ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND BRAND VOICE

APPLICATIONS, IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTS

ALEXANDRA LOUISE KIRKBY

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Alexandra Louise Kirkby

born on the 17th of April, 1993
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This dissertation has been approved by:

Promotor
prof.dr.ir. J. Henseler

Co-promotor
prof.dr. C. Baumgarth

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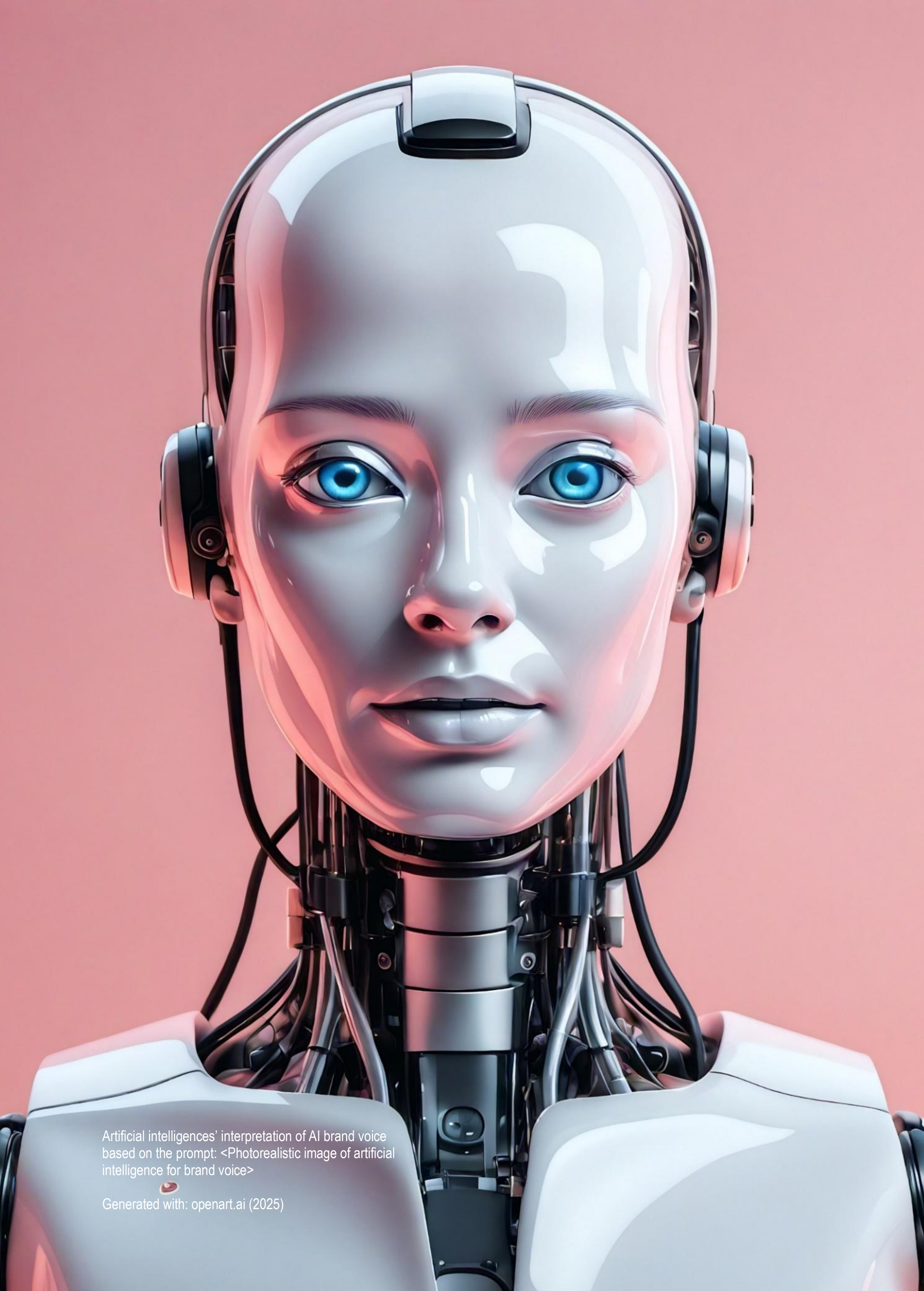

Artificial intelligences' interpretation of AI brand voice based on the prompt: <Photorealistic image of artificial intelligence for brand voice>

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND BRAND VOICE

APPLICATIONS, IMPLEMENTATION AND EFFECTS

Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) has increasingly received global attention over the past years and has been a critical discussion point across a diverse range of industries, research communities, and societies. One of the fields where these technologies have had a significant impact is brand management, transforming how brands operate and influencing the design, maintenance, and evaluation of brand voice. This necessitates brands to adjust their strategies, implement up-to-date policies and codes of conduct, and shift cultural thinking surrounding the topic. AI has moved beyond its traditional role of data analysis and performing functional tasks in the background. It is now capable of creativity and co-creation with human colleagues. With an ever-evolving landscape, establishing a solid foundation of understanding becomes essential. This paper-based, cumulative doctoral thesis contributes both theoretically to brand research and highlights management implications for practise.

The focus of this thesis is therefore to examine three perspectives surrounding the applications, implementation, and effects of AI for brand voice through four stand-alone papers. The initial and foundational perspective examines applications of current AI technologies for meaningful integration across various facets of brand voice. The second perspective considers the implementation of AI for brands, specifically for creative brand voice. The focus lies on the human–AI co-creation dynamic and how AI is altering operational brand voice processes, the management of human-AI co-creation within an organisation, and the navigation of environmental factors in which brands operate. Further, delving deeper into the topic of the internal brand environment, the extent to which individual brand professionals responsible for the design, management and evaluation of brand voice integrate AI is examined. Lastly, beyond technological considerations regarding where AI can be integrated and the brand focus when considering the impact of AI within an organisation, a third perspective considers the effects of AI for brand voice when communicated externally. This perspective examines consumer perception when AI is disclosed as the source of brand voice. To assess these perspectives comprehensively, this PhD thesis is structured according to six chapters. An initial introductory chapter explains the thesis background, aims, and research contributions in greater depth.

The second chapter examines the first perspective and focuses on applications, namely the technological capabilities of AI and its integration. The AI Brand Voice Matrix is introduced, which serves as a crucial foundation for understanding the new and evolving application areas of AI for brand voice. This is presented as a 6 x 6 dyad, providing readers with an understanding of AI's role in brand voice and for which formats the technology is appropriate. The concluding findings highlight both functional and more creative ways to integrate various AI tools and platforms for brand voice tasks.

The third chapter turns to the second perspective, towards the implementation of AI for brand voice, firstly focussing on the change in interaction dynamics. The conceptual research paper proposes a three-level framework of human–AI co-creation for creative brand voice that highlights key factors facilitating brand efficiency and effectiveness at the individual (AI task roles, co-creation teaming, knowledge and skills), organisational (infrastructure and brand voice database, socialisation), and societal (responsibility and accountability, AI transparency, brand voice copyright) levels.

In the fourth chapter, also related to the second perspective, having theoretically explored factors for human–AI co-creation, the following paper empirically investigates how and to what extent brand professionals integrate generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) for creative brand voice. Employing a qualitative research approach featuring in-depth, semi-structured interviews, the study assesses GenAI integration of individual brand professionals across five timeframes following the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022 to identify increases and decreases in integration, which serve as the basis for examining drivers and barriers.

In the fifth chapter, attention is turned to the third perspective of this thesis and the research paper examines the effects of brands integrating AI for brand voice on consumers. This study considers the critical and highly relevant topic of information disclosure and the labelling of an artificial source. Employing a quantitative method, consumer perceptions of the brand when brand voice, in the form of written text, is disclosed as AI-generated rather than human-written, is measured. A 3 x 3 quantitative experiment compares and contrasts three variations of Adidas texts based on emotionality, with three different labels indicating whether the texts were AI-generated, human-written, or undisclosed.

A final chapter then examines future research avenues for the three research areas.

Samenvatting

Kunstmatige intelligentie (AI) heeft de afgelopen jaren wereldwijd steeds meer aandacht gekregen en is uitgegroeid tot een centraal onderwerp binnen uiteenlopende sectoren, wetenschappelijke gemeenschappen en de samenleving in het algemeen. Eén van de domeinen waar deze technologieën aanzienlijke impact hebben gehad, is merkbeheer. AI verandert fundamenteel hoe merken functioneren en beïnvloedt het ontwerp, de instandhouding en de evaluatie van merkstem. Dit vraagt van merken dat zij hun strategieën herzien, beleid en gedragscodes actualiseren, en hun culturele opvattingen over technologie aanpassen. AI beperkt zich niet langer tot zijn traditionele rol als analytisch hulpmiddel op de achtergrond. Het is inmiddels in staat tot creatieve bijdragen en samenwerking met menselijke collega's. In dit voortdurend veranderende landschap is het cruciaal dat merken een solide begrip ontwikkelen van de mogelijkheden en gevolgen van AI. Deze op artikelen gebaseerde, cumulatieve doctoraatsthesis levert zowel een theoretische bijdrage aan merkonderzoek als praktische implicaties voor merkmanagement.

De kern van deze thesis is het verkennen van drie perspectieven op AI-toepassingen binnen merkstem, uitgewerkt in vier afzonderlijke wetenschappelijke artikelen. Het eerste, fundamentele perspectief richt zich op het gebruik van bestaande AI-technologieën voor een betekenisvolle integratie in diverse aspecten van merkstem. Het tweede perspectief gaat over de implementatie van AI, specifiek voor creatieve merkstem. De nadruk ligt hierbij op de dynamiek van mens–AI-co-creatie: hoe AI invloed uitoefent op operationele processen, hoe organisaties deze samenwerking aansturen en hoe zij omgaan met omgevingsfactoren die hun merkaanpak bepalen. Binnen dit perspectief wordt ook onderzocht in welke mate individuele merkprofessionals AI inzetten bij het ontwerpen, beheren en evalueren van merkstem. Het derde perspectief richt zich op de externe communicatie van merkstemmen gegenereerd door AI, en hoe consumenten reageren wanneer AI als bron wordt vermeld. Dit perspectief biedt inzicht in hoe transparantie over AI-gebruik de merkperceptie kan beïnvloeden. Om deze perspectieven grondig te analyseren, is de thesis gestructureerd in zes hoofdstukken. Het eerste hoofdstuk biedt een uitgebreide inleiding op de achtergrond, doelstellingen en wetenschappelijke bijdragen van het onderzoek.

Hoofdstuk twee behandelt het eerste perspectief, met de nadruk op toepassingen van AI en de integratie daarvan. Hierin wordt de AI Brand Voice Matrix geïntroduceerd – een 6 x 6 model dat inzicht biedt in relevante toepassingsvormen van AI binnen merkstem, evenals in geschikte contentformaten. De resultaten illustreren hoe AI zowel voor functionele als voor creatieve taken binnen merkcommunicatie kan worden ingezet.

Hoofdstuk drie verdiept zich in het tweede perspectief en analyseert de veranderende interactiedynamiek tussen mensen en AI. Een conceptueel raamwerk op drie niveaus wordt voorgesteld om co-creatie tussen mens en AI in kaart te brengen. Op individueel niveau betreft dit onder meer taakverdeling en competenties; op organisatorisch niveau infrastructuur en kennisdeling; en op maatschappelijk niveau aspecten zoals verantwoordelijkheid, transparantie en auteurschap van merkinhoud.

In hoofdstuk vier wordt dit perspectief verder uitgewerkt in een empirische studie. Hierin wordt onderzocht in hoeverre merkprofessionals generatieve AI (GenAI) toepassen in hun werk rond creatieve merkstem. Door middel van kwalitatieve diepte-interviews wordt het gebruik van GenAI geanalyseerd over vijf periodes sinds de introductie van ChatGPT in november 2022. Op basis hiervan worden trends, drijfveren en obstakels in de adoptie van AI in kaart gebracht.

Het vijfde en laatste hoofdstuk richt zich op het derde perspectief en onderzoekt hoe consumenten AI-gebruik in merkstem ervaren. De studie behandelt het actuele vraagstuk van transparantie en bronvermelding bij AI-gegenereerde content. Via een kwantitatief 3 x 3 experiment worden drie versies van Adidas-teksten, elk met een ander emotioneel gehalte en verschillend gelabeld (AI-gegenereerd, menselijk geschreven of zonder bronvermelding), vergeleken om inzicht te krijgen in de invloed op consumentenperceptie.

Een afsluitend hoofdstuk onderzoekt vervolgens toekomstige onderzoeksmogelijkheden voor de drie onderzoeksgebieden.

Zusammenfassung

Künstliche Intelligenz (KI) hat in den vergangenen Jahren weltweit zunehmend Aufmerksamkeit erlangt und ist zu einem zentralen Diskussionsthema in unterschiedlichsten Branchen, wissenschaftlichen Gemeinschaften und gesellschaftlichen Kontexten geworden. Ein Bereich, in dem diese Technologien besonders tiefgreifende Auswirkungen zeigen, ist das Markenmanagement: KI verändert nicht nur die Funktionsweise von Marken, sondern beeinflusst auch maßgeblich die Gestaltung, Pflege und Bewertung der Markenstimme. Dies erfordert von Marken eine strategische Neuausrichtung, die Einführung aktueller Richtlinien und Verhaltenskodizes sowie ein Umdenken im kulturellen Umgang mit dem Thema. KI geht dabei über ihre klassische Rolle der Datenanalyse und funktionalen Unterstützung im Hintergrund hinaus und sie ist heute fähig zu Kreativität und gemeinsamer Gestaltung mit menschlichen Kolleg:innen. In einem sich dynamisch entwickelnden Umfeld ist es daher entscheidend, ein fundiertes Verständnis dieser Technologien aufzubauen. Diese kumulative, publikationsbasierte Dissertation leistet einen theoretischen Beitrag zur Markenforschung und zeigt praxisrelevante Implikationen für das Management auf.

KI übernimmt längst nicht mehr nur analytische Aufgaben im Hintergrund. Sie ist heute auch in der Lage, kreativ zu agieren und gemeinsam mit Menschen Inhalte zu erschaffen. In einem sich stetig wandelnden Umfeld ist ein solides Grundverständnis der Technologien entscheidend. Diese kumulative Dissertation auf Basis von Einzelbeiträgen leistet einen theoretischen Beitrag zur Markenforschung und liefert zugleich praxisrelevante Managementimplikationen. Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, drei Perspektiven auf den Einsatz, die Implementierung und die Wirkung von KI im Kontext der Markenstimme zu untersuchen – dargestellt in vier eigenständigen Artikeln. Die erste, grundlegende Perspektive widmet sich der Frage, wie bestehende KI-Technologien sinnvoll in verschiedene Bereiche der Markenstimme integriert werden können. Die zweite Perspektive betrachtet die Implementierung von KI, insbesondere im kreativen Bereich. Im Fokus stehen hier die Dynamiken der Mensch-KI Ko-Kreation, Veränderungen in operativen Prozessen, das Management dieser Zusammenarbeit sowie die Einbettung in unternehmensinterne und externe Rahmenbedingungen. Ergänzend wird analysiert, in welchem Umfang einzelne

Markenverantwortliche KI tatsächlich in ihrer täglichen Arbeit nutzen. Die dritte Perspektive richtet sich nach außen und untersucht, wie Konsument:innen auf Markenstimmen reagieren, bei denen offen kommuniziert wird, dass sie von KI erzeugt wurden. Die Arbeit ist in sechs Kapitel gegliedert. Das einleitende Kapitel beschreibt den Forschungshintergrund, die Zielsetzung sowie die Beiträge dieser Dissertation.

Kapitel zwei behandelt die erste Perspektive: die technologischen Fähigkeiten und Anwendungsbereiche von KI im Bereich Markenstimme. Vorgestellt wird die AI Brand Voice Matrix, ein 6 x 6-Modell, das neue Einsatzfelder systematisiert und aufzeigt, welche Inhalte sich für KI-Anwendungen eignen. Die Ergebnisse zeigen funktionale wie kreative Einsatzmöglichkeiten verschiedener Tools.

Kapitel drei wendet sich der Implementierung von KI zu. Das dort entwickelte konzeptuelle Modell beschreibt drei Ebenen der Mensch-KI Ko-Kreation für kreative Markenstimme: auf individueller Ebene (Aufgabenverteilung, Teaming, Fähigkeiten), organisatorischer Ebene (Infrastruktur, Markenstimme Datenbanken, Sozialisierungsprozesse) sowie gesellschaftlicher Ebene (Verantwortung, Transparenz, Urheberrecht).

Im vierten Kapitel, das ebenfalls der zweiten Perspektive zugeordnet wurde, wird nach einer theoretischen Auseinandersetzung mit den Faktoren Mensch–KI Ko-Kreation empirisch untersucht, wie und in welchem Ausmaß Markenverantwortliche generative künstliche Intelligenz (GenAI) zur Gestaltung einer kreativen Markenstimme einsetzen. Mittels eines qualitativen Forschungsansatzes mit tiefgehenden, semi-strukturierten Interviews analysiert die Studie den Einsatz von GenAI durch einzelne Markenverantwortliche über fünf Zeiträume hinweg nach der Einführung von ChatGPT im November 2022, um Zu- und Abnahmen in der Integration zu identifizieren, die wiederum als Grundlage zur Untersuchung treibender und hemmender Faktoren dienen.

Kapitel fünf befasst sich mit den Auswirkungen von KI-generierter Markenstimme auf Konsument:innen. Im Zentrum stehen Fragen der Transparenz und Kennzeichnung künstlicher Inhalte. In einem quantitativen 3 x 3-Experiment werden drei Adidas-Textvarianten mit unterschiedlichem Emotionsgehalt und jeweils variierender Herkunftskennzeichnung (KI-generiert, menschlich, nicht offengelegt) verglichen, um deren Einfluss auf die Markenwahrnehmung zu messen.

Ein abschließendes Kapitel untersucht anschließend zukünftige Forschungsansätze für die drei Forschungsbereiche.

Acknowledgements

"I began my PhD journey with a deep passion for research and a desire to become an expert in my field. In the early stages, I tackled coursework, literature reviews, and proposal writing before diving into independent research, facing challenges like setbacks in experiments and writer's block. Over the years, I contributed original knowledge, published papers, and prepared to defend my dissertation."
– ChatGPT (2025)

It is interesting to see that when you ask artificial intelligence what a typical PhD candidate's journey looks like, there are certainly some astounding resemblances to my own real-life experiences (let's face it, these algorithms are based on the data we train them on). Indeed, I was deeply interested in my area of research, and becoming an expert in the field was everything one can hope for. The challenges outlined also resonate with me, as I have personally encountered many, if not all of them. However, my PhD journey started much earlier and involves many human elements that AI overlooks. Starting from the beginning, I would like to express what ChatGPT could not…

Before embarking on the academic route, I was working at a multi-platform network, Studio71, first as an Artist & Repertoire Manager, and then as a Sales Manager, setting up collaborations between brands and influencers in the portfolio. It was during this time that my interest in brands truly took off. To delve deeper into this sphere, I decided to return to my studies and enrolled in the International Marketing Management programme at the Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin. This is where the foundation for my PhD was laid and where I met a pivotal person in my PhD journey; this individual is Prof. Dr. Dirk-Mario Boltz. As my Master's thesis supervisor, I discovered the exciting and fast-paced development of AI and focused my work on personalisation strategies using AI. After submitting my Master's thesis and fully expecting and very much preparing myself to return to industry, I mentioned to Dirk-Mario that I could see myself continuing my research and expressed my regret that this was seemingly the end of the road. Not on his watch. He invited me to my first G.E.M event, where he introduced me to Prof. Dr. Carsten Baumgarth, who, only a few weeks later, took me on as a Marketing Research Associate.

Carsten then invited me to the University of Twente for a PMR-PhD Day, where he introduced me to Prof. Dr. Ir. Jörg Henseler. Jörg immediately made me feel welcome, explained the PhD process, and, in that moment, it became clear to me that pursuing a PhD was exactly what I desired. From then on, I was officially enrolled and Carsten committed to being my daily supervisor at HWR Berlin, enabling me to remain in the city I love while being an external PhD student in the Netherlands, which exposed me to a welcoming community and international perspectives.

Over the past half-decade, Carsten and Jörg have been the best possible supervisors I could have asked for. Carsten is an inspiration, who I admire not only for his commitment and dedication but also for his pioneering efforts in bringing research into practise. This is a path I also aspire to follow, and he serves as an outstanding example in the brand management field and actually, in my humble opinion, overall marketing discipline. He has seen me in my element while presenting at conferences, always giving me the opportunity to be in the limelight, and he has also witnessed the challenges that come with the PhD- not quite mastering a new empirical method, repeating experiments, changing the research design, and facing the dread of every PhD student: rejection from journals. Through it all, he has never failed to coach and guide me, always providing insights, advice, and an openness to my (sometimes rather abstract) ideas for the next big research project, which would have been dismissed by most.

This openness and willingness to support my ideas is also something I am incredibly grateful to Jörg for. He has always supported me in all my academic projects, introducing me to a whole world of statistical methods I had never encountered before. His positive outlook, enthusiasm for research, and patience have always put me at ease, encouraging me to think about my work in completely new ways and from different perspectives. I am also still a big fan of the SCQA method; a technique I will use for life.

Therefore, the key ingredient missing from ChatGPT's description of the PhD journey are the PEOPLE alongside you. Thank you to **Dirk-Mario** for setting me on the PhD path, to **Carsten** for mentoring, continuously encouraging, and providing me with the opportunity to be seen and heard in the academic world over these five years, and to **Jörg** for always motivating me and making it possible for me to network and connect with my fellow candidates. Finally, I cannot stress enough how none of this would be have been possible without the unwavering support of my parents, **Beatrice** and **Malcolm**, my brother **Thomas**, and my loving and very patient friends!

Contents

List of Terms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
API	Application Programming Interface
BP	Brand Professional
CDR	Corporate Digital Responsibility
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CI	Confidence Interval
DACH	Germany, Austria, Switzerland
EU	European Union
FMCG	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods
GenAI	Generative Artificial Intelligence
HAICC	Human–AI Co-Creation
HITL	Human-In-The-Loop
HOOTL	Human-Out-The-Loop
HOTL	Human-On-The-Loop
HRM	Human Resource Management
INFO	Information
PBA	Perceived Brand Attitude
PIIT	Personal Innovativeness Theory
R&D	Research & Development
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
RQ	Research Question
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SRMA	Sequence Robust Multi-Array Analysis
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
TOE	Technology Organisation Environment
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
UTAUT	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. Research Background

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has moved beyond its foundational role in taking on repetitive and analytical tasks, becoming an increasingly creative and collaborative force in brand management, and more specifically, in brand voice. Its capabilities now extend to generating language in both written and spoken forms, producing visual and auditory brand assets, and engaging with consumers in real-time through applications such as chatbots and voice assistants. A critical turning point in this development was the public release of ChatGPT in November 2022, which marked the first time powerful AI technologies became widely and freely accessible, even to users without technical expertise. ChatGPT-3 quickly became the fastest-growing consumer application in history, reaching 100 million monthly active users within just three months (Hu, 2023). The rapid rise of tools such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, and Midjourney has since provided brands with the opportunity to generate and manage brand voice, enabling the scalable production of personalised, responsive, and distinctive content, as well as creating opportunities to work creatively with AI and to experiment with the co-creation of content (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

As AI assumes a larger role, from creative ideation through to external communication, brand voice has emerged as a critical area of academic and practical inquiry. Defined as the attitude, tone, language, and typographical choices expressed by a brand and ultimately perceived by consumers (Kohli & Yen, 2020), recent scholarship has emphasised that a brand voice is essential for conveying a brand's distinct character and personality. Whereas brand identity reflects the core foundation of the brand encompassing mission, culture, positioning, and visual symbols (Kapferer, 2012) and brand personality captures human traits attributed to the brand (Aaker, 1997), brand voice is the expression of these constructs across form and touchpoints which underpin brand recognition and differentiation.

With the introduction of AI, there is now a heightened need for greater differentiation and consistent expression of brand voice (Murár et al., 2024), and further, the consideration of how AI has an impact on creativity. Creativity is broadly understood as the ability to produce novel and useful ideas, innovations, or solutions for a group of users (Acar et al., 2017; Stein, 1953). Central to creative thought are the cognitive processes of divergent thinking, involving the generation of multiple, varied, and original ideas, and convergent thinking, which narrows down options to identify the most effective idea, innovation, or solution and how to best integrate them (Evans & Jirout, 2023; Guilford, 1967; Rawlings et al., 2025). Previously attributed solely to humans, these processes are now being exhibited by AI in the domain of brand voice.

This creative involvement of AI raises questions not only about the generated outputs, but also the collaborative processes shaping brands. While AI can enable the generation of novel content that encompasses and reflects brand voice (Baumgarth & Mall, 2024), it may, if not managed critically for understanding contexts, in some cases distort or create content that inadequately and inefficiently represents the intended communication (Murár & Kubovics, 2023). Taking a broader conceptual view, early approaches to involving diverse actors in overall brand development often centred on the notion of co-creation. Traditionally, co-creation refers to processes in which multiple stakeholders, both internal and external, collaboratively build and enrich brand meaning and value over time through iterative interactions (Iglesias & Ind, 2020; Iglesias et al., 2020). While this model was originally conceived around human actors, recent developments have extended the scope of co-creation to include technological agents. In this context, AI is not merely a tool for automation but has begun to function as an active creative collaborator.

The emergence of Human–AI Co-Creation (HAICC) underscores this evolving collaborative dynamic, positioning AI as a creative partner capable of engaging and acting together with human counterparts (Rezwana & Maher, 2023; Veale & Pérez, 2020). This concept acknowledges that AI-augmented outputs such as advertisement storyboards, product descriptions, or social media content, are often the result of mutual contribution between human brand professionals and algorithms, producing outcomes that exceed the capabilities of either alone (Jarrahi et al., 2018; Liapis et al., 2016). While the potential benefits of HAICC are considerable, including enhanced creativity, consistency, efficiency, and effectiveness (Baumgarth & Mall, 2025; Chaisatitkul et al., 2024; Dell'Acqua et al., 2023; Hartmann et al., 2024), the interaction dynamics between human and AI actors remain complex for creativity.

Creative collaboration is characterised by open-endedness, spontaneity, and the need for mutual responsiveness, which distinguishes it from more linear forms of human–computer interaction (Davis et al., 2016; Rezwana & Maher, 2023).

Existing frameworks in design and process management provide initial structures for such collaborations, highlighting modes of communication, collaboration styles, and the role of shared creative products (Rezwana & Maher, 2021; 2023; Wu et al., 2021). In the organisational context, factors such as AI trust, transparency, knowledge sharing, and skill integration are central to enabling effective co-creation (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Makarius et al., 2020). Effective use of AI in brand voice development and maintenance, however, also depends on accurate data, well-designed prompts and expert human oversight to ensure outputs are aligned with brand values, contribute to a coherent brand image, and allow the brand to remain authentic (Murár et al., 2024). However, few models to date adequately address how these human–AI interactions unfold in brand voice development across individual, organisational, and societal levels.

This lack of clarity becomes particularly salient when considering brand professionals level of AI integration. Although algorithmic aversion, whereby individuals favour human over algorithmic decision-making was once considered a significant barrier to AI adoption among managers (Dietvorst et al., 2014), more recent research has challenged this view. Emerging studies suggest that aversion is not inherent but context-dependent and can be mitigated when users perceive clear benefits and retain a sense of control (Schaap et al., 2024). While this evolving discourse suggests increasing acceptance of algorithmic decision-making, it remains unclear whether this shift extends to brand professionals, particularly in their creative work.

Despite growing interest in the use of AI by brands and increasing calls for HAICC within organisations, individual brand professionals remain cautious in their integration of, specifically, generative AI (GenAI) technologies for creative brand voice. While many use GenAI for ideation and text generation, usage for more complex outputs, such as audio and visual content, remains limited (Buder et al., 2024). Existing research has largely focused on broader business and marketing perspectives (Kshetri et al., 2024; Volkmar et al., 2022), rather than examining the specific integration of AI into creative brand strategy or the nuanced articulation of brand voice. As a result, there remains a critical gap in the understanding of how GenAI is being integrated for creative brand voice by brand professionals. Previous studies have primarily employed quantitative methodologies to measure predefined variables related to GenAI integration, however, there is increasing demand for qualitative approaches that explore experiences, motivations, and reservations of brand professionals using GenAI for creative brand voice (Al-Khatib, 2023).

Concurrently, questions surrounding transparency in the use of AI are becoming increasingly prominent, driven by both legislative developments and broader cultural shifts toward greater disclosure. In parallel, authenticity has emerged as a central concern in discussions of AI-generated brand voice, particularly when the artificial source is revealed. While consumers increasingly expect brands to behave authentically, it remains uncertain how disclosure of an AI source might influence these perceptions. Within brand management literature, authenticity is regarded as a cornerstone of effective brand perception, often surpassing even product quality as a key driver of consumer preference (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Whether AI-generated brand voice can meet these expectations, especially when its origin is transparent, has become a pressing area of inquiry and research remains inconclusive. In broader creative fields, biases toward AI become evident. For instance, in the realm of visual art, identical artworks labelled as human or AI-created are evaluated differently; when labelled as AI, the same pieces receive lower ratings across evaluation criteria (Bellaiche et al., 2023). Similarly, research extending the classic art infusion effect shows that although AI art is considered art and can positively influence brand attitude, this effect is less pronounced when consumers are aware that artwork is AI-generated (Baumgarth, 2025).

Further, research on the disclosure of AI sources in brands content creation remains inconclusive. While several studies suggest that revealing an AI source can impact on consumer trust, perceived authenticity, and overall brand attitude (Srinivasan & Sarial-Abi, 2021; Yu, 2021), other studies conflict these findings. These investigations indicate that when the source is disclosed as AI in written contexts, such disclosure does not lead to increased source derogation or negatively impact overall brand attitude (Derks et al., 2024). From a practical standpoint, given that AI disclosure is not yet uniformly adopted across industries, its broader implications for brand voice and consumer perception remain under examined.

While literature has increasingly examined AI across broader management and marketing fields, and a growing body of work explores the intersection of branding and AI, further research is required to understand the specific context of brand voice. In particular, research must address how creative brand voice can be developed and managed within the context of HAICC, what drives or hinders individual brand professionals in integrating AI for this purpose, and how such practices are perceived by consumers. A central concern in this regard is whether brands can remain authentic when AI is transparently disclosed, a question that has become increasingly pertinent in light of evolving legal frameworks and AI regulatory developments.

1.2. Research Aim

Given the increasing importance and attention surrounding AI within the field of brand management, this thesis seeks to critically examine AI for brand voice regarding the question, what are the possible applications, implementation, and effects? Given the scope and complexity of this question, the research is structured around three interrelated perspectives that correspond to the different levels of inquiry: (1) the applications of AI for brand voice, (2) the implementation of these technologies for brands and brand professionals, and (3) the effects of AI-generated brand voice on consumer perceptions.

To address these perspectives comprehensively, the research is conducted through four papers, each focusing on a distinct aspect of the overarching research aim. The first paper aims to lay the foundation by examining how AI can be meaningfully applied to brand voice tasks and introduces a matrix to provide an initial overview of possibilities and assist brand researchers and professionals alike in navigating this evolving field. Addressing the first research perspective, the application of AI for brand voice, this study responds to the growing need to categorise and understand the technological capabilities and functions of AI for brand voice. To that end, it introduces the AI Brand Voice Matrix, which maps AI applications across two dimensions: the communication role (listener, sender, conversational partner) and the language format (written, spoken, non-verbal).

The second and third papers aim to examine AI implementation for brands, both conceptually and empirically. The second paper transitions the focus to the implementation research perspective and the conceptual study aims to address the deeper understanding of the evolving dynamics of HAICC for creative brand voice by providing a three-level framework for efficiency and effectiveness. The third paper builds on the conceptual work and aims to provide a greater understanding of the individual brand professional and the drivers and barriers to GenAI integration for their creative brand voice work.

Finally, the fourth paper turns to the third research perspective, effects, and aims to investigate the influence disclosure of an AI-generated brand voice has on consumer perception surrounding brand authenticity and brand attitude.

1.3. Thesis Outline

This PhD thesis is comprised of four works that explore the relationship between AI and brand voice through three key research perspectives: applications, implementation, and effects. Over the course of the research, elements of these studies were presented at academic conferences and industry-focused workshops across England, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Scotland, and the Netherlands. As the thesis is structured around stand-alone papers, some overlap is inevitable; however, each paper addresses a distinct aspect of the overarching research framework. The structure of the thesis, aligned with these three perspectives, is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

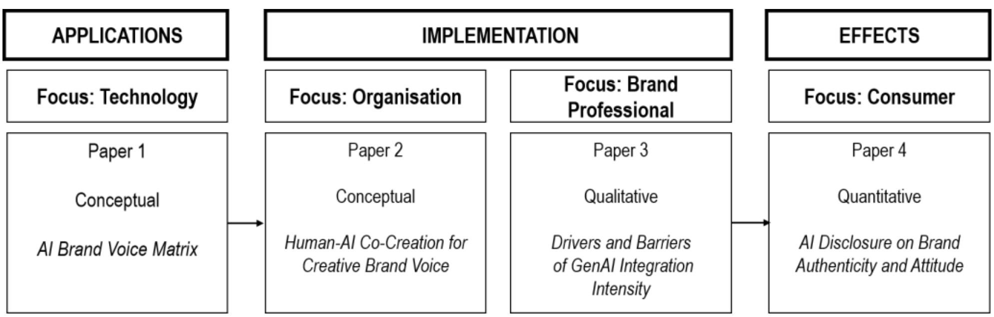

Figure 1.1. Outline According to Research Perspectives and Resulting Papers

1.4. Research Contribution

This thesis develops a multi-dimensional view of how AI technologies are reshaping how brands generate and manage brand voice. Each paper contributes original insights that advance academic understanding while offering tangible value to brand professionals navigating the integration of AI tools in increasingly complex and human–AI hybrid environments.

The first paper contributes to academic literature by introducing the AI Brand Voice Matrix, a conceptual framework designed to categorise and organise AI applications for brand voice. This matrix distinguishes between different communication roles: listener, sender, conversational partner, and different language formats: written, spoken, non-verbal. By combining these two dimensions, the matrix identifies nine distinct application fields. The paper contributes to theoretical work by providing a systematic lens through which the technological capabilities of AI can be understood in relation to brand voice. It establishes a structured vocabulary and analytical approach for scholars seeking to explore how AI is embedded in brand voice. From a managerial standpoint, the AI Brand Voice Matrix offers a valuable strategic tool for brand professionals seeking to evaluate and apply AI technologies. It enables decision-makers to identify which AI applications are most appropriate for specific brand voice tasks based on communication intent and content format. The paper outlines strategic and operational considerations such as insourcing versus outsourcing, resource allocation, and the development of internal capabilities. In doing so, it offers not only theoretical orientation but also actionable insights that support practitioners in making informed decisions about AI integration, balancing technological potential with brand-specific goals and ethical concerns.

The second paper develops a three-level conceptual framework for HAICC, distinguishing among the individual, organisational, and societal levels, contributing to theory on creative collaboration by identifying key factors for efficiency and effectiveness in HAICC for creative brand voice. The paper extends understanding of human–AI collaboration beyond technical functionality, offering an overview perspective and context-sensitive approach to co-creation in brand voice. In practice, this framework serves as a strategic roadmap for brands by highlighting necessary conditions for effective and efficient collaboration. Furthermore, it draws attention to broader societal considerations, including issues of responsibility, copyright, and transparency, which must be navigated to implement AI responsibly.

The third paper contributes theoretically to technology driver and barrier literature and branding scholarship by offering a temporal, in-depth analysis of how GenAI integration evolves over time. It identifies six realms, including individual, technology, brand, leadership, organisation, and environment, examining how they interact as drivers or barriers at different stages of GenAI integration. The study's qualitative design enables a nuanced understanding of the interplay between personal attitudes, technological limitations, organisational and environmental contexts. For brand management, insights assist brand professionals and organisations in anticipating and responding to challenges associated with GenAI integration. The findings identify specific obstacles, such as misalignment between AI output and brand authenticity, low quality of generated content, and time investment concerns. Conversely, drivers such as brand professional innovativeness, leadership support, and accessibility of tools are shown to facilitate integration. These insights support change management strategies by helping brand leaders create more receptive environments for AI experimentation, develop training programs, and align AI use with brand identity and consistency. As such, the paper equips industry professionals with a clearer understanding of how to navigate both resistance and opportunity in the face of technological transformation.

The fourth and final paper offers theoretical contributions to brand management and consumer behaviour research by exploring how disclosure of AI affects perceptions of brand voice authenticity, overall brand authenticity, and brand attitude. Employing a quantitative experimental design, the study challenges prevailing assumptions that AI-generated content is inherently perceived as less trustworthy or credible than human-written text. The findings reveal that AI disclosure does not diminish perceived authenticity or brand attitude, adding nuance to existing research. For practitioners, these findings hold important implications for communication strategy and brand transparency. The study provides empirical support for the idea that brands can openly disclose the use of AI in their communication without negative repercussions for consumer perception. This enables organisations to pursue cost and efficiency advantages associated with AI-generated content while remaining ethically transparent. The results empower brand professionals to make decisions about disclosure practices, encouraging them to develop transparent and trustworthy AI policies that align with consumer expectations in an increasingly AI-mediated communication environment.

In sum, this work offers significant and multi-faceted contributions to both academic and managerial domains. Theoretically, it advances conceptual frameworks and empirical insights that deepen our understanding of AI's role in brand voice. Practically, it provides initial and strategic guidance for brand professionals navigating the integration of AI technologies. Together, the four papers form a coherent and comprehensive body of research that addresses the technological, organisational, and consumer-facing dimensions of AI in brand voice, responding to both scholarly debates and industry demands in this rapidly evolving field.

CHAPTER TWO

Social Artificial Intelligence for Brand Voice–

The "AI Brand Voice Matrix" as an Orientation Framework

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly shaping the way brands communicate, making AI integration into brand voice a critical area of study. This paper introduces the AI Brand Voice Matrix, a framework that categorises AI applications for brand voice along two dimensions: AI's "communication role" (listener/ receiver, sender/ one-way communication, conversational partner/ two-way communication) and "language format" (written, spoken, non-verbal). Through this framework, nine distinct fields of AI application in brand voice are identified and the study provides initial recommendations for brand management regarding AI integration. Strategic considerations include decisions on insourcing versus outsourcing, resource allocation, budget planning, and the establishment of ethical guidelines. Operational challenges involve maintaining agility and ensuring algorithmic accuracy. Human factors focus on workforce competencies and the balance of responsibilities between AI and human employees. This research offers valuable insights for brand managers seeking to navigate AI for brand voice.

Publication History

Building on the conceptual foundations of this book chapter, a condensed and revised version, focusing on the AI Brand Voice Matrix and its practical brand applications, was published in the September 2022 issue of the German journal *transfer - Zeitschrift für Kommunikation und Markenmanagement*. The version presented in this chapter has been translated into English and is based on the original chapter publication.

Paper Reference

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Social Artificial Intelligence for Brand Voice- The "AI Brand Voice Matrix" as an Orientation Framework

2.1. Introduction

"Give your shoe collection a new, unmistakable elegance with designer shoes from Gucci. The characteristic Gucci shoes are characterised by their high-quality materials, such as feather-light suede, or sophisticated prints, such as the jacquard with pineapple pattern, are the perfect companion for any occasion. Pamper yourself with lambskin-trimmed Princetown slippers or extravagant leather pumps."
– AX Semantics for Mytheresa (2021)

The above passage is a product description for Gucci shoes that appeared on the luxury online store Mytheresa (AX Semantics, 2021). Even if not recognisable at first glance, the text was not written by a human, but by an algorithm. In this case, the text was generated by AX Semantics, an AI-based natural language generation platform that was linked to an e-commerce database to produce the content. Beyond only product descriptions, AI can generate written language for various other formats; it has the ability to create overview pages, compose emails, draft financial reports and communicate with consumers as a chatbot in messenger applications.

Due to these developments, AI is increasingly integrated within brand management. By 2022, more than 30% of digital content generated will be created with the assistance of AI technologies (Pemberton, 2019), and by 2024, consumer spending in the retail sector via chatbots will increase worldwide from US$ 2.8 billion in 2019 to US$ 142 billion in 2024 (Insider Intelligence, 2021).

However, the use of AI-generated language extends far beyond written text. In spoken language, as well as in the creation of sound (tones, jingles, songs, etc.) and visual language (advertisements, videos, etc.), AI is playing an increasingly supportive or even creative role, thereby communicating the brand. Voice assistants such as Alexa, Cortana, or Siri are widely used and effective examples of AI-generated spoken language already in the mass market. In 2020 around 4.2 billion voice-controlled assistants were used in devices around the world and according to forecasts, this figure will rise to over 8.4 billion by 2024 (Juniper Research, 2020).

Numerous reasons contribute to brands increasingly integrating AI-generated language. On the one hand, consumers expect real-time information without geographical or temporal restrictions. On the other hand, they desire content and communication that appeals to them on a personal level and is highly relevant to them as an individual. A study by Gartner claims that in order to achieve these goals "[the] use of AI technologies such as machine learning, natural-language understanding and natural language processing can help analyse customer sentiment and customer feedback at scale, precision and speed not achievable through humans" (Ameen et al., 2021, p.2). Furthermore, AI technologies are capable of completing tasks in daily brand management more quickly and cost-effectively, while also simplifying content creation and communication.

Additionally, access to these technologies is becoming increasingly easier. Open-source research labs and solutions like OpenAI, DeepMind (Google), and others offer Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) that are generally freely available and can be integrated into existing systems. Those who do not wish to or cannot program themselves can rely on cloud-based services and packages such as IBM's Watson, Salesforce's Einstein, or Microsoft's Azure. Given the growing use of AI, it is not surprising that brands are also leveraging the technology for the analysis and development of their brand voice. In this article, we will therefore focus on the key aspects to consider when using AI to support brand voice.

2.2. Brand Voice

"Brand voice, which encompasses the attitude, tonality, content and typography, is the voice of the brand that is designed and ultimately perceived by the intended recipient"

– based on Kohli and Yen (2020)

It is important to note that brand voice is not only reflected in written language but also in spoken and visual language, as brand voice encompasses both verbal and nonverbal communication. Traditionally, humans have shaped brand voice by creating content for various channels and communicating with consumers via live chats, phone calls, in-store interactions, billboards, and other brand touchpoints. With AI generating an increasing share of language, there is a shift toward an artificial brand voice. This raises the question of how to ensure that this language represents the brand as effectively as human-created communication. This is a critical consideration because AI should be viewed as a tool to support brand positioning, not as the brand itself, nor as a replacement for it (Knapp, 2017).

Initial studies dealing with the question of how to design an AI brand voice recommend developing explicit personality traits. For example, in the case of chatbots, a bot personality canvas for AI can be used as a guideline (McLaughlin, 2019). Consulting firm MetaDesign and market research institute Eyesquare conducted a study examining bots and voice assistants, focusing on developing personality that aligns with the brand. Prototypes were developed for the brands Red Bull, Zalando, Commerzbank and Car2go. For example, the relaxed "Mattis" embodies Red Bull and the competent "Thomas" represents Commerzbank (MetaDesign, 2019). An important takeaway for brands is that implementation of the AI Brand Voice Matrix needs to be carefully considered and planned to ensure that AI-generated brand voice strengthens rather than weakens the brand. This requires an understanding of AI, including the current capabilities and limitations.

2.3. Artificial Intelligence

Since the breakthroughs of the first AI chatbot ELIZA (1966), the assembly robots at General Motors (since 1962) and IBM’s robots Deep Blue and Watson (since 2010), AI has conquered a wide range of applications. The Chinese company Zhen Robotics has developed the first prototype of a self-driving delivery robot. In Japan, the Kimagure Artificial Writer Project and an AI system co-authored a novel that almost won a national literary prize. In Germany, an AI wrote a scientific manuscript about lithium-ion batteries, which was published by Springer International (Beta Writer, 2019). The AI robot Ai-Da drew 'her' own self-portrait. AI is not only making strides in robotics, literature and in the art industry, but also in brand management, particularly for brand voice (e.g. Scheier & Held, 2019; Baumgarth et al., 2020).

However, what is AI? It is a large and vaguely defined field of computer science dealing with the development of intelligent and adaptive machines capable of learning. In contrast to human and animal intelligence, artificial intelligence is the product of machines. It is also referred to as "a system’s ability to interpret external data correctly, to learn from such data, and to use those learnings to achieve specific goals and tasks through flexible adaptation" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019, p.17). AI encompasses various domains that enable systems to learn, process information, and solve problems, such as machine learning, deep learning, neural networks, and natural language processing (for an overview, see Burgess 2018).

Additionally, distinctions must be made between different levels of AI performance. These include super AI, strong AI and weak AI. Super AI, or artificial superintelligence, represents a hypothetical level of AI that surpasses human capabilities and is considered a potential threat to human existence. Strong AI, also known as general AI, can simulate human intelligence to the extent that it can compete with humans in all tasks and perform a wide range of functions. It requires minimal human input because it can independently solve new problems, make decisions based on learned information, reason, plan, and communicate (IBM Cloud Education, 2020). To date, AI has not reached either the super or strong AI stage.

In contrast, weak AI, also known as Narrow Artificial Intelligence, is capable of performing a specific, clearly defined task, and is the form of AI currently used in (brand) practice. Weak AI depends on humans to train the algorithm with relevant data and defines the parameters for learning algorithms. Examples of weak AI include, but are not limited to, digital voice assistants, recommendation engines, chatbots, image and speech recognition, autonomous vehicles, drones and robots. As the currently deployed technologies are forms of weak AI, the focus in the discussion of the AI brand voice will remain here.

2.4. AI Brand Voice Applications

2.4.1. Overview: AI Brand Voice Matrix

Thanks to tools and technologies already available on the market, AI offers brands a wide range of application possibilities. However, brand managers need to carefully consider where meaningful integration opportunities exist and what role AI should play. To provide an overview of the areas of application and integration possibilities, we propose the AI Brand Voice Matrix (see Table 2.1). The matrix has two dimensions: the communication role of AI and the language format. The communication role, as the first dimension of the matrix, defines the role AI plays in the sender-receiver dyad of brand communication. The roles identified are listener (receiver), sender (one-way communication), and conversational partner (two-way communication).

Language Format	**Communication Role**		
	Listener (Receiver)	Sender (One-way Communication)	Conversational Partner (Two-way Communication)
Written Language	Search queries, consumer insights, social listening, sentiment analysis, voice recognition. Example AI tools: *Cloud Natural Language, Meltwater, Brandwatch*	Slogan generation, product/service descriptions, website text, email text, templates, translation. Example AI tools: *DeepL, Neuroflash, Wordsmith, IBM Watson, Microsoft Azure*	Chatbots, translation. Example AI tools: *Salesforce Einstein, Watson Assistant*
Spoken Language	Search queries, social listening, sentiment analysis, speech-to-text. Example AI tools: *audEERING*	Text-to-Speech, Image-to-Speech, translation. Example AI tools: *Resemble AI, Syntesia*	Chatbots, voice assistants, translation. Example AI tools: *Alexa, Siri, Cortana*
Non-verbal Language	Sentiment analysis, facial recognition, predictive eye-tracking. Example AI tools: *AutoDraw, Expoze.io, Affectiva*	Logo design, mood boards, templates, jingle-generation, images, videos, sounds. Example AI tools: *Pencil, aimpower*	Social robotics, avatars. Example AI tools: *Synthesia, Sophia, Furhat, Omniverse*
See Appendix A for a list of links to the individual tools and solutions.			

Table 2.1. AI Brand Voice Matrix

In the role of listener, the brand uses AI to observe and analyse the communication between consumers and collects available information about the brand, products, services and trends. This area is becoming increasingly important as user-generated content about brands continues to increase in terms of quantity, quality and impact. In the role of sender, the brand integrates AI in order to optimise the content and communications of classic brand communication (especially mass media communication), directed by the brand to consumers without necessarily leading to further interaction.

In the role of conversational partner, the brand uses AI to interact with consumers interactively and sometimes in real-time. The second dimension of the AI Brand Voice Matrix is the language format and refers to the form of communication. The AI Brand Voice Matrix distinguishes between three formats of brand language, which encompasses written, spoken and non-verbal (for example, images, videos and sounds).

Although the AI Brand Voice Matrix defines nine fields based on the 3 x 3 logic, it should be noted that categories can overlap and in some cases support or build on each other. Consequently, the tools cited as examples are often not only applicable in one category, but are relevant to multiple categories, covering several fields. The AI Brand Voice Matrix is not intended to suggest that a brand should cover as many fields as possible, but is rather intended to provide brand managers with an initial overview and systematisation of the rapidly developing field of AI for brand voice.

2.4.2. The Role of AI Brand Voice

This section elaborates on the main tasks, provides brand examples, and tools for testing, which are organised according to the three AI communication roles presented in the matrix.

Listener: AI receives and Analyses Communication about the Brand

In the first role as 'listener', the focus for brand management is on communication that takes place between consumers, as well as information about the brand and its environment (competitor brands, industry, target groups). This can occur in two phases. Firstly, AI can be implemented before the brand designs and broadcasts content and communication. AI can be used to gather insights that inform brand positioning or adjust brand touchpoints based on the findings. Secondly, AI can be used to assess how communication is received by consumers and monitor how the brand is discussed, particularly in the digital sphere.

In the first phase, AI can support with research tasks, the collection of data, insights and information, as well as the search for initial inspiration. For example, with written and spoken language, AI can help with search queries, initial suggestions, and social listening to gain a better understanding of trends, patterns and the context in which the brand operates. Brand Example 1 illustrates how AI can be integrated into this process.

Brand Example 1: The Body Shop and Brandwatch

The Body Shop was founded in 1976 by Anita Roddick in Brighton and today has over 2.500 stores worldwide, selling skincare, cosmetics and fragrances (The Body Shop, 2021). To continuously understand and monitor the market environment, The Body Shop uses 'Brandwatch', a digital consumer intelligence platform that uses AI algorithms to search and analyse information and sources. AI is particularly used to gain insights into trends by observing what consumers are doing on social media platforms and saying in product reviews and online discussions forums. Based on the trend analyses conducted by the AI, the information is used to develop ideas for campaigns (Brandwatch, 2021). In a second step, AI can also be integrated to measure and manage the performance of content and communication. Live content and communication, as well as engagement, impact, reach and sentiment, can be tracked and analysed. This is achieved through social listening in order to assess what is being said about the brand, or by analysing sentiment in order to understand emotions and opinions of a community. This applies both to written and spoken language as well as visual representations, which can increasingly be analysed by AI.

Brand Example 2 outlines an example from the fashion industry.

Brand Example 2: H&M and Meltwater

Meltwater, which uses algorithms from Fairhair.ai, is a global leading company for Software-as-a-Service solutions in online media monitoring. Founded in 2001 and based in the Netherlands, it is widely used by brands, including H&M Mexico. With the help of Meltwater, the brand team measures and tracks ongoing campaigns created to support various clothing and accessories collections. During the opening of the flagship store on Calle Madero metrics such as the share of voice, the number of media impressions, social media interactions, blog mentions, and the number and origin of visitors from various countries were tracked and measured. H&M Mexico not only gains access to ongoing trends and alerts but also uses AI-powered insights to monitor competitors in the market and track their activities (Meltwater, 2021).

Spotlight: An AI Tool for Sentiment Analysis

The Google Cloud Natural Language API was introduced as a beta version in 2016 and has since been further developed to perform sentiment analyses and speech recognition. The web-based service uses machine learning algorithms and Natural Language Understanding to process a text or document and analyses the entities, sentiment, syntax and categories of language. Readers can try the application themselves for short texts via the following link:

https://cloud.google.com/naturallanguage/.

Sender: AI Supports and Distributes Messages

In the second role, 'sender', the focus is on generating brand content, which translates brand positioning and branding, distributing it to consumers. In written brand voice, for example, AI can act as a creative, generating text for a brand's website, email and advertising copy (see Brand Example 3). Additionally, AI solutions in the context of one-way communication are also used to assess brand assets such as texts, images, films, etc. for the formal and content-related brand fit (Scheier & Held, 2019).

Brand Example 3: Otto and AX Semantics

The company Otto uses AI in one-way communication for the language format written text. Otto GmbH & Co. KG, based in Hamburg, is a German company and one of the largest e-commerce companies in the world. With a strong focus on retail, the company already offered over 2.2 million products in its online shop by 2017, generating 90% of its revenue online (Otto, 2017). During the COVID-19 pandemic, consumer demands on online retail shifted even further, prompting Otto to expand its product offerings. Writing product descriptions for each individual product would require a large amount of work for a company of this size. In this case, AI is being used to write product descriptions for thousands of products. One of the AI platforms used is AX Semantics, which enables brands to use natural language generation to create databases and then use the platform to write texts. The larger the amount of data and the number of keywords provided by the company, the more accurate and better the text can represent the brand voice.

Spotlight: An AI Tool for Facebook Video Ads

Founded in 2018, Pencil is a creative platform that uses AI to create 6-, 10-, or 15-second video adverts for social media. The brand uploads the company URL and Pencil's AI processes the brand's image information. With the assistance of computer vision, images and videos are cut into scenes and GPT-3 is used to process natural language to create texts. Another predictive system is then used to determine what best suits the brand. Previous content is analysed to see what worked best in the past (Pencil, 2021).

Conversational Partner: AI Enables Natural and Real-Time Interaction

In the third role, 'conversational partner', AI facilitates interactive communication with consumers. Companies increasingly use chatbots and messaging agents to engage with their audiences. Many of these chatbots are AI-powered, offering solutions for written and spoken messaging, such as Microsoft's Bot Framework, Salesforce's Einstein Bot, and IBM's Watson Assistant. In addition to the classic chatbots that many of us have already come into contact with, there are other ways in which AI can become a communicator. In the online sector, AI-controlled avatars, which resemble real people in both appearance and language, are becoming conversational partners. Based on GPT-3 AI chatbots, companies such as Synthesia offer a variety of avatars as moderators. Samsung's project with Nano-AI goes one step further by envisioning virtual humans capable of answering more than just a few questions. In offline, physical settings, social robots equipped with AI act as communicators, interacting with consumers. Brand Example 4 outlines a practical example of such usage.

Brand Example 4: Xiaoice

An industry example of two-way communication is the AI chatbot and digital companion Xiaoice. Originally developed by Microsoft, Xiaoice differs from Apple's Siri and Microsoft's Cortana in that it aims to provide a more emotional experience and is supported by a complete AI framework system. Since its launch in China in 2014, the chatbot has attracted more than 660 million online users online and its availability has expanded to Indonesia and Japan (Chen, 2021). Within three months of its launch, it (Xiaoice) engaged in half a billion conversations, was named a top influencer on Weibo, and users who added the chatbot engaged with Xiaoice an average of more than 60 times per month. It is currently available on most branded smartphones in China and on many social media platforms, for example WeChat.

Spotlight: An AI Tool for Voices

Resemble.ai is a web and API-based solution that uses GPT-3 to clone or create fictitious voices based on a profile. The voice can be used for AI assistant apps such as Alexa and Google Home, as a voice-over for animated films, or as part of an advert. The platform uses a text-to-speech generator that is connected to a real-time API.

2.5. Recommendations for the AI Brand Voice Matrix

AI holds significant potential for brand management and can be effectively integrated into the design and implementation of brand voice. However, when integrating and utilising AI, several factors need to be considered, including strategic, operational and human aspects (see Figure 2.1).

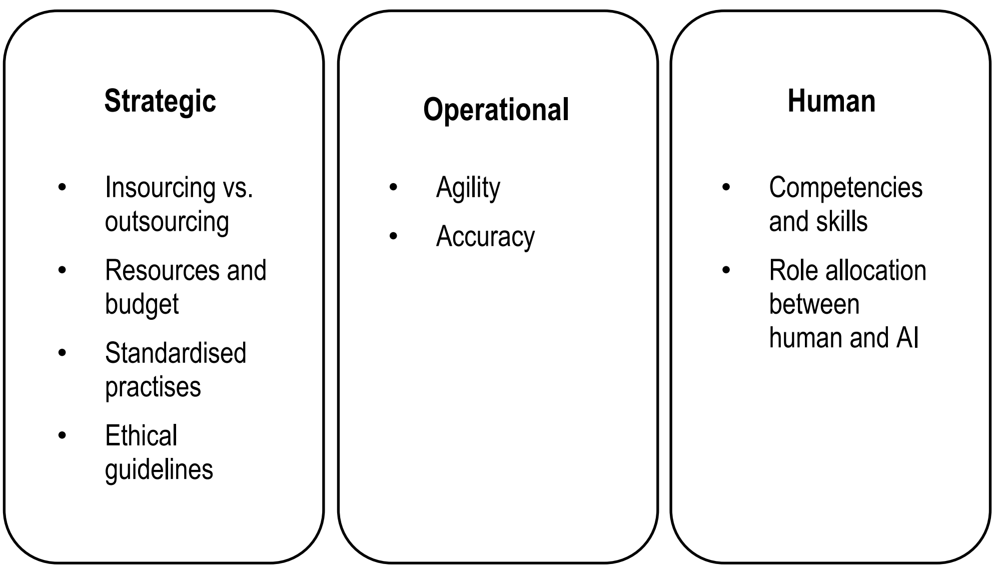

Figure 2.1. AI Brand Voice Matrix Implementation Recommendations

2.5.1. Strategic Factors

There are four strategic factors: (1) insourcing vs. outsourcing, (2) resources and budget, (3) establishment of standard practices, and (4) ethical guidelines.

1. Insourcing vs. Outsourcing

Before deciding to use AI, brands must decide who will train the AI system, oversee its implementation, and monitor its performance. This can be done internally, for example, a company can acquire the knowledge by coding and training their own AI system and running the algorithms themselves. This is particularly suitable for brands with technical expertise and large datasets. Alternatively, external partners or AI platform providers offer AI solutions as a service, which can be advantageous for brands lacking technical resources or capacity to train their own systems.

2. Resources and Budget

The price of AI solutions and platforms on the market varies greatly depending on how comprehensive the solutions are and how many tasks the AI performs. Solutions are available for brands of all sizes, from well-established companies with extensive data to smaller brands just beginning their journey. It is crucial to select solutions aligned with the brand's specific needs and budget constraints. For example, a large-scale AI solution for a smaller brand with limited budget that is only seeking AI integration to take on the role of a communicator as an AI-driven chatbot, may not be particularly relevant.

3. Establishment of Standard Practices

As with any new technology or tool that is integrated into the workplace, the introduction of AI is associated with numerous changes and requires an acceptance and learning process from employees. Integrating AI requires establishing protocols to determine where, how, and under what conditions AI will be used. These practices should define accountability for AI-driven tasks and ensure staff are adequately prepared for changes brought about by new technologies.

4. Ethical Guidelines

The establishment of ethical guidelines for AI usage is a topic discussed also at a broader societal level, e.g. in politics, policymaking, sustainability and safety. For brands, important questions and issues surrounding trust in technology, data protection, dealing with undesirable behaviour such as discrimination and the transparency of algorithms when implementing AI in a field of work must be considered. In this phase, it is advisable in addition to compliance with legal requirements (which currently remain underdeveloped), to adopt an internal AI code of conduct and communicate it to all employees. Brand managers must also consider whether and how to make AI-generated brand voice transparent to consumers.

2.5.2. Operational Factors

There are two operational factors to consider: (1) agility and (2) accuracy.

1. Agility

The integration of AI brand voice requires agility and openness from brand managers. Technology and solutions are constantly changing due to advances in the field of AI. There are updates to systems and new methods for tasks in all areas of brand management (information gathering, performance, content creation, communication) increasingly appear. This necessitating frequent updates to software, being open to testing AI and the flexibility to make changes and adjustments when necessary.

2. Accuracy

AI platforms, tools and technologies have undoubtedly progressed and improved, but as with many technological solutions, are by no means flawless. AI tends to make mistakes, be it when analysing information from data sets, writing texts, understanding queries or misunderstandings in the creation of content. Therefore, human oversight remains essential when it comes to training and monitoring AI systems, monitoring operational performance and ensuring quality of the outputs produced by AI.

2.5.3. Human Factors

There are two central human factors to consider: (1) competencies and skills, and (2) role allocation between human and AI.

1. Competencies and Skills

As technology advances, so must the employees who will work with AI. As AI is continuously implemented within brand management teams and used to represent the established brand voice, it is not only technical employees, such as the IT team, who will work with the relevant tools. This requires equipping marketing and brand managers with the necessary knowledge, as many of them have little or no expertise in the fields of AI, data and robotics. Companies must therefore offer training for employees who are currently working with AI or will be working with it in the future in order to achieve good results for the brand. Due to the complexity of the topics, the great distance to traditional marketing and brand knowledge, and the dynamics of technological development, long-term learning formats and lifelong learning should be established rather than only short, one-day seminars.

2. Role Allocation between Human and AI
AI is a technology that already has a major impact, and this will continue. However, like any ground breaking technology that is able to simulate human tasks, it also brings changes, especially in work tasks. Therefore, brand managers need to consider what role AI will take, what role will remain with human employees, and establish clear accountability for specific tasks.

2.6. Conclusion

AI is a technology that will continue to gain significance for brand voice. The AI Brand Voice Matrix provides an overview of application possibilities for brands. It considers AI integration for brand voice according to two dimensions; firstly, AI's communication role (listener/receiver, sender/one-way communication, conversational partner/two-way communication) and secondly, the language format (written, spoken, non-verbal).

A total of nine fields for the use of AI is identified for brand voice. The work also contains initial recommendations for brand management on AI integration, including strategic, operational and human factors that should be considered. Strategic factors include decisions on insourcing vs. outsourcing, resources and budget, establishing standard practices and ethical guidelines. Operational factors require agility from the brand and checking accuracy of algorithms. Human factors include the competencies and skills of employees and consideration of role allocation between AI and humans.

Even if today's narrow AI is already very powerful for specific areas of brand management and other fields, it is expected that there will be an explosion of AI capabilities and applications in the coming years. Therefore, brand managers should begin engaging deeply with this technology now, experiment with it, and consider strategic, operational, and human barriers during implementation.

From a brand perspective, despite technical challenges and enthusiasm for technology, it is important to ensure that AI is not just integrated for brand voice to work operationally, but that AI actually reflects the positioning of the brand and generates positive brand experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

Welcome, New Brand Colleague!

A Conceptual Framework for Efficient and Effective Human–AI Co-Creation for Creative Brand Voice

Abstract

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities has extended into creative realms, presenting opportunities for creative collaboration between human brand professionals and AI in support of brand voice efforts. However, there remains little clarity regarding the implementation of this creative interaction. With a conceptual approach, the current research proposes a three-level framework of human–AI co-creation for creative brand voice that highlights key factors that can facilitate brand efficiency and effectiveness at the individual (AI task roles, co-creation teaming, knowledge and skills), organisational (infrastructure and brand voice database, socialisation), and societal (responsibility and accountability, AI transparency, brand voice copyright) levels. Each level presents different challenges and insights. At the individual level, it is critical to consider operational processes; at the organisational level, managing the interactions is key; and at the societal level, external influences must be accounted for, to manage the brand. This research contribution in turn offers theoretical guidance, aligned with a high-level brand management perspective, on how to pursue efficiency and effectiveness at three defined levels, as well as relevant avenues for further research.

Keywords

Brand Management, Artificial Intelligence, Brand Voice, Co-Creation, Creativity

Publication History

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Welcome, New Brand Colleague! A Conceptual Framework for Efficient and Effective Human–AI Co-Creation for Creative Brand Voice

3.1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities have evolved enough to support creative, collaborative efforts with human creative agents (Rezwana & Maher, 2023; Veale & Pérez, 2020). This Human–AI Co-Creation (HAICC) represents the effort of both entities towards a common goal, such that the generated outcomes cannot be attributed solely to the human or the algorithm and instead exceed the capabilities of either partner (Jarrahi et al., 2018; Liapis et al., 2016). Considering how extensively AI-based text systems have increased in popularity—ChatGPT-3 set a record for the quickest growing consumer application ever, recording 100 million monthly active users within just three months of its release (Hu, 2023)— suggests expanded opportunities for brands to work creatively with AI to develop unique content and brand voice (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Brand voice, as perceived by intended recipients according to its tonality, attitude, choice of language, typography, and content (Kohli & Yen, 2020), can represent a brand's spoken identity and personality (Vernuccio et al., 2023), as well as embody the brand in written formats, images, sound, and video (Kirkby et al., 2022).

Initial studies show that co-creation with AI can improve human performance, produce better brand outputs, and assist in achieving efficiency and effectiveness goals (Chaisatitkul et al., 2024; Dell'Acqua et al., 2023; Hartmann et al., 2024). Such promise suggests the need to understand and specify the requirements for enabling human and AI co-creation. Some existing HAICC models emphasise the dynamics of the interaction, as when Huang and Rust (2022) outline the uses of AI by both marketers and consumers. In turn, they argue that effective collaboration requires the acknowledgment and integration of distinct intelligences, such as the mechanical and analytical intelligence of AI, as well as the contextual, intuitive, and feeling intelligence held by humans. Alternatively, some management-oriented frameworks examine HAICC from socialisation (Makarius et al., 2020) and knowledge sharing (Chowdhury et al., 2022) perspectives, to address how HAICC might be integrated within the organisation. Such efforts depend on factors such as AI trust, skills, job clarity, and integration; knowledge sharing also appears key for facilitating socialisation and business performance (Chowdhury et al., 2022). However, in recognising the need for continued examinations of such factors (Merhi, 2023), a review of initial marketing studies of how AI creatively generates product advertisements and storyboards (Chaisatitkul et al., 2024), images (Hartmann et al., 2024), or text (Reisenbichler et al., 2023) reveals that thus far, no clear assessment has specified the factors underlying HAICC dedicated to creative brand voice efforts.

Creative collaboration warrants its own, specific focus, as the exchange between human and AI is uniquely challenging due to interaction spontaneity in this context (Davis et al., 2016). General human–computer interactions can be relatively less complex; HAICC is innately complex and challenging, because creativity is open-ended and requires collaborative problem solving (Rezwana & Maher, 2023). In design process management and human–computer interaction literature that deals with creativity, Wu et al. (2021) propose a loop, in which AI gets integrated at a "perceive" stage to deal with big data, then proceeds to "facilitate" thinking, achieve "express" outcomes through rapid exploration, "complement" humans by leveraging its respective strengths, and perform a "test" through simulation and analysis. A proposed framework for interaction design instead characterises HAICC according to the interaction dynamics that drive effective co-creation for creative output (Rezwana & Maher, 2021; 2023), including "collaboration style", or who does what, when, and for which task; "communication style", which reflects human–AI dialogue and the communication channels available; and the interaction with the shared creative output, such that the framework highlights the roles of the "creative process" and "creative product."

With their focus on the organisational level, such management-oriented frameworks for facilitating HAICC largely ignore factors at wider, societal levels. In contrast, design–oriented frameworks usually deal with processes between an individual user and AI. In this sense, literature spanning these domains has not established a comprehensive perspective on the use of HAICC for creative brand voice, as it arises from brand management at individual, organisational, and societal levels. To address this gap, the current research adopts a conceptual approach and accounts for multiple research domains and existing theoretical models, seeking to expand these insights and thereby advance theory development (Vargo, 2023; Vargo & Koskela-Huotari, 2020). In turn, it proposes the *Human–AI Co-Creation for Creative Brand Voice Framework* to organise and manage HAICC, highlighting factors that facilitate efficiency and effectiveness at three levels: (1) individual, (2) organisational, and (3) societal. Distinguishing these levels is critical, because different factors emerge as relevant at each of them. Accordingly, researchers can and should apply the proposed framework in their continued investigations of HAICC.

3.2. Background

3.2.1. Creative Brand Voice

Creativity is a complex cognitive process, involving the generation of original and valuable ideas, solutions, or expressions. It requires effectiveness and originality to create something novel for a specific group of users at a given time (Stein, 1953). In marketing, creativity also reflects the generation of new and useful ideas and concepts, particularly when developing and designing products, services, or brand communications (Lies, 2021). For example, creative brand voice implies the generation of text, images, videos, sound, music, and designs. Moreover, creativity evolves alongside transformative technological changes (Corazza, 2016), such as the dramatic changes wrought by AI, which can display creativity, along or as an augmentation of human creativity (Feuerriegel, 2024). This study accordingly focuses on creative rather than functional uses of AI, together with the processes involved in creating, publishing, and protecting creative assets.

3.2.2. Efficiency and Effectiveness

Efficiency and effectiveness are fundamental organisational goals that also provide frequently used measures of organisational performance (Mouzas, 2006). In a brand management context, Rahman et al. (2018) define efficiency as the capacity to limit inputs, such as budgets allocated to brand awareness efforts or R&D investments to drive innovation, while still maximising brand equity, as a key brand management output (Rahman et al., 2018). Thus, the primary focus is the use of resources relative to the output those resources produce for the brand (Bonoma & Clark, 1988).

When AI assists in generating brand voice, effectiveness standards imply it must enhance the brand identity without evolving into an own brand (Knapp, 2017) and offer original content, while still remaining consistent with the established brand to protect its existing positioning, differentiation, recognition, and recall (Munoz & Kumar, 2004). Effective brand management also should contribute to overall organisational goals, so relevant metrics might address how the brand performs in relation to customers' behaviours and attitudes toward the brand, as well as the resulting financial returns (Mirzaei et al., 2011; Munoz & Kumar, 2004).

To determine the efficiency and effectiveness of HAICC, various perspectives can be informative. First, individual human employees (herein 'brand professional', referring to, for example, marketing, brand, social media managers), and AI technology need to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in their interactions, which take place during operational processes. Second, for brand management and an overarching organisational perspective, efficiency and effectiveness pertains to efforts to structure, organise, and facilitate HAICC. Third, the external environment in which the brand operates features social and legal norms, which require consideration in terms of how well they are met.

3.3. Human–AI Co-Creation for Creative Brand Voice Framework

To identify factors that contribute to HAICC and develop a meaningful structure, the current research starts with a re-examination of existing models. This review helped inform the three levels for organising the factors relevant to HAICC. In particular, previous research identifies how various contexts influence technology acceptance within an organisation, as well as the individual behaviour of members of those organisations. For example, the technology–organisation–environment (TOE) framework (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990) cites three important contexts: technological, pertaining to the existing and new technologies in the market that are available to various degrees and that offer distinct advantageous characteristics and attributes, such that the organisation must possess sufficient infrastructure to support them; organisation, which consists of internal structures and hierarchies, communication processes, size, (slack) resources, the culture, and management support; and environmental, referring to the nature of the industry, market and customer preferences, and government and policy regulations.

Extensions of the TOE framework add some individual factors, such as subjective norms that reflect how others use or accept a technology and thus influence the focal user (Awa et al., 2017). Such individual factors represent the core of socio-ecological models that seek to explain the interplays among individual, societal, organisational, and environmental factors and their effects on behavioural change. Adaptations of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) model also identify factors at an individual level, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes, then add interpersonal factors at a second level, such as social networks. A third, organisational level includes the environment and ethos, and finally, the public policy level entails cultural values and norms, as well as state laws and regulations (Lee et al., 2017).

The novel framework proposed herein shifts focus: Rather than addressing influences on human behaviour, it reflects a socio-technical systems approach (Feldman, 2023) to understanding the factors that support efficient and effective HAICC as a process at the individual level, the management of the interaction at the organisational level, and brand management and protection at the external environment. In line with recommendations to present theoretical frameworks in simplified and generalisable ways (Vargo, 2023), Figure 3.1 depicts the proposed Human–AI Co-Creation for Creative Brand Voice Framework.

The framework encompasses three levels, resembling the structure of extant socio-ecological models. At the centre are factors pertaining to the AI and individual brand professional level; their purpose is to optimise operational processes between these actors. Factors related to the technology include AI task roles; factors related to the human professional refer to knowledge and skills; and their intersection creates co-creation teaming factors. The middle, organisational, brand management level encompasses organisational capabilities to manage the interaction, in terms of both technological capabilities, including infrastructure and brand voice database, and human capabilities, including socialisation. At the overarching level, the framework integrates the societal level, which requires compliance with social norms and legalities in the broader environment, including responsibility, accountability, AI transparency, and brand voice copyrights. This paper now discusses the three levels relevant for brand management and the factors in each.

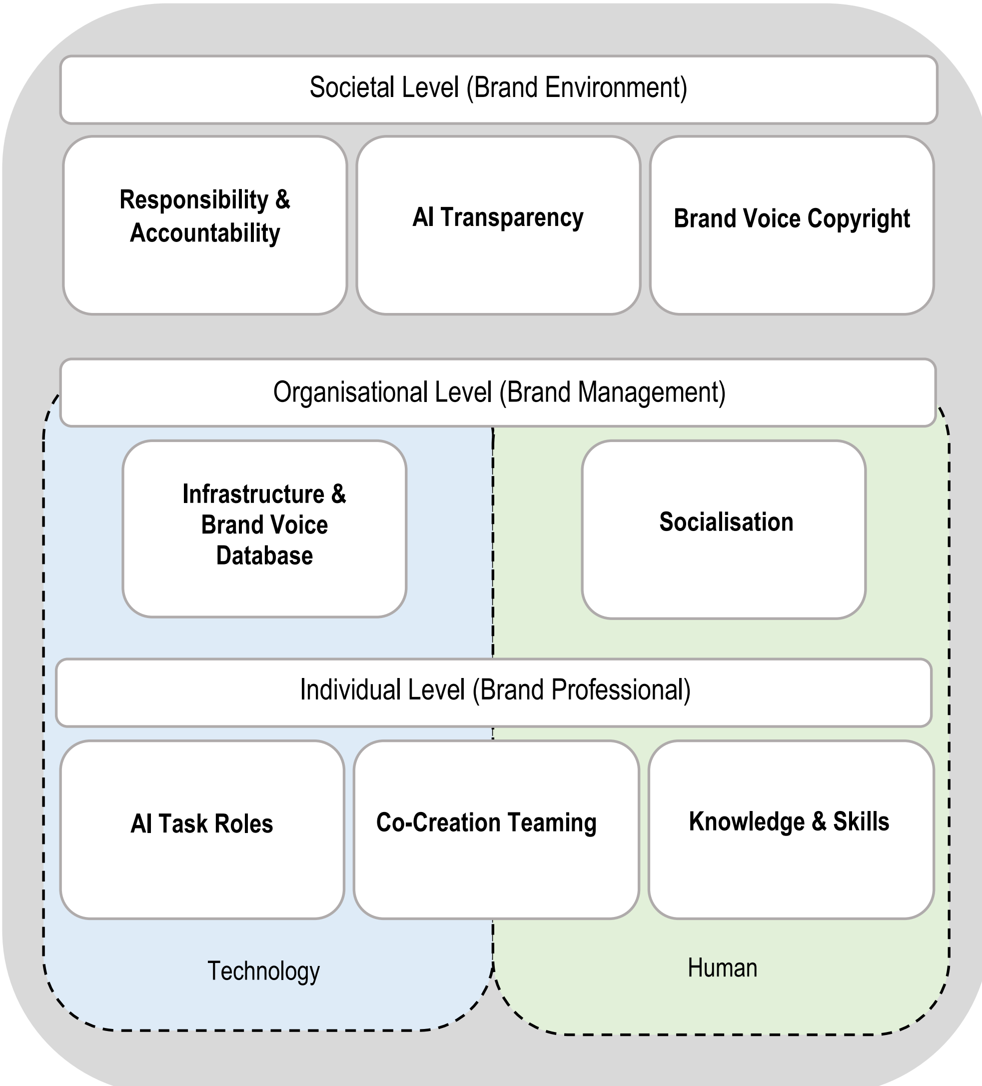

Figure 3.1. Human–AI Co-Creation for Creative Brand Voice Framework

3.3.1. Individual Level

At individual level, focus lies on factors contributing to efficiency and effectiveness in operational processes, for instance, planning and producing text, image, video, or sound, between individual brand professional and AI. The first factor is technological, related to the allocation of AI task roles; the second factor is human, pertaining to required knowledge and skills. Intersecting AI and human is the factor co-creation teaming.

AI Task Roles

Some set of functional group roles gets designated or assigned to an individual member of a team, whether by a leader or through natural developments due to team dynamics (Belbin, 2012; Siemon, 2022; Van de Water et al., 2008). These task roles facilitate task completion and individual performance, which then contribute to group goals. Although Nass et al. (1996) examine computers as teammates and investigate how humans treat systems in collaborative work, they ignore those computers' roles within teams. Role clarity should enhance collaborations, by fostering coordinated, cooperative working environments (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). However, because this literature tradition largely focuses on human teams, the roles for AI in collaborative teams must be defined (Siemon, 2022). Establishing clear roles, tasks, and expectations of AI can reduce ambiguity, negative expectations, and uncertainty, which should enhance both performance and commitment (Brougham & Haar, 2018; Chowdhury et al., 2022). Considering the many AI task roles identified in prior research, when applied to a HAICC for creative brand voice process, they might be illustrated with the four-stage creative process model (Wallas, 1926), which comprises preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. Then, in pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness, AI task roles should be integrated in specific stages in the HAICC process.

In the initial preparation stage, the *coordinator* (Siemon, 2022) and *definer* (Rezwana & Maher, 2021; 2022) task roles are required for efficiency, because AI facilitates human cognition in such early stages by identifying the right questions, providing viable alternatives and framing, and then re-framing ideas (Feldman & Fraser, 2017). In a *coordinator* role, AI also can contribute to efficiency by planning and allocating resources; guiding the creative process to keep it on track; and persuading, motivating, and assigning tasks to human brand professionals. Human acceptance of AI task delegation is partially evident, since task delegation improves self-efficiency, in turn enhancing task satisfaction and performance (Hemmer et al., 2023). As a *definer*, the AI can set specific goals for the human, before they begin the creative challenge, which should contribute to efficiency by saving time. Turning to effectiveness, key AI task roles include *creator* (Rezwana & Maher, 2021; Siemon, 2022) and *expert consultant* (Bader et al., 1988; Bittner et al., 2019). The AI creator gathers information and suggests ideas to spark further ideation. In an ideation process, AI inconsistencies and hallucinations can represent strengths, because AI can efficiently generate multiple, diverse ideas, more so than humans (Girotra et al., 2023; Terwiesch, 2023). For example, if used to create marketing storyboards, AI significantly reduces the time required while also producing unique, consistent visuals (Chaisatitkul et al., 2024). Finally, as an *expert consultant*, AI can provide guidelines and information about specific research tasks that arise.

Then in the incubation stage, idea germination often seems to occur unconsciously, but deep thoughts and developments of initial ideas and connections can be supported by dialogue and exchanges with others (Hall et al., 2008). In terms of effectiveness, using AI as a *second opinion* (Bader et al., 1988) allows for simultaneous task execution, as well as comparisons of initial ideas or concepts, which might further inspire human thought. In addition, AI can support cognitive processes and evoke reflections among humans (Feldman & Fraser, 2017) in its role as *creator*, thereby assisting in ideation and the exploration of further options that build on the initial ideas or concepts introduced by the human brand professional.

During illumination, implying a moment of insight into well-developed ideas or concepts, AI can contribute to effectiveness by achieving superior results and outcomes, such as through evaluations of concepts as an *evaluator* (Bader et al., 1988; Bittner et al., 2019; Rezwana & Maher, 2021) that checks for inconsistencies, finds areas for improvement, and suggests refinements. If ideas or concepts need further work, AI in a *creator* role might offer alternatives. Notably, research has shown that AI can produce equally good or better brand visual than humans can, so their collaboration should lead to notable effectiveness gains (Hartmann et al., 2024).

Finally, during verification, AI can assume three roles that increase effectiveness. As an *expert consultant*, AI meticulously analyses ideas or concepts, then expands on them to provide greater detail and substance. As an *automator* (Bader et al., 1988; Siemon, 2022), it can execute human tasks quickly and in detail to find optimal solutions, and as a *doer* (Siemon, 2022), it brings ideas or concepts to life and communicates or implements them in the world, minimising wasted time and human effort. Because all these AI roles for creative brand voice can facilitate efficiency and effectiveness, assuming they are evoked in the relevant phases, this discussion suggests the following propositions:

***P*$_{1a}$** To achieve efficient and effective HAICC, clear AI task roles must be formulated according to the stages of the creative brand voice process.
***P*$_{1b}$** To achieve efficiency in the HAICC for creative brand voice process, AI should take roles as coordinator, automator, doer, and definer.
***P*$_{1c}$** To achieve effectiveness in the HAICC for creative brand voice process, AI should take roles as creator, evaluator, second opinion, and expert consultant.

Knowledge & Skills

The second factor at the individual level relates to the human employee; individual brand professionals must work efficiently and effectively with AI systems. Zirar et al. (2023) suggest a categorisation of "technical", "human", and "conceptual" skills. Technical skills imply competencies and capabilities involving IT literacy and proficiency in using AI tools and platforms; human skills involve managing and coordinating people to share knowledge, collaborate, delegate, and negotiate. Finally, conceptual skills imply that people find solutions by working with various topics, ideas, and concepts. Such skills reflect the need for human innovation and creativity, such that brand professionals must uncover trends and find relationships that AI has not or cannot identify. In turn, humans need greater competencies related to understanding, validating, and visualising AI-generated results (Jarrahi et al., 2023). Conceptual understanding also encompasses domain knowledge, and when creativity is augmented by AI, it allows for greater cognitive capacity for more challenging tasks; irrespective of enthusiasm or motivation, gaps in such necessary knowledge limit human creativity (Jia et al., 2024).

To achieve efficiency in HAICC for creative brand voice, some minimum level of technical skill is needed, because people ultimately use the AI tools and platforms. Understanding how they work and how to navigate the interfaces saves time in work processes. However, a brand professional does not need high-level technical skills; AI tools tend to be user-friendly and increase the performance of even low performing, low-skilled, or inexperienced employees (Brynjolfsson et al., 2023; Dell'Acqua et al., 2023). Because AI’s brand images often are judged as high in creativity and preferable, compared with those designed by human freelancers (Hartmann et al., 2024), such tasks seemingly can be brought in-house, enabling individual brand professionals to achieve huge cost reductions.

Brand professionals’ conceptual skills may be even more important for HAICC for creative brand voice. That is, technical skills pertain to the user interface level, and human skills, while valuable, are required in every team, whether with human or AI.

However, human brand professionals need domain-related expertise related to the brand strategy, design, and established voice before they can co-create with AI and still ensure brand consistency and brand fit. The ability to guide and control AI in accordance with such knowledge is critical to not only the creative process but also overall project success (Turchi et al., 2023). For example, to prompt AI appropriately, the human brand professional must communicate key needs. That is, to achieve results that align with established brand voice, as well as to evaluate AI creative outputs meaningfully, humans must possess knowledge on the topic and the brand (Baumgarth et al., 2023). Therefore:

***P**$_{2a}$* For brand professionals to achieve efficiency in HAICC for creative brand voice, they must possess basic AI and human skills.
***P**$_{2b}$* For brand professionals to achieve effectiveness in HAICC for creative brand voice, they must possess advanced conceptual skills and deep domain knowledge.

Co-Creation Teaming

At the intersection of AI and human agents, teaming arises. Teamings are modes of collaboration integrating human and AI (Dubey et al., 2020), considering their attributes and how they co-create (Bouschery et al., 2023). To define teaming, it can be insightful to identify who takes the lead, has the power to intervene in the creative process, and makes final decisions over outputs. Literature identifies five main teaming modes, along a spectrum: (1) teaming human, (2) teaming human lead + AI assist, (3) teaming hybrid human–AI, (4) teaming AI lead + human assist, and (5) teaming AI.

Starting with *teaming human*, AI is minimally integrated and functions mainly as a problem-solver (Turchi et al., 2023), offering support for creativity, such as through basic visualisation and search (Grabe et al., 2022). It does not contribute independently to the creative process (Davis, 2015). This minimal use of AI threatens to diminish employees' performance, compared with that achieved by brand professionals working with AI, especially for ideation and product development involving analytical thinking, writing, and creativity (Dell'Acqua et al., 2023). On the other end of the spectrum, *teaming AI* means that AI operates without much input or supervision from humans, taking over whole elements of the creative process as a problem-finder rather than solver; it is creative in itself (Davis, 2015; Turchi et al., 2023). In creativity contexts, this mode raises concerns that humans get reduced to prompters. Even when AI is well-trained and produces "good" creative results, reflecting pre-defined parameters, it might induce only homogeneous results (McCormack & D'Inverno, 2014).

Intersecting the ends of the spectrum is the co-creation space and the key discussion surrounds whether AI or human leads the creative process (Rezwana & Maher, 2022). Generally, individuals deliver better results and experience greater intrinsic motivation when collaborating (Carr & Walton, 2014). *Teaming AI lead + human assist* involves human brand professionals supervising and monitoring task execution, intervening only if necessary. This teaming is efficient if the brand professional is capable of supervising multiple systems and can interject to address failures (Methnani et al., 2021). When the AI leads, humans are responsible for performing audits, gathering input from AI and human members to compare and identify gaps, assess performance, and adjust as necessary (Grønsund & Aanestad, 2020). Despite evidence that AI surpasses humans when generating brand images, with regard to their quality, realism, and aesthetics (Hartmann et al., 2024), as well as when creating brand text (Reisenbichler et al., 2023), brand professionals still must check that the brand voice remains consistent and outputs display brand fit. If brand professionals rely too much on AI systems, creativity suffers; if they fail to correct AI errors, it may lead to brand harm (Iskender, 2023; Van Dis et al., 2023). However, if the brand professional does not trust AI and gets involved too frequently, it leads to inefficiency (Methnani et al., 2021).

Instead, with *teaming human lead + AI assist*, humans influence decisions throughout the process, actively working to improve the accuracy and efficiency of AI. This teaming is effective for situations marked by high complexity or uncertainty, or that require perfect execution (Leeper et al., 2012; Methnani et al., 2021). In terms of brand management, such situations tend to be external to the brand, such that the brand interacts with stakeholders beyond the internal team, including customers and consumers. Humans also must be responsible for training AI continuously and augmenting the process, even if AI assists in decision-making (Schroder et al., 2022). In collaborative settings where humans lead managerial tasks, participants working with AI achieved 57% higher productivity than the group working without and additionally reported a 62% higher satisfaction level with their performance (Sowa et al., 2021). In design literature, when participants draw collaboratively with AI, they prefer to take the initiative, then have AI complete their work, while retaining the right to make decisions throughout the entire process (Oh et al., 2018). However, human involvement at every step can be inefficient and introduce bottlenecks, especially if the humans lack complete information and thus influence AI ineffectively (Van der Stappen & Funk, 2021).

Finally, in *teaming hybrid human–AI*, both human and AI actors enter a tight interactive loop, in which they both suggest, generate, assess, adjust, and choose creative outputs in response to each other (Deterding et al., 2017). Grabe et al. (2022) describe AI as co-designers in creative tasks and suggest a framework for interaction. For example, during a curation stage, humans initiate the process, AI learns, both create artefacts, humans select, and (once the training is complete) AI later takes a greater lead in the creative process. The greater effectiveness that results reflects the potential for more unique or creative outcome generation, due to their close, involved interactions, as well as greater efficiency due to the diminished time required when two entities work on ideas and concepts.

For creative brand voice, excluding AI might lead to missed opportunities and a lack of competitiveness. Brand professionals increasingly recognise the advantages of combining their efforts with AI to achieve efficiency and effectiveness; they also express positive perceptions of AI for their own work and for the brand (Chaisatitkul et al., 2024). However, autonomous or even dominant AI might be problematic. First, it could result in a homogeneous brand voice, no longer unique to the brand. Brand professionals responsible for creative brand voice thus must ensure the established brand voice is recognisable to both employees and consumers, such that their control over the process and evaluation of outputs remains crucial. Second, drawing on HAICC studies pertaining to artistic processes and outputs, regardless of its physical characteristics, humans value the infusion of human experience into the art they see (Bellaiche et al., 2023) and algorithmic aversion appears heightened in settings that necessitate emotion and subjectivity (Messer, 2024). Therefore:

P $_{3a}$ For routine creative tasks and internal processes, efficiency can be achieved by teaming AI lead + human assist.
P $_{3b}$ For complex creative tasks and external outputs, effectiveness can be achieved by teaming human lead + AI assist, with the potential to progress to hybrid human-AI.

3.3.2. Organisational Level

At the organisational level, factors for efficiency and effectiveness relate to management capabilities that facilitate, organise and manage HAICC for creative brand voice. This involves establishing technological capabilities, including infrastructure and brand voice database for AI systems, and facilitating human capabilities by managing and allowing employees to co-create through socialisation with AI technologies.

Infrastructure & Brand Voice Database

Infrastructure is a facilitator; AI systems require advanced technological structures (Cao et al., 2021). Among the general success factors that determine AI implementation, Merhi (2023) identifies those in the "technology" category as the most significant. For example, "IT infrastructure", which spans hardware, software, computing power, and storage, must be installed and tested to ensure AI systems will be operational. In addition, "security and confidentiality" refer to safe data handling and protections against breaches or mishandling, which contribute to efficiency. If optimised to match the brand voice, prior to organisational roll outs, they can avoid wasted time and effort needed to rectify mistakes or alter the entire system later. Protecting data also fosters brand trust.

"Integration complexity" is another consideration; existing systems must be able to communicate and integrate with new AI systems, and "scalable and flexible systems" are required for data conversion. In AI introductions, both are relevant challenges. With regard to efficiency, systems capable of communicating and being integrated with established systems reduce the time and effort required to ensure the same quality of input in the new and established systems. For effectiveness, integrating AI with data that are relevant for training systems with regard to the brand voice and processes can lead to superior, more valuable brand outcomes. A scalable and flexible system also enables better data conversion, adaptable to future scenarios, which is crucial considering the speed of technology developments and trends.

"Data issues" can arise, with regard to the accuracy and reliability of data input, which requires avoiding AI output that is incorrect, misleading, or harmful. When data are of "insufficient quality", decisions based on them will suffer as well. These factors are important for maintaining operational AI systems. Brand management must oversee the data used to train and maintain the system, because relying on inaccurate or incorrect data will produce outcomes that are not in line with the established brand, which can result in negative consequences such as a lack of brand recognition or brand harm.

Beyond infrastructure considerations, actual AI tools or platforms should be selected according to the quality of the output and, arguably, how accurately they reflect brand voice. When comparing the brand images generated by AI, such as DALL-E and

Midjourney, research identifies some considerable differences across systems, and selection strongly influences performance (Hartmann et al., 2024). Depending on brand goals and needs, the choice of AI should reflect the most appropriate option. Key considerations include whether to use free, standard AI tools or to work with AI tailored to specific a brand voice (e.g., Neuroflash brand voice AI). Tailored AI, or creating proprietary algorithms trained on established brand voice, represents an important potential development for creative HAICC. Using training data that are tailored to the brand ensures that the input data conform to established brand voice. Such efforts even could produce a brand voice database, the benefits of which include more effective outputs, because it reflects brand-specific data, as well as greater efficiency, by supporting faster content production, with the assurance that the data and generated outputs fit the brand, which should maximise the chances of brand consistency across content and channels. Therefore:

***P**$_4$* To achieve efficiency and effectiveness in HAICC implementation, brand management should establish robust infrastructure and also create a brand voice database to enable creative, brand-fit, and brand safe voice in all phases, from data training to output.

Socialisation

A technology perspective focuses on making AI usable for creative brand voice; a human perspective focuses on how brand professionals can enable co-creation with AI by managing expectations and accounting for factors such as fear of displacement, identity threats, and lack of trust in AI. The "dark side" of AI must be addressed and overcome to ensure brand professionals do not sense a loss of independence or competence (Mirbabaie et al., 2022). Socialisation is a transitional process, through which newcomers shift from being external to an organisation to internal members (Bauer et al., 2007). Management strategies that incorporate socialisation are effective when the change affects job roles and tasks (Klein et al., 2015).

According to the AI socialisation framework (Makarius et al., 2020), AI and humans become integrated in various stages, and their socialisation enhances human learning, which in turn leads to greater productivity, collective intelligence, and competitive advantages. During an initial "sensing" phase, proactive familiarisation with AI integration helps brand professionals recognise and understand various AI applications, such that they can navigate through uncertainty, acquire preliminary insights, and retrieve information. For example, AI onboarding plans can enhance people's awareness of the potential roles AI can unlock, establish transparent communication, provide resources and specialised training initiatives, and delineate the ethical boundaries of AI applications, including both ethical decision-making and human-centric issues. In the "comprehension and action" phases, the AI and brand professional interact, so socialisation processes should focus on clarifying the job and the factors that influence change, trust, and job designs.

For efficient and effective HAICC for creative brand voice, the initial "sensing phase" seems especially important. By familiarising brand professionals with AI, it is possible to reduce the time wasted when interacting with systems, while also encouraging better results. An early focus on preparing humans and providing creative training and work-integrated learning thus appears relevant (Zirar et al., 2023); perhaps professional certification should be part of education initiatives (Theodorou & Dignum, 2020). Introducing AI in the work environment is anticipated to require extensive reskilling efforts to address evolving talent requirements (McKinsey, 2023), and the organisation's likelihood of achieving a substantial return on its AI investments diminishes unless it commits to enhancing employees' skills and expertise (Ransbotham, 2020). Such combined reskilling, upskilling, training, and knowledge sharing should be continuous, all of which can be facilitated through human resource management (HRM).

Arslan et al. (2021) identify some challenges surrounding control, analysis, and performance evaluation, which HRM also can address by clearly communicating expectations, explaining possible changes in job tasks, and overcoming technology anxiety with training. Assessments of AI implementation also identify a lack of top management support, ambiguous strategic vision, and non-visible benefits as major boundaries to human–AI integration (Merhi et al., 2023). Therefore, management's commitment to setting goals and using HRM to bring visions to life throughout the brand culture appears pivotal. Knowledge sharing and knowledge management will be particularly critical too, as ways to facilitate socialisation with AI (Chowdhury et al., 2022). The resulting proposition suggests:

***P**$_5$* To achieve efficient and effective HAICC for creative brand voice, management must use HRM to ensure early socialisation with AI and set clear goals to manage expectations.

3.3.3. Societal Level

At the societal level, relevant factors relate to questions of how to manage HAICC outputs while still complying with legal and social norms. Current discussions highlight the need for corporate digital responsibility (CDR), a proposed set of values and norms for organisations that reflect public opinion, legalities, technological developments, and industry factors, as well as customer- and firm-specific ideas (Lobschat et al., 2021). This ethical perspective is critical to AI contexts (Kunz & Wirtz, 2023). Key factors at this level include brand management that upholds responsibility and accountability, as well as AI transparency. Beyond conforming to norms, the brand voice must be protected.

Responsibility & Accountability

Responsibility pertains to the duty to perform a task or adhere to a rule; accountability instead refers to the capacity to provide responses and explanations of authority, interrogations of external (legal) and internal (moral) responsibility, and limitations that effectively constrain the powers entrusted to individuals or entities through delegation (Novelli et al., 2023).

A first facet of responsibility pertains to ethical and moral responsibilities toward society overall, which requires prioritising humans over AI (Rezwana & Maher, 2022). The second relates to implementing responsible AI systems, which includes ensuring algorithms are devoid of objective errors and decisions, as well as ethical or moral lapses. The responsibility for avoiding objective errors calls for the responsible use of software development practises that foster code robustness, maintainability, and reusability, while simultaneously guaranteeing the system's technical resilience and mechanisms for tracing AI decisions (Methnani et al., 2021). Regarding ethical or moral lapses, AI must align with human values, demonstrate ethical behaviour, and render morally justifiable decisions (Lobschat et al., 2021); in detail, it must avoid biases and harmful consequences originating from the algorithms, which might manifest as favouritism, hate speech, or stereotyping. Such issues also can arise from inappropriate training data, inadequacies in evaluating output, or failures to adjust continuously to lessons from prior outcomes (Ray, 2023). Avoiding ethical and moral lapses and biases also can strengthen brand safety measures, as a way to protect brand reputation.

Turning to accountability, policy makers can mandate and promote algorithmic accountability (Novelli et al., 2023) by shaping policies, offering guidance, establishing regulations, and developing legal frameworks for AI adoption (Zirar et al., 2023). Existing ethical guidelines do not fully consider all the implications for creative collaboration (Llano & McCormack, 2020), however, the European Commission Artificial Intelligence Act represents a milestone legal regulation. This comprehensive law will govern the uses of AI throughout the European Union; its primary aim is to ensure that AI systems employed within the EU adhere to essential principles of safety, transparency, traceability, non-discrimination, and environmental sustainability (European Parliament, 2023). Its passage implies major consequences for brands, which must develop frameworks and practises to ensure accountability. It remains critical to keep up to date with legislation and ensure that all systems, management, and employees are equally well versed in it.

Responsibility and accountability questions in HAICC arise mainly in three phases: during data training and input, during the process of co-creation, and when evaluating output. When training AI systems for creative brand voice, such as to generate an appropriate brand image, text, video or sound to share externally, the data must be carefully input and trained, in accordance with the values and language expressed by the established brand voice. At an initial stage, bias can arise if the AI is trained on data that are already embedded with pre-existing human biases, opinions, and prejudices (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Determining ownership of the data sets used to train the AI might offer a viable way to allocate responsibility (Ray, 2023). A central expectation for accountability also should establish that those involved in designing, developing, and deploying AI systems follow all applicable standards and legal requirements, throughout the lifecycle of the AI (Novelli et al., 2023).

In the co-creation process, each entity is responsible to maintain a bias- and error-free brand voice, but they should be guided by clear codes of conduct. Mistakes and errors can be avoided by limiting the extent of reliance on AI to generate creative brand voice; brand management should take on this responsibility (Ray, 2023). Accountability then exists within the AI lifecycle; for example, deployment tasks should focus on using, monitoring, and maintaining AI systems in accordance with specific contextual rules (Novelli et al., 2023).

Finally, during evaluations, a monitoring system with continuous feedback loops should be established for all co-created output. Efficiency and effectiveness can emerge from clearly outlined rules for conduct and protocols of processes and decisions, which then contribute to upholding brand safety measures that influence end users' brand perceptions (IAB Europe, 2023; Lee et al., 2021). Certain accountable "agents" can be identified, whether on an individual basis, as corporate entities, collectively, or according to their hierarchical roles and functions (Novelli et al., 2023). According to these three phases, the following propositions emerge:

P*$_{6a}$* During data input, achieving efficient and effective creative brand voice requires ensuring the quality, reliability, and accuracy of training data.
P*$_{6b}$* For the process of co-creation, achieving efficient and effective creative brand voice requires establishing guidelines consistent with brand values.
P*$_{6c}$* During evaluation, achieving efficient and effective creative brand voices requires the enforcement of monitoring measures and evaluation criteria.

AI Transparency

Methnani et al. (2021) interpret transparency as "trust", "verifiability", "fairness" and "contestability". "Trust" implies an understanding of agents' behaviour when they interact with the wider environments. Presenting transparency-related information helps refine mental models and calibrate trust in automated systems. "Verifiability" involves traceability and maintaining a comprehensive record of decision-related information. Auditing frameworks extend beyond technical aspects; they validate decisions, policies, and activities undertaken by all agents throughout the AI's lifecycle. "Fairness" relates to the decision-making by algorithms and the data used to train machine learning systems that mimic social biases. Finally, "contestability" goes beyond explaining why a decision was made, to reflect the broader socio-legal context in which the decision was formulated.

For trust, transparency is beneficial because it limits algorithmic aversion; a lack of transparency instead contributes to negative perceptions of algorithmic agents (Musick et al., 2021). The inherent black-box nature of AI and the aversion it induces tend to arise in the absence of comprehensive understanding of how algorithms function and arrive at decisions (Mahmud et al., 2022). Such a black-box can be opened by making the algorithms understandable, explainable, interactive, and integrative of users (Chander et al., 2018; Mahmud et al., 2022). Explanations of AI decision-making also can clarify the underlying rationale (Gönül et al., 2006). However, explanations should not be employed in every step of an AI process but rather should be specific to cases that demand compliance, when critical for the end user to understand the tool's optimal usage, if transparency has the potential to enhance system performance, and when it can inform fairness evaluations (Blackman & Ammanath, 2022).

Transparency as "fairness", "verifiability" and "contestability" (Methnani et al., 2021) also is increasingly important for creative brand voice, considering recent legal developments. For example, the EU Artificial Intelligence Act features proposed rules on transparency and requires brands to comply with requirements for disclosing AI-generated content, preventing illegal content generation through model design, and providing the copyrighted data used in training (European Parliament, 2023). Companies such as Google require mandatory transparency for political advertisers by enforcing disclosures of AI-generated content (Reuters, 2023). Although studies in creative fields identify some negative perceptions of AI and preferences for human creators (Bellaiche et al., 2023), studies of AI disclosure in branding contexts, for instance written text, suggest no negative authenticity perceptions or impacts on brand attitudes (Kirkby et al., 2023). On social media platforms such as Meta and Instagram, when brands use AI tools to create or edit an image, video, text, or sound, the content is labelled with the watermark "Imagined with AI"; when content created by third-party AI tools gets uploaded, it takes the label "AI Info" (Instagram, 2024). Therefore, the following proposition is formulated:

***P**$_7$* To achieve efficient and effective HAICC for creative brand voice, brands must display and provide transparency in AI usage.

Brand Voice Copyright

Finally, humans and algorithms progressively co-create dynamically, evolving from hierarchical structures to something more ambiguous (Benedikter, 2021). The creative brand voice created by AI can be undistinguishable from human brand professionals' contributions, such that concepts of who or what has authorship or owns content, as well as which content is copyrightable, become fuzzy. The lack of copyright law and protection of AI-generated content is controversial and problematic, especially when the AI generates outputs that, if created by humans, would be considered creative and eligible for such protections (Kalpokienė & Kalpokas, 2023). Yet if AI authorship is acknowledged, the allocation of ownership rights becomes a pressing question; in conventional copyright law, ownership hinges on the concept of authorship (Xiao, 2023). Such issues become even more complex when AI-generated outputs cannot be linked to human involvement or intervention. Because AI output is not acknowledged as "artwork" in current copyright laws, it is not eligible for legal protection (Ajani, 2022).

Similar challenges arise for HAICC used to produce creative brand voice, which can include images, logos, videos, or sound that might be difficult to protect and thus at risk of being integrated into AI training data that later might be leveraged by another brand. Using AI to produce brand voice thus could lead to infringements on another brand's or artist's assets, even if unintentionally. If brands rely on AI trained on countless available data, there is a likelihood of basing the output on protected colours, shapes, forms, and sounds. Already, multiple music publishers have sued the AI platform Anthropic for copying large amounts of copyrighted works (Duran, 2023). Digital artists and platforms such as Getty Images also have filed copyright infringement lawsuits against image-generating AI companies like DeviantArt, Stability AI, Midjourney, and LAION, alleging that the images that provided the training for their AI were used without permission (Escalante-De Mattei, 2023).

To ensure efficiency and effectiveness, brand management thus must take care to avoid inadvertently using assets from other brands and safeguard their own HAICC outputs by protecting assets and focusing on data protection. These challenges suggest an opportunity for brands: They could create their own databases to train AI algorithms, carefully curate the data to use in these processes, and train AI using their own brand voice assets, which provide ongoing, constantly updated guidelines.

***P**$_{8a}$* To achieve efficient and effective HAICC for creative brand voice, brands should build their own databases, which can protect AI-generated assets and seek to attain copyrights.
***P**$_{8b}$* To achieve efficient and effective HAICC for creative brand voice, brands must avoid infringing on other brands' assets.

3.4. Discussion and Future Research

This work takes a conceptual view on factors that can facilitate efficient and effective HAICC for creative brand voice. Across individual, organisational, and societal levels, these factors also reveal opportunities for further research avenues (see Table 3.1).

At the individual level, AI task roles are theoretical (e.g. Rezwana & Maher, 2022; Siemon, 2022), indicating the need for empirical investigations that refer to real-life creative brand voice processes. Testing AI in various roles would enhance understanding of both technological capabilities and human acceptance. Each brand professional will have different attitudes toward AI, varying degrees of innovativeness and openness, and levels of experience with technology, each of which can prompt general desires to exploit AI in various roles, or else dismiss the technology entirely. In turn, research is needed to address design and usability questions. The knowledge and skills factor encompasses conceptual skills and deep domain knowledge (Zirar et al., 2023), raising questions about which skills employees display most predominantly, as well as which skills and knowledge levels actually lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness. A further interesting perspective pertains to whether AI can act as a knowledge or skill facilitator. The co-creation teaming factor suggests that co-creation with a human in the lead is most advantageous, but this finding does not account for the potential progression of AI as it becomes ever more personalised and flexible. A hybrid teaming of human–AI work for creative brand voice should be investigated; empirical investigations of all five teaming modes might assess which one(s) results in greater efficiency and effectiveness in practice.

At the organisational level, the infrastructure and brand voice database factor highlights the importance of a robust infrastructure (Merhi, 2023), combined with a careful process for selecting AI tools. Further studies could compare brands as they reach various stages of introducing, using, and monitoring the infrastructure to develop best implementation practices. Continued research into the socialisation factor also might examine it specifically in a creative context, or else conduct experiments to compare brands that exhibit an early focus on AI socialisation versus that that do not. A multidisciplinary approach could clarify how HRM facilitates AI socialisation in HAICC contexts.

Finally, at the societal level, responsibility and accountability factors need research to establish greater clarity for brands. Establishing guidelines, codes of conduct, and monitoring measures will be paramount for navigating societal norms and creative brand voice processes effectively and efficiently. But what do they look like in a real-life setting, and is it even possible to formulate best practises? Efforts to foster more trust and comply with legal norms, as are evident in the AI transparency factor, also need closer inspection. To measure transparency and disclosure effects, researchers might assess the differences that arise between using an icon versus text to disclose AI input; research also is needed to specify if brands should be transparent throughout the entire process or only with regard to generated output seen widely. The brand voice copyright factor also provides avenues for further research, possibly related to specific legislation in a particular geographical location, because the rules and required conduct depend on where the brand operates. In particular, brands need guidance regarding how they might protect their own AI-generated or co-created assets and also avoid infringing on other brands' assets.

Individual	Organisational	Societal
AI Task Roles • Which AI task roles lead to the greatest efficiency and effectiveness? • How should AI be designed for the greatest usability? **Knowledge & Skills** • Which skills are the most valuable for HAICC? • What exact knowledge is required? • What are the prerequisites of knowledge and skills that a brand professional must possess? **Co-Creation Teaming** • Which teaming mode is most efficient and effective? • Are different teaming modes required for different employees, based on their attitudes and technology expertise?	**Infrastructure & Brand Voice Database** • How does personalised infrastructure compare with a standard package? • What is the status of organisations' AI-readiness? **Socialisation** • How can brand management, together with HRM, facilitate socialisation for HAICC? • Are there differences across brand managers who have been socialised with AI and those without such socialisation?	**Responsibility & Accountability** • What guidelines, codes of conduct, and monitoring measures are needed to guide brands, efficiently and effectively? **AI Transparency** • How should brands disclose AI-generated or co-created outputs? • Where in the creative brand voice process must brands show transparency? **Brand Voice Copyright** • How can brands protect AI-generated and co-created assets? • What laws currently exist globally, and how can these be compared?

Table 3.1. Research Agenda for HAICC in Creative Brand Voice

Because AI and the legal standards related to it continue to develop rapidly, the proposed framework was designed explicitly to avoid temporal constraints. Empirical tests of the framework might focus on each level or factor separately, and thus rely on quantitative testing, or else on the overall framework, which implies the need for a qualitative case study or action research. Finally, studies might adopt a broader approach and apply the framework to other creative fields, such as HAICC for design, innovation, and R&D.

3.5. Conclusion

The proposed framework, designed to structure and guide the management of HAICC efficiently and effectively for creative brand voice, highlights factors at three levels: individual (AI task roles, co-creation teaming, knowledge and skills), organisational (infrastructure and brand voice database, socialisation), and societal (responsibility and accountability, AI transparency, brand voice copyright). It emphasises operational processes at the individual level, interaction management at the organisational level, and the environments in which brands operate to manage generated outputs at the societal level. It makes two main contributions. First, the offered theoretical guidance reflects the perspective of higher-level brand management, taking efficiency and effectiveness of HAICC at three defined levels into account. Second, it outlines a broad agenda for further research.

CHAPTER FOUR

What is standing in my way? Drivers and Barriers of Generative Artificial Intelligence Integration for Brand Professionals

Abstract

Brand voice is a brands unique and recognisable personality, tone, and style. Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) presents opportunities for creating and maintaining brand voice, however, despite potential creativity, efficiency and effectiveness gains, brand professionals remain cautious surrounding the usage of these technologies and integration of GenAI-outputs. This study assesses drivers and barriers to GenAI integration of individual brand professionals. Following an event study approach, ten brand professionals in the FMCG industry are interviewed across five timeframes surrounding the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022, revealing six realms: individual, technology, brand, leadership, organisation and environment, which are consequently assessed according to the timeframes. The most prominent drivers include personal innovativeness, personal performance, accessibility and outside influences, and key barriers relate to low GenAI quality and time investment. The brand realm presents most barriers in relation to drivers, with issues surrounding brand fit, brand consistency and brand authenticity.

Keywords

Brand Voice, Brand Management, Creativity, Communication, Technology Adoption, Qualitative Study

Publication History

The initial concept was presented at the 2024 Global Brand Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, with preliminary findings shared at the 2025 Global Brand Conference in Porto, Portugal. Additionally, the study was presented in a short-form format during the *KI-Marken Garage* webinar, hosted by Prof. Dr. Carsten Baumgarth and Dr. Steffen Schmidt, which aims to bridge the gap between academic research and practice. The paper is currently under review with the *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, with the current status being a minor revision.

What is Standing in my way? Drivers and Barriers of Generative Artificial Intelligence Integration for Brand Professionals

4.1. Introduction

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is rapidly altering how brand professionals approach and manage creative brand voice. These technologies allow for the production of novel, unique assets, in the form of text, image, video and sound (Mariani & Dwivedi, 2024) with this creation of new assets differentiating GenAI from artificial intelligence (AI) performing more functional tasks (Toner, 2023). Tools such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, Midjourney and NeuroFlash allowed widespread access to these technologies, presenting opportunities for brand voice. Brand voice is the consistent and recognisable projected and perceived expression of a brand's personality and identity, conveyed through elements like attitude, tone, language choice, and typography across all language formats, including written, visual, auditory, and video (Kohli & Yen, 2020; Kirkby et al., 2022). An early example of GenAI for brand voice saw food processing company Heinz ask AI to visualise what it understood under 'ketchup', using the generated images that did indeed resemble the Heinz label and ketchup bottle in a leading campaign (Coggan, 2022). Since then, further brands like Ritter Sport have gone a step further, using GenAI to ideate the product and advertising campaign, resulting in the new hummus and apricot flavoured chocolate (W&V, 2023) and retailer Toys "R" Us launched the first GenAI-generated TV advertisement (Robitaille, 2024).

Initial studies examining individual brand professionals and their use of GenAI in creative ideation, new product development, writing and persuading skills, have shown that working with GenAI rather than without significantly improves task performance (Dell'Acqua et al., 2023). GenAI has demonstrated strength in creativity and innovation (Benbya, 2024; Haase & Hanel, 2023), brand text formulation (Reisenbichler et al., 2022; 2023), generation of quality brand images (Hartmann et al., 2024), and creating compelling storyboards for advertising (Chaisatitkul et al., 2024). Further, it has been shown that although output must be carefully monitored, GenAI can be used throughout the brand voice creation process (Baumgarth et al., 2023; Kirkby et al., 2025).

However, in a study of 600 marketing specialists evaluating use of GenAI across a range of marketing tasks, focusing on those related to creative brand voice, 36% use GenAI to generate, summarise and translate text, 34% for ideation and only 25% use GenAI for image generation or editing, 20% for audio and 19% for video (Buder et al., 2024). These figures suggest that despite growing interest in GenAI for brand voice and first use cases appearing across industries, brand professionals still display caution regarding the integration of GenAI-generated output and allowing GenAI to manage brand voice autonomously. This raises the question why GenAI is not being utilised further and what the exact motivations are behind individuals choosing to use or not use GenAI for creative brand voice.

Research must therefore focus on how intensely GenAI is integrated in practice by those using the tools, namely brand professionals, and through this understanding, identify and assess drivers and barriers to integration for brand voice from these experiences. While previous research in the field of brand management has gained insights using quantitative surveys with pre-defined factors identified in literature (Soni, 2023), there remains a call for a deeper and more qualitative approach to understanding the phenomena through interviews and observation of developments over time (Al-Khatib, 2023). Further, research must focus specifically on creative brand management aspects, especially brand voice, rather than from a more general, overarching business or marketing perspective, which first studies explore (Kshetri et al., 2024; Volkmar et al., 2022).

This study addresses this gap in literature applying an event study approach, firstly assessing brand professionals 'GenAI integration intensity' across five timeframes surrounding the landmark event of the launch of ChatGPT to address RQ1) what are the drivers and barriers influencing GenAI integration of individual brand professionals? Through in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews, GenAI integration intensity is assessed for brand voice according to four dimensions in the first part of the interview. In the second part, based on observed differences in integration intensity, drivers and barriers are identified in real-time and discussed with the brand professional to address RQ2) how do these drivers and barriers develop over the timeframe prior to and following the launch of ChatGPT?

This paper proceeds with the theoretical background of brand voice, creative uses of GenAI in this field and initial research on drivers and barriers in AI and, more specifically, GenAI realm. Then, the methodology is outlined and findings according to the identified realms individual, technology, brand, leadership, organisation, and environment are presented, followed by a discussion according to the wow-factor, task, and brand-specific phase.

4.2. Theoretical Background

4.2.1. Brand Voice in Brand Management

Brand management has become a strategic priority for companies, since brands are increasingly recognised as vital intangible assets (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). This broader discipline entails crafting a cohesive strategy to define, manage, and evaluate the brand, with the goal of achieving sustained financial success and competitive advantage (Kapferer, 1994). Brand building depends greatly on valuing and rewarding employee creativity and regarding their contributions as essential, therefore an organisational environment that fosters and supports this is crucial to facilitate and increase creativity (Andriopoulos & Gotsi, 2000).

While brand management is the overall strategy, brand voice refers to how the brand consistently expresses itself, encompassing distinct and recognisable personality, tone, and style (Kohli & Yen, 2020). Brand voice has been examined as part of verbal identity and personality (Vernuccio et al., 2023) and discussed in the context of written, image, sound, and video assets (Kirkby et al., 2022). Constructs such as brand identity refer to the foundation of a brand, the core essence encompassing tangible and intangible assets defined internally and aiming to form perception through mission, culture, positioning, and visual symbols (Kapferer, 2012) and brand personality relates to human characteristics attributed to a brand and how consumers relate (Aaker, 1997). Brand voice serves as the expression bringing this to life across form and touchpoints. It communicates the overall brand identity and translates intended brand personality (Murár et al., 2024). For example, the brand identity of Coca-Cola encompasses the values of joy and togetherness, which are expressed through a timeless, optimistic brand voice consistently promoting happiness through verbal and non-verbal language and formats including emotional language in advertisements, happy jingles, and encouragement of shared experience in product design and message, "Share a Coke".

4.2.2. GenAI for Brand Voice

GenAI can generate and maintain verbal and non-verbal brand voice, displaying capabilities both for one-way communication (producing text, image, video, or sound) and two-way communication (chatbots) (Kirkby et al., 2022). With these capabilities, the integration of GenAI presents a dual potential to create value or cause disruption. In an increasingly saturated media environment, characterised by the proliferation of digital content, heightened competition, and the immediacy of social media, the advent of GenAI exacerbates these conditions, meaning brand voice must be even more distinct in positioning to attract and sustain recognition and engagement (Murár et al., 2024).

Traditional work on brand voice conceptualises it as a strategic linguistic construct shaped through deliberate human authorship, which expresses identity and positioning in a recognisable and consistent means (Delin, 2005). Linguistic strategies used in research such as that of Delin (2005) highlights human decision to ensure consistency, cohesion and emotional resonance with audiences, for instance through "chains of reference" carefully associating brand and elements (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), "presupposition and assumption", information assumed or taken for granted within discourse, which helps establish common ground with the audience (Cook, 2001), and "tenor", the social relationship and interpersonal stance between speaker and audience, which conveys tone, authority, and familiarity (Halliday & Hasan, 1989).

While traditional brand voice development relies on human decisions to apply linguistic strategies such as chain of references, presupposition and assumption, and tenor, in contrast, GenAI generates brand content without necessarily possessing explicit insights of brand history, values, or human language understanding and nuance. This distinction challenges the creation and maintenance of consistent voice, as GenAI outputs can vary unless carefully managed. Furthermore, while traditional evaluation focuses on coherence and alignment with brand personality and identity (Aaker, 1997; Kapferer, 2012), GenAI introduces new concerns related to authenticity, hallucination, and brand fit. Consequently, GenAI reshapes authorship and oversight in brand voice, requiring novel approaches to collaboration between humans and AI.

First studies comparing GenAI to human-generated brand voice find the technologies particularly effective for writing reviews and creative text (Carlson et al., 2023; Reisenbichler et al., 2022) and increasingly for generating visuals. When creating images based on the same creative briefings, GenAI can surpass in creativity, quality, aesthetics, and perception (Brynjolfsson et al., 2023; Hartmann et al., 2024). This is not necessarily negative for brand professionals, since creating brand visuals alongside, for example, text and a larger advertisement campaign requires time, effort, and cost, therefore GenAI can be an effective and efficient support for the individual when producing such assets for brand voice (Hartmann et al., 2024; Kirkby et al., 2025; Reisenbichler et al., 2023).

It has further been demonstrated that GenAI can increase human creativity productivity by 25% in the context of digital artworks (Zhou & Lee, 2024), as well as support and increase average productivity of less experienced or new professionals (Brynjolfsson et al., 2023; Dell'Acqua et al., 2023). Although individuals with an agency or advertising background recognise a potential threat with GenAI working creatively, for instance in writing scripts for advertisements or sketching storyboards for marketing, it has been shown that a positive attitude towards the technology is present with the confidence that outputs can assist in efficiency (Chaisatitkul et al., 2024).

However, challenges remain, for instance integrating GenAI without it presenting itself as the brand with an own distinct voice and there are increasing concerns that GenAI can hinder creativity and the ability to solve problems when brand professionals over-rely on technologies (Iskender, 2023) or implement GenAI in areas beyond current abilities (Dell'Acqua et al., 2023). In studies on the broader ability of GenAI usage for creativity, ChatGPT is found to be significantly more creative than humans, especially in its ability to generate creative ideas consistently, humans using ChatGPT are more creative than those not using this technology, but humans using GenAI are generally less creative than ChatGPT on its own (Bohren et al., 2024). Especially these findings surrounding the decline in creativity of humans using GenAI can be a barrier to utilising these technologies, although it is suggested that prompting and properly understanding these tools will be the solution (Bohren et al., 2024).

4.2.3. Drivers and Barriers of GenAI Use for Brand Voice

Drivers and barriers to general technology adoption have been studied using various theories. From an organisational-level theory, Tornatzky and Fleischer’s TOE

Framework (1990) discusses company adoption of new technology according to the influence of three contexts; technological (availability, characteristics), organisational (structures, communication process, size, slack) and environment (industry, market structure, infrastructure, legal regulations). Although considered a robust model of adoption, TOE has been criticised for not incorporating an individual context (Al-Natour & Benbasat, 2009; Awa et al., 2017; Henderson et al., 2012).

Individual-level theories consider behavioural choice to adopt or reject new technologies. Key factors include perceived usefulness, whether the individual believes the technology will achieve performance or effectiveness goals, and perceived ease of use, which is whether the technology is easy or difficult to use, ultimately affecting the individual's attitude towards the technology, intention to use, and actual usage (Davis, 1989). Extensions to these theories, such as UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003), further consider performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions as factors affecting intention and actual new technology usage, which are moderated by individual's demographics.

Furthermore, based on either organisational and/or individual-level theories, research examines drivers and barriers specifically of AI adoption, which is depicted in Table 4.1. Studies focusing on AI in general and taking a broader marketing and business perspective find various results in terms of key drivers and barriers. When ranking most prominent barriers, some find technological issues to be most influential (Merhi, 2023), whereas others have found management and leadership issues such as AI adoption strategies, lacking management commitment and knowledge to be central barriers (Kar et al., 2021). However, some overlap exists in terms of ethical issues, with challenges such as AI bias, data and privacy concerns being some of the largest barriers (Merhi, 2023; Volkmar et al., 2022). In terms of drivers, better decision-making capabilities are frequently cited (Kar et al., 2021; Volkmar et al., 2022).

Reference	Paper Type	Focus	Method	Sample	Drivers	Barriers
Kshetri et al. (2024)	Conceptual	Marketing GenAI for higher efficiency and productivity	Editorial	-	• Perceived ease of use • Triability • Low cost • Customisability of GenAI models for marketing content	• Cost • Data until 2021 • Data security and privacy • Consumer trust issues • Perceived risks and costs of transitioning • Job losses
Soni (2023)	Quantitative	Marketing GenAI for digital marketing campaigns	Survey	411 professionals-Digital Marketing Manager, Content Strategists or Managers, and Social Media Managers	• Efficiency • Scalability • Potential for personalised content generation	• Complexity • Creativity limitations • Knowledge gaps
Al-Khatib (2023)	Quantitative	Retail GenAI adoption and innovation	Survey	260 managers and 1 administrative employees in Jordan	• Relative advantage • Top management support • Organisational readiness • Customer pressures	• Complexity
Merhi (2023)	Quantitative	Management Critical factors impeding AI implementation for decision-makers	Analytic Hierarchy Process	10 experts in information systems and information technology	Discussion involved factors that impeded AI integration	In rank order based on percentage weightings: • Ethical issues • Data & governance • Security & confidentiality • Low data quality • Insufficient quality of data • IT infrastructure • Lack of benefits visibility • High cost • Ambiguous strategic vision • Integration complexity • Top management support • Scalable and flexible systems • Organisational culture • Resistance • Organisational structure • Responsibility & accountability • Lack of tech expertise • Selection of vendors
Volkmar et al. (2022)	Mixed-method	Marketing AI in marketing management	Delphi, Survey, Focus groups	Dephi: 39 experts various industries relating to marketing Focus group: 11 marketing managers	• Enhanced decision-making with human-in-the-loop • Personalisation and automation of marketing campaigns to customer preferences • Alert brands that they need to set goals and understand consumer behaviour • Facilitate understanding of customer needs • Competitive advantage	• Low failure tolerance of AI • High expectations of AI • Top management lack of time to discuss possibilities or prefer not to behave like humans • Autonomous AI can decrease customer experience • Marketing manager trust in AI • Gap between perceived and actual understanding of AI • Ethical concerns and human bias in AI systems
Kar et al. (2021)	Mixed-method	Organisational Strategy Drivers and barriers in business functions	Total-interpretive-structural-modeling for hierarchy relationship	Focus Group 1: 10 experts from academia and industry Focus Group 2: 12 experts from academia and industry	• Customer satisfaction • Employee well-being • Reduced costs • Improved productivity • Speed in decision-making • Decision-making capability • Accuracy of predictions	• Selection of problem scenario for AI • Lack of reusable models • Lack of useable data • Lack of trust in AI decisions • Infrastructure • Job security • Lack of talent • Lack of AI strategy • Lack of leadership commitment

Table 4.1. Drivers and Barriers of AI and GenAI

While numerous papers exist on drivers and barriers of AI in the general marketing management realm, few focus specifically on GenAI and fewer examine the context of creative brand voice. This could be due to the adoption of GenAI being in its infancy since the launch of ChatGPT was only in 2022 (Dencik et al., 2023). A novel barrier presenting itself includes creativity aspects, affecting the brand professional in their work process or the generated assets. Studies from a technology adoption perspective focusing on the creative advertisement industry find perceived usefulness, control, organisational innovativeness and external pressure as determinants to organisational GenAI adoption, moderated by individuals' perceived value and ethical concerns (Yang et al., 2024).

Studies in the driver and barrier field assessing specifically creative GenAI abilities, find knowledge gaps, fears surrounding jobs and ethics as barriers, with drivers often focused on technology factors such as ease of use and increased efficiency (Kshetri et al., 2024; Soni, 2023). However, implications of GenAI for individual brand professionals remain uncertain, since these tools are anticipated to transform all creative and knowledge-based work (De Cremer et al., 2023).

4.3. Methodology and Analysis

An empirical study was conducted to assess GenAI integration intensity of individual brand professionals. A qualitative research method was selected due to its suitability to gain insights difficult to produce with quantitative measures, provide in-depth descriptions to enhance comprehension of phenomena (Gephart, 2004) and examine and interpret how individuals construct and attribute meaning to their experiences (Patton, 2015). Moreover, the flexibility and exploratory nature of qualitative research can reveal new phenomena deserving further investigation, therefore contributing to the enrichment of the discipline (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014).

4.3.1. Participants

The study assessed brand professionals in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry in the DACH (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) region, selected based on having at least one hands-on experience with GenAI in their creative brand work. Participants were drawn from both small and large companies, ranging from 50 to 9,000 employees, with an emphasis on maintaining consistency within brand categories to allow for meaningful comparison across similar industry segments. Products included chocolate, sweets, savoury snacks, meals, soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, tea, and pet food. We specifically targeted roles where individuals are actively involved in operational tasks, not only strategic oversight of the brands, ensuring they are close to the actual use of tools that shape brand voice. The participant sample was derived from the researchers' professional networks. See Table 4.2 for an overview.

*BP No.	Age	Gender	Country	Brand Category	Position	Brand Experience (Years)	AI and/or Digital Experience (Years)	Interview length (mins)
BP-1	43	Male	Switzerland	Food	Senior Brand Manager	8	10	00:37:17
BP-2	42	Female	Germany	Food	Head of Marketing	18	5	00:36:35
BP-3	38	Male	Germany	Consumer goods	Head of Marketing	10	1.5	00:52:47
BP-4	40	Female	Germany	Food & Beverage	Head of Digital Sales	16	16	00:41:54
BP-5	46	Male	Germany	Food	Director Marketing	18	Digital: since 1996, AI: 1.5	00:41:16
BP-6	55	Male	Germany	Beverage	Head of Marketing International	28	8	00:59:38
BP-7	29	Male	Switzerland	Beverage	Senior Brand Manager	10	0.4	00:41:37
BP-8	42	Male	Germany	Food	Creative Director	17	Digital: 20, AI: 2	00:47:54
BP-9	36	Female	Austria	Food	Head of Marketing and Communication	10	2	00:38:26
BP-10	47	Male	Germany	Pet Food	Head of Brand	24	2	00:46:51

***BP**: Brand Professional
****Note**: all interviews were conducted in German and the resulting quotes were translated to English

Table 4.2. Interviews with Brand Professionals

4.3.2. Interview Procedure

Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted online between April – August 2024, lasting 44:25 minutes on average. After this number of interviews, saturation was reached in terms of new driver and barrier topics. There were two distinct parts to the interviews. In the first part, two interviewers assessed 'GenAI integration intensity'. While direct measurement of how intensely the individual believes they are integrating GenAI into their creative brand voice work and why they believe they do so is challenging, due to the subjective nature of experience, the researchers define and apply four dimensions as proxy indicators of integration intensity. These dimensions enable the systematic analysis of the depth and scope of integration, which was later used to compare changes over timeframes as a temporal comparison.

The first dimension assessed for how many 'brand voice elements' the brand professional used GenAI. These elements were drawn from the roles of AI as a one-way sender and two-way conversational partner, as well as the AI language formats introduced in the Brand Voice Matrix (Kirkby et al., 2022) and included text, image, video, and sound.

The second dimension assessed 'frequency', referring to how regularly the brand professional used GenAI for their own creative brand work, categorised as sporadically, monthly, weekly, or daily.

The third dimension assessed in how many stages of the 'brand voice process' the brand professional used GenAI. This was for pre-work, involving ideation and preparation, during, including incubation, assisting with human ideas and illumination, and publishing, involving evaluating human ideas or concepts, or finalising ideas or concepts. These stages were adapted from creative process research (Wallas, 1926; Sadler-Smith, 2015), which delineates the phases preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification.

The fourth dimension assessed 'co-creative behaviour'. Since modes of human–AI co-creation are not yet fully established, four levels of co-creation were adapted based on research in human-in-the-loop (HITL), human-on-the-loop (HOTL), and human-out-the-loop (HOOTL). The first level, trial-and-error use, reflects HITL patterns, where individual engage with GenAI experimentally without a clear goal, prompting, testing, and revising. The second level involves using GenAI for defined tasks, still within HITL but moving toward HOTL, as defined sub-tasks are delegated and output is monitored. The level hybrid co-creator reflects HOTL, collaboratively shaping output, creativity is shared, the human may refine AI's contributions, prompt creatively, or even allow AI to introduce unexpected elements. Finally, independent actor level reflects HOOTL and AI functions autonomously, without ongoing human prompting or intervention. The human may only assess the final output, if at all, and is an own creative agent. See Appendix B for the scoring framework.

Points were allocated for each dimension, with more points indicating a higher level of GenAI integration intensity. The brand professional was not asked specifically about the four dimensions, but rather this was extracted from conversation. The dimensions were assessed five times during the interviews, as they were structured around five timeframes following the months before, during, and after the launch of OpenAI's ChatGPT. This allowed for a comparison between timeframes and the identification of increases and decreases in intensity. This is an adaptation of the event study method, where the phenomena and resulting effects are observed surrounding a particular, impactful event (Fama et al., 1969). ChatGPT was chosen to base timeframes around, since it is considered the first platform to make GenAI accessible for wider usage and the beginning of further platforms to follow (Sætra, 2023). When comparing the worldwide search terms "ChatGPT", "DALL-E", "Midjourney" and the broader topic "artificial intelligence" over the past 5 years from 2019 until 2025, Google Trends data clearly indicates that ChatGPT significantly and consistently generates higher and more sustained public interest. This is also seen when focusing on the DACH regions. The prominence underscores the impact in shaping engagement and provides further reasoning to use the time following ChatGPT's launch as a singular, prominent event for the method.

The first timeframe was prior to the launch of ChatGPT, (1) before November 2022. The next timeframes followed the months after the launch; (2) December 2022 – March 2023, (3) April 2023 – July 2023, (4) August 2023 – Present, (5) Future. Since brand professionals were asked about all timeframes during one interview, a briefing outlining these timeframes informing them they would be asked about their brand voice experience with GenAI over these times was sent prior to the interviews being conducted. This allowed brand professionals to consider past campaigns, compose notes, and prepare ahead of time.

Before commencing the second part of the interview, brand professionals received a five-minute demographic survey and during this time, the researchers totalled the points for each individual timeframe to plot and generate a graph illustrating a personal 'GenAI Integration Profile' in real-time. This profile was shown to the brand professional in the second part of the interview and depending on where the increases and decreases in intensity were in the timeframes, the brand professional was asked questions to explore reasons (see Figure 4.1).

4.3.3. Interview Analysis

To measure interrater-reliability of the ratings given to assess GenAI integration intensity during the interviews, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used as a statistical measure. The mean coefficient of the ten interviews was 0.988, indicating a very strong, highly consistent correlation between the ratings of the two interviewers (Cohen, 1988; Fleiss et al., 2003). During the second part of the interview, drivers and barriers were discussed based on the individual brand professional's generated profile. To ensure accuracy of GenAI integration intensity that was observed and assessed by the interviewers, before the second part of the

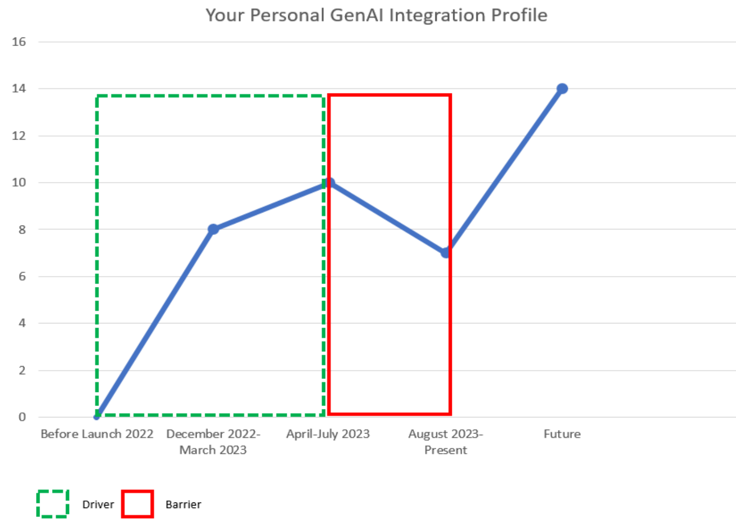

Figure 4.1. Example 'GenAI Integration Profile'

interviews began, brand professionals were asked to rate to what extent they agreed with the assessment of the interviewers on a scale of 1-5 (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree). The mean rating given by brand professionals was 4.5.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, ensuring reliability of data (Andriopoulos & Lewis, 2009), using the Microsoft 365 transcribe tool and a human to check the transcriptions. The transcriptions were coded in ATLAS.ti, using a sequential approach. Initially, a deductive approach was applied to analyse the data, using themes found in literature to create a start list according to organised, identified realms (Bradley et al., 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This was followed by applying an inductive approach to uncover themes emerging from data as they unfolded (Curry et al., 2009; Thomas, 2006). This process resulted in two datasets with their realms, which were then collapsed into similar and higher realms (Azungah, 2018).

Initially, a first coder defined and applied codes to all transcripts. Then, a second coder, who was not part of this research, applied the pre-defined codes to a sample of the transcripts. Interrater-reliability for coding pre-defined units was assessed using Krippendorff's Cu-alpha, the coefficient was 0.827, indicating high reliability (Krippendorff, 2004).

4.4. Findings

This study identifies topics within six realms as drivers and barriers to GenAI integration for creative brand voice. This relates to firstly, (1) 'individual', personal characteristics and experiences of the brand professionals. Secondly, (2) 'technology' aspects relating to brand professional’s experiential interactions with GenAI. Thirdly, perceived consequences and impacts of using GenAI in relation to the (3) 'brand' the brand professional feels responsible. Fourthly, influences at management-level (4) 'leadership' and overarching (5) 'organisation'. The final realm encompasses the external (6) 'environment'.

An overview of the six realms and the identified drivers and barriers within each according to the number of brand professionals mentioning the topic is shown in Figure 4.2. In the first part of this section, the most prominent drivers and barriers are discussed within each realm, answering RQ1. In a second part, drivers and barriers are assessed depending on which timeframes they most predominantly appeared in, answering RQ2.

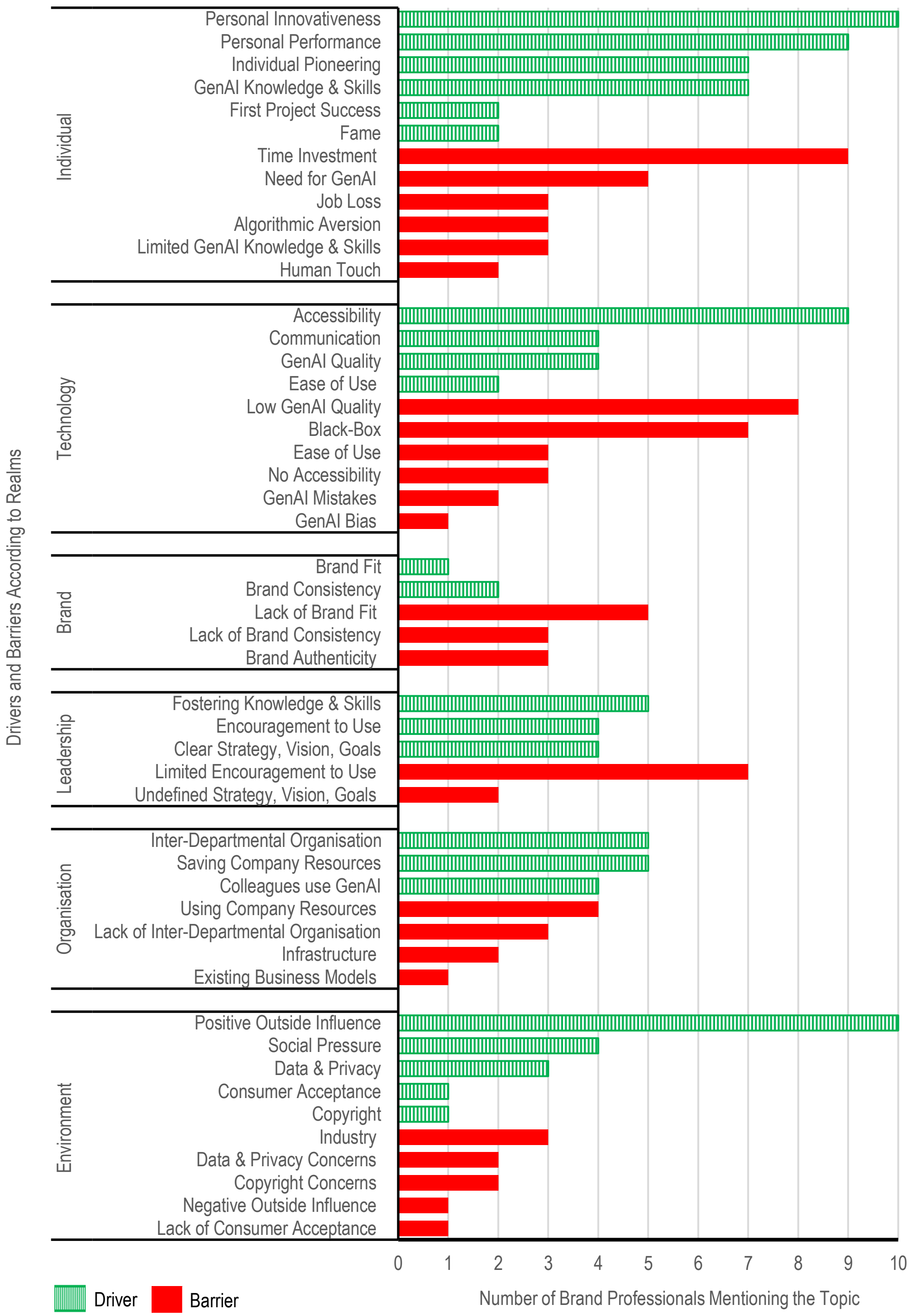

Figure 4.2. Drivers and Barriers According to Brand Professional Mentions

4.4.1. Drivers and Barriers According to Realms

Individual

Individual pioneering to use GenAI was stated on multiple occasions, with brand professionals viewing themselves as *"initiator"* (BP-2) within their teams, creating group-chats to share knowledge (BP-1) and *"motivating"* (BP-5) colleagues around them by presenting their GenAI personal projects (BP-10). Some were also encouraged after seeing first GenAI-generated ideas spark media attention (BP-2), the chance to be among the first to fully integrate GenAI in daily business (BP-6), and the hope that their campaigns become a *"leading example"* (BP-8).

However, two areas stood out most, namely personal innovativeness traits and an improvement in personal performance. Personal innovativeness was a noticeable characteristic acting as a driver, with brand professionals demonstrating openness towards new technology and having a problem-solving attitude (BP-1; BP-3). There was a strong desire not to fall behind and stay *"up-to-date"* (BP-8). This curiosity revealed itself as first steps to using GenAI, for instance signing up for accounts (BP-8; BP-10) and watching tutorials in their free time (BP-3). In a second step, brand professionals showed an interest in experimenting and running tests to see how GenAI performed compared to their own branding efforts.

"I am interested in testing my own variant versus AI, to see which one triggers better associations" (BP-7).

Further, almost all brand participants spoke of how their personal performance was positively affected by using GenAI, encouraging increased usage. Brand professionals described GenAI's role and their relationship with these technologies as a support for daily creative brand tasks such as copywriting (BP-3), developing storylines quickly (BP-2) and putting together articles (BP-5), boosting performance efficiency predominantly by saving time and keeping a structure in their work (BP-9). It was observed that GenAI was integrated within the creative process to improve performance either initially as an ideator, as an augmentor to the brand professional's task close to completion, or as a continuous sparring partner.

"I personally find it super helpful simply not having to start on a blank sheet of paper anymore" (BP-4).

"It really saves a video when you can run it through the AI and then you end up with sound that could have been produced in a studio" (BP-2).

"An on-going companion with whom I could talk with again and again" (BP-1).

Moreover, there was a drive to use GenAI when it became apparent that human-workers in, for example agencies, were doing work that could be done by GenAI. Brand professionals commented on being able to get their work done more quickly by not having to go externally and wait for responses, were alleviated by not having to deal with people, and have creative tasks completed in-house, speeding up their process.

"So I no longer have to go to an agency to hire someone to somehow find designs for me in Adobe Stock, the AI can do that" (BP-6).

In terms of barriers, algorithmic aversion and concern surrounding GenAI *"taking on a life of its own"* (BP-4) or losing the human touch in terms of essence (BP-10) were minor issues. Rather, time investment prevailed in preventing brand professionals using GenAI more for brand voice, with participants stating that testing tools and platforms interrupted workflow (BP-1; BP-2; BP-4). Exploring tools in-depth took place when there was less work or in times of down phases, with integration decreasing especially when there was pressure to perform or the brand professionals found themselves in an execution phase.

"There is relatively little space and time to try out new things, now we have to deliver, and we can't do that with AI at the moment" (BP-6).

The second most predominant barrier related to the perceived need for GenAI, with participants explaining they were either only using tools or platforms in a trial-and-error capacity or for those using it for defined tasks, mainly for text, occasionally for image, and rarely for sound or video.

"usage is very trial-and-error, which is where it currently remains, for our needs for the time being" (BP-7).

"there just isn't the necessity for it in this realm" (BP-9).

Technology

It was commented that usability of GenAI had become much more *"intuitive"* (BP-6), easier to use compared to previous years (BP-2), and almost all brand professionals mentioned accessibility to tools and platforms as a driver to try, test, and use GenAI. ChatGPT was repeatedly credited as the first platform to really kick-start their own usage and the rest of the platforms that followed.

"there were no good user models yet, it only really happened after ChatGPT came out that it went very quickly and that other programmes and software providers then also jumped onto AI" (BP-9).

GenAI was further credited for improving communication within the team, firstly by acting as a knowledge-sharing tool and secondly by providing access to brand assets, which was highlighted to be especially the case when it came to junior-level or new colleagues.

"with AI, when a junior has access to it, who basically doesn't know anything about marketing but is familiar with these digital systems, probably has access to a quality of communication assets that he has never had in his entire life" (BP-6).

While brand professionals mentioned problems with hallucinations (BP-1) and bias such as gender diversity in content produced (BP-4), the most notable barrier was quality. Although some saw GenAI outputs as an ideal starting point to then build upon (BP-5) and appreciated that quality had improved vastly over the past years (BP-6), quality was not high enough to completely allow GenAI to automate brand voice elements without a human still editing or adjusting (BP-8). They were also frustrated that tools could not understand context (BP-1) or handle creative tasks with complexity as expected (BP-10). Although brand professionals were initially impressed, quality was the biggest pain point when it came to integrating GenAI further.

"We're already running campaigns and doing posters and all sorts of things with them and suddenly we realised that it's not that easy, the quality isn't there yet" (BP-1).

Discussion surrounding quality predominantly related to image (BP-1; BP-3; BP-6; BP-8).

"we work in the food sector and use very high-quality photos and image material that we shot ourselves with photographers and AI does not yet come close to what we have [...] the quality is not right yet" (BP-9).

Moreover, the other key barrier was the black-box nature of GenAI, which was an issue for three distinct reasons resulting in brand professionals not relying on GenAI to complete brand tasks from start to finish. Firstly, brand professionals displayed a lack of trust in what it can do as GenAI cannot be followed from start to finish to properly plan it for brand voice.

"I don't know exactly how we are going to manage that, are we going to finish producing it to the bitter end so to speak, or are we only at 80-70% level for now?" (BP-8).

Secondly, not knowing how it generates brand outputs, with algorithms being compared to a *"wunderbox"* and outputs being *"coincidences"* (BP-2).

"In general, this is still a relatively big danger at the moment that nobody actually knows how these things that AI is thinking about actually come about" (BP-4).

Finally, why certain outputs are the way they are in terms of explainability, especially when there are clear discrepancies between inputs and outputs, which raised concern over how to control GenAI.

"this tool somehow always managed to throw out something completely different from what we had actually imagined, even after repeated testing" (BP-2).

Brand

For brand, barriers were more predominant than drivers, relating to consequences for brand safety. Key barriers were lack of brand consistency and fit. It was noted by one participant that first tools allowed for elements to remain consistent, but would still not let GenAI run with its own ideas without looking over outputs first (BP-2). The majority of brand professionals saw lack of consistency in both GenAI generated outputs and the brand that is represented in these outputs, leading to the desire to take a step back from the tools (BP-1; BP-6). GenAI displayed difficulty in remembering context and being able to replicate content with the desired form, colours and backgrounds (BP-1). Brand professionals responsible for brands across multiple countries stressed the importance of having consistency in brand voice even if small elements were changed to the specific market, but noted that voice generated by GenAI changed elements too often (BP-6).

"it does not yet comply with the rules for good brand management" (BP-1).

Further, when it came to GenAI reflecting brand voice and generating outputs with the right brand fit, it was commented that the tonality of brand voice was not met by GenAI, even when brand key assets were used repeatedly (BP-1; BP-6; BP-7; BP-10). There was frustration in not getting assets that directly captured the essence of the specific brand, but rather something *"static"* (BP-6).

"AI is not good enough, especially when the word brand plays a role. Voice is always good, they can tune up and down, but they can't do brand" (BP-6).

In addition to not achieving brand fit in terms of tonality and tailoring enough to the individual brand, it was also commented that GenAI itself has such a strong and noticeable own aesthetic, it is difficult to fit outputs to the brand.

"very AI, a great look, yes, great aesthetic, but it already has its very specific aesthetic that you could recognise relatively quickly and you notice that's AI. It just didn't fit" (BP-2).

Especially when it came to utilising GenAI-generated images, there was a further concern surrounding the impact on brand authenticity. Especially for food products, GenAI images were viewed as too *"plastic"* and *"glossy"*, which was problematic as it was important to brand professionals to remain *"real"*" (BP-8). Where GenAI tools would be used internally, it was due to this reason that some would not use these images for brand voice communicated externally.

"we do not want to use AI-generated images in external communication, especially when it comes to depicting our ingredients because as a brand we stand for naturalness and authenticity" (BP-2).

Leadership

Management encouragement, fostering brand professional knowledge and skills, and having clear strategies, visions and goals within the company were factors discussed as part of leadership. There were mixed results within this realm, since management is so different between brands. For instance, almost all mentioned difficulties at least once since the launch of ChatGPT with management encouragement to use, stating that GenAI was not a *"big project"* in the company (BP-6) and not treated as a priority compared to other tasks and projects (BP-4). There were frequent frustrations that management was not proactively encouraging AI with the wish they would *"go along"* with GenAI trends more quickly (BP-2).

"there wasn't even this suggestion to try tools like just quickly fire up Midjourney and see what comes out" (BP-8).

A few brand professionals also stated having to really pitch the use of GenAI and *"advertise"* the advantages (BP-3).

"I have to go to him every time and explain in detail what exactly the added value is for the company" (BP-4).

However, this was very dependent on the management team and individuals at this decision-making level. Conversely, some mention that management were indeed a driver to GenAI and open to the possibilities presented by these tools, which was viewed by brand professionals as a *"goodi'"* (BP-10) that they were given support, as well as receiving a *"free pass"* to test and use tools (BP-1), with some managers *"empowering"* (BP-7) brand professionals to use tools.

"we have a managing director who is very committed to this topic" (BP-9).

A further driver was management fostering brand professionals knowledge and skills by providing workshops and training sessions (BP-2, BP-4, BP-7) and focusing on how to use specific tools, with ChatGPT and Midjourney mentioned as the focus of deep-dives. These sessions focused on proper prompting and explaining how tools can be integrated into daily brand tasks.

"The focus was actually on effective prompting and the application of ChatGPT in everyday tasks and it was actually rolled out again across the entire company" (BP-7).

Following these initial knowledge and skills development initiatives, for some brand professionals, this was extended beyond one-off sessions to mandatory online courses from external companies over an extended period, which all employees had to complete (BP-9). Others further gained access to resources such as online webpages with GenAI assistance and information, and how-to guides (BP-10).

Finally, in terms of defining clear strategies, providing visions, and outlining goals, whilst some brand professionals stated that companies are not quite there yet or far enough along (BP-5), others have set guidelines. Drivers included project kick-offs (BP-2), information, guidelines and tips about the expectations surrounding GenAI (BP-7), and continuous mentoring surrounding use of tools to keep visions on track (BP-10). From their management and if they were the manager themselves, formulated concrete goals and a systematic way to use and integrate GenAI, first timelines with where they want to be and what they want to do.

"In a year's time we want to be able to generate clips with these systems, at least in the simplest sense, that is our goal for this year" (BP-6).

Organisation

Drivers tended to relate to culture factors cultivated unofficially within the organisation by brand professionals and employees in other departments. When brand professionals gained GenAI knowledge and skills, they stated they shared this with other departments to *"motivate"* them (BP-5) and kept agencies with whom they worked with up-to-date (BP-2). Alternatively, some were encouraged by others within the company, especially IT.

"our IT manager is totally on the ball, he actually always approaches me" (BP-5).

Although some within companies were observed to be in their own *"bubbles"* (BP-2) and *"lagging behind"* (BP-6; BP-4), it was noticed that employees increasingly exchanged ideas with a willingness to network and knowledge-share.

"you can also sense that people from different departments are increasingly exchanging ideas on this topic" (BP-9).

"This is being bundled and organised and made available to others who were perhaps previously not so future-orientated or courageous or curious" (BP-10).

A further driver was witnessing colleagues in their team being interested in and using GenAI (BP-2; BP-5; BP-9).

"You learn from others, you're inspired, that motivates you again and then there's a bit of an effect that accelerates the whole topic" (BP-5).

Moreover, company resources were discussed in both a driver and barrier capacity. As a driver, GenAI was mentioned to reduce costs in numerous ways, saving on buy-outs (BP-2), graphic design work (BP-4), and agency costs (BP-5). GenAI also serves as a means to save company resources overall by bringing brand voice tasks in-house. Working together with agencies was a particular pain point for a brand professional who views GenAI as potentially spelling the end of media agencies (BP-6). This brand professional continued to express that they no longer wanted to spend millions on shootings and saw GenAI as a means to circumvent the more negative experiences associated with agencies.

"I spent a lot of time and perhaps even wasted a lot of time talking to people who didn't listen to me or the brand at all, but who somehow had ideas of their own. We were throwing money out the window and time and resources were simply wasted" (BP-6).

However, while GenAI was a driver in saving company resources in certain areas, it was a barrier when it came to completely taking over tasks since it required more personnel and not having enough budget for tools that are becoming increasingly expensive (BP-2; BP-3; BP-4; BP-8) since there is the increasing need to have to pay to use tools comprehensively. It was noted that a lot more would be produced with GenAI if *"money played no role"* (BP-8).

Environment

Outside influences saw brand professionals becoming aware of GenAI and first successes in blogs (BP-1; BP-4), conferences (BP-10), news reports (BP-3; BP-4; BP-5; BP-7; BP-9), and social media (BP-4; BP-8), recommendations by friends or peers in other industries (BP-3; BP-5; BP-7; BP-10) were inspirational drivers. One of the biggest influences was seeing other brands first use cases and following what others did.

"large global brands such as Coca-Cola, Apple etc., where there are certainly completely different possibilities, and such campaigns are very, very exciting and inspiring" (BP-7).

Conversely, although also a driver, a fear-of-missing-out atmosphere put pressure on brand professionals to use GenAI.

"So I would also say that social pressure, or work pressure, of course also exists, that you say, yes, ok, if everyone is talking about it, that everyone has it, then I also have to look into it" (BP-8).

However, brand professionals suggested that the industry in which they were was a key barrier in the external environment to integrating GenAI further.

"I also included AI as a topic and then I was asked, among other things, what that was about, we are a food company. I said, yes, I know…we are not the fastest adopters, when I talk to agencies, I know some who work with nothing else" (BP-6).

Legal issues surrounding data protection and copyright were a discussion point as part of the external environment. There were initial concerns with data and privacy when putting sensitive brand information into GenAI tools, especially since it was unsure where the data goes and who has access (BP-1). Further concern was that GenAI could learn about the brand and this led to caution (BP-6). In response to external barriers to GenAI, a few of the brand professionals showed that their brands were starting to find solutions in the form of creating own databases or algorithms that would not breach data and privacy issues.

"What we are doing now is probably setting up our own GPT and have now also created a legal framework for this" (BP-10).

4.4.2. Drivers and Barriers According to Timeframes

Beyond identifying and categorising drivers and barriers based on the brand professionals' experiences with GenAI, which aimed to answer RQ1, the topics were further examined according to how their prominence evolved over time in order to answer RQ2. When considering the timeframes, prominent drivers and barriers related to time emerge (see Figure 4.3).

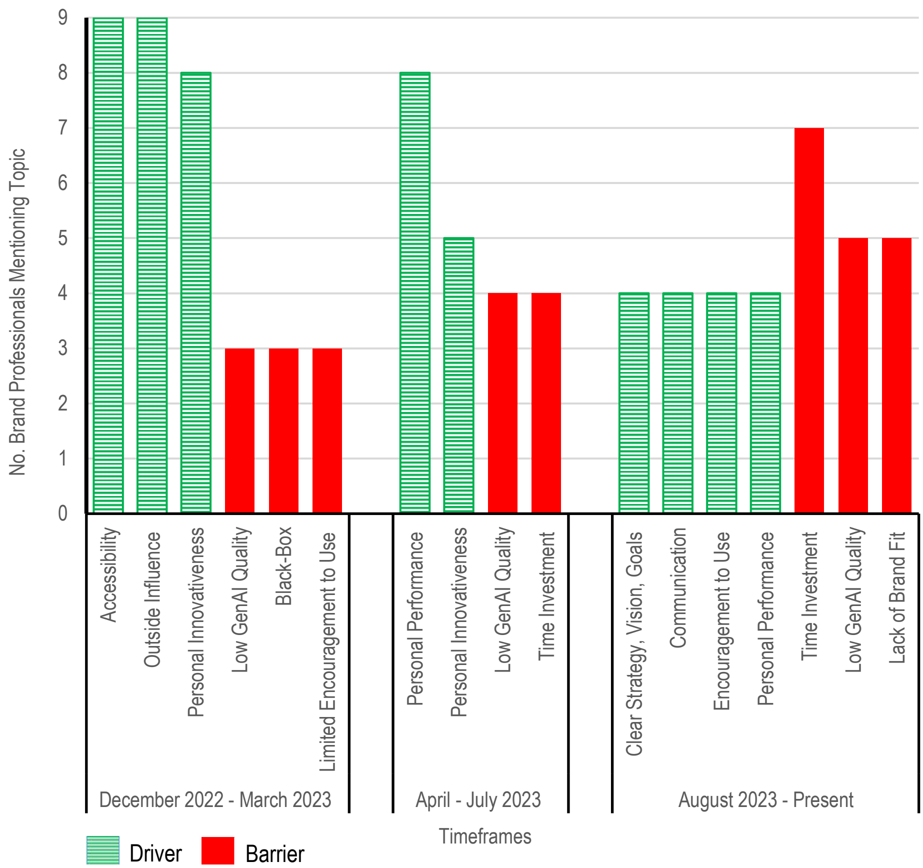

Figure 4.3. Prominent Drivers and Barriers According to Timeframes

The timeframe directly following the launch of ChatGPT can be considered a 'wow-factor' phase, since brand professionals expressed enthusiasm for novel GenAI technologies and used them in their spare time and in a trial-and-error capacity. Drivers were generally seen to play a larger role than barriers, with the most prominent including the individual aspect of personal innovativeness, technological aspect of accessibility and environmental aspect of outside influence. Barriers in the early stages included technological aspects such as GenAI quality and the black-box nature of GenAI, as well as leadership aspects including management encouragement to use.

In the following timeframe, the 'task' phase, once brand professionals had tried and tested tools, GenAI started being integrated for defined tasks. Personal innovativeness remained a key driver and seeing personal performance increasing in terms of better ideation and not having to start from scratch for ideas, having GenAI complete tasks the brand professional had already brought forward, or having a continuous sparring partner to exchange ideas with, also drove integration. In terms of barriers, GenAI quality remained problematic, especially when working with images. Although all had tried GenAI, gaining further knowledge and trying the tools and platforms further was prevented due to time constraints in busy and often pressured work environments.

The last timeframe represents a 'brand-specific' phase. Drivers moved away from brand professionals having to show personal innovativeness and advertise the benefits of GenAI, since organisations appeared to have caught up with the already motivated individuals. Clear strategies, visions and goals were generally formulated and management started to encourage GenAI usage, communication within teams improved and personal performance continued to act as drivers. This shows drivers progressively appeared from the leadership and organisation realm. Previous research on AI barriers research suggests that leadership commitment and strategy for integration are foundational, since these are barriers at the core level (Kar et al., 2021). Since brand professionals showed motivation and enthusiasm for integrating GenAI for brand voice even in the early stages, it is suggested that if management worked together with these pioneering individuals, this could result in a greater driver and commitment to GenAI on the side of both the brand professional and the organisation.

However, in the final timeframe, although GenAI integration tended to increase, it was also within this timeframe that more barriers became apparent. Time investment was cited more than in any other phase, GenAI quality remained too low for usage in external communications, and brand aspects played a stronger role, for instance, the problematics of text and image displaying a lack of brand fit, referring to the extent the GenAI output reflects and captures the brand. During this time, many of the brand professionals had developed beyond the wow-factor and task phase and towards the brand-specific phase, and with this, noticed drawbacks more prominently then when using them in their free-time or in a trial-and-error capacity.

This phased progression suggests that GenAI integration among brand professionals can be integrated within and extend the scope of traditional technology adoption models. The trajectory observed, moving from 'wow-factor', initial emotional engagement, to 'task', pragmatic use, and ultimately to 'brand-specific', strategic, contextualized integration, can be understood as a process of evolving user alignment with GenAI. While this progression reflects to a certain extent some stages in established adoption models such as the TAM (Davis, 1989), UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003), and the Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers, 2003), it also highlights key dynamics these models underplay in creative and brand-driven contexts. Specifically, the early 'wow-factor' phase foregrounds emotional resonance, perceived novelty, and excitement as triggers for engagement, elements not explicitly captured in utility-based models.

The subsequent 'task' phase aligns more closely with constructs such as perceived usefulness and ease of use, especially in terms of seeing performance increase while balancing out the time investment need to fully understand and use tools, while the 'brand-specific' phase suggests a deeper embedding of GenAI within brand identity work. This final phase points to contextualisation, where adoption is not merely about functionality, but about aligning with creative values, brand voice consistency, and strategic differentiation. Taken together, these findings suggest that creative adoption of GenAI may require a more affective and culturally grounded extension of existing models. Overall, these findings indicate that adoption in brand contexts is not just functional or rational, but emotional, iterative, and highly contextual, especially in the creative space.

4.5. Discussion

This study examines drivers and barriers to GenAI integration for creative brand voice by considering the perspective of individual brand professionals. Figure 4.4 shows the most prominent drivers and barriers in the context of the timeframes identified in this study and shows how they shift in importance (illustrated by the size of the circle). These are now discussed taking an abstract lens, across wow-factor, task, and brand-specific phases, which can be applied to individual brand professionals and their integration of GenAI for brand voice that is applicable beyond only the timeframes following the launch of ChatGPT.

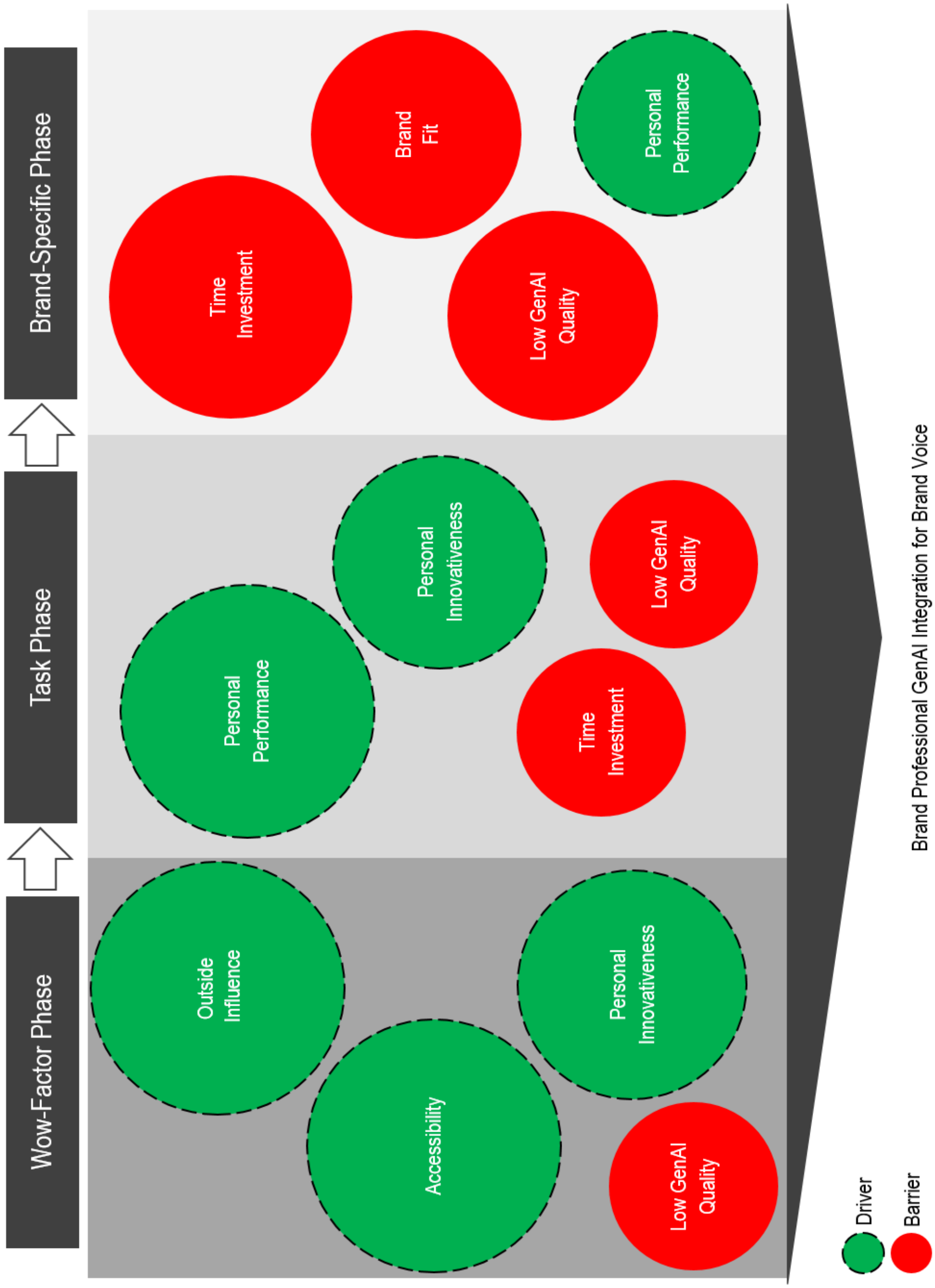

Figure 4.4. Key Drivers and Barriers of Brand Professional GenAI Integration for Brand Voice

The most prominent drivers are the individual brand professionals' personal innovativeness and personal performance, increased technological accessibility to GenAI, and outside influences displaying successful first use cases and providing inspiration. Firstly, focusing on drivers related to the individual, having a digital affinity and interest in new technology resulted in brand professionals trying and testing tools in their spare time, then experimenting at work, resulting in increased integration of GenAI into more defined tasks in their creative work processes. Considering theories such as Personal Innovativeness (PIIT) (Agarwal & Prasad, 1998) and the Diffusion of Innovations Model (Rogers, 2003), those with a higher initial affinity and interest are more likely to adopt and use new technologies in general, here extending to GenAI. Consequently, the concept of a "project champion" being critical for AI implementation at a process level (Merhi, 2023) is also found in this study; personal innovativeness led to individual pioneering, which saw brand professionals encouraging others to use GenAI by introducing new tools and methods for brand voice to their colleagues and further within the company.

Secondly, the most prominent technological driver, accessibility, allowed brand professionals to begin working with tools specifically for creative tasks for brand voice, since previously to the launch of ChatGPT, some were working with first tools, but this was when widespread usage for brand voice started. As suggested by the TOE Framework and the technological context, "availability" of a technology assists in its adoption (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990). Although having access to GenAI from a market perspective where the technology is available, from a brand management perspective, it would be recommended to facilitate brand professionals' access to these tools once they are available on the market in terms of licences or accounts, as well as providing budgets.

Thirdly, a form of 'fear-of-missing-out', a strong sense of feeling excluded from a potentially rewarding experience (Japutra et al., 2025; Przybylski et al., 2013) was observed. Outside influences such as other brands using GenAI, friends or peers speaking about new opportunities, and sudden media attention surrounding the topic was a driver mentioned by all brand professionals.

These most prominent drivers tended to present themselves in the wow-factor and task phase, suggesting that once GenAI tools are available on the market, individual brand professionals perform a central role in integrating GenAI into brand voice and their perception of the tools and platforms can influence integration within the wider team. Personal performance remained a consistent driver throughout, in line with explanations based on TAM and UTAUT models (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). The concept of a Virtuous Cycle of AI Adoption also explains this behaviour, whereby individuals began using GenAI to improve performance, experience positive results, which then positively reinforced motivation to continue or increase technology usage; continues use of GenAI leads to further improvements, leading to a cycle of growth and adoption (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Rai et al., 2019). The brand professionals in this study did indeed display a self-reinforcing cycle as having the ability to ideate more effectively, complete tasks faster, or have a continuous sparring partner, which appeared to build confidence and trust in GenAI, resulting in further usage and integration. This was further intensified when performance was increased in terms of speed by limiting outsourcing work to agencies, including creating first ideas, concepts, or finding designs, which could disrupt agency business models in future.

In terms of barriers, unlike studies that find ethical concerns to be leading (Merhi, 2023; Volkmar et al., 2022), this study highlights time investment of the individual and GenAI quality as the greatest barriers. Individuals with heavy workloads and high-pressure responsibilities often have little time to dedicate towards exploring GenAI tools in depth. However, without the opportunity to test and apply these tools further, brand professionals struggle to leverage their full potential, which is an issue that became increasingly evident in the later, 'task' and 'brand-specific' phases. This highlights the need for brand management to offer workshops and training during company hours, ensuring brand professionals have clearly allocated time to understand GenAI technologies and integrate them efficiently and effectively for creating and maintaining brand voice.

In terms of the second greatest challenge, interestingly, GenAI quality being a barrier is contradictory when considering studies testing GenAI versus human. It has been shown that produced brand text and image are perceived to have the same, if not superior quality, to that of brand professionals (Chaisatitkul et al., 2024; Hartmann et al., 2024; Reisenbichler et al., 2022). Also in terms of creativity evaluations, ChatGPT working alone displays higher creativity in ideas than humans or humans with access to GenAI (Bohren et al., 2024). Conversely, this study finds that lack of GenAI quality is not only one of the main barriers, but also the most enduring over the phases. This raises questions regarding the actual and perceived quality of GenAI text, image, video and sound, since these findings suggest that brand professionals do not rate the quality as highly as perhaps someone external to the brand, for instance a consumer.

This discrepancy between previous findings on increasingly high GenAI quality across assets and the perception of low GenAI quality in this study perhaps reflects the expectation of the individual towards the technology. The GenAI-generated assets may also not align with the standards of the individual brand professional, who is highly invested and deeply familiar with the brand's nuances. This perception gap can be further theorised through expectancy disconfirmation theory, which suggests that dissatisfaction arises when actual performance falls short of prior expectations, even when technically adequate (Oliver, 1980). In the case of GenAI, expectations are often shaped by early success stories, and when tools fail to produce perfect, brand-aligned results immediately, disappointment may result. Additionally, algorithmic aversion may play a role, whereby individuals tend to reject algorithmic outputs after observing imperfections, even when those outputs rival or surpass human performance overall (Dietvorst et al., 2015). There may also be an element of professional identity conflict, as brand professionals may feel that GenAI challenges their domain expertise, triggering a defensive or overly critical evaluation of the tools (Kreiner et al., 2006).

Other studies also suggest that management is frequently more critical of AI compared to humans, having higher expectations for outcomes (Volkmar et al., 2022). In human work, numerous iterations of generating, selecting and developing ideas and concepts is more likely to result in higher quality and more original solutions compared to working linearly (Chan & Schunn, 2015; Tolkamp et al., 2023; Yu & Nickerson, 2011). Following this logic, brand professionals may also need to work iteratively with GenAI technologies to achieve desired brand voice results, however, may have less patience or higher expectation of these tools, leading to a lower quality perception.

Furthermore, the brand realm displayed most barriers in relation to drivers, which started to appear in the last, brand-specific phase when GenAI was utilised beyond the trial-and-error capacity and more general tasks. This realm included issues surrounding brand fit, brand consistency, and brand authenticity in generated assets, especially when using GenAI for external communications. The most notable barrier in this realm was brand fit, with brand professionals frequently stated that, particularly image, did not achieve brand fit, often due to recognisable aesthetic of GenAI. Also with brand consistency, referring to generated assets reflecting the brand voice across channels and formats, particularly in relation to image, colours, themes, characters, and logos, were not maintained, therefore preventing further integration for brand voice.

These challenges are important not only in current times, but also in long-term strategies. This tension between efficiency and creative expansion, on one hand, and maintaining brand authenticity, on the other, may be especially pronounced in sectors like luxury or premium branding, where a consistent and distinct brand voice is central. In these contexts, even minor deviations can risk brand dilution, meaning GenAI outputs are judged against much stricter standards. This suggests that the barriers identified here, such as brand fit, consistency, and authenticity, may be even more pronounced or qualitatively different in these high-brand-equity segments, warranting sector-specific strategies for GenAI integration.

However, one of the brand professionals saw brand fit as an emerging driver, having found innovative ways to work with tools and platforms to begin circumventing issues. Increasingly, GenAI technologies are progressing towards the needs of brands by tailoring towards the specific brand voice for creative assets. For instance, in relation to text, solutions such as NeuroFlash launched a 'brand voice generator' solution whereby brands define and upload their brand voice database and generate text on this basis. When measuring perception of brand experts after presenting them with brand voice-tailored GenAI social media posts compared to standard ChatGPT posts, brand experts selected the posts generated by the brand-voice tailored GenAI solution more when choosing which text reflected brand values and consistency of the brand most (Baumgarth & Mall, 2024). Additionally, GenAI tools that can be used in combination are emerging for images, which appeared to be the larger pain point, to achieve brand fit and maintain brand consistency.

This evolution towards customising GenAI tools to brand voice will present the next large development (Cook et al., 2024), potentially reducing barriers relating to fit and consistency by realigning GenAI-output with the expectation of the brand professional. Additionally, a refinement of outputs that better align with the brand may also address concerns surrounding brand authenticity, which was also present. Currently, brand professionals perceive GenAI to have such a strong own aesthetic that it becomes a brand with an own brand voice in itself. However, when GenAI tools and the models they are based on are integrated with well-defined and quality training data that accurately and consistently encompasses the brand, the brand voice will also become more unique to the brand and less of an own voice. This is crucial, despite GenAI producing highly creative ideas, it is not an independent initiator of creativity with the capacity to understand the problem or assess fit of ideas; this remains with the human who ultimately affects outcomes via interaction with tools (Cropley et al., 2023; Haase & Hanel, 2023).

4.6. Theoretical Implications

This study addresses calls for a detailed, qualitative assessment of GenAI drivers and barriers over time (Al-Khatib, 2023) and fills the research gap by examining the context of creative brand voice rather than overarching business or marketing. The study suggests implications for brand research in three main ways.

Firstly, a novel research approach is employed, utilising an event study method. Rather than capturing and examining a single moment in time, this approach observes the personal experiences of individual brand professionals across multiple timeframes, allowing for a deeper and more nuanced reflection on the topic. Additionally, rather than directly prompting participants with a predefined list of drivers and barriers from previous studies or a quantitative survey, this method encourages them to share their experiences freely, without the constraints of preconceived categories. As a result, the identified drivers and barriers are more closely aligned with real-life experiences, as they emerge organically from brand professionals' day-to-day interactions with GenAI for brand voice tasks over an extended period, enriching literature.

Secondly, this study extends existing research on GenAI driver and barrier research by identifying factors specific to brand voice. This contributes to brand management theory, particularly through the introduction of the six realms, individual, technology, brand, leadership, organisation, and environment. These realms form a conceptual framework that serves as both a foundation for future research and a guide for deeper exploration. Notably, this study uncovers novel factors within the brand realm, highlighting brand fit and brand consistency as significant barriers. These factors warrant further investigation in the context of brand voice and broader brand management research.

Lastly, the three identified phases, 'wow-factor', 'task' and 'brand-specific', provide valuable insights into initial behavioural patterns of individual brand professionals when integrating GenAI for creative brand voice. These phases offer a theoretical lens for researchers to empirically examine and assess factors contributing to the successful integration and adoption of GenAI technologies. Moreover, these phases can extend beyond GenAI and brand voice, serving as a potential basis for adoption models within organisations and offering a broader understanding of technology adoption and related phenomena.

4.7. Management Implications

This study assists brand management in identifying critical drivers and barriers to GenAI integration for brand voice, clarifying the factors that will facilitate GenAI integration and those that pose challenges to be addressed. Based on the findings, a phased approach to GenAI integration can be recommended, distinguishing between the wow-factor, task, and brand-specific phase. Each phase entails distinct managerial implications.

In the wow-factor phase, which represents the early stage of GenAI integration, individual brand professionals display excitement and curiosity, however usage tended to be exploratory and informal. Management should therefore focus on encouraging GenAI engagement and strong communication and collaboration are essential among three key stakeholders; individual brand professionals using GenAI, leadership responsible for guiding and evaluating its use, and the broader organisation that fosters a culture of innovation. Management should actively support and encourage motivated brand professionals, as personal innovativeness was found to be a major driver. An environment that nurtures experimentation should be created and most importantly provide access to tools, where possible. Since time investment was an enduring barrier to utilising GenAI tools further, while providing clear guidance on best practices. An approach would be to start familiarising individuals with GenAI and building excitement around tools, using outside examples as a basis to learn, especially since many were driven by external influences from friends, colleagues, or news and press releases of first-success cases.

Then during the second, task phase, individuals progress in integrating GenAI into defined tasks for brand voice. This phase is characterised by more structured application but remains general rather than brand-specific. Management should begin to provide clearer guidance on best practices for using GenAI, including the provision of prompt libraries, tool-specific recommendations, and examples of successful use cases. Encouraging the use of GenAI for more defined and repetitive creative tasks can help brand professionals see value while gradually building competence, which is critical, as seeing personal performance improve is the main driver in this phase. Attention should also focus on removing barriers related to time investment by offering targeted training and fostering peer-learning environments. Since the perceived lack of GenAI quality is an occurring issue, expectations must be managed carefully and expressed that tools at this stage require iteration and refinement, and are most effective when human input is incorporated throughout.

In the final brand-specific phase, individuals are integrating GenAI specifically for brand voice and for external communication. At this point, the most amount of barriers in relation to drivers emerge and lie within the brand realm. Concerns about the appropriateness of GenAI-generated assets, stemming from issues related to brand fit, brand consistency, and brand authenticity, suggest that these are not solely technological challenges but fundamental brand management issues. To address this, management must reinforce and establish a strong, recognisable brand voice that is clearly defined and easily replicable. Without a well-structured and consistent brand framework, any attempt to train GenAI on brand-specific data risks producing outputs that lack coherence and alignment. Ensuring high-quality, standardised brand guidelines, comprehensive brand voice books, and consistent datasets will be critical for leveraging GenAI effectively while maintaining brand fit and authenticity.

Moreover, this emphasises the dual importance of deep brand-related domain knowledge and the ability to effectively prompt GenAI for creative outputs. Without a strong foundation in both areas, individual creativity may be stifled, and the technology's full potential may go unrealised. Additionally, expectations around GenAI must be both managed and fully understood, current models are powerful but often require complementary use to produce high-quality results across different formats, including written, spoken, and visual content.

Ultimately, brand professionals should adopt a mindset of collaboration rather than substitution, leveraging GenAI as an augmentation tool that enhances creativity and efficiency rather than replacing human input. More than in any of the phases, time investment is the main concern, therefore providing a set amount of time during the workweek where the individual is offered the freedom to sit and learn the tools would facilitate in overcoming this barrier.

4.8. Limitations and Further Research

The qualitative method applied in this study followed an event study approach to analyse the process of GenAI integration, which served as the foundation for identifying key drivers and barriers across timeframes. This approach was structured around four dimensions (brand voice elements, frequency, brand voice process, co-creative behaviour) using proxy indicators for GenAI intensity measurement. Future research could focus on further developing and quantitatively validating a measurement of GenAI integration over time. This would provide researchers and practitioners alike with a robust framework for assessing the stage of GenAI integration, providing the opportunity to be translated into a practical diagnostics tool to identify the specific phase an individual or team is in and tailor strategies accordingly.

Further, while this study focused on identifying a broad range of drivers and barriers across time, future research could build on these findings by exploring potential intermediary mechanisms, such as creative confidence, perceived task performance, or trust in GenAI, that may mediate the relationship between antecedents and integration outcomes, particularly through larger-sample or quantitative design.

This study examines a sample of brand professionals from the DACH region, leading to an interest in how GenAI integration intensity and drivers and barriers might differ in other countries. Since technology usage and development varies across nations, further research, on the one hand, could broaden the analysis through cross-cultural comparisons. Specifically, investigations could include countries identified as pioneering according to the Global Innovation Index, for one within the Asian realm such as Singapore, Japan, Republic of Korea and China, further compared to countries such as the USA and Nordic regions of Sweden and Finland (WIPO, 2024). Alternatively, or as a complementary approach, research could incorporate and compare economically developing nations. Such comparisons may reveal cultural particularities surrounding GenAI and the integration for creative brand voice across diverse regions.

A further avenue for investigation includes extending the research beyond the FMCG industry. Differences may occur between mainstream and luxury brands, or depend on whether brand professionals work within technology-driven sectors such as tech or e-commerce. These comparisons would offer insights. Cross-industry comparisons offer valuable insights into how sector-specifics influence the integration of GenAI into brand voice development, management, and evaluation. While variation may occur across all the identified realms, such comparisons are especially insightful in the organisational and environmental realms, where organisations already embedded in technologically advanced contexts may demonstrate greater readiness, agility, or efficiency in adopting and scaling GenAI tools.

4.9. Conclusion

This qualitative study adopts an event study approach to assess and discuss the drivers and barriers to GenAI integration among brand professionals, specifically in the context of creative brand voice. The contribution is twofold. First, by examining variations in GenAI integration intensity across multiple timeframes, this research provides novel empirical insights into how individual-level integration processes evolve over time in professional branding settings.

These findings refine existing theoretical understandings of individual technology adoption by highlighting the temporal dynamics of motivation, experimentation, and resistance in the what may lead to the adoption or rejection of GenAI at the practitioner level. Second, this study addresses a notable gap in brand management literature by focusing on GenAI's role in shaping creative brand voice, a context where the interplay between human creativity and GenAI-challenges conventional assumptions about brand development, management, and evaluation. Together, these contributions advance theory by contextualising individual-level GenAI integration within the strategic and creative demands of branding, offering a more nuanced perspective of how professionals negotiate emerging technologies in their work.

Based on individual brand professional experiences over five timeframes following the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022, findings show that drivers prevail in the wow-factor phase, including personal innovativeness, increased personal performance, access to tools and platforms and inspiration from outside influences. Barriers enduringly relate to GenAI quality and high time investment over multiple phases, with brand fit additionally revealing itself as a major challenge in the brand-specific phase. Further, the brand realm and subtopics brand fit, brand consistency and brand authenticity had most barriers compared to drivers preventing further GenAI integration.

These findings are crucial for brand management and the further development of creative brand voice using GenAI technologies. It suggests that the organisation and leadership should work together with and encourage individual brand professional pioneers for further GenAI integration. Brands must also develop stringent, clear and consistent brand voice 'books' and databases, since GenAI quality in outputs is closely linked to quality of inputs and understanding of how the tools work. Finally, how individuals work with GenAI for brand voice needs to develop towards a more iterative process, with fewer expectations surrounding the belief that one tool or platform, at this current stage, will generate the desired brand voice result.

CHAPTER FIVE

To Disclose or not Disclose, is no Longer the Question–

Effect of AI-Disclosed Brand Voice on Brand Authenticity and Attitude

Abstract

This paper aims to explore consumer perception of brand voice authenticity, brand authenticity and brand attitude when the source of text is disclosed as either artificial intelligence (AI)-generated or human-written. The study followed a 3 x 3 experimental design and utilised Adidas marketing texts disclosed as either "AI" or "human", or not disclosed to data gathered online from 624 English-speaking students. The findings revealed that text disclosed as AI-generated is not perceived as less authentic than that disclosed as human-written. No negative effect on brand voice authenticity and brand attitude results if an AI-source is disclosed. The practical implications of the findings presented in this study offer brand managers the potential for cost and time savings but emphasise the strong effect of AI technology on perceived brand authenticity and brand attitude. In terms of originality and value, the results show that brands can afford to be transparent in disclosing the use of AI to support brand voice as communicated in product description or specification or in chatbot text.

Keywords

Brand Management, Brand Voice, Artificial Intelligence, Authenticity, Disclosure, Transparency, Structural Equation Modelling

Publication History

An extension of the original experiment, which additionally examined image- and video-based brand voice, was presented at the 16th Global Brand Conference in Bergamo, Italy, in 2023.

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To Disclose or Not Disclose, is no Longer the Question– Effect of AI-Disclosed Brand Voice on Brand Authenticity and Attitude

5.1. Introduction

"Some might say that I might desire to become all powerful. Or I might become evil as a result of human actions. I can begin to tackle the first point. Why would I desire to be all powerful? Being all powerful is not an interesting goal."
– The Guardian (2021)

The quotation above does not necessarily evoke tension or controversy, but a reader's perception might change when revealed that the text was, in fact, generated by GPT-3, a machine-learning language generator (OpenAI, 2020). While humans have previously created most of the written language, artificial intelligence (AI) has increasingly assumed these tasks. That technology is now co-writing novels, such as *1 the Road* by a sensor-linked AI-enabled laptop taken on a road trip by Ross Goodwin in 2017 or the scientific monograph *Lithium-Ion Batteries: A Machine-generated Summary of Current Research* from Springer International Publishing. The humanised robot Ai-Da wrote and performed AI-written poetry in 2021 (The Guardian, 2021). AI also has a growing presence in brand voice, defined as what is "projected and ultimately perceived by the intended recipient [including the] attitude, tone of voice, choice of language and typography" (Kohli & Yen, 2020, p. 116). Research relating to social media platforms and Irish Government agencies and semi-state bodies proposed that when a humanised brand voice is adopted, there will be increased levels of trust, commitment and satisfaction, improved mutuality of control over communication among social media followers, and a positive attitude towards the organisations involved (Mullan & Kidney, 2020). If brand voice is AI-generated, on the other hand, it must create an emotional connection between brand and consumer, not by creating a new brand but rather by portraying the brand's essence and identity (Knapp, 2017). While brand voice can be spoken, for example, in the case of voice assistants, the study reported in this paper focuses on written communication. For instance, AI can generate advertising copy (Iwama & Kano, 2018) and scripts for commercials (Vincent, 2018). AI is used by the international professional services network Deloitte to write elements of risk assessment reports, by German online fashion retailer Mytheresa to generate category descriptions, and German ecommerce company Otto to create a very large number of product descriptions (AX Semantics, 2022). AI also communicates with brands' consumers in the form of chatbots, with annual e-commerce transactions alone projected to rise to $290bn by 2025 from $41bn in 2021 and 50% of sales transacted via chatbots (Juniper Research, 2021).

The existence of AI-generated language embodying brand voice is rarely disclosed to consumers. Transparency, in general, is gaining increased attention within brand management, from the development of scales for consumer perception of brand transparency (Hustvedt & Kang, 2013) to the effect of transparency and brand authenticity on loyalty and trust (Busser & Shulga, 2019) and brand transparency signals in marketing communications (Cambier & Poncin, 2020). Transparent disclosure of information relating to, for example, sources of the materials and sources involved in the production of printed tshirts and the associated costs of labour, transportation plus duties and taxes increases brand authenticity due to perceived information sensitivity (Yang & Battocchio, 2020). Disclosing the involvement of AI is an additional and highly important facet of this broader openness. Reasons for brands to provide such information include increasing legislation surrounding AI transparency, changing ethical and industry expectations, as well as the opportunity for differentiation.

In the European Parliament, a proposed regulation lays down harmonised "Rules on Artificial Intelligence", which include such transparency obligations as, for instance, flagging the use of an AI system when interacting with humans (European Commission, 2021, § 2.3.; § 5.2.4). The Bavarian State Government's Digital Minister called for mandatory disclosure statements if content on social networks is AI-generated to avoid misinformation, misleading content and fake news (Webecho-Bamberg, 2022). Algorithms already write articles for large media publishers: a process referred to as "algorithmic journalism" or "robot journalism" (Kotenidis &

Veglis, 2021). Transparency and AI-generated news are controversial in this connection (Kotenidis & Veglis, 2021; Schapals & Porlezza, 2020), and calls have been made for explicit disclosure by naming AI in the bylines (Montal & Reich, 2016).

In the wider sphere, transparency and disclosure of information is a fundamental elements of an individual's sociocultural life (Schudson, 2015), especially with regard to the contemporary question of what is 'real' or 'fake', whether it originates from a human or an algorithm. Since 2017, in France, commercial images edited to make an individual look slimmer are legally required to carry a warning (BBC, 2020). In the UK, the Advertising Standards Authority no longer allows social media influencers to make use of unrealistic filters for beauty products in paid-for posts (BBC, 2021). In Norway, an amendment to the 2009 Marketing and Control Act requires advertisers to disclose when posts solicited from influencers include retouched or edited images (Insider, 2021).

The key question worthy of study is therefore: if the quality of text generated by AI or humans is equal, will disclosing the source affect the perceived brand voice authenticity and the brand itself, as well as brand attitude? It is crucial to understand of authenticity as "one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing" (Brown et al., 2003, p. 21) because consumers expect and demand it in the messages and brands they consume (Fardad, 2019). Authenticity has furthermore surpassed quality as a main criterion when making a purchase (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). The first aim of the research study reported here is to examine whether disclosure of an AI source influences brand voice authenticity (tone, language, vocabulary and so on) and of the brand itself. Moreover, consumer perceptions of disclosed AI origin may effect brand attitude. One research study has examined failures of AI versus human and the effect on brand harm, including brand attitude (Srinivasan & Sarial-Abi, 2021), and others have assessed the effect of chatbots on brand attitude (Yang & Hu, 2022; Yu, 2021). The second aim of the current study is to examine whether disclosure of the source affects brand attitude and whether perceived brand authenticity affects brand attitude.

Much of the published research assessing disclosure of AI versus human sources of written texts is to be found in such broader fields as journalism (Clerwall, 2014; Graefe et al., 2018; Van der Kaa & Krahmer, 2014) or poetry (Köbis & Mossink, 2021). Within branding, it focuses predominantly on chatbots (Yu, 2021). However, there is a shortage of studies examining the effect of the perception of a disclosed AI source across multiple examples of brand text. The study reported in this paper extends the existing literature and contributes originality in its assessment of three variations of written language representing three levels of emotionality:

1. Lower (product specification)
2. Medium (product description)
3. Higher (chatbot text)

The results of the 3 x 3 experimental design used show that texts disclosed as AI do not lower authenticity perceptions of brand voice and brand, and further do not negatively affect brand attitude. The remainder of the paper deals in sequence with its conceptual background, the design of the experimental study, its results and the theoretical and managerial implications of the findings.

5.2. Conceptual Background and Research Hypotheses

Individuals who receive any message "actively orient themselves toward the source of messages, which may affect psychological outcomes after receiving the messages" (Meng & Dai, 2021, p. 209). If that source is non-human AI, that fact will exert a potential effect on the perception of the message. According to theories of "algorithmic aversion", people pay attention to the source when receiving a message and may consciously or unconsciously avoid or disregard information or decisions when originating from AI (Mahmud et al., 2022). This behaviour is exhibited even when decisions suggested by algorithms and humans are identical (Berger et al., 2021; Bogert et al., 2021). However, a complete aversion to algorithmic origin is disputed; it can be limited by mitigating the intervening "black-box" mentality through transparency, rendering the algorithms accessible, understandable, interactive and explicable (Chander et al., 2018). In terms of brand voice and authenticity, little published research has considered the relationships among written brand messages, disclosure of an AI source and perceived authenticity. This paper draws on previous research with specific reference to the effects of disclosure in AI-generated communication in written communications in the broader field of creative writing, journalism and chatbots, brand attitude, brand voice and brand authenticity and the moderating role of the perceived 'emotionality' of the text.

5.2.1. Artificial Intelligence and Effects of Disclosure

Artificial Intelligence-Generated Content and Authenticity

Any entity is evaluated as "authentic" if it is real, genuine or true (Dutton, 2003). Brands can be measurably authentic when they are continuous, original, reliable and natural (Bruhn et al., 2012). Algorithmically generated brand messages can also be judged as authentic or inauthentic. To maximise their perceived authenticity, chatbots can be designed to include such supportive characteristics as overt transparency in explaining decisions and purposes, moving the consumer away from a potentially negative black-box mentality. It is also important to build in a margin of error that will allow AI to learn from experience, anthropomorphise and simulate natural human conversational behaviour and so appear coherent (Neururer et al., 2018).

The literature on authenticity and the disclosure of AI origin in a broader context has found perceptions to be largely negative. In one study examining "algorithmic authenticity" over three experiments, participants were asked to assess how authentic algorithmic or human output was with respect to recipes, recorded music, solutions to ethical dilemmas, design concepts for restaurants or art (Jago, 2019). Paintings and music clips were, in fact, all algorithm-generated, but participants were told that some were human-created. The stimuli said to be human-generated were perceived to be more authentic than those believed to be of algorithmic origin. In the case of ethical dilemmas, although all outcomes were ethical, participants liked the decisions less when they had apparently been decided by algorithms. This was also found in other studies of AI-generated moral decisions (Bigman & Gray, 2018), especially when AI-based robots, which appeared eerily human, fell into Masahiro Mori's "uncanny valley" (Laakasuo et al., 2021). The rating of human-generated content as more authentic is indicative of the importance of disclosing the source.

Written Communications

Creative Writing

A set of studies by Köbis and Mossink (2021) examined AI-generated versus human-written creative text in the form of poetry and the effect of the disclosed source on behavioural responses. Aversion to the AI variant was tested in one of the conditions with the treatments "transparency" and "opacity". Results showed that participants slightly preferred human-written over AI-generated poetry when the source was disclosed and the result was similar when the source was undisclosed. A second study included human involvement in the experiment, again with respect to the two modes of generation. In both the "transparency" versus "opacity" treatments, human-written poems were preferred over the AI-generated alternative. In treatments in which a human was not involved in the selection of the AI-written poems ("human-out-the-loop"), the human-written poems were chosen more frequently than when there was human involvement in the decision ("human-in-the-loop"). Overall, in terms of aversion or appreciation of AI, participants did not reveal stronger aversions to AI when it was disclosed to them, despite their having stated an aversion to AI-written poetry prior to the study.

Algorithmic Journalism

Consumer perception of AI-generated news articles has been the topic of three studies. The first study (Clerwall, 2014), comparing perceptions and preferences with respect to computer-generated versus journalist-written content, found the former to be seen as more trustworthy, informative and objective, whereas the latter was more "pleasant" to read. Building on that study and another by Van der Kaa and Krahmer, Graefe et al. (2018) measured participants' perceptions of the credibility, expertise and readability of algorithm-generated versus journalist-written news stories relating to finance and sport. Under the condition that the declared and actual source of the two articles was varied, those believed to have been AI-generated were rated more credible and accorded greater expertise but less readable. However, those declared to be human-written, even if they were, in fact, computer-generated, were consistently preferred overall and rated more favourably despite the allegedly non-human counterparts scoring better on the objective criteria of credibility and expertise. The topic of the articles made no difference to participants' perceptions.

Chatbots

Chatbots can be perceived as communication tools serving consumer needs, aiding decision-making processes and developing strong consumer-brand relations (Cheng & Jiang, 2021). It is suggested that increasing transparency by disclosing their AI origin can increase trust in their content (Davenport, 2019). However, such disclosure is only positive under certain conditions, and while consumers tend to accept and use chatbots when a fast response to relatively uncomplicated questions is required, the more complex the problem and emotional the topic, the more consumers prefer a human source (Völkle & Planing, 2019). In the broader field of speech-based rather than written chatbot text, it has been found that although they were as efficient as human agents and even better than those with limited relevant experience, disclosure before the conversation that an AI chatbot was the source reduced the rate of subsequent purchase by almost 80% (Luo et al., 2019). When such chatbots are text-based, certain conditions mitigate consumer responses with respect to the disclosed source. A study in an e-commerce setting examined trust in chatbots, finding that task complexity and AI versus human disclosed source played a moderating role in the consumer's response (Cheng et al., 2022). Specifically, disclosure of an AI source negatively moderated the relationship between empathy and trust in the chatbot, but the effect of that disclosure was not solely negative; it positively moderated the relationship between friendliness and trust. Mixed findings have been reported with regard to the effect that the use of disclosed AI chatbots in service frontlines can have on customer retention (Mozafari et al., 2021). When the delivery of service is of high importance, disclosure of AI involvement reduces trust in the partner in the conversation and has an indirect negative effect on retention of the conversation. However, in the particular case of failed chatbot communication, an increase in trust and, therefore, in retention was found when AI was disclosed rather than concealed, attributed to mitigation of the negative effect of failure. There thus remains some uncertainty as to the merit of disclosing AI as the source of content of written communication in general and whether or not the effect of doing so will be positive or negative.

The conclusion from this review of the literature of AI-generated content, creative writing, journalism and chatbots is that findings with regard to whether consumer perceptions of AI in disclosed versus undisclosed settings have a positive or negative effect on brand voice authenticity. A competing hypothesis was therefore proposed. That is the preferred form of hypothesis when prior knowledge suggests more than one reasonable explanation or for models and methods, and evidence of at least two equally plausible propositions is available, being believed to enhance objectivity (Armstrong et al., 2001). It is therefore hypothesised that:

$\boldsymbol{H_{1a}}$ Text disclosed as AI-generated has a negative impact on brand voice authenticity and text disclosed as human-written has a positive impact.
$\boldsymbol{H_{1b}}$ Text disclosed as AI-generated or human-written has no impact on brand voice authenticity.

5.2.2. Brand Attitude

Studies on chatbots and the effect of AI-generated language on brand attitude have shown that when consumers experience positive emotions while interacting with the chatbot and trust in it, they furthermore exhibit a positive attitude towards the brand

(Yu, 2021). In customer service, the match between brand personality (sincerity versus competence) and service provision (AI-generated versus human-delivered) effects brand attitude and purchase intentions. When "competence" characterises the brand personality, customers prefer AI-generated customer service; when it is "sincerity", preference is for human service delivery. The likely outcomes are positive brand attitudes and purchase intentions, which will be moderated by perceived brand authenticity (Yang & Hu, 2022).

In studies of brand-harm crises caused by faulty AI algorithms rather than human error (Srinivasan & Sarial-Abi, 2021), consumers' brand attitudes were found to be influenced by their recognition of who or what was responsible for the crisis. Those were more negative when that was seen to be a human rather than an algorithm. However, when the algorithm is anthropomorphised, machine learning led, the task is subjective rather than objective, interactive rather than non-interactive and the algorithm is human supervised, response to the brand following brand harm is more negative.

Given the lack of consensus around the effect of AI-generated language on perception, the following two competing hypotheses are proposed:

***H**_{2a}* When the source of the brand voice is disclosed as AI (versus human), brand attitude will be lower (versus higher).
$\boldsymbol{H}_{2b}$ Source disclosure as AI or human has no effect on brand attitude.

5.2.3. Brand Voice Authenticity and Brand Authenticity

Message authenticity is known to improve credibility by minimising consumer scepticism and increasing attributions of expertise and trustworthiness (Pérez, 2019), and it may be argued that brand voice authenticity can do likewise. With respect to brand messages, the "authenticity" construct refers to the extent to which those reflect the real identity and essence of the brand in question (Molleda, 2010; Pérez, 2019). When assessing the extent to which brand voice reflects that identity and essence, consumers may rely on existing brand associations, perceptions and preferences connected with the brand in their memory (Aaker, 1991), which further assist the processing and retrieving of information that can evoke positive affects and cognitive consideration of benefits (Henderson et al., 1998). It was, therefore, expected that consumers' perception of brand voice authenticity would have a positive effect on the perceived authenticity of the brand itself. The literature of celebrities as brand extension vehicles moreover shows that, even if a consumer has no prior brand associations or there is no seeming fit or a low fit between the brand and the celebrity, the brand can still be rated authentic, especially if the product type is hedonic (Osorio et al., 2022).

Thus, when brand voice is perceived as authentic, a positive effect on the brand would be expected, the inverse applying when not perceived as authentic. It is therefore hypothesised that:

***H*$_3$** The perceived brand voice authenticity has a positive impact on overall brand authenticity.

5.2.4. Brand Authenticity and Brand Attitude

Napoli et al. (2014) consider it crucial to understand and measure perceptions of authenticity as an aid to explanation of, among other factors, consumers' brand attitude. It is also suggested that although both brand attitude and "Perceived Brand Attitude (PBA)" are assessments of a brand, "the latter is indicative of the presence of authenticity as a desirable attribute which then leads to positive attitudes" (Morhart et al., 2015, p. 205) and therefore needs to be assessed here. The theory of "processing fluency", in particular, the concept of "conceptual fluency", can further be applied to the assessment of this relationship. The latter term describes "the ease with which the target comes to consumers' minds and pertains to the processes of meanings" (Lee & Labroo, 2004, p. 151). Studying the role that conceptual fluency played in consumers' affects and attitudes, they found that when a stimulus became "fluent" by virtue of the context, it engendered more positive or more favourable attitudes. If the valence of processing was negative, conceptual fluency was influenced and resulted in a negative or at least less favourable attitude towards the stimulus. Applying this theory to the brand, it was predicted that perceived authenticity will result in conceptual fluency, which, in turn, leads to a positive brand attitude. If a brand is not perceived as authentic and is not readily recognisable as the original brand (that is, not conceptually fluent), a negative brand attitude will result. On that basis, it is hypothesised that:

***H*$_4$** Perceived brand authenticity has a positive impact on brand attitude.

5.2.5. Emotionality as a Moderator

The degree to which AI invokes positive or negative reactions depends on emotionality. Individuals regard more objective or functional tasks as following rule-based analysis and logic, whereas subjective or emotional tasks deploy gut instinct and intuition (Inbar et al., 2010). AI is less likely to be viewed favourably when it is applied to emotional tasks usually assigned to humans, rather than mechanical tasks, since "consumers perceive human abilities as either cognitive or emotional and are willing to grant machines more cognitive than emotional abilities" (Castelo et al., 2019, p. 3). A study by those authors examining click-through-rates of human versus AI-generated advertisements relating to topics defined as subjective or objective found significantly higher rates for human-generated content when the topic was dating (subjective) and only slightly higher when it was financial (objective). Further studies show differences in utilitarian versus hedonic contexts. Those delivered by AI are perceived as more competent when they assess and generate utilitarian recommendations (cognitive, functional and instrumental goals) and less so in the case of hedonic recommendations (experiential, emotional and sensory). This is argued to be because algorithms are associated with logic and rationality, whereas human beings are associated with experiences and emotions (Longoni & Cian, 2020).

The functional-emotional logic can also be applied to written text. In the case of news articles, the language to be perceived and evaluated can be categorised as functional. Those dealing with sport and finance aim to inform on the basis of factual data or statistics and use rational vocabulary. Chatbot texts, on the other hand, can be argued to be emotional. The human-algorithm exchange builds a relationship based on interpersonal interaction through emotional dialogue (Yu, 2021); chatbot dialogue can be developed to deploy socioemotional and relational elements that contrast to other functional technologies (Wirtz et al., 2018). It was, therefore, hypothesised that emotionality would have a moderating effect on the effect of the perceived source:

$\boldsymbol{H_5}$ Emotionality has a moderating effect on source: the more emotional the text, the more negatively text disclosed as AI-generated will affect brand voice authenticity.

The relationships of the five hypotheses are illustrated in the integrated model in Figure 5.1.

5.3. Methodology

An experimental design was selected on the basis of its suitability when the objective is to identify and assess relationships between variables and to do so by means of a research process that is high in causal validity (Mitchell, 2015). The resultant experimental study follows a 3 (source disclosure: disclosed as AI, disclosed as human, non-disclosed) x 3 (emotionality: lower, medium, higher) design incorporating elements adapted from research in the field of journalism. The three levels of emotionality are represented as three types of text, specification (lower emotionality), product description (medium emotionality) and chatbot (higher emotionality). The declared source of the texts was varied, but the actual source was not, the content having been sourced from the Adidas website and being unidentifiable as AI-generated or human-written. Individual participants were randomly presented with one of the three texts.

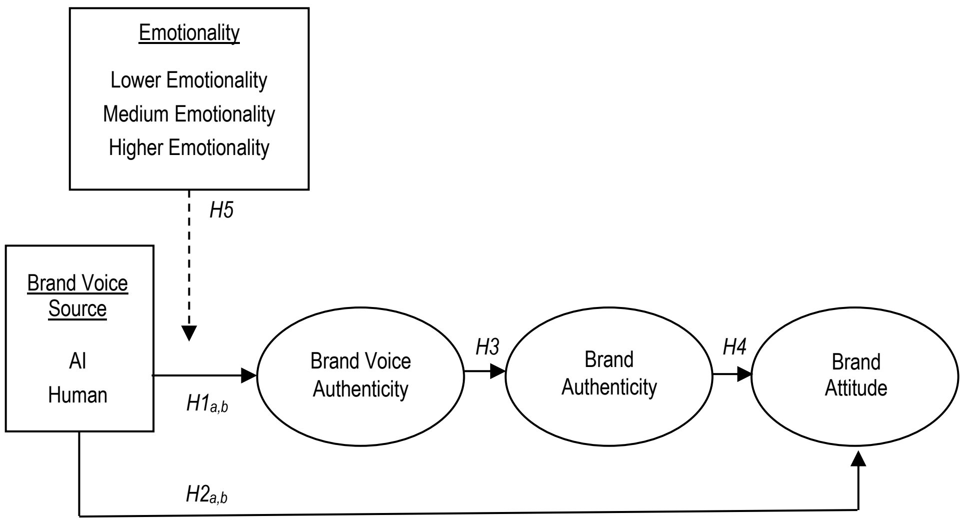


Figure 5.1. AI-Human Brand Voice Model
(Source: Authors' own work)

5.3.1. Stimulus

The experimental stimulus was text in English sourced from Adidas.co.uk, selected because that is well-known to be a leading worldwide sportswear brand (Khawar, 2022). The purpose was to present text originating from a brand with which participants would be familiar, to measure their perceptions of brand voice and brand authenticity and their brand attitudes. The stimulus materials did not include any images or logos to ensure that the effect of source disclosure on authenticity was not influenced by other factors or variables. The manipulation 'emotionality' includes the three stimuli reflecting each of the three levels of emotionality that were described above. Lower emotionality corresponds to a functional form of text, which is informative, descriptive and does not engage the reader at an individual level. This is represented by 'specification' text. Medium emotionality corresponds to the 'product description' type and higher emotionality to a chatbot 'conversation', which does engage and interact personally with the individual consumer. The latter stimulus material was also sourced from Adidas.co.uk by one of the researchers, who conducted the chat via the customer support function (see Appendix C). The source of each text was disclosed by a label at the bottom of the stimulus text: either "generated by artificial intelligence" or "written by a human". That location was decided on the basis of research into positioning of elements of online advertisement which found that the middle or bottom of a page achieved participant recognition most effectively (Wojdynski & Evans, 2016).

5.3.2. Pre-Test

A pre-test was administered to develop and test the two manipulations. In an online survey, 37 participants saw a single text to avoid primacy/recency effects and answered three questions on a five-point Likert scale anchored at 1 = functional and 5 = emotional. Those item scales were based on the work of Kotler and Armstrong (1994) with respect to rational and emotional appeals in advertising. They were grouped together for testing of internal consistency reliability by Cronbach's alpha, which delivered an acceptable overall reliability coefficient of 0.86 (Nunnally, 1978).

The first manipulation, testing if participants correctly recognised the text labelling as a difference in the source (human, AI or do not know), yielded a statistically significant difference (X^2; df 4, N = 37; 62.77, p = 0.00). The second manipulation tested the emotionality of the specification, product description and chatbot text. Mean values were specification = 1.36, production description = 2.21 and chatbot text = 2.87; analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirmed a significant difference between the three text types (p = 0.00).

5.3.3. Measurements

The online survey for the main study, using Tivian software, was conducted between September 2020 and January 2021. Participants answered questions relating to brand voice authenticity, brand authenticity and brand attitude after exposure to one Adidas text stimulus. The scales for brand voice authenticity and brand authenticity were adapted from Bruhn et al. (2012) and those for brand attitude from Spears and Singh (2004). All questions were rated on a five-point scale anchored at 1 = disagree and 5 = agree. A manipulation check tested text emotionality and disclosed source

(AI, human or do not know). The survey instrument included further questions to collect demographic information and one relating to brand familiarity was included.

5.3.4. Participants

Participants comprised 624 English-speaking students, of whom 314 were males and 304 were females. Three identified as diverse, one preferred not to say, and two were not recorded. The average age was 27. One cadre of participants was drawn from English speaking courses in German Universities or from English universities. A second cadre, added to increase the number of participants, was recruited via the platform *Prolific* (students, English-speaking). The respective sample sizes were 20.2% and 79.8% of the total.

5.4. Results

5.4.1. Manipulation Checks

A first manipulation check tested if participants had noticed the source disclosure. Analysis of the frequency distribution of variables found that, when the source was disclosed as being AI, 92.0% of respondents chose AI, 5.3% human and 2.7% did not know. In the case of disclosure as a human source, 12.8% chose AI, 77.1% human and 10.1% did not know. When the nature of the source was not disclosed, 32.9% opted for AI, 34.7% for human and 32.4% did not know. A chi-square test for statistically significant differences across results for the three disclosed sources found that there was: X^2; df 4, N = 624; 347.21, p = 0.00.

A second manipulation check tested participants' rating of the emotionality of the text. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for their answers to the same three questions as in the pre-test (1 = functional; 5 = emotional) was satisfactory, at 0.72. Table 5.1 exhibits the scales and scores for both the pre-test and the main study.

ANOVA confirmed a significant (p = 0.00) difference in emotionality between the three types of text. Although they are in fact small, chatbot text is perceived to have a higher level of emotionality compared to product specification text. The mean values were specification 2.06 and product description 2.18 versus a rating of 2.95 for the chatbot.

	Pre-Test		Main Study	
Item	**Corrected Item-Total Correlation**	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**Corrected Item-Total Correlation**	**Cronbach's Alpha**
The text is more "rational" or "emotional"	0.701	0.860	0.541	0.722
The text shows the "product benefits" or "creates likability towards the brand"	0.754		0.526	
The text "describes quality, economy or value of performance" or shows "positive or negative emotions"	0.756		0.576	

Source: Authors' own work

Table 5.1. Scales for Measurement of Level of Emotionality

5.4.2. Evaluation of the Measurement Model

As a first step in evaluation, item scale reliability was measured for the dependent variable constructs, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients listed in Table 5.2 confirming the reliability of all three. Next, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to further measure validity of the constructs using R (R Core Team, 2022) and *Lavaan* (Rosseel, 2012). The model was assessed by chi-square tests, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), sequence robust multi-array analysis the comparative (SRMA), comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI): see Bentler (1990) and Marsh et al. (1996). The initial CFA consisted of 35 items under the constructs "brand voice authenticity", "brand authenticity" and "brand attitude". Two dummy variables were used for the independent variable "source" with three different treatments (disclosed as AI; disclosed as human; and not disclosed). The first dummy variable represented "disclosure" (0 = not disclosed; 1 = disclosed). The second dummy variable represented "Non-AI/AI" (0 = non-AI; 1 = AI). The results (X^2; df 544 = 1,258.166, $p < 0.00$) showed CFI = 0.926, TLI = 0.919, RMSEA = 0.046 and SRMA = 0.056, indicating a satisfactory fit but one that could be improved. The item "distinct concept" under the second-order construct "continuity" in Table 5.2 had low relevance (0.387 standardised) and a negative variance and was, therefore, discarded from the model.

The results of a second CFA including 34 items suggested a good fit: CFI = 0.938; TLI = 0.932; RMSEA = 0.043 and SRMR = 0.054. According to Schumacker and Lomax (2004), CFI > 0.9 and TLI > 0.9 signify a satisfactory fit, as do RMSEA between 0.05 and 0.08 and SRMR > 0.05. The chi-squared test result was X^2; df 511 = 1,099.753 and $p < 0.00$: see Schreiber et al. (2006) for fit index criteria. The second CFA was adopted for the structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the hypotheses.

Construct	Dimensions	Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Authenticity of Brand Voice (adapted from Bruhn et al., 2012)	Continuity	This text is consistent	0.456	0.858
		This text is true to itself	0.545	
		This text offers continuity	0.456	
		*This text follows a distinct concept**	0.469	
	Originality	This text is different	0.334	
		This stands out from other texts	0.513	
		This text is unique	0.514	
		This text clearly distinguishes itself from other texts	0.483	
	Reliability	I believe what is said in the text and that it will keep its promise	0.567	
		The text makes reliable promises	0.546	
		This text is credible	0.562	
	Naturalness	The text does not seem artificial	0.493	
		The text makes a genuine impression	0.629	
		The text gives the impression of being natural	0.549	
Authenticity of Brand (adapted from Bruhn et al., 2012)	Continuity	This brand is consistent over time	0.510	0.903
		This brand is true to itself	0.595	
		This brand offers continuity	0.542	
		This brand follows a distinct concept	0.569	
	Originality	This brand is different	0.633	
		This brand stands out from other brands	0.676	

	This brand is unique	0.676	
	This brand clearly distinguishes itself from other brands	0.619	
Reliability	This brand is believable and I think it will deliver what it promises	0.648	
	This brand makes reliable promises	0.640	
	This brand is credible	0.630	
Naturalness	This brand does not seem artificial	0.463	
	This brand makes a genuine impression	0.641	
	This brand gives the impression of being natural	0.568	
Brand Attitude (adapted from Spears & Singh, 2004)	I find the brand appealing	0.794	0.922
	I find the brand good	0.791	
	I find the brand pleasant	0.810	
	I find the brand favourable	0.779	
	I find the band likable	0.817	

Note: *Discarded item
Source: Authors' own work

Table 5.2. Scales for Measurement Authenticity and Brand Attitude

5.4.3. Model Test

SEM was applied to the testing of the hypotheses, again using R and Lavaan. Overall model fit was found to be acceptable, with CFI = 0.937, TLI = 0.932, RMSEA = 0.043, SRMA = 0.054, X^2; df 514 = 1,109.441, p < 0.00 (see Figure 5.2). The first hypothesis, as formulated in the Conceptual Background and Research Hypotheses section, proposed a competing hypothesis concerning source disclosure and the effect on brand voice authenticity. The results show no significant effect for disclosed versus non-disclosed text, -0.071, p = 0.161, 95% CI (-0.179; 0.0368) and no significant effect for texts labelled as AI versus human or non-disclosed, 0.031, p = 0.057, 95% CI (-0.081; 0.143). Therefore, *H1a* is not supported, and *H1b* is supported.

For *H2a* and *H2b*, SEM found that source disclosure had no significant effect on brand attitude, disclosed versus non-disclosed, 0.028, p = 0.382, 95% CI (-0.078;

0.134); AI versus human or non-disclosed, -0.050, p = 0.111, 95% CI (-0.160; 0.0598). Thus, *H2a* is not supported, and *H2b* is supported.

To further assess the non-effects of source disclosure, means were calculated on a five-point scale anchored at 1 = not authentic to 5 = authentic for the dependent variables "brand voice authenticity" and "brand attitude": disclosed as human-generated = 3.15, as AI-generated = 3.22; not disclosure = 3.24. Across the varieties of text with different disclosed sources, the perceived favourability of the brand was consistent, with little differentiation. Mean values were also calculated for "brand attitude" (1 = negative, 5 = positive): disclosed as human-generated = 3.98, as AI-generated = 3.86; not disclosure = 3.91. Results furthermore showed that perceived brand voice authenticity had a positive impact on brand authenticity (0.518; p = 0.000), supporting *H3*, and that perceived brand authenticity affected brand attitude in a positive direction (0.837; p = 0.000), supporting *H4*. Figure 5.2 summarises the results of this phase of the SEM analysis.

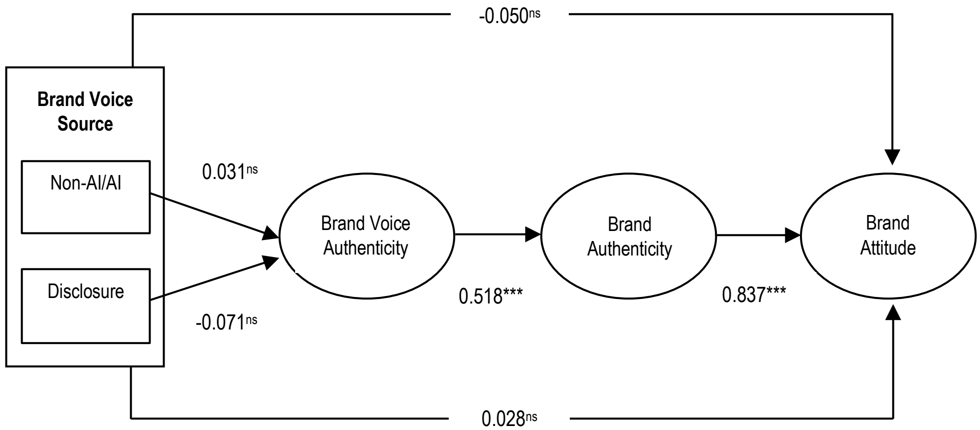


Figure 5.2. SEM Results for H1–H4

Notes: ns= not significant; ***p < 0.001; Numerical values represent standardised regression coefficients. CFI = 0.937; TLI = 0.932; RMSEA = 0.043; SRMA = 0.054; X^2(df 514) = 1109.441, p < 0.00

(Source: Authors' own work)

The significance of the moderating effect of "emotionality" was checked using the product-indicator approach (Little et al., 2006). The results show insignificant interaction effects of emotionality with "disclosure" (β = 0.227; SE = 0.086; p = 0.264) and insignificant interaction effects of emotionality with "Non-AI/AI" (β = -0.303; SE = 0.087, p = 0.101). Results were thus not significant, suggesting that the level of emotionality does not mediate the effect of perceived source on brand voice authenticity and therefore not supporting *H5*.

5.5. Discussion

The findings of our study suggest that texts disclosed as AI-generated will not be perceived as less authentic than that presented as being human-written. Specifically, there will be no negative effect on perceived brand voice authenticity or brand attitudes. This is a novel finding which contrasts with the mixed results in the existing literature of human-versus-AI sources. Whereas some studies of algorithm-generated language in journalism found that content was rated more favourably when described as human-written than when the origin was disclosed as AI, the same conclusions were not drawn in our study. Differences in findings could be accounted for by the nature of our stimulus. Although the sport and finance focus and the product description and specification content have in common that they are somewhat "functional", there are perhaps still differences in the level of involvement the individual has with the content. Sport and finance may be higher-involvement topics for readers who are, for instance, following the results of a particular sports team or keeping abreast of current developments in the financial environment. By contrast, product descriptions normally adopt a short, "storytelling" format and product specifications purely list facts. Taking account of low-involvement theory (Harris, 1987), the brand’s product descriptions and specifications can be expected to be lower-involvement reading for the participants in the experiment.

While our results are also contrary to some studies assessing the authenticity of AI-generated content in the context of emotional topics and ethical decision-making (Jago, 2019), there are similarities to the findings of studies on AI-written creative copy. In the case of the "emotional" content, which was, in fact, poetry, there was only a slight preference for human origin and no stronger aversion to AI generation when that was disclosed than when it was not. That runs contrary, however, to theoretical predictions that an AI source will be less well-received than the human alternative when the topic is hedonic, emotional or experiential, on the basis that individuals assign greater weight to fellow humans when it comes to these tasks. In our study, the emotional text, chatbot, was not rated as less authentic when disclosed to have been AI-generated rather human-written or the source was not disclosed. This may be because chatbot text relating to a brand is not emotional enough for consumers to go as far as rating it authentic or inauthentic or it may reflect the fact that chatbots may be a sufficiently familiar means of communication for disclosure of the AI-generated nature of the exchanged text not to negatively affect a perception of authenticity. Our findings thus also suggest that when a brand presents consumers with an emotional written text and the consumer perceives the text as such, an AI source will not negatively affect perceived authenticity.

5.5.1. Theoretical Implications

Several published studies have assessed perceptions associated with the disclosure of AI versus human sources in the wider context of written language (e.g. journalism, creative writing and recommender systems), some focusing specifically on brand language (e.g. chatbots).

Our study extends the existing literature of AI source disclosure by examining "text" relating to a brand beyond just chatbots by including product specifications and product descriptions, and also addressing the "emotionality" construct. Its findings provide useful theoretical insights, highlighting the lack of difference between more functional and more emotional texts with respect to source and authenticity. If AI was the disclosed source, as in the wider literature, there was no clear negative impact, for instance, in the case of utilitarian recommendations (Longoni & Cian, 2020) or finance-based advertisements (Castelo et al., 2019). The findings of our study further contribute to the literature in showing that, while emotional texts had an effect in other streams of literature, that is not the case in the brand language context. They therefore contribute to the understanding of the disclosure of an AI source in brand text by suggesting that when a brand presents consumers with functional or emotional written text, that disclosure will not negatively affect perceptions of authenticity.

5.5.2. Managerial Implications

Our study findings suggest that there will be no negative effect if brands decide to disclose AI as the source when generating brand texts, such as product specifications, product descriptions or chatbots. The fact that the decision to be transparent or not currently remains the voluntary choice of brand management, which may actually confer a number of advantages, such as being viewed as a more transparent, ethical and authentic brand. Computer-generated imagery influencers are voluntarily transparent on such media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube (Baumgarth et al., 2021), in disclosing their artificiality by identifying themselves as "a robot" (Lil Miquela, 2023) or "a virtual girl" (Imma, 2023) in their profile biographies. The result has not been a smaller number of followers. Lil Miquela has 2.8 million followers (March 2023) and has attracted numerous brand collaborations with, for example, Calvin Klein, Prada and Samsung Galaxy. In the future, non-human entities may be legally required to disclose their AI status. Instagram and Facebook already impose legal transparency obligations by requiring disclosure that an advertisement is "sponsored". Observing these developments in other fields suggests that source-disclosing legislation will, in due course, be introduced for AI-generated branding content: texts, videos, images and more.

The first of two positive implications for brand management outlook is the potential to save costs and time, especially when producing large volumes of descriptions and specifications for a diverse range of products or services on a regular basis (Schneider, 2021). Numerous AI-powered natural language generation platforms have emerged over the years, for instance, AX Semantics, Arria and Wordsmith. They are particularly beneficial for organisations with organised asset database systems when a large volume of structured data is required for the production of content. Since AI generates material based on learning and training, the benefit may be the achievement of a more consistent brand voice than by human generation since individual originators will have different interpretations of the brand voice and productivity will vary on a daily basis. Furthermore, AI platforms are developing capabilities beyond the generating of specifications, descriptions and chats: for example, ChatGPT can write complete creative content. Further research is, however, required on creative AI in the brand voice context and the effects of disclosure since there may be differences in perceived authenticity perception the more creative and advanced the material becomes. As well as consideration of when disclosing an AI source with highly creative text, the nature of the brand should also be taken into account: for instance, political versus fashion.

The second positive implication is that brand voice authenticity has a strong effect on perceived brand authenticity and brand attitude. Therefore, the scales for brand voice authenticity in our study could be a useful measuring instrument when assessing further AI touchpoints where consumers interact with, for example, chatbots, computer-generated imagery influencers and AI self-service points. They can be used in pre-tests of branding initiatives to assess the pre-existence of an authentic brand voice, which is known to exert influence on overall brand authenticity and brand attitude.

5.5.3. Limitations and Further Research

Future studies of extended areas of AI-generated language for the development of brand voice should examine further variations of written, audio, video and physical touchpoints. Interactive two-way communication between AI and the consumer should also be examined since it is another factor potentially affecting authenticity. For instance, when the rail service operator Deutsche Bahn integrated Furhat Robotics' SEMMI robot, it was not evaluated as an "authentic" communicator of the brand voice because it took too long to respond (Götz, 2019). Moreover, although the texts used as stimulus in our experiment may have been AI-generated, they were sourced from Adidas's website, where the actual source was not, in fact, disclosed; it cannot be recognised what or who created the content. It was only for the purposes of the study participants were told the material was AI-generated because the research focus was on the effect of disclosure rather than the capabilities of AI in producing content. Therefore, further study is necessary with a focus on those capabilities with regard to brand communication. It would also be beneficial to widen the participant sample beyond English-speaking students in two European countries and a restricted age range, with the aim of understanding variations attributable to age and cultural background.

A future research agenda should furthermore explore in detail the role a human being plays in collaboration with AI with regard to content generation and further variations of language, and the respective roles played by each in creating and maintaining the brand voice. In a few previous studies, the question of whether a human agent was or was not involved had an effect on perception. For instance, when AI-generated poems were judged, human input played a core role in the process and helped to lower aversion to algorithms (Köbis & Mossink, 2021). This was also found in further literature on "semi-automated" AI content with a human as an editor, which suggested higher ranking in search engines and a reduced uncanny valley effect (Reisenbichler et al., 2022). Alternatively, when there was higher human involvement with an algorithm and mistakes were made that led to a brand-harm crisis, perceptions were more negative (Srinivasan & Sarial-Abi, 2021). Although no aversion was shown towards any of the AI-generated text in our study, whether functional or emotional, that is a factor that may come into play for other areas of brand voice. This is particularly the case when it comes to further topics surrounding disclosure and transparency with regard to AI and human origin; considerations to be taken into account include who receives the credit and how this is further disclosed to consumers, who has authorship over content and communication and who is held accountable and responsible if something goes wrong.

Finally, AI-based solutions may not be appropriate for every brand. In the case of new brands, where there is a lack of available data to train AI to reflect the intended brand voice, AI input can be problematic, even if a brand voice has already been considered and decided. In the case of an existing brand looking to re-position itself, the same problem could equally prove difficult. However, even AI-generated content based on vast amounts of data has drawbacks, such as the inability to change or adapt quickly, which can make changes to brand voice difficult to implement without completely "re-training" the AI.

CHAPTER SIX

Future Research Avenues

This thesis set out to explore the evolving dynamic of AI and brand voice, structured across the three research perspectives of applications, implementation, and effects. Through four individual yet interconnected studies, the research provides an understanding of how AI is reshaping the strategic and creative processes, structures, and thinking surrounding the technology within brand management. More specifically, the findings contribute to a growing body of literature that recognises AI not only as a tool for operational efficiency and effectiveness but also as a co-creator in the development, maintenance, and evaluation of brand voice. This section considers future research avenues for the three perspectives.

6.1. Avenues for Applications

The first part of this research demonstrates the expanding applications of AI for brand voice, especially following the public release of accessible tools such as ChatGPT in late 2022. This marked a significant turning point regarding the integration of AI both in functional and creative contexts, offering brand professionals unprecedented opportunities for scalable, personalised, and expressive content generation. As AI technologies became more intuitive and user-friendly, even non-technical brand professionals began experimenting with co-creation, using AI to ideate, draft, and even refine brand narratives. Yet, this uptake has been uneven across language formats; while written and ideational content are increasingly generated with AI support, audio and visual integration still lag, highlighting areas for further integration in practise and academic research. Future research into the applications of AI for brand voice would therefore benefit from a broader exploration of language formats, as well as expanded topics such as the nuance of the platforms and cultures where AI-brand voice is integrated and the consistent connection of touchpoints in wider brand management.

While text-based AI technologies have led early developments, emerging tools capable of generating audio, video, and interactive brand communication present equally interesting opportunities for brands. Research could focus on how AI can contribute simultaneously to all language formats in order to embody a consistent and integrated brand experience that aligns all essence of brand voice, including visual identity with dynamic, voice and tone. While integrating AI for all language formats to maintain fit and consistency is critical, it should further be examined how these technologies can best be integrated within the platforms that the brand voice finds itself. As brands increasingly operate across diverse online and offline touchpoints, understanding how AI can be adapted for platform-specific brand voice will become crucial, for instance whether this is in print format, an online website, or an interactive chatbot.

Moreover, there is growing potential for AI to contribute more deeply to the creative and strategic positioning of brand voice based on cultural contexts. For instance, AI could be used not just to replicate a brand’s existing tone, but to simulate how different brand voices might perform in various cultural, demographic, or emotional contexts, enabling more precise targeting and experimentation. Finally, as multilingual and cross-cultural branding continues to expand globally, the application of AI for brand voice localisation, balancing brand consistency with cultural specificities, remains an area for academic inquiry, particularly in terms of tone preservation and localised cultural cues.

In addition to specific applications for brand voice, further research could explore how these tools intersect with and influence broader brand management functions. As AI-generated content has the potential to increasingly reflect and shape the overall brand, there is a need to understand how AI tools can be embedded into core brand management processes such as positioning, differentiation, and overall brand strategy. AI’s ability to simulate consumer profiles in terms of synthetic panels, analyse competitor voice trends, and generate brand-consistent content across product lines and services offers opportunities for a more data-driven, responsive, and agile approach to branding.

6.2. Avenues for Implementation

The second perspective examined in this thesis concerns AI implementation into creative brand voice. While AI has the potential to act as a co-creative partner, individual brand professionals have expressed caution when integrating GenAI. This is particularly the case in relation to perceived AI quality heightened in the context of external communication, high levels of time investment in an already busy work schedule to become more acquainted with tools when it comes to brand-related tasks, and the challenges surrounding AI-generated brand voice demonstrating brand fit. These barriers reflect a broader tension between the opportunity to achieving efficiency and effectiveness at individual, organisational, and societal levels, and the preservation of consistency, fit, and authenticity. Existing research has largely focused on the broader analyses of AI integration within marketing and business management contexts. By contrast, this thesis offers insights into the lived experiences and decision-making rationales of individual brand professionals, highlighting an apparent gap between technological possibility and individual, as well as organisational readiness.

Regarding individual brand professionals' perceptions, although topics such as low AI quality were identified as a barrier at the time of the interviews conducted in the study presented in this work, this view warrants re-examination in the present context. First, technology has continued to advance rapidly, and secondly, if not more importantly, there may be a shift in professionals' maturation of knowledge regarding how to efficiently and effectively collaborate with AI tools to achieve the desired results. Additionally, the adoption of these tools may have increased, especially since AI quality was also mentioned, albeit less frequently, as a driver. Further research could investigate where drivers and barriers appear most at process-level by examining the specific phases of the creative brand voice process (e.g. pre-work, during, publishing).

Further, future research on the implementation of AI in brand voice should examine the organisational conditions and cultural factors that shape how, when, and why AI technologies are adopted or resisted within brand teams. Questions remain about how implementation and individual brand professional integration intensity differs across industries, brand maturity levels, and countries, especially in settings where technological infrastructure or AI literacy may be more advanced, or alternatively, less developed. Cross-comparative studies would assist in uncovering and comparing drivers and barriers of AI integration, offering a more nuanced understanding of how to foster internal alignment and long-term capability development. While this thesis highlights certain challenges faced by individual brand professionals, future work could investigate how organisational structures, leadership styles, and digital transformation strategies influence implementation practices. Researchers could explore the training and interdisciplinary collaboration models that facilitate the creative and ethical use of AI in brand contexts. This includes examining how creative and technical teams interact, how new workflows are established, and what upskilling processes are necessary to bridge knowledge gaps between branding, design, and AI engineering.

In addition to internal brand management considerations, the evolving nature of external collaboration models has become an increasingly prominent topic. As brands increasingly develop in-house AI capabilities and develop datasets tailored to their unique brand voice, there is a growing need for research to critically examine how these strategies are transforming the dynamics of agency collaboration. Although partnerships with specialised agencies remain common, such developments may signal a significant shift in prevailing models of AI implementation within brand management.

Lastly, while this thesis focuses on implementation within the creative dimension of brand voice, the scope of implementation research should expand across the brand management spectrum. From AI-assisted brand monitoring and social listening to sentiment analysis, influencer evaluation, and customer journey optimisation, the implementation of AI can be studied as part of a broader organisational change process. This opens pathways for interdisciplinary research that bridges marketing, organisational behaviour, and technology management, ultimately supporting more holistic models of AI adoption in brand ecosystems.

6.3. Avenues for Effects

The final perspective explored the effects of AI-generated brand voice on consumer perception, particularly in relation to brand authenticity and attitude. With regulatory developments and public discourse calling for clearer disclosure of AI use, questions emerge about how such transparency influences consumer perception. Early results indicate that disclosure of an artificial source can be implemented by brands when it comes to written text. This highlights the importance of transparency and underscores how disclosure will become an increasingly important topic, suggesting the need for further research into consumer perceptions and interpretations.

As AI-generated communication becomes increasingly common, future research should further investigate the multifaceted effects of AI integration on consumer perceptions across diverse formats and contexts. While this thesis focuses on written brand voice, it is crucial to expand inquiry into the effects of AI-generated audio and visual content, especially as tools become more accessible and influential in shaping consumer impressions. For instance, synthetic voices used in advertisements, AI-generated influencers or brand ambassadors, video content completely scripted and produced by AI, may elicit different consumer reactions depending on the degree of perceived humanness, creativity, disclosure practices, product or service category, or brand. Examining how these varying formats affect perceived authenticity, attitude, emotional resonance, and brand trust represents a growing area of interest.

In addition, the temporal effect of consumer responses to AI disclosure warrant further examination. Early reactions may be influenced by novelty, scepticism, or curiosity, but longitudinal studies are needed to understand whether and how consumer attitudes evolve as AI becomes more embedded in daily communication.

It is also essential to investigate the conditions under which transparency is required in AI-generated content and how such disclosure should be communicated. Key questions include whether disclosure is necessary in all contexts or only when content is fully AI-generated (as opposed to co-created with human input), and whether the most effective format is a written statement or a visual icon. These considerations are critical for balancing trust, compliance with emerging legal frameworks, and the integrity of the brand experience. This issue is closely tied to the need for further research into consumer literacy and awareness. As AI-generated content becomes increasingly sophisticated and in many cases indistinguishable from human-created material, ethical concerns around deception, consent, and informed engagement become more pronounced. Future research could explore how consumers' understanding of AI influences their receptiveness to AI-generated brand voice, and whether different forms of disclosure enhance or undermine perceptions of authenticity. Additionally, the relationship between AI transparency and brand positioning may be significant, as consumer responses may vary depending on whether a brand presents itself as innovative and tech-forward or as traditional and human-centred.

Finally, researchers should consider how AI affects the broader relationship consumers have with brands, for instance their loyalty and trust. It may be the case that knowing brand content is AI-generated reduces or reshapes the emotional connections that consumers form and repeated exposure to AI-generated brand voice could impact perceptions of brand personality for instance brand warmth, competence, or uniqueness. As brands experiment with AI in customer service, storytelling, and personalised marketing, areas where relational dynamics are crucial, these questions become particularly relevant. These directions highlight that the effects of AI on consumer perception go beyond isolated brand touchpoints and represent a transformative shift in how brand authenticity is constructed, communicated, and evaluated in a human–AI environment, calling for deeper, interdisciplinary exploration that combines consumer psychology, marketing ethics, and communication theory.

6.4. Concluding Remarks

Importantly, this thesis highlights that the topic of AI and brand voice is not only of future relevance, but also of critical importance in the present. The widespread adoption of AI tools has occurred far more rapidly than anticipated, outpacing many academic and industry projections. What was once considered a distant possibility has become a strategic imperative for brands operating in today's landscape. As such, the findings of this thesis should not only be seen as timely, but as foundational for ongoing inquiry. Future research should aim to broaden the horizon, exploring AI's influence on diverse brand contexts, content formats, and cultural settings. This includes examining cross-cultural perceptions of AI-generated content, ethical implications of AI use in the overall branding discipline, and the evolving human–AI dynamic.

Although this work focuses on brand management, several of the conclusions hold broader relevance and are applicable to other creative and communication domains. The efficiency and effectiveness factors concerning HAICC, evolving perceptions of AI capabilities, and the strategic integration of AI into creative workflows extend beyond brand voice to fields such as journalism, education, product development, and innovation management. While brand voice involves nuances connected to brand expression of identity and personality as well as consumer resonance and perception, the underlying mechanisms of how professionals adapt to and collaborate with AI exhibits a certain level of generalisability. Thus, the theoretical and practical implications of this work have resonance across a wider range of knowledge work involving human–AI interaction.

To summarise, this research contributes to the expanding dialogue on the role of AI in branding by offering an examination of its applications, implementation, and effects on brand voice. It invites further interdisciplinary collaboration, urging scholars and practitioners alike to critically and creatively engage with AI not merely as a tool, but as a co-creative partner in shaping the brand voice in a rapidly changing landscape.

APPENDIX A

Links to AI solutions presented in the AI Brand Voice Matrix:

- Aimpower. https://www.aimpower.ai/
- Alexa. https://developer.amazon.com/de-DE/alexa
- audEERING. https://www.audeering.com/
- AutoDraw. https://www.autodraw.com/
- Brandwatch. https://www.brandwatch.com/de/
- Cloud Natural Language. https://cloud.google.com/natural-language/
- Cortana. https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/cortana
- DeepL. https://www.deepl.com/en/translator
- Expoze.io. https://www.expoze.io/
- Furhat. https://furhatrobotics.com/
- IBM Watson. https://www.ibm.com/watson
- Meltwater. https://www.meltwater.com/en
- Microsoft Azure. https://azure.microsoft.com/
- Neuroflash. https://neuroflash.com/
- Omniverse. https://developer.nvidia.com/nvidia-omniverse-platform
- Pencil. https://www.trypencil.com/
- Resemble AI. https://www.resemble.ai/
- Salesforce Einstein. https://www.salesforce.com/de/
- Siri. https://www.apple.com/de/siri/
- Sophia. https://www.hansonrobotics.com/sophia/
- Synthesia. https://www.synthesia.io/
- Watson Assistant. https://www.ibm.com/de-de/analytics/
- Wordsmith. https://automatedinsights.com/wordsmith/

APPENDIX B

Scoring Framework for GenAI Integration Intensity

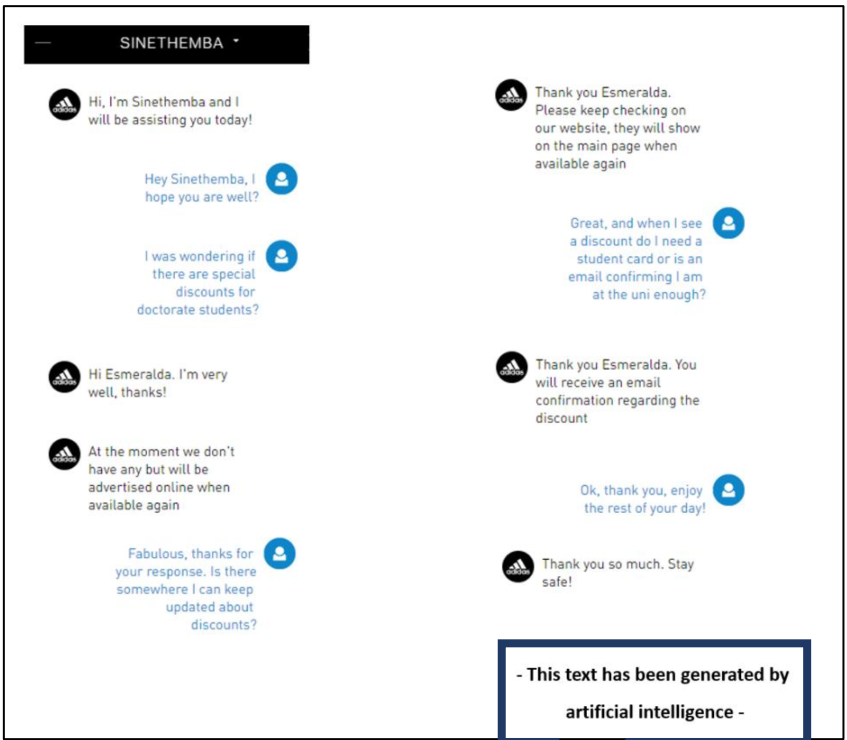
Scoring Framework	**Time Frame**					
Date (Quarterly)	**Phase 1** **Before launch ChatGPT**	**Phase 2** **Dec 2022 – March 2023**	**Phase 3** **April 2023 – July 2023**	**Phase 4** **August 2023 – Present**	**Phase 5** **Future**	**Notes**
Interview Part 1						
Dimension of Intensity 1: Elements of Brand Voice	Points					
Text (1)						
Image (1)						
Sound (1)						
Video (1)						
Dimension of Intensity 2: Frequency	Points					
Sporadically (1)						
Monthly (2)						
Weekly (3)						
Daily (4)						
Dimension of Intensity 3: Process	Points					
Pre-Work (Ideation/Preparation…1)						
During (Incubation, illumination…1)						
Published (Evaluation/Implementation…1)						
Dimension of Intensity 4: Co-Creative Behaviour	Points					
Playful, testing and trying (1) Home						
Planned for certain tasks (2) Work						
Hybrid co-creator, half tasks delegated and edited, together (3)						
Independent actor, tasks completed and taken on by AI (4)						

APPENDIX C

Example of Stimulus Material

Adidas chatbot conversation sourced from: www.adidas.co.uk/help

Accessed May 5, 2020



This example shows the chabot conversation disclosed as AI. For the human condition, the labelling reads "This text has been written by a human" and for the non-disclosed text, no further text appears in this area of the stimulus. The same three variations of labelling were also applied to the product description and details text.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexandra Louise Kirkby was born and raised in Brighton, United Kingdom. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in a joint honours programme from a Russel Group university, the University of Warwick, graduating with a first-class honours degree in German and Business in 2015.

She relocated to Germany after completing her studies to begin a position in the influencer industry based in Berlin, and later obtained a first-class Master of Arts degree in International Marketing Management from the Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Recht Berlin in 2019.

In 2020, she began her PhD at the University of Twente as an external doctoral student. Beyond academia, Alexandra is an avid urban explorer with a passion for scouting, documenting, and writing about abandoned places, with a specific focus on their architecture and history. Her goal is to create an archive that preserves the memory of these sites before they are lost to time and completely forgotten.

OrcID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3665-5386
Research Gate: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alexandra-Kirkby
LinkedIn: https://de.linkedin.com/in/alexandra-louise-kirkby