

Reconfiguring Marketing Workflows Through Generative and Agentive AI: A Human-AI Collaboration Perspective

Richie Enrico Tanujaya¹, Yuli Eni²

^{1,2}Global Business Marketing Study Program, BINUS Business School, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: ¹richie.tanujaya@binus.ac.id, ²yuli.eni@binus.ac.id

¹<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-7724-9846>, ²<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0437-2437>

Corresponding Author: richie.tanujaya@binus.ac.id

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines how generative and agentive AI integrate into real marketing workflows, study how this integration reconfigures decision-making through human-AI interaction. Using a qualitative exploratory design with semi-structured interviews and a Gioia-inspired methodology, four interconnected patterns emerged across six marketing practitioners. First, AI enters the workflow as a cognitive entry point at ideation, shifting creative initiation from internal reflection to human and AI exchange. Second, this restructures the broader workflow, reducing production timelines even redistributing labour toward evaluation and strategic oversight. Third, agentive AI system introduce a supervisory dynamic in which practitioners monitor and audit automated decisions rather than executing them directly. Fourth, human decision authority remains intact but is exercised differently. It concentrated at structural and contextual levels rather than operational ones. AI does not replace marketing practitioners; it reconfigures what professional competence demands. The professional capacity to think critically across ideation, evaluation, and automated execution has become a professional requirement, not an assumed baseline.

Keywords: Generative AI, Agentive AI, Marketing Workflow, Human-AI collaboration, Decision Authority

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence has moved from an outer support to structural infrastructure in marketing practice, reshaping how professionals allocate attention, labour and exercise judgment [1, 2]. Marketers today are dealing with complex digital workflows spanning content creation, campaign execution, and performance analytics, which AI tools are no longer optional but operational

embedded [3, 4]. Two distinct AI paradigms shape this landscape. The emergence of generative AI system used for content and strategic frameworks has transformed creative work by lowering the cost of ideation while raising new questions about cognitive dependence in output originality [5, 6]. Agentive AI systems that act autonomously across digital platforms managing the parameters in campaign delivery optimization has altered the structure of operational decision-making, shifting

practitioners from execution to supervision [7, 8]. Despite the growing both types adoption, existing research has treated generative and agentive AI as a separated phenomena. Studies from AI-assisted creativity rarely discuss automated campaign systems; research on algorithmic marketing rarely engages with generative workflow [9]. This leaves a critical gap: how do generative and agentive AI co-exist and interact within a single, integrated marketing workflow? This paper fills that gap directly. We explore the integration of both this AI system into marketing workflows, and finding how this integration will reconfigures decision authority between practitioners and AI system.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. AI and Marketing Work

AI integration in marketing has accelerated a shift toward decision cycles that are mediated by algorithms [3, 10]. Huang and Rust [11] propose that AI systematically redistributes cognitive in operational tasking between humans and machines, advancing through stages either mechanical or analytical capability levels. Raisch and Krakowski [2] frame this as the automation-augmentation; organizations continuously navigate when to automate execution and when to rely on human judgment, a negotiation that unfolds in practice rather than by design, and varies across task type and practitioner context.

B. Generative and Agentive AI

1). *Generative AI*. Generative AI systems produce content, copy, and strategic frameworks on demand, fundamentally altering how creative work begins [5]. Rather than initiation from internal reflection, practitioners now interact with AI outputs as a starting point; a shift that accelerates ideation but raises concerns about cognitive dependence regards output originality [6]. Cristofaro and Giardino [6] caution about how generated suggestion may narrow creativity diversity in standardizing outputs over time, while Kirk et al. [15] find that perceived human agency remains central to creative authenticity. The human role is not eliminated but rather repositioned around higher order judgement and contextual judgment.

2). *Agentive AI*. Agentive AI operates differently, executing multiple actions autonomously across digital platforms with limited manual intervention [7]. Kunz and Wirtz [8] note that while this improves operational precision, it complicates managerial oversight by introducing new accountability questions. Practitioners need to shift from execution to supervision; they need to watch the system behaviour rather than directing each step [8]. The boundary between who or what ultimately directs a campaign is no longer clearly defined [4].

C. Human-AI Collaboration

Whether the AI involved is generative or agentive, both require practitioners to actively negotiate their relationship with system outputs rather than passively accepting them [12]. Petrescu and Krishen [12] argue that hybrid intelligence frameworks demand continuous engagement with algorithmic outputs, while Enarsson et al. [13] observe that organizations maintain humans "in the loop" precisely because contextual judgment remains beyond what either type of AI can reliably replicate. The resulting arrangement is not a simple linear transfer of authority to AI, but a continuously altered boundary between human and algorithmic control [14]; one that looks different depending on whether a practitioner is reviewing a g copy draft or auditing an autonomous bidding decision.

D. Workflow Reconfiguration and Decision Authority

Both AI types make significant structural effects on professional employment. Vera et al. [16] demonstrate how AI alters task performance and job organization by helping shifting effort by timeframes reduced in cognitive labor. Where generative AI changes how work begins, agentive AI transforms how it is governed; autonomous campaign systems on digital platforms reveal hybrid governance design that divide authority between practitioners and algorithms [7]. This improves operational accuracy but complicates managerial control, even raises accountability problems, according to Kunz and Wirtz [8]. Who or what directs a campaign remains ambiguous [4].

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative exploratory design suited to examining emergent phenomena

events where meaning is constructed through practice [17,18]. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with six marketing practitioners who actively utilize AI Tools in daily work. Participants were selected through purposive sampling across roles; SEO Specialist, E-Commerce Ads Staff, Digital Strategist, Business Administrator, Business Manager, and Performance Marketing Lead. This ensures variation in AI integration depth, role orientation, and human-AI interaction patterns. The addition of a performance marketing lead with extensive agentive AI experience allowed direct evaluation of automated campaign systems functioning with limited manual intervention. Each

interview lasted between 13 to 25 minutes, conducted virtual via zoom and written interview. Discussion covered five thematic areas: Generative AI, Agentive AI, Human-AI Collaboration, Workflow Reconfiguration, and Decision Authority, as established in prior literature [2, 11, 12]. Analysis followed Gioia-inspired approach [17]; transcript were coded into first-order themes, merged into second-order themes, and refined into collective dimensions using NVivo. The framework remained open to emergent patterns, blending deductive guidance with empirical discovery. Data collection continued until conceptual patterns showed meaningful consistency across participants [18].



Fig. 1. NVivo Hierarchy Chart

IV.FINDINGS

Four interconnected patterns emerged: AI as a cognitive entry point during ideation, AI-Driven workflow transformation, the development of

supervision dynamic in agentive AI usage, and the maintenance of human decision authority. These are not a logical stages but rather crossing dimensions of a reconfigured work system.

A. AI as Cognitive Entry Point

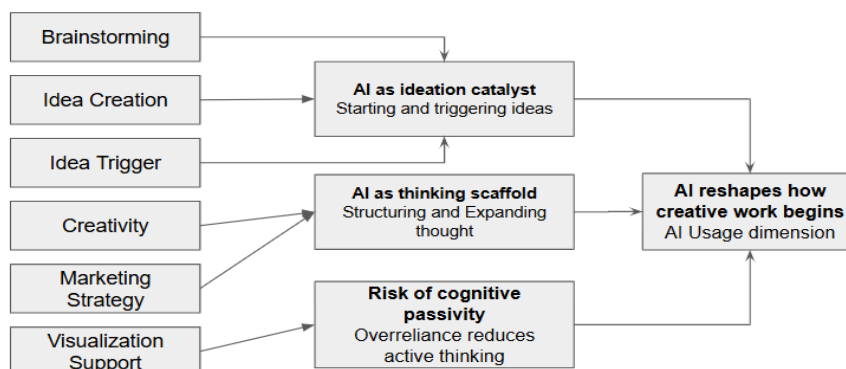


Fig. 2. Gioia Data Structure

Across all the participants, AI was utilized consistently at the earliest and most uncertain stage of marketing work, before the campaign structure had taken shape. Practitioners now initiate from prompting AI then examining outputs, and at the end responding before determining their course of action; rather than relying on either internal reflection or previous experience. One participant

describe using AI “*mostly in the brainstorming phase... to find initial ideas,*” while another remarked it helps “*fish for fresh ideas*” when feeling stuck. A third framed it precisely as “*I rarely begin from a complete blank state anymore because usually it enters at the earliest stage for my work, before the campaign structure is even clear.*”



Fig. 3. Ideation Shift

This signifies a fundamental shift in how ideation can begin, ideas now emerge through engagement with AI rather than from individual memory or intuition; what we referred the cognitive entry point. AI functions not as a source of final answers instead acts as a catalyst for activation in thinking.

However, this dynamic carries a dual nature. When participants reflected critically on AI outputs, entry point were accelerated creative possibility. Cognitive engagement declined when outputs were

accepted without any examination. One participant specifically identified this risk: “The danger is not necessarily AI replaces judgment, it’s that people become way more passive inside the convenience of optimized outputs.” Another observed AI outputs can become “very polished, but also very predictable”, a condition that required intentional for stepping back from AI entirely to protect cognitive independence. Reflective use expands ideation; passive use narrows it.

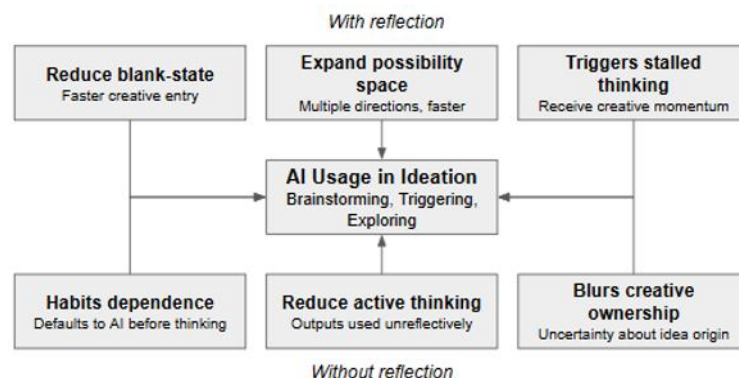


Fig. 4. Tension Map

B. Workflow Transformation

Beyond ideation, AI integration restructures the broader marketing workflow. First, the workflow seemingly become compressed and even more iterative. Task previously requiring extended manual effort such as *research, drafting, and data summarization* are now completed significantly faster. A participant remarked “*What used to take a morning of research can now happen in a much shorter time, i can actually move into*

the actual work faster.” Another described a full day’s production for *copy variations, campaign drafts, and social captions* now accomplished in a few hours, with the bottleneck transitioning from production to quality control and strategic consistency.

Second, labour is redistributed. Participants regularly assigned technical with repetitive tasks, such as *drafting, content structure, and data synthesis* to AI, while their own roles shifted toward evaluating

output in directing strategy for making a contextual judgements. As one participant stated *“The process did shift the process from building every manually to proceeds to always reviewing, directing, and outputs adjustment.”* Human effort concentrates on judgement over execution.

Third, cognitive engagement with data becomes increasingly exploratory. Practitioners use AI to surface patterns instead of reading reports linearly for anomalies detection process. One participant characterized it as feeling *“less like searching and more like engaging with the information itself.”* Another defined AI as *“accelerating the analytical process, but not replacing interpretation itself”*, a distinction that appeared consistently across them. Artificial Intelligence offers a first pass reading of data; however, processes the make means and interpretation for contextual remain distinctly human.

C. Agentive AI Transition

A clear pattern emerged specifically around agentive AI; automated systems that make operational decision independently, without requiring manual input at each step. In contrast to generative AI which supports ideation for content development, agentive AI system execute actions: adjusting bids in real time, expanding or contracting audience targeting, rotating ad creatives, and shifting budget across channels based on live performance signals.

Practitioners working with these type of system described a fundamental shift in role orientation, from execution to supervision. One participant stated *“I no longer manually just adjust individual bids during campaign, but now starts from defining the performance objective to budget conversion priority, then the system would continuously redirect spend based on live signals.”* Audience targeting follows the same logic whereas the practitioner establishes strategy criteria, while the platform autonomously adjusts targeting based on conversion behaviour. A/B Testing similarly became automated, with the system excluding less effective creatives without requiring direct intervention.

This monitoring role required new forms of attention. Practitioners configured a notification for anomalies detector instead of going manual

oversight, the practitioner said *“if the cpc abruptly increases, conversion rates could fall below a benchmark, the system promptly identifies these issues.”* In addition to real time alerts, periodic audits of automated decisions were done, reviewing what audiences were expanded, which creative were prioritized, and how budgets were spread evenly; to verify that technically sound optimizations remained align with strategy. As one participant stated *“Most of the automated decisions are logically sound, but there are still situations where technically did successful in optimizing conflicts with brand considerations, that’s usually where human correction is necessary.”* Agentive AI does not simple free practitioner from operational tasks, it creates a new category of supervisory labour.

D. Human Decision Authority

Despite the structural changes has been shown decision authority remains firmly human-centered across all participants. A consistent boundary was upheld: AI generates and structures and Human evaluate, validate, and decide. One participant stated *“ I always double check and adjust the answers because i wouldn’t just use them directly.”* Another emphasised that *“AI is not the primary decider.”* Importantly, this authority operates at a different levels depending on AI type whereas with agentive they accepted AI autonomy at the operational level while retaining full authority over structured decisions. One participant said this clearly *“At the operational level, the system can autonomously optimize the work, but decisions involving brand positioning like entering a new market segment remain human led.”*

This authority is not passive. Practitioners actively interrogate AI outputs for contextual relevance fit before implementation. Authority is not threatened by AI; it is exercised differently. Where practitioners previously spent effort on execution, they now spend it on judgement and, where necessary, intentional reversal. This redefines editorial judgment, critical evaluation, and the capacity to correct automated system behaviour as the defining professional competencies of the marketing practitioner AI era.

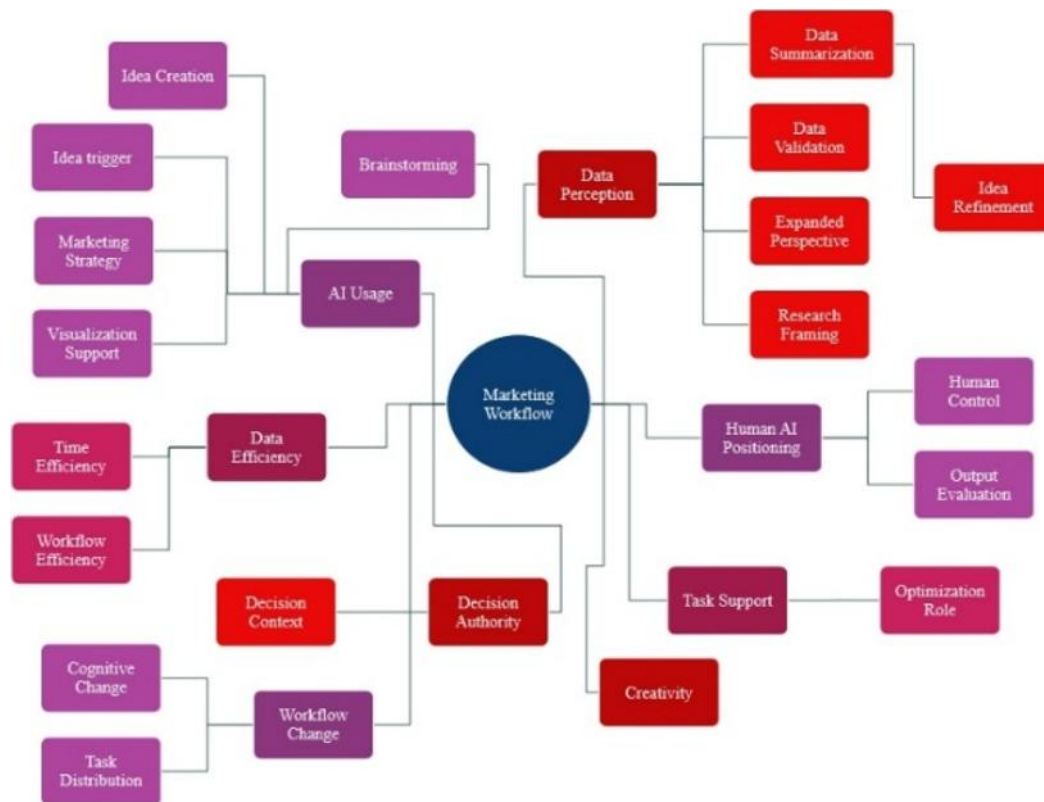


Fig. 5. Visualized Map

V.DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined how generative and agentic AI integrate into real marketing workflow, studied how this integration reconfigures decision making through human-AI interaction. The findings reveal a more differentiated picture than prior literature suggests: AI's role is neither external nor independent, it is structurally integrated, simultaneously reshaping conditions for professional creativity across task allocation over AI types.

The cognitive entry point extends Huang and Rust [11] collaborative AI frameworks by specifying where human and AI interaction is most significant; not in execution or evaluation, but at the moment of greatest cognitive uncertainty which the blank state before ideation begins. This explains why passive adoption risk is highest at the earliest stage of work. AI intervenes at a moment when practitioners are most open to influence, making critical distance not merely a reflective safety but an essential practice that must be developed before to the initial prompt submission. This aligns with concerns from Cristofaro and Giardino [6] with

Steyvers and Kumar [19] warnings about over reliance in decision making assisted by AI.

The workflow transformation findings ground the automation-augmentation paradox [2] in practical use. Practitioners do not make deliberate architectural choices between automation and augmentation; they navigate both within the same workflow episode. This calls for framework that treat hybrid AI use as the operational norm rather than an exceptional design choice. Most significantly, the emergence of a supervisory dynamic in agentic AI use extends existing theory in a direction that generative AI research has not addressed.

Agentic systems do not simply shift which tasks humans perform, they introduce an entirely new form of professional work: the continuous oversight, review, and correction of decisions made by autonomous systems. This is not the same as executing a task or evaluating an output. It demands that practitioners develop familiarity with how these systems reason, recognise when optimisation begins to drift from strategic intent, and know when to step in. Current human-AI collaboration frameworks,

largely built around creative or analytical assistance, have not yet caught up with this reality [14].

For practitioners, staying critically engaged with AI outputs is no longer a matter of preference but it is what competent professional practice now requires. Organisations need to actively build two capacities in their people: the ability to interrogate and selectively apply what AI produces, and the ability to monitor automated systems closely enough to catch when their decisions stop serving the broader strategy. For those designing these systems, preserving meaningful human authority over outcomes should be treated as a core design objective, not an afterthought [20].

This study is not without limitations. The sample is small and draws exclusively from practitioners who are already deeply integrated with AI tools, which naturally limits how far the findings can be generalised. Future work would benefit from including practitioners at earlier stages of adoption, following participants over time to observe how these dynamics shift, and examining agentive AI more directly as autonomous systems grow more prevalent in everyday marketing practice. What this

study does establish, however, is that AI has not simply made marketing work faster or easier; it has changed the nature of the work itself. Ideation is now a conversation, execution is increasingly delegated, and the exercise of judgment is what practitioners are left with and what, for now, remains irreducibly theirs.

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