

The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Shaping Marketing Practices: A Professional Insight Approach.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) on the workflow of marketing professionals. As technological advancements continue to reshape content creation and strategic planning, it is increasingly important to understand how AI is transforming the workflows, skills, and creative practices within marketing agencies. Adopting a qualitative research design, this research draws on in-depth interviews with marketing professionals to uncover practical insights and emerging trends from those who are the crossroads of technology and creativity. Thematic coding was employed to rigorously analyze the interview data, which disclosed a complex picture of AI's role in marketing in today's landscape. The findings highlight a range of positive impacts, including enhanced efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and the ability to generate and personalize content at scale. However, the study also identifies key challenges and limitations, such as the lack of originality and emotional depth in AI-generated content, as well as ethical concerns regarding misinformation, authorship and bias. More importantly, the integration of AI is shown to be catalyzing a redefinition of creativity and prompting a significant shift in the skills demanded by the industry. The study underscores the need for balanced and responsible AI adoption, urging both academics and practitioners to consider not only the benefits but also the ethical complexities associated with this technological transition. The research contributes practical and theoretical insights to the evolving discourse on AI in marketing, serving as a valuable foundation for future investigations and strategic decision-making in the creative industries. The findings of this study offer valuable practical and empirical benefits to the marketing industry by highlighting how generative AI can be strategically integrated to enhance workflows, reduce operational bottlenecks, and augment creative ideation. Practically, the insights help agencies understand where AI tools can be most effectively deployed, such as in content drafting, personalization, and data analysis, freeing up professionals to focus on high-impact strategic and creative tasks. Empirically, the research contributes grounded knowledge on how marketing professionals are adapting to AI in real-time, offering a snapshot of evolving team structures, skill demands, and creative processes. In sum, the results deliver a roadmap for agencies seeking to balance efficiency with authenticity, helping them to harness AI not as a replacement for human creativity, but as a collaborative force that supports innovation and long-term competitiveness.

KEYWORDS: artificial intelligence, marketing, creativity, ethics

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1. Introduction

1.1 Topic of Research and Research Questions

Marketing has long been a dynamic field, evolving interminably with shifts in consumer behavior, technological advancements, and cultural trends, but the most revolutionizing change in recent years has been the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) (Chintalapati & Pandey, 2021, p. 12). From predictive analytics and automated content generation to AI-driven customer segmentation and programmatic advertising, AI has transformed campaign development and consumer engagement in marketing agencies (Davenport et al., 2019, p. 25). And although this integration has cultivated notable opportunities in terms of efficiency and scalability, significant concerns regarding labor displacement, ethical implications, and creative authenticity subsequently arise (Castillo et al., 2020, p. 10). The automation of repetitive tasks, such as data analysis, content optimization, and customer service, has made certain roles redundant, leading to a restructuring of employment in marketing agencies (Puntoni et al., 2021, p. 10). This shift in labor dynamics signals a wider transformation at play, one where the lines between human and machine contributions are blurring increasingly. As AI systems start replacing routine functions, creative professionals are pushed to reevaluate their roles by focusing more on tasks that demand emotional nuance, strategic judgement and cultural sensitivity (Erikson, 2024, p.5). This is because despite AI's ability to generate high-quality content and optimize marketing strategies, the extent to which AI can affect human creativity remains unresolved (Alabi, 2024, p. 10). AI tools still lack the emotional intelligence, cultural awareness, and intuitive storytelling abilities which human marketers possess, necessitating ongoing human oversight to maintain brand identity, ethical standards, and audience relatability (Puntoni et al., 2021, p. 12).

By investigating how AI is transforming workflows, redefining creative processes, and influencing labor dynamics, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of AI's implications in marketing. Additionally, by exploring ethical considerations, industry adoption patterns, and the future of AI-human collaboration, this research will offer valuable insights for marketing professionals and industry leaders navigating the evolving landscape of AI-driven marketing. Although significant attention has been paid to the theoretical possibilities and implications of artificial intelligence in marketing, there still exists a considerable disconnect between conceptual discourse and practical application. Despite a growing body of literature delving into the strategic, creative, and ethical dimensions of AI, there is still a scarcity of empirical research that actually captures the lived experiences of active professionals in this field. And this gap particularly limits our understanding of how AI is operationalized in real-world marketing workflows, the way that creative professionals navigate the challenges it engenders, and what the trajectory of AI integration may look like from the perspective of those on the ground.

To address this gap, this study explores the perspectives of marketing and creative professionals working at the intersection of creativity and AI. Specifically, it investigates how AI is influencing the creative development of advertising campaigns, reshaping professional roles, and challenging traditional notions of creativity, authorship and originality. By gathering insights from industry experts, the research seeks to enrich current academic discourse with experiential knowledge, offering a grounded understanding of both the opportunities and tensions that AI introduces into the marketing sector. And to guide this inquiry, the central research question is as follows:

How does generative AI reshape the work of marketing agencies?

And to substantiate further, this study will also examine this topic through the following sub-questions:

1. How are marketing professionals incorporating AI into their operations?
2. In what ways does AI influence the perception and practice of creativity within marketing agencies?
3. What are the opportunities and challenges brought forth by the integration of AI in marketing practices?
4. What ethical concerns arise from the use of generative AI in marketing?

1.2 Academic Relevance

This research makes a substantive contribution to the growing academic discourse on the integration of artificial intelligence in creative and marketing professions. By closely examining how marketing professionals experience, adapt to, and critically assess AI, the study advances theoretical understanding in several key domains. It engages with contemporary debates about technological accountability, algorithmic bias, and the changing landscape of creative labor, building on frameworks such as the Skill-Biased Technological Change theory and the Technology Acceptance Model. Through its qualitative, interview-driven approach, the study offers nuanced, context-rich insights that move beyond deterministic narratives of either disruption or enhancement. Instead, it provides a grounded account of hybrid creativity—where human expertise, judgment, and ethical reasoning coexist with, and often guide, automated processes. More importantly, the research expands on existing literature by interrogating the boundaries of authorship, originality, and ownership in an AI-mediated environment. It raises questions about copyright, professional identity, and the ongoing evolution of marketing skills, highlighting the need for new governance structures and educational models that keep pace with technological advancement. In doing so, the study not only contributes to

marketing and communication scholarship but also provides a foundation for further inquiry into interdisciplinary topics at the intersection of creativity, ethics, and automation.

1.3 Societal Relevance

Beyond its academic significance, this study holds practical and societal importance for a broad range of stakeholders. As AI continues to transform creative industries, the findings offer valuable guidance for marketing agencies, clients, educators, and policymakers navigating this transition. By capturing the lived experiences and perspectives of marketing professionals, the research helps demystify the realities of AI adoption, touching upon both its opportunities and its risks. The societal implications are particularly evident in the study's focus on ethical and human-centered AI integration. The research underscores the necessity for organizations to cultivate transparency, accountability, and ethical reflexivity in the use of generative tools. It cautions against the dangers of unchecked automation, such as the erosion of creative labor, the amplification of bias, and the dilution of authentic brand voice. At the same time, it points to the resilience and adaptability of human talent, showing how professionals are actively shaping the future of their industry by developing new skills and redefining creativity in partnership with intelligent systems.

As for educators, the study highlights the urgency of updating curricula to address not only technical proficiency with AI but also critical thinking, ethical judgment, and interdisciplinary collaboration. For policymakers, it calls attention to the need for regulatory frameworks that balance innovation with safeguards for privacy, authorship, and workplace equity. Ultimately, the research promotes a more thoughtful and responsible approach to technological change—one that recognizes creativity, labor, and technology as interconnected forces in the evolving landscape of work and communication.

2. Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework starts off outlining the transformation that has befallen marketing through the rise of AI, focusing on how these technologies have rapidly become essential tools for automating content creation and enhancing customer engagement. The opening section establishes the relevance of Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC) theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as the primary lenses for understanding how AI adoption is driving a demand for high-skilled roles while shaping individual attitudes toward new technologies.

The second section uses SBTC to examine how the marketing workforce is changing. It explores the automation of routine tasks, the emergence of hybrid “AI supervisor” roles, and the growing need for ongoing reskilling and digital fluency. This analysis showcases the way organizational structures and skill requirements evolve in response to AI-driven workflows.

Next, the framework introduces TAM to analyze how marketing professionals assess and adopt AI tools in their daily work. This section highlights the importance of perceived usefulness and ease of use, and explores how organizational culture and peer behavior further accelerate AI integration.

Following this, the framework shifts to the practical implications of AI in marketing, addressing its role in enabling data-driven personalization, real-time consumer engagement, and strategic decision-making. It highlights both the operational efficiencies and creative possibilities unlocked by generative AI, as well as the new skillsets required.

The final sections address the challenges brought by AI integration. These include labor market disruptions, strategic decision-making complexities, and a range of ethical concerns such as compromised data and privacy issues as well as a reimagined idea of what creative ownership and authorship even means. Throughout, the framework emphasizes the need for ethical oversight, new governance models, and a balanced approach that preserves human creativity and judgment alongside technological innovation.

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of AI-Based Marketing

Generative artificial intelligence (GAI) has heralded a transformative impact in the field of marketing, allowing companies to streamline their operations while developing customized content. These AI systems are known for autonomously creating new content such as text, images or videos, fostering widespread adoption across marketing departments due to their strong applicability to content-rich tasks (Susarla et al., 2023). As a matter of fact, marketing is among the sectors that has been tremendously affected by GAI, thanks to its reliance on high-quality creative and communicative

outputs (Kshetri et. al, 2024). Recent statistics show us that 73% of U.S. organizations were already employing GAI tools in marketing by early 2023, such as chatbots and content generators (Dencheva, 2023). And as the industry moves toward greater automation, the role of GAI is not just confined to improving productivity or cost-efficiency, it is also being increasingly used to deliver personalized consumer experiences, offering real-time engagement, predictive recommendations, and messaging aligned with individual preferences. Thanks to these capabilities, not only do marketers increasingly engage with these tools but they also contribute to the way professionals strategize and allocate resources ((Kshetri et. al, 2024).

To evaluate the broader implications of AI adoption in marketing, this study draws upon two key theoretical frameworks. The Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC) theory explains how emerging technologies such as GAI increase demand for high-skilled roles, such as AI analysts or digital strategists, while diminishing the need for routine, lower-skill labor (Acemoglu et al., 2022). Within marketing, this shift is evident in the reduced reliance on manual segmentation or copywriting and a rising demand for professionals with data literacy and technical fluency. And at the individual level, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides insight into why marketing professionals adopt AI tools. According to TAM, user acceptance is shaped by perceived usefulness and ease of use (Davis, 1989; Wang et al., 2023). GAI tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney are designed to be user-friendly while offering clear performance benefits, reinforcing TAM's relevance in this context.

2.1.1 A changing workforce in an AI-driven landscape: through the lens of Skill-Biased Technological Change Theory

When we look at it from an organizational standpoint, AI integration has become the catalyst to some fundamental changes in marketing teams. Tasks that once required extensive manual input such as data analytics, basic content creation, and customer segmentation are now being automated. This shift reflects what is outlined in the Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC) theory, which posits that technological advances disproportionately benefit high-skill workers while reducing demand for routine labor (Berman et al., 1998; Acemoglu et al., 2022). As a result, some agencies have begun restructuring their teams, reducing headcount in operational roles that AI can now efficiently fill the shoes for. Nonetheless, human expertise remains indispensable in several key areas. While AI is capable of producing technically competent and on-brand content, it still lacks the emotional intelligence, contextual understanding, and cultural sensitivity required for nuanced brand storytelling and ethical decision-making (Vidrih & Mayahi, 2023). As such, a growing number of marketing teams are adopting collaborative models, where human professionals serve as “AI supervisors.” In these roles, marketers curate, refine, and align AI outputs with strategic objectives and organizational values (Campbell et al., 2022). By automating repetitive tasks and processing large datasets at speed, AI has also allowed marketing departments to reallocate resources toward high-

value strategic functions (Dahlin, 2024, p. 4). For instance, AI chatbots are now capable of managing a wide array of customer service inquiries, significantly reducing the need for large customer support teams (Germann, 2023). However, this efficiency has also contributed to a marked decline in demand for roles focused on tasks like data analysis and routine content development, which has prompted a need for employee reskilling and, in some cases, leading to job displacement (Germann, 2023; Kochhar, 2023). This structural disruption is further exacerbated by the fact that many of the jobs being automated are those normally held by early-career professionals or individuals without a specialized digital skill. As Nah et al. (2023) observe, AI disproportionately replaces mid to low-skill roles, making it harder for new entrants to gain footholds in the industry (p. 289). This raises concerns not only with regards job displacement, but also about the long-term implications for cultivating talent pipelines and diversity in the marketing workforce. Without foundational roles for entry-level employees to develop industry knowledge, organizations may struggle to nurture the next generation of strategic leaders.

Erikson (2024) posits that AI-driven restructuring tends to favor contract-based and freelance work models, especially in creative fields. And this only contributes to the growing precarity in the labor market, where creatives face increased pressure to upskill or risk obsolescence (p. 5). While high-skill professionals, like AI specialists or digital marketing strategists benefit from increased demand, this bifurcation of labor leads to a more widening gap between those with access to digital competencies and those left behind. Companies must therefore take a proactive approach to workforce adaptation by investing in ongoing training, cross-functional learning, and ethical oversight. Jarrahi (2018) stress the importance of AI literacy and reskilling programs that equip existing staff to take on hybrid roles i.e. combining creative intuition with data-driven insights (p. 10). Thus, the SBTC theory offers a useful framework for understanding these shifts. It suggests that while automation reduces the demand for lower-skill roles, it increases the value of high-skill positions, such as digital strategists, AI specialists, and marketing technologists, who are equipped to interpret and guide AI systems (Berman et al., 1998, p. 1247; Acemoglu et al., 2022, p. 296). The marketing industry, therefore, faces not just a technological evolution, but a workforce transformation, demanding new skills and mindsets to thrive in an AI-enhanced environment.

2.1.2 Understanding AI adoption through the Technology Acceptance Model

While the Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC) theory touches upon broader labor market shifts due to AI, like increasing demand for high-skilled digital strategists and a diminishing need for repetitive creative roles (Acemoglu et al., 2022), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) offers us an equally crucial micro-level perspective on how marketing professionals adopt and integrate AI tools into their day-to-day operations.

Developed by Davis (1989), TAM argues that an individual's proclivity to adopt new technologies hinges upon primarily two perceptions: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of

use (PEOU). These factors inform their attitudes toward the technology and predict actual usage behavior. And within the context of marketing, PU pertains to the extent to which professionals believe AI tools can boost campaign effectiveness, content creation speed, or customer targeting accuracy. For example, AI tools like Jasper.ai and ChatGPT are widely adopted because they simplify tasks such as drafting ad copy, producing emails, or generating personalized social content—thus scoring high on both PU and PEOU (Grewal et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023). Wang et al. (2023) found that trust in AI and subjective norms, such as organizational culture or peer behavior, play an increasingly influential role in shaping PU and PEOU. For example, when AI tools are endorsed by senior creative directors or widely used across marketing teams, their perceived legitimacy rises, accelerating adoption.

A practical illustration is the growing use of Jasper.ai and Canva's Magic Write, which allow marketers to generate email sequences, ad copy, and branded content with minimal manual input (Okorie, 2025). These platforms are adopted not just for their productivity benefits but also because of their intuitive interfaces, which align with high PEOU (Grewal et al., 2024). Similarly, Salesforce's Einstein GPT integrates directly into CRM platforms and provides AI-generated email responses and campaign recommendations. Its seamless design makes it accessible to both tech-savvy strategists and traditional marketers (Mittapelly, 2023, p. 4). TAM also explains variation in adoption across roles: while data analysts may adopt AI based on technical performance, content creators may assess its value through the lens of creative augmentation. In both cases, AI adoption is closely tied to how easily the tool integrates into existing workflows and how clearly it improves task outcomes. And as marketing teams increasingly get familiarized with AI-enabled tools, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) helps us understand not just individual adoption but the collective readiness of organizations to embrace technological transformation. In the coming sections, we will apply the analytical lens offered by this theoretical framework to better understand how this readiness translates to the proliferation of opportunities brought by AI adoption in marketing.

2.2 The Transformative Role of AI in Contemporary Marketing Practice

Historically, marketing has relied on tools such as customer surveys, loyalty programs, and transactional data to gauge consumer behavior (Pridmore, 2012, p. 324). But with the advent of artificial intelligence (AI), a paradigm shift in the industry is underway. Based on a 2024 survey by McKinsey & Company, 72% of organizations have now adopted AI in some capacity, signifying a pervasive embrace of AI technologies (McKinsey & Company, 2024). Within the marketing sector, 32% of companies have reported full-scale AI integration, while an additional 43% are in experimental stages of this adoption (Hoffman, 2024). This ubiquitous adoption is emblematic of AI's critical role in transforming marketing strategies, mainly through its ability to deliver detailed insights into consumer behavior, preferences, and purchasing patterns (Davenport et al., 2019, p. 25).

AI has now enabled companies to collect and analyze data from diverse consumer touchpoints, including websites, social media, and physical stores, to build hyper-personalized marketing campaigns. Through predictive analytics and the aid of automated decision-making, brands are now able to craft messages that are contextually relevant and individually tailored (Davenport et al., 2019, p. 25). Not only does this sort of data-driven foundation contribute to a more refined strategic targeting, but they also directly fuel content generation processes. Through the integration of behavioral insights with generative capabilities, AI bridges the gap between audience understanding and content delivery, which in turn fosters more responsive and personalized creative outputs (Feuerriegel et al. 2024, p.4). This is specifically reflected in the domain of content creation where AI-driven tools like GPT models and automated design platforms streamline production by generating tailored materials in real time. Alabi, (2024) posits that these tools reduce the time and resources traditionally required for creative development, while boosting personalization and engagement (p. 5). They have become indispensable during the ideation and development phases of campaigns, enabling faster turnarounds, and reducing a substantial amount of content production costs (Grewal et al., 2024, p. 18). Simultaneously, platforms such as Salesforce's Einstein GPT are transforming customer relationship management by analyzing behavioral data, forecasting future consumer actions, and delivering personalized communication recommendations (Mittapelly, 2023, p. 2).

AI's growing capability to interpret language, sentiment, and contextual cues further deepens the personalization of marketing content. As generative AI becomes more integrated into both the strategic and operational aspects of marketing, its impact is no longer confined to increased efficiency or message customization. Instead, it is fundamentally altering the structure of marketing work itself. By automating core processes, like content creation, data interpretation, and customer interaction, AI is reshaping team dynamics and prompting a reevaluation of required skills and responsibilities within marketing departments (Feuerriegel et al., 2024, p. 7).

This technological shift therefore raises important questions about the evolving nature of human labor in the marketing industry. Understanding the implications requires not only an examination of productivity gains but also a critical look at how AI is influencing workforce demands across different levels of expertise, from routine execution to strategic oversight.

2.3 Opportunities brought by AI applications in marketing

The field of marketing has rapidly been transformed by AI integration, particularly in how professionals approach campaign development, customer engagement, and creative production. From automating customer interactions and predicting consumer behavior to generating content, AI has evolved into a foundational technology that is reshaping both marketing operations and consumer experiences. This shift brings with it not only significant advantages but also complex challenges,

including ethical concerns, labor displacement, and disruptions to traditional creative workflows (Khokhar & Chitsimran, 2019, p. 376; Shah et al., 2020, p. 4). Among the most notable opportunities AI presents is its ability to enhance operational efficiency and scale personalization. In today's digital-first economy, consumers increasingly expect real-time, relevant content tailored to their preferences. AI-driven platforms such as those used by Google and Meta analyze behavioral data to deliver targeted advertisements, significantly improving conversion rates. As noted by Khokhar and Chitsimran (2019), AI enables automation of core functions like customer segmentation, behavior prediction, and data mining, thereby empowering marketers to deliver precision-targeted content more effectively (p. 376). Moreover, AI is introducing new modes of creativity, particularly through the use of generative tools that help marketers draft ad copy, produce visuals, and test campaign variants at a fraction of the time and cost of traditional methods. In China, for instance, the advertising industry has already begun integrating algorithmic models to streamline media planning and content creation (Qin & Jiang, 2019, p. 3). While these innovations may raise questions about the evolving role of human creativity, they also open the door to new opportunities.

2.3.1 Influence of AI in Creative Content Generation

AI, or Generative AI's (used interchangeably in this study) role in marketing has rapidly evolved from a promising innovation to a fundamental driver of industry-wide transformation. Beyond automating routine tasks like customer segmentation or A/B testing, AI is now central to how brands engage with consumers, develop campaigns, and build long-term strategies. Generative AI (Gen AI), in particular, has introduced a paradigm shift by enabling marketers to create tailored content, generate insights at scale, and offer hyper-personalized experiences that were previously unattainable with traditional digital tools (Kshetri et al., 2024). As organizations embrace these technologies, the field is witnessing unprecedented changes in how marketing value is created and delivered. Gen AI tools such as ChatGPT, DALL-E 2, and Jasper.ai allow marketing teams to accelerate ideation and streamline production processes, saving both time and costs (Grewal et al., 2024, p. 18). Their ease of use—an essential component of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)—has encouraged widespread adoption even among non-technical professionals (Davis, 1989; Nah, 2023). The intuitive interfaces of these tools lower the barrier to entry, enabling creatives to experiment and iterate without deep coding knowledge, thus reinforcing perceived usefulness and ease of use, the two pillars of TAM. Moreover, Gen AI's contribution extends beyond efficiency. Its ability to deliver dynamic, context-aware content at scale has allowed companies to create one-to-one personalization strategies that foster deeper consumer engagement. For example, Meta's AI Sandbox empowers advertisers to test variations of ad content and backgrounds across platforms, shortening the creative cycle while maintaining brand relevance (Kshetri et al., 2024, p. 3; Mittapelly, 2023). Additionally, Salesforce's

Einstein GPT offer real-time behavioral analysis and predictive recommendations, enhancing both customer experience and campaign performance (Mittapelly, 2023, p. 9).

In this context, the opportunities presented by AI in marketing are far-reaching. They encompass gains in content creation efficiency, improved personalization through real-time data, and strategic insights that support informed decision-making. As AI continues to mature, these benefits are expected to scale further, offering marketing professionals tools that complement rather than replace human creativity (Kshetri et al., 2024, p. 2).

2.3.2 Personalization and Consumer Engagement at Scale

The ubiquity of AI has also elevated marketers' capacity to deliver personalized content and experiences. Traditional demographic or psychographic segmentation has been largely superseded by AI-driven micro-segmentation, which leverages real-time behavioral, emotional, and contextual data to refine audience targeting. Tools employing machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), and feeling analytics now enable brands to capture a more nuanced customer sentiments from voice, text, and social interactions, which allows for a more hyper-personalized experience at an unprecedented scale (Huang & Rust, 2020, p. 41; p. 45). Recent reports indicate that personalization remains one of the top use cases for Gen AI in marketing. For instance, organizations across industries now deploy Gen AI to tailor investment advice, generate individual product recommendations, and adapt messaging dynamically based on user profiles and behavioral triggers (Ratajczak et al., 2023; Kshetri et al., 2024). Banks and retailers, for example, have integrated Gen AI with Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems to predict consumer needs and deliver adaptive content based on customer journey data. Not only do these systems improve conversion rates but also solidify brand loyalty through relevant and emotionally resonant interactions. Huang and Rust (2020) propose the idea of "thinking AI" and "feeling AI," wherein the former supports logical targeting and the latter allows for emotionally intelligent brand communication (p. 43). This dual capability enables brands to go transcend static personalization and deliver context-aware content that evolves with the consumer.

From the perspective of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), personalization significantly enhances the perceived usefulness of AI tools. When users receive tailored messages, they are more keen on perceiving the interaction as valuable, thereby improving engagement and satisfaction (Davis, 1989). As Gen AI platforms grow more intuitive and seamlessly integrate with marketing workflows, their perceived ease of use also increases, which further accelerates organizational adoption. Ultimately, the ability to personalize marketing at scale through Gen AI not only elevates operational efficiency but also positions brands to foster meaningful and enduring customer relationships

2.3.3 Strategic Decision-Making and Marketing Automation

Beyond content generation and personalization, artificial intelligence (AI) has also been increasingly central to strategic decision-making in marketing. By integrating predictive analytics, natural language processing (NLP), and advanced data visualization tools, AI enables marketing teams to derive actionable insights from vast datasets, transforming the way brands forecast trends, allocate budgets, and respond to market dynamics. These tools help uncover patterns related to customer lifetime value, churn risk, optimal pricing strategies, and advertisement effectiveness (Feuerriegel et al., 2024, p. 10).

One of the most significant impacts of AI is its transformation of the traditional Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) framework. Instead of relying on static models, marketers can now implement machine learning algorithms that perform dynamic segmentation based on real-time behavior. As Huang and Rust (2020) argue, this evolution allows firms to move from targeting large clusters to individual-level personalization. AI's ability to refine targeting strategies continuously through algorithmic learning contributes to more precise messaging and improves campaign responsiveness (Huang & Rust, 2020, pp. 40–42). In congruence with this transformation, AI-powered platforms such as Salesforce Einstein GPT act as intelligent decision-support systems. These tools analyze customer journey data in real time, conduct sentiment analysis, and provide automated recommendations to optimize messaging, timing, and resource allocation (Mittapelly, 2023, p. 1). The result is a strategic workflow that is not only faster but also more aligned with current market conditions and customer expectations.

This evolution also reflects the core dimensions of TAM, as Davis (1989) posits that user acceptance of new technologies hinges on two key factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. AI tools are being rapidly adopted by marketers because they deliver measurable strategic value leading to more efficiency, predictive accuracy, and decision-making agility. Tools like Salesforce Einstein are specifically designed to offer intuitive dashboards and automated insights, reinforcing TAM's emphasis on ease of use. Moreover, the perceived usefulness of AI in strategic planning is evident in its capacity to reduce uncertainty and improve marketing outcomes, making it indispensable in competitive, data-driven environments.

2.4. Challenges brought by AI integration in marketing

Alongside these benefits, however, lie considerable challenges. A primary concern is the potential displacement of labor, especially within creative industries. Erickson (2024) observes that while AI-assisted production still depends on human labor, especially in data preparation and editing, much of this work is increasingly marginalized and uncredited (p. 3). AI has started to encroach upon ideation stages--once thought to be immune to automation--allowing companies to bypass traditional creative teams in favor of algorithmic experimentation. This threatens not only job stability but also the visibility and recognition of human creativity within the marketing production chain. The

displacement issue is compounded by the broader precarity within creative labor markets. Erickson (2024) highlights that AI amplifies existing trends in digitalization, including increased outsourcing, short-term contracts, and a growing divide between technical and non-technical workers (p. 5). As firms demand hybrid skill--such as prompt engineering or AI tool supervision--the workforce must continuously re-skill to remain relevant, often without institutional support. This raises equity concerns, as smaller firms and freelancers may lack access to training and resources required to adapt.

2.4.1 Challenges to the labor market

As AI systems increasingly assume responsibility for routine and semi-creative tasks, they are catalyzing a shift in the types of roles valued within marketing organizations. This shift aligns with what Trajtenberg (2018) characterizes as the hallmark of general-purpose technologies (GPTs): disruptive innovations that redefine productivity, organizational hierarchies, and skill requirements across sectors (p. 10). Some of the roles that were once considered pivotal in marketing, such as junior copywriters, media planners, and design assistants, are being gradually redefined or phased out due to AI's ability to autonomously generate text, visuals, and strategy blueprints. For example, tools like Canva's Magic Write and Jasper.ai are now capable of producing publish-ready content with minimal human input, drastically reducing the time and cost traditionally required for campaign development (Erickson, 2024). The implications of this transformation can be understood through the lens of Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC). As SBTC theory posits that technological advancements disproportionately benefit workers with advanced digital, analytical, or managerial skills, while reducing demand for those engaged in more routine, codifiable tasks (Acemoglu et al., 2022, p. 296; Berman et al., 1998). As a result, marketing organizations are increasingly prioritizing hybrid roles that blend creativity with technical proficiency. Professionals are expected to manage, supervise, and refine AI-generated outputs, making sure that there is alignment with brand values, ethical standards, and strategic goals. However, as Chen et al. (2023) observe, the emergence of these hybrid positions has outpaced the development of clear job definitions, adequate compensation structures, and robust support systems (p. 3). While this may appear efficient, it raises critical concerns about the future of creative labor, especially among entry-level professionals who rely on these roles for skill development and career progression.

What emerges in place of these displaced roles are hybrid positions that combine creativity with technical fluency. Professionals are increasingly expected to manage AI tools, supervise output quality, and align algorithmic results with brand narratives and ethical standards. Yet, as Chen et al. (2023) note, these hybrid roles are not always adequately defined, compensated, or supported. The invisible labor behind AI-driven workflows, such as data cleaning, prompt engineering, and model training, is often overlooked in organizational planning and recognition structures (p. 3) .

2.4.2 Challenges to strategy making process

Moreover, AI integration can distort strategic planning processes. While algorithmic decision-making enhances precision, it can also lead to over-reliance on quantitative metrics at the expense of creative intuition and long-term brand vision. Qin and Jiang (2019) warn that despite the efficiency of AI-driven advertising processes, they remain rooted in traditional paradigms and have yet to be fundamentally reengineered to reflect holistic brand strategy (p. 5). This halfway adoption risks treating AI as a plug-and-play solution rather than an integrated strategic partner, potentially leading to disjointed campaigns and reactive planning cycles. Despite these concerns, the future of AI in marketing is not inherently dystopian. Davenport et al. (2020) argue that marketers who combine algorithmic tools with human empathy, creativity, and ethical awareness are more likely to succeed in the evolving landscape (p. 31). This perspective is gaining traction, as many companies begin to design roles specifically for “AI-human collaboration,” recognizing the value of strategic interpretation, storytelling, and moral reasoning in marketing practice. Furthermore, the implementation of AI in marketing is context-sensitive. As Shah et al. (2020) note, emerging markets may face different constraints and incentives in AI adoption than more technologically mature environments (p. 8). In some regions, AI may open up new access to global markets for small firms; in others, it may exacerbate digital divides and market consolidation. Policymakers and industry leaders must consider these disparities when crafting AI-related policies, ensuring equitable access and inclusive growth.

2.4.3 Ethical Concerns

2.4.3.1 Compromised data and privacy concerns

AI’s unprecedented reliance on large-scale consumer data has also fueled an array of privacy concerns as data-driven personalization, that has now become the norm. With the integration of real-time behavioral, biometric, and contextual data, brands can now deploy sophisticated surveillance technologies that blur the lines between service and oversight (Huang & Rust, 2020). This shift is best understood through the theoretical lens of Michel Foucault’s Panopticon, a metaphor for a society in which the few observe the many, prompting self-regulation among individuals who are aware they may be watched at any moment (Foucault, 1977). In marketing, how this manifests is in the relentless tracking of online activities, ranging from online browsing and purchases to physical location, that influence both consumer behavior and corporate strategy. Building on this, Clarke’s concept of dataveillance captures the evolution from physical to algorithmic surveillance, where continuous monitoring of data trails allows marketers to profile, segment, and target consumers with increasing granularity (Clarke, 2020, p. 65). Shoshana Zuboff’s surveillance capitalism further extends this argument, positing that digital platforms have pioneered an economic system in which user data is

systematically commodified, not just to predict, but to also to nudge behavior in the pursuit of profit (Zuboff, 2019). The infamous Cambridge Analytica scandal, which leveraged Facebook data for psychological targeting, was a stark demonstration of how personal information can be exploited for manipulation, resulting in a public backlash and an overall crisis of trust (Huang and Rust, 2020, p. 44).

This tension gives rise to the so-called privacy-personalization paradox whereby consumers increasingly expect hyper-personalized experiences while they are simultaneously wary of the intrusive data collection required to deliver them (Davenport et al., 2019, p. 38). The willingness to share data is deeply context-dependent, shaped by trust in brands, perceived benefits, and cultural norms. However, regardless of geography, the integration of multiple data streams, ranging from cookies and purchase histories to social media sentiment and even biometric cues—raises the risk of reidentification and data breaches, making true anonymity increasingly elusive (Huang & Rust, 2020).

Empirical studies confirm that the public's anxiety over algorithmic surveillance is growing, especially when opaque AI systems are used to profile, manipulate, or exclude individuals. As Hacker et al. (2023) emphasize, this anxiety can translate into reduced engagement or even active resistance, particularly if consumers believe they are being treated unfairly by algorithms or if their autonomy is threatened (p. 2). High-profile incidents—like the exposure of Cambridge Analytica's practices—have resulted in severe reputational damage and eroded public trust, signaling that transparency and ethical data governance are no longer optional but foundational (Huang and Rust, 2020, p. 44). To address these risks, regulatory and ethical frameworks increasingly call for privacy-by-design, an approach that requires organizations to embed privacy, data minimization, and user agency into AI systems from the outset (Rubinstein & Good, 2013). Legal frameworks such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) now mandate strict standards for data collection, transparency, and consent, with steep penalties for non-compliance (Hacker et al., 2023, p. 4). However, scholars argue that compliance alone is insufficient. As Zuboff (2019) and Clarke (2020) point out, true ethical stewardship requires not just technical safeguards but also a cultural commitment to consumer empowerment and transparency.

Responsible innovation in this space must prioritize transparent user interfaces, clear communication of data practices, and genuine opt-in features for personalization (Feuerriegel et al., 2024; Kshetri et al., 2024, p. 2). Informed consent must move beyond obscure terms of service toward ongoing dialogue, empowering users to make meaningful choices about their data (Kshetri et al., 2024). The goal is to foster an environment where trust, autonomy, and data protection are integral to the marketing ecosystem—not simply regulatory checkboxes but ethical imperatives embedded in practice. Companies that adopt these principles will be better positioned to balance the competitive benefits of AI-driven personalization with the societal imperatives of privacy and human dignity. Conversely, those who neglect them risk not only legal repercussions but lasting reputational harm, as

consumers become ever more discerning about how their personal information is used in the age of algorithmic surveillance.

2.4.3.2 Authenticity and Creative Ownership

Ethical concerns regarding originality, creative ownership, and public trust are now central to debates over AI's growing role in marketing and creative industries. As generative AI tools like ChatGPT, DALL·E, and Midjourney produce outputs that closely mimic human artistry, the distinction between machine-made and human-made content becomes increasingly blurred (McCormack et al., 2019; Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2024, p. 4). This blurring of boundaries raises difficult questions about what constitutes authentic creative work and who is entitled to claim ownership or recognition for such outputs. Traditionally, originality and authorship have been defined by human input and intent; however, as AI's contribution expands from mere support to active generation, these concepts face unprecedented challenges (Erickson, 2024). A key worry is that generative AI may diminish the emotional depth, contextual sensitivity, and socio-cultural resonance that have long defined impactful creative work. Critics contend that while AI is adept at producing vast quantities of material at speed, its outputs may lack the cultural nuance, originality, or emotional intelligence needed for truly compelling storytelling (Erickson, 2024). As a result, brands risk alienating audiences who increasingly value authenticity and meaningful engagement (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2024, p. 8). This loss of “the human touch” can be especially damaging in sectors—like advertising, music, and film—where consumer trust and emotional resonance are core to success (Vidrih and Mayahi, 2023, p. 11).

Economically, the rise of AI-generated content also signals a potential devaluation and commodification of creative labor. As agencies and brands turn to AI to streamline the production of visuals, copy, and campaign assets, human creatives may be marginalized to supervisory or “prompt engineering” roles, overseeing outputs rather than driving the creative process themselves (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2024, p. 2). This shift not only places downward pressure on wages and job security but also increases precarity in an already volatile industry. Legally, the attribution and protection of creative ownership is mired in uncertainty. Current copyright regimes, such as U.S. law, typically require human authorship for works to receive protection, leaving AI-generated outputs in a grey area where rights are unclear and disputes may arise (Hacker et al., 2023). These issues also intersect with broader societal questions about the future of cultural production. Overreliance on generative AI can foster creative homogenization, as outputs tend to mirror patterns found in training data and may inadvertently perpetuate biases, stereotypes, or existing market trends (McCormack et al., 2019). There is also growing concern that such technology may erode the diversity of creative

expression, leading to a landscape dominated by algorithmic repetition rather than genuine innovation (Nah et al., 2023, p. 295).

To address these risks, recent scholarship and industry frameworks advocate for robust human-AI collaboration models that place humans at the center of creative decision-making (Nah et al., 2023). This involves not only maintaining human oversight in the development and curation of content, but also creating ethical governance protocols tailored to the unique challenges of creative industries. These protocols must clarify questions of authorship, ensure that human collaborators are recognized and fairly compensated, and uphold the standards of originality, diversity, and authenticity that underpin public trust and brand reputation (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2024, p. 4).

2.5 Conclusion

Generative AI's impact is fundamentally altering the way that standard practices of content creation and campaign development in marketing are carried out. Through the automation of tasks like ideation, production, and personalization, AI-powered platforms now enable marketing teams to obtain new levels of operational efficiency and scalability. And when we combine them thoughtfully with human expertise, these technologies will be the harbinger of campaigns that are not just dynamic and relevant, but also more innovative in its approach and execution. While the current ecosystem still relies heavily on human creativity, the growing influence of AI cannot be ignored (de Bruyn et al., 2020). As highlighted throughout this framework, the future of marketing lies in a careful balance, leveraging AI's strengths while preserving the human insight, ethical judgment, and contextual sensitivity essential for effective communication. Achieving this equilibrium will demand continued investment in both AI technologies and the upskilling of marketing professionals, along with a commitment to ethical standards and experimentation. Ultimately, while AI has the potential to drive significant advancement in marketing, the true extent of its impact on the creative process and the future role of human professionals will depend on how organizations navigate this evolving relationship.

3 Methodology

3.1 Description and Justification of Method

An exploratory qualitative research design was adopted in this study, as it was particularly suited for examining the evolving role of artificial intelligence (AI) in marketing operations. Qualitative research opened avenues to conduct a deeper exploration of social and industry-specific phenomena by focusing on the lived experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of industry professionals (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). Given how rapidly AI had been integrated into marketing, an exploratory approach offered rich, nuanced insights that quantitative methods might not have fully captured. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were utilized as the primary method of data collection, as they allowed the exploration of the perspectives of industry professionals through in-depth examination while also leaving room for flexibility in adapting questions to emerging themes (Adams, 2015, p. 494). This research aimed to investigate how AI was transforming the field of marketing, with an emphasis on how current industry practices had been affecting professional roles and anticipated future developments. By engaging with professionals actively involved in marketing and AI integration, the study explored perceptions of creativity, originality, and authenticity in AI-generated content, as well as the impact of AI on workflows and strategic decision-making. Since qualitative research prioritizes in-depth understanding over statistical generalization, the findings contributed valuable theoretical insights and industry-specific recommendations that could serve as a foundation for future studies in AI-driven marketing (Carminati, 2018, p. 1).

To gather relevant data, this study employed semi-structured interviews, which are particularly suited to situations that require a balance between structure and adaptability. The use of open-ended questions facilitated a flexible dialogue, which allows the researcher to probe into unanticipated but relevant topics, follow emerging themes, and adjust the interview trajectory accordingly (Adams, 2015). Given that the participants were knowledgeable professionals actively engaged in the field, a descriptive and interpretive interview format was adopted to uncover insights that may not have surfaced in more structured formats (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Interviewing industry experts offered significant methodological strengths. These participants brought practical, insider knowledge that was directly applicable to the research focus, thereby enhancing the richness and specificity of the data collected. Furthermore, expert interviews are known for yielding high-quality information, which increases the reliability and contextual relevance of the research findings (Bogner et al., 2009).

All the interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams. This was selected based on the preferences of the respondents to ensure a comfortable environment, reduce potential distractions, and uphold confidentiality. Interview durations varied depending on participant availability, averaging between 45 and 60 minutes. The semi-structured format supported open-ended, organic conversations,

allowing respondents to elaborate on their thoughts and contribute nuanced, experience-based perspectives on how artificial intelligence is being integrated into marketing practices.

3.2 Proposed sample and sampling strategy

This study employed a combination of purposive expert sampling and snowball sampling to ensure the credibility, relevance, and richness of the data collected (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 4). Purposive expert sampling was particularly well-suited considering how AI integration in marketing profession is still a growing topic of interest, and the current empirical literature remains limited. This approach enables an intentional selection of participants based on their professional expertise, allowing us to garner respondents that had substantial experience in AI-driven content creation and marketing campaign development (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 3). The sample comprised of ten professionals—nine female and one male—who were employed in junior to middle management positions within creative marketing and advertising agencies. These participants held roles in departments such as content strategy, script writing, social media management and media data analyst, ensuring diverse perspectives across multiple touchpoints of creative production. Their involvement in the decision-making processes and campaign execution allowed us to collect informed views on the practical implications of AI into their day-to-day.

Participants were primarily contacted through professional social platforms such as LinkedIn, as well as personal networking tools like Instagram and WhatsApp. These channels were instrumental in establishing initial contact, particularly given the informal yet professional nature of the advertising industry. Additional participants were identified using snowball sampling, where current interviewees referred colleagues from their professional networks who were likely to offer valuable insights into the topic (Bogner et al., 2009, p. 103). This method enabled the study to reach a broader participant pool while maintaining thematic relevance and depth.

The sample size reached saturation after ten interviews, indicating that additional participants were unlikely to contribute new themes or significantly enhance the depth of analysis. The selected participants represented a cross-section of industry functions, thereby enriching the data with diverse, practice-oriented insights. This comprehensive sampling strategy not only ensured analytical rigor but also aligned well with the study's objective to explore the nuanced implications of AI in creative advertising production.

3.3 Operationalization of relevant constructs/concepts

To systematically examine how generative AI is reshaping the work of marketing agencies, this research employed a carefully constructed topic list as the backbone of its qualitative data collection. The topic list was developed to address the central research question and its sub-questions, in order to ensure a holistic exploration of AI's impact on creativity, workflow, strategy, and ethics in contemporary marketing practice. The operationalization process began with an in-depth review of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks, specifically the Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC) theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This foundation enabled the researcher to translate abstract theoretical constructs into practical, researchable variables, thereby bridging the gap between conceptual inquiry and empirical investigation.

The topic list comprised four primary thematic blocks. The first block focused on the adoption and integration of AI tools within agency operations. Questions in this section probed how professionals use AI in daily tasks, what kinds of tools are employed, and how workflows have changed in response to AI integration. The intention was to empirically ground the theoretical discussions of SBTC and TAM by eliciting firsthand accounts of this adoption. Then, the second thematic block addressed the evolving definition and practice of creativity in the context of AI-driven marketing. Participants were asked to reflect on how generative AI influences brainstorming, content production, and campaign ideation, as well as the perceived value of human creativity versus machine-generated output. This approach was intended to explore the nuanced interplay between AI capability and creative intuition, a central concern in both the literature and industry debates. The third block explored the opportunities and challenges presented by AI in marketing, with special attention to strategic decision-making, efficiency, and the emergence of new skill sets. This segment delved into both the positive outcomes, such as improved personalization and enhanced decision support—and the risks, including workforce disruption and skill obsolescence, as predicted by SBTC theory.

The fourth block was dedicated to ethical and societal concerns, encompassing questions about algorithmic bias, data privacy, authorship, and the perceived trustworthiness of AI-generated content. Participants were encouraged to share experiences and perceptions regarding the risks of misinformation, the challenges of maintaining brand authenticity, and the protocols in place for ensuring responsible use of AI. The fourth block was also subsequently followed by an inquiry into future outlook and reflections, to ensure that the interview covered extra dimensions for a well-rounded discussion. The topic list was initially constructed based on the theoretical and empirical gaps identified in the literature, but remained flexible and adaptive. As interviews progressed, the

sensitizing concepts approach was used to refine questions in response to emerging themes, allowing new insights to be incorporated throughout the data collection process (Bowen, 2019).

In order to ensure the robustness and validity of the operationalization, questions were piloted with a marketing professional to check for clarity and relevance. Feedback was used to further refine the interview guide, enhancing its capacity to elicit rich, nuanced data. The final topic list (see Appendix B) served as the core instrument for gathering empirical evidence, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the research objectives and enabling a detailed analysis of generative AI's impact on the work and identity of marketing professionals.

3.4 Processing and analysis of data

The analysis phase of this research was specifically designated to identify and interpret the common themes within our interview data, focusing on the ways in which generative AI is reshaping work and creativity in marketing workflows. All interviews were recorded with the consent of participants and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure a truthful representation of both the content and any nuances of each response.

To maintain the confidentiality of the respondents, some of the participants were assigned a pseudonym, ensuring that their data could be discussed openly while preserving anonymity. The thematic analysis was conducted in line with the established guidelines of Braun & Clarke (2006), utilizing an iterative process of open, axial, and selective coding. The first step, open coding, involved a close, line-by-line reading of each transcript to generate initial codes. During this stage, recurring ideas, challenges, and opportunities related to AI adoption, creativity, workflow adaptation, and ethical dilemmas were captured and labeled. This enabled a granular understanding of the participants' lived experiences and professional reflections. The process then moved to axial coding, where these initial codes were compared and connected across transcripts. At this stage, the analysis sought to group related codes into broader categories, exploring the relationships between themes such as automation, skill transformation, creative process changes, and risk management. Axial coding was crucial in understanding the intersection of individual experiences and overarching industry trends as well as the theoretical frameworks that we grounded this study on.

The final phase, selective coding, basically entailed distilling the analysis to its most salient themes. Our focus here was to integrate the most relevant categories into a coherent narrative that helped address the central research question and sub-questions. Through this process, core themes emerged, including enhanced creativity, shifting skill requirements, new models of collaboration, and the persistent need for ethical oversight in AI-powered marketing practice. The relationships between

these themes are illustrated in Appendix C using code book, offering a summary of the analytical process.

To enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings, peer debriefing was employed throughout the coding process. This involved sharing coding decisions and emerging themes with a colleague familiar with qualitative research and AI in marketing, who provided constructive feedback and critical questions. This external perspective helped challenge researcher assumptions, refine theme definitions, and strengthen the overall rigor of the analysis.

Ultimately, this layered approach to data analysis ensured that both the complexity and diversity of professionals' experiences with generative AI were captured, paving the way for nuanced, evidence-based insights into how marketing agencies are adapting to—and shaping—the future of AI-driven creativity.

4. Results

The findings from the qualitative analysis of the interviews on the influence of artificial intelligence (AI) in the marketing industry reveal four primary thematic themes. These themes detail the core patterns and concerns that emerged from the unique and diverse experiences of marketing professionals, offering us the much-needed understanding on how AI is reshaping the marketing workflows. Each theme has been discussed below, with attention to its practical consequences for the sector.

The first theme, *Benefits of Using AI in Marketing*, details the way that marketing professionals perceive the key advantages of AI integration in their daily workflows. Across interviews, participants consistently highlighted how AI tools, especially generative models like ChatGPT and CoPilot fostered more efficiency and productivity. Respondents also described how AI streamlines content ideation, research, and initial drafting, allowing teams to accomplish more with fewer resources at their disposal. They also pointed out that AI facilitates greater inclusivity and accessibility in marketing, such as through translation engines that quickly adapt campaigns for different regions or demographics. Another point is AI's ability to analyze large volumes of customer data enables more targeted and relevant marketing, improving campaign effectiveness. The overall sentiment was that AI is an invaluable assistant, amplifying human potential rather than replacing it.

The second theme, *Limitations and Risks of AI*, focuses on the challenges, pitfalls, and reservations professionals encounter in practice. A recurring concern was the quality and authenticity of AI-generated content. Many interviewees emphasized that, while AI is effective for initial drafts or data analysis, the final outputs often require substantial human editing to ensure they align with brand voice and regulatory standards. Participants cited risks such as generic or "robotic" messaging, potential bias or errors in AI output, and the danger of over-reliance leading to diminished creative skills within teams.

The third theme, *Ethical Challenges of AI*, addresses the significant privacy, authorship, and misinformation risks associated with deploying AI in marketing. Concerns over the verifiability and originality of AI-generated content were echoed by multiple professionals, who highlighted the need for rigorous human oversight to avoid the inadvertent spread of misinformation, the blurring of creative authorship, and breaches of customer privacy. The inherent inability of AI to fully replicate human judgment, nuance, or empathy was repeatedly cited as a central limitation, one that reinforces the need for clearer ethical guidelines and ongoing vigilance.

The fourth theme, *Human Creativity and AI: New Skills for the Future*, explores how the evolving interplay between AI-driven automation and human ingenuity is reshaping the marketing profession. While respondents acknowledged that AI can spark inspiration, help overcome creative blocks, and provide novel perspectives for campaign design, they also agreed that AI-generated creativity is fundamentally derivative, limited largely by the breadth and biases of its training data.

True originality, emotional resonance, and contextual appropriateness continue to require distinctly human intuition and insight. Many interviewees described how AI's integration is not simply transforming tasks, but driving a broader shift in the very skills and mindsets that will define successful marketing teams in the future.

4.1 Benefits of AI Integration in Marketing

AI's integration into marketing practices has brought up significant discussion in both academic literature as well as the lived experiences of industry professionals. As AI tools become more sophisticated and their usage pervasive, their adoption is not only revolutionising operational processes but also altering the way marketing agencies conceptualize and execute campaigns. This section discusses the core benefits of AI in marketing, connecting participant insights from interviews with the theoretical perspectives established in the literature. A particular focus is placed on how AI enhances efficiency and cost-effectiveness as dimensions that consistently emerged as key drivers for AI adoption in both scholarship and practice.

4.1.1 Efficiency and Cost-effectiveness

Some of the consistently mentioned benefits of integrating AI into marketing practices was its measurable impact on efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Respondents across various marketing roles collectively agreed that AI reduces the time and resources needed to execute routine and repetitive tasks, thereby significantly enhancing productivity.

Rahaf, a marketing specialist, highlighted the practical upper hand that AI has given to her role by explaining how tools like ChatGPT helps streamline her work. "The main benefits are saving time and effort. Using ChatGPT for translation tasks, for instance, is faster and often more accurate than Google Translate, meaning we don't have to rely heavily on human translators or colleagues for quick translations." Zeynep, a CRM marketing manager, similarly pointed out the way AI has now enabled her to efficiently handle tasks that would take her considerably longer: "AI speeds up tasks significantly. Writing articles, preparing briefings, or drafting emails is now far quicker, allowing me to focus more on strategic or high-level responsibilities." Cost-effectiveness was another prominent benefit underscored by participants, often linked directly to the improved efficiency enabled by AI. One of the respondents, Bas, having worked in a highly regulated financial institution (name undisclosed for confidentiality purpose) as a marketing specialist, also stressed how AI tools have reduced costs by handling labor-intensive tasks, such as initial content drafting and audience segmentation, enabling marketers to focus on higher-value strategic tasks. He explained, "AI takes care of a lot of the 'heavy lifting' like data segmentation and drafting initial content versions, allowing the smaller teams to handle larger, more complex campaigns without increasing our budget proportionally." This point was also echoed by Anh, a marketing data analyst who highlighted that AI

has significantly shortened the creative iteration process. " AI helps agencies and clients save a lot of time in the creative process. For example, with AI, clients don't have to go through multiple rounds of feedback with an agency. Instead, they can use the tool to instantly generate or adjust ads, try out different versions, and see the results immediately," she explained. This reduction in iterations directly translates into lower campaign production costs.

Eliana, one of the respondents who currently works as a social media manager, offered insights from her experience in campaign marketing, describing AI as an invaluable productivity aid: "AI is incredibly useful in planning and drafting initial campaign content, making it possible to handle bigger workloads more efficiently." Carolin, a content marketer, similarly highlighted the benefits from a business development perspective, noting how AI can quickly generate comprehensive market insights and competitor analyses. "Instead of manually spending days researching potential customers or markets, AI provides us with quick, reliable overviews of relevant companies, speeding up the business development process," she noted. August added from her role in social media marketing that AI has streamlined content scheduling and management, stating, "Scheduling and managing posts, especially during campaign peaks, has become far less time-consuming thanks to automated AI tools."

This observed efficiency corresponds to existing literature, specifically Huang and Rust (2020), who argued that AI-driven automation significantly accelerates repetitive marketing tasks, allowing human teams to shift their focus toward more strategically important activities (p. 31). Likewise, they also state that AI's speed in data processing and content generation drastically improves organizational productivity by removing all the manual bottlenecks (p. 31). Respondents also detailed the way AI has reduced the need for additional human resources, mainly pertinent to small-to-medium-sized businesses or start-ups with constrained budgets. As Viola, an Online Marketing Specialist noted, "Because our team is small, AI was essential in managing the workload. We uploaded all the client's files into ChatGPT, which helped us develop a more consistent brand voice and tone." Another respondent, Shen—who is currently doing freelance marketing for Harper's Bazaar-- echoed a similar sentiment from her experience in campaign analytics, stating, " I trust the AI to handle large datasets effortlessly, allowing us to quickly surface insights that would otherwise take much longer to find manually and require additional analytical staff, which also helps us save on operational costs." These practical examples align closely with the assertions of Germann (2023), who notes that AI enables organizations, especially those with limited human capital, to maintain competitive parity through technological efficiencies. McKinsey & Company (2024) further support this by emphasizing that AI technologies democratize capabilities previously restricted to larger organizations, allowing smaller businesses to achieve high-level productivity at significantly lower costs.

According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are primary drivers for adopting new technologies (Wang et al., 2023). The interview

findings clearly resonate with this theory, as participants consistently emphasized how intuitive AI systems facilitated quicker adoption and integration into their everyday practices. For instance, Rahaf, expressed this situation as follows: "The learning curve for most AI tools we use was surprisingly manageable, and seeing how quickly they improved our efficiency made us integrate them very quickly into our daily work routines."

All in all, the respondents unanimously recognized AI's value in providing substantial improvements in efficiency and significant cost savings in marketing practices. By automating labor-intensive tasks, streamlining creative processes, and reducing the necessity for extensive iterative revisions, AI technologies effectively allocate marketing resources more efficiently. This reallocation empowers human marketers to engage in more strategic and creative activities, crucial for long-term success. These findings highlight AI's strategic importance in contemporary marketing workflows, underscoring the necessity for continued investment and integration of such technologies.

4.1.2 Enhanced Creativity

Beyond efficiency and cost-effectiveness, another benefit highlighted by marketing professionals is AI's ability to boost creativity in their respective works. Although the literature emphasizes that AI technology predominantly excels at automating repetitive and analytical tasks, recent discussions also suggest its growing role as a creative assistant, particularly in brainstorming, content generation, and campaign ideation (Davenport et al., 2019, p. 36).

Corresponding to this view, Eliana remarked how generative AI tools have been instrumental in sparking new ideas and helping overcome creative roadblocks: "Sometimes, if I'm stuck creatively, ChatGPT can quickly generate multiple ideas that I wouldn't have immediately thought of myself. It's an amazing tool for getting unstuck and seeing new possibilities." Eliana's observation reinforces Kshetri et al.'s (2024) argument that AI can effectively stimulate human creativity by generating numerous initial concepts, thus facilitating a broader exploration of creative avenues (p. 2). August similarly underscored how AI has reshaped creative approaches in social media marketing, noting, "AI helps us test and experiment with ideas rapidly, making it easier to find creative concepts that resonate best with our audience". Carolin provided additional insight from her experience, emphasizing that AI significantly improves the conceptualization stage. "Using AI for initial brainstorming allows us to explore diverse creative directions more effectively and quickly, significantly enhancing our overall creative output," she noted. This also supports Kshetri et al.'s (2024) assertion that AI can enrich the ideation process by rapidly generating diverse conceptual starting points that humans can subsequently refine and develop (p. 7). Participants also noted AI's substantial role in refining creative outputs, as Viola remarked how AI improved her team's ability to craft clear and engaging content: "AI is more useful when it comes to refining pre-existing creative

concepts by suggesting minor but impactful improvements. That way we make sure our messages are clear and engaging." Shen further elaborated on this, stating, " To me, it's important to always make the result my own—rephrase it or add my own perspective. Copying directly from AI doesn't feel authentic. But using it for inspiration or to help me think outside the box really supports my creativity." These experiences reflect literature suggesting that AI systems excel at refining existing content to enhance readability, coherence, and audience appeal, thus elevating overall creative quality (Nah et. al, 2023, p. 280).

And despite the acknowledged advantages of AI, respondents still consistently highlighted that genuine originality and emotional connection in marketing content remain distinctly human endeavors. Zeynep, for instance, cautioned that AI-generated content frequently requires extensive human oversight to achieve emotional depth and originality, stating, "Although AI-generated content is useful, it still needs substantial human editing to ensure emotional resonance and originality." Bas echoed this sentiment, highlighting the irreplaceable value of human intuition and empathy in crafting impactful marketing messages: "The true creative ideas, especially those involving deep customer understanding and empathy, always come from human insights. AI is supportive but cannot replace that human touch." While AI is increasingly regarded as a valuable creative assistant, facilitating ideation processes generation, experimentation, and refinement, respondents strongly assert that authentic creativity, characterized by emotional nuance, originality, and strategic vision, remains fundamentally human.

4.1.3 Improved decision-making and strategizing

The way that strategy-making processes have been reshaped is yet another key advantage engendered by AI integration in marketing operations, which is a trend well-supported by both recent academic literature and professional practice. As Huang and Rust (2020) posit, AI technologies, such as predictive analytics, natural language processing (NLP), and advanced data visualization, now serve as indispensable tools in uncovering trends, modeling customer behavior, and reducing uncertainty in high-stakes decision-making. Not only do these capabilities enable marketers to act faster but it informs their data-driven decisions across the campaign lifecycle (p. 33). This shift is evident in the way AI enhances traditional marketing models like Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP). Instead of relying on pre-defined customer segments, marketers are increasingly deploying machine learning models that allow for dynamic segmentation based on real-time behavior (Huang & Rust, 2020, p, 35). Bas described how these models were used in a recent campaign promoting sustainable mortgages. By analyzing anonymized customer data such as home age, energy labels, regional trends, and loan history, the team was able to predict which clients would most likely be interested in upgrading to greener housing options. "AI helped us create segments that were

actually relevant to the campaign,” Bas explained. “Instead of sending broad emails, we were able to speak to people who truly benefit from our offer.” This case illustrates precisely what Huang and Rust (2020) identify as AI’s advantage: enabling individual-level personalization that increases the relevance and responsiveness of marketing efforts (p. 32).

Equally pertinent to this strategic decision-making is the speed with which insights can be gathered and acted upon. AI shortens the gap between data collection and actionable insights, a point emphasized by several respondents. As one of the respondents, Shen, for instance, talked about how AI tools enable faster campaign analysis: “AI handles large datasets effortlessly, allowing us to quickly surface insights that would otherwise take much longer to find manually.” This aligns with Mittapelly’s (2023) view that platforms like Salesforce Einstein GPT enhance marketers’ ability to make agile decisions by automatically analyzing customer journeys, detecting anomalies, and recommending next-best actions (p. 4). These features are not merely efficiency tools, they also actively mold strategic direction in real time. This strategic depth of AI insights extends beyond audience segmentation or post-campaign reporting, as one of the respondents, Anh, highlighted how AI also supports mid-campaign decision-making by evaluating performance data in real time. “It shortens our evaluation cycle. We no longer wait weeks for reports; we get immediate feedback and can shift direction almost instantly if something isn’t working.” As Feuerriegel et al. (2024) argue, this capacity to continuously refine targeting and messaging strategies based on ongoing data analysis is what truly transforms AI from a supportive tool to a strategic partner. Not to mention, AI is also increasingly being used to inform strategic decisions across diverse markets and languages. Rahaf also added how she uses generative AI not just for translation but for analyzing market reactions in different linguistic contexts: “It helps us understand what’s resonating with specific demographics, especially in multilingual regions.” Through NLP, AI helps uncover subtle patterns in customer sentiment that might be overlooked in standard dashboards, supporting more nuanced and culturally informed strategy development. This function aligns directly with Feuerriegel et al.’s (2024) observation that AI can enhance customer lifetime value assessments and brand positioning in complex market environments (p. 121).

Underlying the successful integration of AI into strategic workflows is the perceived utility and accessibility of these tools, the key components of the Technology Acceptance Model. Respondents consistently recognized AI as useful not just because it saves time, but because it adds clear value to their strategic outcomes. Bas noted that “AI doesn’t just make things faster, it makes our campaigns smarter by reducing guesswork and giving us more confidence in the direction we’re taking.” This perception of increased decision-making accuracy strongly reinforces TAM’s principle that perceived usefulness is a driving factor for adoption. Some of the AI tools adopted in marketing, like Salesforce Einstein or internal data dashboards, are designed to be intuitive and accessible even

for those without technical backgrounds (Mittapelly, 2023). This user-friendliness satisfies TAM's second principle of perceived ease of use, facilitating wider internal adoption and encouraging cross-functional collaboration on strategy.

In sum, the strategic benefit of AI in marketing lies in its dual capacity to enhance both the speed and the precision of decision-making. From personalized targeting and real-time analysis to cross-market strategic planning, AI tools empower marketers to respond quickly, act confidently, and align their strategies more closely with customer behaviors and market demands. As both theory and practice demonstrate, AI is no longer a future-facing innovation, it is a foundational component of modern marketing strategy.

4.2 Limitations and Risks of AI

Artificial intelligence, no doubt, has brought considerable benefits to the marketing industry, but its rapid integration also carries a host of limitations and risks. Both literature and respondent experiences highlight that technological constraints shape the implementation of AI in marketing, becoming a catalyst to unresolved ethical challenges and growing concerns about its broader impact on the labor market as a whole. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and recent literature emphasize that user adoption of AI depends not only on its perceived usefulness and ease of use, but also on recognition of its inherent limitations and risks (Davis, 1989; Feuerriegel et al., 2024; Huang & Rust, 2020). These dimensions need more exploration as organizations weigh the strategic promise of AI against practical and ethical realities.

4.2.1 . Technological Constraints and Reliability

While AI is increasingly integrated into marketing workflows, every practitioner interviewed highlighted fundamental limitations that restrict its reliability—limitations well-documented in academic research (Feuerriegel et al., 2024; Chintalapati & Pandey, 2021). Across organizations and roles, the consensus is that AI-generated outputs can be helpful but are never sufficient without critical human oversight.

A key limitation arises from the quality and context of training data. As August noted, “I used AI as a search engine, asking about customs and daily habits in Greece,” when tasked to write TikTok scripts for a new market. Yet, she emphasized, “I try to avoid relying too much on AI, especially for the creative parts. When I'm generating ideas or the basic script, I do it myself. But after I have a draft, I use AI to help express my content in a more professional, engaging way, maybe by rephrasing or localizing it for different markets”. This cautious stance was also echoed by Rahaf, who uses ChatGPT for content drafts and translations, but always ensures that “the core message fits our store and audience. I believe we know more about our products than AI can ever retrieve from the internet,

so I wouldn't let ChatGPT write about our newest collections in detail". Rahaf's experience mirrors the findings of Shaikh et. al (2023), who warn that generic outputs are a recurring risk when AI is applied to highly localized or brand-specific messaging. A common pattern among our respondents were in their reporting of technical errors and contextually inappropriate suggestions as a persistent challenge. Zeynep recounted, "When I transcribe interviews, AI sometimes mishears words or phrases, so I relisten and correct mistakes. When writing blogs or articles, AI sometimes makes things up or misinterprets context, so I often need to delete or completely adjust what it writes." She stressed the importance of always "tweaking and rewriting" AI output so that her own voice is still evident in the output. "I can also recognize when something's written by AI, certain phrases or styles stand out, so I try to avoid making my work too 'AI-sounding'". Yellana's approach was not too far off from Zeynep's, as she states, "For important decisions, I always double-check the results myself. For example, if ChatGPT gives me a list of ten companies, I'll verify whether they actually fit the criteria. Sometimes, the information is inaccurate, like, it might list companies based in the wrong country. Double-checking might take a few extra minutes, but it's worth it to avoid bigger mistakes down the line". This reflects Feuerriegel et al. (2024), who highlight the risks of "hallucinated" outputs and erroneous data that can undermine campaign credibility or lead to reputational harm (p. 117). Beyond this technological constraint, the other recurring answer among our respondents was in the rigidity that constitutes current AI, especially when it comes to dealing with nuance, sarcasm, or brand tone. Bas described a campaign in which Copilot "generated Dutch headlines that were completely off the mark...[and] actually ended up promoting spending instead of saving." This incident required extensive revision by native speakers to ensure cultural appropriateness, a clear illustration of Grewal et al.'s (2024) findings on the limitations of static training data and the ongoing necessity of human intervention for contextual accuracy (p. 3). Eliana emphasized how, even though AI "is incredibly useful for a first draft, it never nails the tone or emotional nuance. There's always a need for substantial rewriting." Shen also stated, "AI can surface insights quickly, but if the data it's trained on is outdated or limited, you end up reinforcing old biases or missing emerging trends. You still need someone to spot when the outputs don't make sense for the current market".

These accounts stand testament to the fact that although AI is a powerful accelerator for routine marketing tasks and a valuable tool for inspiration or drafting, its reliability is still quite limited by that gap from human intuition, culture, and context. As the Technology Acceptance Model suggests, perceived usefulness and ease of use drive adoption (Davis, 1989), but persistent reliability issues mean that human oversight and creative control remain indispensable in professional marketing practice.

4.2.2 Risks for Creativity

While AI is widely praised for boosting efficiency and easing workload pressures in marketing workflows, a recurring concern among participants was the risk of diminished creative originality due to over-reliance on machine-generated content. This sentiment was echoed across multiple respondents who highlighted how automation can gradually displace the very cognitive and intuitive processes that define high-quality marketing. Underscoring this, August shared a moment of critical reflection on how using AI began to interfere with her creative instincts: “I realized I was limiting my own creativity and originality. Now, I deliberately keep some distance, so I generate my own ideas instead of copying what’s already out there.”

This quote reflects a growing unease with the derivative nature of AI content, which participants repeatedly noted lacks the emotional richness, spontaneity, and strategic surprise that human-generated content often carries. Zeynep similarly cautioned that, “Although AI-generated content is useful, it still needs substantial human editing to ensure emotional resonance and originality.” These observations support the findings of Huang and Rust (2020), who argue that while AI excels at reproducing and remixing existing data, it lacks the capacity for true originality, defined as ideas that are not just novel but contextually meaningful and emotionally resonant. This is especially relevant in marketing, where emotional appeal and storytelling are the lifeblood to audience engagement. Participants also expressed concern that consistent reliance on AI for ideation and content generation could de-skill marketing teams over time. Eliana described a scenario in which she used AI to brainstorm ideas, only to later feel unsure whether the results were shaped by her own input or overly influenced by the tool: “I’ve noticed that if I rely on AI too much, my ideas start becoming less original and more repetitive. But when I use it as a backup—especially when I’m stuck—it can really help by giving me a jumping-off point.”

This view reflects the risk highlighted by Vidrih and Mayahi (2023), who caution that overuse of generative tools can reduce the diversity of creative expression, producing homogenized outputs that align more with algorithmic averages than bold or disruptive ideas. Campbell et al. (2022) also discussed this creative complacency whereby marketing professionals may unknowingly defer too much to AI’s suggestions, especially when under time pressure or lacking confidence in their own ideas. This concern was also hinted at by Shen, who noted: “I always make the result my own—rephrase it or add my own perspective. Copying directly from AI doesn’t feel authentic.”

These insights collectively reveal a delicate tension that while AI can serve as a powerful ally in the creative process, it can also erode the uniqueness and emotional authenticity of marketing content when not used thoughtfully. And considering these reflections, marketing teams must approach AI integration with a strong commitment to preserving human-led ideation and originality,

ensuring that creativity remains a core competency rather than an outsourced function. This aligns with the predictions of Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC) theory (Acemoglu et al., 2022), which suggests that as routine tasks are automated, the relative value of human creativity, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking will only grow.

4.3 Ethical Challenges of AI integration in marketing

As artificial intelligence becomes an integral part of marketing practice, it introduces not only unprecedented efficiencies but also a host of complex ethical considerations that are now central to the day-to-day work of marketers. The automation of content creation, campaign management, and data-driven personalization has changed the speed and scale at which marketing agencies operate. Yet, this rapid transformation comes with a new set of questions and risks, especially when it comes to the accuracy, ownership, and creative authenticity of AI-generated content. Drawing on both recent academic literature and practitioners' lived experiences, the following sections explore how marketers are negotiating these ethical crossroads in their everyday work.

4.3.1 Misinformation and the Limits of AI Accuracy

While AI adoption in marketing has been remarkable, it has also placed marketers at the crossroads of new ethical challenges. The very tools that allow brands to create content in seconds, analyze trends on a massive scale, and automate campaigns are also, at times, the source of their greatest ethical dilemmas. Recent scholarship (Feuerriegel et al., 2024; Nah et al., 2023) warns that these ethical tensions are not just hypothetical, they are already shaping daily decisions and even reshaping what it means to work responsibly in marketing. One of the most recurring points that emerged in the interviews was concerning the truthfulness of AI-generated information itself. Yellana was quick to remark: "Sometimes, the information is inaccurate.. like, it might list companies based in the wrong country," she admitted. Her response has been methodical, she says: "Double-checking might take a few extra minutes, but it's worth it to avoid bigger mistakes down the line. I'd never trust AI 100% or base key decisions solely on what it generates." This everyday diligence reflects a broader industry awareness of what Feuerriegel et al. (2024) term "hallucinations": confidently stated but entirely fabricated facts that can easily slip through without human oversight (p. 117).

For Zeynep, these so-called hallucinations present a challenge not just to factual accuracy but to the integrity of her own voice as a marketer. She explained, "When writing blogs or articles, AI sometimes makes things up or misinterprets context, so I often need to delete or completely adjust what it writes. No matter what, I always tweak and rewrite AI output so it keeps my own voice." This back-and-forth, i.e. generating, checking, rewriting, has become routine for many marketers, serving as a reminder that the speed and convenience of AI cannot replace the careful judgment honed by experience. Rahaf also offered a glimpse into the additional precautions required in fast-moving

sectors like fashion retail: “AI sometimes hallucinates facts, so every claim is double-checked against trusted sources before publication. I would never let ChatGPT write about our newest collections in detail, because it doesn’t have the expertise or up-to-date information our brand has.” For her, safeguarding brand trust isn’t simply about getting the facts right; it means ensuring the unique value of the brand is never diluted by a generic, error-prone machine. The academic literature supports this cautious approach. As Nah et al. (2023) observe, unchecked faith in AI’s outputs is now seen as a legal and ethical vulnerability, one that can have real consequences in industries subject to regulation or public scrutiny (p. 280).

4.3.2 Concerns of Authorship

While marketers praise the efficiency of AI in generating drafts or jumpstarting campaign ideas, a new set of concerns has become part of the creative routine: Who really owns what is produced, is it truly original, and does AI quietly reinforce stereotypes or patterns that marketers might otherwise avoid? One of the respondents, Zeynep noted that “AI mostly summarizes and repackages what’s already out there. It doesn’t create anything truly new.” This hands-on, editorial process reflects the tension described by Huang and Rust (2020), who argue that while AI can remix and accelerate production, its outputs are ultimately derivative, unable to break free from their training data. Shen draws a clear distinction between ideation and final execution: “AI is great for brainstorming, ideation, analysis, and planning, but when it comes to actually creating and publishing the final product, I think that should remain a human task. That’s where I draw the line.” This stance resonates with Vidrih & Mayahi (2023), who contend that emotional intelligence and contextual awareness, core to authentic storytelling, remain human strengths that AI cannot replicate. Rahaf’s experience further highlights the creative limitations of AI: “The ideas it produced were out of touch, and we could immediately tell they wouldn’t resonate. We ended up developing the campaign ourselves, without AI’s help.” These responses further confirm Erickson’s (2024) assertion that generative AI, while efficient, still struggles to capture the nuance and emotional depth required for truly resonant marketing content.

This direct critique illustrates a broader concern about the superficiality of AI-generated messaging—a concern supported by Erickson (2024), who argues that generative models lack the lived experience and cultural attunement needed to craft content that resonates authentically with specific audiences (p. 21). For marketing professionals working in fast-paced, culturally sensitive environments, originality is not just a creative goal but a strategic imperative tied to brand identity and trust. And beyond questions of creativity, issues of authorship and intellectual property also emerged. Respondents noted the ambiguity of ownership when AI tools are involved in drafting or content generation. Carolin posed the dilemma succinctly: “If the idea comes from the AI, and we just edit it,

who really owns it? It's a grey area—and sometimes we avoid using AI altogether for certain types of work just to keep things clear.” This aligns with concerns in the literature about the unclear legal and ethical status of AI-generated intellectual property, particularly in jurisdictions where authorship is tied to human creators (Nah et al., 2023, p. 82).

4.3.3 Algorithmic Bias

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly embedded in marketing decision-making, the issue of algorithmic bias has emerged as a critical ethical concern. AI systems are only as objective as the data they are trained on, and particularly when historical data reflects societal inequalities or exclusions, AI risks perpetuating and even amplifying these biases in marketing outputs. This concern was not hypothetical for many of the professionals interviewed; instead, it was experienced as a tangible, daily consideration in campaign development and customer targeting. Respondents raised concerns that AI-driven content or segmentation strategies can unintentionally marginalize certain groups by reproducing stereotypical representations or excluding nuanced cultural identities. As one of the respondents, Zeynep, explained, “AI sometimes makes assumptions about who our audience is based on trends in the data, but those trends don't always reflect the diversity we want in our messaging.” She described an instance where an AI-generated persona excluded certain age groups and languages that were core to their actual customer base. “If we didn't intervene manually, entire segments would have been left out just because they didn't ‘match the pattern,’” she added.

This echoes concerns raised in recent literature. Lambrecht and Tucker (2019) demonstrated how gender bias can inadvertently shape digital advertising outcomes (p. 1), while de Bruyn et al. (2020) note that algorithmic systems can reinforce past discrimination through data-driven feedback loops (p. 8). Several of the marketing professionals interviewed voiced similar apprehensions. Shen noted, “I always try to double-check which segments are being prioritized. There have been times when AI has completely overlooked rural or lower-income groups, even though we explicitly wanted to target them.” This speaks to the growing need for human oversight—not just to improve campaign accuracy, but to uphold fairness and inclusivity. A recurring point from participants was that bias often manifests subtly, embedded in phrasing, visuals, or assumptions generated by AI. Ellie recalled, “We had an AI draft a slogan once that, on the surface, looked fine—but it carried undertones that weren't inclusive. It was only after reading it a few times that we caught it.” This underscores the challenge posed by this plausible bias, when the AI's output appears reasonable while subtly reinforcing stereotypes (Feuerriegel et al., 2024, p. 117).

Respondents also emphasized that combating algorithmic bias requires both technical and organizational responses. Some described efforts to diversify their training datasets or apply post-generation audits to AI-generated content. Others noted the value of cross-functional review teams,

where copywriters, data analysts, and DEI experts collaborate to assess fairness and representation. As Shen put it, “[AI] still needs diverse human input to be truly ethical. Otherwise, it’ll just keep replicating what it already knows, which isn’t always fair..” In line with Feuerriegel et al. (2024), who advocate for ongoing audits and governance frameworks in AI applications, the professionals in this study framed algorithmic bias not merely as a technical flaw but as a leadership challenge (p. 122). Addressing it demands deliberate interventions—ranging from dataset selection to cross-cultural review—aimed at ensuring AI supports inclusive, responsible, and ethically sound marketing.

4.4 Human Creativity and AI: New Skills for the Future

As artificial intelligence becomes deeply embedded in marketing workflows, a key area of transformation concerns the evolving nature of human creativity. While AI offers rapid ideation, automation, and scalability, it also raises critical questions about the preservation of originality, emotional nuance, and authorship as discussed earlier. Marketers are now navigating a new creative landscape, one that call for not just technical proficiency with AI tools but also a renewed emphasis on intuition, ethical judgment, and storytelling. And rather than replacing human creativity, AI is increasingly viewed as a collaborator that augments it. However, leveraging this partnership effectively demands the development of new hybrid skills and an intentional rebalancing of roles between humans and machines.

4.4.1 AI-Human Collaboration

An AI-driven landscape is not simply characterized by a handover of creative power from humans to machines. Instead, the research and interviews highlight an emerging consensus that the most productive future is one in which human and AI capabilities are purposefully combined, producing a synergy that neither could achieve alone. This “collaborative intelligence” approach is echoed in the literature, where scholars have described the optimal scenario as a hybrid environment, one where technology augments human strengths rather than replacing them (Campbell et al., 2022; Erikson, 2024). This ideal is closely aligned with the predictions of Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC) theory, which suggests that as advanced technologies automate routine and easily codified tasks, the relative value of creative, strategic, and adaptive human skills rises (Acemoglu et al., 2022; Berman et al., 1998). The interviewees’ perspectives consistently illustrated how AI, when implemented carefully, can free up time and mental bandwidth for higher-level thinking and innovation.

Carolyn articulated this shift, noting, “AI can make marketing more efficient by taking over repetitive tasks and letting people focus on more complex or creative work.” This observation aligns

with Dahlin (2024), who found that AI allows marketing teams to reallocate resources to strategic functions, thus reinforcing the demand for skills in critical thinking and creative problem-solving. Carolin further explained that, “Ideally, AI would help when I’m stuck or lacking inspiration—maybe something that integrates directly with Google Docs or Word and jumps in when I need help, but always keeps the process collaborative, so I can still bring in my own ideas and voice.” Her emphasis on collaboration, rather than replacement, captures the SBTC principle: the marketer’s value is amplified when they can direct and refine AI’s contributions rather than simply execute pre-programmed tasks. Other respondents echoed the need for a careful balance, especially in creative and brand-defining roles. Shen described a workflow in which AI’s generative capabilities are used to accelerate brainstorming and ideation, but ultimate responsibility for campaign quality and authenticity remains firmly human. “AI is great for brainstorming, ideation, analysis, and planning, but when it comes to actually creating and publishing the final product, I think that should remain a human task. That’s where I draw the line.” This approach mirrors arguments by Vidrih & Mayahi (2023), who point out that emotional intelligence, contextual awareness, and nuanced storytelling are still out of reach for even the most advanced AI models (p. 10).

The necessity of human oversight, especially in the final phases of campaign execution, is further reinforced by the limitations of AI in terms of originality and voice. Zeynep observed, “Without enough human intervention, campaigns might start to look and sound the same. To keep things creative, AI should be a collaborator, not the whole process.” She advocated for a model where, “Human creativity should always be at the forefront. Creative teams and planning teams need to drive the process, with AI providing support, ‘the finishing touches,’ as we say in Dutch, ‘the dots on the i.’ The majority of the responsibility should be with people; AI is there to help, not replace.” This aligns with Huang and Rust’s (2020) findings that AI excels at remixing and accelerating content production, but that genuine novelty and brand authenticity remain the province of skilled human creators. Eliana summed up the collaborative vision: “The ideal relationship is collaborative. AI should handle drafts and repetitive tasks, freeing people to focus on creative direction, emotional nuance, and ethics. Final decisions—especially about brand identity and trust—should always remain human-led.” This statement also reflects what Nah et al. (2023) have posited AI’s greatest potential is realized when paired with human intuition and ethical judgment.

The collective wisdom of these practitioners highlights an industry moving toward hybridized roles—where marketers become not only content creators, but also supervisors, curators, and ethical stewards of AI-driven processes. The need for AI literacy the ability to prompt, critique, and direct machine-generated outputs will become a core competency for future marketing professionals, as suggested by both interviewees and the literature (Grewal et al., 2024). In sum, the most compelling vision for the future of marketing is not one of technological displacement, but of augmentation. As

SBTC theory predicts, the relative value of adaptive, creative, and strategic human skills is only increasing. AI's role, as described by those working most closely with it, is to accelerate, support, and expand the reach of those skills—not to render them obsolete. The success of tomorrow's marketers will hinge on their ability to embrace this partnership, guiding AI with a human touch and ensuring that the result is not just efficient, but meaningful and original.

5. Conclusion

The integration of generative AI into marketing agencies is reshaping not only daily routines but also the conceptual and practical boundaries of creative and strategic work. This research set out to address the question “*How does generative AI reshape the work of marketing agencies?*”, the resulting shifts in creative perception and practice, the array of opportunities and challenges that AI introduces, and the ethical concerns emerging from this transformation. From the outset, it is clear that marketing professionals have embraced AI primarily as a catalyst for efficiency and scalability. Across the interviews, respondents described how AI systems now underpin many repetitive or data-heavy tasks, including content generation, trend analysis, and campaign planning. The day-to-day use of tools like ChatGPT, MidJourney and Copilot has transformed the creative workflow, enabling teams to rapidly produce first drafts, segment audiences, and generate variations in campaign messaging. Such practices echo the findings of Grewal et al. (2024), who assert that AI-driven automation not only expedites the production process but also permits agencies to tackle more ambitious campaigns without proportionally increasing their workforce (p. 6).

The Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC) theory is reflected in the lived experiences of the marketing professionals in this study. As predicted by Acemoglu et al. (2022), the introduction of AI has shifted the composition of agency teams (p. 336). Professionals with strong digital fluency, adaptability, and analytical skills are now more valued, while roles built on routine content production or manual data processing have become less central. Many respondents, especially those in management or strategy, observed that the emergence of hybrid job descriptions, like prompt engineering and AI supervision, has prompted them and their teams to continually upskill, seeking not just technical know-how but also critical thinking and ethical sensibility. The interviews also revealed a growing demand for professionals who can interpret AI-generated insights, ensure alignment with brand values, and oversee quality control, highlighting the evolving mix of technical and human skills required for contemporary marketing. While the operational impact of AI is largely celebrated, the study finds that professionals remain circumspect about its effect on creativity. Many describe using AI for brainstorming, ideation, or overcoming creative blocks, in line with Grewal et al. (2024)'s assertion that AI can expand the initial stages of the creative process (p. 10). However, there is near-universal agreement that the true originality and emotional resonance of marketing content must come from human input. Respondents noted that AI-generated materials, though useful as starting points, often require significant refinement to match the brand's voice, cultural nuance, and intended audience impact. They expressed concern that AI's tendency to remix existing ideas risks homogenizing creative output, thereby making it harder for brands to stand out. This is consistent with Vidrih and Mayahi's (2023) argument that while AI excels in efficiency, it lacks the contextual awareness and imaginative leaps necessary for compelling storytelling.

Addressing one of our sub-questions, “*In what ways does AI influence the perception and practice of creativity within marketing agencies?*”, a recurring theme emerged out of the interviews; the idea that the best results emerge from a collaborative interplay between human intuition and machine assistance. Agencies that successfully leverage AI tend to treat it as a creative partner, relying on it for suggestions, data synthesis, and efficiency, but reserving final judgment and strategy for human professionals. This approach is supported by collaborative intelligence frameworks (Campbell et al., 2022; Erikson, 2024), which see technology as an amplifier of human potential, rather than a substitute. Underscoring what the opportunities and challenges brought forth by the integration of AI in marketing practices are, one of our sub-questions, the interviews primarily revealed that professionals feel most empowered when AI frees them from tedious tasks--allowing them to invest their energy in big-picture thinking, narrative development, and client engagement. But despite these opportunities, the study documents several significant challenges accompanying the integration of AI. One of the most pressing is the risk of errors or “hallucinations” in AI generated content. Many respondents reported instances where AI produced information that was plausible on the surface but inaccurate or out of context upon closer examination. The necessity of rigorous human oversight and fact-checking is now well established in professional routines, aligning with Feuerriegel et al. (2024) and Nah et al. (2023), who caution that unchecked reliance on AI outputs can threaten brand credibility and invite regulatory scrutiny (p. 117; p. 286). As for the “*ethical concerns that arise from the use of generative AI in marketing*”, concerns about authorship and originality were the most prominent among respondents. Professionals are acutely aware that AI tools tend to repackage existing ideas, sometimes producing content that feels generic or lacking in personality. Respondents described a constant process of editing and adaptation to ensure that marketing materials remain distinctive and representative of their agency’s or client’s values. This tension reflects debates in the literature (Huang & Rust, 2020, p. 43. ; Erickson, 2024) regarding the limits of machine creativity and the ongoing necessity of human involvement for work that requires emotional nuance and ethical discernment.

Algorithmic bias was another ethical dilemma raised by both the respondents and the literature. There is growing recognition among professionals that AI models trained on historical data may inadvertently replicate past prejudices or societal biases, potentially resulting in discriminatory or exclusionary messaging. The literature provides clear cases (de Bruyn et al., 2020; Lambrecht & Tucker, 2019) of biased ad delivery and segmentation, and respondents similarly expressed the importance of diverse and representative training data, as well as the need for regular audits and human intervention to ensure fairness and inclusivity in AI-assisted campaigns. Respondents described the tension between leveraging AI for hyper-personalized marketing and the ethical management of customer data. The “privacy-personalization paradox” (Davenport et al., 2020) is an everyday reality: marketers are acutely aware that their clients and audiences expect bespoke

experiences but are wary of intrusive data practices. Professionals described a move toward privacy-by-design frameworks, data minimization, and transparent user consent, in line with guidance from Rubinstein and Good (2013) and increasing regulatory requirements such as GDPR (p. 1). Another layer to these challenges is the transformation of career pathways and organizational structure in marketing. The widespread use of AI has not only automated certain job functions but has also given rise to new, more strategic roles. Professionals are finding themselves increasingly involved in the curation, management, and critical oversight of AI-generated work. This aligns with SBTC, which posits that technological change rewards workers with high-level analytical and creative skills while making some routine jobs obsolete. Respondents from both large agencies and smaller firms recognized the need for continual upskilling, not only to keep pace with technological change but also to safeguard their employability as the landscape evolves. The findings support Cillo and Rubera (2024) who emphasize that training in AI literacy, prompt engineering, and ethical risk assessment is now a core requirement for anyone seeking a long-term future in the sector (p. 3).

Looking forward, professionals anticipate that the partnership between humans and AI will become even more nuanced. Rather than a wholesale substitution of labor, the industry is moving toward a model where AI augments human creativity and decision-making but never fully replaces the unique capacities for empathy, critical judgment, and strategic vision. Respondents predict that as AI tools grow more autonomous and sophisticated, there will be even greater emphasis on developing creative, analytical, and leadership skills among marketing professionals. This future-oriented view is echoed in the academic literature, where authors such as Dahlin (2024) and Erikson (2024) foresee the continued convergence of technological and human strengths, producing marketing outputs that are efficient, data-driven, and deeply resonant. The study also reveals that the ethical and social dimensions of AI adoption are not an afterthought but central to how agencies are planning out their future. There is a growing consensus that technological innovation must be balanced by ethical stewardship, whether it is through formal codes of conduct, transparent data practices, or industry-wide standards for algorithmic fairness and accountability (Feuerriegel et al., 2024; Hacker et al., 2023). Agencies that fail to engage with these issues risk not only regulatory penalties but also the erosion of client trust and brand reputation.

Generative AI is reshaping marketing agencies by transforming how professionals work, what skills are valued, and how creativity is both perceived and practiced. The research demonstrates that the most successful agencies are those that approach AI as a creative and strategic partner, cultivating a workforce skilled in both technology and human insight. Opportunities for greater efficiency and expanded creative capacity are real, but so are the challenges of ensuring originality, fairness, and privacy. As the industry continues to evolve, the future of marketing will depend on a nuanced,

ethically grounded, and human-centered approach to AI—one that leverages the best of both worlds for maximum impact and integrity.

5.1 Limitations of the Research

This research inevitably faces several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. Qualitative inquiry, by its nature, not only captures the perspectives and experiences of participants but is also shaped by the dynamic relationship between the researcher and those being interviewed (Boeije, 2010). In this study, the researcher's own professional background in the marketing sector may have subtly influenced the process of data interpretation, offering both insider insights and potential biases based on prior industry experience. Another limitation arises from the scope and composition of the participant sample. Given the targeted recruitment of marketing professionals with direct experience in AI integration, and the relatively modest sample size, the results are context-specific and are not intended to be broadly generalized to the entire marketing industry. Instead, this research prioritizes depth and nuance over breadth, generating rich, contextually embedded insights into how AI is currently being used and understood by practitioners. Future studies could address this limitation by engaging a larger and more diverse pool of participants, representing a wider variety of organizations, roles, and cultural backgrounds. Such diversity would provide a broader range of experiences and perspectives regarding the implementation of AI in marketing.

Time constraints also played a role in shaping the research process. The data were collected within a relatively short period, which may have limited both the breadth and the depth of insights gained. Considering the rapid pace at which AI technologies evolve and are adopted in the marketing sector, longitudinal research would likely yield a more comprehensive view of how attitudes and practices shift over time. Additionally, potential selection bias should be acknowledged. The participant pool was determined in part by availability and willingness to discuss AI, which may have skewed the sample toward individuals who are already engaged with or interested in digital transformation. This self-selection could result in findings that over-represent positive perceptions of AI, while more skeptical or disengaged voices remain underrepresented. To mitigate such bias, the research process incorporated regular peer debriefing and careful documentation of methodological decisions throughout data analysis, promoting transparency and reflexivity.

And while this study provides valuable and in-depth insights into the evolving relationship between AI and marketing practice, its findings must be understood within the context of these methodological constraints. Efforts were made to ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the research through reflexive practice and systematic record-keeping, yet the inherent limitations of qualitative work remain and should be taken into account when drawing broader conclusions.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The present study offers an in-depth exploration of how generative AI is reshaping the daily practices, skillsets, and creative processes within marketing agencies. As the intersection of AI and marketing continues to evolve, several avenues for future research emerge from both the strengths and limitations of this study.

First, there is substantial value in investigating more deeply the mechanisms by which AI delivers operational benefits within marketing agencies. While this study has documented the perceived efficiency gains, cost reductions, and enhanced scalability that accompany AI integration, future research should move beyond self-reported perceptions to examine these effects quantitatively. For instance, comparative studies could measure campaign turnaround times, cost savings, and ROI before and after AI adoption. Additionally, research could investigate how these efficiency gains interact with key brand performance indicators—such as brand equity, loyalty, and consumer trust—in order to provide industry professionals with actionable insights on leveraging AI for both short-term effectiveness and long-term brand value.

Secondly, the findings of this study highlight the persistent and evolving set of risks and limitations associated with AI adoption. Building on the clusters identified in this research, future studies should explore in greater detail the practical and ethical challenges that agencies encounter. This includes not only the reliability and “hallucinations” of AI-generated content, but also the subtler issues of algorithmic bias, data privacy, and the impact on workplace dynamics and entry-level employment. As the regulatory environment continues to shift, it is especially important for researchers to examine how agencies are developing internal protocols, codes of conduct, and strategies for responsible AI use. Greater attention should also be paid to the long-term implications of workforce restructuring and the ways in which reskilling and upskilling initiatives can mitigate potential job displacement.

Moreover, the relationship between AI and creativity in marketing warrants further, focused inquiry. This study has shown that while AI can enhance ideation and accelerate content production, the nature of creativity itself is in flux. Future research should examine how AI alters the creative process across different types of agencies, campaign genres, and cultural contexts. In particular, it would be valuable to explore how marketing professionals perceive and negotiate the boundaries between human and machine creativity, what is gained, what is lost, and what new forms of hybrid creativity may emerge. Interdisciplinary approaches drawing from philosophy, psychology, and design studies could provide fresh perspectives on the evolving definition of creativity and authorship in an AI-driven industry. Not to mention, the qualitative insights with quantitative and mixed-methods research will be crucial for broadening the generalizability of future findings. This includes larger and

more diverse samples, surveys that capture the attitudes of those less engaged with AI, and longitudinal studies that track how the role of AI in marketing evolves over time. Such research could also benefit from cross-cultural comparisons, as attitudes toward AI, privacy, and creativity may vary significantly between markets and regulatory regimes.

All in all, a fast-paced evolution of AI technologies makes longitudinal research particularly important. Future studies should follow agencies and professionals over time to capture the long-term impacts of AI adoption on agency structures, creative practices, and professional identities. This longitudinal approach will offer more robust insights into the dynamic relationship between technological change, skill development, and organizational adaptation. By pursuing these directions, future researchers can expand upon the foundation established by this study, which could lead to a richer, more nuanced understanding of how generative AI is transforming not only the logistics of marketing workflows, but also its creative, ethical, and strategic dimensions. These insights will be vital for practitioners, educators, and policymakers seeking to navigate and shape the future of marketing in an AI-driven world.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:

Pasang Dorjee Lama, 695027pl@eur.nl

DESCRIPTION

You are invited to participate in a research about AI and the way it is influencing the workflows of professionals in the marketing industry. The purpose of the study is to understand how Generative AI, in particular, is reshaping the creative workflows of marketing professionals.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to be interviewed. In general terms, my questions will be related to how marketing professionals are incorporating AI into their operations. More specifically, the interview will explore the ways that AI influences the perception and practice of creativity within marketing agencies. The interview also aims to delve into the opportunities and challenges brought forth by the integration of AI in marketing practices, as well as the ethical concerns that arise from the use of generative AI in marketing. Your invaluable input will contribute to a more well-rounded understanding of the role of AI in marketing and the way that future practices will be shaped.

Unless you prefer that no recordings are made, I will make an audio recording of the interview.

I will use the material from the interviews and my observation exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

As far as I can tell, there are no risks associated with participating in this research. I will not use your name or other identifying information in the study. To participants in the study will only be referred to with preferred pseudonyms, and in terms of general characteristics such as age and gender, etc.

You are always free not to answer any particular question, and/or stop participating at any point

TIME INVOLVEMENT

Your participation in this study will take 45-60 minutes. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

PAYMENTS

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact –anonymously, if you wish-- the Data Protection Officer (fg@eur.nl) or visit www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl. (T: 088 - 1805250).

Do you have a complaint or concerns about your privacy? Please email [Pasang Dorjee Lama](mailto:Pasang.Dorjee.Lama@eur.nl), 695027pl@eur.nl or visit www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl. (T: 088 - 1805250)

SIGNING THE CONSENT FORM

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you **DO NOT NEED** to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, you may prefer to consent orally. Your oral consent is sufficient.

I give consent to be recorded during this study:

Name

Signature

Date

I prefer my identity to be revealed in all written data resulting from this study

Name

Signature...

Date

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Introduction and Background

1. Can you briefly tell me about your background—your name, role, country of origin, and educational path?
2. How long have you worked in marketing or advertising, and what departments or types of projects have you been involved in?
3. What initially drew you into this field, and how has your role evolved over time?

Theme 1: Integration of AI in Marketing Operations

(Sub-question 1: How are marketing professionals incorporating AI into their operations?)

1. What types of AI tools or platforms are currently in use in your agency (e.g., for content creation, audience targeting, media buying)?
2. Do you use generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Midjourney, or others? If so, how are they integrated into daily workflows?
3. Can you walk me through a recent campaign where AI played a significant role?
4. In what phases of campaign development (planning, execution, analysis) is AI most actively used?
5. How do you determine the balance between AI automation and human intervention in campaign decisions?
6. Have there been any unexpected or unintended outcomes from using AI tools that changed the way you now approach their use?

Theme 2: Creativity and the Role of Human Insight

(Sub-question 2: In what ways does AI influence the perception and practice of creativity within marketing agencies?)

1. How do you think AI is influencing “creativity” in marketing?
2. How do creative professionals in your agency see AI? Is it a collaborator, a tool, or a competitor?
3. Can you share your personal experience with AI—has it enhanced your creative ideas or limited them?
4. How do you ensure originality and brand voice when using AI-generated content?

Theme 3: Opportunities and Challenges of AI Integration

(Sub-question 3: What are the opportunities and challenges brought forth by the integration of AI in marketing practices?)

1. What benefits have you or your agency experienced from integrating AI into your marketing workflows?
2. Have you faced any challenges—technical, organizational, or creative—while using AI tools?
3. Do you see AI as helping to streamline repetitive tasks, or is it affecting higher-level strategic or creative roles?
4. What new possibilities do you believe AI can open up in marketing?
5. How has AI changed team dynamics—such as collaboration, decision-making, or the distribution of responsibilities?

Theme 4: Ethical Considerations and Impacts

(Sub-question 4: What ethical concerns arise from the use of generative AI in marketing?)

1. Are there ethical dilemmas your team has discussed regarding AI-generated content (e.g., authorship, originality, misinformation)?
2. How do you handle transparency with clients or audiences when content is AI-generated?
3. Do you have guidelines or policies in place around the ethical use of AI?
4. If you don't have guidelines... how do you ensure privacy and accountability?
5. How do you ensure diversity, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity when using generative AI that may be trained on biased data?

Closing block of questions / Future Outlook and Reflections

1. How do you think generative AI will continue to shape the marketing profession in the next 3–5 years?
2. What kinds of skills do you believe will become more important for marketers in an AI-enhanced landscape?
3. Do you anticipate that AI will replace some roles or create entirely new ones?
4. What advice would you give to agencies just beginning to experiment with generative AI?
5. If you could design the “ideal” relationship between human creativity and AI in marketing, what would it look like?

- Sum up what has been discussed and thank the respondent for their time and insights.
- Ask if they have any questions for the researcher.
- Remind them that they can contact you later if they have further thoughts or questions.

Appendix C: Overview of Respondents

Interviewee	Role / Title	Gender	Age	Country	Education	Years of Experience	Department
Rahaf	Marketing Specialist	F	25	Netherlands	Masters	2	Content Marketing, Brand Strategy
Zeynep	CRM Marketing Manager	F	25	Turkey	Masters	4	CRM, Campaign Management
Bas	Marketing Specialist	M	34	Netherlands	Masters	6	Digital Strategy, Campaign Analytics
Eliana	Social Media Manager	F	27	Bulgaria	Masters	5	Social Media, Campaign Planning
Carolin	Content Marketer	F	24	Germany	Bachelors	2	Content Writing, Copywriting
August	Social Media Marketer	F	23	China	Masters	3	Content Writing, Video Scriptwriting
Shen	Freelance Marketer, Video Editor	F	23	Netherlands	Bachelors	2	Marketing Analytics, Video Editing
Anh	Marketing	F	25	Vietnam	Masters	5	Media Data Analytics

Viola	Data Analyst Online Marketing Specialist	F	22	Hungary	Masters	5	Digital Marketing, Content Creation
Yellana	Content Manager	F	23	Netherlands	Masters	1	Copywriting, Editorial Management

Appendix D: Code Book

Themes	Codes	Initial Codes	Example
Benefits of AI integration in marketing	Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Automation of repetitive content creation and administrative tasks. - Enables small teams to scale efforts without increasing headcount. 	<p>“The biggest benefit is time and productivity. Tasks that would take me much longer—like writing articles, planning campaigns, preparing briefings, or drafting emails—are now far faster with AI. I can focus on higher-level tasks because AI helps with the heavy lifting”</p>
	Enhanced Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports brainstorming and overcomes creative blocks with idea prompts. - Facilitates rapid prototyping and iteration of campaign content. 	<p>“Sometimes, if I’m stuck creatively, ChatGPT can quickly generate multiple ideas that I wouldn’t have thought of myself.”</p>
	Improved Decision Making and Strategizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides real-time analytics and insights for better targeting. - Helps identify trends and patterns for long-term planning. 	<p>“AI handles large datasets effortlessly, allowing us to quickly surface</p>

			insights that would otherwise take much longer to find manually.”
Limitations and Risks of AI	Technological Constraints and Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk of factual inaccuracies or ‘hallucinated’ content from AI outputs. - AI often misinterprets brand tone or lacks context awareness. 	“Sometimes, the information is inaccurate... like, it might list companies based in the wrong country. Double-checking might take a few extra minutes, but it’s worth it to avoid bigger mistakes down the line”
	Risks for Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over-reliance on AI may suppress original human ideas and creative confidence. - Generated content often lacks emotional depth and contextual relevance. 	“I realized I was limiting my own creativity and originality. Now, I deliberately keep some distance, so I generate my own ideas instead of copying what’s already out there.”
Ethical Challenges of AI	Misinformation and the Limits of AI Accuracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content may include fabricated or misleading facts without verification. - Erodes trust and risks brand damage if unchecked. 	“Double-checking might take a few extra minutes, but it’s worth it to avoid bigger mistakes down the line. I’d never trust

<p>Human Creativity and AI: New skills for the future</p>	<p>AI- Human Collaboration</p>	<p>-Requires skill in crafting effective prompts and refining AI outputs. - Human input remains essential for tone, nuance, and authenticity.</p>	<p>“Ideally, AI would help when I’m stuck or lacking inspiration— maybe something that integrates directly with Google Docs or Word and jumps in when I need help, but always keeps the process collaborative, so I can still bring in my own ideas and voice.”</p>
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Appendix E: AI Usage Declaration

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Declaration Page: Use of Generative AI Tools in Course Assignments

Student Information

Name: Pasang Dorjee Lama

Student ID: 695027

Course Name: Master's Thesis Project

Supervisor: Dr. Selma Toktas

Date: 25th June 2025

Declaration:

Acknowledgment of Generative AI Tools

I acknowledge that I am aware of the existence and functionality of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, which are capable of producing content such as text, images, and other creative works autonomously.

GenAI use would include, but not limited to:

- Generated content (e.g., ChatGPT)
- Writing improvements, including grammar and spelling corrections (e.g., Grammarly)
- Research task assistance (e.g., finding survey scales, qualitative coding, debugging code)

Prompts (on ChatGPT) include:

- "Can you please summarise the key arguments presented in this paper?"
- "How can I draw connection between these three papers?"
- "Could you explain the main theoretical framework used in this article in simple terms?"
- "Help me synthesise the findings from these articles to outline common themes."
- "How can I improve the arguments presented in this passage that links the discussion of TAM to the following section on AI's impact in marketing?"
- "Provide a concise overview of the ethical challenges discussed in the selected sources."
- "How does this research relate to concepts like surveillance capitalism or dataveillance?"
- "How can I incorporate Foucault's Panopticon theory and Zuboff's surveillance capitalism into a discussion about AI, privacy, and marketing?"

I declare that I have used generative AI tools, specifically Grammarly and ChatGpt, in the process of creating parts or components of my course assignment. The purpose of using these tools was to aid in generating content or assisting with specific aspects of the assignment.

I declare that I have NOT used any generative AI tools and that the assignment concerned is my original work.

Signature: [digital signature]

Date of Signature: [Date of Submission]

Extent of AI Usage

I confirm that while I utilized generative AI tools to aid in content creation, the majority of the intellectual

effort, creative input, and decision-making involved in completing the assignment were undertaken by me. I have enclosed the prompts/logging of the GenAI tool use in an appendix.

Ethical and Academic Integrity

I understand the ethical implications and academic integrity concerns related to the use of AI tools in coursework. I assure that the AI-generated content was used responsibly, and any content derived from these tools has been appropriately cited and attributed according to the guidelines provided by the instructor and the course. I have taken necessary steps to distinguish between my original work and the AI-generated contributions. Any direct quotations, paraphrased content, or other forms of AI-generated material have been properly referenced in accordance with academic conventions.

By signing this declaration, I affirm that this declaration is accurate and truthful. I take full responsibility for the integrity of my assignment and am prepared to discuss and explain the role of generative AI tools in my creative process if required by the instructor or the Examination Board. I further affirm that I have used generative AI tools in accordance with ethical standards and academic integrity expectations.

Signature: PasangDorjeeLama

Date of Signature: 25th June 2025