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Phone: +(351) 217 903 024 | e-mail: administrador.repositorio@iscte-iul.pt
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“Yes, I am a Slave to AI”: Critical Perspectives of Generative AI in Co-creation and Problem-Solving

Abstract

Advances in technology have led to a new form of human interaction, especially with consumers. Faced with this change, companies have begun to adopt new practices and tools in a competitive environment. Thus, problem-solving in marketing is understood as a more dynamic form of interaction, with greater assertive impact, aimed at cost reduction, brand recognition, and increased sales. However, significant challenges are posed by advances in emerging technologies, particularly generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). This article synthesizes practitioners' and academics' perspectives on the use of GenAI by “slave” in the context of advertising. These perspectives build a narrative about organisations' dependence on AI for co-creation and problem-solving. This research offers a significant and timely contribution to marketing practitioners by highlighting challenges and concerns in the current context and by reinforcing that dependence on AI can have consequences, including limitations on critical thinking and on the human co-creation process.

Keywords

Artificial intelligence; GenAI; problem-solving; technology; marketing; co-creation.

1 Introduction

GenAI has become essential in collaborative processes within various sectors of society, including advertising and creative communication (Rivera et al., 2026). It has the potential to revolutionize learning experiences and outcomes (Pierce & Jiang, 2025), including the use of GenAI in advertising education through adaptive case studies (Kolesnyk & Van Berlo, 2026). GenAI also supports integrating humans and technology into customer service as an increasingly interactive experience (Liao, 2026; Saviano et al., 2025).

GenAI has been integrated into the marketing field to address challenges and develop content that enhances the customer experience (Li & Xiao, 2025). The integration of GenAI, particularly large language models (LLMs), represents an advance in marketing applications (Malik & Terzidis, 2025), increasingly promoted by practitioners as tools for inferring personality (Härtel, 2026) and for critically engaging in sustainable AI practices (Christensen, 2025).

LLMs have attracted the attention of key decision-makers as a potential approach to content production, but they often produce inaccurate outputs (Kim et al., 2026). While GenAI has been adopted for content creation, its application in marketing still requires closer empirical and conceptual scrutiny (Doherty et al., 2026).

From a management perspective, these concerns become especially salient when GenAI is adopted in a subordinate or "slave" mode, whereby human decision-makers defer responsibility, creativity, and critical reasoning to algorithmic outputs rather than using AI as a complementary decision-support tool (Branda & Ciccozzi, 2026).

The rapid evolution and application of GenAI tools are provoking intense debate about their potential to boost productivity, stimulate creativity, or disrupt employment (Baygi & Huysman, 2025). Therefore, the use of GenAI promises substantial productivity gains for organizations

and raises unresolved questions about data management and privacy for practitioners (Hernández-Tamurejo et al., 2025).

This study critically investigates the effects of GenAI tools on cognitive processes during problem solving, with an emphasis on cognitive offloading and intellectual autonomy.

Despite the growing body of research on GenAI, important gaps remain regarding human oversight and creative co-creation in marketing contexts. First, existing evidence suggests that decision quality improves when human intervention remains active in the process, indicating that the boundary between AI support and excessive dependence remains insufficiently clarified (Jia et al., 2025). Second, although research has demonstrated the usefulness of AI in producing textual outputs, less attention has been paid to how marketers can leverage AI in co-creating creative materials, including visual advertising, without displacing human judgment and originality (Zheng & Brintrup, 2025). Third, the literature continues to point to unresolved contextual factors surrounding adoption in marketing co-creation and decision-making (Seyfi et al., 2025), as well as persistent questions about how AI- and human-generated recommendations are evaluated in practice (De Cicco et al., 2025). Taken together, these gaps indicate the need for a more explicit discussion of how dependence on GenAI reshapes co-creation and problem-solving in marketing communication.

In response to these gaps, the study addresses the question: What are academics' and practitioners' opinions on the “slave use” of GenAI for co-creation and problem-solving? To answer the research question, this study adopts an opinion-based paper approach to examine emerging phenomena associated with the use of GenAI through a critical review of the literature, complemented by contributions from academics and marketing practitioners in Portugal and the United Kingdom (UK).

Rather than treating the experts’ views as primary empirical generalizations, the article uses them to develop a conceptual and normative discussion of GenAI dependence in marketing

communication. It presents reasoned arguments about the effects of GenAI on problem-solving and decision-making, while highlighting implications for intellectual autonomy and organizational practice. In this sense, the article aims to clarify concepts, identify critical implications, and support academic and practitioner debate on the responsible use of GenAI in creative and organizational contexts.

This research contributes to the emerging literature on GenAI in marketing communication by shifting the focus from adoption benefits to the quality of collaboration. Specifically, it explains how dependence on GenAI can undermine intellectual autonomy, weaken strategic judgment, and redistribute authorship and accountability in co-creation and problem-solving. The study, therefore, offers a conceptual account of when GenAI remains value-enhancing and when it becomes strategically corrosive (Kaartemo & Helkkula, 2025; Raisch & Krakowski, 2021).

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review of studies in the last five years on AI and GenAI in problem-solving and critical perspectives, identifying gaps and opportunities. Section 3 describes the methodology for collecting and analyzing opinions from academics and practitioners in Portugal and the UK. Section 4 presents the opinions obtained. Finally, Section 5 concludes and outlines future research.

2 Debate in existing literature

Tasks in academia, advertising, and brand management have changed as GenAI catalyzes the transition from individual human output to collaborative AI-human co-creation. Accelerated literature synthesis, increased creativity, rapid prototyping, and scalable personalized content are documented advantages reported by academics (Brynjolfsson et al., 2025; Dwivedi et al., 2023). However, a strong body of critical literature also emphasizes that these benefits come

with new hazards that shift human effort away from in-depth analysis toward prompt crafting and output curation (Kellogg et al., 2020).

Prompt engineering as a new literacy is a key theme. The quality and direction of AI outputs are mediated by prompt craft, since competent prompting frequently influences utility more than domain understanding (Robertson et al., 2024). Although quick mastery is elevated to a creative and epistemic skill by this technical gatekeeping, it also risks favoring surface-level manipulation over systematic rigor.

Generative technologies speed up drafting and synthesis in academic settings, but they can also conceal prejudice and illusions, encouraging "prompt-dependence" among users and early-career researchers (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Holmes et al., 2022). According to the literature, an overreliance on AI can shift labor from creating and testing claims to managing AI outputs, thereby compromising argumentative practice and critical evaluation (Raisch & Krakowski, 2021).

AI broadens the creative search field and enables personalized communication, yet it may homogenize voice and degrade emotional nuance by replicating prevailing patterns in training data (Lin, 2025). AI-assisted data storytelling can simplify complex facts and introduce bias when users lack statistical literacy, thereby affecting campaign interpretation and consumer trust (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025). Brand scholars warn that AI-mediated interactions can undermine authenticity and marginalize minority perspectives if training data reflects cultural disparities (Sahebi & Formosa, 2025).

Cross-domain research highlights automation biases and shifting expertise. Practitioners frequently defer to AI's perceived authority, constraining strategic search and lowering exploratory problem framing (Raisch & Krakowski, 2021). Kellogg et al. (2020) demonstrate how algorithmic systems can rearrange authority and expertise, prioritizing technical proficiency, such as promptcraft, over contextual judgment. According to Nisa et al. (2025)

and Passi et al. (2025), this reconfiguration can lead to prompt-dependent practitioners who excel at eliciting outputs but lack the skills necessary to analyze provenance, uncertainty, and ethical consequences.

GenAI has become an integral part of every organization. Ethical and governance questions are prevalent throughout the literature. Generative models incorporate biases and opaque training histories, resulting in responsibility gaps when AI influences decisions without obvious accountability (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Floridi et al., 2018). Scholars support hybrid intelligence designs that highlight provenance, uncertainty, and alternative framings. Moreover, institutional policies mandate transparent attribution of AI contributions (Holmes et al., 2022; Raisch & Krakowski, 2021).

Research has shown that institutions must promote literacy alongside critical approaches, and that organizations must implement governance frameworks that protect human judgment and ethical accountability (Papagiannidis et al., 2025). Without proper controls, AI-human co-creation can lead to increased dependence and undermine the ethical foundations of academic practice and brand practice.

The rapid diffusion of GenAI has profoundly reshaped organizational problem-solving, particularly in digital marketing and advertising contexts. GenAI systems, most notably LLMs, are increasingly deployed to support tasks such as campaign ideation, content generation, audience targeting, and strategic analysis (Campbell et al., 2025).

A central critique in recent scholarship concerns the erosion of human critical thinking in organizational problem-solving. GenAI systems generate outputs by probabilistically predicting patterns in large-scale training data rather than by employing contextual understanding, value-based reasoning, or strategic intent. This form of "synthetic fluency" can mask inaccuracies, biases, or misalignments, encouraging users to accept outputs uncritically (Amin et al., 2025). Dwivedi et al. (2023) similarly argue that the coherence and persuasive

quality of GenAI outputs may foster an illusion of competence, particularly among non-expert users.

Closely related to this issue are the phenomena of automation bias and organizational dependence. Automation bias refers to the tendency for individuals to overtrust algorithmic recommendations, even when these recommendations conflict with contextual knowledge or practitioners' expertise (Romeo & Conti, 2026). In fast-paced problem-solving environments, such as digital advertising agencies operating under performance pressure, AI-generated outputs are often prioritized for their speed, apparent authority, and low marginal cost. Rice et al. (2024) highlight that users frequently perceive GenAI systems as authoritative due to their linguistic sophistication and the breadth of their responses.

Ethical and accountability challenges further complicate the use of GenAI in organizational problem-solving (Ning et al., 2024). Generative models are trained on vast, opaque datasets that may embed historical biases, copyrighted material, or culturally insensitive assumptions. Papagiannidis et al. (2025) emphasize that responsibility gaps emerge when AI systems influence decision-making while accountability remains diffuse among developers, organizations, and end users. In advertising contexts, this raises critical questions regarding responsibility for misleading claims, discriminatory targeting, or reputational harm arising from AI-generated content.

Taken together, this literature suggests that the central issue is not GenAI adoption itself, but the form that human–AI collaboration takes in marketing communication. When GenAI remains augmentative, it can support ideation, analysis, and co-creation. However, when it begins to substitute for human evaluative judgment, creative reasoning, and accountability, collaboration becomes maladaptive, and decision quality may deteriorate. The present article builds on this tension by conceptualizing "slave use" as a problematic mode of human–AI

collaboration in which dependence reshapes marketing decision-making, weakens intellectual autonomy, and redistributes authorship and responsibility.

3 Methodology

This research employs a methodological stance grounded in an opinion-oriented document, commonly referred to in the literature as a perspective or position paper (Duan et al., 2019; Sarker, 2024).

This methodology is particularly appropriate in situations involving rapid technological advancements and conceptual uncertainties, such as the use of generative artificial intelligence in strategic decision-making. (De Fine Licht & De Fine Licht, 2020). This approach entails a critical examination of new phenomena, integrating a systematic review of pertinent literature, conceptual reasoning, and the formulation of research questions (Kolářová & Schmude, 2026). For this purpose, a thorough examination of the existing literature and the development of inquiries for scholars and industry experts in Portugal and the UK will yield informed perspectives on reliance on technology and the decision-making process. Experts were selected through purposive sampling, based on their relevant experience. Data collection, conducted through structured questionnaires, ensured accuracy and provided informed insights into technology, decision-making, and problem-solving.

This methodological strategy enables both mapping the current state of the field and developing conceptual insights and best practices derived from experts' experiences, thereby aligning with the primary purpose of opinion/position papers. It encourages academic discussion, challenges conventional beliefs, and highlights avenues for future research (Duan et al., 2019; Kolářová & Schmude, 2026; Sarker, 2024).

4 Panelist Critical Perspectives

The expert perspectives are discussed in light of existing literature to identify where they reinforce, refine, or extend current debates on GenAI dependence in marketing communication.

4.1 Over-reliance and deskilling

As GenAI capabilities evolve, increasing reliance generates psychological, ethical, and material risks (Bartikowski, 2026; Grewal et al., 2025). In advertising co-creation, over-reliance emerges when fluent GenAI output is treated as decision-ready, crowding out critique and reflective judgment. Filipa Fernandes (practitioner, Expansion Labs International) describes this tipping point as the moment when GenAI "stops provoking questions and only speeds up answers", aligning with a logic of dependence, in which convenience reduces users' motivation to engage in evaluative effort, thereby gradually weakening critical thinking (Bartikowski, 2026).

Academic perspectives converge around a valuation drift and its routinization. Abhishek Mishra (academic, IIM Indore) argues that over-reliance begins when practitioners treat AI-generated content as superior, suggesting that GenAI should be used to "finesse the content, not generate it", in line with Brüns and Meißner (2024). This drift is stabilized by organizational routines, including prompt lock-in, acceptance without critique, and speed-over-reflection norms that narrow exploration and displace judgment, as noted by Faizan Ali (academic at the University of Galway). Mohammad Soliman (academic, Sultan Qaboos University) adds an organizational trigger: "when humans default to AI for ideation and iteration", thereby optimizing for speed over insight and reducing strategic debate. Together, these views align with concerns that GenAI can inflate perceived quality through surface plausibility, thereby increasing the uncritical uptake of generic or misleading outputs when verification and domain expertise are insufficient (Little et al., 2026). These dynamic risks turn value co-creation into value co-destruction, resulting in homogenized ideas and weaker

differentiation (Yang et al., 2025). It may also paradoxically reduce empowerment, which diminishes when automation becomes excessive (Y. Feng & Sun, 2025).

A practical safeguard is therefore governance, not willpower. Implementing "human-first checkpoints" (Filipa Fernandes) preserves performance gains while maintaining human-centric evaluation (Lo Duca, 2025; Yang et al., 2025). This requires that humans frame the brief, develop at least one human-only concept before AI prompting, and provide a written critique explaining why the selected idea works and how it was improved beyond the GenAI draft (Faizan Ali; Mohammad Soliman).

4.2 Disclosure as a creative variable and AI aversion

Expert opinions on GenAI disclosure expose a strategic fault line between normalization and differentiation. This tension mirrors prior research showing polarization among advertising executives regarding disclosure and extends it by framing disclosure not only as a compliance issue, but also as a strategic and creative decision (Demsar et al., 2025). One perspective, articulated by António Reis Pereira (practitioner, Automóvel Clube de Portugal), posits that AI's ubiquity will render disclosure arguable as its use becomes the "new normal." This normalization paradigm, however, overlooks robust evidence of AI aversion, a phenomenon in which consumers instinctively distrust or reject algorithmic outputs, particularly in creative domains where they perceive them as uniquely human (Y. Feng, 2025). Research confirms that merely disclosing GenAI's role in content creation may reduce perceived brand authenticity and trigger negative reactions, directly challenging the assumption that audiences will passively accept full automation (Ali et al., 2025; Brüns & Meißner, 2024)

The alternative strategy, advocated by Lino Trinchini (academic, Nottingham Trent University), is to "embrace transparency and authenticity", with a focus on human creativity in the use of GenAI. This approach reframes disclosure from a compliance burden into a creative variable. However, recent studies suggest that transparency can attenuate the positive

effects of anthropomorphism, reducing the perceived social presence that fosters trust (Y. Wang et al., 2025). Therefore, a successful disclosure must do more than simply state that AI was used. It must strategically preserve human-like qualities.

A practical approach is the selective disclosure, in which firms use GenAI for tangible ad elements (e.g., backgrounds) but rely on human, trust-critical elements (e.g., service providers) and clearly communicate this division of labor (Grigsby et al., 2025). Implementing such a strategy may be complex in practice, but it can create opportunities for differentiation, positioning, and reduced reliance on GenAI as a premium service (Demsar et al., 2025). This human-centric framing, which positions AI as an assistive tool, mitigates aversion and enhances authenticity, transforming a potential risk into a source of competitive advantage by demonstrating that technology serves, rather than supplants, human creativity.

4.3 Co-creation identity and "who owns the voice"

GenAI co-creation converges on a shared position among experts, grounded in the principle that human accountability is non-negotiable. At the organizational (Anna Boechat, academic, Universidade Católica Portuguesa) and individual level (Patrícia Oliveira, practitioner, Observador; Raquel Carrilho, practitioner, Observador), AI is framed as an auxiliary tool, with humans as the ultimate gatekeepers. This view is supported by research showing that the onus for legal and ethical compliance rests with the agency or brand (Demsar et al., 2025), by philosophical accounts defining the human-AI creative relationship as AI-assisted production (Khan et al., 2026), and by consumer psychology. Because AI is perceived as lacking a mind, consumers attribute greater ownership of AI-generated content to the human user, making AI plagiarism seem less immoral than human plagiarism (Wei et al., 2025).

These expert views align with the literature that treats AI as assistive rather than autonomous, but they also expose an already noted tension in prior work. As GenAI becomes more deeply embedded in co-creation, attribution and accountability become harder to separate cleanly

(Khan et al., 2026; Little et al., 2026). The core issue is authenticity. Because AI lacks internal emotional states, its attempts to generate emotionally charged brand communications are perceived as inauthentic, thereby triggering moral disgust among consumers (Kirk & Givi, 2025). Furthermore, as AI's role shifts from assistant to collaborator, it actively shapes outputs in ways that make clean attribution difficult (Little et al., 2026). This attribution becomes more complex when AI is perceived as emotional, which increases its perceived ownership and blurs responsibility (Wei et al., 2025), creating tension between the legal willingness for a single author and the reality of distributed agency.

The challenge is to develop governance frameworks that uphold human accountability while acknowledging AI's active role. This requires a shift from a narrative of sole authorship to one of accountable stewardship. A practical approach is the CARE framework (Collaboration, Accountability, Responsiveness, Empowerment), which provides a structured, human-centric model for mitigating risks and implementing robust accountability systems (C. (Mitsu) Feng et al., 2024).

4.4 Ghostwriting remorse and the moral cost of dependence

The use of GenAI to ghostwrite emotionally meaningful communications imposes a dual moral cost. For senders, it can trigger guilt over perceived dishonesty, as it feels like "misrepresenting effort or voice" (Anish Yousaf, academic, Nottingham Trent University). This is empirically supported by research showing that using GenAI for heartfelt messages elicits guilt (Hass et al., 2026). The sense of responsibility is heightened because consumers attribute more ownership and credit to themselves for AI-assisted work (Khan et al., 2026; Wei et al., 2025). For recipients, AI-authored emotional communications are perceived as inauthentic because AI lacks internal emotional states, which can trigger moral disgust (Kirk & Givi, 2025).

Both experts propose a solution centered on reframing AI's role from a substitute to an assistant. Teresa Lopes (practitioner, Creative Gate) suggests using AI as a brainstorming

engine but not as a replacement for creative thinking, whereas Anish Yousaf argues for framing it as an assistive tool for articulation rather than for idea generation. These expert accounts reinforce existing evidence that the moral cost does not arise from GenAI use per se, but from the perception that authorship, effort, or emotional authenticity has been inappropriately displaced (Hass et al., 2026; Khan et al., 2026; Kirk & Givi, 2025). While unacknowledged ghostwriting elicits guilt, acknowledged assistance does not (Hass et al., 2026). Moreover, the negative effects of AI authorship are mitigated when AI edits only the communication (Kirk & Givi, 2025). The moral cost, therefore, stems from deception, not from the technology itself. Reducing this moral cost requires transparency and a commitment to co-creation. By clarifying that responsibility remains human and framing AI as a supportive tool, the perception of dishonesty is reduced. This involves designing GenAI tools that emphasize co-creation and encourage a culture of human oversight. The moral cost of dependence is not inherent in the technology, but in the failure to maintain transparency and accountability in its use.

4.5 Empowerment paradox in consumer co-creation

The integration of GenAI into consumer co-creation presents an empowerment paradox. In fact, it can either enhance or diminish consumer autonomy. Luís Martins (practitioner, Delta Cafés) argues that GenAI empowers when it "reinforces the consumer's choice and autonomy" but reduces empowerment if it creates "dependence or uncritical automatism". This expert view directly reinforces research showing that GenAI can enhance empowerment under human-led collaboration but reduce it when automation becomes excessive and displaces user control (Y. Feng & Sun, 2025). While human-led collaboration and communication with GenAI enhance empowerment, excessive reliance on AI for creation can lead to a loss of control and disempowerment. This paradox reflects a broader tension between AI as a tool for human augmentation versus human replacement (Hermann & Puntoni, 2025a).

Empowerment is maximized when GenAI functions as a "co-pilot, never as an autopilot" (Luís Martins), a notion that grounds on perceived controllability. Research shows that perceived controllability is a significant moderator of trust in GenAI. Even beneficial features, such as personalized recommendations, can fail to build trust if users perceive a lack of control (Singu et al., 2026). This requires maintaining "agentic empowerment", a term by Hermann and Puntoni (2025a) that refers to a sense of autonomy, control, and meaningfulness. When consumers lead the co-creation process, using GenAI as an assistive tool, their sense of competence and autonomy is enhanced (Y. Feng & Sun, 2025; (Jenny) Lin & Wu, 2026). The suggestion by an *anonymous* academic at Nottingham Trent University that GenAI should be used as a "tutor" aligns with this augmentation-based approach.

To keep empowerment "real", brands must design co-creation experiences that prioritize human agency and controllability (Singu et al., 2026). This means ensuring the consumer always "decides the final result" (Luís Martins) and framing GenAI as a supportive partner. By focusing on agentic and creative empowerment, i.e., leveraging GenAI to expand consumers' capabilities without sacrificing their control, brands can mitigate the risks of dependence and ensure that co-creation remains a genuinely empowering experience (Hermann & Puntoni, 2025a, 2025b).

4.6 Promptcraft as hidden dependence and power

Experts have conceptualized promptcraft as a focal point of creative and strategic agency rather than merely a technical optimization process. Maria Camargo (scholar, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria) posited that reliance arises when prompt engineering replaces strategic, creative, and critical analysis, resulting in message uniformity, repetitive narrative frameworks, and a gradual diminishment of unique brand identity. Ivo Valente (practitioner, Six-Factor) similarly noted that teams may become excessively focused on formulating the "ideal phrase," thereby detracting from audience comprehension, communication goals, and contextual

strategies. In this regard, promptcraft constrains the decision-making framework and compresses human evaluative capacities.

This interpretation aligns with Bozkurt's (2024) characterization of prompt engineering as an art-science interface that mediates human-AI interaction and requires deliberate capability-building and ethical awareness. However, the expert accounts extend this view by foregrounding organizational power dynamics. Promptcraft can operate as an informal gatekeeping resource within teams, concentrating influence in those able to elicit outputs that sound right, even when strategic accountability and brand risk remain elsewhere. Dependence thus becomes a governance issue: who controls prompts, which outputs are approved, and what criteria define good creative work.

Recent scholarly investigations substantiate this apprehension. Yang et al. (2025) report that advertising practitioners perceive GenAI as enhancing efficiency while also posing risks of deskilling and reduced strategic depth in human-AI co-creation. Similarly, Little et al. (2026) argue that as GenAI shifts from assistant to collaborator, organizations must consciously design capability structures to preserve human oversight and expertise. Lo (2023) further conceptualizes prompt engineering as a literacy practice, suggesting that diffusing competence across teams mitigates gatekeeping and cognitive over-reliance. Collectively, these perspectives position prompt craft not as a neutral technique but as a site of redistributed authority and potential cognitive dependence in marketing communication.

4.7 Indistinguishability and creative legitimacy

In both academic and practitioner circles, creative legitimacy has been characterized as shifting from the identity of the initial author to the methods used to establish and maintain credibility. Luisa Martinez (academic, Iscte-IUL) asserted that legitimacy should be grounded on a truthful representation of authorship and on how transparency is practiced: regular, systematic disclosure can safeguard trust without necessarily diminishing uniqueness. Rita Roque

(practitioner, Six-Factor) highlighted that brands may need to set themselves apart through signals that are difficult to replicate authentically, such as lived experiences, personal specificity, humor, and culturally relevant nuances, as these indicators help audiences perceive authenticity, even when the text appears fluent.

These perspectives align with Zhang and Prebensen's (2024) experiments that show that tourists struggle to distinguish ChatGPT-generated tourism marketing materials and that GenAI outputs can pass a Turing-style test while matching marketer-written text in semantic fluency and perceived attractiveness. When indistinguishability becomes routine, legitimacy cannot depend on consumers reliably "spotting AI". It shifts to process: when and how GenAI involvement is disclosed, how provenance is documented, and how human critical judgment is made visible (e.g., editorial sign-off, source traces, and brand-voice governance).

Recent work further complicates this legitimacy calculus. Koning and Voorveld (2025) find that AI disclosures can increase AI-related and persuasion knowledge, yet also decrease trust in both the advertisement and the organization, implying that transparency is not a frictionless solution but a design choice with trade-offs. Jung et al. (2025) similarly show that trust in AI and perceived humanness form two pathways that shape evaluations of AI-generated luxury advertising. Taken together, our experts' responses suggest that as fluency is commoditized, differentiation and legitimacy shift toward verifiable provenance, experiential originality, and consistent brand behavior over time, making legitimacy less a property of the artifact and more a property of the brand's accountability system.

4.8 Human–AI entanglement as resource relations

Respondents viewed GenAI as more than just a mere tool, yet not as an independent creator. Luís Schwab (academic, IPAM) emphasized the risks of dependence throughout the creative process: gathering information, ideation, and idea sharing, and, most importantly, the final output when teams cease to exercise critical judgment. Practitioners, Pedro Rebordão

(LISPOLIS) and Guido Santos (Genesis Digital Solutions) characterized GenAI as a “super tool” and a catalyst for value creation, while asserting that the “true value” still originates from humans and that prompts cannot supplant expertise. They also noted a unique aspect compared with traditional tools: GenAI's output is less predictable, which encourages more iteration while simultaneously heightening the need for oversight (e.g., hallucination checks).

This framing mirrors Kaartemo and Helkkula's (2025) argument that value co-creation involves entangled human-AI resource relations rather than a simple tool-use model, with multiple types of relations shaping how agency and responsibility are distributed. The expert opinions operationalize this lens for marketing communication: if GenAI is an entangled resource, dependence should be assessed by where the relation becomes non-transparent (e.g., unreviewed outputs, invisible assumptions embedded in prompts, or over-trusting “AI-sounding” fluency). Designing entanglement, then, means specifying the relation the team wants GenAI to occupy (background assistant, interpretive partner, or near-immersive co-author) and the corresponding accountability.

The comments imply that the core competence is the orchestration of the integration of resources, human judgment, brand knowledge, and GenAI capabilities toward value-in-use (He & Yang, 2025). In practice, this suggests instituting checkpoints for verification, hallucination detection, and brand-voice consistency, while treating GenAI as a collaborative partner whose contributions must remain inspectable.

4.9 Data-driven storytelling dependence

Two risks dominated expert comments: factual distortion and manipulative persuasion. Jorge Cunha (practitioner, IT Tech BuZ) argued that GenAI threatens narrative integrity by inventing or distorting facts and “manufactures emotion” through manipulative tactics. His constraint, “no source, no claim”, recasts GenAI as a co-pilot that drafts, summarizes, and proposes hypotheses, but never validates truth; accountable human review becomes mandatory. Tabish

Mir (academic, University of Nottingham) similarly warned that GenAI can "oversell" subtly, influencing audiences who are less aware of how the technology works; when the "facade" is perceived, the effect can backfire against the brand.

These concerns align with and tighten Lo Duca's (2025) framework for co-designing data-driven stories. The framework uses the journalistic 5-Ws (Who, What, When, Where, Why) to guide GenAI toward consistent, contextual outputs and explicitly anchors story development in ethical principles as it progresses from data to information, knowledge, and wisdom. In our data, the experts' evidence gate functions as an operational rule in the early AI-Data and AI-Information stages: GenAI may help extract patterns, generate candidate storylines, and draft narrative options, but any claim included in a public-facing story must remain traceable to underlying data and sources, with the human storyteller retaining responsibility for verification.

Recent evidence underscores the importance of this boundary. GPT-4 can be highly persuasive in conversational settings, and this persuasion is strengthened when arguments are personalized, raising the stakes for "ethical persuasion" in marketing narratives (Salvi et al., 2025). Complementarily, Park and Nan (2025) find that LLMs can generate highly convincing misinformation and that exposure can reduce trust and influence decision-making, illustrating how fluent fabrication can circulate as a data-backed explanation.

In marketing communication, the risk of dependence peaks when GenAI becomes a shortcut for justification rather than a disciplined aid for explanation, evidence tracking, and accountable meaning-making.

4.10 Synthetic media spillovers (deepfakes) and trust decay

Practitioners are now concentrating on maintaining credibility in an era where "seeing is believing" no longer applies. João Matos (practitioner, EY) contended that brands ought to replace superficial transparency with verifiable evidence and consistent behaviour:

communicate calmly and clearly during crises, use technical indicators (such as metadata), and establish trust rituals that make authenticity measurable. Ana Telles (practitioner, Studio TUCA) suggested a cultural approach: highlight the qualities that set humans apart from machines, craftsmanship, imperfection, and visible "errors", to provide audiences with richer cues of authenticity than mere polished realism.

These proposals align with Momeni's (2025) findings that audiences struggle to identify deepfakes and that persuasive synthetic media can shape opinions, raise ethical concerns, and blur the boundaries of reality. In a marketing context, this creates spillover distrust: even authentic brand content may be treated as suspect, especially when it circulates beyond owned channels. The "proof over proclamation" recommendation responds directly by shifting trust from aesthetic realism to verifiability and consistent conduct, i.e., what the brand repeatedly does rather than merely what it declares.

The demand for credible evidence aligns with extensive research on deepfakes, which cautions that synthetic media can accelerate the process of "truth decay" and facilitate reputational undermining and exploitation (Hynek et al., 2025). Collectively, the insights from experts indicate that restoring trust necessitates not only technical verification tools but also communication strategies that render accountability transparent, namely, who is accountable, how the content was created, and how assertions can be verified.

5 Conclusion

This article critically examines the perspectives of experts and opinion leaders regarding the "slave use" of generative artificial intelligence in human-AI co-creation for marketing communication. Employing an opinion-based methodological approach that integrates experts' insights from Portugal and the UK, the study addresses how dependence on GenAI shapes professional practices, intellectual autonomy, and organizational accountability in advertising co-creation.

The article contributes to the growing body of knowledge by synthesising emerging perspectives on GenAI-driven problem-solving and by foregrounding implications for advertising education, professional practice, and organisational learning. It positions GenAI adoption as a governance challenge rather than a purely technical opportunity, calling for guidelines that mandate transparent attribution, capability-building that promotes prompt literacy alongside critical reasoning, and co-creation designs that preserve human agency and ethical responsibility in human-AI-consumer interactions.

In summary, the study highlights that the use of generative AI in marketing co-creation should be guided by a 'co-pilot' model, in which professionals retain strategic control, authorship, and ethical responsibility, thereby avoiding the risks of cognitive dependence and the erosion of skills. In practical terms, the study emphasizes the need to integrate governance frameworks with control and transparency mechanisms, whilst, at an organizational level, the development of critical thinking skills and AI literacy is essential. For future research, a longitudinal analysis of the impacts of GenAI dependency is suggested, as well as an exploration of cultural variations in perceptions of responsibility and authenticity in human-AI co-creation contexts.

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