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Exploring the Role of IT Usage in Enhancing Customer Satisfaction: A Literature Review on SMEs in the Creative Industries

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ABSTRACT

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the creative industries play a critical role in driving innovation and economic growth. The adoption of Information Technology (IT) has become increasingly pivotal in enhancing their operational efficiency and customer engagement. This literature review explores the impact of IT usage on customer satisfaction within SMEs operating in the creative industries. It examines how IT tools, such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems, e-commerce platforms, and digital marketing, influence customer experiences and loyalty. Key findings indicate that effective IT adoption not only streamlines business processes but also fosters personalized interactions and improved service delivery, which are critical to customer satisfaction. Challenges such as limited resources, lack of technical expertise, and data security concerns are also discussed. The review concludes by highlighting the need for SMEs in the creative sector to leverage IT to remain competitive strategically and recommends areas for further research to optimize IT integration for enhanced customer satisfaction.

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Introduction

The creative industries and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a significant role in economic development, contributing around 10% to global GDP [1]. However, defining and classifying creative SMEs presents challenges due to the unique characteristics of the sector [2], [3]. Various external and internal factors influence the interaction between SMEs and creative industries, including administrative burdens and access to financing [1], [4], [5]. To promote the creative economy, governments should reduce administrative obstacles, provide preferential loans, and implement additional support measures for SMEs [1], [6]. Developing cooperation through cooperatives, business centers, and partnerships can help creative SMEs adapt to unconducive business climates [6]. The government can play a crucial role as both regulator and facilitator in strengthening the internal conditions of creative industries and SMEs [1], [6]. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective policies to support the growth of creative industries and SMEs.

In this context, Information Technology (IT) emerges as a crucial enabler of innovation and creativity within the creative industries. IT usage empowers artists to explore novel forms of expression and creation beyond traditional methods [7]. Creative industries are among the most innovative sectors, contributing to innovation in other industries through creative inputs and technology adoption, particularly in software and advertising [8], [9]. The integration of IT in creative processes opens up new opportunities for artists and businesses alike, with emerging technologies shaping the future of these industries [4], [5], [10]. Knowledge absorptive capacity and IT utilization significantly impact innovation performance in creative industry SMEs, as demonstrated in a study of Romanian enterprises [11], [12].

By leveraging IT, creative SMEs can enhance artistic expression and operational efficiency, adapt to rapidly changing market demands, and drive economic growth. Moreover, IT facilitates the development of networks, partnerships, and collaborations essential for creative SMEs to thrive in a competitive global economy. The alignment of technological advancement with government support and policy measures highlights the interconnected nature of IT, creative industries, and SMEs in fostering sustainable innovation and economic progress.

Material and Methods

This literature review employed a systematic approach to analyze the impact of Information Technology (IT) usage on customer satisfaction within Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the creative industries. The review process was facilitated by Elicit.ai, an advanced tool designed for efficient literature review, enabling comprehensive data collection, organization, and synthesis. The process began with the definition of research

objectives, focusing on how IT tools influence customer satisfaction in creative industry SMEs, as well as identifying their benefits and associated challenges. Relevant academic databases were searched using keywords such as *IT usage in creative industries*, *SMEs and customer satisfaction*, and *digital transformation in SMEs* to retrieve pertinent literature.

Inclusion criteria were applied to select studies published within the last ten years that specifically addressed IT applications in SMEs within the creative industries and their relationship to customer satisfaction. Articles that did not meet these criteria were excluded to maintain the review's focus and relevance. The selected studies were analyzed thematically, with key insights categorized into areas such as IT tools, their impact on customer satisfaction, and barriers to adoption. Elicit.ai was instrumental in extracting, summarizing, and synthesizing findings, allowing for the identification of trends, patterns, and gaps in the literature. To ensure accuracy and comprehensive coverage, the findings were cross-referenced with insights from secondary sources. This systematic and technology-assisted methodology ensured a thorough and efficient review, providing valuable insights into the role of IT in enhancing customer satisfaction within SMEs in the creative industries.

Results

Table 1 presents a summary of selected studies included in this literature review, offering an organized overview of key details for each source. The table is structured into four main columns: *Code*, *Authors*, *Title*, *Year*, and *Abstract Summary*. This structured presentation facilitates a clear and comprehensive understanding of the reviewed literature and serves as a key reference point for the subsequent analysis and discussion.

Table 1. Papers' basic information

Code	Authors	Title	Year	Abstract summary
P1	Sunil Mithas [13]	Effect of Information Technology Investments on Customer Satisfaction: Theory and Evidence	2005	IT investments improve customer satisfaction through increased perceived quality and value, with differing effects between manufacturing and service sectors.
P2	Hojjat Talebi et al. [14]	The Impact of Information Technology on Service Quality, Satisfaction, and Customer Relationship Management (Case Study: IT Organization Individuals)	2023	Information technology has a significant impact on service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer relationship management in IT organizations.
P3	Shiva Prasad et al. [15]	The impact of electronic stores' use of information technology on customer satisfaction: The case of Amazon Company e-marketing	2019	The use of information technology by electronic stores positively impacts customer satisfaction.
P4	Sunil Mithas et al. [16]	Information Technology, Customer Satisfaction, and Profit: Theory and Evidence	2016	Aggregate IT investments have a positive association with customer satisfaction, but the

Code	Authors	Title	Year	Abstract summary
				strength of the relationship varies over time.
P5	Rohit Kumar et al. [17]	Impact of Information Technology Usage by Banks on Customer Satisfaction in Banking Sector of Pakistan	2013	IT usage by banks positively impacts customer satisfaction in the banking sector of Pakistan.
P6	Asep Sutarman et al. [18]	The Role of Information Technology in Empowering the Creative Economy for Sustainable Tourism	2023	The creative economy has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction, and IT plays a role in empowering the creative economy for sustainable tourism.
P7	Z. Tarigan et al. [19]	The impact of information technology quality on electronic customer satisfaction in movie industry	2020	High-speed IT access and social media communities increase customer satisfaction in the movie industry.
P8	Germanus S. Chole [20]	Evaluating the Role of Customer Relationship Management in Enhancing Customer Satisfaction: A Study of Arusha Urban Water Supply and Sanitation	2024	IT usage enhances customer satisfaction in the water supply and sanitation industry through improved information processing, communication, and service delivery.

Table 2 provides a detailed summary of the main findings, recommendations, and IT impacts derived from the reviewed studies. The table is organized into three key columns: Code, Main Findings, Recommendation, and IT Impacts. This table offers a comprehensive and structured view of the key contributions of the reviewed literature, facilitating a better understanding of how IT adoption drives value and customer satisfaction in the creative industry sector.

Table 2. Papers' extended information

Code	Main findings	Recommendation	IT Impacts
P1	The effect of IT investments on customer satisfaction is mediated through their impact on perceived quality and perceived value. - The effect of IT investments on customer satisfaction differs between the manufacturing and service sectors. - The study establishes the effect of IT investments on overall customer satisfaction, which is an important measure of business value beyond just financial metrics.	Not mentioned (the abstract does not explicitly state a "recommendation" section)	The "IT Impacts" in Sunil Mithas (2005) are that IT investments impact customer satisfaction through their effects on perceived quality and perceived value.
P2	Optimal and intelligent use of information technology can significantly improve customer focus and company operations. - Companies with high IT management maturity can deliver superior customer services and gain a strong competitive position. - Information technology in operations can lead to performance improvement, cost reduction, increased speed, and enhanced customer experience.	1. Organizations should focus on utilizing information technology to improve service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer relationship management. 2. Managers and organizations should prioritize investment in information technology development and improvement, and formulate strategies to leverage IT to create customer focus and improve operations.	1. Improving service quality and exceeding customer expectations 2. Optimizing operations and customizing offerings to meet individual customer needs 3. Enhancing customer relationships and building long-term partnerships

Code	Main findings	Recommendation	IT Impacts
P3	There was no statistically significant effect between the use of information technology by electronic stores and customer satisfaction. - The study recommended that electronic stores should use information technology as it can improve the quality of services and positively impact customer satisfaction.	The study recommended that electronic stores should use information technology in their management strategies and activities because it can improve the quality of services provided to customers, which positively impacts customer satisfaction.	The impact of electronic stores' use of information technology on customer satisfaction
P4	IT investments had a more positive influence on customer satisfaction in the 1994-1996 period than in the 1999-2006 period. - IT investments had a positive effect on profits in the 1999-2006 period but a negative effect in the 1994-1996 period. - IT investments had a stronger effect on perceived quality than on perceived value, which explains the observed effects on customer satisfaction and profits.	Not mentioned (the abstract does not explicitly state any specific recommendations or conclusions from the study)	1. IT investments had a positive association with customer satisfaction, but the strength of this relationship was stronger in the 1994-1996 period compared to the 1999-2006 period. 2. IT investments had a positive effect on profits in the 1999-2006 period, but a negative effect in the 1994-1996 period. 3. The impact of IT investments on customer satisfaction was mediated through its effect on perceived quality more than perceived value.
P5	Information technology usage by banks has a significant positive effect on perceived banking service quality. - Perceived banking service quality significantly and positively affects customer satisfaction in the banking sector of Pakistan. - Banks should improve their usage of information technology to increase perceived service quality and customer satisfaction.	Banks should improve their usage of information technology in order to raise the level of perceived banking service quality, which would then increase the satisfaction level of their customers.	1. Information technology usage by banks has a significant positive effect on perceived banking service quality. 2. Improved perceived banking service quality resulting from IT usage then has a positive impact on customer satisfaction in the banking sector of Pakistan.
P6	The creative economy has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction. - Creative economy marketing positively influences both tourist satisfaction and sustainable tourism development. - Smart tourism, driven by tourist satisfaction, is an important component of the creative economy.	1. Creative economy entrepreneurs should adopt smart technologies to enhance tourist satisfaction. 2. Governments should enact policies that support the integration of smart technologies and creative strategies in the tourism sector. 3. The smart business ecosystem, a key component of smart tourism, enables collaboration and partnerships among businesses in the tourism sector, leading to enhanced quality and competitiveness of tourism products and services.	1. Smart tourism, enabled by information and communication technology (ICT), allows for the transformation of data into valuable insights and services for the tourism sector. 2. Smart tourism consists of various components and layers that are enabled and supported by ICT. 3. The smart business ecosystem, a key component of smart tourism, enables collaboration and partnerships among businesses in the tourism sector, leading to enhanced quality and competitiveness of tourism products and services.

Code	Main findings	Recommendation	IT Impacts
P7	The use of high-quality information technology, specifically high-speed data accessibility, enhances the intensity of interaction within the social media community. - The use of high-quality information technology, particularly high-speed data accessibility, increases the satisfaction of movie trailer viewers. - The presence of a social media community provides satisfaction for movie trailer viewers.	1. Expand the geographic scope of the study to a broader area beyond just East Java province in Indonesia. 2. Analyze viewer comments on films in order to provide feedback to film companies to help improve their sustainability. 3. The study contributes to ongoing research in the field of social media usage.	1. Information technology quality has a positive and significant effect on the social media community. 2. The social media community has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. 3. Information technology quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.
P8	Information technology significantly enhances timely information processing, effective customer communication, and efficient service delivery, thereby reducing customer complaints and administrative errors. - The study concludes that information technology is crucial for improving customer satisfaction at the Arusha Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority.	1. IT is crucial for improving customer satisfaction at the Arusha Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (AUWSA) 2. Further research should be conducted to explore the impact of CRM on customer satisfaction in other service industries in Tanzania	1. Timely information processing 2. Effective customer communication 3. Efficient service delivery These IT impacts were found to reduce customer complaints and administrative errors, thereby improving customer satisfaction.

Discussion

A. SMEs in Creative Industries

The creative industries and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a significant role in economic development, contributing around 10% to global GDP [1]. However, defining and classifying creative SMEs presents challenges due to the unique characteristics of the sector [2], [21]. Various external and internal factors influence the interaction between SMEs and creative industries, including administrative burdens and access to financing [1], [22]. To promote the creative economy, governments should reduce administrative obstacles, provide preferential loans, and implement additional support measures for SMEs [1], [6]. Developing cooperation through cooperatives, business centers, and partnerships can help creative SMEs adapt to unconducive business climates [6], [23]. The government can play a crucial role as both regulator and facilitator in strengthening the internal conditions of creative industries and SMEs [1], [6]. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective policies to support the growth of creative industries and SMEs.

B. IT usage in creative industries

Information Technology (IT) plays a crucial role in fostering innovation and creativity within the creative industries. IT usage enables artists to explore novel forms of expression and creation beyond traditional methods [7], [19], [20]. Creative industries are among the most innovative sectors, contributing to innovation in other industries through creative inputs and technology adoption, particularly in software and advertising [8], [9]. The integration of

IT in creative processes opens up new opportunities for artists and businesses alike, with emerging technologies shaping the future of these industries [10]. Knowledge absorptive capacity and IT utilization significantly impact innovation performance in creative industry SMEs, as demonstrated in a study of Romanian enterprises [5], [11]. Overall, IT usage in creative industries not only enhances artistic expression but also drives economic growth and innovation across various sectors, highlighting the importance of continued technological development and adoption in these fields.

C. Impact of IT usage in creative industries on customer satisfaction

Research indicates that information technology (IT) investments have a positive impact on customer satisfaction in various industries [14], [15], [17]. IT enhances service quality, perceived value, and customer relationship management, leading to increased customer satisfaction [13], [14], [16]. Studies show that IT usage in electronic stores, such as Amazon, significantly affects customer satisfaction by improving service quality and decision-making processes [8]. However, the strength of this relationship may vary over time. Mithas et al. [16] found that IT investments had a stronger positive influence on customer satisfaction in the 1994-1996 period compared to 1999-2006. Interestingly, the same study revealed that IT investments positively affected profits in the later period but negatively in the earlier period. The impact of IT on customer satisfaction is primarily mediated through perceived quality and value, with a stronger effect on perceived quality [13], [16]. These findings underscore the importance of IT in enhancing customer satisfaction across various sectors.

Conclusion

The creative industries and SMEs play a pivotal role in driving economic growth and fostering innovation. SMEs contribute significantly to the creative economy, yet they face unique challenges such as complex classifications, administrative burdens, and limited access to financing. Government support, including reduced administrative barriers, preferential loans, and cooperative strategies, is essential for empowering SMEs to thrive in the creative sector. Additionally, SMEs' adaptability and collaboration through business centers and partnerships enhance their resilience in dynamic market conditions. Information Technology (IT) serves as a transformative force in the creative industries, enabling new forms of artistic expression, improving operational efficiency, and fostering innovation. IT integration enhances the ability of creative SMEs to adapt to evolving market demands and build networks, making them key drivers of innovation across various sectors. Furthermore, IT adoption improves customer satisfaction by offering personalized experiences, streamlining services, and strengthening customer relationships, ultimately boosting customer engagement and loyalty.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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