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Creative Industries' Perspectives on AI's Potential Impact on Creative Jobs: Qualitative Study on Creative Professionals in Yogyakarta and Surrounding Areas

Rizka Putri Pranandari[1*], Atsushi Aoyama[1]

[1]Graduate School of Technology Management, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan

**Corresponding Email*: gr0669xh@ed.ritsumei.ac.jp

ABSTRACT

The widespread use of AI in the creative industries has become unavoidable in recent years. This study aimed to explore the perspectives of creative professionals regarding AI's impact on human jobs in their respective industries. The qualitative data were collected from 10 creative professionals through in-depth interviews and were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. Our analysis resulted in eight main themes and 18 categories. There are four important findings to highlight from this study. First of all, the positive and negative impacts of AI depend on the quality of human resources. Secondly, the positive and negative impacts of AI also depend on individual's wisdom and mindset. Third, in principle, AI is merely an assistive tool for humans and its use is optional, depending on human needs. Finally, the diverse opinions about AI's impact may be influenced by individuals' roles in the economic system. Based on these findings, a recommendation was proposed in the later part of this article.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Creative Industries, Jobs, Qualitative Study, Thematic Analysis.

1. Introduction

In Indonesia, creative industries contribute significantly to the national economy, making a considerable contribution to job creation. Indonesian Agency of Creative Economy (Barekraf) reported that in 2023, creative industries created jobs for more than 22 million people (Fadhillah et al, 2026). While Indonesian Agency of National Development Planning (Bappenas) reported that creative industries in Indonesia provided employment for more than 23 million people, accounting for 17% of national workforce (Pangestika et al., 2026).

Creative industries are industrial sectors that have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent and have the potential in creating jobs and wealth through the creation and exploitation of intellectual property (Cunningham, 2002). Creative industries are known for their activities in utilizing individual talent to produce content, services or products with rich cultural and symbolic value (Granados et al., 2017). Indonesia Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (Kemenparekraf) regard 17 industrial sectors as creative industries. Those industrial sectors are broadcasting (TV and radio), architecture, advertising, performance art (drama, dance, etc.), music, fine art, product design, fashion, video (including movie and animation), photography, visual design, publishing, culinary, game development, craft, interior design, and software or application (Pranandari & Aoyama, 2025).

One of the most notable challenges for creative industries is the ever-shifthing technological developments (Dellyana et al., 2024). A profound technological advancement that has made major shifts in many aspects of society recently is the rapid development of artificial intelligence (Pranandari & Aoyama, 2025). The widespread use of AI in creative industries is likely to be unavoidable as these industries are adaptable to the new technologies. Creative industries are the end users for various technologies, and thus, these industries often necessitate the development of new technologies (Müller et al, 2008). There are four major issues stemming from AI involvement in the

creative productions. The first issue is about the co-creation between human and AI, where AI becomes a tool for human and has a potential to augment human creativity. The second issue stresses that human only creativity is the only 'true' and authentic creativity. Third issue is about the plagiarism concerns. And the final issue is about how AI may diminish human creativity by weakening motivation and self-concept of individual creativity (Ivcevic and Grandinetti, 2024).

The widespread utilization of AI in creative industries has generated concerns about how human creators will be affected, and what impact it may have on creative industries (O'Toole and Horvat, 2024). AI has some advantages in terms of task performance compared to human. Those advantages include its round the clock availability for non-stop working, its highly competent and efficient performance, its ability to take risky tasks, as well as its productivity in doing repetitive jobs (Trivedi et al., 2023). Thus, human jobs have the potential to be displaced in the era where massive automation occurs.

Acemoglu and Restrepo (2019) define automation as the massive adoption of new technologies which enable capital or machine to substitute for human labor in various tasks. The substitution effect can lead to the costs' reduction and productivity enhancement on one hand, but on the other hand, it may lead to the reduction of employment opportunities for human labor, generating a detrimental displacement effect (Restrepo, 2024). Automation may radically transform the production task content, allowing machine to take over task originally performed by human labor (Acemoglu & Restrepo, 2019).

In the context of today's creative industries, the issue of AI's impact on creative jobs is very intriguing to be investigated. We argue that the perspectives and opinions of creative professionals are the essential sources to get valuable insights regarding to this issue. Therefore, we decided to carry out an interview-based qualitative study on them. We will delimit the scope of this study on the creative professionals residing in Yogyakarta and surrounding areas, as these areas are the bases for various kinds of creative industries. This research is expected to answer the following main research question.

MRQ. How do creative professionals perceive AI's impact on creative jobs?

2. Research Method

This study was exploratory in nature and adopted a qualitative research approach. The data were collected using in-depth interviews with creative professionals in Yogyakarta and surrounding areas. The main criterion for the participants was their direct involvement in the production process of creative products. The sampling method used in this study was purposive sampling. Through the data collection process, we have successfully gathered rich qualitative data from 10 participants from various sub-sector of creative industries. The overview of the participants is shown by Table 1.

The qualitative data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis as the main analytical tool. Thematic analysis enables researchers to identify and interpret patterns of meaning within qualitative data. The analysis adopted Braun and Clarke's six-step process that ensures a rigorous and systematic analytical process (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2018). The steps of thematic analysis include familiarizing the data, generating codes, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing an analytical report (Sudarmanto, 2025).

Practically, the data collection process in this study involved several steps such as participants searching, permission request, coordination, and the conduct of interviews. Before the interviews, we asked the participants to sign a letter of informed consent. The interviews were recorded using a cellphone provided by the researcher. We decided to terminate the data collection process once data saturation had been achieved for main themes.

Moreover, this study employed several analytical steps such as audio record transcription, coding, code categorization and main themes generation. The coding process was conducted by integrating some codes which have similar meanings. Thereafter, the codes were grouped into 18 categories, and these 18 categories were synthesized into eight main themes.

Table 1. Overview of the Participants
(Source: Author, 2026)

Participant Code	Industrial Sub-Sector	Occupation	Gender
P1	Animation	Creative Director	Male
P2	Software and Game	Production Director	Male
P3	Advertising	Owner & Designer	Male
P4	Graphic Design	Designer	Male
P5	Decorative Art	Florist	Female
P6	Handcraft	Craftsman	Male
P7	Broadcasting	Drama Scriptwriter	Female
P8	Publishing	Novel Writer	Female
P9	Fashion	Owner & Designer	Male
P10	Photography	Photo Editor	Female

3. Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis was carried out by performing several analytical steps such as audio record transcription, coding, codes categorization and main themes generation. The coding process was conducted carefully by sorting and combining some similar codes. The results of thematic analysis are classified into eight main themes and 18 categories as shown by Table 2. These themes will be discussed one by one in order to present a detailed description and analytical explanation about each theme.

Table 2. Results of Thematic Analysis
(Source: Author, 2026)

Theme	Category	Code
Production Types	IT-Supported Production	Predominantly digital workflow (2)
		Hybrid digital workflow (1)
	Conventional Production	Fully manual workflow (40)
AI's Ability in Creative Tasks	Tools AI	Automation (4)
	Generative AI	Consultation (5)
		Idea generation (6, 42)
		Idea exploration (31)
		Concept creation (72)
AI's Potential Roles & Advantages	Productivity Enhancement	Speeding up the tasks (11, 27)
		Production capacity expansion (12)
	Task Support Tool	Ability in handling various tasks (3)
	Creativity Support Tool	Creativity stimulation (15)
		Information gathering (65)
Precondition for AI's Favorable Impact	Developed Human Resources	High AI literacy (10)
		The importance of education for successful technological adoption (16)
		Correlation between high quality HR and technology awareness (18)
		Advanced AI utilization for high quality HR (20)
	Human Wisdom and Constructive Mindset	Priority for human involvement (13)
		Unique and highly self-demanding mindset (34)
		Prudent assessment on role division with AI (49)

Precondition for AI's Detrimental Impact	Underdeveloped Human Resources	Low AI literacy (9)
		The reduction of government's budget on education (17)
		Limited AI utilization for low quality HR (21)
	Counterproductive Mindset	Non-distinctive and low self-demanding mindset (33)
Perceived Concern About AI	Job Displacement	Perceived threat on software industry's jobs (19)
		Perceived threat on game industry's jobs (23)
		Perceived threat on graphic design jobs (38)
		Job displacement in visual-based industries (81)
	Technology Turbulence	Rapid development of AI technology (39)
	Users' Misconduct	Widespread unethical uses among newbie writers (68)
Perceived Reassurance About AI	The Nature of AI Utilization	A mere assistive tool (7, 28, 54, 64)
		Need-based optional utilization (36, 41)
		No threat for fully manual production workflow (43, 46)
	AI's Limited Capability	Similar and repetitive outputs (29)
		Defective outputs (50, 55)
		The importance of human involvement (58)
Paradoxial Perspectives	Disadvantages for Workers	Worker's concern on job displacement (83)
	Advantages for Business Owners	Owner's enthusiasm for gaining profit through labor efficiency (74, 77)

3.1. Theme 1: Production Types

"…Very dominant (IT involvement), about 80%..." (P3; Transcription by Rizka Putri Pranandari – R.P.P.)

"…I didn't use, fully manual…" (P5; Trans. By R.P.P.)

Specifically in this study, the types of production are classified based on the utilization of information technology during the production process. Thus, the types of production can be categorized into "IT-supported Production" and "Conventional Production". Two participants who have occupation as a florist and a craftsman respectively have stated implicitly that their products are completely handmade. Therefore, both may fall into the "Conventional Production" category. A participant from animation industry has stated that the utilization of information technology is fifty-fifty during the production process. Thus, the production process of his product is considered as a hybrid digital workflow and fall into "IT-supported Production".

We argue that the involvement of IT in the production process is the first stepping stone to understand which industries that are barely exposed by AI's impact and what kind of industries that may be severely affected by AI. An industry that produces some handmade products, for instance a wooden handcraft industry, may be exposed to a little or no impact from AI. While an industry that has IT-intensive workflow like software industry may be strongly affected by AI in terms of human involvement and jobs.

3.2. Theme 2: AI's Ability in Creative Tasks

"…as for the type of AI used for producing the external outputs, the outputs that finally appear on the screen, we have to choose Tools AIs. AIs which help the automation…" (P1; Trans. by R.P.P.)

Based on the data collected from the interviews, we found that there are two types of AI that are generally utilized to support the creative tasks. These are tool-based AI and generative AI. Tools AIs are mainly used for automation, enabling the efficient utilization of manpower. While generative AIs are mainly used for generating ideas and concepts. Idea generation tasks are commonly performed during the initial phase of creative production which is in accordance with the findings of Nugroho et al. (2025) which suggesting that AI plays a significant role during ideation phase of creative production.

3.3. Theme 3: AI's Potential Roles & Advantages

"…indeed, the presence of AI may help to speed up the process…" (P3; Trans. by R.P.P.)

One of major advantages of using AI is its capability to enhance productivity. Some participants suggested that some tasks can be done faster by using AI. This kind of efficiency enables the organizations or teams to expand the production capacity. In addition, AI can be utilized as creativity support tools. A participant suggests that AI has a role in stimulating ideas while another participant suggests that AI is very helpful for information gathering. These tasks are very essential for facilitating the creativity.

3.4. Theme 4: Precondition for AI's Favorable Impact

"…In developed countries with developed educational system and high-quality human resources, they leverage AI for more advanced tasks. While in countries with underdeveloped educational system, the uses of AI are not optimal…" (P2; Trans. by R.P.P.)

Our participants argued that AI may have a favorable impact on human workforce within creative industries provided that several conditions are fulfilled. The first condition is the well-developed human resources. A participant suggests that there is a direct correlation between the development of education and successful technology adoption. In addition, a well-developed educational system nurtures high-quality human resources, which are essential for developing society with a high-level of technological literacy and awareness.

The second condition for AI's favorable impact is the presence of human wisdom and constructive mindset among people who utilize and organize this technology. Human wisdom may be manifested by prioritizing human involvement in creative productions. A participant suggests that the utilization of AI should not sacrifice the human involvement in the production of creative works. In addition, another participant has stressed that creative professionals should bear in mind that the value of creative works is determined by human uniqueness. This implies that similar and non-distinctive works produced by AI have lower value compared to those produced by human, and thus, the creative professionals must push themselves not to rely on AI too much.

3.5. Theme 5: Precondition for AI's Detrimental Impact

"…AI will kill human creativity in the countries that are not ready to use AI…" (P2; Trans. by R.P.P.)

In contrast, some participants argued that some conditions lead to the AI's unfavorable impact on human workforce. One of the major conditions is the underdeveloped human resources. A participant has complained that government's budget on education has been reduced. This may have counterproductive impact on educational quality as a whole, which eventually could inhibit the development of high-quality human resources that are capable of optimally leveraging advanced technologies like AI. Another condition is the presence of counterproductive and low self-demanding mindset among AI users. A participant argued that an individual who has a complacent mindset and high reliance on AI is likely to produce non-unique creative works. In this case, AI may impose negative impacts on such individual.

3.6. Theme 6: Perceived Concern About AI

"…The threats are there, most of rookie writers tend to use AI. Even for thesis writing, there is a case where the writing is done completely using AI. That's unethical…" (P8; Trans. by R.P.P.)

Several participants have expressed their concerns about AI. The most noticeable concern is about the possibility of job displacement in their respective industries. The participants indicate that human jobs in some IT-intensive creative industries like graphic design, photography, game and software industries will be significantly affected by AI. They argued that in the future, AI will have sufficient capability to replace human roles in many tasks within their industries. Another concern is about the misuse of AI among creative professionals. A participant suggested that many writers have a tendency to take shortcuts by fully using AI in generating works. Some negative consequences may arise from these practices. From the legal perspective, this kind of practice may lead to copyright infringement. While from the economic perspective, the full dependence on AI in creating works might have negative impact on product's originality and competitiveness.

3.7. Theme 7: Perceived Reassurance About AI

"…AI is merely our assistant. But that doesn't mean it will dominate us in the production process. Because its outputs are certainly containing defects here and there…" (P7; Trans. by R.P.P.)

Nevertheless, there are some relieving truths about AI. First of all, it is important to bear in mind that AI is merely an assistive tool for humans. Ultimately, it will depend on humans who use this tool. Individuals who have competence, wisdom and creativity will have a bigger potential in optimally leveraging AI. While individuals with low competence and counterproductive mindsets are likely to be negatively affected by AI. Secondly, at least for now, AI has several notable limitations. Many of our participants argued that outputs produced by AI have many defects and limitations. A participant suggests that AI can only produce similar and repetitive outputs. While another participant firmly argued that the role of humans in refining outputs created by AI is indispensable. In summary, the role of human in the production process of creative products is likely to be guaranteed as human creativity is an irreplaceable thing.

3.8. Theme 8: Paradoxical Perspectives

"…For me, it feels that the situation is starting to become uncertain. I am worried about losing my job and getting replaced by AI…" (P10; Trans. by R.P.P.)

"…As an owner, I have greatly benefited as I don't need to pay for additional staff. Their jobs can be replaced by AI…" (P9; Trans. by R.P.P.)

One of the most intriguing findings in this study is that there are two paradoxical perspectives regarding the impact of AI on human jobs. One perspective has a skeptical tone while another one has enthusiastic tone. From the business owner's perspective, AI is a great advantage as it allows the business operations become more efficient through a considerable reduction in labor costs. On the other hand, AI might become a nightmare for workers due to its human-level capability in various tasks. The concern of losing job and getting replaced by AI is so real for some workers. At the end of the day, this phenomenon is like two sides of the same coin.

3.9. Discussion of Results

Based on the results, we identified four important findings to highlight from this study. First of all, the positive and negative impacts of AI depend on the quality of human resources. In this regard, the governments must play a pivotal role by using their power to develop high-quality but accessible education and training programs. Secondly, the positive and negative impacts of AI also depend on individuals' wisdom and mindset. It is important for creative professionals to bear in mind that the most valuable thing in creative industries is uniqueness, and human uniqueness can't be replaced by AI. Third, in principle, AI is merely an assistive tool for humans. The use of AI is optional and depends on human needs. In the future, humans still have a capability to produce excellent creative works even without the involvement of AI. Finally, the diverse opinions about AI's impact

might be influenced by individuals' role in the economic system. For workers, it might be a source of concern. For business owner, it might be a source of enthusiasm.

In the era where technologies are rapidly advancing like today, the quality of human resources may become a key determinant. Creative industries face challenges derived from ever-shifting technological developments (Dellyana et al., 2024). In this regard, highly competent and adaptive human labor may survive the rise of AI, while incompetent individuals may be displaced. Huo et al. (2024) suggest that low-skilled workers have a higher potential to be replaced by AI. Restrepo (2024) suggests that the adoption of automation technologies such as AI are generally beneficial from the perspective of business operation. Because this technology enables the reduction of costs and the increase of productivity. This argument is supported by our finding which indicates that business owners may be enthusiastic about the potential efficiency gained from the replacement of human labor with AI. Furthermore, the results highlight the importance of constructive mindset. Individuals with highly self-demanding mindsets will be motivated by the presence of AI as this challenge may stimulate them to produce more unique creative works. In the context of creative industries, creativity is a distinctive factor because it enables individuals to produce uniqueness. Creativity is regarded as the most essential intellectual capital within the industries because it has no limitation when it comes to development potential (Kostromina et al., 2023). Thus, the shortage of labor with sufficient creativity in the creative industries may pave the way for AI to take over creative jobs.

4. Conclusions

The widespread use of AI in the creative industries is unavoidable recently. This study aimed to explore the perspectives of creative professionals regarding AI's impact on creative jobs in their respective industries. From the study, we concluded four important points. First, the positive and negative impacts of AI depend on the quality of human resources. Secondly, the positive and negative impacts of AI also depend on individual's wisdom and mindset. Third, in principle, AI is merely assistive tools for human. Lastly, the diverse opinions about AI's impact might be influenced by human's role in the economic system.

We recommend that it is important for the policymakers pay greater attention to educational curricula, ensuring that it not only equips future human resources with adaptive competencies to face rapidly advancing technologies such as AI, but also fosters human resources with resilience and a constructive mindset.

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