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AI and Authorship of Audiovisual Creators

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1. Introduction

Recent developments in machine learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems have led to increased interaction with these systems on a regular basis. The tools afforded by these technologies are increasingly accessible to the public and are infused throughout the audiovisual creative process. Emerging research shows that AI can support skills often associated with creativity, generate new combinations of well-known concepts, investigate new possibilities and facilitate changes that enhance the development of previously unthinkable ideas (Zhou & Lee, 2024). Understanding the significant ramifications of the upcoming major change in the audiovisual industry driven by AI technology is essential (Yuan et al., 2022). Artificial intelligence-powered visual effects, editing and cinematography, among others, have advanced significantly. In the film industry, AI-powered technologies have given filmmakers unprecedented control and accuracy, enabling them to produce visually stunning and captivating cinematic experiences (Yu et al., 2024). Simultaneously, the AI authorship puzzle is gaining prominence as AI use in the creative process continues to grow. The integration of personalised AI in human-AI collaboration could profoundly influence traditional notions of authorship. This is especially pertinent as AI-generated outputs are tailored to meet users' unique experiences and styles, creating a blurred distinction between human and AI contributions (Draxler et al., 2024).

The effects of generative AI on authorship and the creative processes of audiovisual professionals are becoming more widely known and of increasing interest. Understanding how generative AI will transform the creative process generally is necessary, given its growing

importance in shaping the film production process (Fuchs, 2023). The importance of the present study is highlighted by its investigation of the multidimensional link between AI integration in film production and its implications for filmmakers' authorship perception, with the interplay of two psychological ownership dimensions: content originality and personal touch serving as a proxy for authorship perception.

The present research addresses a highly relevant and emerging topic: how the integration of AI in the audiovisual creative process reshapes traditional perceptions of authorship among filmmakers. Using a thematic analysis of filmmakers' experiences, the study contributes to the growing body of literature exploring AI's transformative influence on creative practices. The analysis identified five core dimensions through which AI reconfigures notions of authorship: (1) filmmakers' evolving perceptions and the defining characteristics of authorship; (2) the underlying determinants that influence authorship attribution; (3) the impact of AI on creators' sense of authorship and artistic autonomy; (4) its influence on artistic autonomy and decision-making; and (5) the continuing reliance on human skill, judgment and emotional expression within the creative process. These demonstrate that the integration of AI into filmmaking does not supplant human authorship but transforms it through new modes of collaboration and mediation where creative agency remains human in intention and sensibility.

With the rapid growth of AI tools in the audiovisual industry, this research aligns closely with ongoing academic, creative and legal debates, particularly within the EU's evolving copyright framework, which continues to grapple with questions of human authorship and technological mediation. The paper is structured as follows: Section 1 introduces the study, outlining its central argument and intellectual contribution. Section 2 reviews the state of the art and elaborates on the

theoretical background. Section 3 details the research design and methodology, while Section 4 presents the key empirical findings. Section 5 discusses these results in relation to broader conceptual and policy implications and Section 6 concludes by reflecting on the study's limitations and proposes directions for future research.

2. State of the art

2.1. AI & Content Creation

Defining AI refers to the replication of human cognitive functions by machines, enabling them to carry out tasks that typically require human intelligence. This includes abilities such as acquiring knowledge and learning how to use it, applying logical rules to draw conclusions and self-correcting based on outcomes (Marrone et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2021). Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC) represents a new content creation method that enhances traditional content creation approaches. Wu et al. 2023 identify three different modes of content generation: Professionally Generated content (PGC), User Generated Content (UGC), and Artificial Intelligence-generated content (AIGC).

The primary benefit of AI-generated content (AIGC) is that it can surpass the limitations of existing content creation forms in terms of quantity and quality. At present, the quality of AIGC content is significantly better than it was before (Wu et al., 2023), which explains the focus of our study on AI-generated content in professional settings. Moreover, the types of AIGC content have been enriched, including text, images, video, etc. In general, AIGC can be categorised into: i) text; which encompasses structured writing, creative writing and dialogue writing as its main subfields

(Hinton & Wagemans, 2023; Wasi et al., 2024), ii) Picture; enabling users to change and add new elements to their pictures based on the prompts given (Hoogeboom et al., 2021), and iii) video generation; utilisation in video clip processing to generate trailers and other forms of videos (Wu et al., 2023).

2.2. AI integration in the audiovisual industry

The foundation for the expansion of AI opportunities is created by the massive daily creation, production, dissemination, and consumption of texts, photos, videos, and sounds on internet platforms (Hussain et al., 2024). Accordingly, an AI-powered system can, for instance, predict which song a user would like to listen to because it has "seen" thousands of sounds the user has listened to in the past and "understood" the patterns that represent her/his favorite genre, artist, song, or song transition (Amato et al., 2019).

Technically speaking, audiovisual works are viewed as a synthesis of images and sounds. Television, film, and the internet are the three macro-sectors that make up the audiovisual industry (La Torre, 2014). The landscape of the film industry has changed over time due to the extraordinary progress and advancements of AI. At first, AI was mostly used for computational tasks like automation and data processing. But as technology developed, AI started to become more prevalent in the creative aspects of filmmaking (Pradeep et al., 2023).

The practice of creating many specialised adaptations for a single product, such as spin-offs, prequels, sequels, and remakes for various distribution channels, is becoming more and more popular. According to La Torre (2014, p.19), audiovisual products are regarded as belonging to

the creative industries and "have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property." In addition to the conventional arts sectors, the audiovisual business encompasses movies, DVD and videos, radio, television, video games, new media, music, books and the press. It is represented by those industries that produce goods with moving pictures (La Torre, 2014). According to Amato et al. (2019), the media and creative sectors are where AI is being used more and more, with creatives always being early adopters of technical advancements, as they are in a constant quest for new tools that would enhance their work.

2.3. AI integration in the film creation process

AI technologies present novel chances for creativity and productivity in content production as they continue to develop quickly. Numerous developments fostered by AI technology simplify and improve many facets of filmmaking, leading to greater effectiveness, affordability and creative opportunities (Pradeep et al., 2023). With the development of deep learning and machine learning algorithms, AI gained the ability to analyse enormous volumes of data, enabling filmmakers to explore unique story structures and develop nuanced stories (Yuan et al., 2022). Storyboarding and script creation are facilitated by AI algorithms used for script analysis and prediction. Filmmakers started experimenting with AI-generated storylines as the technology advanced, pushing the boundaries of narratives (Wang et al., 2024).

The development of AI in film has continuously pushed the artistic and creative limits of the sector, from the appearance of AI-generated characters to the integration of AI in virtual reality and augmented reality experiences. In addition to increasing efficiency, this fusion of AI and

filmmaking creates new opportunities for creative expression (Wang et al., 2024). Filmmakers can explore previously unexplored possibilities by utilising AI's capabilities, encouraging creativity and leading the industry into a period of artistic experimentation and technological breakthrough (Mirowski et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024). In the film sector, for instance, there's a growing utilisation of 3D models and game engines, as the level of detail now surpasses the uncanny valley, becoming indistinguishable from reality. The deployment of computer-generated imagery (CGI) and advanced visual effects has broadened the scope for filmmakers, allowing them to produce sophisticated and believable effects that were previously unattainable using practical methods alone (Mrad et al., 2022). Such technologies enable the realisation of imaginative or futuristic environments, as seen in groundbreaking productions like “Avatar” and “Star Wars” (Smith et al., 2017).

Understanding the significant ramifications of the upcoming major change in the filmmaking industry driven by AIGC technology is important (Wang et al., 2024). Artificial intelligence-powered visual effects, editing and cinematography have advanced significantly. AI-powered technologies have given filmmakers greater control and accuracy, allowing them to produce visually enhanced and captivating cinematic experiences (Yu et al., 2024). Demand could decrease for traditional aspects of filmmaking, including labour-intensive jobs like editing, visual effects and sound design, as well as set construction, props and costume design. However, this evolutionary shift also signals a rise in the need for specialist knowledge in digital asset generation, automated editing systems and AI integration (Yu et al., 2024).

Moreover, analysis of box office trends, drawing upon extensive data spanning both CGI-driven animated films and those crafted using traditional methods, demonstrates that the adoption of AI-enabled technology has notably elevated the competitive edge of animated films at the box office. Amba and Singh (2023) identify that these technological approaches help studios and filmmakers achieve higher revenue streams compared to non-CGI productions.

2.4. AI & Creativity.

Emerging research shows how AI can support skills often associated with creativity, such as curiosity, grit (Gordon et al., 2015) and persistence (Belpaeme et al., 2018). Recent research by Zhu and Luo (2025) operationalise Boden's (1998, p.348) foundational mechanisms of combinational, exploratory and transformational creativity within AI-assisted design workflows . They show that modern AI systems can collaboratively expand both problem and solution spaces in creative domains. Rather than merely automating predefined tasks, these frameworks demonstrate that generative models support creative novelty by enabling systematic recombination, structured exploration of design concepts and strategic reframing that allows for the emergence of previously infeasible solutions (Boden, 1998; Zhu & Luo, 2025). Creativity is conceptualised as comprising four components: the person (human), process (mental), press (environmental interaction), and product (creative result) (Rhodes, 1961; Runco & Kim, 2011). AI can assist humans in divergent thinking, valuable for artistic domains such as the visual arts and other non-routine creative activities, including writing (Bangerl et al., 2025). These developments have ushered in novel opportunities for storytelling, granting filmmakers innovative means to express their creative ambitions. The use of CGI and special effects allows for the construction of

worlds and scenarios beyond the reach of conventional techniques, including the creation of characters and creatures that would otherwise be impossible to portray in physical form (Amba & Singh, 2023). Highlighting AI's supporting role in idea development, Bangerl et al. (2025) further note AI's capacity to inspire, offer conceptual strategies and provide constructive feedback, while also raising questions about how prolonged reliance on AI for diverse thinking tasks might impact individuals' long-term creative and cognitive abilities.

Kirkpatrick (2023) asserts that, since AI models are trained on human-developed works, a core element of humanity remains embedded in AI-generated outputs. Despite considerable advancement in AI capabilities, it is anticipated that AI will function as an additional creative resource rather than supplanting the inherently gratifying and personal nature of human artistic creation (Kirkpatrick, 2023). Analysing the rate of AI adoption in the creative process, Zhang and Zhou (2024) found that creators with less experience gain greater productivity benefit from these tools thereby achieving an equalising effect.

AI acts as an instrumental tool that helps unleash creativity and hence is connected to the process through which creativity occurs (Kafai & Burke, 2014). In a study of AI's impact on human creativity, Marrone et al. (2022), however, note that AI applications today are not capable of independent creativity as the fundamental aspects of creativity, such as divergent thinking and producing novel, effective outcomes, are either beyond what AI can currently achieve or require human input. Hence, pointing out clear areas where AI and humans can work together in creative processes. Additionally, AI can accelerate parts of the creative workflow that were traditionally done by humans, freeing them to focus on more complex activities. This finding is supported by Chiu et al. (2022), who highlight that one's positive attitude toward technology can explain their intention to use that technology.

2.5. AI creations and authorship in the EU

In response to the rapid expansion of AI across creative and industrial sectors, the European Union introduced Regulation (EU) 2024/1689, known as the AI Act (2024), is the EU's first comprehensive legal framework governing artificial intelligence. The current interpretation of EU copyright law clearly excludes non-human entities, including AI systems, from being recognised as authors or inventors. Eligibility for copyright protection is contingent upon the criterion of originality (AI Act, 2024). Jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) defines originality as the expression of the author's own intellectual creation, thereby necessitating demonstrable human involvement and the exercise of creative judgment (Lucchi, 2025). Accordingly, outputs generated exclusively by artificial intelligence systems, absent meaningful human contribution, are generally excluded from protection under existing EU copyright law. This stance is rooted in the emphasis on "personal touch" and "personality" in legal interpretations, which inherently ties authorship to natural persons (Ballardini et al., 2019; Fritz, 2024).

However, as AI technology continues to advance, it presents new challenges to these traditional concepts of authorship. Despite some standardised definitions in EU Directives, a unified understanding of authorship across the EU remains unclear, particularly regarding the potential for legal persons to be considered authors. This lack of clarity underscores the need for further refinement and harmonisation of authorship concepts in EU copyright law. In the EU, the concept of authorship in copyright law, especially for audiovisual and cinematographic works, is partially standardised but lacks complete uniformity across member states (Ballardini et al., 2019). The

Directive 2001/29/EC (EU, 2001) in its Article 2(1) identifies the principal director as the author, generally interpreted as the natural person responsible for the film's artistic and creative decisions.

There appears to be convergence on the idea that AI authorship depends on the user who is in charge of producing the outputs, as demonstrated by the practical solution to the AI authorship conundrum in the US setting (Samuelson, 2020, p. 21). "Under U.S. law, only works created by a human can be copyrighted, which excludes photographs and artwork created by animals or by machines without human intervention," as reaffirmed by the Commission on New Technological Uses of Copyrighted Works (CONTU) legal stance on this matter (Samuelson, 2020).

Emerging developments in artificial intelligence raise fundamental questions concerning the interpretation of authorship and inventorship in relation to AI-generated works and inventions. This calls for reconsideration of existing legal definitions and frameworks to ensure that innovation is facilitated rather than constrained in the evolving technological environment. Addressing these issues involves balancing the protection of established notions of authorship with the need to accommodate new modes of creative and inventive activity (Ginsburg et al., 2020). Developing a comprehensive framework that accounts for the key factors involved in AI and intellectual property will be crucial for legislators and policymakers. Such a framework would aim to strike an appropriate balance between protecting intellectual property rights and ensuring access to AI-generated innovations, ultimately fostering a legal environment that encourages technological progress while preserving the core principles of copyright law (Zhang, 2025).

2.6. AI content & authorship perception

The integration of personalised AI in human-AI collaboration could profoundly influence traditional notions of authorship. In current creative workflows involving AI, the creator's original

vision can sometimes be overshadowed, diminishing their sense of ownership over the final outcome (Chung et al., 2022). Striking a balance between preserving the creator's unique voice and accommodating AI's input is a complex challenge. Contemporary AI tools often struggle to maintain this balance, occasionally exerting more control than intended and shifting from being a supportive tool to dominating the creative process (Weber et al., 2024)

With the use of various AI tools, human-AI collaboration becomes more prominent as a significant component of filmmaking, posing issues regarding authorship, co-authorship and ownership of the content created (Pradeep et al., 2023; Weber et al., 2024). Exploring the question of co-authorship, Nichols et al. (2020) show a collaborative storytelling system in which AI may not only produce material but also engage in creative collaboration with humans during the creation process.

According to Draxler et al. (2024), users frequently avoid openly claiming authorship of AI-generated work, but they do not consider themselves to be the producers of such content. Additionally, having influence over the material and engagement boosts one's sense of ownership. This also demonstrates situations in which users do not openly ascribe AI authorship or claim ownership of content generated by AI, underscoring the need for user-AI collaboration in fostering a sense of authorship among users (Draxler et al., 2024). Weber et al. (2024) extended this analysis and indicated that creatives (VFX artists, screenwriters, documentary filmmakers), for instance, had different appraisals of AI integration in the creative process, resulting in varied levels of output appreciation and appropriation, suggesting gaps in meeting their specific requirements to enhance their authorship perceptions.

Beyond being a question of declaration, authorship is equally a matter of personal judgment. A person's authorship sense is dependent on influencing factors such as their perceived control

and agency (Avey et al., 2009). Intangible things, like ideas, can also be created and controlled to foster feelings of ownership. For instance, Draxler et al. (2024) discovered that user participation levels have a significant impact on perceived authorship in an AI-assisted writing experience. Participants had a greater sense of authorship when they had more authority over text generation, including writing and editing. Perceptions of authorship were lowest in the condition with the least amount of user input. Lehmann et al. (2022) discovered a positive association between the sense of authorship and the degree of influence over the AI contribution, which lends further credence to this claim. Authorship declarations also differed depending on the situation. Dropdown menus and other explicit interface features improved recognition of AI contributions. On the other hand, due to worries about possible unfavourable impressions or authenticity preservation, free-text scenarios frequently led to the omission of AI involvement (Draxler et al., 2024).

2.7. Authorship conception for AI-generated outputs

Among the ethical issues brought up by the collaborative nature of human-AI content creation, the appropriate distribution of authorship over creative outputs is still a contentious issue (Jiang et al., 2023). The state in which people develop a psychic connection with things and begin to view them as “theirs” is known as psychological ownership. According to Pierce et al. (2001), psychological ownership differs from formal ownership due to its dual cognitive-affective structure. Therefore, psychological ownership entails both a strong emotional bond with an object and the intellectual recognition of it as one’s own (Xu et al., 2024). Further expatiating on the concept, Avey et al. (2009) refer to psychological ownership as a sense of possession toward a material or immaterial object and is intrinsically human. It has a significant impact on the emotions, attitudes and behaviors of persons who experience ownership. Accordingly, psychological ownership is becoming more widely acknowledged as an important determinant for

the safe and effective use of generative AI tools (Weisz et al., 2023). Kuzminykh and Cauchard, (2020) describe the five structural characteristics of psychological ownership in the technological realm, expanding on the acknowledged dimensions of psychological ownership put forth by Pierce et al. (2001) as follows: i) self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to effectively use and control the owned object; ii) accountability, the sense of responsibility for the object and its outcomes; iii) sense of belonging, the feeling of connection and place associated with ownership; iv) self-identity, the extent to which the owned object becomes part of one's self-concept; and v) territoriality, the protective behaviors and feelings of possessiveness towards the owned object. These dimensions collectively explain how users form psychological ownership in digital environments despite the intangibility of such possessions. Nevertheless, the growing interest in understanding the dynamics of psychological ownership within the context of human-AI creation still points to the necessity of substantial enough changes for creators to feel an increased sense of authorship (Diakopoulos et al., 2007; Mirowski et al., 2023).

To elucidate the ownership conception mechanism, this study builds on Xu et al.'s (2024) framework, who identified the additional factor – involvement, defined as the contributions input in the process of creating co-creations by different parties, including both from the human side and AI itself is identified as a major factor associated with developing users' sense of ownership towards human-AI co-creations. This level of involvement is determined by a) the Originality and b) the Level of Contribution.

a) Originality of creation

“There needs to be the 'personality' of the author present within the work to meet a threshold of originality. People perceive that a person legitimately 'owns' a piece of creation if it reflects one's original idea, suggesting an extension of self-identity” (p.4). This conceptualisation emphasises the critical role of individual creative imprints in establishing authentic authorship, where the work becomes a tangible manifestation of the creator's unique cognitive and emotional landscape.

b) Level of Contribution

“The sense of control in the process is measured by whether AI users perceive that the decisions made can influence or predict the outcome and the amount of effort is measured by users' time spent or steps involved in the process reaching a certain threshold” (p.4). This perspective frames the level of contribution as a multidimensional construct, understood within this study as a personal touch, where psychological ownership emerges through the creator's perceived agency and substantive engagement in the generative process (Xu et al., 2024).

At the forefront of the digital intersection between artificial intelligence and film production, limited attention has been devoted to examining how AI-powered creative processes affect filmmakers' perceptions of authorship. To address this gap, the present study investigates how the integration of AI into the audiovisual creative process influences traditional understandings of authorship among filmmakers. The following sub-questions serve to elucidate this central inquiry: (1) In what ways does AI involvement shape their sense of authorship and psychological ownership over generated outputs? and (2) How does the use of AI in creative production affect filmmakers' ability to express personal style, originality and intent?

3. Methodology

For this study exploring the impact of AI integration on traditional perceptions of authorship among filmmakers, the Braun and Clarke six-step framework for thematic analysis was employed. The Braun and Clarke framework involves six iterative steps: familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, developing themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first step consisted of familiarising with the data by repeatedly reading the interview transcripts in detail. Next, initial codes were generated manually by meticulously coding all relevant segments of the transcripts line-by-line. Codes are the smallest units of analysis that capture interesting features of the data (potentially) relevant to the research question (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Following the coding was the theme generation step by grouping codes that shared meaningful patterns under broader thematic categories. This step moved the analysis from numerous codes to more abstract, central ideas representing commonalities in filmmaker perspectives on AI's influence on authorship. Then, a rigorous process of review and refining process of the themes was undertaken to ensure clarity, internal coherence and distinction from one another. After refining the themes, detailed definitions and descriptions for each final theme were developed, anchoring them explicitly to the data and articulating their relevance to the study's inquiry into authorship perceptions. The final step was the formulation of the findings report, integrating verbatim quotes, codes and thematic narratives to comprehensively reflect the major insights developed through

this systematic analytic process, which shall be presented in the next section (Naeem et al., 2023).

The coding process was conducted through MAXQDA.¹

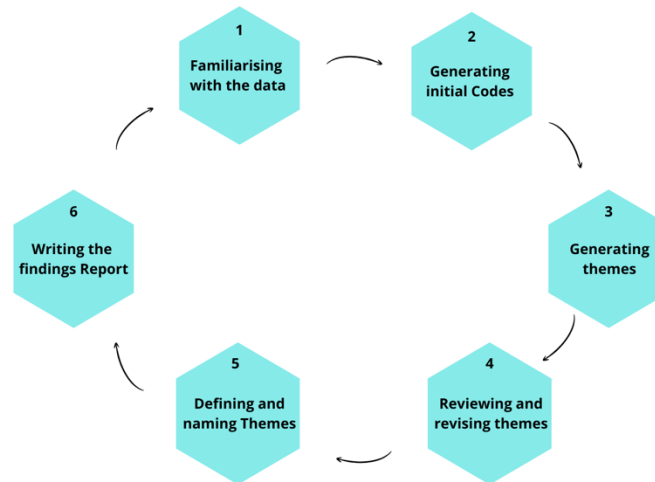


Figure 1. Six steps of Thematic Analysis Framework by Braun and Clark.

Sampling Method

The study employed purposive sampling to identify participants. 18 filmmakers (anonymised as p1, p2, etc.) were recruited (14 males, 3 females, and 1 non-binary; age range = 27–58 years). 3 of the participants were aged 27-30, 11 of them were aged 30-40, 3 aged between 40-50 and 1 participant was aged 58. Their experience in the film industry ranged from 5 to 42 years of experience, cutting across major film industries notably, Hollywood, Nollywood, Bollywood and the European Film industry (Sarikakis et al., In press). Filmmakers were selected

¹ See code system : appendix 1

based on the following inclusion criteria: i) Active engagement in the film industry, ii) Having publicly available works showcased in festivals, cinemas or through online and offline distribution channels as well as public viewings and iii) work as either indie, hobbyist or industry. This choice was made because of the interest in professionals with consistent practice, to determine how AI integration in practice impacts their authorship perceptions. Moreover, the method ensures a broad spectrum of expertise through the representation of diverse creative roles, such as directors, screenwriters, animators, VFX artists or editors, among others.

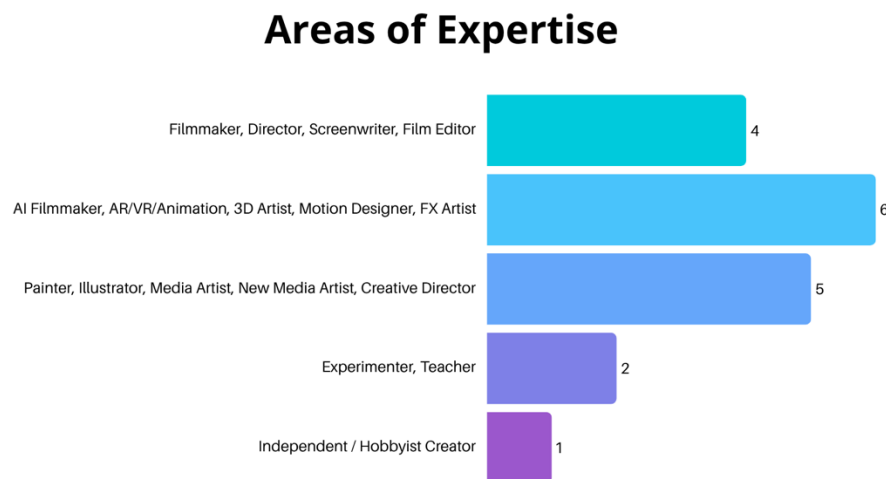


Figure 2. Film professionals areas of expertise

The expert interviews are methodologically applicable to this study, as they facilitate a profound comprehension of the motivation behind the AI inclusion in the creative process and its resultant effect on creators' authorship sense. Furthermore, the research design's consultation with experts presents a meaningful opportunity: "Their action orientations, knowledge and assessments decisively structure, or help to structure, the conditions of action of other actors, thereby showing

that expert knowledge has a socially relevant dimension” (Bogner & Menz, 2009, p. 54). This choice was deliberate, as their approach offers an open and flexible method of qualitative data analysis, free from alignment with any particular theoretical perspective, which suited the exploratory nature of the research.

Data Collection

Data was collected through online interviews using semi-structured questionnaire designed to facilitate open-ended discussions ², allowing participants to share their experiences while enabling the identification of emerging themes. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was conducted via the video conferencing tool “Zoom” to ensure accessibility. Participant recruitment was done by using publicly available information from sources such as festival programs, online film catalogs and distribution platforms to identify eligible participants. Eligible individuals will be contacted through personalised invitations sent via email or social media. The study adheres to the standards set forth by the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Moreover, the study and data collection process received approval³. Ethical considerations included the obtention of informed consent, ensuring participant confidentiality and allowing participants the right to withdraw at any stage. Participants were provided with clear information about the study’s purpose, degree of anonymisation, privacy procedures and potential risks prior to participation.

² See interview guide: appendix 2

³ University of Vienna's Institutional Review Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences (IRB), under the REBOOT project - Reviving, Boosting Optimising and Transforming European Film Competitiveness (approval NO. 20240510_025)

4. Findings

After conducting thematic analysis following the Braun and Clarke six step framework for thematic analysis, five main themes emerged from the interviews including: authorship perception and its characteristics; factors determining authorship; impact of AI on creators sense authorship; Impact of AI on a creator's artistic autonomy and reliance on human skills and processes.

4.1. Theme 1: Authorship perception and it's characteristics

This theme explores how filmmakers perceive authorship in the era of AI, highlighting notable shifts in how creators define and negotiate the role of AI within creative authorship. The theme is structured around four subthemes, outlined in the hierarchy chart below:

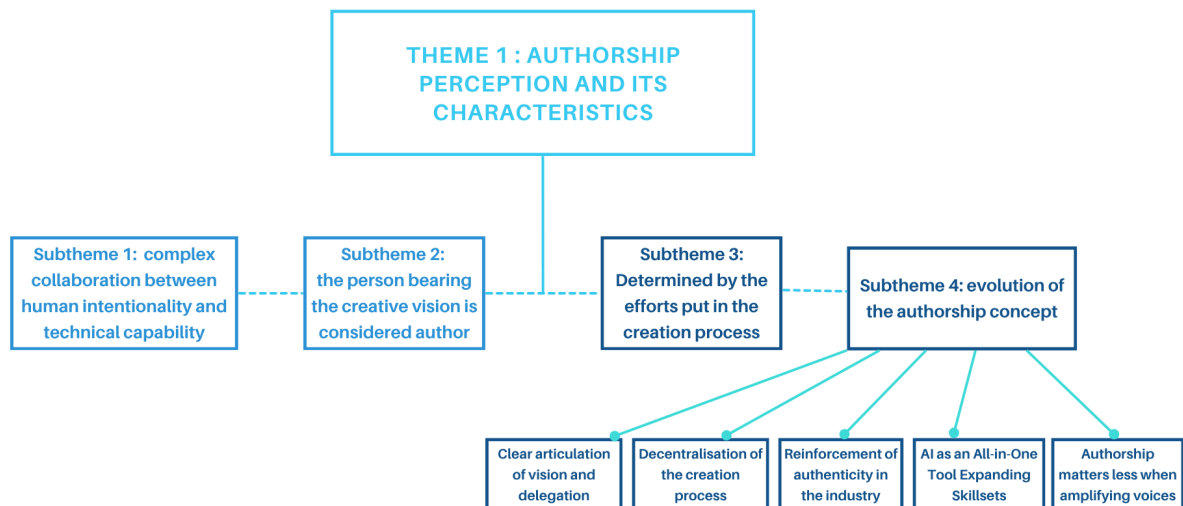


Figure 3. Film professionals auhtorship perception and its characteristics

4.1.1. Subtheme 1: Complex collaboration between human intentionality and technical capability

Interviewees emphasised the nuanced boundary between process automation and human agency in determining authorship appropriation. They pointed out that all AI-generated outputs primarily stem from human experiences, underscoring a collaborative dynamic rather than a displacement of human creativity.

P9 articulated this by stating, “There really is no difference between me occupying that position, but instead of employing an army of artisans and various specialists, I can offload that to the computer”. This reflects a conception of AI as an extension of human creative labour rather than an autonomous authorial entity. Similarly, p6 noted the evolving perception of authorship, remarking, “I think that there is a continual evolution in the perception of authorship and once understanding of these tools goes a bit further. The creator becomes a strategic director, conceptualising, guiding, curating and ultimately shaping the final work, even when utilising AI-generated concepts”. These insights reveal a complex interplay where human intentionality and technical capability fuse, with AI serving as a powerful tool that augments human agency in authorship.

4.1.2. Subtheme 2: The person bearing the creative vision is considered author

Across the interviews, participants consistently asserted that authorship resides primarily with the individual who holds the creative vision and directs the process. AI is understood as a tool that aids production but does not replace the authorial role of conceptualising, curating and guiding the work. They emphasised that authorship entails imagining something novel or giving voice to a unique perspective, which AI alone cannot generate.

P2 reflected, “I think it's because the vision or the imagination is very different, like creating something that didn't exist before,” highlighting the deeply personal and imaginative aspect of authorship. Stressing on the importance of active engagement with AI, p3 stated that “The authorship is still with me because it depends on what I release”. P6 framed authorship as strategic and emotional: “True authorship emerges not from more generation of content, but from the strategic vision, emotional intelligence, and deliberate choices that transform technological output into meaningful artistic expression”. P15 on the other hand articulated that “Authorship in AI-assisted creation lies in creative direction and the ability to give soul to what is generated, bringing meaning and coherence to the work”, underscoring the vital role of the creator in imbuing AI outputs with significance.

4.1.3. Subtheme 3: determined by the efforts put into the creation process

This subtheme captures creators’ views on the significance of their personal effort in defining authorship, emphasising that a sense of ownership arises from substantial involvement in the creative process. Participants described varying thresholds of effort that they consider necessary to claim authorship, reflecting diverse approaches to negotiating human and AI contributions.

P1 stressed, “I am the author of my videos, there is the concept, the editing, there are choices inside”. They further emphasised, “for a piece to be considered as my achievement, it must be at least 70 - 80 percent mine”, indicating a clear quantitative sense of ownership tied to effort. P6 conveyed that authorship results from extensive post-AI human intervention: “I think of myself as the author of a lot of the AI generated content that I put out because of process. I'm doing seven to

ten processes on top of that thing to continue to do that”. Other participants echoed similar sentiments about effort. P16 stated, “if you spend time on something for a week, then logically you have to own this. The style might not be yours, but you put in the work”. The sense of ownership is thus tied not merely to ideation but to the active labour and decision-making that forge the final creative product.

4.1.4. Subtheme 4: evolution of the authorship concept

Participants articulated how the introduction of AI into their creative process has transformed their understanding of authorship, reflecting a nuanced progression along several dimensions. The first relates to the clear articulation of vision and delegation. The concept of authorship evolved towards the ability to clearly conceptualise and delegate while retaining control over the creative vision. P9 described authorship as the capacity “to have ideas in your mind and delegate them to other people just for logistical purposes... but with the appropriate language and the expertise to communicate correctly”. The second one was the decentralisation of the creation process. Here, participants observed that AI has eased production barriers, thereby decentralising creative output generation. P2 noted, “I feel like things become easier to produce”, suggesting AI’s democratising effect. P3 underscored this shift: “There has been a real shift because the AI sometimes is really producing good stuff”. P5 added that AI generates valuable suggestions and ideas, benefiting the creative result.

The third dimension is related to the reinforcement of authenticity in the industry. Several participants expressed that AI heightens the demand for authenticity. P1 reflected on documentary filmmaking’s new approach, asserting, “You can be loyal to the reality, this is the new way to make documentaries”. They warned against “an interpretation of the interpretation of the

interpretation”. P6 echoed concerns about authorship definition amid AI’s training data influence, highlighting the need to maintain creative intent despite variance in the final outputs.

Moreover, filmmakers perceived AI as an All-in-One Tool Expanding Skillsets. It is regarded as an enabler for creators to broaden their expressive capacity and technical skills. P7 praised AI’s flexibility: “it gives you flexibility to become a much rounded creator”. P8 reflected, “I almost became a one-man band”, while p9 articulated AI’s role in filling “the specific fine art gap that I need”, complementing directorial and technical skills.

Finally, they revealed that authorship matters less when amplifying voices. Some participants viewed authorship as less central, with AI as a voice amplifier over ownership. P4 dismissed traditional recognition: “I don't want any kind of credit. Recognition doesn't have any kind of importance to me”. P7 remarked, “Now I don't feel like I own things a hundred percent”, reflecting a shift in attitudes toward ownership.

4.2 Theme 2: Factors determining authorship

This theme explores the specific characteristics and dimensions creators require to feel ownership of creations produced using AI. It highlights how creators set criteria for authorial legitimacy, focusing on meaningful human input, creative control and effort invested in shaping the final outcome. These factors form the basis for their sense of ownership amid the collaborative human-AI creative process. Key considerations include the extent of human intentionality, the degree of customisation and refinement applied to AI outputs and the strategic role creators play in directing and curating content. The theme is structured around four subthemes, outlined in the hierarchy chart below:

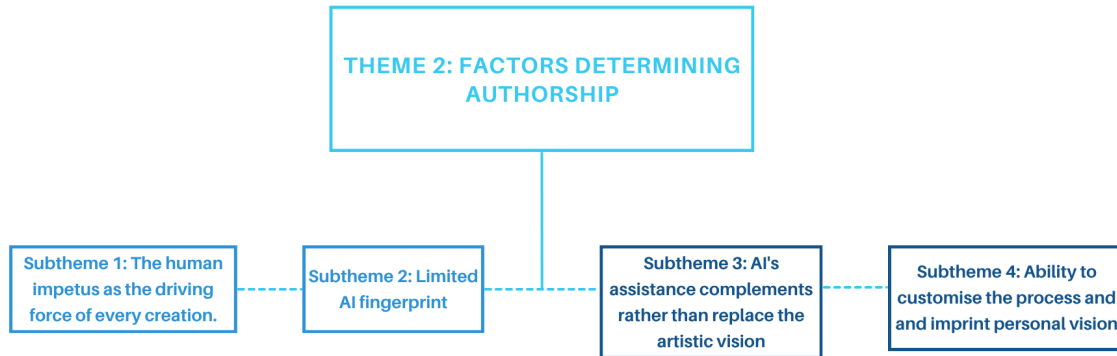


Figure 4. Factors determining authorship

4.2.1. Subtheme 1: the human impetus as the driving force of every creation

Almost all participants concurred that authorship fundamentally rests with the human who bears the creative vision. However, true authorship within this context is mediated by various factors, such as the proportion of AI involvement and the level of customisation achieved. The prevailing view is that while AI functions as a powerful tool, it cannot supplant human agency or claim authorship status independently.

P5 expressed a comparable belief, remarking, “We are the ones starting the conversation. AI should get the credit, but it shouldn't have the authorship”. Here, AI is acknowledged as a collaborator but not a creative equal, reinforcing the idea that authorship lies with the human who orchestrates and contextualises the process. P12 clarified the degree of her own reliance on AI, noting, “I would always be credited as the author because I never rely on its direct creative input”, asserting authorship as contingent upon judgment and conceptual framing rather than on technical generation. P14 summarised this balance succinctly: “Whoever created this or that project using AI tools”, affirming that even when tools are involved, credit must return to the human who conceives them. Similarly, p4 underscored the essential need for human initiation: “if the AI tool

was open in front of me and there was no input, it wouldn't create anything". This recognition positions AI as a passive medium that requires continuous human activation and intent.

They further indicate the need for a high sense of creative agency to initiate and lead the entire creative process to authentically claim authorship as noted by p4 highlighting the primacy of a unique human voice in ideation: "the initial idea is what makes it unique. I will never use AI for ideation or the writing process...it's a very unique human perspective on life". P9 reinforced traditional authorship roles: "the line really is my own ideas," while p14 concluded, "Ideas and vision should always come first from the human brain."

4.2.2 Subtheme 2: limited AI fingerprint

Creators emphasised the importance of maintaining a dominant level of human creative agency to feel authentic authorship. They articulated a preference for AI contributions to remain subordinate, allowing their vision to prevail and AI input to be perceived as assistance rather than authorship. This dynamic is well captured by the "boss and employee" analogy, where the creator remains the strategic director and AI functions as a tool or collaborator within controlled boundaries.

P2 noted, "if I don't notice that it's AI, then it's appropriate. If I can notice it, then I try to stay away from it", highlighting sensitivity to visible AI influence. A position p8 corroborates and adds that "once this process is done in my head, I then use AI just to try to poke holes into the story".

4.2.3 Subtheme 3: AI's assistance complements rather than replaces the artistic vision

Filmmakers expressed a clear distinction between AI as a supportive tool and AI as a replacement for human creativity. The consensus was that AI enhances and advances the creative process when it complements the artistic vision without necessarily overshadowing the essential human input and control. P1 articulated this balance: “My content is me. I want it to be something special and unique, as my focus is to create something that was not achievable, but I don't want to be replaced.” P6 described a pragmatic approach: “It's really just a determinant of what's best for that specific piece of creation in my assessment,” while p11 considered AI a supportive element: “It's mostly using it as support for my work. AI can help me, but in the end, it doesn't substitute the actual contribution”. P15 reflected on maintaining the human element: “If it's enhancing the creative process, then I use it; if it's taking away the human element too much, then I step back.”

4.2.4 Subtheme 4: ability to customise the process and imprint personal vision

Participants emphasised the central importance of being able to influence and shape AI-generated outputs in accordance with their personal vision. They described customisation as essential not only for distinguishing their work from generic or random AI creations but also for safeguarding authenticity and sustaining artistic ownership. P3 underscored this necessity, reflecting, “It will be very important to modify something to a personal thing that differentiates it from random stuff. It has to be really artistic and unique”. This statement captures the participants' collective conviction that the act of customising AI outputs transforms automated data generation into meaningful, individualised creative expression. P9 expanded on this perspective, observing that autonomy lies in the ability to adapt the process around one's vision: “The more you can customise the process for yourself, the more it's a true artistic process, and not some sort of fake

replacement”. For several, this deliberate act of self-direction is what draws the boundary between artistry and automation. P5 explained how clear creative direction ensures that AI remains a subordinate tool: “I’m always the one with the vision, the idea, how it has to look and then you use AI to bring that to life.”

Yet, not all participants shared this deeply personal or hands-on relationship with the tools. A contrasting view was expressed by p16, who remarked, “Even the prompts, I don’t want to think too much. Ask AI to define them and then you can create your own and it doesn’t look like the other one”. This more detached approach denotes reliance on AI’s autonomous generative capacities, resulting in an output that lacks the personalised craftsmanship emphasised by others.

4.3 Theme 3: Impact of AI on creators’ sense of authorship

This theme analyses how AI influences filmmakers’ perceptions of authorship of AI-generated outputs. It examines how the introduction of AI tools affects creators' sense of ownership and authenticity over their creative works and highlights strategies they use to enhance their appropriation of outputs generated with the tools. The theme is structured around two subthemes, outlined in the hierarchy chart below:

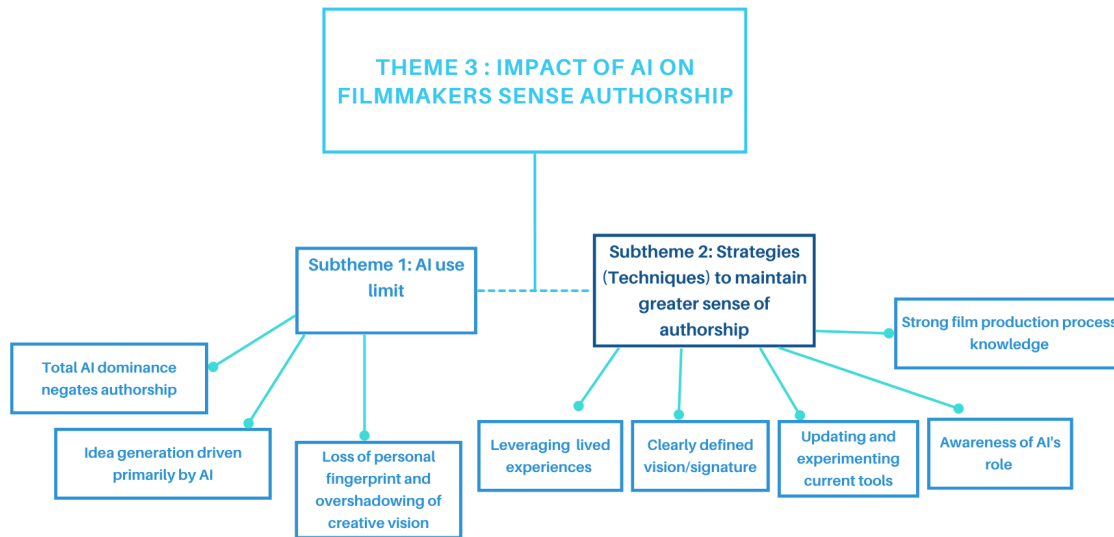


Figure 5. Impact of AI on filmmakers sense of authorship

4.3.1 Subtheme 1: AI use limit

This subtheme defines thresholds where creators perceive their authorship as being compromised or lost due to AI's involvement in the creative process. They identified three factors that could prompt them to limit AI use: the negation of authorship when AI dominates the creative process, idea generation driven primarily by AI and the loss of personal fingerprint and overshadowing of creative vision.

Some creators feel that when AI dominates the process entirely, traditional authorship no longer applies to their work. P16 expressed this by saying, "I'm not sure about that because it's all AI for me. If I were to do traditional and use AI with it, it would be applicable, but I think it's not applicable for me".

Moreover, authorship perception diminishes significantly when idea generation and conception stem predominantly or completely from AI. P7 explained that AI is sometimes just a tool for compiling sources, but genuine authorship requires more profound human ideation. P8 similarly asserted that, “Ideation and conception are usually step one for me. I have to start from something that feels at least 90 - 100% human.”

Furthermore, creators feel a loss of their “fingerprint” when AI’s contribution overshadows their vision and control. P1 commented on maintaining control: “If you use AI and lose control, you are just creating an obvious video. P2 explained that if AI begins to “take over the project”, it “ruins the project a bit,” prompting them to step away. P4 warned against becoming subordinate to AI: “You basically say that AI is the master and you are becoming the slave to that tool”. P5 metaphorically described AI as “the boss” and themselves as “the employee”, suggesting ownership shifts toward AI at that point. P7 summarised that “authorship ends once you relegate it to someone else”. Nonetheless, many participants emphasised the artist’s ongoing role in curating and steering AI contributions to preserve their vision. P6 noted that it is “up to you as the artist” to selectively include content so the final product “resembles what you want and your vision remains unscratched” while p9 maintained that authorship “starts and ends with my vision”. The views here indicate a delicate balance creators must strike between leveraging AI capabilities and retaining genuine authorship through active creative control and personal vision.

4.3.2 Subtheme 2: strategies (techniques) to maintain a greater sense of authorship

Filmmakers adopt a range of strategies to preserve their sense of authorship and control in AI-assisted creative processes. These strategies enable them to assert human creative agency even when working collaboratively with AI.

They reported leveraging their lived experiences and unique aesthetic sensibilities to curate and select among numerous AI-generated options. P4 explained that AI may provide a “lot of options”, but it is the creator’s “sense of aesthetics...based on life experience” that renders the final creation truly unique. Similarly, p6 highlighted that diversifying one’s artistic approach helps “make sure your artistic voice cuts through” the biases inherent in AI suggestions.

Additionally, a clearly defined artistic vision or signature style serves as another critical anchor for authorship. Participants asserted that AI should complement, not replace, this vision. P3 stated, “I have a very clear idea of what I want”, while p8 emphasised the importance of maintaining a distinctive voice, saying, “Having a key voice and signature style that’s recognisable is important because that’s what makes you you as a storyteller”. P10 echoed this, remarking, “AI cannot challenge my unique artistic voice because it starts in my head”. This sentiment was shared by p15, who insisted on “not letting the tool take control, but using it to amplify your vision.”

Moreover, keeping pace with AI tools through ongoing experimentation and research empowers creators to harness AI effectively without losing control. P7 underscored the need for “upskilling and updating yourself”. P13 candidly termed it “the no sleep club”, emphasising the constant learning required to integrate AI into workflows successfully.

The awareness of AI’s influence to support its strategic use in the creative process was equally pointed out as a coping mechanism. P6 noted “I’ve crossed the threshold where I’m able to manipulate these tools and guide them”, while p15 pointed out that, “If AI ever overshadowed my contribution, it would mean I used it without criteria. AI doesn’t dictate the result, I do”. A critical self-awareness state differentiates creators from passive users.

Finally, a firm grounding in traditional production skills underpins many creators’ confidence in using AI as a tool rather than a replacement. P3 acknowledged “the huge advantage”

of longstanding artistic and filmmaking experience and p4 advised focusing on “foundational work from a traditional background.” P9 concurred that “my traditional skills are pretty solidly set”, enabling quick adaptation to new AI functionalities. However, while most creators emphasise human agency and skillful integration, some embrace fully AI-driven production. P5 admitted, “For now I’m just fully focusing on AI,” though he hinted at returning to traditional areas like 3D animation, reflecting the diversity of approaches in the creative community.

4.4. Theme 4: AI impact on artistic autonomy

This theme analyses how AI impacts filmmakers' artistic agency and their ability to lead the entire creative process. The four subthemes that led to the development of this theme are shown in the hierarchy chart below.

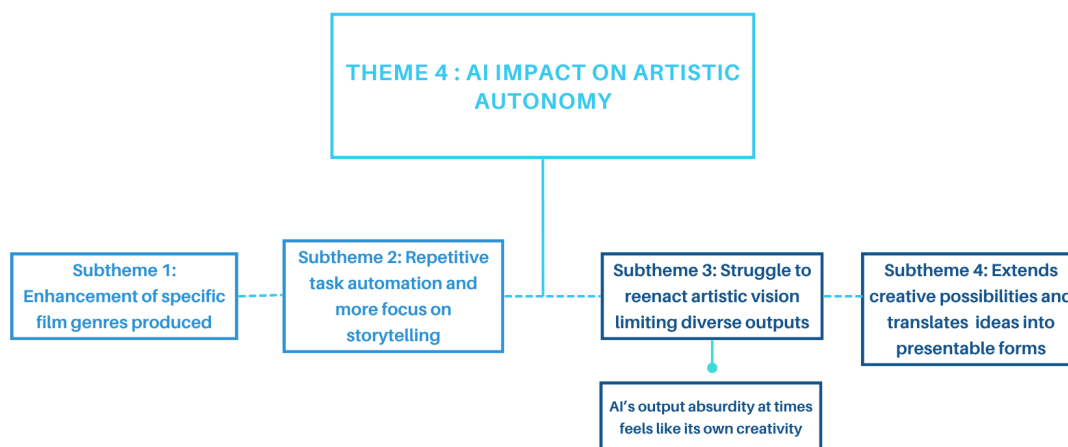


Figure 6. Impact of AI on filmmakers artistic autonomy

4.4.1 Subtheme 1: Enhancement of specific film genres produced

The tools deepen and enhance the production of specific film genres, shifting aspects such as post-production into pre-production by enabling clearer translation of creative visions into images. P4 stated, “I’m mostly interested in doing a lot of science fiction and horror stuff. AI definitely helps”. P8 shared how AI allows long-held ideas to finally be realised. “It basically allows you to go from the 'wouldn't it be cool' to 'here's a cool idea' that looks and feels like this”. P9 added, “It's affected pitch decks especially for my sci-fi and fantasy projects where it's harder to find real-world photos”.

4.4.2 Subtheme 2: Repetitive task automation and more focus on storytelling

AI frees creators by automating menial, repetitive tasks, opening more space for creativity. P8 emphasised this efficiency: “It allows you to get things out of your head and focus more on the storytelling part”. P10 stressed organisational help: “It helped me a lot to organise. I can have a very fast process”. P12 clarified AI’s role is to “help me spend more time on that creative process”, supported by p15 : “It's not a matter of replacing creative work, but freeing oneself from repetitive parts and leaving room for experimentation”.

4.4.3 Subtheme 3: Inherent struggle to reenact artistic vision, limiting diverse outputs

Filmmakers acknowledged that AI presents some limitations due to its training data. P9 elaborated, “The inherent struggle with AI is making it yours”. P2 admitted stepping away from AI when results fall short. Conversely, they generally agreed that AI’s output absurdity at times feels like its own creativity. This nuance reflects how AI-generated “happy accidents” and imperfections introduce a novel form of creativity. P1 hinted that “imperfections will be the new

interesting part of any movie”, while highlighted that surprises are sometimes “better than what I envisioned”. P4 observed AI’s “quirks” producing accidental but “interesting” effects. P6 lauded these “happy accidents” similar to those often found in traditional filmmaking.

4.4.4 Subtheme 4: Extension of creative possibilities and translation of ideas into presentable forms

AI revolutionises creative workflows by enabling storytellers to explore unprecedented avenues. P4 aspired to use AI “even more and more” to become “more prolific” and “tell more stories,”. P9 credited AI for visualising imagination, especially in sci-fi/fantasy genres, while p13 celebrated unlimited possibilities opened by AI. Some, like p14 and p16 considered AI as indispensable in modern creation.

4.5. Theme 5: Reliance on human skills and processes

Filmmakers overall assert that human input supersedes all AI contributions and remains essential because AI does not operate autonomously or possess genuine creativity. P15 captured this sentiment, recognising AI’s utility as a technical aid but concluded that “taste, rhythm and narrative choices remain human,” adding, “AI helps, speeds things up, opens up new paths, but in the end, the human touch remains irreplaceable”. P7 reinforced the uniquely human dimension: “Now where the humanness comes in. And I think we are coming back to that”.

Many creators use AI minimally in scripting and editing, areas they regard as inherently human creative domains. P9 stated, “I use it pretty minimally because those are areas where the human creative has to be the driver.” This view underscores the importance of human-led narrative

development. AI is widely regarded as an instrument whose artistic value depends on its user and the integration into the creative workflow. As p15 summarised, “AI is just an instrument and artistic value will always depend on who uses it and how it’s integrated into the creative process.”

Where AI is deemed unnecessary, filmmakers prioritise traditional methods for their superior fidelity to human nuance. P4 questioned the need for AI in simple contexts: “Why do you need AI for something you can do with your traditional camera in five minutes?”. P8 echoed this artistic scepticism, stating, “If there is a story that requires the performance of an actor, I go for it. AI can’t yet replace a real actor.” These stands underscore human skills, emotional depth and traditional techniques as indispensable pillars supporting creativity, despite AI’s growing integration in filmmaking.

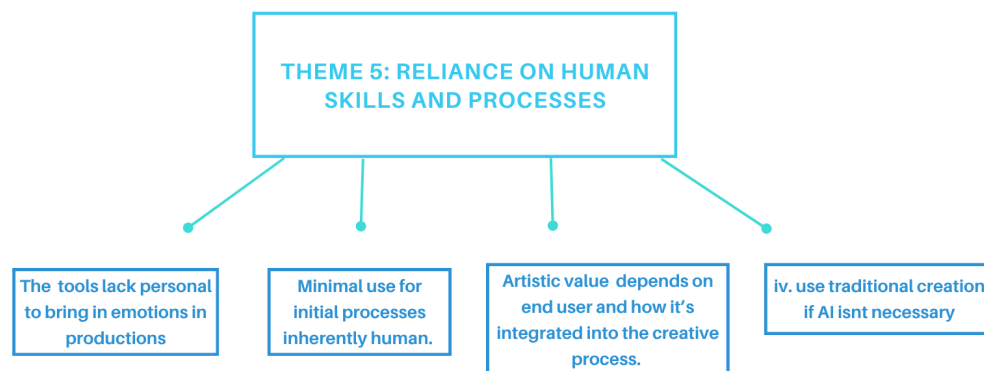


Figure 7. Filmmakers reliance on human skills and processes

5. Discussion

This study explored how the integration of AI in filmmakers’ audiovisual creative process influences their perceptions of authorship. The findings reveal a complex but consistent effort

among professionals to reconcile technological collaboration with the enduring human sense of creative agency. Rather than perceiving AI as a threat that displaces human authorship, participants describe a reconfiguration of creative roles, in which authorship becomes distributed yet still anchored in human intentionality, judgment and emotional expression which not only aligns with Kasunic and Kaufman (2018) findings on the reorientation of how AI is conceptualised in the creative process but also emphasise its use as an asset supporting human creators. Interpreting these findings through the lens of psychological ownership (Pierce et al., 2001) helps explain how filmmakers preserve the feeling that their creations remain authentically “theirs,” even as AI systems increasingly shape the technical and aesthetic dimensions of production.

Filmmakers consistently positioned themselves as the primary authors of their works because they conceive the creative vision, direct its realisation and integrate AI as a tool that materialises that vision. In the context of AI-assisted creation, authorship is neither erased nor diminished - it is transformed into a hybrid form of directorial authorship, where human creativity orchestrates algorithmic input. Along similar lines, De Masi et al. (2025) point out that AI-assisted works complicate and expand singular authorship, shifting them toward distributed or hybrid forms where the author/director orchestrates a collective process between human artist and algorithmic systems, thereby reframing authorship as the curation and direction of machine-generated outputs rather than direct individual creation. The participants’ insistence that the “person bearing the creative vision” is the author demonstrates the continuing centrality of human agency and decision-making. Within psychological ownership theory, this reflects the control route to ownership; the perception that one can intentionally shape and influence outcomes reinforces the feeling of possession over the creative product.

This sense of authorship is also reinforced by the effort and customisation filmmakers invest in their process. Many described it as something earned through labour, problem-solving and emotional engagement rather than merely initiating a prompt or selecting the generated outputs. Effort and self-investment are central antecedents of psychological ownership, as the experience of “working on” something binds the self to the object of creation in accordance with findings from Mirowski et al.(2023, p.14). Even when AI automates certain aspects of editing, rendering or idea generation, participants maintained ownership by making conscious creative decisions, curating results and embedding their personal style. This sharply contrasts He and do’s (2025) view, according to which creators relying on AI in the creative process disregard it as a co-author or principal creator with tendencies to credit the human “orderer” who prompted the AI system even when AI performed a significant creative role, illustrating how omission of AI in creative authorship persists even in landmark AI-driven audiovisual works. Authorship, therefore, persists not as a static claim but as a dynamic process of continuous negotiation between human direction and machine capability.

At the same time, they identified thresholds beyond which authorship begins to erode. When AI dominates ideation or execution - particularly when outputs are generated without significant human intervention, the filmmakers reported a diminished sense of authorship and emotional connection to the work, which aligns with findings by Oh et al. (2018) who explain the need by AI users to lead major initiatives when collaborating with AI tools. This loss mirrors the psychological ownership pathway of *reduced control* and *weakened self-identity*: when individuals no longer feel that their skills, intentions or personality are reflected in a product, the sense of “mine-ness” fades. Yet, rather than rejecting AI altogether, filmmakers developed adaptive strategies to preserve their authorship, such as setting creative boundaries, maintaining a clear

vision, curating AI outputs and investing in continuous learning to remain the expert guiding the process. These behaviours align with existing research on *creative autonomy* and *technological mediation* (Verbeek, 2015, p.31), where agency is maintained through conscious direction of technology rather than its avoidance.

Participants also described AI as a catalyst for creative autonomy and empowerment. By automating repetitive technical tasks, AI allowed them to devote more time to storytelling, experimentation and conceptual refinement. This functional enhancement strengthened their sense of mastery and control. However, this empowerment was moderated by an awareness of AI's aesthetic limitations. Some expressed concern that overreliance on algorithmic tools could homogenise creative outputs or subtly constrain imagination by reproducing patterns embedded in training data (Xu, 2025). Here, autonomy becomes a paradox: AI simultaneously expands and restricts creative freedom. Filmmakers navigate this tension by treating AI as an extension of their creative toolkit rather than as a substitute for human artistry, reaffirming the self-determination that underpins ownership and authorship alike.

Interestingly, across most accounts, the human element remained the foundation of authorship. Participants argued that human intuition, emotion and lived experience give meaning into creative works in ways AI cannot replicate. This conviction resonates with the identity-based route of psychological ownership - the perception that a work embodies aspects of one's self, values and worldview. Such views also align with the EU's current legal discourse on AI and copyright, which continues to emphasise human-significant intellectual contribution as the defining feature of authorship (Lucchi, 2025, p.22). By grounding authorship in emotional resonance and human sensibility, filmmakers reaffirmed both their creative legitimacy and their psychological connection to the works they produce.

Implications

These findings demonstrate a transformation of authorship from a model of singular creation to one of human-led collaboration. Filmmakers conceptualise authorship as hybrid but hierarchically structured: AI contributes technically and procedurally, while humans remain responsible for vision, meaning and coherence. Psychological ownership provides a valuable framework for understanding this evolution, as it captures the emotional and cognitive mechanisms, namely; control, effort and self-identity through which authors maintain a sense of authorship in technologically mediated contexts. This study, therefore, extends existing theories of authorship by highlighting its psychological dimensions and demonstrates that creative ownership in the AI era depends less on exclusion of technology and more on intentional engagement with it.

From a practical standpoint, these insights suggest that sustaining authorship in the age of AI requires not only legal clarity but also psychological awareness. Filmmakers can maintain a strong sense of authorship by cultivating technological literacy, preserving creative direction and foregrounding personal expression within AI-mediated workflows. For policymakers, these findings underscore the need for copyright frameworks that recognise the scalar nature of authorship, acknowledging human-led AI collaboration without eroding human creative rights. Finally, for AI developers, designing tools that prioritise user control, transparency and creative customisation may help preserve the psychological ownership that fuels artistic innovation.

6. Limitations and future research

The use of purposive sampling in this study may introduce a degree of researcher bias, despite the application of clearly defined recruitment criteria. The inherent subjectivity of this non-probability sampling method limits the representativeness of the sample, which in turn affects both internal and external validity. Internally, the interpretation and analysis rely on the researcher's subjective judgment, while externally, the findings are constrained by the non-representative nature of the sample and situational factors, particularly given the exploratory focus on AI integration in filmmakers' creative processes. Moreover, the study situates itself amid the limited legal and ethical framework relating to AI integration in film production, characterised by blurred definitions of what constitutes authorship in a fast evolving creative landscape. Another significant challenge faced was recruiting female participants for the study. Despite repeated attempts to ensure greater inclusion, female professionals proved very challenging to recruit, which explains why there is an overrepresentation of male professionals in the sample. These limitations suggest caution when generalising the findings beyond the studied context. Future studies could investigate how filmmakers navigate AI integration in increasingly hyper-realistic productions, assessing implications for the sustainability of creative practices within the film industry and the maintenance of creator agency.

Additionally, examine audience perceptions of the “humanness” of AI-generated audiovisual content, providing insight into how AI-mediated creativity is received and evaluated by viewers. Expanding the focus to include diverse industry roles, cultural contexts and longitudinal changes in AI adoption would further enrich understanding of AI's transformative impact on authorship and creativity.

7. Conclusion

The integration of AI into the audiovisual creative process is not erasing human authorship but transforming it. Filmmakers continue to express a strong sense of ownership grounded in intentionality, emotional investment and creative control. Rather than diminishing human agency, AI reconfigures the boundaries of authorship, positioning it as a collaborative yet fundamentally human-centered process. In this evolving landscape, creativity remains an embodiment of human vision and identity, even as tools become increasingly intelligent and autonomous.

Yet, this redefinition of authorship unfolds within a broader societal context. As generative AI reshapes not only creative practices but also the circulation of information and cultural expression, we stand at a decisive juncture. The same technologies that empower new forms of artistic innovation also challenge established ethical and legal frameworks, especially concerning the use of existing works in AI training processes and the protection of creators' rights. The task ahead is a collective one. Industry professionals and policymakers must work together to ensure that AI remains a tool that enhances creativity and democratic participation rather than one that undermines them. Initiatives such as the EU's AI Act provide an initial foundation, but stronger safeguards are needed to embed human values, transparency and accountability at the core of AI systems. Ultimately, the future of authorship in the age of artificial intelligence will depend not only on technological advancement but also on the collective capacity to preserve human agency, uphold creative integrity and foster a digital environment where innovation and citizenship coexist in mutual respect.

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Appendix 1 : Code system

Code System	Memo	Frequency
Code System		447
Theme 1 : authorship perception and its characteristics	This theme explores what authorship means to them in the AI age and depicts the shift they notice in the notion of authorship how creators currently define AI	0
Subtheme 4: evolution of the authorship concept	what they think authorship is as a result of AI introduction in their creative process	0
It has decentralised the creation process		3
It has evolved to being able to clearly articulate the vision and delegate tasks while maintaining the creative vision		4
It has reinforced the need for greater authenticity in the industry		7
Being author matters less now as long as I entertain and transmit a message	even though other thing it has eveloved the concept of Authorship, some think AI is there to amplify voices and hence authorship matters less	8
they are all in one tools that help me broaden my skillset		9
Subtheme 1 complex collaboration between human intentionality and technical capability.	This explains the thin line separating preocess automation and human agency to lead the authorship concept which is exemplified as all what AI produces stems from human experiences	7
Authorship is complexified as we always draw some inspiration from existing things	and this thin line description stems from lived experiences from which AI draws inspiration	5
Subtheme 2: the person bearing the creative vision is considered author	this subtheme stresses on the human individual as the orchestrator of all outputs generated	28
I try to balance its input with my vision		9
Subtheme 3: Determined by the efforts put in the creation process	it explains the amount of efforts creators think they should put in to feel authorship	23
Theme 2: Factors determining authorship	This theme explores the specific characteristics and dimensions creators requiure to feel ownership of creations produced using AI	0
Subtheme 1: The human impetus as the driving force of every creation	Here, almost all of us agree that authorship rests on the huma bearing the creative vision, however, ture authorship in this sense is mediated by a couple of factors such as the proportion of Ai used, the level of customisation achieved etc (Alex's refeernce in this case definines what he considers who should be credited aas author)	10

creators creative agency	it explains that they need to be the ones initiating and leading the entire process to feel authorship of outputs	14
Extract codes from the main question		
AI generation is a job on its own led by an artist ie filmmaker		1
Subtheme 2: Limited AI fingerprint	They need to feel little AI input overshadowing their vision - as long i maintain the most creative agency - That's what AXL implies. Use the Boss Analogy here	11
Subtheme 3: AI's assistance complements rather than replace the artistic vision	they use AI if they see that it advances their creative process rather than replace the human input	16
Subtheme 4: Ability to customise the process and print my vision	This explains how they want to be able to influence the outputs with their vision	7
It doesn't matter to me because everything is AI generated. I just recreate what's already there		2
Theme 3: Impact of AI on creators' sense of authorship	This analyses how AI influences creators' authorship perception of AI generated outputs	0
subtheme 1: point at which AI begins to affect the sense of authorship	This describes the level at which their authorship of AI generated outputs is lost in the creative process	0
it's all AI for me so that's not applicable		1
If the idea generation process stems from and is totally influenced by AI		7
when I feel like losing my fingerprint on the work I'm doing	This explains how they could lose authorship in the process if they let AI's contribution overshadow their creative vision. here they explain how sense of ownership is lost when the tools impose their vision/narrative through suggestions on theirs	25

Subtheme 2: Strategies to maintain greater sense of authorship	It explains the strategies they adopt to make sure they retain higher sense of authorship of what is generated There exists controversial views as some see it not as an infringement, but as a tool to help tell more stories	1
the lived experiences and skills help me curate whatever is generated via AI		6
I have a clearly defined vision/signature that AI just complements		28
keeping up to date by experimenting and researching current tools	This explains how they stay ahead of tools by basing on their is an (1) in-depth knowledge of the film production process which enables them to be them (2) aware of what are AI's input in their process and lets them (3) use what they feel adds to the creative process. Which isn't true for hobbyists who have a 100% AI generated process hence, rely exclusively of what's given to them.	20
I don't, I'm fully for AI production		3
I'm too aware of it so I know what to take from it		4
Knowing the film production process / Background		16
Theme 4 : Impact of AI on a creator's artistic autonomy	This analyses how AI impact creators' artistic agency	0
Subtheme 1: the tools have deepened and enhanced my approach to the film genres I produce.	It has turned post production into pre production as they can clearly translate their creative vision into images	7
Subtheme 2: the tools automate repetitive tasks and let me focus on storytelling	This explains how AI frees the creative process by automating menial tasks, giving more space for the creative part by authors	10

Subtheme 3: I struggle to reenact artistic vision limiting diverse outputs	here they explain how AI's creativity is limited by what its trained on hence limits human creativity in that regards. However, they aknowledge that sometimes AI's imperfection depicts some kind of creativity they are glad with	9
	Here he explains that you can just create content for its sake as AI will always provide something based on what its trained on but ultimately, you'll be the one to determine its relevance and direction via your human input and aesthetics.	
AI's output absurdity at times does feel its creativity		15
Subtheme 4: Extends creative possibilities and translates my idea into presentable forms	This explains how AI has revolutionised their cretive process by enabling them to explore unprecedented storytelling avenues	20
Q1. What is your area of expertise? What kind of projects do you typically work on?		1
years of experience		0
Name		18
Profession		24
Area of expertise		45
Theme 5: reliance on human skills and processes		3
I quickly realised that the tools lack my personal flair		1
Basic cinematographic knowledge should still be a prerequisite in the industry		2
I use it pretty minimally in terms of scripting and edition because I feel thats a human process		1
AI is just an instrument, and artistic value will always depend on who uses it and how it's integrated into the creative proces		1
There's always the need for human input to bring in emotions in productions. AI lacks that.		4

use traditional creation if AI isn't necessary		3
the iteration process with AI is interesting to generate the best outputs		5
The choice of a tool is a creative choice	Random pertinent statements	3

Code System

Appendix 2 : Interview Guide

AI & Authorship of Audiovisual Creators

Interview Questions

Assessing exposure and Integration of AI tools in the creative process.

1. Please introduce yourself: What is your area of expertise? What kind of projects do you typically work on?
2. How do you incorporate AI tools in your audiovisual creation process?
3. What specific AI tools do you use AND for what purpose?
4. Can you walk me through your AI workflow use?
5. What aspects of working with AI do you think are helpful? What are the advantages of using AI tools? Can you provide specific examples?
6. What aspects of working with AI do you think are challenging? What are the disadvantages of using AI tools? Can you provide specific examples?
7. How do AI tools impact your ability to express your creative goals? Can you describe any instances where it either enhanced or hindered your expression?

Authorship and Originality

8. How do you balance using AI assistance and maintaining your unique artistic voice?
9. How would you define "authorship" in the context of AI-assisted audiovisual creation?
10. How has your perception of what it means to be an "author" changed since you started using AI tools?
11. In the future, do you think AI might change the way authorship is perceived in the audiovisual industry? If yes, **how**?
12. Considering the rapid advancements in AI technology, how do you balance staying current with AI tools and maintaining your traditional creative skills?

Sense of Authorship over AI assisted works

13. How do you determine the appropriate level of AI assistance in your work?
 - i. To what extent does it feel like a collaborative process?
 - ii. Who should be credited as the author?
 - iii. At what point in the creative process do you feel AI involvement begins to **affect** your sense of authorship?
 - iv. Have you ever decided to reduce AI involvement to maintain a stronger sense of authorship?
14. Have you ever felt that AI-generated content overshadowed your personal input in a project?

Opportunity Cost of Not Integrating AI

15. What is AI's *added value*, if any, compared to content that does not use it?
 - i. ***Have you experienced*** a project where AI significantly enhanced your efficiency or output quality?
16. What creative opportunities or innovations might be missed by not embracing AI in the audiovisual field?
 - i. ***Have you experienced*** any instances where not using AI has led to **missed** opportunities or falling behind in your industry?

17. How do you perceive the long-term impact on your career development if you were to limit or avoid AI use in your creative process?

18. Do you have any **policy** recommendation to protect Human creators in relation to AI generative tools?

End

Appendix 3 : AI disclosure

Tool	Function	Used in Chapters
Perplexity. AI	Adjusting APA-7 citations, wording check, creating APA-7 citations, wording check.	References
GPT-3.5	Adjusting APA-7 citations, wording check, creating APA-7 citations, wording check.	References
Grammarly	Wording + Grammar Check	Full report
DeepL Translate	Translation of Abstract	Abstract
Turboscribe AI	Trasnscription of Interviews	Findings

Abstract (English)

Traditional notions of authorship and creative agency in the audiovisual creative process have witnessed a seismic shift resulting from the increasing integration and accessibility of artificial intelligence (AI). AI tools enhance creativity by generating novel ideas, refining workflows and offering unprecedented precision. Given its growing importance in film production, understanding how generative AI transforms the creative process is essential. This research examines how audiovisual professionals in the film industry interact with AI systems, exploring the dimensions that shape their authorship perceptions and the role of psychological ownership over AI-generated outputs. Through interviews with 18 filmmakers and a thematic analysis of their lived experiences, the results reveal a complex but consistent effort among filmmakers to reconcile technological collaboration with the enduring human sense of creative agency. AI is perceived as an asset that reconfigures creative roles, making authorship more distributed yet still profoundly anchored in human intentionality, judgment and emotional expression. The analysis contributes to the field by extending existing theoretical frameworks and providing practical insights. These align with current academic and legal discussions, particularly within the European Union's (EU) evolving copyright framework and offers insights into how integrating AI in audiovisual creation is transforming traditional conceptions of authorship while illuminating the future of human-AI collaboration in the creative industries.

Abstract (Deutsch)

Traditionelle Vorstellungen von Urheberschaft und kreativer Handlungsfähigkeit im audiovisuellen Schaffensprozess erfahren durch die zunehmende Integration und Zugänglichkeit künstlicher Intelligenz (KI) einen tiefgreifenden Wandel. KI-Tools fördern die Kreativität, indem sie die Generierung neuer Ideen unterstützen, Arbeitsabläufe optimieren und ein bislang unerreichtes Maß an Präzision ermöglichen. Angesichts ihrer wachsenden Bedeutung in der Filmproduktion ist es unerlässlich, zu verstehen, inwieweit generative KI den kreativen Prozess verändert. Diese Studie untersucht, wie Fachleute der Filmindustrie mit KI-Systemen interagieren, welche Faktoren ihre Wahrnehmung von Urheberschaft prägen und welche Rolle die psychologische Eigenverantwortung im Umgang mit KI-generierten Ergebnissen spielt. Basierend auf Interviews mit 18 Filmemacher*innen und einer thematischen Analyse ihrer Erfahrungen zeigen die Ergebnisse, dass Filmschaffende vielschichtige, zugleich aber konsistente Bemühungen unternehmen, die technologische Zusammenarbeit mit einem fortbestehenden menschlichen Gefühl kreativer Handlungsfähigkeit in Einklang zu bringen. KI wird als eine Ergänzung verstanden, die kreative Rollen neu definiert und die Urheberschaft zwar stärker verteilt, jedoch weiterhin tief in menschlicher Intentionalität, Urteilsfähigkeit und emotionaler Ausdruckskraft verankert. Die durchgeführte Analyse trägt zu diesem Forschungsfeld bei, indem sie bestehende theoretische Ansätze fortführt und um praxisrelevante Erkenntnisse ergänzt. Sie steht im Einklang mit aktuellen wissenschaftlichen und rechtlichen Diskursen - insbesondere im Hinblick auf die sich wandelnden Urheberrechtsvorschriften der Europäischen Union (EU) - und eröffnet neue Perspektiven auf die Art und Weise, wie die Integration von KI in die audiovisuelle Produktion traditionelle Konzepte von Urheberschaft transformiert und die zukünftige Zusammenarbeit zwischen Mensch und KI in der Kreativbranche prägt.