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Innovative Management Strategies to Drive Growth in the Creative Economy in the Digital Age

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Abstract
The creative economy has become one of the fastest-growing contributors to global gross domestic product, yet its actors face mounting pressure to reinvent how they manage innovation, talent, and market access under accelerating digitalization. This article examines how innovative management strategies drive growth in the creative economy in the digital age, addressing a persistent gap in the literature: most existing studies treat digital transformation, talent management, and cross-sector collaboration as separate variables rather than as an integrated management system. Using a qualitative descriptive method grounded in a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2021 and 2026, this study synthesizes findings from twenty-five scholarly sources across Asia, Europe, and international bodies. The results show that five interrelated strategies determine competitive advantage in creative-economy organizations: digital transformation and platform-based business models, data-driven decision-making, digital talent management, cross-sector innovation collaboration, and adaptive organizational leadership supported by enabling public policy. The discussion demonstrates that these strategies function most effectively when integrated within a single adaptive management framework rather than applied in isolation. The study concludes that creative-economy actors who combine technological adoption with human-centered and collaborative management practices achieve more sustainable growth, offering practical implications for entrepreneurs, managers, and policymakers seeking to strengthen creative industries in an increasingly digital global market.
Keywords: innovative management; creative economy; digital transformation; digital talent management; organizational agility

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1. Introduction

The creative economy has evolved from a peripheral cultural activity into a strategic pillar of national and global economic development. Encompassing sectors such as design, film and animation, music, fashion, culinary arts, crafts, and digital application development, the creative economy is distinguished by its reliance on ideas, imagination, and intellectual property rather than physical capital as its primary source of value (Zhao et al., 2024). Over the past decade, this sector has demonstrated resilience and growth even amid global economic disruption, contributing significantly to gross domestic product, employment generation, and export earnings in both developed and emerging economies (Hasirah et al., 2025). Indonesia, together with other emerging markets across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, has positioned the creative economy as a central engine of inclusive growth, recognizing its capacity to combine cultural identity with economic competitiveness (Dellyana et al., 2023).

The digital age has fundamentally altered the operating environment of creative-economy actors. Advances in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and social media platforms have dissolved the geographic and financial barriers that once separated creative producers from global consumers (Aldoseri et al., 2024). A designer in a small city can now sell directly to a customer on another continent; an independent filmmaker can distribute content worldwide through streaming platforms; and a culinary entrepreneur can build a loyal customer base entirely through social commerce. These shifts have expanded market opportunity dramatically, yet they have also intensified competition, shortened product life cycles, and raised customer expectations for personalization, speed, and authenticity (Zaelani et al., 2025). Digital transformation, in other words, is not merely a technological upgrade; it is a structural reconfiguration of how value is created, captured, and delivered in the creative economy (Vărzaru & Bocean, 2024).

Against this backdrop, management practice within creative-economy organizations has struggled to keep pace with the speed of technological and behavioral change. Many creative enterprises, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), remain organized around conventional management models that emphasize craftsmanship and artistic autonomy over systematic planning, data utilization, and scalable business processes (Syarkani, 2025). This mismatch between traditional management culture and digital-era market demands has become one of the central constraints on creative-economy growth. Innovative management strategies, therefore, are no longer optional refinements but essential capabilities that determine whether creative businesses survive, scale, or stagnate (Varde et al., 2025). Innovation in this context extends beyond product or artistic innovation to encompass innovation in organizational structure, business models, talent development, decision-making processes, and stakeholder collaboration (Gouveia et al., 2024).

A substantial body of literature has examined individual dimensions of this transformation. Several studies have investigated the role of digital platforms and e-commerce in expanding market access for creative MSMEs (Hastalona et al., 2025; Kurnianingsih, 2025), while others have focused on the contribution of artificial intelligence and big data analytics to more responsive and evidence-based decision-making (Aldoseri et al., 2024; Shen et al., 2025). A parallel stream of research has emphasized the human dimension of innovation, highlighting how talent management, digital skills development, and organizational culture shape an enterprise's capacity to innovate sustainably (Lewaherilla et al., 2024; Khoruzhy et al., 2023). Still other scholars have examined cross-sector collaboration between creative businesses, educational institutions, government agencies, and technology communities as a mechanism for building innovation ecosystems (Abbas et al., 2025; Barkova, 2025), while a further set of studies has analyzed the enabling or constraining role of public policy, regulation, and institutional governance in accelerating creative-economy digitalization (Dellyana et al., 2023; Foziljonovna, 2026).

Despite this expanding body of knowledge, three significant gaps remain. First, most existing studies examine digital transformation, talent management, cross-sector collaboration, and policy support as isolated variables, typically through single-sector or single-country quantitative surveys, rather than as interconnected components of a coherent management strategy (Judijanto et al., 2025; Appio et al., 2021). Consequently, practitioners

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are left with fragmented insight into which strategies matter most and how these strategies interact with one another in practice. Second, much of the literature that does adopt an integrative perspective originates from general digital-transformation research in manufacturing, retail, or financial services (Gouveia et al., 2024; Vărzaru & Bocean, 2024), leaving a comparative gap regarding how these dynamics manifest specifically within the creative economy, where value creation is intangible, culturally embedded, and highly dependent on individual and collective creativity (Martial et al., 2024). Third, comparatively few studies synthesize findings across multiple creative sub-sectors and multiple national contexts to identify management strategies that are transferable across the heterogeneous landscape of the creative economy, from fashion and culinary businesses to film, animation, and digital design (Pingki et al., 2025; Murdana et al., 2026).

This study addresses these gaps and offers three elements of novelty. First, rather than treating digitalization, talent management, collaboration, and policy as separate research streams, this article synthesizes them into an integrated framework of innovative management strategies specifically calibrated to the operational realities of creative-economy actors. Second, the study draws on a deliberately cross-sectoral and cross-national body of literature published between 2021 and 2026, allowing the identification of strategy patterns that recur across fashion, culinary, film, and digital-creative sub-sectors in both emerging and developed economies, rather than conclusions limited to a single industry or country (Ratna et al., 2025; Yantu et al., 2026). Third, the study explicitly positions organizational agility and adaptive leadership as the connective mechanism that determines whether digital tools and talent investments translate into measurable competitive advantage, building on recent evidence that digital adoption alone does not guarantee performance gains unless mediated by agile organizational capability (Yantu et al., 2026; León Gómez & Jiménez López, 2024).

Understanding how these strategies interact is important for at least three groups of stakeholders. For creative entrepreneurs and managers, a clearer synthesis of proven strategies can guide more efficient allocation of limited resources toward the interventions most likely to generate growth. For policymakers, identifying the conditions under which public support accelerates rather than merely subsidizes digital adoption can improve the design of creative-economy development programs (Foziljonovna, 2026). For scholars, this study contributes an integrative conceptual foundation that can be tested and extended through future empirical research across additional creative sub-sectors and regions.

The urgency of this synthesis is amplified by the pace at which digital technologies are reshaping consumer behavior. Younger consumer segments, particularly millennials and Generation Z, increasingly discover, evaluate, and purchase creative products through digital channels, rewarding brands that demonstrate authenticity, responsiveness, and social relevance while penalizing those that rely on conventional, slow-moving business practices (Zaelani et al., 2025). At the same time, the proliferation of low-cost digital tools has lowered barriers to entry, intensifying competitive pressure and compressing the time available for creative enterprises to adapt (Vărzaru & Bocean, 2024). Enterprises that fail to modernize their management practices risk losing relevance not because their creative output is inferior, but because their organizational and operational models cannot translate creative potential into sustained market value (Ratna et al., 2025). This dynamic underscores that innovative management, rather than creativity alone, has become the decisive variable separating creative enterprises that scale successfully from those that remain constrained to small, local markets.

Equally important is the recognition that innovative management strategies are not implemented in an institutional vacuum. National and local governments increasingly shape the pace and direction of creative-economy digitalization through infrastructure investment, fiscal incentives, regulatory simplification, and capacity-building programs (Dellyana et al., 2023; Foziljonovna, 2026). Where such institutional support is absent or poorly coordinated, even well-managed creative enterprises may struggle to access financing, digital infrastructure, or export channels, reinforcing the argument that effective creative-economy growth strategies must be understood as a multi-level phenomenon spanning individual enterprises, industry ecosystems, and public policy. This study therefore situates enterprise-

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level management strategies within this broader institutional context rather than examining them in isolation.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze how innovative management strategies can be systematically applied to accelerate creative-economy growth in the digital age, with particular attention to the interaction between digital transformation, data-driven management, talent development, cross-sector collaboration, and adaptive leadership. The remainder of this article is organized as follows: the next section describes the qualitative literature-review method used to identify and synthesize the studies underpinning this analysis; the following section presents the results and discussion organized around five core strategic themes; and the final section offers conclusions and practical implications for creative-economy stakeholders

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method using a systematic literature review (library research) as its primary data-collection technique. This approach was selected because the research objective is conceptual and synthetic in nature: rather than testing a single causal hypothesis, the study seeks to map, compare, and integrate strategy patterns reported across a heterogeneous body of existing empirical and conceptual research on creative-economy management in the digital age.

Data sources consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in reputable academic databases, including Scopus-indexed journals, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, supplemented by targeted searches using the Consensus academic search engine. The search used combinations of the keywords "innovative management strategies," "creative economy," "digital transformation," "digital economy," and "MSME growth." Inclusion criteria were: (1) publication between 2021 and 2026 to ensure currency with rapidly evolving digital practices; (2) publication in a peer-reviewed journal with an active, resolvable digital object identifier (DOI); (3) topical relevance to management strategy, innovation, or digital transformation within the creative economy or directly analogous organizational contexts; and (4) availability of the full text or a sufficiently detailed abstract for thematic extraction. Sources that were purely promotional, non-peer-reviewed, or unrelated to management or organizational strategy were excluded.

The review process followed five sequential stages, illustrated in Figure 1: literature identification, screening and selection, data extraction, thematic analysis, and synthesis of findings. During the identification stage, an initial pool of candidate sources was compiled from database searches. During screening, titles, abstracts, and metadata were reviewed against the inclusion criteria described above. Eligible sources then proceeded to data extraction, in which bibliographic information, key findings, proposed strategies, and sector or country context were recorded in a structured matrix. In the thematic-analysis stage, extracted findings were coded and iteratively clustered using a constant-comparison technique, in which each new source was compared against previously coded themes to confirm, refine, or expand the emerging thematic structure. This process converged on five recurring strategic themes: digital transformation and platform-based business models, data-driven management, digital talent management, cross-sector innovation collaboration, and adaptive leadership supported by public policy. Finally, in the synthesis stage, these themes were integrated into a coherent narrative and conceptual framework, presented in the Results and Discussion section.

Twenty-five sources met the inclusion criteria and form the evidentiary basis of this study, spanning research conducted in Indonesia, China, Portugal, Spain, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Russia, Colombia, and multi-country European Union contexts, which supports the cross-sectoral and cross-national scope described in the introduction. Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation, in which recurring findings across independent studies from different countries and sub-sectors were treated as stronger evidence of a generalizable strategy pattern than findings reported by a single source. Because this study relies exclusively on secondary, publicly available published literature, no primary human-subject data were collected, and no ethical clearance for primary data collection was required.

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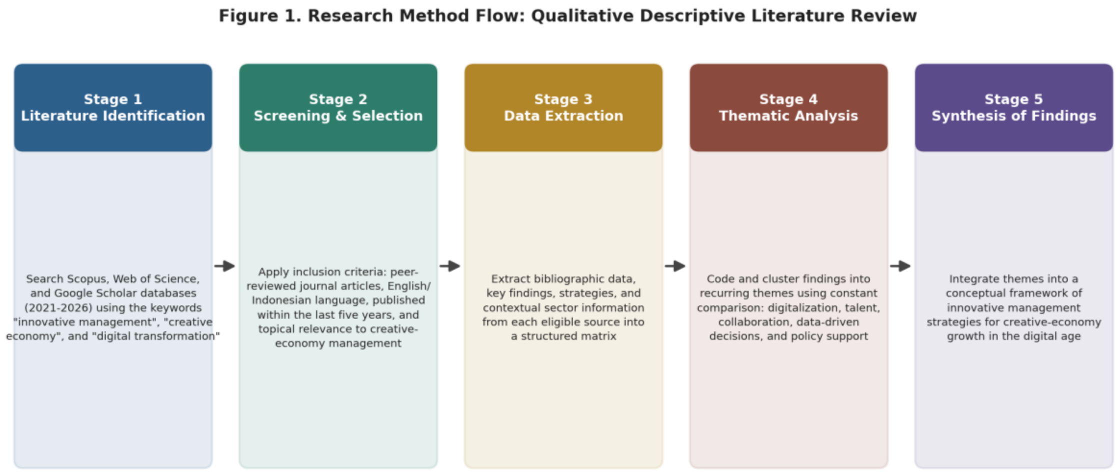

Figure 1. Five-Stage Research Method Flow (Qualitative Descriptive Literature Review)

3. Results and Discussion

The thematic synthesis of the twenty-five reviewed sources converges on five interrelated strategic themes that collectively explain how innovative management drives creative-economy growth in the digital age: digital transformation and platform-based business models, data-driven management, digital talent management, cross-sector innovation collaboration, and adaptive leadership supported by enabling policy. Table 1 summarizes these themes, their core strategic actions, and representative sources, before each theme is discussed in detail.

Theme	Core Strategic Actions	Representative Sources
Digital Transformation & Platform-Based Business Models	Adopt e-commerce, social commerce, and streaming/distribution platforms; redesign business models around digital channels rather than treating digitalization as add-on marketing	Zhao et al. (2024); Syarkani (2025); Hastalona et al. (2025); Yantu et al. (2026)
Data-Driven Management	Use AI and big-data analytics for demand forecasting, personalization, and resource allocation; build organizational capacity to act on data, not just collect it	Aldoseri et al. (2024); Shen et al. (2025); Kurnianingsih (2025)
Digital Talent Management	Invest in structured training, mentorship, and incentives for digital and creative skills; institutionalize design thinking and creativity as organizational competencies	Lewaherilla et al. (2024); Khoruzhy et al. (2023); León Gómez & Jiménez López (2024); Abbas et al. (2025); Ratna et al. (2025)
Cross-Sector Innovation Collaboration	Build partnerships with academia, technology communities, government incubators, and global distribution platforms to access capabilities beyond internal capacity	Barkova (2025); Judijanto et al. (2025); Appio et al. (2021); Martial et al. (2024); Hasirah et al. (2025)
Adaptive Leadership & Enabling Policy	Cultivate agile, flexible leadership and project management; align enterprise strategy with supportive government regulation, infrastructure, and capacity-building programs	Murdana et al. (2026); Foziljonovna (2026); Dellyana et al. (2023); Yantu et al. (2026)

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Table 1. Five Strategic Themes of Innovative Management in the Creative Economy

Digital Transformation and Platform-Based Business Models

The most consistently reported strategy across the reviewed literature is the adoption of digital platforms as the primary channel for production, marketing, and distribution. Zhao et al. (2024) provide empirical evidence from China showing that regional digital-economy development has a statistically significant positive effect on the growth of creative industries, primarily by lowering transaction costs and expanding market reach beyond local boundaries. Similar findings emerge from Indonesian contexts, where Syarkani (2025) demonstrates that MSMEs adopting digital business-model innovation, such as e-commerce integration and social-commerce marketing, achieve stronger competitive positioning than enterprises relying solely on physical retail channels. Hastalona et al. (2025) extend this argument by proposing an integrated digital-innovation model for MSME growth, arguing that digital adoption is most effective when embedded within a broader business-model redesign rather than treated as a superficial marketing add-on.

Importantly, the literature cautions against treating digital adoption as a guarantee of performance improvement. Yantu et al. (2026), studying creative industries in Gorontalo Province, Indonesia, find that digital transformation alone does not directly and significantly affect competitive advantage; instead, its effect is fully mediated by organizational agility, the enterprise's capacity to sense market shifts and reconfigure resources rapidly in response. This finding is corroborated by Gouveia et al. (2024), whose bibliometric synthesis of digital-transformation research emphasizes that strategic alignment between technological investment and organizational goals, rather than technology adoption per se, is what determines value creation. Vărzaru and Bocean (2024) reinforce this point using European Union enterprise data, showing that digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and cloud computing generate innovation-driven revenue only when integrated into a coherent innovation strategy. Taken together, these findings indicate that digital transformation functions as a necessary but insufficient condition: platforms expand opportunity, but organizational capability determines whether that opportunity converts into growth.

Data-Driven Management and Artificial Intelligence

A second recurring theme is the shift toward data-driven decision-making, enabled by artificial intelligence and big data analytics. Aldoseri et al. (2024) identify AI adoption as a key pillar of digital transformation across industries, noting that AI-enabled analytics allow organizations to anticipate consumer trends, personalize offerings, and optimize resource allocation with a precision that conventional intuition-based management cannot match. Within the creative economy specifically, this capability is particularly valuable given the sector's dependence on rapidly shifting consumer taste and cultural trends. Shen et al. (2025) find that digital-economy investment promotes sustainable competitiveness by enabling the creation of new industry niches, a process closely tied to the analytical capacity to identify emerging market segments before competitors do. Kurnianingsih (2025) applies this reasoning directly to Indonesia's creative-economy sector, showing that firms leveraging digital transformation for operational and market intelligence report measurably stronger corporate competitiveness than firms that digitize only their marketing functions.

Data-driven management also intersects with financial and operational efficiency. Several sources note that predictive analytics and automated inventory or production planning reduce waste and improve responsiveness in fashion, culinary, and craft sub-sectors, where demand can be highly seasonal and trend-sensitive (Martial et al., 2024; Pingki et al., 2025). However, the literature also flags a capability gap: many creative MSMEs lack the technical infrastructure or analytical skills to fully exploit available data, underscoring the close interdependence between this theme and the talent-management theme discussed next.

This capability gap has direct strategic implications. Enterprises that invest in data infrastructure without a corresponding plan for interpreting and acting on that data tend to accumulate information without converting it into decisions, effectively duplicating cost without generating value. The reviewed literature therefore frames data-driven management not as a

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stand-alone technology investment but as an organizational capability that must be paired with analytical talent and a decision-making culture willing to act on evidence rather than intuition alone, reinforcing why this theme cannot be separated from human-capital considerations.

Digital Talent Management

The third theme concerns the human capital dimension of innovative management. Lewaherilla et al. (2024) argue that innovative talent-management strategies, including structured training, mentorship, and incentive systems tailored to creative and digitally skilled workers, are a decisive factor in sustaining SME growth within the creative sector, particularly because creative output depends heavily on individual expertise that is difficult to standardize. Khoruzhy et al. (2023) broaden this argument through a comparative analysis of human-capital management strategies under national digitalization, concluding that enterprises investing simultaneously in technical digital skills and softer entrepreneurial competencies outperform those focusing on either dimension alone. This dual-competency requirement is echoed by León Gómez and Jiménez López (2024), who find that SMEs successfully navigating digital transformation typically pair technology investment with structured employee upskilling programs, mitigating the implementation barriers that otherwise undermine digital initiatives.

Within the creative economy, talent management also encompasses the cultivation of creative and design thinking capacity. Abbas et al. (2025) show that applying design-thinking methodology as both a talent-development tool and a business-model framework enables creative entrepreneurs to translate ideation capacity into commercially viable products more consistently. Ratna et al. (2025) similarly find that enterprises that institutionalize innovation and creativity as organizational competencies, rather than relying on individual founder talent, demonstrate greater resilience and scalability.

Cross-Sector Innovation Collaboration

The fourth theme highlights collaboration across organizational and sectoral boundaries as an accelerator of innovation. Barkova (2025) argues that integrating creative thinking into management strategy requires deliberate collaboration between creative practitioners, technologists, and business strategists, since innovation in the digital creative economy rarely emerges from a single discipline acting alone. This is supported by Judijanto et al. (2025), who find that sustainable business models among digital-era creative startups are strongly associated with participation in innovation ecosystems that connect entrepreneurs with academic institutions, technology communities, and government incubation programs. Appio et al. (2021), in a foundational synthesis of digital-transformation and innovation-management research, similarly conclude that innovation increasingly occurs through networked, ecosystem-based processes rather than isolated corporate research and development, a pattern directly applicable to the collaborative, project-based nature of creative work.

Empirical illustrations of this theme recur throughout the reviewed national case studies. Indonesia's film and animation sub-sector, for example, has expanded international market access through distribution partnerships with global streaming platforms, demonstrating how collaboration with external digital infrastructure providers can substitute for capital investment that individual creative enterprises could not undertake alone (Martial et al., 2024). Likewise, fashion enterprises that combine local cultural motifs with globally sourced digital design and marketing expertise have achieved stronger export performance than enterprises relying solely on internal capability (Hasirah et al., 2025).

Adaptive Leadership and Enabling Policy

The fifth and final theme concerns organizational leadership and the institutional environment within which creative enterprises operate. Murdana et al. (2026) argue that entrepreneurial management in the digital-age creative economy must balance commercial growth with social sustainability, requiring leaders who can navigate ambiguity, mobilize community stakeholders, and adapt organizational structures rapidly. This adaptive leadership capacity is precisely what mediates the digital-transformation and competitive-advantage

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relationship identified by Yantu et al. (2026). Foziljonovna (2026) extends the discussion to project-management practice within creative enterprises, finding that structured yet flexible project-management frameworks improve the reliability of creative output delivery without suppressing the experimentation that creative work requires.

At the institutional level, Dellyana et al. (2023) demonstrate that Indonesia's national creative-economy governance framework, which combines regulatory simplification, digital-infrastructure investment, and capacity-building programs, has measurably accelerated digital adoption among creative MSMEs, particularly when local government implementation is well coordinated with national policy design. This finding underscores that adaptive leadership operates at both the enterprise and policy levels: enterprise leaders adapt internal structures and processes, while public-sector leaders shape the external conditions that determine how widely such adaptation can spread across the creative-economy ecosystem.

The importance of this dual-level view is reinforced by comparative evidence from outside Indonesia. Studies of digital business-model innovation in other emerging markets similarly find that enterprise-level agility is easier to sustain when supported by predictable regulation, accessible financing, and public digital-infrastructure investment (Foziljonovna, 2026; Khoruzhy et al., 2023). Where institutional support is inconsistent, even enterprises with capable leadership and strong digital talent report slower scaling, suggesting that leadership adaptability and policy enablement should be treated as complementary rather than substitutable strategic levers.

Toward an Integrated Framework

Read together, these five themes are not independent levers but interdependent components of a single adaptive management system. Digital platforms create market opportunity; data analytics convert that opportunity into actionable intelligence; digital talent converts intelligence into differentiated creative output; cross-sector collaboration supplies capabilities that individual enterprises cannot build alone; and adaptive leadership, reinforced by enabling policy, integrates the other four components into coherent organizational action. This interdependence explains a pattern noted repeatedly in the literature: enterprises that adopt digital tools without corresponding investment in talent, collaboration, or leadership capacity frequently fail to translate that adoption into sustained competitive advantage (Yantu et al., 2026; Vărzaru & Bocean, 2024), whereas enterprises that pursue these strategies in combination report stronger and more durable growth outcomes (Zaelani et al., 2025; Judijanto et al., 2025). This integrated reading directly addresses the novelty motivating this study: rather than ranking these strategies in isolation, the evidence indicates that their combined, mutually reinforcing application is what ultimately drives creative-economy growth in the digital age.

This synthesis also carries practical diagnostic value. An enterprise experiencing stagnant growth despite active social-media presence, for instance, may be under-investing in data analytics or talent rather than in digital visibility itself; an enterprise with strong technical talent but limited market reach may instead require stronger cross-sector partnerships or platform integration. Viewing the five themes as an interdependent system, rather than a checklist of unrelated best practices, allows managers and policymakers to diagnose which specific linkage in the system is weakest and to target interventions accordingly, rather than applying generic digitalization advice uniformly across highly heterogeneous creative enterprises

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

This study set out to analyze how innovative management strategies drive creative-economy growth in the digital age, addressing the literature's tendency to examine digitalization, talent management, collaboration, and policy support as disconnected variables. The synthesis of twenty-five peer-reviewed sources published between 2021 and 2026 shows that five strategies consistently determine creative-economy competitiveness: digital transformation through platform-based business models, data-driven management enabled by artificial intelligence and analytics, digital talent management, cross-sector innovation collaboration, and adaptive leadership supported by enabling public policy. Crucially, the

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evidence indicates that these strategies function as an interdependent system rather than as independent options; digital adoption alone does not reliably produce competitive advantage unless it is mediated by organizational agility, complemented by skilled talent, and reinforced by collaborative and institutional support.

These findings carry direct practical implications. Creative-economy entrepreneurs and managers should treat digital-platform adoption as a starting point rather than an end point, pairing it with deliberate investment in analytical capability, employee digital competency, and external partnerships. Policymakers, meanwhile, should design creative-economy support programs that address multiple strategic levers simultaneously, since isolated interventions, such as digital-infrastructure subsidies without accompanying skills training, are less likely to produce sustained growth.

This study is limited by its reliance on secondary literature and its qualitative, descriptive synthesis method, which does not permit statistical generalization or causal inference. Future research should test the proposed integrated framework empirically across specific creative sub-sectors and regions, using quantitative or mixed-methods designs, to determine the relative weight of each strategic component and to examine how their interdependence varies across different institutional and cultural contexts. Nonetheless, by integrating a cross-sectoral and cross-national body of recent evidence, this study offers a coherent conceptual foundation for understanding how innovative management strategies can accelerate sustainable, competitive, and culturally grounded growth in the creative economy of the digital age.

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