

# Examining the Influence of Artificial Intelligence on Public Relations: Insights from the Organization-Situation-Public-Communication (OSPC) Model

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**Abstract:** The growing presence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the Public Relations (PR) sector is an undeniable reality. Although still early in the journey towards widespread adoption, organizations are progressively infusing AI into their PR approaches. Yet, there's a spectrum of understanding and implementation across practitioners. The objective of this research was to shed light on AI's influence on PR within the context of the Organization-Situation-Public-Communication (OSPC) model. Employing a comprehensive literature review as the research design, we examined a vast array of scholarly articles and industry reports to collect data on AI-driven tools, their application in PR, and the implications at each level of the OSPC model. Results of the study revealed that AI-driven tools were enhancing efficiency, personalizing communications, adapting to situational factors, and cultivating relationships with publics. These advancements, however, came with potential risks, challenges, and ethical considerations that require further investigation. Specifically, AI-driven automation can sometimes overshadow human expertise, raising concerns about trust and transparency in PR communications. The study concluded that there is a critical need for PR practitioners to strike an optimal balance between AI-driven automation and human expertise. Moreover, PR practitioners are encouraged to continuously update their skills and competencies, particularly in data analytics and AI, and adopt transparent communication practices. This study offers valuable insights for practitioners and researchers to effectively navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by this rapidly evolving technology, and to develop more informed and ethical AI-driven PR strategies.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Artificial Intelligence-driven Tools, OSPC Model, Public Relations, Strategic Communication

## 1. Introduction

The swift progress of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has induced transformative effects across numerous sectors, including Public Relations (PR). With the advent of sophisticated AI technologies, PR professionals can now extract valuable insights regarding stakeholder attitudes and behaviors through real-time data analysis[1]. Moreover, these professionals are leveraging AI-enabled tools for content creation and distribution, thus streamlining their work processes[2]. Emerging AI-driven platforms like ChatGPT have become instrumental in enhancing customer service and stakeholder interactions[3-6], as well as serving as valuable research aids for scholars[7].

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While prior studies have delved into the influences of AI technologies on PR, they have explored the impact of AI on marketing and PR from various perspectives, including neoliberalism[8], identification of potential AI roles in PR[9], and analysis of AI adoption levels among nations, corporations, and consumers[10]. Yet, these studies often present a generalized perspective of AI's effect on PR. They tend to either accentuate the positive aspects of increased automation and efficiency[9] or highlight ethical considerations[10], but fail to deliver a comprehensive, theoretically-grounded comprehension of AI's impact across the PR sector[11].

Several scholars have advocated for a systematic review of AI's effects on strategic communication practices[8][10-14]. Nevertheless, the current body of literature exhibits a void when it comes to a meticulous examination of AI's potential repercussions on PR practices within a strong theoretical backdrop. More specifically, an in-depth investigation into the potential impact of AI on PR practices, founded on a robust theoretical framework, is noticeably absent[9-11]. In addition, there often appears to be a lack of methodological rigor when exploring AI's potential implications on PR practices and research. For instance, preceding research has typically been future-oriented and reliant on a restricted number of expert interviews or literature reviews[1][13][15]. This is likely attributable to the rapid evolution of AI and a dearth of experts capable of offering insights into its effects on PR. Given the swift and unique development of AI technologies, compared to previous advancements[16], achieving a holistic understanding of AI's influence on PR can pose a formidable challenge to PR professionals and researchers.

In response to this, the primary objective of this study is to address this lacuna by implementing a literature review focused on recent PR-related journals published circa 2020. The Organization-Situation-Public-Communication (OSPC) model[17] has been adopted as a framework to enhance our understanding of PR dynamics. The OSPC model elucidates the interconnectivity of organizational, situational, public, and communication factors, offering a systematic approach to delve into AI's impacts on PR. The ambition of this research is to elucidate the role of AI in molding PR practices and research while simultaneously highlighting the opportunities and challenges brought forth by AI in the ever-evolving domain of PR. By scrutinizing the existing literature on PR and advancements in AI, practitioners and researchers can augment their understanding of PR dynamics within the context of AI development, ensuring adaptability in the face of an increasingly volatile communication landscape.

## **2. Frameworks for AI's Impact on Communication Fields**

Regarding AI and its impact on the media and communication's industries and practices, previous studies have explored various aspects related to the relationship between AI, journalists, and mass media industry. These include the misconceptions surrounding AI[18][19] and diverse facets of AI-driven journalism, such as content creation, personalization, and distribution[20]. Researchers have debated the potential risks and benefits of AI adoption in journalism, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration between journalists and AI experts to ensure responsible and ethical utilization of AI technologies in the field[21].

In the marketing and PR fields, similar trends are observable. Although Manis and Madhavaram investigated the concept of AI-enabled marketing capabilities and their position within the hierarchy of marketing capabilities[3], it is challenging to identify a mutually exclusive and exhaustive method to explicate AI's impact on strategic communication. Of course, numerous studies in the field of public relations have examined AI's role in PR research, as well as the risks and benefits associated with its use. These studies also explore the potential for AI to complement the expertise of PR practitioners, acknowledging the importance of human intuition and judgment in effective PR strategies. Additionally, research has explored AI's potential for enhancing decision-making processes and improving customer experience, while also emphasizing the importance of focusing on new and disruptive technologies to

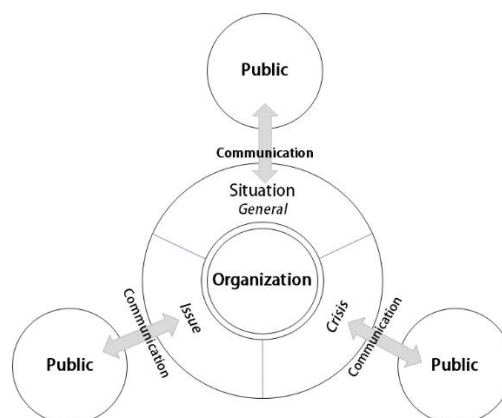
optimize business operations. Moreover, ethical implications related to AI use in PR have also been a subject of investigation[1][9][22-25]. These studies often discuss the potential for AI to reinforce both strong and weak social logic depending on the situation, further emphasizing the need for responsible and ethical AI applications.

In summary, research on the potential impact of AI on PR practices has generally lacked explicit theoretical frameworks to support its claims. While some studies, such as Ardila[23] and Kopalle et al.[14] have utilized specific theoretical foundations to analyze AI's impact on communication fields, these frameworks do not fully encompass the broader landscape changes brought about by the adoption of AI technology. Nonetheless, major studies have drawn upon various existing literature and theories to discuss AI's potential impact on the PR field and connect their findings to broader concepts, including professional identity, PR ethics, and the need for strategic communication professionals to adapt to technological changes. By providing more specific examples of AI technologies and their characteristics in relation to their respective fields, researchers can encourage a deeper examination of the unique benefits, drawbacks, and areas where human sensitivity is still required. Through these efforts, they provide a comprehensive understanding of the ongoing transformations and potential future developments in the field of PR resulting from AI adoption.

## 2.1 Moving Forward and Overview of the OSPC Model

The development of comprehensive theoretical frameworks is crucial for explaining and predicting AI-induced changes in the field of PR. These frameworks should incorporate insights from various disciplines, such as organizational communication, issue or crisis management, stakeholder characteristics, and strategic communication tactics, to offer a comprehensive perspective of AI's potential impact on PR practices and academia. By integrating interdisciplinary perspectives, research frameworks can assist practitioners and scholars in navigating the complex landscape of AI-driven PR communication, addressing both the challenges and opportunities presented by rapidly evolving technology. Furthermore, these frameworks can serve as a foundation for future empirical studies exploring the specific ways AI is transforming PR practices and the ethical, legal, and societal implications of these changes.

In this context, the current study focuses on the less widely known but comprehensive Organization-Situation-Public-Communication (OSPC) model[17], which offers a holistic theoretical framework for understanding public relations by emphasizing the interdependence of four primary factors: organization, situation, public, and communication. As this model asserts that effective PR practice and academic boundaries are influenced by the interplay among these factors, it enables a more nuanced examination of PR dynamics. Below is a conceptual map of the OSPC model [Fig. 1].



[Fig. 1] Conceptualization of the OSPC Model

[Table 1] presents an example of situation management, stakeholder relations, and communication tactics categorization for a corporate organization. In any given situation, such as general operations, growing issues, or confronting crises, effective communication with the public can significantly impact the organization's mission execution. To achieve this, the organization strategically selects communication strategies and tactics based on the situation and specific characteristics of the stakeholders they are engaging with.

[Table 1] Example of a Breakdown of Corporate PR Practice According to the OSPC Model

Organization	Situation	Public	Communications
Corporate PR	General: Relationship Management	Consumer: Consumer Relations	Company/Product Advertising, etc.
	Issues: Issue Management	Community: Community Relations	Monitoring and scanning, lobbying, etc.
	Crisis: Crisis Management	The Media: Media Relations	Press conference, apologies, etc.

## 2.2 Organization Level

The situation component of the OSPC model refers to the external context in which an organization operates, and its PR efforts are conducted[17]. AI can significantly influence situational factors, as it allows organizations to monitor and analyze vast amounts of data to better understand the external environment and respond proactively to emerging trends and issues[26] In crisis communication, AI-powered tools, such as Brand24 and Mention, can help organizations identify potential crises in real-time and develop rapid response strategies to reduce negative impacts on their reputation[27][28]. Additionally, AI-driven sentiment analysis tools, like Brand24 and IBM Watson Natural Language, can assist organizations in gauging public opinion and detecting shifts in sentiment, enabling them to adapt their PR strategies to changing situations[25][29].

On the other hand, the rapid pace of AI development may also lead to increased competition, as organizations that fail to adapt and integrate AI into their PR efforts risk falling behind in the ever-evolving communication landscape[30]. The OSPC model's situational component, which pertains to the external context and PR efforts of an organization[17], can be significantly influenced by AI. In that context, AI can be applied to aid in real-time crisis communication, sentiment analysis, and adaptation to changing circumstances

## 2.3 Situation Level

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## 2.4 The Public Level

On the other hand, The public component of the OSPC model includes various stakeholder groups with whom an organization interacts, including customers, employees, investors, and the media[17]. AI can play a critical role in shaping an organization's relationships with these stakeholders by enabling more personalized and targeted communication[31]. For instance, AI-driven chatbots such as IBM's Watson Assistant can provide instant, customized responses to stakeholder inquiries, enhancing customer service and engagement[32][33]. Additionally, AI tools like Salesforce Marketing Cloud and IBM Watson Marketing can facilitate public segmentation, enabling organizations to tailor their messaging to specific stakeholder groups and increase the effectiveness of their communication efforts [1][26][34].

However, the use of AI in PR also raises concerns regarding data privacy and the potential for manipulation[35]. For example, the unauthorized use of personal data by Cambridge Analytica for political purposes demonstrates the risks involved[36]. While AI can positively impact the public component of the OSPC model by enabling personalized communication, enhancing customer service, and facilitating public segmentation, it also raises important ethical considerations around data privacy and the potential for manipulation.

## 2.5 The Communication Level

[Table 2] Key Findings, Implications, and Research Topics on AI and Public Relations

Theme	Key Finding	Practical Implication	Future Research Agenda
Organizational Perspectives	Ethical implications of AI in PR, optimal balance between human expertise and AI automation, skill development for AI adaptation.	Guide organizations in integrating AI responsibly, maintain human expertise, develop necessary skills.	1-1: Ethical AI integration 1-2: Human expertise vs. AI automation balance 1-3: Skill development for AI adaptation
Organizational Situation	AI-driven crisis identification and management, risks and challenges in AI situational analysis, leveraging AI for trend analysis.	Enhance crisis management, identify potential risks, proactively address trends and issues.	2-1: AI in crisis management 2-2: Risks and challenges in AI situational analysis 2-3: AI in trend analysis
Organization-Public Relationships	AI for personalized relationships, audience segmentation, ethical considerations in AI-driven PR.	Foster stronger relationships, balance personalization and trust, ensure ethical practices.	3-1: AI in personalized relationships 3-2: Implications of AI audience segmentation 3-3: Ethical considerations
PR Communication Strategies and Tactics	AI-driven tools for effective and engaging PR content and campaigns, potential drawbacks and limitations of AI in PR, balancing AI capabilities and human touch	Develop more effective PR content and campaigns, understand, and mitigate potential risks, maintain human qualities in communication	4-1: Leveraging AI for PR content and campaigns. 4-2: Drawbacks and limitations of AI in PR 4-3: Balancing AI capabilities and human touch

The communication component of the OSPC model focuses on the methods and tactics employed by an organization to convey its messages to various publics[14]. AI has the potential to significantly impact

PR communication by enabling the development of more sophisticated and targeted communication strategies[25]. For instance, AI (such as Dialogflow) can be used for sentiment analysis to tailor messages according to audience preferences or for optimizing content distribution through automated scheduling[36][37].

It is important to develop strategies for optimizing AI-generated content to maximize audience engagement and achieve communication objectives[26], and to analyze the effectiveness of AI-driven content generation tools in enhancing audience engagement[38]. Furthermore, assessing the value of AI-driven tools in delivering successful PR campaigns and enhancing ROI is crucial[31], and research should investigate the impact of these tools on PR campaign outcomes and relationship building[39]. Finally, ethical frameworks and guidelines must be developed to ensure responsible AI implementation in PR practices[10]. Overall, the updated OSPC model, informed by the key findings from the literature review, practical implications, and future research directions identified in [Table 2], offers a robust framework for comprehending the impact of AI on PR practices.

### **3. Practical Implications and Research Questions**

The recent rise and rapid adoption of AI present numerous opportunities for future research by PR scholars. In this section, we suggest a set of future research questions for each level of the OSPC model.

#### **3.1 Organizational Perspectives on AI Integration in PR Practices**

As AI technologies revolutionize the PR landscape, organizations face the dual challenge of integrating these tools and maintaining ethical practices. This necessitates an optimal balance between human expertise and AI automation for maximal PR efficiency and effectiveness[9][26][40]. Firstly, understanding what competencies PR practitioners need to remain competitive in this AI-driven environment is crucial. This gives rise to the first research question: What are the necessary competencies for PR practitioners in an AI-driven environment, and how can they be effectively integrated into organizations? Secondly, finding the ideal balance between human expertise and AI-driven automation becomes a key research area, giving rise to our second research question: What is the ideal balance between human expertise and AI automation in PR efforts? Lastly, organizations must consider the ethical implications of AI-driven PR tools. This necessitates an exploration of how organizations can uphold ethical values in their PR practices, resulting in our third research question: How can ethical AI integration be achieved in PR while maintaining responsible practices? By addressing these research questions, we gain insights into ethical AI integration, the balance between human expertise and AI automation, and necessary skill development for AI-integrated PR operations. This understanding facilitates effective AI incorporation, ensuring ethical conduct, and the development of future-ready PR professionals, ultimately enhancing organizational competitiveness in the evolving AI landscape in PR.

#### **3.2 Situational Management in AI-Driven PR**

In PR, effective situation management, especially during crises, is crucial, and AI-driven tools can potentially revolutionize this process[41]. Research should focus on utilizing AI for real-time crisis management, understanding potential risks of AI-driven situational analysis, and exploring how organizations can leverage AI to proactively address trends and issues[42].

Firstly, researchers should explore how AI can help monitor and analyze large data sets to identify potential crises early, and facilitate accurate situational assessments, enabling timely responses. This leads to the research question: How can AI-driven tools be utilized for real-time crisis identification and

management in PR? Secondly, it's necessary to address the potential risks associated with AI for situational analysis and response, such as accuracy, reliability, and ethical implications. This prompts the research question: What are the potential risks and challenges associated with using AI for situational analysis and response? Lastly, leveraging AI to anticipate and proactively address emerging trends is vital. Scholars should investigate how AI can analyze large-scale data to identify trends, facilitating proactive strategy development. This results in the research question: How can organizations leverage AI to anticipate and address emerging trends and issues proactively? By addressing these questions, we can deepen our understanding of incorporating AI in PR situational management, guiding effective use of AI technologies, and enhancing crisis management and reputation preservation capabilities..

### **3.3 The Perspective of Organization-Public Relationships**

Establishing strong organization-public relationships is pivotal in PR. AI-driven tools offer potential to enhance these relationships, but their use brings about certain implications[23]. Research needs to understand how AI can foster personalized relationships, the effects of AI on public segmentation and targeted communication, and how to navigate ethical considerations in AI-driven PR efforts[43][44].

First, research should explore how AI can enhance personalized relationships with publics. Scholars can investigate how AI tools analyze large-scale data to identify publics' needs, preferences, and expectations, and tailor communication strategies. The first research question is: How can AI foster more personalized and meaningful relationships with various publics? Second, the impact of AI tools on public segmentation and targeted communication and their effects on trust and relationship-building need examination. Researchers can scrutinize the potential trade-offs associated with using AI for targeted communication. The second research question is: What are the implications of using AI-driven tools for public segmentation and targeted communication on trust and relationship-building in PR? Lastly, it's critical to explore the ethical considerations of data privacy and potential manipulation in AI-driven PR efforts. This includes risks associated with personal data collection, analysis, and use by AI tools, and the potential for manipulation in AI-driven communication. The final research question is: How can organizations navigate the ethical considerations related to data privacy and potential manipulation in AI-driven PR efforts? These research questions will allow for a deeper understanding of AI's role in fostering personalized relationships, its implications on trust and relationship-building, and the ethical considerations in AI-driven PR efforts.

### **3.4 The Perspective of the Organization's Communication Strategies and Tactics**

The integration of AI in PR is rapidly evolving, necessitating research on how AI tools can improve PR content and campaigns, potential drawbacks of overreliance on AI, and the balance between AI capabilities and the human touch[12][24]. First, scholars should examine how AI-driven tools enhance the planning, execution, and measurement of PR campaigns. The research can focus on how AI supports data-driven insights, audience targeting, and content optimization. Further, how AI aids creative processes in PR should be explored. The first research question is: How can AI-driven tools enhance the effectiveness and engagement of PR content and campaigns? Second, the potential risks of depending too much on AI for PR communication strategies need scrutiny. Research should look into the loss of human creativity, empathy reduction in communications, potential biases in AI-generated content, and the possibility of misinterpretations. The second research question is: What are the potential drawbacks of relying heavily on AI for PR communication strategies and tactics? Finally, it's important to understand how PR professionals can maintain a balance between AI's strengths and the essential human qualities in communication. Researchers should focus on how to combine AI capabilities with human expertise, intuition, and empathy. The final research question is: How can PR professionals maintain a

balance between utilizing AI capabilities and preserving the essential human touch in communication? Addressing these research questions will deepen our understanding of the effective integration of AI in PR, potential pitfalls, and the balance between AI and human touch.

#### 4. Conclusion

Pursuing the primary aim of this study, we examined the impact of AI on PR practices and research within the OSPC model framework. The findings highlight that AI-driven tools are reshaping PR practices across the four dimensions of the OSPC model by bolstering efficiency, personalizing communications, adapting to situational circumstances, and nurturing relationships with the public. Upon distilling our findings, we identified profound implications for PR practitioners, who must develop new skills to remain competitive in an AI-driven landscape, and for researchers, who must persistently scrutinize the implications of AI for PR theory and practice, including the ethical considerations around their use in PR. In reflecting on our results, the study underscores the necessity to explore the potential risks, challenges, and opportunities related to AI integration in PR across each facet of the OSPC model. This involves examining the optimal balance between human expertise and AI-driven automation, and investigating the role of AI in fostering trust and transparency in PR communications. By deepening our comprehension of the impact of AI on PR, we can navigate more effectively the challenges and opportunities that this rapidly evolving technology presents for the future of PR.

Recognizing the implications of our findings, it is evident that further research is paramount to enhance our understanding of AI's impact on PR within the OSPC model and beyond. As AI technologies continue to advance and become more sophisticated, it is critical to continuously examine their implications for PR theory and practice. This includes exploring the potential risks and ethical considerations related to their use in PR, investigating the optimal balance between human expertise and AI-driven automation, and identifying the most effective ways to integrate AI technologies into PR practices across the four dimensions of the OSPC model. To conclude, given the significance of our findings, the integration of AI into PR emerges as an increasingly critical topic for both practitioners and researchers. Through the lens of the OSPC model, this study has shed light on the key findings, practical implications, and future research topics related to AI's impact on PR. By systematically exploring these dimensions, we contribute to the growing body of knowledge on AI and PR, which enables us to leverage the potential of AI to advance the field while ensuring ethical and responsible practices.

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