

Income Uncertainty and Continuance Intention Among Nano Niche Beauty Creators: The Mediating Role of Motivation

Annisa' Nurul Maghfirah ¹, Diki Putra Setianto ² & Dhiyan Septa Wihara ³

State University of Surabaya, Indonesia^{1,2,3}

Corresponding Author: annisa.23186@mhs.unesa.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The gig economy has turned content creation into a livelihood many people now rely on, though one with uncertain and often inconsistent income, especially for smaller creators whose earnings depend heavily on platform algorithms. This study examines how income uncertainty affects continuance intention among nano niche beauty creators on TikTok Indonesia, with motivation as a mediating variable. Data were collected from 107 purposively sampled respondents and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 and Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4). Income uncertainty showed no significant relationship with either motivation ($\beta = 0.011$, $p = 0.942$) or continuance intention ($\beta = 0.198$, $p = 0.091$). Motivation, however, was significantly related to continuance intention ($\beta = 0.236$, $p = 0.003$). The indirect effect of income uncertainty on continuance intention through motivation was not statistically supported (Bootstrap CI: -0.069 to 0.064). These findings suggest that motivation is positively associated with continuance intention, whereas income uncertainty is not significantly associated with either motivation or continuance intention in this sample. Platform strategies aimed at retaining these creators may therefore benefit from prioritizing community and creative autonomy over monetary incentives.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the gig economy has emerged as a topic of discussion, not least in Indonesia. The short-term contract and freelancing businesses made possible by the use of digital platforms have created wide accessibility to flexible jobs (Kamarudin & Arif, 2024). One of the more obvious ones is the growth of the profession of content creation. The pandemic saw the number of registered content creators rise from 2,552 to 7,730

users per month, with the growth being dominated by Gen Z (51.56%) and Millennials (45.93%), who are mainly active in lifestyle, fashion, beauty, travel and F&B content (Wulandari, 2020). The growth has been fueled by TikTok, which allows users to establish their own following by creating videos that are short (15-60 seconds) and have relatively low barriers of entry (Fachmy et al., 2021; Schillinger et al., 2020 as cited in Endarwati & Ekawarti, 2021).

Within the TikTok creator ecosystem, individuals are commonly segmented by follower count: nano (1,000 to <10,000), micro (10,000 to <50,000), mid-tier (50,000 to <500,000), macro (500,000 to <1 million), and mega (>1 million) influencers (Tian et al., 2023). Although the audience is small, recent attention has been given to nano influencers, as they tend to have high engagement rates and are seen as more authentic than their larger counterparts, making them an important tool for SMEs, especially when reaching niche audiences (Campbell & Farrell, 2020; Putri et al., 2021). Nano influencers and their followers have a close and two-way relationship that can build trust and translate into meaningful action like buying products that larger influencers may not be able to achieve.

However, involvement in the content creation process is not without its challenges. For the purposes of this study, nano influencers who specialize in beauty content are hereafter referred to as nano niche beauty creators, defined as individuals who produce beauty videos on TikTok with fewer than 10,000 followers. For nano niche beauty creators in Indonesia, micro-factors of dependence towards platform algorithms create complicated work dynamics, where the creators never know when they will generate income and are required to produce content on a regular basis to maintain their audience and thus create income uncertainty (Hidayah et al., 2025). Some 80% of freelancers face income volatility and 65% do not have a regular income source outside of their freelance activities, making them more financially exposed (Zelma, 2024). This insecurity is enhanced by the unpredictable nature of the reward income, the randomness in earning periods, and algorithmic reliance among the nano niche beauty creators (Zhang et al., 2025). Under these circumstances, hope labor has emerged, which is an attitude of working without adequate compensation in the present, in the hope that one will have an opportunity to get a better job in the future (Mackenzie & McKinlay, 2021).

In this regard, motivation becomes a very important factor in deciding whether the creator perseveres or not. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposes that three psychological needs, competence, autonomy, and relatedness must be satisfied to contribute to increased motivation and well-being, and when those needs are not met, they result in reductions in motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT also differentiates between autonomous motivation, which stems from internal values endorsed by the self, and controlled motivation, which is based on external pressures (Deci & Ryan, 2008). When applied to the platform context, this income uncertainty can hinder the satisfaction of these psychological needs, which will influence the motivational quality that will determine the motivation to continue or not on the platform.

The mechanism works through each need in a slightly different way. Income uncertainty chips away at competence when creators cannot tell whether their effort will translate into results, since earnings on TikTok hinge as much on algorithmic exposure as on content quality. It constrains autonomy too, pushing creators toward whatever format or trend currently pays rather than the content they would otherwise choose to make. Relatedness suffers less directly, but still erodes as financial pressure crowds out the community-oriented, non-monetized interaction that sustains a creator's sense of belonging to their audience. Taken together, these three pathways are why income uncertainty is expected to weaken motivation rather than simply coexist with it.

Motivation itself is measured here using items adapted from Gagné et al.(2015) Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale, which in its original form separates motivation into intrinsic, identified, introjected, external, and amotivation subtypes. This study combines them into a single composite score rather than modeling each subtype separately. Two considerations support this choice. First, these subtypes are not independent categories but points along a single continuum of self-determination, ranging from fully autonomous to fully controlled motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008); treating them as one composite reflects this underlying continuum rather than ignoring it. Second, with a sample of 107 respondents, estimating five separate subconstructs alongside income uncertainty and continuance intention would strain the model's statistical power, so a composite measure keeps the analysis exploratory but tractable. The trade-off is that this study cannot speak to which specific type of motivation matters most, only to motivation's aggregate role as a mediator, a limitation addressed further in the Discussion.

The broader creator economy literature has grown rapidly in recent years, with recent work mapping the value chains and strategic dynamics that drive influencer marketing as an industry (Libai et al., 2025) and offering comprehensive overviews of micro-influencer marketing as an emerging research area (Chen et al., 2024). These patterns recur across contexts that differ from the one at hand. Butschek et al. (2022) and Doucette and Bradford (2019) examine gig and freelance workers in Europe and the US, finding that income uncertainty shapes effort allocation and risk-taking, but neither study looks at content creators specifically. Content creators fare a bit better in the literature: Törhönen et al. (2020) surveyed 377 YouTube and Twitch creators and found intrinsic motivation outweighs financial incentive as a driver of continued content production, while Hu et al. (2025) reported the opposite pattern among 421 DouYin producers in China, where economic benefits significantly predicted continuance intention. Neither study, however, treats motivation as a mechanism connecting income conditions to continuance; Hu et al. explicitly flag this as an open question for future research. Two further strands add texture but not resolution. Are and Briggs (2023) and Mishra et al. (2024) document, through qualitative interviews, how precarity and financial instability erode creator wellbeing and career sustainability, yet their designs cannot quantify how these factors interact. Zhang et al. (2025), working with panel data from a Chinese livestreaming platform, found that reward volatility sharply reduces content output ($r=-$

0.77) and lowers creator welfare, offering strong quantitative evidence but confined to a single livestreaming context far removed from short-video beauty content.

Taken together, no existing study has quantitatively tested income uncertainty's effect on both motivation and continuance intention among nano niche beauty creators on TikTok in Indonesia, a group defined by a distinct niche orientation, platform-specific dynamics, and a largely young, female creator base. More importantly, none of these studies positions motivation as a mediating mechanism within the gig economy context. This is the central contribution of the present study. To address this, the present study analyzes the effect of income uncertainty on the intention to continue as a nano niche beauty creator, with motivation as a mediating variable, using a quantitative approach applied to active TikTok nano niche beauty creators in Indonesia.

In addition to theoretical value, the results of this study can be used practically for the community of nano niche beauty creators in Indonesia. This knowledge of the shortcoming of income uncertainty as an explanatory variable for creators' activity can help them adjust their expectations and maintain their activity despite fluctuations in incomes on platforms. The results will provide insights for brands and marketing practitioners interested in working with influencers at the nano level, offering guidance on how to achieve a more effective, sustainable partnership. The findings highlight the need to encourage the psychological needs of creators over and above financial incentives to keep nano-tier talent on the platform, for platform policymakers.

Based on the theoretical arguments above, this study aims to examine the effect of income uncertainty on motivation and continuance intention among nano niche beauty creators, the effect of motivation on continuance intention, and the mediating role of motivation in the relationship between income uncertainty and continuance intention.

METHOD

The design used in this research is a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, which examines the associations among income uncertainty, motivation, and continuance intention. The population in this research is an active nano niche beauty creator who has followers in the range of 1,000 less than 10,000 on the tiktok social media platform in Indonesia. Respondents were recruited through the researcher's existing network of mutual connections and followers on TikTok, using a purposive sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2017), targeting accounts consistent with the nano-tier threshold defined above. Eligibility was further

Narrowed to accounts that were actively producing beauty content and had enabled the TikTok Shop "Yellow Cart" feature for monetization purposes such as affiliate marketing, indicating that the respondent was not merely a follower but an active nano niche beauty creator engaged in income-generating activity on the platform. Potential respondents were approached individually through direct messages; of approximately 170 creators contacted, 107 completed the questionnaire and were retained for analysis, yielding a response rate of approximately 63%. Data collection took place over one week, from May 21 to May 26, 2026.

Participation in this study was voluntary. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the estimated completion time, and the confidentiality of their responses. The collected data were kept confidential and used solely. For academic purposes, with only aggregated or descriptive statistics reported in this manuscript. The study did not establish a minimum age of 18 years as an eligibility requirement; therefore, respondents under 18 years of age were not automatically excluded from participation. No parental or guardian consent was obtained for the underage respondent. However, the study posed minimal risk, involving only self-reported survey responses about content creation activity rather than sensitive personal, psychological, or medical information, and this limitation is acknowledged as an area for improvement in future research involving underage creator populations.

The one independent variable is Income Uncertainty (X), the one mediating variable is Motivation (Z) and the one dependent variable is Continuance Intention (Y). The instrument consisted of three variables: Income Uncertainty (3 items; Zelma, 2024), Motivation (5 items; Gagné et al., 2015) and Continuance Intention (3 items; Goldbach et al., 2017). The items were rated on a 4-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 for Strongly Disagree to 4 for Strongly Agree.

IBM SPSS Statistics 23 was used to analyze the data, together with Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 4, simple mediation). Validity was tested using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation method, with items considered valid if $r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$ (0.190, $N=107$, $\alpha = 0.05$). Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha with a criterion level of 0.60 (Sugiyono, 2017); items not meeting this criterion were retained due to the exploratory nature of the study, subject to further justification in the Results section. Hypothesis testing was preceded by classical assumption tests, namely normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. Direct effects were tested using a $p\text{-value} < 0.05$, while the indirect effect of motivation was tested using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples, with significance indicated by the absence of zero between the lower limit (BootLLCI) and upper limit (BootULCI).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

The analysis of the characteristics of the respondents consisted of age, domicile, Active duration as creator, followers range, Activity status as creator, and Income category.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
< 18	1	0.93%
18–24	58	54.21%
25–30	44	41.12%
> 30	4	3.74%
Total	107	100%
Domicile		
Bali & Nusa Tenggara	2	1.87%
Jawa	94	87.85%
Kalimantan	2	1.87%
Sulawesi	2	1.87%
Sumatera	7	6.54%
Total	107	100%
Active Duration		
< 1 year	15	14.02%
1–2 years	61	57.01%
2–3 years	23	21.50%
> 3 years	8	7.48%
Total	107	100%
Followers Range		
1.000–3.000	88	82.24%
3.001–5.000	11	10.28%
5.001–7.000	4	3.74%
7.001–10.000	4	3.74%
Total	107	100%
Activity Status		
Full time creator	28	26.17%
Part time	79	73.83%
Total	107	100%
Income Category (month)		
No income yet	4	3.74%
IDR 1 – IDR 500,000	50	46.73%
IDR 501,000 – IDR 1,000,000	30	28.04%
IDR 1,001,000 – IDR 2,000,000	11	10.28%
> IDR 2,000,000	12	11.21%
Total	107	100%

Source: Processed data, 2026

The age distribution revealed that majority (54%) of respondents were between 18 and 24 years of age, followed by 25 to 30 years (41%), over 30 years (4%) and under 18 years (1%). The majority of the composition suggests that the sample consists of the tech-savvy Generation Z and late Millennials who have grown up with digital natives and significant exposure to social media applications and beauty product trends.

In terms of geographic distribution, there is a high concentration of respondents in Java 94 (88%), Sumatra 7 (6%) and Bali & Nusa tenggara, Kalimantan 2 (2%) and

Sulawesi 2 (2%). The concentration indicates that digital beauty content creation in Indonesia is mainly in Java, possibly due to the better digital infrastructure and the greater concentration of digital marketing activity in major metropolitan areas in Java. The majority of them have been active on TikTok for 1–2 years, amounting to 61 individuals (57%), followed by 2–3 years, which accounted for 23 individuals (22%), under 1 year, which accounted for 15 individuals (14%), and over 3 years, which accounted for 8 individuals (7%). Regarding follower count, 88 individuals (82%) fall within the 1,000–3,000 range, followed by the 3,001–5,000 range with 11 individuals (10%), and both the 5,001–7,000 and 7,001–10,000 ranges with 4 individuals (4%) each. This distribution shows that nearly all the sample is in the earliest follower tier, and that this sample has been found to meet the nano niche beauty creator criteria. From the standpoint of the type of activity, 79 people (74%) are part-time creators and 28 people (26%) are full-time creators, which suggests that there is a significant proportion of people who are content creators alongside other work or academic interests. Regarding monthly income from TikTok, 50 individuals (47%) earned between IDR 1–500,000 per month, followed by IDR 501,000–1,000,000 with 30 individuals (28%), over IDR 2,000,000 with 12 individuals (11%), IDR 1,001,000–2,000,000 with 11 individuals (10%), and 4 individuals (4%) who have not generated any income. This income profile suggests that the financial return for this creator tier is concentrated in the lower income brackets, and that this is contextually relevant to the income uncertainty variable explored in this study.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Income Uncertainty (X)	6.00	12.00	9.9533	1.37623
Motivation (Z)	11.00	20.00	15.6262	2.04904
Continuance Intention (Y)	3.00	12.00	10.6355	1.71779
Valid N (listwise) =	107			

Source: Processed data, 2026

Descriptive statistics for the core research variables (min, max, mean and standard deviation scores) are based on the responses of 107 respondents. The mean score of the independent variable, Income Uncertainty (X) is 9.95 (SD = 1.38), representing that the participants overall sense the income from their nano niche beauty creator activities is relatively unstable. The mean score of the Mediating Variable (Motivation; Z) is 15.62 (SD = 2.05), which is moderately high level of internal drive of the respondents to continue their creative activities. The mean score for the dependent variable, Continuance Intention (Y), is 10.63 with an (SD = 1.72), indicating that the respondents have a relatively high intention to stay active creators on TikTok. The descriptive values are used as a baseline for the subsequent inferential analysis which will be presented in the next section.

Table 3. Validity & reliability test

Variable and Indicators	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Information	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Income Uncertainty (X)			0.379	Retained
X1.1	0.178	Retained		
X1.2	0.256	Valid		
X1.3	0.278	Valid		
Motivation (Z)			0.509	Retained
Z1.1	0.130	Retained		
Z1.2	0.200	Valid		
Z1.3	0.258	Valid		
Z1.4	0.418	Valid		
Z1.5	0.404	Valid		
Continuance Intention (Y)			0.966	Reliable
Y1.1	0.933	Valid		
Y1.2	0.904	Valid		
Y1.3	0.949	Valid		

Source: Processed data, 2026

However, the Cronbach's Alpha values for the Income Uncertainty variable (0.379) and the Motivation variable (0.509) were below the 0.60 cut-off criterion (Sugiyono, 2017), and were therefore retained rather than removed, consistent with the exploratory analytical decision stated in the Method section. Several methodological considerations support this retention. First, both constructs were measured with a relatively small number of items (3 items for Income Uncertainty; 5 items for Motivation), and Cronbach's Alpha is known to be sensitive to item count, tending to underestimate reliability in short scales even when inter-item correlations are theoretically sound (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Second, Income Uncertainty as operationalized in this study may capture multiple distinct facets of uncertainty (for example, the amount and timing of income), which can lower internal consistency estimates without necessarily indicating a flawed construct, since Alpha assumes unidimensionality. Third, this study is exploratory in nature, examining a population, nano-tier beauty creators on TikTok, that has not been extensively studied using these instruments in the Indonesian context; some degree of reliability attenuation is expected when adapting established scales

to a novel context and sample. This pattern is consistent with recent scale-development research

in adjacent platform-mediated work contexts, which similarly reports that proactive worker constructs require careful psychometric validation when applied across new populations (Mansour, 2026). Nonetheless, this reliability limitation is acknowledged, and future research is encouraged to refine the Income Uncertainty and Motivation instruments, for example through additional item development or confirmatory factor analysis, to strengthen internal consistency in this population.

Table 4. Classical & assumption test

Test	Variable/Statistic	Value	Result
Normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)	Unstandardized Residual	Sig. = 0,000	Not Normal
Multicollinearity	Income Uncertainty (X)	TOL= 1,000 VIF = 1,000	No Multicollinearity
	Motivation (Z)	TOL= 1,000 VIF = 1,000	No Multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity (Glejser)	Income Uncertainty (X)	Sig. = 0,004	Heteroscedasticity
	Motivation (Z)	Sig. = 0,010	Heteroscedasticity

Source: Processed data, 2026

As shown in Table 4, the normality test showed that the data were not normally distributed (Sig. =0.000); the Glejser heteroscedasticity test showed that there was heteroscedasticity in the variables X (Sig. =0.004), Z (Sig. = 0.010). However, the multicollinearity test showed good results with a tolerance value of 1.00 for each of the variables and VIF value of 1.00. This study recognizes the violation of the normality and heteroscedasticity assumptions as limitations. To address this issue, the mediation model was re-estimated using heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors (HC3). Results were substantively unchanged, confirming the robustness of the reported findings.

Table 5. Model Summary for the Mediation Analysis

Outcome	Predictor (s)	R	R ²	f	df1	df2	p
Motivation (Z)	Income Uncertainty (X)	0,007	0,0001	0,005	1	105	0,942
Continuance Intention (Y)	X, Z	0,324	0,105	6,094	2	104	0,003
Continuance Intention (Y), total effect model	X	0,160	0,026	2,770	1	105	0,099

Source: Processed data, 2026

Table 5 presents the model summary statistics for each regression equation in the mediation analysis. The first equation, predicting Motivation (Z) from Income Uncertainty (X), explained a negligible proportion of variance ($R^2=0.0001$, $F(1,105)=0.005$, $p=0.942$), indicating that Income

Uncertainty has virtually no linear relationship with Motivation in this sample. The second equation, predicting Continuance Intention (Y) from both Income Uncertainty and Motivation, explained a modest but statistically significant proportion of variance ($R^2=0.105$, $F(2,104) = 6.094$, $p=0.003$), suggesting that the combined model accounts for approximately 10.5% of the variability in creators' continuance intention. The total effect model, predicting Continuance Intention from Income Uncertainty alone, explained a smaller proportion of variance ($R^2=0.026$, $F(1,105) = 2.770$, $p = 0.099$) and did not reach conventional significance. Taken together, these results indicate that Motivation, rather than Income Uncertainty, is the stronger contributor to the explained variance in Continuance Intention within this model.

Table 6. Total Direct, and Indirect Effects of Income Uncertainty on Continuance Intention through Motivation

Path	Coeff	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	Result
H1: $X \rightarrow Z$	0,011	0,145	0,073	0,942	-0,278	0,299	Rejected
H2: $Z \rightarrow Y$	0,236	0,078	3,033	0,003	0,082	0,390	Accepted
Total Effect: $X \rightarrow Y$	0,200	0,120	1,664	0,099	-0,038	0,439	Rejected
Direct Effect (H3): $X \rightarrow Y$	0,198	0,116	1,707	0,091	-0,032	0,427	Rejected
Indirect Effect (H4): $X \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$	0,003	0,033	-	-	-0,069	0,064	Rejected

Note: Confidence intervals for the indirect effect are bootstrapped (BootLLCI/BootULCI) based on 5,000 resamples; intervals for the total and direct effects are based on standard errors.

Source: Processed data, 2026

Table 6 summarizes the total, direct, and indirect effects of Income Uncertainty on Continuance Intention, including their respective confidence intervals. The total effect of Income Uncertainty on Continuance Intention was not statistically significant (Effect =0.200, SE =0.120, $t=1.664$, $p=0.099$, 95% CI [-0.038, 0.439]), as the confidence interval contains zero. Similarly, the direct effect of

Income Uncertainty on Continuance Intention, controlling for Motivation, was also not statistically significant (Effect = 0.198, SE =0.116, $t=1.707$, $p=0.091$, 95% CI [-0.032, 0.427]). The indirect effect of Income Uncertainty on Continuance Intention through Motivation was likewise not statistically significant, as the bootstrap confidence interval crossed zero (Effect = 0.003, BootSE = 0.033, 95% CI [-0.069, 0.064]). Because both the total and direct effects of Income Uncertainty on Continuance Intention were nonsignificant and of similar magnitude, and the indirect effect through Motivation was negligible, these findings collectively indicate that Income Uncertainty, whether acting directly or through Motivation, does not exert a meaningful influence on the continuance intention of nano niche beauty creators in this study.

DISCUSSION

Income Uncertainty on Motivation

As per the results of this study, the result of the income uncertainty towards the motivation of nano niche beauty creators on TikTok Indonesia ($\beta = 0.011$; $p = 0.942$) did not show significant value, so that H1 could not be accepted. This is counter to the insight of Doucette and Bradford (2019) that income uncertainty compels gig workers to invest more of their time and labour into their gig-related work, as a means to adjust to the

stress. This difference may be due to the different characteristics of the research subjects. Doucette and Bradford (2019) found that subjects were those who had two jobs with the gig work being a secondary one to address actual financial needs, meaning that income uncertainty was a stronger pressure for a behavioral response. By contrast, the relatively high proportion of part-time creators and the generally low TikTok income reported in this sample may indicate that content creation was not primarily perceived as a main source of income by some respondents. This discovery suggests that income insecurity does not hinder creative content production by nano niche beauty creators, and that they maintain their creative activity despite personal obstacles for reasons other than material considerations, such as intrinsic satisfaction in the creative process and social connection with their community. This may also reflect the still-informal state of compensation structures in the micro-influencer segment; Marchán Sanz et al. (2025) found that the industry lacks standardized remuneration norms, with a significant share of creators compensated only in products rather than cash, which likely dampens the salience of income uncertainty as a psychological stressor for creators who do not treat the platform as a primary income source.

This is in line with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan and Deci (2000), which suggests that autonomous motivation arises because of meeting the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, as opposed to the receipt of external monetary rewards, which recent research suggests can even promote counterproductive behavior when used as the primary driver of engagement (Gagné et al., 2025). The finding is supported by Butschek et al. (2022) who found that changing financial incentives does not affect people with strong intrinsic motivation: their motivation comes from their satisfaction with the task rather than from external incentives.

Motivation on Continuance Intention

In accordance with the proposed hypothesis, motivation was shown to have a positive and significant effect on the continuance intention of nano niche beauty creators focus on TikTok Indonesia ($\beta = 0.236$; $p = 0.003$), and thus supported H2. The results indicate that the more motivated creators are toward creating content on the platform, the more likely they will be to continue this process. This result is consistent with Törhönen et al. (2020), who found that intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant effect on continuance intention in content creation ($\beta = 0.568$; $p < 0.001$). Based on the above, Jabagi et al. (2019) argued that self-motivation of platform workers was positively correlated with commitment, persistence, and work retention, which theoretically can be considered as indicators of the continuance intention. This is further corroborated by Mansour (2026), whose cross-country validation of gig crafting behavior found that proactive, self-directed engagement with gig work is a stronger predictor of continuance than externally imposed conditions, reinforcing that internally-driven motivation generalizes as a continuance driver beyond the beauty-content context studied here. This result should be interpreted at the level of overall motivation rather than its specific dimensions, since motivation in this study was measured and analyzed as a single composite score rather than as separate subtypes (see Method). Descriptive

inspection of item-level responses may suggest a pattern favoring intrinsic and social items over the material extrinsic item, but this study's design does not permit a statistically-supported claim about which specific motivational dimension matters most, as such a claim would require a separate analysis modeling each sub type independently. What can be concluded is that motivation, in its aggregate form, functions as a significant driver of continuance intention, regardless of its internal composition.

Theoretically, the finding is in line with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan and Deci (2000), especially in terms of Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) that states that internalized motivation is what motivates a person to engage in an activity voluntarily and persistently (Gagne & Deci, 2005). In the context of nano niche beauty creators, this suggests that internalized forms of motivation, as a composite whole, are a stronger driver of continuance intention on the TikTok platform than externally imposed financial incentives, although this study's aggregate measure cannot isolate which internalized components (e.g., creative satisfaction, social belonging) carry the most weight.

Beyond confirming the hypothesis, this finding also carries a broader theoretical implication for Self-Determination Theory. It extends the theory beyond its conventional organizational and educational settings by showing that internalized motivation continues to predict behavioral continuance even in an unstructured, self-directed digital labor context where no formal reward system or organizational support structure exists. Unlike traditional SDT contexts in which autonomy, competence, and relatedness are typically cultivated through institutional mechanisms such as managerial support or formal feedback systems, nano niche beauty creators appear to generate these need satisfactions organically, through direct audience interaction and self-paced content creation. This suggests that SDT's core proposition, that autonomously regulated motivation sustains behavior more robustly than externally imposed regulation, extends to settings where the psychological need-supportive environment is self-constructed by the individual rather than externally provided by an institution, offering a novel application of the theory to the emerging context of independent, platform-based creative labor.

Income Uncertainty on Continuance Intention

Based on the results of hypothesis testing in the third hypothesis, it can be seen that the level of income uncertainty does not have a significant influence on continuance intention for nano niche beauty creators on TikTok Indonesia, with a value of $\beta = 0.198$ and $p = 0.091$, so the third hypothesis is rejected. This result contradicts Zhang et al. (2025), who reported that a fluctuation in reward income is negatively correlated with content production volume ($r = -0.77$) among livestreaming creators in China, and Are et al. (2023), who reported that income uncertainty ($r = -0.65$) and a sense of

powerlessness ($r = -0.61$) generated by de-platforming negatively affect creators' decisions to continue their activity on the platform. This difference can be due to basic differences in the nature of the subjects in various studies. The livestreamers in Zhang et al. (2025) were those whose earnings were only from virtual gifting, which would cause fluctuations in earnings when there was a fluctuation in the number of viewers. Are et al. (2023), in contrast, focused on marginalized creators subject to potentially more extreme cases of income volatility the threat of forced removal of their accounts. Financial pressure, however, generally does not have a strong influence on the continuance intention of the nano creators studied in this study, as they do not mainly use the platform for earning income. This is also a similar outcome as H1 of this study, which revealed that there was no significant relation between income uncertainty and motivation of nano creators in general, suggesting that financial factors do not play a key role in general either as a motivator nor as a barrier to sustaining nano activity on TikTok.

In particular, the sign of the β coefficient for this test is opposite to the hypothesized direction so that income uncertainty can be expected to have a slight positive effect on continuance intention, albeit not significant. This phenomenon can be understood using Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan and Deci (2000); especially in Basic Psychological Needs (BPN) theory, which explains that individuals whose basic psychological needs are met tend to be more resilient in situations of outer pressure such as financial pressure (Van Den Broeck et al., 2008). As such, the motivation for creating a nano does not necessarily involve a decrease in continuance intention when the income is not certain; it may be intrinsic, that is, satisfaction and social connectedness with members of the community.

Motivation as a Mediator of Income Uncertainty on Continuance Intention

Results of the fourth hypothesis testing indicate that income uncertainty has no mediating role in influencing continuance intention among nano niche beauty creators on TikTok platform in Indonesia (Bootstrap CI = -0.069 to 0.064) and thus the hypothesis is rejected. This finding differs from the study conducted by Gagné et al. (2022) which states that uncertainty due to changes in working circumstances can have an impact on the satisfaction of workers' basic psychological needs in the SDT framework, which in turn has consequences for the quality of motivation and work results, including the intention to continue working. The statistical basis for this rejection lies in the bootstrapped indirect effect itself, which is the primary criterion for evaluating mediation in this study: the 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect ranges from -0.069 to 0.064, crossing zero, indicating that the indirect effect is not statistically distinguishable from zero. This is consistent with, though not solely explained by, the non-significant H1 pathway ($\beta = 0.011$; $p = 0.942$), since a non-significant $X \rightarrow M$ path is one plausible contributor to a non-significant indirect effect, but the indirect effect's own confidence interval remains the decisive statistical evidence for this conclusion. This does not imply that income uncertainty and motivation are conceptually unrelated constructs; rather, it indicates that within this sample, motivation does not serve as a

statistically significant transmission pathway through which income uncertainty affects continuance intention. The relationship between the two constructs may still operate through mechanisms not captured by this specific mediation model.

In theory, this finding can be explained by the Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) which is a sub-theory of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by (Deci et al., 1999). In the context of the nano niche beauty creators in this study, the income uncertainty they faced did not appear to disrupt or weaken creators' intrinsic motivation to the extent needed to produce a statistically significant indirect pathway; this suggests that, for this sample, the mediating chain from income uncertainty through motivation continuance intention did not manifest as a significant statistical pathway, though this should not be read as evidence that the two constructs are unrelated in a broader theoretical sense.

There are a few caveats to be noted when interpreting these results. The instruments used to measure Income Uncertainty ($\alpha = 0.379$) and Motivation ($\alpha = 0.509$) have reliability that is below the conventional cut-off of 0.60, possibly affecting the accuracy of measurements. Furthermore, the data do not meet assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity, which should be taken into account when interpreting the results. The sample composition is also limited to respondents who were living in Java (87.9%), limiting the generalizability of the findings to the larger population of nano beauty creators in Indonesia.

On the basis of these restrictions, a number of suggestions are made for further research. Subsequent studies would benefit from the development of more reliable measurement instruments, using more representative indicators of income uncertainty and motivation. Further increasing the geographic area and comparing creator segments, including part-time versus full-time creators, may additionally improve generalizability of the results. The inclusion of other factors, such as perceptions of platform algorithms or creators' professional identity, could also help to gain a fuller picture of the phenomenon. A mixed methods approach (survey and in-depth interview) is also recommended to complement the interpretation of quantitative findings. Finally, if the same could be done for other platforms like Instagram Reels or YouTube Shorts it would continue to have a place in the wider digital creator economy.

CONCLUSIONS

This study finds that income uncertainty was not significantly associated with either motivation or continuance intention, while motivation was positively associated with continuance intention among the sampled nano niche beauty creators on TikTok Indonesia. The indirect effect of income uncertainty on continuance intention through motivation was also not statistically supported. These findings suggest that motivation may be relevant to creators' continuance intention, but the role of income uncertainty as a direct or indirect explanatory factor was not supported in this sample. The findings

should be interpreted cautiously given the low reliability of two measures, the non-normality and heteroscedasticity of the data, and the concentration of respondents in Java.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

A.N.M. (Annisa' Nurul Maghfirah) : Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft.

D.P.S. (Diki Putra Setianto) : Supervision, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing

D.S.W. (Dhiyan Septa Wihara) : Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

SIMILARITY STATEMENT

The authors confirm that this manuscript is an original work and has been subjected to institutional plagiarism screening using Turnitin, ensuring it meets the required similarity threshold.

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