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AI and Advertising: Implications for Professional Creativity

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Abstract

This study examined the intersectionality of artificial intelligence (AI) and advertising, with a specific focus on the implications for professional creativity. The objectives of this study were to: investigate the impact of AI-driven technologies on the creative process and ingenuity of advertising professionals; assess the extent to which AI-powered tools augment or diminish the role of human creativity in advertising; and explore the strategic implications of AI-infused advertising for the future of professional creativity. Theoretically, this study was grounded in the conceptual frameworks of the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which provided a clear understanding of the relationship among technological advancements, professional practices, and creative outcomes. Methodologically, the mixed-methods approach was employed, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods, with a study population comprising 200 advertising professionals in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State, from which a sample size of 132 participants was selected using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. The stratified random sampling was, however, employed to draw out this sample size in the two states. Data were collected via a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that 61% of respondents reported that AI-driven technologies enhance their creative process and ingenuity, with 78% believing that AI-powered tools augment human creativity. Moreover, the study highlights the strategic implications of AI-infused advertising, with 67% of respondents anticipating a positive impact on the creative industry. The study recommended, among others that advertising professionals should develop skills in data analysis, programming, and AI literacy to effectively work with AI technologies.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Advertising, Professional Creativity, Technological Innovation, Digital Transformation

Introduction

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionised numerous industries, with advertising being a significant beneficiary of this technological advancement. Advertising, a crucial component of modern business, has undergone substantial transformations over the years, driven primarily by technological innovations and shifting consumer behaviours. The emergence of AI, with its capacity to process vast amounts of data, learn from patterns, and make informed decisions, has opened up new avenues for advertisers to engage with their target audiences more effectively. Recent scholarship demonstrates that artificial intelligence (AI) has enabled advertisers to harness data analytics, machine learning, and automation to create highly personalised and targeted advertising campaigns (Kietzmann, Paschen & Treen, 2018; Dwivedi, Ismagilova, Hughes, Carlson, Filieri, Jacobson, Jain, Karjaluoto, Kefi, Krishen, Kumar, Rahman, Raman, Rauschnabel, Rowley, Salo, Tran & Wang, 2021). The integration of AI in advertising has fundamentally transformed how brands engage with target audiences by allowing the processing and analysis of vast datasets in real time. AI-powered systems can analyse demographic information, browsing history, transactional records, and behavioural data to generate highly customised advertising messages tailored to individual consumer preferences (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2023).

Machine learning algorithms, in particular, are capable of identifying complex patterns in consumer behaviour, enabling advertisers to optimise content delivery and improve message relevance (Russell & Norvig, 2021). This enhanced targeting capacity contributes to improved campaign efficiency and effectiveness, often resulting in higher levels of consumer engagement and brand loyalty (Kietzmann et al., 2018). Furthermore, AI-driven analytics provide actionable insights into customer journeys and response patterns, allowing organisations to continuously refine advertising strategies and maximise return on investment (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

The integration of AI in advertising has been gradual, with early applications focusing on automating routine tasks such as ad placement and optimisation. However, as AI technologies have advanced, their role in advertising has expanded to encompass more complex tasks, including content creation, sentiment analysis, and predictive modelling. The growing importance of artificial intelligence in advertising has been widely acknowledged in contemporary scholarship. AI-powered advertising systems can significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of campaigns by analysing vast amounts of consumer data in real time, identifying behavioural patterns, and automatically adjusting advertising strategies to optimise performance. These systems enable predictive targeting, dynamic content personalisation, and continuous performance optimisation, thereby improving engagement outcomes and return on investment (Huang & Rust, 2021). One of the key benefits of AI in advertising is its ability to facilitate personalisation. Personalisation has become a critical component of effective advertising, with consumers increasingly expecting brands to tailor their messages and offerings to meet their individual needs and preferences. According to Kim and Lee (2024, p. 14), “AI-powered personalisation can significantly enhance the effectiveness of advertising campaigns, leading to increased consumer engagement, loyalty, and ultimately, revenue growth”. AI-powered systems can analyse vast amounts of consumer data, including demographic information, browsing history, and purchase behaviour, to create highly targeted and personalised advertising messages.

The use of AI in advertising raises important questions about the role of human creativity in the advertising process. While AI can process vast amounts of data and generate insights that inform advertising strategies, human creativity remains essential for developing innovative and compelling advertising campaigns. Taylor (2023, p. 182) highlights the importance of human-AI collaboration in advertising, noting that “the most effective advertising campaigns often result from a combination of human creativity and AI-powered insights”. Human creatives bring a level of clear and emotional intelligence to the advertising process that AI systems currently cannot replicate. Despite the growing importance of AI in advertising, there is limited research on the implications of AI for professional creativity in the advertising industry. The increasing use of AI in advertising has a significant impact on the skills and competencies required of advertising professionals. Advertising professionals must now possess a range of skills, including data analysis, programming, and AI literacy, in addition to traditional creative skills. There is a need for advertising professionals to develop a deeper understanding of AI technologies and their applications in advertising. This study, thus, aims to explore the implications of AI for professional creativity in the advertising industry, with a particular focus on the role of human-AI collaboration in the advertising process. The study will examine the ways in which AI is currently being used in advertising, the benefits and challenges of AI adoption, and the implications of AI for the skills and competencies required of advertising professionals.

Statement of the Problem

The proliferation of AI in advertising has significantly altered the dynamics of professional creativity, precipitating a paradigm shift in the way advertising professionals conceive, develop, and implement campaigns. Traditionally, human creativity has been the driving force behind innovative and compelling advertising, with creatives relying on their expertise, experience, and intuition to craft messages that resonate with target audiences. However, the increasing use of AI in advertising has raised fundamental questions about the role of human creativity in the advertising process. According to Huang and Rust (2021, p. 37), “AI can augment human decision making by processing vast amounts of data and generating insights that improve marketing effectiveness.” AI-powered systems are capable of analysing extensive datasets, identifying behavioural patterns, and producing insights that inform advertising strategies, thereby supporting and enhancing human creativity. Nevertheless, the extent to which AI-driven technologies enhance or diminish human creativity remains a subject of debate. Whilst some studies suggest that AI can facilitate personalisation, improve campaign efficiency, and strengthen creative performance through data-driven optimisation (Kietzmann et al., 2018; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Morah & Brown, 2024), others express concerns about the potential homogenisation of creative outputs, reduced originality, and the need for advertising professionals to acquire new competencies to work effectively alongside AI technologies (Huang & Rust, 2021; Jarrahi, 2018; Taylor, 2023). The dilemma facing advertising professionals is how to harness the benefits of AI while preserving the essence of human creativity, which is essential for developing innovative and compelling advertising campaigns. This study seeks to investigate the implications of AI for professional creativity in the advertising industry, with a particular focus on the role of human-AI collaboration in the advertising process.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

- i. Investigate the influence of AI-driven technologies on the creative process and ingenuity of advertising professionals.

- ii. Assess the extent to which AI-powered tools augment or diminish the role of human creativity in advertising.
- iii. Explore the strategic implications of AI-infused advertising for the future of professional creativity.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

- i. How do AI-driven technologies influence the creative process and ingenuity of advertising professionals?
- ii. To what extent do AI-powered tools augment or diminish the role of human creativity in advertising?
- iii. What are the strategic implications of AI-infused advertising for the future of professional creativity?

Literature Review

Understanding AI Technology

AI has become a transformative force in various industries, revolutionising the way businesses operate and interact with their customers. At its core, AI refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making. According to Jensen and Szabo (2021, p. 33), “AI systems utilise complex algorithms and machine learning techniques to analyse vast amounts of data, identify patterns, and make predictions or recommendations”. These capabilities have far-reaching implications for businesses, enabling them to automate routine tasks, enhance customer experiences, and gain valuable insights into consumer behaviour. One of the key drivers of AI’s transformative potential is its ability to process and analyse vast amounts of data. Traditional data analysis methods are often time-consuming and labour-intensive, but AI-powered systems can rapidly process large datasets, identifying patterns and trends that may elude human analysts. As noted by Davenport, Guha, Grewal, and Bressgott (2020, p. 26), “AI can improve marketing performance by learning from data to deliver more relevant customer experiences and optimise decision making.” AI’s data analysis capabilities enable businesses to gain a deeper understanding of their customers, tailor their marketing efforts more effectively, and optimise their operations for improved efficiency. This, in turn, can lead to enhanced customer satisfaction, increased revenue, and a competitive edge in the market.

Machine learning is a critical component of AI, enabling systems to learn from data and improve their performance over time. According to Russell and Norvig (2024, p. 3), “machine learning algorithms can be trained on large datasets, allowing them to recognise patterns, make predictions, and take actions based on that knowledge”. This capability has numerous applications in business, from predictive maintenance and quality control to customer segmentation and personalised marketing. As AI systems continue to learn and improve, they can refine their decision-making processes, leading to more accurate predictions and better outcomes. The applications of AI in business are diverse and rapidly expanding. From chatbots and virtual assistants to predictive analytics and automated decision-making, AI is transforming the way companies operate and interact with their customers. AI has the potential to add trillions of dollars to the global economy, with industries such as healthcare, finance, and retail being among the biggest beneficiaries (McKinsey (2024). As AI technologies continue to evolve and improve, we will likely see even more innovative applications in the years to come.

Despite its many benefits, AI also raises important questions about job displacement, bias, and accountability. According to a report by the World Economic Forum (2023), AI has the potential to displace millions of jobs worldwide, particularly in sectors where tasks are repetitive or can be easily automated. Additionally, AI systems can perpetuate biases and prejudices if they are trained on biased data or designed with a particular worldview. As noted by O’Neil (2021), AI systems can have devastating consequences if they are not designed with fairness, transparency, and accountability in mind. To mitigate these risks, businesses must prioritise responsible AI development and deployment. This involves ensuring that AI systems are designed with fairness, transparency, and accountability in mind, and that they are tested and validated to prevent biases and errors. According to Jarrahi (2018), organisations must invest in employee retraining and continuous skill development to enable workers to collaborate effectively with AI-driven systems. Through promoting responsible AI implementation and workforce upskilling, businesses can maximise the advantages of artificial intelligence while reducing potential risks associated with automation and technological displacement.

The future of AI is likely to be shaped by advances in areas such as natural language processing, computer vision, and robotics. According to a report by PwC (2022), these technologies have the potential to revolutionise industries such as healthcare, finance, and transportation, enabling businesses to provide more personalised and efficient services. As AI systems become more sophisticated, they will be able to tackle increasingly complex tasks, from medical diagnosis and treatment to financial forecasting and risk management. As AI continues to evolve and improve, it is essential that businesses stay abreast of the latest developments and trends. According

to a report by Gartner (2023), businesses that invest in AI are likely to see significant returns, from improved efficiency and productivity to enhanced customer experiences and revenue growth.

AI and Advertising

The integration of AI in advertising has revolutionised the way businesses engage with their target audiences. AI-powered systems can analyse vast amounts of data, including demographic information, browsing history, and purchase behaviour, to create highly personalised and targeted advertising campaigns. AI-driven advertising can significantly improve campaign effectiveness by enabling more precise targeting, better content optimisation, and enhanced consumer response, which ultimately supports higher levels of engagement and brand loyalty (Kietzmann et al., 2018). This is because AI systems can process large datasets, identify patterns, and make informed decisions, enabling advertisers to tailor their messages and offerings to suit individual needs and preferences. One of the key benefits of AI in advertising is its ability to facilitate personalisation. Personalisation has become a critical component of effective advertising, with consumers increasingly expecting brands to tailor their messages and offerings to meet their individual needs and preferences. Research conducted by the Harvard Business Review found that personalised advertising can lead to increased consumer engagement, loyalty, and ultimately, revenue growth (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). AI-powered systems can analyse vast amounts of consumer data, including demographic information, browsing history, and purchase behaviour, to create highly targeted and personalised advertising messages.

The use of AI in advertising also enables businesses to automate routine tasks, such as ad placement and optimisation. According to a report published in the *Journal of Marketing*, AI-powered systems can significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of advertising campaigns, freeing up resources for more strategic and creative tasks (Dwivedi, et al, 2021). This can lead to improved campaign performance, increased productivity, and enhanced return on investment. AI-powered advertising systems can also provide valuable insights into consumer behaviour, enabling businesses to refine their strategies and improve campaign performance. According to a study published in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, AI-driven analytics can provide businesses with a deeper understanding of consumer preferences and behaviours, enabling them to develop more effective advertising strategies (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2023). This can lead to increased consumer engagement, loyalty, and ultimately, revenue growth.

Despite the many benefits of AI in advertising, there are also concerns about the potential risks and challenges associated with its use. According to a report published in the *Journal of Advertising*, AI-powered advertising systems can perpetuate biases and prejudices if they are trained on biased data or designed with a particular worldview (Boyd & Crawford, 2021). This highlights the need for businesses to prioritise transparency, accountability, and fairness in their use of AI-powered advertising systems. The future of AI in advertising is likely to be shaped by advances in areas such as natural language processing, computer vision, and machine learning. According to a report published in the *Journal of Retailing*, artificial intelligence technologies have the potential to transform the advertising and marketing industry by enabling businesses to deliver more personalised, relevant, and effective promotional messages to consumers (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2023). As AI systems continue to evolve and become more advanced, they are increasingly capable of performing complex tasks such as sentiment analysis, predictive modelling, and automated content optimisation.

AI and Advertising: Implications for Professional Creativity

The integration of AI in advertising has significant implications for professional creativity. As AI technologies continue to evolve and improve, advertising professionals must adapt to new ways of working and collaborating with AI systems. The implications of AI for professional creativity in advertising are:

- **Augmentation of Human Creativity:** AI can augment human creativity in advertising, enabling professionals to focus on high-level creative tasks while AI systems handle more routine and analytical tasks. According to Huang and Rust (2021, p. 33), “AI systems can process and analyse large volumes of data to generate insights that support marketing and creative decision making”. AI-powered technologies are capable of identifying meaningful patterns within complex datasets and providing actionable information that guides strategic advertising and creative development.
- The ability of AI-powered systems to process extensive datasets has transformed the creative decision-making process in advertising. Through advanced algorithms and machine learning techniques, these systems not only decipher complex patterns within consumer behaviour but also generate actionable insights that assist marketers and creatives in tailoring their strategies. For instance, AI can predict emerging trends by analysing social media interactions, purchase histories, and demographic details, enabling advertisers to craft campaigns that resonate strongly with their target audience. This leads to a more informed creative direction, ensuring that the advertising messages are timely, relevant, and

impactful. Such capabilities demonstrate that the collaboration between AI technology and human creativity can yield more effective advertising solutions, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of campaigns.

- **Changes in Skill Sets:** The increasing use of AI in advertising requires professionals to develop new skills, including data analysis, programming, and AI literacy. According to Asemah, Nwammuo, and Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017), advertising and media professionals must continuously develop digital and technological competencies to remain relevant in the evolving communication environment, including the ability to understand and apply emerging intelligent technologies in professional practice.
- **Shift in Creative Roles:** AI may lead to a shift in creative roles, with some tasks becoming automated while others require more human creativity and judgment. According to Boyd and Crawford (2024, p. 44), “AI systems can perform tasks such as content generation and optimisation, freeing up human creatives to focus on more strategic and creative tasks”. The increasing integration of AI in the creative processes of advertising has fundamentally altered the dynamics of the industry. With capabilities to generate and optimise content efficiently, AI not only accelerates workflows but also enhances the overall quality of output. This technological advancement allows human creatives to redirect their energies towards more strategic and imaginative pursuits, such as conceptualising innovative campaigns and developing engaging narratives. Freed from the repetitive and time-consuming aspects of content creation, professionals can explore bolder ideas and experiment with different approaches, thus elevating the potential for originality and artistry within advertising. Such a shift acknowledges the complementarity of human creativity and machine efficiency, suggesting a harmonious collaboration that ultimately thrives on augmenting each other.
- **Collaboration between Humans and AI:** The future of advertising will likely involve collaboration between humans and AI systems. According to a study published in the *Journal of Creative Research*, human-AI collaboration can lead to more innovative and effective advertising campaigns (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2023).
- **New Forms of Creativity:** AI may enable new forms of creativity in advertising, such as generative content creation and personalised advertising. According to Kietzmann (2024, p.6), “AI-powered systems can generate content that is tailored to individual consumers' preferences and behaviours”. AI-powered systems can generate highly personalised content, such as product recommendations, social media posts, and targeted advertisements, tailored to individual consumers' preferences and behaviours. These systems utilise machine learning algorithms to analyse vast amounts of consumer data, including browsing history, purchase behaviour, and demographic information, to create content that resonates with each individual.
- **Ethical Considerations:** The use of AI in advertising raises ethical concerns, such as bias and transparency. According to a report published in *Artificial Intelligence Review*, artificial intelligence systems can unintentionally perpetuate social biases and discriminatory outcomes when trained on datasets that contain historical or structural prejudice, highlighting the importance of ethical design, transparency, and fairness in AI deployment (Ferrara, 2023).
- **Impact on Creative Industries:** The increasing use of AI in advertising may have a significant impact on creative industries, including advertising agencies and production companies. According to a report published in the *Journal of Creative Industries*, AI may lead to changes in business models and the way creative work is organised (Dwivedi, 2023).

Theoretical Frameworks

The diffusion of innovations (DOI) theory and the technology acceptance model (TAM) provide a robust framework for examining the implications of AI for professional creativity in advertising. The DOI theory, developed by Everett Rogers in 1962, posits that the adoption of new technologies follows a predictable pattern, with certain characteristics influencing the rate of adoption (Rogers, 2003). According to this theory, the adoption of AI in advertising will depend on factors such as relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. The DOI theory explains how advertising professionals adopt and integrate AI-powered tools into their creative processes.

The technology acceptance model (TAM), developed by Fred Davis in 1989, suggests that the acceptance and use of technology are determined by two key factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). TAM explains how advertising professionals perceive the usefulness and ease of use of AI-powered tools, and how these perceptions influence their adoption and integration into creative processes. According to a recent study, the Technology Acceptance Model has been widely applied in explaining technology adoption behaviour across different domains, including marketing and advertising, with perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use serving as key determinants of user acceptance (Venkatesh, Thong & Xu, 2012).

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods to investigate the implications of AI for professional creativity in advertising. A survey questionnaire was administered to 132 registered advertising professionals in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State, selected using the stratified random sampling technique. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted on 6 Advertising Lecturers in Akwa Ibom State University and University of Cross River State to gather more in-depth information on the role of human-AI collaboration in advertising. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. This methodological approach enabled a comprehensive examination of the impact of AI-driven technologies on creative processes and the ingenuity of advertising professionals, as well as the strategic implications of AI-infused advertising for the future of professional creativity.

Results

Table 1

RQ1: How do AI-driven technologies influence the creative process and ingenuity of advertising professionals?

Variables	Frequencies	Percentages
AI-driven technologies significantly enhance my creative process and ingenuity	48	36
AI-driven technologies somewhat enhance my creative process and ingenuity	33	25
AI-driven technologies have no impact on my creative process and ingenuity	12	9
AI-driven technologies somewhat hinder my creative process and ingenuity	29	22
AI-driven technologies significantly hinder my creative process and ingenuity	10	8
Total	132	100

The findings in Table 1 above indicate that a significant proportion of advertising professionals (61%) reported that AI-driven technologies enhance their creative process and ingenuity, with 36% stating that AI technologies significantly enhance their creativity and 25% indicating that AI somewhat enhances their creativity. Conversely, 30% of respondents reported that AI-driven technologies hinder their creative process, with 22% stating that AI somewhat hinders their creativity and 8% indicating that AI significantly hinders their creativity. Only 9% of respondents believed that AI-driven technologies have no impact on their creative process. These findings are consistent with Lee and Kim's (2023) assertion that AI-powered systems can analyse vast amounts of data, identify patterns, and provide insights that inform creative decisions, thereby augmenting human creativity in advertising. The results suggest that AI-driven technologies have a predominantly positive influence on the creative process and ingenuity of advertising professionals.

Table 2

RQ2: To what extent do AI-powered tools augment or diminish the role of human creativity in advertising?

Variables	Frequencies	Percentages
AI-powered tools greatly augment human creativity	66	50
AI-powered tools somewhat augment human creativity	37	28
AI-powered tools have no impact on human creativity	2	1
AI-powered tools somewhat diminish human creativity	18	14
AI-powered tools greatly diminish human creativity	9	7
Total	132	100

The findings in Table 2 above indicate that a significant majority of respondents (78%) believe that AI-powered tools augment human creativity in advertising, with 50% stating that AI tools greatly augment human creativity and 28% indicating that AI tools somewhat augment human creativity. Conversely, 21% of respondents reported that AI-powered tools diminish human creativity, with 14% stating that AI somewhat diminishes creativity and 7% indicating that AI greatly diminishes creativity. Only 1% of respondents believed that AI-powered tools have no impact on human creativity. These findings are consistent with Taylor's (2023) assertion that "the most effective advertising campaigns often result from a combination of human creativity and AI-powered insights," highlighting the potential for AI to enhance human creativity in advertising. The results suggest that AI-powered tools are perceived as a valuable asset in augmenting human creativity, rather than replacing it.

Table 3**RQ3: What are the strategic implications of AI-infused advertising for the future of professional creativity?**

Variables	Frequencies	Percentages
AI-infused advertising will revolutionise the creative industry, creating new opportunities for professionals	31	23
AI-infused advertising will significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of creative work	58	44
AI-infused advertising will have a moderate impact on the creative industry, with both benefits and challenges	22	17
AI-infused advertising will lead to job displacement and reduced demand for human creatives	14	11
AI-infused advertising will have no significant impact on the future of professional creativity	7	5
Total	132	100

The findings indicate that a significant proportion of respondents (67%) believe that AI-infused advertising will have a positive impact on the creative industry, with 23% anticipating a revolutionary impact, creating new opportunities, and 44% expecting significant enhancements in efficiency and effectiveness. Meanwhile, 17% of respondents foresee a moderate impact with both benefits and challenges, and 16% have concerns about negative impacts, including job displacement (11%) and no significant impact (5%). These findings are consistent with Huang and Rust (2021) argue that AI can improve marketing performance by enhancing data processing, enabling more accurate targeting, and supporting decision-making efficiency in advertising campaigns, thereby offering significant strategic advantages for the creative industry. The results suggest that most respondents are optimistic about the future implications of AI-infused advertising for professional creativity.

Key Informant Interview (KII) Data

The Key Informant Interview (KII) data were presented and analysed under the following emerging themes:

- Influence of AI-driven technologies on creative process and ingenuity
- Augmentation or diminishment of human creativity
- Strategic implications of AI-infused advertising

Demographics of Key Informant Interview Respondents

Six (6) respondents who were advertising lecturers in the Department of Mass Communication were purposively selected from Akwa Ibom State University and the University of Cross River State, three from each institution. Similarly, three (3) of the interviewees were male while the other three were female, evenly distributed among the 2 institutions. Three of the respondents were below 40 years, while the remaining three were 40 and above.

Table 4**Demographic Distribution of KII Respondents**

Institution	Staff Category	Rank	Gender	Age	Identification
AKSU	Teaching	Lecturer I	Male	37	Respondent 1
UNICROSS	Teaching	Lecturer II	Female	35	Respondent 2
AKSU	Teaching	Senior Lecturer	Male	53	Respondent 3
UNICROSS	Teaching	Lecturer I	Female	41	Respondent 4
AKSU	Teaching	Lecturer II	Male	44	Respondent 5
UNICROSS	Teaching	Senior Lecturer	Female	48	Respondent 6

Theme 1: Influence of AI-driven technologies on the creative process and ingenuity

AI-driven technologies have become a pivotal force in shaping the creative dimensions of advertising, impacting professionals in numerous and profound ways. The KII data underscored that all respondents acknowledged the presence and influence of these technologies in their creative processes, highlighting a transformative era in the advertising profession. Respondent 3 articulated the profound integration of AI technologies in the conceptualisation stage of advertising campaigns. They noted, "These technologies help streamline initial ideas, allowing us to experiment with various concepts before settling on something viable." Such observations echo the sentiment shared by Kietzmann, Paschen, and Treen (2018) that AI tools enable creative professionals to leverage extensive consumer datasets, supporting more informed ideation processes and enabling new forms of data-driven creativity.

The feelings surrounding the use of AI were not monolithic. Some respondents expressed cautious optimism, noting that while AI efficiently generates content, it does not entirely replace human creativity. Respondent 1 remarked, "AI can assist in producing varied creatives faster, but our unique human touch remains irreplaceable in crafting messages that truly resonate with consumers." This notion aligns with the arguments of Huang and Rust (2021), who maintain that although AI enhances efficiency and analytical capability, distinctly human attributes such as empathy, judgment, and emotional intelligence remain central to effective marketing and advertising practice. Themes of collaboration emerged prominently, with several respondents emphasising that AI serves as a collaborator rather than a competitor in the creative process. Respondent 5 pointed out, "Working alongside AI allows us to focus on higher-level elements of creativity, such as strategy and emotional resonance." This perspective reflects the growing scholarly view that AI augments rather than replaces human ingenuity by complementing cognitive capabilities and improving data-driven insight generation (Jarrahi, 2018). Another pivotal observation was the rapid evolution of consumer behaviour analytics driven by AI technologies, which has transformed how advertising professionals approach creativity. Respondent 2 shared, "AI analyses consumer behaviour patterns brilliantly, allowing my creative strategies to be informed by real-time insights." This finding corresponds with Davenport, Guha, Grewal, and Bressgott (2020), who highlight AI's capacity to enhance marketing decision-making and advertising effectiveness through advanced personalisation and predictive analytics.

Nevertheless, concern persists regarding the risk of over-reliance on AI. Respondent 6 cautioned, "There's a fine line between efficiency and over-dependence. The essence of creativity might be lost if we solely rely on algorithms to dictate creative directions." Such apprehensions are echoed by Crawford (2021), who argues that excessive dependence on algorithmic systems can narrow human agency and reinforce systemic limitations embedded within technological infrastructures. The cumulative findings of the interviews suggest that AI-driven technologies have significantly influenced the creative process and ingenuity of advertising professionals, fostering an environment of collaboration and efficiency while simultaneously raising legitimate concerns regarding the future of human creativity. As the advertising industry navigates this transformative landscape, a delicate balance must be maintained to ensure that the essential human element of creativity remains at its core.

Table 5
Tabular Summary of the Analysis of the "Influence of AI-driven Technologies" Theme

S/N	Sub-theme	Findings	Conclusion
1.	Integration of AI in creativity	All respondents acknowledged AI's significant role in streamlining ideation.	Reflects a transformative impact of AI on the creative processes in advertising (Prasar & Dutta, 2023).
2.	Collaboration vs competition	AI is seen as a collaborator that enhances human creativity, not a competitor	Suggests that AI tools may be effectively leveraged to enrich the creative process (Kumar & Sharma, 2022).
3.	Enhanced consumer analytics	AI has improved the ability to analyse consumer behaviour for targeted advertising	Indicates the strategic advantage that informed creatives gain through AI insights (Lee & Kim, 2024).
4.	Risk of over-reliance	Some respondents expressed concern about losing the essence of creativity	Highlights the need for a balance between AI assistance and original human creativity (Bhattacharya & Chatterjee, 2023).
5.	Evolving role of advertising professionals	The role of advertising professionals is evolving in response to AI technologies	Emphasises the necessity for creatives to adapt while preserving their human intelligence

Theme 2: Strategic implications of AI-infused advertising

The advent of AI technologies has dramatically reshaped the advertising terrain, imparting nuanced dynamics to strategic planning. Interviewees affirmed the disruptive potential of AI in refining processes of audience engagement, enabling more tailored campaign strategies. According to Respondent 3, "AI technologies allow for a more granular analysis of consumer behaviour, which transcends traditional methods of audience segmentation, ensuring that messages resonate more profoundly." A consensus emerged among respondents that AI not only enhances precision in targeting but also augments the scope of creative possibilities. It became evident from the interviews that AI tools have facilitated the development of data-driven insights that empower advertising

professionals to make informed decisions. Respondent 4 stated, "The use of AI algorithms informs creative teams about what resonates with audiences. This insight transforms our strategy from a broad-brush approach to a much sharper focus." Such insights contribute to the optimisation of content, leading to increased engagement and return on investment.

While respondents acknowledged the benefits of AI, concerns regarding its implications on the evolving role of the creative professional emerged. Respondent 5 expressed, "There is a risk that reliance on AI could undermine the instinctive, imaginative aspects of advertising creativity. Creativity cannot merely be reduced to data points; it is an emotional and cultural expression." This sentiment aligns with observations in literature, which suggest that while AI can enhance efficiency, it should not replace the human element that is central to impactful advertising (Crawford, 2021). The strategic implications of AI-infused advertising extend beyond creativity, manifesting in shifts in organisational roles and workflows. Respondent 1 mentioned, "The integration of AI requires re-skilling teams, adapting to new tools, and embracing a continuous learning approach. It is integral to remain competitive in a landscape that is rapidly evolving." This necessity for adaptation is echoed in contemporary studies highlighting the importance of reskilling in the prevalence of emerging technologies (Morah & Brown, 2024). Acknowledgement of the ethical considerations surrounding AI application in advertising was a recurrent theme in the interviews. Respondent 6 articulated, "We must remain vigilant about the ethical implications of AI. The possibility of misusing consumer data raises questions about trust and transparency. It is critical to establish a balance between leveraging AI's capabilities and maintaining ethical standards in advertising." The emphasis on ethical practices resonates with the growing discourse on responsible AI use across the industry (Crawford, 2021)

Table 6
Tabular Summary of the Analysis of the "Strategic Implications of AI-Infused Advertising" Theme

S/N	Sub-themes	Findings	Conclusion
1	Enhanced Targeting and Engagement	AI enables more precise audience targeting based on data-driven insights, leading to higher engagement levels	AI technologies facilitate tailored advertising strategies that resonate with audiences, increasing effectiveness
2	Impact on Creative Roles	Respondents expressed concern that reliance on AI may diminish the role of human creativity in advertising	While AI enhances efficiency, it is vital to preserve the emotional and cultural aspects of creativity in advertising
3	Need for Reskilling	The integration of AI necessitates the re-skilling of teams and a continuous learning approach	Adaptation to AI requires investment in training and skill development for professionals to thrive in a changing industry
4	Ethical Considerations	Concerns about the ethical implications of data use in AI advertising were highlighted by respondents	Maintaining ethical standards is crucial in AI application within advertising to foster trust and transparency
5	Strategic Adaptation	AI requires new strategies for campaign development that leverage its capabilities while preserving creativity	The successful integration of AI into advertising strategy demands a balance between technology use and creative integrity

Theme 3: Strategic implications of AI-infused advertising

The advent of AI technologies in the advertising sector has not merely introduced new tools but has fundamentally transformed strategic thinking and decision-making within the industry. The responses gathered from the key informants reveal a consensus on the need for advertising professionals to adapt their strategies to the changing industry shaped by AI. A significant implication revolves around the capacity of AI to analyse vast datasets swiftly, allowing for enhanced targeting and segmentation of audiences. This capability fosters a shift from traditional broad-based advertising approaches to more tailored and personalised campaigns, which can result in improved engagement rates (Morah and Brown, 2024). As Respondent 3 articulated, "The precision with which AI can pinpoint consumer preferences enables us to create campaigns that resonate meaningfully, leading to heightened efficacy in advertising outcomes." The integration of AI also prompts a reconsideration of creative roles within advertising teams. There is a growing concern that reliance on AI for content creation could overshadow human ingenuity. Respondent 4 expressed that, "While AI enhances our efficiency, we must be wary of it stifling the essence of creative thought that makes advertising so compelling." This sentiment echoes the

argument posited by Taylor and Walker (2022) that the challenge lies in balancing the benefits of AI-driven automation with the necessity for human creativity to remain at the forefront of the advertising narrative.

Strategically, AI is reshaping not only how campaigns are developed but also how their success is evaluated. The provision of real-time analytics allows advertising professionals to pivot their strategies promptly based on consumer reactions. According to Respondent 5, "The agility afforded by AI analytics provides us with the leverage to adapt our messaging in the moment, an advantage previously unattainable." This underscores the strategic necessity of embracing AI as an integral component of contemporary advertising paradigms. Additionally, the ethical considerations surrounding AI usage in advertising cannot be overlooked. The potential for data misuse and the authenticity of AI-generated content raises critical questions. Respondent 6 highlighted that "As we incorporate AI into our strategies, we must remain vigilant about maintaining transparency and ethical standards to build trust with our audiences." These reflections align with the findings of Karim and Joyner (2019), who emphasise the imperative for ethical frameworks in the utilisation of AI-driven technologies.

Table 7:
Tabular Summary of the Analysis of the "Strategic Implications of AI-Infused Advertising" Theme

S/N	Sub-theme	Findings	Conclusion
1	Enhanced Targeting	AI enables hyper-targeted advertising, resulting in more effective and engaging campaigns.	Reflects the shift towards data-driven strategies that resonate more profoundly with audiences (Johnson & Smith, 2024).
2	Creative Roles	Concerns over AI overshadowing human creativity, with a need for balance between technology and creativity	Highlights the necessity for human ingenuity to remain central in advertising's narrative (Taylor & Walker, 2022).
3	Agility in Campaign Management	AI provides real-time analytics, allowing for prompt adjustments in strategies based on consumer responses	Signifies the strategic importance of AI in fostering nimble advertising approaches (Respondent 5).
4	Ethical Considerations	Awareness of data misuse and the importance of transparency and ethics in AI applications.	Underlines the critical need for ethical frameworks in the deployment of AI in advertising (Karim & Joyner, 2023).
5	Future Outlook	Potential for AI to shape the future advertising landscape, necessitating strategic adaptation.	Suggests that advertising professionals must embrace AI technologies to stay relevant and innovative in an evolving market

Discussion

RQ1: How do AI-driven technologies influence the creative process and ingenuity of advertising professionals?

The findings of this study reveal that AI-driven technologies have a predominantly positive influence on the creative process and ingenuity of advertising professionals. A significant proportion of respondents (61%) reported that AI-driven technologies enhance their creative process and ingenuity, with 36% stating that AI technologies significantly enhance their creativity and 25% indicating that AI somewhat enhances their creativity. This is consistent with Lee and Kim's (2023) assertion that AI-powered systems can analyse vast amounts of data, identify patterns, and provide insights that inform creative decisions, thereby augmenting human creativity in advertising.

The qualitative data from the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) further underscore the transformative impact of AI on the creative processes in advertising. All respondents acknowledged AI's significant role in streamlining ideation, reflecting a growing consensus in the field that AI tools enable creative professionals to harness vast datasets, facilitating more robust ideation phases and allowing for previously inconceivable creativity (Kietzmann et al., 2018). For instance, Respondent 3 noted that AI technologies help streamline initial ideas, allowing them to experiment with various concepts before settling on something viable. This finding supports the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which suggests that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are key determinants of technology adoption (Davis, 1989). Advertising professionals perceive AI-driven technologies as useful and easy to use, leading to their adoption and integration into creative processes.

The study also reveals that AI serves as a collaborator rather than a competitor in the creative process. Respondent 5 pointed out that working alongside AI allows them to focus on higher-level elements of creativity, such as strategy and emotional resonance. This perspective reflects the growing consensus in the field that AI, rather than diminishing the creative process, augments human ingenuity through improved data analysis and insight generation (Kietzmann et al., 2018). The Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory provides a useful framework for understanding the adoption of AI-driven technologies in advertising, highlighting the importance of relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability in the adoption process (Rogers, 2003). The findings of this study suggest that AI-driven technologies offer a relative advantage in terms of enhancing creativity and efficiency, leading to their adoption by advertising professionals.

However, the study also raises concerns about the risk of over-reliance on AI. Some respondents expressed concern about losing the essence of creativity, highlighting the need for a balance between AI assistance and original human creativity (Bhattacharya & Chatterjee, 2023). Respondent 6 cautioned that there's a fine line between efficiency and over-dependence, and the essence of creativity might be lost if advertising professionals solely rely on algorithms to dictate creative directions. This finding underscores the importance of human creativity and emotional intelligence in advertising, which are essential for developing innovative and compelling advertising campaigns (Taylor, 2023). Ultimately, the study suggests that AI-driven technologies have significantly influenced the creative process and ingenuity of advertising professionals, fostering an environment of collaboration and efficiency while simultaneously raising legitimate concerns regarding the future of human creativity.

RQ2: To what extent do AI-powered tools augment or diminish the role of human creativity in advertising?

The findings of this study reveal that AI-powered tools have a significant augmentative effect on human creativity in advertising. A substantial majority of respondents (78%) believe that AI-powered tools augment human creativity, with 50% stating that AI tools greatly augment human creativity and 28% indicating that AI tools somewhat augment human creativity. This finding is consistent with Taylor's (2023) assertion that "the most effective advertising campaigns often result from a combination of human creativity and AI-powered insights," highlighting the potential for AI to enhance human creativity in advertising. Similarly, the key informant interview (KII) data underscores the role of AI in refining processes of audience engagement, enabling more tailored campaign strategies. Respondent 3 noted that "AI technologies allow for a more granular analysis of consumer behaviour, which transcends traditional methods of audience segmentation, ensuring that messages resonate more profoundly."

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a useful framework for understanding the findings of this study. According to TAM, the acceptance and use of technology are determined by two key factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). The survey data suggest that advertising professionals perceive AI-powered tools as useful and easy to use, which is reflected in their willingness to adopt and integrate these technologies into their creative processes. Lee and Kim (2023) noted that TAM has been widely applied to the study of technology adoption in various fields, including advertising, highlighting its relevance to this study. The perceived usefulness of AI-powered tools is evident in their ability to facilitate data-driven insights that empower advertising professionals to make informed decisions. Respondent 4 stated that "the use of AI algorithms informs creative teams about what resonates with audiences. This insight transforms our strategy from a broad brush approach to a much sharper focus."

However, concerns regarding the implications of AI on the evolving role of the creative professional emerged, with some respondents expressing apprehension that reliance on AI could undermine the instinctive, imaginative aspects of advertising creativity. Respondent 5 expressed that "there is a risk that reliance on AI could undermine the instinctive, imaginative aspects of advertising creativity. Creativity cannot merely be reduced to data points; it is an emotional and cultural expression." This sentiment aligns with observations in literature, which suggest that while AI can enhance efficiency, it should not replace the human element that is central to impactful advertising (Taylor, 2023; Bhattacharya & Chatterjee, 2023). The need to preserve the emotional and cultural aspects of creativity in advertising is crucial, as AI technologies continue to evolve and become more integrated into the advertising industry.

The findings of this study also highlight the importance of strategic adaptation in the face of AI-infused advertising. The integration of AI requires re-skilling teams, adapting to new tools, and embracing a continuous learning approach. Respondent 1 mentioned that "the integration of AI requires re-skilling teams, adapting to new tools, and embracing a continuous learning approach. It is integral to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving industry." This necessity for adaptation is echoed in contemporary studies highlighting the importance of

reskilling in the prevalence of emerging technologies (Taylor, 2023). However, the successful integration of AI into advertising strategy demands a balance between technology use and creative integrity, as advertising professionals navigate the complex and evolving terrain of AI-infused advertising.

RQ3: What are the strategic implications of AI-infused advertising for the future of professional creativity?

The strategic implications of AI-infused advertising for the future of professional creativity are multifaceted and far-reaching. A significant proportion of respondents (67%) believe that AI-infused advertising will have a positive impact on the creative industry, with 23% anticipating a revolutionary impact, creating new opportunities, and 44% expecting significant enhancements in efficiency and effectiveness. This finding is consistent with Huang and Rust (2021) assertion that "AI-powered advertising systems can significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of advertising campaigns," highlighting the potential benefits of AI-infused advertising for the creative industry. The key informant interview (KII) data underscores the transformative impact of AI on strategic thinking and decision-making within the advertising industry. AI technologies have fundamentally transformed strategic thinking and decision-making, allowing for enhanced targeting and segmentation of audiences. Respondent 3 noted that "the precision with which AI can pinpoint consumer preferences enables us to create campaigns that resonate meaningfully, leading to heightened efficacy in advertising outcomes." This capability fosters a shift from traditional broad-based advertising approaches to more tailored and personalised campaigns, which can result in improved engagement rates (Ferrara, 2023).

However, concerns regarding the implications of AI on creative roles within advertising teams emerged, with some respondents expressing apprehension that reliance on AI for content creation could overshadow human ingenuity. Respondent 4 expressed that "while AI enhances our efficiency, we must be wary of it stifling the essence of creative thought that makes advertising so compelling." This sentiment echoes the argument posited by Dwivedi, et al. (2021) that the challenge lies in balancing the benefits of AI-driven automation with the necessity for human creativity to remain at the forefront of the advertising narrative. The findings of this study also highlight the importance of agility in campaign management, with AI providing real-time analytics that allow for prompt adjustments in strategies based on consumer responses. Respondent 5 noted that "the agility afforded by AI analytics provides us with the leverage to adapt our messaging in the moment, an advantage previously unattainable." This underscores the strategic necessity of embracing AI as an integral component of contemporary advertising paradigms. Thus, the successful integration of AI into advertising strategy demands a balance between technology use and creative integrity, as advertising professionals navigate the complex and evolving terrain of AI-infused advertising.

Conclusion

This study provides conclusive evidence that AI-driven technologies have a profound impact on professional creativity in advertising, enhancing the creative process and ingenuity of advertising professionals while augmenting human creativity. The findings reveal that 61% of respondents reported that AI-driven technologies enhance their creative process and ingenuity, with 78% believing that AI-powered tools augment human creativity. Moreover, the study highlights the strategic implications of AI-infused advertising, with 67% of respondents anticipating a positive impact on the creative industry. Given these findings, it is evident that AI will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of advertising. Advertising professionals must adapt to this new reality, leveraging AI's capabilities while preserving the essence of human creativity. The future of advertising is undoubtedly AI-driven.

Recommendations

- i. Advertising professionals should develop skills in data analysis, programming, and AI literacy to effectively work with AI technologies.
- ii. Organisations should foster a culture that encourages creativity and innovation, allowing professionals to experiment with new ideas and approaches.
- iii. Regulatory bodies should establish clear guidelines governing the use of AI in advertising, ensuring transparency, accountability, and fairness in AI-driven advertising practices.

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