

Integrating generative artificial intelligence into advertising creativity education: An exploratory study in spanish universities

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How to cite this article / Standard reference:

López Alonso, Esmeralda; Moreno López, Begoña, & Baltasar Lallave, Sergio (2026). Integrating generative artificial intelligence into advertising creativity education: An exploratory study in spanish universities. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 84, 1-23. <https://www.doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2026-2611>

Reception Date: September 26, 2025

Acceptance Date: November 27, 2025

Publication Date: March 10, 2026

ABSTRACT

Introduction: This exploratory-descriptive study analyzes the integration of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) into university-level advertising creativity education across Spanish universities. It stems from the growing influence of GAI in creative processes within the advertising sector (particularly in creative departments) which positions creativity-related courses as key contexts for observing its pedagogical integration. **Methodology:** The research combines a documentary analysis of 40 curricula with an *ad hoc* questionnaire administered to creativity instructors. A total of 77 valid responses were collected from 37 universities, enabling a qualitative approach based on inductive thematic coding alongside basic descriptive statistics for quantitative data. **Results:** The findings indicate a partial and recent integration of GAI. Its use is primarily technical and instrumental (to generate images or text), and practical methodologies are being implemented, although there is little specific evaluation of GAI use. The tools used in the classroom are the

same as those in the professional environment, yet their use lacks a structured pedagogical framework. Significant barriers persist, such as a lack of resources, limited institutional training for faculty, and the absence of defined ethical criteria for their use. **Discussion:** A discrepancy is observed between the speed of technological adoption and the institutional response. GAI is perceived as a useful tool for execution, but not as a generator of conceptual innovation, which poses challenges for its critical integration into university education. **Conclusions:** It is proposed that curricula be revised to incorporate GAI as a comprehensive competency, linked to creativity, strategy, and ethics, in order to prepare students for the challenges of today's digital ecosystem.

Keywords: generative artificial intelligence; higher education; advertising creativity; curricula; digital competencies; teaching innovation; university training

1. INTRODUCTION

GAI is beginning to reshape university teaching as well as daily professional practice in the advertising industry. Its integration is transforming teaching practices and students' learning processes, while raising new challenges regarding their preparation for the professional world. In university studies of communication and advertising, these changes are especially visible, as these disciplines are closely linked to cultural and technological shifts. Furthermore, they require the development of skills such as practical creativity, critical thinking, and the interpretation of social discourses. As Cotrina et al. (2021) point out, it is necessary to update teaching methodologies and foster more collaborative and adaptive learning environments.

The widespread use of tools such as ChatGPT and Midjourney is beginning to influence how teaching and learning take place in the classroom. These technologies enable task automation, the generation of texts and images, and support for idea generation. This raises significant challenges: How does the role of teachers in guiding the creative process change? How is the notion of authorship affected when generative algorithms are involved? What criteria should guide the evaluation of work done with technological support without discouraging creativity? These questions are especially relevant in subjects related to advertising creativity, where intuition, strategic planning, and visual expression all play a role.

Although interest in integrating GAI into universities is growing, research on its specific application in teaching advertising creativity remains limited. Studies have highlighted that the mere presence of these tools in the classroom does not, in itself, guarantee pedagogically effective use. For example, Jimbo et al. (2023) emphasize that their incorporation requires rethinking teaching practices and promoting teacher training that addresses not only technical aspects but also their ethical and critical implications.

This perspective is reinforced by recent work highlighting the need for specific pedagogical skills to apply these technologies meaningfully, beyond mere digital proficiency (González Hernández et al., 2025). In this context, it is worth asking how GAI is being integrated into university-level advertising creativity education. This research focuses both on the changes occurring in teaching approaches and on the challenges of developing creative skills in an increasingly automated environment. It is based on the premise that technological advances not only modify the tools used for creation but also influence how the creative process is taught and conceived.

1.1. Structural Transformations in the Studies of Advertising and Public Relations

Advertising has traditionally been a discipline highly sensitive to social, economic, and technological changes. This adaptability has contributed to its consolidation as an area of study in Spanish universities, where it has gained academic recognition since the late 20th century. An example of this evolution is the growth of

doctoral research: three out of every four dissertations on advertising have been defended in the 21st century, reflecting its progressive integration into the field of social sciences (Baladrón Pazos et al., 2019; Martínez & Saperas, 2012).

The use of these technologies has a direct impact on Advertising and Public Relations studies, where not only are teaching methods changing, but also the skills that future professionals are expected to acquire. In an increasingly automated job market, universities face the challenge of training professionals capable of combining technical, strategic, and ethical perspectives. Therefore, the incorporation of digital tools should not be understood merely as a practical improvement, but as part of a broader approach that fosters a critical and creative attitude toward technology. As López Regalado et al. (2024) emphasize, it is crucial to commit to future-oriented education that prepares students to responsibly assume the role they will play in the communication processes of the future.

The introduction of these technologies into education also necessitates a rethinking of the role of teachers, training processes, and the importance of upholding educational principles. Several studies warn that innovation cannot be at odds with the human element. Bouzenada et al. (2018) and Parra Sánchez (2022) agree that technology should support, not replace, human interaction if a socially meaningful educational experience is to be guaranteed. Beyond its technical utility, the value of AI in universities depends on how it is integrated into teaching practice, with appropriate pedagogical planning and the active support of institutions.

1.1.1. Training in Advertising and Public Relations in Spain

Advertising and Public Relations studies have experienced sustained growth in recent decades and are now among the most prestigious degrees within the Spanish university system. In the 2023-2024 academic year, 12,635 students were enrolled, according to data from the Advertising Observatory in Spain, reflecting its consolidation as a leading educational option in the fields of communication and marketing (Asociación Española de Anunciantes¹, 2024).

The current academic recognition of advertising rests on a history that began in 1915, when Prat Gaballí taught the first course in Scientific Advertising. Since then, university training in this field has evolved to include more than fifty programs at public and private universities (Torres Romay & García Mirón, 2023). Even so, this growth has not always been accompanied by a genuine updating in the face of the significant social, technological, and cultural changes that have transformed the sector in recent years.

Several studies indicate that one of the most common problems in Advertising and Public Relations degrees is the imbalance in the structure of the curricula. The majority of specialized courses focus on advertising (68.99%), while only 31.01% are dedicated to public relations, according to Matilla et al. (2018). This distribution reinforces a more tactical than strategic approach, relegating key competencies such as corporate communication and brand management —especially relevant in the current context— to a secondary role.

These structural shortcomings are compounded by changes in student profiles and digital environments. López Pérez and Canuto (2024) point out that today's students need more adapted methodologies, with flexible, personalized approaches that integrate the use of technology. This necessitates a rethinking of both content and teaching methods. Van Vaerenbergh (2024), for his part, warns that this transformation directly affects what happens in the classroom: it is necessary to incorporate GAI into the curriculum, update assessment systems, and establish a clear ethical framework for the use of these tools from the outset.

¹ Spanish Association of Advertisers

In the workplace, one of the most discussed aspects is the growing demand for skills related to content creation. This has led to some confusion regarding the professional profile of Advertising and Public Relations students, which is sometimes seen as similar to that of Journalism graduates. As Armendáriz (2015) points out, this perception has led many companies to prefer hiring Journalism graduates for writing or content production tasks.

Employability data points to a favorable situation: a total of 86.1% of Advertising graduates from the 2013-2014 academic year were employed in 2019, according to the INE (2020). However, these figures say nothing about the quality of employment or the degree of alignment between what is learned at university and what the sector actually demands. In an increasingly digital environment, a clear gap remains between the skills taught and those valued in the labor market. While some research (Medina et al., 2025) demonstrates an uneven integration of digital skills into curricula, other studies, such as that by Tejero et al. (2024), reflect the student perspective, which appreciates these tools for specific tasks but insists on the need for more critical training.

The gap between what is taught at universities and what the advertising industry actually demands remains a shared concern. As Fernández Gómez and Feijoo Fernández (2022) point out, it is urgent to strengthen content related to digital marketing, online community management, branded content, and transmedia storytelling. It's not just about adding new tools to the curriculum, but, as Torres Romay (2025) warns, about rethinking the pedagogical approach to move beyond teaching practices still rooted in analog models.

This need for transformation affects both the content and the dynamics of learning. Gallent Torres et al. (2023) insist that the incorporation of technologies such as GAI must actively involve students, teachers, and institutions, striving for a balance between technical training and ethical reflection. Similarly, Martín García et al. (2025) point out that, from within the professional sphere itself, especially in agencies and advertisers, there is a perception that university education should be much more connected to the current reality of advertising, characterized by constant evolution.

It is important to note that this disconnect is not new. Back in 2010, Corredor and Farfán warned that while curricula barely changed, the market was evolving rapidly in tandem with digitalization. Updating programs, therefore, require not only incorporating new technical skills but also reinforcing essential capabilities that remain key in the professional environment, such as strategic creativity and the ability to connect with audiences.

Along these lines, Agüero et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of students gaining firsthand knowledge of how the sector operates: the different types of agencies, how teams are organized, and how creative processes are structured in increasingly transmedia environments. Improving training is not just about incorporating more technology, but about teaching students to think critically, make decisions, and create within a constantly evolving professional ecosystem.

The teaching of creativity, one of the core elements of the professional profile, also requires adjustments. It has been noted that curricula are not responding quickly enough to market transformations (Sanz et al., 2021), a concern already present in previous research that underscores the value of creativity as a transversal competence, where divergent thinking, cultural analysis, and problem-solving converge (Arens et al., 2011).

From a more recent perspective, there is a growing awareness of the need to rethink the educational model from a more humanistic perspective, in which teachers act as reflective mediators and interactive learning (IL) is integrated with ethical and pedagogical considerations (Martínez Bejarano, 2025). At this point, the integration of IL becomes especially relevant. Its use is already part of many processes related to creativity

and communication, and it is redefining how learning and production take place in the classroom. Hence the need to establish clear frameworks that prevent inequalities in access and ensure responsible implementation, principles already reflected in some institutional recommendations (UNESCO, 2023).

The transformation of the sector not only affects professional profiles but is also reflected in the industry's economic performance. In 2022, advertising investment in Spain reached €12,214.2 million, 4.7% more than the previous year, with digital media as the main recipient, accounting for €2,810.4 million (InfoAdex, 2023). This sustained growth in the digital sphere confirms the urgent need to review university education, equipping students with technological skills aligned with the professional environment in which they will operate.

1.1.2. GAI and Transformation in Advertising Training

The GAI is beginning to transform both university teaching and daily work in the advertising industry. Along these lines, several studies indicate that its most significant effect will be the personalization of learning through adaptive systems capable of configuring learning pathways according to each student's characteristics and behavior (Vía Guzmán, 2024). In the classroom, these tools can help adapt learning paces, simplify repetitive tasks, and improve information management. All of this allows for tailoring content to students' actual needs and making the educational experience more accessible and effective. However, for this change to be meaningful and have a positive impact, faculty need to feel prepared, not only in the technical aspects but also in how to coherently integrate these tools into their teaching practice.

Nevertheless, this process comes with its own set of challenges. From a pedagogical perspective, Jara et al. (2023) warn that, although these tools can facilitate tasks related to writing or verbal creativity, they should not be confused with substitutes for critical thinking. Nor can they replace human creative capacity, which remains essential in both education and the professional practice of communication.

In the advertising field, GAI has begun to transform both strategic and creative processes. Massive data analysis allows for the identification of behavioral patterns and the adjustment of messages almost in real time, profoundly altering how campaigns are planned (Kietzmann et al., 2018). This automation capability lightens the technical workload and frees up professionals to focus on more conceptual tasks. However, as Li (2019) cautions, this efficiency does not eliminate the need for human oversight to ensure authenticity and an emotional connection with the audience. From a pedagogical perspective, Bonilla et al. (2025) emphasize that GAI only provides real value in the classroom when integrated as a learning resource with clear objectives, not as an automated tool. In line with this idea, Pérez et al. (2023) believe it can stimulate critical thinking if used judiciously. However, Fernández Rincón and Hernández Gómez (2023) warn that, in many cases, its use in creative contexts stems more from a fascination with technology than from any real impact on the quality of the work, leading to a certain degree of sensationalism surrounding its application.

Technological advances have brought with them far-reaching ethical dilemmas. Concerns about issues such as privacy, algorithmic bias, and equitable access are increasingly present in academic debate. In fact, the urgency of establishing clear protocols to guarantee the fair and responsible use of these tools has been highlighted (Estévez Cedeño & Sánchez Vera, 2024). One of the most significant barriers, according to García Zabala et al. (2025), is the lack of critical training for teachers in this area. This training gap, which also appears in international studies, underscores the need to equip teaching staff not only with technical knowledge but also with an ethical perspective. Recent research, such as that by Okagbue et al. (2023) and Ng et al. (2022), concurs that this dual approach is essential. This idea is also shared by Vera (2023), who believes that any effective integration must be based on preparation aligned with market demands and student expectations. In Spain, the debate has already begun to move into communication faculties. While

some proposals, such as that of Lopezosa et al. (2023), advocate for introducing specific courses, others argue for a comprehensive approach that addresses the entirety of the training.

In any case, for these technologies to contribute truly and sustainably to advertising training, their implementation must align with ethical and regulatory principles. Several studies have highlighted the importance of establishing guidelines that guarantee responsible implementation, considering aspects such as fairness, privacy, and sustainability (Salmerón Moreira et al., 2023). The issue is not only technical but also one of balance. It is about harnessing the benefits without neglecting the risks, as proposed by Holmes et al. (2019) or in the more recent work of Bewersdorff et al. (2023).

1.2. Teaching Creativity in the Face of the Challenges of the Digital Environment

Advertising creativity has historically held a prominent place in university education in Advertising and Public Relations. Its comprehensive nature makes it a key competency, present both in specific subjects and in other areas of the curriculum. However, this centrality has not always translated into a coherent or sufficient presence in academic programs. In fact, its teaching and assessment remain poorly systematized, as Pérez Ordóñez et al. (2021) point out, highlighting a gap between the theoretical recognition of its importance and its actual treatment in the classroom.

The gap between what is taught in classrooms and what the workplace demands translates into significant learning gaps for students. Much of this situation stems from a lack of clear and coherent teaching and assessment methods. A recent study identifies two particularly relevant challenges: first, the difficulty of converting subjective assessments into comprehensible grades; and second, the lack of tools that allow students to develop critical thinking and greater creative autonomy (González Leonardo et al., 2020). From another perspective, it has been argued that creativity can only flourish in environments that value trial, error, and divergence as essential parts of the process, rather than penalizing them (García & Pérez, 2024). When clear criteria are lacking and assessments rely too heavily on the teacher's opinion, students struggle to trust their creative abilities. Furthermore, the emergence of GAI tools is beginning to change how creativity is addressed, adding new demands to the process.

The shortcomings in teaching creativity are not limited to assessment but also affect curriculum design itself. Creative strategy is barely present in Communication degree programs, and when it appears in Advertising and Public Relations programs, it is presented in a scattered manner, without a common name or a coherent approach (Castelló-Martínez, 2020). This lack of uniformity hinders the development of continuous and well-structured learning. Furthermore, many creativity-focused courses are taught through isolated practical exercises, lacking a defined methodological framework or a solid connection to the actual workings of agencies (Baladrón Pazos et al., 2024). Although listed as required courses in many programs, their academic orientation remains disconnected from the demands of the professional world.

Curriculum revisions cannot be limited to content; they also require rethinking how teaching is delivered. Fostering creativity involves creating spaces that allow students to experiment, make mistakes, and progress. According to Tur-Viñes (2024), the creative classroom should promote collective exploration and embrace error as part of the learning process. This view aligns with that of Balbuena Palacios et al. (2025), who emphasize that creative competencies develop when knowledge of the professional environment, originality, and a critical attitude are combined. Evaluating only the final result leaves out essential aspects of the process. For this reason, these authors suggest using rating scales and agreeing on criteria that help students understand what is expected of them and where they can improve.

The GAI does not replace the changes that creative teaching needs, but it can accelerate its evolution. By taking on more mechanical tasks, it allows both teachers and students to dedicate more time to strategic and

conceptual thinking, as Rico Sesé (2020) points out. Its introduction into artistic processes is fostering more original proposals tailored to each context, capable of enriching the aesthetic experience (Serrano et al., 2023). However, this potential only materializes when its use is approached from a critical perspective, one that avoids the repetition of patterns and promotes representations that challenge the conventional, along the lines of what Martín Prada (2024) proposes.

Although creativity occupies a strategic place in Advertising and Public Relations education, its academic development remains partial and unsystematic. The arrival of GA introduces new dynamics to the educational environment, especially in subjects related to creativity, offering methodological possibilities that are still largely unexplored. However, studies focused on how this technology is being incorporated in the classroom remain very limited. This work, therefore, is presented as a first exploratory approach that seeks to provide insights into understanding this emerging integration, in line with the objectives detailed below.

2. OBJECTIVES

The study aims to analyze, from an exploratory and descriptive perspective, how the GAI is being integrated into university teaching of advertising creativity, within the degrees in Advertising and Public Relations taught in Spanish universities.

This objective stems from the growing interest in GAI in education, especially in creative fields where its use is becoming increasingly prevalent in classrooms. Furthermore, it takes into account that creative departments in the advertising sector were among the first to incorporate these tools into their workflows, reinforcing the need to adapt training to new professional demands.

Specific Objectives

- To examine the presence of content linked to GAI in the curricula and teaching guides of subjects related to creativity.
- To identify the methodologies, tools, and strategies that teachers are using to integrate GAI into the classroom.
- To understand teachers' perceptions of the impact of these technologies on the development of students' creative skills.
- To assess the level of preparation that, according to teachers, students acquire to face the work environment in a professional context marked by automation and digital transformation.

3. METHODOLOGY

In the first phase of the study, a documentary analysis was conducted of the curricula and course guides for degrees in Advertising and Public Relations offered by Spanish universities. To define the scope of the analysis, the study by Baladrón Pazos et al. (2024) was used as a reference, consulting the course offerings for the 2024-2025 academic year with the aim of identifying degrees that include content related to creativity.

The search for degree programs was conducted using the search engine of the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sport, including public and private universities, as well as affiliated centers. All subjects within each degree program were reviewed, paying particular attention to those related to advertising creativity and with the potential to incorporate GAI content. Broader advertising courses that could address creative skills from other perspectives were also included.

Double degrees, qualifications unrelated to the subject of study, such as Protocol or Journalism, and programs offered by foreign universities were excluded. The final analysis encompassed 40 degrees offered at 40 universities.

To organize the information, a template was created that included variables such as geographical location, type of university (public or private, in-person or online), the name and description of the subjects, whether they were required or optional, and the number of ECTS credits. The data collection and systematization work was carried out between September and December 2024, which allowed for working with up-to-date information.

Based on this compilation, the content of the course guides was analyzed in detail. As Isam (2012) points out, there are subjects with very established names such as Advertising Copywriting or Advertising Creativity, but There is a great deal of diversification in the names of each subject, which makes it difficult to compare institutions. This diversity is reflected in the coexistence of terms such as “Conceptualization,” “Art Direction,” and “Creative Production.”

Alegre and Roca (2012, in Castelló-Martínez, 2020) argue that creativity should not be considered an isolated subject in advertising studies, but rather a comprehensive and cross-cutting pedagogical approach throughout the entire educational process. In this sense, creativity constitutes a teaching style and a way of understanding the profession that, when applied holistically in any educational activity, has a positive impact on the educational experience of all those involved.

To classify the analyzed subjects, the criteria proposed by Castelló-Martínez (2020) were followed, which establishes different levels according to the subject's title. Level 1 includes subjects closely linked to creativity, such as “Creative Strategy” or “Conceptualization,” identifiable by the explicit presence of the term “creativity” or its idiomatic variants like “*creativitat*”, as well as expressions related to their specialization, such as “creative techniques” or “creative strategies.” Level 2 groups those subjects whose titles refer to processes of ideation, innovation, or idea production, such as “Art Direction,” “Copywriting,” “Writing,” “Design,” or “Advertising Production,” among others. Based on this classification, 123 subjects were selected, with at least one subject at each level per educational institution: 50 belong to level 1 and 73 to level 2.

In the second phase of the study, a questionnaire was designed specifically for faculty members who teach subjects related to creativity. This questionnaire was sent individually via institutional email to contacts at the 40 participating institutions. Informed consent was requested in the body of the email, and the confidentiality of the data was guaranteed. The objective was to better understand how GAI tools are being incorporated into university teaching and to gain firsthand knowledge of the experiences, difficulties, and opportunities that faculty members perceive in this process.

The questionnaire included closed-ended questions, Likert-type scales, and open-ended questions, distributed across six thematic blocks that addressed different key aspects: (1) the presence of generative intelligence (GI) in curricula, (2) teaching methodologies used, (3) tools and platforms employed, (4) evaluation criteria and results obtained, (5) teacher training needs, and (6) general assessments and proposals for improvement. Teachers were asked about their use of generative tools according to the type of content (text, image, video, etc.), with references to applications such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, and Midjourney. The open-ended questions gathered personal impressions regarding barriers, benefits, and training needs.

Before its distribution, the questionnaire was reviewed by three expert teachers specializing in creativity and technology applied to education to ensure that the questions were clear and appropriate for the study's purpose. Distribution took place between February and April 2025 via personalized emails sent to the institutional contacts at each center. Responses were manually reviewed to avoid duplicates by subject.

The quantitative data analysis was performed using Excel and basic descriptive statistics. Open-ended responses were examined using inductive thematic coding, grouping similar ideas to identify emerging patterns. Although no specialized software or multiple coders were used, the process was documented in working matrices. To reinforce the consistency of the analysis, three external teachers reviewed a sample of responses, fully agreeing with the established categories.

Professors from 37 universities responded, representing 92.5% coverage. This participation allows for a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A total of 77 completed questionnaires were obtained.

To analyze the data collected in the questionnaires, a detailed reading was chosen, allowing for the identification of common themes and relevant differences among the responses. From there, the content was grouped around key topics such as teaching methods using GAI, the tools used in class (such as image, text, or music generators), how teachers perceive the development of creativity, and their opinion on students' level of preparedness for changes in the sector.

At the same time, data from the analysis of curricula and teaching guides were organized into comparative tables that analyzed whether GAI was included as specific content of the subject, which helped to clearly see how creativity, teaching and the use of GAI are related in training.

The combination of the two phases of the study has allowed for a detailed examination of how AI is being incorporated into advertising creativity education. It wasn't just a matter of determining whether these technologies were present, but rather understanding how they are integrated, what role they play in teaching practice, and how they are being received by those who use them in the classroom.

Despite the scope of the analysis, there are limitations that must be considered. The qualitative approach has facilitated the collection of important nuances, but it does not allow the results to be extrapolated to the entire university system. Although a high response rate was obtained regarding Spanish universities that offer advertising programs, it is possible that the individuals who participated in the questionnaire were precisely those with the greatest interest in the use of GAI, which may have influenced the results. The three institutions from which no responses were received were UDIT, Universitat Abat Oliba CEU, and the Pontifical University of Salamanca.

Furthermore, as it was a self-administered questionnaire, some responses may have been influenced by the interpretation of the questions or by a desire to project a particular image. There were also difficulties in categorizing some responses due to the diversity of approaches that GAI is beginning to bring into the classroom. Although the questionnaire was reviewed by specialists, no pilot tests were conducted, nor were technical reliability indicators applied, which should be taken into account when evaluating the results.

4. RESULTS

Phase 1: Document Review of Teaching Guides

One of the first issues highlighted by the study is a certain disconnect between teaching practice and official documents. Although GAI has begun to be introduced into many advertising creativity courses, this incorporation is not always reflected in the course guides analyzed.

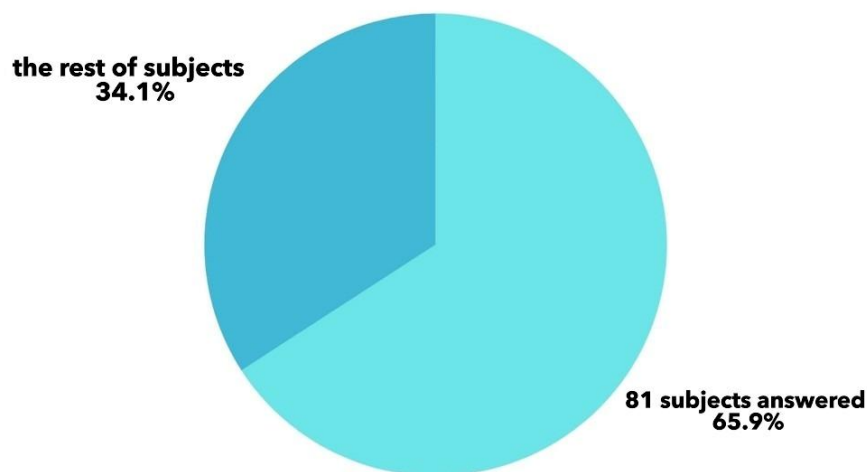
As mentioned, of the 81 subjects included in the analysis, professors in 65 of them (80.25%) confirmed having incorporated content related to AI. However, of the 123 course guides studied, only 8 include specific references to Artificial Intelligence in their content. This suggests that AI is being implemented flexibly or experimentally, without structured planning within academic programs.

These data suggest that, although GAI is already present in classrooms, its integration still depends largely on the individual initiative of teachers and not on an institutional commitment reflected in the curricula.

Phase 2: Questionnaire for University Teachers

In phase 2, the responses of 77 teachers from 37 universities were analyzed, relating to 81 different advertising creativity subjects (which constitutes 65.85% of all subjects selected in the total sample).

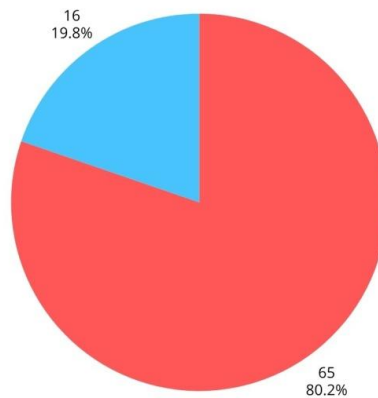
Figure 1: Proportion of Subjects with Teacher Responses Versus Total Subject Population



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Of these 81 subjects, 32 would fall under level 1, corresponding to those subjects with the term “creativity” or equivalent in their title (39.51% of the sample), while in level 2, which groups subjects with a more technical or applied focus (such as writing, design or art direction), it is possible to find 49 subjects (60.49% of the sample). Regarding the incorporation of content related to GAI, 65 out of 81 subjects (80.25%) use GAI as a tool.

Figure 2: Number and Percentage of Subjects Incorporating AI Content



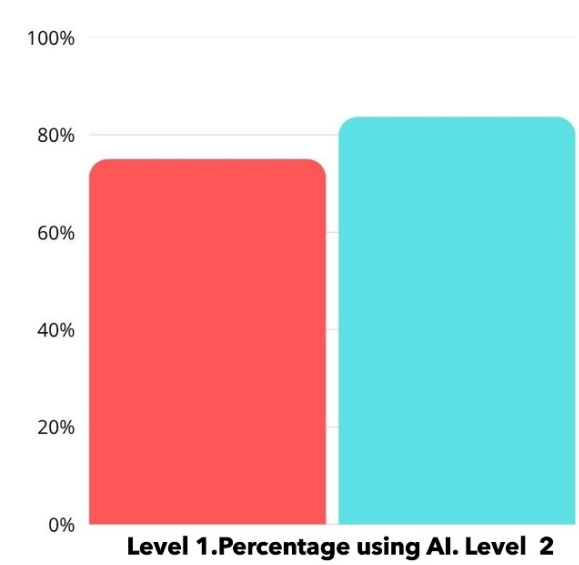
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In terms of levels, at Level 1, 24 out of 32 subjects report using AI (75%). At Level 2, 41 out of 49 subjects indicate that they use it (83.67%), while 8 state that they do not use it (16.33%).

The slight advantage of level 2 could be explained by the greater presence of technical or technological subjects (e.g., Art Direction, Graphic Design, Web Design and Mobile Apps, or Audiovisual Production). This suggests that the explicit presence of the term “creativity” in the subject title is not necessarily associated with a greater incorporation of generative tools.

Furthermore, 70% of the participating teachers have accumulated more than five years of teaching experience in subjects related to creativity, which lends solidity to the results by collecting perceptions from teachers with extensive experience in the methodological evolution of the advertising field.

Figure 3: Distribution of GAI Use Based on Subject Level Across the Sample of Responses



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The main results obtained in this survey are broken down below, organized according to the evaluated key themes.

a. Degree of Curricular Integration of the GAI

The results indicate an increasingly common incorporation of GAI-related content into advertising creativity courses, especially in the last two academic years. However, this presence is not yet clearly reflected in course syllabi, suggesting a gap between what actually happens in the classroom and what is documented in official university documents.

A large proportion of the teaching staff acknowledge having begun to introduce this type of content, although its presence within the overall course remains limited. In most cases, it is estimated to be no more than 10% of the total, although a significant number of teachers report dedicating between 10% and 30% of their time to it.

No significant differences have been detected based on teaching experience: both long-term and newly hired teachers are incorporating these tools. This suggests that the adaptation is widespread, possibly driven by the evolution of the professional environment to which students are heading.

b. Methodological Strategies and Teaching Applications

The integration of GAI into the classroom occurs, in most cases, through practical activities. Its use is primarily geared towards supporting the final production of assignments, especially in project development, prototype design, or specific exercises focused on fostering creativity. The most common methodologies are applied workshops and guided exercises, although in some cases strategies that combine theory and practice, such as case studies or specific lectures, are also employed. The participation of external experts in generative AI remains very limited, possibly due to a lack of professionals specializing in this still-emerging field.

This instrumental use allows students to overcome certain technical barriers common in the creation of communication products. Generating images for graphic campaigns, writing texts or scripts, and creating visual mockups are some of the most common uses. In some cases, teachers propose comparative exercises to observe the differences between creative processes developed with and without the help of these tools.

c. Tools Used and Alignment With the Professional Sector

The study shows that both faculty and students are using a wide variety of GAI tools, many of which are also used in the professional advertising field. For image creation, the most frequently mentioned tools are DALL·E 3, Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, and Leonardo AI. For text generation, ChatGPT versions 3 and 4 stand out, along with other platforms such as Perplexity AI and Copy AI.

Regarding design and graphic editing, Canva AI and Adobe Sensei seem to be more established in teaching. However, applications designed to generate video or audio are rarely used in the classroom, and when they are, it's only occasionally. Some of the applications mentioned were Runway AI, Sora, Synthesia, and Suno AI.

The alignment between the tools used in class and those prevalent in the professional world suggests a connection between university education and the demands of the job market. This link also reinforces the practical approach being used in many courses.

d. Perceptions of the Impact of GAI on Creativity

Teachers agree GAI is having an impact in the classroom, but primarily on the more technical aspects of the creative process. While it helps develop ideas faster and allows for more agile visualization of proposals, it doesn't replace the more conceptual part of creative work. It is valued as a useful tool, especially for improving presentations or testing visual approaches, but questions are also raised.

Some teachers warn of the risk that students may become overly reliant on these tools. The immediacy of the results and their apparent spectacular nature could lead to skipping key phases of the process, such as research or prior reflection. Therefore, although their value as a production tool is acknowledged, many still do not see them as a means to promote strategic innovation.

e. Assessment of Skills and Use of GAI

In most cases, the use of graphic design in creativity courses is assessed through the submission and presentation of practical projects. Although other activities, such as workshops or exercises focused on exploring these tools, are also included, their presence in the assessment is less frequent. Typically, GAI is not valued as a competency in itself, but rather as one element within the overall creative process.

This lack of specific criteria highlights a clear need: to advance in the design of evaluation methods that not only measure technical mastery, but also the ability of students to integrate AI critically, ethically, and strategically into their proposals.

f. Teacher Training and Competence Level

Although a significant portion of the teaching staff has received training in GAI, in most cases it has been through their own initiative: online courses, self-study, or participation in specific workshops. Training offered by the universities themselves remains limited, and many teachers express a need for more specific training programs tailored to the fields of creativity and advertising.

In general, it is perceived that the current level of preparation is insufficient to adequately and rigorously teach these tools. This deficiency directly impacts how they are addressed in the classroom, both in terms of depth and quality.

g. Structural Barriers and Pedagogical Challenges

The study highlights several obstacles that hinder the effective integration of GAI into university teaching. Among the most prominent are the lack of technological resources, such as licenses, software, or suitable equipment; the limited time available for faculty to update their skills; and the administrative burden that restricts their ability to dedicate time to educational innovation.

Added to this there are other difficulties: the complexity of supervising creative processes mediated by these tools, the challenges of evaluating their use based on clear criteria, and the varying levels of student preparation. There are also concerns regarding authorship of the work generated and the lack of defined ethical guidelines for their use. All of this not only presents technical challenges but also requires a rethinking of the pedagogical approach used to integrate GAI into the classroom.

h. Prospects for Improvement and Future Projections

Among the proposals put forward by the faculty, the most prominent are the need for ongoing, specialized training, ensuring equitable access to technological resources, and revising curricula to adapt them to the new context. One of the most widely shared ideas is that GAI should be treated as a comprehensive competency, not only from its technical perspective but also in relation to creative strategy, professional ethics, and the sustainability of its use.

The study also highlights the importance of strengthening critical thinking in the classroom and promoting a more reflective and conscious use of GAI, in line with the challenges of the professional environment. While there is broad consensus on the growing impact of these technologies in the advertising sector, the study makes it clear that current training does not yet guarantee that students are prepared to confidently meet the demands of the working world.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study confirm that the integration of GAI into university teaching is progressing unevenly and is still in its early stages. Its incorporation is largely driven by individual initiatives from faculty members, who act as the main drivers of innovation in a context where institutional planning remains limited. This situation reveals a clear disconnect between teaching practice and current curricular frameworks.

One of the most significant aspects of this disconnect is reflected in the curricula themselves. Although many subjects already incorporate content related to GAI in teaching practice, this reality is not usually reflected in official guides, which limits its institutional visibility and hinders structural integration. This lack of curricular updating prevents the establishment of clear learning objectives and appropriate assessment mechanisms for these new competencies.

Although the surveyed teachers have established professional careers, their use of these tools is primarily focused on technical tasks related to visual or textual execution. This reduces the potential of GAI as a cross-curricular pedagogical resource capable of enriching ideation processes, critical analysis, and strategic reflection— aspects that, according to authors such as Martín Prada (2024), are key to understanding the true impact of these technologies in the creative field.

One of the most concerning issues for teachers is the lack of clear criteria for evaluating the use of GAI in the classroom. In many cases, this absence of shared guidelines is compounded by the limited specific training offered by universities and certain structural limitations, such as a lack of resources or the rigidity of official curricula. These conditions often result in the integration of GAI being limited to occasional technical use, without becoming part of a more robust educational approach.

Students' ability to adapt to these tools is evident, especially regarding their practical use. However, there isn't always a deep understanding of how they can enrich creative processes. Sometimes, the immediacy with which results are obtained encourages a quick, visually focused approach, without pausing to reflect on the meaning or coherence of the ideas. To avoid this, it is essential that teaching foster a more critical attitude, helping students identify when technology adds value and when it can impoverish creative thinking.

Nevertheless, there is a shared perception of the transformative potential of GAI if integrated judiciously. As González Hernández et al. (2025) point out, these technologies can act as a catalyst for a profound renewal of the educational ecosystem, provided they are adopted from a critical perspective and with a clear ethical orientation. In this sense, the challenge lies not only in incorporating new tools but also in revising the

pedagogical frameworks that shape learning. As Van Vaerenbergh (2024) warns, this process requires rethinking the skills taught, the criteria used to assess them, and the values promoted in the classroom.

There is a widespread perception that these tools can be useful if incorporated judiciously and without losing sight of the educational purpose. The challenge goes beyond simply incorporating new techniques: it involves reviewing how learning is constructed, the role of creativity, which skills are prioritized, and how students are supported in a constantly evolving context.

In practice, the study's findings imply the need for concrete measures aimed at teachers, educational institutions, and curriculum design. For teachers, specific training in the pedagogical use of GAI is proposed to strengthen teaching skills and foster critical integration in the classroom. At the institutional level, curricula should be reviewed and updated to incorporate GAI as a cross-curricular competency and establish clear evaluation criteria for activities that utilize it. Regarding curriculum, its incorporation should not be limited to isolated teacher initiatives but rather framed within a coherent and supported planning framework. Furthermore, it is recommended to promote critical thinking among students to recognize when these tools add real value to the creative process. With these lines of action, technological adoption aligns with a structured educational response that fosters teaching innovation without compromising the conceptual foundations or ethical principles of advertising creativity training. In this way, the integration of GAI would enhance teaching innovation without jeopardizing the conceptual foundations or ethical principles of advertising creativity training.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS, FUNDING AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Funding: The authors declare that they have not received funding for this research.

Conflict of Interests: The authors declare that there is no conflict.

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