International Journal of Social Science Research and Review

http://ijssrr.com
editor@ijssrr.com
Volume 9, Issue 9
September, 2026
Pages: 204-214

Impact of Generative AI on Freelance and Professional Artists: An Empirical Study

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v9i9.3536

Abstract
Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is changing the way digital art is created and shared. It provides new opportunities for faster content creation but it also creates concerns about artists careers and creative ownership. This study examined how freelance and professional artists perceive the growing use of GenAI in the creative industry. A descriptive quantitative research design was used. Data were collected through an online questionnaire, and 80 valid responses were analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings show that most participants were familiar with GenAI and understood how these tools work. While many respondents reported that AI had not yet affected their work, nearly one-third experienced a decline in client opportunities. Most artists were concerned that AI models are trained on copyrighted artwork without permission. They also believed that artists should be compensated when their work is used for AI training. Respondents expected freelance artists to face greater challenges in the coming years because of increasing competition from AI-generated content. At the same time, they felt that human creativity, originality, and emotional expression remain difficult to replace. The study concludes that AI should be used as a supporting tool rather than a substitute for artists. Clear copyright policies and fair practices are needed to protect creative professionals while encouraging responsible use of AI.

Keywords: *Generative AI; Artist; Professionals; Evaluation; Impact Analysis*

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has transformed the creative landscape by enabling machines to produce original-looking text, images, audio, and other digital content from existing data. Powered by machine learning algorithms and large-scale datasets, GenAI has evolved from an experimental technology into a commercially significant industry, with applications spanning education, healthcare, entertainment, software development, and the creative arts. Popular tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Grok, Perplexity, DALL-E, Midjourney, and Stable Diffusion have made AI-generated content widely accessible to both professionals and the general public. Emma and Peace (2022) define generative AI as machine learning systems capable of creating novel content by identifying patterns within existing datasets (Emma & Peace, 2022). The rapid commercialization of these technologies has contributed to the growth of the global generative AI industry, valued at approximately USD 48 billion, highlighting its increasing economic and societal importance (Jiang et al., 2023).

Among the most influential applications of GenAI is image generation, where diffusion models and generative adversarial networks (GANs) produce highly realistic visual content from simple text prompts (Copper, 2025). These technologies have significantly reduced the time and technical expertise required to create digital artwork, thereby democratizing artistic production. While this accessibility has expanded creative opportunities, it has also disrupted traditional artistic professions by lowering entry barriers and increasing competition within the creative economy. Freelance artists, illustrators, photographers, and graphic designers increasingly compete with AI-assisted creators who can produce commercial-quality visuals rapidly and at minimal cost. Consequently, concerns have emerged regarding declining commissions, reduced income, job displacement, and the growing difficulty of distinguishing human-created artwork from AI-generated content (Octavia, 2025). The widespread adoption of generative AI has also generated significant ethical, legal, and professional debates. Critics argue that many AI models are trained using copyrighted artwork without the consent or compensation of original creators, raising concerns about intellectual property, authorship, artistic ownership, and fair use. Simultaneously, organizations are rapidly integrating AI into creative workflows because of its efficiency, lower production costs, and ability to accelerate content creation (Copper,

2025). While many artists perceive AI as a threat to authenticity and creative labour, others have begun incorporating AI into brainstorming, concept development, reference generation, colour exploration, and workflow management. These contrasting perspectives have intensified discussions regarding the future relationship between human creativity and artificial intelligence, with many scholars suggesting that sustainable creative industries may ultimately depend on collaborative human AI partnerships rather than complete replacement of human artists (Navigating the Digital Age, 2024). Against this backdrop, understanding artists' perceptions, adaptation strategies, and concerns regarding generative AI has become increasingly important for informing future technological, legal, and policy developments within the creative sector.

2. Literature Review

The emergence of Generative AI (GenAI) has fundamentally transformed the creative landscape by reshaping the way digital content is produced, distributed, and consumed. Unlike traditional artificial intelligence systems that primarily perform analytical or predictive tasks, generative AI possesses the ability to create original-looking content, including text, images, music, videos, and computer code, by learning patterns from extensive datasets. This capability has positioned GenAI as one of the most disruptive technologies of the twenty-first century, particularly within creative industries that have historically relied on human imagination, artistic skill, and originality. As its adoption continues to expand across commercial, educational, and artistic sectors, scholars have increasingly examined its implications for creativity, employment, intellectual property, and professional identity. Emma and Peace (2022) describe generative AI as machine learning systems capable of producing unique outputs by identifying and reproducing complex relationships within existing data. This technological advancement has accelerated with the introduction of publicly accessible tools such as ChatGPT, Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, DALL-E, Gemini, and Grok, allowing individuals with little or no artistic training to generate sophisticated content within seconds. Jiang et al. (2023) further observed that the rapid commercialization of these technologies has transformed generative AI into a multibillion-dollar industry, reflecting its growing economic significance across global markets (Jiang et al., 2026). While these developments have democratized access to creative production, they have simultaneously generated concerns regarding originality, authenticity, and the future role of human creators. A substantial body of literature has focused on the technological foundations that enable AI-generated artwork. Contemporary image-generation systems primarily rely on diffusion models and Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), both of which have significantly improved the quality and realism of AI-generated images. Diffusion models such as Stable Diffusion and DALL-E progressively remove noise from randomly generated patterns to produce detailed visual outputs that closely resemble human-created artwork. These systems also permit image editing through natural language prompts, enabling users to modify existing images while preserving their overall composition. Such technological improvements have substantially lowered the technical barriers associated with digital art production and have expanded creative opportunities for both professionals and amateur users. However, the accessibility of these technologies has also intensified competition within creative industries by allowing non-artists to produce commercial-quality visual content rapidly and at minimal cost. The growing adoption of generative AI has generated contrasting perspectives regarding its influence on creativity and artistic productivity. Several studies emphasize the positive contributions of AI to creative practice. Zhou and Lee (2024), through an analysis of more than four million artworks, reported that text-to-image AI increased creative productivity by approximately twenty-five percent while simultaneously improving audience engagement and perceived artistic value (Zhou et al., 2024). Similarly, Pardeshi (2024) argued that the integration of artificial intelligence into animation has enhanced realism, reduced production time, and expanded creative possibilities by automating technically demanding processes (Pardeshi, 2024). Jia (2024) also suggested that the future of digital animation should involve a balanced collaboration between human artists and AI technologies, where artificial intelligence enhances efficiency while human creators continue to provide imagination, emotional depth, and artistic direction (Jia, 2024). Collectively, these studies suggest that AI possesses considerable potential to complement rather than replace human creativity when integrated responsibly into artistic workflows. Despite these technological advantages, the literature consistently highlights growing economic challenges for artists, particularly those working independently. Freelance artists traditionally depend upon commissioned work, personal portfolios, client relationships, and reputation to sustain their careers. Even before the emergence of generative AI, freelancers faced unstable income, irregular employment opportunities, intense competition, and pricing pressures. The introduction of AI-generated art has further complicated this professional environment. Many clients increasingly prefer AI-generated illustrations because they can be produced quickly and at considerably lower costs than commissioned artwork. Consequently, freelance artists now compete not only with other professionals but also with AI-assisted creators capable of producing visually appealing images without formal artistic training. This shift has contributed to concerns

regarding declining commissions, reduced financial stability, and long-term career sustainability within creative professions. The relationship between artificial intelligence and employment within creative industries remains a subject of considerable academic debate. Kawakami and Venkatagiri (2024) examined artists' discussions on social media and found that although generative AI can enhance creative capabilities, many artists fear job displacement, declining public trust, and increasing professional uncertainty (Kawakami & Venkatagiri, 2024). These concerns have intensified as businesses increasingly adopt AI-generated content to reduce production costs and improve efficiency. Erickson (2024) similarly observed that rapid advancements in AI have raised widespread concerns regarding labour market disruption, with several reports predicting substantial automation across creative occupations (Erickson, 2024). Although empirical evidence regarding long-term employment outcomes remains limited, ongoing workforce reductions within graphic design, illustration, gaming, and entertainment industries suggest that generative AI has already begun altering employment patterns across creative sectors. In contrast, professional artists often demonstrate greater willingness to integrate AI into selected stages of their creative process rather than viewing it solely as a replacement technology. Commercial illustrators, graphic designers, and animation professionals increasingly utilize AI to generate concept sketches, develop reference materials, explore colour palettes, and automate repetitive production tasks. Tsao et al. (2025) argued that while AI increases content production and accelerates creative workflows, it also contributes to cultural homogenisation and intensifies competition by flooding digital markets with rapidly generated content (Tsao et al., 2026). Chakraborty (2024) similarly concluded that AI-assisted animation significantly reduces production time and lowers operational costs, enabling smaller studios and independent creators to participate in increasingly competitive markets (Chakraborty, 2024). Nevertheless, these scholars also caution that AI-generated content often lacks artistic intention, emotional nuance, and contextual understanding, qualities that remain central to meaningful artistic expression. Another major theme within existing scholarship concerns copyright protection, intellectual property rights, and the ethical implications of AI training practices. Contemporary generative AI systems are typically trained using billions of publicly available images and textual resources, many of which remain protected by copyright. Al-Busaidi et al. (2024) argued that this practice creates significant legal uncertainty because existing copyright frameworks were developed for human authors rather than machine-generated content (Al-Busaidi et al., 2024). Li et al. (2025) further observed that recent legal decisions denying copyright protection to AI-generated works have intensified debates surrounding authorship, ownership, and originality (Li et al., 2025). The controversy surrounding AI-generated images that imitate the artistic style of Studio Ghibli exemplifies broader concerns regarding unauthorized reproduction of artistic styles without consent or compensation. These issues highlight the urgent need for updated legal frameworks capable of balancing technological innovation with the protection of creative labour and intellectual property rights. Ethical concerns surrounding generative AI extend beyond copyright to include issues of transparency, authenticity, and fairness. Many scholars argue that AI-generated artwork challenges conventional definitions of creativity because artificial intelligence lacks consciousness, emotional experience, cultural understanding, and intentionality. Akhtar (2025) contended that although AI can combine learned patterns to produce visually impressive outputs, it cannot genuinely replicate the emotional significance or lived experiences that characterize human artistic expression (Akhtar, 2025). Similarly, Renée Otmar et al. (2025), comparing AI-assisted literary editing with professional human editors, found that ChatGPT consistently performed below experienced editors in preserving narrative quality, contextual interpretation, and stylistic nuance (Otmar et al., 2025). These findings suggest that while AI demonstrates remarkable technical capabilities, its outputs remain dependent upon human creativity, supervision, and critical judgment. Public perception of AI-generated art represents another growing area of research (Otmar et al., 2025). Rapp et al. (2025) reported that individuals generally evaluate AI-generated images positively in terms of visual quality and technical precision (Rapp et al., 2025). However, participants frequently described these images as conventional, emotionally detached, or lacking originality. Similarly, Roca et al. (2025) demonstrated that most individuals distinguish AI-generated images from authentic photographs only slightly better than chance, indicating that advances in generative AI have produced highly convincing visual outputs. Interestingly, participants were more successful at identifying AI-generated images containing human faces than landscapes or inanimate objects, suggesting that humans remain particularly sensitive to subtle imperfections in facial representation (Roca et al., 2025). These findings illustrate both the growing sophistication of generative AI and the increasing difficulty consumers experience when attempting to distinguish human-created content from AI-generated imagery. The literature review indicates artists attitudes toward the expanding use of AI-generated imagery. Brewer et al. (2025) found that many artists perceive AI image generators as threatening because they imitate distinctive artistic styles while bypassing years of artistic training and creative development (Brewer et al., 2025). Similarly, Bojić et al., (2024) emphasized that the inability to distinguish AI-generated artwork from human-created work contributes to declining perceptions of authenticity and artistic value (Bojić et al., 2024). Jiang et al. (2026), surveying 378 professional visual artists, found widespread opposition toward generative AI, with participants

reporting increased workplace stress, reduced employment opportunities, and growing pressure from clients and employers to incorporate AI into their workflows (Jiang et al., 2026). Zhang et al. (2025) further observed that artists frequently describe AI-generated artwork as lacking originality, emotional depth, and authentic creative intention despite acknowledging its technical sophistication (Zhang et al., 2025). These findings demonstrate that artists place considerable importance on the creative process itself rather than solely on the visual appearance of the finished product. Although much of the existing literature emphasizes the disruptive consequences of generative AI, several scholars argue that the future of creative industries is likely to involve collaboration rather than competition between humans and intelligent technologies. Many artists have already begun integrating AI into brainstorming, concept development, experimentation, scheduling, and productivity management while reserving critical creative decisions for human judgment. Such collaborative approaches recognize AI as a supportive tool capable of enhancing efficiency without replacing imagination, emotional intelligence, or artistic vision. Nevertheless, this transition requires clear ethical standards, transparent copyright policies, and educational initiatives that enable artists to adapt successfully to rapidly evolving technological environments. Literature review showed that generative AI has fundamentally altered artistic production, creative labour, and professional practice. While AI offers significant advantages in terms of efficiency, accessibility, and creative experimentation, it also introduces substantial concerns regarding employment, copyright, authenticity, and artistic identity. Most previous studies have focused either on technological capabilities or on legal and ethical challenges, whereas comparatively fewer investigations have examined the lived experiences, perceptions, adaptation strategies, and professional concerns of freelance and professional visual artists. Addressing this gap is essential for developing balanced policies and sustainable practices that encourage technological innovation while preserving the value of human creativity within the rapidly evolving creative economy. The existing literature suggests that although both professional and freelance artists are affected by generative AI, the nature and extent of these impacts differ in terms of employment, income, workplace pressure, creative control, and adaptation strategies **(Table 1)**.

Table 1: Comparison of the Impact of Generative AI on Professional and Freelance Artists

Aspects	Professional Artists	Freelance artists	Similarities
Employment impact	Change in job roles, restructuring, reduced demand for certain tasks within companies.	Loss of commissions due to clients choosing AI over real artists.	Concerns over job security and the future of artistic careers.
Income	Usually receive a fixed salary and will be less vulnerable to income loss.	Income may decrease due to fewer commissions.	Both may face economic insecurity.
Workplace pressure	Expectation from employers to adopt AI tools and use them in their processes.	Must adapt independently to compete in the market.	Both may be forced to use AI in their work.
Competition	Competition with AI's fast output may cause changes in workspace requirements.	Direct competition with AI in the market.	Both face more competition from AI.
Productivity	AI may assist in concept art, brainstorming, drafting, and repetitive tasks, improving efficiency.	Help in faster and quicker outputs,	Both may use AI as a tool for creative and productivity support.
Creative control	May have less control over creative decisions because of companies pushing AI tools.	Has more control over how much they may choose to implement AI in their work.	Both value human creativity and expression
Copyright concerns	Concerned about AI being trained on copyrighted works without consent.	Concerned about their work being used to train models without compensation.	Both advocate for stronger protection of intellectual property.
View of AI art	Questions whether it can be match human creativity and intent.	Often believes that it lacks authenticity and emotional depth.	Both frequently argue that human-made art possesses unique emotional and creative qualities.
Adaptation strategies	Learn AI tools to meet workplace demands and improve efficiency.	Offer personalized, original, or niche services that AI cannot easily replicate.	Both are finding ways to incorporate AI while preserving their artistic identity.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the impact of generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) on freelance and professional artists. A quantitative survey approach was employed to collect data on artists'

perceptions, experiences, and attitudes regarding the use of generative AI in creative industries. The descriptive design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researchers to systematically describe existing conditions and identify patterns related to the adoption and perceived impact of AI technologies without manipulating any variables.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population comprised freelance artists, professional artists, and individuals actively engaged in artistic practice across different creative domains. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that only respondents with practical experience in art participated in the study. Participants were selected based on their involvement in artistic activities, irrespective of their geographical location or artistic specialization. In total, 80 valid responses were collected and included in the final analysis.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed through Google Forms. The questionnaire was distributed through online professional and creative communities, including LinkedIn, ArtStation, Behance, and other social media platforms where artists actively interact.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section collected demographic information, including age, artistic specialization, years of experience, and employment status. The second section measured the perceived impact of generative AI using Likert-scale questions related to job security, client demand, productivity, and competition. The third section examined respondents' usage of AI tools, including the types of tools used and the stages of the creative process in which AI was incorporated. The final section contained open-ended questions that allowed respondents to describe their personal experiences, opinions, and concerns regarding the influence of generative AI on their careers. To improve data quality, the questionnaire incorporated logic-based branching so that respondents answered only questions relevant to their professional background. Participants were also requested to provide a professional portfolio or social media profile to verify that they were active artists. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was reviewed to ensure that the questions were clear, relevant, and aligned with the objectives of the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

The completed questionnaires were exported from Google Forms into Microsoft Excel for analysis. Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, tables, and graphical representations, were used to summarize the responses. Pie charts and bar charts were prepared to present the demographic characteristics of respondents and their perceptions regarding the impact of generative AI. The findings were interpreted by comparing the distribution of responses across different variables, enabling the identification of major trends and patterns related to artists' experiences with generative AI.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were maintained throughout the study. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and were assured that their responses would be used solely for academic purposes. No personally identifiable information was disclosed, and all responses were treated confidentially to protect participants' privacy.

3.6 Rationale of the Study

The rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence has transformed creative industries by changing how artistic content is produced, distributed, and consumed. While AI offers opportunities for improving efficiency and creativity, it has also generated concerns regarding employment, originality, copyright infringement, and the future role of human artists. This study was undertaken to investigate these emerging issues from the perspective of freelance and professional artists. The findings provide empirical evidence on how artists perceive the opportunities and challenges associated with generative AI and contribute to the growing body of literature on AI's influence on creative professions.

4. Results and Discussion

A total of 80 responses were collected from freelance artists, professional artists and hobbyists to understand how generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is influencing artistic practice and employment. The findings reveal that while artists recognize the usefulness of AI, they remain concerned about its long-term impact on originality, employment, and copyright.

4.1 Age profile of respondents

The largest proportion of participants (52.6%) belonged to the 21-40 years age group, followed by 30.8% aged 15-20 years, while 16.6% were above 41 years (**Figure 1**). This shows that the study mainly represents artists who are actively involved in the creative industry and are more likely to encounter AI tools in their professional work. Younger artists are generally more familiar with digital technologies, making their opinions particularly relevant in understanding the current transition toward AI-assisted creativity.

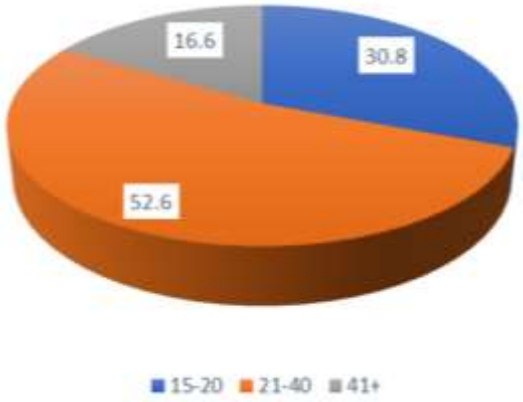

Figure 1: Age distribution of the respondents participating in the study.

4.2 Awareness of Generative AI

Most respondents (88.8%) reported that they understood how generative AI models work, whereas only a small percentage were unsure (8.8%) or unaware (2.5%) (**Figure 2**). This high level of awareness suggests that opinions expressed in this study are based on practical knowledge rather than assumptions. The widespread use of tools such as Midjourney, DALL-E, and ChatGPT has made artists increasingly familiar with AI technologies. Similar observations were reported by Jiang et al. (2023), who noted that AI tools have become widely accessible within creative communities (Jiang, Brown, Cheng, Khan, Gupta, Workman, Hanna, Flowers, & Gebru, 2023).

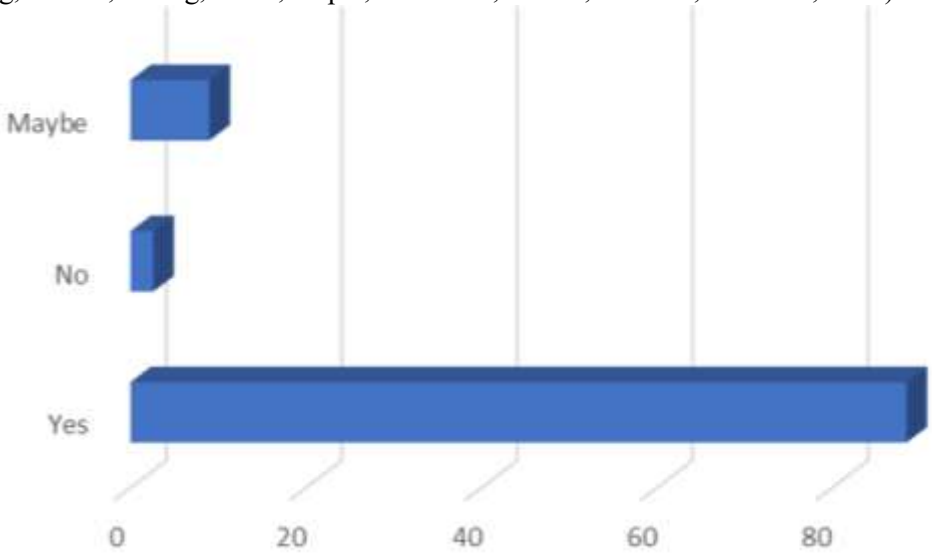

Figure 2: Respondents' awareness of how generative AI models work.

4.3 Professional background of respondents

The survey included participants from different artistic backgrounds. Hobbyists represented the largest group (40%), followed by freelance artists (32.5%), full-time professionals (22.5%), and others (5%) (**Figure 3**). This distribution provides perspectives from individuals with different levels of professional dependence on artistic work. Freelancers and professionals are more directly affected by market competition, while hobbyists often view AI from a learning or experimental perspective.

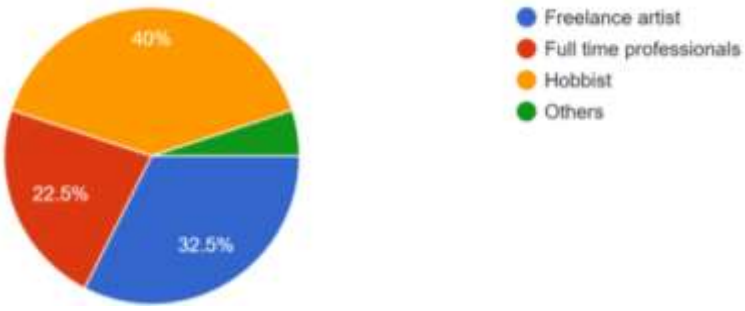

Figure 3: Professional status of respondents based on their involvement in artistic practice.

4.4 Experience as artists

Most respondents had considerable experience in art. Around 36% had worked for 6–10 years, while 34% had more than 10 years of experience (**Figure 4**). Only a small proportion had less than one year of experience. This indicates that the responses mainly came from experienced artists who have witnessed the changes occurring before and after the emergence of generative AI. Their opinions therefore provide valuable insights into how AI is reshaping artistic careers.

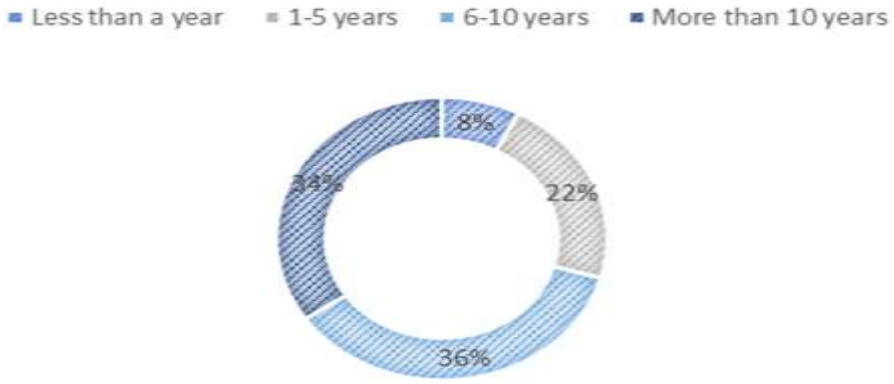

Figure 4: Years of professional experience of the respondents as artists.

4.5 Areas of specialization

Concept art was the most common specialization (43.6%), followed by digital illustration (33.3%), character design (11.5%), graphic design (6.5%) and photography (5.1%) (**Figure 5**). These fields are among the most affected by AI image generators because they rely heavily on digital production. The higher representation of concept artists explains why many respondents expressed concerns regarding competition from AI-generated content.

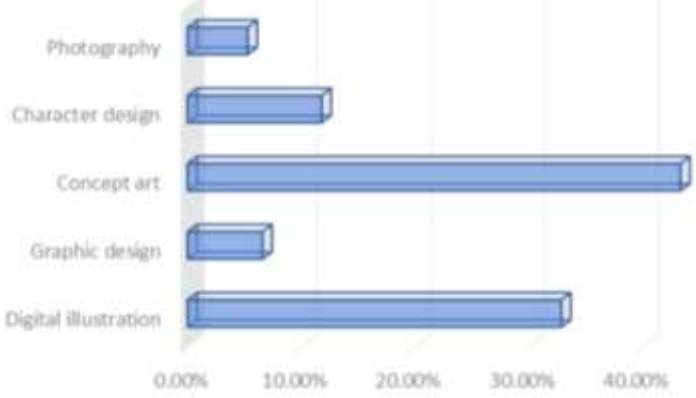

Figure 5: Artistic specializations represented among the survey respondents.

4.6 Impact of AI on artistic work

The results show mixed experiences regarding the direct impact of AI on work opportunities. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64.5%) stated that AI had not yet affected their client base, while 30.3% reported a significant decline in clients (**Figure 6**). Only a few respondents experienced any increase in work due to AI. These findings suggest that

although the overall market has not completely shifted toward AI-generated art, a substantial group of artists is already experiencing negative effects. This supports previous findings by Kawakami and Venkatagiri (2024), who reported growing concerns about reduced employment opportunities for artists (Kawakami & Venkatagiri, 2024).

Figure 6: Perceived impact of generative AI on respondents' work and client opportunities.

4.7 Copyright and ethical concerns

One of the strongest findings of this study relates to copyright. More than 82% of respondents were concerned that AI systems are trained using artists' work without permission (**Figure 7**).

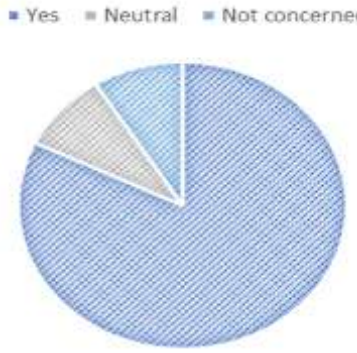

Figure 7: Respondents' concerns regarding the use of artists' work for training generative AI models without permission.

Likewise, 77.2% believed that artists should receive financial compensation if their work is used to train AI models (**Figure 8**). These findings demonstrate that copyright protection remains one of the most pressing issues surrounding generative AI. The results are consistent with Al-Busaidi et al. (2024), who argued that existing intellectual property laws are not fully prepared to address AI-generated content (Al-Busaidi et al., 2024).

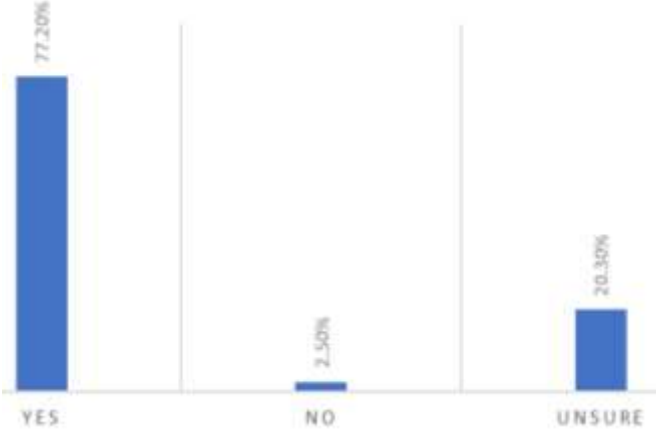

Figure 8: Respondents' opinions on compensating artists whose work is used to train generative AI models.

4.8 Future impact on freelance artists

Participants expressed considerable concern about the future of freelance artists. Nearly 63% predicted that AI would negatively affect freelance careers over the next two to three years, whereas only 11% expected positive

outcomes (**Figure 9**). Freelancers often depend on commissions, making them more vulnerable to clients choosing lower-cost AI-generated alternatives. These findings indicate that respondents expect increasing competition as AI tools continue to improve.

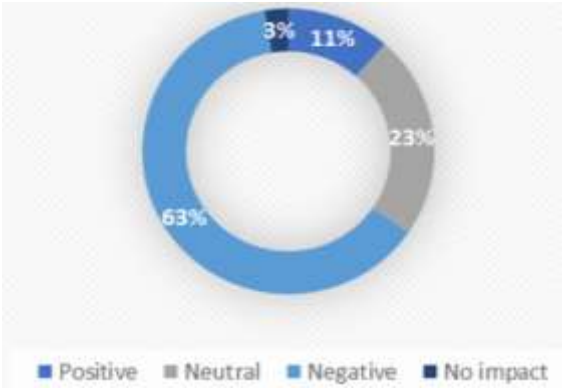

Figure 9: Respondents' expectations regarding the impact of generative AI on freelance artists over the next two to three years.

4.9 Public willingness to pay for AI-generated art

Interestingly, 85% of respondents stated that they would not pay for AI-generated images if they were clients (**Figure 10**). Only 2.5% were willing to purchase AI-generated artwork. This finding suggests that although AI can create visually appealing images, many people continue to value originality, human creativity, and emotional expression. The result supports earlier studies showing that audiences often appreciate the authenticity of human-created artwork even when AI-generated images appear technically impressive.

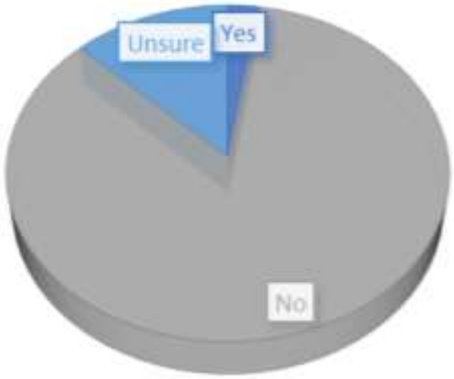

Figure 10: Respondents' willingness to pay for AI-generated images as potential clients.

The findings present a balanced picture of generative AI within the creative industry. Artists recognize that AI increases efficiency and supports idea generation. However, they remain concerned about employment, originality, copyright, and fair compensation. Most respondents do not believe that AI can fully replace human creativity. Instead, they view it as a tool that should assist artists rather than replace them. The study also shows an important distinction between current and future impacts. While many respondents reported little immediate effect on their work, they expected much greater challenges in the coming years. This suggests that the influence of AI is still developing and may become more significant as businesses increasingly adopt automated creative tools. The findings indicate that the future of creative industries is likely to depend on responsible collaboration between human artists and artificial intelligence. Such collaboration will require stronger copyright protection, transparent AI training practices, and policies that recognize the value of human creativity.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of generative AI on freelance and professional artists by analysing responses from 80 participants with different artistic backgrounds. The findings show that artists are well aware of AI technologies and acknowledge their ability to increase efficiency and support creative workflows. However, they also express strong concerns about copyright, unauthorized use of artistic work, declining employment opportunities, and increasing competition. Although most respondents reported that AI has not yet significantly reduced their work, many believe

that freelance artists will face greater challenges in the near future. The survey also revealed strong support for compensating artists whose work is used to train AI models. At the same time, most participants preferred human-created artwork over AI-generated images, indicating that originality and emotional expression remain highly valued.

The findings suggest that generative AI should be viewed as a supportive creative tool rather than a replacement for human artists. Future progress will depend on balanced policies that encourage innovation while protecting artistic rights and professional livelihoods. Further research involving larger and more diverse samples would provide a deeper understanding of how AI will continue to transform creative industries across different regions and artistic disciplines.

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