Human-AI Collaboration and Creative Skills: A Panel-based Industry Study from the Germany Media Sector

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***Abstract*—The growing development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT and Midjourney is transforming creative processes in the media industry. This transformation shows itself not only through full automation, but also through Human-AI Collaboration (HAIC), in which AI systems support rather than replace creative professionals. However, there is a lack of empirical studies that systematically capture media professionals' perspectives on creative competencies in the context of AI. Addressing this research gap, this study aims to investigate how media professionals in Germany perceive and use AI related to creative tasks and skills. Based on a quantitative panel survey of 128 respondents, the study analyzes both, current practices and future expectations regarding AI's role in creative work. The findings reveal that AI tools are already widely integrated into creative workflows. At the same time, respondents with a strong creative self-concept tend to view AI as both a supportive tool and a potential threat to creative roles. The study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the AI-based transformation of creative labor and the future of skills in AI-augmented work environments.**

***Keywords*-Artificial Intelligence (AI); Human-AI Collaboration (HAIC); Creativity, Creative skills; Media industry, Workforce transformation; Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI).**

I. Introduction

The adoption of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools with potential for creative work, such as ChatGPT, Midjourney, or Adobe Firefly, has fundamentally reshaped workflows in the media industry. While earlier waves of automation primarily targeted routine or physical tasks [1] [2], the latest developments increasingly touch upon creative domains long considered resistant to automation. These tools now support ideation, content generation, and even strategic planning, raising the question of how creative work is changing and which creative skills remain essential in a media environment disrupted by AI. Yet, despite this growing influence, it remains unclear how professionals themselves perceive this transformation. In particular, there is limited understanding of how generative AI is reshaping the skill requirements and self-conception of creative workers in practice.

In light of these developments, the concept of creativity itself is being reexamined not only as a cultural ideal, but as a productive skill relevant to future work scenarios across industries. Creativity is gaining prominence as a core, future professional competency. Reports, such as the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs [3] emphasize creative thinking as one of the most in-demand skills in the coming years. However, creativity is not a static trait, it is embedded in specific roles, tasks, and work contexts. This is true especially in the media industry, where creative output coexists with structured workflows and increasing AI integration. The media sector, in particular, stands at the intersection of automation and creativity. It is both early adopter of GenAI tools but still heavily reliant on human-centered creative judgment [4]. These developments align with the concept of HAIC, which emphasizes joint decision-making, complementary strengths, and a redefinition of task distribution between humans and AI [5][6].

While the capabilities of GenAI are transforming creative processes, empirical studies that capture the experiences and expectations of creative professionals remain scarce. As [7] notes in a recent systematic review, the field remains at an early stage, with a lack of quantitative studies examining how practitioners evaluate the role of GenAI in creative work.

To address this gap, the study takes a practitioner-centered perspective to examine how media professionals assess the role of AI in creative workflows and skill demands. In particular, this paper investigates how creative work and creative skills are shaped by the integration of AI in the German media sector. For this purpose, we explore how media professionals position themselves in relation to AI, both in terms of current work practices and future expectations, as well as the question of AI for augmentation vs. automation. Against this background, we address the following research questions:

RQ1: Which professional characteristics are associated with the use of creative skills and AI in current media work?

RQ2: How does the perception of one's own creative work relate to expectations about AI's role in supporting or replacing creative skills in the future?

To explore these questions, we conducted a panel-based quantitative survey among 128 media professionals in Germany. Building on the previously outlined research gap, the goal of this study is to generate empirical insight into how creative professionals perceive and integrate artificial intelligence into their workflows. Rather than focusing on the technical capabilities of GenAI, the study centers on the human perspective. It seeks to understand how individuals experience the transformation of creative tasks, how they evaluate the role of AI in augmenting or substituting creativity, and what expectations they hold for the future. Here, we designed a structured questionnaire based on the literature on HAIC and creative skills in digital work.

The survey captures both current practices and attitudes, as well as respondents' expectations regarding the evolving role of AI in their professional environment.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides the theoretical foundation, covering HAIC, definitions of creativity, and the role of AI in the media industry. Section 3 reviews related empirical work on AI, creativity, and skills. Section 4 outlines the survey design and methodological approach. Section 5 presents the empirical results, including descriptive statistics and correlation analyses. Section 6 discusses the implications of the findings, followed by a conclusion summarizing key insights and future research directions.

II. Theoretical Foundation

In this section, we describe the concept of Human-AI Collaboration and the media industry. Also, definitions for creativity and creative work are described.

A. Media and AI

The media industry represents a particularly relevant context for studying the integration of AI, given its dual nature. It combines structured information processing with human-centered creative production [4]. Understanding how AI affects this sector requires conceptual clarity regarding both AI and media as domains of work and technology.

In this study, we refer to AI as "a machine-based system that can, for a given set of human-defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments" [8, p. 2]. This definition highlights AI not merely as a technical tool, but as a system capable of taking on decision-relevant roles in complex environments—an important distinction when evaluating its influence on creative tasks.

Similarly, media companies are understood as "companies that deal with the procurement, selection, processing, utilization, bundling, and distribution of information or entertainment" [9, p. 5]. This broad scope reflects the increasingly hybrid nature of media work, which spans data-driven processes and expressive, aesthetic production. In such environments, AI adoption does not simply automate workflows, but alters the structure of creative roles and task delegation [9].

This lays the groundwork for analyzing how AI is reconfiguring the media industry's creative capacities—especially in relation to HAIC, where AI does not replace, but cooperates with, human expertise.

B. Human-AI Collaboration

HAIC refers to a collaborative process in which human users and AI systems work together by leveraging their complementary abilities to accomplish tasks [10]. Unlike approaches focused on full automation, the HAIC framework centers on augmentation, with AI technologies enhancing rather than replacing human performance [5]. Central to this partnership is the establishment of trust: while users benefit from AI-generated input, they remain the primary decision-makers, preserving the centrality of human judgment [6].

This collaborative dynamic can be seen in situations where AI handles repetitive or routine elements of a task, enabling humans to concentrate on more complex or creative dimensions [11]. Furthermore, AI may provide context-sensitive suggestions to aid decision-making [12]. This highlights the distinction between AI used for automation—aimed at substitution and AI employed for augmentation in line with HAIC principles [13].

C. Creativity and Creative Work

Regarding creativity, [14] provides a definition within their theoretical framework, stating that both originality and effectiveness are necessary for creativity. This is then further developed into a more dynamic definition, which also encompasses relevant areas of creativity, such as focus areas, creativity goals, the creative potential of an agent and their environment, and other detailed examinations of creativity [14]. This definition is important to narrow down on what qualifies as creative. In their theoretical examination of the creative economy, [15] distinguishes between two types of conceptualizing creative work. The first area of includes workers employed in cultural industries, while the second includes workers engaged in cultural occupations. The distinction lies in the fact that one group produces creative products (i.e., graphic designers, art directors, writers, or animators), whereas the other experiences a creative work environment, while not necessarily having a creative job themselves (i.e., film industry, radio, or publishing). In this model, cultural and creative work are treated the same [15]. The conceptual distinction between products and work helps clarify the relationship between creative occupations and creative tasks. Importantly, however, creativity is not bound to a specific industry, but can emerge across sectors, depending on how individuals define and experience their work. Therefore, creativity can be empirically examined not only by industry classification, but also through self-assessment, task characteristics, and the use of specific skills. This perspective informs the design of the present study, which explores how media professionals perceive and engage with creative work in relation to AI integration.

III. Related Work

A comprehensive literature review was conducted in two stages to identify relevant work on AI and skills, with a particular focus on creative tasks in media-related occupations. Relevant literature was identified through a search of scholarly databases, with Google Scholar, Web of Science, ResearchGate. The research was carried out in two stages. In the first step, research papers on AI skills were searched (keywords: {"AI" OR "Artificial Intelligence" } AND "Skills"). These search results were then screened for relevance based on an analysis of title, abstract, and number of citations. Furthermore, the literature was categorized in general work and more specific research on the AI-impact on creative work in media-related occupations. Table I summarizes the selected literature, structured into general work on AI and skills, and specific studies on AI's role in creative media work.

As Table I shows, the research findings are diverse and relate to different aspects of the impact of AI on skills. Independent from the skill-impact, some research shows that AI can enhance creative task and may result in a productivity increase for creative work [16]. Other research highlights that results generated with support of AI may lack originality, narrative intent and inspiration [7], [17]–[19]. From a task-impact perspective, [20] predicts that AI might lead to a new way of creative work, with some activities automated and more time for the human to focus on creative tasks.

TABLE I
AI IMPACT ON CREATIVITY AND FUTURE SKILLS

AI and skills		
Ref.	**Key Findings**	**Cit.**
[21]	Automation mainly affects predictable physical tasks; creativity noted, not analyzed.	1257
[22]	Technical and collaborative skills needed for AI use.	897
[23]	ChatGPT impacts 32.8% of jobs fully, esp. high-skilled.	219
[24]	Digital/social-emotional skills rise; creativity is augmented.	90
[25]	AI hurts skilled cognitive labor, helps unskilled labor.	26
[26]	AI demands both technical and soft (incl. creative) skills.	14
AI and creative media skills		
Ref.	**Key Findings**	**Cit.**
[18]	AI augments creativity but can't replace human originality.	718
[17]	AI stimulates but limits originality; risks creative labor devaluation.	155
[20]	Journalists shift to creative/strategic tasks via automation.	77
[27]	AI recombines existing ideas; acts as creative catalyst.	41
[16]	AI boosts efficiency, not originality or narrative control.	7
[28]	AI users produce more art, gain popularity, but less novelty.	4
[7]	AI is changing but not replacing creative work. Focus on co-creation and prompt literacy.	2
[19]	AI raises productivity in media; humans remain essential.	0

In the following, we distinguish between general literature on AI-related skill shifts and studies specifically focused on creative tasks in media professions. In the broader discourse on AI and workforce skills, early studies such as [21] emphasize that automation primarily affects predictable physical and routine cognitive tasks, while creativity is mentioned as less vulnerable but remains under-examined in detail. More recent analyses extend this view. Enholm et al. [22] and Babashahi et al.[26] stress the increasing importance of technical and collaborative skills, with the latter explicitly including soft and creative skills in future competence profiles. Ellingrud et al. [24] add that digital and emotional-social skills are gaining relevance, and views creativity as a skill to be augmented, not replaced, by AI. However, not all perspectives are optimistic [25], for instance, argues that AI tends to harm skilled cognitive labor, while supporting lower-skilled tasks. Similarly, [23] identifies a high degree of exposure to AI substitution, especially among high-skilled professions. Regarding creative work in media-related occupations, research is both more focused. Anantrasirichai and Bull [18], as well as Kirkpatrick [27] argue that AI can effectively augment creative processes, for instance by recombining existing ideas or increasing productivity, yet without replacing human originality or intentionality. Simon [20] and Lee[17] highlight a functional shift: Media workers, especially journalists, are moving toward strategic and creative roles, even as AI introduces risks of deskilling or devaluing creative labor. Zhou and Lee [28] find that AI-supported creators produce more and gain visibility, but often at the cost of novelty and originality, echoing concerns raised by [16] about narrative flattening. Doyle and Baumann [19] conclude that while AI tools enhance productivity in media contexts, human input remains essential, particularly for original ideation and contextual interpretation. While these studies offer important conceptual and technological insights, they rarely include the perspectives of creative professionals themselves. This highlights the need for empirical research that captures how practitioners experience and assess the role of AI in their actual workflows, particularly in terms of task structures and perceived creative competencies. Taken together, these findings suggest a growing consensus. These existing studies also inform key dimensions of the present study's survey design, such as the focus on creative tasks, skill profiles, and the perceived trade-off between augmentation and substitution. While AI is unlikely to fully replace creative professionals, it is actively reshaping the meaning, value, and required competencies of creative work. Creativity is increasingly framed not as a static trait but as a dynamic skill, one that co-evolves with AI capabilities, sometimes enhanced, sometimes challenged.

IV. STUDY APPROACH

This study builds on a broader research project investigating how AI is reshaping labor in the German media industry, with a specific focus on creative tasks. The aim of this sub-study is to empirically analyze how media professionals perceive and apply AI in their creative work, how they assess their own creative competencies, and how they evaluate the potential of AI to support or replace creative skills.

A. Survey Design and Conceptual Foundations

To explore these dimensions, a quantitative panel survey was conducted via the Unipark platform [29] between December 17, 2024, and January 06, 2025. Respondents were first screened to ensure they (1) work in the media sector and (2) have experience using AI technologies in a professional context. This resulted in a sample of 128 valid responses.

The questionnaire was theory-driven and built upon the concepts outlined in Section II. In particular, it was structured in three major areas:

1) **Skills and workflows:** Respondents were asked to indicate which professional competencies (e.g., creative, technical, interpersonal), based on the top skills, defined by [3] they regularly use, and to characterize their daily workflows in terms of routine, structure, and cognitive/social complexity. The level of routine in this section were inspired by the

relevance for level of routine in AI substitution stated by [30].

2) **AI use and practices:** Participants reported how frequently they use selected Generative AI (GenAI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Midjourney, Copilot, based on [31] and for which types of tasks (ideation, writing, planning, etc.). This section also included questions about whether AI is already being used in creative work and how respondents perceive its current and future relevance.
3) **Creative self-assessment and AI expectations:** To explore the relationship between perceived creativity and attitudes toward AI, participants provided a personal judgment about their work in terms of creativity and evaluated whether AI could support or replace such creative processes in the future. Respondents were also asked to estimate how much of their current work could, in principle, be replaced by AI technologies.

The overall goal was to connect individual-level assessments of creative skills with perceived opportunities and risks of AI integration, thus linking subjective experience with broader theories of skill transformation in AI-mediated environments.

B. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed descriptively and for item correlations. Descriptive statistics provided insight into the distribution of skills, workflow characteristics, and the use of AI among media professionals. To examine relationships between creative self-perception and attitudes toward AI, Pearson correlation coefficients (r) were calculated.

The correlation analysis aimed to test whether the self-assessment on the level of personal creativity is related to openness to using AI or an increased concern about potential substitution. It also explored how perceptions of AI creativity or relevance correlate with expectations about the future of creative work.

This analytic approach addresses two research questions. First, which professional profiles and tasks are associated with creativity and AI use (RQ1). Second, how creative self-perception shapes the anticipation of AI's role in future work (RQ2).

V. Results

This pre-study among media workers in Germany was conducted to gain initial quantitative insights into the impact of AI on the media workforce.

A. Demographic Data

From a total sample of 723 study participants, 21% worked in the media industry, from which 83% had experience with artificial intelligence, resulting in a sample of 128 participants. Most of the study participants are male (60%) young professionals with master's or bachelor's degrees (66%) and belong to the age group of 25-34 years. As shown in Table II, most study participants are employed in larger media companies, and since worked 4-6 years in the media industry.

TABLE II
Demographics of Panel Study Respondents

Question	%
Company size	
Up to 499 employees	52
500 to 2,999 employees	37
From 3,000 employees	10
Media industry experience	
3 years and under	26
4–6 years	36
7–10 years	16
Over 10 years	22
Professional status	
Employed in a company	92
Self-employed entrepreneur	5
Freelance for companies	2
Other	1

Most respondents classify their own knowledge of AI solutions as very or rather comprehensive (57%), while 30% classify it as medium and only 14% as low or very low, indicating a broad arrival of AI solutions in media work. Regarding the professional use of popular AI tools, ChatGPT is the most utilized tool, with 51% reporting that they use it regularly or very frequently. This is followed by Meta AI (34%), Microsoft Copilot (33%), and Google Gemini (32%). The least used tools, with under 30% indicating regular or very frequent use, are DeepL (29%), Microsoft Bing AI (27%), Adobe Firefly (27%), and Snapchat MyAI (25%). This still demonstrates the dominance of OpenAI and ChatGPT within the GenAI tools.

B. Descriptive Results

In terms of competencies applied in daily work (Figure 1), communication skills ranked highest, used by 57% of respondents. Leadership and management skills followed closely (54%), as did technical skills (51%). Creative skills were also named by nearly half of the participants (49%), confirming the central role of creativity in many professional roles. Analytical skills (45%) and interpersonal skills (40%) were used less frequently, while only 28% reported using organisational skills regularly. This distribution reflects a broad mix of cognitive, interpersonal, and technical demands, with creativity positioned alongside other high-order skills.

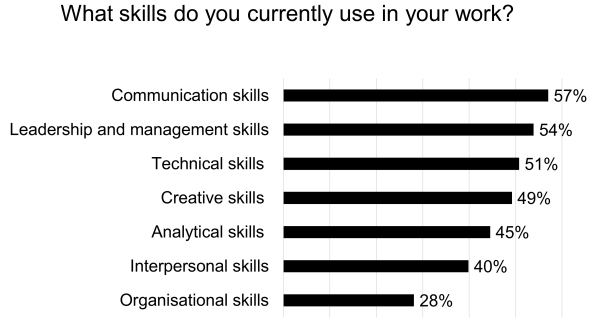

Figure 1. Skills used by media workers (n=128).

As shown in Figure 2, the majority of respondents (70%) stated that their work is predominantly creative. However, the majority of the participants also perceives their work as data-driven and repetitive: 54% reported that their work depends heavily on structured data, and 53% indicated that decisions are based on clear rules or algorithms. More than half (52%) described their workflows as having a high degree of routine. Interestingly, 50% said their work requires little complex thinking and simple problem-solving, and 48% reported that their work involves little social or emotional interaction. These results indicate a prominent role of creativity in media workflows, next to more structuring aspects.

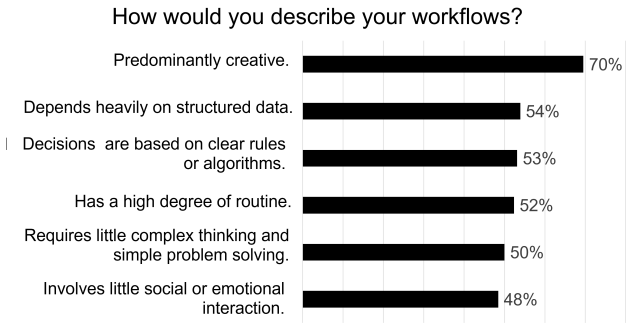

Figure 2. Perceived workflow characteristics (n=128).

According to the study results, AI is already widely used in creative professional contexts. 76% of the respondents stated that they use AI for creative tasks in their work. This widespread adoption indicates that AI has become a tool not just for repetitive tasks, but also for creative work.

When asked whether cooperation with or substitution by AI is expected, the responses were relatively balanced. 38% of participants tended toward (rather) substitution, while 34% expected (rather) collaboration, as shown in Figure 3. A further 27% remained undecided. These results reflect a notable degree of uncertainty and ambivalence regarding the future role of AI in individual workflows, with a slight tendency toward perceiving AI as a substitutive rather than a collaborative force.

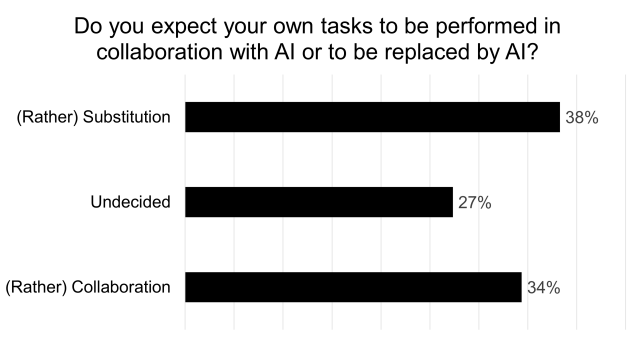

Figure 3. Perspective on AI collaboration or substitution (n=128).

The descriptive results paint a nuanced picture of creative professional work within the media industry, shaped by both human and technological capabilities. Creativity is shown as a central characteristic of work, described by media workers, next to structured, data-driven, and even routinized settings. AI is also, already widely integrated into creative workflows. Regarding HAIC a balanced view is presented, with media workers divided between collaboration with- or substitution due to AI. Together, these findings provide a foundation for the following correlation analysis exploring how creative workers perceive the creative use of AI.

C. Correlations Analysis

To further explore the relationship between individual perceptions and the role of AI in creative work, we conducted bivariate correlation analyses. The aim was to identify statistical associations between key variables such as creative self-assessment, frequency and type of AI use, and expectations regarding AI's role in supporting or substituting creative tasks. These correlations provide insight into how media professionals' subjective views on their creativity relate to their engagement with AI tools and their attitudes toward future work developments. The following section presents selected significant results from this analysis, highlighting how perceived creativity correlates with beliefs about the relevance, usefulness, and substitutive potential of AI in creative contexts.

Several significant but rather weak ($0.20 \leq r \leq 0.39$) or very weak ($r \leq 0.19$) correlations highlight how media professionals perceive the role of AI in creative contexts, as shown in Table III. The self-assessment of one's work as predominantly creative correlates positively with the belief that AI is becoming increasingly important for creative tasks ($r = .343, p < .001$) and with the perception that AI supports creative processes in the workplace ($r = .361, p < .001$). A similarly weak correlation is found with the frequency of AI use in creative tasks ($r = .363, p < .001$), suggesting that individuals who describe their work as creative are also more likely to integrate AI tools into their workflows. Additionally, the belief that AI can be creative is significantly, though more weakly, associated with creative self-assessment ($r = .221, p = .012$). The notion that AI may even replace creative skills shows a weak positive correlation as well ($r = .284, p = .001$). An even weaker but still significant correlation also emerges with the belief that creative thinking as a skill is gaining relevance ($r = .192, p = .030$), suggesting that those engaged in creative work are expecting a change of relevance for human creativity in the age of AI. Together, these results suggest that creative professionals not only recognize the growing relevance of AI for their work but also engage with its potential benefits and risks. This ranges from support and enhancement to possible substitution of human creativity.

Table IV presents the results of the correlation analysis for the self-perception as creative worker related to current and future AI job replacement potential (measured in percent). The perceived present-day potential of AI to replace one's own tasks correlates weakly with the creative self-assessment ($r = .325, p < .001$). Similarly, it correlates with the long-term expectation of AI substituting one's own tasks. The results revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = .227, p = .010$),

TABLE III
PEARSON CORRELATIONS WITH THE STATEMENT
"MY WORK IS PREDOMINANTLY CREATIVE." (N=128)

Correlated statement	r	p-value
The use of AI is becoming increasingly important for creative tasks	0.343	< 0.001
Artificial intelligence can be creative	0.221	0.012
I frequently use artificial intelligence in creative tasks	0.363	< 0.001
The use of AI supports creative processes in my work	0.361	< 0.001
The use of AI replaces creative skills in my field	0.284	0.001
Creative thinking (will increase in relevance)	0.192	0.030

indicating that individuals who expect a higher percentage of their tasks to be potentially replaced by AI in the future are more likely to describe their work as creative. These findings suggest that individuals working in creative roles may be particularly aware of, or engaged with, the capabilities of AI technologies, both now and in the future.

TABLE IV
PEARSON CORRELATIONS WITH THE STATEMENT
"MY WORK IS PREDOMINANTLY CREATIVE."

Correlated statement	r	p-value
I already see a high potential for AI to replace parts of my current work	0.325	< 0.001
I expect AI to replace a larger share of my tasks in the long-term	0.227	0.010

The results of this exploratory panel study provide a view of how media workers in Germany perceive and integrate artificial intelligence into their creative work. The demographic profile shows a sample of predominantly young, well-educated professionals working in larger media organizations, with most having several years of experience in the industry. A significant majority reports substantial familiarity with AI solutions and regular use of tools, such as ChatGPT, highlighting the growing penetration of generative AI in everyday media work. The descriptive findings further underscore the central role of creativity in these professionals' self-descriptions and workflows. While 70% describe their work as predominantly creative, many also report operating within structured, routinized, and data-driven environments.

Creative skills are widely used but coexist with strong demands for communication, leadership, and technical competencies. The use of AI for creative tasks is also, already widespread, within media workers. Furthermore, HAIC is seen ambivalent, with a balanced division between substitution or collaboration. The correlational analysis reinforces these patterns: Those who describe their work as creative are significantly more likely to perceive AI as relevant, supportive, and even creative in itself. Positive attitudes toward AI's role in creative processes correlate with both frequent use and a sense of increasing importance. Creative professionals also assess substitutions due to AI, which may shift or redefine their roles. This is seen in current, as well as future, substitution potential.

All in all, the findings suggest that creativity is a relevant part of media workflows and skills. Most media workers use AI already and see potential for AI for creative taskswith the possibility of replacing skills, leading to a possible reshaping of creative work.

VI. DISCUSSION

This study explored how media professionals in the Germany perceive and engage with AI in relation to creative work. The results provide a differentiated view of the role of creativity in media professions and how AI integration is shaping both current practices and future expectations.

The study's results indicate that creativity is a key aspect of media work. Most respondents describe their daily work as predominantly creative, yet this creative activity occurs alongside structured, routinized, and rule-based elements. This confirms the hybrid character of contemporary media work, as described in prior literature on creative occupations [15] [20]. The frequent and purposeful use of AI tools like ChatGPT within these settings suggests that creative work is already undergoing transformation through AI augmentation, especially in contexts aligned with HAIC, where AI tools assist human workers but do not replace their creative judgment or authorship.

At the same time, the study reveals a found ambivalence. Correlational analyses show that those who describe their work as creative are not only more likely to adopt AI tools, but also slightly more aware of AI's potential to replace certain creative tasks. This perception highlights the tensions in HAIC: While professionals appreciate AI's supportive capabilities, they remain aware of the risk of creative deskilling or decreased autonomy [12][17] . Importantly, the perception of AI as a supportive tool and the anticipation of its potential to substitute are not mutually exclusive, but are both found in professionals' perception. Future studies should also further differentiate between collaborative and substitutive AI implementations to better understand how HAIC models are perceived and enacted in practice.

These results suggest that creativity is increasingly considered a dynamic, adaptable skill, one that is both enhanced and challenged by AI technologies. From a practical standpoint, this raises questions for skill development and workforce planning. Media organizations may need to re-evaluate how they support creative roles, not only through technical upskilling but also by fostering critical, reflective capacities in dealing with AI systems.

Despite these insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. The study is based on self-reported data and captures only a snapshot in time, and the sample was conducted through a panel provider who has monetarily incentivized participation. It also focuses on a specific national context and industry.

VII. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This paper examined the role of AI in creative work within the German media industry. Based on a panel survey of 128 media professionals, two research questions guided the analysis.

Regarding RQ1, the findings indicate that creative skills are widely used and required in media work today, with 70% of respondents describing their tasks as predominantly creative. AI

tools, especially ChatGPT, are already integrated into creative workflows by a majority of professionals. Moreover, the use of AI positively correlates with higher self-assessed creative engagement. This could be because GenAI tools are becoming available in an increasing number of areas for content creation and editing, opening up new possibilities in creative work and thus driving GenAI adoption.

In relation to RQ2, the results indicate that media professionals with a strong creative self-concept are also more likely to view AI as relevant, helpful, and even creative. At the same time, they are more likely to anticipate that AI could possibly substitute aspects of their work. These professionals recognize both the substitutive and augmentative potentials of AI the later a pattern that closely aligns with emerging visions of future HAIC models, where human labor is interacting with AI.

In sum, the study suggests that the use of AI is not perceived by media professionals as incompatible with creative work. Corresponding GenAI tools are being used and tested, even if people are still unsure about the impact on their own working environment. One explanation could be that although the use of GenAI offers potential for automation, much of its use still involves massive human involvement for exploring the new possibilities of the tools (e.g., extensive prompting). The required curiosity, openness, and the joy of creating and exploring new frontiers is closely linked to creative mindsets. In the long term, however, GenAI solutions can be expected to be more closed and integrated solutions, which could, in some cases, lead to a reassessment of the corresponding effects and also to new resistance to the use of AI in the creative sector, especially for those who could then be affected by substitution effects and excluded from previously creative work steps. For the media industry, this implies a strategic need to support AI-related future skills to make use of AI as an enabler and not a substitute for creative work in ways that reflect an evolving collaboration with AI, beyond replacement logics and toward co-creation.

Future research could explore the ethical implications of professional exclusion due to automation or extend the anaylsis to other cultural contexts. Also, the view of media experts could be explored qualitatively, to gain further insight into the creative processes with AI. Also, it could adopt mixed-method designs. In particular, qualitative studies could offer more profound insight into how creative media work is influenced by AI.

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