

The Use of AI in Government Media Offices in the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract:

This study aims at exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in government media offices in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and its effects on communication strategies. It outlines the advantages of employing AI in work such as creation of content and its delivery and the disadvantages such as ethical issues, data protection. This research is based on qualitative interviews conducted with media professionals from six UAE government offices, and it offers a holistic view of the potential of the modern AI, as well as the difficulties that arise in the real world. The results are inconclusive; nevertheless, the results of the study show that media development is possible with the help of AI, but development should be handled with caution since there are many ethical and practical issues to be addressed. The discussion provides recommendations for the effective integration of AI technology in the communication process with the public.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, government communication, community of practice, PR, UAE

1. Introduction

This study investigates the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) technology on enhancing the functions of government media offices in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The evolution of AI technology has significantly improved communication processes, even within the public sector activities. This research specifically focuses on media offices in the UAE, exploring how AI can enhance public sector communication, including fostering audience engagement. A media office is a communication agency responsible for conveying the strategy and news of a specific emirate. The UAE, a federal state composed of seven emirates, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, and Fujairah, has seven media offices, each representing a different emirate. For example, there are separate media offices for Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah, among others.

This study also examines usability challenges, ethical considerations, data protection issues, and training requirements related to AI implementation in these media offices. Ultimately, it seeks to articulate the practical and strategic advantages of leveraging AI to reposition these offices in alignment with the UAE's national vision for digitalization and transparency. The study contributes to our understanding of the process of integrating AI technologies into government communication and the extent to which it reflects a substantial

shift in how the government conveys messages to the public. AI has the potential to optimize processes, customize services for citizens, and enhance data processing for more effective decision-making. However, incorporating AI in these services also poses challenges, including ethical concerns related to data collection and usage, the need to maintain content accuracy in automated communications, and the potential biases inherent in AI systems. Understanding these factors is crucial for fostering positive practices in applying AI within government communication.

The UAE is a significant research focus due to its proactive digital transformation agenda and its leadership in implementing AI in governance. Even prior to the establishment of the first Minister of Artificial Intelligence in 2017, the UAE had already taken a pioneering role across various sectors in advancing its artificial intelligence initiatives. Government media offices have also embraced AI applications to enhance their communication services. The UAE's AI strategy, along with other initiatives, underscores the country's aspirations in digital governance, making the exploration of AI in governmental media centers particularly relevant. Moreover, the diverse media environments within the UAE facilitate an examination of the different applications of AI across its various regions, allowing for a comprehensive study of AI usage in all emirates.

This study highlights how media offices' use of AI aligns with the UAE's strategy to brand itself as an advanced and innovative nation, particularly in the realm of e-government communication. In fact, one can argue that the UAE's AI strategy is part of the country's strategic narrative about itself, aiming to bolster internal public support while defining its role internationally. Such strategic narratives are created and then disseminated through various channels, including speeches, media coverage, cultural diplomacy, and international events, which communicate a nation's identity and aspirations. To unpack such narratives, one needs to examine their formation, projection, and reception, and this cyclical process shapes how narratives evolve over time (Miskimmon et al., 2018). This study explores how governmental media offices across each emirate engage with and implement this narrative of the UAE as a leading hub in implementing AI technology. In a federal system like the UAE, one might expect these media offices to operate as a unified community of practice, which is somewhat evident in their terms of reference and main responsibilities. However, as this study shows, there are some differences in these offices' approaches to implementing AI technology.

The study begins with a literature review of selected research exploring the role of technology in government communication and public relations. This is followed by a theoretical framework that merges technology acceptance with the concept of a community of practice. The findings are then presented thematically, concluding with a summary of the key arguments.

2. Literature review – AI in PR and government communication

The UAE has made efforts to ensure the adoption of AI technology in different industries, enabling it to assume a prominent role in the digitization of the management of state affairs. The Prime Minister's Office (2022) notes that the government of the UAE has made efforts such as the UAE's AI Strategy 2031, where the use of AI has been set as a principle in enhancing efficiency in service delivery and involving citizens in making use of the information provided through analysis. In this respect, the Dubai Media Council Guide (2023) defines AI as a machine-based system capable of making predictions, recommendations, or

decisions for human-defined objectives, influencing real or virtual environments. This definition is found in the guide "100 Practical Applications and Use Cases for Generative Artificial Intelligence in the Media."

Academic studies have defined AI in various ways. For instance, Noir (2023) defines AI as "intelligent computing," characterized by programs that can sense, think, learn, act, and adapt in ways akin to human abilities. Noir notes that AI systems improve autonomously from collected information, concentrating on enhanced thinking and data analysis. Significantly, she underscores that AI's primary role is to augment human capabilities, not to replace them. In 2021, Taeihagh argued that AI is transforming social interactions and commercial transactions, shaping modern society significantly. He pointed out that the potential of AI to match or exceed human intelligence in complex problem-solving underscores the need for a deep understanding and management of its risks. Taeihagh also highlighted AI's socioeconomic advantages, such as improved safety, greater autonomy, enhanced mobility for the elderly and disabled, and increased efficiency and quality in product and service delivery. Nevertheless, he warned that the evolution of AI systems makes them riskier and more interconnected with other intelligent devices and systems, necessitating a robust global governance framework, especially in areas like autonomous weaponry, transportation, and healthcare.

Moreover, De-Lima-Santos and Wilson (2022) discuss the advanced applications of AI in news media, focusing on the roles of machine learning for public interaction and computer vision for content management. They also emphasize the limited use of natural language processing (NLP) models and the challenges of overcoming linguistic barriers in this sector. Also, Taeihagh (2021) discusses AI's transformative influence on social transactions, enhancing autonomy and safety, especially for vulnerable groups like the elderly and disabled, but he warns of the escalating risks tied to the interconnected nature of AI systems, advocating for a global governance framework.

Within the field of PR, many studies have discussed the role and relationship of AI to the specific operations in this field, such as using AI tools in content creation, sentiment analysis, and real-time data tracking. However, to be widely adopted, AI tools must be perceived as user-friendly and beneficial in terms of productivity enhancement. For instance, Prowly Magazine's (2021) discussion on AI in PR delineates both the technology's potential and the ethical considerations it engenders. The discussion also accentuates the necessity of ethical frameworks to navigate AI's benefits and challenges within PR, underscoring a future where AI and human creativity coalesce in PR practices. The USC Annenberg Relevance Report (2024) provides forward-looking insights into AI's imprint on the PR industry, illustrating an industry on the cusp of technological transformation. It heralds a paradigm shift towards AI integration, spotlighting the critical need for PR professionals to adapt to this new technological era. Additionally, O'Keefe and Young (2020) and Gregory and Hinton (2021) critically explore AI's ethical dimensions within PR, calling for a reasonable balance between technological advancements and ethical imperatives. Their works advocate for ethical guidelines that ensure AI's responsible use in PR. Zuiderwijk et al.'s (2021) study provides valuable insights into AI's profound impact on public governance. It emphasizes the need for robust data governance, effective impact assessment techniques, dependable AI systems, and governance mechanisms tailored to AI's unique challenges in the public sector. These findings offer a comprehensive roadmap for future research and policy development in this dynamic and evolving field. Guzman and Lewis (2019) also expand the discourse by critiquing traditional communication paradigms in the face of AI's burgeoning interactions with humanity. Their research illuminates

AI's nuanced operational, relational, and metaphysical dimensions within communicative technologies, advocating for a theoretical engagement that fully grasps AI's evolving communicative roles.

Medaglia, Gil-Garcia, and Pardo's (2023) study is a valuable resource in Government Communication and AI. Their meticulous examination of existing research provides insights into the evolving role of AI in government and the associated challenges and opportunities. Their study reinforces the significance of responsible AI governance and ethical considerations in shaping the future landscape of AI applications within government contexts. Moreover, Merhej (2021) addresses the adoption of artificial intelligence in governmental media offices within the MENA region. The analysis presents in-depth information on the factors contributing to AI integration and its outcomes. It also addresses the peculiarities of such offices' operations in light of AI-induced challenges. In general, the research conducted by Merhej deepens the appreciation of the nature of the potential and limitations of the technology under consideration in this specific context. Also, Madan and Ashok (2023) examine AI adoption and diffusion in public administration. One of the central tenets of their study is recognizing the paramount importance of data governance maturity in effectively addressing the ethical dilemmas surrounding AI adoption. Among the key findings unearthed by this research are the burgeoning momentum of AI adoption and diffusion in public administration, coupled with the persistent presence of ethnic tensions related to fairness, transparency, privacy, and human rights. Additionally, their study spotlights a notable gap in the existing literature, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced understanding of the contextual and processual aspects of AI adoption and diffusion within public administration. Finally, Maalla (2021) insists that a pressing demand exists in the contemporary public sector landscape for heightened efficiency, effectiveness, and agility in response to the ever-evolving economic and social dynamics. This study embarks on an exploratory journey guided by a hypothesis that posits the feasibility of integrating artificial intelligence within the public sector. Maalla's (2021) work serves as a crucial resource for government leaders, policymakers, and researchers seeking a comprehensive understanding of the pivotal role that AI can play in modernizing government administrations and enhancing their responsiveness to the evolving needs of society.

In summary, the public relations sector has significant potential to benefit from advancing AI, given the widespread adoption of AI technologies across various industries, including technologies related to facial recognition, data analytics, and automated customer services. This is why the UAE Ministry of Cabinet Affairs (2023) has developed a framework to evaluate AI maturity in government services, categorizing adoption levels into five stages: Explorer, Experimenter, Practitioner, Professional, and Transformer. The Explorer stage involves understanding AI's potential and evaluating available tools. Experimenters move further by piloting AI solutions tailored to their organization's needs. Practitioners identify specific AI applications and opportunities suited to their operations. At the highest level, Transformers leads the integration of AI into their organizations, implementing innovative solutions that enhance functionality and efficiency. The AI framework focuses on several dimensions, including data accessibility and quality, enabling organizations to access essential data and build repositories. One of the most important dimensions concerns people, as it concerns the skills necessary to benefit from AI. Additionally, it is crucial to consider whether governmental organizations have plans to attract the required digital talent. Finally, it is worth noting that this framework seems to expand on Rogers' (2003) model that divides adopters of innovations into

five groups: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. Non-adopters are sometimes added as a sixth category.

3. Theoretical framework – adopting technology in a “community of practice”

Several studies approach the topic of AI integration theoretically from the usual framework of technology adoption applying different models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989), Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) developed by Rogers (2003), the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) developed by Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990), the Unified Theory of Acceptance, Use of Technology (UTAUT), developed by Venkatesh et al. (2003) and Intelligent Information Technology (IIT), developed by Park et al. (2022). Each of these models provides unique insights into the motivations, conditions, and challenges associated with AI adoption, forming a robust foundation for understanding its role in UAE media offices, which also include other determinants such as those mentioned by Marikyan and Papagiannidis (2023): performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. The aim is to highlight the importance of understanding how people accept and use technology, which has significant theoretical and practical implications.

In this study, we combine some of the above factors related to technology acceptance with the theory of “community of practice” in that it regards the UAE media offices as a form of a community of practice. Technology encompasses three interconnected dimensions: artifacts, tools, skills and practices, and organizational structures (Coupaye, 2022); combined, these dimensions define a specific community of practice. The idea of a “community of practice” originated in research on situated learning, and how newcomers in a group gradually adopt its practices, roles, and identity. At first, individuals may engage in minor, peripheral activities within the group, but over time, their involvement deepens as they take on central roles and fully integrate into the community’s core practices (Hoadley, 2012).

Donaldson (2020) introduces the concept of a Digitally Enhanced Community of Practice (DECoP), which is defined by several interrelated attributes that foster collaboration, growth, and meaningful engagement. At its core, a DECoP is guided by an inspiring philosophy that motivates its members and is often clearly articulated and showcased on the community’s platform. Shared goals are vital for establishing the community’s purpose, as they should address common concerns while encompassing diverse perspectives, ensuring that the DECoP’s design aligns with its overarching objectives. A distinguishing feature of a DECoP is its capacity for evolution, adapting to its members’ changing needs and interests. This adaptability is rooted in the community’s autonomy, allowing shared goals and an evolving focus to develop organically rather than through external imposition. Collaboration is central to a DECoP’s activities. Finally, organizational sponsorship supports DECoPs, representing the community’s identity and significance, rather than merely providing logistical or financial assistance.

Integrating technology adoption theories with the concept of community of practice provides a novel theoretical framework to understand how PR practitioners adopt and integrate digital tools into their professional environments. Models explaining the acceptance of technology tend to focus on perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, aligning with how a community of practice facilitates knowledge sharing and collaborative problem-solving, allowing members to assess the practicality and benefits of new technologies within a

supportive environment. Moreover, such models emphasize the role of communication and social networks in spreading new ideas, a process inherent to a community of practice where early adopters within the group can act as influencers, demonstrating the value of innovative technologies and encouraging adoption among peers. Moreover, they emphasize social influence and facilitating conditions, which are central to the community of practice. Within these communities, practitioners are exposed to peer endorsements and shared experiences that can reduce uncertainty and foster a supportive environment for technology adoption. Integrating factors mentioned in such models with the community of practice concept helps capture the dynamic interplay between technology adoption and professional collaboration and provides actionable insights for fostering digital transformation among PR practitioners. The community provides ongoing support, reinforcing members' confidence and commitment to integrating new technologies into their practices.

This study explores how AI tools are employed to enhance government communication, both from practical and ethical standards, given the federal nature of the UAE government and the potential differences among media offices. Thus, this study looks at the broader picture of AI implementation and how it affects services such as efficiency in government dissemination of information and public participation. It will then examine the room for growth in AI communication for the government.

4. Methodology

The article adopts a qualitative research design to investigate the role of AI in UAE government media offices, specifically focusing on the use of AI by media officers to improve public services, its advantages and disadvantages, and ethical concerns. This study utilizes the interpretive approach to explore the extent of incorporating AI in government communication.

It is important to note that each government media office (GMO) is a department within the government in a particular emirate responsible for managing media relations and communication on behalf of the government. They are typically tasked with representing the government's vision and news to local, regional, and international media outlets, building positive relationships with media organizations, managing media crises, and disseminating government-related news in collaboration with local government agencies. GMOs may also manage the government's social media channels, implement strategic communication plans, and serve as an interactive platform for government entities and the media to access news from various sectors. The role of GMOs is generally aligned with the overall media policy and regulations of the respective country or region. In general, they provide a mix of PR and media services.

The principal data collection technique is semi-structured interviews with media officers from all seven emirates of the UAE. This technique allows an in-depth insight into how media officers understand the role and use of AI in their daily work, as well as their view of the challenges, and ethical issues related to this technology. In total, six interviews were conducted to have a fair understanding of the geographical media scene; the interviews covered five emirates (Dubai, Sharjah, Al Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, in addition to the federal government media office and the country's main news agency (WAM). Table 1 gives an overview of all interviews conducted.

Table 1, overview of participants

Interviewee	Organization	Interview date	Gender	Cumulative years of experience
Participant 1	Sharjah Media Office (1 interview)	November 2023	Female	12
Participant 2	Fujairah Media Office (1 interview)	November 2023	Male	31
Participant 3	Ras Al Khaimah Media Office (1 interview)	March 2024	Female	29
Participant 4	Dubai Media Office (1 interview)	March 2024	Female	23
Participant 5	UAE Government Media Office (1 interview)	August 2024	Female	14
Participant 6	Emirates News Agency/WAM (1 interview)	August 2024	Male	10

The interviews were conducted in Arabic, between November 2023 and August 2024. They were then transcribed and analyzed thematically (Ruslin et al., 2022). Given the limited number of interviews, the analysis was done manually, with both researchers examining each script twice. The main themes were the ambivalent attitudes toward AI technology, the limitations of this technology, and the hierarchy in implementing AI technology across the various media offices, with some offices, especially in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, spearheading this implementation process in contrast to other smaller emirates such as Al Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah. An interview guide was developed focusing on the following themes:

- Familiarity with AI
- The operational impact of AI
- Benefits accruing to its adoption
- Potential uses of AI in government communications
- Limitations of AI use vs its benefits
- Ethical concerns
- Best practices in implementing AI technologies in government communication.

It is worth noting that the authors obtained ethical approval from their academic institution before conducting this study. All participants were informed about the purpose of the research and were given consent forms to confirm their voluntary participation.

5. Findings

5.1 Ambivalent attitudes in implementing AI technology

In all media offices, communication professionals accept implementing AI to improve communications strategies, enhance content creation processes, and effectively engage audiences. The results show that media practitioners in the UAE government who operate in different emirates consider AI technology beneficial for improving government communication and consider its potential use in content creation and audience engagement. On the other hand, they still appreciate that machines cannot replace the need for human beings to ensure the relevance and precision of information dissemination.

For instance, Participant (1) is very optimistic about using technology, especially artificial intelligence, to improve government operations. She cites initiatives such as the training camp for artificial intelligence and contests that aim to create AI awareness, especially among youngsters who prove their trust in the future of AI. She is confident that applications like the Smart Media Platform will make publishing easier, control the spread of information, and help manage the organization. This positivity can be seen in their efforts to push for the development of AI within the office for better content creation, faster response time, and improved accountability. In this context, Participant (1) states, "As a media office, we always try to keep pace with modern technology in all fields that serve the communication and media system." Furthermore, she says, "We focus on developing the skill of dealing with specialized artificial intelligence applications, raising performance, and improving communication services...The media office is interested in the use of artificial intelligence through this platform."

Nonetheless, Participant (1) acknowledges that the use of AI tools in daily tasks was still limited because employees were not familiar with or skilled in the tools. This arises from a wider challenge, which is that AI in public relations is quite new and requires practical experience. Participant (2) concurs with this view, adding that excessive employee unavailability to training hinders the utilization of AI. Using these technologies is not easy as it requires specialized knowledge. As such, the office only employs AI for very specific and controlled segments of its work and not as part of the overall integration within media strategy. This points to an urgent gap that requires a holistic approach to media education with regard to AI in all capabilities within media offices to avoid misuse and abuse of this technology.

Still, Participant (2) accepts AI as an innovative asset and thinks this invention will be inevitable for future effectiveness and strategic communication. He advocates for AI in allocating media proprietary content into directed mediums as a positive way of improving the dissemination of information to the target subject. He accepts AI can help disseminate media messages at a faster rate and for an extensive audience, and he reaffirms his practicality in the applicability of AI in the context of media. In relation to this idea, Participant (2) states that,

Artificial intelligence is a new vision for humanity to accomplish projects that humans seem unable to accomplish at maximum speed...In the end, artificial intelligence will not be a content owner or content maker, but it will help us spread news quickly and widely...We must rely on artificial intelligence because it is an existing mechanism, just like the Internet or email.

Participant (3) agrees that AI will help improve working efficiency and communication. For instance, her office employs two types of artificial intelligence in editing, news monitoring, and response systems, as they also use AI as a tool for improving audience interaction and access through interaction features such as chatbots. AI is, therefore, seen as one that enhances governance. Participant (3) says,

Artificial intelligence can speed up the services provided...in a smarter way that enables the user or stakeholder to inquire and obtain accurate responses...We digitally provide all services in our emirate's government...Artificial intelligence will certainly change the method of communication in a way that reduces the time of providing the service and makes the information ready at the time of request.

On the other hand, Participant (5) affirms her office's use of AI as an essential tool that helps to reduce the time and costs incurred when producing content and engaging in creative processes. She applauds two AI programs—ChatGPT and Midjourney because they aid in content creation, translation, and graphic designing, which he considers to be an improvement in terms of efficiency and innovation. She notes that AI assists in accomplishing various media tasks and enhancing individual creativity. Thus, there is a rather strong acceptance of the technology and an optimistic emotional perception about it when applied in the media of government.... It is clear that this is the case emotionally regarding AI in government media. Participant (5) notes that,

Artificial intelligence saves time and effort and provides different options in content creation, translation, and development of some visual materials...AI should be viewed as a major tool that facilitates the process of using government communication applications in general...Our team welcomes any application or program that saves them effort and time.

Participant (6) is firm that 'AI is the future of media' – citing the role of AI in WAM Intelligent technology, which supports content production, video editing, and news outbox pipelines. For him, AI technology is one of the appendages that the UAE strategy to be number one in the AI race has put in place because of its capability to save time and enhance productivity. There is no way his resolved position could be misplaced since he strongly believes that AI can transform relationships and media paradigms, in particular, in a very dynamic context and media. In this regard, Participant (6) mentions that

Artificial intelligence is part of our daily work, and it facilitates and organizes work without compromising strategic media messages...We are talking about using artificial intelligence to analyze the audience and study their expectations... Artificial intelligence has facilitated the process of collecting and editing data, saving time and effort.

In summary, while all participants embrace the use of AI, there are variations in implementing AI technology in their daily tasks, with some offices, like Dubai, faring better than others. Moreover, they all agree on some limitations of AI, which are discussed in the following section.

5.2 The AI limitations

Despite the benefits of introducing AI in UAE government media offices, participants highlight several limitations of this technology with regard to ethical, training, and privacy issues, presenting some constraints that cannot be overlooked. For them, addressing these limitations requires an integrated approach combining human oversight in monitoring algorithms, novel approaches to training, and regulating laws in order to promote the ethical integration of AI, safeguard the privacy of data, and prepare the workforce, thereby enabling government media campaigns to tap into the potential of artificial intelligence responsibly and efficiently.

The issue of ethics in using AI is a critical constraint experienced in all media offices across the government of the UAE. This is because it has ethical implications when it comes to misinformation, misuse of AI content, and the issue of dependency on data. For example, Participant (4) highlights the potential of writing using AI, which can be harmful and cause great concern among the public and even the trust between countries. This danger is even greater when AI output or content does not fit the organization's objectives, thereby requiring human intervention to prevent ethical violations.

Data protection and confidentiality principles pose a major challenge within the AI framework of the media houses in the UAE. Participant (3) highlights that the information is private since, with any AI application, a compromise is reached where large amounts of learning data are used, a portion of which is deemed sensitive. This presents a danger of using the technology since it is difficult to prevent the system from wanting to work with data that has been reserved and under sealed circumstances. Protecting data against unauthorized access or usage requires an emphasis on appropriate measures for networks and systems. Participant (4) is equally keen on the need for privacy because of the nature of the information that exposes to risks regarding the ruling family in Dubai, and that is why her office encourages extreme caution in data management, supporting legal action in the form of regulation to fit AI with fulfilling the most restrictive legislation on privacy. In this respect, the Ministry of AI in the UAE intends to establish a regulatory framework, but efficient enforcement is still required to address data security concerns and ensure that AI remains in harmony with the nation's core principles.

Another aspect that limits the use of AI in media offices in the UAE is the legal aspect. Offices have begun to push for some rules that will govern the application of Artificial Intelligence in communicating with the public, especially on matters revolving around data protection, intellectual property rights, and ethical concerns. Participant (1), for example, argues that for AI technology, there is a need for privacy safeguards to address issues of data misuse. Not only would such a structure promote ethical compliance in the use of AI technologies, but it would also minimize issues related to the careless handling of information and infringement of copyrights. That is why the first three participants highlight the need for a legally enforceable framework that would foster sustained and safe public communication through AI technology by ensuring that activities carried out using AI systems are within the provisions of the law and the specific national requirements.

Moreover, according to Participant (6), there is considerable reliance on the Ministry of Artificial Intelligence guidelines, which, although useful, are not all relevant to government media work. This missing focus creates a scenario for media offices where some aspects of the

use of AI, including security measures and the ethics around content generation, have to be self-governed and initiated individually by each media office. Participant (6) also voiced a concern regarding the need for protective measures in the law concerning data management aspects when applying AI. Given the type of sensitive information that various media offices deal with, especially government press releases and audio-visual libraries, there are fears of how those possessing it could manipulate data and how AI may leak such data.

In summary, all media offices agree that there should be human control in using AI to achieve any set goals and objectives. They believe that with proper oversight, the content generated using AI will be content-relevant and conform to the organization's culture and values. In this instance, Participant (1), as an example, draws attention to the importance of content creation and decision-making human monitoring to avoid ethical and tactical discrepancies. Thus, human mediation is mandatory in evaluating and improving AI content based on judgment of the context and the organization's position regarding such content. As Participant (3) and Participant (6) noted that, in their media offices, people need to check the work done by AI due to the inability of AI to comprehend the complex and multifaceted rules associated with content writing. As such, PR and communication professionals working in these media offices should supplement the work delivered by AI applications to ensure it aligns with the governmental agencies' standards; for instance, one media officer remarked that most, if not all, writings edited by AI needs some form of editing to ensure it aligns with the UAE culture.

5.3 The (in)visible hierarchy in implementing AI technology

Adopting AI in government media offices across the UAE reflects varied paces and strategic focuses, with each emirate adapting AI technologies to its specific goals, infrastructure, and public engagement needs. This disparity highlights how factors within technology acceptance such as perceived ease of use, usefulness, and organizational readiness, influence the pace and depth of AI integration.

For instance, Participant (4) from the Dubai Media office believes there is no effective communication for the government without AI. Some reasons include content writing, aesthetics, and reaching out to various audiences. As Participant (4) put it,

We desperately need to use AI to communicate better and will need it even more in the future...We use artificial intelligence in the creative aspect of design, video production, and creative writing or content writing...It is not a matter of whether we need it or not; rather, it has become a necessity.

This is despite the fact that the participant's office in Dubai exhibits an advanced case of the use of AI in the archiving and translation of content and even the shooting of videos, which demonstrates the personnel's acceptance of AI as a tool for work and also a tool for creativity. In fact, the Dubai media office, where Participant (4) is based, has positioned itself as a leading adopter of AI, establishing comprehensive frameworks to incorporate AI in various public service areas. His team demonstrates advanced AI applications, such as virtual broadcasters and social media content monitoring, to maintain an international reputation for innovation. The team's Digital initiative underscores a proactive stance on digital transformation, ensuring AI is embedded across communication channels to improve engagement and efficiency. As such, the Dubai office recognizes the perceived usefulness and organizational readiness to

leverage AI's full capabilities, further solidifying Dubai's role as an innovator in media technologies.

Abu Dhabi also incorporates AI significantly but follows a different approach focused on streamlining government functions and aligning with national objectives. Abu Dhabi's AI initiatives focus on personalized content and data-driven insights to enhance service delivery but with a balanced view of AI's role, emphasizing ethical considerations and public trust. Abu Dhabi's commitment is evident in its structured framework for digital governance, which integrates AI to centralize government services, emphasizing efficiency without compromising transparency and accessibility.

In contrast, other participants, like Participant (2) and Participant (3), adopt AI at a more measured pace, concentrating on data privacy, ethical considerations, and specific operational benefits. These media offices recognize AI's utility in enhancing communication but emphasize human oversight and caution in automating public interactions. This approach aligns with the notion of perceived ease of use, with media offices ensuring that AI remains accessible and non-intrusive. Participant (2) Media Office, for instance, employs AI for tasks like drone-controlled environmental monitoring but retains human control for decision-making, reflecting a careful balance between automation and human judgment. Likewise, Participant (1) acknowledges that her office lags behind in implementing AI tools systematically although she affirms the office's strategy to engage with young audiences, in particular,

Although we do not currently use AI directly in our communication channels or in interactions with the media, internal agencies, or other government institutions... we are working to promote this technology... Our focus is on enhancing youth's engagement with this technology, not as a practical application but as a means of raising awareness and encouraging them to create their own applications. So we want to teach them about these technologies and their potential uses.

Thus, the varying paces and approaches toward AI adoption across UAE media offices underscore the importance of considering broader implications when exploring technology integration across diverse environments. Digital technologies can disrupt established business practices and markets, fostering innovation and efficiency. However, these disruptions can also bring adverse effects, particularly by contributing to the emergence of new digital divides.

The above highlights a divide among the community of practice, which consists of PR professionals staffing the various media offices. It presents a significant challenge within the context of technology acceptance, as it may lead to disparities between those who invest in training and skill development and those who do not. This gap emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and upskilling in the digital age. Unlike earlier models of technology adoption, which may have focused narrowly on acquiring specific skills, the current landscape necessitates a more comprehensive approach. This finding reflects a dissonance between the top-level AI strategists, which is the cabinet, and the middle-level leadership of media professionals responsible for implementing such strategies in their daily work. The issue is not that these professionals are opposed to AI technology; on the contrary, they are enthusiastic about its inevitable role in the UAE's future. However, differences exist in the implementation of AI, as each media office develops its own sub-community of practice and progresses at

varying rates compared to others. Furthermore, there appears to be a competitive dynamic among these media offices, with the Dubai media office and the Abu Dhabi media office taking the lead in digital transformation to underscore the significance of their respective emirates within the UAE.

Digital technologies can only be effectively integrated into the workforce through a significant cultural shift within organizations. This shift involves introducing new tools and changing employees' daily practices, attitudes, and behaviors. Professionals generally have a positive perception of AI technology, which aligns with the core principles of the Technology Acceptance Model, allowing leadership to establish clear milestones and strategies for AI adoption. By doing so, organizations can leverage this existing acceptance to drive digital transformation further. Leadership plays a pivotal role in guiding the organization through the stages of technology adoption, ensuring that the benefits of AI and other digital tools are fully realized. This underscores the significance of leadership in this digital age, as it is about introducing new tools and overseeing the broader cultural and organizational changes that come with technological advancements.

6. Conclusion

The above analysis highlights that several media offices do not operate as a unified community of practice. This is evidenced by their differing perceptions of AI's role in their work, as well as their delay in developing tailored strategies that meet their individual needs. Moreover, they tend to passively receive information and documents from government offices without establishing clear implementation milestones. Most significantly, there is a lack of collaboration among the media offices, and the organizational support necessary to define and validate the community's identity remains unclear.

This study contributes to understanding AI integration in UAE government media offices by highlighting different emirates' varied attitudes, challenges, and strategic approaches. By closely examining AI's roles, benefits, and limitations, this research offers insights into how each emirate in the UAE's federal system adopts AI to support government communication, aligning with the UAE's commitment to digital transformation in public administration. The study also highlights how AI is perceived as a complementary tool that enhances communication efforts while requiring human oversight and ethical considerations. Findings reveal that AI is perceived as a valuable asset for improving efficiency, content creation, and data-driven insights, but with varying acceptance and implementation speed across emirates.

Moving forward, there is a clear need for ongoing training and skill development to support the sustainable integration of AI. This study suggests that to maximize the benefits of AI, UAE government media offices should invest in comprehensive training programs that equip employees with the skills needed to manage AI applications responsibly and effectively. Additionally, addressing data privacy and ethical standards will become increasingly important as technology evolves.

All media offices should develop a framework highlighting the critical components that should be integrated into their AI strategies, such as the one developed by Berryhill et al. (2019). To maximize the effectiveness of an AI strategy, continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential, and such an ongoing process allows policymakers to maintain a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the rapidly evolving AI landscape, including

technological advancements, ethical considerations, and regulatory challenges. Rather than adhering to a rigid, linear approach, it is also advisable to develop these components concurrently, as such a flexible method facilitates the exploration of innovative solutions while fostering collaboration among various stakeholders. Finally, the governmental media offices can potentially set benchmarks for ethical and effective AI use in public communication, ultimately supporting national objectives for innovation and transparency in governance.

Further research could explore the long-term effects of AI on government communication strategies and how these technologies influence public perception of transparency and trust in government. Comparative studies across other sectors or regions within the UAE or internationally could deepen the understanding of AI's role in public administration and its socio-cultural impacts on communication practices. Moreover, future studies can compare government communication in federal systems like the UAE and how it may differ cross-culturally, for instance, in other federal systems like Germany, Belgium, or the USA.

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