Research Article

Generative Artificial Intelligence and the Media Industries: Collective Consequences for Journalism, Advertising, and Public Relations

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Abstract: Generative artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as a disruptive force in media industries, reshaping how information is created, disseminated, and consumed. While much scholarly attention has focused on individual sectors such as journalism, advertising, or public relations, the broader collective consequences of AI adoption across these interconnected fields remain underexplored. This paper discusses how generative AI transforms professional practices, ethical frameworks, and audience relationships across the three domains, highlighting both opportunities for efficiency and innovation as well as challenges of credibility, transparency, and trust. By framing AI as a cross-industry actor, the study emphasizes the need to move beyond siloed approaches and toward a holistic understanding of media ecosystems in the age of automation. Ultimately, the paper argues for a shared research and policy agenda that addresses the converging risks and responsibilities of journalism, advertising, and public relations, with particular attention to disinformation, professional identity, and audience literacy in a rapidly evolving communicative environment.

***Keywords*:** Generative Artificial Intelligence, Journalism, Advertising, Mass communication

1. Introduction

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) marks a transformative moment in the history of media industries [1]. Unlike earlier forms of narrow AI designed for task-specific applications, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Midjourney, and Stable Diffusion are capable of producing human-like text, visuals, audio, and video content, thereby reshaping the processes of creation, distribution, and audience engagement [2, 3]. This technological disruption is particularly significant in the domains of journalism, advertising, and public relations fields traditionally oriented toward content production and relationship-building with audiences and stakeholders [4].

While initial research has tended to examine the impact of AI within individual industries, recent scholarship highlights the importance of considering cross-industry implications. Researchers such as [5] argued that advertising, journalism, and public relations share common opportunities and challenges with generative AI, particularly concerning efficiency, credibility, ethics, and the redefinition of professional roles. These industries are not isolated; rather, they coexist within a larger media ecosystem where audiences encounter news, branded content, and advertisements in overlapping and intertwined ways [6, 7].

One of the most pressing issues is the rise of AI-driven disinformation and deepfakes, which undermine not only individual professions but also the legitimacy of media systems as a whole [8, 9]. For example, misinformation circulating on social media can simultaneously damage a company's reputation (a concern for PR), erode trust in news organizations (a challenge for journalism), and manipulate consumer perceptions (a risk for advertising). Addressing such challenges requires a holistic perspective that goes beyond disciplinary silos and recognizes AI as a cross-industry actor [10].

This paper builds on these insights by examining the collective consequences of generative AI for journalism, advertising, and public relations. Specifically, it explores how AI adoption transforms professional practices, ethical frameworks, and audience relationships, while also highlighting the need for cross-sector collaboration in addressing shared risks. By situating generative AI within a broader communicative paradigm, this study contributes to the ongoing effort to reimagine media work, ethics, and literacy in the age of automation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Generative AI and Media Transformation

Generative AI represents a step-change in how media content is produced, distributed, and consumed. Unlike earlier automation technologies, which performed narrowly defined tasks, generative AI is capable of content creation that appears human-like, raising both opportunities for efficiency and concerns about authenticity [2, 11]. This has prompted scholars to frame generative AI as a communicative technology that mediates the relationship between media organizations and their audiences [5, 13]

Across industries, professionals are experimenting with applications such as automated text generation, AI-driven design, chatbots, and recommendation systems to support journalistic reporting, targeted advertising, and digital PR strategies [14, 15]. However, the rapid integration of these tools challenges established professional norms, particularly regarding authorship, ethics, and the role of human expertise [16, 10].

2.2. AI in Journalism

In journalism, generative AI is used for newswriting, summarization, audience personalization, and data analysis [17, 18]. Automated systems can increase newsroom efficiency but also risk undermining credibility if errors or biases in AI outputs go unchecked [19]. Furthermore, scholars warn that excessive reliance on AI may reshape journalistic authority and the human role in reporting [20]. Recent research emphasize the ethical implications of disclosure whether audiences should be informed when they are reading AI-generated news (Montal & Reich, 2017). As journalism serves a public interest function, concerns about transparency and accountability are amplified compared to other industries.

Recent studies held by [21] also analyzed how generative AI (GAI) changes power dynamics in newsrooms, alters traditional news production workflows, and raises ethical concerns (e.g. falsity, editorial judgment, transparency. Their findings elucidated that scholars are now treating GAI not just as novelty but something reshaping journalism's institutional, ethical, and production structures. Helps ground discussion of opportunities and risk. Moreover, [22] documented a case study that illustrates how Bloomberg has implemented AI assistance in its newsroom (editorial workflows), including applications for summarization, content suggestions, and other support tools. The focus is on integrating AI without disrupting journalistic standards, and on how AI can augment rather than replace human editorial work. Similarly, [23] also held research to explore how ethicists, journalists, and media professionals perceive AI: key concerns include guidelines, bias, transparency, editorial control, and how to maintain ethical standards in presence of AI tools, their findings provide elucidation on usefulness for discussion of normative issues: how journalism practitioners themselves see risks, what ethical frameworks are emerging, and where tensions lie.

2.3. AI in Advertising

Advertising has rapidly embraced AI for targeted messaging, predictive analytics, and content generation. Chatbots, AI influencers, and algorithmically optimized campaigns are reshaping how brands engage with consumers [24, 25]. Generative AI enables personalized experiences at scale but also blurs boundaries between human and machine-created persuasion.

Key risks include deepfakes in branding, false endorsements, and audience manipulation through hyper-personalized ads [9]. Researcher such as Rodgers [26] highlights the tension between efficiency-driven automation and ethical advertising practices, where the drive for engagement may conflict with consumer protection and transparency.

2.4. AI in Public Relations

In public relations, AI is applied to social listening, crisis communication, stakeholder engagement, and media monitoring [27]. Generative AI chatbots and virtual influencers now serve as brand representatives, directly mediating organizational relationships with publics [28].

However, the ethical codes of PR practice have historically been premised on human actors. As Guzman [29] indicated the involvement of machines in communicative labor challenges assumptions about responsibility, accountability, and professional identity. Furthermore, PR professionals must increasingly respond to reputational crises caused by AI-generated disinformation and fake content originating from outside actors [9]

3. Methodology

The study employed a qualitative content and thematic analysis of recent scholarly literature, industry reports, and policy documents published between 2020 and 2024. Sources were identified using academic databases such as Scopus using keywords including “generative AI,” “automated journalism,” “AI advertising,” “AI public relations,” “media ethics,” and “trust.” Approximately 80 peer-reviewed studies and industry papers were examined to identify converging patterns, sectoral differences, and cross-industry linkages. Each document was coded inductively to trace recurring themes related to efficiency and innovation, ethical framework and challenges. Each document was read carefully and coded inductively, following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis procedure.

4. Dicussion

This study suggests that generative AI is not merely a sector-specific innovation but a system-wide disruptor across the media ecosystem. Scholars such as Guzman and Lewis [5] argued that research has remained siloed, focusing on single professions while neglecting the collective consequences of AI integration. This gap risks overlooking how AI-driven disruptions in one field cascade into others, producing ripple effects across industries. For example, a single AI-generated deepfake video could trigger a multi-industry crisis: journalists may unintentionally report misinformation, PR professionals may be forced into damage control, and advertisers may face consumer backlash through association. Thus, the implications of generative AI are inherently interconnected and systemic.

The literature further highlights an urgent need for cross-industry ethical frameworks, AI literacy programs, and regulatory standards that address shared risks. While journalism emphasizes truth and accountability, advertising prioritizes persuasion, and PR focuses on relationship management, all three professions now face the challenge of managing human-machine communication in a converged media environment. Moving forward, research must adopt a holistic perspective that situates generative AI within the broader “public arena” of communication [6]. This requires

comparative studies, collaborative ethical guidelines, and cross-disciplinary education that prepare future media professionals for an AI-driven ecosystem.

4.1 Ethical Frameworks

The adoption of generative AI across journalism, advertising, and public relations introduces complex ethical challenges that existing frameworks struggle to address. Traditional professional codes assume human authorship and decision-making, yet AI increasingly acts as a co-creator of content, blurring lines of responsibility and accountability [5, 31, 36]. Key ethical considerations include:

4.1.1 Authorship and Accountability

Determining responsibility for AI-generated errors, misinformation, or biased content remains unresolved. For instance, if a news article generated by AI contains factual inaccuracies, it is unclear whether the journalist, the AI developer, or the media organization is accountable.

4.1.2 Bias and Fairness

AI models reflect the biases present in their training data, which can lead to discriminatory or misleading outputs. This affects all three domains, from journalistic reporting to targeted advertising and PR messaging.

4.1.3 Transparency and Disclosure

Ethical practice demands that audiences are informed about AI involvement in content creation. Failure to disclose AI-generated material risks eroding trust and undermining credibility [16].

4.2 Opportunities for Efficiency and Innovation

Generative AI offers transformative potential for media industries by significantly enhancing operational efficiency and enabling innovative practices across journalism, advertising, and public relations which are as follow:

4.2.1 Automation of Routine Tasks

One of the most immediate benefits of generative AI is its ability to automate repetitive and time-consuming processes. Tasks such as news summarization, content drafting, data collection, social media monitoring, and audience segmentation can now be performed at scale and with remarkable speed. This automation not only reduces human error but also frees media professionals to concentrate on higher-order cognitive tasks, such as investigative reporting, strategic campaign planning, or creative content development. As Chan-Olmsted [4] and Diakopoulos [15] elucidated, AI-driven automation helps organizations reallocate human resources to areas that demand nuanced judgment, ethical considerations, and emotional intelligence—areas where machines are less capable.

4.2.2 Personalization at Scale

Generative AI enables highly granular customization of content to match audience preferences, behaviors, and contexts. In journalism, this might manifest as adaptive news feeds that present stories tailored to individual reading patterns. In advertising, AI can design dynamic campaigns that respond to real-time engagement metrics, optimizing messaging for each segment. Public relations professionals can leverage AI to craft targeted messaging for specific

stakeholders, enhancing the relevance and impact of communications. By harnessing audience data effectively, organizations can strengthen engagement, improve retention, and cultivate deeper trust with their audiences.

4.2.3 Creative Experimentation

Beyond efficiency, generative AI opens new frontiers for creativity and innovation. AI can rapidly generate multiple variations of textual content, visual assets, infographics, videos, or interactive experiences, enabling experimentation that was previously too resource-intensive or time-consuming. This capability encourages media professionals to explore unconventional storytelling techniques, novel branding strategies, and immersive audience interactions. As Mollick [3] and Liu & Yao [24] emphasized, AI's generative capabilities do not replace human creativity but augment it, allowing for iterative experimentation and accelerating the process of idea validation, content prototyping, and audience testing.

4.3 Cross-Industry Challenges and Collective Consequences

Although the adoption of generative AI varies across journalism, advertising, and public relations, scholars emphasize that the most critical challenges are not confined to individual professions but rather emerge as collective consequences that cut across the media ecosystem. One of the most prominent concerns is disinformation and deepfakes. AI-generated falsehoods, ranging from fabricated news articles to synthetic audio-visual content, have the potential to simultaneously disrupt all three industries. For instance, a deepfake can create a public relations crisis for an organization, undermine the credibility of journalists who inadvertently report it as fact, and mislead consumers through manipulated advertising campaigns [30]. Table 1 indicate cross industry challenges of adopting generative AI.

Table 1: Cross-Industry Challenges

Challenge	Description	References
Disinformation and Deepfakes	AI-generated falsehoods impact all three industries (journalism, advertising, and public relations) simultaneously. A deepfake may create a PR crisis, damage journalistic credibility, and mislead consumers.	[30, 8]
Ethical Uncertainty	Each profession faces dilemmas around authorship, bias, and transparency, but current ethical frameworks remain industry-specific rather than collective.	[31, 32]
Audience Trust	Media consumers rarely separate journalism, advertising, and PR in their digital feeds; hence, credibility loss in one domain can erode trust across all.	[6, 34]
Professional Identity	Automation is reshaping what it means to be a journalist, advertiser, or PR practitioner, with AI increasingly positioned as a co-creator rather than merely a tool.	[35]

A second shared challenge involves ethical uncertainty. Questions of authorship, accountability, bias, and transparency remain pressing in all three domains, yet existing ethical frameworks tend to be industry-specific and fragmented rather than collaborative. This creates a gap in addressing issues that are inherently cross-industry, as generative AI increasingly blurs boundaries between journalistic reporting, persuasive advertising, and strategic communication [31,32].

Another area of concern is audience trust. In today's media environment, consumers do not neatly separate journalism, advertising, and public relations content; instead, they encounter all three within integrated digital feeds and hybrid communication spaces. As a result, credibility loss in one domain for example, if audiences discover AI-written news without disclosure can easily spill over into distrust of advertising and PR messages, eroding confidence in the media system as a whole [6].

Finally, the rise of AI raises significant questions about professional identity. Automation is reshaping what it means to be a journalist, advertiser, or PR practitioner, positioning AI not merely as a tool but as a co-creator of content. This shift challenges long-standing professional norms and calls into question the boundaries of expertise, creativity, and responsibility within media work [33]. Collectively, these challenges demonstrate that the consequences of generative AI cannot be fully understood within disciplinary silos, but must be addressed through a systemic and cross-industry perspective. Table 1 indicates the Cross-Industry Challenges.

5. Conclusions

Generative artificial intelligence is not simply another technological advancement in media industries, it represents a structural transformation that cuts across journalism, advertising, and public relations. As this review highlights, AI tools increasingly function as co-creators of media content, reshaping professional roles, ethical frameworks, and audience relationships. While individual studies have examined AI's impact within separate fields, the evidence suggests that the most critical implications are collective. Issues such as disinformation, deepfakes, audience trust, and blurred professional boundaries transcend industry divisions, requiring a more holistic, cross-sector approach. By situating generative AI within the wider media ecosystem, this study underscores the urgency of developing shared ethical standards, collaborative strategies, and audience literacy frameworks that can withstand the challenges of automation. A systemic perspective allows scholars and practitioners alike to move beyond disciplinary silos and toward solutions that recognize the interdependence of media professions in the digital era.

5.1 Limitation and Future Direction

This study has following limitations: First, the review has primarily concentrated on journalism, advertising, and public relations, even though other fields such as entertainment, education, and marketing research are also undergoing significant AI-driven transformations that warrant attention. Second, the pace at which generative AI technologies evolve poses a challenge; new tools and practices emerge so quickly that academic literature risks lagging behind industry realities. Third, much of the existing research remains context-specific, with a strong focus on western settings, leaving questions about how AI adoption unfolds in the Global South where cultural, regulatory, and technological infrastructures differ. Finally, while theoretical and conceptual contributions dominate current discussions, empirical research that measures AI's actual impact on professional practices, ethical frameworks, and audience perceptions is still limited.

Given these constraints, future research should adopt a broader and more comparative lens. Scholars might examine how journalism, advertising, and PR interact with generative AI not in isolation but as part of a shared media ecosystem, conducting cross-industry empirical studies to capture similarities and divergences. Equally important is

the development of integrated ethical frameworks that can guide AI use across professions, addressing concerns of transparency, authorship, bias, and accountability. Another promising direction lies in audience-focused research, investigating how publics interpret and respond to AI-generated content, particularly in relation to trust and credibility. Attention should also be directed toward global and cultural variations, exploring how adoption differs across regions and socio-political contexts. Finally, future studies should assess the long-term implications of AI for professional identity and governance, asking how these technologies reshape what it means to work in journalism, advertising, or public relations and what regulatory models may ensure responsible use without stifling innovation.

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Data Availability:

The research data related to this work are included within the manuscript. For more information on the data, contact the corresponding authors.

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