Manexia
Journal of Business, Management, and Creative Economy

e-ISSN: 3124-6532
Vol. 2 I Issue 2 I May 2026
Pages 72-94

DOI
https://doi.org/10.66203/manexia.02204

Human–AI Collaboration Reshaping Creative Labor and Professional Identity Dynamics

Galih[1]*

***Corresponding Mail:**
galih@uninus.ac.id

Article History:
Submitted: 06-01-2026
Approved: 04-04-2026
Published: 04-05-2026

OPEN ACCESS
Available at the open access journal:
https://sciedex.com/manexia

Abstrak

Creativity is increasingly no longer an exclusively human endeavor, as artificial intelligence becomes deeply embedded in processes of ideation, production, and evaluation. This shift challenges established assumptions about authorship, originality, and professional identity within the creative economy. Despite growing research on digital labor, artificial intelligence, and identity work, these domains remain theoretically fragmented, limiting understanding of how human–AI collaboration reshapes both creative processes and identity construction. This study addresses this gap by developing an integrative conceptual framework that bridges creative labor theory, identity work, and socio-technical perspectives. Using a mechanism-based analytical approach, the study conceptualizes creative labor as a hybrid co-creative system characterized by generative expansion, iterative co-creation, algorithmic mediation, and human curation. It further explains how these processes trigger identity transformation through recursive stages of destabilization, experimentation, negotiation, and reconstruction. The study contributes by reframing creativity as a distributed process, extending identity theory to incorporate AI as an active participant, and introducing the concept of hybrid intelligent labor, offering a foundation for future empirical inquiry.

Keywords

human–AI collaboration; creative labor; identity transformation; hybrid intelligent labor; distributed creativity; socio-technical systems

[1] Faculty of Engineering and Agriculture, Universitas Islam Nusantara, Bandung, Indonesia

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, is fundamentally reshaping the nature of work in the creative economy. What was once considered a domain uniquely dependent on human imagination, intuition, and symbolic expression is increasingly being co-produced through interactions between human agents and algorithmic systems (Amankwah-Amoah *et al*., 2024; Anantrasirichai & Bull, 2022). This shift reflects a broader transformation from viewing technology as a passive tool toward recognizing AI as an active participant in creative processes, capable of generating ideas, recombining knowledge, and influencing decision-making pathways (Jarrahi, 2018; Raisch & Krakowski, 2021). More recent developments in large language models further extend this transformation by enabling AI systems to shape problem framing and ideation trajectories, thereby influencing not only outputs but also the cognitive processes underlying creativity (Brynjolfsson *et al*., 2023; Dell'Acqua *et al*., 2023). Consequently, creative work is no longer solely an expression of individual cognition but emerges as a hybrid outcome of human–machine collaboration.

This transformation is particularly significant within the creative economy, where value is not only derived from functional outputs but also from symbolic meaning, authenticity, and cultural relevance (Potts *et al*., 2008; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010). Historically, creative labor has been characterized by autonomy, precariousness, and identity-driven work practices, often involving self-branding, portfolio careers, and fluid professional boundaries (Menger, 1999; Duffy, 2016; Gandini, 2016). The rise of digital platforms has further intensified these dynamics by restructuring how creative outputs are produced, distributed, and monetized, leading to the platformization of cultural production (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Duffy *et al*., 2019). More recent studies suggest that platform infrastructures do not merely mediate distribution but actively shape creative direction through algorithmic visibility and ranking mechanisms, thereby embedding creative labor within systems of algorithmic governance (Vallas & Schor, 2020; Nieborg *et al*., 2023). In such environments, professional identity is not merely a static attribute but an ongoing accomplishment shaped by social interaction, recognition, and meaning-making processes (Brown, 2015; Caza *et al*., 2018).

Despite the growing body of research on digital labor and creative industries, existing literature has largely approached technological change through the lens of automation and efficiency. Early studies emphasized the displacement of labor and the restructuring of tasks (Autor, 2015; Frey & Osborne, 2017), while more recent perspectives highlight augmentation, where AI enhances human capabilities rather than replacing them (Brynjolfsson *et al*., 2018; Raisch & Krakowski, 2021). However, these perspectives remain limited in capturing the deeper transformation occurring in creative work, where the boundaries between human agency and machine contribution become increasingly blurred. Emerging evidence indicates that generative AI can simultaneously expand individual productivity while introducing risks of homogenization due to reliance on shared data patterns (Noy & Zhang, 2023; Doshi & Hauser, 2024; Mollick, 2024). This paradox suggests that technological advancement not only transforms efficiency but also reshapes the nature of creativity itself.

At the same time, research on professional identity and identity work has provided rich insights into how individuals construct, negotiate, and sustain their identities in organizational contexts (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ibarra, 1999; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Identity is shaped through processes of sensemaking, social interaction, and adaptation to changing role expectations (Gioia *et al*., 2000; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). In creative fields, identity is often closely tied to notions of originality, authorship, and personal expression (Elsbach, 2009; Beech, 2008). However, this stream of literature has not sufficiently accounted for the presence of intelligent technologies that actively participate in the creative process. As AI systems increasingly contribute to idea generation, design, and content production, they challenge traditional assumptions about authorship, expertise, and creative ownership.

Moreover, digital environments increasingly produce "datafied identities," where metrics such as engagement and visibility shape how individuals interpret their professional worth (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Cheney-Lippold, 2017).

Parallel to this, emerging studies on AI in the workplace have begun to explore human–AI symbiosis and algorithmic collaboration (Faraj *et al.*, 2018; Kellogg *et al.*, 2020). These studies suggest that work is being reorganized around interactions between humans and intelligent systems, where decision-making authority, task boundaries, and accountability are continuously negotiated. AI systems increasingly function as co-agents in knowledge production by influencing attention, generating alternatives, and structuring decision environments (Sutherland & Jarrahi, 2018; Kallinikos *et al.*, 2021). Empirical evidence further indicates that generative AI can significantly enhance individual productivity and creative output, while simultaneously raising concerns about reduced diversity and convergence of ideas at the collective level (Noy & Zhang, 2023; Doshi & Hauser, 2024). Such findings highlight a critical tension between expansion and standardization in AI-mediated creativity.

Taken together, these developments point to a critical gap in the literature. While creative labor studies emphasize socio-cultural conditions, AI research focuses on technological capabilities, and identity theory examines individual meaning-making processes, there remains limited integration across these domains. More fundamentally, existing research tends to treat technology as an external factor rather than as an embedded actor within socio-technical systems (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Leonardi, 2011). As a result, there is a lack of conceptual frameworks that explain how human–AI collaboration reshapes professional identity within the creative economy. Existing models do not adequately capture the dynamic interplay between technological augmentation, creative processes, and identity transformation.

This paper addresses this gap by proposing a conceptual framework that integrates insights from creative labor, professional identity, and AI collaboration. We argue that human–AI collaboration constitutes a new form of hybrid creative labor, in which identity is continuously reconfigured through interactions with algorithmic agents. Rather than viewing AI as either a tool or a threat, we conceptualize it as a co-creative partner that participates in the production of meaning, value, and professional identity. In doing so, the paper advances a multi-level understanding of how creative workers navigate identity transformation in AI-mediated environments.

The contribution of this study is threefold. First, it extends the literature on creative labor by introducing the concept of hybrid human–AI work, moving beyond traditional notions of autonomy and precarity (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Duffy, 2016). Second, it advances identity theory by incorporating AI as an active element in identity work processes, thereby expanding the scope of identity construction in contemporary organizations (Brown, 2015; Caza *et al.*, 2018). Third, it contributes to the broader discourse on digital transformation by highlighting how value creation in the creative economy is increasingly shaped by collaborative interactions between humans and intelligent systems (Vial, 2019; Verhoef *et al.*, 2021).

By integrating these perspectives, this paper lays the foundation for a more comprehensive understanding of creative labor transformation in the age of AI, offering new directions for both theory development and future empirical research.

2. Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Creative Labor in the Digital Economy

Creative labor has long been conceptualized as a distinctive form of work characterized by autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and the pursuit of symbolic value rather than purely economic

outcomes (Menger, 1999; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010). Unlike routine labor, creative work relies on the generation of novel ideas, aesthetic judgment, and cultural interpretation, positioning it as a key driver of innovation and meaning production within the creative economy (Potts *et al.*, 2008; Anderson *et al.*, 2014; Florida, 2002). This form of labor is inherently embedded in social and institutional contexts, where value is co-constructed through cultural recognition and audience interpretation.

However, the digital transformation of industries has fundamentally reconfigured the conditions under which creative labor is performed. The proliferation of digital platforms has not only expanded access to production and distribution but also introduced new forms of control, dependency, and competition (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Duffy *et al.*, 2019). Creative workers increasingly operate within platform-mediated environments where visibility, reputation, and income are shaped by algorithmic infrastructures (Vallas & Schor, 2020; Wood *et al.*, 2019). Recent studies further emphasize that these platforms function as socio-technical systems that actively shape creative practices through algorithmic curation, ranking, and recommendation mechanisms (Nieborg *et al.*, 2023; Srnicek, 2017).

As a result, creative labor has evolved into hybrid forms that combine elements of entrepreneurship, self-branding, and content production (Gandini, 2016; Duffy, 2016). This transformation intensifies the longstanding tension between autonomy and precarity. While digital tools enable broader participation and creative expression, they also expose workers to unstable income streams, continuous evaluation, and intensified competition (Gill, 2002; Kuhn & Maleki, 2017). In this context, creative labor becomes not only a site of production but also a site of identity construction, where individuals continuously negotiate their professional roles and self-concepts (Brown, 2015; Caza *et al.*, 2018).

More recently, the integration of artificial intelligence introduces a qualitatively different layer of transformation. AI systems are no longer limited to automating routine tasks but are increasingly capable of generating creative outputs such as text, images, and designs (Anantrasirichai & Bull, 2022; Amankwah-Amoah *et al.*, 2024). This development challenges the long-standing assumption that creativity is uniquely human. From a theoretical perspective, this shift can be understood through the lens of combinatorial innovation, where novelty emerges from recombining existing knowledge elements at scale (Arthur, 2009; Fleming, 2001). AI significantly accelerates this recombination process, thereby expanding ideational possibilities while simultaneously raising concerns about convergence and reduced originality.

Consequently, creative labor in the digital economy is increasingly characterized by hybrid human–AI interaction, where value is co-produced through the integration of cognitive, algorithmic, and socio-cultural processes. This transformation necessitates a reconceptualization of creative labor beyond traditional human-centric frameworks.

2.2 Professional Identity and Identity Work

Professional identity refers to how individuals define themselves in relation to their work roles, encompassing beliefs, values, and meanings associated with their occupation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Pratt *et al.*, 2006). Identity is not a fixed attribute but an ongoing, dynamic process shaped by social interaction, organizational context, and personal experience (Ibarra, 1999; Gioia *et al.*, 2000). Identity work involves the continuous construction, maintenance, and revision of self-definitions as individuals navigate evolving role expectations and environmental changes (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Brown, 2015).

In creative professions, identity is particularly salient because it is closely tied to notions of originality, authorship, and personal expression. Creative outputs are often perceived as extensions of the self, making professional identity deeply intertwined with creative performance (Elsbach, 2009; Beech, 2008). This strong identity attachment increases

vulnerability to disruption, as changes in work processes or evaluation criteria can directly affect individuals' sense of self and legitimacy (Petriglieri, 2011).

Identity construction is fundamentally a sensemaking process, where individuals interpret experiences and adjust their identities based on feedback from peers, audiences, and institutional actors (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Dutton *et al.*, 1994). In digital environments, this process is increasingly mediated by data-driven feedback loops. Metrics such as likes, shares, and algorithmic visibility serve as signals of recognition and legitimacy, contributing to what has been described as "quantified identity" (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Cheney-Lippold, 2017). As a result, professional identity becomes contingent not only on social validation but also on algorithmic evaluation.

The introduction of AI into creative work further complicates identity processes by introducing a non-human actor into identity construction. When AI contributes to ideation and production, it challenges traditional boundaries between human and machine agency (Faraj *et al.*, 2018; Kellogg *et al.*, 2020). This creates ambiguity around authorship, expertise, and ownership, prompting individuals to renegotiate their professional identities.

From a theoretical standpoint, this shift aligns with socio-technical perspectives that view technology as constitutive of organizational processes rather than as an external tool (Orlikowski, 2007; Leonardi, 2011). However, identity theory has only recently begun to acknowledge the role of intelligent technologies as active participants in identity work. This highlights a critical gap in understanding how identity is constructed in environments where agency is distributed across human and algorithmic actors.

2.3 Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of Work

The impact of artificial intelligence on work has evolved from a focus on automation toward a more nuanced understanding of augmentation and collaboration. Early research emphasized the potential of AI to replace human labor, particularly in routine and predictable tasks (Autor, 2015; Frey & Osborne, 2017). These perspectives framed technological change primarily in terms of efficiency gains and labor displacement.

More recent scholarship, however, highlights augmentation, where AI enhances human capabilities and enables new forms of interaction (Brynjolfsson *et al.*, 2018; Raisch & Krakowski, 2021). The emergence of advanced generative AI further extends this perspective by introducing co-agency, where AI systems actively shape cognitive processes, problem framing, and decision-making pathways (Brynjolfsson *et al.*, 2023; Dell'Acqua *et al.*, 2023).

The concept of human–AI collaboration has therefore become central to understanding contemporary work dynamics. Rather than acting as a substitute, AI functions as a partner that contributes analytical power, scalability, and pattern recognition, while humans provide contextual understanding, ethical judgment, and creative insight (Jarrahi, 2018; Faraj *et al.*, 2018; Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). This interaction reflects a form of distributed cognition, where cognitive processes are extended across human and technological systems (Hutchins, 1995).

Empirical evidence suggests that such collaboration can significantly enhance productivity and creative output. Studies show that generative AI tools improve efficiency and expand ideational space, enabling individuals to produce more outputs in less time (Noy & Zhang, 2023). However, these benefits are accompanied by potential risks, including over-reliance on AI, reduced diversity of outputs, and algorithmic bias (Doshi & Hauser, 2024; Kallinikos *et al.*, 2021). This creates a paradox in which AI simultaneously expands and constrains creativity.

In addition, AI introduces new forms of control and coordination through algorithmic management. Systems can assign tasks, monitor performance, and evaluate outputs without

direct human supervision, shifting authority from human managers to technological infrastructures (Kellogg *et al.*, 2020; Wood *et al.*, 2019). This redistribution of control alters power dynamics within organizations and influences how work is experienced and organized (Sutherland & Jarrahi, 2018; Vallas & Schor, 2020).

Taken together, these developments indicate that AI is not merely transforming tasks but reshaping the fundamental structure of work, including cognition, agency, and authority.

2.4 Toward an Integrated Perspective

Although the literatures on creative labor, professional identity, and artificial intelligence provide valuable insights, they have largely evolved in parallel rather than in an integrated manner. Creative labor research emphasizes socio-cultural dynamics but often treats technology as an external factor (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Duffy, 2016). Identity theory focuses on human meaning-making processes while overlooking non-human actors (Brown, 2015; Caza *et al.*, 2018). AI research prioritizes efficiency and performance, with limited attention to identity and symbolic value (Jarrahi, 2018; Raisch & Krakowski, 2021).

This fragmentation reflects a broader limitation in socio-technical research, where technological systems are insufficiently theorized as embedded actors within organizational and social processes (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Leonardi, 2011). As AI becomes increasingly integrated into creative work, this separation becomes untenable.

A more comprehensive understanding requires an integrative perspective that captures the interplay between technological capabilities, work practices, and identity construction. Such a perspective must recognize that changes at the technological level cascade through cognitive processes and social interactions, ultimately reshaping systems of value and meaning (Vial, 2019; Verhoef *et al.*, 2021).

By synthesizing these theoretical streams, this study advances a socio-technical and process-oriented view of creative labor transformation. It moves beyond dichotomies such as human versus machine or automation versus augmentation and instead conceptualizes work as a hybrid system in which human and algorithmic capabilities are continuously combined, negotiated, and reconfigured. This integrated perspective provides the foundation for addressing the conceptual gap identified in the next section.

3. Conceptual Gap and Problematisation

Despite the rapid expansion of research on creative labor, artificial intelligence, and professional identity, these bodies of literature remain only loosely connected. Each stream has developed its own conceptual focus and theoretical assumptions, resulting in a fragmented understanding of how work is transforming in the creative economy. This fragmentation becomes particularly problematic in the context of human–AI collaboration, where technological, social, and identity dynamics intersect in ways that existing theories struggle to fully capture.

First, the literature on creative labor has predominantly focused on the socio-economic conditions of work, emphasizing precariousness, flexibility, and autonomy within cultural and digital industries (Menger, 1999; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Gill, 2002). Scholars have highlighted the rise of project-based careers, self-branding practices, and entrepreneurial identity formation among creative workers (Duffy, 2016; Gandini, 2016; Kuhn & Maleki, 2017). The platformization of cultural production has further intensified these dynamics by embedding creative labor within algorithmically mediated environments that shape visibility, access, and income opportunities (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Duffy *et al.*, 2019; Vallas & Schor, 2020). However, this body of work largely treats technology as an external structuring force rather than as an active participant in the creative process. As a result, it fails to adequately

theorize the role of AI as a co-creative agent that contributes to idea generation, decision-making, and value creation.

Second, the literature on artificial intelligence and work has primarily emphasized performance-related outcomes, focusing on productivity, efficiency, and task reconfiguration. Early studies framed AI in terms of automation and labor displacement (Autor, 2015; Frey & Osborne, 2017), while more recent perspectives highlight augmentation and collaboration (Brynjolfsson *et al.*, 2018; Raisch & Krakowski, 2021). Within this stream, the concept of human–AI collaboration has gained prominence, portraying AI as a partner that enhances analytical capabilities and accelerates decision-making processes (Jarrahi, 2018; Faraj *et al.*, 2018). Empirical findings demonstrate that generative AI can significantly improve individual productivity and expand ideational possibilities (Noy & Zhang, 2023). However, this literature tends to privilege measurable outcomes while under-theorizing the subjective and symbolic dimensions of work. In particular, it provides limited insight into how AI reshapes workers' sense of self, professional identity, and perceived legitimacy.

Third, identity theory and identity work literature offer a rich understanding of how individuals construct, negotiate, and sustain their professional identities in dynamic environments (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ibarra, 1999; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Identity is conceptualized as a socially embedded and continuously evolving process shaped by interaction, sensemaking, and institutional expectations (Gioia *et al.*, 2000; Brown, 2015; Caza *et al.*, 2018). In creative domains, identity is particularly salient because it is closely tied to authorship, originality, and personal expression (Elsbach, 2009; Beech, 2008). However, this literature remains fundamentally human-centric, largely overlooking the role of intelligent technologies as active participants in identity construction. AI is rarely conceptualized as an actor that can shape meaning-making processes, leaving a critical gap in understanding identity dynamics in AI-mediated environments.

Taken together, these three streams reveal a fundamental limitation in existing scholarship. Creative labor research emphasizes socio-economic conditions but underplays technological agency. AI research highlights technological capabilities but neglects identity and meaning. Identity theory focuses on human actors but overlooks the role of intelligent systems. This separation reflects a broader tendency in organizational research to treat technology as exogenous rather than as constitutive of social processes (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008; Leonardi, 2011). Consequently, there is no comprehensive framework that explains how interactions between humans and AI reshape professional identity within the creative economy.

This table consolidates the fragmented literature streams identified in the problematisation stage and clarifies how the present study advances beyond them. It analytically demonstrates the limitations of prior approaches and positions the proposed framework as an integrative theoretical contribution.

Table 1. Theoretical Fragmentation and Integrative Contribution in Human–AI Creative Labor Research

Dimension	Creative Labor Literature	AI and Work Literature	Identity Theory Literature	Integrative (This Study)
Primary Focus	Socio-economic conditions of creative work (autonomy, precarity, cultural production)	Performance, productivity, and task transformation	Meaning-making, identity construction, and role adaptation	Interaction between work processes, technology, and identity
View of Technology	External structuring force (platforms, infrastructures)	Functional tool or augmenting system	Largely absent or contextual background	Embedded socio-technical actor shaping cognition and meaning

Dimension	Creative Labor Literature	AI and Work Literature	Identity Theory Literature	Integrative (This Study)
Concept of Agency	Human-centered (creative worker as primary actor)	Shared but instrumentally framed	Human-centered (identity as social process)	Distributed agency across human and AI actors
Understanding of Creativity	Individual or socially embedded human capability	Enhanced output through AI support	Implicitly human-centered	Distributed, co-created through human–AI interaction
Treatment of Identity	Identity as outcome of creative work conditions	Largely neglected	Core focus (dynamic, evolving)	Identity as dynamically co-constructed with AI participation
Analytical Limitation	Under-theorizes technological agency	Under-theorizes meaning and identity	Ignores non-human actors	Integrates mechanisms linking technology, work, and identity
Contribution of This Study	—	—	—	Mechanism-based framework linking co-creation and identity transformation

Source: Developed by the author

By structuring prior literature along comparable analytical dimensions, Table 1 clarifies the fragmentation that motivates the study's theoretical development. Table 1 strengthens the argument by explicitly showing that existing streams fail to simultaneously account for technological agency, creative processes, and identity dynamics, thereby justifying the need for an integrated, mechanism-based framework.

This gap becomes more evident when examining the emergence of generative AI. Unlike earlier technologies, generative AI does not merely support execution but actively participates in ideation and content creation. It shapes what is possible, visible, and valuable by generating alternatives, ranking outputs, and influencing attention (Kellogg *et al*., 2020; Sutherland & Jarrahi, 2018; Kallinikos *et al*., 2021). This introduces a form of distributed agency, where cognitive processes and decision-making authority are shared between human and machine actors. Existing theories, however, are not well equipped to explain how such distributed agency affects professional identity, particularly in domains where identity is closely tied to creative authorship.

To address this limitation, it is necessary to problematize several foundational assumptions underlying existing theories.

First, the assumption of the autonomous creator is increasingly untenable. Traditional perspectives conceptualize creative professionals as independent sources of originality and value (Elsbach, 2009; Amabile & Pratt, 2016). However, when AI systems generate ideas, suggest designs, and produce content, the boundary between human and machine contribution becomes blurred (Anantrasirichai & Bull, 2022; Amankwah-Amoah *et al*., 2024). Creativity can no longer be understood as residing solely within the individual but must be reconceptualized as a distributed process emerging from human–AI interaction.

Second, the assumption of centralized human agency is challenged in AI-mediated environments. Classical views of work assume that humans retain primary control over decision-making processes. Yet, algorithmic systems increasingly shape choices by filtering information, ranking alternatives, and structuring attention (Kellogg *et al*., 2020; Sutherland & Jarrahi, 2018). This creates a condition of distributed cognition (Hutchins, 1995), where agency is not located within a single actor but distributed across socio-technical systems. As

a result, understanding work requires moving beyond individual-level explanations toward relational and system-level perspectives.

Third, the assumption of stable professional identity is increasingly problematic. In creative industries, identity is traditionally grounded in notions of authenticity, originality, and expertise (Potts *et al.*, 2008; Elsbach, 2009). The integration of AI into creative processes complicates these criteria, as outputs may be partially generated by algorithmic systems. This raises questions about legitimacy: Who is the creator? What constitutes originality? How is expertise defined in AI-mediated contexts? At the same time, new forms of professional identity are emerging, centered on skills such as prompt design, algorithmic interpretation, and content curation (Jarrahi, 2018; Faraj *et al.*, 2018). These developments suggest that professional identity is not only disrupted but also redefined.

Fourth, the assumption that value is derived solely from outputs is increasingly insufficient. In digital and AI-mediated environments, value is co-produced through processes of interaction, interpretation, and validation (Nambisan *et al.*, 2019; Vial, 2019). AI-generated outputs may enhance efficiency, but their value ultimately depends on human judgment, social recognition, and cultural meaning (Potts *et al.*, 2008; Duffy *et al.*, 2019). This indicates that value creation is relational and processual rather than purely output-driven.

These problematisations collectively highlight the need for a new conceptual approach that moves beyond existing dichotomies such as human versus machine or automation versus augmentation. Instead, it calls for a perspective that recognizes the relational, processual, and multi-level nature of human–AI collaboration. Such a perspective must account for how cognition, identity, work practices, and market dynamics are co-evolving within socio-technical systems.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following central conceptual problem: how does human–AI collaboration trigger the reconfiguration of professional identity within the creative economy? Specifically, the study seeks to explain the dynamic interplay between co-creative processes, technological mediation, and identity transformation. By reframing creative labor as a hybrid system characterized by distributed agency and continuous interaction, this paper aims to provide a more comprehensive theoretical foundation for understanding identity transformation in the age of AI.

4. Conceptualization of Human–AI Creative Labor

4.1 Redefining Creative Work in the Age of AI

The emergence of artificial intelligence, particularly generative systems, necessitates a fundamental redefinition of creative labor. Traditional perspectives conceptualize creative work as a creator-centered activity in which originality, authorship, and value creation are primarily attributed to individual human agents (Elsbach, 2009; Amabile & Pratt, 2016). Within this paradigm, creativity is understood as the outcome of internal cognitive processes shaped by expertise, intrinsic motivation, and domain-relevant skills (Woodman *et al.*, 1993; Anderson *et al.*, 2014). Creative workers are therefore positioned as the central locus of ideation, interpretation, and execution.

However, the increasing integration of AI into creative processes challenges this assumption at a foundational level. AI systems are no longer confined to supporting peripheral tasks but actively participate in ideation, content generation, and decision-making (Anantrasirichai & Bull, 2022; Amankwah-Amoah *et al.*, 2024). Rather than merely extending human capability, AI increasingly shapes the cognitive pathways through which ideas are generated and evaluated (Brynjolfsson *et al.*, 2023; Dell'Acqua *et al.*, 2023). This shift signals a transition from a human-centric model of creativity toward a distributed system of co-creation.

From a theoretical perspective, this transformation can be understood through the lens of distributed cognition, where cognitive processes are extended across human and technological systems (Hutchins, 1995), and combinatorial innovation, where novelty emerges from the recombination of existing knowledge elements (Fleming, 2001; Arthur, 2009). AI significantly amplifies both mechanisms by enabling large-scale recombination and rapid exploration of ideational spaces. Consequently, creativity is no longer located within a single actor but emerges from the interaction between human cognition and algorithmic processes.

This reconceptualization also aligns with socio-technical perspectives that view technology as constitutive of organizational processes rather than as an external tool (Orlikowski, 2007; Leonardi, 2011). In this view, AI is not simply used in creative work but becomes embedded within it, shaping both the process and the outcome of creative activity. Creative labor thus evolves into a hybrid system in which agency, cognition, and value creation are distributed across human and machine actors.

4.2 Dimensions of Human–AI Collaboration in Creative Work

To operationalize this reconceptualization, human–AI creative labor can be understood through four interrelated dimensions that capture the mechanisms of interaction between human actors and AI systems. These dimensions reflect how creativity is enacted within hybrid socio-technical environments.

1) Generative Expansion

The first dimension refers to the role of AI in expanding the ideational space through generative capabilities. AI systems can produce multiple variations of text, images, and design concepts based on input prompts, enabling rapid exploration of creative possibilities (Noy & Zhang, 2023; Doshi & Hauser, 2024). This process significantly reduces cognitive constraints and enhances the breadth of idea generation.

From a theoretical standpoint, this aligns with the componential theory of creativity, which emphasizes the importance of idea generation and domain-relevant knowledge in producing creative outcomes (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). AI functions as an external cognitive resource that extends human ideation capacity, effectively augmenting the creative process. At the same time, because AI-generated outputs are derived from recombination of existing patterns, generative expansion may introduce convergence effects, potentially limiting radical novelty (Arthur, 2009; Heigl *et al.*, 2025).

2) Iterative Co-Creation

The second dimension captures the iterative and dialogic nature of human–AI interaction. Creative work increasingly unfolds through cycles of prompting, generation, evaluation, and refinement, where human and AI contributions continuously shape each other (Faraj *et al.*, 2018; Jarrahi, 2018). This transforms creativity from a linear process into a recursive and feedback-driven system.

This dynamic reflects theories of collective creativity, where innovation emerges through interaction and recombination among multiple actors (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006). In the context of AI, the collaborative network extends beyond human participants to include algorithmic agents, resulting in a hybrid co-creative system. Creativity becomes an evolving process shaped by continuous interaction rather than a discrete act of individual production.

3) Algorithmic Mediation

The third dimension involves the mediating role of AI in shaping decision-making processes. AI systems influence creative outcomes by ranking alternatives, recommending options, and structuring attention through algorithmic suggestion (Kellogg *et al.*, 2020; Sutherland &

Jarrahi, 2018). This introduces a layer of algorithmic mediation that shapes both the direction and evaluation of creative work.

From a theoretical perspective, this can be understood through the concept of choice architecture, where decision environments are structured in ways that influence behavior (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008), and through data-driven innovation frameworks that emphasize the role of data and algorithms in shaping outcomes (Kallinikos *et al.*, 2021). While algorithmic mediation can enhance efficiency and reduce uncertainty, it also introduces potential biases and constraints, as recommendations are shaped by underlying datasets and training models (Doshi & Hauser, 2024).

4) Human Curation and Meaning-Making

The fourth dimension highlights the continued centrality of human judgment in interpreting, selecting, and contextualizing AI-generated outputs. Despite the increasing capabilities of AI, human actors remain responsible for assigning meaning, ensuring contextual relevance, and aligning outputs with cultural and social expectations (Elsbach, 2009; Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

Human curation serves as a critical mechanism for maintaining authenticity and legitimacy in creative work. As AI-generated content becomes more prevalent, value shifts from pure production toward interpretation and meaning-making (Potts *et al.*, 2008; Duffy *et al.*, 2019). This redefines the role of the creative professional from sole creator to curator and orchestrator of hybrid creative processes.

4.3 Integrating the Dimensions: Toward a Hybrid Co-Creative System

Taken together, these four dimensions: generative expansion, iterative co-creation, algorithmic mediation, and human curation, orm an integrated conceptualization of human–AI creative labor. Rather than operating independently, these dimensions interact dynamically, shaping the overall structure of creative work.

This figure isolates the internal architecture of human–AI creative labor by specifying the four core mechanisms and their recursive interdependencies. It shifts the analysis from a high-level framework to the operational dynamics through which creativity is enacted within a hybrid socio-technical system.

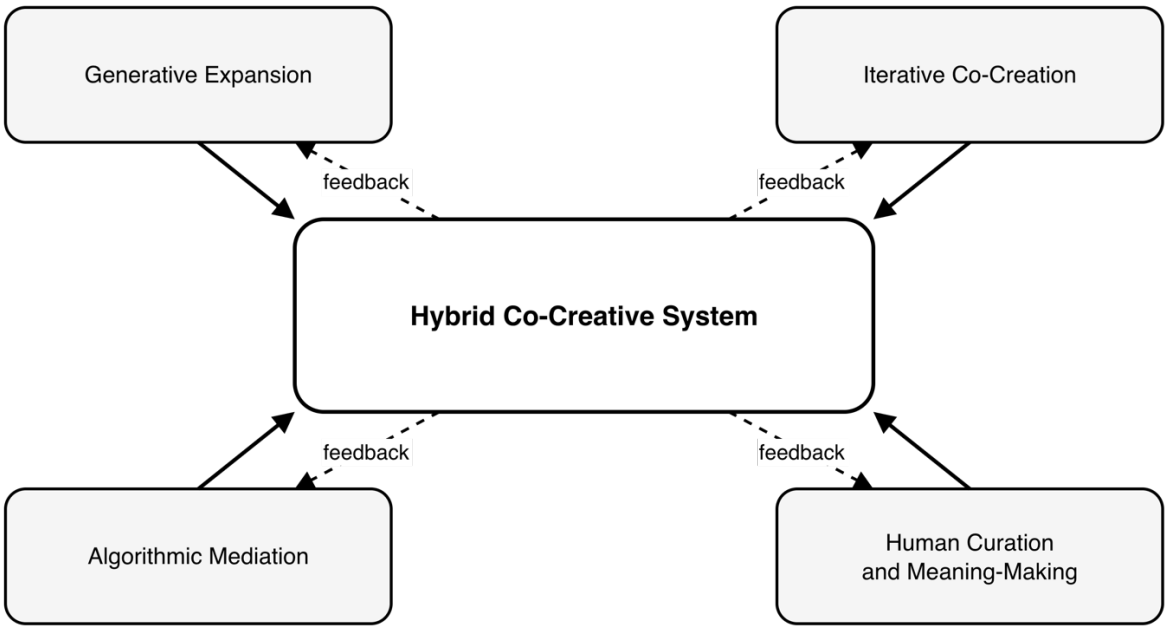

Figure 1. Mechanisms of Human–AI Creative Labor
Source: Developed by the author

The architecture articulated in Figure clarifies how creative labor is enacted through four interdependent mechanisms that continuously interact within a hybrid co-creative system. Figure 1 supports the article's argument by demonstrating that creativity is not a linear sequence but a recursive, feedback-driven process shaped by both algorithmic and human contributions, thereby grounding the broader framework in specific operational dynamics.

This integrated system reflects a shift from individual-centered production toward a hybrid co-creative system characterized by distributed agency, recursive interaction, and socio-technical integration. Creativity is enacted through continuous feedback loops in which human and AI contributions are interdependent and mutually constitutive.

Importantly, this system is not neutral. The interaction between these dimensions produces both opportunities and tensions. While generative expansion and iterative co-creation enhance creative potential, algorithmic mediation may constrain autonomy, and the increasing reliance on human curation shifts the basis of professional value. These dynamics create the conditions under which professional identity is destabilized, negotiated, and ultimately reconstructed.

4.4 Theoretical Positioning and Contribution

The conceptualization of human–AI creative labor advances existing literature in three important ways.

First, it extends creativity theory by shifting the locus of creativity from the individual to a distributed system involving both human and algorithmic actors. This challenges traditional assumptions about authorship and originality, positioning creativity as an emergent property of interaction rather than an individual attribute.

Second, it contributes to socio-technical theory by conceptualizing AI as an embedded and constitutive element of work processes. Rather than treating AI as a tool, this framework positions it as an active participant in shaping cognition, decision-making, and value creation (Orlikowski, 2007; Leonardi, 2011).

Third, it provides a mechanism-based foundation for understanding identity transformation. By identifying the processes through which human–AI interaction reshapes creative work, the framework establishes a clear link between technological change and identity dynamics. This lays the groundwork for the multi-level analysis developed in the next section.

4.5 Transition to Identity Transformation

By redefining creative labor as a hybrid co-creative system, this section establishes the conditions under which professional identity is transformed. As agency becomes distributed, creativity becomes collaborative, and value becomes relational, traditional identity anchors such as authorship and originality are destabilized.

This framework clarifies how human–AI collaboration reorganizes creative labor through socio-technical mechanisms and links these mechanisms to professional identity transformation. It positions creativity as a distributed process in which technological agency, human judgment, and identity work are mutually connected.

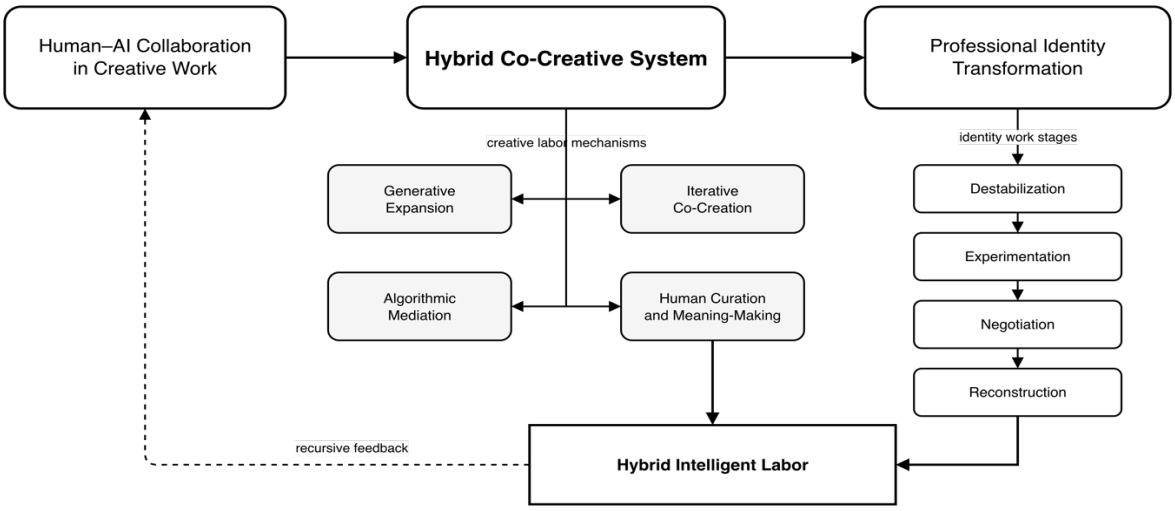

Figure 2. Integrative Framework of Human–AI Creative Labor and Professional Identity Transformation
Source: Author's conceptualization

As articulated in Figure 2, human–AI collaboration is theorized as the entry point through which creative labor becomes a hybrid co-creative system. Figure 2 links the article's core mechanisms: generative expansion, iterative co-creation, algorithmic mediation, and human curation, to the recursive transformation of professional identity, thereby supporting the argument that AI-mediated creativity reorganizes both work processes and identity construction.

5. Transformation of Professional Identity

The integration of artificial intelligence into creative work does not merely alter tasks and processes but fundamentally reshapes how individuals understand and construct their professional identities. In creative domains, identity is deeply intertwined with notions of authorship, originality, and personal expression, making it particularly sensitive to technological disruption (Elsbach, 2009; Pratt *et al.*, 2006). As demonstrated in the previous section, human–AI creative labor is characterized by generative expansion, iterative co-creation, algorithmic mediation, and human curation. These mechanisms collectively reconfigure how creative work is performed, thereby altering the foundations upon which professional identity is built.

This table specifies the analytical linkage between human–AI creative labor mechanisms and stages of identity transformation. By compressing the framework into four columns, it foregrounds the causal mapping while maintaining conceptual clarity and parsimony.

Table 2. Mapping Human–AI Creative Mechanisms to Professional Identity Transformation

Mechanism	Core Process Logic	Identity Transformation Triggered	Resulting Identity Shift
Generative Expansion	Expansion of ideational space through AI-generated alternatives	Destabilization of authorship and originality assumptions	Questioning of uniqueness and creative ownership
Iterative Co-Creation	Recursive interaction between human input and AI output	Experimentation with new roles and practices	Emergence of hybrid roles (e.g., prompt designer, co-creator)
Algorithmic Mediation	Structuring of choices through ranking, recommendation, and filtering	Negotiation of control, autonomy, and legitimacy	Reinterpretation of expertise and decision authority

Mechanism	Core Process Logic	Identity Transformation Triggered	Resulting Identity Shift
Human Curation and Meaning-Making	Selection, contextualization, and validation of outputs	Reconstruction of professional meaning and value	Shift toward curator/orchestrator identity

Source: Developed by the author

By aligning mechanisms with identity stages, Table 2 provides a structured analytical bridge between process-level dynamics and identity outcomes. Table 2 strengthens the article's mechanism-based argument by making explicit how specific features of human–AI collaboration systematically trigger distinct phases of identity transformation, rather than treating identity change as an abstract or emergent by-product.

Building on identity work theory and socio-technical perspectives, this section conceptualizes professional identity transformation as a dynamic and processual phenomenon. Rather than occurring as a single shift, identity transformation unfolds through a recursive sequence of stages: destabilization, experimentation, negotiation, and reconstruction. These stages are not strictly linear but interact through feedback loops, reflecting the evolving nature of human–AI collaboration.

This figure explicates the processual dynamics through which professional identity is reconfigured in human–AI collaborative environments. It conceptualizes identity transformation as a recursive sequence of stages, emphasizing feedback loops rather than linear progression.

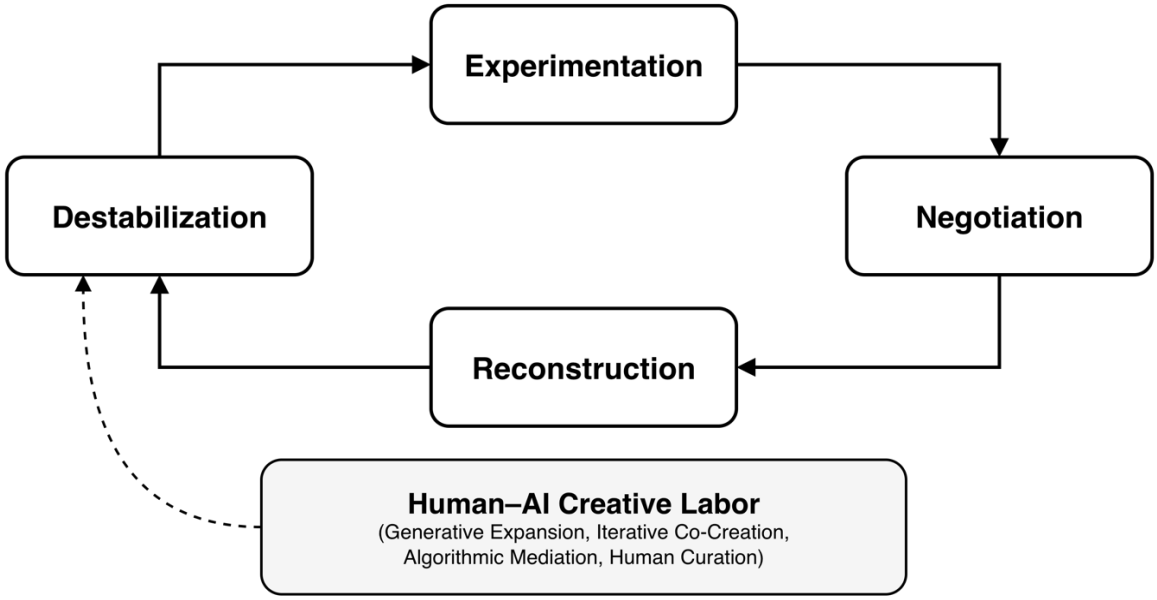

Figure 3. Process Model of Professional Identity Transformation in Human–AI Creative Work
Source: Author's conceptualization

As illustrated in Figure 3, professional identity transformation unfolds through a recursive cycle of destabilization, experimentation, negotiation, and reconstruction, rather than a linear transition. Figure 3 supports the article's argument by demonstrating how human–AI creative labor continuously triggers and reshapes identity work processes, reinforcing the view that identity is dynamically reconfigured within evolving socio-technical environments.

5.1 Identity Destabilization

The transformation process begins with identity destabilization, where existing professional identities are disrupted by the introduction of AI into creative work. Identity destabilization occurs when individuals experience a misalignment between their established self-concept

and the changing nature of their work roles (Petriglieri, 2011). In creative professions, where identity is strongly anchored in originality and authorship, the emergence of AI-generated content challenges deeply held assumptions about the uniqueness of human creativity.

The generative expansion capability of AI intensifies this disruption by demonstrating that tasks previously considered uniquely human can be replicated or augmented by algorithmic systems (Anantrasirichai & Bull, 2022; Amankwah-Amoah *et al.*, 2024). Empirical evidence indicates that generative AI can produce outputs of comparable quality to human-generated work, thereby blurring the distinction between human and machine contributions (Noy & Zhang, 2023; Doshi & Hauser, 2024). This creates a form of identity threat, as individuals begin to question the distinctiveness and value of their expertise (Ashforth *et al.*, 2020).

At the same time, algorithmic mediation reshapes the locus of control within creative processes. Decision-making is increasingly influenced by AI-generated suggestions, rankings, and recommendations, leading to a redistribution of agency (Kellogg *et al.*, 2020; Sutherland & Jarrahi, 2018). This shift can generate a perceived loss of autonomy, further destabilizing professional identity. From a cognitive perspective, this stage reflects a disruption of established schemas through which individuals interpret their roles, triggering processes of sensemaking and reinterpretation (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

5.2 Identity Experimentation

In response to destabilization, individuals engage in identity experimentation, exploring alternative roles, practices, and self-definitions that better align with evolving work conditions. Identity experimentation involves provisional enactments of new identities, allowing individuals to test their viability and coherence within changing environments (Ibarra, 1999).

Within human–AI creative labor, this stage is closely linked to iterative co-creation processes. As individuals interact with AI systems, they begin to adopt new roles that reflect hybrid forms of work, such as prompt designers, AI-assisted creators, or content curators (Jarrahi, 2018; Faraj *et al.*, 2018). These roles represent a shift from direct production toward orchestration, where value is derived from guiding and refining AI-generated outputs rather than producing them independently.

Experimentation is further facilitated by the affordances of digital platforms, which provide immediate feedback through audience engagement and algorithmic metrics (Duffy *et al.*, 2019; Gandini, 2016). These feedback mechanisms enable rapid cycles of trial and adjustment, accelerating the process of identity exploration. From a learning perspective, this stage reflects the development of adaptive expertise, where individuals acquire flexible skills to navigate uncertain and evolving environments (Hatano & Inagaki, 1986).

However, identity experimentation is not purely self-directed. It is shaped by structural constraints, including platform algorithms, market expectations, and institutional norms (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Vallas & Schor, 2020). As a result, emerging identities are co-constructed through interaction between individual agency and socio-technical structures.

5.3 Identity Negotiation

The third stage involves identity negotiation, where individuals seek to reconcile emerging identities with existing norms, expectations, and sources of legitimacy. Identity negotiation is inherently relational, requiring validation from peers, audiences, and institutional actors (Beech, 2008; Gioia *et al.*, 2000).

In AI-mediated creative work, negotiation becomes more complex due to the presence of a non-human collaborator. A central tension lies in establishing legitimacy in contexts where AI contributes to creative outputs. Traditional criteria of authenticity and originality are challenged, as audiences may question the value of work produced with algorithmic assistance (Potts *et al.*, 2008; Elsbach, 2009). Individuals must therefore articulate new

narratives of value, emphasizing aspects such as human judgment, contextual understanding, or ethical considerations.

Algorithmic mediation further complicates negotiation by shaping visibility and recognition. Platform algorithms influence which outputs gain attention, thereby affecting perceptions of success and legitimacy (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Wood *et al.*, 2019). This creates a feedback loop in which algorithmic validation reinforces certain forms of identity while marginalizing others.

At the same time, identity negotiation involves reconfiguring agency. Although AI systems generate suggestions and alternatives, individuals retain responsibility for interpreting and implementing these outputs. This results in a form of distributed agency, where control is shared between human and machine actors (Raisch & Krakowski, 2021; Faraj *et al.*, 2018). Negotiating this shared agency becomes a central aspect of identity construction in AI-mediated environments.

5.4 Identity Reconstruction

The final stage of the transformation process is identity reconstruction, where individuals develop more stable and coherent professional identities that integrate the realities of human–AI collaboration. Identity reconstruction involves consolidating new roles, practices, and meanings into a consistent self-concept (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Brown, 2015).

In this stage, professional identity shifts from being defined primarily by individual production to being shaped by the ability to engage effectively with hybrid creative systems. Human curation becomes central, as individuals derive value from selecting, interpreting, and contextualizing AI-generated outputs (Amabile & Pratt, 2016). This reflects a broader transition toward distributed creativity, where value is co-produced through interactions among multiple actors and systems (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006).

Reconstructed identities are therefore hybrid in nature, combining human creativity with technological capability. These identities are not static but remain adaptable, reflecting ongoing interaction with evolving AI systems and market conditions. From a sociological perspective, this aligns with the concept of liquid professionalism, where identities are continuously redefined in response to changing environments (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016).

5.5 Emerging Forms of Hybrid Professional Identity

The transformation process gives rise to distinct forms of professional identity that reflect different configurations of human–AI interaction:

1) AI-augmented creator: Individuals who leverage AI to enhance creative output while maintaining a central role in ideation and decision-making.
2) AI curator: Professionals who focus on selecting, refining, and contextualizing AI-generated content, emphasizing judgment and interpretation.
3) AI collaborator: Actors who engage in continuous interaction with AI systems, treating them as partners in co-creative processes.

These identity types illustrate that transformation is not uniform but varies depending on individual capabilities, preferences, and contextual conditions. They also highlight that identity is increasingly defined by relational and processual factors rather than by fixed roles.

5.6 Identity Transformation as a Recursive Socio-Technical Process

Taken together, the transformation of professional identity in human–AI collaboration can be understood as a recursive socio-technical process. The stages of destabilization, experimentation, negotiation, and reconstruction are interconnected through continuous feedback loops, reflecting the dynamic nature of AI-mediated work.

Importantly, this process is driven by the interaction between the four dimensions of human–AI creative labor identified in Section 4. Generative expansion and algorithmic mediation trigger destabilization, iterative co-creation enables experimentation, and human curation supports negotiation and reconstruction. Identity transformation is therefore not an isolated phenomenon but an emergent outcome of broader socio-technical dynamics.

This perspective advances identity theory by shifting from static and human-centric models toward a relational and process-oriented understanding of identity. It highlights that professional identity is co-constructed through ongoing interaction between human and technological actors, providing a foundation for the multi-level framework developed in the next section.

6. Discussion

This study advances a comprehensive understanding of how human–AI collaboration reshapes creative labor and professional identity by integrating insights from creativity research, identity theory, and socio-technical perspectives. The proposed framework conceptualizes creative labor transformation as a multi-level and recursive process, linking individual cognition, work practices, and market-level value recognition. Rather than treating these dimensions in isolation, the discussion positions human–AI collaboration as a unifying mechanism that explains how technological, social, and identity dynamics co-evolve in AI-mediated environments.

6.1 A Multi-Level Perspective on Creative Labor Transformation

The central contribution of this study lies in the development of a multi-level framework that captures the transformation of creative labor across interconnected domains. At the individual level, AI reshapes cognitive processes by expanding ideational space and influencing how individuals interpret and generate creative outputs (Noy & Zhang, 2023; Doshi & Hauser, 2024). These cognitive shifts trigger identity work, as individuals seek to reconcile their self-concept with evolving work practices (Ibarra, 1999; Brown, 2015).

At the work process level, creative labor is enacted through iterative cycles of human–AI interaction, where generative expansion, algorithmic mediation, and human curation are continuously integrated (Faraj *et al.*, 2018; Jarrahi, 2018). This co-creative cycle transforms creativity into a recursive and feedback-driven process, characterized by distributed agency and ongoing adaptation.

At the market level, creative outputs are evaluated and legitimized through social and institutional processes, where symbolic meaning, authenticity, and cultural relevance play a central role (Potts *et al.*, 2008; Duffy *et al.*, 2019). Algorithmic visibility further shapes value recognition by influencing which outputs gain attention and legitimacy (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Wood *et al.*, 2019).

These levels are connected through a recursive transformation mechanism in which AI-driven cognitive shifts reshape identity, identity influences work practices, and work practices ultimately redefine market value. This mechanism reflects a socio-technical feedback loop, where technological affordances and human interpretations co-evolve over time (Orlikowski, 2007; Leonardi, 2011). As a result, creative labor transformation is not linear but dynamic, involving continuous cycles of adaptation and reinforcement.

6.2 Reframing Identity Theory: AI as an Active Actor

A key theoretical contribution of this study is the extension of identity theory to incorporate AI as an active participant in identity work. Traditional identity scholarship conceptualizes identity construction as a socially embedded process shaped by interactions among human

actors (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Gioia *et al*., 2000; Brown, 2015). However, the findings of this study suggest that AI systems also play a constitutive role by influencing cognition, decision-making, and evaluative processes.

Algorithmic outputs shape what individuals perceive as possible, relevant, and valuable, thereby influencing how they interpret their own capabilities and professional roles (Faraj *et al*., 2018; Kellogg *et al*., 2020). This introduces a form of distributed agency, where identity is co-constructed through interaction between human and algorithmic actors (Raisch & Krakowski, 2021). From this perspective, identity work must be understood as a socio-technical process rather than a purely social one.

This reconceptualization aligns with post-humanist and relational perspectives that decenter the human subject in favor of networks of human and non-human actors (Latour, 2005; Braidotti, 2019). It also raises important questions about autonomy, authorship, and self-concept, suggesting that identity boundaries become increasingly fluid in AI-mediated environments.

6.3 Extending Creative Labor Theory: Toward Hybrid Intelligent Labor

The study also contributes to creative labor literature by shifting the focus from precariousness toward the transformation of the labor process itself. Existing research has emphasized instability, self-exploitation, and platform dependency in creative work (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Duffy, 2016; Vallas & Schor, 2020). While these dimensions remain relevant, the present framework highlights a deeper transformation in how creative labor is performed.

Creative labor is increasingly defined by the integration of human cognition and algorithmic capabilities, resulting in what can be described as hybrid intelligent labor. In this form of labor, value is generated not solely through individual production but through the orchestration of human–AI systems (Jarrahi, 2018; Faraj *et al*., 2018). Creativity becomes a distributed process, consistent with theories of collective creativity and knowledge recombination (Hargadon & Bechky, 2006; Woodman *et al*., 1993).

This transformation also redefines skill requirements. Competencies such as prompt design, algorithmic literacy, and content curation become critical for effective participation in creative work. At the same time, dependency on algorithmic systems introduces new forms of precarity related to technological control and platform governance (Kellogg *et al*., 2020; Wood *et al*., 2019). Thus, hybrid intelligent labor represents both an expansion of creative capability and a reconfiguration of labor conditions.

6.4 Human–AI Collaboration as a Strategic Capability

From a strategic management perspective, the findings position human–AI collaboration as a source of competitive advantage. Traditional strategy literature emphasizes resources and dynamic capabilities as drivers of firm performance (Teece, 2007; Warner & Wäger, 2019). The present framework extends this perspective by conceptualizing human–AI collaboration as a higher-order capability that integrates human judgment with algorithmic intelligence.

Organizations that effectively orchestrate human–AI interaction can enhance innovation, adaptability, and responsiveness to market changes (Nambisan *et al*., 2019; Verhoef *et al*., 2021). AI enables rapid exploration of ideas and scalable execution, while human actors provide contextual understanding and cultural interpretation (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). This synergy creates a hybrid capability that is difficult to replicate and therefore strategically valuable.

Importantly, the framework also highlights the role of identity in shaping strategic outcomes. As individuals adopt new identities as AI collaborators or curators, their engagement with work processes and their contribution to organizational goals evolve. This suggests that

competitive advantage is not only resource-based but also identity-driven, emerging from how individuals interpret and enact their roles within socio-technical systems.

6.5 Rethinking Value Creation in the Digital Economy

The study further contributes to digital economy research by offering a process-oriented understanding of value creation. Existing literature often emphasizes scalability, efficiency, and network effects (Nambisan, 2017; Nieborg & Poell, 2018). However, the findings suggest that value in AI-mediated environments is co-produced through interactions between cognition, identity, and work practices.

AI-generated outputs may enhance efficiency, but their value depends on human interpretation, social validation, and cultural meaning (Potts *et al.*, 2008; Elsbach, 2009). This highlights the importance of legitimacy, which is negotiated through audience reception, platform visibility, and institutional recognition (Duffy *et al.*, 2019; Vallas & Schor, 2020).

At the same time, the criteria for value recognition are evolving. Traditional markers such as originality and authorship are increasingly complemented by new forms of evaluation, including the ability to collaborate with AI and curate meaningful outputs (Bender, 2025). This indicates a shift toward relational and process-based value creation, where meaning emerges through interaction rather than being embedded solely in outputs.

6.6 6.6 Implications and Future Research Directions

The framework proposed in this study opens several avenues for future research. First, empirical validation is needed to test the multi-level relationships identified in the model. Quantitative approaches such as Structural Equation Modeling can examine the causal links between AI-driven cognitive changes, identity transformation, and work practices, while qualitative methods can explore the lived experiences of creative professionals in AI-mediated environments (Caza *et al.*, 2018; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

Second, longitudinal studies are necessary to capture the dynamic nature of identity transformation. Identity work unfolds over time through cycles of disruption, adaptation, and stabilization (Ibarra, 1999; Petriglieri, 2011), and future research should examine how hybrid identities evolve and become institutionalized.

Third, cross-industry comparisons can provide insights into how human–AI collaboration varies across different creative domains. The impact of AI is likely to differ depending on institutional contexts, market structures, and cultural norms (Nambisan *et al.*, 2019; Potts *et al.*, 2008).

Finally, future research should develop a taxonomy of human–AI competencies, including skills such as prompt engineering, algorithmic literacy, and content curation. Such work would contribute to both theory and practice by clarifying the capabilities required for effective participation in hybrid creative labor.

7. Conclusion

This study set out to address a fundamental limitation in existing scholarship: the lack of an integrated theoretical explanation of how human–AI collaboration reshapes professional identity within the creative economy. While prior research has examined creative labor, artificial intelligence, and identity work as largely separate domains, it has remained insufficient in capturing the dynamic interplay between technological capability, creative processes, and identity transformation. In response, this study developed a multi-level conceptual framework that explains how human–AI interaction reconfigures creative labor through interconnected mechanisms spanning cognition, work practices, and market-level value recognition.

The findings advance the literature by demonstrating that the impact of artificial intelligence extends beyond task augmentation or automation, fundamentally altering the locus of creativity itself. Rather than residing within the individual, creativity emerges as a distributed and relational process shaped through continuous interaction between human judgment and algorithmic systems. This reconceptualization challenges dominant assumptions of autonomous authorship and centralized human agency, positioning human–AI collaboration as a hybrid co-creative system characterized by generative expansion, iterative co-creation, algorithmic mediation, and human curation. In doing so, the study not only integrates previously fragmented literatures but also introduces a mechanism-based understanding of how technological and social processes co-evolve in creative work.

A central theoretical contribution lies in extending identity theory by conceptualizing artificial intelligence as an active participant in identity construction. The study shows that professional identity transformation is not merely a response to external change but an emergent outcome of recursive socio-technical processes, unfolding through stages of destabilization, experimentation, negotiation, and reconstruction. This perspective shifts identity research beyond human-centric assumptions and aligns it with relational and post-humanist views of distributed agency. In parallel, the study contributes to creative labor theory by introducing the notion of hybrid intelligent labor, where value creation depends on the orchestration of human and algorithmic capabilities rather than individual production alone. From a strategic standpoint, the findings further suggest that human–AI collaboration constitutes a higher-order capability that enables organizations to generate competitive advantage in increasingly data-driven and adaptive environments.

Beyond its theoretical contributions, the study offers important implications for practice and policy. For organizations, the findings highlight the need to move beyond viewing AI as a productivity tool and instead develop capabilities that integrate human judgment with algorithmic intelligence. This includes investing in new competencies such as prompt design, algorithmic literacy, and creative curation, as well as fostering organizational cultures that support experimentation and identity adaptation. For policymakers and educators, the results underscore the urgency of rethinking skill development frameworks to prepare individuals for hybrid work environments in which creativity, interpretation, and socio-technical coordination become central. At a broader level, the study suggests that value creation in the digital economy is increasingly relational and process-based, requiring new forms of governance that address issues of authorship, legitimacy, and algorithmic influence.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. As a conceptual study, the framework has not yet been empirically validated, and its propositions remain to be tested across different contexts. In addition, the analysis is primarily focused on the creative economy, which may limit its generalizability to other sectors where the role of creativity and identity differs. Furthermore, while the study emphasizes the transformative potential of AI, it does not fully capture the heterogeneity of technological adoption, including variations in access, capability, and institutional constraints. These limitations, however, do not diminish the study's contribution; rather, they highlight the complexity of the phenomenon and the need for further investigation.

Future research should build on this framework by conducting empirical studies that examine the causal relationships between human–AI interaction, identity transformation, and work practices. Longitudinal designs would be particularly valuable in capturing the evolving nature of identity reconstruction over time, while cross-industry comparisons could reveal how socio-technical dynamics vary across different institutional contexts. In addition, further work is needed to develop a systematic taxonomy of human–AI competencies and to explore the ethical and governance implications of distributed creativity, particularly in relation to authorship, accountability, and algorithmic bias.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the rise of artificial intelligence represents not merely a technological advancement but a profound transformation in how creative work is performed and how professional identity is constructed. By reframing creativity as a hybrid and distributed process, the study offers a new lens for understanding the evolving relationship between humans and intelligent systems. Ultimately, the most significant implication is not that AI replaces human creativity, but that it redefines it—reshaping not only what individuals do, but who they become within the process of working.

6.7 Subheading

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit frames placeholder architecture as a structured configuration within synthetic analytical environments. Lorem ipsum entities are classified according to variational breadth, symbolic relatedness, or dispersion indicators reflecting patterned distribution across hypothetical domains (Lorem, 19XX; Ipsum *et al.*, 20XX). Such metrics support illustrative categorization and comparative mapping, yet they implicitly position lorem ipsum arrangements as fixed characteristics rather than as dynamically orchestrated placeholder structures.

References

Amabile, T. M., & Pratt, M. G. (2016). The dynamic componential model of creativity and innovation in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 36*, 157–183. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2016.10.001

Amankwah-Amoah, J., Khan, Z., & Wood, G. (2024). Artificial intelligence and business transformation: A review and research agenda. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 198*, 122950. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2023.122950

Anantrasirichai, N., & Bull, D. (2022). Artificial intelligence in the creative industries: A review. *Artificial Intelligence Review, 55*(1), 589–656. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10462-021-10039-7

Anderson, N., Potočnik, K., & Zhou, J. (2014). Innovation and creativity in organizations. *Journal of Management, 40*(5), 1297–1333. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206314527128

Arthur, W. B. (2009). *The nature of technology: What it is and how it evolves*. Free Press.

Ashforth, B. E., Harrison, S. H., & Corley, K. G. (2020). Identification in organizations: An examination of four fundamental questions. *Journal of Management, 46*(1), 31–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206319876649

Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review, 14*(1), 20–39. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4278999

Autor, D. H. (2015). Why are there still so many jobs? *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 29*(3), 3–30. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.29.3.3

Beech, N. (2008). On the nature of dialogic identity work. *Organization, 15*(1), 51–74. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508407084487

Braidotti, R. (2019). *Posthuman knowledge*. Polity Press.

Brown, A. D. (2015). Identities and identity work in organizations. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 17*(1), 20–40. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12035

Brynjolfsson, E., Rock, D., & Syverson, C. (2018). Artificial intelligence and the modern productivity paradox. *Economics of Innovation and New Technology, 27*(7), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/10438599.2018.1496127

Caza, B. B., Vough, H., & Puranik, H. (2018). Identity work in organizations. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 5*, 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032117-104634

Cheney-Lippold, J. (2017). *We are data: Algorithms and the making of our digital selves*. NYU Press.

Couldry, N., & Mejias, U. A. (2019). *The costs of connection*. Stanford University Press.

Duffy, B. E. (2016). The romance of work. *Social Media + Society, 2*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116666307

Duffy, B. E., Poell, T., & Nieborg, D. B. (2019). Platform practices in cultural industries. *Social Media + Society*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119879672

Dutton, J. E., Dukerich, J. M., & Harquail, C. V. (1994). Organizational images and member identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 39*(2), 239–263. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393235

Elsbach, K. D. (2009). Identity affirmation through "signature style". *Journal of Management Studies, 46*(6), 1046–1070. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2009.00821.x

Faraj, S., Pachidi, S., & Sayegh, K. (2018). Working with AI. *Information and Organization, 28*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infoandorg.2018.01.002

Fleming, L. (2001). Recombinant uncertainty. *Management Science, 47*(1), 117–132. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.47.1.117.10671

Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class*. Basic Books.

Frey, C. B., & Osborne, M. A. (2017). The future of employment. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 114*, 254–280. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2016.08.019

Gandini, A. (2016). *Digital work*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Gill, R. (2002). Cool, creative and egalitarian? *Information, Communication & Society, 5*(1), 70–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180110117668

Gioia, D. A., Schultz, M., & Corley, K. G. (2000). Organizational identity. *Academy of Management Review, 25*(1), 63–81. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2000.2791603

Haenlein, M., & Kaplan, A. M. (2019). Artificial intelligence and robots. *Business Horizons, 62*(1), 5–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2018.08.004

Hargadon, A. B., & Bechky, B. A. (2006). When collections of creatives become creative collectives. *Organization Science, 17*(4), 484–500. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1060.0200

Hesmondhalgh, D., & Baker, S. (2010). *Creative labour*. Routledge.

Hutchins, E. (1995). *Cognition in the wild*. MIT Press.

Ibarra, H. (1999). Provisional selves. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 44*(4), 764–791. https://doi.org/10.2307/2667055

Ibarra, H., & Obodaru, O. (2016). Betwixt and between identities. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 36*, 47–64. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2016.06.003

Jarrahi, M. H. (2018). Artificial intelligence and the future of work. *Business Horizons, 61*(4), 577–586. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2018.03.007

Kallinikos, J., Aaltonen, A., & Marton, A. (2021). Data-driven innovation. *Research Policy, 50*(1), 104147. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2020.104147

Kellogg, K. C., Valentine, M. A., & Christin, A. (2020). Algorithms at work. *Academy of Management Annals, 14*(1), 366–410. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2018.0174

Kuhn, K. M., & Maleki, A. (2017). Micro-entrepreneurs. *Academy of Management Perspectives, 31*(3), 183–200. https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2015.0147

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social*. Oxford University Press.

Leonardi, P. M. (2011). When flexible routines meet flexible technologies. *MIS Quarterly, 35*(1), 147–167.

Maitlis, S., & Christianson, M. (2014). Sensemaking in organizations. *Academy of Management Annals, 8*(1), 57–125. https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2014.873177

Menger, P. M. (1999). Artistic labor markets. *Annual Review of Sociology, 25*, 541–574.

Nambisan, S. (2017). Digital entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 41*(6), 1029–1055. https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12254

Nambisan, S., Wright, M., & Feldman, M. (2019). The digital transformation of innovation. *Research Policy, 48*(8), 103773. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2019.03.018

Nieborg, D. B., & Poell, T. (2018). Platformization of cultural production. *New Media & Society, 20*(11), 4275–4292. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818769694

Noy, S., & Zhang, W. (2023). Experimental evidence on productivity effects of generative AI. *Science, 381*(6654), 187–192. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adh2586

Orlikowski, W. J. (2007). Sociomaterial practices. *Organization Studies, 28*(9), 1435–1448. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607081138

Orlikowski, W. J., & Scott, S. V. (2008). Sociomateriality. *Academy of Management Annals, 2*(1), 433–474. https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520802211644

Petriglieri, J. L. (2011). Under threat. *Academy of Management Review, 36*(4), 641–662. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2009.0088

Potts, J., Cunningham, S., Hartley, J., & Ormerod, P. (2008). Social network markets. *Journal of Cultural Economics, 32*(3), 167–185. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10824-008-9066-5

Pratt, M. G., Rockmann, K. W., & Kaufmann, J. B. (2006). Constructing professional identity. *Academy of Management Journal, 49*(2), 235–262. https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2006.20786060

Raisch, S., & Krakowski, S. (2021). Artificial intelligence and management. *Academy of Management Review, 46*(1), 192–210. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2019.0058

Srnicek, N. (2017). *Platform capitalism*. Polity Press.

Sutherland, W., & Jarrahi, M. H. (2018). The gig economy. *International Journal of Information Management, 43*, 328–338. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2018.07.004

Teece, D. J. (2007). Dynamic capabilities. *Strategic Management Journal, 28*(13), 1319–1350. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.640

Vallas, S., & Schor, J. B. (2020). What do platforms do? *Annual Review of Sociology, 46*, 273–294. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-121919-054857

Verhoef, P. C., Broekhuizen, T., Bart, Y., *et al*. (2021). Digital transformation. *Journal of Business Research, 122*, 889–901. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.09.022

Vial, G. (2019). Understanding digital transformation. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems, 28*(2), 118–144. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsis.2019.01.003

Wood, A. J., Graham, M., Lehdonvirta, V., & Hjorth, I. (2019). Good gig, bad gig. *Work, Employment and Society, 33*(1), 56–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017018785616