CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Smule: Sing Karaoke & Record Your Favorite Song also known as Smule Karaoke is a music application for portable karaoke on a smartphone that has been established since 2012. Globally, 4 million Android users rated Smule with an average rating of 3.8 in September 2021 (Sing Karaoke & Record Your Favorite Song, 2021).

Published on Smule's website (2017, May 8), Smule had got supported by Tencent – a conglomerate holding company of multinational technology in China, well known for their video game vendor and one of the most financially valuable companies (Tencent, n.d.) – along with other investors. Smule also occasionally invites some well-known artists to draw attention and let other users join. One of the talented singers that Smule used for brand Ambassador is Rizky Febian from Indonesia.

Smule's concept is connecting the world through music (Smule, n.d.). With Smule, users can create, share, and find each other through music. In his interview, Jeff Smith (Newsland, 2016), the CEO and the co-founder of Smule said that the social graph on Smule is strangers and the fact that when someone sends a picture to a stranger is weird, but it is not that weird when they sing together which he thinks more safe and fun. With those kinds of uniqueness, the boundary to sing with strangers is quite transparent in Smule, making it possible for users to expand their social networks and find someone new with the same interest in music.

There are certain conditions to use Smule. The primary thing is that users need a phone. Although there is a web version of Smule, users can only sing by using the application on the phone. Smule is a freemium application, where users can pay for more features that Smule provides as the user see fit. In Playstore,

1

Smule is rated for 12+. Since Smule had been established in 2012 and based on a user-generated content system, not every song is listed in Smule but songs that are known around 2012 should be popular, so most users come from late teenagers to young adults. This is proven by a questionnaire that 62% of the respondents are late teenagers (17-25) and 24% are young adult (26-35). Smule can be used by anyone regardless of their gender, as long as they have an interest in singing or music in general and having fun with their activity in Smule. Smule is also most popular in Indonesia (Forbes, n.d.).

Even with the features that Smule has to offer, along with the support and endorsements Smule has, the data in the attachment shows that some users still have problems in using Smule (Google Play A, n.d.). No matter how good the brand is, Smule still has some shortcomings that frustrate the users.

There are 22 reviews in the attachment. Three reviews said that Smule is not user-friendly and another two reviews said that Smule's layout is not clear and inefficient. Another three reviews said about the same with their explanation: that they can not see Bookmarks in Invites by periodical manner but by time added instead, also they can not get information on a page at one glance. Another review said that the verified user's notifications may be fun but it is not for some users and they have to scroll pass those notifications before finding notification from the users they are following. Two reviews said that they prefer to not use any effect at all because the effects provided by Smule were ruining this user recording, therefore the user said to put an option of "no filter".

There is a review about technical problems, however, it should have been resolved if the UI is well-designed. That problem is that Smule did not have the "refresh" button on the recording preparation page. Because one of the problems said in the review is about how a recording just got cut in the middle of recording, even when they retake the recording, which means that the songbook somehow fails to be downloaded fully and they have to restart their application or phone or delete the cache manually.

Redesigning User Interface…, Mollie Ivory, Universitas Multimedia Nusantara

Based on those complaints and feedbacks, the author concludes that Smule needs a redesign in UI to maximize the features and experiences that Smule tries to deliver to its users. There might be changes in the UX of the application, but the UX of Smule itself will not change. As result, the users are expected to have a better experience and interface to enjoy their time while using Smule.

1.2 Problem Formulation

How to redesign UI for Smule Karaoke?

1.3 Problem Boundaries

1.3.1 Demographic

1) Age: primarily 17-25 y.o. and secondarily 26-35 y.o. (late teenager and young adult, DepKes RI, 2009)

Google Store (Sing Karaoke & Record Your Favorite Song, 2021) recommended Smule as 12+. Considering Smule as a freemium application, the author set the lowest age to 17 because late teenagers already have control over their money. Considering Smule Karaoke that has been established in 2012 and its user-generated content, the author limits the highest age to 35 (young adult) because some songs may not be available, especially old songs.

2) Gender: male and female

Both males and females can use Smule. Males and females have different vocal ranges, and singing would be more fun to combine various voices.

3) Economy: SES A and B (SES classification by Nielsen, 2010)

Smule is a freemium application. Users can pay to unlock more features and remove ads. Users also need a phone as the platform. Therefore, the author decides to narrow down the audience target into Social Economy Status A and B.

3

1.3.2 Geographic

Smule is a global application. So, to narrow the problem down, the author focuses on the area in Indonesia because, among the countries, Smule is the most popular in Indonesia (Sensor Tower, n.d.).

1.3.3 Psychographic

Since Smule Karaoke is a music application, this design is aimed at people who love music, composing, covering a song, prefer simplicity and want detailed features.

1.3.4 Smule Application

The redesigning is focused on UI. Some minor changes in the UX of the application might happen, but the UX of Smule will not change. In this case, the UX is about interactivity and efficiency. The Smule version used for this paper is version 8.9.3 in Android.

1.4 Final Project's Goal

Redesigning User Interface (UI) to maximize the experience in Smule Karaoke.

1.5 Final Project's Benefits

1.5.1 Smule

To Smule, this project report may be used as a reference for Smule Karaoke or used wholly.

1.5.2 Author

To the author, the benefit is to complete the requirements to graduate from Multimedia Nusantara University and obtain the title of S.Ds.

1.5.3 Multimedia Nusantara University

Carrying the name of Multimedia Nusantara University, the author works hard and wishes to create a good impact on her design in this project by holding on 5C as the motto of Multimedia Nusantara University (Caring, Credible, Competitive, Competent, and Customer Delight).

1.5.4 Users

The author wishes to reduce those hard times that the users face in Smule Karaoke application.

1.5.5 Other People

The author hopes that this project may be helpful and become a source of inspiration for future UI development.