Artificial Intelligence and Public Relations Synergy: A Study in the Context of Bangladesh

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Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of public relations (PR) has brought a massive change in communication. This paradigm shift is not merely a technological advancement but a fundamental transformation in how public relations practitioners (PRPs) interact with stakeholders to communicate effectively. The study's primary objective was to examine the extent to which PRPs in Bangladesh utilize AI in their routine activities to achieve organizational goals. This research elucidates the current landscape by surveying a diverse sample of PRPs, thereby disclosing the degree to which AI technologies have been incorporated into PR practices. The study revealed that the utilization of AI in the field of PR in a variety of institutions in Bangladesh is less anticipated. Inadequate knowledge was also discovered in the investigation. This research contributes to the ongoing conversation regarding the influence of AI on the future of PR. It offers valuable insights for professionals and organizations that are striving to navigate this transformative journey effectively.

Keywords: AI, Public Relations, Practice, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

AI has the potential to serve as an asset in the ever-expanding realm of communication. The integration of AI with human expertise presents an opportunity for a transformative phase in communication, enabling experts to establish connections, foster resonance, and achieve widespread success (Gomez, 2023). AI systems are exerting a transformative influence that extends beyond the realm of human-machine interaction. The widespread adoption of chatbots and other technologies has a tremendous impact on human-human contact, leading to the emergence of new patterns. The advent of information technology and communication formats has brought about significant changes in the social landscape, leading to the introduction or removal of many activities (Drogan, 2023).

AI has the potential to enhance an organization's PR endeavors through the provision of tools that effectively engage with the emotions and cognitive processes of a specific target audience. AI has the potential to assist in identifying news articles that align with the preferences of individual journalists working for certain media organizations, hence facilitating effective media relations. A significant number of PRPs have already included AI in their operations, employing it for tasks like monitoring, website analytics, and social listening, among others. The discipline is currently witnessing exponential growth in technological advancements. Within the field of media monitoring, AI can propose pertinent subjects that could be

considered for inclusion or exclusion in the monitoring process. If an individual is utilizing a service for the purpose of monitoring images, as opposed to text, AI is probably employed to facilitate the search process. However, the advantages of AI in the field of PR are manifold. One of the several advantages of AI in the field of PR is the ability for professionals to optimize and streamline their normal procedures. By eliminating the time needed for various routine chores, such as the collection and analysis of consumer data, media monitoring, and social listening, individuals may allocate more time towards enhancing their creativity in content development. There are several other advantages associated with the utilization of AI in the fields of communications and PR. Speech-to-text conversion technology has the potential to be beneficial in several contexts, such as press conferences, media interviews, podcast episodes, and conference presentations. Natural language processing (NLP) has enabled AI to achieve a level of writing comparable to that of humans, allowing it to generate content on a wide range of topics. The process of converting audio and text materials into several languages to facilitate wider dissemination (Nolden, 2023). However, Generative AI systems hold significant potential for PRPs, as they offer the ability to enhance communication content and function as a personal editor, proofreader, and sounding board. Nevertheless, these applications pose unique issues that have not previously been encountered in the realms of communication and law. Due to the distinctiveness of this novel technology, PR practitioners must adopt a more intentional and contemplative approach when employing AI. However, PRPS need to be cautioned to avoid inadvertent errors, especially those related to intellectual property violations. To ensure responsible decision-making, practitioners should prioritize the verification of material ownership and accuracy. Given the dynamic nature of the legal framework around AI, practitioners must exercise increased vigilance in staying abreast of the latest legal developments in this rapidly changing domain. One undeniable aspect of the unpredictable realm shaped by AI is the enduring presence of generative AI. When attempting to access ChatGPT, users may see a notification indicating that the system is now operating at maximum capacity, hence suggesting a need to revisit the platform later. A forward trajectory characterizes technological advancement, and the field of PR has already recognized the disruptive potential of ChatGPT and similar AI programs (Myers, 2023). Moreover, in the realm of marketing, PR, and communications, AI has emerged as a powerful ally, enabling professionals to enhance their strategies, streamline processes, and deliver exceptional results (Jacobs, 2023). In the ever-evolving landscape of communication and media, the strategic practice of PR has undergone a remarkable transformation with the integration of AI technologies. As organizations increasingly seek to connect with diverse audiences, build brand identities, and navigate the intricacies of the digital age, AI has emerged as a powerful tool for reshaping the PR industry. With AI-driven solutions ranging from natural language processing for sentiment analysis to chatbots for real-time engagement, PRPs are leveraging these technologies to enhance their capabilities in areas such as media monitoring, crisis management, and audience targeting (Smith & Johnson, 2020; Brown et al., 2019). The utilization of AI in the field of PR has facilitated the automation of monotonous jobs, including the monitoring, and tracking of media coverage. Automation not only assumes control over the mundane tasks associated with the field of PR but also enhances the capacity of PRPs to acquire valuable insights swiftly. The utilization of AI is facilitating PRPs in acquiring real-time information from the digital realm. This advantage can prove to be pivotal in the context of a social media boycott, wherein discussions propagate swiftly, and temporal resources are of paramount importance. The utilization of AI is enabling PRPs to effectively measure and evaluate individuals' sentiments and attitudes towards a particular brand. This capability allows for a precise assessment of sentiment, which can then be compared to other key performance indicators such as engagement levels, stock price, or sales figures (Maldonado, 2020). This paradigm shifts to change PR strategies and emphasizes the need to understand AI in the field and its effects on communication. Given the circumstances, the main goal of the study was to investigate the extent to which PRPs engage in the multifaceted utilization of AI in their routine activities in Bangladesh to achieve organizational goals.

2. Literature Review

The field of AI has experienced significant growth in recent years, adopting and integrating the newest technological advancements (Perakakis et al., 2019). AI is a subject that is discussed in various contexts, and it is crucial to develop a conceptual understanding of AI when considering its implications in the field of PR. AI refers to the integration of various technologies that empower machines to execute a range of tasks, including data manipulation, analysis, and processing, with a level of proficiency surpassing that of human capabilities. Instead of generating employment opportunities, AI and machine learning have the potential to enhance the performance of competent workers, so they serve as complements rather than competitors to PR experts (Liew, 2021). According to Dignum (2018), the utilization of AI technology in PR offers numerous benefits. He also stated that AI has facilitated PRP's routine activities, which has strengthened their capacity. According to Galloway and Swiatek (2018), the utilization of AI in the field of PR can be exemplified through several means, including the delivery of presentations and lectures at conferences and events, as well as its application in social media platforms. AI tools provide valuable information that PRPs may utilize to modify their strategies and enhance their rate of success. The utilization of AI in the field of publishing is expected to expedite the attainment of objectives, yielding outcomes that are not only swifter but also of superior quality compared to previous methods.

However, the integration of AI into the field of PR has become a focal point of scholarly inquiry and industry interest. AI technologies, including natural language processing, machine learning algorithms, and chatbots, have gained prominence in PR practice, offering novel ways to streamline communication processes and engage with diverse audiences (Bowen, 2020; Grunig & Repper, 2021). Recent studies emphasize the potential of AI in media monitoring, sentiment analysis, and predictive analytics, enabling PR professionals to track sentiment in real time, identify emerging trends, and tailor content for maximum impact (Smith & Johnson, 2019; Brown et al., 2020). Furthermore, AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants are revolutionizing customer service, providing immediate responses to queries and enhancing stakeholder interactions (Grunig & Repper, 2021; Baker & Murphy, 2018). While the benefits of AI in PR are evident, researchers are equally concerned about ethical considerations, data privacy, and the need for transparency in automated communication (Bowen, 2020; Brown et al., 2020). Özgen et al. (2023) argued that PR must adapt to the rapid development of AI, which is smarter than memories and constantly evolves. The fast usage of digital tools in PR will lessen the knowledge gap.

The emergence of AI in the field of PR presents both novel problems and the potential to enhance communication efficiency with stakeholders. According to Liew (2021), recent studies have demonstrated that the adoption and utilization of AI technology within organizations can facilitate the evaluation of return on PR endeavors and establish alignment between organizational goals and objectives. Within the realm of PR, AI possesses the capability to construct content based on data analysis and effectively handle crises. Additionally, it possesses knowledge regarding upcoming trends in media. AI has been predominantly utilized in the routine operations of only the most renowned PR agencies. The utilization of this tool is aimed at enhancing individuals' skills and abilities. Consequently, PRPs can allocate a greater amount of time towards engaging in creative pursuits. The potential diminishment of diversity in PR positions could arise due to the lack of awareness and understanding of AI. Consequently, the role of this technology has assumed paramount importance in guaranteeing the efficacy of PR initiatives. However, PR specialists can utilize AI to provide highly targeted communications that are most appropriate for the unique requirements of their clients. The utilization of this approach has the potential to decrease the level of exertion required in generating content tailored to a certain target demographic. Furthermore, it can aid a PR enterprise in mitigating uncertainty. Automation and machine learning technologies provide valuable assistance to professionals in identifying the specific components that contribute to the effectiveness of PR campaigns. Due to the superior speed of machines in task execution compared to humans, it becomes feasible to derive

prompt and accurate conclusions that are advantageous to the client. The utilization of this tool facilitates comprehension and anticipation of patterns, a crucial component in the process of making informed decisions. AI and machine learning (ML) are utilized to drive a diverse range of analytical and creative instruments, which have the potential to enhance an agency's services and marketing endeavors. AI has facilitated a shift in the operational strategies of numerous conventional PR and marketing organizations, enabling them to adopt a more proactive stance in their professional endeavors. Now, PRPs can leverage the emerging synergy between humans and intelligent technologies in order to develop data-driven campaigns, automate repetitive tasks, analyze online interactions, and anticipate potential catastrophes. Mohamed and Bayraktar (2022) stated that the integration of AI into the field of communications has experienced a very sluggish start. In 2017, a mere 3% of news articles pertaining to the PR sector included any reference to AI. PR specialists are gradually, albeit steadily, adjusting to emerging technologies. PR organizations are currently utilizing AI in their day-to-day operations to comprehend their capacity for optimizing consumer activities, generating novel encounters that enhance brand loyalty, and enhancing user experiences.

However, the adoption of AI technologies in PR practice has yielded a multitude of benefits. Firstly, AI-powered sentiment analysis and media monitoring tools provide PR professionals with real-time insights into public perceptions and emerging trends, enabling them to make data-driven decisions and craft more targeted communication strategies (Smith & Johnson, 2019). Secondly, AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants have revolutionized customer service, ensuring 24/7 responsiveness and personalized interactions, thereby enhancing stakeholder engagement (Baker & Murphy, 2018). Additionally, AI facilitates the automation of routine tasks such as content generation and distribution, freeing PR practitioners to focus on more strategic activities (Brown et al., 2020). Furthermore, predictive analytics powered by AI assist in forecasting potential PR crises, allowing organizations to proactively manage and mitigate reputational risks (Grunig & Repper, 2021). In recent times, the news media industry has experienced significant disruptions due to the emergence of technology-driven methodologies in the creation, production, and distribution of news products and services. The field of AI has transitioned from the world of speculative literature to a tangible instrument that holds the potential to assist society in tackling many obstacles, such as those encountered by the news industry. The prevalence of computing has been evident, and various methodologies may be accomplished using AI (de-Lima-Santos & Ceron, 2022).

Despite the increasing amount of research on the integration of AI in PR practice in Bangladesh, there are still numerous significant gaps in the existing literature. The incorporation of AI in the practice of PR has been the subject of numerous international studies; however, more research needs to be conducted that is tailored to the distinctive socio-cultural and economic context of Bangladesh. AI is transforming the landscape of PR activities in Bangladesh, but more attention needs to be paid to this development. This study aims to address these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of the utilization of AI in the Bangladeshi public relations sector, thereby elucidating its unique attributes and implications.

3. Research Methodology
3.1. Research Design and Data

A combination of mixed techniques was employed in this study, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Primary data were collected from PR practitioners associated with various government and private institutions within their respective fields. Secondary data were sourced from a wide range of publications, studies, and other relevant materials. A purposive sampling technique was adopted, and interviews were conducted with 40 respondents. Additionally, the questionnaire was carefully developed based on a review of existing literature and the extensive practical experience of the authors, who have been actively working in this field for many years. The objective of the study was clearly communicated, and participation in the data collection process was entirely voluntary, with no coercion involved. Table 1 summarizes the study participants' sociodemographic characteristics. Most of the participants were male

(85%), 31-40 and 41-50 years old (75%), married (87.5%), postgraduate students (87.5%), and working experiences 11 to 15 is (55%).

Table 1: Sociodemographic information and health-seeking behaviors (n=40).

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	34	85
Female	06	15
Age		
18-30 years old	10	25
31-40 years old	15	37.5
41-50 years old	15	37.5
> 50 years old	5	2
Marital Status		
Single	5	12.5
Married	35	87.5
Education		
Post-graduate	35	87.5
MPhil or PhD	5	12.5
Working Experiences		
Below 5	4	10
6 to 10	5	12.5
11 to 15	22	55
16 to 20	5	12.5
Above 20	4	10

3.2. Study Model

The study employed the Knowledge Attitude and Practices (KAP) theory, pioneered by John Coster (Chen et al., 2021; Cui et al., 2023), and has been applied in numerous research disciplines. The theory is frequently implemented in public health research to examine the health behaviors of individuals and to clarify their transformations. The KAP model, developed in the 1950s, has been widely used to assess survey respondents' understanding of a subject (Rahman et al, 2022). These models consist of three fundamental components: the acquisition of precise knowledge, the development of attitudes, and the adoption of behaviors. I have employed this definition to articulate the way PRPs employed in various institutions implement AI in their daily operations to accomplish institutional objectives. Employing the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) model to investigate the integration of AI into public relations practice in Bangladesh. The following is an example of how the KAP model may be implemented in this investigation:

4. Results

Table 2 (A, B, C) illustrates that the findings from the study indicate varying levels of awareness and perceptions regarding the integration of AI in PR practice. Half (50%) of the respondents reported having a sufficient understanding of how AI is applied in PR, suggesting a growing familiarity with the technology among PR professionals. Additionally, 40% of respondents believe that AI's ability to analyze large datasets can be instrumental in identifying trends, patterns, and correlations that support strategic decision-making. A larger proportion, 60%, emphasized AI's capability to monitor vast amounts of online and traditional media, enabling PR teams to track brand mentions and relevant topics in real time. While only 30% of respondents acknowledged the role of AI-powered chatbots in managing routine public queries, this group also recognized the potential for AI to free up professionals for more strategic tasks. They further noted that AI could analyze audience behavior to develop personalized, targeted content, thereby enhancing audience engagement across different segments. The ability of AI to provide real-time analysis of social media and

news trends, which can help detect potential crises early, was recognized by 60% of respondents. In terms of content management, 40% of respondents agreed that AI tools could optimize social media posts and assist with content creation. Furthermore, a significant 70% of respondents highlighted AI's capacity to enhance the quality of language used in PR communications, suggesting that AI is seen as an asset in refining messaging and improving overall communication strategies.

Table 2A: Knowledge towards AI and PR

No	Items (Knowledge)	Correct Response (%)
K1	I have enough ideas about AI	20 (50%)
K2	I know about how AI is integrated with PR practice	20 (50%)
K3	AI can analyze large datasets to identify trends, patterns, and correlations that may be crucial for strategic decision-making	16 (40%)
K4	AI tools can scan vast amounts of online and traditional media to monitor mentions of brands, products, or key topics relevant to PR campaigns.	24 (60%)
K5	AI-powered chatbots can handle routine queries from the public, freeing up PR professionals to focus on more strategic tasks	12 (30%)
K6	AI tools can analyze audience behavior to create personalized and targeted content, improving engagement with different segments of the audience	12 (30%)
K7	AI can provide real-time analysis of social media and news trends to detect potential crises early	18 (60%)
K8	AI tools can schedule and optimize social media posts for maximum reach and engagement	16 (40%)
K9	AI can help to create contents	16 (40%)
K10	It can help to improve the language	28 (70%)

Table 2B: Attitude towards AI and PR

No	Items	SDA (%)	DA (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)
A1	AI can enhance the effectiveness of PR campaigns and communication strategies	5 (12.5)	10 (25)	14 (35)	6 (15)	5 (12.5)
A2	I am enthusiastic to embrace AI in communication.	3 (7.5)	7 (17.5)	20 (50)	7 (17.5)	3 (7.5)
A3	For extensive service, I think we should integrate in PR practice	2 (5)	8 (20)	20 (50)	8 (20)	2 (5)
A4	I do believe that AI could contribute to enhance the communication landscape	3 (7.5)	7 (17.5)	7 (17.5)	20 (50)	3 (7.5)
A5	With the help of AI, we could develop the quality of the content	5 (12.5)	10 (25)	6 (15)	14 (35)	5 (12.5)
A6	I think that PR professionals should acquire AI-related skills to stay competitive in the industry	5 (12.5)	5 (12.5)	20 (50)	7 (17.5)	3 (7.5)

Table 2C: Practices towards AI and PR

No	Items	Yes	No
P1	I frequently practice AI to write content	22 (55%)	18 (45%)
P2	I want to integrate AI into the overall PR and communication strategies of organizations.	22 (55%)	18 (45%)
P3	I want to take training on AI for better services.	21 (52.5%)	19 (47.5%)
P4	I want to solve any challenges to implement AI in communication	23 (57.5%)	17 (42.5%)
P5	We should be vigilant about the use of AI in communication	24 (60%)	16 (40%)

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 2 illustrates that 35% of the respondents expressed a neutral stance regarding the ability of AI to enhance the effectiveness of PR campaigns and communication strategies. 20% of the participants remained

neutral when asked about their enthusiasm for embracing AI in communication and expressed a belief that AI integration should be considered in PR practice for more extensive services. Another 20% agreed that AI could contribute to improving the communication landscape. Additionally, 35% of respondents believed that AI could help improve the quality of content in PR. However, 20% of the respondents were neutral on the idea that PR professionals should acquire AI-related skills to remain competitive in the industry.

Table 2 illustrates a growing inclination among respondents toward the use of AI in PR and communication. Approximately 55% of respondents reported that they frequently utilize AI to generate content and expressed a desire to integrate AI into their organization's overall PR and communication strategies. Additionally, 52% of the respondents indicated a strong interest in receiving AI-related training to enhance their services. Notably, 57% acknowledged their willingness to address challenges associated with implementing AI in communication, and 60% emphasized the need for caution and vigilance in the application of AI within the communication landscape. These results highlight both enthusiasm for and concerns about AI integration in the industry.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study underscores the increasing synergy between AI and PR practices in Bangladesh, revealing diverse levels of awareness and perceptions among PRPs. Fifty percent of respondents exhibited a robust comprehension of AI's function in PR, while the majority acknowledged AI's capacity to improve strategic decision-making, especially via data analysis, real-time media surveillance, and early crisis identification. A substantial majority of participants recognized AI's capacity to enhance content generation and elevate communication quality, with 70% highlighting its contribution to the refinement of PR messaging. Although AI-powered chatbots are not widely recognized, their capacity to manage regular duties and enable PR professionals to concentrate on more strategic endeavors was acknowledged. The findings indicate a favorable perspective on the incorporation of AI in PR, with professionals recognizing it as a significant asset for enhancing efficiency, engagement, and communication efficacy in the domain.

The study reveals a complex understanding of the relationship between AI and PR among participants in Bangladesh. A considerable number of respondents maintained a neutral position about AI's capacity to improve PR campaigns and communication strategies; however, there is a distinct conviction that AI integration ought to be contemplated for the expansion of PR services. Although hardly 20% of participants expressed enthusiasm for AI in communication, a noteworthy 35% recognized its potential to enhance the quality of public relations content. The varied replies reflect a prudent yet increasing acknowledgment of AI's impact on the communication sector, implying that PR professionals in Bangladesh could gain a competitive edge by developing AI-related competencies, despite lingering reservations about these breakthroughs.

The analysis indicates an expanding synergy between AI and PR, with a rising percentage of respondents demonstrating a favorable disposition towards the integration of AI in PR and communication initiatives. More than fifty percent of the participants regularly utilize AI for content creation and are enthusiastic about integrating it into their organizational communication strategies. A considerable percentage also emphasized the necessity for AI-related training to improve their offerings. Despite evident enthusiasm for AI integration, respondents acknowledge the challenges, with 57% expressing a readiness to confront potential impediments and 60% underscoring the necessity of prudence and vigilance in the deployment of AI within the communication domain. This equilibrium of optimism and caution highlights the transforming function of AI in influencing the future of PR. The findings suggest that, although there is increasing acceptance of AI in the practice of PRPs in Bangladesh, further education, strategic implementation, and skill development are necessary to harness AI's potential in the industry fully.

According to the study, (PRPs') knowledge of how to incorporate AI into their work is only moderate. Furthermore, it was shown that their attitude toward implementing AI-driven solutions in public relations could have been better, showing neither a great deal of enthusiasm nor substantial opposition. The study also revealed a significant knowledge gap: PRPs do not fully understand the potential advantages and real-world uses of AI in the public relations industry. This disparity points to the urgent need for focused education and training initiatives that will equip PRPs with the knowledge and abilities they need to use AI in their job successfully.

The study suggests that there should be a greater availability of AI-related training programs for public relations professionals (PPRs) both locally and worldwide. This would allow PPRs to have a better grasp of how AI may help them with their activities, modify communication strategies, and adapt audience engagements. In addition to this, it emphasizes the necessity of teaching ethical principles regarding the use of artificial intelligence in public relations practices and emphasizes the significance of acquiring AI-related competencies to maintain competitiveness in the ever-evolving public relations sector. It advocates for the incorporation of AI technologies in media surveillance and content creation in order to improve organizational efficiency.

6. Limitations and Direction for Future Research

The study includes several shortcomings, such as a sample size of forty, which might not be sufficient to accurately represent the public relations industry in Bangladesh as a whole. In subsequent research, it would be possible to add a more comprehensive sample that encompasses a wide variety of public and private organizations to conduct comparative analysis. Furthermore, it is possible that some of the participants who supplied neutral comments did not have adequate awareness or confidence in their ability to comprehend the function that AI plays in public relations. It is possible that in the future, the study will investigate a variety of analytical methodologies, such as regression analysis, in order to obtain more profound insights.

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