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**THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON STRATEGIC PUBLIC
RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS**

BY

VICENTIA KYEREMAA

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DEGREE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH MARKETING**

SUPERVISOR: DR. ALBERT ANANI-BOSSMAN

DECEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original work and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in the university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all the resources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Kyeremaa Vicentia

MAPRM24055



23/12/2025

Student

Index

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of dissertations laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication (UniMAC-IJ).

Dr. Albert Anani-Bossman



28/12/2025

Supervisor

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my father and mother, whose unwavering financial support and encouragement have been the backbone of my academic journey. Their sacrifices, guidance, and belief in my potential have shaped every achievement I celebrate today. I also dedicate this work to my friends, whose assistance, understanding, and constant motivation sustained me throughout my studies and during the completion of this research.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on strategic public relations (PR) campaigns in Ghana, focusing on how PR professionals adopt, use, and interpret AI technologies across campaign planning, implementation, and evaluation. The study explored the extent of AI integration, the benefits it brings to PR practice, and the challenges that limit its effective application. A qualitative research approach grounded in the interpretivist paradigm was employed to gain in-depth insights into practitioners' lived experiences. Using a phenomenological research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten PR professionals drawn from radio and television stations, corporate communication units, and PR/digital agencies within the Greater Accra Region. Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis supported by NVivo 14, allowing for systematic coding, theme development, and the interpretation of recurring patterns. The key findings reveal that AI adoption in PR is emerging but uneven, influenced by training exposure, organizational readiness, and access to digital tools. Respondents reported that AI enhances efficiency, supports evidence-based decision-making, improves audience targeting, and stimulates creativity in campaign design. However, challenges such as data inaccuracy, limited access to full-featured AI tools, technical and infrastructural constraints, skill gaps, ethical concerns, and cost barriers continue to restrict broader adoption. Despite these limitations, practitioners recognize AI as a transformative resource capable of strengthening strategic communication when supported by adequate training and infrastructure. Based on the findings, the study recommends that PR organizations prioritize structured AI training programs for communication professionals.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Traditional public relations have long been centered on human-led activities such as drafting press releases, organizing media events, and fostering journalist relationships to shape public perception (Jaligama, 2025). Organizations have historically relied on manual media monitoring, press kits, and one-way communication models to disseminate their key messages. However, the rise of digital media has forced a shift toward more responsive, real-time engagement, requiring PR professionals to be active across multiple online platforms (Harju & Viertamo, 2025). Artificial intelligence is now being introduced to augment traditional PR by automating routine tasks such as media tracking, sentiment analysis, and influencer mapping. AI tools further enhance traditional strategies by enabling hyper-personalized messaging, chatbot-mediated dialogue, and predictive analytics for issue management (Carucci, 2025; Mandloi et al., 2025).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as a transformative force across multiple industries, introducing intelligent automation into sectors such as finance, healthcare, education, and communication. AI comprises a constellation of technologies that collectively enable systems to perceive, process, and act on data without explicit programming (Harju & Viertamo, 2025). In communication and public relations, AI applications have been utilized for real-time sentiment analysis, predictive behavioral targeting, automated content creation, and stakeholder emotion tracking (Carucci, 2025). These technologies allow organizations to forecast communication outcomes, optimize media buying, and enhance content relevance by identifying prevailing public

moods and reactions (Mandloi et al., 2025). Research indicates that AI integration not only enhances operational efficiency but also increases the strategic agility of communication teams, especially in handling crises and managing multichannel outreach.

The integration of artificial intelligence into public relations (PR) is transforming how campaigns are designed, delivered, and evaluated by enabling data-driven, adaptive, and hyper-targeted communication strategies (Harju & Viertamo, 2025). AI-powered platforms now assist with a broad array of PR functions, including media monitoring, influencer mapping, automated press release generation, and behavioral trend forecasting, thereby streamlining previously manual tasks (Mandloi et al., 2025). These AI-driven applications allow PR professionals to personalize outreach through chatbots, customize responses based on consumer emotion, and adjust narratives on-the-fly using live analytics dashboards (Jaligama, 2025).

Despite its immense potential, the adoption of artificial intelligence in public relations raises several concerns, particularly around transparency, explainability, and control over algorithmic processes that shape communication outcomes, as seen when IBM faced criticism over opaque AI auditing tools. Key ethical issues include data privacy breaches, surveillance fears, and algorithmic bias, especially when AI systems are trained on historical datasets that may reinforce stereotypes or marginalize vulnerable groups (Mandloi et al., 2025). Yet, the advantages offered by AI have been successfully leveraged by firms which uses AI to analyze consumer emotions in PR campaigns. AI's predictive capabilities are also revolutionizing crisis communication, as demonstrated by Edelman's "Command Center," which uses AI tools for social listening and real-time issue forecasting to prepare strategic responses for their clients (Harju & Viertamo, 2025).

However, excessive reliance on automation may diminish the essential human dimensions of PR that define authentic communication and emotional connection with stakeholders, as debated during Google's use of Duplex AI in public voice interactions (Carucci, 2025).

1.2 Problem statement

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is fundamentally reshaping how public relations (PR) campaigns are conceptualized, executed, and evaluated. As organisations navigate increasingly dynamic media environments, AI tools such as chatbots, machine learning models, and natural language processing systems are being leveraged to enhance message customization, stakeholder monitoring, and campaign performance measurement (Harju & Viertamo, 2025). In developed countries, the integration of AI in PR has been extensively researched, with findings indicating its potential to improve engagement metrics, automate workflows, and enable rapid responses to reputational risks (Carucci, 2025). However, these studies are largely concentrated in Western and Asian contexts, leaving a significant gap in our understanding of how AI is influencing public relations practices in emerging economies such as Ghana (Yadav & Chaturvedi, 2024).

In Ghana, public relations remains heavily rooted in traditional media practices such as radio announcements, press conferences, and interpersonal networking, with limited empirical analysis on the extent of AI adoption or impact. While global firms operating in Ghana such as MTN Ghana and Unilever Ghana have begun incorporating AI tools into their communication frameworks, it is unclear how AI specifically supports or challenges their strategic PR activities. Furthermore, the few studies that address AI in communication within Sub-Saharan Africa tend to generalize digital transformation or focus on marketing outcomes rather than public relations-specific functions such

as crisis management, trust-building, stakeholder engagement, and media framing. As a result, practitioners and scholars lack localized, evidence-based insights into whether and how AI augments PR strategy and effectiveness in the Ghanaian context (Harju & Viertamo, 2025).

Adding to the complexity, the literature presents conflicting perspectives regarding AI's role in strategic communication: while some scholars emphasize its efficiency and data-driven precision, others warn that AI tools can produce ethical risks, such as reinforcing biases, diminishing transparency, and marginalizing local voices in narrative creation (Carucci, 2025; Jalgama, 2025). For instance, AI-driven sentiment analysis tools may misinterpret culturally embedded expressions or fail to detect sarcasm in local languages, leading to flawed insights and misaligned messaging. Therefore, there exists an urgent need for empirical inquiry into how Ghanaian firms of different sizes and sectors are incorporating AI into their public relations functions and what implications this has for campaign success, audience trust, and communication ethics (Jalgama, 2025).

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1.3 Research objectives

- I. To examine the extent to which public relations professionals in selected firms in Ghana adopt AI technologies in the planning and execution of their strategic public relations campaigns.

- II. To assess the benefits that public relations professionals derive from the use of artificial intelligence in the execution of their PR campaigns.
- III. To identify the key challenges faced by public relations professionals when applying AI technologies in the design, implementation, and evaluation of strategic PR campaigns.

1.4 Research questions

- I. To what extent are artificial intelligence technologies adopted by public relations professionals in selected firms in Ghana for planning and executing strategic public relations campaigns?
- II. What benefits do public relations professionals derive from the use of artificial intelligence in their PR campaigns?
- III. What challenges do public relations professionals face when applying artificial intelligence in the design, implementation, and evaluation of strategic PR campaigns?

1.5 Significance of the study

First, the study contributes to academic literature by providing empirical evidence from Ghana, which is often missing in global discussions about AI and PR. While there is growing research on AI in communication in developed countries, there is limited literature from African contexts. This research helps to close that gap by showing how AI tools such as chatbots, predictive analytics,

and social media listening are used (or not used) by PR teams in Ghana. It also explains what benefits and challenges are associated with AI use. This makes the study useful for researchers, lecturers, and students who are interested in digital communication and African PR practices. It provides a local case that can be compared with global studies to understand differences and similarities.

Second, the study provides insights that can guide policy decisions, especially in areas related to digital transformation, communication, and ethical AI use. Government agencies and regulatory bodies responsible for technology, media, and corporate communication can use this study to better understand the current state of AI adoption in communication-related sectors. It can also help shape training policies, capacity-building initiatives, and ethical guidelines for AI use in PR. If policymakers want to promote digital innovation in Ghana's private sector, this study gives them useful evidence for how AI is being used and where support is needed, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that may lack the resources to adopt these technologies.

Third, this research benefits PR practitioners, communication consultants, and business leaders by showing how AI can improve or complicate strategic PR work. It will help communication managers understand which tools are most useful for campaign planning, audience targeting, and feedback monitoring. It will also highlight the real-world challenges PR teams face when using AI, such as costs, technical skills, or ethical concerns. By showing examples of how some firms successfully apply AI, the study can serve as a guide or model for others.

1.6 Organisation of the study

This study is organized into five chapters.

Chapter One provides the introduction to the study. It includes the background of the study, the research problem, objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, and the organization of the study. This chapter sets the stage for the rest of the work.

Chapter Two presents the review of related literature. It discusses key ideas and theories about artificial intelligence and public relations. It also looks at what other researchers have written on the topic, and it identifies gaps in the existing knowledge that this study aims to fill.

Chapter Three explains the methods used to carry out the research. It describes the research design, population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and how the data will be analyzed. This chapter also discusses ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four presents the findings and analysis of the data collected from the selected firms in Ghana. It shows how the results relate to the research questions and discusses what the findings mean in the context of AI in public relations.

Chapter Five gives the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. It summarizes the key findings, answers the research questions, and suggests what organizations, policymakers, and researchers can do based on the results.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature relevant to the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public relations (PR), with a focus on strategic communication contexts. It explores key theoretical frameworks, definitions of AI and PR, historical developments, specific applications, benefits, challenges, and recent empirical studies. The review aims to provide a strong conceptual foundation for the study and to identify research gaps, particularly within African and Ghanaian PR practices, that this research seeks to address.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory

The Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory, developed by Rogers, provides a foundational lens for analyzing how new technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) are adopted within public relations (PR) systems. The theory categorizes adopters into five groups; innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards based on their readiness to embrace innovations (Woodcock, 2014; Elsherif, 2011). It also identifies five key innovation attributes that influence adoption: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (Greenhalgh et al., 2004). These factors are particularly relevant in examining how AI technologies such as chatbots, predictive analytics, and sentiment analysis are adopted in strategic PR campaigns across diverse social systems like Ghana, where trust in automation and digital literacy rates vary.

DOI's emphasis on communication channels and social systems is crucial for understanding the pace and pattern of AI adoption in Ghanaian PR contexts (Andoh-Quainoo, 2015). Interpersonal communication, especially among professional networks and opinion leaders, plays a critical role in influencing adoption decisions (Djabanor, 2019). In Ghana, where PR practitioners often operate in collectivist settings and may rely heavily on peer validation, the influence of early adopters within PR associations and media houses can significantly shape the diffusion process. At the same time, mass media and digital platforms serve to raise awareness about AI tools but may be limited by infrastructural gaps and unequal access to technology.

Critically, while DOI offers explanatory power, it has been critiqued for underplaying contextual reinvention and power dynamics in innovation diffusion (Greenhalgh et al., 2004). Moreover, DOI's assumptions about innovation benefits being objectively evaluated can overlook socio-cultural skepticism about automation. This presents a nuanced challenge: AI in Ghanaian PR may show relative advantage in speed and reach but low compatibility in communities with historical distrust of Western technologies. Such tensions highlight the importance of adapting DOI to reflect not just adoption metrics, but local meaning-making and trust-building processes within PR strategy.

Application to the study

The Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory offers a valuable framework for understanding how Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies are being adopted within strategic public relations (PR) campaigns in Ghana. Given DOI's focus on the attributes of innovation, this study will explore how PR professionals in Ghana perceive AI tools in terms of their relative advantage (e.g., efficiency in media monitoring), compatibility (alignment with cultural and professional values), complexity (technical difficulty), trialability (opportunities to experiment), and observability (visibility of results). These factors are critical in explaining the rate and manner in which AI innovations diffuse across different PR sectors, including corporate communication, political messaging, and media relations.

DOI's adopter categorization (innovators, early adopters, early/late majority, and laggards) is particularly relevant in the Ghanaian context, where disparities in technological access, training, and institutional support may influence AI uptake. For instance, early adopters, often found in multinational PR firms or urban-based agencies, may experiment with AI-powered sentiment analysis or automated press release generation. In contrast, laggards, such as smaller local firms or public institutions, may hesitate due to perceived risks, low digital literacy, or mistrust of automation. This categorization helps identify which segments of the PR field are leading in AI integration and which require targeted interventions or capacity-building.

Moreover, the study applies the DOI lens to explore how AI innovations are communicated and legitimized within Ghana's PR ecosystem. It investigates the role of opinion leaders such as senior PR consultants, media trainers, and tech-savvy influencers in facilitating or hindering AI adoption. The research also considers how local reinventions of AI tools (e.g., local-language chatbots or culturally-adapted media monitoring systems) demonstrate reinvention as proposed by Greenhalgh et al. (2004). Thus, DOI theory not only guides the analysis of AI adoption patterns but also informs recommendations for more context-sensitive innovation strategies that consider Ghana's unique technological, cultural, and professional dynamics.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis 1989, is a widely used framework for predicting user acceptance and usage of technology. TAM posits that two main beliefs Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), determine users' attitudes toward a technology and, consequently, their behavioral intention to use it (Mugo, 2017; Napitupulu et al., 2017). These constructs are particularly applicable in understanding how PR professionals in Ghana perceive and integrate AI tools such as natural language processing (NLP), predictive analytics, and chatbots into their strategic communication campaigns.

In the Ghanaian PR context, Perceived Usefulness can relate to how AI enhances campaign efficiency, improves audience segmentation, and automates repetitive tasks. For instance, a PR manager who sees AI as enabling real-time media monitoring or personalized messaging is more likely to adopt it as a strategic tool. Meanwhile, Perceived Ease of Use reflects the effort required to interact with AI platforms often influenced by the availability of training, user-friendly design, and digital infrastructure (Igben & Ugbome, 2023). In environments where PR professionals face

technical limitations or lack exposure to AI tools, low ease of use may hinder acceptance, even if usefulness is acknowledged.

TAM has evolved to include external factors that influence user beliefs, such as social influence, facilitating conditions, and trust (Ibrahim & Shiring, 2022). These additions are vital in applying TAM to the Ghanaian context, where peer endorsement, organizational support, and cultural attitudes toward automation play a substantial role in technology uptake. For example, PR firms with strong digital leadership or tech-driven organizational cultures are more likely to normalize AI use, shaping positive perceptions among staff. Moreover, concerns about job displacement, data privacy, or AI bias may negatively impact trust and slow down acceptance issues that are often under-explored in TAM but are emerging in AI discourse.

While TAM is valuable in highlighting cognitive factors that drive or inhibit technology acceptance, it has been critiqued for being overly individualistic and lacking contextual sensitivity. It tends to assume rational decision-making without fully accounting for institutional constraints, socio-political factors, or power relations that affect adoption especially in Global South contexts. In applying TAM to this study, the framework will be complemented by insights from DOI to capture both individual perceptions and systemic dynamics influencing AI adoption in Ghanaian PR practice.

2.3 Defining Artificial Intelligence and Public Relations

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is broadly understood as the ability of machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as reasoning, learning, language understanding, and decision-making. According to Hassani et al. (2020), AI involves the study of agents that receive percepts from the environment and perform actions. This includes a wide range of technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), computer vision, and large language models (LLMs). AI systems are increasingly embedded in communication processes, automating decision-making and content creation in sectors including journalism, marketing, and public relations. Russell and Norvig (2016) as cited in Dwivedi et al. (2021) defined the term AI to describe systems that mimic cognitive functions generally associated with human attributes such as learning, speech and problem solving.

Furthermore, AI has diversified the conceptual understanding and definition of PR from a human communicative practice into a technological-human partnership characterized by intelligence, prediction, augmentation, and ethical accountability. These conceptual evolutions such as algorithmic public relations, cognitive PR, and augmented PR. This demonstrates that PR is no longer merely about managing relationships but about orchestrating intelligent communication systems that continuously learn, adapt, and ethically interact with digital publics. With the integration of AI technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and generative models, PR has evolved into what some scholars describe as algorithmic public relations (Collister, 2015). Another emerging view is Cognitive Public Relations, which positions PR as an intelligence-driven system where human intuition and AI reasoning jointly shape corporate identity and communication strategies (Nevi et al., 2025). Another is Augmented Public Relations, emphasizing human–AI collaboration, where practitioners manage communication

ecosystems supported by generative models and automated agents, enhancing personalization and engagement while preserving human oversight (Pradini, Wardhani, & Awaloedin, 2024; Agbasimelo & Duru, 2024).

2.4 Artificial Intelligence and Public Relations

Recent studies show that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an important part of modern Public Relations (PR), especially after the release of advanced language models like ChatGPT in late 2022. AI is now being used to perform several PR functions including analytics, targeting, content creation, and strategy development. According to Anani-Bossman, Nutsugah, and Abudulai (2024), AI is transforming the communication profession by enhancing how practitioners manage and evaluate their work. The authors note that the PR industry has identified many possible AI applications, ranging from data analytics to chatbots and crisis communication. This shows that AI has become a central tool for managing information and audience engagement in PR.

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) has played a key role in documenting AI's growth within PR. Their reports show that more than 120 AI tools have been identified and classified based on their level of complexity, from basic automation tools like databases to advanced systems for structured and unstructured data such as Google Analytics and Quid (Anani-Bossman et al., 2024; CIPR, 2023). Similarly, Smith and Waddington (2023) observed that CIPR's analysis of the Chiefmartech dataset listed around 5,855 tools relevant to PR, categorized into 18 different areas of practice. This classification highlights the rapid expansion and variety of AI tools now available to communication professionals.

The pace of AI adoption in PR has also been tracked through several industry surveys. Gregory, Valin, and Virmani (2023) report that early in 2023, only a small percentage of PR professionals were using AI tools like ChatGPT. However, usage grew quickly within months, signaling a tipping point for AI integration in communication work. The PRCA International Communications Consultancy Organisation (ICCO) found that while only 15% of professionals used ChatGPT in February 2023, the figure increased sharply by mid-2023. This rapid growth mirrors how the PR industry gradually embraced the internet in the 1990s, suggesting a similar technological shift.

Before this surge, Virmani and Gregory (2021) noted that PR relied mostly on individual, task-based tools such as those used for media monitoring or press release distribution. There was little evidence of integrated systems combining multiple functions. However, the introduction of generative AI tools in late 2022, like OpenAI's ChatGPT, marked a turning point. These tools allowed practitioners to generate text-based content instantly, including press releases and social media posts. As the authors explain, such models work by identifying patterns in language, producing outputs that can refine and adapt existing content. While these systems do not create original ideas, they are highly effective in improving the clarity and tone of written material.

Zakrzewska (2023) adds that AI in PR is not only used for analysis but also for managing online reputation and maintaining engagement on social media. As technology advances, improvements in computing power, network infrastructure, and data accessibility continue to support the expansion of AI applications in PR. Her study also recalls that the first major discussion of AI in PR came from the CIPR's 2018 "Humans Still Needed" report, which evaluated how AI might shape PR practice over the following five years. The continued research from CIPR and

Chiefmartec confirms that AI tools have grown both in number and complexity, reflecting the profession's shift toward digital and data-driven communication.

2.5 Specific AI Applications in Public Relations

One of the earliest and most prevalent uses of AI in PR is in media monitoring and analytics. AI tools such as Talkwalker and Meltwater use machine learning and natural language processing to track media coverage, identify sentiment, detect emerging issues, and measure campaign impact in real time. This has shifted PR from reactive to predictive strategy (Jeong & Park, 2023). According to Foo et al. (2025), AI-based analytics platforms enhance decision-making by synthesizing large-scale data into actionable insights. This aligns with the TAM construct of “perceived usefulness,” as practitioners adopt tools that improve productivity and effectiveness.

Furthermore, under DOI, media monitoring tools exhibit high “observability” and “trialability,” as users can easily evaluate their benefits through dashboards and KPI visualizations, accelerating adoption in data-driven communication cultures.

Generative AI technologies such as GPT models are being used to create press releases, blog posts, emails, and social media captions. While early tools focused on automation, newer systems enable personalized, audience-specific content that maintains tone and brand identity. Tang and Zhang (2025) note that generative AI enables mass personalization, significantly improving message relevance and engagement. This supports DOI's “relative advantage” dimension, where innovations that offer clear superiority over existing practices are adopted more rapidly.

AI-powered chatbots are increasingly used for stakeholder interaction, especially in customer service, event management, and public education. Chatbots enable organizations to respond in

real-time, 24/7, across multiple channels. According to Foo et al. (2025), recent advancements in sentiment recognition and natural dialogue make chatbots more empathetic and context-aware. This supports two-way symmetrical communication as outlined in Excellence Theory, albeit with questions about genuine responsiveness.

Chatbots also demonstrate high compatibility and trialability (DOI), allowing PR firms to pilot their use in low-risk environments (e.g., FAQ bots) before full integration. However, in low-trust environments, especially in the Global South, adoption may be delayed due to perceived complexity and cultural mismatch (George et al., 2025).

Synthesis and Theoretical Implication

Across all three applications media monitoring, content creation, and chatbot engagement AI presents both efficiency gains and contextual risks. The DOI framework helps identify where AI is seen as advantageous (e.g., media speed, audience analysis), and where compatibility, complexity, or reinvention issues slow uptake. Similarly, TAM reveals how perceived usefulness may be high, but ease of use, trust, and ethical ambiguity can inhibit broader diffusion, particularly in settings like Ghana with socio-linguistic and infrastructural diversity.

AI in PR should be seen not just as a technical upgrade but as a shift in strategic communication logic. Without critical reflection on bias, accessibility, and cultural fit, AI risks reinforcing inequities rather than enhancing public engagement. For AI to be truly strategic in PR, particularly in African contexts, theories like DOI and TAM must be applied with sensitivity to local values, digital capabilities, and communication ecologies.

2.6 Challenges of AI in Public Relations

AI integration in PR is not without challenges. Ethical concerns are growing, particularly around bias and misinformation. Algorithms can inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes or exclude minority voices if trained on skewed datasets (Jobin, Ienca, & Vayena, 2019). This raises issues of transparency and accountability, especially when AI systems make autonomous content decisions (George & Ekpe, 2025).

Trust also emerges as a central challenge. Research indicates that overreliance on AI-generated content can lead to perceived inauthenticity, reducing audience trust (Jeong & Park, 2023). Moreover, a digital divide persists. While large organizations may afford AI tools and infrastructure, smaller PR firms, especially in developing countries, face barriers due to cost, skills, and access.

Lastly, data privacy and compliance with regulatory frameworks like GDPR remain significant hurdles. PR professionals must navigate the balance between data utility and ethical use, particularly when leveraging personal data for tailored messaging (Bian, Wang & Yang, 2025).

2.8 Empirical Studies on AI and PR

Panda et al. (2019) explored AI's strategic disruption in the Indian PR industry through semi-structured interviews with 31 PR professionals. Their findings highlighted that AI-powered systems enhance operational efficiency by automating routine tasks such as media list generation, social media scanning, and crisis communication. AI's real-time capabilities were praised for improving personalization and responsiveness, which aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)'s concept of perceived usefulness. However, the study focused more on practitioner perception than audience response, and lacked an analysis of cultural compatibility, a critical construct in the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) framework, particularly in diverse or multilingual societies.

George et al. (2025) examined AI adoption in PR strategies used to promote sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Grounded in Excellence Theory and DOI, the study surveyed 140 PR practitioners and stakeholders. While traditional methods like radio campaigns and community forums dominated, AI was used mainly for social media analytics and automated content generation. The moderate integration of AI reflects DOI's "early majority" stage of adoption. However, the study observed that such integration did not significantly influence behavioral change suggesting a gap between message dissemination and persuasive communication. This aligns with TAM's challenge of trust, and highlights that AI tools, while efficient, are insufficient on their own to deepen stakeholder engagement or promote participatory development.

Jeong and Park (2023) applied the Organization–Situation–Public–Communication (OSPC) model to explore AI's role in PR. Their literature-based study found that AI tools improve situational

analysis, message targeting, and relational communication, particularly in adaptive contexts. However, they cautioned that automation can overshadow human judgment, raising ethical concerns and transparency issues. The study supports TAM's emphasis on trust and calls for a hybrid model of AI-human integration. The emphasis on continuous skill development echoes the DOI concept of reinvention, where technology must be adapted not merely adopted by PR professionals to remain effective and ethical.

Conducting a descriptive survey of 230 PR workers in the UAE, Mallek et al. (2025) investigated the role of AI-driven PR strategies in promoting sustainable development initiatives. Results showed a positive, statistically significant relationship between AI integration and sustainability outcomes, largely due to improved data analytics and audience targeting. Yet, the study also emphasized the need for training and capacity-building, reinforcing DOI's focus on trialability and complexity as adoption influencers. Unlike the Nigerian study by George et al. (2025), this research demonstrated stronger institutional readiness, highlighting the role of contextual infrastructure and strategic alignment in successful AI deployment.

Yessenbek et al. (2025) conducted a comparative study on AI adoption in PR between the USA and Kazakhstan, highlighting how national context affects technological implementation. While US firms like Edelman and IBM leveraged AI for media tracking, sentiment analysis, and campaign measurement, Kazakhstani firms faced challenges related to infrastructure, specialist availability, and ethical awareness. The study identified corporate culture, legal frameworks, and data processing capabilities as key determinants of successful AI integration findings that map directly onto both TAM (ease of use and trust) and DOI (compatibility and reinvention). It also underscores the need for culturally adaptive tools, especially in non-Western contexts.

In a case study of three major Indonesian firms, Soegiarto et al. (2024) found that AI is increasingly used in social media content management, media monitoring, and personalization of marketing communications. However, resource constraints and regulatory uncertainty remain barriers to broader adoption. Although AI is perceived as useful (TAM), adoption is constrained by perceived complexity and limited trialability (DOI). The study suggests that localized governance frameworks and inter-agency collaboration could help reduce AI-related risks and improve strategic integration.

2.9 Research Gaps

Despite growing interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public relations (PR), several research gaps persist.

Empirically, there is a noticeable lack of research focusing on African contexts, particularly Ghana. Most existing studies originate from Asia, Europe, or North America, making it difficult to generalize findings to regions with different technological infrastructures, media ecosystems, and cultural communication norms.

Practically, little has been done to develop or test frameworks that guide the integration of AI into strategic PR campaigns. While some studies report on AI tools used in content creation or monitoring, there is limited guidance on how to align these tools with campaign objectives, audience segmentation, and ethical standards.

2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed key concepts, theories, and empirical studies on the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public relations (PR). It explored definitions, theoretical frameworks (DOI and

TAM), AI applications, benefits, challenges, and research gaps. The review revealed limited theory-driven and context-specific studies, especially in African settings like Ghana. It also identified a lack of practical frameworks for AI integration in PR campaigns. These insights justify the need for this study. The next chapter outlines the research methodology, explaining the design, data collection, and analysis methods.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter outlined the research methodology employed in this research. It described the research approach, study area, population, sample size, sampling technique, research instrument, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach situated within the interpretivist paradigm, which assumes that reality is socially constructed and best understood through the subjective experiences of individuals (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This paradigm aligns with the study's aim of exploring how public relations (PR) professionals in Ghana perceive and engage with Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in their strategic communication practices.

Qualitative research, as defined by Teherani et al. (2015), focuses on understanding meaning, context, and lived experience through methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. It enabled the researcher to gather rich, in-depth data and uncover complex social phenomena that are not easily reduced to numerical representations (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

The choice of a qualitative approach was grounded in three key considerations. First, the phenomenon under investigation, AI integration in PR within the Ghanaian context, is emerging and under-theorized. As such, it requires an exploratory design that allows flexibility and openness

to new insights. Quantitative methods, by contrast, tend to rely on predefined variables and are better suited to hypothesis testing (Osborne, 2008), which is not the aim of this study.

In line with constructivist epistemology, this study valued the participants' own interpretations and meaning-making processes. This approach was particularly relevant in studying digital transformation in PR, where practitioners' understanding, acceptance, and application of AI are shaped by their cultural, organizational, and technological environments.

3.3 Research Design

This study adopted a phenomenological research design, which is rooted in the interpretivist paradigm and seeks to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals regarding a particular phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004). Phenomenology is particularly suited to inquiries that aim to uncover how individuals make sense of emerging technologies in their everyday professional practices (Adeniran & Tayo-Ladega, 2024).

The central goal of this research **was to** gain deep, first-person insights into how PR professionals in Ghana **experienced** the use of AI technologies in planning, executing, and evaluating communication strategies. This design **focused not** on measuring frequency or outcome, but on understanding the essence of these experiences from the participants' point of view.

In line with phenomenological principles, the study **relied on** in-depth, semi-structured interviews to allow participants to express their thoughts, feelings, and reflections in their own words.

3.4 Study area

This study will be conducted in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, which serves as the hub for the country's media, corporate communication, and public relations industries.

3.5 Study population

The study population consists of public relations and communication professionals working in selected organisations across the Greater Accra Region. These individuals are involved in the planning, execution, and evaluation of strategic PR campaigns, making them suitable respondents for exploring the integration of AI into PR practice.

Inclusion Criteria:

- PR professionals with at least one year of experience in the field
- Individuals currently engaged in strategic communication, digital PR, media relations, or campaign management
- Professionals employed in selected radio/TV stations, corporate communication departments, or PR/digital agencies

3.6 Sampling Technique

This study will employ a purposive sampling technique, a non-probability method in which participants are deliberately selected based on specific characteristics aligned with the study's objectives. This technique is suitable for qualitative research where the goal is not generalisation but in-depth understanding from information-rich cases (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Participants will be public relations professionals working in radio and television stations, corporate communications departments, and PR or digital agencies located in the Greater Accra Region. To be eligible, respondents must have at least one year of PR experience and demonstrate practical exposure to AI-related tools or technologies, such as media monitoring software, generative content platforms, or audience analytics tools. This ensures that respondents have direct, relevant experience with the subject matter.

Recruitment Strategy

Participants will be recruited through a combination of methods:

- Formal letters and emails will be sent to the Human Resource or Communications departments of selected organisations, explaining the purpose of the study and requesting access to eligible PR professionals.
- A snowball sampling approach will be used to identify additional participants. Initial interviewees will be asked to recommend colleagues who meet the criteria, especially those with firsthand experience in using AI for strategic PR work.

Operationalizing Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion will be confirmed through a short screening form completed prior to interviews, verifying:

- Years of PR experience
- Current role in campaign planning or strategy
- Use of or familiarity with AI tools in their professional work

3.7 Sample size

This study will involve a sample of approximately ten (10) public relations professionals drawn from a range of organisations in the Greater Accra Region, including radio stations, television stations, corporate communication units, and PR/digital agencies. The selection aims to reflect the diversity of PR practice and AI adoption contexts across Ghana's evolving media and communication landscape.

In qualitative research, sample size is not determined by statistical generalisation but by the goal of achieving data saturation; the point at which no new themes or insights emerge from further data collection. While Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) initially suggested that saturation can be reached with as few as 6–12 interviews in homogeneous groups, more recent scholars argue that saturation depends on sample diversity and topic complexity (Vasileiou et al., 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

To ensure breadth and depth of perspectives, the sample will be purposively selected to include:

- Professionals from both radio and television stations, as well as non-broadcast PR settings (e.g., agencies and corporate departments)
- A balance of genders, to explore any gendered experiences of AI integration
- Varying levels of experience in PR (e.g., junior, mid-level, and senior practitioners)

The researcher will adopt a flexible sampling strategy. While the initial target is ten participants, the final number may expand slightly if data saturation is not achieved within that range. Saturation will be assessed during the analysis phase, when recurrent patterns, themes, and codes begin to appear consistently across interviews, and new data no longer provide additional insights or variation (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

3.8 Instrument

Data for this study will be collected using a semi-structured interview guide, a flexible qualitative instrument that combines a core set of pre-determined open-ended questions with the freedom to explore emerging themes based on participants' responses (Naz, Gulab, & Aslam, 2022). This format ensures that the research objectives are systematically addressed while enabling participants to share detailed, context-rich narratives about their experiences with AI in strategic public relations (PR).

The interview guide will be organised into four key sections:

1. Demographic Information –This section will collect background data such as gender, age, educational qualification, years of PR experience, current job role, and type of organisation (broadcast media, agency, or corporate communications).
2. Adoption of AI Technologies-This section will explore the extent and nature of AI use in PR campaigns. It will investigate specific AI tools adopted (e.g., media monitoring software, generative content tools, chatbots), frequency of use, and areas of PR practice where these tools are applied.

3. Benefits of AI Adoption-Questions will probe perceived advantages such as improved efficiency, data-driven decision-making, enhanced targeting, cost-effectiveness, or creative enhancement.
4. Challenges in Applying AI-This section will examine technical, ethical, organisational, and contextual barriers to AI adoption, including issues of trust, skills gaps, bias, and access.

Interview Procedure and Duration

Each interview is expected to last between 45 and 60 minutes and will be conducted in person or virtually, depending on the participant's availability and preference. With participants' informed consent, interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy. All recordings will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher, allowing for thorough thematic analysis.

Data Validation and Protection

To ensure instrument validity, the interview guide will undergo expert review by the supervisor. The feedback will help assess the clarity, relevance, and coverage of questions in relation to the research objectives.

All audio files, transcripts, and related data will be stored in password-protected folders on an encrypted device, accessible only to the researcher.

3.9 Data analysis

This study will employ reflexive thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019), to analyse the qualitative data collected through interviews. Thematic analysis is well-suited to

exploratory research, as it allows for a rich, flexible, and context-sensitive interpretation of participants' lived experiences and perspectives on AI adoption in strategic public relations (PR).

The process will follow six iterative phases. It will begin with familiarisation with the data, during which all interviews will be transcribed verbatim, read repeatedly, and accompanied by notes of initial thoughts. This will be followed by the generation of initial codes, where key ideas will be coded manually, highlighting features relevant to the research objectives. The next phase will involve constructing themes, as related codes will be grouped to form broader categories or patterns of meaning. These themes will then be reviewed by comparing preliminary themes across transcripts and refining them to ensure internal coherence and distinctiveness. After this, the process will move to defining and naming themes, with each theme being clearly defined, named, and supported with illustrative quotes. The final phase will involve producing the report, in which the themes will be linked back to the research questions and literature, forming the basis of the findings chapter.

The analysis will be managed using NVivo 14 software, which provides an efficient platform for organising, coding, and retrieving qualitative data. This software also supports visualisation tools (e.g., coding matrices, word clouds) that can assist in theme development and pattern recognition.

To ensure trustworthiness, several strategies will be employed throughout the study. Credibility will be addressed through member checking, whereby summary interpretations will be shared with participants for validation. Dependability will be ensured by maintaining an audit trail that documents coding decisions and the development of themes. Reflexivity will be upheld as the researcher maintains a reflective journal to acknowledge personal assumptions and minimise bias.

Transferability will be supported using thick descriptions that provide sufficient context to aid future application in similar settings.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

This study will strictly adhere to ethical research principles to protect participants' rights, dignity, and professional integrity. Ethical approval will be sought from the Institutional Review Board before data collection.

Participation will be voluntary, and each respondent will be asked to provide written informed consent. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences.

To address potential reputational and organisational risks, participants will be assured that no identifiable information, such as names, job titles, or employer names, will appear in the final report. All responses will be fully anonymised during transcription and reporting, and sensitive topics, including critiques of AI tools or organisational readiness, will be handled with discretion.

Data will be stored in password-protected, encrypted folders accessible only to the researcher. Audio recordings will be deleted once transcription is verified. Transcripts and research files will be retained securely for five years in line with institutional policy, after which they will be permanently destroyed.

The study will also uphold academic integrity, avoiding plagiarism, fabrication, or selective reporting. Transparency will be maintained throughout data collection, analysis, and dissemination, ensuring honest representation of participants' views.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study and discusses them in relation to the research objectives. The findings are organised thematically to reflect the core areas of inquiry, including the adoption of AI technologies in strategic PR campaigns, the benefits derived from their use, and the challenges encountered during implementation. Each theme is supported by direct responses from participants to highlight their perspectives and experiences. The discussion integrates these findings with relevant literature.

4.2 Demographics

The participants occupied varied positions across the PR and media field, with each job role representing 20% of the sample. This diversity in roles from directors and managers to a multimedia journalist suggests that participants approach AI from different functional perspectives. Those in senior positions, such as directors and strategic PR managers, are more likely to view AI as a strategic resource for planning, data interpretation, and decision-making. In contrast, participants in operational or journalism roles tend to use AI for task-based activities such as content creation, drafting messages, or conducting quick research. These role-based differences influence the level of confidence, expectations, and frequency of AI adoption across participants.

In terms of experience, most respondents (40%) had three years of PR practice, while the rest had between two and nine years. Participants with fewer years of experience, particularly those in the two-to-three-year range, are generally more open to experimenting with new technologies, including AI. Their exposure to digital tools during their studies and early careers may make them more adaptable and willing to integrate AI into their workflow. On the other hand, the participant with eight to nine years of experience showed a more cautious approach, reflecting a preference for established PR techniques and a desire to ensure accuracy and ethical use before fully adopting AI tools. This indicates that experience level may shape how practitioners balance innovation with professional judgement.

Educational qualifications were also fairly balanced, with 40% holding master's degrees and 60% holding bachelor's degrees. Those with postgraduate training may have gained more exposure to digital communication research, analytics, and emerging technologies, which can enhance their readiness to adopt AI.

Table 1: Demographic

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=5)	Percentage (%)
Job Title / Role	PR and Communication Director	1	20%
	Head of Sports (Vision 1 FM & Light TV)	1	20%
	Strategic Public Relations Manager	1	20%
	Assistant PR Manager	1	20%
	Multimedia Journalist	1	20%
Years of Experience	2 years	1	20%
	3 years	2	40%
	4 years	1	20%
	8–9 years	1	20%
Educational Qualification	Master’s / Master in PR	2	40%
	Bachelor’s Degree / First Degree	3	60%

4.3 Adoption of AI Technologies in Strategic PR Campaigns

Familiarity with AI Tools

Before considering formal training, the interviews showed that many PR professionals had already developed varying levels of familiarity with AI technologies through personal exploration and informal learning. Some respondents indicated that they were aware of AI tools, had tried them independently, or used them occasionally in their work without institutional support. This familiarity often came from self-directed efforts such as experimenting with AI platforms, observing colleagues, browsing online materials, or relying on trial-and-error. For example, one respondent noted having “No training but moderate familiarity,” P1

This reflects a surface-level understanding that allowed them to use some AI tools but without deeper insight into their broader capabilities. Another shared, “No training, but I know about it, I use it sometimes,” P5. This suggests that although they were able to apply AI tools in isolated tasks, their usage lacked structure and strategic alignment.

These findings resonate with studies that show initial AI use in PR often begins with informal experimentation before formal organizational adoption. Panda et al. (2019) found that Indian PR practitioners first engaged with AI tools through exploratory use, with uneven depth of understanding and application, reflecting DOI’s notion of early trialability without full integration. In the Nigerian context, George et al. (2025) also observed moderate and fragmented AI use, where tools were applied mainly for limited functions such as social media analytics rather than embedded strategically across campaigns. From a TAM perspective, the participants’ moderate familiarity but hesitant adoption suggest that perceived usefulness is present, but perceived ease of use and trust remain underdeveloped, which may explain why familiarity alone has not translated into systematic use of AI in this study.

These comments reveal that familiarity alone does not guarantee effective AI integration in PR campaigns. Without a solid foundation, PR professionals may misapply tools, overlook more advanced features, or fail to interpret AI-generated insights appropriately. Informal exposure often leads to inconsistent use, limited confidence, and uncertainty about ethical considerations. Thus, while familiarity is an important entry point, it tends to produce fragmented or experimental implementation rather than systematic strategic use. This underscores the need to understand familiarity as a preliminary stage that prepares, but does not fully equip, professionals to adopt AI meaningfully.

Overall, 3 out of 5 participants demonstrated low-to-moderate familiarity with AI, while only 2 showed strong familiarity based on their responses.

Training and Competence in AI Adoption

Building on this initial familiarity, the interviews revealed that formal training played a more decisive role in enabling effective and confident AI adoption within strategic PR campaigns. Respondents who had undergone structured training programmes expressed higher competence in integrating AI across different phases of their campaigns. One participant explained, “Yes. I underwent a training on the use of AI tools in the execution of my work,” P4

This demonstrates how such training directly supported real-world PR functions. Another respondent added, “Yes I have been trained on a diverse range of data related to AI technologies, digital tools, and their applications...” P2 indicating that their training was comprehensive and cross-industry, which enriched their ability to innovate and adapt AI tools strategically.

These findings suggest that formal training provides not only technical skills but also strategic awareness, helping practitioners determine which AI tools align with specific campaign goals, how to evaluate automated insights, and how to balance data-driven outputs with human judgment and creativity. Those trained in AI reported greater confidence, stronger advocacy for AI within their organisations, and clearer understanding of ethical boundaries and technical limitations. This structured exposure reduced uncertainty and resistance, transforming AI from a peripheral option into a core strategic resource.

In contrast, respondents without formal training struggled to move beyond basic familiarity. Their usage tended to be inconsistent, narrow, or experimental, limiting the depth of AI integration in

PR practice. This highlights that while familiarity introduces PR professionals to AI tools, formal training is the key driver that enables full adoption, optimises usage, and positions AI as a central component of modern PR strategy.

Overall, 3 participants reported having no formal AI training, while only 2 had received structured training that improved their competence.

The emphasis on formal training in these findings aligns strongly with prior research, which consistently identifies skills and capacity-building as key enablers of AI adoption in PR. Mallek et al. (2025) reported that AI-driven sustainability communication in the UAE was most effective where organizations invested in training, reducing perceived complexity (DOI) and strengthening perceived usefulness (TAM). Similarly, Soegiarto et al. (2024) found that Indonesian firms with structured AI training programmes integrated AI more deeply into media monitoring and content management than those relying on ad hoc learning. In line with Panda et al. (2019), this study reinforces the idea that training not only improves technical competence but also supports reinvention (DOI), allowing practitioners to adapt AI tools creatively to their strategic communication needs rather than using them only for routine automation.

Tools and Platforms Used

Several respondents identified specific AI platforms that were formally used within their organizations to enhance PR activities. These tools were particularly valued for their ability to streamline processes, monitor media coverage, and generate actionable insights. For example, one respondent highlighted,

This statement suggests that AI tools are being used not only for monitoring but also for content creation, which indicates a deeper integration of technology into campaign workflows.

“Talk-walker, offers real-time media monitoring with predictive analytics and visual recognition. ChatGPT is often used for drafting press releases, social media posts, speeches, and Questions and Answers responses” P3. This statement suggests that AI tools are being used not only for monitoring but also for content creation, which indicates a deeper integration of technology into campaign workflows.

Another respondent noted, “Gamma,” P4 as the primary tool used, implying that their organization supports specific platforms that fit their operational needs. The adoption of these tools suggests that organizations are beginning to recognize AI as a strategic resource capable of improving campaign outcomes through better data analysis, content automation, and real-time feedback.

The use of organizationally supported tools also reflects a deliberate effort to standardize AI use across PR functions, which can lead to consistency in data gathering, message delivery, and performance evaluation. Respondents who had access to such platforms expressed satisfaction with their ability to save time, provide comprehensive coverage of media mentions, and support decision-making with data-driven insights. This demonstrates that the presence of institutional support for AI tools directly facilitates smoother adoption and integration into day-to-day operations.

In contrast, some respondents reported that their use of AI tools was more individualistic and not necessarily part of an organizational mandate. For instance, one respondent stated, “Deepseek only,” P1, indicating reliance on a single platform rather than a diverse toolkit. Another added, “We don't use it in planning. I personally use it sometimes,” P5, revealing that AI use is more of a

personal initiative than a company-wide practice. This pattern highlights a gap between individual awareness and organizational commitment to AI adoption.

The respondents who relied solely on personal use also faced challenges such as limited access to premium versions of tools, inconsistent workflows, and lack of formal support or guidance from their organizations. This situation potentially limits the full benefits of AI in PR because campaigns may lack standardized approaches to data analysis and content optimization. It also suggests that without formal investment from organizations, AI adoption remains fragmented and highly dependent on the initiative of individual practitioners. Addressing this gap by institutionalizing AI use could ensure broader adoption and better alignment of AI capabilities with strategic PR goals. Overall, 3 participants used or referenced specific AI tools (Talkwalker, ChatGPT, Gamma), while 2 relied on personal use only or had no organizational AI tools.

Jeong and Park (2023) highlight how AI platforms enhance situational analysis and message targeting through real-time analytics, which is consistent with participants' use of Talkwalker for predictive monitoring and visual recognition. Likewise, Foo et al. (2025) found that AI-based analytics systems improve strategic decision-making by synthesizing large volumes of media data into actionable insights, reflecting the perceived usefulness dimension of TAM. The use of ChatGPT for drafting press releases and social media content also aligns with Tang and Zhang's (2025) argument that generative AI enables mass personalization and strengthens DOI's "relative advantage" over purely manual content production. However, similar to concerns raised by Bian et al. (2025), the more individualistic and fragmented use described by some participants suggests that the absence of organizational policies and governance can limit standardization and deepen ethical and quality risks.

Stages of Campaigns Where AI is Applied

The findings revealed that the planning stage is where AI technologies are most frequently applied in strategic PR campaigns. Respondents indicated that AI plays a crucial role in gathering data, analyzing audience behavior, and generating insights that inform the direction of campaigns before execution begins. One respondent stated, “Planning,” P1 when asked about where AI is most commonly applied, emphasizing its primary function as a research and strategy tool. Another respondent noted that AI helps them understand their audiences better and refine their campaign objectives, explaining,

“It helps get a fair idea of your audience during the planning and implementation stages,” P4. These perspectives show that AI is instrumental in conducting sentiment analysis, competitor tracking, and message testing, which collectively provide a stronger foundation for campaign strategy. By focusing AI use at this stage, PR professionals can make data-driven decisions, identify potential risks, and increase the likelihood of achieving campaign goals.

AI’s contribution to planning extends to content ideation, where tools like ChatGPT are used to generate drafts of press releases, social media posts, and campaign slogans that can be refined by human teams. This reduces the time spent on brainstorming and allows for quicker iteration of campaign concepts. Overall, respondents suggested that the planning phase is the most resource-intensive, and AI significantly eases this burden by automating analysis and providing actionable recommendations.

A few respondents indicated that AI is used not just in planning but throughout the entire campaign lifecycle, covering implementation and evaluation stages as well. For example, one respondent

explained, “AI is most commonly applied at all stages of my strategic PR campaigns but its impact varies depending on the phase. Planning stage, implementation stage and evaluation stage” P3.

P2 added, “AI is most commonly applied across multiple stages to enhance efficiency and effectiveness,” pointing to a more holistic adoption of AI tools. This multi-stage application suggests that AI’s value is not limited to research but extends to real-time monitoring, automated report generation, and post-campaign evaluations where outcomes are measured and insights are fed back into future planning.

Respondents who reported multi-stage integration appeared to benefit from continuous feedback loops, which allowed them to adjust campaigns dynamically based on data trends. This indicates a more mature use of AI within PR, where technology supports a cyclical process of planning, execution, and learning. Not all respondents reported extensive AI use across all stages of campaigns. Some indicated that their use was sporadic or confined to a single stage. For instance, P5 mentioned, “Maybe Evaluation,” suggesting that AI is used mainly after campaign execution to measure performance rather than guide strategic decisions. This limited application highlights an opportunity for growth, as extending AI’s use to earlier stages could lead to more proactive and predictive campaign strategies. Overall, 3 participants applied AI mainly at the planning stage, while 2 indicated multi-stage usage or sporadic use limited to evaluation.

George et al. (2025) observed that, in Nigeria, AI was mainly used for social media analytics and preliminary planning rather than for interactive engagement or evaluation, suggesting an early but partial adoption stage in DOI terms. By contrast, Soegiarto et al. (2024) documented firms that extended AI use into social media content management and performance tracking, echoing the multi-stage integration reported by some participants in this study. Where participants described

AI use across planning, implementation, and evaluation, the pattern resembles the more advanced, institutionally ready contexts reported by Mallek et al. (2025), where AI becomes embedded in the full campaign cycle.

Extent of Organizational AI Adoption

The responses suggest that AI adoption in PR work is increasing, but still partial and in development. Some organizations have begun integrating AI tools into multiple aspects of their public relations functions, showing a growing recognition of AI's potential. One respondent observed, "AI adoption in our organization's PR work is steadily growing, with tools and technologies being integrated into various aspects of strategy, content creation, and media monitoring to enhance efficiency and effectiveness" P3. This highlights that AI is being progressively woven into key PR processes, which may eventually lead to a more comprehensive digital transformation of communication strategies.

P3 noted, "It's fairly used," indicating that while AI has a place in their operations, it is not yet fully optimized or leveraged in every campaign. These accounts reveal that many organizations are still at an intermediate stage, experimenting with AI and gradually building capacity, rather than achieving full-scale adoption. Respondents who reported growing adoption often mentioned that this shift was driven by an increasing awareness of AI's benefits, particularly its ability to save time, reduce human error, and provide data-driven insights that inform decision-making. The tone of these responses suggests a cautious but positive approach, where organizations are testing AI solutions, evaluating their return on investment, and progressively embedding them into workflows.

In contrast, some respondents either could not clearly identify the extent of AI adoption in their organizations or admitted that their organizations had not adopted AI at all. P1 stated, “Not clear,” reflecting uncertainty or a lack of communication about how AI is being used at the organizational level. Another respondent went further to confirm, “We have not adopted yet,” P5 which implies that some PR departments are still operating with traditional methods, relying on manual data collection and human-driven processes rather than automated solutions. Overall, 2 participants described growing organizational adoption, 1 reported partial usage, and 2 indicated unclear or no adoption at all.

George et al. (2025) classified Nigerian PR practitioners as largely in the “early majority” phase of DOI, where AI is present but not yet transformative, which parallels participants’ descriptions of AI being “fairly used” or gradually integrated. In contrast, Mallek et al. (2025) reported stronger institutional readiness in the UAE, where AI integration showed clear links to sustainability outcomes due to better infrastructure and strategic alignment. Yessenbek et al. (2025) likewise demonstrated how national and organizational contexts shape AI adoption, with US firms much further along the diffusion curve than Kazakhstani counterparts.

Influencing Factors for Adoption

One of the most prominent factors influencing the adoption of AI technologies in PR campaigns was the desire to improve efficiency, reduce workload, and save time. Respondents emphasized that AI tools provide faster ways of gathering information, generating content, and analyzing large volumes of data, which would otherwise take significant human effort. For example, one respondent explained, “The need to be efficient and reduce mistakes,” P4, suggesting that AI is viewed as a means to improve accuracy in research and execution while minimizing human error.

Another respondent noted the importance of speed, simply stating, “How fast it is,” P1 highlighting that the quick turnaround offered by AI solutions makes them attractive for time-sensitive PR campaigns. These comments demonstrate that efficiency gains are not merely a convenience but a key motivator driving decision-makers to invest in AI technologies as part of their communication strategies.

Efficiency also plays a crucial role in crisis communication, where real-time insights and automated monitoring allow PR teams to respond swiftly to emerging issues. The speed of AI-driven data processing enables organizations to be more proactive, monitor media coverage continuously, and adjust messaging before reputational risks escalate. This functional benefit appears to strongly justify the move toward integrating AI despite potential implementation challenges.

Another important factor that emerged from the interviews was the level of organizational readiness, including budget allocations, skill availability, and team preparedness to work with AI tools. Respondents highlighted that AI adoption is often influenced by whether an organization has the human capacity and financial resources to implement and maintain the technology. One respondent outlined this clearly, stating,

“Campaign objectives, budgets and resources, team skills and readiness,” P3 as key determinants for adoption. This implies that even when there is interest in using AI, resource constraints or a lack of trained personnel can delay or limit its integration into PR work. Similarly, another respondent noted that organizations often weigh the perceived value of AI relative to its cost, sharing that, “resource allocation and perceived value vs. cost influence adoption decisions” P2. This means that if managers do not see a clear return on investment, they may prefer traditional

methods, especially in smaller organizations with limited budgets. The findings suggest that successful adoption requires not just tools but also internal capacity-building, leadership buy-in, and the creation of a supportive organizational culture that encourages experimentation and learning with AI. Overall, all 5 participants cited efficiency as a major driver of adoption, while 3 additionally emphasized resources, budgets, and team skills as barriers or motivators.

Panda et al. (2019) found that Indian PR professionals valued AI primarily for automating repetitive tasks and enhancing operational efficiency, echoing respondents' emphasis on time-saving and accuracy. Sutherland et al. (2021) and Bekri et al. (2025) similarly showed that AI's ability to process large datasets and provide real-time analytics strengthens its perceived usefulness (TAM), particularly in fast-paced communication environments and crisis situations. At the same time, the importance participants attach to campaign objectives, budgets, and team skills is consistent with Soegiarto et al. (2024), who argued that perceived complexity and resource constraints (DOI) can slow adoption even where interest in AI is high. The present findings therefore reinforce the idea that both TAM (usefulness, ease of use) and DOI (resources, complexity, compatibility) jointly shape AI uptake in PR campaigns.

4.4 Benefits of AI in PR Campaigns

Improved Efficiency and Time-Saving

Respondents consistently emphasized efficiency as one of the most significant benefits of adopting AI in PR campaigns. They described AI as a game-changer for reducing the time spent on research, data collection, and content development. AI's ability to process large datasets within seconds allows PR professionals to focus more on strategic tasks rather than manual analysis. One

respondent clearly stated, “On a scale I would say 7 because now I’m able to make my research easily and cuts time” P4, suggesting that AI not only speeds up the process but also improves the quality of information gathered. Another respondent emphasized the speed advantage, stating, “How fast it is” P1, showing that quick turnaround is a key reason why AI is incorporated into their campaigns. These views reveal that PR teams are benefiting from reduced preparation time, faster message formulation, and more rapid development of communication materials such as press releases, social media posts, and campaign briefs.

In addition to faster research, respondents highlighted AI’s ability to enable real-time media monitoring and responsiveness to emerging issues. PR professionals are able to track brand mentions, media coverage, and public sentiment continuously, allowing them to make timely interventions. One participant explained, “AI tools can analyze vast amounts of media coverage, social media conversations, and public sentiment in real-time, allowing PR teams to quickly understand trends and issues” P2.

Another respondent supported this by adding, “It faster content creation and real time monitoring” P3, pointing to AI’s dual role in creating content and providing live feedback on how campaigns are performing. The ability to respond promptly to crises or capitalize on emerging opportunities is a clear competitive advantage, ensuring that campaigns remain relevant and aligned with audience sentiment. Overall, AI’s speed and real-time insights enhance PR teams’ agility, reduce delays, and help maintain reputational control.

Sutherland et al. (2021) observed that AI-based automation allows practitioners to reallocate time from routine tasks to higher-level strategy, which mirrors respondents’ experiences of reduced manual workload. Panda et al. (2019) similarly reported that AI enhances operational efficiency

in media monitoring and crisis communication, supporting the TAM construct of perceived usefulness as a key determinant of adoption. Bekri et al. (2025) further demonstrated that real-time analytics improve campaign responsiveness and planning quality, aligning with participants' references to AI's speed and real-time monitoring capabilities. Overall, all 5 participants highlighted efficiency and time-saving as the strongest and most consistent benefit of AI in PR campaigns.

Enhanced Audience Targeting and Engagement

Another prominent benefit reported was AI's capacity to improve audience targeting. Respondents highlighted that AI makes it possible to segment audiences more accurately and design campaigns that resonate with specific demographic or psychographic groups. One respondent observed, "AI predicts audience behaviors and preferences, enabling PR teams to proactively craft messages that resonate with target groups before issues arise or opportunities are missed," P2. This proactive capability allows PR practitioners to anticipate audience needs and craft messaging strategies that are highly relevant.

Another respondent echoed this benefit, stating,

"AI has notably improved audience targeting and engagement in several impactful ways: Precision Audience Segmentation and Predictive Analytics for Campaign Success" P3. These findings suggest that AI empowers PR teams to move beyond generalized communication strategies toward hyper-personalized messaging that increases engagement and trust. Respondents also emphasized that AI strengthens decision-making by providing actionable insights based on real-time data. Rather than relying on guesswork, PR professionals can evaluate audience responses, campaign performance, and sentiment metrics to guide their next steps.

One participant stated, “They increase efficiency and speed up work, Data-driven Decision Making and Competitive Intelligence” P3, highlighting that AI not only streamlines operations but also informs strategic choices with evidence. This data-driven approach ensures that campaigns are better aligned with audience expectations, which increases their effectiveness and minimizes wasted resources. Together, these responses demonstrate that AI does not just automate processes but adds strategic value by enabling PR teams to make informed, evidence-based decisions that optimize campaign outcomes. Overall, 3 participants emphasized improved audience targeting through predictive analytics, while 2 did not directly mention targeting benefits.

Tang and Zhang (2025) argued that generative and analytic AI significantly improve message relevance through mass personalization, a pattern reflected in participants’ emphasis on precision audience targeting and predictive campaign success. Foo et al. (2025) likewise showed that AI-based dashboards synthesize complex audience data into actionable insights, which supports the TAM notion of perceived usefulness and enhances practitioners’ willingness to adopt such tools. Bekri et al. (2025) linked these analytics capabilities to better campaign design and real-time performance optimization. Seen through a DOI lens, the clear relative advantage and high observability of AI-enabled targeting can accelerate diffusion, but, as George et al. (2025) caution, effective engagement still depends on trust and persuasive messaging, not technology alone.

Increased Creativity and Innovation

Respondents perceived AI as a complement to human creativity, helping them generate fresh ideas and explore innovative campaign approaches. Rather than replacing human input, AI was viewed as an enhancer that sparks inspiration through data-driven insights. One respondent remarked,

“Absolutely, AI has enhanced creativity and innovation in my strategic PR campaign but in a complementary way rather than replacing human ingenuity” P3.

Another respondent added, “Yes, I believe AI has enhanced creativity and innovation in campaign strategies because it provides new tools and insights that enable more personalized, targeted, and dynamic approaches” P2. These statements suggest that AI helps uncover new trends, audience preferences, and emerging topics that might otherwise go unnoticed. By offering this expanded perspective, AI enables PR teams to craft fresh narratives and experiment with innovative formats that engage audiences more effectively.

AI also supports creativity by enabling rapid testing and iterative improvements to campaigns. Respondents acknowledged that AI tools make it possible to run multiple variations of messages and optimize them in real-time. As one respondent explained, “AI-driven automation allows for rapid testing and optimization of campaigns, fostering innovation in how messages are delivered and received” P2. This approach allows teams to adjust campaigns on the go, measure what resonates with audiences, and discard ineffective tactics quickly. The result is a cycle of continuous improvement that enhances creativity by allowing PR teams to take calculated risks, experiment with new approaches, and learn from the data almost instantly. Overall, 3 participants believed AI enhanced creativity and innovation, whereas 2 expressed uncertainty or minimal experience using AI creatively.

Jeong and Park (2023) advocate a hybrid AI–human model, arguing that automation should support rather than supplant strategic judgment, a position echoed in respondents’ emphasis on AI “enhancing” creativity. Soegiarto et al. (2024) also reported that Indonesian firms used AI to generate ideas and personalize content while relying on human teams for cultural adaptation and

narrative framing, illustrating DOI's concept of reinvention as practitioners adapt innovations to their own context.

Reduction of Manual Labor and Costs

Respondents reported that AI reduces the burden of manual tasks, freeing up time for more strategic work. Repetitive processes such as compiling media reports, tracking mentions, and drafting basic content can now be handled by AI tools. One participant shared, "Helps in media content creations, media relation management and reduces costs and manual labor" P3, which highlights how automation directly translates to efficiency. This benefit is particularly valuable for small PR teams with limited personnel, as it allows them to accomplish more with fewer resources.

While some respondents mentioned that cost is a barrier to initial AI adoption, others viewed AI as a cost-saving tool over time. By reducing the amount of manual labor required and improving campaign precision, AI minimizes wastage of resources. Respondents suggested that even though AI tools might require upfront investment, their ability to enhance targeting, improve efficiency, and reduce reliance on manual work ultimately leads to better cost efficiency. This positions AI as not just a productivity enhancer but also a strategic investment that delivers long-term financial value for PR organizations. Overall, 3 participants reported reductions in manual workload and operational costs, while 2 indicated that financial or adoption barriers limited this benefit.

Panda et al. (2019) found that AI systems significantly diminished the time and labour required for media list compilation, monitoring, and basic content creation, particularly in resource-constrained teams. George and Ekpe (2025) likewise observed that AI-supported campaign management can enhance cost-efficiency when tools are integrated strategically, though they cautioned that initial investments and governance structures are crucial. Soegiarto et al. (2024)

reported similar tensions, noting that while AI is perceived as useful (TAM), adoption is sometimes held back by concerns over upfront cost and perceived complexity (DOI). The present findings confirm that participants weigh AI's labour- and cost-saving potential against these financial and capacity-related barriers when deciding whether and how extensively to adopt such tools.

4.5 Challenges in Applying AI in PR Campaigns

Data Accuracy and Information Quality

One of the most prominent challenges reported by respondents was the issue of accuracy in AI-generated outputs. While AI tools are capable of processing large amounts of data quickly, respondents indicated that these outputs are not always reliable and sometimes require human verification to avoid reputational risks. For instance, one respondent explicitly stated, "Inaccurate information sometimes" P1, drawing attention to cases where AI-generated results could be misleading if used without critical review. This finding highlights that AI's performance is not infallible, and over-reliance on automated outputs may expose organizations to risks such as misinformation or poorly tailored communication strategies. Respondents suggested that despite the efficiency benefits, AI results must be scrutinized to ensure they align with organizational goals and ethical standards before being deployed in campaigns. This underscores the continuing need for human oversight and editorial judgment in AI-supported PR activities.

In addition to accuracy issues, respondents emphasized that AI's effectiveness is directly tied to the quality of data it processes. One participant pointed out, "AI relies on high-quality data; incomplete or biased data can lead to inaccurate insights or misinformed decisions" P2. This

response highlights a double-edged reality, while AI can provide deep insights, it can also replicate and amplify errors if the source data is flawed. This is a particularly important consideration for PR campaigns, where the credibility of insights drives decisions on messaging, media engagement, and audience targeting. Organizations that lack proper data management systems risk feeding their AI tools with fragmented, outdated, or biased data, which may lead to ineffective or even counterproductive campaign outcomes. Respondents' concerns reflect the importance of investing in clean, comprehensive, and representative datasets to enhance AI reliability. Without proper data governance, AI adoption risks being viewed as a liability rather than a strategic asset, particularly in sensitive industries where communication missteps can have long-term reputational consequences. Overall, 3 participants raised concerns about AI accuracy and data quality, while the remaining 2 did not explicitly report issues in this area.

Jobin et al. (2019) highlighted how flawed or biased datasets can produce misleading or discriminatory outputs, which is consistent with respondents' worries about reputational risks and misinformed decisions. Sivarajah et al. (2017) similarly emphasized that big data analytics are only as good as the underlying data infrastructure, underscoring the need for robust data governance in communication settings. Jeong and Park (2023) warned that over-reliance on AI without critical human oversight may compromise transparency and trust, reinforcing TAM's insight that trust and perceived reliability moderate adoption. These parallels suggest that for PR practitioners, the perceived usefulness of AI is conditional on confidence in its accuracy and the quality of the data it processes.

Technical and Infrastructural Limitations

Another significant challenge raised by respondents was limited access to robust AI tools. Many PR teams, particularly in resource-constrained organizations, rely on free versions or demo tools, which often come with functional restrictions that limit their utility. As one respondent explained, “Sometimes, we don’t get to use all the tools available due to only being on the demo or free version” P4, indicating that their ability to explore AI’s full potential is hindered by budgetary or licensing constraints. This means that certain advanced features such as predictive analytics, multi-channel integration, or automated reporting remain inaccessible, resulting in less effective campaign planning and execution. The lack of full-feature access may also discourage PR professionals from fully committing to AI use, as the perceived return on investment remains limited when working with restricted functionalities.

Respondents also discussed the challenges of integrating data across multiple platforms, which limits AI’s ability to generate comprehensive insights. One respondent admitted, “Often struggle to access unified data across platforms (social, media coverage, etc.)” P3, suggesting that data silos within organizations create fragmented views of campaign performance. This lack of interoperability between platforms prevents PR teams from fully leveraging AI’s analytical capabilities, as the system cannot connect disparate data points to produce holistic insights. This problem is particularly acute in organizations that manage multiple digital channels, as incomplete integration means that valuable audience engagement patterns may go unnoticed. Respondents’ experiences reveal that without the necessary infrastructure to aggregate and synchronize data sources, the benefits of AI are only partially realized. Investment in integrated communication management systems may therefore be a prerequisite for organizations seeking to maximize AI

adoption. Overall, 3 participants experienced infrastructural or tool-access challenges, whereas 2 did not report significant technical limitations.

Soegiarto et al. (2024) found that Indonesian organizations often rely on basic or trial versions of AI tools, constraining their ability to exploit advanced capabilities such as predictive analytics, much like the respondents who reported relying on demo or free versions. Yessenbek et al. (2025) also documented infrastructural and integration challenges in Kazakhstan that hindered unified data analysis and comprehensive campaign monitoring, contrasting with better-resourced US firms. These findings illustrate DOI's complexity and compatibility dimensions, where fragmented systems and low interoperability slow diffusion.

Human Capacity and Expertise Gaps

A recurring theme across the interviews was the shortage of skilled personnel capable of designing, deploying, and maintaining AI systems. Respondents recognized that AI is a specialized field that requires technical expertise, and many organizations lack the human resources to operate these systems effectively. One respondent observed, "Without experienced data scientists or AI specialists, it can be challenging to develop, implement, and maintain AI systems effectively" P2. This shortage of technical expertise creates a dependency on external consultants or limits organizations to surface-level AI usage. As a result, PR teams may use AI tools in a limited capacity, for example, automating simple content generation, but fail to exploit more advanced features such as predictive modeling or performance optimization. This underutilization reduces the overall impact of AI adoption and keeps organizations in a cycle of partial digital transformation rather than achieving full integration.

Even in organizations where AI tools are available, respondents noted that proficiency levels among PR professionals vary widely. One respondent explained, “The PR professionals in our organization are aware of AI’s potential, but their ability to use it effectively varies widely” P3. This uneven distribution of expertise means that AI adoption is often championed by a small number of individuals while others remain hesitant or undertrained. Inconsistent usage across teams can result in fragmented workflows and uneven campaign quality. Respondents implied that capacity-building programs, internal training, and peer learning initiatives are necessary to ensure that all PR professionals can confidently engage with AI tools. Addressing this challenge would help to standardize AI adoption across the organization, reduce inefficiencies, and create a culture of innovation that embraces data-driven decision-making. Overall, 3 participants noted gaps in skills or expertise among PR professionals, while 2 felt they or their teams had adequate capability.

Mallek et al. (2025) stressed that training and capacity-building were crucial for leveraging AI in sustainability-related communication, noting that lack of expertise created underuse and inefficiency. Panda et al. (2019) similarly observed that practitioners often lacked deep technical understanding of AI tools, limiting usage to surface-level automation rather than strategic applications.

Organizational and Ethical Concerns

Respondents raised concerns about maintaining authenticity and trust when integrating AI-generated content into PR campaigns. One respondent warned, “Over-reliance on AI can risk perceptions of inauthenticity, potentially damaging the credibility of the organization if audiences feel they are being manipulated or misled” P2. This highlights that while AI can improve

efficiency, it must be used carefully to avoid alienating stakeholders. The respondent stressed the importance of openness, saying,

“It is important to disclose when AI is being used to generate content or interact with audiences to maintain trust and avoid deception” P2. These concerns suggest that organizations must develop clear ethical guidelines for AI usage, ensuring transparency in communications and protecting the organization’s reputation.

Ethical risks were also highlighted in relation to bias and fairness. AI systems can replicate prejudices present in training datasets, potentially leading to discriminatory or exclusionary communication. As one respondent explained, “AI systems can inadvertently perpetuate biases present in their training data, leading to unfair or discriminatory messaging that could harm reputation and stakeholder relationships” P2. This finding underscores the need for rigorous oversight and bias-checking mechanisms to ensure that AI-supported campaigns reflect inclusive and equitable values. Failure to address these ethical concerns could not only harm brand image but also result in regulatory or public backlash. Overall, 3 participants expressed ethical concerns such as authenticity, bias, or transparency, while 2 reported no major ethical issues.

Jobin et al. (2019) documented widespread concern that AI systems can reinforce existing biases and undermine fairness if not carefully governed, while Bian et al. (2025) highlighted transparency and disclosure as critical issues in AI-generated messaging. Jeong and Park (2023) also warned that over-automation can damage relational trust if stakeholders feel manipulated or misled, supporting the emphasis on openness voiced by respondents. George and Ekpe (2025) note that in development communication, over-reliance on AI without ethical safeguards can erode community trust.

Cost and Resource Constraints

Cost was another recurring challenge identified by respondents, who noted that the price of AI tools and systems can act as a barrier to adoption, particularly for smaller organizations. One respondent explained, “Allocating funds toward AI tools might divert resources from other essential areas like creative content or human resources” P2. This indicates that PR teams must carefully balance investment decisions to avoid sacrificing other critical campaign components. Another respondent added that adoption depends on a cost-benefit assessment, stating that organizations hesitate to adopt AI, “The cost of AI tools plays a significant role in determining whether or not they are adopted our PR campaigns,” P3.

These financial considerations often delay AI integration or limit it to free or trial versions of tools, preventing organizations from fully exploring AI’s potential. Respondents suggested that demonstrating a clear return on investment is crucial for securing management buy-in and justifying expenditure on AI solutions. Overall, 3 participants identified cost as a barrier to AI adoption, while 2 participants indicated minimal or no cost-related concerns.

Soegiarto et al. (2024) reported that smaller firms often hesitate to invest in AI due to unclear return on investment and competing budget priorities, a pattern similar to organizations in this study that weigh AI tools against other needs such as creative work and human resources. George et al. (2025) likewise found that limited budgets and infrastructure in Nigeria restricted AI integration primarily to basic analytics rather than more advanced applications. Sutherland et al. (2021) argue that while AI promises long-term efficiency gains, organizations must cross an initial investment threshold to realize these benefits, which can slow diffusion among resource-constrained entities.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a synthesis of the key findings from the study, drawing together the themes presented in Chapter Four. It begins with a summary of the major results, followed by a conclusion that highlights the overall implications of the research for public relations practice. The chapter closes with recommendations for practitioners, policymakers, and future researchers aimed at improving the adoption and effective use of AI technologies in PR campaigns.

5.2 Summary

5.2.1 Adoption of AI Technologies in Strategic PR Campaigns

The findings on the adoption of AI technologies in strategic PR campaigns reveal a gradual but growing integration of AI into public relations practice, shaped by training, tools, campaign stages, organizational readiness, and perceived value. Training emerged as a crucial enabler of adoption, with respondents who had undergone structured programs expressing greater confidence and competence in applying AI across planning, execution, and evaluation phases. Formal training was seen to enhance technical knowledge, strategic thinking, and organizational readiness, while the absence of training left some professionals relying on personal exploration, resulting in inconsistent and often superficial use of AI tools. In terms of tools and platforms, respondents reported using applications such as Talk-walker for real-time media monitoring, ChatGPT for drafting campaign content, and Gamma for research support. Those with organizationally

supported tools experienced more standardized and effective integration, whereas others relied on individual initiatives or free versions, leading to fragmented adoption and limited impact.

AI was most frequently applied during the planning stage of campaigns, where it was used for audience research, sentiment analysis, competitor tracking, and content ideation, allowing PR professionals to make data-driven decisions and develop well-informed strategies. A smaller number of respondents reported multi-stage integration, applying AI to planning, implementation, and evaluation phases to enable continuous monitoring and iterative improvements, which reflects a more mature level of adoption. However, some respondents indicated that their use of AI was confined to the evaluation stage, signaling room for growth in earlier campaign phases. Overall, respondents described AI adoption as partial and developing, with some organizations steadily increasing their use of AI tools, while others remained at a low or experimental stage.

Key drivers of adoption included the need for efficiency, accuracy, and time savings, as well as the ability to respond quickly to crises and emerging trends. Respondents also identified organizational readiness, budget availability, and team skills as decisive factors, emphasizing that cost-benefit considerations often determine whether AI is adopted or not. The results suggest that for AI adoption to be fully realized, organizations must invest in training, infrastructure, and supportive policies that encourage experimentation and maximize the strategic value of AI in PR campaigns.

5.2.2 Benefits of AI in PR Campaigns

The findings on the benefits of AI in PR campaigns highlight four key areas where its impact is most pronounced: efficiency, audience targeting, creativity, and cost reduction. Respondents consistently emphasized that AI significantly improves efficiency by reducing the time spent on

research, data collection, and content creation. Its ability to process large datasets quickly enables PR professionals to focus on higher-level strategic tasks. Real-time media monitoring was also cited as a major advantage, as it allows teams to track public sentiment, brand mentions, and emerging issues, ensuring timely interventions and more agile crisis communication.

Another major benefit identified was enhanced audience targeting and engagement. AI's ability to predict audience behaviors and segment groups with precision allows PR teams to craft messages that resonate with specific demographics, improving relevance and impact. Respondents stressed that this data-driven approach supports better decision-making, as real-time analytics provide evidence to guide campaign strategies, resulting in more effective and resource-efficient communication efforts.

AI was also seen as a catalyst for creativity and innovation. Rather than replacing human input, it was described as a complementary tool that sparks new ideas, identifies trends, and encourages experimentation. Respondents valued AI's role in enabling rapid testing and optimization of campaign messages, which fosters continuous improvement and more dynamic engagement with audiences.

Finally, respondents highlighted AI's ability to reduce manual labor and lower operational costs over time. Automating repetitive tasks such as media monitoring, report compilation, and drafting basic content allows PR teams to reallocate time and resources to strategic functions. Although some noted that initial costs can be a barrier, many viewed AI as a long-term investment that delivers cost efficiency by minimizing waste and maximizing output.

5.2.3 Challenges in Applying AI in PR Campaigns

The findings reveal several key challenges limiting the effective application of AI in PR campaigns. A major concern among respondents was data accuracy and information quality. While AI processes data quickly, its outputs are not always reliable and often require human verification to avoid reputational risks. Respondents stressed that poor, incomplete, or biased data can lead to misleading insights and flawed campaign decisions, highlighting the need for clean, representative datasets and proper data governance to improve reliability.

Technical and infrastructural limitations were also reported, particularly restricted access to full-featured tools due to reliance on demo or free versions. This prevents PR teams from maximizing AI's potential and limits advanced functions like predictive analytics. Respondents also described difficulties in integrating data across platforms, creating fragmented insights and hindering comprehensive campaign analysis. Investment in integrated communication systems was seen as necessary for unlocking AI's full benefits.

Human capacity gaps were another barrier. Respondents noted a shortage of skilled personnel to manage AI systems, leading to underutilization and dependence on external experts. Even where tools were available, knowledge levels among PR professionals varied widely, causing inconsistent adoption and uneven campaign quality. Respondents emphasized the need for ongoing training and capacity-building initiatives to standardize AI use and foster a culture of data-driven decision-making.

Organizational and ethical concerns emerged around transparency, authenticity, and bias. Over-reliance on AI was seen as a risk to credibility, with respondents stressing the need to disclose AI

usage to maintain public trust. There were also concerns about AI perpetuating biases present in its training data, potentially leading to discriminatory messaging, which calls for robust oversight and fairness checks.

Finally, cost and resource constraints were significant barriers. The high cost of AI tools was reported to compete with other budget priorities, causing some organizations to delay adoption or rely on free versions. Respondents stressed that adoption often depends on clear evidence that benefits outweigh costs, underscoring the need for demonstrating return on investment to justify expenditure.

5.3 Conclusion

This study concludes that the adoption of AI technologies in strategic PR campaigns is an emerging but steadily developing phenomenon, driven largely by the quest for efficiency, accuracy, and improved decision-making. The findings show that AI is no longer viewed merely as an optional add-on but is gradually becoming a strategic asset that shapes campaign planning, implementation, and evaluation. Respondents with formal training and access to organizationally supported AI tools demonstrated a higher level of integration, indicating that capacity-building initiatives and infrastructure investment are critical in accelerating adoption across the PR industry.

The benefits of AI are clear and multifaceted. It improves efficiency by automating research, data analysis, and content generation, allowing professionals to focus on strategy rather than repetitive tasks. Its ability to conduct real-time monitoring, deliver actionable insights, and enable precise audience segmentation enhances both the relevance and effectiveness of campaigns. AI also serves as a catalyst for creativity and innovation, supporting experimentation and continuous improvement through data-driven optimization. Moreover, its potential to reduce manual labor and

generate cost savings over time positions it as a valuable long-term investment for organizations seeking to maximize productivity and competitiveness.

Despite these advantages, significant challenges remain. Data accuracy issues, fragmented datasets, and the risk of misinformation underscore the need for robust data governance and human oversight. Technical and infrastructural barriers, including limited access to full-feature tools and poor platform integration, continue to restrict the full realization of AI's potential. Additionally, gaps in human capacity and uneven levels of expertise create inconsistent adoption patterns, while ethical concerns regarding transparency, authenticity, and bias demand clear organizational guidelines. Cost constraints further complicate adoption decisions, especially in resource-limited settings, where management requires strong evidence of return on investment before committing to AI solutions.

Overall, the findings suggest that while AI holds transformative potential for PR campaigns, its successful adoption requires a balanced approach—one that combines technological investment with human capacity-building, ethical safeguards, and organizational commitment. With these enablers in place, AI can evolve from being a supplementary tool to a fully integrated driver of strategic public relations, enhancing both operational efficiency and the quality of stakeholder engagement.

5.4 Recommendations

Organizations should prioritize structured training programs for PR professionals to enhance their technical expertise in AI tools and applications. Regular workshops, certifications, and peer-learning sessions can ensure consistent competence across teams, reduce over-reliance on a few skilled individuals, and build a culture of confidence in AI-driven decision-making.

PR organizations should move beyond free or demo versions of tools and invest in full-feature AI platforms that allow for predictive analytics, multi-channel integration, and automated reporting. Integrating these systems with existing communication management tools will enable unified data access, improve insight generation, and support seamless campaign evaluation.

To address concerns about data accuracy and reliability, organizations should implement clear data management policies, including regular audits to ensure that datasets are clean, representative, and up to date. This will reduce the risk of misinformation and enhance the credibility of AI-generated insights for PR strategy development.

Organizations should create and enforce ethical standards for AI use, including disclosure policies when AI-generated content is used. Bias detection mechanisms and oversight committees can be established to ensure fairness, protect audience trust, and prevent reputational risks associated with inauthentic or discriminatory messaging.

Management should treat AI as a strategic investment rather than a discretionary expense. Allocating specific budgets for AI tools, infrastructure upgrades, and staff training will ensure consistent adoption and reduce disruptions caused by funding constraints. Cost-benefit analyses should be regularly conducted to demonstrate the return on investment and secure leadership buy-in.

Organizations should foster a culture of experimentation where AI is used to test new campaign ideas, measure engagement, and refine strategies in real time. Establishing internal pilot projects, knowledge-sharing forums, and collaborative partnerships with tech providers can encourage innovation and help PR teams stay ahead of industry trends.

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