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Global Research Trends on Creative Industry Competitiveness: A Bibliometric Analysis of Innovation and Sustainability

Dimas Ramadan^{1*}, Agung Utama¹

¹ Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas
Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

* Corresponding author: Dimas Ramadan (dimasramadan.2024@student.uny.ac.id)

Abstract

The creative industry has emerged as a strategic driver of economic growth and competitiveness. This study aims to analyze the global development, research patterns, thematic structures, and future directions of studies on creative industry competitiveness through a bibliometric approach. The study employed a bibliometric literature review using publications indexed in the Scopus database, with data analyzed through VOSviewer to examine publication trends, authorship, institutional and country contributions, keyword co-occurrence, and thematic clustering. The findings reveal a substantial increase in scientific publications over time, reflecting growing academic interest in creative industry competitiveness. China and Indonesia emerged as leading contributors, while journal articles dominated the publication types, confirming the maturity of the field. Keyword network analysis identified seven major thematic clusters encompassing strategic management, innovation, sustainability, entrepreneurship, digital transformation, cultural heritage, regional development, and SME competitiveness. These findings indicate that research on creative industry competitiveness has evolved into a multidisciplinary domain characterized by strong interconnections among technological, organizational, and institutional dimensions. The study concludes that future research should adopt more integrated approaches by incorporating emerging themes, such as artificial intelligence, platform ecosystems, green innovation, and the circular economy, to strengthen the sustainable competitiveness of creative industries.

Keywords

Competitiveness, Creative Industry, Digitalization, Innovation.

1. Introduction

The creative economy has become one of the most strategic sectors in driving both global and national economic growth. In Indonesia, this sector has demonstrated a significant contribution to the national economy, accounting for 7.44% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016 and recording an average annual growth rate of 10.14%. In addition, the creative economy supports approximately 8.2 million creative business units across various subsectors (Rahmi, 2018). These developments indicate that the creative economy not only functions as a source of economic growth but also serves as a strategic alternative for enhancing national competitiveness in the digital era while strengthening economic resilience against global dynamics and crises (Romarina, 2016; Syahsudarmi, 2019).

The phenomenon of creative economy growth has become increasingly visible alongside the rapid advancement of digital transformation, which has encouraged the emergence of new technology-based business models. Application and interactive game subsectors have become major drivers of creative industry growth due to their ability to expand market access and foster more globally competitive innovations (Wulansari et al., 2022; Syafitri & Nisa, 2024). The advancement of digital technology has also encouraged governments to develop more innovative governance and regulatory frameworks to align with the dynamics of the digital creative economy (Dellyana et al., 2023). In the Indonesian context, this development is reflected in the continuous increase in the added value of the creative industry, rising from IDR 525.96 trillion in 2010 to IDR 922.59 trillion in 2016 (Rahmi, 2018). Such conditions demonstrate that the creative industry possesses substantial potential to become a pillar of sustainable and innovation-based economic development.

Despite its considerable potential, the creative industry continues to face various structural challenges that affect its competitiveness. Major constraints include inadequate infrastructure, limited quality of education in creative fields, and restricted access to financing for creative business actors (Syafitri & Nisa, 2024). Other challenges involve the digital divide and geographical barriers, particularly in rural areas, where artisans often struggle to access the internet and supporting infrastructure needed to expand their businesses (Onitsuka et al., 2018; Amalia et al., 2025). Furthermore, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) protection still requires regulatory frameworks that are more adaptive to developments in the digital era (Saefudin et al., 2025). Financing also remains a significant obstacle, as many creative Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have not been able to utilize IPR as collateral for obtaining business capital (Mahmudah et al., 2024). These challenges indicate that strengthening the competitiveness of the creative industry requires not only business innovation but also sustainable policy support, infrastructure development, and governance improvement.

Numerous previous studies have examined the factors influencing creative industry competitiveness. Anjaningrum and Sidi (2018) and Ernawati et al. (2022) emphasized that product innovation and market orientation are essential factors in strengthening the competitive advantage of creative industry actors. Other studies have also highlighted the importance of digitalization and branding strategies in enhancing business competitiveness (Khumairoh & Nisa, 2024). In addition, government support and the availability of adequate infrastructure have been identified as important supporting factors for creative industry development (Rifa'i et al., 2019). However, most previous studies remain partial in nature because they focus only on specific regions, subsectors, or variables. Existing research has also paid limited attention to integrating issues of digital transformation, sustainability, human resource development, and creative industry competitiveness into a comprehensive analytical framework. This condition indicates the existence of a

research gap that requires a more systematic approach to understanding the global development of studies related to creative industry competitiveness.

The novelty of this study lies in using a bibliometric approach to comprehensively map creative industry competitiveness, revealing key themes, research clusters, and the interconnections among innovation, digitalization, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and human resource development. This study aims to analyze the directions, patterns, and trends in the development of research on creative industry competitiveness through a bibliometric approach. In addition, this study seeks to identify major themes, emerging research trends, and future research opportunities. The findings contribute to the literature on creative industry competitiveness and provide practical insights for governments, academics, and industry practitioners in developing sustainable, innovative, and competitive creative economy strategies to address challenges and opportunities in the digital era.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Creative Economy and Creative Industry Competitiveness

According to Rudianto (2009), Competitiveness Theory can be categorized into three interrelated levels. First, firm-level competitiveness refers to an organization's ability to create added value, improve efficiency, and sustain a competitive advantage in the marketplace through effective resource utilization, innovation, and strategic management. Second, industry-level competitiveness emphasizes how industry structure, market dynamics, and competitive intensity shape the relative competitive positions of firms within a sector, encouraging continuous improvement and differentiation. Third, national-level competitiveness is influenced by macroeconomic policies, political stability, the quality of human resources, technological development, and innovation capacity, all of which determine a country's ability to compete in the global economy. These three levels are interconnected, as improvements at the firm level contribute to stronger industry performance, which in turn enhances a nation's overall economic competitiveness.

Furthermore, Bhawsar and Chattopadhyay (2015) argue that Competitiveness Theory has evolved considerably over time alongside the development of diverse analytical approaches and measurement frameworks. They note that although many models have been proposed to conceptualize competitiveness, the concept remains complex and difficult to define universally due to contextual variations and differing scholarly perspectives. Meanwhile, Yoyo (2021) explains that competitiveness can be assessed through both qualitative and quantitative approaches. These include modeling techniques, measurable indicators, and weighted summation methods commonly used in the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) and World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Competitiveness Reports. These approaches provide a comprehensive understanding of how firms, industries, and nations maintain and enhance their positions in global competition.

2.2. Bibliometric Analysis in Creative Industry Research

Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative research approach used to map and evaluate the development of scientific literature within a specific field. This method focuses on analyzing publication patterns, citation structures, authorship networks, and keyword co-occurrences to identify research trends and intellectual structures (Donthu et al., 2021). In the context of creative industry research, bibliometric analysis is particularly useful for understanding how scholarly attention has evolved, especially in relation to themes such as innovation, digital transformation, entrepreneurship, and competitiveness (Yoyo, 2021). By systematically examining large volumes of academic publications, this approach enables researchers to identify dominant topics, influential authors, and leading journals that shape the development of knowledge in the creative economy domain.

Furthermore, bibliometric techniques provide a powerful tool for identifying research gaps and emerging trends that may not be easily detected through traditional literature review methods. Through mapping co-citation networks and keyword co-occurrence analysis, researchers can reveal the intellectual structure of creative industry studies and uncover underexplored areas that require further investigation (Zupic & Čater, 2015). In addition, bibliometric analysis supports evidence-based decision-making in academic research by offering a comprehensive overview of how knowledge in the creative industry field is constructed and disseminated globally. This approach is increasingly applied in studies of creative economy competitiveness to integrate fragmented literature and provide a more holistic understanding of research development trajectories (Donthu et al., 2021).

3. Methods

This study employs a bibliometric literature review approach. According to Snyder (2019), a literature review is a research method designed to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize prior studies. The bibliometric approach was selected because it enables a quantitative analysis of scientific developments, including publication patterns, author relationships, and thematic trends within a specific research field. The present study focuses on mapping global research related to the competitiveness of the creative industry. Its primary aim is to analyze the direction of research development, examine collaboration patterns among authors and countries, and identify potential topics for future investigation.

The data for this study were obtained from the Scopus database, a reputable source widely used in bibliometric research due to its extensive coverage, high metadata quality, and compatibility with bibliometric analysis (Donthu et al., 2021). The literature search employed the keywords “competitiveness” AND “creative industry”, limited to English-language journal articles and conference papers published up to 2025. The retrieved records were exported in Research Information Systems (RIS) format for analysis. To ensure study quality, editorials, book chapters, notes, errata, and duplicate records were excluded, while the remaining publications were screened based on their titles, abstracts, and keywords for relevance. The bibliometric findings were then synthesized through qualitative content analysis by examining publication trends, citation patterns, collaboration networks, and keyword clusters generated by VOSviewer to identify major research themes, emerging topics, and research gaps.

Data analysis in this study was conducted using bibliometric methods with the support of VOSviewer software. According to van Eck and Waltman (2010), VOSviewer is designed to construct and visualize bibliometric maps based on relationships among publications and authors. The analytical process involved several stages, including publication and citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and bibliographic coupling. The results were presented through network and density visualizations to illustrate the connections between authors, countries, and keywords. Furthermore, the bibliometric findings were qualitatively synthesized through content analysis following the stages proposed by Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016), which include topic identification, literature selection, quality evaluation, synthesis, and interpretation of results. Validity was ensured by relying on reputable academic data sources (Scopus), while reliability was strengthened through the use of internationally recognized bibliometric software such as VOSviewer.

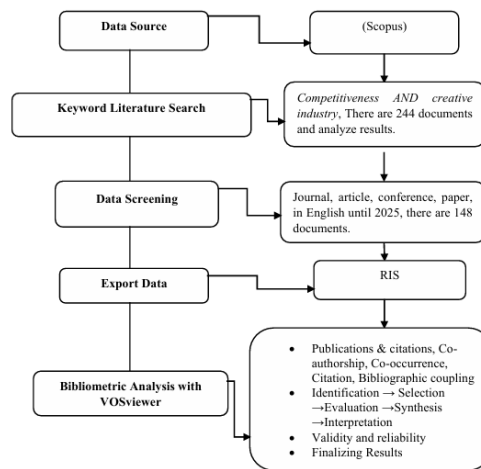


Figure 1. Data Search and Data Finalization

Figure 1 illustrates the workflow of the bibliometric analysis conducted in this study. The process began with data retrieval from the Scopus database using the keywords *competitiveness AND creative industry*, which initially identified 244 documents. After applying the inclusion criteria, including document type, English language, and publication period up to 2025, 148 eligible publications were retained and exported in Research Information Systems (RIS) format. The selected data were then analyzed using VOSviewer through publication, citation, co-authorship, co-occurrence, and bibliographic coupling analyses, followed by content synthesis and interpretation to ensure valid and reliable findings.

4. Results

Based on a literature search using the keywords “*Competitiveness AND creative industry*” in the Scopus database, eight analysis results visualizations were obtained, providing a comprehensive illustration of the publication patterns. These visualizations offer essential information regarding the dynamics of publication growth, the most productive source journals, the most active authors and institutions, the geographical distribution of contributing countries, the types of documents published, the academic subject areas involved, and the funding agencies supporting related research. These findings offer an empirical foundation for understanding the development, direction, and intensity of global studies on the creative industry and competitiveness.

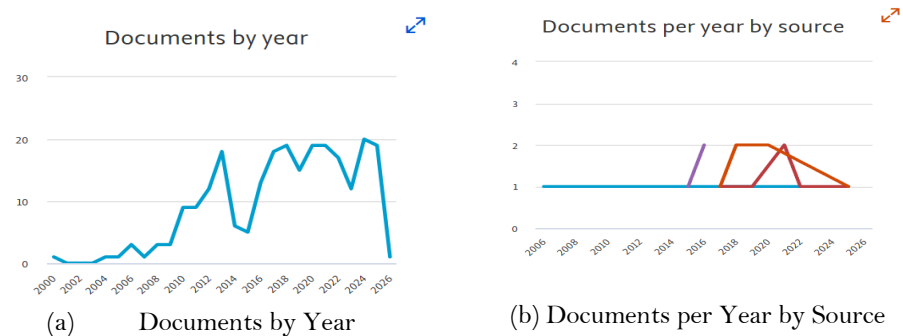


Figure 2. Documents by Year and Source Distribution (Scopus Data)

Figure 2 presents the documents-by-year analysis, which shows the annual trend in the number of publications. There has been a significant increase in publication

volume over time, particularly between 2010 and 2025. This upward trend serves as a key performance indicator in bibliometric analysis, reflecting the evolution and expansion of a research field. The steady growth in publications demonstrates that scholarly interest in the creative industry continues to rise, providing a strong basis for forecasting future research directions.

The documents-per-year by source analysis illustrates annual publication trends classified by publication outlet, such as scientific journals and conference proceedings. Each line represents a specific source. The visual pattern indicates that while some sources maintain relatively stable and low publication outputs, others exhibit sharp increases, particularly between 2016 and 2024. This visualization is essential for identifying the most influential and productive publication sources, as well as for understanding the dynamics of knowledge dissemination within the creative industry research ecosystem over time (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

Table 1. Documents by Author

Author	Number of Documents
Danko, L.	5
Munizu, M.	4
Siswanto, V.K.	4
Bednari, P.	3
Bontje, M.	3
Mustera, S.	3
Pono, M.	3
No Author ID found	3
Arauzo-Carod, J.M.	2
Armayah	2

Table 1 presents a ranking of the most prolific authors in the creative industry, measured by the number of publications they have produced. This assessment of author productivity helps identify central figures or key researchers who make significant contributions to the field's development. In addition to highlighting leading experts, the list also serves as an indicator for identifying potential research collaborations and for mapping existing intellectual networks.

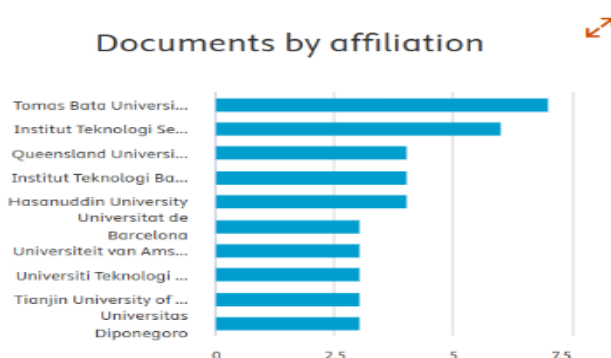


Figure 3. Documents by Affiliation

Figure 3 highlights the institutions with the highest publication productivity related to the creative industry. This information identifies universities and research institutions that play a central role in advancing knowledge in this field. The presence of various Indonesian institutions, such as ITS, ITB, Unhas, and Undip, alongside international universities from the Czech Republic, Australia, Spain, and other countries, demonstrates the existence of an active global research network.

This pattern indicates that research on the creative industry is supported by strong international collaboration.

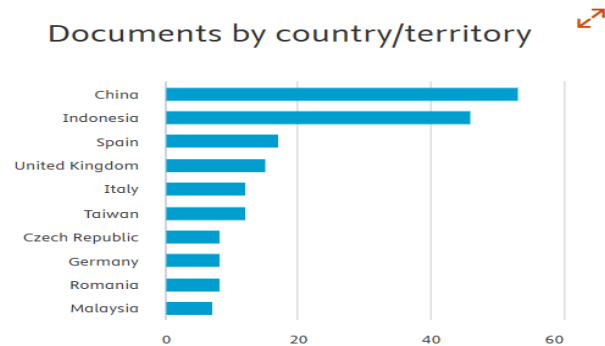


Figure 4. Documents by Country/Territory

Figure 4 analysis maps the geographical distribution of research contributions by identifying the countries with the highest number of publications. The prominence of China and Indonesia, followed by countries such as Spain, the United Kingdom, and Italy, demonstrates that creative industry research operates on a global scale. This analysis is crucial for understanding the international research landscape, identifying leading countries in the field, and mapping centers of academic excellence worldwide.

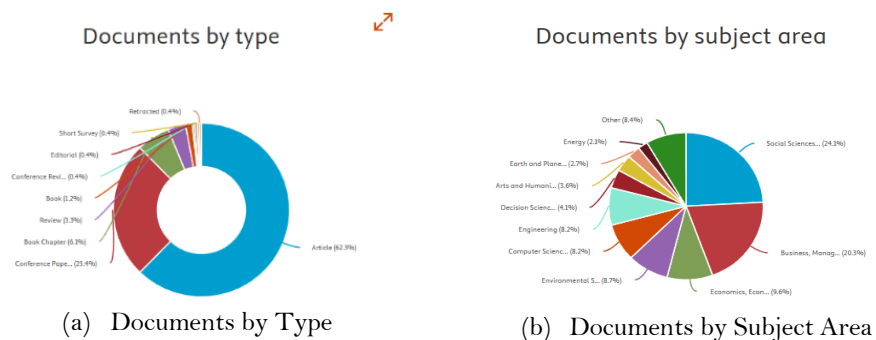


Figure 5. Documents by Type and Subject Area

Figure 5 presents the documents by type analysis, which categorizes publications based on their document types or formats. The data indicate that journal articles account for the most significant proportion of publications (62.3%), followed by conference papers (25.4%). The dominance of journal articles suggests that research findings in the creative industry are primarily disseminated through formal academic channels that undergo rigorous peer-review processes. This pattern reflects a high level of maturity and scientific validation within the field.

The documents by subject area illustrate the distribution of publications across various academic disciplines. The results show that research on the creative industry is highly multidisciplinary, with the most significant contributions originating from Social Sciences (24.1%) and Business, Management, and Accounting (20.3%). The involvement of additional fields such as Economics, Engineering, Computer Science, and Arts and Humanities further demonstrates that studying the creative industry requires an interdisciplinary approach that integrates social, economic, technological, and cultural perspectives (Snyder, 2019).

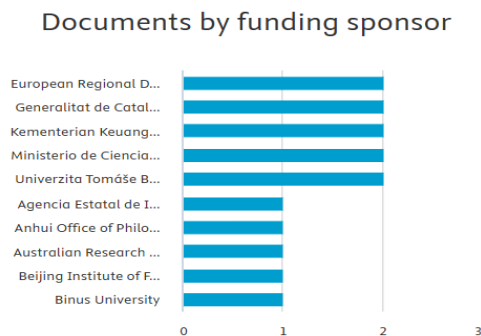


Figure 6. Documents by Funding Sponsor

Figure 6 shows the analysis of documents by funding sponsors, which identifies the institutions that serve as the primary sources of research funding in the creative industries. The involvement of various entities, including government bodies (such as the Indonesian Ministry of Finance) and national research agencies (such as the Agencia Estatal de Investigación España), as well as universities, demonstrates the presence of diverse financial support. This analysis offers valuable insights into the funding resources that drive research activities and highlights the strategic priorities of stakeholders at both national and international levels.

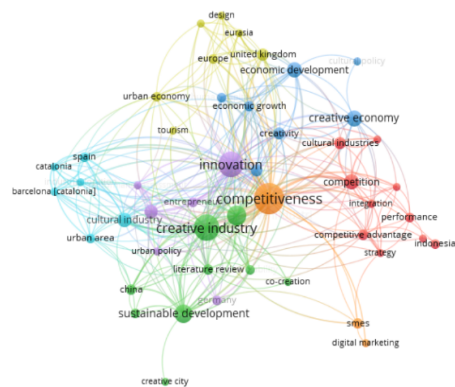


Figure 7. Creative Industry Research Publications Trends

Figure 7 illustrates the growth in the number of scientific publications over time on research topics related to the creative industry. The data show a substantial increase in publication volume, particularly in recent years. This upward trend suggests that academic interest in and the relevance of research on creative industry issues, such as competitiveness and innovation, continue to strengthen. The consistent growth indicates that this field has evolved beyond a temporary research focus and has become an established and sustainable academic area. Minor fluctuations observed during specific periods may reflect natural shifts in research priorities or changes in industrial policy at both global and national levels (Snyder, 2019).

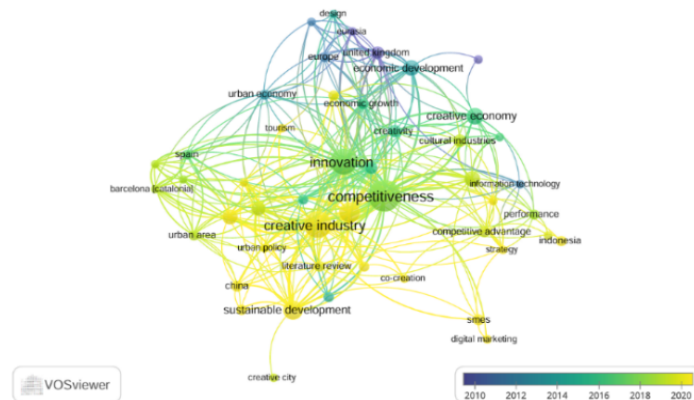


Figure 8. Visualization Map of the Creative Industry Network

Figure 8 displays a visualization of a keyword network map that illustrates the thematic relationships among researchers working on creative industry competitiveness, based on Scopus-indexed publications from 2010 to 2025. The map was generated using VOSviewer, where the size of each node represents the frequency of keyword occurrences, and the strength of the connecting lines reflects the degree of interrelation between research topics. The node colors indicate the dominant period of keyword emergence, with blue representing earlier research (around the 2010s) and yellow representing more recent topics (closer to 2020). The analysis reveals that the keywords competitiveness, innovation, and creative industry occupy central positions with the largest node sizes, signifying their role as the primary research focus in this field over the past decade. Additionally, the connections to keywords such as creative economy, cultural industries, economic development, and sustainable development indicate a shift toward research directions that increasingly emphasize innovation, digitalization, and sustainability as strategic pathways for enhancing competitiveness at the global level (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

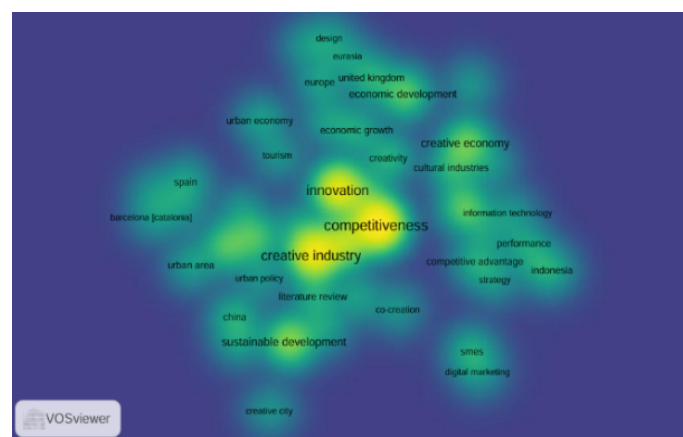


Figure 9. Visualization of the Competitiveness Network

Figure 9 presents a keyword co-occurrence map illustrating thematic relationships among concepts in creative industry research. Node size represents keyword frequency, while the distance between nodes indicates topical relevance. The density visualization shows that competitiveness and innovation form the core themes, connected to specialized topics such as regional economic development,

urban revitalization, sustainable development, and MSMEs management. It also distinguishes mature research areas (yellow) from emerging topics (green), highlighting the evolution of scholarly attention. The mapping identifies seven major research clusters, providing a comprehensive overview of the thematic structure and development of creative industry research (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

Based on the bibliometric analysis conducted in this study, seven clusters were identified. Each cluster represents a set of keywords, articles, and/or authors that are thematically connected, thereby reflecting distinct subtopics or research foci within the domain of the creative industry and competitiveness. The formation of these clusters, derived from keyword co-occurrence patterns and citation linkages, enables the identification of the intellectual structure of the field, including the central themes within each cluster, the relationships among subthemes, and the temporal evolution of research interests (Zupic & Čater, 2015).

The keyword co-occurrence analysis identified seven thematic clusters that represent the intellectual structure of research on creative industries and competitiveness. The first cluster focuses on global competitiveness, strategic management, and technology integration, emphasizing themes such as competitive advantage, business strategy, performance, internationalization, and information technology adoption. The second cluster highlights the relationship between creative industries, cultural heritage, and sustainable development through concepts such as creative cities, co-creation, and the utilization of local cultural assets, with China emerging as a prominent research context. The third cluster centers on the creative economy, human capital, knowledge, and cultural policy, underscoring the importance of creativity, innovation, and intellectual capital as key drivers of economic growth (Shujahat et al., 2017).

The fourth to seventh clusters demonstrate the multidisciplinary evolution of creative industry competitiveness research. The fourth cluster emphasizes tourism, design, and regional development as drivers of competitiveness, with the United Kingdom as a prominent context. The fifth focuses on entrepreneurship, innovation, and urban governance, highlighting entrepreneurial ecosystems and policy integration, particularly in Germany. The sixth examines cultural industries and spatial dynamics in Southern Europe, especially Barcelona and Catalonia, showing how urbanization and regional characteristics shape cultural industry development (Borre et al., 2023). The seventh highlights the competitiveness of SMEs in the digital era, emphasizing digital marketing and technology adoption as key strategies for improving performance. These clusters illustrate that creative industry competitiveness extends beyond strategic management and innovation to encompass cultural heritage, entrepreneurship, regional development, sustainability, and digital transformation, reflecting the increasing complexity of the creative economy and its growing contribution to competitiveness at local, regional, and global levels (Hosseini & Rajabipoor, 2023).

5. Discussion

The findings suggest that research on creative industries and competitiveness has gradually shifted from a relatively narrow focus on creativity and cultural production toward a broader perspective that integrates strategic management, innovation, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and digital transformation (Bangsawan, 2023). This evolution indicates that competitiveness is no longer viewed solely as an outcome of creative capability but rather as a dynamic process supported by technological advancement, organizational capabilities, and institutional environments. Such a shift reflects the increasing complexity of the creative economy, where firms are expected not only to generate creative value but also to adapt continuously to rapidly changing market conditions (Sedyastuti, 2018).

This development is consistent with previous studies by Shujahat et al. (2017), which argue that innovation has become one of the primary determinants of sustainable competitiveness within creative industries. Earlier research largely emphasized creativity as the main source of competitive advantage. In contrast, more recent studies increasingly recognize that innovation capabilities, knowledge management, digital technologies, and strategic collaboration collectively determine long-term organizational performance (Ferreira et al., 2020). The convergence of these themes demonstrates that competitiveness is increasingly shaped by the interaction between internal capabilities and external ecosystems rather than by isolated organizational resources. Consequently, the creative industry should be understood as a knowledge-intensive sector in which innovation continuously transforms creative ideas into economic and social value.

Another important implication concerns the growing integration of sustainability into creative industry research. Rather than treating sustainability as a separate issue, contemporary studies increasingly position environmental, social, and cultural sustainability as fundamental dimensions of competitiveness (Borre et al., 2023). This perspective reflects the broader global transition toward sustainable development, where cultural heritage, creative cities, and collaborative innovation are considered strategic assets that simultaneously generate economic growth and preserve local identity (Harper, 2021; Hosseini & Rajabipoor, 2023). Such findings reinforce the argument that sustainable competitiveness requires balancing economic performance with cultural preservation and social inclusion, particularly in creative sectors that depend heavily on local knowledge and cultural resources.

The geographical concentration of publications in countries such as China and several European economies also provides valuable insights into the global development of creative industry research. Previous studies have shown that these countries have established relatively mature innovation ecosystems supported by strong public policies, research funding, and institutional collaboration (Hasrudin & Sagena, 2023). Consequently, they have become leading contributors to knowledge production in this field. However, this concentration also reveals an important research imbalance, as studies from many developing countries remain comparatively limited despite the growing contribution of creative industries to employment, regional development, and national economic growth (Rofii, 2020). Expanding empirical research across emerging economies would therefore provide a more comprehensive understanding of how different institutional and socio-economic contexts influence competitiveness.

The increasing attention devoted to SMEs, entrepreneurship, and digital marketing further indicates that future competitiveness in the creative industry will depend largely on digital capability and entrepreneurial resilience. Digital technologies have transformed not only marketing activities but also business models, customer engagement, innovation processes, and collaboration among creative actors (Rofii, 2020). This transformation suggests that digitalization should not merely be interpreted as technological adoption but as a strategic capability that enables organizations to improve flexibility, innovation performance, and market responsiveness. At the same time, entrepreneurial ecosystems supported by public policy and innovation networks play an increasingly significant role in strengthening regional competitiveness (Hasrudin & Sagena, 2023).

The present study demonstrates that the intellectual landscape of creative industry research has become increasingly interdisciplinary, combining perspectives from strategic management, economics, cultural studies, entrepreneurship, urban development, and digital innovation. Although existing studies have substantially advanced the understanding of competitiveness, several research opportunities remain underexplored. Future research should pay greater attention to emerging issues such as artificial intelligence, platform ecosystems, circular economy practices,

green innovation, and cross-sector collaboration, as these themes are expected to shape the next generation of competitiveness research within the creative industry (Borre et al., 2023).

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that research on creative industries and competitiveness has experienced significant growth and evolved into an increasingly interdisciplinary field. The bibliometric analysis reveals that competitiveness is no longer examined solely from the perspective of creativity but has expanded to encompass strategic management, innovation, sustainability, entrepreneurship, digital transformation, regional development, and cultural heritage. The identified thematic clusters indicate that the interaction of technological capabilities, human capital, institutional support, and collaborative ecosystems shapes competitiveness in the creative industry. These findings provide a comprehensive overview of the intellectual structure of the field and offer practical implications for policymakers, industry practitioners, and researchers. Strengthening innovation ecosystems, promoting digital transformation, and integrating sustainability into creative industry policies are essential strategies for enhancing long-term competitiveness at both regional and national levels.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis was restricted to publications indexed in the Scopus database and relied primarily on bibliometric techniques, which emphasize publication patterns rather than the substantive content of individual studies. Consequently, relevant literature indexed in other databases or unpublished sources may not have been captured. Future research is encouraged to incorporate multiple databases, such as Web of Science or Dimensions, and combine bibliometric analysis with systematic literature reviews or qualitative content analysis to provide deeper theoretical insights. Additionally, emerging topics, including artificial intelligence, platform ecosystems, circular economy practices, green innovation, and cross-sector collaboration, warrant further investigation to better understand their roles in strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of creative industries.

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