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Internet of Things (IoT), Applications and Challenges: A Comprehensive Review

Sayed Mazhar Ali¹, Mushtaque Ahmed Rahu², Sarang Karim³, Ghulam Murtaza Jatoi⁴, Asim Sattar⁵

¹ Department of Electrical Engineering, MUET SZAB Khairpur Mirs; email: mazharlakyari@gmail.com (S.M.A)

² Department of Electronic Engineering, QUEST, Nawabshah 67450, Pakistan, email: rahumushtaque@gmail.com (M.A.R)

³ Department of Telecommunication Engineering, QUEST, Nawabshah 67450, Pakistan, email: sarangkarim@hotmail.com (S.K)

⁴ Department of Electronic Engineering, QUEST, Nawabshah 67450, Pakistan, (G.M.J)

⁵ Department of Mechanical Engineering, MUET SZAB Khairpur Mirs; (A.S)

* Correspondence: mazharlakyari@gmail.com

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Abstract

This paper offers a thorough exploration of Internet of Things (IoT) applications, encompassing diverse sectors such as healthcare, smart cities, agriculture, industrial settings, smart homes, and more. It underscores the transformative impact of IoT on daily life and industries, optimizing processes, increasing efficiency, and providing valuable insights through continuous data flow. The review delves into specific applications within healthcare, illustrating how IoT enhances patient care, facilitates telemedicine, and improves medication adherence. In smart cities, IoT contributes to urban planning, traffic management, waste management, and public safety. Precision farming, livestock management, manufacturing optimization, and smart homes exemplify the broad spectrum of IoT applications. Despite its vast potential, IoT poses challenges related to security, interoperability, scalability, and data management. The paper outlines these challenges and proposes solutions, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and innovation. Additionally, the review anticipates future trends in IoT, focusing on 5G connectivity, edge computing, and AI integration, while identifying areas for future research to address current challenges and explore new applications. The comprehensive examination provided in this paper contributes to a holistic understanding of the current state and future prospects of IoT applications.



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1. Introduction

The Internet of Things (IoT) represents a groundbreaking paradigm, describing the interconnected network of physical entities such as devices, objects, and systems [1]. These entities are embedded with sensors, software, and other technologies, enabling them to acquire, exchange, and act upon data. The core concept of IoT revolves around establishing a seamless and intelligent communication ecosystem, facilitating interactions between devices over the internet. This extends the influence of the internet beyond conventional computing devices like computers and smartphones to encompass a wide array of everyday objects. Referred to as "things," these objects

range from household appliances and industrial machinery to vehicles, wearable devices, and more. Through the integration of sensors and connectivity, IoT empowers these objects to collect real-time data, share information, and, in certain instances, autonomously make decisions [2]. The overarching objective of the Internet of Things is to optimize efficiency, refine decision-making processes, and introduce new levels of automation by enabling devices to communicate and collaborate without direct human intervention. The applications of IoT are expansive, spanning diverse industries such as healthcare, agriculture, smart cities, manufacturing, and consumer electronics [9-11].

IoT has the potential to transform how we live and work, making our environments smarter, more

interconnected, and responsive to our needs. However, along with its tremendous benefits, IoT also presents challenges related to security, privacy, interoperability, and data management, which need to be carefully addressed for its widespread and secure adoption [8]. The Internet of Things (IoT) has experienced rapid growth, significantly transforming various sectors and reshaping the way industries operate. In healthcare, IoT facilitates remote patient monitoring and the use of smart medical devices, enhancing personalized and efficient healthcare delivery. Smart cities benefit from IoT by enabling real-time urban planning and bolstering public safety through connected infrastructure. Agriculture sees improved productivity through precision farming and livestock management, as IoT sensors monitor soil conditions and animal health [4-5]. Industrial IoT (IIoT) optimizes industrial processes with predictive maintenance and supply chain enhancements, while smart homes feature automation and connected appliances for increased convenience [10]. Retailers leverage IoT for inventory management and personalized shopping experiences. Transportation benefits from connected vehicles and fleet management, enhancing traffic efficiency and safety. IoT contributes to energy management with smart grids and improved energy efficiency in homes and businesses. Real-time data on air and water quality has proven to be invaluable for environmental monitoring, playing a crucial role in pollution control and wildlife conservation efforts. In these domains, the Internet of Things (IoT) emerges as a pivotal tool, demonstrating its significance in optimizing processes, enhancing efficiency, and delivering valuable insights through a continuous flow of data [7]. This not only shapes the present landscape but also lays the foundation for the future evolution of various industries and daily life.

The overarching objective of this comprehensive review is to meticulously explore both the applications and challenges inherent in the realm of the Internet of Things (IoT). This endeavor entails a thorough examination of the diverse and impactful applications of IoT across a spectrum of sectors. The sectors under scrutiny include healthcare, smart cities, agriculture, industrial settings, smart homes, retail, transportation, energy management, and environmental monitoring. The review seeks to provide a detailed analysis of the positive applications of IoT, showcasing its role in revolutionizing processes and fostering efficiency across diverse sectors. Simultaneously, it aims to delve into the challenges associated with the widespread adoption of IoT. These challenges encompass security and privacy concerns, interoperability issues, scalability challenges, and the intricate task of managing vast amounts of

generated data. By conducting an in-depth analysis of both the positive applications and the hurdles encountered by IoT, this review endeavors to contribute to a holistic understanding of the current state and the future prospects of this transformative technology. The insights derived from this exploration are anticipated to serve as a valuable resource, guiding stakeholders towards informed decision-making and facilitating the ongoing evolution of IoT in various sectors.

2. IoT Applications

The Internet of Things (IoT) has emerged as a revolutionary paradigm that seamlessly connects physical devices, enabling them to communicate, collect, and exchange data. This research paper delves into the multifaceted applications of IoT in key sectors, namely healthcare, agriculture, industry, and smart cities. The integration of IoT technologies in these domains has not only streamlined operations but also ushered in unprecedented efficiency, sustainability, and innovation.

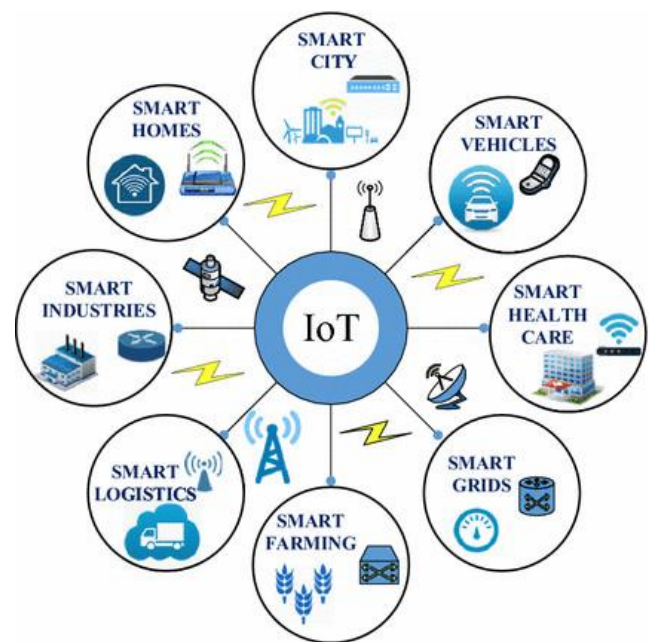


Figure 1. Applications of IoT

2.1 Healthcare:

IoT devices, such as wearables and connected medical sensors, enable continuous monitoring of patients' vital signs and health metrics. Real-time data transmission allows healthcare professionals to remotely track patients' conditions, ensuring timely intervention and personalized care. Implantable and wearable smart medical devices, such as insulin pumps, cardiac monitors, and smart inhalers, enhance patient management and treatment adherence [10]. These devices collect and transmit data to healthcare providers, supporting better-informed decision-making.

IoT facilitates remote consultations through video conferencing, enabling patients to connect with healthcare professionals from the comfort of their homes. Connected medical devices in telehealth setups enhance diagnostic capabilities and enable remote monitoring [11]. Smart pill dispensers and medication packaging with embedded sensors help patients adhere to prescribed medication schedules. Reminders and notifications are sent to both patients and healthcare providers, promoting better medication management. IoT sensors in homes and healthcare facilities can detect falls or changes in activity patterns, especially in elderly populations. Immediate alerts are sent to caregivers or emergency services to ensure rapid response in case of accidents. RFID and IoT-enabled tags are used to track the location and status of medical equipment, ensuring efficient asset utilization and reducing the risk of loss or theft. Real-time tracking enhances inventory management and helps maintain optimal levels of equipment availability [8]. IoT devices assist in monitoring and controlling the spread of infections within healthcare settings. Automated hand hygiene monitoring, wearable infection-detection devices, and environmental sensors contribute to a safer healthcare environment. IoT supports the management of chronic conditions by providing continuous monitoring and timely interventions. Connected devices help patients and healthcare providers track and manage conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and respiratory disorders. IoT devices aid in the collection of real-world data for clinical trials, enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of research. Wearables and connected devices can provide insights into patient behaviors, treatment responses, and overall health status. Wearable devices and smart clothing equipped with health sensors allow individuals to track their fitness, activity levels, and overall well-being. Sharing this data with healthcare professionals can contribute to a more thorough comprehension of an individual's health. The multifaceted applications highlighted above illustrate the various transformative ways in which the Internet of Things (IoT) is reshaping the healthcare landscape. These applications not only foster proactive care, enhancing patient outcomes, but also streamline and optimize various healthcare processes.

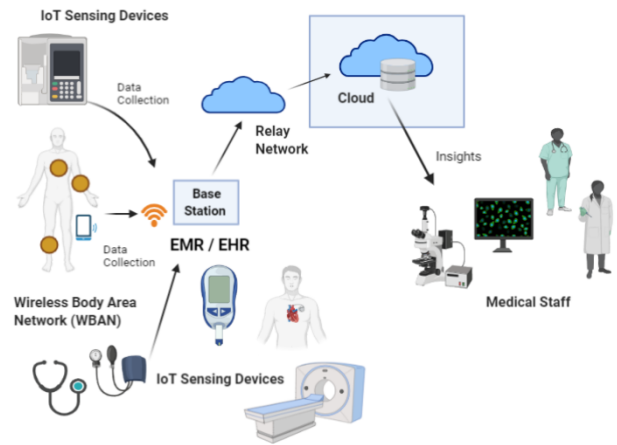


Figure 2. IoT in Healthcare

Nevertheless, it is imperative to underscore the critical importance of addressing security and privacy considerations associated with the utilization of patient data in these IoT applications. Ensuring the responsible and ethical handling of such sensitive information is paramount to maintaining the trust and well-being of individuals within the healthcare ecosystem. Therefore, a comprehensive approach to data security and privacy is crucial to mitigate potential risks and uphold the ethical standards expected in healthcare practices leveraging IoT technologies.

2.2 Smart Cities:

The role of the Internet of Things (IoT) in urban planning is indispensable, providing real-time data and insights that empower informed decision-making. Utilizing smart sensors and devices, urban environments are monitored for various parameters, such as air quality, noise levels, and energy consumption. This wealth of data equips city planners with the tools to create urban spaces that are not only sustainable but also highly efficient.



Figure 3. IoT in Smart Cities

In the context of smart cities, IoT is harnessed for intelligent traffic management systems. Sensors strategically embedded in roadways and infrastructure continuously collect data on traffic flow, congestion levels, and parking space availability [9]. City planners leverage this information to optimize traffic signal timings, reroute vehicles, and enhance overall transportation efficiency. These measures, in turn, contribute to a reduction in congestion and an improvement in overall mobility within the city.

Furthermore, IoT plays a pivotal role in fostering efficient waste management practices in smart cities. Through the deployment of sensors in waste bins, fill levels are monitored in real-time [4]. This data facilitates the creation of optimized waste collection routes, leading to reduced fuel consumption and operational costs. Additionally, smart waste bins, equipped with sensors, can send timely alerts when they reach full capacity, enabling targeted and timely waste collection interventions. In essence, the integration of IoT technologies in urban planning not only enhances the quality of life for city residents but also contributes to the creation of more sustainable and resource-efficient urban environments. The seamless connectivity and data-driven insights provided by IoT play a crucial role in shaping the future of smart cities and urban development. IoT enhances public safety through various applications. Surveillance cameras equipped with IoT capabilities provide real-time video feeds for monitoring public spaces. Smart street lighting with integrated sensors can detect unusual activities and automatically illuminate areas, improving overall safety.

Emergency response systems are also enhanced by IoT, enabling quicker and more precise responses to incidents.

2.3 Agriculture

Precision farming, facilitated by IoT technologies, transforms agricultural practices by delivering real-time data and insights to farmers. Field-deployed IoT sensors and devices monitor and optimize various aspects such as soil moisture, nutrient levels, and pH [6]. This provides farmers with precise information for fine-tuning irrigation and fertilization processes, ensuring crops receive optimal amounts of water and nutrients. The result is a reduction in waste and an enhancement in yield. Weather data collected by connected weather stations, including temperature, humidity, and precipitation, aids farmers in making well-informed decisions related to crucial tasks such as planting and harvesting. This data-driven approach optimizes crop production based on prevailing weather conditions. High-resolution imagery of fields captured by IoT-powered drones and satellites is utilized for crop health assessments, pest detection, and identifying areas that may require targeted attention. This empowers farmers to take focused actions to address specific challenges. Continuous monitoring of crops enabled by IoT technologies allows farmers to detect issues early and implement preventive measures. This real-time monitoring contributes to the adoption of more efficient and sustainable agricultural practices. Smart sensors and cameras play a vital role in monitoring crop health by identifying signs of diseases, pests, or nutrient deficiencies. Early identification enables farmers to implement targeted interventions, reducing the reliance on excessive pesticide or fertilizer use. In irrigation, IoT-based systems leverage soil moisture data to automate watering processes, ensuring crops receive the optimal amount of water. This not only minimizes water waste but also promotes water conservation. Livestock management benefits from IoT applications, enhancing animal welfare, improving efficiency, and optimizing overall farm operations. Connected devices provide valuable data on the health and behavior of livestock. Wearable IoT devices on livestock monitor vital signs and detect early signs of illness, enabling farmers to provide timely medical attention and reducing the risk of disease spread, thereby improving overall herd health.

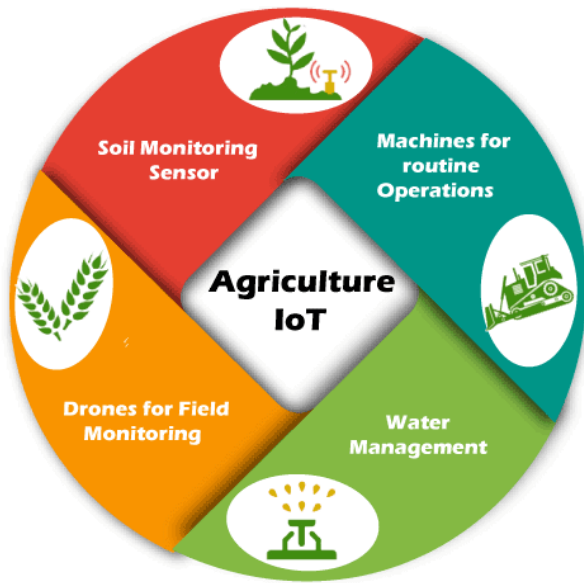


Figure 4. IoT in Agriculture

The application of IoT-enabled GPS devices aids in tracking the location and movement patterns of animals, especially beneficial for managing grazing areas, preventing overgrazing, and quickly locating animals in emergencies. Additionally, IoT-based feeding systems can be programmed based on nutritional needs and feeding schedules, improving efficiency and ensuring animals receive the appropriate balance of nutrients, ultimately contributing to their overall health and productivity.

2.4 Industrial IoT (IIoT):

IoT is transforming the manufacturing industry by connecting devices, machines, and systems to create a more intelligent and efficient production environment. IoT sensors are embedded in machinery and equipment, collecting real-time data on performance, production rates, and equipment health. This data is analyzed to optimize manufacturing processes, improve product quality, and reduce downtime. IoT enables manufacturers to track the location and condition of assets, raw materials, and finished goods in real time. This enhances inventory management, reduces the risk of errors, and streamlines production workflows. Predictive maintenance, enabled by IoT, allows manufacturers to anticipate and address equipment failures before they occur, minimizing downtime and optimizing maintenance schedules. IoT sensors continuously monitor the condition of machinery, measuring factors such as temperature, vibration, and fluid levels. Anomalies in these parameters trigger alerts, allowing maintenance teams to intervene proactively. Predictive maintenance leverages machine

learning algorithms that analyze historical data to predict when equipment is likely to fail. This approach helps schedule maintenance activities during optimal times, preventing unexpected breakdowns.

IoT plays a crucial role in optimizing supply chain operations by providing visibility, transparency, and data- IoT devices, such as RFID tags and GPS sensors, enable real-time tracking of shipments throughout the supply chain. This improves visibility, reduces the risk of lost or delayed goods, and enhances overall supply chain efficiency. Connected sensors in warehouses and distribution centers monitor inventory levels and conditions. This data is used to optimize stock levels, prevent stockouts, and reduce carrying costs. IoT-generated data, combined with advanced analytics, helps improve demand forecasting accuracy. This enables companies to align production and inventory levels with actual demand, reducing excess inventory and associated costs.

2.5 Smart Homes:

IoT-connected light bulbs and switches allow users to remotely control lighting levels, colors, and schedules through mobile apps or voice commands. IoT-enabled thermostats adjust home temperatures based on user preferences and occupancy patterns, optimizing energy usage and reducing heating and cooling costs [11]. IoT-powered door locks and video doorbells offer enhanced security features, allowing homeowners to control access and monitor their front doors remotely. Smart home devices include connected entertainment systems that enable users to control audio, video, and streaming services through centralized platforms.

2.6 Energy Management:

IoT-connected energy meters provide real-time data on energy consumption, helping homeowners monitor usage patterns and identify opportunities for efficiency improvements. IoT devices track the performance of solar panels, optimizing energy production and providing insights into the overall efficiency of solar energy systems. IoT-enabled plugs and outlets allow users to remotely control power to devices, turning them on or off to conserve energy and prevent standby power consumption. Connected energy storage solutions, such as smart batteries, integrate with renewable energy sources to store excess energy for later use, promoting energy resilience.

2.7 Security:

IoT-based cameras and surveillance systems provide real-time monitoring, motion detection, and remote

access for enhanced home security. Video doorbell cameras with IoT capabilities allow homeowners to see and communicate with visitors from IoT-connected motion sensors trigger alarms and notifications in the event of unauthorized movement, enhancing security and deterring intruders. Connected smoke and carbon monoxide detectors send alerts to homeowners' devices in case of emergencies, improving response times and safety [9].

3. Challenges for IoT and Possible Solutions

The Internet of Things (IoT) presents numerous opportunities, but it also comes with several challenges. Here are some common challenges in IoT and possible solutions:

3.1 Security and Privacy Concerns:

IoT devices are susceptible to security breaches, and the vast amount of data collected raises privacy concerns. Implement robust security measures such as encryption, secure boot, and regular software updates. Privacy policies should be transparent, and user consent should be prioritized.

3.2 Interoperability:

Many IoT devices come from different manufacturers and may use different communication protocols, making interoperability a significant challenge. Standardization of communication protocols and the adoption of open standards can enhance interoperability. Industry collaborations and consortia can work towards establishing common standards.

3.3 Scalability:

As the number of IoT devices increases, managing and scaling the infrastructure becomes a challenge. Cloud-based solutions and edge computing can help distribute the workload and manage large-scale deployments efficiently. Additionally, adopting a modular and flexible architecture can facilitate scalability.

3.4 Power Consumption and Battery Life:

Many IoT devices are constrained by limited power sources, leading to concerns about battery life. Optimize device designs for energy efficiency, use low-power components, and implement sleep modes when devices are not actively transmitting data. Exploring alternative power sources like solar or kinetic energy can also be beneficial.

3.5 Data Management and Analytics:

The sheer volume of data generated by IoT devices can overwhelm existing data management and analytics systems. Implement edge analytics to process data closer to the source, reducing the need for massive data transfers. Utilize advanced analytics tools and machine learning algorithms to derive meaningful insights from the data.

3.6 Lack of Standardization:

The absence of universal standards can lead to fragmentation and hinder interoperability. Industry-wide collaboration and the development of standardized protocols can address this issue. Organizations such as the IoT Consortium and Open Connectivity Foundation work towards creating and promoting standards.

3.7 Regulatory Compliance:

Compliance with various regional and international regulations related to data privacy and security can be complex. Stay informed about regulatory requirements in different regions and design IoT solutions with privacy and compliance in mind. Regularly update systems to comply with changing regulations.

3.8 Cost of Implementation:

Implementing robust IoT solutions can be expensive, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises. Innovate cost-effective hardware and software solutions. As technology matures and adoption increases, economies of scale may help reduce costs. Governments and organizations can also provide incentives for IoT adoption.

Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative effort from industry stakeholders, policymakers, and technology innovators to ensure the sustainable growth and success of the IoT ecosystem.

4. Future Trends and Research Directions

The landscape of the Internet of Things (IoT) is marked by several noteworthy trends that are shaping its trajectory. Firstly, the integration of 5G connectivity stands out, revolutionizing IoT capabilities by providing faster and more reliable data transfer speeds. This facilitates the real-time processing of data, enabling applications like autonomous vehicles and smart cities to operate seamlessly. In tandem, the rise of edge computing is transforming the traditional cloud-centric IoT architecture. Edge computing allows data processing to occur closer to the data source, reducing latency and improving overall system efficiency. Furthermore, the convergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with IoT is

fostering advanced data analytics, predictive modeling, and intelligent decision-making within IoT devices and systems.

However, these trends bring forth challenges that necessitate further research for the continued growth and sustainability of IoT. Addressing interoperability issues among diverse IoT devices and platforms is crucial to ensure seamless communication. Security concerns associated with the influx of AI in IoT, coupled with data privacy considerations, demand innovative solutions. Energy efficiency remains a pressing challenge, especially as IoT ecosystems expand. Future research should thus focus on devising strategies for enhanced interoperability, bolstering security measures, and optimizing energy consumption. Exploring new applications, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, environmental monitoring, and smart cities, offers promising research avenues that can push the boundaries of IoT innovation and utilization.

4. Results and Discussions

The integration of Internet of Things (IoT) applications across various sectors has yielded significant results, ushering in transformative changes and redefining conventional practices. In healthcare, the implementation of IoT technologies has led to remarkable advancements in patient care and management. The adoption of remote patient monitoring through wearables and connected medical sensors has enabled healthcare professionals to track patients' vital signs in real-time, ensuring prompt interventions and personalized care. The use of smart medical devices, such as insulin pumps and cardiac monitors, has improved patient management and treatment adherence, contributing to better health outcomes.

In smart cities, the deployment of IoT has revolutionized urban planning and public services. Real-time data from smart sensors and devices provide valuable insights for informed decision-making, leading to more sustainable and efficient urban spaces. The intelligent traffic management systems powered by IoT have optimized traffic flow, reduced congestion, and enhanced overall transportation efficiency. Waste management in smart cities has become more efficient with the implementation of IoT-enabled sensors in waste bins, allowing for optimized waste collection routes and timely disposal.

Agriculture has witnessed a significant boost in productivity through the application of precision farming enabled by IoT. Farmers now have access to real-time data on soil conditions, crop health, and

weather patterns, leading to informed decision-making and optimized resource utilization. The use of IoT-powered drones and satellites for crop monitoring has provided high-resolution imagery, aiding in early detection of diseases and pests. Livestock management has also benefited from IoT applications, with connected devices providing data on animal health, location, and behavior, enhancing overall farm efficiency.

In the industrial sector, the adoption of Industrial IoT (IIoT) has transformed manufacturing processes. Smart manufacturing, driven by IoT sensors, has improved production efficiency, product quality, and reduced downtime. Predictive maintenance, another application of IIoT, has enabled proactive identification and resolution of equipment failures, minimizing disruptions in industrial operations. Asset tracking through IoT has enhanced inventory management and streamlined production workflows, contributing to overall operational efficiency.

Smart homes have become more interconnected and convenient with the implementation of IoT applications. Home automation features, such as smart lighting systems and thermostats, provide users with remote control and energy optimization capabilities. Security in smart homes has been bolstered by IoT-enabled devices, including smart cameras, doorbell cameras, and motion sensors, contributing to enhanced safety and surveillance.

While the results highlight the numerous benefits of IoT applications, it is essential to address the challenges associated with this technology. Security and privacy concerns remain critical, emphasizing the need for robust measures such as encryption and transparent privacy policies. Interoperability issues must be addressed through standardization efforts and collaborations within the industry. The scalability of IoT infrastructure, power consumption, and battery life optimization also require ongoing research and innovation.

Looking ahead, the future trends and research directions identified in this paper underscore the evolving nature of IoT. The integration of 5G connectivity, edge computing, and the convergence of AI with IoT represent promising avenues for further exploration. As researchers and industry stakeholders collaborate to overcome challenges and explore new applications, the transformative impact of IoT on healthcare, agriculture, industry, smart cities, and other sectors is poised to continue shaping a more interconnected, secure, and innovative technological landscape.

5. Conclusions

This paper provides a comprehensive overview of the current state, challenges, and future directions in this dynamic field. Currently, IoT applications are widespread, spanning industries such as healthcare, smart cities, industrial automation, and environmental monitoring. Despite significant progress, challenges persist, with interoperability issues, security concerns, and energy efficiency constraints being prominent obstacles to the seamless integration of IoT technologies. Addressing these challenges is crucial for unlocking the full potential of IoT applications. Future directions should focus on the development of standardized interoperability protocols, robust security frameworks, and innovative solutions for energy-efficient IoT devices. Additionally, the review highlights the importance of exploring new applications, particularly in areas like edge computing, AI integration, and the convergence of IoT with other cutting-edge technologies. This holistic approach is essential for shaping the future of IoT applications, fostering a more interconnected, secure, and innovative technological

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