

## **Masterarbeit**

# AI-Driven Marketing Transformation: Effects on Marketing Skill Profiles of AI Tools

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## Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Masterarbeit untersucht die Integration von Künstlicher Intelligenz (KI) in Marketingprozesse sowie die daraus resultierenden Anforderungen an zukünftige Kompetenzen von Marketingfachkräften in einer durch KI geprägten Arbeitsumgebung. Künstliche Intelligenz bietet das Potenzial zur Automatisierung repetitiver Aufgaben, zur Optimierung datengetriebener Entscheidungen und zur Ermöglichung personalisierter Kundenansprachen. Während die technologischen Potenziale von KI bereits umfassend erforscht sind, mangelt es nach wie vor an empirischen Untersuchungen zur praktischen Implementierung von KI in verschiedenen Branchen.

Im Rahmen dieser Masterarbeit wird eine umfassende Analyse durchgeführt, um zu untersuchen, wie Unternehmen im DACH Raum KI-Technologien zur Optimierung ihrer Marketingprozesse einsetzen. Qualitative Interviews mit Marketingexpert\*innen dienen dazu, strategische Einsatzmöglichkeiten von KI in diversen Bereichen des Marketing zu untersuchen. Darüber hinaus wird der Wandel der benötigten Kompetenzen von Marketingfachkräften beleuchtet, wobei ein besonderer Fokus auf der Kombination von technischen Fähigkeiten im Umgang mit KI-Tools und sozialen Kompetenzen wie Kreativität, kritischem Denken und Anpassungsfähigkeit liegt. Die Ergebnisse dieser Untersuchung zeigen, dass KI zwar das Potenzial besitzt, die Effizienz im Marketing signifikant zu steigern, die Implementierung von KI jedoch auch Herausforderungen im Hinblick auf ethische Fragestellungen, Datenschutz und die fortlaufende Weiterentwicklung der erforderlichen Fähigkeiten mit sich bringt. Unternehmen müssen sowohl technische als auch zwischenmenschliche Kompetenzen priorisieren, da KI-gesteuerte Marketingstrategien zunehmend zur Norm werden. Diese Arbeit leistet einen Beitrag zum Verständnis der Transformation des Marketings im DACH Raum durch KI und der zukünftigen Kompetenzen, die notwendig sein werden, um in diesem dynamischen Umfeld erfolgreich zu agieren.

Abschließend werden Handlungsempfehlungen für Unternehmen zur effektiven Integration von KI in ihre Marketingstrategien formuliert, wobei die Notwendigkeit einer Kultur des kontinuierlichen Lernens sowie der ethischen Achtsamkeit im Umgang mit KI besonders hervorgehoben wird.

## Abstract

The purpose of this master's thesis is to investigate the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies within marketing operations and to identify the skillsets that will be essential for marketing professionals in an AI-driven landscape. As AI continues to reshape marketing practices, it offers the potential to automate repetitive tasks, enhance data-driven decision-making, and enable personalized customer engagement. However, while AI's technological capabilities have been well-documented, there is a lack of empirical research on its practical application across different industries, especially in markets in the DACH region, which have been slower to adopt new technologies.

To address these gaps, this thesis provides a comprehensive analysis of how companies in the DACH region are leveraging AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations. The research draws on qualitative interviews conducted with marketing professionals to explore the strategic use of AI tools in areas such as customer segmentation, predictive analytics, and personalized marketing. In addition, the study identifies the evolving skill requirements for marketing professionals, emphasizing the balance between technical proficiency with AI tools and softer skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability.

The findings indicate that while AI has the potential to significantly enhance marketing efficiency, its adoption is accompanied by challenges related to ethics, privacy, and the need for continuous upskilling. Companies are expected to prioritize both technical and interpersonal skills in their marketing teams, as AI-driven strategies increasingly become the norm. This research contributes to the understanding of how AI is transforming marketing in the DACH region and offers insights into the future competencies needed to navigate this evolving landscape.

The thesis concludes with recommendations for companies on effectively integrating AI into their marketing practices and highlights the importance of fostering a culture of continuous learning and ethical awareness in AI adoption.

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# 1 Introduction

The marketing landscape has undergone a significant transformation over the past few decades, largely driven by the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT). Traditionally, marketing campaigns have required extensive manual effort for various aspects, from designing and processing to analyzing and targeting specific audiences. However, with the integration of AI and the IoT, many of these tasks no longer necessitate specific manual skills. For example, AI is able to analyze vast amounts of data, assess target audiences with precision, and create various marketing assets, fundamentally altering the way these campaigns are designed and executed (Verma et al., 2021, pp. 115–117).

The competitive advantage in the marketing field is increasingly determined by how well employees can leverage these technologies. When used correctly, AI and the IoT provide significant support to employees, enhancing their efficiency and effectiveness across different tasks. For example, according to a Salesforce (2024, wo.P.) report, 60% of marketers are already utilizing AI to assist with tasks such as data analysis, personalization, and campaign management, and this adoption rate is expected to increase (TheBulletin, 2024, wo.P.). In addition, AI-driven marketing can result in increases of 15–20% in operational efficiency as well as significant cost reductions in marketing processes (HubSpot, 2024, wo.P.).

This shift has reduced the need for certain traditional skills while simultaneously increasing the demand for new, technology-driven competencies. Dentsu, one of the largest network agencies in the world, recently published the “Consumer Navigator - Q2 2024 Mindset” report, which reveals significant economic uncertainties that are shaping consumer behavior and attitudes across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA). Despite a predominantly negative sentiment toward the current state of the economy—particularly in Great Britain, where 65% of consumers view the economic situation unfavorably—many consumers remain cautiously optimistic about their personal financial situations. This duality, with 70% of consumers feeling relatively secure personally but apprehensive about broader economic trends, has led to notable shifts in spending patterns. According to Dentsu’s (2024) report, nearly 48% of the surveyed consumers have reduced spending or delayed major purchases due to economic uncertainty, reflecting a pervasive sense of financial caution. Furthermore, 45% of consumers are increasingly “trading down” by making everyday concessions and opting for more affordable alternatives to navigate economic challenges. Concerns about job security persist across all markets, with 52% of consumers expressing some degree of worry about their job stability, further contributing to a cautious and conservative approach to spending. These insights provide a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in the EMEA region, illustrating how economic sentiment and financial stability are influencing decision-making in a complex and uncertain economic landscape (Dentsu, 2024, wo.P.).

AI is rapidly becoming a pivotal force in marketing, revolutionizing the industry in profound ways. The explosive growth of AI startups, alongside an increasing number of AI-focused conferences and substantial investments from major technology companies, underscores its transformative potential. According to recent insights from CompTIA, the global AI market is poised for remarkable expansion, with forecasts suggesting it will surpass \$100 billion in a few years. This surge in adoption reflects a broader trend of AI integration across industries, driven by its ability to automate processes, analyze vast amounts of data, and optimize marketing strategies in real-time (CompTIA, 2024, wo.P.). This surge in interest and development is unsurprising given the buzz around machine learning, deep learning, and analytics over the past few years, all of which are core components of AI technology. These advancements underscore a critical insight: Data alone, often referred to as the “new oil,” is insufficient without the sophisticated analytical capabilities of AI (Wirth, 2018, p. 436).

Although there is considerable research on the topics of skills in marketing and job requirements in the marketing field, questions regarding future skills have not yet been posed. This is relevant not only for the workforce but also for management within the marketing sector. To understand what will be pertinent in the future and how to best adapt to such a transformation, it is crucial to engage with this topic. In addition, to what extent soft and hard skills are relevant for the marketing industry should be examined (Lyu & Jin, 2021, pp. 120–131). Therefore, it is important to conduct scientific research related to how this change will impact marketing and which skills will be relevant in the future.

This thesis examines the pivotal roles that will shape the landscape of AI-powered marketing in the future. Strategic planning and creativity emerged as indispensable skills, including crafting narratives, developing brand strategies that resonate with target audiences, and designing campaigns that evoke emotion and captivate customers. Ethical decision-making will take the center stage as AI algorithms advance, emphasizing the importance of integrating ethical considerations into decision-making processes. Human marketers play a crucial role in addressing potential biases in AI-driven campaigns and safeguarding brand integrity. The ability to build and nurture relationships with customers relies on empathy and a nuanced understanding of human behavior, emphasizing the enduring human touch in marketing. As personalized communication and customer engagement strategies center on the human capacity to connect emotionally, the rapid evolution of technology and consumer behaviors underscores the necessity for marketers to remain agile and committed to continuous learning. In this dynamic landscape, humans will continue to be essential in adapting marketing strategies to continually changing trends and emerging platforms (Taddeo & Floridi, 2018, pp. 171–172).

## 1.1 Problem Statement

Future marketing professionals are expected to possess a diverse skill set that aligns with the evolving landscape of AI-driven marketing. Key among these skills will be the ability to interpret and generate insights from AI-generated data and to transform these into actionable strategies that drive marketing success. Creativity and innovation remain paramount, emphasizing the need for a mindset that fosters the development of unique, emotionally resonant campaigns that may be beyond the capabilities of AI. Ethical decision-making is a critical competency; professionals must comprehend the ethical implications of AI in marketing and prioritize consumer trust and brand reputation in their strategic choices (Taddeo & Floridi, 2018, p. 172). Adaptability and a commitment to lifelong learning are also essential attributes, ensuring that marketers can navigate the dynamic terrain of technological advances and industry changes. Moreover, collaboration and emotional intelligence are crucial, as marketers must collaborate effectively with cross-functional teams and leverage emotional intelligence to understand and connect with diverse audiences, enriching the human touch in marketing endeavors (Culnan & Williams, 2009, pp. 674–683; Lee et al., 2003, pp. 755–768).

As the future of marketing becomes increasingly intertwined with AI, the interaction of human creativity and AI efficiency will define success in the field. Marketers must not only harness AI's technological capabilities but also cultivate skills related to strategic thinking, creativity, and ethical considerations. Navigating this partnership between humans and AI presents both challenges and opportunities, promising a marketing landscape that is technologically advanced yet deeply human-centered. This thesis explores the complex relationship between marketing professionals and AI and provides guidance for the future.

Due to digital transformation, the emergence of various AI tools, and the breakthrough of AI tools that make them accessible to the “masses,” there is an increasing tendency to use them in the work context. In the marketing field, which is fast paced and based on data-driven decisions, it is crucial to stay informed about the latest trends and the interests of target audiences (Nistor, 2019, pp. 127–132). An increasing number of useful tools are being launched that simplify work and make processes more efficient; indeed, their use is becoming almost necessary (Sandeepanie et al., 2020, pp. 304–312). For employees, this can be a challenge, as they constantly need to adapt to new tools.

## 1.2 Derivation of Research Question

The rapid integration of AI into the marketing industry has fundamentally altered the landscape, transforming how campaigns are designed, processed, and executed. This transformation is driven by AI's ability to analyze vast amounts of data, assess target audiences with precision, and create various marketing assets. As a result, the roles and responsibilities within the

marketing industry are evolving, prompting critical questions about the future of marketing job profiles and the skills required to succeed in this new environment.

Understanding these changes is essential for both current and future marketing professionals to remain relevant and competitive. By investigating the tasks that will continue to be relevant despite AI automation and the skills that will be expected from employees, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the future of marketing careers. In addition, it will explore the challenges that marketing professionals may face as they adapt to the integration of AI in their field. The following research questions guided this thesis:

Q1: How do companies leverage AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations?

Q2: What skills will be expected from marketing employees in an AI-driven landscape?

By addressing these questions, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of marketing roles in the context of AI integration. The findings provide practical recommendations for marketing professionals, educators, and industry leaders to navigate the changing landscape and prepare for the future.

### 1.3 Objectives and Methodology of the Work

The primary objective of this thesis was to examine the impact of AI on the skill requirements of marketing professionals. In particular, the question of what new competencies and skills are expected from employees in an AI-supported marketing environment was addressed. The focus was on the development of relevant skills, such as creativity and strategic thinking, as well as ethical and analytical abilities.

In the past, marketing campaigns had to be designed and processed differently. Today, AI can be used to analyze campaigns, assess the target audience, and create various assets. The goal of this study was to investigate the extent to which job profiles may change due to the transformation of AI and to identify which skills will be relevant in the future of marketing considering the evolution of skills in relation to AI tools. By understanding these changes, this thesis aimed to provide insights and recommendations that will help marketing professionals and educators prepare for and adapt to the evolving demands of the industry.

To achieve these goals, qualitative interviews were conducted with experts in the field of marketing. These interviews aimed to provide deeper insights into the expectations and changes related to the increasing integration of AI into marketing processes. Using Mayring's qualitative content analysis, the transcribed interviews were evaluated to form key categories and identify the essential areas of focus. At the end of the thesis, well-founded statements are provided regarding which competencies will be crucial for marketing professionals in the future and how companies can prepare their teams for these changes.

## 2 State of the Research

This chapter provides an overview of the current research related to the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in marketing. It examines the conditions and capabilities required in the marketing sector, the impact of AI on marketing tasks, and how AI technologies are transforming marketing practices. The aim was to establish a foundation for understanding the impact of AI on marketing and identify the skills required to succeed in an AI-centric environment.

Culnan and Williams (2009) examined the importance of ethical considerations in strengthening privacy practices in organizations. The study aimed to explore the ethical implications of AI in marketing and how they can enhance organizational privacy, utilizing a qualitative approach that included a literature review and detailed case studies of data breaches. The sample consisted of two high-profile incidents: ChoicePoint, where identity thieves accessed the personal information of 145,000 individuals by posing as legitimate businesses, and TJX, where inadequate security measures exposed over 94 million credit and debit card numbers. The primary research question was, "What are the ethical implications of AI in marketing and how can they enhance organizational privacy?" The findings revealed that organizations have a moral duty to protect consumer data, extending beyond legal compliance. The study suggests that integrating ethical considerations into privacy programs can strengthen these programs and address compliance challenges. Furthermore, future professionals need to make ethical decisions and continuously adapt to new technologies to uphold these standards. Both ChoicePoint and TJX suffered significant financial and reputational damage due to their privacy breaches. However, the study primarily focused on ethical implications without providing extensive empirical data and only examined two US data leaks, neglecting to consider European law. While the theoretical recommendations are sound, practical implementation strategies could have been explored more deeply. Additionally, the reliance on only two case studies may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or industries (Culnan & Williams, 2009, pp. 678-681).

Schlee and Harich (2010) investigated the evolving knowledge and skills requirements for marketers in the 21st century, aiming to identify the essential skills required for marketing professionals in the modern digital landscape. Using a qualitative method and content analysis, they analyzed 500 marketing job postings from Monster.com, covering positions in cities such as Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, and Seattle. The study found that conceptual marketing knowledge and the ability to adapt to new technologies are crucial for career advancement in marketing. Additionally, numerous marketing positions demand technical skills, including database analysis and various industry-specific software and analytics tools. Meta-

skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are also highly valued by employers. However, the study is limited to a theoretical analysis without empirical verification, and the sample size of 500 job postings, limited to five cities, may not be representative of the broader US marketing landscape (Schlee & Harich, 2010, pp. 46-54).

Wirth (2018) examined the role of AI in marketing, specifically focusing on how AI assists with predictive analytics, customer segmentation, and personalized marketing strategies. The study utilized a qualitative methodology, drawing on a literature review and a review of AI applications in various industries. The primary research question sought to understand how AI helps with key marketing tasks such as predictive analytics and customer segmentation. Wirth found that AI's ability to analyze data and generate insights significantly impacts marketing strategies and customer interactions, particularly by improving customer segmentation and enabling more personalized marketing measures. However, the study lacked specific case studies and did not go into sufficient detail regarding the practical implementation of AI in marketing, which limits the depth of its findings. The absence of a clearly defined sample size and detailed models or processes also detracts from its practical applicability, making it more of a general overview than a comprehensive guide to AI in marketing (Wirth, 2018, pp. 10-16).

Taddeo and Floridi (2018) explored how AI is changing the marketing landscape, focusing specifically on the ethical implications of AI in marketing and how these considerations should be integrated into decision-making processes. The study employed a qualitative methodology, using a literature review to examine ethical issues raised by AI and how AI is transforming the marketing industry. The sample included a mix of theoretical perspectives and real-world marketing cases. The research sought to answer the question, "What are the ethical implications of AI in marketing, and how should these considerations be integrated into decision-making processes?" The study concluded that in an AI-driven marketing landscape, ethical decision-making, creativity, and strategic planning are indispensable skills. It emphasized that ethical frameworks are critical for the responsible use of AI in marketing, highlighting the importance of integrating these considerations into strategic processes. However, the study lacks practical implementation details and provides only a limited scope, with relatively brief analyses of the examples provided. Additionally, the inclusion of more empirical data would have strengthened the study's findings (Taddeo & Floridi, 2018, pp. 75-81).

Di Gregorio et al. (2019) analyzed the employability skills required for marketing graduates, with a focus on the impact of digital transformation and AI integration on career paths in marketing. The primary research question was, "What employability skills are necessary for

marketing graduates in the context of AI integration?" The study utilized mixed methods, incorporating qualitative content analysis of job advertisements and a quantitative online survey. The qualitative data was derived from 359 online job advertisements and 417 offline advertisements from top firms, universities, and employment platforms such as LinkedIn, Adecco, and Monster. The quantitative data included responses from a survey sent to 16,183 contacts, yielding 1,562 valid responses. The study found that the integration of AI in marketing necessitates the development of digital and technical skills, as well as customer-insights skills. Cross-country analysis revealed that highly digitalized firms prioritize digital and technical skills, followed by core marketing and basic soft skills, while lowly digitalized firms place more emphasis on analytical skills. However, the study lacks differentiation between industries, which might have varying skill requirements for marketing professionals. Additionally, the data collection period for job advertisements was limited to one month, which may not capture long-term job market trends and could quickly become outdated in the fast-evolving marketing landscape (Di Gregorio et al., 2019, pp. 62-66).

Davenport et al. (2019) investigated how artificial intelligence enables online retailers to predict customer preferences and personalize marketing efforts, focusing on AI's transformative impact on retail marketing. The study employed qualitative content analysis, incorporating a literature review and case studies of online retailers that utilize AI in their marketing strategies. The primary research question was, "How does AI enable online retailers to predict customer preferences and personalize marketing efforts?" The study found that AI tools improve customer loyalty by providing personalized recommendations, enhancing customer experience, and significantly increasing engagement. Furthermore, AI allows retailers to make accurate predictions about customer preferences, which boosts marketing efficiency. However, the study is primarily theoretical and focuses solely on the retail sector, limiting its applicability to other industries. Additionally, it lacks empirical data and quantitative analysis to validate the proposed framework, and while it touches on ethical and policy issues, it provides limited practical guidance for implementing AI in real-world marketing contexts (Davenport et al., 2019, pp. 90-97).

Verma et al. (2021) provided an overview of how AI technologies have transformed marketing practices, focusing on the new competencies required for marketers. The study employed a quantitative data collection method and a systematic literature review, analyzing 1,580 documents from databases such as Scopus and Web of Science. The primary research question addressed, "How have AI technologies transformed marketing practices, and what new skills are required for marketers?" The study concluded that AI significantly reduces the need for manual tasks, enhances operational efficiency, and necessitates the development of new,

technology-driven skills among marketers. However, the review was limited to literature published up to 2020, which may not reflect the most recent advancements in AI and marketing. Additionally, the rapidly evolving nature of AI and marketing means that the identified trends and research directions could change as new technologies and methodologies emerge (Verma et al., 2021, pp. 112-117).

Huang and Rust (2020) developed a categorization of AI into three distinct types: mechanical AI, thinking AI, and sentient AI, and examined their specific applications across various stages of marketing processes. The study sought to provide a strategic framework for integrating AI into marketing practices by utilizing a qualitative content analysis based on an extensive literature review. Although the sample included theoretical frameworks and case studies of AI applications in different marketing environments, the study did not specify the number of cases or provide concrete details on sample size, which represents a methodological limitation. The primary research question focused on categorizing AI into mechanical AI, thinking AI, and sentient AI, with each type serving different functions in marketing. Mechanical AI was found to automate repetitive tasks such as data entry and basic content generation, improving operational efficiency. Thinking AI, on the other hand, generates data-driven insights by analyzing large datasets, supporting more informed decision-making, especially in market segmentation and targeting. Sentient AI was identified as having the capability to understand and respond to human emotions, enhancing customer interactions and personalizing the consumer experience. The authors proposed a three-stage framework for AI integration in marketing: the research stage, where AI improves market research by identifying trends and consumer preferences through data analysis; the strategy stage, where AI aids in segmentation, targeting, and positioning by providing deeper insights into consumer behavior; and the action stage, where AI optimizes marketing actions by enhancing real-time decision-making and personalizing marketing messages. Despite these valuable insights, the framework remains largely conceptual and has not been tested through empirical research. Future studies should include specific case studies and empirical data to validate and refine this framework, as its generalizability to a wide range of marketing contexts may be limited without such empirical support (Huang & Rust, 2020, pp. 132-137).

Morandini et al. (2023) explored the transformation of professional skills resulting from AI implementation, with a particular focus on the challenges organizations encounter and the transversal skills required for effective collaboration with AI in marketing. The study adopted a qualitative content analysis approach, relying on a review of academic literature and theoretical discussions. However, specific details about the sample size were not provided, which is a noted limitation. The central research question addressed, "What transversal skills are

necessary for working effectively with AI in marketing, and how does AI enhance these skills?" The findings emphasized that skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication are indispensable for marketing professionals in an AI-driven environment. AI supports the development and application of these skills by automating repetitive and routine tasks, enabling professionals to concentrate on higher-level strategic and creative tasks, such as interpreting AI-generated insights and crafting personalized marketing strategies. Nevertheless, the study is primarily conceptual, offering forward-looking insights without current empirical examples to demonstrate the practical implementation of these findings in real-world settings. Furthermore, the applicability of the results may be constrained by the study's focus on specific sectors and the rapidly evolving nature of AI technologies, highlighting the need for future empirical research to validate the framework and expand its relevance to diverse industries (Morandini et al., 2023, pp. 147-152).

Author/ Year	Goal/ Research Question	Method	Sample	Key Findings	Critique
Culnan and Williams (2009)	How Ethics Can Enhance ----- What are the ethical implications of AI in marketing and how can they enhance organizational privacy?	Qualitative Method  Literature Review  Case Study Analysis	Two high-profile data breaches: Choice Point (145,000 individuals) and TJX (94 million credit and debit card numbers)	Organizations have a moral duty to protect consumer data, extending beyond mere legal compliance.  Integrating ethical considerations into privacy programs strengthens these programs and helps address compliance challenges.  Future professionals must make ethical decisions and continuously adapt to emerging technologies to maintain effective privacy standards.	The study primarily focuses on ethical implications without providing extensive empirical data.  Only two data leaks in the US were examined, with no consideration of European law.  The recommendations are theoretically sound but lack depth in exploring practical implementation strategies.  Reliance on two case studies may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or industries.
Schlee and Harich (2010)	What knowledge and skills are required for marketing jobs in the 21st century? ----- What are the essential skills required for marketing professionals in the modern digital landscape?	Qualitative Method  Content Analysis	Analysis of 500 marketing jobs (posted on Monster.com)  Cities Included: Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, and Seattle	Conceptual marketing knowledge and the ability to adapt to new technologies are crucial for career advancement in marketing. Numerous marketing positions demand technical skills, including:	Limited to theoretical analysis; no empirical verification.  The study only assesses 500 job postings from specific cities, which may not represent the broader US marketing landscape.

				<p>Database analysis Industry-specific software and analytics tools</p> <p>Meta-skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are also highly valued by employers.</p>	
Wirth (2018)	<p>Understanding what AI is capable of, especially in the marketing context</p> <p>-----</p> <p>How does AI assist in predictive analytics, customer segmentation, and personalized marketing strategies?</p> <hr/>	<p>Qualitative Method</p> <p>Literature Review</p>	No information about the concrete sample size	<p>AI significantly impacts marketing strategies by analyzing data and generating valuable insights.</p> <p>Improving customer segmentation, allowing for more precise targeting.</p> <p>Enabling personalized marketing efforts, tailoring strategies to individual customers.</p>	<p>The study lacks specific case studies, limiting practical insights.</p> <p>Insufficient detail on practical implementation strategies.</p> <p>The absence of a clearly defined sample size weakens the study's empirical rigor.</p> <p>The article offers a general overview rather than an in-depth analysis of AI's role in marketing.</p>
Lancendorfer, Taddeo, and Floridi (2018)	<p>How AI is changing the marketing landscape</p> <p>-----</p> <p>What are the ethical implications of AI in marketing and how should these considerations be integrated into decision-making processes?</p>	<p>Qualitative Method</p> <p>Literature Review</p>	No information about the concrete sample size	<p>Ethical decision-making, creativity, and strategic planning are indispensable skills in the AI-driven marketing landscape.</p>	<p>Strong focus on ethics lacks practical implementation details</p> <p>only gives a limited scope, and the analysis of these examples is relatively brief</p>

<p>Di Gregorio, Maggioni, Mauri, and Mazzucchelli (2019)</p>	<p>How digital transformation has disrupted the marketing career path by analysing the most in-demand marketing skills and identifying opportunities for future marketing professionals ----- What employability skills are necessary for marketing graduates in the context of AI integration?</p>	<p>Mixed- Methods  Qualitative Content Analysis  Quantitative Online Survey</p>	<p>Qualitative Data: Job advertisements from the top 100 firms  total of 359 online job advertisements and 417 offline advertisements were analyzed.  Quantitative Data: The survey was sent to 16,183 contacts, resulting in 1,562 valid responses. (n = 1,562)</p>	<p>AI integration requires strong digital and technical skills, along with customer-insights skills.  Highly digitalized firms prioritize digital and technical skills, followed by core marketing and soft skills.  Lowly digitalized firms place more emphasis on analytical skills.</p>	<p>The research does not differentiate between industries with varying skill requirements.  The data collection period for job advertisements was limited to one month.  This short timeframe may not capture long-term job market trends and could quickly become outdated, especially in marketing.</p>
<p>Davenport, Guha, Grewal, and Bressgott (2019)</p>	<p>How artificial intelligence is transforming the retail conversation ----- How does AI enable online retailers to predict customer preferences and personalize marketing efforts?</p>	<p>Qualitative Content Analysis</p>	<p>No information about the concrete sample size</p>	<p>AI tools enhances:  -customer engagement through personalized recommendations.  - hyper-personalization, predictive analytics, and real-time decision-making.  - marketing strategies, improving customer engagement and marketing efficiency.</p>	<p>Focused on retail; limited applicability to other sectors.  Primarily theoretical and conceptual, based on literature review and practitioner interactions.  Lacks empirical data and quantitative analysis to validate findings.  Discusses ethical and policy issues but offers limited practical implementation guidance for real-world marketing contexts.</p>

<p>Verma, Sanjeev, Sharma, Rohit, Deb, Subhamay, and Maitra, Debojit (2021)</p>	<p>An overview of artificial intelligence in marketing ----- How have AI technologies transformed marketing practices, and what new competencies are required for marketers?</p>	<p>Quantitative Data Collection  Systematic Literature Review</p>	<p>The study analyzed 1,580 documents.</p>	<p>AI reduces the need for manual tasks in marketing.  AI enhances operational efficiency.  AI requires marketers to develop new technology-driven skills.</p>	<p>Review limited to literature published up to 2020.  May not capture recent developments in AI and marketing.  AI and marketing are rapidly evolving fields; trends and research directions may shift as new technologies emerge.</p>
<p>Huang and Rust (2020)</p>	<p>Create a strategic framework for artificial intelligence in marketing ----- How can AI be categorized into mechanical AI, thinking AI, and feeling AI, and what are their applications in marketing?</p>	<p>Qualitative Content Analysis</p>	<p>No information about the concrete sample size</p>	<p>AI automates repetitive tasks, provides data-driven insights, and enhances customer understanding, transforming marketing strategies and engagement.  The authors developed a three-stage framework for AI integration in marketing:  <b>Research stage:</b> AI enhances market research by analyzing data to identify trends and opportunities.  <b>Strategy stage:</b> AI aids segmentation, targeting, and positioning through deeper insights into consumer behavior.</p>	<p>Broad framework; lacks specific case studies and field usage.  Solely a theoretical concept without empirical validation.  Future research should include empirical studies to test and refine the framework.  Generalizability to all marketing contexts may be limited.  Empirical research needed to assess applicability in diverse settings.</p>

				<b>Action stage:</b> AI optimizes marketing actions.	
Morandini, Sofia, Fraboni, Federico, De Angelis, Marco, Puzzo, Gabriele, Giusino, Davide, and Pietrantoni, Luca (2023)	The paper investigates the transformation of professional skills due to AI implementation and the challenges organizations. ----- What are the transversal skills necessary for working effectively with AI in marketing, and how does AI enhance these skills?	Qualitative Content Analysis	No information about the concrete sample size	Emphasizes the importance of transversal skills for effective AI collaboration.  Key skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication.	Forward-looking, but lacks current empirical examples due to its theoretical nature.  Generalizability may be limited by the focus on specific sectors.  The rapidly evolving nature of AI technologies could constrain the applicability of the results.

The current body of research on AI in marketing is extensive, with numerous studies highlighting AI's potential to optimize marketing operations by automating repetitive tasks, providing data-driven insights, and enhancing customer engagement through personalization and predictive analytics (Davenport et al., 2019; Wirth, 2018). Existing studies (e.g., Culnan & Williams, 2009; Taddeo & Floridi, 2018) primarily focus on the ethical implications of AI and the importance of integrating these considerations into decision-making processes. However, these studies often offer theoretical explorations without detailed empirical data or practical implementation strategies. Similarly, Schlee and Harich (2010) and Morandini et al. (2023) emphasize the changing skill requirements for marketing professionals but rely heavily on literature reviews and job postings, lacking robust quantitative data from real-world applications. Wirth (2018) and Davenport et al. (2019) explored AI's role in marketing practices, such as predictive analytics and personalized marketing, but only provide general overviews without specific case studies or practical insights.

In the opinion of the author of this thesis these studies have largely focused on the technological aspects of AI and its ability to transform marketing processes, such as segmentation and real-time customer interactions. However, despite the growing adoption of AI, there remains a significant gap in understanding the practical applications of AI technologies across different industries and countries. Specifically, research often lacks detailed insights into how companies strategically implement AI to optimize marketing operations in real-world settings, and how AI's role varies across sectors. Another critical gap lies in the limited exploration of the human element in AI-driven marketing. While studies acknowledge the growing need for marketers to acquire new skills, few have thoroughly examined the specific skillsets required to thrive in an AI-driven environment. Furthermore, the existing literature has yet to address the unique context of the DACH region, since Switzerland, Austria and Germany are countries known for their slower adoption of new tools and technologies. This geographical gap is significant because the pace of AI adoption and the associated challenges can vary greatly between regions and markets. The market dynamics and its slower pace of technological adoption make it a particularly interesting case for studying AI implementation in marketing and the resulting skill requirements.

This thesis seeks to address these research gaps by providing an empirical analysis of how companies in the DACH region leverage AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations and identifying the specific skills required for marketing employees in an AI-driven landscape. By focusing on these three countries (Austria, Germany and Switzerland), this research aims to offer valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with AI adoption in a market traditionally slow to adapt to new tools, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of AI's role in marketing. Based on the above mentioned research gaps the following research questions were derived:

Q1: How do companies leverage AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations?

Q2: What skills will be expected from marketing employees in an AI-driven landscape?

This research is both crucial and timely, as it addresses substantial research gaps by offering empirical insights into the role of AI in optimizing marketing operations and describing the evolving skill requirements within the context of the DACH region. The results will be of value to both academic and industry stakeholders, thereby contributing to the advancement of theoretical knowledge and practical application within the domain of AI-driven marketing.

## 3 Foundations

This chapter provides working definitions for terms related to artificial intelligence (AI) and AI tools used in the marketing field. AI has emerged as a transformative force, redefining how businesses interact with their customers and optimize their strategies. This chapter highlights its relevance and outlines its application within the marketing context. Various AI technologies, such as machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing, are examined, and their specific applications in key marketing tasks are explored. This foundational understanding establishes a foundation for a deeper analysis of how AI is reshaping the marketing landscape and the implications for marketing professionals.

### 3.1 Foundations of Marketing

Marketing is a dynamic field that plays a pivotal role in the success of any organization. Understanding the foundational principles of marketing is essential for developing strategies that effectively meet customer needs and achieve organizational goals. This chapter delves into the core concepts of marketing, exploring both strategic and tactical elements that form the backbone of marketing practices. By examining frameworks such as the three Cs and the four Ps, insights can be gained into how marketing strategies are crafted and executed in various business contexts.

Marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships to capture value in return. It encompasses understanding customer needs, creating products and services that fulfill those needs, and effectively communicating the benefits to the target audience. The “marketing mix” plays a crucial role in this process and is also referred to as the four Ps—product, price, promotion, and place. *Product* refers to what a company offers to meet customer needs. *Price* is the amount charged for the product, influencing how it is perceived in terms of value. *Promotion* involves the activities that communicate the product’s benefits and persuade customers to buy it. *Place* refers to how the product is distributed and made accessible to customers. Together, these elements ensure that marketing efforts are comprehensive and effective in achieving business objectives (Bergstedt, 2010, pp. 38–40).

The foundations of marketing are built upon strategic frameworks and tactical tools that guide businesses in understanding and meeting customer needs. A key framework is the three Cs model, which includes the company, the customer, and the competition. This model helps organizations develop strategies that leverage their capabilities, address customer needs, and differentiate from competitors. The *company* aspect focuses on whether an organization can successfully create, develop, or deliver a strategy. The *customer* aspect emphasizes understanding and meeting customer needs, whether expressed or latent. The *competition* aspect

involves analyzing what competitors are doing and finding ways to stand out in the market (Bergstedt, 2024, pp. 38–39).

### 3.2 Skills Required in the Marketing Field

The advent of AI is fundamentally transforming the landscapes of various industries, including marketing. This section outlines the skills required for marketing professionals before the integration of AI and contrasts them with the emerging skills necessitated by an AI-driven landscape. The skills are categorized into core skills, thinking skills, self-management skills, social and communication skills, and physical and manual skills. In addition, it explores how AI is likely to influence marketing practices and work environments in the future.

The skills necessary for success in the marketing field are diverse and multifaceted, reflecting the complexity and dynamic nature of the profession. According to Schlee and Harich (2010), technical skills, such as proficiency in database marketing, internet analytics, and various statistical software, are critical at all job levels. Meta-skills, such as oral and written communication, teamwork, and quantitative analysis, are also highly valued. Furthermore, conceptual marketing knowledge, including market segmentation, product management, and strategic planning, which are essential for advancing to middle and upper-level positions in the field, is increasingly gaining importance (Schlee & Harich, 2010, pp. 344–346). By equipping marketing professionals with a blend of technical, meta, and conceptual skills, educational programs can better prepare graduates to meet the challenges of the modern marketing landscape, ensuring they are capable of driving strategic initiatives and adapting to new technologies and market trends.

The integration of AI systems into organizations has highlighted the importance of identifying and cultivating transversal skills within the workforce. Transversal skills, which are also known as transferable or soft skills, can be applied across various tasks and industries. These skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration, and they are essential for working effectively with AI systems. They enable workers to adapt to new technologies and processes and to continuously learn and develop in the face of rapidly changing technology (Morandini et al., 2023, p. 46).

Transversal skills are crucial for working with AI systems, and they can also be developed and enhanced through AI. By automating specific tasks and processes, AI frees up time and resources, allowing employees to focus on more complex and demanding tasks that require these transversal skills. Leveraging AI to optimize and streamline certain processes enables organizations to foster and improve their employees' transversal skills, leading to higher productivity and innovation (Morandini et al., 2023, p. 46).

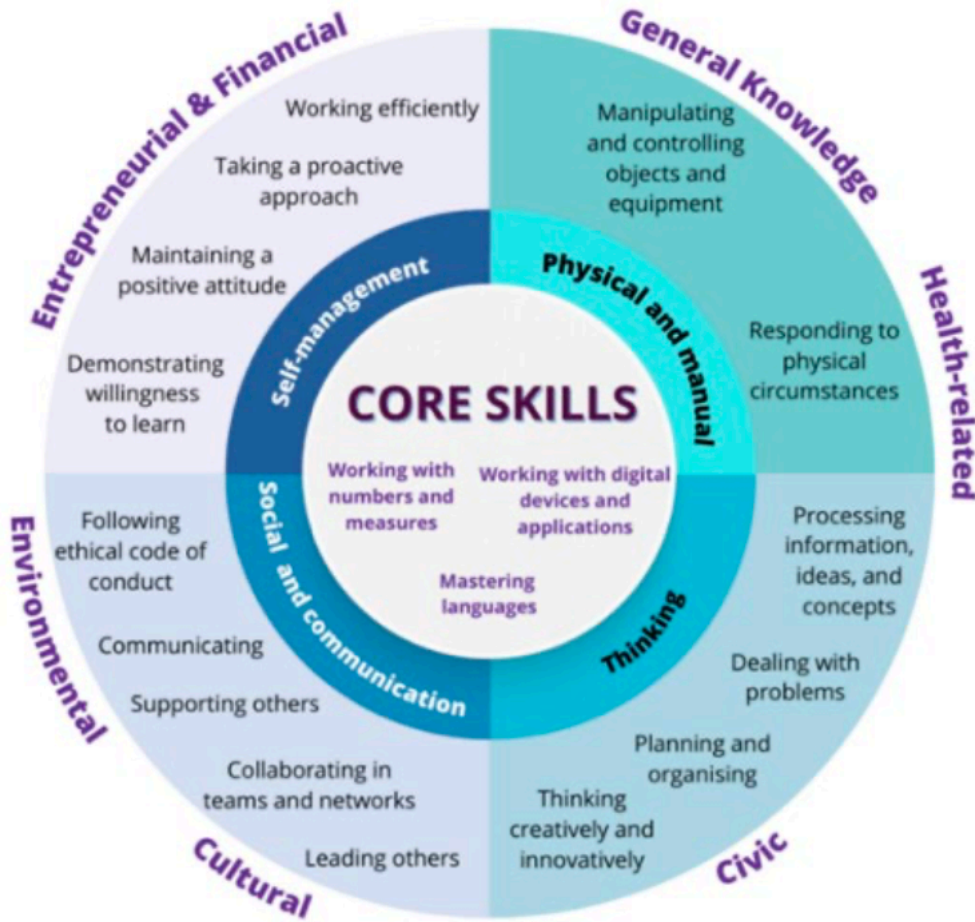


Figure 1 TSC Model (Morandini et al., 2023, p. 46)

The third report the ESCO Member States Working Group published in 2021 proposed a new taxonomy model for transversal skills and competences (TSCs). TSCs are considered valuable for effective action in any work, learning, or life activity. They are termed “transversal” because they are not exclusively linked to a particular context. In a world facing rapid technological and social changes, this transversality and the associated transferability are increasingly important. Furthermore, transversality can be linked to “deeper learning,” which refers to the skills and

competences that enable the more specific skills needed in a work environment (Morandini et al., 2023, p. 46).

The TSC model consists of six main categories: core competencies, thinking competencies, self-management competencies, social and communication competencies, physical and manual competencies, and life skills. These categories comprise a number of individual clusters to assist in mapping each skill. The model facilitates the identification of relevant concepts and the relationships between them, and it is helpful for different purposes and users from various sectors. In organizational contexts characterized by the adoption of AI systems, three of the six categories of TSCs (thinking, self-management, and social and communication skills) predominantly comprise skills that are considered “soft” or transferable and are therefore relevant to Industry 4.0 workers (Morandini et al., 2023, p. 46).

Di Gregorio et al. (2019) comprehensively analyzed the employability skillset required for marketing graduates in the contemporary job market. Employability skills are crucial for bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical application in the professional world, especially in a dynamic field such as marketing, where technological advancements are continually reshaping industry demands. Di Gregorio et al.’s (2019) categorization of the employability skills of marketing graduates is introduced in the following chapters.

### 3.2.1 Core Competencies

Core competencies are essential skills and include understanding, reading, speaking, and writing in one or more languages. These abilities form the foundation for effective communication and collaboration in diverse environments. For employees working with AI, proficiency in English is particularly important, as it is the predominant language used in AI applications. Mastery of English allows professionals to access a vast array of resources, engage in global discussions, and contribute effectively to the rapidly evolving field of AI. Understanding and developing one’s core competencies is crucial for success in today’s interconnected and technology-driven world (Morandini et al., 2023, p. 48).

Core marketing skills encompass planning, organization, time management, content creation across channels, creative thinking, precision, attention to detail, sales knowledge, and the ability to manage multiple marketing tasks. Skills such as planning, organization, and time management (Factor Loading = 0.675) are fundamental for executing marketing strategies effectively, while creative thinking (Factor Loading = 0.650) is essential for developing innovative marketing campaigns (Di Gregorio et al., 2019, p. 254).

The integration of AI necessitates effective communication skills to share information about complex AI systems. Building trust in AI work and developing effective leadership skills are also essential to ensure staff’s productive and efficient use of AI (Morandini et al., 2023, pp.

48–49). AI improves social and communication skills by providing feedback on employees' online interactions. It enhances communication skills in customer interactions through automatic responses and intelligent support. Moreover, AI helps develop managers' leadership skills by identifying the needs and motivations of team members (Morandini et al., 2023, p. 49).

### 3.2.2 Thinking Competencies

The ability to analyze data and derive actionable insights is vital in today's data-driven marketing landscape. Analytical skills include being data-driven (Factor Loading = 0.744) and having good conceptual and analytical abilities (Factor Loading = 0.751), statistical knowledge (Factor Loading = 0.706), problem-solving skills (Factor Loading = 0.744), and critical thinking skills (Factor Loading = 0.705). For instance, good conceptual and analytical skills are crucial for understanding and interpreting complex data sets to inform marketing decisions (Di Gregorio et al., 2019, p. 254).

The demand for thinking skills has increased with the rise of AI in marketing. Professionals must enhance their creativity to generate new ideas and think outside the box. The development of problem-solving skills is crucial to effectively address complex situations. In addition, analytical, critical, and rapid thinking are needed to understand AI-generated data and make informed decisions (Morandini et al., 2023, pp. 46–47).

AI aids in the enhancement of thinking skills by automating repetitive tasks, thereby allowing professionals to focus on solving complex problems. It augments creativity, empathy, learning, and critical thinking skills to address gaps left by AI, fostering a more comprehensive skill set (Morandini et al., 2023, p. 47).

### 3.2.3 Self-Management Competencies

Effective self-management skills are vital in the marketing field. Marketing professionals must develop time management skills to leverage the capabilities of different technologies and use the remaining time to complete tasks that require human intervention. Improving self-management skills for the development of new ideas is essential; meanwhile, AI can manage and monitor the workflow (Morandini et al., 2023, pp. 47–48).

AI enhances self-management skills by improving time management, workflow management, and prioritization through personalized advice. It also enhances the quality of planning skills by automating the scheduling of activities, events, and resources. Furthermore, AI explainability contributes to the development of critical thinking skills (Morandini et al., 2023, p. 48).

Proficiency in digital and technical skills is indispensable in an era dominated by digital marketing. Key skills include knowledge of social media (Factor Loading = 0.707), mobile marketing (Factor Loading = 0.529), e-commerce (Factor Loading = 0.705), analytics and real-time practices (Factor Loading = 0.716), internet and software knowledge (Factor Loading = 0.660),

and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) (Factor Loading = 0.582). For example, knowledge of analytics and real-time practices is vital for tracking and optimizing marketing campaigns in real time (Di Gregorio et al., 2019, p. 254).

Understanding customer behavior and preferences is central to developing successful marketing strategies. Customer insights skills involve knowledge of the company and its customers (Factor Loading = 0.675), research methods (Factor Loading = 0.663), customer touchpoints, journey mapping (Factor Loading = 0.708), and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) (Factor Loading = 0.575). Knowledge of customer touchpoints and journey mapping helps marketers create more personalized and effective customer experiences (Di Gregorio et al., 2019, p. 254).

### 3.2.4 Social and Communication Competencies

Social and communication competencies include skills such as initiative, teamwork, interpersonal skills, motivation, flexibility, oral communication, presentation skills, and stress resilience. These are essential for effective collaboration and personal productivity within marketing teams. Initiative and teamwork are particularly significant, with high factor loadings indicating their critical role in employability (Di Gregorio et al., 2019, p. 254). For instance, teamwork (Factor Loading = 0.708) is crucial for collaborative projects, while oral communication skills (Factor Loading = 0.651) are important for presentations and client interactions (Di Gregorio et al., 2019, p. 254).

### 3.2.5 Flexibility and Adaptability in Marketing Jobs

The fast-paced nature of marketing, with its emphasis on customer focus, requires professionals in the field to demonstrate high degrees of flexibility and adaptability. Marketing professionals must consistently adjust to shifting consumer behaviors and rapidly changing market trends to remain both efficient and relevant. AI significantly contributes to this dynamic by offering advanced data collection and analysis capabilities, empowering marketers to gain deeper insights into customer preferences and behaviors. This, in turn, facilitates the development of more personalized and effective marketing strategies.

The dynamic nature of the marketing field, which focuses intensively on customer needs and operates at a fast pace, demands high levels of flexibility and adaptability. Marketers must continuously adjust to changing consumer behaviors and market trends to remain competitive and efficient. This necessitates a deep understanding of emerging technologies and tools, particularly AI, which can provide critical support in gathering and analyzing vast amounts of data. AI not only enhances marketers' ability to understand customer preferences and behaviors but also offers innovative ideas for marketing campaigns. By leveraging AI, marketers can meet customers where they are, providing personalized experiences and optimizing engagement

strategies. This capability is crucial for maintaining relevance in a rapidly evolving market landscape (Schlee & Harich, 2010, p. 344). In addition, adapting to new social media algorithms or changes in consumer behavior (e.g., due to economic shifts) requires a high degree of flexibility. In such contexts, the willingness to embrace new technologies, such as AI and data analytics, can significantly enhance marketing efforts (Di Gregorio et al., 2019, p. 254).

AI's capacity to generate creative inputs and innovative ideas empowers marketers to meet customers where they are, ensuring engagement strategies that are both timely and relevant. The integration of AI in marketing workflows necessitates that professionals not only adapt to new tools and technologies but also develop the ability to interpret and leverage AI-driven insights effectively. This dual requirement underscores the importance of continuous learning and skill development in maintaining a competitive edge in the marketing industry (Nistor, 2019, p. 130; Schlee & Harich, 2010, p. 344).

### 3.3 Foundations of Artificial Intelligence

AI has emerged as a transformative force in various industries, including marketing. The integration of AI into marketing strategies promises to revolutionize the field by enhancing efficiency, enabling advanced data analysis, and facilitating personalized customer interactions. However, this technological advancement also introduces a range of challenges and complexities that marketing professionals must navigate.

The future of marketing is dependent on the interaction between human creativity and AI efficiency. Marketers must develop their skills related to strategic thinking, creativity, and ethical considerations. Challenges are present, but navigating the partnership between humans and AI promises a marketing landscape that is not only technologically advanced but also deeply human-centered. This thesis explores the complex relationship between marketing professionals and AI and provides guidance for the future.

Despite the profound impact AI is likely to have on a wide array of business functions, some managers still have an insufficient understanding of what AI is, including what it can and cannot do. Misconceptions about AI's capabilities, such as the belief that "with enough data, AI can learn anything," can lead to significant challenges. Marketing managers who have been sold on the "magical powers" of AI-driven solutions may underestimate its dangers, limitations, and pitfalls. Moreover, business managers might misjudge the areas in which AI is most likely to bear fruit—and where it will most likely fail—if adopted by marketing organizations, potentially leading to misallocated efforts and resources (De Bruyn et al., 2020, p. 91).

AI applications in marketing are distinguished from traditional modeling approaches by their capacity for "higher-order learning," a process in which AI systems autonomously generate new knowledge structures. This ability, which can be seen particularly in advanced AI

methodologies, such as deep neural networks, has enabled significant advancements in predictive analytics, customer segmentation, and personalized marketing strategies. However, the implementation of AI in marketing also brings technological pitfalls, including the risks associated with biased AI, the need for explainable AI, and the challenges in transferring tacit knowledge between AI systems and marketing professionals (De Bruyn et al., 2020, p. 92).

Marketing is inherently fast paced and data driven, necessitating that professionals stay abreast of the latest tools and trends. The continuous emergence of new AI tools makes it necessary for marketers to constantly adapt and develop new skills. In this context, understanding the implications of AI for marketing skill profiles is crucial. A goal of this thesis was to investigate the extent to which job profiles in marketing are changing due to AI transformation and to identify the skills that will be relevant in the future.

AI technologies can be broadly categorized based on their capabilities and functions. These include machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), and robotics, each of which contributes uniquely to marketing. ML, a subset of AI, focuses on developing algorithms that enable machines to learn from data and improve their performance over time without explicit programming. NLP involves the interaction between computers and human language, enabling machines to understand, interpret, and respond to human language in a valuable way. Robotics involves the design and application of robots that can perform tasks autonomously or semi-autonomously (Kumar et al., 2021, p. 871).

### 3.3.1 Narrow Artificial Intelligence

Narrow AI, also known as weak AI, is designed to perform specific tasks with a high degree of proficiency. This form of AI is widely used in marketing, leveraging neural network-based ML to analyze data and generate intelligent outputs without requiring an understanding of the underlying context. Unlike general AI, narrow AI focuses on narrowly defined tasks, such as playing chess, where it excels by processing vast amounts of data through powerful algorithms and computing resources. In marketing, narrow AI has garnered significant attention in research and practical application. Its analytical capabilities can be harnessed for big data and marketing analytics, enabling businesses to gain insights from extensive datasets. Adaptive personalization systems utilize narrow AI to tailor marketing messages and recommendations to individual preferences (De Bruyn et al., 2020, pp. 92–95).

**Machine Learning:** ML is a subset of AI that focuses on developing algorithms that enable machines to learn from data and improve their performance over time without explicit programming. ML involves training models using datasets to identify patterns and make predictions. This technology is pivotal in tasks such as predictive analytics, customer segmentation, and personalized recommendations. For instance, Netflix uses ML algorithms to predict viewer

preferences and recommend content, enhancing user engagement and satisfaction (Kumar et al., 2021, p. 871).

**Natural Language Processing:** NLP deals with the interaction between computers and human language. NLP enables machines to understand, interpret, and generate human language in a way that is both meaningful and useful. Applications of NLP in marketing include sentiment analysis, chatbots, and voice-activated assistants. For example, Apple's Siri and Amazon's Alexa utilize NLP to understand and respond to user queries, providing a seamless and intuitive user experience (Kumar et al., 2021, p. 871).

**Robotics:** Robotics involves the design and application of robots that can perform tasks autonomously or semi-autonomously. In the context of marketing, robotics can be used for tasks such as inventory management, customer service, and product demonstrations. Robots can enhance operational efficiency and provide innovative customer experiences. An example is the use of robots in retail stores to assist customers with information about products and guide them through the store, improving the overall shopping experience (Kumar et al., 2021, p. 871).

### 3.3.2 Strong AI

In contrast to narrow AI, strong AI, also known as artificial general intelligence (AGI), represents the aspirational goal of creating machines that possess human-like cognitive abilities across a wide range of tasks. Today, machines are limited to performing specific, well-defined tasks, such as playing chess, recognizing human faces, or predicting the likelihood of an online visitor clicking a banner ad. These algorithms are confined to their programmed domains, making them weak AI. However, the theoretical concept of strong AI envisions machines that can learn to learn, engaging in cognitive activities similar to humans. Although the scientific consensus suggests that we are still decades away from achieving AGI, it is a fascinating area of exploration. Some researchers even (humorously) define AI as "everything we cannot do yet," highlighting the evolving nature of the field (De Bruyn et al., 2020, p. 92).

As the understanding and application of AI continues to advance, it is crucial to recognize the distinctions between narrow and strong AI. While the concept of strong AI continues to inspire significant debate and research, practical applications in the current marketing landscape are largely dominated by narrow AI. These applications, while limited in scope, have already begun to revolutionize marketing strategies and customer interactions. To understand the full potential of AI in marketing, it is essential to explore the specific AI solutions that are being developed and implemented today. These solutions offer a glimpse into the future of marketing, where AI not only enhances existing processes but also creates new opportunities for innovation and efficiency.

Strong AI aims to perform any intellectual task that a human can do. This type of AI does not yet exist, but it represents the ultimate goal for many AI researchers. For this goal to be met, general AI needs to understand, learn, and apply knowledge across a wide range of tasks and possess the flexibility to adapt to new situations. While current AI technologies cannot yet achieve this level of understanding, ongoing advancements in ML and cognitive computing are pushing the boundaries (Kumar et al., 2021, p. 870). The next chapter of this thesis delves into symbolic AI, another significant approach that has shaped the development of AI, providing further context to the complexities and potential of this transformative technology (De Bruyn et al., 2020, p. 92).

### 3.3.3 Marketing and Artificial Intelligence Solutions

In this thesis, *marketing* is defined as the process of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service, encompassing a broad spectrum of activities, such as market research, advertising, sales, and customer service. In today's rapidly evolving digital age, AI has become an indispensable tool in enhancing these marketing functions. AI's analytical capabilities allow businesses to gain a deeper understanding of their customers, personalize their marketing efforts, and optimize their overall strategies for greater effectiveness. While the concept of AGI remains a distant goal, the practical application of AI in marketing is making significant strides through narrow AI. In the transition from discussing theoretical AI capabilities to practical applications, it is essential to explore how AI solutions are currently transforming marketing strategies and customer interactions. Therefore, this section addresses the various AI solutions available for marketing, highlighting their potential to enhance business models, sales processes, and customer service.

AI applications in marketing are distinguished from traditional modeling approaches by their capacity for "higher-order learning," a process in which AI systems autonomously generate new knowledge structures. This ability, particularly seen in advanced AI methodologies such as deep neural networks, has enabled significant advancements in predictive analytics, customer segmentation, and personalized marketing strategies. However, the implementation of AI in marketing also brings technological pitfalls, including the risks associated with biased AI, the need for explainable AI, and the challenges in transferring tacit knowledge between AI systems and marketing professionals (De Bruyn et al., 2020, p. 92).

### 3.3.4 Artificial Intelligence Solutions for Marketing

In the rapidly evolving digital age, AI has become a crucial tool for enhancing marketing activities such as research, advertising, sales, and customer service. AI's analytical capabilities enable businesses to understand their customers better, personalize their marketing efforts, and optimize their strategies.

In the AI-driven marketing landscape, core skills have evolved to encompass a deeper understanding and use of AI technologies. Marketing professionals need to better utilize ML algorithms to predict outcomes, classify data, or optimize processes. Furthermore, improving skills in programming languages is essential to effectively manage and use AI. AI enhances core skills by providing real-time feedback and identifying areas for improvement, thus enhancing language skills. It also improves measurement and evaluation skills through access to AI-provided data and supports the acquisition and refinement of digital skills through AI-provided personalized learning experiences (Morandini et al., 2023, pp. 45–46).

In the future, AI is likely to substantially change both marketing strategies and customer behaviors. According to Huang and Rust (2020), AI can be categorized into three main types based on its capabilities: mechanical AI for automating repetitive tasks, thinking AI for processing data and making decisions, and feeling AI for analyzing human emotions and interactions. These AI types can be strategically applied to different stages of marketing. For example, mechanical AI can be used for data collection, thinking AI for market analysis, and feeling AI for understanding customers at the marketing research stage. During the marketing strategy stage, mechanical AI can assist in segmentation, thinking AI can aid in targeting, and feeling AI can enhance positioning. Finally, at the marketing action stage, mechanical AI can provide standardization, thinking AI can facilitate personalization, and feeling AI can support relation- alization.

AI solutions are already making significant impacts across various industries. In the transportation sector, AI-enabled driverless cars are predicted to revolutionize business models and customer behavior. Similarly, in sales, AI agents can enhance teleconversations by providing real-time feedback based on voice analysis, thereby augmenting the capabilities of human salespeople (Huang & Rust, 2020, pp. 30–50). Moreover, AI's role in marketing extends beyond automation and optimization. As Wirth (2018) indicated, AI is transforming market research by providing powerful tools for data analysis, prediction, and planning. These AI-based solutions enable businesses to gain deeper insights into consumer behavior and preferences, making marketing strategies more effective and targeted (Wirth, 2018, pp. 435–438).

AI's impact on marketing is categorized into two primary intelligence levels: task automation and context awareness. Task automation involves AI performing well-defined, rule-based tasks with little human intervention, while context awareness involves more complex AI capabilities that require holistic thinking and adaptability. For instance, AI can automate business processes, such as data entry and customer support, thereby freeing up human employees to focus on more strategic tasks. AI is expected to significantly alter sales processes by augmenting human capabilities. AI agents can monitor tele-conversations in real-time, providing feedback to salespeople based on customer tone and inferred issues and thereby enhancing the

effectiveness of sales pitches. Firms may also use AI bots to make initial contact with sales prospects, which can be as effective as human salespeople. However, the risk of customer discomfort upon realizing they are interacting with a bot remains a challenge. AI enables online retailers to predict customer preferences with high accuracy, potentially shifting business models from shopping-then-shipping to shipping-then-shopping, meaning products are sent to customers based on predicted needs, and unwanted items can be returned. Companies such as Birchbox and Stitch Fix are already experimenting with predictive AI to tailor product offerings to individual customer preferences. AI tools can analyze vast amounts of customer data, including non-numeric data such as text, voice, and images, to provide personalized recommendations and improve customer engagement. This capability is critical for delivering tailored marketing messages and enhancing the customer experience. For example, AI-driven analytics can predict customer buying behaviors, helping marketers to optimize pricing, promotions, and product recommendations in real-time (Davenport et al., 2019, pp. 25-28).

Furthermore, AI aids in the development of physical and manual skills by automating simple tasks, allowing professionals to focus on more complex activities. It improves accuracy and precision in physical tasks through its advanced capabilities, and AI-based training programs enhance physical and manual skills in a safe and controlled environment (Morandini et al., 2023, p. 50).

### 3.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, the foundational concepts explored in this chapter underscore the critical role that AI is set to play in the future of marketing. Traditional marketing frameworks, such as the three Cs (Company, Customer, Competitor) and the four Ps (Product, Price, Promotion, Place), continue to provide valuable structure, but they must now be adapted to incorporate advancements in AI technology. AI-driven processes like machine learning, predictive analytics, and natural language processing are increasingly influencing marketing strategies, allowing for enhanced personalization and automation (Wirth, 2018, p. 436). These developments highlight the need for marketing professionals to develop a range of new skills, including technological proficiency, data analysis, and ethical decision-making, in order to remain competitive in an AI-driven landscape (Schlee & Harich, 2010, p. 50).

The relevance of these foundational topics to my master's thesis lies in their contribution to understanding how AI reshapes traditional marketing practices. AI allows for more precise targeting, increased efficiency in campaign management, and better customer insights. As outlined in various sources, AI enhances customer segmentation and personalizes marketing approaches through automated data analysis and real-time decision-making (Davenport et al., 2019, p. 95). These capabilities directly relate to the core question of how AI is transforming marketing operations and the skills required to manage these technologies.

Key findings from the literature demonstrate that AI will continue to reduce the need for manual tasks while amplifying human creativity, strategic planning, and interpersonal communication. Marketers will need to master both hard skills, such as AI tool proficiency and data interpretation, as well as soft skills like critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability (Di Gregorio et al., 2019, p. 65). This shift in skill requirements emphasizes the importance of AI models and technologies in modern marketing, not only for optimizing processes but also for driving innovation and maintaining a competitive edge.

The discussion of these foundational concepts is highly relevant to my thesis because it provides the necessary context for understanding how AI technologies are adopted in marketing practices and what competencies are critical for future marketing professionals. By examining both the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of AI, this chapter establishes a foundation for exploring how marketers can leverage AI to optimize their operations while navigating the challenges posed by technological advancements. The insights drawn from this chapter are integral to addressing the broader research questions in my master's thesis, particularly regarding the future skills landscape and the role of AI in shaping the marketing industry.

## 4 Technology Adoption and Frameworks

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in marketing has revolutionized how businesses understand and engage with their customers. AI has enabled marketers to harness vast amounts of data, automate complex processes, and deliver highly personalized experiences. However, the successful deployment of AI and other advanced technologies in marketing includes how these technologies are adopted and implemented within organizations, leading to the crucial topic of technology adoption and the frameworks that guide this process. Technology adoption is the process by which individuals and organizations accept, integrate, and utilize new technologies. In the context of marketing, adopting new technologies can significantly enhance an organization's capabilities, drive innovation, and maintain competitive advantage. However, the adoption process is often complex and influenced by various factors, including organizational readiness, perceived usefulness, ease of use, and external pressures. Understanding the frameworks that underpin technology adoption is essential for marketers and business leaders. These frameworks provide structured approaches to evaluate, implement, and manage new technologies effectively. They help in identifying potential barriers to adoption and offer strategies to overcome them, ensuring that technology investments translate into tangible business benefits. This chapter focuses on the adoption of AI and other technologies within marketing, examining the theoretical frameworks that guide this process. Understanding how new technologies are integrated into marketing practices is critical for maintaining a competitive edge in a rapidly changing landscape. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Socio-Technical System Model, the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, and the Normalization Process Theory are all explored as frameworks that provide structure for assessing the adoption of AI in marketing. Each framework addresses different factors influencing technology adoption, including user perception, organizational readiness, and societal factors. By exploring these models, this chapter highlights the complexities of implementing AI in marketing and the importance of aligning technology with user behavior and organizational culture.

### 4.1 Technology Acceptance Model

The technology acceptance model (TAM) is used to understand the factors that influence individuals' acceptance and usage of new technologies. Developed by Fred Davis originally in 1986, the TAM has become one of the most widely used models in the field of information systems and technology adoption. In the following, an in-depth look at TAM is provided, explaining its components, application, and relevance to the adoption of AI technologies in marketing (Davis et. al. 1989, pp. 983-986).

#### 4.1.1 Fundamentals of the Technology Acceptance Model

The TAM aims to explain and predict how users come to accept and use a technology. The model suggests that two primary factors or beliefs—perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU)—determine a user’s decision to adopt a technology.

**Perceived Usefulness:** This factor refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system or technology will enhance their job performance within an organizational context. In simpler terms, if the technology is perceived to be beneficial and can help users achieve their tasks more efficiently, they are more likely to adopt and use it in their work (Lee, Kozar, & Larsen, 2003, p. 755).

**Perceived Ease of Use:** The second factor refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a technology will be free of effort. If a technology is easy to understand and use, it is more likely to be accepted by users (Lee, Kozar, & Larsen, 2003, p. 756). The usability of a specific tool plays into PEOU because the more intuitively a tool can be used, the easier it is for people to navigate a new tool. PEOU has a direct effect on the intention to use a tool and the initial fear or hurdle users must overcome when using a new tool (Nistor, 2019, p. 130).

These two factors influence users’ attitudes toward using a technology, which in turn affects the behavioral intention to use it. Ultimately, this intention leads to the actual use of the technology.

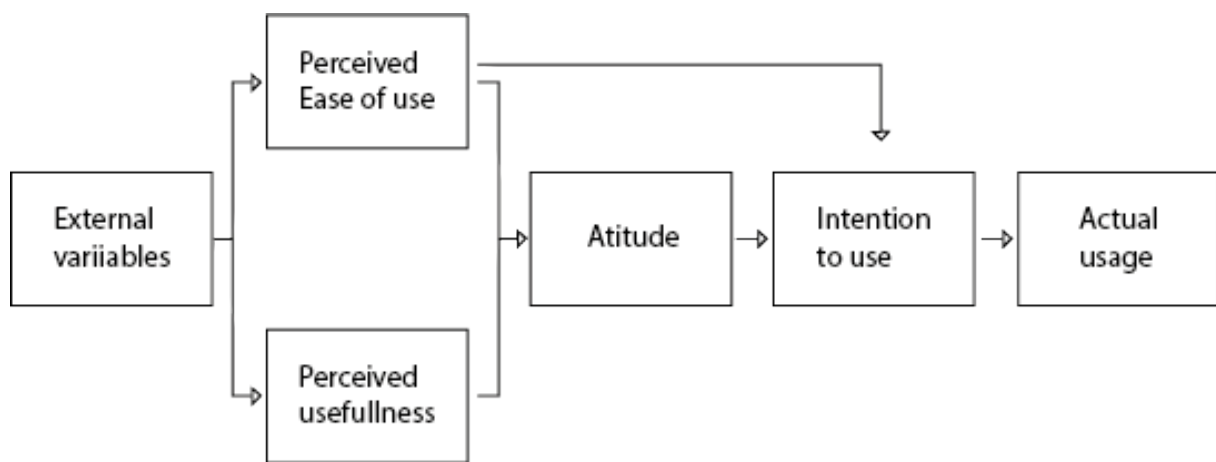


Figure 2 Technology Acceptance Model (own representation, based on Davis, 1986, p. 23)

The TAM is easily applicable to different situations. However, the simplicity of the model is both its biggest advantage and its biggest limitation. Despite the fact that the TAM is a predictive model and provides an understanding of users’ perspectives, it does not provide sufficient information to make future technologies more usable or to improve future developments. Indeed, little has been done to understand the determinants of PEOU (Nistor, 2019, p. 129).

#### 4.1.2 Application of the Technology Acceptance Model

This section explores the practical application of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) within the marketing industry, particularly in the context of AI adoption. Originally developed by Davis (1986), TAM is widely used to understand how individuals adopt and utilize new technologies. The model identifies two key factors—perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use—that significantly influence users' acceptance of technology. In marketing, TAM serves as a valuable framework for predicting how AI tools and technologies will be integrated into everyday marketing practices. By examining real-world applications of TAM, this section aims to provide insight into how marketing professionals perceive AI's value, the barriers to adoption, and the conditions necessary for successful integration of AI into marketing operations. The TAM is extensively used in various domains to predict and explain user behavior toward new technologies. It provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding the adoption process and offers valuable insights for practitioners aiming to increase user acceptance of new systems. In marketing, the TAM can be used to evaluate the adoption of new marketing technologies, such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems, to better understand user data, for example, how users behave on different platforms and what their interests are. By assessing the PU and PEOU of these technologies, organizations can identify potential barriers to technology adoption and develop strategies to address them (Nistor, 2019, pp. 128-133).

#### 4.1.3 The Technology Acceptance Model and Artificial Intelligence Adoption in Marketing

The adoption of AI technologies in marketing can be effectively analyzed using the TAM. AI technologies, such as predictive analytics, chatbots, and personalized marketing tools, can significantly enhance marketing performance by providing deeper insights, automating repetitive tasks, and delivering personalized experiences. However, their adoption depends on how users perceive their usefulness and ease of use.

**Perceived Usefulness of AI:** For AI tools to be adopted, marketers must believe that these tools will enhance their job performance. For instance, predictive analytics can help marketers better understand customers' behaviors and preferences, leading to more effective marketing strategies (Lee, Kozar, & Larsen, 2003, p. 759). In addition, the integration of AI into social media strategies has shown that PU significantly impacts the intention to use AI-based tools. However, employees must show an intrinsic motivation to make their work more efficient, be willing to use tools that are new, and possibly learn to use these independently to improve their work performance in order for PU to play a role in the process (Nistor, 2019, pp. 130–133).

**Perceived Ease of Use of AI:** AI technologies must be user-friendly and not require extensive effort to learn and operate. If marketers find AI tools complex and difficult to use, their adoption

will be hindered. It is therefore essential that the tools introduced are self-explanatory or intuitive to use. Otherwise, users can experience high levels of frustration and refuse to use the tools. Simplifying the user interface and providing adequate training can enhance the PEOU (Lee, Kozar, & Larsen, 2003, p. 760). Indeed, PEOU has been found to directly affect the attitude toward using AI technologies in marketing (Nistor, 2019, p. 129).

The TAM by Davis (1986) should be combined or extended with other models to enhance its explanatory power regarding the acceptance of new technologies (Yu/Toa, 2009, p. 92). While the model makes a substantial contribution to explaining behavioral intentions and actual behavior, attitude and perceived usefulness are significantly influenced by perceived ease of use. The ease of use has a strong effect on behavioral intention. Therefore, in the interpretation of the author of this study, the user interface of AI likely plays a crucial role in the acceptance of AI technologies in marketing. By applying the TAM to AI adoption in marketing, organizations can develop targeted interventions to improve the acceptance and utilization of AI technologies. Understanding the factors that influence AI adoption can help in designing better tools and providing necessary support to users, ultimately leading to more effective and efficient marketing practices.

#### 4.1.4 Extended TAM for Social Media Marketing

Integrating new tools, especially AI tools, into everyday marketing would help to make marketers' work more efficient, for example, by processing data more quickly, and help companies, as employees would be able to achieve better measures.

An extended version of the TAM incorporates additional variables to better understand technology adoption in specific contexts, such as social media marketing. This extended model includes factors such as social influence, which refers to the degree to which individuals perceive that important others believe they should use the new technology. Social influence has been found to significantly impact both PU and PEOU, thereby influencing the overall adoption process. The extended TAM also considers the role of social networks and how they affect individual acceptance of technology. Social networks can provide support and exert pressure, facilitating or hindering the adoption of new technologies (Nistor, 2019, p. 131). This understanding is crucial for marketers looking to leverage AI in social media strategies, as it underscores the importance of peer and social influences in technology adoption.

## 4.2 Socio-Technical System Model

The TAM provides a robust framework to understand how PU and PEOU influence the acceptance and utilization of new technologies. Delving deeper into the implementation of technology in organizations, it becomes crucial to consider the broader organizational context. The socio-technical system (STS) model emphasizes the joint optimization of social and technical

systems within an organization to achieve optimal performance and well-being. The model was developed by researchers at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in the mid-20th century, notably by Eric Trist and colleagues. This model emerged from studies on the interaction between social and technical elements in work environments, particularly in the coal mining industry. The STS model underscores the importance of considering both human and technical factors in organizational design to enhance productivity and employee satisfaction (Sony & Naik, 2020, pp. 4–5).

#### 4.2.1 Fundamentals of the Socio-Technical System Model

The Socio-Technical System (STS) Model posits that any organizational system comprises two interrelated subsystems: the social subsystem and the technical subsystem. The social subsystem includes the people, their relationships, and the organizational culture, while the technical subsystem encompasses the tools, technologies, and processes used to perform tasks. The core principle of STS is that for an organization to function optimally, both subsystems must be designed and managed in harmony (Trist, 1981, pp. 50–58). In the following paragraphs the fundamentals of the STS will be explained to get a better understanding of how this model can be applied in the marketing context.

**Joint Optimization:** This principle states that the social and technical subsystems should be jointly optimized to achieve high performance and quality of working life. Changes in technology should be accompanied by corresponding changes in work processes and social structures (Trist, 1981, pp. 50–58).

**Autonomous Work Groups:** STS promotes the creation of autonomous work groups that have control over their tasks and decision-making processes. This autonomy leads to higher job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity (Trist, 1981, p. 55).

**Environmental Interaction:** The STS model highlights the importance of an organization's interaction with its external environment. Successful organizations are those that can adapt to changes and integrate external factors into their socio-technical systems (Trist, 1981, p. 57).

#### 4.2.2 Application of the Socio-Technical System Model

The STS model has been applied across various industries and organizational contexts, demonstrating its versatility and effectiveness in addressing complex organizational challenges. In healthcare, the STS model has been used to design work systems that improve both patient care and employee satisfaction. For example, the implementation of electronic health records (EHRs) involves considering both the technological aspects of the EHR system and the social dynamics of the healthcare team (Trist, 1981, p. 60). In manufacturing, autonomous work groups have been formed to manage production processes, leading to improvements in

efficiency and worker morale. The introduction of new machinery or automation tools is carefully integrated with changes in job roles and team structures (Trist, 1981, p. 62).

The design and implementation of information systems, such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems, benefit from the STS approach by ensuring that the technology is user-friendly and supports the workflows and interactions of the people using it (Nistor, 2019, p. 128). This is relevant to this thesis because integrating new AI tools within an organization requires the simultaneous adaptation of the STS to ensure optimal workflow efficiency. Merely introducing a new tool into an established workstream can disrupt existing processes and potentially diminish team productivity. For successful implementation and maximum utilization of AI tools across various departments, it is crucial for leadership to reassess and redefine operational methodologies. This involves reconfiguring how employees collaborate and clarifying task responsibilities within the updated workstream. By strategically aligning the STSs with the new AI capabilities, organizations can boost productivity and achieve more effective results.

Sony and Naik (2020) emphasized that integrating STS theory with Industry 4.0 technologies, such as robotics, the Internet of Things, AI, and machine learning, is essential for achieving sustainable and successful implementations. They proposed a framework for incorporating STS into Industry 4.0 integration mechanisms, highlighting the need to align social and technical elements in vertical, horizontal, and end-to-end integrations (Sony & Naik, 2020, p. 5).

#### 4.2.3 The Socio-Technical System Model and Artificial Intelligence Adoption in Marketing

The principles of the STS model are highly relevant to the adoption of AI technologies in marketing. AI tools, such as predictive analytics, chatbots, and personalized marketing platforms, can significantly enhance marketing performance. However, their successful implementation requires considering both technical and social factors.

**Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use:** As highlighted by the TAM, AI tools must be perceived as useful and easy to use. The STS model adds that these perceptions are influenced by the broader social and organizational context in which the technology is being implemented (Nistor, 2019, p. 130).

**Organizational Culture and Structure:** The integration of AI into marketing processes should align with the organizational culture and structure. For instance, the deployment of AI-driven customer segmentation tools should consider the marketing team's readiness and ability to adapt to new data-driven approaches (Nistor, 2019, p. 131).

**Continuous Learning and Adaptation:** The dynamic nature of AI technologies requires continuous learning and adaptation. Organizations should foster a culture of innovation and provide ongoing training to help employees effectively use AI tools (Trist, 1981, p. 65).

### 4.3 Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The diffusion of innovations theory, proposed by Everett Rogers (1962), is a framework that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technologies spread through cultures. This theory has been widely applied in various fields, including telecommunications, healthcare, and marketing, to understand the adoption and diffusion of innovations. The Innovation Diffusion Theory is frequently discussed in the literature and is often used as an approach to explain the acceptance of new products or innovations. This theory focuses on the process of how an innovation spreads from its initial market entry to widespread adoption (Rogers, 2003, p. 219). The following chapters provide an overview of the theory, including its key components and application.

#### 4.3.1 Fundamentals of the Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The diffusion of innovations theory elucidates the mechanism through which innovations are disseminated via specific channels over time within a social system. This theoretical framework delineates several critical elements that affect the diffusion process. In this context, an *innovation* is an idea, practice, or object perceived as novel by an individual or another entity adopting it. *Communication channels* are the pathways through which information regarding the innovation is transmitted to the members of a social system. The element of *time* encompasses the period required for the members of the social system to adopt the innovation. Finally, the *social system* consists of a collection of interrelated units that engage in joint problem-solving activities to achieve a shared objective. Innovativeness reflects the degree to which an individual or an organization adopts an innovation relatively early compared to other members of a social system. According to the diffusion of innovations theory, categories are formed to classify different members of the social system based on their innovativeness. These categories help in understanding the adoption behavior of different groups within a system. For example, the “Late Majority” comprises individuals who adopt an innovation mainly due to economic necessity or social pressure. This group includes those who adopt after the innovation has been widely accepted and is typically characterized by caution and traditionalism. These individuals adopt innovations about two standard deviations after the mean adoption time and are referred to as “laggards.” Laggards are predominantly traditional, cautious, and generally oriented towards the past (Stoetzer & Mahler, 1995, pp. 13–16).

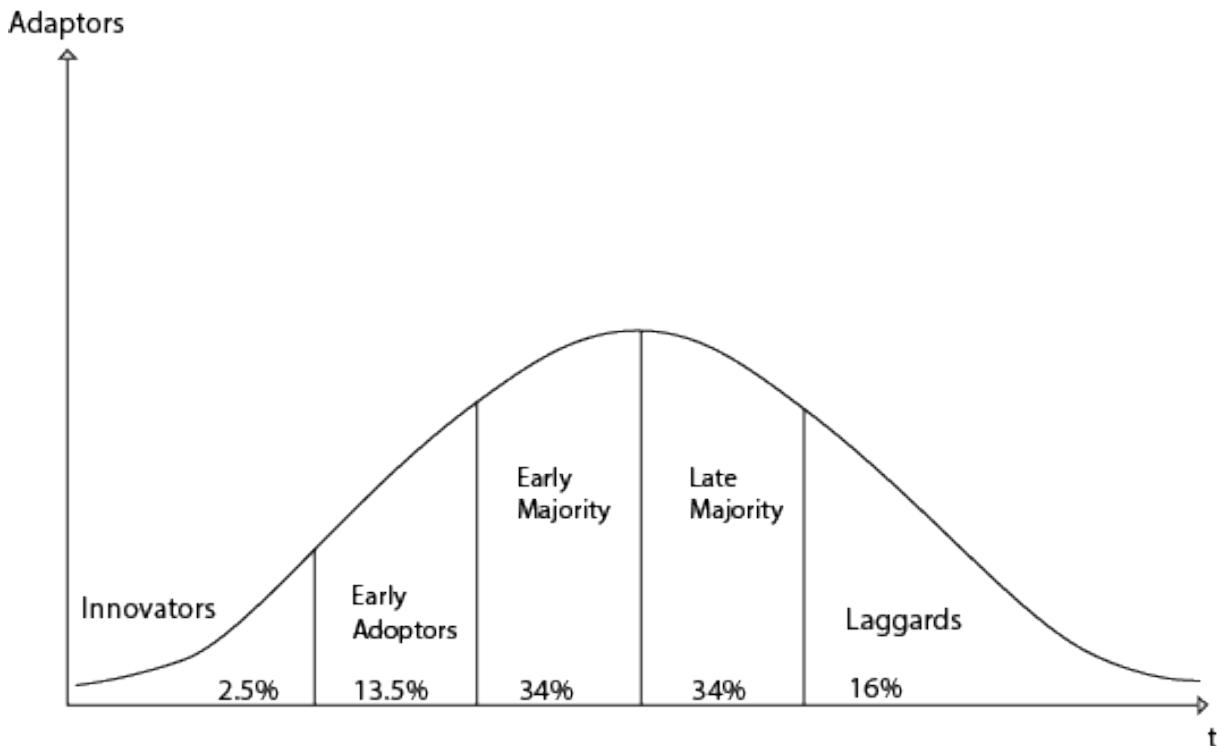


Figure 3 Diffusions of Innovations (own representation, based on Stoetzer & Mahler, 1995, p. 14)

#### 4.3.2 Key Components of Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Rogers (1962) identified five attributes of innovations that influence their adoption rate: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. *Relative advantage* refers to the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the existing solution. *Compatibility* is the extent to which an innovation is consistent with the values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters. *Complexity* indicates how difficult an innovation is perceived to understand and use. *Trialability* is the extent to which an innovation can be experimented with on a limited basis before full-scale adoption, and *observability* pertains to the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others (Stoetzer & Mahler, 1995, pp. 13–16).

Rogers (1962) also categorized adopters into five groups based on their readiness to adopt an innovation. *Innovators* are venturesome individuals who are the first to adopt an innovation. *Early adopters* are respectable opinion leaders who adopt early but carefully. The *early majority* consists of deliberate individuals who adopt an innovation just before the average member of a social system. The *late majority* includes skeptical individuals who adopt an innovation just after the average member of a social system. Finally, *laggards* are traditionalists who are the last to adopt an innovation. The innovation–decision process describes the steps individuals go through from first knowledge of an innovation to its adoption or rejection. The process begins with knowledge: individuals become aware of the innovation and gain some understanding of how it functions. The next step is persuasion, where individuals form a favorable or

unfavorable attitude toward the innovation. The decision stage involves engaging in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation. Implementation is the stage during which the innovation is put into use. Finally, confirmation involves seeking reinforcement for the decision made, although individuals may reverse the decision if exposed to conflicting messages.

#### 4.4 Normalization Process Theory

In this section, the relevance of healthcare sector studies to the marketing field will be explained, particularly in the context of understanding cognitive participation. While this may seem like a departure from the primary focus on marketing, healthcare research offers valuable insights into the implementation of new technologies and practices, which are increasingly relevant in the marketing sector due to the rise of AI. The healthcare field has long studied the dynamics of adopting innovations, such as new medical procedures or technologies, which often face similar challenges and can be therefore compared to those encountered in marketing when integrating AI-driven tools. Concepts like cognitive participation—defined as the degree of engagement and commitment required for successful adoption—are crucial to understanding how new technologies are normalized and integrated into existing processes. By examining the parallels between healthcare and marketing, proven strategies from healthcare studies can be applied to improve the implementation of AI in marketing. Just as high levels of cognitive participation have been shown to enhance the adoption of new practices in healthcare, they can similarly support the successful integration of AI in marketing, facilitating better outcomes and smoother transitions. Therefore, this detour into healthcare is essential for understanding the broader dynamics of technology adoption in the marketing industry. Implementing complex interventions in healthcare poses a significant challenge, as translating research findings into practice is often fraught with difficulties. A well-founded theory for examining these implementation processes is the normalization process theory (NPT). NPT offers a structured approach to understanding how new practices are integrated and normalized in everyday work.

##### 4.4.1 Coherence as a Construct

Coherence is a fundamental construct in the field of psychology and health promotion that was originally conceptualized by Kelner and Antonovsky (1988). Coherence refers to the extent to which a person perceives their life experiences as understandable, manageable, and meaningful. This concept is central to NPT theory, which focuses on factors that promote human health and well-being rather than factors that cause illness (Kelner & Antonovsky, 1988, pp. 77-79).

Having introduced coherence as a crucial construct in NPT, it is important to explore its specific dimensions in greater detail. Understanding these dimensions will provide deeper insights into how AI technologies can be effectively integrated and normalized within marketing practices.

In the following, the four main constructs of coherence and their implications for embedding AI-driven innovations into routine marketing activities are outlined.

**Comprehensibility:** This dimension refers to the degree to which individuals perceive internal and external stimuli as making cognitive sense and being structured, ordered, and consistent. Comprehensibility involves the belief that things happen in an orderly and predictable manner and that one can understand events in one's life and reasonably predict what will happen in the future (Eriksson & Lindstrom, 2008, pp. 191–193).

**Manageability:** Manageability is the extent to which individuals feel they have the resources to meet the demands posed by these stimuli. This includes personal resources, such as skills and strengths, as well as external resources, such as social support and financial means. The feeling of having adequate resources to cope with life's challenges contributes significantly to a sense of manageability (Hakanen, Feldt, & Leskinen, 2007, pp. 603–608).

**Meaningfulness:** The motivational component of coherence, meaningfulness refers to the extent to which individuals feel that life makes sense emotionally and that challenges are worthy of investment and engagement. This dimension is crucial because it provides the motivation to cope with stressors and challenges, enhancing resilience and persistence (Hakanen, Feldt, & Leskinen, 2007, pp. 603–608).

With a thorough understanding of the dimensions of coherence and their importance in integrating AI technologies into marketing practices, the next step is to consider how coherence can be effectively measured. Evaluating coherence is vital to determining how well new practices are comprehended and adopted within an organization. In the following section, various methods and tools for measuring coherence are explored, and a framework to assess the integration of AI-driven innovations in marketing is presented. The three dimensions of coherence are assessed through a series of questions designed to gauge comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. Higher scores indicate a stronger sense of coherence which is associated with better health outcomes and greater resilience to stress (Kelner & Antonovsky, 1988, pp. 77-79).

#### 4.4.2 Cognitive Participation as a Construct

Cognitive participation refers to the relational and social processes that individuals engage in to initiate and sustain a new practice within their work settings. It is a crucial construct within NPT, emphasizing the importance of engagement and commitment from key individuals who drive and support the implementation of new practices (May et al., 2021, p. 26). The specific dimensions of cognitive participation provide insight into how individuals and groups engage with new practices and are outlined in the following.

1. **Initiation:** This dimension evaluates the efforts made by key individuals to engage others in the new practice. It involves the identification and mobilization of champions who advocate for the implementation and work to get others involved. Successful initiation relies on the ability to communicate the value and necessity of the new practice to potential adopters (May & Finch, 2009, pp. 445–449).
2. **Legitimation:** Legitimation concerns the extent to which individuals believe that their involvement in the new practice is appropriate and necessary. This involves assessing whether the new practice aligns with their professional roles and responsibilities. When individuals perceive their participation as legitimate, they are more likely to invest time and resources into the implementation process (May & Finch, 2009, pp. 443–445).
3. **Enrollment:** Enrollment focuses on the organizational processes that facilitate individuals' engagement with the new practice. It examines the mechanisms by which people are brought into the practice, including training, support, and resource allocation. Effective enrollment ensures that individuals are adequately prepared and equipped to carry out the new practice (Rogers, 2003).
4. **Activation:** Activation refers to the ongoing support and reinforcement required to sustain individuals' involvement in the new practice. It involves the continual mobilization of resources and the maintenance of networks that encourage continued engagement. Activation is critical for ensuring that the practice becomes embedded in routine work (Damschroder et al., 2009, pp. 9–13).

To ensure an understanding of the construct, it is important to make it measurable. Cognitive participation is measured using instruments that assess the four dimensions outlined above. The NoMAD instrument, for example, includes items that evaluate initiation, legitimation, enrollment, and activation. These items are designed to capture the extent to which individuals are engaged in the relational work necessary to implement and sustain new practices (Rapley et al., 2018, pp. 8–10).

Understanding cognitive participation, a concept often studied in healthcare, has significant relevance beyond medical settings, particularly in fields like marketing. Cognitive participation refers to the active engagement and commitment of individuals in adopting and integrating new practices. In healthcare, high levels of cognitive participation have been linked to successful implementation of new interventions, leading to improved outcomes (Grol & Wensing, 2004). Similarly, in marketing, the adoption of new technologies, strategies, or processes, such as artificial intelligence or data-driven approaches, requires marketers to fully engage with and commit to these innovations. When cognitive participation is high, marketers are more likely to embrace new practices, leading to greater success and competitive advantage. Conversely, low levels of engagement can result in resistance, poor adoption, and the failure of marketing

initiatives. Therefore, lessons from healthcare studies on cognitive participation can be directly applied to marketing to ensure effective implementation and integration of new practices, ultimately driving better performance outcomes.

Cognitive participation has practical applications in the design and execution of implementation strategies. By identifying and supporting key individuals who can champion new practices, organizations can enhance the likelihood of successful implementation. Training programs, resource allocation, and continuous support mechanisms are all critical components that contribute to strong cognitive participation (May et al., 2021, p. 21).

#### 4.4.3 Reflexive Monitoring as a Construct

Reflexive monitoring in action (RMA) is a specialized monitoring approach aimed at supporting complex system innovations by gathering collective learning and reflection. RMA integrates learning and reflection directly into project activities, thereby promoting the adaptability and further development of the project and its participants. RMA consists of four main activities carried out in a continuous cycle. It begins with observation, which captures what happens within the project and its environment. This is done through participatory observation and in-depth interviews to gain a deep understanding of the dynamics. The next step is analysis, where the collected data are analyzed to identify key themes and problems. This can be performed either by the monitor alone or jointly with the project team to incorporate various perspectives and deepen the understanding of system dynamics. The last step is reflection on the thought processes about the norm and the actions of a project. This can happen through conversations or formal meetings. Reflection supports a team's ambition and helps identify key requirements for the project. Based on these reflections, project activities can be adjusted to better respond to identified challenges and achieve project goals more effectively. This step ensures that the project remains on course and can adapt to changing conditions (Van Mierlo et al., 2010, pp. 15–22).

RMA differs from traditional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches, which are often outcome-oriented or constructivist. While traditional M&E approaches typically only assess results, RMA focuses on the learning process and the participants' abilities to contribute to system innovation. RMA challenges existing values and institutional frameworks and can thus potentially lead to profound changes (Van Mierlo et al., 2010, pp. 36–38).

The implementation of RMA involves various methods that enable the collection and analysis of dynamic interactions within the project and its context. Participatory observation allows observers to actively participate in project activities to gain a deep understanding of processes and interactions. In-depth interviews capture the assumptions, values, and experiences of the project participants while also fostering reflection. Reflexive process descriptions provide a chronological account of the project's progress, including any achievements and challenges.

Collaboration between the project manager and the monitor is crucial for the success of RMA. The monitor supports the project team in achieving project goals while providing a basis for accountability. The distribution of tasks between the project team and the monitor can vary, ranging from independent observations by the monitor to joint analysis and reflection (Van Mierlo et al., 2010, pp. 19–27).

#### 4.4.4 Normalization Process Theory in the Marketing Context

The integration of AI tools in marketing requires organizations to adopt structured approaches similar to those used in healthcare interventions, such as NPT. This theory provides a framework for embedding complex technologies such as AI into daily marketing operations. The rapid adoption of AI forces marketing teams to make sense of these tools (coherence) and to see them as beneficial for efficiency, creativity, and customer engagement (Bode et al., 2022, p. 7). Successful implementation also demands active participation from marketing professionals (cognitive participation), ensuring they are trained and motivated to integrate AI into their tasks (Finch et al., 2024, pp. 3-7). Moreover, collective action is required, involving the restructuring of workflows and task responsibilities to incorporate AI effectively. Finally, reflexive monitoring ensures that marketing teams continually assess the impact of AI on their strategies, making necessary adjustments to optimize results (Bode et al., 2022, p. 9). Just as NPT helps with the implementation of complex healthcare interventions, it can also be applied to the marketing field, especially with the integration of AI tools. The rapid adoption of AI in marketing is forcing organizations to develop new processes and ways of working. Applying NPT in this context can provide a structured approach to integrating these technologies.

**Coherence (sense-making work):** In marketing, coherence involves understanding how AI tools can benefit marketing strategies and operations. It requires marketing teams to perceive AI as a valuable addition that can enhance efficiency, creativity, and customer engagement (Bode et al., 2022, pp. 3–4).

**Cognitive Participation (engagement work):** Successful implementation of AI tools requires the commitment of marketing professionals. This involves training, continuous learning, and engagement with the new technology to ensure its effective use. Teams must be motivated and see the long-term benefits of integrating AI into their daily tasks (Bode et al., 2022, p. 5).

**Collective Action (enacting work):** This step involves the practical integration of AI tools into marketing workflows. It requires restructuring tasks, reallocating resources, and ensuring that all team members know how to use the AI tools effectively. This includes setting up systems for data analysis, customer interaction, and personalized marketing strategies (Bode et al., 2022, pp. 4–6).

**Reflexive Monitoring (appraisal work):** Continuous assessment of the AI tools' effectiveness is crucial. Marketing teams must regularly evaluate the impact of AI on their campaigns and strategies. Feedback loops should be established to refine the use of AI, ensuring it meets the desired objectives and contributes to improved marketing outcomes (Bode et al., 2022, p. 7).

By applying NPT to the integration of AI tools in marketing, organizations can better manage the transition, ensuring that new technologies are effectively embedded into their operations. The structured approach of NPT helps to address the challenges of adoption by providing a framework for understanding how AI can be integrated into everyday workflows and ensuring that teams are actively engaged in the process. This, in turn, maximizes the potential benefits of AI, enhancing marketing practices by improving efficiency, creativity, and customer engagement (Bode et al., 2022, p. 7; Finch et al., 2024, pp. 4-8).

#### 4.1 Conclusion

In summary, Chapter 4 explored the various theoretical models and frameworks that help explain how AI technologies are adopted within marketing practices. The chapter delved into prominent frameworks such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the Socio-Technical Systems Theory, the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, and the Normalization Process Theory (Davis, 1986; Rogers, 2003; May, 2009). Each model offers a unique perspective on technology adoption, focusing on factors such as perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, organizational readiness, and social factors that influence the integration of new technologies into marketing operations.

These models are critical for understanding how AI technologies are implemented within organizations, which is directly relevant to my master's thesis. By examining these frameworks, this chapter provided insight into the complex factors that drive AI adoption in marketing, including how marketers perceive AI's usefulness and how organizations can align their strategies with technological advancements. For instance, the Technology Acceptance Model highlights that marketers are more likely to adopt AI when they perceive it as useful and easy to use, a factor that becomes increasingly relevant as AI tools evolve to become more user-friendly and integral to marketing processes (Davis, 1986, p. 983).

The key findings indicate that these models will play a critical role in the future of AI adoption in marketing. As AI becomes more sophisticated, models such as TAM and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory will help explain how marketers are expected to integrate these technologies into their daily operations, particularly for tasks such as customer segmentation, predictive analytics, and personalized marketing. The relevance of these models to my thesis lies in their ability to provide a structured approach to understanding the barriers and drivers of AI adoption. For example, the Socio-Technical Systems Theory emphasizes the importance of aligning

technology with organizational culture and social practices, which is crucial for ensuring AI's successful implementation (May, 2009, p. 535).

AI's role in marketing is expected to grow, with technologies enabling greater efficiency, personalization, and data-driven decision-making. However, the adoption of AI technologies in marketing hinges on marketers' acceptance of these tools and their ability to integrate them into existing frameworks. The theoretical models discussed in this chapter help explain how this acceptance occurs and the challenges that marketers may face in the process. Acceptance models are crucial because they provide a way to measure and predict how new AI tools will be adopted, and they offer insights into the necessary conditions for successful integration within marketing teams.

The relevance of these models for my thesis is paramount. Understanding the frameworks that drive AI adoption provides valuable insights into how marketing professionals can leverage these technologies to optimize their operations. Moreover, by applying these models, I can better evaluate the factors that will influence the success or failure of AI technologies in the marketing industry. This knowledge is essential for predicting future trends and identifying the skills and strategies needed to navigate the ever-evolving AI landscape. These theoretical foundations not only enhance the academic rigor of my thesis but also offer practical insights into the real-world application of AI in marketing.

## 5 Methodology and Research Design

For the purpose of this thesis, expert interviews were employed as the primary data collection method. These were evaluated through qualitative content analysis to extract relevant insights and information. In the rapidly evolving landscape of marketing, the introduction of new tools and technologies, particularly those driven by artificial intelligence (AI), is fundamentally altering the way marketing professionals perform their jobs. To understand these changes comprehensively, it is essential to gain insights directly from those at the forefront of this transformation. Based on the data from the expert interviews, this chapter explores how marketing jobs are changing, how organizations are handling the integration of new tools, and what new skills are required for effective utilization of these technologies.

### 5.1 Research Question

The rapid evolution of AI is transforming the marketing landscape, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of how these technologies are integrated and utilized within organizations. This transformation is being guided by several foundational models, including the technology acceptance model (TAM), diffusion of innovations theory, and socio-technical systems (STS) theory. These models collectively provide a robust framework for examining the integration of AI tools in marketing and the resulting changes in skill requirements and job roles.

Marketing is changing significantly due to the introduction of AI tools, which are enhancing data analysis, customer engagement, and personalized marketing strategies. These changes necessitate new skills and adaptations from marketing professionals. To address these transformations, the following research questions were formulated:

#### **1. How do companies leverage AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations?**

The goal of this question was to explore the practical aspects of AI integration in marketing, focusing on how organizations implement these technologies and train their employees. By understanding these processes, the research aimed to identify best practices and common challenges in leveraging AI for operational optimization.

#### **2. What skills will be expected from marketing employees in an AI-driven landscape?**

This question addressed the evolving skill requirements for marketing professionals in the context of increasing AI adoption. It sought to identify the skills that will be critical in an AI-driven marketing environment and understand which traditional marketing tasks will persist. Moreover, it aimed to explore the challenges employees may encounter as they adapt to new technological demands.

By grounding this research in TAM, diffusion of innovations theory, and STS theory, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how AI tools are transforming marketing operations and the implications for marketing professionals. The insights gained from this research will offer valuable guidance for organizations and individuals navigating the integration of AI in marketing, ensuring they are well-equipped to meet future challenges and opportunities.

## 5.2 Research Design and Sample

In the following paragraphs, the criteria used to qualify individuals as experts for the interviews is discussed. Choosing to interview marketing experts made sense for several reasons. First, these professionals possessed extensive experience and knowledge in the field, providing a depth of understanding that is invaluable when examining the impacts of new technologies. They had firsthand experience with the traditional methods of marketing and navigating the transition to AI-enhanced tools, offering a unique perspective on both the continuity and change within the industry. Furthermore, the marketing experts were well-positioned to provide detailed accounts of how their organizations managed the introduction and integration of new tools. They were able to offer insights into the strategies employed, the challenges faced, and the solutions developed to ensure a smooth transition. This information was crucial for identifying best practices and common pitfalls in the adoption of AI and other advanced technologies in marketing. In addition, understanding the skills required to effectively use new marketing tools was a critical component of this research. The marketing experts shed light on the specific competencies that are becoming increasingly important, such as data analysis, AI literacy, and adaptive learning. Their insights helped identify the training and development needs that organizations must address to prepare their workforce for the future of marketing.

By interviewing marketing experts, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how marketing jobs are evolving in response to technological advancements. These interviews captured the experiences, challenges, and strategies of professionals who were adapting to new tools and ways of working, offering valuable lessons for both practitioners and researchers in the field of marketing. This approach ensured that the findings were grounded in real-world experiences, making them highly relevant and applicable to current industry practices.

In an academic context, expert interviews represent a qualitative research methodology designed to gather in-depth insights and expert opinions on a specific subject. Expert interviews are conducted to obtain experts' perspectives, experiences, and insights related to a particular research topic. It is important to determine the scope and boundaries of the research question to ensure that the interviews focus on relevant and meaningful aspects of the subject. In general, qualitative interviewing emphasizes the importance of investigating interviewees'

experiences and perspectives for developing a better understanding of social reality. A limitation of such work lies in its reliance on the insights and perspectives of the selected experts. Consequently, the results and recommendations of this study may have been influenced by the limited number of interviewed experts and may not comprehensively cover all facets of AI in the advertising industry, including legal and ethical considerations. In addition, the research may have been constrained by temporal or regional limitations due to the rapid changes in the field of AI and legislative regulations. It is essential to note that the results were based on information available at the time of the interviews, which may evolve (Döringer, 2020, pp. 267–273).

The research design provides the framework within which the study is conducted. It outlines the methods and techniques of research while also explaining how the data will be processed and analyzed. The aim of the research design is to develop a clear plan to effectively map out the study and answer the research question (Mayring, 2020, p. 5).

Qualitative interviews are a critical research method that allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and meanings. This method is particularly valuable when the research objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena that cannot be easily quantified. The choice of qualitative interviews as a research method is often driven by the need to understand the "how" and "why" behind certain behaviors, attitudes, and processes, which is essential for generating rich, detailed data that quantitative methods might overlook (Kepper, 1994, p. 32).

According to Mayring, there is a general research design that can be applied to both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Figure 4 illustrates the research design of this thesis, modeled after Mayring's framework but adapted for this study. As shown in the figure, every research project begins with a research question and the identification of a research gap, which was discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis. In the second phase of the research process, theoretical chapters are constructed to establish a comprehensive foundation and contextual framework for the study. In this thesis, Chapters 3 and 4 fulfill this role by examining the essential competencies currently required in the marketing profession, alongside the technical underpinnings of artificial intelligence. These chapters further explore the processes of technological adaptation within organizations, highlighting both the integration of AI systems and the mechanisms by which individuals and institutions adjust to novel processes and emerging technologies. The third phase delineates the methodological framework, providing a detailed account of the selected method, including its inherent advantages, limitations, and associated techniques. Subsequently, in the fourth phase, the empirical investigation is undertaken, which encompasses the conduct of expert interviews, the development of a coding manual, and the application of inductive category formation, as elaborated in Chapter 6. Within this phase, the

outcomes of the inductive category formation are also presented, serving as the basis for the formulation of hypotheses. These processes are similarly addressed in Chapter 6. Finally, the research question is systematically addressed through the analysis of the results, particularly via the formulated hypotheses, with conclusions synthesized in Chapter 7 (Mayring, 2020, pp. 8-11).

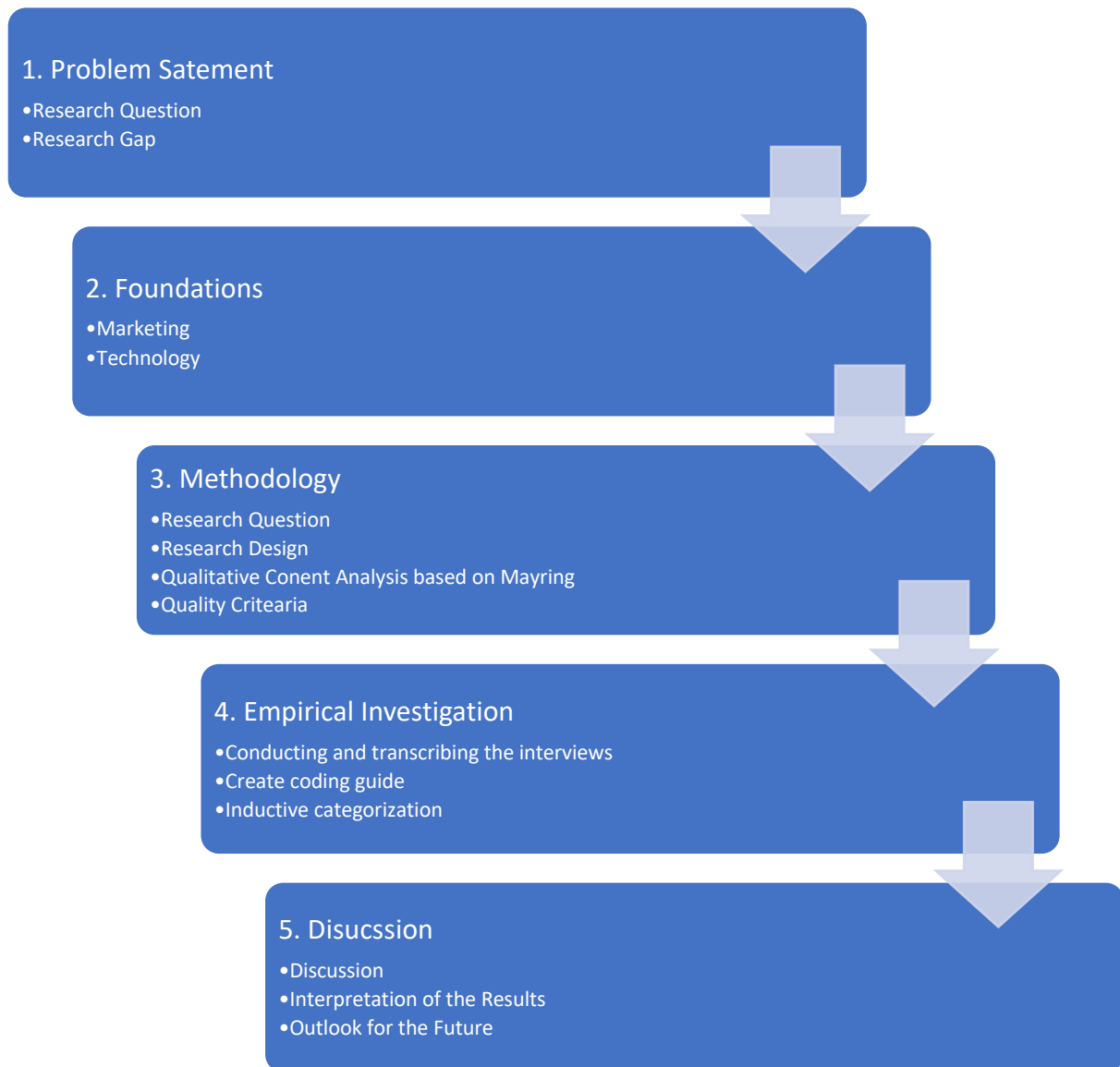


Figure 4 Research Design (own representation, based on Mayring 2020, p.8)

A common form of qualitative interview is in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews can be either unstructured or semi-structured, providing a flexible framework that allows the interviewer to delve deeply into participants' thoughts and experiences. This flexibility enables the interviewer to probe further into topics as they arise, thereby uncovering underlying motives, feelings, and attitudes that might not surface in more structured formats (Kepper, 1994, p. 45).

Another form of qualitative interview is the exploratory interview. Exploratory interviews are typically employed to gather preliminary information that can help define the research problem

and shape the hypotheses. These interviews are less structured and are designed to open up new areas of inquiry, making them especially useful in the early stages of research, when the aim is to identify key themes and variables (Kepper, 1994, p. 39).

Finally, focused interviews are particularly suited to exploring specific topics or experiences. These interviews are usually semi-structured, and the questions are designed to elicit participants' perspectives on a particular issue. Focused interviews strike a balance between structure and flexibility: The researcher has a clear idea of the topics to be covered but can adapt questions based on participants' responses, allowing for a deeper exploration of the subject matter (Kepper, 1994, p. 50).

For this study, expert interviews were chosen as the primary qualitative research method. This decision was made based on the specific research objectives and the nature of the information required. Expert interviews are particularly effective when the research aims to gather in-depth insights from individuals with specialized knowledge or experience in a particular field. In the context of this study, where the focus was on understanding the impact of AI on marketing strategies and the required skills in the DACH Region, interviewing experts in marketing and AI provided access to nuanced perspectives that were critical for a comprehensive analysis (Kepper, 1994, p. 148).

Expert interviews provided a unique opportunity to delve deeply into the subject matter, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how AI is transforming marketing roles. By engaging with industry professionals and thought leaders who had firsthand experience with AI tools and their applications in marketing, valuable insights were captured that might not have been accessible through other research methods.

In general, qualitative interviews emphasize the importance of investigating the interviewees' experiences and perspectives to develop a better understanding of social reality.

The use of expert interviews allowed this research to explore not only the established knowledge within the field but also to uncover insights that might not be widely recognized in the existing literature. This method facilitated the collection of detailed, context-specific information that was essential for understanding the complexities of AI adoption in marketing within the DACH Region, an area characterized by its slower integration of AI technologies compared to other regions. Thus, the expert interviews contributed significantly to the study by providing both theoretical and practical insights that were crucial for addressing the research questions (Kepper, 1994, p. 36).

The experts needed to work in both the marketing and a technical field, as the focus of this study was AI usage in marketing. Individuals such as educators or those conducting research in this field were also considered, as were those working in management who had engaged with the requirements for employees in the marketing field.

	Position	Country	Years of Experience
Interview Person 1	Digital Marketing	Austria	6
Interview Person 2	Digital Marketing (leadership)	Switzerland	7
Interview Person 3	Digital Marketing (leadership)	Switzerland	10
Interview Person 4	Digital Marketing (operational)	Austria	5
Interview Person 5	Digital Marketing (operational)	Germany	5

Table 1 Interviewees

### 5.3 Method and Operationalization

A qualitative method, specifically semi-structured interviews with experts, was used to address the research questions. Experts possess unique knowledge about the social contexts in which they operate, for example, their company or organization, as well as their own work processes. Given that the research questions were central to the interviews, they significantly influenced the course of the conversation. To guide the discussion, it was crucial to develop an interview guide with pre-formulated questions and thematic keywords. The guide served as a pre-set and systematically applied framework for structuring the interview. Interview guides can be designed in various ways, but they should always include prompts and pre-formulated questions to manage interactions during interviews.

The creation of the interview guide followed the principle of being “as open as possible [and] as structured as necessary” (Baur & Blasius, 2014, p. 560). The detailed development of the interview guide is explained later on in Chapter 5.3.2.

#### 5.3.1 Selection Criteria and Identification of Experts

In the following, the choice of organizations and the criteria for choosing the experts for the interviews are outlined. In expert interviews, the interviewee should be “a source of specialized knowledge about the social facts to be researched” (Gläser & Laudel, 2009, p. 12) and should possess specialized knowledge about motivations, experiences, and contexts within a particular area (Baur & Blasius, 2014, p. 571). Based on this, the following questions were considered when selected interviewees to ensure that they had the necessary expertise and willingness to contribute valuable insights to the research (Gläser & Laudel, 2009, p. 17):

Who possesses the relevant information?

Who is most capable of providing precise information?

Who is most willing to provide information?

Who among the informants is available?

An expert, in the context of this thesis, refers to an individual who possesses a significant depth of knowledge and experience within the field of marketing, particularly with regard to the integration of AI tools and technologies into marketing processes. The experts selected for the study had a minimum of five years of professional experience, ensuring they had worked in marketing both before and during the rise of AI technologies. This allowed them to provide a nuanced understanding of the changes AI has introduced to the field.

The experts were not only practitioners with hands-on experience but also individuals in leadership or organizational roles. Their responsibilities often included overseeing the integration of AI within their teams, guiding the adaptation to new tools, and facilitating the upskilling of their employees. Their insights were invaluable, as they understood both the operational impact of AI and the broader strategic shifts within the marketing landscape.

By utilizing my professional network and personal marketing experience, I reached out to these experts and initiated interviews. The inclusion of individuals with personnel responsibilities was particularly important to capture how leaders facilitate team engagement with AI tools and help employees adapt to new workflows. The objective was to gather both technical and managerial perspectives on the evolving demands of AI-driven marketing. These experts were vital to the research, as they provided insights into how AI influences job profiles and the skills necessary for future success in marketing, bridging the gap between traditional marketing roles and the emerging AI-driven landscape.

### 5.3.2 Interview Guide

Guided interviews are defined as interviews “that are structured using a guide” (Baur & Blasius, 2014, p. 560). In this method, the guide serves as a pre-established and systematic framework for structuring and conducting the interviews. The interviewees of this study belonged to a special target group that possessed specific expert knowledge and could thus act as knowledge mediators, conveying factual and experiential knowledge (Baur & Blasius, 2014, p. 560).

The guided interview format, which expert interviews characterize as, is defined by its less structured and non-standardized approach, is particularly effective when multiple topics are being explored and specific information needs to be gathered. An interview guide is employed to keep the focus on the key questions, maintain a balance between allowing open responses and directing the dialogue, and ensure comparability across interviews (Gläser & Laudel, 2009, pp. 12–15).

In the practical implementation of the guide, the four steps of the SPSS formula (collecting questions, checking questions, sorting, and subsuming) were applied (Baur & Blasius, 2014,

p. 567). During the literature review, areas of interest were noted and formulated into essential questions. Various types of questions (e.g., icebreakers, narrative prompts) and specific formulations of the questions were developed and critically examined with regard to the research interest. The questions were then thematically grouped and arranged in an appropriate sequence.

After creating a first version, the guide was tested for practical suitability and actual interview duration. A pretest was conducted to ensure participants would be able to understand all the questions and make the process of the interview stringent. This allowed for corrections to be made regarding the comprehensibility of the questions. For the pretest, a personal connection working in marketing was used. Based on their feedback, the questions were revised and adapted. Individual questions were reformulated, and changes were made to the overall procedure. The duration of the interview was set at 30–40 minutes. The final version of the interview guide comprised six main topics divided into thematic blocks: general questions and biographical introductory questions, activities in the marketing sector related to AI in the workplace, the problems emerging from these changes and how the skills of employees are changing due to this technological disruption, how these problems are affecting employees' work, and what solutions could be adapted. The same semi-structured interview guide was used for all five interviewees. All interviewees were sent the interview questions in advance.

The interview guide was sent to participants in advance upon request. The interview process followed the following steps:

1. **Introduction:** The interviewer introduced herself and explained the purpose of the interview. It was emphasized that all responses would remain confidential, and verbal consent was obtained for recording and transcription of the interview. The interviewer ensured that the participants were comfortable with the process before proceeding.
2. **Company and Role:** Participants were asked to provide basic personal information, such as their role within the company and how long they had held this position. These questions helped set the context for understanding their experience and expertise. The interviewer asked the participants to describe their use of AI technologies within their marketing operations as well as their insights related to the skills required for marketing professionals in an AI-driven landscape.
3. **Current Situation:** The interview delved into the specific AI technologies being utilized in marketing. Participants were asked how these tools were applied to optimize operations, such as customer segmentation, personalized marketing, and predictive analytics. This section included discussions around potential problems and challenges arising from the use of AI in marketing.

4. **Problems:** Participants were asked to discuss the steps they took to implement AI technologies and the types of training or professional development offered to marketing employees to acquire AI-related skills. Some secondary questions explored specific challenges, such as integrating AI into existing workflows and the effectiveness of training programs.
5. **Impact of Problems:** Following the discussion of challenges, participants were asked to reflect on the impact these challenges had on their work or that of their colleagues. They provided examples of how these difficulties affected their marketing operations, offering real-world insights into the practical implications of AI integration.
6. **Solutions and Future Skills:** Participants were asked to consider the future of marketing in an AI-driven world and which skills they thought would become increasingly important. The interviewer prompted discussions around how the role of marketing professionals might evolve as AI technologies advance and what additional skills would be required to adapt to these changes.
7. **Conclusion:** Participants were thanked for their contributions. The interviewer asked if they had any further recommendations for companies looking to integrate AI into their marketing strategies. Participants were encouraged to share any final thoughts on the subject and were informed about the next steps in the research process, including how their input would contribute to the study.

This structured approach ensured a comprehensive exploration of the participants' experiences with AI in marketing, while allowing flexibility to delve deeper into areas of particular relevance based on the experts' input.

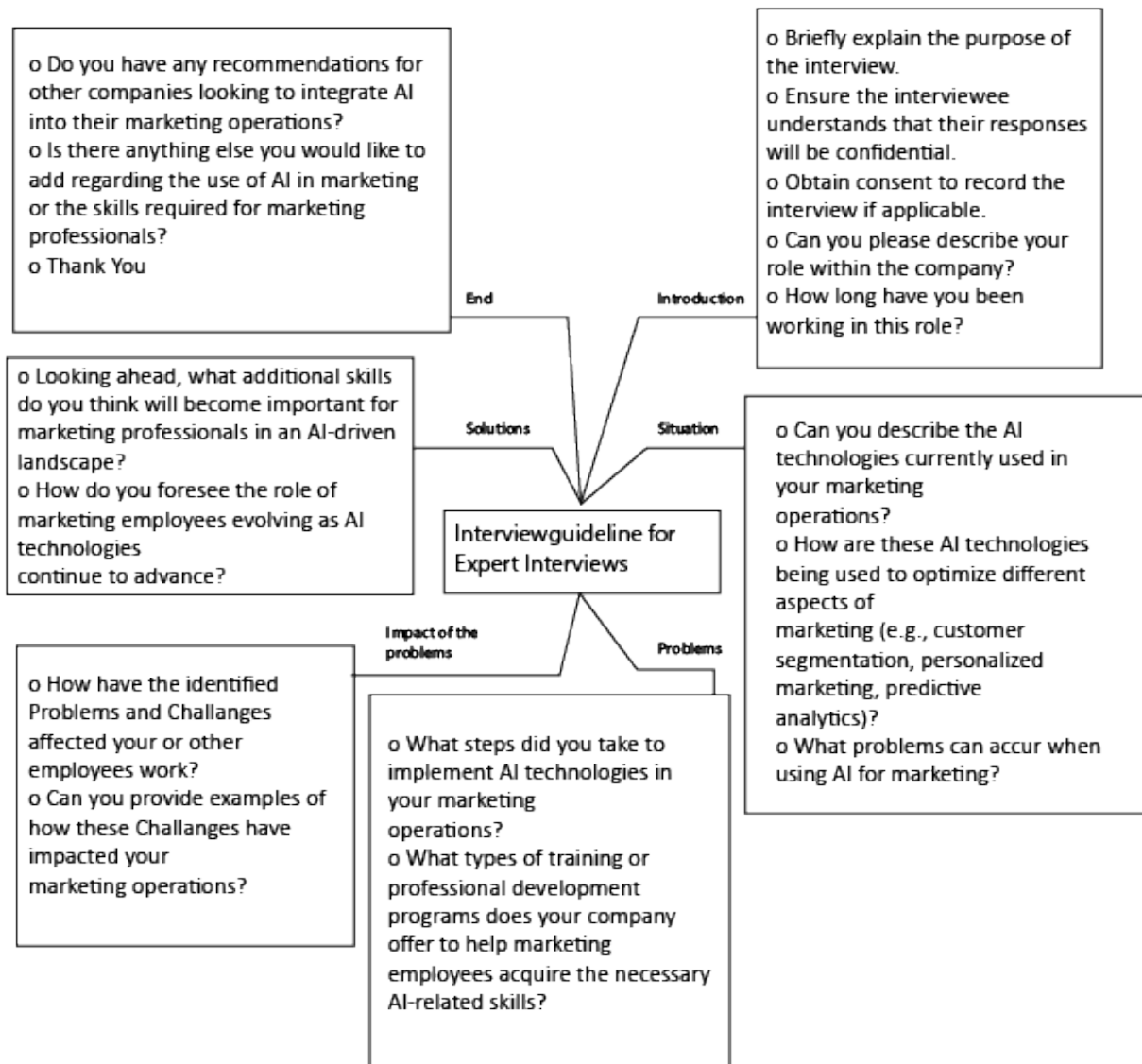


Figure 5 Presentation of Interview Guideline (own representation)

### 5.3.4 Interview Inquiry

In order to recruit the interviewees for this work, I spoke to marketing experts in my personal and professional environment. I asked them about their professional background and their current work situation, paying attention to whether they met the criteria for experts for this research. If they met the criteria, I asked them if they were available for an interview. The interview request was sent to five people by email; a thematic introduction was implied. The topic, focus, and methodology of this thesis were presented. The framework of the interviews (duration of about 30–45 minutes and a Microsoft Teams meeting link) were explained. The email was written in English for three people and in German for two people. All the experts who were contacted responded positively to the request within 24 hours, and suitable interview dates were quickly found. The interviews were conducted in calendar weeks 31 and 32.

## 5.4 Qualitative Content Analysis Based on Mayring

Qualitative methods aim to describe complex phenomena in their entirety. These methods are characterized by a focus on individual, subjective, and detailed explanations, which enables the identification and representation of more intricate relationships (Brosius & Koschel, 2003, p. 20). According to Mayring, the goal of qualitative content analysis is to process and analyze communication material. The focus is less on the material being purely text-based and more on its ability to be recorded. Based on this definition, the material can include images, sounds, or any other form of communication, as long as it can be documented (Flick, 2005, p. 468).

Qualitative content analysis is a method for evaluating texts collected during data gathering in social science research projects, such as guided interviews. The analysis primarily uses categories and coding and is thus so precise that a systematic and intersubjectively verifiable procedure becomes possible (Mey & Mruck, 2020, p. 545).

Content analysis originated in the United States during the 20th century. It gained prominence in the 1920s, when it was used to evaluate large amounts of data, particularly text, newspaper articles, and radio broadcasts. Common methods at the time included frequency analysis, valence, intensity, and contingency analysis. These techniques aimed to categorize the frequency of certain features within texts and analyze their interrelationships. Qualitative content analysis is characterized by three distinct techniques: summary content analysis, explication, and structuring content analysis (Mayring, 1991, p. 209.). Summary content analysis involves paraphrasing and inductive category formation, where the material is filtered according to specific rules. Explication focuses on examining unclear text passages to identify essential material for analysis; this is followed by condensation. Structuring content analysis—which is particularly relevant to this study—involves creating a deductive category system based on theoretical foundations. Individual text passages are categorized using a coding guide, and anchor examples are provided to illustrate typical statements for each category. This approach allows for revision of the category system as needed (Fenzl & Mayring, 2014, pp. 547–550).

Qualitative content analysis is applied by breaking down analytical units into smaller parts, which are then systematically processed. According to Mayring, a general procedural model can be applied to any content analysis. The first step is to define the material to be studied. Next, it is essential to examine the context in which the material was produced and identify its formal criteria and characteristics. After this, the direction of the analysis and its goals must be established (i.e., whether the focus is on a group of people or the creation of the text itself). At this point, a specific research question can be formulated, followed by the application of a procedural model suited to the subject. Since this model is highly dependent on the subject matter, there are guiding techniques. The first is summarizing the content analysis, which reduces the text to its essential components. This process includes methods such as omission,

generalization, construction, selection, integration, and bundling, which together form a model for summarizing content analysis. Qualitative content analysis has both strengths and limitations. According to Mayring, it not only contributes to the development of new qualitative research methods but also offers advantages, such as effective techniques for analyzing verbal research material, particularly for subjective interpretations and evaluations. The greatest strength of qualitative content analysis lies in its systematic approach; the method is rule-based, ensuring that it is not merely a subjective interpretation of a text but a categorical system is developed, allowing for the structured analysis of text fragments. This system makes the results more transparent and accurate. In addition, it enables the analysis of large datasets and allows for the integration of quantitative methods when necessary, bridging the gap between qualitative and quantitative research (Fenzl & Mayring, 2014, p. 550).

Qualitative content analysis is not always suitable. For more exploratory research questions, other methods, such as grounded theory, may be more appropriate. The key to choosing the right method is ensuring that it aligns with the research question and the material being analyzed (Mey & Mruck, 2020, pp. 123–124). In this thesis, structuring content analysis technique was applied because the guided expert interviews were based on theoretical elaborations and support and deepen them.

#### 5.4.1 Transcription

Transcription is the process of converting an audio or video-recorded interview into written form, which then serves as the basis for analysis (Flick, 1991, p. 161). In the initial phase of analyzing the expert interviews, it was necessary to transcribe the recorded audio and video files into written form. This was essential because the focus of the research was not on the experts as individuals but on the knowledge, they possessed (Liebold & Trinczek, 2009, p. 37). For this study, a verbatim transcription approach was employed (Mayring, 2002, p. 89). According to Kowal and O'Connell (2012), four types of transcription can be distinguished. The first, standard orthography, involves translating the meaning of the words, smoothing out dialect expressions or slips of the tongue, and converting the conversation into standard language. In contrast, literary transcription preserves linguistic features such as word breaks and pauses in the conversation. The third type, phonetic transcription, accurately represents spoken language and is often displayed using literary transcription. Phonetic transcription can also be represented according to the international phonetic alphabet (Kowal & O'Connell, 2012, pp. 437-445).

#### 5.4.2 Method of Analysis

The analysis applied in this study followed the model of summative content analysis as outlined by Mayring. The aim of this analysis was to reduce the material in such a way that the essential content was preserved, creating an abstracted but still representative corpus of the

original data. Content analysis allows for the systematic examination of communication, with the goal of drawing logical conclusions therefrom (Mayring, 2008, p. 13).

### 5.4.3 Paraphrasing, Generalization, and Reduction

Qualitative content analysis begins with the selection of the material to be analyzed, from which paraphrases are generated. A “paraphrase” is understood as a faithful summary of the statements made by an expert, preserving the information, interpretations, and opinions while omitting redundant parts of the text (Kaiser, 2014, p. 96). Next is the process of inductive category formation, during which categories are developed through meticulous examination and review of the transcribed interviews.

In this study, the expert interviews were transcribed and then paraphrased, generalized, and reduced according to Mayring’s methodology. This required the creation of context units and coding units: small text components that are assigned to a category. In this type of analysis, the development of categories and their assignment to the relevant text segments represent the qualitative element. However, before the categories can be defined, the content of the transcripts must be paraphrased to extract the relevant information. In the subsequent step, unnecessary text segments are deleted, and appropriate categories are formed. Finally, the material is thoroughly reviewed, and the analysis begins. The key aspect of content analysis is the category system, which serves as the central tool that ensures the analysis is transparent and understandable (Mey & Mruck, 2020, pp. 498–502).

There are two potential approaches to category formation: deductive and inductive. In the deductive approach, categories are predetermined before the interviews are conducted. In contrast, the inductive approach allows categories to emerge from the material itself. In this study, the categories were derived from the interview material (inductive). Inductive categorization is a part of the broader framework of summarizing content analysis (Flick, 1991, pp. 472–473). The different steps will be explained in the following paragraphs.

1. **Defining the Material and Research Question:** In the inductive approach, the first step is to define the research question and the material to be analyzed. In this study, the research questions were established at the outset, and the data were gathered through expert interviews.
2. **Developing Categories and Coding Guidelines:** Categories are then defined based on an analysis of the material. Selection criteria are determined in the form of a coding guide (Table 2).
3. **Category Formation:** Categories are developed based on the analysis of the material and guided by the established selection criteria. This process is carried out by systematically reducing the material.

4. **Review and Adjustment of Categories:** After reviewing approximately half of the material, the categories are re-examined and, if necessary, adjusted or supplemented.
5. **Final Categorization and Reduction:** The remaining material is then reviewed, reduced, and categorized based on the established categories.
6. **Analysis and Interpretation:** Finally, the material is evaluated, for instance, by analyzing frequencies. The results are then analyzed and interpreted in relation to the material, allowing for a final assessment of the findings (Mayring, 2008, pp. 83–86).

This structured approach to inductive category formation ensures a systematic analysis of qualitative data, allowing for themes and patterns to emerge directly from the interviews. It is a method particularly well-suited to uncovering insights from complex data sets.

## 5.5 NoMad Instrument

The Normalization Measurement Development (NoMAD) instrument was developed to measure the complexity of implementation from the perspective of research participants. It is based on the theoretical constructs of normalization process theory (NPT) and underwent several stages of development, including theoretical elaboration, item generation and reduction, cognitive testing, and expert validation. The objective was to create a pragmatic measurement tool that maintains theoretical integrity while being easily applicable. The final version of the NoMAD instrument comprises 43 items that systematically cover the four main constructs of NPT. Through iterative development and comprehensive testing, it has been ensured that the instrument is both theoretically sound and understandable for users. Thus, the NoMAD instrument serves as a valuable tool for assessing implementation processes in various contexts and can be used alongside other instruments for measuring implementation outcomes, processes, and impacts (Rapley et al., 2018, pp. 2-8).

## 5.6 Quality Criteria

To obtain meaningful results, it is essential to conduct measurements as accurately as possible. The collected data typically reflect not only the variables being measured but also often include measurement errors that can arise from social desirability, the subjectivity of individuals, or misunderstandings. Despite these challenges, it is crucial to be able to analyze and interpret the collected data. To facilitate this and ensure the quality of research results, research employs what are known as “quality criteria.” These serve as a benchmark for the quality of the research (Buber & Holzmüller, 2009, pp. 270–279).

### 5.6.1 Relevance as a Quality Criterion in Qualitative Market Research

Relevance (or utility) is a general quality standard in qualitative research. In qualitative market research, the research question is typically predefined; this is similar to other types of

commissioned qualitative research, such as evaluation research (Buber & Holzmüller, 2009, pp. 278–279). The scope of the research can vary significantly, ranging from well-defined subjects, such as evaluating the effectiveness of a marketing campaign, to less specified subjects, such as developing scenarios for future products or services. Often, qualitative market research requires analyzing many aspects of the research subject to derive generalized statements about markets, products, advertising media, and target groups and their needs or concerns. Relevance can be evaluated through an analysis of the scope, ensuring that the breadth of the research phenomenon is maintained throughout the study without inappropriate narrowing. The research process must be designed to allow for new and surprising results that less complex, quantitatively standardized methods could not achieve. The presentation of the results must communicate the quality effectively, ensuring that actionable insights for market strategies can be derived. Methodological competence should be demonstrated succinctly, and the use of photos, video clips, or text excerpts from the data collection can enliven presentations. Highlighting the relevance of qualitative research involves presenting new, surprising, and innovative insights that other methods would not reveal as well as ensuring the comprehensibility of the presentation for different audience groups. The length of presentations and reports should be adjusted to clients' usage scenarios, providing both detailed and concise versions.

Ethical conduct is another essential quality criterion and includes data protection, anonymization, informing participants about the study's goals and procedures, and preventing potential harm to participants (e.g., psychological distress caused by interviews). Reflected subjectivity involves researchers' reflections on the subjective elements of the research process, which are a hallmark of qualitative market research. This includes documenting and analyzing personal backgrounds, fears, barriers, disturbances, irritations, and personal relationships with the research topic. This can be achieved through self-reflection or supervision from other researchers; subjective influences should be integrated reflectively into the research process (Buber & Holzmüller, 2009, pp. 278–279).

This thesis addressed a critical gap in the current literature concerning the future skills required in marketing in an AI-driven context. While there is extensive research on current marketing skills and job requirements, the question of future skills remains underexplored. This gap is significant for both the workforce and management in the marketing sector, as understanding and adapting to future trends is essential for maintaining competitiveness (Lyu & Jin, 2021, pp. 120–131).

The relevance of this research is underscored by its focus on identifying and analyzing the key roles and skills that will define AI-powered marketing in the future. This study is crucial for marketing professionals who must navigate evolving technological advancements and their

implications. Emphasizing strategic planning, creativity, and ethical decision-making, this research highlights the need for skills that extend beyond AI's technical capabilities (Taddeo & Floridi, 2018, pp. 171–172).

This study provides a forward-looking analysis of the skills needed for future marketing roles, emphasizing their practical application. The findings offer valuable insights for both academic research and professional practice, guiding the strategic development of marketing professionals and organizations. Therefore, this thesis meets the quality criterion of relevance by addressing a crucial yet underexplored area of future skills in marketing. It provides a comprehensive analysis of necessary skills, ensuring the applicability and utility of the research for current and future marketing practices, thereby enhancing the study's credibility and impact within the academic and professional communities.

### 5.6.2 Documentation and Intersubjective Comprehensibility in Qualitative Research

Ensuring intersubjective comprehensibility of a study establishes the basis for the evaluation of the research by third parties. The process by which results are derived becomes reconstructible through the documentation of the procedure. Comprehensive documentation of the methods and data in the final report would make such as report too lengthy, and it would be unlikely that a client would review and verify the documents thoroughly. However, documentation is necessary, particularly for possible client inquiries regarding the background of the research results. Documented materials serve as a useful reference if deeper information or evidence is requested after the report is completed. Therefore, an appropriate retention period for the data (e.g., five years) should be maintained.

Documentation disciplines researchers to adopt a methodologically conscious approach. It is a prerequisite for collaboration in larger, international, and virtual teams. Documentation also supports shortcut strategies, as it creates a pool of data, methods, decisions, and criteria that can be reused or serve as a guide for other, similarly structured studies. These documents can be utilized for best practice analyses. The data collection and analysis methods, sampling strategies, transcription rules, methodological decisions, underlying data, and evaluation criteria should be documented (Buber & Holzmüller, 2009, p. 277).

In this thesis, the methodologies and procedures for data collection and analysis were meticulously documented, including a detailed description of the experts involved, the criteria utilized for participant selection, and the systematic steps taken to develop various constructs and analyze the data. Such transparency is crucial, as it enables other researchers to replicate the study and critically evaluate the validity of the findings, thereby enhancing the robustness and credibility of the research outcomes.

### 5.6.3 Transparency in Qualitative Research

Transparency—the openness and traceability of the entire research process—is a central quality criterion in qualitative research. Transparency ensures that the methodology, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of the results are comprehensible and verifiable by other researchers. Transparency also requires the disclosure of the researchers' reflection processes. This means that researchers must document and reflect on their own assumptions, considerations, and potential influences related to the research process. Only through such disclosure can the subjectivity and perspectives of the researcher be critically examined within the framework of analysis and interpretation. Transparency thus contributes to the credibility and trustworthiness of the research by openly presenting and discussing the entire research process. This not only promotes the traceability of the results but also enhances the acceptance and recognition of the study within the scientific community (Moravcsik, 2019, pp. 4–6).

# 6 Empirical Investigation

Chapter 6 focuses on the research questions and methodology. The chapter discusses the use of guided expert interviews, where experts are chosen based on their relevance to the topic, and a structured interview guide is developed. The research questions—How do companies leverage AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations? What skills will be expected from marketing employees in an AI-driven landscape? —are emphasized. The chapter concludes with an overview of the analysis of the qualitative content, which followed Mayring’s approach. The collected data were analyzed to provide insights into how companies leverage AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations and to identify the skills expected from marketing employees in an AI-driven landscape. The chapter is divided into four sections: descriptive results and analysis, the formulation of the hypotheses, answering the research question, and recommendations for action. Content analytical rules were established for each step of the process.

## 6.1 Discriptive Results / Analysis

This chapter presents the results of the expert interviews, which were analyzed using Mayring’s qualitative content analysis. The results for each category described in [Table 2 : Category Scheme \(Own Representation\)](#), and described in the chapters 6.2.1 and 6.2.2, are discussed first, followed by answers to the research questions. The analysis was based on the following category scheme, which was derived from the literature.

The interviews began with general questions regarding gender, position within the organization, size of the organization, and the country of operation. Of the five interview participants (IPs), three were female and two were male. Two IPs indicated that they held a leadership position within their organization (IP2 and IP3), while the others held roles in operational marketing. Regarding the country of operation, two interviewees were based in Austria (IP1 and IP4), two in Switzerland (IP2 and IP3), and one in Germany (IP5). The respondents’ countries of origin included Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. All interview participants reported having at least five years of experience working in marketing.

<p><b>AI Integration in Marketing Practices</b>          How do companies leverage AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations?</p>	<p>AI Tools and Their Applications (e.g., ChatGPT, MidJourney, Performance Max campaigns for content creation, customer segmentation, SEO, ad targeting)</p>
	<p>Benefits of AI in Marketing (e.g., efficiency, personalization, data analysis)</p>
	<p>Challenges and Limitations</p>

	(e.g., over-reliance, accuracy, ethical concerns)
<p><b>Skills for AI Integration in Marketing</b></p> <p>What skills will be expected from marketing employees in an AI-driven landscape?</p>	<p><b>Creative and Analytical Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity and Innovation (e.g., integrating AI with creative processes, generating unique content)</li> <li>• Critical Thinking and Decision-Making (e.g., evaluating AI outputs, strategic thinking)</li> <li>• Technical Proficiency (e.g., proficiency in AI tools, data analysis)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Ethical and Interpersonal Competencies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ethical and Legal Awareness</b> (e.g., understanding data privacy laws, ethical AI use)</li> <li>• <b>Interpersonal and Communication Skills</b> (e.g., collaboration, adapting AI insights for teams)</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Adaptability and Lifelong Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adaptability and Continuous Learning</b> (e.g., keeping up with AI advancements, learning new tools)</li> </ul>

Table 2 : Category Scheme (Own Representation)

## 6.2 AI Integration in Marketing Practices

The first category, “AI Integration in Marketing Practices,” examined the different AI tools available and identified specific roles and tasks within a company where these tools can be effectively applied. In the respective subcategories, the analysis captured detailed insights on how efficiently these AI tools can be utilized in various marketing activities. The subcategories also addressed the specific tools used and suited positions also potential benefits these tools bring to the marketing process, as well as the challenges and limitations that may arise when integrating AI into a company’s marketing strategy.

### 6.2.1 AI Tools and their Applications

Increasingly, AI tools are being integrated into marketing operations, allowing companies to streamline processes, enhance creativity, and improve overall efficiency. Various AI technologies are being utilized across different aspects of marketing, including content creation, customer segmentation, and predictive analytics. A prominent example is the use of ChatGPT for content generation; all of the IPs mentioned Chat GPT as a frequently used tool. Marketing

teams leverage this tool to produce high-quality texts for social media, emails, and presentations with significantly reduced time and effort. IP1 mentioned that their organization employs a ChatGPT-based tool that has been customized with templates for different situations, which helps them generate and refine content quickly (IP1, Lines 4–8). This customization allows the tool to serve as a valuable resource for creating presentations, rationales, and even analyzing target audiences, making the overall marketing process more efficient.

Similarly, AI tools such as MidJourney are being used for visual content creation, enabling marketers to generate images and videos without the need for traditional photoshoots. IP4 highlighted the convenience of these tools, noting that they have reduced the frequency of photoshoots and made it easier to optimize visual content: “We don’t need as many shootings anymore as we would have needed back in the day” (Lines 18–19).

Beyond creative tasks, AI plays a critical role in data-driven marketing activities, such as customer segmentation and predictive analytics. For instance, IP2 described how their organization uses AI-based analysis tools to predict future trends and customer behavior, allowing them to develop proactive marketing strategies: “We can use these tools to predict future trends and customer behavior [...] This enables us to develop proactive marketing strategies” (IP2, Lines 34–36).

AI is also utilized for targeting ads through tools such as Google’s Performance Max campaigns, which dynamically adjust ad content based on user behavior. This automation allows for highly personalized advertising experiences, as explained by IP4: “Performance Max campaigns now [...] adjust the text and images that customers see without us having to write all the texts” (IP4, Lines 31–35).

Moreover, AI applications extend to areas such as search engine optimization (SEO) and customer relationship management (CRM). AI-generated content is optimized for search engines, and AI-driven CRM systems match customer data with job profiles or predict future trends based on historical data, further enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing efforts.

Category	Criteria	Anchor Example	Coding Rule
AI Tools and their Applications	Each text passage that clearly indicates what AI tools experts use and for what purpose.	IP4: “AI is also utilized for targeting ads through tools such as Google’s Performance Max campaigns, which dynamically adjust	Text passages must include examples (tools) and their use cases related to sustainable data protection.

		ad content based on user behavior. This automation allows for highly personalized advertising experiences, as explained by IP4: “Performance Max campaigns now [...] adjust the text and images that customers see without us having to write all the texts” (IP4, Lines 31–35).	
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Table 3 Category AI Tools and their Applications (Own Representation)

## 6.2.2 Benefits of AI in Marketing

The integration of AI technologies into marketing operations has yielded significant benefits, enhancing the efficiency, personalization, and effectiveness of various marketing activities. These advantages are reflected across different facets of marketing, from content creation to data-driven decision-making. One of the most notable benefits is the dramatic increase in efficiency. IP1 highlighted how AI tools like ChatGPT streamline tasks such as writing rationales for media plans: “It really saves me more time because if I didn’t need to think about it and put it really nicely in words [...] It also sounds more eloquent.” Such efficiency allows marketing professionals to allocate more time to strategic and creative endeavors, thereby improving overall productivity (IP1, Lines 36–38).

Similarly, IP2 emphasized the time-saving aspect of AI, noting that their team now spends significantly less time generating communication materials: “We certainly save 80% of the time we used to spend and have a much more consistent communication line.” This reduction in time spent on routine tasks enables teams to focus on more valuable activities, ultimately boosting the effectiveness of their marketing efforts (IP2, Lines 11–16).

Another significant benefit of AI is its ability to analyze large datasets quickly and accurately, providing valuable insights that inform marketing strategies. IP3 noted how AI tools have transformed their approach to data analysis: “It’s made just the processes and the researching, the market researching and the data analysis, much, much simpler.” By enabling real-time data analysis, AI helps marketing teams make informed decisions and adapt their strategies to changing market conditions (IP3, Lines 123–125).

AI's ability to inspire creativity and provide new ideas is an often overlooked but important benefit. IP1 mentioned that AI helps them break out of routine thinking patterns: "You're always in your kind of own bubble, and to get some outside perspective, also sometimes to challenge ourselves, so you can put what you had in mind [...] and then asking ChatGPT, what could be done better?" This ability to challenge conventional thinking and offer fresh perspectives adds a creative dimension to AI's role in marketing (IP1, Lines 16–18).

The integration of AI in marketing offers substantial benefits, including increased efficiency, enhanced personalization, and improved data analysis, all of which contribute to more effective and impactful marketing strategies. These advantages not only streamline operations but also provide a competitive edge in the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Category	Criteria	Anchor Example	Coding Rule
Benefits of AI in Marketing	Every text passage that clearly demonstrates how AI tools contribute to and enhance marketing operations.	IP1: "It really saves me more time because if I didn't need to think about it and put it really nicely in words [...] It also sounds more eloquent." (IP1, Lines 36–38).	Text passages must include examples of how AI can improve the work done in marketing operations.

Table 4 Category Benefits of AI in Marketing (Own Representation)

### 6.2.3 Challenges and Limitations

While AI technologies offer numerous benefits in marketing, they also present several challenges and limitations that companies must navigate. These issues range from over-reliance on AI tools to concerns related to accuracy, creativity, and ethical implications.

One of the primary challenges is the risk of over-reliance on AI, which can lead to complacency among marketing professionals. IP5 expressed concerns about this tendency, noting that "it's easy to get complacent and just accept the data and texts generated without doing a sensitivity check" (Lines 62–64). Reliance on AI can result in a loss of critical thinking and may cause marketers to overlook important nuances that AI tools might miss.

Another significant limitation is the accuracy of AI-generated content. While AI can process and generate large amounts of data quickly, the quality of the output is not always guaranteed. IP1 pointed out that "many things that ChatGPT provides are quite generic" and emphasized the importance of critical thinking and manual oversight to ensure that the content produced aligns with the specific needs of the marketing campaign (Lines 45–48). This highlights the

need for marketers to remain vigilant and not to take AI-generated content at face value without thorough review and revision.

The impact of AI on creativity is also a concern. IP5 observed that AI tools, while useful, might limit the creative process because they primarily rely on existing data and patterns: “AI never really generates anything new. It just mixes existing knowledge and reshuffles the deck” (Lines 66–68). While AI can assist with certain creative tasks, it cannot fully replace human ingenuity and the ability to generate original ideas.

Ethical concerns related to AI use in marketing, particularly regarding data privacy and bias, present additional challenges. IP4 discussed the complexities of using AI tools that may rely on data from uncertain sources: “We kind of don’t know which data they use to train themselves” (Lines 141–142). Such uncertainties can lead to legal and ethical dilemmas, especially when using AI-generated content or insights for customer engagement. Moreover, there is concern about the potential for AI to introduce bias into marketing strategies, as algorithms may inadvertently reinforce existing stereotypes or exclusionary practices.

The fast-paced evolution of AI technologies requires continuous learning and adaptation from marketing professionals. IP2 stressed the importance of adaptability, noting that “AI technologies are constantly evolving, so our people have to be flexible and willing to keep learning” (Lines 57–58). A constant need for upskilling can be a challenge for teams that must balance learning new tools with ongoing marketing responsibilities.

In conclusion, while AI offers significant advantages, these are tempered by challenges and limitations that must be carefully managed. Marketers must remain vigilant, ensuring that AI tools are used responsibly and that their outputs are critically evaluated to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of their marketing strategies.

### 6.3 Skills for AI Integration in Marketing

The category “Skills for AI Integration in Marketing” explored the essential competencies required for marketing professionals to effectively incorporate AI technologies into their workflows. This category identified key skills necessary for leveraging AI in various marketing roles and tasks, focusing on the ability to merge AI with creative and analytical processes, adhere to ethical standards, and continuously adapt to technological advancements.

In the respective subcategories, shown in [Table 2 : Category Scheme \(Own Representation\)](#), the analysis delved into the creative and analytical skills needed to generate innovative content and make strategic decisions using AI. This included not only the technical proficiency required to operate AI tools and analyze data but also the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate AI outputs and integrate them into broader marketing strategies. The subcategories also address the importance of ethical and interpersonal competencies and the ability to

communicate and collaborate effectively within teams, which is crucial for translating AI-driven insights into actionable strategies. Finally, the subcategory related to adaptability and lifelong learning emphasized the need for marketing professionals to stay abreast of AI advancements and continuously develop their skills. This adaptability is critical for maintaining a competitive edge in the fast-evolving, AI-driven marketing landscape. Each of these subcategories contributed to a comprehensive understanding of what skills will be expected from marketing employees as they navigate an increasingly AI-integrated environment.

### 6.3.1 Creative and Analytical Skills

In the rapidly evolving field of marketing, the integration of AI technologies necessitates a unique combination of creative and analytical skills. These competencies enable marketing professionals to harness AI's potential while maintaining the human touch that drives innovation and strategic decision-making. IP2 highlighted the crucial balance that employees must strike between creativity and the effective use of AI in marketing:

Our employees must be able to develop creative marketing ideas that are then supported and optimised by AI analyses. In other words, creativity and the ability to empathize with a target group are still very important. Creativity is perhaps almost a little less important than the ability to put yourself in the target group's shoes with a creative idea and consider or, how should I put it, analyze whether the idea really suits the target group and the objective (IP2, Lines 51–56).

This statement underscores the evolving role of creativity in the marketing field, where traditional creative processes are now complemented by AI-driven insights. Employees are expected to not only generate innovative ideas but also to critically assess these ideas through the lens of AI, ensuring they resonate with target audiences and meet campaign objectives effectively.

Creativity remains a cornerstone of effective marketing, even as AI technologies become increasingly integrated into the industry. IP2 emphasized that while AI can enhance and optimize marketing strategies, the initial creative spark still relies on human ingenuity. They stated, "Our employees must be able to develop creative marketing ideas that are then supported and optimized by AI analyses. In other words, creativity and the ability to empathize with a target group are still very important" (Lines 51–54). This highlights the essential role of human creativity in crafting ideas that resonate with audiences, a task that AI alone cannot fulfill. IP4 echoed this sentiment, noting that while AI can generate ideas, it is up to the marketing team to infuse these outputs with originality and emotional depth:

It's not just about being creative or understanding customer needs anymore. You really have to be well-versed in the latest technological tools and platforms because,

honestly, these are becoming essential in every aspect of our work. But even with all this technology, there's something that, like, it just can't replicate, you know? (IP4, Lines 194–198)

This balance between human creativity and AI-driven optimization is crucial in developing campaigns that not only capture attention but also connect with audiences on a deeper level. IP5 pointed out that the creative process must also involve a critical evaluation of whether an idea aligns with the target audience's needs and the campaign's objectives: "It's like AI plays a supporting role, but their own work and creativity shine through" (IP5, Lines 218–219). This perspective underscores that in an AI-enhanced marketing environment, creativity must be coupled with strategic thinking and empathy to ensure that marketing efforts are both innovative and effective.

While AI can automate many tasks, it is the human element that drives strategic success. Critical thinking and decision-making skills are essential for evaluating AI outputs and ensuring they align with the broader marketing strategy. IP5 underscored the importance of not becoming overly reliant on AI, noting, "It's easy to get complacent and just accept the data and texts generated without doing a sensitivity check" (Lines 51–54). Such caution highlights the need for marketers to critically assess AI-generated content and data, ensuring that it meets the required standards and truly serves the campaign's objectives. Strategic thinking is equally vital when integrating AI into marketing plans. AI tools can provide valuable insights and data-driven recommendations, but it is up to marketing professionals to decide how to apply these insights in a way that aligns with the company's goals.

IP2 discussed how AI tools have streamlined data analysis processes: "We can use these tools to predict future trends and customer behavior [...] enabling us to develop proactive marketing strategies" (Line 34). The ability to analyze and act on data is essential for staying competitive in the AI-driven marketing landscape.

The interviews revealed that while creativity remains a vital element in developing compelling marketing campaigns, the increasing integration of AI technologies has elevated the importance of analytical skills among marketing professionals. As AI tools become more sophisticated, the ability to interpret data and draw actionable insights is just as critical as generating innovative ideas. A combination of creativity and analytical prowess allows marketers to craft strategies that are not only imaginative but also data-driven and highly effective. Thus, the integration of AI into marketing requires a sophisticated blend of creative and analytical skills to ensure that marketing professionals can effectively leverage AI technologies while maintaining the creativity and strategic thinking that are essential for successful campaigns. The combination of creativity, critical thinking, and technical proficiency forms the foundation of effective

AI integration, allowing marketers to harness the power of AI while continuing to drive innovation and achieve strategic goals.

Category	Criteria	Anchor Example	Coding Rule
<b>Creative and Analytical Skills</b>	Text passages that highlight how AI tools are integrated into marketing to balance creative and analytical tasks, while also detailing the skills necessary for innovation and data-driven decision-making.	IP2: "Our employees must be able to develop creative marketing ideas that are then supported and optimized by AI analyses. In other words, creativity and the ability to empathize with a target group are still very important." (IP2, Lines 51-54).	Text passages must clearly illustrate the usage of creative thinking and analytical skills.

Table 5 Category Creative and analytical Skills (Own Representation)

### 6.3.2 Ethical and Interpersonal Competencies

As AI technologies become increasingly integrated into marketing practices, the importance of ethical and interpersonal competencies continues to grow. These skills are crucial for ensuring that AI is used responsibly and that marketing teams can effectively collaborate and communicate in an AI-driven environment. Understanding the ethical and legal implications of AI is paramount for marketing professionals. The use of AI in marketing often involves handling large amounts of data, which raises concerns about privacy, bias, and transparency. IP4 highlighted the complexities associated with data usage in AI tools: "We kind of don't know which data they use to train themselves [...] and this is a very big topic" (Lines 140–142). This uncertainty can lead to ethical and legal challenges, particularly when it comes to ensuring that customer data is handled responsibly and that AI-generated insights do not reinforce existing biases or lead to discriminatory practices. As AI continues to evolve, marketers must stay informed about data privacy laws and ethical guidelines to ensure that their use of AI aligns with both legal standards and societal expectations.

In addition to ethical and legal awareness, strong interpersonal and communication skills are essential for marketing teams working with AI technologies. The integration of AI into marketing strategies often requires collaboration across different departments and teams, making effective communication a critical skill. IP2 emphasized the importance of teamwork and

communication, noting, “Even in an AI-driven world, it’s super important to be able to work well in a team, communicate, and lead” (Lines 61–62). The ability to collaborate effectively ensures that AI-driven insights are understood and applied correctly within the broader marketing strategy.

Adapting AI insights for team use is another critical aspect of interpersonal competence. As AI tools generate data and recommendations, marketing professionals must be able to interpret these insights and communicate them effectively. This requires not only technical proficiency but also the ability to translate complex AI outputs into actionable strategies that can be easily understood and implemented by team members. IP4 pointed out the need for such skills, mentioning that introducing AI tools to teams and helping them see the benefits is crucial for successful integration: “Your relationship with your client has to be really good, and you have to be really good with trying to satisfy your client [...] and introduce them to it” (Lines 59–61).

In summary, ethical and interpersonal competencies are foundational for the responsible and effective use of AI in marketing. Marketing professionals must be vigilant in understanding and adhering to ethical guidelines while also possessing the interpersonal skills needed to collaborate, communicate, and lead in an AI-enhanced environment. These skills are essential not only for ensuring that AI is used ethically but also for fostering a collaborative atmosphere where AI-driven insights can be fully leveraged to achieve marketing objectives.

Category	Criteria	Anchor Example	Coding Rule
<b>Ethical and Interpersonal Competencies</b>	Text passages that describe the ethical considerations and interpersonal skills necessary for using AI in marketing, particularly with regard to data privacy, responsible AI usage, and effective communication within teams.	IP2: "With the increasing use of AI, more ethical questions arise, be it in the handling of data, the transparency of algorithms, or the avoidance of bias and discrimination in the results. Marketers will also need to understand how to use AI in a responsible way and how to ensure that the technology is used fairly and transparently"	Text passages must address the ethical challenges and responsibilities associated with AI in marketing.

		(IP2, Lines 202–206).	
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Table 6 Category Ethical and Interpersonal Competencies (Own Representation)

### 6.3.3 Adaptability and Lifelong Learning

In the fast-paced world of AI-driven marketing, the ability to adapt and a commitment to lifelong learning have become indispensable. As AI technologies evolve and new tools emerge, marketing professionals must continuously update their skills and knowledge to remain competitive and effective in their roles.

Adaptability is a critical skill in this dynamic environment. AI technologies are not static; they are constantly advancing, which requires marketers to be flexible and open to change. IP2 highlighted the importance of this adaptability, noting that “[...]adaptability and continuous learning are extremely important for us—AI technologies are constantly evolving, so our people have to be flexible and willing to keep learning [...]” (Lines 57–58). Flexibility is crucial for marketers who must quickly integrate new AI tools and methodologies into their workflows, ensuring that their strategies remain relevant and effective.

Continuous learning is closely tied to adaptability, as it involves the ongoing effort to acquire new skills and stay informed about the latest developments in AI. Marketing professionals cannot rely solely on their current knowledge; they must be proactive in seeking out new learning opportunities. IP4 discussed the significance of staying up to date with AI advancements, mentioning that their company provides upskilling workshops and encourages employees to explore new tools: “We actually just had a workshop about prompting. [...] In our agency we have these upskilling workshops” (Lines 102–107). IP4 also mentioned that their agency has a designated budget allocated for their development initiatives. A commitment to continuous learning ensures that marketing teams are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills necessary to leverage AI technologies effectively.

The rapid pace of AI innovation means that marketing professionals must be self-driven in their learning efforts. IP5 emphasized the importance of self-management and independent learning, stating, “You really need to have a strong personal interest in learning these tools because, you know, with older colleagues, you see that they’re more reluctant—they might close their laptops” (Lines 124–126). The drive to independently explore and master new AI tools is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in the industry.

In summary, adaptability and lifelong learning are foundational competencies for marketing professionals in an AI-driven landscape. The ability to quickly adapt to new technologies and commit to continuous learning ensures that marketers can effectively integrate AI into their strategies, staying ahead of industry trends and maintaining their relevance in a rapidly

changing environment. Indeed, these skills are essential for long-term success in the evolving field of AI-enhanced marketing.

Category	Criteria	Anchor Example	Coding Rule
<b>Adaptability and Lifelong Learning</b>	Text passages that emphasize the necessity of continuous learning and flexibility in the face of evolving AI technologies in marketing, particularly in relation to keeping skills updated and adapting to new tools and methodologies.	IP2:"Adaptability and continuous learning are extremely important for us—AI technologies are constantly evolving, so our people have to be flexible and willing to keep learning" (IP2, Lines 57–58).	Text passages must mention the need for adaptability and open mindedness, continuous learning in relation to the changing landscape of AI technologies.

Table 7 Category Adaptability and Lifelong Learning (Own Representation)

## 6.4 Answering the Research Questions

This section synthesizes the findings from the expert interviews to address the two core research questions guiding this study. The first question explored how companies leverage AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations, while the second examined the skills that will be expected from marketing employees in an AI-driven landscape.

Through the detailed evaluation of the interview data, it became evident that AI technologies play a transformative role in enhancing marketing efficiency, personalization, and data-driven decision-making. Companies are increasingly integrating AI tools into their marketing strategies, utilizing them to streamline processes, generate unique content, and analyze large datasets. However, the effective use of these technologies requires a specific set of skills from marketing professionals.

The analysis revealed that beyond technical proficiency, marketing employees must develop a combination of creative, analytical, ethical, and interpersonal competencies to successfully navigate the evolving landscape. Skills such as adaptability, continuous learning, critical thinking, and innovation are crucial for leveraging AI's full potential while ensuring that its application aligns with ethical standards and enhances collaborative efforts within teams.

This section provides a comprehensive answer to the research questions by connecting the theoretical discussions with the empirical findings from the interviews. It highlights how

companies are optimizing their marketing operations through AI and delineates the key skills that will shape the future of marketing in an AI-driven world.

#### 6.4.1 How do Companies Leverage AI Technologies to Optimize Marketing Operations?

In this section, the first research question—How do companies leverage AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations?—is addressed, and the various ways in which companies are integrating AI tools to enhance and streamline their marketing efforts are explored. These technologies have become central to modern marketing strategies, enabling businesses to achieve greater efficiency, personalization, and data-driven decision-making. This section also discusses the challenges companies face related to over-reliance, accuracy, and ethical considerations when utilizing AI in their marketing operations. In contemporary marketing operations, companies are increasingly turning to AI technologies to optimize various aspects of their strategies. The integration of advanced AI tools, such as ChatGPT, MidJourney, and Performance Max, has fundamentally transformed approaches to content creation, customer segmentation, search engine optimization, and ad targeting. These tools have evolved from being supplementary aids to becoming central components of modern marketing strategies. For example, IP1 stated, “I would say I use it quite a lot for mails for different text to generate. To write some rationals when I made some plans, but we also have many different options” (Lines 13–15). Such automation enables marketing professionals to concentrate on higher-level strategic tasks by reducing the time spent on repetitive content creation, thereby fostering more efficient workflows. By handling routine tasks, AI tools like ChatGPT allow marketers to devote more resources to creative and strategic decision-making.

Another major benefit of AI is the enhanced ability to personalize marketing efforts. AI enables marketers to tailor their messaging and campaigns to specific audience segments with unprecedented precision. IP2 highlighted this capability, noting, “This is no longer just a ‘nice-to-have,’ but really a must. You also need to be able to combine different tools, for example, to combine AI-supported analyses with creative processes in order to develop really effective campaigns” (Lines 127–129). The ability to deliver personalized content at scale not only enhances the customer experience but also drives better business outcomes by ensuring that marketing efforts are more relevant and effective.

AI’s capacity to process and analyze data at scale also supports more informed decision-making. By leveraging AI for data analysis, companies can gain deeper insights into customer behaviors, market trends, and the effectiveness of their campaigns. Such a data-driven approach allows marketers to adjust their strategies in real-time, ensuring that they remain responsive to changing market conditions and consumer preferences. IP5 underscored this advantage: “You can just throw all this data into the system, and, I mean, as a human, you can’t

possibly analyze and evaluate as much data as AI can, right? So, yeah, it definitely helps” (Lines 44–46).

Despite the clear advantages of AI in marketing, companies also face several challenges and limitations when integrating these technologies into their operations. One of the most significant concerns is the potential over-reliance on AI. While AI tools can effectively handle many tasks, there is a risk that marketers may become too dependent on them, potentially overlooking the need for human judgment and critical evaluation. IP2 expressed such concerns:

Another point is networked thinking. In other words, the ability to combine different disciplines and technologies is becoming increasingly important. In the past, you might have been able to focus on being really good in a particular marketing discipline, but now you have to look at the big picture. It’s about understanding how to combine the data you get from AI tools with creative ideas and strategic thinking to get really resounding results. And, um, interpersonal skills are not to be underestimated either. (Lines 134–139)

This highlights the importance of maintaining a balance between AI-driven automation and human oversight to ensure that marketing outputs remain relevant and aligned with brand values.

In conclusion, companies are leveraging AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations by employing tools such as ChatGPT, MidJourney, and Performance Max campaigns for content creation, customer segmentation, and ad targeting. The benefits of AI, particularly in terms of efficiency, personalization, and data-driven decision-making, are substantial. However, to fully capitalize on the potential of AI in marketing, companies must carefully manage challenges related to over-reliance, accuracy, and ethical considerations, ensuring that their AI-driven strategies are both effective and responsible.

#### 6.4.2 What Skills will be Expected from Marketing Employees in an AI-driven Landscape?

In an AI-driven marketing landscape, the skills required of marketing employees are evolving rapidly to keep pace with technological advancements. The integration of AI into marketing operations demands a unique blend of technical proficiency, creative and analytical abilities, ethical and interpersonal competencies, and a strong commitment to continuous learning and adaptability. These skills are crucial for leveraging AI effectively while addressing the complexities and challenges it introduces.

First and foremost, technical proficiency is foundational skill that marketing employees must develop to effectively utilize AI tools in their daily operations. As AI becomes increasingly

integral to various marketing functions, the ability to understand and operate these technologies is essential. IP2 highlighted this need:

Our people need to understand how AI works and be able to use these tools effectively. This means they should be familiar with data analysis, machine learning, and the application of AI in various marketing areas. Then there's data expertise, for example, this is about interpreting large amounts of data and deriving actionable insights from it. In other words, you need to have a strong understanding of data science and be able to think analytically. (Lines 43–48).

Technical proficiency encompasses a range of abilities, from basic familiarity with AI tools to more advanced skills, such as data analysis and machine learning. Marketers must be adept at using these tools to automate routine tasks, generate content, and optimize campaigns, thereby enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of their marketing efforts. Without a solid technical foundation, marketing professionals may find themselves at a disadvantage and unable to fully capitalize on the capabilities of AI.

However, technical skills alone are not sufficient in an AI-driven marketing environment. Creative and analytical abilities are equally critical, as marketing professionals must be able to apply AI tools in innovative ways while also critically evaluating the outputs generated by these tools. Critical thinking is a particularly important skill in this context. While AI can provide valuable insights and generate content, the information it produces can sometimes be generic or lack the nuance needed for effective marketing. IP5 emphasized the importance of critical thinking, noting, "This critical questioning, not just letting things slide. Creativity. Yeah. Not just due to AI, but because we're generally more distracted, and I think that's why maintaining focus. Concentration, yeah. It's super important and likely getting lost" (Lines 116–119). Critical thinking skills allow marketers to sift through AI-generated data and content, identify what is truly valuable, and refine it to align with the brand's strategic objectives.

In addition to critical thinking, creativity remains a core competency in marketing, even in an AI-driven landscape. While AI can assist in generating ideas and automating content creation, the true power of marketing lies in the ability to infuse campaigns with originality and innovation. AI tools can generate ideas, but it is up to human marketers to bring those ideas to life in a way that resonates with target audiences. IP2 highlighted this balance between AI and human creativity:

Creativity certainly remains important—even if AI can automate many tasks, human creativity is simply irreplaceable. Our employees must be able to develop creative marketing ideas that are then supported and optimized by AI analyses. In other words, creativity and the ability to empathize with a target group are still very important. Creativity is perhaps almost a little less important than the ability to put yourself in the target

group's shoes with a creative idea and consider or, how should I put it, analyze whether the idea really suits the target group and the objective. (Lines 50–56)

IP3 underlined similar sentiments:

Right now, the realistic answer is due to the fact that we haven't been able to teach AI yet to creative side. Uh, and we haven't been able to give it that in in like that personal engagement. I think the the marketing employees role will change drastically and the sense of that it will no longer be interacting directly with customers or it will no longer be speaking to customers, but it will be purely teaching and telling AIs what the goal is and how to get there with the style of communication, the color scheme and that kind of the creative side of it. (Lines 226–232)

These quotes underscore the enduring value of human creativity in marketing, where the ability to think outside the box and push creative boundaries sets successful campaigns apart from the competition. In a landscape where AI can handle many of the routine tasks, creativity becomes the differentiator that can elevate a brand and engage consumers on a deeper level.

Ethical and interpersonal competencies are also becoming increasingly important as AI takes on a larger role in marketing. The integration of AI into marketing raises significant ethical considerations, particularly in areas such as data privacy and the potential for AI to perpetuate biases. Marketing professionals must be equipped to navigate such ethical challenges, ensuring that their use of AI aligns with legal requirements and maintains consumer trust. IP1 stressed the importance of ethical awareness:

But then also, if I think of ethics is sometimes like, like I said, the Performance Max campaigns. For instance, I think they're they use a lot of data from, yeah, people basically. And sometimes, yeah, we don't know if this is actually data that people want to have or open up to everybody. (Lines 145–148)

IP2 also had concerns about the ethics of AI:

With the increasing use of AI, more ethical questions arise, be it in the handling of data, the transparency of algorithms, or the avoidance of bias and discrimination in the results. Marketers will also need to understand how to use AI in a responsible way and how to ensure that the technology is used fairly and transparently. (Lines 202–206)

Ethical awareness involves understanding data privacy laws, ensuring that AI tools are used responsibly, and being transparent with consumers about how their data is being used. Moreover, marketers must be vigilant in preventing AI from reinforcing existing biases, which could harm a brand's reputation and erode consumer trust.

In addition to ethical awareness, interpersonal and communication skills are essential for effectively collaborating with teams and communicating AI-generated insights. As AI tools

generate increasingly complex data and insights, the ability to convey these findings to team members and stakeholders in a clear and actionable manner becomes crucial. IP2 observed the following:

These skills are particularly crucial when it comes to successfully implementing AI-driven projects and promoting collaboration between different departments. Because now that people can suddenly take on many more tasks because AI has made them easier, it has become much more important for me to understand where in the big AI world I can support my employees so that they can realise their full potential. (Lines 21–67).

Similarly, IP3 stated the following:

If you need someone who can self manage, who thinks for themselves, who can communicate effectively with themselves, but also with the AI, and has a general knowledge of the technology as well. Because if you don't have that base, you will never know what it really is capable of and what it does. (Lines 65–68)

Good communication skills ensure that all team members understand how to use AI tools effectively and that AI-driven strategies are implemented cohesively across the organization. In addition, these skills also facilitate collaboration between marketing teams and other departments, such as IT and data analytics, ensuring that AI initiatives are aligned with broader business goals.

Finally, the rapid pace of technological advancement in AI necessitates a high degree of adaptability and continuous learning among marketing professionals. As new AI tools and capabilities emerge, staying up to date with the latest developments is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge. IP4 highlighted the need for continuous learning:

You really have to be well-versed in the latest technological tools and platforms because, honestly, these are becoming essential in every aspect of our work. But even with all this technology, there's something that, like, it just can't replicate, you know? (Lines 195–198).

In an AI-driven landscape, marketing employees must be committed to lifelong learning, constantly refining their skills and adapting to new technologies. Such adaptability extends beyond just learning new tools; it also involves being open to change, embracing new ways of working, and being willing to experiment with innovative approaches. IP2 said that "adaptability and continuous learning are extremely important for us—AI technologies are constantly evolving, so our people have to be flexible and willing to keep learning" (Lines 57–58).

The skills expected from marketing employees in an AI-driven landscape encompass a comprehensive blend of technical proficiency, creative and analytical abilities, ethical and

interpersonal competencies, and a commitment to continuous learning and adaptability. Such skills are necessary for leveraging AI effectively and for navigating the challenges and complexities that come with its integration into marketing practices. As AI continues to reshape the marketing industry, the development of these skills will be essential for marketing professionals to thrive in this dynamic and rapidly evolving field.

## 6.5 Formulation of Hypothesis

Based on the insights from the key findings of this research, specific hypotheses can now be developed. These hypotheses are intended to provoke discussion and illustrate connections, taking the research a step further by structuring the research design and refining the analytical methods. Thus, the formulation of hypotheses is not merely a preparatory step but a vital part of scientific inquiry, as it bridges the gap between theoretical considerations and empirical analysis.

In scientific research, hypotheses are foundational statements that guide the entire research process. They can generally be classified into two main types: undirected and directed hypotheses. Undirected hypotheses acknowledge the existence of a relationship between variables but do not specify the direction of the relationship. This type of hypothesis is particularly useful when exploring areas where the direction of the effect is unknown or not yet predicted based on the existing literature. On the other hand, directed hypotheses are more specific, suggesting not only the existence of a relationship but also the nature of that relationship, whether positive or negative. Directed hypotheses are often preferred in scientific research due to their ability to provide clearer guidance for testing and analysis, thereby allowing researchers to draw more definitive conclusions. The distinction between these two types of hypotheses is crucial, as it determines the scope and direction of the research. According to Thompson and Skau (2023), the scope of a hypothesis, whether broad or narrow, significantly impacts the research process, including the selection of data and analytical methods and the types of inferences that can be made. Narrower, more directed hypotheses tend to offer more precise and testable predictions, while broader, undirected hypotheses may allow for greater exploration but at the cost of specificity (Thompson & Skau, 2023, pp. 3–7).

Hypotheses often involve causal relationships, where one variable (the cause) is expected to directly influence another variable (the effect). Causal hypotheses can describe either direct effects, where the independent variable directly impacts the dependent variable, or indirect effects, where the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is mediated through one or more intermediary variables. For instance, a direct effect might hypothesize that increased training leads to higher employee productivity, whereas an indirect effect could suggest that training improves skills, which in turn enhances productivity. To test these hypotheses effectively, researchers must engage in operationalization, the process of defining

abstract concepts in measurable terms. This involves specifying how each variable will be measured or manipulated, ensuring that the hypotheses can be empirically tested and validated within a study's framework (Backhaus et al., 2000, p. 53).

Hypotheses play a critical role in scientific research for several reasons. They provide a clear direction for the research, helping to determine what data need to be collected and how it should be analyzed, which in turn structures the research process efficiently. Hypotheses must also be testable, meaning they can be supported or refuted through empirical evidence, ensuring that the research is grounded in observable and measurable phenomena. Furthermore, a well-formulated hypothesis should be falsifiable, meaning there should be a possibility of it being proven wrong. This is essential for the scientific method, as it allows for rigorous testing and validation. Hypotheses often arise from theoretical frameworks and serve to test these theories in practical settings, linking theory and empirical research, which is essential for the advancement of scientific knowledge. By narrowing the research focus, hypotheses help researchers avoid unnecessary data collection and analysis, providing a specific lens through which to view the research problem, thus making the study more manageable and the results more meaningful. Chesterman (2013) emphasized that a significant hypothesis must be explicit, testable, and have theoretical implications, which can ultimately contribute to the evolution of broader theories by offering explanations that extend beyond simple descriptions (Chesterman, 2013, pp. 71–77).

Formulating hypotheses for a thesis is therefore critical. They help narrow down the research question, providing a clear focus for the study, ensuring that the research is directed and relevant, thus avoiding the pitfalls of a broad or unfocused investigation. By defining expected findings, hypotheses bring clarity to research objectives, which is crucial for communicating the purpose and direction of the research to academic supervisors and peers. They also form the basis for the analytical approach, dictating the type of data to be collected and the methods to be used for analysis, which is essential for producing robust and credible findings. Well-formulated hypotheses contribute significantly to the academic field by testing existing theories or providing new insights, thus advancing the body of knowledge in the area of study. In summary, the formulation of hypotheses is a foundational step in the research process that determines the direction, scope, and rigor of the study. Through hypotheses, a general research question is transformed into a specific, testable proposition, guiding the study towards meaningful and scientifically valuable conclusions (Thompson & Skau, 2023, pp. 3–7).

Hypothesis 1 is associated with the category "Benefits of AI in Marketing," as explained in Chapter 6.2.2. This hypothesis addresses the growing use of AI-driven tools, such as natural language generation (NLG), automated graphic design software, and content recommendation

engines, within marketing practices. These tools have increasingly been integrated to automate and assist with tasks that were traditionally characterized by manual effort, repetition, and significant time consumption. By automating processes such as content creation, personalization, and data analysis, AI alleviates the workload of marketing professionals, allowing for more efficient output and ensuring greater consistency in content across multiple campaigns. As AI integration becomes more prevalent within content creation workflows, it is expected that these technological advancements will result in significant improvements in both marketing efficiency and content consistency. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**Hypothesis 1:** The more AI tools are integrated into content creation workflows, the greater the improvement in marketing efficiency and consistency will be.

Hypothesis 2 is related to the cost-saving potential of AI in marketing operations. This hypothesis reflects the understanding that AI technologies can optimize automation processes, leading to a reduction in the need for manual tasks. By automating routine and repetitive processes, companies can streamline their marketing operations, thereby lowering labor costs and increasing productivity. This is particularly relevant in areas such as customer segmentation, content distribution, and performance tracking, where AI can significantly reduce the time and resources required to achieve optimal results. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was derived as follows:

**Hypothesis 2:** If companies use AI technologies, they can reduce their marketing costs by optimizing automation processes and reducing manual tasks.

Hypothesis 3 is a causal hypothesis derived from the category "Creative and Analytical Skills," as described in Chapter 6.3.1. This hypothesis posits that the integration of AI will increasingly necessitate critical thinking skills among marketing professionals in the future. This is driven by the observation that AI, while highly efficient at automating repetitive tasks and processing large amounts of data, often produces incorrect or overly generic responses due to its reliance on pre-existing data. These AI outputs frequently lack the depth of creativity and the specificity required to meet the nuanced, context-specific demands of marketing. As a result, marketing professionals must critically evaluate these AI-generated outcomes, applying their own judgment and creativity to refine and adapt them to ensure they meet the intended marketing goals. This highlights the importance of critical thinking in interpreting AI-generated data, questioning its validity, and making necessary adjustments to fit specific objectives. Additionally, AI's evolving nature means that marketing professionals must remain flexible and engaged in lifelong learning to continue using AI tools effectively while maintaining proper oversight and quality

control. Furthermore, as AI becomes more deeply integrated into marketing workflows, the role of self-management becomes crucial. Marketing professionals must balance their use of automated systems with their own creative input, ensuring that AI supports their strategic goals rather than dictating them. This increased reliance on AI calls for a higher level of responsibility and strategic oversight, making both critical thinking and self-management essential skills for success in the field. Based on the findings from Chapter 6.3.1, the following hypothesis has emerged:

**Hypothesis 3:** The more AI is integrated into marketing, the more necessary critical thinking and self-management become for the success of marketing professionals.

Hypothesis 4 is a causal hypothesis because it establishes a cause-and-effect relationship between lifelong learning (independent variable) and resilience, job satisfaction, and performance (dependent variables). As discussed in Chapter 6.3.3, the rapid integration of AI into marketing has significantly transformed the industry, bringing both opportunities and challenges for marketing professionals. AI tools are continuously evolving, requiring professionals to adapt to new technologies and methods at a fast pace. This often leads to skill gaps and an increasing need for continuous learning. Lifelong learning plays a crucial role in helping marketing professionals equip themselves with the necessary knowledge and skills to keep up with these changes. By actively engaging in ongoing education and skill development, professionals are better able to adapt to the dynamic landscape created by AI, improving their resilience to technological disruptions. Lifelong learning also enhances a professional's ability to navigate the complexities introduced by AI, enabling them to maintain a competitive edge in the market. Moreover, professionals who invest in lifelong learning are likely to experience higher job satisfaction as they feel more competent and confident in handling AI-related challenges. Their ability to stay relevant and agile in an industry undergoing rapid technological transformation can lead to improved job performance and overall professional well-being. Therefore, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

**Hypothesis 4:** Marketing professionals who engage in lifelong learning will be more resilient to the challenges posed by the integration of AI, resulting in better job satisfaction and performance.

## 7 Discussion

In the previous chapter, the results of the literature research and the empirical analysis were compared and discussed. The final chapter is now dedicated to summarizing the results, followed by a conclusion including limitations and an outlook. The aim is to offer a perspective based on the findings of this work, which in turn can be used as a basis for further research approaches.

### 7.1 Interpretation of the Results

The integration of AI technologies into marketing operations has proven to be a transformative force, allowing companies to significantly optimize their processes. Based on empirical evidence gathered from expert interviews, it is evident that the companies in the DACH region are leveraging AI tools to enhance efficiency and streamline marketing operations in several key areas. The findings of this study highlight a noticeable transformation in the work and therefore in the skillset required for marketing professionals as a result of the integration of AI into marketing practices. Traditional marketing skills are being supplemented and, in some cases, replaced by more technologically oriented competencies. This shift is apparent in the growing emphasis on skills such as data analysis and the effective use of AI-driven tools and platforms, which are becoming essential in the contemporary marketing landscape. In the following discussion, the key findings of this research are critically analyzed in relation to the existing literature. The results are contextualized within the broader framework of AI adoption in marketing, after which the limitations of the study are discussed, and directions for future research are proposed. The core objective of this research was to explore how companies are leveraging AI technologies to enhance their marketing operations and to identify the specific skills that marketing professionals will need in this evolving environment. The results indicate that AI is playing an increasingly pivotal role in both automating routine and repetitive tasks as well as enabling more nuanced, data-driven, and personalized marketing strategies. These findings suggest that the future success of marketing efforts will be heavily reliant on the ability of professionals to effectively utilize AI for customer segmentation, predictive analytics, and personalized content creation.

#### 7.1.1 Comparison with Existing Literature

Traditional marketing skills, while still valuable, are increasingly being supplemented—and in some cases supplanted—by competencies that are more technologically oriented. This shift is particularly evident in the growing demand for skills related to data analysis, machine learning, and the effective utilization of AI-driven tools and platforms, which have become essential in the modern marketing landscape.

The study's results align closely with the foundational elements of the technology acceptance model (TAM), which posits that the perceived usefulness and ease of use of a technology significantly influence its adoption within an organization. In the context of AI in marketing, the TAM helps explain the slower pace of AI adoption observed in organizations. Despite the recognized benefits of AI, such as enhanced predictive analytics and improved customer segmentation, the perceived complexity and the steep learning curve associated with AI tools may be contributing to a cautious approach. This hesitation could stem from a lack of sufficient technical training and support, which hinders the perceived ease of use of these technologies. Consequently, while AI is acknowledged for its potential to transform marketing practices, its adoption is moderated by these perceived barriers. In line with the diffusion of innovations (DoI) theory, which emphasizes the role of innovation characteristics and social systems in the adoption process, the findings suggest that the relative advantage of AI its compatibility with existing values and practices, and the complexity of its use are all factors influencing its diffusion within the market. Companies in the DACH region appear to be in the early stages of AI adoption, which are characterized by gradual experimentation and selective implementation. This aligns with the innovation adoption curve—innovators and early adopters are beginning to explore AI, while the majority of individuals remain cautious, likely awaiting further validation of its benefits and the development of more user-friendly applications. While the socio-technical system (STS) model provides a framework for understanding the interplay between social and technical factors in technology adoption, it does not entirely align with the findings of this study. In the European context, the integration of AI into marketing is hindered by a mismatch between the technical capabilities of AI tools and the readiness of the social systems, including organizational culture and employee skills. The STS model assumes that aligning these systems naturally leads to successful adoption; however, the current research reveals that even with technical readiness, deeper issues, such as cultural resistance, lack of strategic vision, and complex organizational dynamics, often impede the effective use of AI. Moreover, the STS model does not fully account for regional and cultural specificities, which play a significant role in shaping AI adoption in the DACH region, highlighting the need for a more nuanced approach to understanding the interaction between social and technical systems in this context. Normalization process theory (NPT) provides further insight into the integration of AI into everyday marketing practices. NPT focuses on how new technologies become routinely embedded in organizational workflows. The findings of the current study suggest that while AI tools are being integrated into marketing operations, there is still a need for normalization—AI use becoming a routine and accepted part of daily marketing activities. The socio-technical approach of NPT highlights that the integration of AI is not just a technical challenge but also a social one, involving changes in work practices, roles, and organizational norms. The current study's findings are also in line with the findings of Wirth (2018), who emphasized the transformative

impact of AI on marketing, particularly through its capabilities in predictive analytics and customer segmentation. In the DACH Region, marketing professionals are increasingly leveraging AI to predict customer behaviors, tailor marketing campaigns, and optimize segmentation strategies. However, the slower adoption pace compared to other regions suggests that local market dynamics, including organizational readiness and regulatory environments, play a significant role in shaping how and when these technologies are integrated.

### 7.1.2 Implications for the Future

The integration of AI into marketing practices is reshaping the industry in profound ways, creating both opportunities and challenges for marketing professionals. The findings of this study suggest that the required skillset for marketers is shifting significantly. Traditional marketing skills, such as brand management and creative strategy, remain important, but there is an increasing demand for technical competencies, including data analysis, machine learning, and proficiency in using AI-driven tools. Marketing professionals must therefore invest in upskilling and reskilling to stay relevant, which necessitates a greater focus on continuous learning. Companies should support this by providing ongoing training and resources to help their teams adapt to these new demands.

AI's ability to enable highly personalized customer experiences is one of its key advantages in marketing. AI tools can analyze large datasets to predict customer behavior, segment audiences with greater precision, and deliver personalized content at scale, enhancing customer engagement and loyalty. However, for AI to be used effectively, marketing teams must integrate AI insights with creative content development. A balance between data-driven decision-making and creative intuition is essential to ensure that personalized marketing efforts resonate with customers on both a rational and an emotional level.

As AI becomes more prevalent in marketing, ethical considerations become increasingly important. Marketing professionals must be vigilant in ensuring that their use of AI complies with ethical standards and regulatory requirements, including being transparent about data usage, ensuring fairness in AI-driven decisions, and safeguarding consumer privacy. Companies that prioritize ethical AI practices will not only avoid potential legal issues but also build trust with customers, which is critical for long-term success.

The successful integration of AI into marketing practices also requires a cultural and organizational shift. Leaders within marketing organizations must champion the adoption of AI, fostering a culture that embraces innovation and is open to change. This involves addressing any resistance to AI adoption, which may stem from fears of job displacement or a reluctance to learn new skills, by clearly communicating the benefits of AI and providing the necessary resources for training. Creating an environment where experimentation with AI tools is encouraged and aligning AI adoption with broader business objectives are crucial steps for ensuring that its

integration is both smooth and effective. AI's integration into marketing necessitates collaboration across various functions within a company. Marketing teams need to work closely with data scientists, IT professionals, and legal departments to ensure that AI tools are implemented effectively and ethically. Interdisciplinary collaboration is essential for overcoming the challenges associated with AI adoption, such as ensuring data accuracy, addressing technical issues, and navigating regulatory compliance. By fostering collaboration, companies can ensure that AI is not only a tool for enhancing marketing but also a driver of innovation across the organization.

The integration of AI into marketing offers numerous opportunities, including increased efficiency, enhanced customer targeting, and the ability to deliver more personalized marketing experiences. However, these opportunities are accompanied by significant challenges. One of the key challenges identified is the need for ethical oversight in the use of AI, as discussed by Taddeo and Floridi (2018). As AI systems are increasingly used to make decisions that affect consumers, it is crucial to ensure that these systems are transparent, fair, and free from bias. In addition, while AI can augment human capabilities in many areas, it cannot fully replace the need for human creativity, emotional intelligence, and strategic thinking. These uniquely human attributes remain essential, particularly in areas where AI has limitations, such as in understanding complex emotional cues and cultural contexts that are vital for effective marketing. The dynamic nature of AI technologies means that marketing practices must be continuously monitored and adapted. What works today may not be effective tomorrow as AI tools and consumer behaviors evolve. Marketing teams should establish mechanisms for regularly reviewing the performance of AI-driven campaigns and be ready to pivot as needed. Staying informed about the latest developments in AI will ensure that the organization remains competitive in a rapidly changing landscape.

## 7.2 Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of AI on marketing skill profiles and the evolving landscape of AI-driven marketing, several limitations must be acknowledged. One of the primary limitations of the study is the relatively small sample size used for the qualitative analysis. The expert interviews conducted were limited to a select group of professionals; thus, the findings may have limited generalizability. In addition, while a regional focus provided valuable insights into the specific challenges and opportunities faced by companies in the DACH region in adopting AI technologies, it limits the applicability of the findings to other geographical contexts. Austria, Germany and Switzerland are known for their cautious approach to adopting new technologies, which may not reflect the experiences of companies in more technologically advanced or rapidly evolving markets. Therefore, the conclusions drawn may not be directly applicable to countries with different technological adoption rates or regulatory environments.

The study relied on qualitative methods, particularly expert interviews, to gather insights into the evolving skill requirements in the marketing field. While qualitative research is well-suited for exploring complex and emerging topics such as AI in marketing, it inherently involves a degree of subjectivity and interpretive bias. The insights provided by the experts, while valuable, may have been influenced by their individual experiences and perspectives, potentially leading to a skewed interpretation of the broader industry trends. In addition, reliance on expert opinions means that the study may not have fully captured the perspectives of entry-level marketing professionals or those working in smaller organizations, who might experience the impact of AI differently.

The rapidly evolving nature of AI technologies presents a temporal limitation. The data and insights gathered reflect the state of AI and its application in marketing at the time of the research. However, as AI technologies continue to advance, new tools, practices, and challenges will likely emerge that were not accounted for. Consequently, the findings may become less relevant as the technology and its applications continue to evolve.

Another limitation is the lack of quantitative data to complement the qualitative findings. While the study provides a detailed exploration of the issues through expert interviews, it does not include quantitative metrics, which could have provided additional support for the conclusions drawn. For example, surveys with a larger sample size could have been used to quantify the prevalence of specific skill gaps or the extent of AI adoption across different sectors. The inclusion of such data could have strengthened the study's findings and provided a more robust basis for the recommendations made.

### 7.3 Outlook for Future Research

The findings and limitations of this study indicate several avenues for future research that could further enhance understanding of the impact of AI on marketing skill profiles and the broader marketing landscape. Given the rapidly evolving nature of AI technologies and their application in marketing, it is crucial to continue investigating this dynamic area to ensure that both academic knowledge and practical application remain current and relevant.

Future research should aim to include a larger and more diverse samples to improve the generalizability of the findings. Expanding the context beyond the DACH region to include different areas with varying levels of AI adoption could provide a more comprehensive picture of how AI is (re)shaping marketing skills globally. In addition, including participants from different levels of seniority, ranging from entry-level marketers to senior executives, and across various industries could offer a more nuanced understanding of how AI impacts marketing skills at different stages of a professional career and within different marketing contexts.

Given the rapid advancements in AI technologies, longitudinal studies are recommended to track the evolution of marketing skills over time. Such studies could monitor how the integration of AI continues to shape marketing practices and the associated skill requirements. Longitudinal research would also allow for the observation of long-term trends and the identification of emerging skills that may become critical as AI technologies develop further and become more ingrained in marketing operations.

To complement the qualitative insights provided by this study, future research could incorporate quantitative methods, such as large-scale surveys or experimental designs, to validate and extend the findings. Quantitative data could provide a more robust understanding of the prevalence of specific AI-related skills among marketing professionals, the degree of AI adoption across different sectors, and the effectiveness of various AI tools in enhancing marketing outcomes. Quantitative studies could also explore the relationship between specific AI competencies and career advancement in the marketing field.

While this study provides a broad overview of AI's impact on marketing skills, future research could focus on industry-specific investigations. Different industries may experience the integration of AI in marketing differently depending on their unique characteristics, consumer behavior, and regulatory environments. For example, research could explore how AI is influencing marketing in highly regulated industries, such as healthcare or finance, compared to its impact in less regulated sectors, such as retail or entertainment. Industry-specific studies could yield targeted insights that are more directly applicable to professionals working within those sectors.

As AI continues to play a more prominent role in marketing, the ethical implications of its use deserve further exploration. Future research could examine the ethical challenges posed by AI, such as data privacy concerns, algorithmic bias, and the potential for AI to reinforce existing inequalities. Investigating how companies can implement ethical guidelines for AI in marketing, and how these guidelines can be effectively communicated and enforced would be valuable for both academic and practical purposes. Moreover, studies could explore consumer perceptions of AI-driven marketing and the ethical considerations that are most important to them.

Given the global nature of AI adoption, cross-cultural studies could provide valuable insights into how cultural context influences the integration of AI in marketing. Such research could explore how cultural differences impact the acceptance of AI technologies, the ethical considerations that are prioritized, and the specific skills that are valued in marketing professionals. Understanding these cultural nuances could help multinational companies tailor their AI-driven marketing strategies to different markets more effectively.

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## 9 Appendix

### 9.1 Interview Guideline

#### Introduction

##### 1. Opening Remarks:

- Introduction of the interviewer: Hannah Seier
- Briefly explain the purpose of the interview.
- Ensure the interviewee understands that their responses will be confidential.
- Obtain consent to record the interview if applicable.

##### 2. Company and Role:

- Can you please describe your role within the company?
- How long have you been working in this role?
- Can you provide a brief overview of your company's operations?

#### Current Situation

##### 3. AI Applications and Skills:

- Can you describe the AI technologies currently used in your marketing operations?
- How are these AI technologies being used to optimize different aspects of marketing (e.g., customer segmentation, personalized marketing, predictive analytics)?
- What skills do you think are currently required for marketing employees in your company to effectively work with AI technologies?

#### Problems

##### 4. Implementation Process and Training:

- What steps did you take to implement AI technologies in your marketing operations?
- What types of training or professional development programs does your company offer to help marketing employees acquire the necessary AI-related skills?
- What skills does one need to work in marketing now vs a few years ago? (eg. Using AI tools now)

#### Impact of Problems

##### 6. Impact of Skill Gaps:

- How have the identified skills affected your or other employees work?
- Can you provide examples of how these gaps have impacted your marketing operations?

#### Solutions

##### 7. Future Skills:

- Looking ahead, what additional skills do you think will become important for marketing professionals in an AI-driven landscape?
- How do you foresee the role of marketing employees evolving as AI technologies continue to advance?

#### Conclusion

##### 8. Final Thoughts:

- Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the use of AI in marketing or the skills required for marketing professionals?
- Do you have any recommendations for other companies looking to integrate AI into their marketing operations?

##### 9. Thank You:

- Thank the interviewee for their time and insights.
- Inform them about the next steps in the research process and how their input will contribute to your study.

## 9.2 Exposé

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<b>Arbeitstitel</b>	AI-Driven Marketing Transformation: Effects on Marketing Skill Profiles through AI Tools.
Fragestellung der Master-These	<p><b>Problem Statement:</b></p> <p>The future of marketing is dependent on the interaction between human creativity and AI efficiency. Marketers must develop their skills in strategic thinking, creativity, and ethical considerations. Challenges are present, but navigating the partnership between humans and AI promises a marketing landscape that is not only technologically advanced but also deeply human-centered. This article aims to explore the complex relationship between marketing professionals and AI and provide guidance for the future.</p> <p>Through digital transformation and the emergence of various AI tools, or the breakthrough of AI tools that make them accessible to the "masses," there is an increasing tendency to use them in the work context. Specifically in the marketing field, more and more useful tools are being launched that not only simplify work in the marketing sector or make processes more efficient but also make their use necessary or almost obligatory (Sandeepanie et al., 2020, pp. 304–312).</p> <p>In the marketing field, which is built fast paced and based on data-driven decisions, it is crucial to keep up with the times and stay informed about the latest trends and the interests of the target audience (Nistor 2019, pp. 127–132). For employees, this is often a challenge as they constantly need to adapt to new tools.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>In the past, campaigns had to be designed and processed differently; today, AIs can be used to analyze campaigns, assess the target audience, and create various assets. The goal of this work is to investigate the extent to which job profiles change due to the transformation of AI and to identify which skills will be relevant in the future of marketing, considering the evolution of skills in relation to AI tools.</p>

	<p><b>Research Question:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do companies leverage AI technologies to optimize their marketing operations?</li> <li>2. What skills will be expected from marketing employees in an AI-driven landscape?</li> </ol>
<p>Wissenschaftliche und praktische Relevanz</p>	<p><b>Scientific Significance:</b></p> <p>Although there is a considerable amount of research on the topic of skills in marketing and job requirements in the marketing field, the question regarding future skills has not yet been posed. This is relevant not only for the workforce but also for the management within the marketing sector. To understand what will be pertinent in the future and how to best adapt to the transformation, it is crucial to engage with this topic. Also, it should be questioned to what extent soft and hard skills are relevant for the marketing industry (Lyu &amp; Jin, 2021, pp. 120–131). Therefore, it is important to conduct scientific research and inquire how this change will impact marketing and which skills will be relevant in the future.</p> <p>This work is supposed to look into the pivotal roles that will shape the landscape of AI-powered marketing in the future. Strategic planning and creativity emerge as indispensable skills, encompassing the art of crafting narratives, developing brand strategies that resonate with target audiences, and designing campaigns that evoke emotion and captivate customers. Ethical decision-making takes center stage as AI algorithms advance, emphasizing the importance of integrating ethical considerations into decision-making processes. Human marketers play a crucial role in addressing potential biases in AI-driven campaigns and safeguarding brand integrity. The ability to build and nurture relationships with customers relies on empathy and a nuanced understanding of human behavior, emphasizing the enduring human touch in marketing. As personalized communication and customer engagement strategies pivot on the human capacity to connect emotionally, the rapid evolution of technology and consumer behavior underscores the necessity for marketers to remain agile and committed to continuous learning. In this dynamic landscape, humans will continue to be essential in adapting marketing strategies to ever-changing trends and emerging platforms (Taddeo &amp; Floridi, 2018, p. 171-172).</p> <p>Future marketing professionals are expected to possess a diverse skill set that aligns with the evolving landscape of AI-driven marketing. Key among these skills is the ability to interpret and generate insights from AI-generated data, transforming them into actionable strategies that drive marketing success. Creativity and innovation remain paramount, emphasizing the need for a mindset that fosters the development of unique, emotionally resonant campaigns beyond the capabilities of AI. Ethical decision-making is a critical competency, requiring professionals to comprehend the ethical implications of AI in marketing and prioritize consumer trust and brand reputation in their strategic choices (Taddeo &amp; Floridi, 2018, p. 172). Adaptability and a commitment to lifelong learning are essential attributes, ensuring that marketers can navigate the dynamic terrain of technological advances and industry changes. Additionally, collaboration and emotional intelligence play a crucial role, as marketers must collaborate effectively with cross-functional teams and leverage emotional intelligence to understand and connect with diverse audiences, enriching the human touch in marketing endeavors (Culnan &amp; Williams, 2009, pp. 674–683).</p> <p>Future marketing professionals are expected to possess a diverse skill set that aligns with the evolving landscape of AI-driven marketing. Key among these skills is the ability to interpret and generate insights from AI-generated data, transforming them into actionable strategies that drive marketing success. Creativity and innovation remain paramount, emphasizing the need for a mindset that fosters the development of unique, emotionally resonant</p>

	<p>campaigns beyond the capabilities of AI. Ethical decision-making is a critical competency, requiring professionals to comprehend the ethical implications of AI in marketing and prioritize consumer trust and brand reputation in their strategic choices. Adaptability and a commitment to lifelong learning are essential attributes, ensuring that marketers can navigate the dynamic terrain of technological advances and industry changes. Additionally, collaboration and emotional intelligence play a crucial role, as marketers must collaborate effectively with cross-functional teams and leverage emotional intelligence to understand and connect with diverse audiences, enriching the human touch in marketing endeavors (Lee et al., 2003, pp. 755–768).</p> <p><b>Practical Relevance:</b></p> <p>Currently, we are experiencing a significant transformation in practice. There are already some pioneers who have focused on AI-based tools in marketing. However, there are still no recommendations or best practice examples for this as it is new. No one knows exactly how to use these tools optimally and what challenges lie ahead (Verma et al. 2021). There is uncertainty regarding the legal foundations for specific tools and how the data can be utilized.</p> <p><b>Relevance for Digital Media Management:</b></p> <p>This topic is relevant for media management for several reasons. Since we engage with the media industry, it is crucial for us as media management students to be able to work with these tools and to use them to the best of our abilities in our work. It is also important to adapt to the latest tools and technologies. We explore these topics in courses such as Marketing &amp; Sales, Digital Business Innovation Transformation, Business Planning &amp; Entrepreneurship, Media Content &amp; Data Management, and Media Business Management.</p>
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Methodenwahl und Sampling	<p><b>Empirical Method:</b></p> <p>For the purpose of this thesis, I will employ expert interviews as the primary data collection method, and these will be subsequently evaluated through qualitative content analysis to extract relevant insights and information.</p> <p><b>Choice of Methodology including Limitations:</b></p> <p>In an academic context, expert interviews represent a qualitative research methodology designed to gather in-depth insights and expert opinions on a specific subject. Expert interviews are conducted to obtain expert perspectives, experiences, and insights on a particular research topic. Determine the scope and boundaries of the research question to ensure that the interview focuses on relevant and meaningful aspects of the subject (Döringer, 2020, pp. 267–273).</p> <p>In general, qualitative interviewing emphasizes the importance of investigating experiences and perspectives of the interviewees for developing a better understanding of social reality. Although the expert interview is methodologically situated in the qualitative paradigm, in practice, individual relevancies of experts tend to be overshadowed by the researchers' interest in collecting information about a particular social field (Döringer, 2020, pp. 267–273).</p> <p>The limitation of this work lies in its reliance on the insights and perspectives of the selected experts. Consequently, the results and recommendations may be influenced by the</p>

limited number of interviewed experts and may not comprehensively cover all facets of the advertising industry with AI, as well as legal and ethical considerations. Additionally, the research could be constrained by temporal or regional limitations, given the rapid changes in the field of artificial intelligence and legislative regulations. It is essential to note that the results are based on information available at the time of the interviews and may evolve in the future (Döringer, 2020, pp. 267–273).

**Sampling Selection:**

On the one hand, the experts should work in the marketing field, and on the other hand, also in the technical field, as they particularly deal with AI trends. Similarly, individuals such as educators or those conducting research in this field are considered. Additionally, someone working in management who has thus engaged with the requirements for employees in the marketing field.

**Here is a possible compilation of the areas of expertise.**

	Position
Interviewpartner 1	Digital-Marketing (operational)
Interviewpartner 2	Digital-Marketing (operational)
Interviewpartner 3	Digital-Marketing (operational)
Interviewpartner 4	Digital-Marketing (leadership)
Interviewpartner 5	Digital-Marketing (leadership)

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## 9.3 Interviews

### 9.3.1 Interview Person 1

Interviewer: Umm, we'll talk about AI application. It's skills first, so can you maybe describe the the AI technology currently used in your marketing operations?

Interview Person 1: So we have our own tool that is based on ChatGPT and we first had like our own chat, utility and now they transformed it more with different templates you can use for different situations that you can also use as kind of an inspiration. You can now also upload presentations, download stuff, get it translated. All these different kinds, so mostly based on chat I would say.

Interviewer: OK. And then how are you using these or other AI technologies to optimize different aspects of marketing?

Interview Person 1: So in general for my work, I would say I use it quite a lot for mails for different text to generate. To write some rationals when I made some plans, but we also have many different options. We can use it for to get some inspiration to get some new ideas, because you're always in your kind of own bubble and to get some outside perspective, also sometimes to challenge ourselves so you can like put what you had in mind. What you want to do and then asking ChatGPT umm, what could be done better? How it can be challenged this kind of stuff? Umm, but also when it comes to target audience that you can ask what kind of target audience would make sense here. Uh, we also use it for client relationships. So to analyze how is the communication style of our clients, how can we improve it? Also for research, umm, we sometimes use it to SWAT analysis and also for presentations that we kind of give what we want to talk about and then ask ChatGPT to provide kind of headlines or something like that. So I would say many different areas where I use AI in work.

Interviewer: And you mentioned the rationals. Can you maybe explain or give an example of how you use it in the context?

Interview Person 1: Yeah, sure. So when I do the media plans, I decide which kind of platforms I want to use, which kind of channels I want to use, umm. And from my experience, I know what makes sense and also from analysis that I did, and sometimes I just need to put it in words why I'm using it and there's really nice just to give ChatGPT. It was like this is the media plan. This was the goal. This is the target audience, blah blah. And please just write me the rational why? We are doing it and put it into words because it sounds always much better if the activity rights it, then I write and it's also saves me more time because if I we didn't need to think about it and put it really nicely in words. So it also sounds more eloquent. I take more time than if I just tell Chad Tiffany in bullet points. The outline of the campaign and the reason and then to activity really does nice rational and text.

Interviewer: Yeah. And then what skills do you think are currently required for marketing employees in our company to effectively work with AI technologies?

Interview Person 1: Umm, I think you need really a good knowledge about the topic because many things that ChatGPT provides is quite generic. So you still always need to read through what you get from ChatGPT. And then question if it really makes sense because in marketing there are so many different factors you need to take into consideration and to activity sometimes also if you give ChatGPT all the information has probably always something that

you did not put but you know it. So you also need to consider it and need to check does it make sense? So I think critical thinking and really questioning is also really important. And even if ChatGPT really good as a start point, I think most of the time you really need to get through it. And really question, does it make sense or do I need to change something and most of the time I do need to change something because I know the client doesn't like it? Or maybe we already tried it and we know it doesn't make sense or it didn't work. And those are all things that have to be doesn't know that I need to either put in, but there are so many factors that sometimes you don't think of all the different factors you need to put into. I'm ChatGPT. Tell you also get an answer that really works not only in theory, but also in in practical work. Umm I was having prompting is quite. You need to be quite good at prompting that. You know, what do you need to tell ChatGPT that you need to explain more if you just have one question? It's the most of the time. Not enough. You need to give more background information. You need to describe. Who you are. Who is the client? So really mastered the art of prompting. I would say is also quite quite important and never just take what you get from ChatGPT. Always check if that makes sense, because there are cases where it really doesn't make any sense.

Interviewer: From the yeah, I think you kind of already moved on to the next topic, which are the problems? Umm. Then what steps did you take to implement AI in your marketing operations?

Interview Person 1: Umm it's it's a what do you mean with the problems? Sorry.

Interviewer: Sorry.

Interviewer:Umm, so the next section is about the problems that I'm right now starting with like the current situation and then moving on to pop.

Interview Person 1: Yeah.

Interview Person 1: OK. OK. OK. OK.

Interviewer: Sorry my fault.

Interview Person 1: The question was how we implemented.

Interviewer: Yeah. In your marketing operations.

Interview Person 1: Umm, so I would say the companies really behind pushing that. So we really always have kind of some presentations about it, some schools that are sending many materials where can learn how to prompt and everything and and in the end it's up to everyone to make use of it. So it's not that we have a certain process where it says now you need to use ChatGPT, but it's really something everyone umm needs to figure out themselves when to use creativity and I'm pretty sure that there are people who don't use it that much and then there are people who really use it a lot and I have to say for me it's really it depends on. How I feel because there's certain days where I'm quite good at writing. For example, rationals and other days. I'm not an, it's just easier to use chat GPT. So there is no fixed process. It's really up to everyone how much you want to implement ChatGPT and for me it also depends on the topic. And how I feel their days were really use it a lot because I feel like I'm slow in thinking and it makes everything more efficient and fast. And there are days where I feel like I'm I will just write it down myself, and it's gonna be fine.

Interviewer: Yeah, fair. Are there any types of trainings or professional development programs your company offers you and your it's employees to help the marketing employees acquire like necessary AI related skills like you mentioned before example the prompting.

Interview Person 1: Yeah. So we have and a lot of materials and stuff and all the trainings, but it's always that you need to. Find those stuff yourself and really decide for yourself if you want to do the training. I mean, we have our weekly meetings with the whole company where sometimes people introduce certain things, percent certain things, but this is always just really limited, like 5 to 10 minutes. But there were materials shared. There's a prompt library, many different other stuff like the A really a lot of materials, but you need to be proactive in really looking through it and to trainings. So nothing's mandatory here.

Interviewer: OK, umm and what skills would you say? That's when need to work in marketing. Now versus a few years ago, you can compare.

Interview Person 1: Umm. Yeah, I think I mean critical thinking and questioning things. I think this was always important, but it's even more important now and also to be fast with trends. When it comes to AI is really critical because it can help you so much. Uh, and I think in some time it will also make a difference if a company was fast in using AI in certain areas or not because it can really give you a huge. Benefit so yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you think there's more technical knowledge required?

Interview Person 1: No, I don't think so. I think that many people think that they need more technical knowledge, but in general we have been working with tools five years ago as well, and it's kind of another tool you need to use and you kind of need to learn how to use it best. But it's not a specific technical knowledge that you need to have, so I don't think that you really need that.

Interviewer: So. But technical knowledge overall is a big factor. You would say then and now.

Interview Person 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: OK, umm, and what problems can you identify when using AI for marketing? I mean, you've mentioned a few.

Interview Person 1: There.

Interviewer: Yeah, sorry.

Interview Person 1: Yeah. Yeah, you need to Fact Check you will will need to think if what TBT tells you makes sense. I've heard some examples where someone asked her to be. What influencer they would recommend, and I don't remember exactly which ones, but one of them was Katzenberger. And I also don't remember the brand, but like if you have certain knowledge about influencer marketing and you don't need, you don't even need to be deep into the topic. You know, this really doesn't make any sense. Umm. So yeah, those those are the biggest things for me that you really. To question if it makes sense and just not take everything as it is. Also, when it comes to to research, because it's nice to use it for research, but I think it's always just the starting point. Umm. And then you need to think yourself. Does

it make sense? Should we really use that? Umm. Is it actually true? Because sometimes ChatGPT also produces things that are not exactly true. So that we need to be careful.

Interviewer: Yeah. So you've already covered the impacts of the problem with your example quite well, so we'll skip that question and move on to the solutions.

Interview Person 1: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: So looking ahead, what skills do you think will become more important for marketing professionals in this AI driven landscape?

Interview Person 1: Uh, I think in general that you open for it and that you use it is quite important because it can make life so much more efficient and easier. Umm. I think the skills will not change that much because we already or I already use it a lot. Umm yeah, I think the basics will stay the same in the future as well. Umm. At least when I think about the tools that I'm using now, I don't know how far AI will go in the future. But for now, I think those are the basics that will not change in the future as well.

Interviewer: Umm. And how do you foresee the role of marketing employees evolving with this AI revolution?

Interview Person 1: Yeah. Umm, I think some tasks will just go to chat GPT. So you will not focus. On creating text so much or all this stuff and you will focus more on strategic stuff or really questioning critical thinking, all these topics will get bigger I think. And everything that can be done by AI in a certain way that will be less part of the top or will just make that so much time. Like if you look how much time you spend on each task, this will not be such a huge part of your work anymore because you have the API which is doing that. So I think certain jobs in marketing will maybe not completely disappear but get less and everything that is more in the strategic direction will get more important.

Interviewer: Yeah. Umm. And then final thoughts, is there anything else you would like to add regarding the AI marketing topic? I haven't asked you.

Interview Person 1: Umm, I think safety is a big topic so that you really have saved some safety when it comes to data.

Interviewer:Umm.

Interview Person 1: So that data is not just out there. If you have ChatGPT we know ChatGPT learns from everything the that you put in. So you need to be careful there and I think it will also change a lot how you create. UM, stuff like images or texts and that needs to be found a way how to deal with it. And also when it comes to the. Ownership of ideas or of certain creatives, that this is an important part, but I have to say it's not so much part of my job because I'm more on on the media side, but I think for a creative agencies this will be. A big task in the future.

Interviewer: And. Would you put this pointer categorize this with problems of AI, or do you think it's just another point to think of in the future?

Interview Person 1: Umm, I wouldn't say it's a problem. I would say it's a challenge because it

doesn't have to be a problem if you figure out how to deal with it, but it can be a problem if you don't deal with it. So I would say it's more kind of a challenge.

Interviewer: OK. This because this is what I was referring to her I thought about when I mentioned the technical knowledge because when you use it as an marketing employee and I kinda have the feeling that you might. Have to know about the technical stuff like how is the data processed and am I even allowed to upload anything or no? But as you said, like if you work in a bigger company, it's not.

Interview Person 1: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: It's not really part of your job to know about it, but you ask someone in legal maybe if they.

Interview Person 1: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: OK. And then do you have any recommendations for other companies looking to integrate AI in their marketing operations?

Interview Person 1: Umm, I would say it's really important to integrate it. It's such a huge thing and huge trends that will really stay and. I think there's no way around using it and it can make life so much easier, so much better. You can generate new ideas you you have so many options. What you can do with AI and you would be kind of stupid not to use this. And I think companies that use AI are really ahead of all the others. And that's a big opportunity. Every company should jump on.

Interviewer: Did you wish your company offered more trainings or make it more obvious, or have like a more structured process?

Interview Person 1: Umm. Umm, not really, because you just need to take the time yourself to go through the tool that we have to look for the different templates we have and it's most of the time. Self explanatory. Umm. And it's just part of the job to be proactive. If you want to develop yourself, you should be able to do it yourself, because it's not hard and I think there is enough material and stuff available that is easy, accessible, easier, understandable. So I would say that is a pretty great job.

Interviewer: Yes. So would you say and maybe self management is a big topic for the future in marketing because as you said like you have to learn it by yourself, you have to figure it out by yourself.

Interview Person 1: Umm, I think this really depends on the topic on the company, on the team. I think this is in general topic that you should have a good self management and a certain motivation for your work, so I wouldn't really say this is something specific to it. I but about the top in general, if you ask me.

Interviewer: Yep. Well, thank you for your interview.

### 9.3.2 Interview Person 2

Interviewer: Can you describe the AI technologies currently used in your marketing operations?

Interview Person 2: Uff, we currently use AI every day. I don't even know where to start. I think it would make sense to break it down into the individual areas in which we currently use AI so that I can list all the areas of application. Let's start with texts or copywriting. We write all external communications with the help of Chat GPT. We have created our own chat for this. We had to train it, so to speak. In other words, I fed it with information about us for a whole day. In other words, what we do, who our target group is, how we want to present ourselves to the outside world, what image we want to show of ourselves, what tonality we want to use to address which target groups and so on. Ammm, that really took me some time, but it paid off a thousand times over. Now we can always use the chat to create any communication. And always hit the right tone of voice for the target group and so on. Of course, the texts still have to be slightly adapted and checked, but we certainly save 80% of the time we used to spend and have a much more consistent communication line. Of course, this also goes in the direction of SEO. We also use a Chat GPT-based programme for all our SEO texts. This is already trained on some important SEO points. We can then generate SEO texts with extremely little time and, above all, extremely cost-effectively. Of course, these also have to be revised and adapted, but here too it is much less effort for us and we can save a lot of money. Then we will certainly also use some analysis tools. Ammm, smaller and simpler analyses and evaluations are often done with Chat GPT and can thus save time. But for larger analyses, for example for ammm the monthly reportings e.g. For SEO or Google Ads we use a special AI based analysis tool. We can very easily throw any data in there, i.e. long screenshots and the tool automatically comes up with important KPIs that it can calculate etc.. It also saves the information from the previous month and immediately calculates all changes. It's a really great tool that saves me a lot of time. Ammm, where else? Ahh certainly in image and video generation. There are so many really ingenious tools that make our lives soooo much easier. For example, we use a tool that can clone people. So we can generate lots of people from one video and save an infinite amount of time. Brilliant tool! The same also applies to image generation, of course. It has never been so easy to find a suitable image for any topic. Of course, we also use AI in our CRM. There, customer data is automatically matched to corresponding jobs. This means that profiles are scanned by AI and then compared with the vacancies and immediately shown where the people would fit. Predictive analytics tools: We can use these tools to predict future trends and customer behaviour. Or at least try to. As far as I know, this is based on historical data. This enables us to develop proactive marketing strategies and secure our competitive advantage.

Interviewer: What skills do you think are currently required for marketing employees in your company to effectively work with AI technologies?

Interview Person 2: So, when it comes to using AI technologies in marketing, you really need a good mix of technical and strategic skills. Erm, our employees need to have quite a few skills. For example: We can start with the technical skills - that's really important. Our people need to understand how AI works and be able to use these tools effectively. This means they should be familiar with data analysis, machine learning and the application of AI in various marketing areas. Then there's data expertise, for example - this is about interpreting large amounts of data and deriving actionable insights from it. In other words, you need to have a strong understanding of data science and be able to think analytically. Here, too, the focus has shifted away from the actual processing and understanding of data and knowing how to analyse the right KPIs with AI has become much more important. Creativity certainly remains important - even if AI can automate many tasks, human creativity is simply irreplaceable. Our

employees must be able to develop creative marketing ideas that are then supported and optimised by AI analyses. In other words, creativity and the ability to empathise with a target group are still very important. Creativity is perhaps almost a little less important than the ability to put yourself in the target group's shoes with a creative idea and consider or, how should I put it, analyse whether the idea really suits the target group and the objective. Then adaptability and continuous learning are extremely important for us - AI technologies are constantly evolving, so our people have to be flexible and willing to keep learning. This applies to new technical skills as well as adapting to changing market conditions and customer expectations. Then I would say that interpersonal skills have become much more important, especially for managers. Even in an AI-driven world, it's super important to be able to work well in a team, communicate and lead. These skills are particularly crucial when it comes to successfully implementing AI-driven projects and promoting collaboration between different departments. Because now that people can suddenly take on many more tasks because AI has made them easier, it has become much more important for me to understand where in the big AI world I can support my employees so that they can realise their full potential.

Interviewer: What steps did you take to implement AI technologies in your marketing operations?

Interview Person 2: So, um, the process of integrating AI technologies into our marketing was quite extensive. It didn't happen overnight. First of all, we got an overview of which AI tools were available and which of them would best suit our needs. That was really the first step. We then took a closer look at some of these tools, we did test runs to see how they work and whether they really deliver what they promise. That really took a lot of time. I didn't have any training or help, so I had to spend days reading up on them and finding suitable tools, etc. Um, then it was time for the actual implementation. We had to adapt our existing systems to the new AI tools, so to speak. It was important that everything harmonised well with each other because, well, there's no point if the AI doesn't work properly with our existing processes. We worked closely with our IT people, who then implemented it technically. But, um, technology alone is not enough. Of course, we also had to prepare our team for it. So, we set up training programmes to teach our employees how to use these AI tools effectively. That wasn't easy either, because everyone has a different level of knowledge. That's why we tried to make the training programmes as flexible as possible, so that everyone is picked up where they are. Yes, and then there was the issue of change management. Many people are afraid of new technologies at first, so we had to make sure that everyone in the team was on board and understood the benefits of AI. That was, um, perhaps the most important part of the whole thing - convincing the team that AI doesn't want to take away their work, but rather help them to work better and more efficiently.

So, it's been a long road, but it's definitely paid off in the end. We are now much more efficient and can concentrate on the really important tasks because a lot of what used to be time-consuming is now simply done by AI.

Interviewer: What types of training or professional development programs does your company offer to help marketing employees acquire the necessary AI-related skills?

Interview Person 2: Yes, of course, as far as our training and development programmes to build up AI skills in the marketing team are concerned, we have some really good things going on. Um, we offer regular workshops and training courses that are aimed precisely at getting our people up to speed when it comes to AI and the corresponding tools. These training courses are super practical, so it's not just about theory, but really about how to use

the tools in everyday life. We start with the basics so that everyone can really get started, regardless of how much prior knowledge they have. And then we build this up step by step, right up to advanced techniques, such as how to carry out AI-supported data analyses or combine creative processes with AI. These are actually always further training sessions where I focus on each individual person and then clarify the difficulties and problems with them alone. It has simply turned out that I can only help everyone as well as possible. We also, um, regularly bring in external experts who go into more detail and bring our team up to date when it comes to new developments or tools. That's super important because the AI world is constantly evolving and we want to make sure that our team is always up to date. And I should also mention this: We are committed to continuous learning. This means that we don't just have one training course and that's it, but we always offer new learning modules when something changes or when new tools come onto the market. This keeps everyone in the team up to date and allows them to incorporate the new technologies directly into their daily work.

Interviewer: What skills does one need to work in marketing now vs a few years ago?

Interview Person 2: Well, when I think about what you need to be able to do in marketing today compared to a few years ago, a lot has really changed. Um, it used to be important to master the classic marketing skills - analysing target groups, developing creative campaigns, planning communication strategies, things like that. That's still important, of course, but now there's a whole layer of new skills that weren't even on the radar a few years ago. For example, um, technical understanding and the ability to work with AI tools. Nowadays, you really need to know how to use these tools properly to analyse data, make predictions and optimise marketing strategies. This is no longer just a "nice-to-have", but really a must. You also need to be able to combine different tools, for example, to combine AI-supported analyses with creative processes in order to develop really effective campaigns. Then, um, initiative and independent learning have become much more important. AI technologies are constantly evolving and you can't just wait for someone to tell you what to do. You have to stay active yourself, keep up to date with new developments and keep learning. Flexibility is the keyword here - you have to be prepared to constantly adapt to new tools and methods. Another point is networked thinking. In other words, the ability to combine different disciplines and technologies is becoming increasingly important. In the past, you might have been able to focus on being really good in a particular marketing discipline, but now you have to look at the big picture. It's about understanding how to combine the data you get from AI tools with creative ideas and strategic thinking to get really resounding results. And, um, interpersonal skills are not to be underestimated either. Precisely because AI takes over many of the technical tasks, the human element is becoming increasingly important. You have to be able to work well in a team, but also be able to lead and motivate others, especially when it comes to introducing new technologies and using them in a meaningful way in everyday life. So, basically, today it's about combining technical expertise, creativity, initiative and social skills in a way that wasn't necessary in the past. This makes the work more challenging, but also incredibly exciting, because you are constantly learning new things and developing yourself further.

Interviewer: How have the identified skills affected your or other employees work?

Interview Person 2: So, as far as the effects of skill gaps are concerned, you really notice when there are gaps. Um, especially in an area like AI, where technologies are developing so quickly, it can be really problematic if someone is not completely up to date or lacks certain skills. Of course, this then has an impact on the work as a whole.

For example, if someone is not as skilled at analysing data or using AI tools, it simply takes longer to complete certain tasks or the results are not as precise as they could be. This can then lead to missed opportunities or decisions being made that are not optimal because the underlying data has not been analysed correctly. And this then runs through the entire chain - if the data analysis is not correct, the marketing strategies based on it are also less effective. I once had a case where someone in a project had difficulties combining different AI tools with each other. This is really important today because the tools alone often only do part of the work. But if you don't know how to bring them together, then the potential remains unutilised. In this case, this meant that the campaign did not perform as well as we had expected, simply because the possibilities of AI were not fully utilised.

And then there is the issue of creativity and how it is combined with AI. If someone has difficulty thinking creatively and incorporating AI-supported analyses at the same time, then you notice this in the results. The campaigns then often seem less well thought out or don't quite strike the right chord with the target group. These are the moments when you realise that the creative process is stalling because the AI results are not being interpreted or used correctly. In the team itself, you also notice when interpersonal skills are lacking, especially when it comes to integrating the new technologies. If someone cannot work well in a team or has difficulties leading others, the entire project can suffer as a result. This is then reflected in the collaboration - it takes longer for decisions to be made or there are misunderstandings because communication is not going so well. This can slow down the entire workflow and ensure that projects are not implemented as efficiently as they could be.

So, these skill gaps can really have a big impact, both on the quality of our work and on the efficiency of the processes. That's why it's so important that we are constantly evolving and making sure that everyone in the team has the necessary skills to keep up with the latest developments.

**Interviewer:** Looking ahead, what additional skills do you think will become important for marketing professionals in an AI-driven landscape?

**Interview Person 2:** When I look to the future, I think that the requirements profile for marketing professionals will change even further in an AI-driven world. Um, what I see in particular is that technical knowledge will become even more important. So, it will no longer be enough just to know how to use AI tools - you will really need to understand how these technologies work, what's going on under the bonnet and how you can customise them to get the most out of them. That means deeper knowledge in areas like machine learning and algorithms will become increasingly important. Then I believe that the ability to think and work in complex ecosystems will become much more important. AI systems are becoming increasingly networked and can process a huge amount of data from different sources. As a marketing professional, you will therefore need to be able to structure and use this flood of data in a meaningful way in order to create comprehensive and personalised customer experiences. This means learning not only to think in terms of individual channels, but to keep an eye on the entire customer journey and orchestrate AI technologies in such a way that they interlock seamlessly. As for creativity, I think it will continue to play a central role, but in a slightly different form. Um, it will become more important to develop creative ideas that are not only original, but can also be validated and optimized through AI analysis. This means that marketing professionals will have to develop a keen sense of how to combine creative processes and technological possibilities. In other words, how to turn the data and insights provided by AI into truly innovative and relevant campaigns. And, um, then social and ethical responsibility comes into play. With the increasing use of AI, more ethical questions arise, be it in the handling of data, the transparency of algorithms or the avoidance of bias and discrimination in the results. Marketers will also need to understand how to use AI in a

responsible way and how to ensure that the technology is used fairly and transparently. This will play an increasingly important role, especially when it comes to gaining and maintaining customer trust. In terms of the role of marketers themselves, I think it will evolve from someone who works primarily creatively or strategically to a more versatile professional who combines technology, creativity, strategy and ethics. It will be more and more about designing the interface between man and machine. So, marketing professionals will not only have to develop ideas, but also ensure that these ideas are supported and implemented by AI in the best possible way. They will act more like conductors, ensuring that all elements - data, technology, creativity - work together harmoniously to achieve the best results.

**Interviewer:** Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the use of AI in marketing or the skills required for marketing professionals?

**Interview Person 2:** So, I think now really is the perfect time to jump on the AI bandwagon. Developments in this area are progressing so rapidly that it's almost risky not to join in. Companies that don't embrace AI now really run the risk of simply standing still in the future. I would even say that a marketing department that doesn't use AI will only achieve around 20% of the productivity compared to those that successfully integrate AI. They are worlds apart. AI offers so many opportunities to optimize processes, make better use of data and ultimately address target groups in a much more targeted and efficient way. If you miss out on this, you will really struggle to keep up with the competition. So it's no longer a question of whether you use AI, but how quickly you do it and how well you integrate it into your own processes. Now is the time to use these technologies and secure a real competitive advantage.

### 9.3.3 Interview Person 3

Interviewer: OK, all looks good. Can you please briefly describe your role within your company and how long you've been working in this?

Interview Person 3: Sure thing. So I currently work in marketing activation, meaning that my current role is around activating the customer completely within our product portfolio. That includes anything from physical interactions or includes the entire touchpoint map of a customer. And previously I worked in investing where I had a lot to do with artificial intelligence or finance intelligence. Any form of automated system or software as a service system where we were personally invested and helped companies build up their a funding structure for when they launched into a seed round.

Interviewer: I think you I will jump right into the current situation. Can you maybe describe the AI technologies used in your marketing operations?

Interview Person 3: Sure thing for our marketing, operations, we use a variety of different AI technologies, including the Azure cloud for data crunching as well as a gated form of chat, GPT to base any online interactions or as an online chat chat bot. Excuse me with customers who have queries or have any questions about our products beyond that within the store activations. We also have a gated form of chat, GPT and other forms of large language models to gauge and base and to make customer interactions with our displays or with our screens much more interactive and much more natural.

Interviewer: Mhm. And then can you maybe explain how these technologies help you optimize different aspects of marketing?

Interview Person 3: Sure. So for example, if you look at the gated chat GPT version we use in our online platforms, it helps a lot because it means that we don't need to have a single person #1 hired and solely responsible for responding to customer queries.

It makes the entire process much more efficient, both on our back end side, meaning that we don't need to go look for information through a database. We don't need to, you know, open a ticket internally to see who, who is responsible for the question. That is asked. It is very much just that a customer types in a question and then the AI would search its data warehouse or its data lake actually for the information and then give a the appropriate response to the keywords that it it filters out of the question.

On that side, it makes everything much more efficient and makes it much easier. Umm. Internally, we also have a form of AI. Uh that I can't name. However, that is much easier. It's used in our accounting, which is great. It makes my life super easy because it means I can basically just put in an invoice and it automatically translates it into our SAP system or into our accounting system internally and thus I don't need to create like the manual entry for accounting that it goes down into our accounting or into our booking journal.

Interviewer: And then considering the AI tools you guys are using. Uh. What skills do think currently are required for Marketing employees in your company to work effectively with those technologies?

Interview Person 3: Sure. Umm, I mean you need to have a like a general knowledge of of AI. At least you need to have interacted with it at least a little bit, and then you definitely also need to have the. I don't want to say the technological background, but you need to have a technological understanding in a sense of that. You need to be able to understand how you can interact with the AI, how you prompted correctly, and how you can, you know, ask the correct

questions to lead the AI to the answer that you need.

And this very much also comes into like an entrepreneurial mindset or into the into the entrepreneur because a lot of it is self management, a lot of it is self learning, right?

It's you're communicating with an AI. You need to learn from each other how you interact with each other and that also internally kind of becomes a cultural fit, right?

We are a company that very, very quickly adopted AI into a lot of processes which were previously done manually, so internally we've had people who didn't like or couldn't adapt culturally to the AI shift because they didn't have the self management, they didn't have the self learning, they didn't have the mindset of pushing themselves to learn new skills new and a new understanding event. Part of it is also the he didn't want to think for that step. Think that one step further. Right. They didn't want to have that understanding or they didn't want to build themselves that understanding of OK to receive this, I need to write out No 2 sentence prompt but a a like a small paragraph.

So the AI knows what I need from it from A to Z and so it's it's very. It's very much a a I would say a rounded human being. If you need someone who can self manage, who thinks for themselves, who can communicate effectively with themselves, but also with the AI, and has a general knowledge of the technology as well. Because if you don't have that base, you will never know what it really is capable of and what it does.

Interviewer: Yep. And as you've mentioned like prompting for example what kind like what kind of trainings or support does your company offer to help employees acquire the necessary skills?

Interview Person 3: Sure. So we actually offer, I actually just finished one earlier.

It was great there, mainly online learnings cause we're multinational company but within them we have the different AIS that we use and the different areas broken down.

Now I'm in a bit of a weird position because I interact with almost every department within the company, so I actually have to go through all of the learnings available from finance to accounting to legal to online to yeah, I had to do all of the learnings. So they're mainly online learnings. They're like small workshops where it's you get the theory and you get the you get a task and then you get shown how to do the task and then you need to do the task depending on which sector you're in about 2 to three times legal. For example, you have to do four times, so you definitely know it account and you do it twice because it's much simpler, right? The prompts are not as long because it's not looking for legal statutes. For example, umm and then you also if you want to they will provide you a paperback copy of these online learnings, but that's just an academic book, so I don't recommend doing that.

And yeah, you know, then we also have like an online like a online sandbox almost where you can mess around or you can learn and interact with the different AIS in a gated environment, meaning that if you do make a mistake, it doesn't immediately get sent and routed to our international data bank or into like our international accounting system. It just kind of stays within that sandbox. And then you're like, oops, delete. I made a mistake. Uh, which I think is a great tool. And for example, I spent a lot of time on it learning the different tools. I know a lot of I'm actually made. Most of the people in my team do the same thing, which was great and in turn you have a lot of very funny and interesting learnings.

Interviewer: Yep. Umm. And what would you say? Like, what's the difference between for example, working in marketing like five years ago where I didn't put as much versus now?

Interview Person 3: Uh, I would say it makes analysis is like competitive analysis is and stuff like that. Much, much easier, right? Especially like for example with chat GPT 4.0. Now it's

much smarter. It reads and crawls the Internet much faster and it much more precisely, meaning it. It still makes \*\*\*\* up. Am I allowed to swear?

Interviewer: Yep. I might just censor it.

Interview Person 3: It still makes stuff up. But it's much more accurate. Meaning for example, you can ask for a specific or niche industry and you can say create me a competitive analysis, include these parameters. Right. For for example, a small analysis of and then you can just write. OK, this is my situation. These are the four competitors.

Create the SWAT analysis and it'll give you actually relatively comprehensive base.

Now you'll need to add in your own research and your own sources and stuff like that, but the base research is that will already be completed for you, meaning for example, when we launch a new product, yes, OK, we ask and we look for market research and stuff like that. But I can tell you a lot of our market research now is done through AI, especially the number crunching like the big data analysis, all of what was done by hand five years ago or was done by one person five years ago is now done purely by an AI. It is purely the Excel sheet is fed into an AI. It's given a very long prompt. I will say that and then you just get your perfect market analysis of how your product will perform initially on product launch, the slope down that it will receive because the promotion has dropped off and then the pickup it should have due to the reasons umm. So it's made just the processes and the researching the market researching and the data analysis much, much simpler.

Interviewer: Yep. And can you maybe think of like you've now mentioned the work itself, but can you maybe think of skills like what difference does it make? That I know. You know what I mean?

Interview Person 3: No. Do you mind explaining?

Interviewer: Yep. So you just mentioned the differences between like what you used to do in marketing and what like you do now and how I can help. But then what kind of skills do you need to be able to work with the?

Interview Person 3: Yeah, I mean that comes back to what I was saying earlier, right, like five years ago when I was working in marketing or in venture capital when I was helping companies build their marketing strategies.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interview Person 3: You know, you had the people, for example, in certain departments like the online department, who they were entrepreneurial, they they were very cultured, they were very social, right. They were animals of their environment, basically right. They they needed to be as social and as out there as possible because they needed to develop the online content of what is happening now versus you had the people then in, for example, the data analysis which still did stuff like it was done 20 years ago on Excel, because that's nothing changed, right? Those people weren't entrepreneurial.

They didn't want to learn more because they already knew they or they thought they already knew everything, that there was to know. Umm. So in turn, you know you had to, you basically had to go from having these departmentalize thinking of, OK, this kind of person fits into here and this kind of person fits into here to needing a well rounded person it everywhere, right. It's you need people who are self starters who self manage.

You need people who are animals of their environment and of the Culture, right?

Especially because the AI, for example, doesn't know the company culture or the isn't able to split up the the culture within each team. The AI is I'll block for all teams.

Meaning, if somebody over here responds in a completely different manner than somebody over here, what what does the AI learn? You know, it could be that they completely contradict themselves and in turn your misconstruing the data like and you're misconstruing it's thought pattern, making it much more difficult for it to learn and to grow and to build and understanding of what its actual task needs to be. And so you you. Yeah, you also just need a a general knowledge of of technology and of AI, right? Whether that's physical as well, for example, for us with touch screens and stuff like that, very small amount, very niche part of the business, but also plays into it.

Interviewer: Yep. And can you identify any roles that you problems that you currently have when using AI?

Interview Person 3: Other than the fact that it uses a bunch of energy. Uh, I mean, you know, I think that's something that it'll get better as we go along, right? RI still very young, we currently refer to it as Babe Ruth because it's a baby, right? It's still sometimes makes spelling mistakes and stuff like that, but that's all stuff that you know as it learns as its data like expands and stuff like that. The more it interacts with us and with the people and with customers, it gets better. It gets more fine tuned because it is a self learning AI as well, right? It is a self correcting AI which is great. It just takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of energy. It takes, you know, we have a rotating schedule within our office floor on our marketing floor, which is just. On that day, this person only talks to the AI on that day, this person, the next person only talks to the AI, you know, and it's it's time consuming stuff. But. When the event horizon it looks like and with the results we're having so far that it makes sense and that we're slowly getting there is just sometimes you know you want to speed up the process a bit more because you need it to be there and not here.

Interviewer: Yeah. Umm. Yep. And can you maybe like looking ahead what do you think, what additional skills do you think will become important for marketing professionals in the AI driven lightscape. Like, what's the solution for the problems you guys have?

Interview Person 3: Yeah, yeah. I mean it's it's kind of weird because you're gonna need everybody to kind of become a little bit of a leader of the AI, right? It's the the the way I always describe it to my team is that the AI is like your little child that you need to bring across the road, right? You kind of need to take it by hand and walk it across the road internally or intern you kind of have, you know, people who aren't really set to be leaders or who aren't prepared to lead. Irrespective of it's a person or a technology, right? For example. It sorry, I'm kind of hacking all the data on data teams right now. For example, data teams, they don't necessarily collaborate very openly with with other teams, right? UM, because they're not used to that. They're they're very used to being in their little little data data cell and that's it, right? But when working with an AI, especially when using an AI also as a communicative tool. You know it's you're collaborating with people you're collaborating with different departments, meaning that you need to not only lead the AI, then you also need to lead the other side through it, through the prompt or through the goal and. You need to also then show support to those people, and more specifically you need to show support to the AI, right? You need to be able to tell the eye. OK, not this. This is what I wanted and that kind of. Is a skill. That's definitely needed. It's also kind of the event horizon that you're gonna get to if you're companies will become very and I can already tell that it's already coming to our company. It's already happening in my company, is that they're kind of looking to hire, not necessarily for the skill set that you had, but more for the skill set that you

can build up to. Umm. Meaning that you know they're looking for people who already have no entrepreneurial mindset, who are willing to self manage and to continue learning. They're looking for people who are it. Hopefully a cultural fit. Umm and already have a base knowledge or a general knowledge of AI, meaning that any student currently has a distinct advantage over anybody else who's already been marketing for the last 20 years. Because I can guarantee you the student has interacted with chat GPT 100 times more. For example, for writing their thesis.

Interviewer: Haha, Yep. Umm. And another question is how do you foresee the role of marketing employees evolving?

Interview Person 3: Now do you mean that for example? Because I could answer that in two ways, right? So the I think the like Doomsday answer is Marketing employees won't exist anymore.

Interviewer: Umm.

Interview Person 3: Right now, the realistic answer is due to the fact that we haven't been able to teach AI yet to Creative side. Uh, and we haven't been able to give it that in in like that personal engagement. I think the the marketing employees role will change drastically and the sense of that it will no longer be interacting directly with customers or it will no longer be speaking to customers, but it will be purely teaching and telling AIs what the goal is and how to get there with the style of communication, the color scheme and that kind of the creative side of it. But then the AI does the entire execution side of it, meaning that I think for Marketing employees, for example in my team, the activation Team, the execution side of it will probably fall away largely, unless someone needs to be built physically. But we'll follow a largely due to the fact that anything that is digitally on the digital side of the Touch Point map would then be executed by an AI. So that means you know, prompting Skills would need to be taught and learned. But no companies gotta sit you in the classroom. Meaning it's self learning it's self management. It's so you know it's. Artificial intelligence literacy, basically.

Interviewer: Yep.

Interview Person 3: Does that answer your question?

Interviewer: Yeah, that was my question. Umm, is there anything else you would like to add we haven't talked about yet.

Interview Person 3: You know, I think something that you definitely could should look into as well is. Maybe not necessarily. Artificial intelligence in marketing, but how artificial intelligence is applied to data in marketing, right? So for example in in my company the biggest or the people who use artificial intelligence the most by far are the data crunchers. UM, and that's purely because it makes their life 10,000 times easier, right? It's if you can input an excel sheet and say I need this and it spits you out another excel sheet with the resulted pivot table. It's much easier than figuring it out for four out. You know, and in turn, I think maybe if if you want to and if you have time, I don't know that is it. Maybe if you can see how their jobs are affected, cause it could well be that their jobs fully get voided and get made redundant due to the fact that AI becomes so advanced. I mean, we're slowly seeing it in our data team. Our data team is shrinking because the AI is getting faster and learning, you know.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interview Person 3: Just an idea.

Interviewer: Yeah, for sure. And do you have any recommendations for other companies? How or why or which AI they should integrate into their marketing operations?

Interview Person 3: I mean, I would always recommend integrating a form of chat GPT into your online platform or a somewhere along your customer journey map or your touchpoint map. Now is it the version that we have which is the caged version, meaning that it won't send data to open a I I don't know because it's a very expensive solution.

It's also very energy intensive solution, not that we hosted locally, but we pay the electricity bill for the service they respectively. Now do I think companies should do it?

Absolutely. I think it's a fantastic tool and I think the more it learns, the better it gets with personal engagement personal. Interactions. How companies do it? I think that is very difficult. You would need to look that at or. You would need to look at that on a company to company basis. For example, Apple would integrate it completely differently than we would or Rolls Royce wouldn't do it completely differently than Swiss airlines, for example, right? It's needs to be looked at it by a case by case standard, but it's possible in almost every industry and it's possible in almost every point of the touch point map of a customer experience. Further question is just how?

Interviewer: Yeah. And how would you say a company should integrate it into like their internal operations that are what I mean like for the employees to use in like a?

Interview Person 3: Do not make your HR port do not make your HR portal a \*\*\*\*\* AI. You're every employee will hate you for it because they'll just simply ask them. Like, yeah, I salary question and it will spit them out like a wrong person's salary. We've had that happen already and it the entire project was scrapped almost immediately.

Interviewer: No, but I mean in Marketing like specifically in marketing for example for customer segmentation or I don't know predictive analytics or something like that.

Interview Person 3: I mean, yeah, you know that that brings us back to to the data side. You can integrate it into almost any part where using it now across the board in all departments, from data to activation to digital right.

Interviewer: But it's about the recommendations for other companies.

Interview Person 3: I was getting there.

Interviewer: OK, sorry.

Interview Person 3: Right. I would my recommendation would be phase it in slowly. Umm, start with a department where there's a lot of information where there's a lot of preset information for the AI and AI models available, such as data analysis. We're currently building the base AI for activation, which is taking forever. That's very difficult. It doesn't help that I really enjoy messing with it, but you know, I can I give you a recommendation on an AI? No, because there's so many solutions available nowadays, and I also can't tell you what our AI is based off of. But and I think that's like the only probably best recommendation I can give you is just if a company chooses to implement it in Marketing either in one part of Marketing or across the marketing department is to do it in slow phases

#1 so that people have time to adapt culturally and to build an understanding and to also maybe understand themselves a bit better of, OK, I want to self learn, I want to learn this, I want to grow my learning because there's people who will say no, I'm out and that's OK too. But you need to give people the opportunity. That would be probably my one and only recommendation to companies.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time.

Interview Person 3: Sure thing.

Anytime. Yeah, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out. You have my email.

#### 9.3.4 Interview Person 4

Interviewer: Umm can you describe the AI technologies currently used in your marketing operations?

Interview Person 4: Yes. So I work as a content creator and we use a lot of like general purpose artificial intelligence technologies such as ChatGPT or MidJourney. So any artificial intelligence systems that would like generate content, I use them the most, but there are also like other functions that other people in our agency use. However, I'm just confronted with the generative ones.

Interviewer: And how would you say those technologies are being used to optimize different aspects in marketing?

Interview Person 4: I think first of all, we're trying to save a lot of time with them because especially when it comes to text generation and using chat GBT, me, because I work in social media marketing, so we have to write a lot of captions. We have to write a lot of emails. There's community management, so we tried to save more time and also to yeah get faster basically with just writing the texts and then for MidJourney or for instance creating images. We have to definitely be more careful, but for instance, we don't need as much shootings anymore as we would have needed back in the days. Or sometimes when we have a shooting and the images didn't turn out as good as we want to have them, then they're right. Now there are many options like how we can optimize them using in Adobe like. There's a lot of like generated fill things that you can use in Photoshop. This is also like a new AI thing, so stuff like this it definitely helped us save time. And just yeah, I think time is the most important thing that we try to save and optimize. Yeah.

Interviewer: And have you worked with AI for example to do like customer segmentation or personalized marketing predictive analytics or like can you name any other examples where you used or might have used AI for marketing?

Interview Person 4: So there is a new when we play the ads or we we, yeah, we wanna reach our customers then for instance Google has this Performance Max campaigns now where actually they can also adapt the ads. So we're just give them like keywords or something and they will actually adjust the text and like the photos that customers see without us having to write all the texts and you know, the images based on what the customer is like searching online. So this is very, I would say top notch personalized advertising. So yeah, they used their data and this is going on all like Google ad platforms. So, for instance, also YouTube is included, search is included, so this is something where we also use or these new technologies and AI technologies are used and help us to. Yeah, have advertising more personalized and very efficient to reach the goals that we're trying to, umm, achieve, yeah.

Interviewer: Yes. And what would you say. What skills are currently required to work in marketing overall Like you can say it for content creation, but then also maybe think of the bigger picture.

Interview Person 4: Umm. So in the bigger picture, I think you have to be able to adapt really quick to new tools. So I see it a lot of times if sometimes you know new tools come up and we are being scared or people are being scared to do something wrong there. I think that's the biggest challenge right now, just to if there's a new tool, just try it out. Just I don't know, subscribe to it and see what you can do with these tools. See what what you can adapt with it, which like you said, the processes which like process in your agency can be optimized by

using this tool. But yeah, there are many tools and I think first of all you like you have to be very opened up to use these tools. And then second of all, you also have to have a better understanding of what tools are necessary and what tools are maybe just the waste of your money. So I think this is also a good school right now to have and then also I think just in general, umm, what with all the AI technologies coming up, you have to be. More personal your relationship with your client has to be really good and you have to be really good with like trying to satisfy your client trying to understand their needs and then if I think of AI and clients like introduce them to it and see, you know, make them see what kind of opportunities they have using these tools. And if we do campaigns with them, so yeah, I think there is a concerning technology. You have to be opened, but then concerning clients you still have to have these like soft skills of yeah, talking to your client, understanding your client. I think this will never go away.

Interviewer: Umm. And as you've mentioned that the processes might change, can you maybe say if and what steps did you take to implement AI technologies in your marketing operations like in your team or in your company? How did they integrate it?

Interview Person 4: Umm, I think I think that there was not really like certain steps we took actually and that also surprised me to be honest, because I think when these new technologies came up, we either used it or not. So for instance, an open source, so you were just able to create an account and you could use it if you want or not. And then maybe after some weeks we talked to each other and we helped each other out and be like, oh, you know, you can actually, for instance, if I prepared PowerPoint slides and I wanted to shorten the text. Are you can ask ChatGPT to do that and that way we kind of yeah, took the first steps in implementing AI tools into our process. So there was not really a hello, this is ChatGPT and this is how we're gonna implement it. But it was more like a learning by doing and basically learning together. So it's not really a step by step process.

Interviewer: And as you've mentioned, I think for example, the Adobe AI stuff before, how about this?

Interview Person 4: But. Like did you also need to figure out by yourself? And so yeah, actually, yes, I mean there are some upskilling workshops that are proposed now. But I think when it came up, it was really up to us and up to the employees to yeah, check out this new things cause even our the people that, umm like our like my boss for instance even he had to first of all understand these tools. So I think there was no, not really a. This is how it's going, but yeah, we try to help each other out like link send us links to Adobe courses or you know what YouTube videos together like. It's actually just really a learning by doing thing, and because technology is moving fast and I think nobody really can be 100% prepared and then introduce you to all of it, but you just have as an employee especially in marketing and content creation, you have to be very much open to just try it out by yourself and then help others out and try to learn together, yes.

Interviewer: And as you've mentioned the upskilling, I don't know workshops that you have. Is there anything else like did you maybe talk about prompting or has your company offered any trainings or sessions to acquire the new necessary AI related skills?

Interview Person 4: Yes. Umm, we actually just had a workshop about prompting. So yes. Umm. Right now, yes. And also we have like our company gives us like a certain amount of umm money each year and we can choose courses that we can wanna do with this year. So we have for instance €1000 that we can use to just do courses. So yeah, in our agency we have

these upskilling workshops like you just said prompting or how can I use MidJourney and also like about the laws and ethics about it like how can we make sure that we're using it in a legal way or at least be aware of the challenges that those AI tools bring up and yeah, so I can use this money and then we're also have workshops. But like I said, the workshop just started out like I think this year, even though I has been a topic for much longer.

Interviewer: Yep. And then maybe can you make a comparison from before like before I was booming and was integrated into your work or the marketing field overall? Like, what would you say is the main difference when working in marketing then and now?

Interview Person 4: Mm-hmm. Umm yeah, I think like I said, there are way more tools that you have to be able to understand and use in your everyday life. I think back in the days they were not really as much tools that we have right now for like now I can have tools for text generation, for image, for videos. Umm. Then we have Adobe, which has basically all of it, but we still use different tools. So and yeah, I think the tool thing is one of the biggest that you have to be able to know all of them and know how to work with them and. Yeah, I think other than that, like I also said, I think the point with the shootings is so I think shootings have become way more easier like content shootings, content days because, yeah, the material you can just make so much more out of it and use it in all kinds of different ways, because I think back in the days we had, I had like for instance, product shootings for everything like I had to photograph each product. And if there was like a new product, we had a new shooting and now I think there are way more like different ways how you can do it and maybe you just have to shoot one time and then you can on Photoshop actually exchange the rest the colors of the product and everything. So you can just adapted and also when I think of creating assets, it's just very easy not right now to create assets and it's not that hard anymore and takes not as much time as it used to.

Interviewer: Yeah. Umm. And then I think you've also mentioned like the problems kind of with the data protection and stuff. How would you say? Do the problems you've mentioned like what impact do they have on your work or marketing overall?

Interview Person 4: Umm, so I think these we use a lot of tools that are very big companies like I said or open source we kind of don't know which data they use to train themselves. So I think this is a very big topic. Uh, because, yeah, sometimes they might use data that is not actually open to the public, and we also give them our data. So if I edit photos or I write text like I also trained them and I think this is like a yeah problem concerning law. But then also, if I think of ethics is sometimes like, like I said, the Performance Max campaigns. For instance, I think they're they use a lot of data from, yeah, people basically. And sometimes, yeah, we don't know if this is actually data that people want to have or open up to everybody. Umm. And then also I'm thinking of how, I mean I'm, I'm still I'm sure that like we still need content creators because like you said like prompting and stuff like this, you have to know how to use these tools and how to prompt. But then also some jobs might actually be in danger, and this is also quite worrying if I think, yeah, of of my work and yeah.

Interviewer: Would you then think or say that and for example data protection law is now a new skill or knowledge marketing employees are required to have like is this mandatory knowledge?

Interview Person 4: Mm-hmm. I think. And I think right now we don't need to have it like a as like very professional. But like for instance, there's the new AI act coming up, and it's also concerning us. Umm for instance, we have to if we use generative technologies, we have to.

Amm. Communicate that to the public, basically, and so this is gonna be important that we know actually, OK, if we use this technology, this is actually using data. So I have to inform people about it or I have to be transparent with it and I don't think that we have to be experts in data, but I think we have to be UM, we have to be aware of when it's being used or when we use data that we have and know what consequences that might bring. So we have to use. I know what we do or we should do if we're gonna use tools that, yeah, have data that maybe we don't even know what kind or where they get it from. So yeah, I think awareness is more the point.

Interviewer: Yeah. And then looking ahead. Umm, what additional skills do you think will be relevant in the future in marketing? Like for example to umm, when you think of studying marketing, I think you learn lots of like. Processes or methods to use? Do you think this will still be relevant in the future or what would you think is important for future marketeers to learn in university, for example?

Interview Person 4: Hmm. Yeah, I think maybe learning all these theories is outdated. Anyways, I think of course you have to learn it maybe once to just understand. Like, where is it all coming from? But then. Umm yeah. Maybe like you said, I think different things are gonna be more important. For instance, technology like maybe understanding how technology actually works and having more basics basic courses in coding or stuff like this. I think because technology and marketing is, yeah, but not really becoming one, but there is so much technology in marketing. So I think this is get should be way more important than marketing courses and more implemented. And yeah, like actually you said like more the ethical perspective and the law perspective. So that we actually know, OK, technology is good and we can use it. But where are the boundaries and where? Yeah, where should we be aware of that? There might be like some. Not really danger, but yeah, some kind of laws we might break if we do something or where we can harm the public and society and yeah.

Interviewer: And also looking into the future, how do you see the marketing roles evolving in the future.

Interview Person 4: Yeah, like I said I think, you know, marketing roles are definitely going to require a much stronger skill set in technology. It's not just about being creative or understanding customer needs anymore. You really have to be well-versed in the latest technological tools and platforms because, honestly, these are becoming essential in every aspect of our work. But even with all this technology, there's something that, like, it just can't replicate, you know? Things like really connecting with people on an emotional level. I mean, studies are showing that AI, and technology in general, still struggles to capture the subtleties of human emotions. Things like humor or what really moves people. And that's where we, as humans, still have the upper hand. So, while tech skills are becoming more important, our ability to understand and convey emotions is still going to be, like, our superpower in marketing. I also think that, as more routine tasks get automated, soft skills are going to become even more critical. The way we communicate with our coworkers, how we collaborate, and our ability to adapt quickly, those are all going to be incredibly important. Being flexible, easygoing, and open-minded—those are the traits that will really help marketers thrive in a future that's, like, increasingly driven by technology.

Interviewer: Thank you. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the use of AI and marketing?

Interview Person 4: No, I don't think so. Umm. And then do you have any recommendations for other companies on how to integrate AI into their marketing operations? Mm-hmm. Umm. Yeah, like I said, I think you have to be opened up. Don't be fearful when it comes to AI. Try to try out different tools and see how they can optimize your process. And yeah, but then at the same time, UM, don't think that you will be replaced or try to work against it. Like just try it out and still combine it with your creative skills and the skills you already have and already had. Yeah.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interview Person 4: You're welcome.

### 9.3.5 Interview Person 5

Interviewer: So, could you briefly introduce yourself and, um, maybe just describe your professional background in bullet points? And perhaps give us a quick overview of where you're currently working or what you're doing?

Interview Person 5: Sure! My name is IP5, I'm 26, and I work as a Strategist, or, um, the official title is „Strategic Planner“ and I work at a marketing agency. So, basically, there are three main areas I focus on. The first is communication strategy, which, you know, involves developing campaigns and, uh, starting with a lot of research and market analysis. Then, there's writing creative briefs for the creative team and also drafting strategies for the different channels, you know, from the initial creative idea to how we actually broadcast it. The second area is brand strategy, which means planning, conducting, and evaluating workshops. Based on these, we then work together with the client to develop a brand strategy. And then, the third area is, um, trend analysis and market analysis. What's happening right now? How can we, you know, leverage certain brands or jump on trends? And, of course, there's a lot of building presentations, analyzing data, keeping an overview, and being creative.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you. Let's jump right into the current situation. Can you maybe describe which AI technologies you're currently using in your marketing operations?

Interview Person 5: Yeah, in strategy, it's mainly limited to Perplexity and Google. Uh, what do you think? For simple searches, just to narrow things down. And... Of course, we use ChatGPT for shortening texts. Quickly translating my texts, summarizing graphics, analyzing data—especially for, like, target group insights, it's really practical. And, uh, in the creative side, it's then... What's the name of the tool? The one for creating images.

Interviewer: You mean?

Interview Person 5: No, where you input the details, and then these images and graphics are generated.

Interviewer: Right, did I ask too quickly?

Interview Person 5: No, no, all good! Yeah, it's MidJourney, sorry, but that plays a lesser role in strategy right now. Got it.

Interview Person 5: So, it's mainly Perplexity, Google, Chamonix, and Chat GPT. And can you, like, briefly describe in what aspects or areas these tools help optimize your marketing operations? Like, maybe customer segmentation or personalized marketing, predictive analytics, just as examples? Mhm, yeah, especially for, uh, target group changes, it makes a lot of sense to get, like, a forecast based on data from the last five years. It's helpful to see how things might change.

Interview Person 5: You can just throw all this data into the system, and, I mean, as a human, you can't possibly analyze and evaluate as much data as AI can, right? So, yeah, it definitely helps.

Interviewer: Mhm, and can you maybe also mention some problems that arise when using AI in marketing?

Interview Person 5: Well, definitely, one issue is relying too much on it. You know, it's easy to get complacent and just accept the data and texts generated without doing a sensitivity check. And, for sure, creativity might suffer a bit because you just rely on it too much, and in the end, AI never really generates anything new. It just mixes existing knowledge and reshuffles the deck. But nothing new actually comes out of it. Yeah, that's, um, kind of unfortunate. I think that's the main downside of AI in this area.

Interviewer: Mhm, mhm, totally. And I also wanted to ask about the company you're currently working at or maybe where you've worked before. Do you know what steps they've taken to implement AI internally in the process or externally in their image?

Interview Person 5: Mhm, so, internally, we had this summer event called "Data and Deeds." We were divided into teams—it was shortly after, I think, the launch of ChatGPT. We were split into teams and given existing clients, like breweries, insurance companies, banks—it was a mix—and we had to develop campaigns using only AI tools. One team had to come up with a campaign for a homeless shelter, a brewery, and, um, sports betting—all using only these tools. That was kind of our introduction to these tools, like the kickoff. And externally, we offered something similar to our clients through our consulting services. It was part of the agency where we invited clients, split their employees into teams, and had them play around with the tools for a day to get to know them.

Interviewer: Cool, so you basically offered training sessions to your clients too?

Interview Person 5: Exactly, in a playful way, allowing them to try out the tools all day.

Interviewer: Cool, and what kind of training or programs do you have to help employees develop the skills needed for AI-related work? Actually, there's nothing formal. We had this "Data and Deeds" workshop during the summer event, which was very cool, but after that, there weren't any more courses or training sessions. There was one time when an artist came in and gave a talk about how he uses AI in his work, but no other formal courses.

Interviewer: So, how do you, like, learn these tools? How do you and your colleagues pick up these skills? How do you implement this?

Interview Person 5: Honestly, it's just a lot of trial and error. We pick up things from the usual online magazines, websites, newsletters. When new tools come out, one person might try them out, and then we talk about it. Every second Monday, we have what we call "Momo" or "Monday Morning," and if someone wants to, they can present a tool they've tried out during that meeting and say, "Hey, I tried this out." But it's not mandatory; it's all voluntary. If you want, you can get involved and just try things out.

Interviewer: Mhm, and considering that AI can take over many tasks, could you maybe compare the skills needed in marketing five years ago versus now? Mhm, I think, back then, you had to observe much more—like in the real world, what people were doing—and analyze a lot more data. You had to be more creative, and now it's more about not losing that creativity. Not becoming too complacent. And? Recognizing when something is, well, nonsense? Out of all the data and sources available now, I think you had to observe a lot more back then and be creative, but now you're very much tied to these tools and sources, and you rely too heavily on what ChatGPT spits out.

Interviewer: Mhm. And you mentioned some problems earlier—creativity was one of them. Could you elaborate on that? And maybe there are other ways AI impacts your work?

Interview Person 5: Negatively, or, uh, positively?

Interviewer: Both—how does it impact your work? Yeah. You're definitely faster with analysis and the research process. I think it broadens your perspective, you know, you can quickly take on another point of view, which I find to be a very positive aspect. But yeah, a big factor is this complacency you can easily fall into. Just relying on AI to handle things and, yeah, losing some of the beauty of creativity that this job brings. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Would you say, then, that critical thinking has become a more important skill now compared to before, since you can't believe everything AI generates?

Interview Person 5: Yeah, definitely—this critical questioning, not just letting things slide. Creativity. Yeah. Not just due to AI, but because we're generally more distracted, and I think that's why maintaining focus. Concentration, yeah. It's super important and likely getting lost.

Interviewer: Yeah, and like you mentioned earlier, how you're self-teaching—self-management is super relevant. How do you manage that?

Interview Person 5: You really need to have a strong personal interest in learning these tools because, you know, with older colleagues, you see that they're more reluctant—they might close their laptops, which, in a way, is nice. They close their laptops and let their thoughts flow, and they're creative in that process. But on the other hand, they're kind of closing themselves off. And AI can be very practical, as I mentioned earlier, by offering another point of view, but AI is here to stay, and it's not going away. So, the best thing you can do is engage with it. Critically, yes, but also seeing the positive aspects and not shutting yourself off from it because it will definitely impact every industry, including ours.

Interviewer: Yeah, do you have an example? I found it really interesting when you said that older colleagues might close their laptops while younger ones are more driven. Has there been a situation like that where you can tell me about it?

Interview Person 5: Yeah, definitely. When there are, say, two strategists, and one is 38 or 40 and has seen the transition from old-school advertising to the new, and I'm 26, and we both get the same task—my first thought was ChatGPT, like, what are the clichés?

Interview Person 5: Or something like that. And the other person closes their laptop, grabs a piece of paper, and starts writing. It was really interesting. In the end, when you combine both approaches, it works out well, but it's fascinating to see how some prefer to put the laptop away and let their thoughts flow, which is also beautiful. Both approaches work.

Interviewer: Do you think that could lead to complications in the future?

Interview Person 5: Yeah, I think people who don't exactly despise AI but keep it at arm's length might feel some frustration or sadness because things used to work differently, and, you know, people don't like change, especially when it's external rather than internal. It could lead to resistance or even develop a kind of aversion to new technology, which brings a lot of uncertainty, especially in the first year. Everyone knew what AI was, but no one really knew what AI was. No one could define it, and even now, it's hard for most people who aren't experts to describe what AI is in one or two sentences. There's this mix of fear, of maybe having missed the train, just trying to catch up, and, yeah, this process of figuring out how to use it for yourself. And that's what I like and dislike about it. It only works through experimentation.

Interviewer: Yeah. And since we've been talking about the future and your older colleague, when you think about the future, what additional skills do you think will become more important to work in this landscape?

Interview Person 5: Mhm. Just thinking about it, in my job, you really need analytical thinking. And I'm curious to see how that will change because, yes, ChatGPT is already handling a lot of the analysis, but you still need to dive into the subject and remain an expert. I think we shouldn't fall into the trap of complacency and continue using AI as an assistant—it should be used for what it is, a tool to assist us.

Interviewer: And do you think you can put that into words? Like, it's a tool, but what would you call that skill? Or how would you name it? If nothing comes to mind, I can give you a few examples, but I wanted to get your thoughts.

Interview Person 5: Yeah. Maybe it's about filtering out unnecessary tasks and delegating those to the AI assistant. Focusing on what's really important? Yeah, but what are your examples?

Interviewer: Well, for instance, technical skills like prompting. That's something you have to learn, or, I believe, research will become super relevant—skills you might have only touched on in university but could become entire courses or semesters in the future.

Interview Person 5: Yeah, and you can already see that in job listings—it's becoming more emphasized.

Interviewer: Exactly, like prompting. Then there's self-management or critical thinking and leadership because you can always ask AI or an assistant for simple things or data-based questions. But, in the end, it lacks that human touch.

Interview Person 5: Mhm, yeah, I completely agree. Self-management is super important, especially in staying engaged with the topic and not handing everything over but continuing to work independently with it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interview Person 5: And with prompting—yeah, I hadn't thought about that, but absolutely, as you get more comfortable with each prompt, you realize, oh, this worked really well last time. It's useful to share, like, "Hey, try this prompt," or even just saying, "Imagine you're an expert in this," works well.

Interviewer: Yeah. And since you mentioned it—how do you think the role of marketing employees in companies will change in the future?

Interview Person 5: Well, I think there will be people in companies who believe this job will become obsolete, thinking, "We have AI, it can quickly write this up," and marketing professionals will often have to prove themselves, especially in corporate environments, to show that their job isn't one that can be fully taken over by AI. They'll need to constantly clarify that AI can only be used as a support tool. AI can help run a company, sure, but marketing will always need that human touch you mentioned earlier, something AI will

always lack—thankfully. So, I don't think we should let AI become the main focus of our jobs but rather see it as a supporting role.

Interviewer: Yeah, what do you think, then? How will the truly skilled experts stand out in the future? There are always average workers, but then there are those who excel.

Interview Person 5: Mhm, yeah, those who know exactly how to use these tools to work faster.

Interview Person 5: More efficiently, more accurately. They know the right prompts, they've trained their AI assistant well. And they keep themselves at the forefront, crediting their work to themselves, not AI. It's like AI plays a supporting role, but their own work and creativity shine through.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interview Person 5: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, just to wrap up, do you have any recommendations for other companies that are on the verge of integrating AI into their processes or into the company as a whole? How can they do it best?

Interview Person 5: Mhm, I think anything involving large amounts of data can be safely handed over to AI, or, you know, routine tasks. Do you mean generally or specifically in marketing?

Interviewer: More in marketing, yeah.

Interview Person 5: Well, I think anything like text writing—those are tasks that can be well-managed by AI. Lots of trial and error, trying out tools, offering training for employees. Approach the whole topic with a sense of fun and not too seriously, but...

Interview Person 5: I think there's often this fear that arises, like, "Will it already be less?" I think especially in areas with older employees or where people have been in the industry for a long time, there's fear about losing jobs. There are plenty of studies on that, and I believe that approaching it with fun can help ease that fear. And get them to embrace the transformation and process. I think our "Data and Deeds" summer event was really cool. It wasn't about producing anything super meaningful, but rather about trying out each tool. So, I think it's about introducing people to these tools and giving them the space to explore. You can't expect everyone to want to engage with these tools in their free time. Many don't, and that should be okay too. So, it's about integrating that into the workflow.

Interviewer: Yeah. Mhm, thanks. Is there anything else you're thinking about or that you'd like to mention regarding marketing or AI in marketing that we haven't discussed?

Interview Person 5: Mhm, not at the moment.

Interviewer: No? Okay. Then thank you for the interview.