The role of the social media platform *Pinterest* as a creative media reference for generation Z students

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to analyze the role of the social media platform Pinterest as a reference for the creativity of Generation Z students. The research method used was qualitative with a case study approach, allowing for an in-depth exploration of how Pinterest influences student creativity. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and document studies, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Informants were determined purposively, consisting of students from the Department of Sociology at Universitas Negeri Padang, specifically from both the Sociology Study Program and the Communication Studies Program. This targeted selection ensured that the informants had relevant experience and insights. Data processing utilized the Miles and Huberman data analysis technique, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This method ensured that the data was systematically analyzed to identify patterns and draw meaningful conclusions. The results of the study indicate that Pinterest plays a crucial role in facilitating the creative processes of Generation Z students. This platform serves as a rich source of visual inspiration, offering a vast array of images and creative ideas that can stimulate the imagination of Generation Z students. Additionally, the ability to save and share creative content broadens the horizons of Generation Z students, enabling them to continuously develop their creative skills and expertise. Pinterest not only provides inspiration but also serves as a collaborative tool where students can exchange ideas and gain feedback from peers, further enhancing their creative potential.

Keywords: Generation Z; Media Reference; Pinterest; Student Creativity

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an integral part of daily life, not only as a means of social interaction but also as a source of inspiration and reference. Social media serves as a media hub that can focus on user existence, facilitating them in their activities and collaborations. Thus, social media can strengthen relationships between users and make it easier for students to exchange information in the field of education (Abbas et al., 2019; Alismaiel et al., 2022; Ansari & Khan, 2020; Nasrullah, 2017).

Pinterest, a unique and innovative social media platform, has gained popularity due to its ability to allow users to explore, discover, save, and share visual inspiration in the form of images and videos known as "pins." With a strong focus on creative ideas, fashion, food, and various other interests, Pinterest provides a platform for individuals to collect and organize their interests in various themed boards (Enterprise, 2014; Gonçalves et al., 2019).

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Pinterest's development is driven by the desire to facilitate exploration, inspiration, and creativity in visual form, especially amidst the rapidly growing digital content boom (Huntington, 2022; Lapolla, 2014; Scolere & Humphreys, 2016). Founded in March 2010 by Ben Silbermann, Paul Sciarra, and Evan Sharp, Pinterest has grown into one of the leading social media platforms with over 400 million monthly active users worldwide as of September 2021. Pinterest's presence as a social media platform that facilitates interaction between users with similar interests has been a crucial factor in its success.

Pinterest's interface is designed to be intuitive and engaging, allowing users to easily explore content and gather inspiration according to their interests. Users can create themed boards for specific topics, add pins, and collaborate with others (Jing et al., 2015; Lazzez et al., 2023). Additionally, Pinterest integrates artificial intelligence technology to recommend content that matches users' interests, enhancing the overall user experience.

Pinterest's role as new media is not limited to inspiration alone. The platform influences various aspects of daily life, such as providing inspiration for cooking, home decorating, clothing design, and vacation planning. This makes Pinterest a highly valuable resource for individuals who want to explore and develop their interests and creativity.

Not only for individuals, Pinterest also has significant implications in the business and marketing world. Many businesses use Pinterest as a visual marketing tool to promote their products and services and link their pins to their websites to drive more traffic and potential customers (Huang et al., 2022). Optimized marketing strategies with Pinterest can provide substantial benefits in building brand image and reaching target markets more effectively.

Pinterest has paved a new way in changing how people interact with visual content in this digital era. Through inspiration, collaboration, and creativity, Pinterest continues to solidify its position as one of the leading social media platforms that encourages users to explore and express their interests and ideas (Clarke, 2019).

Among students, Pinterest presents an open window to the world of visual inspiration. This includes students at Universitas Negeri Padang, particularly those in the Department of Sociology who are part of Generation Z. The numerous project-based learning (PBL) assignments for students in the Department of Sociology at Universitas Negeri Padang are one of the factors driving them to use Pinterest. PBL is a learning approach that emphasizes collaborative projects and contextual learning, where students are given tasks that require problem-solving, research, and presentation of results.

Generation Z, also known as Gen Z or centennials, is the generation born between 1997 and 2012, right after the millennial generation or Generation Y. Additionally, Generation Z includes those born between 1998 and 2009 (Tapscott, 2009). Generally, these statements are accurate, considering that Generation Z is the generation born after 1996. On average, Generation Z is currently attending college, while some have entered the workforce by 2020.

Pinterest has become a highly relevant platform for Generation Z students, who have grown up in the digital era and are accustomed to using technology (Saputra, 2024). In the context of learning and creativity, Generation Z students use Pinterest as a rich source of visual inspiration. They not only save ideas for academic projects but also create inspirational boards that reflect their interests and identities. Collaboration is key to Pinterest's use among Generation Z students, as they can share ideas, references, and tutorials with fellow students around the world. With Generation Z's tendency to combine technology with creativity, Pinterest provides a platform for developing visual and conceptual skills. Additionally, Generation Z students use Pinterest as a personal marketing

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tool, building an online identity that reflects their talents, interests, and aspirations. With a combination of flexibility and visual engagement, Pinterest plays a crucial role in supporting Generation Z students in their academic and personal development journeys.

This research was conducted to analyze the role of the social media platform Pinterest as a reference for the creativity of Generation Z students.

METHODS

In this research, a qualitative research method with a case study approach was used. This type of method is employed to investigate and understand an event or problem that has occurred by gathering various types of information, which is then processed to obtain a resolution method so that the expressed problem can be solved (Saputra, 2023).

Generally, a case study is a more appropriate strategy when the substance of the research question is how or why, when the researcher has little ability to control the events being studied, and when the focus of the research is on contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts (Yin, 2009). This research will be analyzed using Media Richness Theory, a theoretical framework that focuses on the ability of communication media to convey information, particularly in organizational and business contexts. This theory is based on the assumption that each medium has a certain level of richness or sharpness, affecting its ability to convey information with clarity and content richness (Daft & Lengel, 1986).

As a qualitative study, the subjects in this research are informants who serve as data sources. The informant selection technique used is purposive sampling. This technique involves selecting individuals based on specific criteria or categories that are created according to the research objectives (Wahyuni, 2018). Therefore, the subjects in this research are selected based on this technique, namely nine students from the Department of Sociology at Universitas Negeri Padang. These informants are determined based on the following criteria:

1. Active students enrolled in the Department of Sociology.
2. Regularly use Pinterest in their academic or personal activities.
3. Able to provide in-depth insights into the use of Pinterest in the context of learning.
4. Participate in communities or forums discussing topics related to Pinterest.
5. Have experience creating content or pins on Pinterest.
6. Familiar with various features and functions of Pinterest relevant to their studies.
7. Involved in projects or assignments that utilize Pinterest as a tool.
8. Follow accounts or boards on Pinterest related to sociology or their study topics.
9. Willing to participate in interviews and in-depth discussions about their experiences using Pinterest.

With these criteria, it is expected that the research can gain a better understanding of how students use Pinterest in their academic context.

Data collection techniques included interviews, observation, and literature study. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman data analysis technique. The analysis was carried out in three stages: 1) data reduction; 2) data display; and 3) conclusion drawing (Saputra, 2023).

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The use of the social media platform "Pinterest" offers a unique visual experience, allowing users to discover, save, and share various visual content covering a wide range of topics, from interior design, food recipes, fashion styles, to do-it-yourself (DIY) projects. Pinterest facilitates easy and structured access to visual inspiration from around the world. Users can explore various thematic boards created by other users, containing images and ideas related to specific interests. This enables them to discover new ideas, trends, and projects that can spark their creativity. In this context, Pinterest serves as a means for exploring and discovering creative ideas.


Image 1. Pinterest Logo
Source: www.logos-world.net

One important aspect of Pinterest is its ability to allow users to save and organize the content they encounter in the form of "pins" on their personal thematic boards. This enables users to create collections of ideas that they can access and further develop in the future. By saving and organizing inspirational content, Pinterest helps users to compile ideas, develop projects, and actualize their creativity. Additionally, collaboration among users is also an important aspect of facilitating creativity on Pinterest. Users can collaborate with others on shared thematic boards, allowing them to share inspiration, ideas, and perspectives (Ismail, 2016). This creates an environment that can stimulate discussion, exchange ideas, and enhance inspiration, all of which support creativity and innovation.

Pinterest not only facilitates individual creativity but also has implications for collective creativity. Users can draw inspiration from other users' contributions and blend those ideas to create something new and innovative (Acar et al., 2024). In this sense, Pinterest is not only a place to seek inspiration but also to contribute to creative collaboration at a community level. The positive influence of Pinterest in supporting creativity and inspiration is reflected in user experiences. Users feel inspired, more creative, and have a broader knowledge of various topics. They can create a visual portfolio of their interests, expand their horizons, and develop new skills. Therefore, Pinterest is not just a social media platform, but also a tool that facilitates creative growth and personal development.

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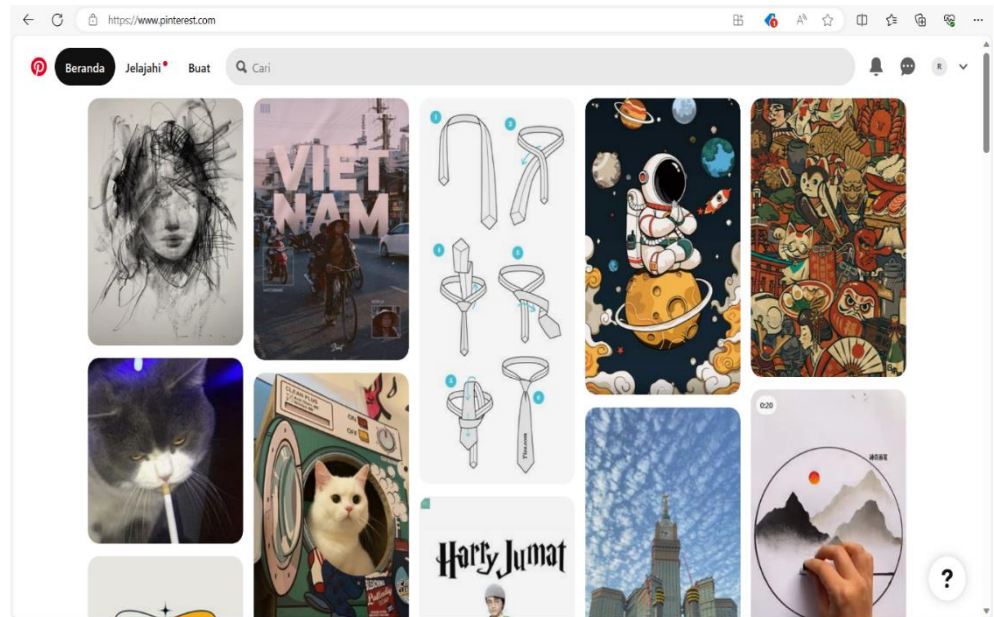
Image 2. Pinterest Desktop Interface
Source: Primary research data

Image 3. Pinterest Mobile Interface
Source: Primary research data

The results of this study indicate Pinterest's role as a media reference for creativity among Generation Z students by exploring various aspects of the platform's use in the context of higher education. The analyzed data shows that most Generation Z students actively utilize Pinterest at various stages of their creative processes. From visual arts to functional design, Pinterest introduces a variety of ideas and visual inspiration, opening up broad exploration opportunities for Generation Z students to develop their creativity.

In-depth interviews with key informants provide a comprehensive understanding of the importance of community in user experience. Bintang, a communication studies student born in 2005, highlighted,

> *"Pinterest is not just a source of ideas for me, but also a place where I can connect with individuals with similar interests. This community provides valuable support and feedback in developing my artwork."*

These findings affirm that Pinterest is not just a reference platform, but also a collaborative space that can strengthen networks and facilitate the exchange of ideas. Although the use of Pinterest has a positive impact on the creativity development of Generation Z students, the research also identifies some challenges they face. Generation Z students often struggle with sorting information and managing the overwhelming creative stimuli, which can lead to a risk of losing focus on specific concepts. Niken, a sociology student born in 2003, expressed,

> *"I often feel overwhelmed because I find so many interesting ideas. But too much inspiration can sometimes backfire."*

Amid these challenges, this research suggests significant positive potential from using Pinterest in higher education contexts. Generation Z students believe that the platform not only helps them find ideas but also provides an environment that supports collaboration and idea exchange. Some Generation Z students voiced their desire for guidance or workshops that could help them optimize the use of Pinterest as a more effective creative tool.

Overall, Pinterest plays a significant role in facilitating creativity and inspiration through easy access to inspiring visual content. By helping users discover new ideas, save inspiration, and collaborate with others, Pinterest creates an environment that stimulates creativity and innovation. With continuous development and feature updates, Pinterest will continue to be a source of inspiration and a place to explore creativity for millions of users worldwide. Pinterest users utilize the platform to support their creativity and inspiration in various ways. They can create thematic boards that organize ideas and inspiration according to their interests, such as home decoration, lifestyle, or art projects. By browsing through various pins posted by other users, they can discover new ideas, current trends, and creative variations of a concept. Users can also collaborate with others, share ideas, and provide feedback, creating an environment that promotes innovative ideas.

The impact of using Pinterest in facilitating the discovery of creative and innovative ideas is the creation of an online environment that promotes creative exploration. Pinterest helps users overcome creative blocks by providing easy and organized access to various inspirations. This can stimulate imagination, spark new ideas, and facilitate the creative process. Additionally, Pinterest can also serve as a self-imaging tool for users, allowing them to express their interests, lifestyle, and preferences through the thematic boards they create.

The experiences and perspectives of Generation Z students provide valuable insights into how Pinterest facilitates creativity and inspiration. This section explores individual stories and the broader impact of Pinterest on the creative processes of these students. Bintang, a communication studies student, finds Pinterest to be an indispensable part of her creative toolkit.

> *"Whenever I feel stuck, I turn to Pinterest. The diverse range of visuals and ideas always sparks something new in my mind."*

She describes how Pinterest boards serve as a digital sketchbook, where she can pin ideas and revisit them when needed. This process helps her to refine her projects and maintain a

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steady flow of inspiration. Another student, Arif, a design major, highlights the collaborative aspect of Pinterest.

> *"I often create shared boards with my classmates for our group projects. It's an efficient way to gather references and ensure everyone is on the same page."*

The ability to collaborate on boards has streamlined their group work, making it easier to compile ideas and feedback in one accessible place. For Niken, the challenge lies in managing the influx of inspiration.

> *"There are so many amazing ideas out there, it can be overwhelming. Sometimes I need to take a step back and focus on one concept at a time."*

Despite this, she acknowledges that the wealth of content available on Pinterest has broadened her creative horizons significantly. In educational settings, Pinterest has proven to be a valuable resource for students. Students have reported using Pinterest to prepare for assignments and projects. By creating boards dedicated to their coursework, they can compile research and inspiration in an organized manner. This approach not only aids in their creative development but also enhances their organizational skills.

Collaboration is a key element of Pinterest's appeal. The platform's features support collective creativity, allowing users to work together seamlessly. Shared boards are a popular tool for collaborative projects, enabling multiple users to contribute ideas and feedback. Dina, a fashion design student, describes her experience with collaborative boards.

> *"My classmates and I use shared boards for our design projects. It's a great way to share our inspirations and keep track of each other's progress."*

This collaborative environment fosters a sense of teamwork and collective effort, which is crucial for successful project outcomes. In addition to shared boards, the comment and messaging features on Pinterest facilitate real-time feedback and discussions. Users can comment on pins, offering suggestions or critiques that can help refine ideas. This interactive aspect enhances the creative process, making it more dynamic and engaging. While Pinterest offers numerous benefits, it also presents challenges that users must navigate. The vast amount of content can be overwhelming, making it difficult for users to focus on specific ideas. Additionally, the need to manage and organize pins effectively is crucial to avoid clutter and confusion.

To address these challenges, users have developed strategies to optimize their use of Pinterest. One common approach is to create multiple boards for different projects or themes. This helps to compartmentalize ideas and maintain focus. Users also employ techniques such as regularly reviewing and updating their boards to keep their collections relevant and organized. Workshops and tutorials on effective Pinterest use can further enhance users' experience. By learning best practices for organization and collaboration, students can maximize the platform's potential as a creative tool (Ghazi & Goede, 2019). As Pinterest continues to evolve, its role in facilitating creativity and inspiration is likely to expand. Future developments may include enhanced features for collaboration, such as more sophisticated tools for real-time editing and feedback (Herrera-Franco et al., 2020). Additionally, improvements in search algorithms and content recommendations can help users discover even more relevant and inspiring content.

The integration of Pinterest with other digital tools and platforms also presents exciting possibilities. By linking Pinterest with productivity apps, design software, and educational

resources, users can create a seamless workflow that supports all aspects of their creative process. Pinterest stands out as a powerful tool for facilitating creativity and inspiration among Generation Z students. Its rich visual content, collaborative features, and user-friendly interface make it an ideal platform for exploring and developing creative ideas. By providing easy access to a diverse range of inspirations, Pinterest helps users to overcome creative blocks and continuously refine their skills.

The experiences of Generation Z students highlight the significant impact of Pinterest on their creative processes. Whether used individually or collaboratively, the platform supports a dynamic and interactive environment that fosters innovation and growth . As the platform continues to evolve and introduce new features, it will remain an essential tool for creative exploration and inspiration. With its ability to adapt and innovate, Pinterest is poised to support the creative endeavors of Generation Z students and beyond for years to come.

Adding further depth to the research, interviews with more students provided additional perspectives on how Pinterest impacts their creative processes. Fajar, a communication studies student born in 2004, noted,

> *"Pinterest helps me see different styles and techniques in visual communication that I wouldn't have thought of on my own."*

He elaborated that by exploring various pins and boards, he gains insights into the latest trends and innovative approaches in visual storytelling, which he then incorporates into his projects. Another student, Sinta, studying sociology and born in 2002, highlighted how Pinterest aids in her academic research.

> *"I use Pinterest to find infographics and visual data representations. It makes understanding complex sociological theories much easier and more engaging."*

This practical application demonstrates Pinterest's versatility beyond just artistic inspiration, extending into educational enhancement and academic support.

Expanding the discussion on collaboration, Ayu, a design student born in 2003, shared her experience of working with international peers through Pinterest.

> *"We use shared boards to compile our ideas and design references. It's amazing how easily we can collaborate despite being in different countries."*

This ability to bridge geographical distances through shared visual content exemplifies the platform's potential in global collaborative projects. Additionally, Rizki, a sociology student born in 2001, pointed out how Pinterest serves as a platform for cultural exchange.

> *"I follow boards from different cultures to get a sense of their visual aesthetics and societal values. It enriches my understanding and helps me approach my studies from a more diverse perspective."*

Such use of Pinterest underlines its role in promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity, contributing to a more holistic educational experience.

In addressing the challenges faced by users, further strategies were shared by the students. For instance, Budi, a communication studies student born in 2005, recommended,

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> *"I create private boards for my work-in-progress projects. This way, I can experiment freely without worrying about the board looking messy."*

This approach allows for a more flexible and iterative creative process, where ideas can be refined and reorganized before being made public. Meanwhile, Ayu suggested,

> *"Using Pinterest's 'Sections' feature within boards helps me categorize ideas more specifically. It keeps my boards tidy and my mind clear."*

These practical tips demonstrate how students actively manage the platform to enhance their productivity and creativity.

Considering the potential future developments of Pinterest, the integration with augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies could be explored. Such advancements could offer users immersive experiences, allowing them to visualize their creative ideas in a more interactive and tangible way. For instance, AR features could enable users to see how a design would look in a real-world setting, while VR could provide virtual collaborative spaces for group projects.

Furthermore, the introduction of more sophisticated analytics tools on Pinterest could help users track their creative progress and gather insights on popular trends and user engagement. This data-driven approach would empower users to make informed decisions about their creative projects and strategies.

The positive impact of Pinterest on Generation Z students' creativity and inspiration is undeniable. The platform's extensive visual content, organizational tools, and collaborative features create an environment that nurtures creative exploration and development. By continuously adapting to the needs of its users and incorporating new technologies, Pinterest is well-positioned to remain a vital resource for creative and academic growth.

In conclusion, Pinterest's role in facilitating creativity and inspiration among Generation Z students is multifaceted and far-reaching. Its ability to provide a vast array of visual content, support collaborative efforts, and enhance educational experiences makes it an indispensable tool in the modern creative landscape. As the platform evolves and introduces new features, its impact on the creative processes of students will only continue to grow, fostering a new generation of innovative thinkers and creators.

Analysis of User Interaction and Collaboration on the New Media "Pinterest"

The social media platform Pinterest has emerged as a dynamic space where users with similar interests can interact and collaborate. The platform offers various features that encourage users to engage in activities such as sharing, commenting, and collaborating, all centered around visualizing ideas and inspiration (Hardiman et al., 2014). By enabling the formation of groups or shared boards, Pinterest facilitates the exchange of ideas and inspiration among users.

One of the key features that drive interaction patterns on Pinterest is the ability to follow and comment on other users' pins. This feature allows users to connect with others who share similar interests and gain inspiration from the works and projects they share (Fahmi, 2019). In this interactive community, users have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions, enriching the sharing experience and motivating creative growth.

The ability to follow and comment on pins creates a network effect, where users can discover new content and connect with like-minded individuals. This network effect

enhances the overall user experience, as users can continuously find new sources of inspiration and engage in meaningful discussions with others (Chen et al., 2023). For example, a user interested in fashion can follow fashion designers and influencers, comment on their pins, and receive feedback on their own fashion boards. This level of interaction fosters a sense of community and collaboration, encouraging users to actively participate in the platform.

The formation of groups or shared boards is another important aspect of collaboration on Pinterest. Users can create groups with others to collect ideas related to a specific topic or interest. For instance, a group interested in interior design can form a shared board to share inspiration related to room designs or particular styles. This creates an environment that facilitates in-depth discussion, exchange of views, and enhancement of ideas.

Shared boards allow users to collaborate on projects and share their ideas in a visual format. This collaborative feature is particularly beneficial for creative projects, as it enables users to visually communicate their concepts and receive feedback from others. For example, a group of students working on a design project can create a shared board to collect visual references, brainstorm ideas, and develop their project collaboratively. This collaborative process not only enhances the quality of the project but also fosters a sense of teamwork and collective creativity.

Collaboration on Pinterest has a significant impact on the user experience. By contributing and sharing their knowledge, users feel more engaged and connected to the community. Increased interactivity motivates users to be more active in exploring content, seeking new ideas, and improving their skills in various fields. Additionally, collaboration enriches existing ideas, brings new perspectives, and inspires innovation.

When users collaborate on Pinterest, they bring their unique perspectives and experiences to the table, enriching the collective pool of ideas. This diversity of thought leads to more innovative and creative outcomes, as users can build upon each other's ideas and develop new concepts. For example, a group of artists collaborating on a shared board can inspire each other with different artistic styles and techniques, resulting in more diverse and innovative artworks.

With more active engagement, users gain additional benefits from using Pinterest. They can enhance their inspiration, discover new ideas for their projects, and build a strong social network. Moreover, collaboration allows for the formation of stronger communities around shared interests, enhancing the sense of ownership and group identity.

The sense of community and belonging that arises from collaboration on Pinterest is a key factor in motivating users to stay active on the platform. Users who feel connected to a community of like-minded individuals are more likely to continue contributing and engaging with content. This sense of belonging also enhances the overall user experience, as users feel supported and valued within their community.

In the context of research on Pinterest's role as a media reference for the creativity of Generation Z students, the application of Media Richness Theory is highly relevant to understand how the richness of visual media on this platform affects and enriches the creative processes of Generation Z students. By exploring Pinterest's features that offer the ability to visualize ideas and inspiration in the form of images, designs, and visual collages, we can see how this platform meets the criteria of media richness described in the theory (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Media Richness Theory posits that communication media vary in their ability to convey information based on factors such as immediacy of feedback, multiple cues, and personalization. Pinterest's rich visual content and interactive features make it a highly effective medium for conveying complex ideas and stimulating creativity. Generation Z students, who are digital natives and highly visual learners, can benefit greatly from the rich media environment that Pinterest provides.

Pinterest facilitates the delivery of creative information in a more comprehensive and dense manner, enabling Generation Z students to explore and share their ideas through rich visual media (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). In the context of creative tasks, such as art or design projects, the media richness of Pinterest provides an effective means to convey complex messages and stimulate the imagination of Generation Z students.

The ability to visualize ideas and inspiration through images, designs, and visual collages is particularly beneficial for creative tasks. Generation Z students can use Pinterest to gather visual references, create mood boards, and develop their projects in a visually rich environment. This visual approach to creativity enhances their ability to conceptualize and communicate their ideas effectively (Dhir et al., 2018).

Along with this, the interactivity offered by Pinterest is also relevant to the research context. Generation Z students can interact with content, provide feedback, and collaborate with fellow users. This can create a more dynamic learning experience and enrich the creative process by allowing the exchange of ideas and feedback among community members on this platform.

The interactive features of Pinterest, such as commenting and sharing, enable Generation Z students to engage in meaningful discussions and receive constructive feedback on their work. This level of interactivity fosters a collaborative learning environment, where students can learn from each other and develop their creative skills through peer-to-peer feedback (Utz & Breuer, 2017).

However, it is important to also consider the complexity of tasks in this research context. Media Richness Theory highlights that the effectiveness of a medium also depends on how well the medium fits the tasks at hand. In this case, Pinterest may be more effective for complex creative tasks, where visual richness can add an additional dimension to creative ideas and concepts (Whiting & Williams, 2013).

Complex creative tasks, such as developing a design project or creating an art piece, require a medium that can convey nuanced and detailed information. Pinterest's rich visual content and interactive features make it an ideal platform for such tasks, as it allows users to explore and develop their ideas in a visually rich and collaborative environment.

By applying Media Richness Theory in this research, it can be identified that Pinterest is not just a static reference source but a medium that provides a dynamic and rich creative experience. Therefore, this research provides deeper insights into how media richness on this platform plays a key role in developing the creativity of Generation Z students in higher education environments (Van Dijck, 2013).

The dynamic and rich creative experience offered by Pinterest is a testament to its effectiveness as a tool for fostering creativity among Generation Z students. By leveraging the platform's capabilities, students can immerse themselves in a visually stimulating environment that nurtures their creative processes and encourages innovation.

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One of the standout features of Pinterest is its ability to support a wide range of creative activities. Users can create and curate boards that serve as visual portfolios, showcasing their projects and ideas. This not only allows students to organize their inspirations but also provides a platform for them to share their work with a broader audience. The visibility and feedback they receive from this exposure can be instrumental in refining their creative skills and gaining recognition for their work.

In addition to personal boards, Pinterest's collaborative features are particularly beneficial for group projects and classroom settings. Teachers and students can create shared boards for specific courses or projects, enabling everyone involved to contribute resources, ideas, and feedback. This collaborative approach ensures that all members of the group are actively engaged and have the opportunity to influence the direction of the project. It also promotes a sense of shared ownership and responsibility, which can enhance the learning experience and lead to more cohesive and well-developed outcomes.

The platform's search functionality is another critical component that supports creativity. Pinterest's search engine is designed to surface visually rich content that aligns with users' interests and queries. For Generation Z students, this means they can quickly find inspiration and references for their projects, whether they are looking for design trends, artistic techniques, or innovative solutions. The ability to discover new content and ideas easily helps to keep their creative juices flowing and ensures that they are always at the forefront of their field.

Furthermore, Pinterest's algorithmic recommendations play a significant role in sustaining user engagement. By analyzing user behavior and preferences, Pinterest suggests pins and boards that are likely to be of interest to the user (Ellison et al., 2014). This personalized experience keeps students engaged with fresh content and ideas, which can be particularly motivating for those who are working on long-term projects or exploring new creative fields.

The community aspect of Pinterest cannot be overlooked either. As users interact with each other's content through comments, likes, and shares, they form connections with individuals who have similar interests and passions. These connections can lead to collaborative opportunities, mentorship, and even friendships that extend beyond the digital realm. For Generation Z students, building such a network can be incredibly valuable, providing them with support, feedback, and opportunities that can significantly impact their academic and professional journeys (Zhong et al., 2021).

In addition to fostering creativity and collaboration, Pinterest also supports the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. As students explore various ideas and inspirations on the platform, they are encouraged to evaluate and synthesize information, making connections between different concepts and applying them to their projects (Li et al., 2021). This process of critical analysis is essential for developing innovative solutions and advancing their creative abilities.

Moreover, Pinterest's visual format is particularly well-suited for accommodating diverse learning styles. Generation Z students, who are often characterized by their preference for visual and interactive content, can benefit greatly from the platform's emphasis on images and videos. This aligns with the principles of Media Richness Theory, which posits that media that can convey rich and nuanced information are more effective for complex communication tasks. By providing a visually rich environment, Pinterest caters to the learning preferences of Generation Z students, making it easier for them to engage with and absorb information (Akdemir & Oguz, 2008).

The platform's integration with other digital tools and resources further enhances its utility for students. For example, users can save pins from websites, link to external resources, and integrate their Pinterest boards with other productivity and creative tools. This interoperability allows students to seamlessly incorporate Pinterest into their broader digital workflow, making it a versatile tool for research, ideation, and project development (Claypoole & Szalma, 2019).

In the context of higher education, Pinterest's potential as a teaching and learning tool is immense (Uram & Papka, 2016). Educators can use the platform to create interactive and visually engaging lesson plans, curate resources for their students, and facilitate collaborative projects. The ability to share and discuss visual content in real-time makes Pinterest an effective tool for both in-person and remote learning environments. Additionally, the platform's vast repository of user-generated content provides a wealth of resources that educators can draw upon to enhance their teaching materials and support their students' learning experiences.

Research on the impact of Pinterest on the creativity of Generation Z students can provide valuable insights into how digital tools can be leveraged to support creative development. By applying Media Richness Theory, researchers can explore the specific ways in which the platform's visual and interactive features contribute to the creative processes of students. This research can inform best practices for integrating Pinterest into educational settings and highlight the benefits of using rich media environments to foster creativity.

In conclusion, Pinterest is a powerful tool for facilitating user interaction and collaboration, particularly among Generation Z students. Its rich visual content, interactive features, and collaborative capabilities make it an ideal platform for supporting creative endeavors. By enabling users to connect, share, and collaborate, Pinterest fosters a sense of community and engagement that enhances the overall user experience. The application of Media Richness Theory in this context underscores the importance of visual and interactive media in supporting complex creative tasks. As such, Pinterest stands out as a valuable resource for fostering creativity, collaboration, and innovation among Generation Z students in higher education environments.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the social media platform Pinterest plays a crucial role in facilitating the creative process of Generation Z students. The platform serves as a rich source of visual inspiration, offering a variety of images and creative ideas that can stimulate the imagination of these students. The ability to save and share creative content broadens the horizons of Generation Z students, allowing them to continuously develop their creative skills and expertise.

Moreover, this study concludes that Pinterest provides quick and easy access to a wide range of creative resources, such as DIY tutorials, art guides, and innovative projects. This enables Generation Z students to develop their ideas with concrete references and clear guidance. Thus, the platform functions as an informal learning tool that can enhance the creative abilities of Generation Z students without being limited by geographical or institutional boundaries.

Additionally, this study concludes that Pinterest plays a significant role in building creative communities among Generation Z students. Through features such as collaborative boards, comments, and content sharing, Generation Z students can interact and share inspiration with one another. This community provides social and constructive support, creating an

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environment that encourages the exchange of ideas and collective creativity development.

Finally, Pinterest is not just a platform for passive visual consumption but also a collaborative tool that allows Generation Z students to become producers of their own creative content. By combining inspiration from Pinterest with their own creations, Generation Z students can develop their own creative skills and even build portfolios that can be accessed by a large audience, adding a professional dimension to their creative development.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Saputra, R.A.V.W.: Conceptualization (lead), methodology (lead), writing – original draft (lead), review (supporting), editing (supporting), securing funding. conceptualization (supporting), methodology (supporting), writing – original draft (lead), review (lead).

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