Policy Research Journal
ISSN (E): 3006-7030 ISSN (P) : 3006-7022 Volume 3, Issue 4, 2025

BALANCING INNOVATION AND IP PROTECTION IN AI-DRIVEN TRADEMARK CREATION

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15201453

Keywords
AI and trademarks, intellectual property, trademark law, innovation, authorship, legal reform, artificial intelligence, IP ownership.

Article History
Received on 04 March 2025
Accepted on 04 April 2025
Published on 12 April 2025

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Abstract

The increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in trademark creation presents a novel challenge to traditional intellectual property (IP) frameworks. AI tools now autonomously generate logos, brand names, and slogans—functions once exclusive to human creativity. This shift raises complex legal questions about authorship, ownership, and enforceability of AI-generated trademarks. The purpose of this study is to evaluate how existing IP laws respond to these developments and whether they adequately protect both innovation and trademark integrity. Employing a doctrinal legal research method, the study analyzes statutory provisions, administrative practices, and judicial interpretations across key jurisdictions, including the United States, European Union, and China. It also examines ethical and practical concerns such as mass automated filings and potential infringement liabilities. The findings reveal a significant gap in legal clarity concerning the role of AI in trademark generation, with current laws insufficiently addressing the absence of human authorship. The study recommends targeted reforms to clarify ownership rules, establish transparency obligations, and limit misuse of AI in trademark systems. These measures aim to balance the benefits of innovation with the foundational goals of IP protection in an evolving digital landscape.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of AI has significantly impacted the IP landscape, particularly in the area of trademark creation. AI technologies are increasingly used to autonomously generate brand names, logos, slogans, and other identifiers that traditionally required human ingenuity. This transformation presents new challenges for existing IP frameworks, which were primarily designed to protect human-created works. As AI continues to gain creative capabilities, legal systems are confronted with difficult questions regarding authorship, ownership, originality, and enforceability of AI-generated trademarks. The purpose of this study is to investigate the intersection of innovation and IP protection in the context of AI-driven trademark creation. Specifically, it aims to assess whether current legal structures adequately address the unique challenges posed by AI-generated trademarks and to propose a framework that balances technological innovation with the core principles of trademark law. The scope of the study includes a comparative analysis of legal regimes in the United States, European Union, and China—jurisdictions that represent diverse legal traditions and varying

levels of AI integration in IP administration (Singh & Singh, 2023; Khan, 2024).

This research is motivated by the growing commercial use of AI-powered branding platforms such as Logojoy, Looka, and NameRobot, which enable users to generate thousands of potential trademarks with minimal human input. As these tools become more prevalent, critical legal and ethical questions arise. Can trademarks generated by AI be registered and protected under current laws? Who holds the rights to such trademarks—the user, the AI developer, or no one at all? What mechanisms can be employed to prevent the misuse of AI in mass-producing or infringing upon existing trademarks?

Using a doctrinal legal research methodology, this study analyzes statutory provisions, administrative practices, and judicial interpretations in the selected jurisdictions. It also incorporates comparative legal analysis and normative reasoning to evaluate the coherence, adaptability, and fairness of existing legal responses. By examining how different legal systems are approaching or failing to approach the issue, this paper contributes to a growing body of scholarship concerned with AI and IP law. The significance of this study lies in its potential to influence ongoing international debates and policymaking efforts concerning the future of intellectual property rights in the digital era. As AI becomes an increasingly common tool in the creative and commercial sectors, the absence of legal clarity threatens to undermine both innovation and the foundational objectives of trademark law, including consumer protection and market order.

The preliminary findings suggest that current IP laws do not adequately accommodate the complexities of AI-generated trademarks. Most jurisdictions continue to rely on traditional concepts of human authorship and intent, leaving AI-assisted or autonomous creations in a legal grey area. In response, the study proposes a series of legal and regulatory reforms aimed at clarifying ownership, introducing transparency requirements, and limiting potential abuse of AI in trademark registration systems. The structure of the article is as follows: Section 2 explores the role and capabilities of AI in trademark creation. Section 3 examines the legal foundations of trademark law and their limitations in the context of AI. Section 4 provides a comparative analysis of international legal responses. Section 5 discusses ethical and policy considerations. Section 6 offers concrete legal reforms, and Section 7 concludes the paper by summarizing key findings and suggesting directions for future research.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study centers on the intersection of AI and IP law, specifically focusing on trademark law. It explores the shift from traditional human-driven trademark creation to AI-assisted processes, raising questions about authorship, ownership, distinctiveness, and liability in trademark law. The theoretical framework builds upon legal positivism and economic theories of IP, which argue that IP laws exist to balance the protection of creators' rights with the broader societal benefits of innovation and competition. Within this framework, AI is positioned as an emerging tool that both challenges and enhances traditional notions of authorship and ownership, requiring a rethinking of established IP principles. The study examines how AI's role in trademark creation reshapes these relationships, proposing new models for defining AI authorship and ownership in line with legal and ethical norms, while ensuring that the public good and consumer protection is not undermined. By integrating these perspectives, the study offers a comprehensive approach to understanding the evolving dynamics between technology and intellectual property law.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, utilizing doctrinal legal research to analyze the intersection of AI technology and trademark law. The research primarily involves an extensive review of existing legal literature, case law, international treaties, and regulatory guidelines from key jurisdictions, including the United States, European Union, and China. Through comparative legal analysis, the study identifies gaps and inconsistencies in the current legal frameworks regarding AI-generated trademarks. Additionally, content analysis is applied to assess the practical challenges and ethical considerations associated with AI in the trademark creation process. The research

also incorporates expert opinions and policy papers from international intellectual property organizations such as WIPO to understand the broader implications of AI on global trademark protection. The selected materials, including case studies, legal documents, and academic articles, are critically analyzed to offer a comprehensive understanding of the legal, ethical, and practical issues surrounding AI-generated trademarks. This methodological approach allows for a thorough examination of the evolving challenges in IP law and provides a foundation for proposing legal reforms.

AI IN TRADEMARK CREATION: THE TECHNOLOGICAL SHIFT

AI is increasingly redefining creative and commercial practices across multiple industries, and trademark creation is no exception. Traditionally, the design and selection of trademarks involved creative professionals, marketing teams, and legal advisors working in tandem to develop brand elements that are not only distinctive but also legally protectable. However, the emergence of AI-powered platforms has dramatically altered this process. Through advanced machine learning algorithms, natural language processing, and big data analytics, AI systems are now capable of autonomously generating brand names, logos, slogans, and even complete brand identities tailored to specific market segments. This technological shift enables businesses, including startups and small enterprises, to access high-quality branding solutions at a fraction of the traditional cost (Thongmeensuk, 2024; Khan & Jiliani, 2023).

Platforms such as Logojoy, Looka, Zyro, and NameRobot have grown in popularity due to their ability to generate thousands of brand name and logo variations based on user-inputted preferences. These platforms utilize databases of linguistic patterns, color psychology, consumer trends, and even trademark availability to generate viable branding options. Importantly, they do so in a matter of seconds, often bypassing the iterative, human-centered creative process that characterizes conventional brand development. In many cases, the AI does not simply assist a human designer but replaces the creative process entirely. The user's role is often reduced to responding to prompts or selecting from pre-generated options, raising questions about the degree of originality, intent, and authorship involved in the final output (Kazimi & Thalwal, 2024; Khan & Usman, 2023).

While the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of these tools are undeniable, their use introduces significant legal uncertainty. Trademark law is grounded in the premise that a mark is created by a person or legal entity that can be held accountable for its use, enforcement, and protection. However, when a mark is generated by an autonomous system, the question of who qualifies as the creator becomes legally ambiguous. This ambiguity is further compounded by the absence of direct human creativity or intent in many AI-generated trademarks. If an AI tool generates a mark that closely resembles an existing one, who is liable for infringement—the AI developer, the end user, or neither? Similarly, can such a trademark be said to have the distinctiveness and origin-linking function required for legal protection under existing laws?

The increasing reliance on AI for trademark creation also raises practical concerns for trademark offices. As AI tools make it easier to produce large volumes of trademark applications, they risk overwhelming registration systems and diluting the distinctiveness of the trademark landscape. Automated mass filings could result in trademark squatting, over-appropriation of common terms, or the monopolization of design elements with minimal human judgment. These issues highlight the inadequacy of current legal frameworks, which remain ill-equipped to handle the scale, speed, and autonomy associated with AI-generated content (SINGH, 2024; Khan et al., 2023).

In short, the technological shift brought about by AI in trademark creation presents a double-edged sword. On one hand, it democratizes access to branding and enhances innovation; on the other, it challenges the very foundations upon which trademark law is built. The absence of clear legal recognition or regulation of AI-generated marks may lead to inconsistencies in enforcement, uncertainty in ownership, and reduced confidence in the trademark registration system. This calls for urgent legal and regulatory attention to ensure that trademark law evolves in tandem with technological innovation (Rossi & Bianchi, 2024; Khan, 2023).

TRADEMARK LAW AND THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORSHIP

Trademark law differs fundamentally from copyright law in its treatment of authorship and originality. While copyright is heavily reliant on the originality and creativity of the author, trademark law centers on the distinctiveness of a mark and its ability to identify the source of goods or services to consumers. However, even with this functional focus, the concept of authorship remains relevant—particularly in assessing use, ownership, and enforceability. As AI systems begin to autonomously generate trademarks with minimal or no human input, legal questions emerge regarding whether such outputs meet the doctrinal requirements of trademark law, especially in jurisdictions that condition registration on human intention and commercial use (Lim, 2018; Liu et al., 2023).

A primary legal challenge concerns ownership: who owns an AI-generated trademark? Is it the developer of the AI who programmed the algorithm, the end user who supplied input data, or neither? The absence of human creativity and authorship in the process complicates the assignment of ownership rights. Most legal systems have yet to adopt provisions addressing such scenarios, creating a vacuum where proprietary rights over AI-generated marks remain undefined. Another pressing issue is distinctiveness. While AI can be trained to avoid generic or descriptive terms, it may still lack the intuitive understanding of market saturation or cultural nuance required to generate truly distinctive marks. Furthermore, AI-generated trademarks may inadvertently resemble existing marks, raising the risk of infringement or rejection by trademark offices for likelihood of confusion (Mehrotra, 2024; Khan & Ximei, 2022).

Equally problematic is the requirement of intent to use, a cornerstone of trademark application processes in many jurisdictions. In the United States, for instance, a "bona fide intent to use" the mark in commerce is a legal prerequisite. If the trademark was generated entirely by an autonomous system without direct human involvement or business planning, it is debatable whether this requirement is genuinely satisfied. Does the passive act of selecting an AI-generated trademark constitute a sufficient commercial intention? The answer remains uncertain, and courts have yet to provide definitive guidance on this point. Current jurisprudence and administrative practice do not offers uniform answers. In most cases, trademark offices continue to treat AI-assisted trademark applications as though they were entirely human-driven. This assumption overlooks the increasingly autonomous role AI plays in the creative process and risks undermining the consistency and integrity of trademark registries. Until regulatory or judicial clarification is introduced, these offices may inadvertently allow registrations that raise questions of authorship, originality, and liability—issues that traditional frameworks are not equipped to resolve. In light of these developments, the concept of authorship in trademark law, though traditionally peripheral, must now be reconsidered. As AI systems gain greater independence and creative influence, a reevaluation of foundational legal concepts is necessary to maintain the effectiveness and legitimacy of trademark protection in an era of machine-generated innovation (Celestin, 2024; Khan et al., 2022).

COMPARATIVE LEGAL ANALYSIS

United States

In the United States, trademark law is governed by the Lanham Act, which requires applicants to demonstrate either actual use of a trademark in commerce or a bona fide intent to use the mark in the future. Under the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) regulations, AI-generated trademarks are accepted as part of the registration process. However, there is currently no explicit policy addressing the issue of AI authorship or ownership. This absence of clear legal guidelines leaves open several critical questions. For instance, if an AI system generates a trademark, who owns the rights to that mark—the AI developer, the user who provided input to the system, or no one at all? While trademark law traditionally centers on human authorship, the increasing role of AI in the creative process raises doubts about whether the current system can adequately assign ownership in such cases (Lin & Khan, 2021).

Further complicating matters, the USPTO's examination process assumes that trademarks are created by humans, which may be problematic in the case of AI-generated trademarks. The distinctiveness

requirement, a cornerstone of trademark law, may also be harder to meet if the AI tools used are not sufficiently programmed to avoid overly generic or descriptive marks. Although AI tools can streamline the trademark creation process, there is a risk that they could produce marks that fail to meet the distinctiveness requirement, leading to challenges in both registration and enforcement. The USPTO's lack of an explicit policy leaves a legal grey area, making it crucial for future reforms to provide clearer guidance on AI's role in trademark law (Poddar & Rao, 2024; Khan, 2022).

European Union

In the European Union, the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) oversees trademark registrations, but it has not issued formal guidelines or regulations specific to AI-generated trademarks. Like the U.S., the EU's trademark system emphasizes distinctiveness and non-deceptiveness as core requirements for registration. AI-generated trademarks that are overly generic, descriptive, or misleading could face significant challenges in being granted protection. Since AI systems are programmed to process large datasets, there is a potential risk that AI might generate marks that lack the required originality or that mirror existing trademarks. This could be particularly problematic in the context of confusion or misleading representations in the marketplace, where consumers could be misled into associating a trademark with the wrong source of goods or services. The EUIPO's lack of an official position on AI-generated marks reflects the ongoing challenge of adapting traditional trademark principles to the evolving role of AI in creative industries. As in the United States, EU law presupposes human authorship and intent behind trademarks, but this assumption becomes increasingly problematic as AI systems are capable of autonomously generating distinctive marks without human oversight. With no formal framework recognizing AI as a "creator" or rights holder, legal clarity in the EU remains lacking, and future reforms will likely be necessary to address this gap (Ray, 2023; Khan & Wu, 2021).

China

China, as a global leader in AI development, has been proactive in integrating advanced technologies into its IP registration processes. The China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) has adopted a range of technological tools to streamline the registration process, including AI-driven systems for examining trademark applications and detecting potential infringements. However, despite China's technological advancements, its legal framework does not yet recognize AI as a legal creator or rights holder in trademark matters. The absence of a legal recognition of AI authorship creates challenges in determining who holds the rights to trademarks generated by AI systems. While China's approach to AI in the trademark process is more technologically advanced than that of many other jurisdictions, it shares common limitations with the United States and the European Union. Chinese trademark law still relies on human authorship and intent as fundamental principles, which becomes problematic when considering trademarks created autonomously by AI. The potential for AI to generate innovative but legally uncertain trademarks may necessitate future regulatory developments to address issues of ownership, distinctiveness, and liability in cases involving AI-generated marks (Kumari, 2022; Abdelrehim Hammad et al., 2021).

LEGAL AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

The use of AI in trademark creation presents a range of legal and ethical challenges that must be carefully considered as AI technologies become more integrated into creative and commercial practices. While AI offers significant advantages in terms of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, it also introduces complexities that may undermine the fundamental principles of trademark law, particularly in the areas of ownership, liability, and fair use.

1. Risk of Mass Production and Trademark Dilution

One of the primary legal concerns associated with AI-generated trademarks is the potential for mass production of marks. AI systems can generate vast quantities of trademarks within a short time frame, offering users the ability to produce hundreds or even thousands of logos, names, and brand identities.

While this can provide cost-effective branding solutions, it raises the risk of flooding trademark registries with large volumes of marks. This could lead to an oversaturation of the marketplace with similar or overly generic marks, which may dilute the value of existing trademarks and undermine their distinctiveness. Trademark law is designed to protect consumer association—ensuring that marks clearly identify the source of goods or services and prevent consumer confusion. However, if AI systems generate numerous marks that are indistinguishable from one another, or that are too similar to existing trademarks, this may hinder the ability of consumers to distinguish between competing brands. Furthermore, it may overwhelm trademark offices, leading to administrative inefficiencies and delays in the examination process. Such a situation could erode the core function of trademarks in protecting both businesses and consumers from confusion and unfair competition (Mahingoda, 2023; Usman et al., 2021).

2. Liability and Infringement: Determining Responsibility

The issue of liability for AI-generated trademarks is another critical legal concern. In the event that an AI-generated mark infringes on an existing trademark, it is unclear who should bear responsibility for the infringement. Trademark law typically holds human creators or businesses accountable for using or registering marks that infringe upon the rights of others. However, AI-generated trademarks complicate this framework, as the creator of the mark is not a human but rather an algorithm developed and operated by a platform or company.

The potential liability for infringement could fall on various parties:

- The AI developer, who created the system that generated the infringing trademark.
- The user, who input data into the AI tool and selected the trademark for use.
- The platform provider, who facilitated the AI tool but may not directly control its outputs.

Each party could theoretically be held responsible for different aspects of the infringement, but determining fault in such cases is legally complex. Courts and trademark offices have yet to address how liability should be assigned in AI-generated trademark disputes. This uncertainty may create a legal loophole, where businesses and individuals exploit AI tools to create marks without fully understanding or taking responsibility for the risks of infringement (Kibirige, 2024; Khan et al., 2021).

3. Good Faith and Fair Use: Application to Algorithmic Actions

Another ethical and legal issue stems from the doctrines of good faith and fair use in trademark law. These principles are premised on human judgment, where decisions regarding the use of a mark are made based on factors such as the intent to mislead, the likelihood of confusion, and the level of commercial use. However, when AI generates trademarks autonomously, these doctrines become difficult to apply. AI systems do not have the capacity for intent, and their actions are guided by data and algorithms rather than human discretion. For example, the good faith requirement in trademark law often assumes that the applicant has a genuine intention to use the mark in commerce. In contrast, when an AI system autonomously generates a mark without any real understanding of the business context or market dynamics, it becomes challenging to assess whether the mark was chosen in good faith or whether its use could unfairly capitalize on an existing brand's reputation. Similarly, fair use provisions, which allow the limited use of another's trademark under certain conditions, become more complicated when the use is algorithmic rather than human-driven. This raises ethical concerns about the oversight and accountability of AI systems in the trademark creation process. As AI continues to play a larger role in branding, these ethical and legal challenges must be addressed to ensure that the integrity of trademark law is maintained. Clear frameworks for assigning responsibility and ensuring fairness in the AI-assisted trademark process are essential to avoid misuse or exploitation of AI technologies in ways that could undermine consumer protection and market order (Salle & Rini, 2024; Kahn & Wu, 2020).

THE NEED FOR REFORM

As AI becomes an increasingly integral part of trademark creation, there is a growing need for legal reform to ensure that trademark law remains effective and relevant in this evolving landscape. While AI offers numerous benefits in terms of speed, efficiency, and creativity, it also raises significant concerns regarding ownership, distinctiveness, liability, and fair use. A balanced approach is essential—one that fosters innovation through AI technologies while preserving the integrity of IP protection. The following legal reforms are proposed to address these challenges and ensure that AI-generated trademarks are adequately regulated:

1. Clarify Ownership Rules

One of the most pressing issues surrounding AI-generated trademarks is the lack of clarity regarding ownership. Trademark law typically attributes ownership to a human creator or a legal entity, but AI systems do not fit neatly into this framework. Laws should be reformed to define the IP status of AI-generated content explicitly. A clear distinction should be made between fully automated outputs—where AI generates a mark with minimal human input—and those cases where significant human involvement is present, such as when a user customizes or refines an AI-generated design. By clearly delineating ownership, IP law can avoid ambiguity and ensure that the rights to AI-generated trademarks are properly assigned, whether to the AI developer, the user, or another party. Such clarification will also help resolve disputes regarding infringement, authorship, and commercial use (Bharati, 2024).

2. Registration Guidelines for AI-Generated Marks

Trademark offices should implement specific registration guidelines tailored to AI-generated trademarks. These guidelines should provide clear criteria for assessing the originality and distinctiveness of marks created through AI. Audits of originality should be conducted to ensure that AI-generated trademarks do not infringe upon existing marks, are not overly generic, and meet the legal requirement of being distinctive. This may involve developing algorithms or tools to evaluate the similarity between proposed AI-generated marks and registered trademarks, helping to avoid conflicts and ensuring that AI-generated marks are unique and legally protectable. Such guidelines could also provide transparency regarding how AI tools are used in the trademark creation process, ensuring consistency and fairness in the registration process (Kumar, 2024).

3. AI Transparency Requirements

To promote accountability and fairness in the trademark process, AI transparency requirements should be introduced. Developers and users of AI systems must disclose the extent of AI involvement in trademark creation during the application process. This disclosure would include providing information about the AI system used, the level of human input, and how the AI was trained to generate marks. Transparency requirements would help ensure that trademark offices, as well as the public, are aware of how marks are created and whether they meet the necessary legal standards for protection. Additionally, such transparency could allow for more informed decisions when trademark disputes arise, ensuring that AI-generated marks are treated with the same rigor and scrutiny as human-generated marks (Khan et al., 2025).

4. Limitations on Automated Filings

To prevent the abuse of AI technologies and the potential flood of low-quality marks into trademark registries, it may be necessary to impose limitations on automated filings. Such limitations could include restricting the number of trademarks that can be filed by a single entity or through an AI system within a specific time period. This would reduce the risk of AI tools being used to file large volumes of overly generic or confusingly similar marks, which could overwhelm trademark offices and undermine the value of the trademark system. Limiting the frequency of automated filings would also help prevent trademark squatting, where individuals or entities register trademarks with no intention to use them, solely for the purpose of reselling them at a later time (Khan & Ullah, 2024).

5. International Harmonization

As AI-generated trademarks become a global issue, international harmonization of trademark law is

critical to creating consistency and clarity across jurisdictions. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) should take a leading role in establishing international standards for AI-generated trademarks. By developing harmonized rules, guidelines, and best practices, WIPO can help ensure that AI-generated trademarks are treated fairly and consistently worldwide. This would not only foster innovation but also prevent jurisdictional fragmentation, where different countries have conflicting rules regarding AI-generated marks. International harmonization could also provide a framework for resolving cross-border disputes involving AI-created trademarks, which are increasingly likely in a globalized marketplace (Khan, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The rapid advancement of AI in trademark creation presents both exciting opportunities and significant challenges. This research underscores the transformative potential of AI in shaping the future of branding, while also highlighting the critical need for legal and regulatory adaptation. As AI continues to play a pivotal role in the creation of trademarks—enabling faster, cost-effective, and innovative branding solutions—traditional trademark laws must evolve to address the complexities introduced by these technologies. Key legal and ethical challenges, such as ownership, distinctiveness, liability, and intent to use, require urgent attention to ensure that the legal frameworks governing trademark protection remain effective in the age of machine-generated content. The proposed reforms, including clarifying ownership rules, developing specific registration guidelines, introducing AI transparency requirements, limiting automated filings, and promoting international harmonization, are essential for creating a balanced approach. These reforms will enable innovation in trademark creation while safeguarding the core principles of trademark law, such as consumer protection, distinctiveness, and fair competition.

As this research demonstrates, there is a clear need for further exploration into the intersection of AI technology and intellectual property law. Future research could delve deeper into the implications of AI in other aspects of IP, such as copyright and patent law, and explore the ethical concerns surrounding AI-driven innovation, including the potential for bias in algorithmic decisions. Additionally, research on cross-jurisdictional legal frameworks and international cooperation in IP protection will be crucial as AI technologies and global markets continue to intertwine. Ultimately, the integration of AI into trademark creation offers the potential to redefine the way businesses approach branding and intellectual property. However, without appropriate legal reforms, this potential could be undermined by confusion, abuse, and a lack of accountability. As such, the future of AI in trademark law hinges on a thoughtful, nuanced approach that balances innovation with protection, ensuring that AI can be harnessed responsibly in the service of both businesses and consumers alike.

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