creating social welfare will not be optimal (Štreimikienė & Kačerauskas, 2020). Therefore, collaboration between the government, industry players, academics, and the community is an important foundation in building an inclusive and sustainable creative economy ecosystem.

Overall, the creative economy is not just a new economic sector, but also a strategic instrument in realizing social welfare that is equitable and based on local potential. Through individual empowerment, cultural preservation, job creation, and community strengthening, the creative economy has proven itself as a transformational force in community development. Amid global challenges such as social inequality, climate change, and technological disruption, the creative economy provides hope for a more humane, inclusive, and sustainable future. Therefore, it is time for the creative economy to be placed as a priority in the national development agenda, not only as a source of economic growth, but also as a path to a more prosperous and dignified society.

Millennial Contribution to the Creative Economy

The millennial generation, born between the early 1980s and mid-1990s, now plays a very significant role in driving the growth of the creative economy in (Carrasco-Gallego, 2017), has a high entrepreneurial spirit, and a tendency to prioritize the values of originality and novelty, this generation is the driving force of the economic sector based on creativity, ideas, and innovation. Changes in the global economic structure from the manufacturing industry to an economy based on knowledge and creativity provide ample space for millennials to contribute actively and substantially. The creative economy is a sector that relies on human creativity as its main asset. In this context, millennials who grew up in the midst of the era of digitalization and technological disruption have the ability to create innovative products that not only have economic value, but also social and cultural value. Their ability

to utilize digital platforms such as social media, marketplaces, and streaming channels provides a competitive advantage in creating and marketing creative products and services. Not a few of them have succeeded in developing start-ups in the fields of design, music, film, culinary, fashion, and animation which then contribute to national economic growth.

One of the characteristics of millennials that supports the progress of the creative economy is the ability to think across disciplines and dare to challenge conventions (Kiat et al., 2024). They do not only create products, but also create narratives, brand identities, and experiences that can touch consumers emotionally. This makes the creative products produced not only unique but also close to local social and cultural values. In the fashion sector, for example, many young designers have adopted traditional Indonesian motifs into modern fashion styles, thus creating a symbiosis between local wisdom and global tastes.

The contribution of millennials is also evident from their increasing participation in various creative economy exhibitions both at home and abroad. The Indonesian government through the Creative Economy Agency and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy often facilitates young creative economy actors to promote their products to the international market. The millennial generation has proven to be able to compete in the global market by carrying local values in a format that is relevant to international tastes. Their ability to build global networks through communication technology is the key to success in expanding the market (Ogamba, 2018).

Not only in the fields of production and marketing, millennials also contribute to the development of new business models that are more inclusive and sustainable. Through a community-based approach, collaboration, and co-creation, they encourage the formation of a more dynamic creative economy ecosystem. Co-working spaces, business incubators, and creative communities are thriving in various cities as a place to share ideas, knowledge, and resources. This phenomenon shows that the contribution of millennials to the creative economy is not only individual, but also collective and long-term.

It is also important to note that millennials not only create economic opportunities for themselves, but also open up jobs for others. Many of the creative businesses they pioneer have succeeded in absorbing workers from various backgrounds, including from both younger and older generations. By prioritizing the principle of inclusivity, millennials are able to create a work

environment that values diversity and encourages productivity. This is in line with the spirit of the creative economy which prioritizes participatory and collaborative values in every process. Amid the challenges of globalization and very rapid technological developments, millennials also show resilience in facing change. They are relatively quicker to adapt to market dynamics and new technological developments. In the COVID-19 pandemic situation, for example, many creative economy actors from the millennial generation have succeeded in utilizing digital technology to maintain and even improve their businesses. Digital transformation is not only a tool, but also a key strategy in designing a resilient and adaptive business model (Abudaqa & Noburu, 2025). However, the contribution of millennials to the creative economy is not without challenges. Tight competition, limited access to capital, and lack of protection of intellectual property rights are still obstacles faced by young creative economy players. This is where the role of government and the private sector becomes important in creating an ecosystem that supports the growth of creative businesses. Policies that favor creative industry players, providing entrepreneurship training, and strengthening legal protection for works are important elements in supporting the sustainable contribution of millennials.

Education also plays a vital role in strengthening the contribution of millennials in this sector. An educational curriculum that is adaptive to the development of the creative industry, as well as a learning approach that encourages creativity and innovation, will produce a young generation that is ready to compete in the new economic era. Educational institutions must be strategic partners in forming an entrepreneurial mindset and practical skills needed in the creative industry. Connectivity between the world of education, industry, and the creative community needs to be strengthened in order to create an integrative and productive ecosystem.

In the long term, the contribution of millennials to the creative economy is projected to increase along with the development of technology and changes in people's consumption patterns. Today's consumers are not only looking for functional products, but also products that have aesthetic value, symbolic meaning, and emotional experiences. This is where the advantage of the creative economy lies, and this is where millennials take a strategic role as value creators. This role not only provides economic impacts, but also has an impact on strengthening cultural identity, preserving local values, and improving the quality of life of the community. Overall, the millennial generation has proven itself as an agent of change that brings a new breath to

the development of the creative economy in Indonesia. With the advantage in utilizing technology, the courage to innovate, and a collaborative spirit, they are able to create new breakthroughs that drive the wheels of the economy based on ideas and creativity. The next task is to ensure that these contributions continue to be supported and directed towards inclusive, sustainable, and equitable development. Thus, the creative economy is not only an arena for economic growth, but also a vehicle for positive social transformation for the future of the nation.

CONCLUSION

The role of the creative economy in improving social welfare among millennials has proven to be one of the main drivers of social and economic transformation in the digital era. The involvement of the millennial generation in various sub-sectors of the creative economy such as design, culinary, music, digital applications, and creative content shows that they have great potential as agents of change. By relying on creativity, innovation, and technology, millennials are able to create new job opportunities that not only increase personal income, but also provide a positive social impact on the surrounding community.

Furthermore, the creative economy has encouraged the creation of an inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem. Among millennials, the creative economy provides space to channel potential and talents that were previously less accommodated by the formal sector. This opens up access to wider economic resources and stimulates local community-based economic growth. In addition, the collaborative approach that is widely applied in creative economy practices strengthens social solidarity, enriches interactions between individuals, and fosters a spirit of mutual cooperation as a foundation for shared prosperity.

Thus, the role of the creative economy is not only important in economic aspects, but also in forming a dynamic and inclusive social identity among millennials. Empowering the younger generation through the creative economy contributes significantly to improving the quality of life, reducing unemployment, and strengthening the capacity of communities in facing global challenges. Therefore, synergy between the government, industry players, and the community is needed to create a more conducive creative economy ecosystem for the achievement of sustainable social welfare.

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