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# The Impact of Human-AI Co-creation on the Content Creation Process

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# Abstract

The rapid integration of generative AI (genAI) into the marketing industry is transforming the content creation process, ushering in a new era of collaboration between GenAI and content creators. This relationship, known as human-AI collaboration or human-AI co-creation, enhances efficiency and aids ideation, yet raises critical questions about the respective roles of GenAI and content creators. The aim of this study is to develop an in-depth understanding of this collaborative relationship, examining the influence of GenAI across the various phases of content creation within marketing firms. Through qualitative research involving semi-structured interviews, the study explores the phases of content creation including task definition, planning, ideation, content generation, and finalising and testing, while assessing participants' perceptions of GenAI as a tool versus a collaborative partner.

Key findings reveal that GenAI enhances ideation by generating a diverse range of ideas, streamlines workflows, and reduces cognitive load during routine tasks, allowing content creators to dedicate more attention to high-effort decision-making tasks. However, participants expressed concerns about the limitations of GenAI in conveying emotional depth and authenticity, highlighting the essential role of human qualities such as emotion, creativity, and critical thinking in creating relatable, nuanced content. Furthermore, participants perceive GenAI's role as dynamic being useful for ideation and content generation but requiring human oversight, particularly in tasks involving emotional intelligence, originality, and final content approval. Concerns also emerged around ethical implications and the risk of over-reliance on GenAI, with participants stressing the importance of continuous skill development to retain the human element in AI-assisted workflows.

The study proposes a conceptual framework which underscores the importance of human oversight in leveraging GenAI, positioning it as an assistive technology that optimises workflows while maintaining the essential human touch in creative processes. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of human-AI co-creation, providing both practical and theoretical insights for practitioners seeking to navigate the evolving landscape of content marketing.

# Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the incredible people who have always been by my side, offering support and love throughout this challenging and rewarding journey. My deepest thanks go to:

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# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

The following table provides definitions for the acronyms and abbreviations used throughout this dissertation.

*Table 1 – List of acronyms and abbreviations*

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
2PDM	Planning, Production, Distribution, and Measurement and Optimisation
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIGC	Artificial Intelligence Generated Content
BPMN	Business Process Model and Notation
CM	Content Marketing
CST	Creativity Support Tools
DCM	Digital Content Marketing
HCI	Human-Computer Interaction
IoT	Internet of Things
GenAI/GAI	Generative Artificial Intelligence

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Research Problem

Throughout history, digital transformations have driven various industries, including marketing, to adapt from traditional methods to innovative digital approaches. This evolution dates back to the advent of steam engines and computing systems, leading to today's advanced technologies. Each technological transformation has necessitated that the marketing industry adopt new tools and workflows to keep pace with an increasingly technology-driven world. Furthermore, these changes have significantly impacted the industry, pushing firms to integrate new technologies to innovate their business models and maintain competitiveness.

Marketing innovation, a crucial factor of this transformation, involves the development and implementation of new strategies, techniques, or technologies designed to engage with target audiences in more creative and effective ways. Today, businesses are leveraging cutting-edge technologies, such as data analytics, blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI), and Internet of Things (IoT) to establish themselves as leaders in innovation. Among these, generative AI (GenAI or GAI), a subset of AI, has emerged as a crucial technology that has profoundly impacted the marketing industry, especially within content marketing (CM), where it is drastically changing the way content is generated (Feuerriegel, Hartmann et al. 2024, Kshetri, Dwivedi et al., 2024, Gupta, Nair et al. 2024).

For instance, Coca-Cola's recent "Create Real Magic" campaign used GenAI, leveraging OpenAI's technology to generate unique, AI-generated visuals that incorporated iconic brand assets such as its logo and polar bear (Cui, Phelan et al. 2024). This campaign invited digital artists and consumers alike to co-create branded content, allowing Coca-Cola to connect deeply with audiences through an immersive, art-driven experience that reinforced its brand identity (Cui, Phelan et al. 2024). This application of GenAI in marketing exemplifies the significant potential for brands to foster creative engagement, build competitive advantage, and enhance personalisation at scale (Cui, Phelan et al. 2024). As consumer demand for personalised content experiences continues to rise, a study projected that by 2025, over 30% of large corporations will utilise GenAI to generate outbound marketing content (AI in Marketing 2023).

Hence, GenAI has not only redefined content creation but has also expanded the possibilities for producing high-quality digital content across multiple formats (Rezwana 2023). This technology is capable of interpreting human input and generating AI-generated content (AIGC) in diverse formats, including text, images, audio, and video (Kshetri, Dwivedi et al. 2024, Feuerriegel, Hartmann et al. 2024, Sengar, Hasan et al. 2024, Gupta, Nair et al. 2024). As GenAI becomes increasingly integrated into the content creation process, a new relationship of human-AI collaboration (Wu, Ji et al. 2021), often referred to as co-creativity, is emerging (Rezwana 2023). This collaboration presents significant opportunities, merging the efficiency and scalability of GenAI with the distinct creative insights of content creators. However, as this collaboration evolves, important questions arise regarding the division of labour between GenAI and content creators (Chintalapati, Pandey 2022, Wahid, Risqo, Mero et al. 2023). The boundaries between tasks suited for GenAI and those requiring human creativity are becoming increasingly blurred, highlighting the need for a clear framework to balance this collaboration effectively moving forward (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024).

Despite the transformative potential of GenAI in content creation, a significant gap remains in understanding how GenAI collaborates with content creators across various phases of the content creation process (Kantosalo, Takala 2020, Zhou, Lee 2024). The distinction between tasks performed exclusively by humans, those executed by GenAI, and those involving collaboration is often unclear, creating uncertainty about the most effective ways to integrate this technology (Kshetri, Dwivedi et al. 2024). Additionally, concerns surrounding the quality, originality, and ethical implications of AIGC have been emphasised by previous academics (Rezwana 2023, Dwivedi, Kshetri et al. 2023), as do questions about the roles and responsibilities of content creators and GenAI in this new collaborative workflow (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024). Understanding how to balance these dynamics, including both positive and negative factors, is crucial for marketers seeking to utilise GenAI without compromising the quality of content delivered to potential customers (Castelo, Katona et al. 2024). Therefore, it is of utmost importance that marketers comprehend the complexities of human-AI co-creation to leverage GenAI effectively while maintaining the unique value of human creativity, thinking and emotional touch (Wu, Ji et al. 2021).

## 1.2 Research Question

This study aims to understand the collaborative relationship between human creativity and GenAI in the content creation process. By exploring the relationship between content creators and smart systems, the dissertation aims to provide valuable insights to help businesses make more informed decisions about incorporating intelligent tools in their CM strategies. Therefore, the research aims to address the following research question:

How does the integration of GenAI influence the various stages and factors that shape the content creation process in marketing companies?

By exploring this question, the goal is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how the integration of GenAI technologies affects the various stages of the content creation process in marketing companies, as well as other factors that shape the creative and strategic decision-making of marketing professionals. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute theoretically by advancing knowledge of the relationship between human creativity and GenAI, and by developing a new framework to capture the dynamics of this evolving collaboration. The anticipated findings will enhance theoretical models of content creation and GenAI integration, thereby enriching academic discourse and providing novel perspectives for future research.

## 1.3 Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this research is to explore the impact of integrating GenAI with human creativity in the content creation process in marketing industries. To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been identified:

1. To identify the stages and factors influenced by integrating GenAI with human creativity during the content creation process. This objective seeks to understand how human-AI co-creation affects the various stages of content creation by analysing existing frameworks and models.
2. To identify and analyse the tasks performed by GenAI, content creators, and a combination of both during the content creation process. This objective aims to comprehend the roles and responsibilities of each contributor within a human-AI co-creation workflow, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of GenAI and human creatives in different aspects of content creation.

3. To propose a workflow framework that guides organisations intending to integrate GenAI in their content creation processes. By understanding the complexities of human-AI co-creation, this objective seeks to provide a practical framework for organisations to effectively leverage the capabilities of GenAI while maintaining the creative input of content creators.

These objectives collectively aim to provide a thorough understanding of how GenAI influences the content creation process, the roles and responsibilities of GenAI and human creatives, and a framework for effective integration in marketing industries.

## 1.4 Structure of Dissertation

The next chapter explores the existing literature, beginning with traditional CM processes and progressing to recent models that integrate GenAI into marketing workflows. It deepens the understanding of current research and identifies significant gaps in the field. The following chapter outlines the methodology, detailing the research approach, data collection methods, participant selection, and analytical tools, along with justifications for each decision. The fourth chapter presents the research findings, highlighting the key themes that emerged from the interviews regarding the utilisation of GenAI during the content creation process. The subsequent chapter discusses the implications of these findings, comparing them with existing literature and introducing a refined framework for integrating GenAI into content creation. The final chapter provides an overview of the key findings, highlighting the study's theoretical and practical contributions. Additionally, the chapter addresses the limitations of the study, offers recommendations, and emphasises opportunities for further research and development in this field.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive exploration of the current landscape of CM, particularly focusing on the impact of GenAI and human-AI co-creation on the content creation process. This review will delve into traditional content creation processes and the challenges they present, laying the groundwork for understanding how disruptive technologies are reshaping the industry. The examination will then move to GenAI's role in CM and its integration into the content creation process. Finally, the concept of human-AI co-creation will be discussed, highlighting how collaboration between humans and GenAI can enhance creative outcomes. By the end of this chapter, this study will present a conceptual framework that outlines how the literature currently presents the transformative potential of GenAI and its implications for content creators in the marketing industry.

### 2.2 Content Marketing

CM is a strategic marketing approach focused on producing and disseminating, consistent, valuable, and relevant content to engage and retain a targeted audience, with the aim of driving profitable customer actions and outcomes (Pulizzi 2013, Holliman, Rowley 2014). Digital content marketing (DCM), an extension of traditional CM, focuses on leveraging technological tools to create and distribute content across various digital channels (Rowley 2008, Hollebeek, Macky 2019). This digital-centric approach allows organisations to more effectively reach and engage their target audience by utilising platforms such as email, websites, mobile applications and social media to provide personalised and interactive content experiences (Järvinen, Taiminen 2016, Terho, Mero et al. 2022).

Despite the absence of a universally accepted definition of CM, researchers and practitioners have proposed various conceptualisations that emphasise different aspects of this approach. Some definitions focus on the use of electronic channels (Rowley 2008), and emphasise use of online technologies and information (Terho, Mero et al. 2022), while others highlight the role of storytelling and aim to influence consumer behaviour (Du Plessis 2015). Yet, there is a shared understanding that the primary aim of CM is to deliver valuable and engaging content to a target audience, to build trust, foster customer relationships, and drive profitable customer

actions (Holliman, Rowley 2014, Hollebeek, Macky 2019, Terho, Mero et al. 2022). By creating informative, educational, or entertaining content that aligns with audience needs and interests, organisations can establish themselves as trusted industry leaders. This not only helps enhance brand awareness but also enables the creation of positive perceptions around the organisation's products or services (Pulizzi 2013, Holliman, Rowley 2014).

Therefore, to ensure the delivered content meets the needs of the target audience, content development is often a collaborative process involving multiple departments within an organisation (Terho, Mero et al. 2022). Marketers collaborate with subject matter experts to develop informative and engaging content (Järvinen, Taiminen 2016), while design teams or external agencies focus on creating visually appealing illustrations that complement the written material (Wahid, Risqo M., Gunarto 2022). However, the traditional content creation process is undergoing significant disruption due to rapid technology advancements. Modern digital tools can autonomously generate human-like text as well as images, audio, and video content with minimal human input (Wahid, Risqo, Mero et al. 2023). This transformation raises questions about the changing roles of designers and content creators in an increasingly technology-driven environment. Furthermore, these disruptive changes imply that there is a need to have a comprehensive understanding of the traditional digital content creation practices, and the challenges faced by professionals.

### 2.2.1 Traditional Content Creation Processes

In the traditional content creation process, content marketers follow a series of steps to develop the final content, with innovation and creativity playing crucial roles. Innovation involves introducing new ideas or approaches that lead to novel content concepts, while creativity focuses on the imaginative and original expression of these ideas. This process typically includes several key steps, which can vary depending on the context.

Naseri and Noruzi (2018), developed a CM process model named 2PDM, which is based on prior research. This framework emphasises the importance of planning, production, distribution, and measurement and optimisation phases (Naseri, Noruzi 2018). This model provides a structured approach to CM, focusing on setting objectives, understanding target audiences, and using data-driven insights to inform future strategies (Naseri, Noruzi 2018).

In contrast, Kosuniak's (2021) DCM process, although similar to the 2PDM model, refers to the third stage as promotion rather than distribution, emphasising the importance of financial investment and resource allocation in the CM process. Jami Pour and Karimi's (2023), six-stage DCM process model offers a more comprehensive and nuanced approach, including strategic awareness, infrastructure development, content creation, publishing, evaluation, and optimisation. Jami Pour and Karimi's (2023) research emphasises the critical role of content creation, with a focus on targeted, novel, and audience-centric content, as well as the often-overlooked importance of content evaluation and optimisation.

Schulkind's (2022) book offers a more streamlined approach, outlining a practical roadmap for implementing sustainable CM practices. Schulkind's (2022) model focuses on core elements like defining goals, generating ideas, curating content, and leveraging partnerships. Moreover, they emphasise the importance of diversifying content formats and channels, as well as promotion and measurement (Schulkind 2022), which are key aspects also highlighted in the 2PDM and DCM models (Naseri, Noruzi 2018, Kosuniak 2021). These models share a common emphasis on creating and distributing valuable content to attract and retain customers but differ in their level of comprehensiveness and the specific terminology used to describe the stages. The 2PDM and DCM models provide a more structured framework for CM, while Schulkind's (2022) approach offers small businesses a pragmatic guide to implementing effective content creation processes.

While there are common themes and overlapping stages, the varying perspectives underscore the complexity of developing and implementing effective CM strategies. Researchers and practitioners must carefully consider the unique needs, resources, and objectives of their organisations when selecting or adapting a CM process model. This consideration should extend beyond simply choosing the right framework, but also anticipating and addressing the potential challenges that may arise during implementation. Ultimately, the most successful CM efforts will be those that strike a balance between strategic planning and practical implementation, drawing on the insights from various process models to create a tailored approach that drives results. By proactively identifying and mitigating challenges, organisations can ensure that their content creation process remains agile, efficient, and aligned with their overarching marketing objectives.

## 2.2.2 Challenges in Traditional Content Creation Processes

The traditional content creation processes, despite their effectiveness, present several challenges that drive content creators to explore modern tools and solutions. A study by Kajander (2019) highlights several key challenges encountered by content creators. One primary issue is the lack of a structured CM strategy. It is emphasised that an unclear or undefined content strategy can often fail to deliver the desired results, complicating the work of content creators (Ryan 2016).

Another primary challenge is the difficulty in constantly creating high-quality content that meets the necessary criteria, such as being credible, relevant, useful or entertaining, interesting, differentiated, shareable and brand aligned (Kingsnorth 2016). Achieving all these elements simultaneously can be a significant challenge for content creators, who must deeply comprehend their target audience and develop content that resonates with their interests and needs. Moreover, the pressure to produce a high volume of content across multiple channels and in diverse formats can lead to burnout and decreased creativity among content creators. This emphasis on quantity over quality highlights the significant challenge of consistently creating high-quality, engaging content at scale (Eaton 2020).

Additionally, allowing sufficient time for brainstorming and consistently prioritising the target audience's needs are crucial for delivering effective results in the field of digital marketing (Ryan 2016). Through their research, Kajander (2019) found that content creators often faced difficulties in brainstorming new ideas due to the constraints of limited topic options and insufficient time allocated for the process. Therefore, the process of creating unique and engaging ideas through brainstorming sessions and extensive research is time-consuming and labour-intensive, often leading to creative blocks and delays (Kajander 2019).

In the marketing industry, the content creation process often faces disruptions due to the complex collaboration among employees. This includes issues such as lack of clear communication and alignment between different individuals involved, including copywriters, designers, and subject matter experts. Additionally, the siloed nature of organisations, where different departments operate independently, makes it challenging to maintain a consistent content culture and ensure alignment across the organisation (Kingsnorth 2016, Kajander 2019). Pulizzi (2012) further reiterates this issue, noting that content is often created in various departments, leading to misunderstandings and a lack of cohesion.

These collaboration challenges, combined with the other problems encountered by content creators throughout the content creation processes, have motivated content creators to seek more efficient and collaborative solutions. Many of these problems can be effectively addressed by incorporating new technologies, which create new opportunities to improve creativity, optimise workflows, and encourage improved collaboration amongst content creators.

## 2.3 Disruptive Technologies in Content Marketing

The concept of disruptive technology prominently emerged in the 1990s, primarily through Clayton Christensen's influential work (Christensen 1997), as recognised by academics over the years (e.g. Utterback, Acee 2005, Si, Chen 2020, Hopster 2021). Disruptive technologies can be characterised as initially inferior in performance and cost, according to traditional metrics, yet possessing distinctive advantages that consumers often overlook (Utterback, Acee 2005, Si, Chen 2020). As these technologies evolve, they gradually penetrate niche markets and ultimately challenge and displace established products within their traditional markets (Utterback, Acee 2005, Si, Chen 2020, Hopster 2021). A key characteristic of disruptive technologies is their ability, not only to replace existing solutions, but also to introduce novel functionalities that expand and diversify market offerings (Utterback, Acee 2005, Si, Chen 2020). Over time, the discourse surrounding disruptive technology has expanded into the broader framework of disruptive innovation (Christensen, McDonald et al. 2018), which encompasses not only technological advancements but also disruptions in product offerings and business models (Si, Chen 2020).

Disruptive technology is often confused with disruptive innovation, a broader concept that describes a process where a new product or service begins in simple, low-end applications and gradually moves upmarket, displacing established competitors (Christensen, McDonald et al. 2018). This process is characterised not only by technological attributes, but also by the innovation's ability to create new markets and value networks (Christensen, McDonald et al. 2018). Importantly, disruptive innovations are frequently accompanied by business model innovations that sustain new entrants and foster improvement over time (Christensen, McDonald et al. 2018). While disruptive technology emphasises technological advancements, disruptive innovation underscores the business model and strategic implications for transforming industries and markets (Christensen, McDonald et al. 2018). Key disruptive

technologies in CM include big data analytics, blockchain, IoT, and AI (Alqurashi, Alkhaffaf et al. 2023).

Among these disruptive technologies, AI has emerged as the latest technology with significant potential to impact the marketing sector (Alqurashi, Alkhaffaf et al. 2023). This is due to its capability to perform activities typically requiring a degree of human-like intelligence (Anantrasirichai, Bull 2022). Traditionally, AI is broadly defined as the automation of intelligent behaviours, including the abilities to perceive, analyse and react (Chowdhary 2020). In recent years, AI technology has undergone significant advancements, leading to the development of new methods for quickly processing large amounts of information and making prediction based on past data (Elfa, Ahmad et al. 2023). AI now encompasses various sub-fields, utilising a variety of techniques such as natural language processing, machine learning, deep learning, computer vision, and speech recognition (Chowdhary 2020). As these AI technologies become increasingly sophisticated, their integration into the creative creation of digital content has emerged as an unavoidable trend, transforming the field of content creation (Li 2019).

Consequently, professionals worldwide are exploring AI-driven solutions that best align with their business (Alqurashi, Alkhaffaf et al. 2023), with the goal of enhancing their core process and achieve rapid success (Chintalapati, Pandey 2022). By having AI assist professionals in real-time, the AI-driven solutions can accurately identify their design tasks within a specific context and address issues such as data collection, provide efficient feedback, support scientific decision-making, and improve overall efficiency while also forecasting potential outcomes (Li 2019). Furthermore, it is emphasised that in the field of CM, AI has transformed various domains, particularly in areas such as intelligent content creation, predictive AI, content creation, cognitive content platforms, and content personalisation (Chintalapati, Pandey 2022). Therefore, understanding and identifying AI's impact on CM is crucial.

In their research, Chintalapati and Pandey (2022) identified key sub-themes influencing the field, including creation and curation of content, automated insights, narrative-driven content generation and content personalisation (Chintalapati, Pandey 2022). Similarly, another set of applications of AI were identified, such as information analysis, information extraction and enhancement, content generation, improvement and refinement of content during post-production workflows, and data compression (Anantrasirichai, Bull 2022). According to

Anantrasirichai and Bull (2022), AI has the capability to develop intelligent tools that enhance both the management and quality of large-scale content production.

However, the effective use of AI in CM comes with its own set of challenges. One of the primary concerns is the ethical considerations surrounding AI, particularly the risk of bias (Rezwana 2023, Dwivedi, Kshetri et al. 2023, Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024, Fui-Hoon Nah, Zheng et al. 2023) and the creation of fake content (Anantrasirichai, Bull 2022, Dwivedi, Kshetri et al. 2023). The concerning issue is that AI systems currently lack the ability to fully understand context, emotion, and social relationships, which can lead to unintended cultural and societal impacts (Anantrasirichai, Bull 2022, Rezwana 2023, Dwivedi, Kshetri et al. 2023). Moreover, the quality of AIGC relies on diverse and high-dimensional datasets that can capture the nuances of human preferences and contemporary trends (Anantrasirichai, Bull 2022, Rezwana 2023). As a result, AI systems will respond based on the data they were trained on. Thus, data is a crucial factor, which not all organisations, especially small firms, may possess.

Another crucial challenge is that AI technologies should not be utilised independently but rather as part of a larger workflow that requires human oversight and feedback to ensure accuracy and effectiveness (Anantrasirichai, Bull 2022, Rezwana 2023, Dwivedi, Kshetri et al. 2023). This is referred to as a “human-in-the-loop” approach to ensure that AI systems are continually refined and improved through human intervention (Neo 2021, Anantrasirichai, Bull 2022). Additionally, the interactions between humans and AI systems will become increasingly important, as AI is designed to adapt to user feedback and context. However, AI's inability to think independently and its reliance on human input raise questions about its true innovative potential (Li 2019).

Therefore, Chintalapati and Pandey (2022) suggest that while prior research has primarily focused on the implications and impact of AI in CM, future studies should investigate how the implementation and use of AI applications impact the intelligent CM processes. This further raises the question of which tasks should be performed by content designers, which tasks should be handled by AI, and which tasks can be managed by both (Wahid, Risqo, Mero et al. 2023). Additionally, academics emphasise the need to explore how marketing professionals can collaborate with GenAI to enhance creativity (Kshetri, Dwivedi et al. 2024) and productivity (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024).

Furthermore, the AI discussed throughout the examined literature tends to be of the general type, which is more related to analysing, interpreting, and predicting data. However, when it comes to content creation, it is essential to distinguish this type of AI from GenAI (Feuerriegel, Hartmann et al. 2024). Recognising this distinction is crucial, as GenAI offers unique capabilities in generating novel text, images, and audio content, yet also presents ethical and control challenges that are not encountered in traditional AI applications. While traditional AI is optimised for structured, rule-based tasks and producing predetermined outputs, GenAI's creative and autonomous generation of content requires specific approaches to ensure responsible use. By understanding these differences, researchers and practitioners can pursue more targeted approaches in the development and application of GenAI technologies, ultimately leading to more effective and innovative solutions in content creation.

## 2.4 GenAI in Content Marketing

Unlike traditional AI systems that rely on predefined rules and datasets, GenAI is based on generative modelling (Feuerriegel, Hartmann et al. 2024, Gupta, Nair et al. 2024). These models use machine learning architectures to learn patterns from training data (Sengar, Hasan et al. 2024), enabling them to generate novel content that mimics the characteristics of the learned samples (Feuerriegel, Hartmann et al. 2024, Gupta, Nair et al. 2024). The entire GenAI infrastructure encompasses the model, user-friendly interfaces (Fui-Hoon Nah, Zheng et al. 2023) and data processing capabilities (Feuerriegel, Hartmann et al. 2024). These GenAI systems allow professionals to leverage these systems for generating new content in various forms, such as text, visuals, video and other media (Kshetri, Dwivedi et al. 2024, Feuerriegel, Hartmann et al. 2024, Sengar, Hasan et al. 2024, Gupta, Nair et al. 2024).

In recent years, a range of powerful GenAI tools have been developed, significantly enhancing the creative process in CM. Systems like OpenAI's GPT-4, DALL-E 2, and Midjourney, as well as marketing-focused platforms such as Jasper.ai and Copy.ai, have transformed content creation. Among these, OpenAI's ChatGPT has gained considerable popularity among both the general public and marketing professionals, as evidenced by surveys and findings (Kshetri, Dwivedi et al. 2024). For instance, GPT-3 and its successors can generate high-quality, engaging marketing copy, slogans, and logos from simple prompts, streamlining the content creation process. These advanced language models offer capabilities that enable the creation of more compelling and effective content.

While tools like Copy.ai, Jasper.ai, and Peppertype.ai focus on generating text-based marketing content, DALL-E 2 excels at creating realistic visuals and artwork from text prompts. Additionally, DALL-E 2 provides artists and marketers with tools to generate photorealistic images and visual content, inspiring new artistic projects (Galatolo, Cimino, Mario Giovanni C. A. et al. 2022). Furthermore, these capabilities indicate the emergence of an AI revolution in creative industries, as these systems offer speed and scale in producing high-quality content. Consequently, the vast creative potential of these cutting-edge technologies has driven continuous development and innovation, as researchers and professional experts strive to push the boundaries of what is possible.

Despite the impressive advancements in GenAI capabilities, concerns arise about its potential to disrupt creative jobs (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024). While these intelligent systems can automate various creative tasks, studies suggest that they are unlikely to completely replace creative professionals in the near future (Routray 2024). Human input remains essential for refining and evaluating the output generated by GenAI. Consequently, tools such as GPT-3 and DALL-E 2 increasingly serve as “digital assistants” to enhance individual productivity (Routray 2024); rather than being seen as a replacement for content creators. Instead, researchers such as Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. (2024) advocate that AI systems should be viewed as an opportunity to embrace as a creative partner in the content creation process.

Moreover, the increasing adoption of GenAI in CM has sparked debates among researchers regarding the appropriate stages and extent of its integration into the content creation process (Li 2019, Chintalapati, Pandey 2022, Wahid, Risqo, Mero et al. 2023). While some academics argue for a more limited role, emphasising the importance of the human element in decision-making (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024), others emphasise the benefits of GenAI, such as its ability to enhance content novelty (Zhou, Lee 2024), leading to higher productivity and efficiency in marketing activities (Kshetri, Dwivedi et al. 2024). This ongoing debate necessitates a deeper understanding of the implications of GenAI in content creation process.

## 2.5 GenAI in Content Creation Process

This section aims to examine the current academic frameworks and models regarding the collaboration between content creators and GenAI in the content creation process. Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. (2024) developed a conceptual framework that examines the

complexities involved in integrating GenAI within creative industries. This framework represents GenAI not solely as a technological advancement, but as a transformative force that merges with human creativity (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024). This interaction holds the potential to revolutionise creative processes by enhancing human capabilities rather than replacing them (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024).

The framework outlines two primary roles for GenAI within creative industries, namely as internal tools that assist in the production of creative works, and as client-facing applications that enable consumers to directly interact with AIGC (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024). This distinction highlights the twofold impact of AI within creative industries. On the production side, it helps automate repetitive tasks and generate novel ideas, while on the consumption side, it provides consumers with new avenues to interact with creative content (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024).

A critical aspect of Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al.'s (2024) framework is its exploration of the balance between automation and preserving the human element in creative outputs. While AI enhances efficiency and accelerates workflows, it also raises concerns about the authenticity and emotional resonance of AIGC (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024). The framework highlights the challenge faced by creative industries in navigating this tension, emphasising the importance of maintaining authenticity and fostering emotional connections with audiences (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024).

Khan's (2023) research contrasts with these claims by viewing AI more as an assistive tool rather than a collaborative partner. Khan (2023) compares the approach of GenAI to the traditional content creation method performed solely by a professional. In this comparison, Khan (2023) describes how GenAI assists in content curation and expansion, but assigns minimal significance to human input when it comes to creating the written material in the content generation phase.

Moreover, Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al.'s (2024) framework addresses the broader implications of AI integration on the creative workforce and industry dynamics. Their research emphasises the importance of collaboration between creative professionals and AI experts to effectively harness the technology's capabilities while maintaining the unique contributions of human creativity (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024). Similarly, Kim and Maher's (2023) study investigated the impact of AI-generated inspiration on the ideation process within design

tasks. Kim and Maher's (2023) discovered that participants exposed to AI-generated inspirations produced significantly more novel, varied, and numerous ideas than those produced by participants in the control group. This finding reinforces the notion that GenAI should be viewed as a collaborative partner, rather than just an assistant, in the creative process.

Liao, Hansen et al. (2020) critique a traditional design optimisation framework, offering insights into the relationships between designers, problem formulation, tools, and outcomes. This framework assumes the design workflow is parallel, iterative and strategically complex (Cross 2001, Hay, Duffy et al. 2017, Liao, Hansen et al. 2020), but may not fully capture the mental parallelism and simultaneous thinking characteristic of real-world design (Kim, Jieun 2011). While it highlights designers' cognitive processes, it may oversimplify the essential insight and reflection needed for innovation (Howard, Culley et al. 2008), and lacks flexibility to accommodate the variability introduced by diverse design problems, tools, and artifacts.

To address these limitations, Liao, Hansen et al. (2020) propose an AI-augmented design ideation framework that extends the discussed traditional model by integrating AI to support the ideation process. It builds on a generalised design hypothesis context, considering complex design scenarios characterised by the designers, design process, and artifacts (Liao, Hansen et al. 2020). This AI-augmented framework identifies cognitive strategies through an empirical research approach of engineering design tasks, emphasising the phases of discovery and reframe/define (Liao, Hansen et al. 2020).

The AI-augmented framework proposed by Liao, Hansen et al. (2020) offers a detailed exploration of cognitive strategies, highlighting the explicit roles of AI in enhancing these processes. During the discovery phase, AI assists in parsing initial information into insightful representations, potentially accelerating the early stages of ideation. In the reframe/define phase, AI-generated suggestions and references can prompt designers to explore novel concepts and design goals, fostering creativity and innovation. The framework acknowledges the significance of human factors, such as inter- and intra-personal differences, experience, and cognitive styles, which are crucial for effective design ideation.

Another relevant study outlined a cyclical model represented by the infinity symbol, including six key phases being perception, thinking, expression, collaboration, building, and testing (Wu, Ji et al. 2021). This model emphasises how AI-assisted analysis of extensive data and sensor inputs can enhance human perception, expanding human understanding beyond conventional

sensory capabilities (Wu, Ji et al. 2021). During the thinking phase, AI complements human cognitive abilities, facilitating a more profound exploration and fostering innovative thinking that surpasses traditional human limitations. This collaborative dynamic allows for more efficient and comprehensive ideation processes, potentially leading to groundbreaking discoveries and creative outputs (Wu, Ji et al. 2021).

When it comes to expression, Wu, Ji et al.'s (2021) model highlights AI's role in enabling rapid and diverse creativity across various domains such as art, design, music, writing, and coding. By leveraging AI tools, individuals can express their ideas effectively without being constrained by traditional skill barriers, thus emphasising creativity as the primary driver. Moving to the collaboration step, Wu, Ji et al.'s (2021) model underscores the significance of aligning human creativity with AI's analytical capabilities throughout this process. It recommends understanding and leveraging the respective strengths of both creative professionals and AI to optimise task assignment and create productive partnerships.

In the subsequent phases of building and testing, AI plays a crucial role in simulating and analysing processes, leading to higher-quality production outcomes at reduced costs (Wu, Ji et al. 2021). This phase enables predictive insights and meticulous preparation, preparing teams for real-world implementation with efficiency and effectiveness (Wu, Ji et al. 2021). Throughout this iterative process, the model underscores the transformative potential of the collaboration between humans and AI, enhancing creativity and optimising production processes (Wu, Ji et al. 2021). It positions this smart technology as a tool that improves human capabilities rather than replacing them, emphasising the augmentation of human ingenuity through technological integration (Wu, Ji et al. 2021). This concept of human-AI collaboration (Wu, Ji et al. 2021), more commonly known as human-AI co-creation refers to the collaboration between humans and GenAI in creative tasks (Yang, Yang et al. 2022, Rezwana 2023). This terminology and its relevant frameworks are further explored in Section 2.6.

Overall, the proposed human-AI collaboration model offers a high-level perspective on the transformative potential of this partnership in enhancing creativity and optimising production processes. However, the model seems to focus on the broader content creation process without delving deeply into the nuances and sub-processes typically associated with comprehensive content development and marketing. While the model highlights the role of AI in augmenting human perception, cognition, expression, and collaboration (Wu, Ji et al. 2021), it falls short in addressing several crucial phases of the content creation workflow. The lack of consideration

for the ideation, research, planning, drafting, optimisation, distribution, and feedback stages suggests that the model takes a more macro-level view of the content creation process.

By overlooking these essential sub-processes, it appears that the current model does not provide a complete picture for content creators and creative professionals seeking to fully integrate human-AI collaboration into their workflows. The current model's emphasis on the transformative potential of this partnership is valuable, but a more detailed and holistic framework is required to outline the cooperative benefits of human-AI collaboration in content creation.

## 2.6 Human AI Co-Creation

The communication between humans and computational agents, such as smart computers, that leads to creative outputs is broadly referred to as human-computer co-creativity (Davis 2013, Kantosalo, Takala 2020) or the human-computer relationship (Yang, Yang et al. 2022). When utilising AI systems, it is more specifically known as human-AI collaboration (Zhou, Lee 2024) or human-AI co-creation (Rezwana 2023). The concept of human-computer co-creativity, introduced by Davis (2013), focuses on integrating a computer into a collaborative process. This integration offers interesting possibilities in computational creativity and creativity support tools (CST) by effectively combining human and computational creativity (Davis 2013). Computational creativity is an emerging field that combines AI with the goal of developing intelligent systems capable of independently producing creative outputs or collaborating with creative professionals in the creative workflow to generate novel and meaningful ideas, artifacts, and solutions (Rezwana 2023). In brief, this field explores how AI can be leveraged to enhance and support human creativity.

On the other hand, the term human-computer relationship describes the interaction between a user and an AI system, which plays an important role in advocating for co-creation during a design process (Yang, Yang et al. 2022). Moreover, Yang, Yang et al. (2022) description emphasises human-computer interaction (HCI), whereas human-AI co-creation establishes a more complex relationship between content creators and AI (Rezwana 2023). This is because AI not only assists but actively participates in the creative process, contributing its own ideas and insights (Rezwana 2023). Additionally, AI assumes multiple roles, functioning as a partner, evaluator, and generator, much like a human collaborator (Kantosalo, Takala 2020).

Ultimately, AI generates unique content that is blended with the user's contributions, resulting in novel and innovative outcomes (Rezwana 2023).

Building on this foundation, research in this domain has identified several types of computational creativity systems. These include systems that generate creative outputs independently, those designed to support and enhance human creativity, and those that co-create alongside humans, integrating the creative strengths of both entities into a seamless process (Davis 2013, Rezwana 2023). The concept of co-creative systems originated from merging standalone generative systems with CST, thus harnessing both the system's generative capabilities and its supportive role (Rezwana 2023). In purely generative systems, computers solely drive the creative process, whereas in CST, humans lead the creative initiative (Rezwana 2023). However, in co-creative systems, both computers and creative professionals take the initiative, working together as co-creators to enhance the creative process (Rezwana 2023).

In the context of CM, recent research has focused on the impact of human-AI co-creation with a focus on factors such as content originality, usefulness and innovative (Castelo, Katona et al. 2024) or novelty (Zhou, Lee 2024). Whilst the primary purpose of the current study is to understand how GenAI can coexist with content creators through the content creation process, it is important to understand the components that are influenced by this collaboration to be able to assess where GenAI is best included in the CM phases (Zhou, Lee 2024). Current studies have discovered that the novelty of content produced by AI adopters displayed a complex pattern (Zhou, Lee 2024). On average, content novelty decreased over time, indicating that new works became more similar, whereas some users pushed the creative boundaries, resulting in an increase in maximum content novelty (Zhou, Lee 2024).

Complementing these insights, Castelo, Katona et al.'s (2024) study examined the creative potential of AI in generating ideas for a new smartphone application designed to alleviate loneliness. In this study, professional app designers and GPT-4 were tasked with creating app concepts, which were then evaluated by participants who experienced loneliness (Castelo, Katona et al. 2024). The findings revealed that AI-generated ideas were consistently rated higher in terms of originality, innovation, and usefulness compared to human-generated ideas (Castelo, Katona et al. 2024). Specifically, GPT-4's ideas scored significantly higher on scales of originality, innovation, and usefulness (Castelo, Katona et al. 2024).

These results remained robust even when accounting for the variability among judges and potential correlations in their ratings (Castelo, Katona et al. 2024). The mixed-effects linear model used in the analysis confirmed the significant difference in ratings, reinforcing the conclusion that ideas generated by AI ideas were perceived as more creative than those generated by humans (Castelo, Katona et al. 2024). This study further illustrates the significant role AI can play in enhancing creative processes and outcomes in CM and other fields (Castelo, Katona et al. 2024). Therefore, understanding how to effectively integrate GenAI within the content creation process is crucial, given its significant impact (Castelo, Katona et al. 2024). To address this, the following section introduces a conceptual framework grounded in existing models and empirical studies discussed in previous sections. This framework aims to offer both theoretical exploration and practical application for integrating GenAI into the content creation process.

## 2.7 Conceptual Framework

In analysing existing content creation frameworks and models, this study has identified common stages and processes highlighted in the literature reviewed in previous sections. Based on these findings, a conceptual framework has been developed to include the key phases and tasks of the content creation process. Illustrated in Figure 1, this framework outlines five sequential phases including the pre-design, planning, ideation, content generation, and testing. Each phase defines specific roles for both content creators and GenAI systems, supporting a collaborative workflow that leverages the distinct strengths of human creativity and GenAI capabilities.

The framework's pre-design phase is informed by the foundational stages outlined in the model by Liao, Hansen et al. (2020). It begins with content creators gaining a comprehensive understanding of the task or problem they are addressing, which is essential for effective content creation. During this stage, AI systems can assist by clarifying ambiguous requirements, thereby enhancing the research process and ensuring that content creators are well-informed. In the subsequent planning phase, GenAI can play a pivotal role by helping content marketers refine their content plans and offering suggestions for structuring the content. This collaboration offers the potential to improve decision-making precision, enabling marketing professionals to dedicate more time to creativity and innovation (Naseri, Noruzi 2018, Wu, Ji et al. 2021).

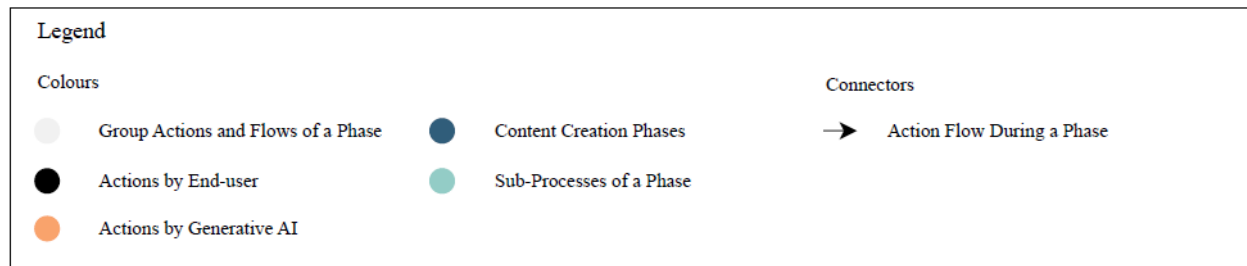
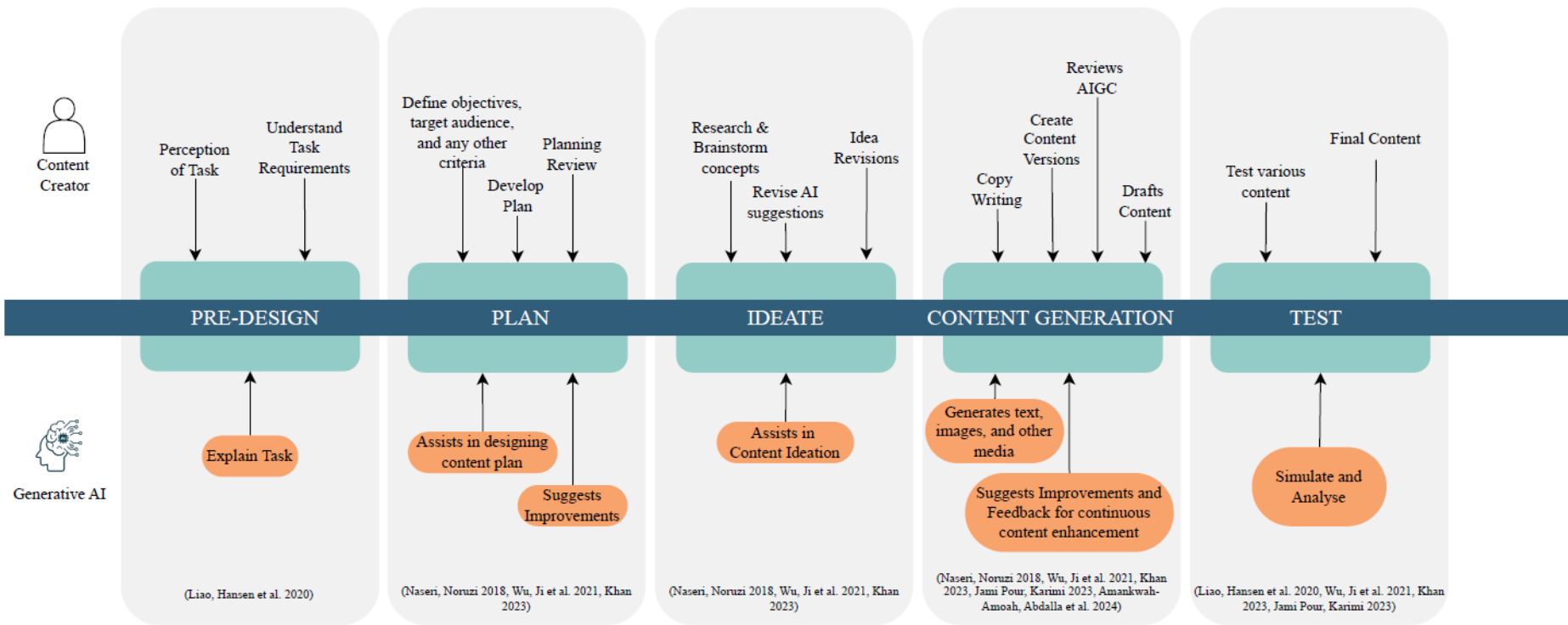


Figure 1 - Conceptual Framework for Human-AI Collaboration in the Content Creation Process

During the ideation phase, the role of GenAI becomes more dynamic, as it can act as a creative collaborator in the brainstorming process. By generating a wide array of ideas, GenAI can expand the scope of possibilities, offering novel concepts that push creative boundaries. These AI-generated ideas can then be refined through human input, resulting in a richer and more diverse pool of creative options. This collaborative relationship between AI and content creators can accelerate the ideation process, ensuring that innovative ideas emerge that might not have been conceived through human effort alone (Kantosalo, Takala 2020, Zhou, Lee 2024).

In the content generation phase, GenAI assumes a more autonomous role by creating initial drafts of various media formats, such as written content, visuals, voice, and video. These AI-generated outputs can serve as the foundational elements for human creators to build upon. This phase emphasises a blend of AI efficiency and human creativity, ensuring that the content produced is both aligned with the creative vision and tailored to meet specific marketing goals. The collaborative nature of this phase can allow content creators to add personality and context, ensuring the final product is unique and relevant to the target audience (Castelo, Katona et al., 2024; Rezwana, 2023).

In the final phase, content creators interact with GenAI for comprehensive evaluations of their content, including testing, reviewing, and refinement. GenAI tools are employed not only to review the content but also to simulate its potential performance before publication. By analysing predicted analytics and incorporating AI suggestions, content creators can make informed adjustments to enhance the final content. This iterative process ensures that the content is optimised for its intended audience and performance metrics, leading to a more effective outcome. Ultimately, this conceptual framework aims to provide a clearer understanding of how GenAI can be effectively integrated into the content creation process.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological approach employed to research the integration of GenAI in the content creation process among content creators in Malta. The study adopts the six-layered Research Onion framework by Saunders, Lewis et al. (2019), ensuring a structured and comprehensive approach to addressing the research question, as discussed in Section 1.2. This framework is particularly well-suited to the study, as it offers a clear, step-by-step guide for making key methodological decisions, from establishing the research philosophy to selecting data collection methods. Its layered structure reflects the complexity of the research topic, enabling a systematic exploration of human-AI collaboration in content creation. Each layer of the Research Onion ensures that the methodology remains aligned with the study's objectives outlined in Section 1.3, particularly in examining the interaction between GenAI and marketing professionals across the various stages of content creation.

### 3.2 Research Philosophy

This study adopts an interpretivist research philosophy, which asserts that reality is socially constructed, and the complexities of human interactions, along with their associated meanings, cannot be fully captured through objective measures alone (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2019). This approach enables an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, particularly regarding the role of GenAI in digital content marketing and the concept of human-AI co-creation.

In interpretivist research, the researcher plays a crucial role in interpreting data, with their insights and experiences shaping the understanding of social phenomena (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2019). This perspective recognises the importance of engaging with diverse creative professionals working in CM, who bring varied viewpoints that are essential for comprehending the complexities of human-AI collaboration and co-creation. By incorporating these diverse perspectives, the study aims to identify meaningful insights into how GenAI influences content creation practices and fosters co-creation between humans and GenAI.

### 3.3 Research Approach

An inductive approach has been chosen to examine the integration of GenAI in DCM. This method supports the development of theory grounded in data, making it particularly effective for uncovering insights in a rapidly evolving field where predefined hypotheses may limit understanding. Researchers such as Wu, Ji et al. (2021), Khan (2023), Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. (2024) have successfully employed inductive reasoning to investigate emerging technological trends. Similarly, this study aims to identify patterns and relationships that emerge during the interaction between content creators and GenAI in marketing.

In contrast, deductive methods, as employed by Kajander (2019), Kantosalo and Takala (2020), Yang, Yang et al. (2022), and Castelo, Katona et al. (2024), are better suited for testing established theories and are less applicable to studies focused on generating new theoretical insights. Hybrid approaches, such as those proposed by Rezwana (2023), who combined inductive and deductive methods, and Liao, Hansen et al. (2020), who integrated inductive reasoning with empirical data, demonstrate the value of combining multiple methodologies.

However, since one of the primary objectives of this study is to build a theoretical framework from the research findings, a fully inductive approach is deemed the most appropriate. The conceptual model developed in the literature review will be refined based on insights derived from participants' data. This iterative process ensures that the final theoretical framework aligns closely with real-world practices, highlighting the inductive approach's effectiveness in addressing the complexities of GenAI integration in content creation.

### 3.4 Methodological Choice

For this research, the appropriate methodological choice is a qualitative approach, as it allows for a thorough investigation of participants' experiences, offering the in-depth insights necessary to understand the complex ways in which GenAI is influencing the creative process. Unlike quantitative methods, which often rely on structured data collection through tools such as questionnaires or surveys, qualitative research enables the researcher to engage deeply with participants' thoughts and practices through in-depth discussions. This is crucial for this study that examines GenAI usage in marketing, where information cannot be fully captured through predetermined responses or numerical data.

While mixed methods are valuable in some contexts, they are not suitable for this study due to the need for focused, detailed exploration, which quantitative data alone cannot provide. Multi-methods, such as combining an experiment with interviews, were considered but ultimately not feasible due to the time constraints of the research project. Academic researchers in related fields have adopted various approaches, including case study analysis (Wu, Ji et al. 2021), editorial and conceptual studies (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024), and dataset collection (Khan 2023). However, since this study aims to explore how marketers actively use GenAI, qualitative research was deemed as the best fit, closely aligning with the work of Rezwana (2023), who employed qualitative methods in a mixed-methods study but emphasised the importance of deep, conversational insights in understanding GenAI adoption. In this context, qualitative research offers the depth and flexibility required to discover meaningful patterns in GenAI use, making it the most suitable choice for this study.

### 3.5 Research Design and Strategy

In this section, the research strategy for investigating GenAI integration in CM is outlined and justified. The study adopts a grounded theory approach, using semi-structured interviews with participants selected through purposive sampling. This strategy aligns with the study's overall inductive research approach, which seeks to generate in-depth insights through conversational, flexible data collection methods, rather than imposing rigid, predetermined questionnaires. The reasoning for each step of this strategy, as illustrated in Figure 2, will be discussed in detail, covering the interview design, sampling methods, and data collection procedures.

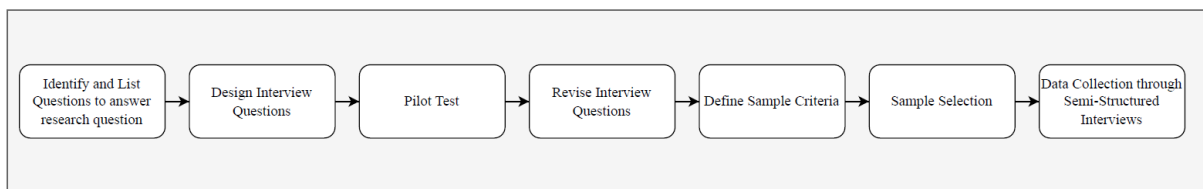


Figure 2 - Study Procedure

#### 3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the primary data collection method for this study. This methodology offers a balance between flexibility and consistency, allowing the researcher to explore predetermined topics while also accommodating follow-up questions and deeper exploration of emergent themes (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2019). The semi-structured approach is particularly well-suited for the exploratory study of GenAI usage in CM, as it enables

participants to elaborate on their experiences and provide insights that may not have been anticipated during the initial research design.

By facilitating open-ended discussions, the researcher captured a more nuanced understanding of how GenAI influences content creation, creativity, and decision-making within marketing teams. This flexibility was crucial, given that the integration of GenAI into CM is still a developing phenomenon. The research seeks to understand not only its current uses but also participants' evolving perceptions of its impact on creativity and work processes. Furthermore, since some questions may be more relevant to participants depending on their specific experiences with the technology, the semi-structured format allows for these variations to be addressed appropriately. As Rezwana (2023) demonstrated in her research, semi-structured interviews are particularly useful in studies where participants' subjective experiences are key to understanding the phenomenon being studied.

### 3.5.2 Sampling Method

The study utilised a purposive sampling strategy, often described as judgmental sampling, to select participants whose attributes aligned with the research question (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2019). This non-probability sampling approach involved choosing participants based on the researcher's judgment regarding their suitability for providing relevant data (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2019). This approach was suitable for the study, as it allowed the researcher to focus on participants with direct experience in using GenAI for CM, thereby ensuring the collected data collected was highly relevant to the research question.

The recruitment process for participants in this study followed a two-step approach. Initially, an online search was conducted to locate marketing agencies and small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) that have a marketing team based in Malta. Subsequently, LinkedIn was utilised to identify individuals directly involved in CM. Potential participants were approached through direct communication via email and LinkedIn messages, outlining the purpose of the study and requesting their participation. This recruitment method allowed the researcher to target professionals who are actively involved in CM and have hands-on experience with GenAI, ensuring that the insights collected are both relevant and applicable to the study's aims. Additionally, this approach helped ensure a range of participants with varying levels of experience in CM, which adds depth to the findings by capturing a wide spectrum of perspectives.

### 3.5.3 Participant Criteria

To ensure the collected data was relevant and consistent, participants were selected based on three key criteria. Firstly, all participants had to have at least one year of experience working in the field of CM, enabling them to provide practical insights into the use of GenAI. This criterion guaranteed that participants could offer informed perspectives grounded in real-world usage. Secondly, participants had to be 18 years or older, ensuring they were legally able to consent to the study and possessed the necessary experience to provide valuable insights. Lastly, only those who actively used GenAI in their work were included. This focus on individuals who were already incorporating GenAI into their content creation processes allowed the study to examine the current integration of GenAI in marketing practices, rather than relying on speculative opinions from those without direct experience. While gender was not a primary selection criterion, efforts were made to achieve a reasonably balanced gender distribution among participants. Collectively, these criteria ensured that participants were well-suited to provide the detailed, experience-based data needed for a comprehensive exploration of GenAI's role in CM.

### 3.5.4 Sample Size

The study set a target participant sample of 20 individuals, selected to provide a manageable yet appropriately diverse range of perspectives. This decision was guided by the principle of data saturation, a well-recognised concept in qualitative research (Glaser, Strauss 1967). Hennink and Kaiser (2022), through their analysis of various academic papers, discovered that a smaller sample size of under 25 interviews, specifically between 9 and 17 interviews, was typically enough to reach saturation, where no new themes or insights emerged from additional data collection. Although a similar study in this field involved 38 participants (Rezwana 2023), the scope and time constraints of this project necessitated a more focused approach. Considering that GenAI is a rapidly evolving technology, the selected sample size was expected to provide insightful findings into its application in CM contexts while still maintaining a practical scope for in-depth exploration. Ultimately, the study included 27 scheduled interviews, of which 24 were successfully completed. The findings from these interviews are detailed in the Results Chapter, which also provide an overview of the demographic breakdown and an in-depth exploration of participant experiences.

### 3.5.5 Interview Protocol

The interviews were planned to be conducted online to enhance scheduling flexibility and accommodate participants from various locations, particularly during the summer months when many Maltese professionals might have been working or traveling abroad. This approach ensured greater accessibility and convenience, making it easier to engage with marketing professionals who often have busy schedules, thereby improving participation rates. Each interview was expected to last between 45 and 60 minutes, providing sufficient time for in-depth discussions while minimising participant fatigue. Prior to the interviews, participants were asked for their informed consent for audio recording, ensuring the accuracy of transcription and analysis while maintaining their rights and privacy. During the interview process, the participants were asked questions which were adapted from existing studies and compiled into a structured interview guide, which was consistently followed across all interviews. This ensured that all interviews maintained a consistent structure, allowing for a more reliable comparison of responses. The below summarises the key interview questions that guided the process, while the full guide can be found in Appendix A.

Topic	Questions	Literature Source(s)
<b>General Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefly describe your background?</li> </ul>	
<b>GenAI Usage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How frequently do you use genAI tools, for which business processes and which features do you leverage most?</li> </ul>	
<b>Human-AI Co-creation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How has genAI impacted your marketing team and processes?</li> <li>Which tasks can genAI perform autonomously, and which benefit from human collaboration?</li> </ul>	Wahid, Risqo, Mero et al. (2023), Liao, Hansen et al. (2020), Li (2019), Chintalapati, Pandey (2022)
<b>Pre-design Phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you understand the requirements for content tasks?</li> <li>Do you seek genAI assistance?</li> <li>How does genAI's output influence your approach?</li> </ul>	Wu, Ji et al. (2021)
<b>Planning Phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you leverage genAI in designing your content plan?</li> <li>What aspects of the content plan do you use genAI to help with?</li> <li>How do you balance human judgment with genAI recommendations?</li> </ul>	Khan (2023)

Figure 3 – Interview Guide Part 1

<b>Ideation Phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you collaborate with genAI during ideation?</li> <li>• How do you balance AI's suggestions with your own creativity?</li> </ul>	Khan (2023)
<b>Content Generation Phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does genAI act as a collaborative partner?</li> <li>• How does genAI assist in creating content across different formats?</li> <li>• When do you rely more on human expertise than on genAI?</li> <li>• What strategies do you use to ensure that the final content is both innovative and meets quality standards?</li> </ul>	Wu, Ji et al. (2021), Khan (2023)
<b>Testing Phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you collaborate with genAI during the testing phase?</li> <li>• What is AI's role in final content decisions?</li> <li>• Is it mainly used for simulation and analysis, or can it be used differently in this phase?</li> </ul>	Wu, Ji et al. (2021)
<b>Human Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which tasks do you believe humans are irreplaceable by genAI?</li> </ul>	Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. (2024) and Routray (2024)
<b>Benefits and Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What concerns do you have about genAI in CM?</li> <li>• Where do you see the most significant impact of genAI?</li> <li>• What recommendations do you have for organisations adopting genAI?</li> </ul>	

Figure 4 – Interview Guide Part 2

### 3.5.6 Pilot Study

Prior to the main data collection phase, one pilot study was carried out to test the interview questions and refine the interview protocol. Although the results from this one pilot study were not included in the main data set, this phase was crucial for ensuring that the questions were clear and elicited responses relevant to the research objectives. Additionally, it allowed the researcher to refine the interview flow and ensure that participants felt comfortable with the format. The pilot study confirmed that semi-structured interviews were suitable for exploring the complex and dynamic topic of GenAI integration in marketing.

## 3.6 Time Horizon

A cross-sectional time horizon was selected for this study due to its suitability for capturing data within a limited timeframe of less than a year (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2019). This approach was ideal for gathering insights at a specific point in time (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2019), aligning with the study's aim of understanding how GenAI was currently being used in CM. A

longitudinal approach, while useful for tracking changes over time (Saunders, Lewis et al. 2019), was not appropriate for this research due to the rapidly evolving nature of GenAI technologies. Longitudinal studies would have required extended observation, which exceeded the project's time limitations and may not have captured the immediate relevance of fast-changing GenAI practices. The cross-sectional design, therefore, ensured timely and efficient data collection, offering valuable insights without the need for long-term tracking.

### 3.7 Techniques and Procedures

The data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews using platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet. These platforms were selected for their flexibility, accessibility, and ease of use, enabling that participants can join interviews from various locations and at their convenience. Each interview was audio-recorded with the participants' informed consent, and each recording was assigned a unique identifier, stored in a secure Excel sheet, to ensure anonymity and prevent identification by name.

After conducting the interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed using TurboScribe.ai, a GenAI transcription service known for its speed, efficiency, and high accuracy. The service also included timestamps, which facilitated the detailed analysis of the interview data. The selection of TurboScribe.ai was based on its capacity to process large volumes of data quickly while maintaining a high degree of accuracy.

Before analysis, the transcribed data underwent a meticulous pre-processing phase to ensure accuracy and consistency. This process involved manually reviewing the transcriptions while re-listening to the audio recordings to correct any errors or omissions, ensuring the data was accurate and reliable for subsequent analysis. Special attention was given to capturing not only the participants' spoken words but also relevant pauses, emphases, and non-verbal cues, which provided additional context to their responses. Non-verbal expressions or filler words such as “er”, “mhm”, and “um” were included in the transcription when noticeable, as they reflected natural speech patterns. However, these fillers were not the focus of analysis, as the study prioritised the substantive content of the participants' responses. Repeated words were retained, as they may indicate emphasis or importance and were valuable during the coding process.

For participants who switched to speaking in Maltese, the transcriptions were carefully translated into English, ensuring that the meaning, tone, and nuances of their responses were

accurately preserved. Following transcription and translation, the data was cleaned to correct any transcription errors, standardise language, and remove irrelevant filler words or content that might have detracted from the main insights. This pre-processing phase also included a thorough review to ensure anonymisation, with any personally identifiable information redacted to protect participants' privacy.

Once the transcripts were finalised, the qualitative data was analysed using NVivo, a software tool specifically designed for qualitative data analysis. NVivo was selected for its ability to handle complex textual data, systematically organise it, and allow for detailed coding and thematic analysis. This tool also enabled the researcher to explore relationships between different data points, making it ideal for the inductive approach employed in this research.

The coding process began with process coding, which involved capturing the actions and sequences described by the participants during their interviews. This approach was critical in mapping out the specific phases of content creation allowing the researcher to understand how AI and humans collaborate at each stage. For instance, if multiple participants described their experiences in terms of “AI-assisted ideation” or “human review of AI-generated content”, these specific actions were coded to reflect their perceptions of how GenAI is integrated into the content creation process. This step ensured that the analysis was accurately represented of the participants' experiences and provided a structured framework for further analysis, highlighting the dynamics of GenAI involvement in various phases of content creation.

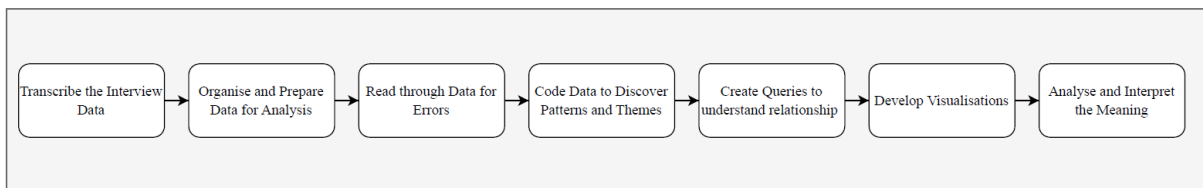
Next, axial coding was applied to group the initial codes into broader categories. The purpose of axial coding was to organise the large number of process codes into more meaningful themes that address the research question. For example, codes related to timesaving, efficiency, and ease of use were grouped into a larger theme, such as “GenAI’s Key Benefits”. This process of grouping codes into higher-level categories enabled the researcher to begin identifying broader patterns within the data.

The data was analysed using thematic analysis, which was particularly suited to this study due to its focus on identifying patterns across the entire dataset. This method allowed the researcher to explore recurring themes and ideas across the interviews, offering insights into how GenAI is influencing CM. The themes were developed inductively, meaning they emerged from the data rather than being predefined. NVivo assisted in organising these themes, ensuring a systematic and comprehensive analysis.

During the analysis, vertical analysis was conducted, which involved a deep dive into individual participants' responses to ensure the nuances of each person's experience are captured. This approach allowed the researcher to identify both common themes across the participant group and unique insights from individuals. For example, while some participants may have shared common views on GenAI's impact, others may have provided contrasting or unique perspectives that warrant further exploration.

Throughout the analysis, participants' quotations were used to illustrate key findings. These direct quotes provided evidence for the themes identified and enriched the analysis by grounding it in the participants' own words. The use of quotations also ensured that the findings remained closely connected to the data, accurately reflecting the participants' experiences and insights.

The combination of process coding, axial coding, and thematic analysis ensured that the data was analysed in a structured and meaningful way. This approach allowed the researcher to identify both explicit and implicit patterns in how GenAI was being integrated into CM offering a detailed understanding of GenAI's evolving role in this field. The analysis procedure of this study was summarised in Figure 5.



*Figure 5 - Data Analysis Procedure*

### 3.8 Ethical Considerations

This research process placed a strong emphasis on ethical integrity, ensuring that all stages of the study were conducted with the utmost respect for participants and ethical standards. Careful attention was given to designing the interview questions (in Appendix A) to be neutral and non-leading, minimising bias and allowing participants to express their genuine perspectives. This helped ensure that the data collected was both accurate and reliable. Participants were fully informed about the research purpose and provided informed consent prior to participation. Their confidentiality was protected, and they were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Moreover, the research adhered to strict data protection policies, including those established by the University of Malta, ensuring that

any personal or sensitive information was securely handled and stored (L'Universita' ta' Malta). Transparency and ethical responsibility were maintained throughout the study, particularly in the reporting and analysis of findings.

### 3.9 Limitations

This study was limited by its relatively narrow sample, which primarily consisted of content creators. While this focus offered valuable insights into this specific group, it may inadvertently have excluded the perspectives of other professionals in the content creation field, such as graphic designers, videographers, and SEO strategists. Additionally, the study's geographical focus on Malta may restricted the generalisability of the findings to broader international contexts. The cultural and market dynamics unique to Malta could have influenced how GenAI was perceived and implemented, which may differ significantly from practices in larger, more diverse markets. Another challenge encountered was that some participants were hesitant to share detailed information about their use of GenAI, possibly due to concerns about disclosing sensitive company practices or activities that may not align with company policies. This reluctance led to some participants providing limited responses, such as simple “yes” or “no” answers, which could have impacted the depth of the data collected. Finally, the translation of Maltese responses into English may have led to the loss of nuanced meaning or context, potentially affecting the interpretation of the data.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative analysis of interview data exploring the use of GenAI in content creation. The data were manually coded using NVivo software to identify key themes and insights relevant to the research question and objectives outlined in Section 1.2 and Section 1.3. The results capture participants' experiences and perspectives, offering a comprehensive view of how GenAI is currently integrated into the content creation process. The analysis reveals significant patterns, illustrated through diagrams that highlight the core themes emerging from the interviews. Furthermore, the findings provide an in-depth understanding of participants' demographics, the identified phases and sub-processes of content creation, and their perceptions of GenAI. This section also explores how these perceptions are shaped by factors such as professional experience and generational background, outlining the key benefits, strengths, and limitations of GenAI and content creators. Overall, these findings establish a foundational understanding of the relationship between content creators and GenAI, providing valuable insights into its practical applications within the marketing industry.

### 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The study included 27 scheduled interviews, of which 24 were successfully completed. The participant sample demonstrated a near-equal gender distribution, with 13 females and 11 males. The majority of participants were in 25 to 34 age range, predominantly Millennials, followed by Generation X and Generation Z. On average, participants had 11 years of experience in the marketing industry, with experience levels ranging from 1.5 to 34 years. Notably, most participants reported integrating GenAI into their daily workflows. Each interview lasted approximately 35 minutes, providing a substantial opportunity to explore participants' experiences and insights. The demographic characteristics of each participant are listed in Figure 6.

Participant No	Age	Generation	Gender	Years of Experience
Participant 1	41	Millennials	Female	20
Participant 2	32	Millennials	Male	9
Participant 3	25	Gen Z	Male	3
Participant 4	34	Millennials	Female	9
Participant 5	47	Gen X	Male	25
Participant 6	28	Millennials	Male	10
Participant 7	36	Millennials	Male	10
Participant 8	45	Gen X	Female	20
Participant 9	36	Millennials	Female	13
Participant 10	41	Millennials	Male	20
Participant 11	32	Millennials	Female	7
Participant 12	29	Millennials	Female	5
Participant 13	27	Gen Z	Female	1.5
Participant 14	48	Gen X	Male	14
Participant 15	30	Millennials	Female	2
Participant 16	32	Millennials	Female	11
Participant 17	32	Millennials	Male	10
Participant 18	38	Millennials	Male	11
Participant 19	37	Millennials	Female	5
Participant 20	31	Millennials	Male	7
Participant 21	36	Millennials	Male	15
Participant 22	43	Millennials	Female	4
Participant 23	54	Gen X	Female	34
Participant 24	32	Millennials	Female	5

Figure 6 - Participants' Demographics

### 4.3 Perceptions of GenAI

The themes presented in Figure 7 emerged from participants' responses to questions about their perceptions of GenAI during the interviews. These themes were categorised under "AI as a Tool" and "AI as a Collaborative Partner".



terms. One participant referred to it as “my best friend” (Participant 11), while others likened it to “the best intern” (Participant 19) or “a junior copywriter” (Participant 17). Similarly, a Gen Z participant described GenAI as an “alternate brain” (Participant 3), emphasising its role in expanding cognitive capabilities. In contrast, a Gen X participant offered a more practical view stating, “I consider AI to be a tool in the same way that I consider a forklift to be a tool” (Participant 5), highlighting a functional approach to its use.

These descriptions reflect a sense of reliance and comfort, implying younger generations may integrate GenAI more deeply into their daily routines, developing a relationship with the technology that extends beyond mere functionality. Nevertheless, the overall consensus is that GenAI, while valuable, is primarily seen as a tool rather than a collaborative partner. This perspective highlights an appreciation for GenAI’s contributions to creative workflows, while also maintaining a clear distinction between human creativity and technological assistance.

#### 4.4 Benefits, Strengths, Limitations and Concerns

The following sub-chapter discusses the strengths and limitations of both GenAI and content creators, along with the key benefits and concerns associated with GenAI usage. Emerging themes from the interviews highlight GenAI’s strengths, particularly its ability to provide broader insights, generate ideas, and improve the content creation process. Below are two quotations taken directly from the interview transcripts.

“It definitely influences us by bringing in new ideas and new perspectives.” – Participant 16

“They [GenAI tools] serve as an extra pair of eyes for you to review your material. And they help you identify uhm mistakes or issues which might not be immediately evident to the naked eye.” – Participant 17

Furthermore, the participants emphasise limitations with the current version of GenAI tools. Notably, the following quotations point out GenAI’s struggles with understanding prompts and requires constant human oversight, making it unsuitable as a standalone automated system.

“But AI needs to understand better the user for whom it is working to be able to generate the content.” – Participant 10

" I would say perception of working with AI is that it will never replace humans. Similarly to planes, which can run on autopilot for 90% of the flight, they still need human pilots to

ensure safe take-off and landing and also to oversee and manually intervene if needed during the flight.” – Participant 20

Figure 9 illustrates the emerged themes comparing the strengths and limitations of GenAI.

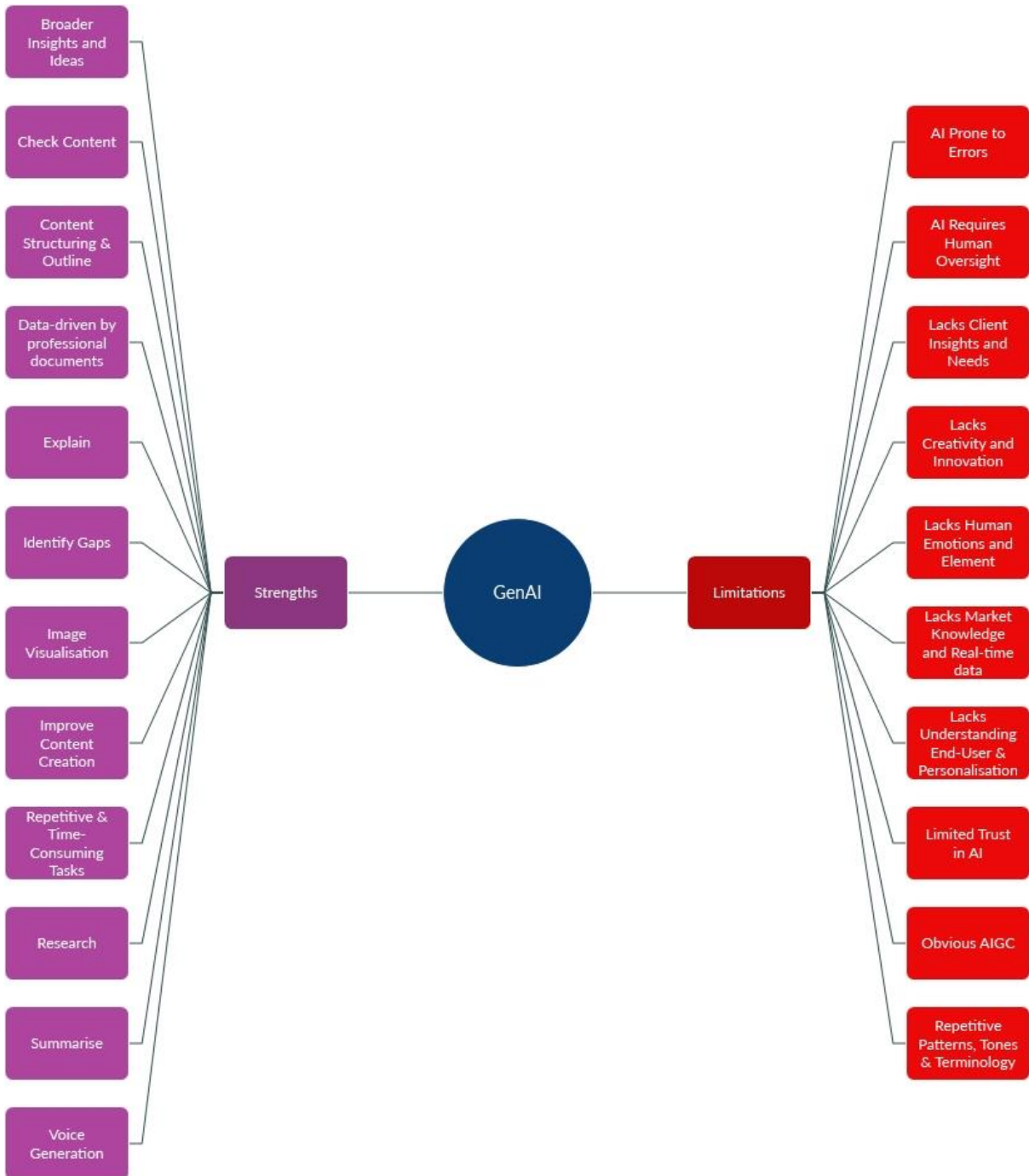


Figure 9 - Mind Map Comparison of GenAI's Strengths and Limitations

Participants emphasised that human input is irreplaceable due to the unique strengths of human thinking, emotional intelligence, and creativity qualities that GenAI cannot fully replicate. As Participant 13 put it, “human touch and human brain and human perspective will be always

much more valuable than any set of fancy AI tools.” The majority acknowledged that while GenAI supports content creators, human intuition and decision-making are essential to maintain authenticity and depth in the published content. Conversely, certain limitations of human capabilities also emerged as themes. Some participants acknowledged cognitive challenges and often engage in time-consuming tasks, driving their need for faster, more efficient solutions. The comparison between strengths and limitations of content creators is further illustrated in Figure 10.

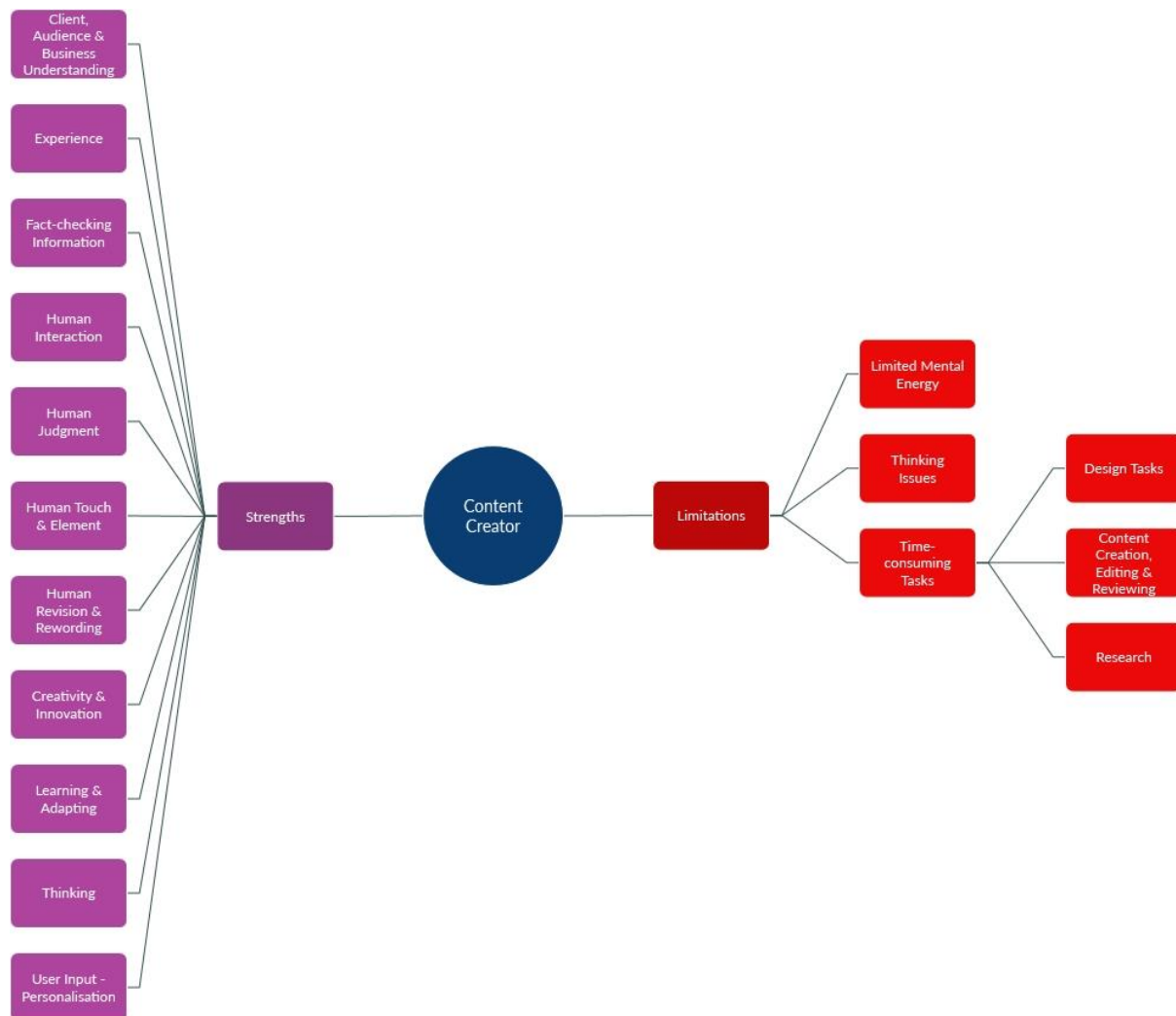


Figure 10 – Mind Map Comparison of Content Creator’s Strengths and Limitations

Throughout the interviews, participants highlighted key benefits of GenAI, as illustrated in Figure 11. The top three advantages, including increased helpfulness, speed, and ability to save time, emerged as particularly impactful for content creators. As Participant 12 shared, “It helped a lot with regards to productivity. I work better. It's easier. It's faster”, underscoring GenAI’s potential to streamline workflows and enhance efficiency.

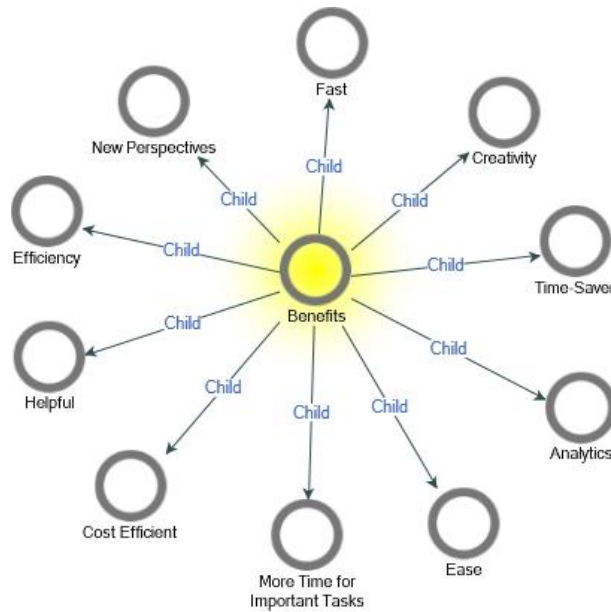


Figure 11 – Coding map of GenAI Key Benefits

Participants expressed concerns about GenAI, including fears of overreliance leading to laziness, reduced content quality, job losses, ethical implications, and bias, as illustrated in Figure 12. As Participant 24 emphasised, “it is being so overused, that we are forgetting the talent of the people.”

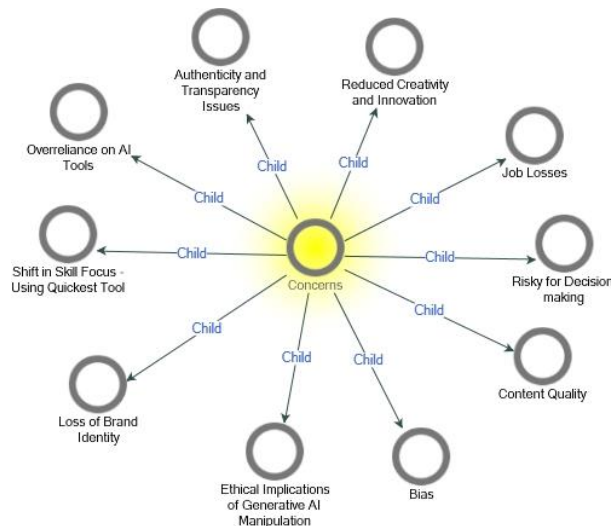
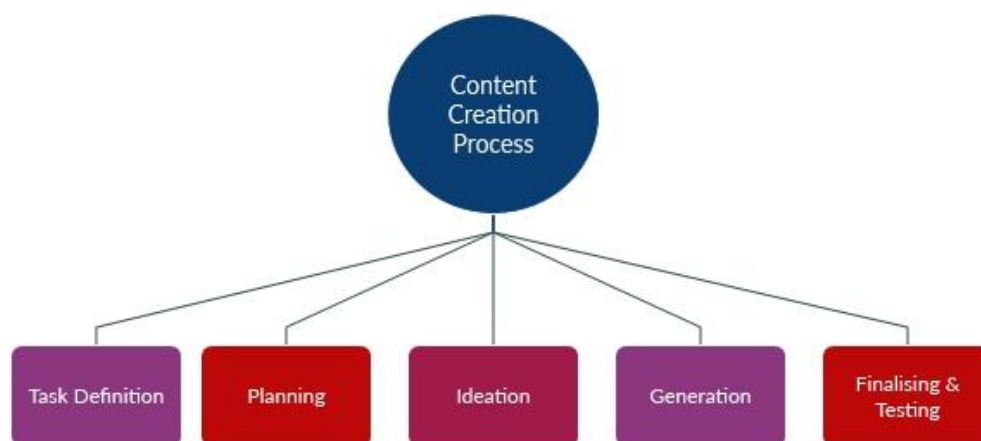


Figure 12 – Coding Map of GenAI Concerns

This sub-chapter provided a comprehensive exploration of participants' perspectives on GenAI, revealing its perceived benefits and limitations, along with broader implications for the creative process. These insights set the context for the following sub-chapter, which delves into the sub-processes within each phase of content creation, examining how GenAI interacts with human input at each step.

## 4.5 Emerged Themes of Content Creation Process

In discussing the phases of content creation, no new phases emerged; instead, participants rephrased the initial and final phases that emerged from the Literature (Section 2) to enhance clarity. The first phase, “Pre-Design,” was renamed “Task Definition,” and “Testing” was revised to “Finalising and Testing” as illustrated in Figure 13. Notably, two participants mentioned using GenAI during post-production to analyse campaign performance for insights applicable to future campaigns. However, this perspective was not widely echoed by the other participants, leading to its exclusion from the main findings, as it did not receive substantial emphasis from the majority.



*Figure 13 – Mind map illustrating the key phases of content creation.*

In this study, the themes identified within each phase of the content creation process were systematically coded using process coding and classified as sub-processes. This approach facilitated a nuanced understanding of the various elements contributing to the overall workflow. The concept maps presented in Figures 14, 16, 18, 20, and 26 visually summarise these themes, illustrating the relationships and interdependencies.

To enhance clarity and facilitate a more intuitive understanding of these sub-processes, Business Process Model and Notation (BPMN) diagrams were developed for each phase as illustrated in Figures 15, 17, 19, 25, and 27. BPMN is a widely recognised method for representing business processes in a graphical format, making it easier to convey complex information clearly and effectively (refer to Appendix B for details regarding BPMN symbols). Each diagram illustrates the sequential flow of activities, decisions, and interactions within a specific content creation phase, dividing responsibilities between the content creator, their team, and GenAI. The diagrams emphasise the bi-directional flow of information, where GenAI’s suggestions are constantly refined by the human creator and their team.

Overall, the integration of concept maps and BPMN diagrams enhances the understanding of the sub-processes involved in content creation and offers a structured framework for analysing and improving these processes in future projects. These visual tools assist both practitioners and researchers alike in grasping the complexities of content creation, thereby facilitating more effective workflows and outcomes.

#### 4.5.1 Phase 1 - Task Definition

In the initial content creation phase, while participants agreed that defining objectives and conducting initial research are crucial, their views on using GenAI varied. About half used GenAI to support brainstorming and research, viewing it as a tool for gathering insights or guiding initial steps. For instance, Participant 13 described GenAI as a “guideline” or “starting point,” while Participant 11 saw it as a flexible tool, stating, “I do seek AI.” Others preferred a more manual approach to gain clarity on project requirements, echoing the sentiment that traditional methods provide a solid foundation. Participants described diverse team collaboration approaches, like Participant 14’s monthly meetings to discuss 3-month roadmaps, and Participant 4’s team starting with client briefs and sharing individual research findings to refine ideas collectively. This diversity in task initiation practices highlights the evolving balance of manual work and GenAI assistance in the initial phase.

Furthermore, Figure 14, a concept map, highlights the themes and codes identified during the interview process, illustrating the relationships between tasks such as audience analysis, research, and client communication. In contrast, Figure 15 uses BPMN to map the sequential flow, decision points, and interactions between the content creator and GenAI, including inclusive gateways to represent varied decision paths that may be taken in this phase.

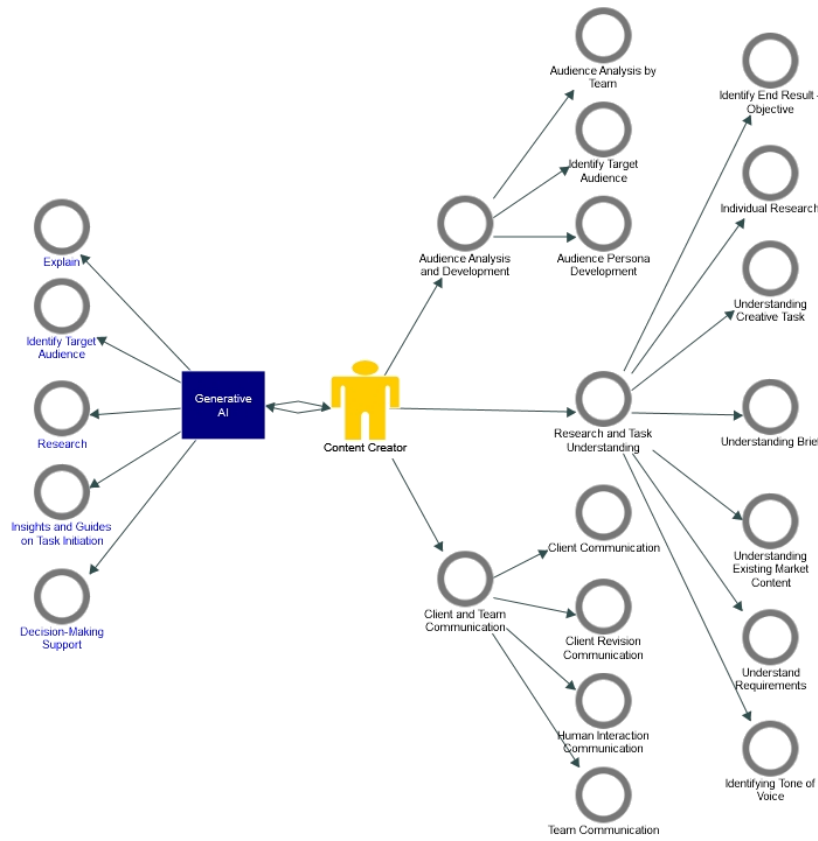


Figure 14 - Concept map of Task Definition

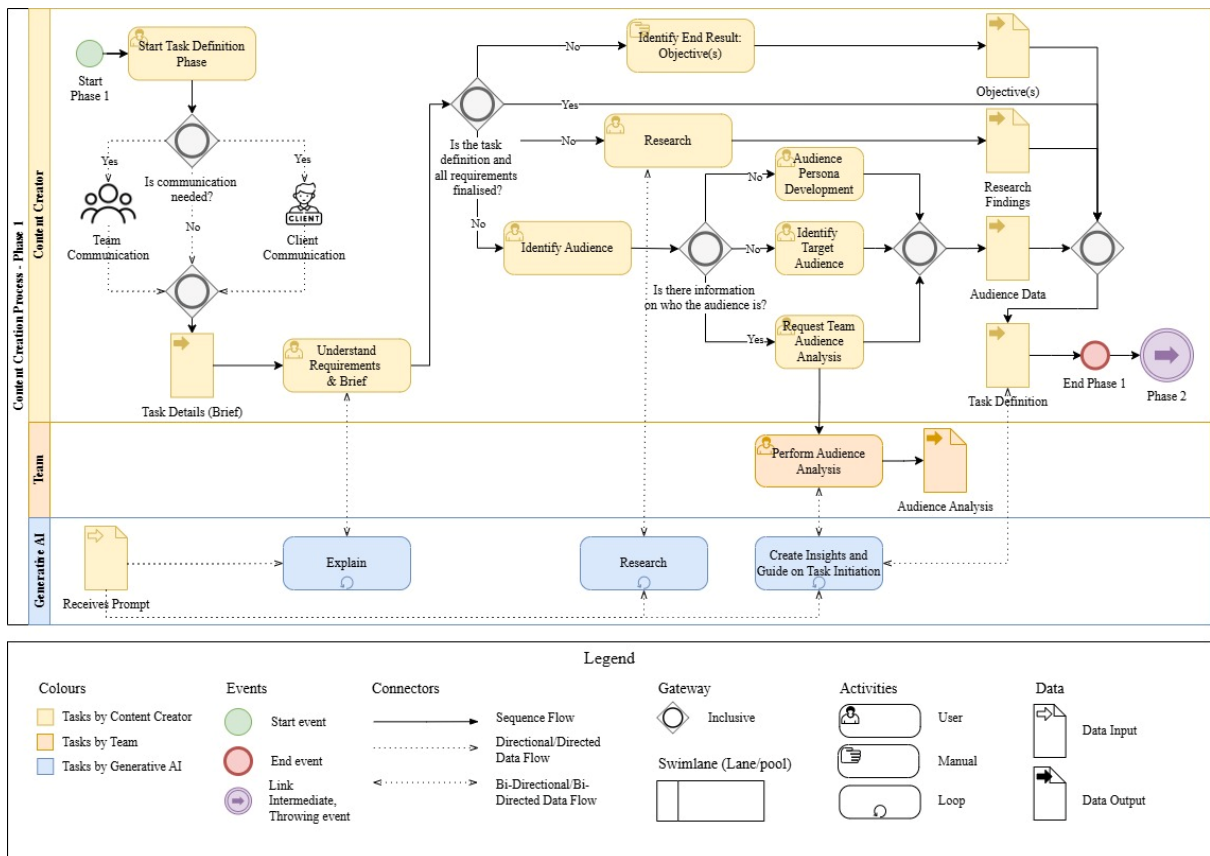


Figure 15 - BPMN of Task Definition

## 4.5.2 Phase 2 - Planning

The second phase, Planning, reveals a strong preference for manual planning with minimal reliance on GenAI among participants. As Participant 17 described, “We come up with a plan... aimed at achieving our objectives.” Similarly, Participant 1 emphasised, “The content plan, technically, you create yourself,” underscoring the value placed on personal expertise. However, GenAI still plays a supportive role in refining and organising ideas. Participant 18 explained that after drafting a plan, they turn to GenAI for help in structuring the plan “Once I come up with a plan, I can ask the tool, can you lay it out for me month by month?” Participant 3 added that GenAI provides “a core skeleton of something, and you can easily change it the way you want it to be,” showing how GenAI suggestions are selectively incorporated rather than followed rigidly. This diversity in participant approaches is reflected in Figure 16 and Figure 17, where decision points in the BPMN diagram allow for both manual planning and GenAI-assisted refinement, illustrating the flexibility participants exercise in blending traditional planning with AI-driven insights.

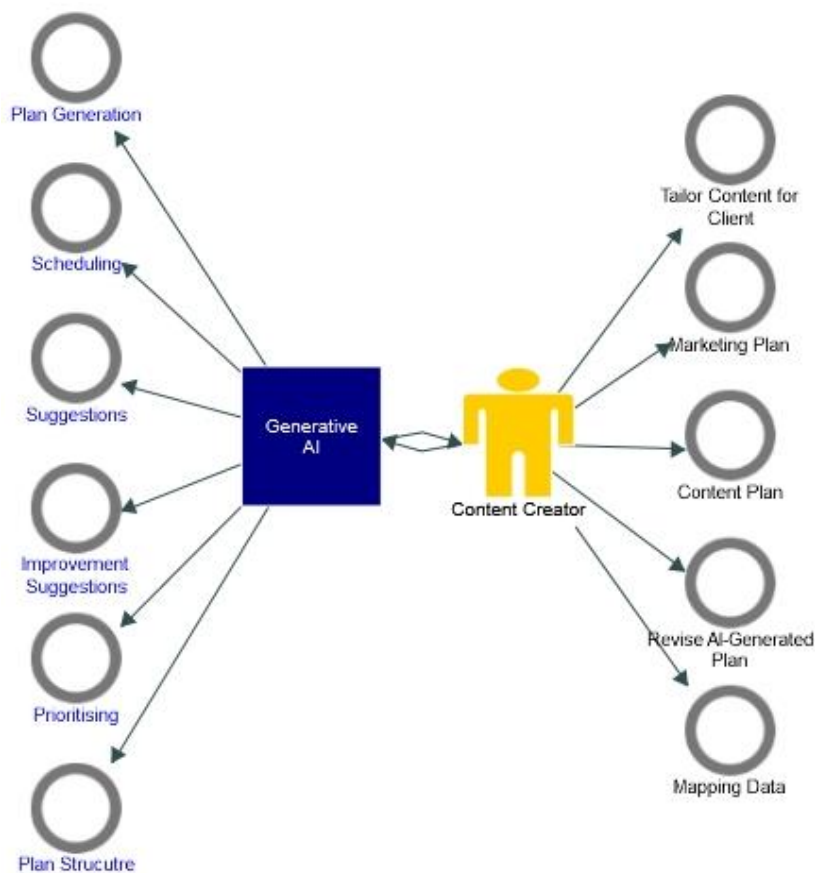


Figure 16 - Concept map of Planning

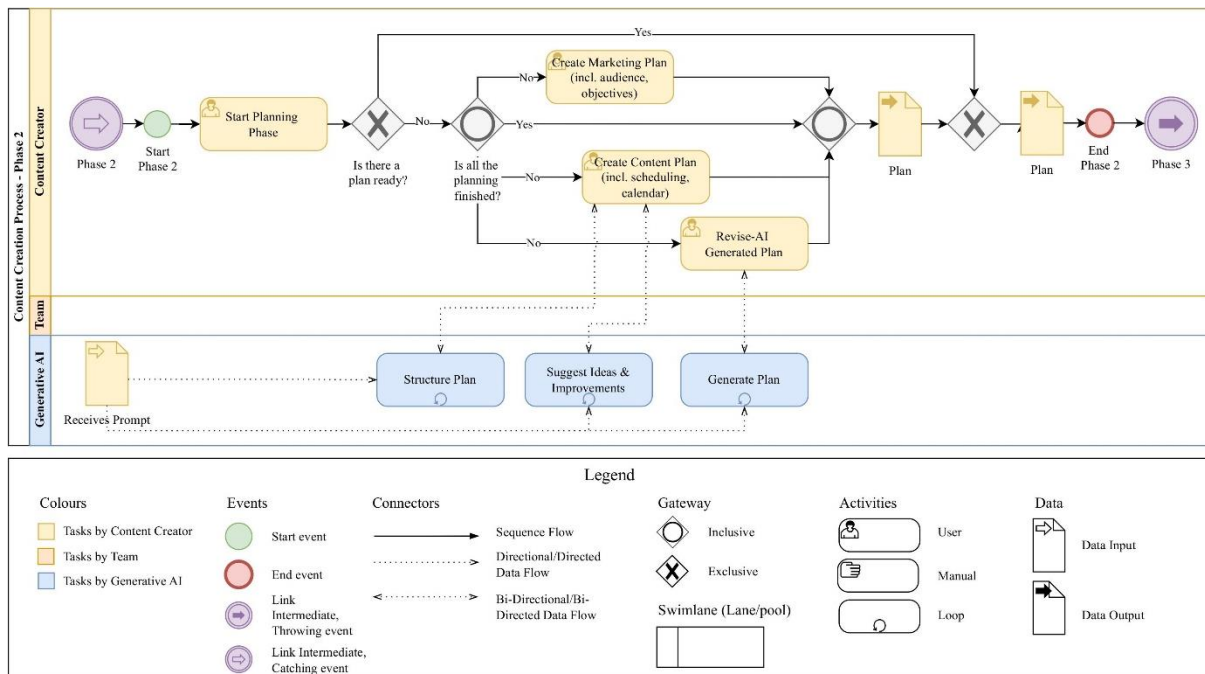


Figure 17 - BPMN of Planning

### 4.5.3 Phase 3 - Ideation

During the Ideation phase, participants increasingly relied on GenAI to inspire new ideas or expand upon their own. As Participant 1 noted, the benefits include “going into ChatGPT, which will then give you more ideas, more opinions that maybe you wouldn't have thought of exactly.” Similarly, Participant 13 found GenAI useful “for some suggestions or for some different angles.” However, when it came to identifying trends, Participant 23 pointed out, “You have to really work hard and find what's trending in Malta.” In general, participants preferred real-time sources, like TikTok, Instagram, HubSpot, or Google Trends, for trend analysis, as they perceived GenAI’s knowledge base as not current enough for their needs.

These findings are illustrated in Figure 18, which shows how GenAI supports the content creator by generating ideas, aiding brainstorming, and suggesting improvements. The content creator then refines these outputs, researches trends, and incorporates team feedback. Meanwhile, Figure 19, captures the diverse use of GenAI in ideation, where it supports creativity but is less suited for real-time insights, showcasing the flexibility of human-AI collaboration throughout the ideation process.

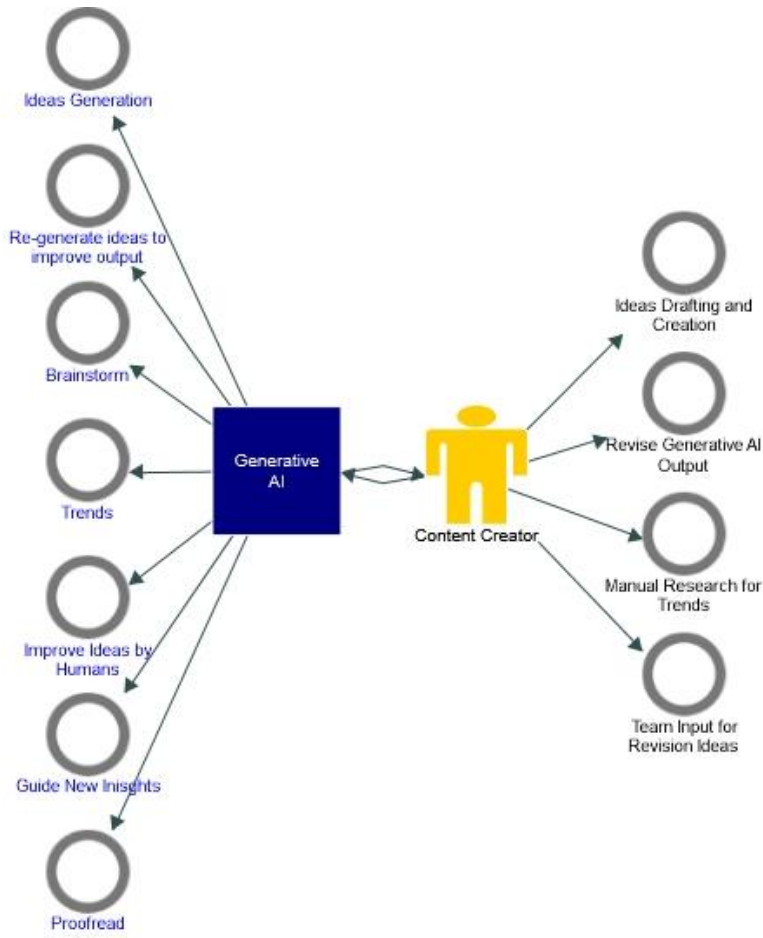


Figure 18 – Concept map of Ideation

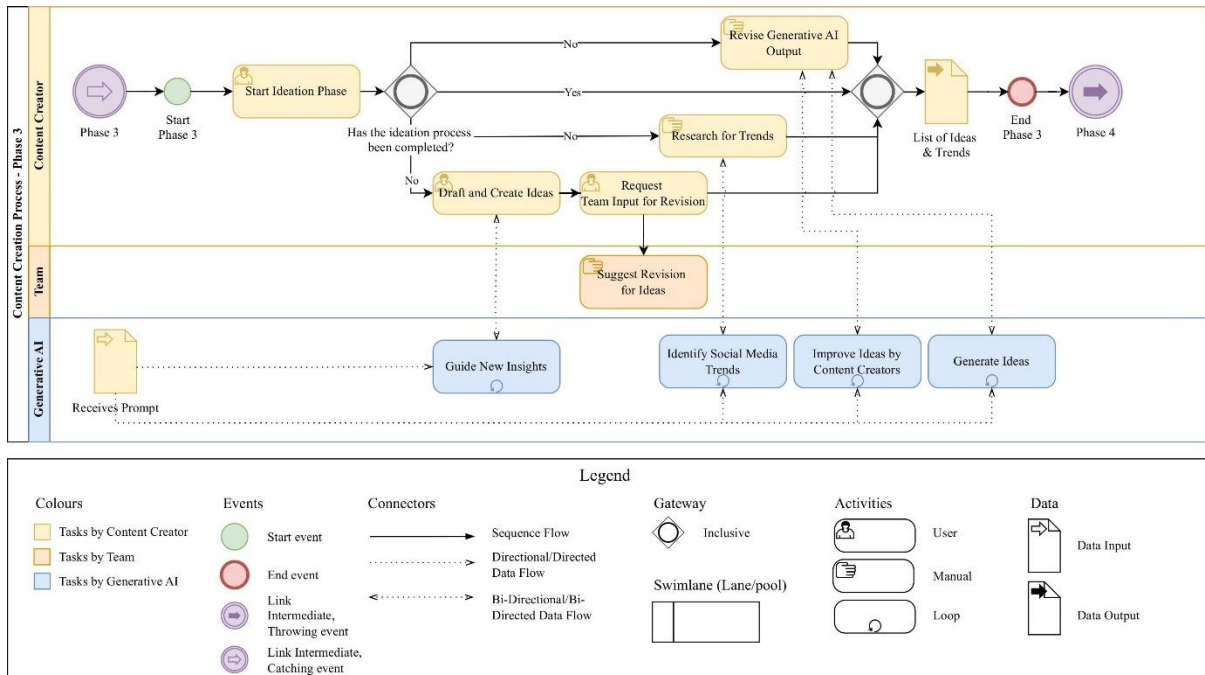


Figure 19 – BPMN of Ideation

#### 4.5.4 Phase 4 – Content Generation

During the Content Generation phase, participants primarily used GenAI for creating text and images, while voice and video were less frequently generated. For text, tools like ChatGPT assisted content creation by generating captions and keyword-driven content. As Participant 2 described, “The idea, the keywords, the direction, is all given by the team, and then AI will help us to come up with something which is quite marketable.” This reflects a preference for using GenAI to create initial drafts, which are then refined further.

Similarly, platforms like Midjourney and DALL-E were frequently utilised for image creation, though participants noted challenges with accuracy, particularly with details like hands. As Participant 15 mentioned, “it doesn't know how to handle it, nothing.” Participant 22 added, “Sometimes you can't find the image that you want...which is hence why we go to AI for imagery.” However, Participant 24 observed that AI-generated images often lack “emotion,” leading marketing teams to prefer human photographers for campaigns requiring a personal touch.

Voiceover tools were seen as useful and frequently used, but some participants felt they were limited. Participant 10 expressed interest in localised capabilities, noting, “I’m very excited to see what it can do in Maltese.” For video, tools like CapCut were mentioned, with Participant 18 highlighting that, “it gives a different feel to every piece of content,” by adding effects that enhance storytelling.

Participants had mixed opinions, with around half still performing manual tasks such as writing, graphic design, photography, and video editing. They emphasised that GenAI outputs require careful proofreading and editing, as over-reliance could lead to generic content. Participant 24, for example, expressed a preference for traditional media, stating, “I’d rather spend [the budget] on videographers, photographers, and actual models who can create some human experience,” underscoring the importance of a human touch in specific contexts. This balance between efficiency and authenticity reflects the nuanced integration of GenAI in content generation.

The emerged themes are represented in Figure 20 and Figure 25. Figure 20, a concept map, illustrates the collaborative roles of the content creator and GenAI across various media types,

including written content, visuals, voice, and videos. The corresponding sub-processes for each media type are detailed in Figure 21 to Figure 24.

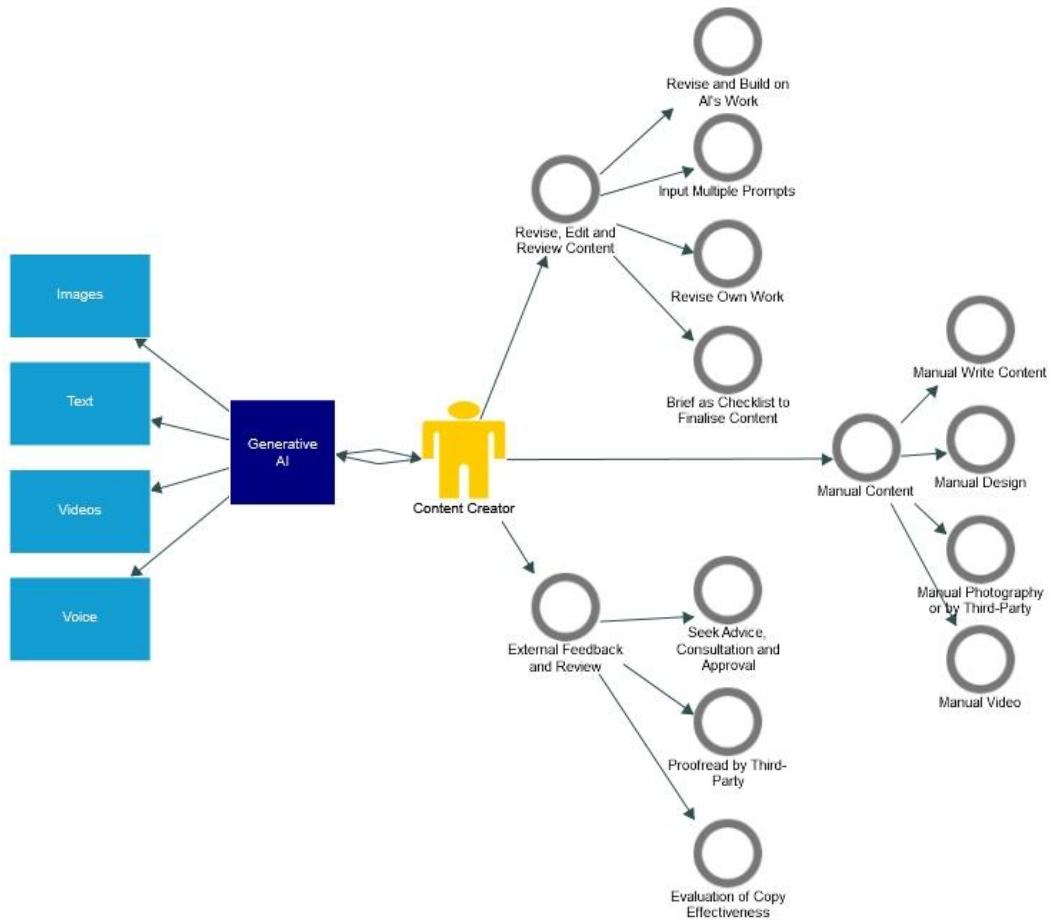


Figure 20 – Concept map of Content Generation

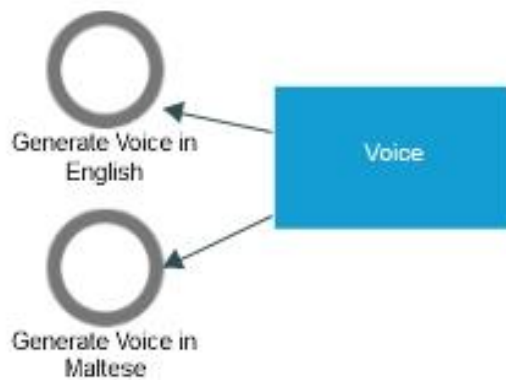


Figure 21 – Voice sub-processes

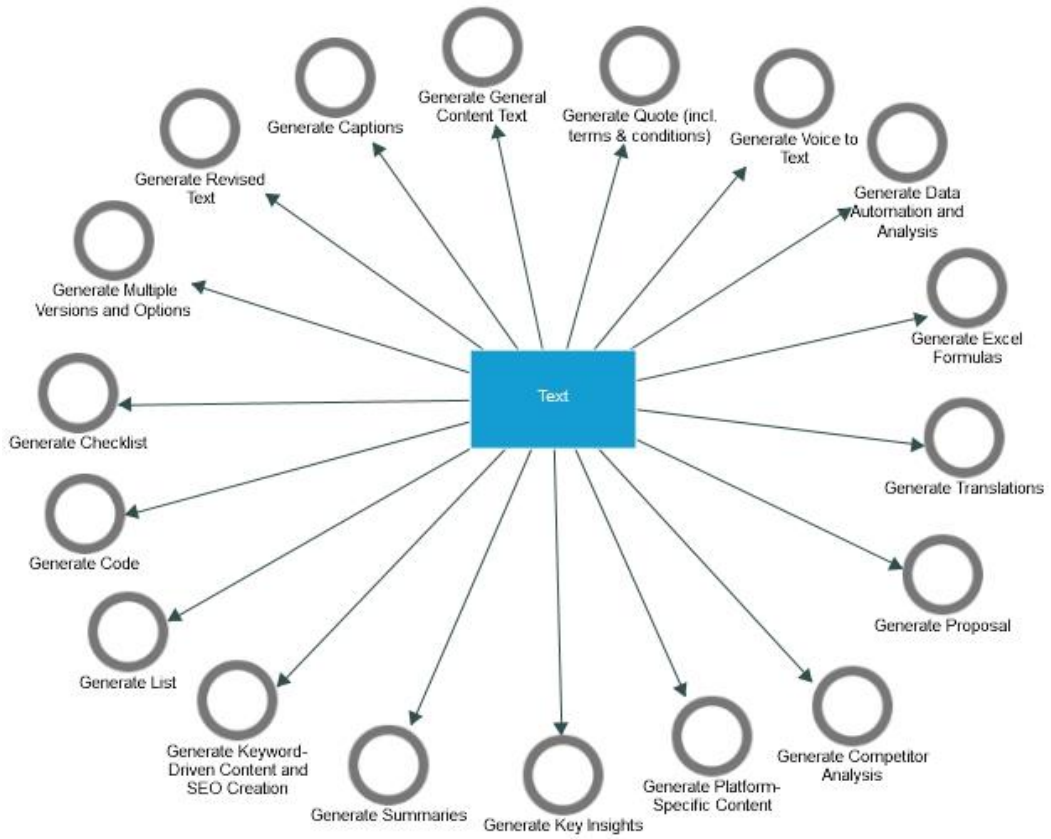


Figure 22 – Text sub-processes

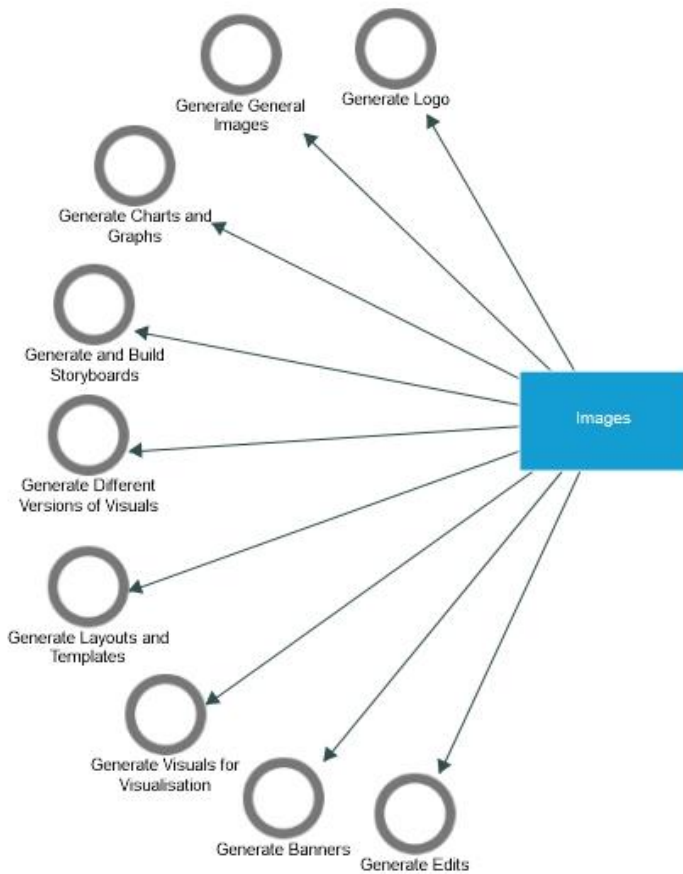


Figure 23 – Images sub-processes

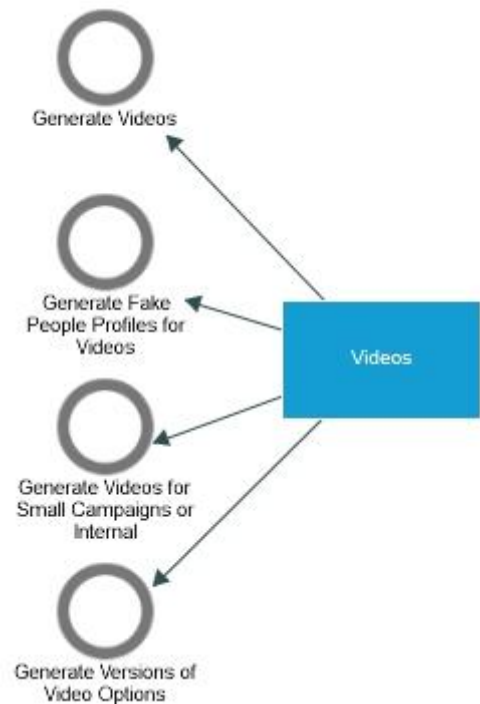


Figure 24 – Videos sub-processes

In contrast, Figure 25 visually represents how the content creator initiates the process by starting content generation, either manually or through GenAI. The flow includes decision points that guide whether AIGC needs revision, feedback, or additional manual input. Each sub-process, such as generating multiple versions, revising content, and finalising based on feedback, is captured step-by-step. This flowchart also highlights the iterative nature of the generation phase, where AI-driven insights and human creativity are continually looped in to produce high-quality content, incorporating proofreading and final approvals.

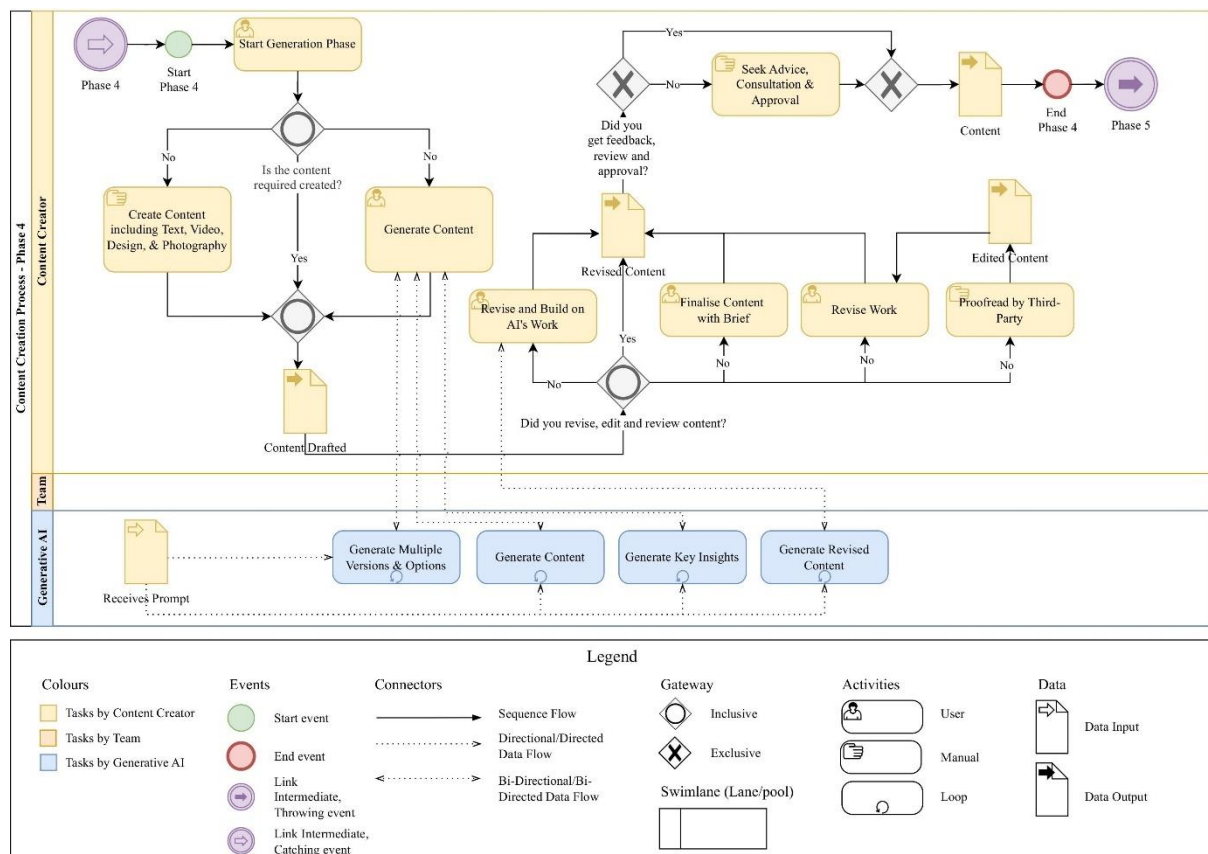


Figure 25 – BPMN of Content Generation

#### 4.5.5 Phase 5 – Finalising and Testing

In the final phase, participants’ use of GenAI decreases, preferring human judgment for critical decisions. GenAI tools were mainly used for last-minute revisions and proofreading, allowing creators to ensure accuracy without losing the personal touch. As Participant 17 explained, “Reviewing before publishing, like ChatGPT, helps with proofreading to identify any last-minute mistakes.” However, some participants preferred a more hands-on approach, expressing that, while GenAI can provide helpful insights, the responsibility for final content quality

remains with the team. “The reality is that AI assists us, but it cannot take decisions for us,” remarked Participant 17, underscoring the importance of human discretion.

Participants consistently emphasised that the ultimate decision-making in this phase rests with the content creator or their team, not with GenAI. Participant 24 noted, “We already have enough opinions in the office...if we add a robot, it will complicate our lives.” This preference for human oversight at the last stage reflects the participants' commitment to quality control, ensuring that GenAI remains a supporting tool rather than a decision-maker.

These perspectives are depicted in Figure 26, which shows how GenAI collaborates with the content creator by providing data-driven insights, predicting content performance, and assisting with content revision. The content creator then reviews these insights, ensuring that the content aligns with brand guidelines and satisfies quality standards.

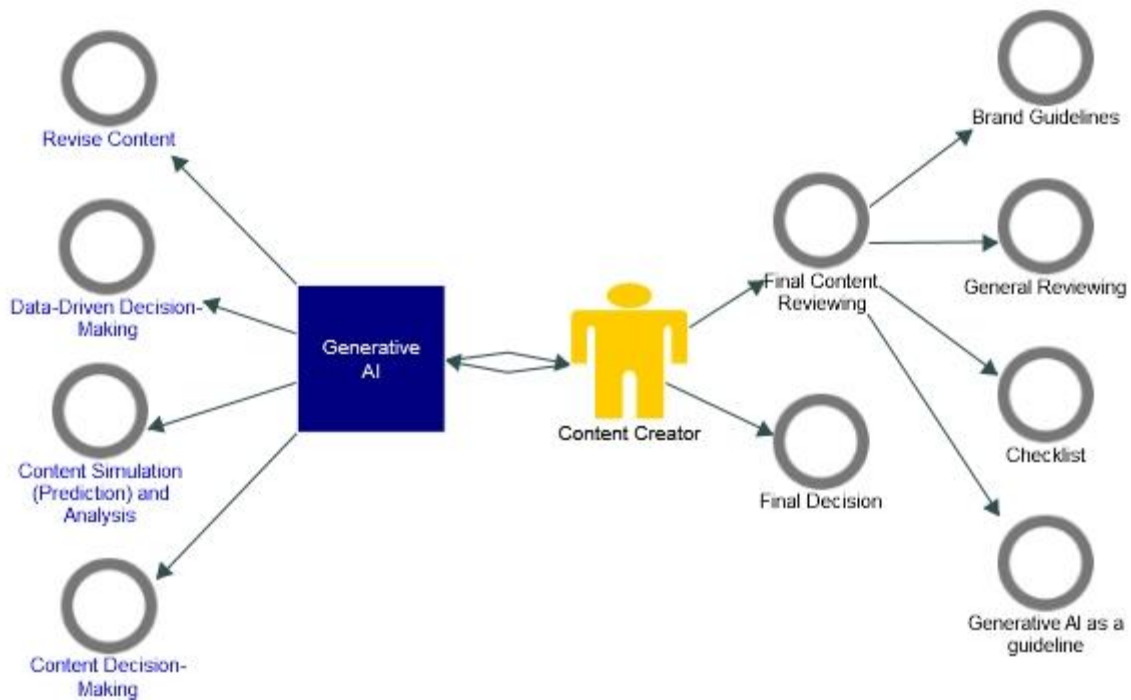


Figure 26 – Concept map of Finalising and Testing

Meanwhile, Figure 27, highlights the collaborative approach ensuring that the content is polished and ready for publication, incorporating final revisions, brand alignment, and team feedback to produce a finalised, high-quality content piece.

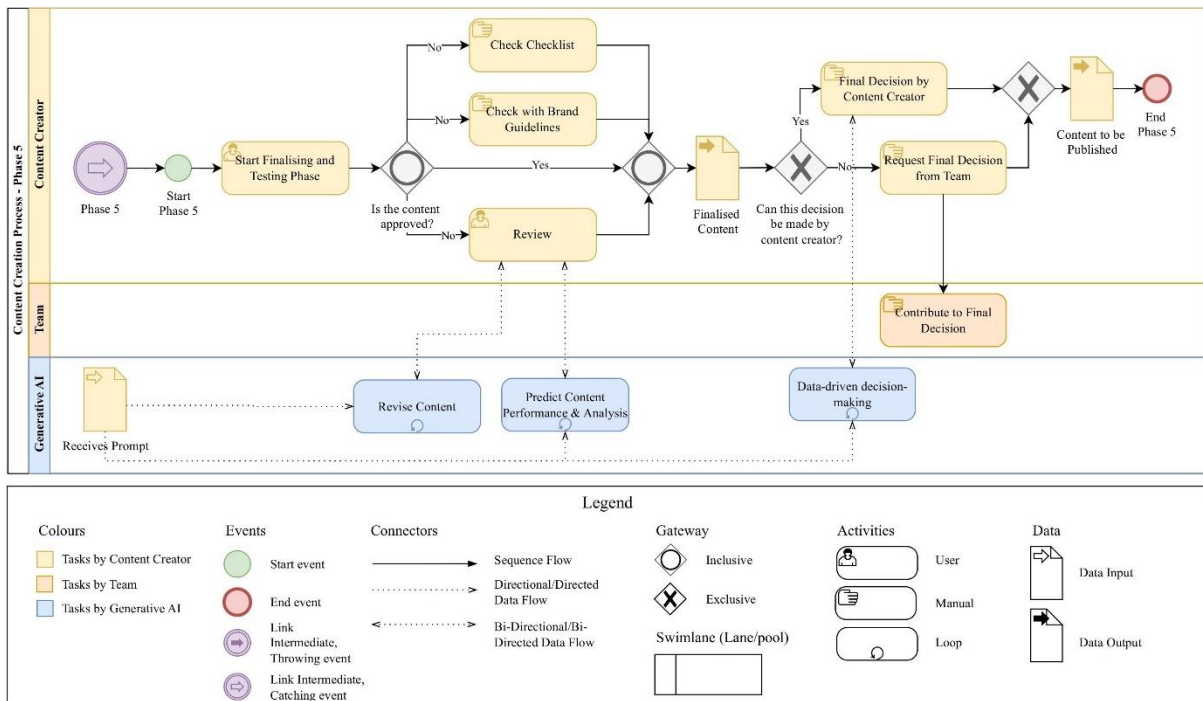


Figure 27 – BPMN of Finalising and Testing

## 4.6 Final Recommendations

At the conclusion of the interviews, participants offered recommendations for future marketers considering the adoption GenAI, as illustrated in Figure 28. Collectively, they advised content marketers to approach GenAI with the right mindset and balance, viewing it as a complementary tool rather than a replacement. As Participant 20 stated, “The best solution is likely to use both human and AI capabilities.” Similarly, Participant 13 emphasised, “I would say, put human first, and use it as a tool, not as a solution.” Participants further stressed the importance of proper training, with Participant 4 noting that “training needs to be done, courses need to be taken” to ensure effective and knowledgeable use of GenAI. This is crucial as GenAI presents new opportunities. As Participant 3 remarked, “It does create new opportunities. So, I think for every job that's kind of useless in the future, there will be another job that people can do.” This underscores the necessity of adapting and learning as technology advances.

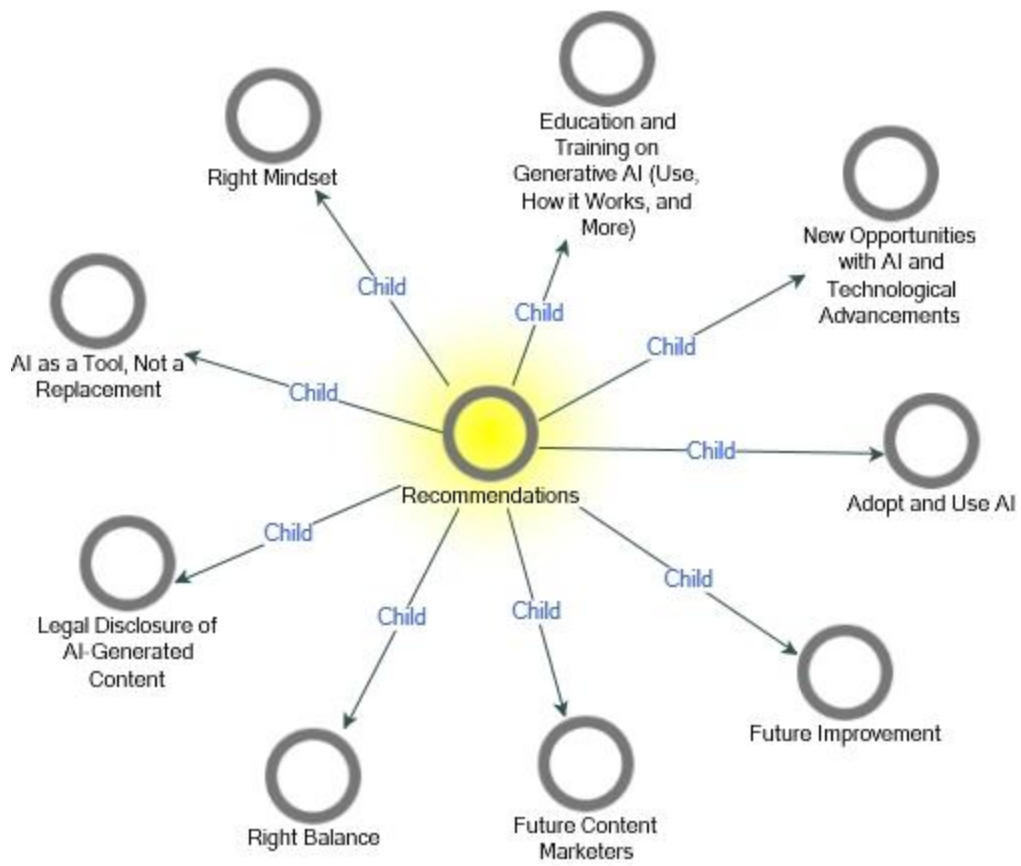


Figure 28 - Coding map of Future Recommendations

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comparative analysis of the study's findings and existing academic literature on the role of GenAI in content creation. By examining the insights from participant interviews and contrasting them with established research, the following discussion provides a deeper understanding of how GenAI is perceived, applied, and integrated into CM workflows. The discussion explores the key themes that emerged from the research, evaluating how these themes align with or diverge from previous studies in the field. Ultimately, the chapter integrates the findings from the literature and participants' insights to present a revised conceptual framework.

### 5.2 Stages and Factors Influenced by GenAI Integration

The study indicates that integrating GenAI with human creativity influences various factors within each content creation phase, rather than introducing new phases altogether. This finding aligns with Liao, Hansen et al. (2020) and Khan (2023), who assert that AI tools primarily optimise existing workflows. However, integrating GenAI notably influences factors such as ideation diversity, efficiency, cognitive load, emotional resonance, and authenticity. For instance, GenAI expands ideation by generating unique ideas that creators may not consider independently, broadening the creative scope as described by Wu, Ji et al. (2021). Additionally, participants reported that GenAI enhances efficiency, particularly in repetitive tasks, which allows creators to focus on higher-level creative tasks and reduce cognitive load during the ideation and drafting stages. While GenAI accelerates drafting, participants noted limitations in conveying nuanced emotional depth, underscoring the unique role of human input in sustaining authentic, relatable content (Rezwana 2023, Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024).

Furthermore, the task redefinitions, such as renaming of Phase 1 and Phase 5, highlight the need for clarity in task objectives, reflecting Liao, Hansen et al.'s (2020) emphasis on the importance of well-defined roles and responsibilities within human-AI collaboration. This role clarity is critical as GenAI tools introduce new avenues for content refinement and quality assurance. Yet, participants demonstrated a preference for retaining final decisions within

human oversight, reinforcing the importance of human judgment and adaptability in preserving content integrity. By enhancing ideation and reducing repetitive work, GenAI optimises each stage, establishing itself as an influential tool that amplifies human capabilities without overshadowing the creative decision-making essential to content creation. This aligns with the view of Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. (2024), who assert that GenAI collaboration integrates with human capabilities without fundamentally transforming human roles in content creation.

### 5.3 Roles and Responsibilities in Human-AI Co-Creation

The following sub-sections aim to explore the distinct roles and responsibilities performed by GenAI and content creators, both independently and collaboratively, throughout the content creation process. This discussion aims to highlight the strengths and limitations of GenAI and human contributors, offering insights into how these roles may evolve in a human-AI co-creation framework.

#### 5.3.1 GenAI - a Tool or Collaborator?

Participants' perspectives on whether GenAI serves as a tool or a collaborator reflect an evolving relationship between technology and creativity, underscoring both the assistive and dynamic roles GenAI can play. Most participants aligned with Khan's (2023) view that AI is primarily an assistive technology. However, participants who used GenAI more extensively into their workflows began to view it as a collaborator, a sentiment echoed by Rezwana's (2023) concept of human-AI co-creation, where GenAI moves beyond being a mere tool and takes on more dynamic, creative roles. This shift also reflects generational differences, as younger participants are more inclined to perceive GenAI as a collaborative partner, while older participants generally maintain a perspective closer to Routray's (2024) notion of GenAI as a "digital assistant" that enhances productivity without replacing human input. This difference suggests that perceptions of GenAI may evolve over time as its integration deepens, a theme also noted by Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. (2024).

Furthermore, the findings reveal a dynamic yet structured collaborative workflow, where GenAI functions as both tool and collaborator, depending on the task. Participants found GenAI most useful for ideation and content generation but emphasised the need for human thinking for tasks involving emotional intelligence, originality, and final approval. This view aligns with

Chintalapati and Pandey (2022), who emphasise that AI should complement existing workflows, enhancing productivity while still relying on human oversight to ensure creative quality. Furthermore, participants expressed concerns that an over-reliance on GenAI could diminish content quality, highlighting the need for continuous skill development among content marketers, as noted by Feuerriegel, Hartmann et al. (2024). Overall, findings indicate that a balanced collaborative model requires delineation in roles based on strengths, with GenAI handling data-heavy and repetitive tasks, while content creators maintain control over tasks demanding emotional intelligence, strategic direction, and final approval, to maintain a balance in an increasingly AI-driven environment.

### 5.3.2 Strengths and Limitations of GenAI

Participants identified significant benefits of GenAI, including increased speed, efficiency, and the ability to generate diverse content. These findings align with Naseri and Noruzi (2018), who highlight AI's role in improving decision-making and refining content plans to streamline production. Additionally, Castelo, Katona et al. 2024 found that GenAI tools, enhanced CM by producing novel content across various formats, thus optimising the creative process. AI's ability to ideate quickly also reflects the study of Zhou and Lee (2024), who highlight how AI enhances productivity in creative processes by pushing the boundaries of what is possible.

Despite these benefits, participants voiced concerns about GenAI's limitations, particularly its challenges in understanding prompts and its inability to create content with emotional depth. This critique aligns with research by Anantrasirichai and Bull (2022), who argue that AI systems often struggle to grasp context and emotional nuances. Similarly, Rezwana (2023) highlights that while AI can generate novel content, it lacks the social and emotional context that human creators provide, which is crucial in content that needs to resonate on a deeper, emotional level. Hence, human oversight is essential in overcoming these limitations, supporting Anantrasirichai and Bull's (2022) "human-in-the-loop" model, which emphasises the necessity of human feedback in refining AIGC. This research highlights the importance of human intervention in creative decision-making, as GenAI currently lacks the capability to produce content with the required nuance and emotional resonance.

### 5.3.3 Future Implications for GenAI in Content Marketing

Participants consistently emphasised the importance of ongoing education and training to effectively leverage the capabilities of GenAI within content creation. This recommendation is particularly relevant given the rapid advancements in AI technologies, as noted by Rezwana (2023) and Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. (2024). As GenAI technologies continue to evolve, participants stressed that content creators must adapt by learning to work alongside these tools, ensuring that human creativity is not diminished by over-reliance on GenAI. This aligns with the broader discussions in the literature about the future of AI in creative industries, where Zhou and Lee (2024) assert that GenAI can be a powerful collaborative partner in content creation, but only when thoughtfully and strategically integrated.

Participants also expressed concerns about the potential for job displacement, particularly for younger professionals who may over-rely on GenAI early in their careers. While prior research, such as Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. (2024), has focused on AI's disruptive impact on jobs, the participants in this study emphasised the importance of adapting to use GenAI rather than fearing replacement. Some individuals agreed that certain jobs, such as content writers and voice actors, are already experiencing a decline in demand as GenAI automates more tasks. However, most participants stressed that human oversight will always remain essential, even as GenAI takes on more creative tasks. Overall, participants highlighted the need to adapt, as evolving technologies often create new opportunities and way of working, as has been the case with the impact of disruptive technologies over the years.

## 5.4 A Refined Framework for Content Creation

The primary objective of this study was to develop a refined framework for content creation, integrating the research findings and existing literature outlined in Chapter 2. The final conceptual framework, illustrated in Figure 29, outlines the key phases and their corresponding sub-processes, which can be executed by the content creator, GenAI, or a combination of both. The diagram is intentionally non-sequential, as it is not a flowchart; instead, each task can be completed independently, depending on the content creator's needs and preferences. The sub-processes within each phase are flexible, allowing creators to decide the order and way they are performed.

Furthermore, the framework was developed carefully to showcase the importance of maintaining a balance between creative professionals and GenAI by including processes such as task definitions, constant human oversight, and iterative collaboration with GenAI. This was a key point that emerged from the data analysis. The displayed tasks in Figure 29 are essential to ensuring that AIGC aligns with brand guidelines and creative objectives. This builds on to the model proposed by Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. (2024), which emphasises the balance between automation and the human element in creative outputs.

The refined framework developed in this study demonstrates how GenAI can be seamlessly integrated into existing workflows without disrupting the core creative functions. This is further illustrated in Figure 30, which visually compares the literature-based framework with the final version informed by the study's findings, highlighting the key changes in tasks and processes, as detailed in the diagrams' legend. While most participants viewed GenAI as a tool rather than a collaborator, the framework acknowledges the increasing role of human-AI co-creation in daily practices. By acknowledging the collaborative potential of GenAI, the framework aligns with the perspectives of Rezwana (2023) and Kantosalo and Takala (2020), who advocate for GenAI as a co-creator rather than merely a tool. Despite participants' general preference for seeing GenAI as a tool, the framework strikes a balance by integrating GenAI's strengths in content generation while ensuring that human creativity, expertise, and decision-making remain central. Thus, the process of human-AI co-creation is maintained, even if GenAI is not widely seen as a full collaborator.

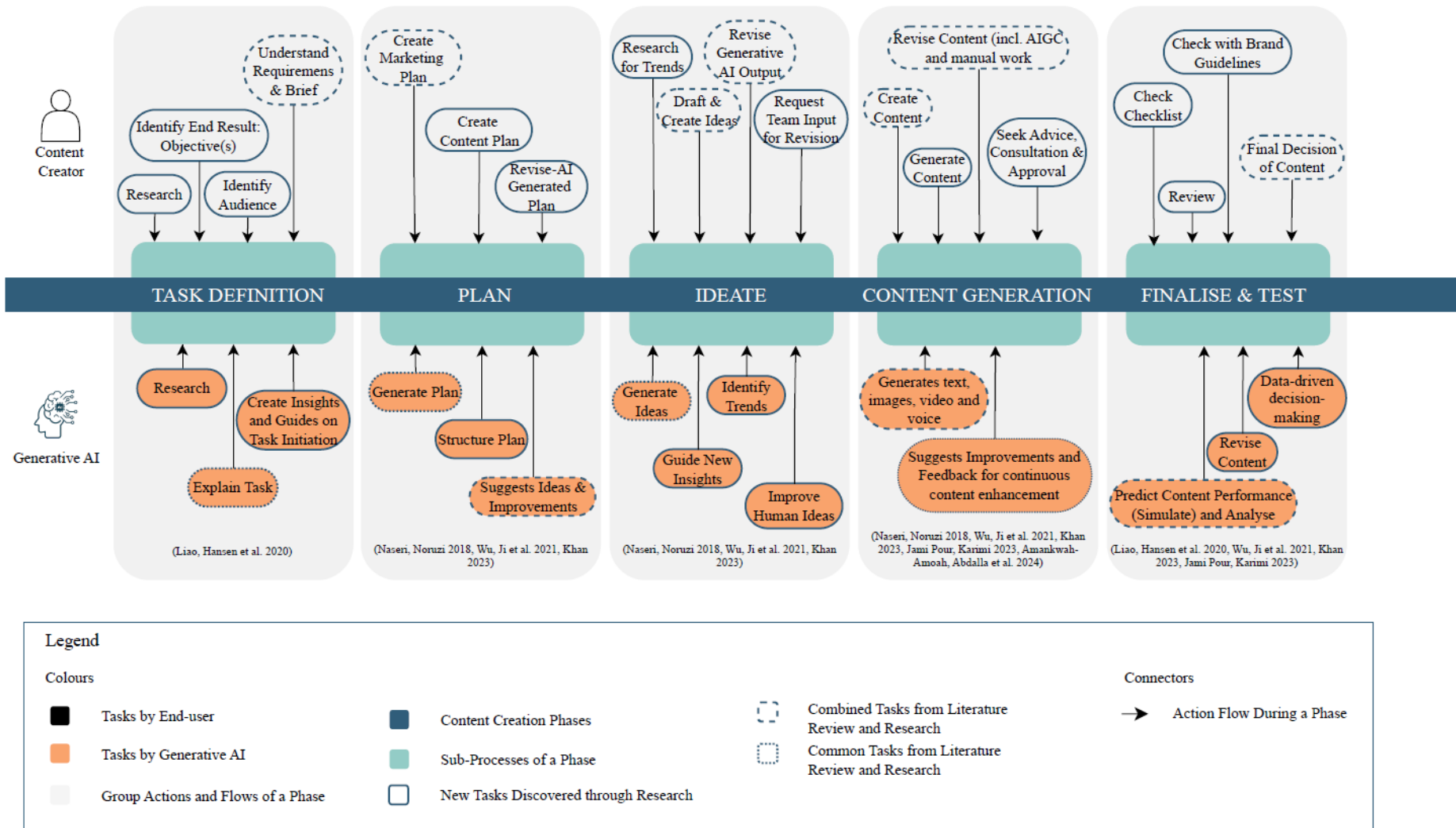


Figure 29 - Revised Conceptual Framework for Human-AI Collaboration in the Content Creation Process

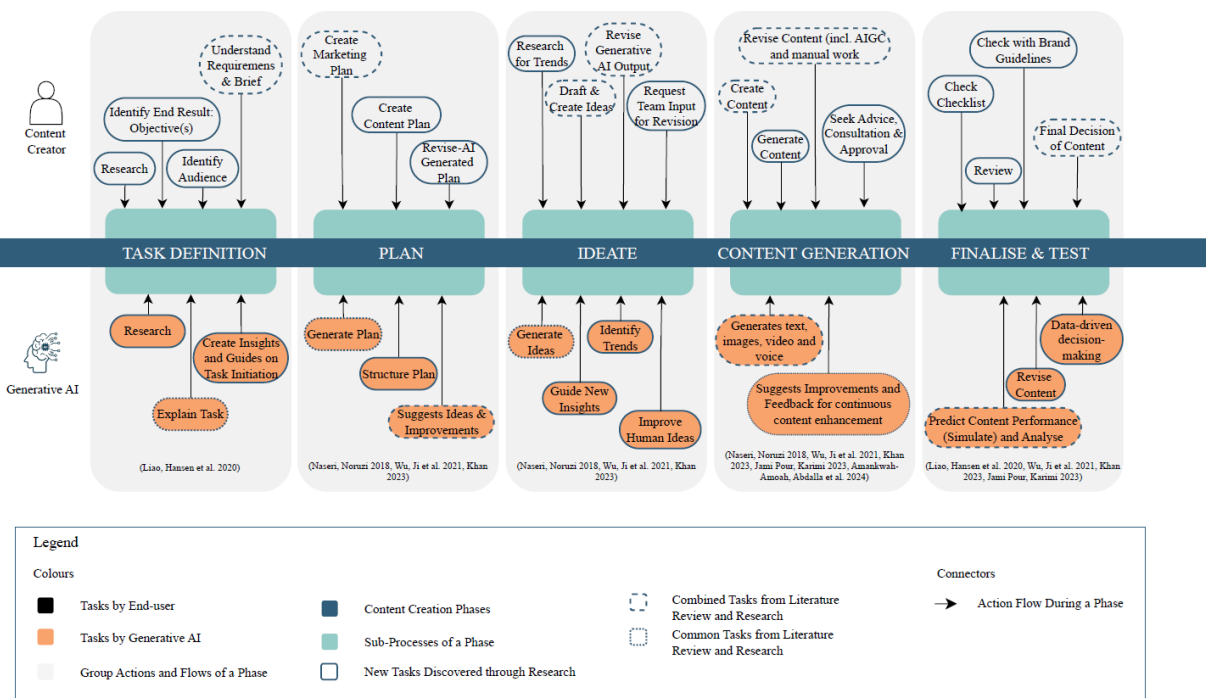
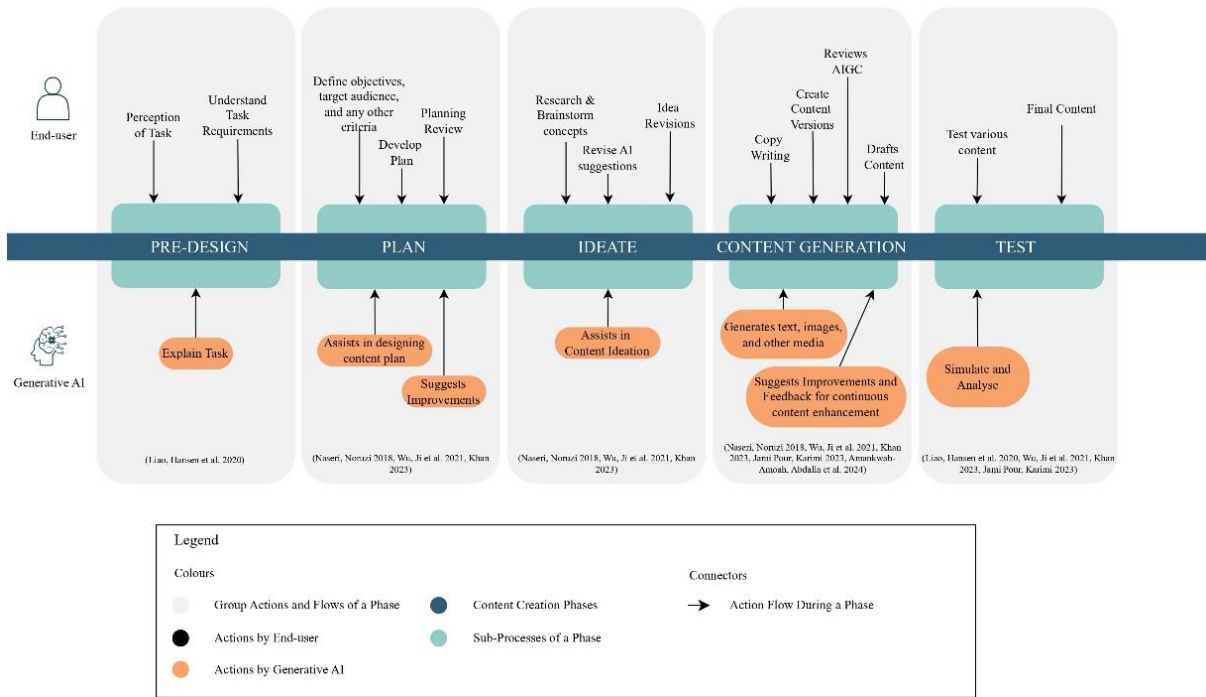


Figure 30 – Conceptual Framework Comparison

## 5.5 Overview

In conclusion, this study reveals that GenAI is transforming content creation processes, but the human element remains indispensable. While GenAI offers clear advantages in terms of speed and efficiency, the findings emphasise the continued importance of human touch, particularly in tasks requiring emotional intelligence and originality. As GenAI technologies continue to advance, the balance between GenAI and human input will be crucial for maintaining the quality and authenticity of content. The refined framework developed in this study provides a practical guide for content creators and a theoretical model that builds upon existing literature, demonstrating how human-AI co-creation can enhance workflows without overshadowing the creative contributions of human professionals. Future research should focus on maintaining this balance and ensuring that content creators are equipped to navigate the rapidly evolving GenAI technologies.

## 6 Conclusion

### 6.1 Summary of Findings

This study examined the integration of GenAI within the content creation process, exploring its evolving role alongside content creators across different phases. The findings reveal a complex relationship between GenAI and content creators, shaped by the participants' familiarity with GenAI, generational perspectives, and the specific demands of each content creation phase. The proposed framework identifies five primary phases: Task Definition, Planning, Ideation, Content Generation, and Finalising and Testing, each presenting distinct opportunities and challenges for GenAI involvement.

Throughout these phases, participants collaborate with GenAI using it as a complementary tool, adapting it to the evolving demands of each stage in content creation. In the Task Definition and Planning phases, GenAI aided research and organisation, while human judgment guided the foundational planning and strategic decisions to ensure alignment with brand objectives. As the process shifted to Ideation and Content Generation, GenAI's role expanded, functioning as a creative collaborator that helped develop ideas and produce content efficiently. This collaboration showcased GenAI's potential for innovation, even as participants carefully retained control to maintain brand authenticity and resonance. Finally, in the critical Finalising and Testing phase, human judgment again took precedence, with GenAI assisting in technical refinements but leaving final approvals to the creative team. This phased approach reveals a nuanced balance, where GenAI's strengths in efficiency and ideation are maximised without overshadowing the essential human touch needed for context, emotional depth, and brand integrity.

Across these phases, the study identified key advantages of GenAI, including its speed and scalability. However, participants consistently highlighted GenAI's limitations, including its difficulty in understanding context and conveying emotional depth. Consequently, maintaining a human element within the process emerged as essential for preserving authenticity and alignment with creative and brand objectives. Based on these findings, the study proposes a conceptual framework that balances human and GenAI input across adaptable phases of content creation, allowing content creators to flexibly leverage GenAI's strengths without compromising core creative values.

## 6.2 Theoretical Contributions

This research advances the understanding of human-AI co-creation in CM through several theoretical contributions. Firstly, it builds on existing literature (Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. 2024, Wu, Ji et al. 2021) to provide a nuanced view of how GenAI complements, rather than redefines, content creation phases. However, it challenges claims by Khan (2023) that position GenAI as a tool, contributing to theoretical perspectives that recognise GenAI as a dynamic collaborator in the content creation process. This aligns with recent views on human-AI collaboration by Rezwana (2023) and Zhou and Lee (2024), who argue that GenAI's role extends beyond automation into co-creation. Secondly, the study contributes to the evolving discussion on the division of roles and responsibilities between content creators and GenAI, echoing Chintalapati and Pandey's (2022) view that human oversight is essential in creative workflows involving GenAI.

Finally, the refined conceptual framework developed in this research extends theoretical models such as those proposed by Liao, Hansen et al. (2020) and Wu, Ji et al. (2021), positioning GenAI as an influential yet complementary force within each phase of content creation. This framework adds to theoretical discussions on the balancing automation with human creativity, suggesting that while GenAI can significantly contribute to ideation, drafting, and other content tasks, human expertise remains essential to producing authentic, strategically aligned content. This refined framework provides a foundation for future research on the collaborative dynamics between GenAI and content creators, encouraging further exploration of how intelligent technologies shape creativity, decision-making, and content quality in CM.

## 6.3 Practical Contributions

The study offers practical insights for content managers and industry professionals seeking to optimise their workflows through GenAI integration. The findings reveal that integrating GenAI can greatly enhance productivity and broaden ideation, particularly for repetitive or data-intensive tasks. By allowing GenAI to assist in ideation and content creation, content creators can focus on higher-order tasks requiring emotional intelligence, strategic planning, and brand alignment. However, the study warns against an over-reliance on GenAI, as human oversight is essential for ensuring content quality and emotional resonance, which are crucial for audience engagement. Additionally, the findings highlight the importance of training and

upskilling content teams to work alongside GenAI, rather than fearing potential job displacement. Emphasising collaborative skills and adaptability can prepare professionals for the evolving demands of GenAI-integrated roles, thereby enabling them to effectively balance GenAI's contributions with human creativity. The proposed framework, supported by BPMN diagrams, serves as a practical guide, illustrating how organisations can structure workflows to leverage GenAI's strengths while maintaining the integrity of human-driven creativity and decision-making. This balanced approach supports content creators in fostering a productive yet thoughtful integration of GenAI, aligning with strategic business objectives and maintaining creative authenticity in CM.

## 6.4 Limitations and Future Research

The study faced several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, due to time constraints, the research was conducted with a relatively small sample of participants. While 24 interviews provided valuable insights, a larger sample, along with the inclusion of focus groups or experiments, could have offered a more nuanced understanding of the phases and sub-processes involved in content creation. Observing content marketers working with GenAI in real-time would have helped capture the dynamic nature of human-AI collaboration more effectively. Secondly, the sample lacked diversity in generational representation, with most participants being millennials. Including a broader range, particularly younger and older content creators, could have revealed additional insights into how perceptions of GenAI differ across age groups. This could further enrich the understanding of how GenAI is adopted and integrated across various demographics.

Future research should focus on the rapid evolution of GenAI. As GenAI technologies continue to advance, the nature of human-AI co-creation will likely change, along with participants' perceptions and interactions with these tools. A key research question to explore in future studies could be: "How does the continued advancement of GenAI influence the balance between human creativity and AI-driven content creation in marketing?" This question is critical to understanding the extent to which GenAI might shift from being seen as a tool to a full collaborator and whether this shift affects the creative agency of content creators. It is crucial that future studies closely monitor these developments to better understand how GenAI's expanding capabilities impact content creation processes and human creativity. As GenAI takes on more sophisticated roles, it may increasingly blur the line between tool and

collaborator, a trend that needs careful oversight and ongoing investigation. This is particularly important to ensure that the balance between human input and AIGC is maintained as technology progresses.

The findings of this study offer a promising foundation for the ongoing exploration and integration of GenAI in content creation, supported by the proposed framework that balances GenAI and human input across key content creation phases. By leveraging the processes outlined in this study, content marketers can build workflows that are not only efficient but also adaptable to the industry's evolving demands. As GenAI continues to advance, its influence on content creation will undoubtedly expand, offering new possibilities for enhanced creativity, strategic insight, and innovation. This balanced approach encourages content creators to engage with GenAI as an evolving contributor to their work. Ultimately, this study underscores that with thoughtful integration, GenAI can serve as a sustained force in driving creativity and shaping the future of human-AI collaboration in content creation process within marketing companies.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A - Interview Questions

The below is the interview guide for the dissertation.

Topic	Discussion questions/prompts	Literature Source
<b>General Information About Participant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you please share a brief overview of your background and experience?</li> <li>• <i>Prompt: industry, years in content marketing, current position</i></li> </ul>	
<b>General information regarding generative artificial intelligence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How frequently do you use GenAI-powered tools?</li> <li>• How do you use GenAI in your work? Which business processes utilise GenAI? Which AI features do you leverage the most?</li> <li>• <i>Prompt: Frequency, specific business processes, key AI features used</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Human-AI Co-creation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the utilisation of GenAI impacted your marketing team and your marketing workflow and process?</li> <li>• In the content creation process, which tasks can GenAI perform autonomously, and which tasks benefit from a collaboration between GenAI and human input? Follow-up: Can you share examples of AI-enhanced creative processes?</li> <li>• <i>Prompt: Overall impact of GenAI on the content creation process, expert insights on the division of tasks between AI and humans</i></li> </ul>	Wahid, Risqo, Mero et al. (2023), Liao, Hansen et al. (2020), Li (2019), Chintalapati, Pandey (2022)
<b>Pre-design Phase in Content Creation Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you typically go about understanding the requirements of a specific content</li> </ul>	Wu, Ji et al. (2021)





	<p>creation task (example, seek input from colleagues)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the pre-design phase, do you seek GenAI assistance in explaining the requirements of a specific task?</li> <li>• In what ways do you collaborate with GenAI during the pre-design phase to better understand and define the task requirements?</li> <li>• How does the output from GenAI influence your understanding or approach to the task?</li> <li>• <i>Prompt: Approach to defining requirements, use of GenAI, methods/tools, impact and challenges.</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Planning Phase in Content Creation Process</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you leverage GenAI to assist in designing your content plan?</li> <li>• What specific aspects of the content plan do you typically use AI to help with (examples, topic suggestions, content structure, scheduling)?</li> <li>• How does GenAI contribute to suggesting improvements to your content plan?</li> <li>• How do you balance human judgment and GenAI recommendations during this phase?</li> <li>• <i>Prompt: tasks in content planning, use of GenAI, balancing human contribution with GenAI</i></li> </ul>	Khan (2023)
<p><b>Ideation Phase in Content Creation Process</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you collaborate with GenAI during the ideation phase?</li> <li>• What specific tasks or processes does GenAI support (such as generating initial ideas, identifying trends, or suggesting topics)?</li> </ul>	Khan (2023)






	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the revision process work when you and GenAI review and refine content ideas together?</li> <li>• How do you balance AI’s suggestions with your own insights and creativity?</li> <li>• <i>Prompt: tasks in content ideation, communication during human-AI co-creation, input of human creativity in final ideas</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Content Generation Phase in Content Creation Process</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the content generation, how does GenAI act as a collaborative partner in design tasks?</li> <li>• Follow-up: How does GenAI assist in creating content across different formats, such as text, images, or other media?</li> <li>• Follow-up: What specific roles or tasks does AI handle in content generation?</li> <li>• How do you balance your creative input with the suggestions provided by GenAI to achieve high-quality content?</li> <li>• In what scenarios do you rely more on human expertise versus AI capabilities?</li> <li>• What strategies do you use to ensure that the final content is both innovative and meets quality standards (example, company’s criteria, policies, guidelines)?</li> <li>• Are there any specific areas within the content generation phase where you feel AI could better support or enhance human efforts?</li> <li>• <i>Prompt: to identify the role and tasks done by GenAI and humans, process of content generation</i></li> </ul>	<p>Wu, Ji et al. (2021), Khan (2023)</p>

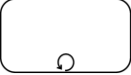



<p><b>Test Phase in Content Creation Process</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you collaborate with GenAI during the testing phase to evaluate and refine content?</li> <li>• What role does AI play in helping you make decisions about the final content?</li> <li>• Existing literature suggests that GenAI is primarily used for simulation and analysis during the testing phase. Do you agree with this perspective?</li> <li>• Are there other ways GenAI can be utilised in this phase?</li> <li>• <i>Prompt: further understand use of GenAI in the testing phase</i></li> </ul>	<p>Wu, Ji et al. (2021)</p>
<p><b>Human Contribution</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have there been instances where AI-generated content did not meet your expectations or required extensive human revision?</li> <li>• Follow-up: Therefore, which are the tasks in your opinion which humans are not replaceable?</li> <li>• <i>Prompt: identify tasks done solely by humans</i></li> </ul>	<p>Amankwah-Amoah, Abdalla et al. (2024) and Routray (2024)</p>
<p><b>Potential Benefits and Challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What concerns, if any, do you have about the use of GenAI in content marketing?</li> <li>• In which specific areas of content marketing do you believe AI has the most significant impact?</li> <li>• Based on your experience and expertise, what recommendations do you have for organisations looking to adopt GenAI in their content creation process?</li> <li>• <i>Prompt: benefits, challenges (job losses), and feedback</i></li> </ul>	



## Appendix B - BPMN Symbols

The below is a brief explanation of each BPMN symbol used in the diagrams in Section 4.3.

Symbol	Name	Type	Description
	Swimlane (Lane/pool)	General Symbol	A swimlane diagram organises activities into distinct categories, represented as lanes or pools. Each lane corresponds to a participant, role, or department, facilitating the visualisation of responsibilities and interactions within a process.
	Start Event	Event Symbol	The start event symbol marks the initiation point of a business process. It indicates the trigger that sets the process in motion, such as an external event or the completion of a preceding task.
	End Event	Event Symbol	The end event symbol signifies the conclusion of a process. It denotes the final outcome, which could result from various conditions, indicating that no further activities will follow in that particular process.
	Link Intermediate, Throwing Event	Event Symbol	This symbol represents an intermediate event that throws a signal to another process. It is used to indicate that an event will trigger a subsequent action, facilitating the transition between different processes or subprocesses.

	<p>Link Intermediate, Catching Event</p>	<p>Event Symbol</p>	<p>The catching event symbol depicts an intermediate event that awaits a signal from another process. It illustrates how the process will pause until it receives an external trigger, effectively linking two processes.</p>
	<p>Inclusive Gateway</p>	<p>Gateway Symbol</p>	<p>The inclusive gateway allows for one or more outgoing paths to be taken from a single point in the process, indicating that multiple paths may be executed based on specific conditions. It facilitates complex decision-making scenarios within the workflow.</p>
	<p>Exclusive Gateway</p>	<p>Gateway Symbol</p>	<p>The exclusive gateway represents a decision point in the process where only one of the outgoing paths can be selected based on defined conditions. It ensures that only one alternative is executed, thus guiding the flow of the process.</p>
	<p>User Task</p>	<p>Activity Symbol</p>	<p>The user task symbol denotes an activity that requires human intervention. It represents tasks that need to be performed by a specific user, emphasising the role of human input in the execution of the process.</p>
	<p>Manual Task</p>	<p>Activity Symbol</p>	<p>This symbol indicates a task performed manually without the use of automated systems. It</p>

			highlights activities that are entirely dependent on human effort, typically involving physical actions rather than automated processes.
	Loop	Activity Symbol	The loop symbol signifies that a particular activity can be repeated multiple times under certain conditions. It reflects iterative processes where tasks may need to be executed until specific criteria are met.
	Sequence Flow	General Symbol	Sequence flow arrows represent the order in which activities and events occur within a process. They indicate the direction of the workflow, illustrating how one task leads to the next in a linear or branched manner.
	Directional/Directed Data Flow	General Symbol	This symbol illustrates the flow of data in a specified direction between activities, tasks, or events. It emphasises the path that information takes within the process, ensuring clarity in data movement.
	Bi-Directional/Bi-Directed Data Flow	General Symbol	The bi-directional data flow symbol indicates that data can move in both directions between two points in the process. This representation is useful for illustrating interactive processes

			where information exchange occurs.
	Data Input	General Symbol	The data input symbol signifies points in the process where data is entered or captured. It indicates the sources of information that feed into the process, critical for accurate decision-making and task execution.
	Data Output	General Symbol	The data output symbol represents the points where data is produced or released from the process. It illustrates the outcomes or results generated, which can be utilised for further analysis or decision-making.