AI-Mediated Communication in Academic Organizations: Issues and Directions

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ABSTRACT

Central to successful organizational relations and operations among academic organizations is effective communication, recently being reshaped by Artificial Intelligence (AI). While proven advantages of the technology are widely documented in the fields of business, information technology, engineering, and medicine, its potentials within academic environments, where strong critical thinking and human connection are hallmarks of organizational success, remains understudied. Aiming to analyze AI for communications among academic organizations, this quantitative study surveyed 50 academic and administrative managers from various colleges and universities in Calabarzon, the Philippines' most populous region as of 2020 (Balita 2023), situated in the southern section of its largest island. It was found that respondents use communication channels, specifically collaboration and productivity software and products with built-in AI features. Informed by the General Systems Theory, the Organizational Information Theory (von Bertalanffy 1986; Weick 1993 in West and Turner 2012, 294), and Hancock, Naaman, and Levy's (2020) AI-mediated communication (AI-MC) framework, the study concludes that AI use among academic organizations is assistive in nature and expedites communication management, specifically message creation and distribution. While deemed promising, AI use in examined organizations poses ethical and functional issues such as inaccessibility and user inexperience, content bias and inaccuracy, constrained capacity to nurture human connection, and data privacy risks. Respondents recommend capacity building efforts and policy implementation to manage said issues and maximize AI use without compromising human agency.

Keywords: academic organizations, AI-mediated communication (AI-MC), artificial intelligence (AI), communication management, organizational communication

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI), initially just a "thought" among philosophers, scientists, and mathematicians was first coined in the 1950s (Smith 2006, 4) and began to flourish in the 1970s with the so-called "expert systems," a technology designed to "mimic human expertise in specific domains" (Filimowicz 2023). Such advancement began with computers being able to store larger amounts of data to its now more popular capacity—the ability to perform tasks and solve highly complex problems that used to necessitate human intelligence (Anyoha 2017). Designed to simulate human thinking, albeit powered by non-organic networks and algorithmic systems, AI has recently been able to perform more sophisticated functions such as reading, writing, speaking, interpreting, and creating, among others. Such capacities enable AI to gain traction among various markets and groups—among which are academic organizations.

AI use within academic environments is met with both optimism and concern. On the one hand, its ability to revolutionize communication and research and enhance productivity proves useful in today's knowledge economy (Esplugas 2024, 819); on the other hand, overdependence on it raises concern, especially among academic environments, with fear that it may curtail criticality, creativity, and integrity (Fontanilla et al., 2023, 29). This paper explores this dichotomous nature of AI as it examines how the technology is used for communication among academic organizations.

At the core of successful organizations is effective communication. The Oxford dictionary (2023) defines communication as the activity or process of expressing and conveying ideas and feelings. Communication ensures proper transfer and management of information between and among internal and external audiences, thus enhancing engagement and connection. It helps clarify and reinforce an organization's mission and vision along with strategies placed to achieve them, ultimately motivating employees to effect organizational success (Juneja 2015).

One of the lenses through which organizational communication can be investigated is from a systems perspective, which posits organizations as a whole that is made up of systems. This perspective supports the existence of complex patterns of interactions among subsystems and claims that in order to understand the entire system and propel it to realize its purpose, such interactions should be understood. Thus, sharp focus is given on explicitly knowing and addressing problems of relationships, structure, and connections among organizational subsystems. Managing communications facilitates this as it reduces structural ambiguities, binding organizational subsystems together, enabling order, internal stability, and optimum performance (Almaney 1974; West and Turner 2021, 294). Such knowledge has given rise to a need for implementing well-designed communication management strategies, recently being reshaped by AI.

In essence, communication management pertains to the special attention given to identifying channels of communication within or among organizations to reach outcomes. Such channels are strategically selected depending on the nature of information or knowledge to be shared and with whom. Carefully planning, managing, and monitoring the flow of communication keep members of an organization informed and engaged in team decisions and efforts towards achieving short-term and long-term goals (Ditlevsen and Johansen 2019, 6). Revolutionizing communication channels

that used to be limited to interpersonal and traditional modes is AI—its potential for improving, disrupting, or obstructing organizational communication systems merits investigation.

AI-mediated communication (AI-MC), in its capacity to modify, augment, or generate messages (Hancock, Naaman, & Levy 2020, 89) offers convenience; history suggests that technology has largely benefited mankind. However, overreliance on automation (and everything that is yet to become of AI) significantly places the future of human agency in question. Modern AI's proven benefits are widely documented in the fields of engineering, information technology, medicine, and business; little is said, however, about its application in communications, specifically within academic environments, where critical thinking and human connection remain hallmarks of organizational success.

This study investigates the nature and functions of AI as a tool for communication among academic organizations. It centers on the overarching research question "How is AI used for communication among Calabarzon higher education institutions (HEIs)?" Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What communicative functions utilize AI among Calabarzon higher education institutions (HEIs)?
2. What are Calabarzon HEI managers' general view of AI-mediated communication (AI-MC) and organizational performance?
3. What AI-MC related issues are observed by Calabarzon HEI managers?
4. How do managers of Calabarzon HEIs suggest resolving these issues?

Consequently, it seeks to reach the following research objectives:

1. Determine communicative functions that utilize AI among Calabarzon higher education institutions (HEIs);
2. Discuss general view of AI-mediated communication (AI-MC) and organizational performance among Calabarzon HEIs;
3. Enumerate issues on AI-mediated communication (AI-MC) observed by Calabarzon HEI managers; and
4. Chart how managers of Calabarzon HEIs suggest resolving these issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication in Organizations

Organizations, Miller (2012) writes, are entities possessing five critical features—the "existence of a social collectivity, organizational and individual goals, coordinating activity, organizational structure, and the embedding of the organization within an environment of other organizations" (11–12). Organizations create and provide products and services to satisfy human needs, driving socio-economic growth. Driving efficient work systems towards achieving organizational goals is

effective communication. Wrench, Carter, and Ward (2015) outline central ideas on how communication propels organizational success:

1. Effective communication enables the classification of information or knowledge to be shared and which channels should be used for optimum results.
2. It establishes an organization's identity and maps out ways it can be effectively practiced.
3. It reinforces an organization's mission and vision, keeping employees and key stakeholders informed and involved in various strategies put in place to achieve these.
4. It outlines an organization's priorities, guiding managers on expediting resources.
5. It clarifies functions expected of employees, helping them gauge whether these are met.
6. It influences employee behaviors towards themselves, their colleagues, their stakeholders, and the organization itself, helping them align commitment and performance with expected outcomes.
7. It provides critical information used for organizational decision-making and streamlining processes.
8. It identifies internal and external risks and threats, informing organizations on how best to cope.
9. It fosters human connection, thereby strengthening members' sense of teamwork, shared ownership, and accountability.
10. It allows organizations to monitor and evaluate current practices and processes properly, ultimately effecting better outcomes.

Communication, Millller (2012) continues to write, goes beyond simply transmitting messages from senders to receivers; it also concerns itself with the many ways information must flow and foster meaning within the environment it is situated in. Communication, with the help of technologies, allow for the construction of intricate networks that enable organizations to connect with others and reach its goals (12). Organizations should therefore pay close attention to their strategies of creating, distribution, monitoring, and evaluation of information.

Organizational Communication Theories

Several communication theories can be observed among organizations. The interest of this study is specifically on the General Systems Theory and the Organizational Information Theory (von Bertalanffy (1986) and Weick (1993) in West and Turner (2012, 294). Viewing organizations as systems entails an assemblage of processes integrated to form a unified, organized whole. Harmonizing the systems subsumed within this whole, as suggested by Weick, is situating organizations within information environments. This means understanding organizations within the broader landscape of data, information networks and flows, and knowledge management (Miller 2012, 68–70).

Such a perspective likewise opines effective communication management practices to decrease equivocality or uncertainties among subsystems, thus enhancing productivity. Attention is focused

on the interconnected nature of organizational systems and organizational sensemaking, which in part involves utilizing technologies.

Communication Management

Good managers focus on implementing effective communication management strategies in place (Goudar 2010, 2). This ensures efficient systems for storing, distributing, and controlling information, which allows for strategic positioning among organizations, leveraging the power of information and responding effectively to equivocality or change. Using technology and a systems perspective enables efficient generation of data and insights that inform managers of the impact of communication across networks in the organization. Communication management is organized into three broad categories: planning and design; distribution and storage; and monitoring and evaluation (Cote 2023; Knowledgehut Solutions, Ltd., 2023).

Planning and Design are concerned with identifying information that an organization needs to share, with whom, and with what channels. They involve analyzing stakeholder needs and preferences and accordingly designing organizational messages in alignment with these. Message receivers may be internal or external stakeholders. Understanding stakeholder background offers insight on how best to package or design information.

Distribution and Storage covers modes of message sharing and documentation using various communication channels. Upon learning stakeholders' needs, preferences, and behaviors, an organization should then decide on how information should reach them. Critical is outlining strategic outcomes, to determine which channels would work best to achieve these. Depending on the nature of the information to be shared, organizations may explore various channels. For internal audiences, communication may be relayed through the following formats: digital or printed newsletters, magazines, or brochures; online/offline, formal/ informal, individual/group meetings with employees; and SMS messaging. For external audiences, communication may be facilitated through press/media releases; social media postings (social media posters, audio cards, videos, etc.); websites; and online/offline, formal/ informal, individual/group meetings with external stakeholders.

Monitoring and Evaluation involve collecting information on stakeholder behaviors on communication strategies in place (feedback mechanisms, engagement surveys, and the like). Feedback informs organizations on areas for improving systems and processes, allowing managers control towards more efficiently achieving their goals.

Technology in Organizations

When crafting plans, designing projects, and charting future directions for their organizations, managers often rely on facts and knowledge deduced from analyzing them. This process is often driven by communication in some form. Technology, especially digital technologies, significantly expedite communications among organizations at reduced costs (Ramey 2013).

Sarokin (2020), Henderson (2020), and Harris-Briggs (2023) raise some of the core benefits of using technology in organizational communications. First of these is automation and other workflow standardization processes that involve technology in expediting the completion of tasks

at shorter cycles. Another is remote work, which utilizes digital technologies that enable real-time conversations, file sharing, and task management regardless of physical space. Such examples of streamlining technology to automate tasks and enhance productivity and collaboration can lead to reduced costs. Moreover, sources write how technology enables real-time connection with various stakeholders, thus enhancing external relations and engagement. Such strategic approach can help expand organizations' reach, creating enormous opportunity and inspiring stronger brand recall and support.

AI and AI Models

AI use among academic organizations holds much potential as they position themselves within information environments. Leveraged strategically, the different types of AI and their unique features and capabilities help drive organizational success. Ang et al. (2023) forward three broad categories for artificial intelligence in terms of capability: narrow, general, and superintelligence (219–220).

Narrow intelligence, also called weak AI, is referred to as an AI system designed and trained for a narrow or single specific task (i.e., content generation, grammar and writing, email management, chatbot assistance, data and sentiment analysis, among others). Most AI tools and applications known today are classified under this category. General AI, also termed strong or deep AI, mimics human cognition and intelligence, thus (theoretically) possessing an ability to apply this intelligence in solving an array of problems. General AI is currently not yet fully realized. Meanwhile, superintelligence, purely theoretical as of this writing, is described as a software-based AI system that has "self-awareness," thus having an ability to surpass human intelligence (Mucci & Stryker 2023).

In addition, Smolic (2024) cites the six main subsets of AI: machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing, neural networks, robotics, and genetic algorithms. In terms of functionality, Garza-Ullowa (2024) offers two main categories, generative AI and predictive AI. Generative AI operates on computer algorithms to create or generate new content (text, photo, video, and other file formats). Predictive AI, on the other hand, uses smart computer algorithms that enable the prediction of future outcomes based on historical data (i.e., data forecasting, customer relationship management, etc.) (491–493).

AI-Mediated Communication (AI-MC)

Hancock, Naaman, & Levy (2020, building on Russell and Norvig 2010) define AI-mediated communication (AI-MC) as "[technology] mediated interpersonal communication in which an intelligent agent operates on behalf of a communicator by modifying, augmenting, or generating messages to accomplish communication goals" (90). This definition assumes AI as "computational systems that involve algorithms, machine learning methods, natural language processing, and other techniques that operate on behalf of an individual to improve a communication outcome" (90). As such, the authors characterize AI-MC as having the following dimensions:

1. *Magnitude* or the extent of changes AI enacts on messages (i.e., grammar or spelling check vs. full text generation);
2. *Media type* or the media (text, audio, video) in which AI operates (i.e., suggestive text vs. appearance modification in photo or video);
3. *Optimization goal* or the purpose for which AI is optimizing messages (i.e., to sound/appear professional, warm, authoritative, among others);
4. *Autonomy* or the extent of a sender's involvement or supervision on AI's message optimization (i.e., sender chooses from AI-suggested email responses vs. AI actually engaging in conversation with minimal input from the sender); and
5. *Role orientation* or the role AI operates on behalf of (i.e. the sender offering messages to enhance efficiency vs. receiver assessing a message's truthfulness or reliability).

While AI-mediated communication offers vast opportunities within academic environments, it also challenges the current dynamics of organizational communication with its capacity to augment and modify messaging, thus influencing individual or organizational presentation and public perception (Hancock, Naaman, & Levy (2020, 94).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. The study is quantitative in nature, given its overarching goal of describing AI use for communication management among higher education institutions in the Calabarzon region. Quantitative measurements emphasize objective measurements and the mathematical or statistical analysis of data derived from structured research instruments—in this case, a survey questionnaire (Babbie 2013, 187, 198, 272). The generation of numerical data to arrive at a generalized explanation for a particular phenomenon is captured using this approach (Chonody 2023).

Respondents of the Study. Tasked to oversee communications and operations among organizations, respondents for the study are managers and coordinators from HEIs in Calabarzon, the most populous region in the Philippines as of 2020 (Balita 2023). A total of 50 respondents selected through network sampling were surveyed. Network sampling is a type of non-probability sampling where a researcher taps his/her/their network for possible respondents. New respondents are sought from one or a few units, forming a sample (Aransiola 2023). Sample size is set to 50, considered sufficient for the Central Limit Theorem (CLT) to hold. CLT posits that the distribution of sample means approximates a normal distribution as the sample size is increased, regardless of the population's distribution. It considers sufficient a sample size of 30–50 to accurately describe or predict population characteristics (Ganti 2023).

Research Instrument. To collect data from the respondents, the study utilized a survey questionnaire consisting of four-point Likert-scale statements and open-ended questions. The Likert-scale is specifically useful for measuring respondent attitudes and beliefs. The questionnaire comprised sections that collected information on the respondents' profiles; their use of AI tools for managing communications; and issues encountered regarding AI use. The instrument was validated by experts in communication, statistics, and information technology.

Data Gathering Procedure. Upon harmonizing details of the research topic (focus, objectives, frameworks, scope, and significance), a survey questionnaire was designed by the researcher. Formal request letters were sent out to the researcher's professional network. Contacted were managers (directors, deans, chairs, and coordinators) from HEIs representatives of Calabarzon.

The formula used was:

$$\textit{Weighted mean} = \frac{\sum wx}{\sum w}$$

$$\textit{Weighted mean} = \frac{w(4)+w(3)+w(2)+w(1)}{\sum w}$$

$$\textit{Weighted mean} = \frac{\textit{Total weighted mean}}{\textit{Total number of respondents}}$$

Where:

Σ = *Sum*

W = *Weight*

X = *Value*

The weighted mean was interpreted using the verbal Likert scale below:

Weight/Scale	Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation
1	1.00 – 1.74	Strongly Agree
2	1.75 – 2.49	Agree
3	2.50 – 3.24	Disagree
4	3.25 – 4.00	Strongly Disagree

Pursuant to the Philippines's Data Privacy Act of 2012, managers who expressed willingness to participate as study respondents were presented with a consent form stipulating respondent confidentiality. Upon agreement, they were then asked to proceed with answering the study questionnaire.

Data Analysis. Information on the respondents' profiles were summarized using frequency counts and percentages. Collected data pertaining to AI use for communication among respondents' respective HEIs was analyzed by calculating the weighted mean of responses for each Likert-scale statement in the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profiles and Use of AI for Organizational Communication

Almost half (45%) of the respondents are from the age group 31–40, while the other half is distributed along the 21–30 and 41–50 age groups. People Management (2021) describes the 30s

as the average age of first-time managers. Thinking and performative skills characteristic of management and leadership (i.e., focus, information management, and multitasking, among others) also typically peak around a person's 30s (The University of California 2023). While openness to learning and mastering new technologies are more strongly linked with younger employees in organizations (Sundstrup et al. 2022, 1), keeping abreast with the latest technological trends to achieve organizational outcomes is expected of managers regardless of age (Laker 2023). Respondents' use of AI for communication within their organizations are summarized below:

Statement	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Our college/university uses AI for content creation (i.e., creating messages and templates for employee newsletters, social media content, etc.) and distribution (i.e., email, messaging, social media posting, among others).	2.46	Agree
Our college/university uses AI for conversation intelligence (i.e., email auto-draft, real-time meeting transcriptions or summaries, etc.).	2.7	Disagree
I personally use AI (i.e., AI features on SMS, email, social media, etc.) in communicating information with my superiors and subordinates.	2.2	Agree
Our college/university uses AI for streamlining processes (i.e., scheduling meetings, quality assurance scoring, faculty/employee evaluation, etc.).	2.75	Disagree
Our college/university uses AI that measure employee performance in perfect precision.	2.9	Disagree
Our college/university uses AI for improving customer service (i.e., support chatbots, feedback mechanisms, engagement surveys, etc.).	2.78	Disagree

Table 1. Communicative functions that utilize AI among Calabarzon higher education organizations (HEIs). Source: author.

Table 1 confirms respondents' personal use of AI for communicating with colleagues (2.2) and organizational use of AI for content creation and distribution (2.46). AI and built-in AI features of known collaboration and productivity software and products are claimed to be used in managing communications in their organizations. Meanwhile, they disagree with AI use for conversation intelligence (2.7) and streamlining processes (2.75), especially for quality assurance scoring and faculty/employee evaluation (2.9). This reflects low confidence in AI's capacity to measure employee performance in perfect precision. Disagreement (2.78) is likewise expressed by the majority in terms of using chatbots for customer service and engagement.

In composing messages or generating texts, respondents utilize built-in AI features of email and smart messaging: *smart compose* (a hybrid language generation model that offers wording suggestions when composing emails; and *smart reply* (similar with smart compose but presents short email responses as clickable options) (Chen et al. 2019, 1; Wenker 2023, 1). Fourteen (14) respondents also claim use of AI-powered applications Grammarly and Turnitin. Both apps are designed for writing assistance, able to check for originality and grammatical and mechanical errors in writing. Turnitin specifically estimates a work's similarity with existing online sources.

Moreover, nine (9) respondents claim personal—not institutional—use of the app ChatGPT (AI designed to process huge amounts of data and generate text). With its capacity for providing conversation-like responses to almost any query, the app ChatGPT has gained popularity among various users. The University of Central Arkansas (2023) lists ChatGPT's popular functionalities: the ability to answer questions in a variety of formats with precise stipulations, solve mathematical equations, process big data, translate between languages, debug and fix codes, write literary pieces, and even design marketing strategies. These very same functionalities, however, make the app's use questionable within academic environments, where the premium is placed on nurturing cognition, novelty, and criticality. Originality is specifically an area of concern since generative AI draws on existing data to create "new" content. Respondents, particularly managers for academics and research, are also keen on this issue, stating that while AI apps prove helpful for quick queries, generated content should still be verified to ensure message accuracy and appropriateness with intended outcomes.

In addition, social media platforms' built in AI features, specifically Facebook's text analysis and targeted advertising (powered by deep text and deep learning) are also explored by some respondents for communicating/content sharing and distribution with external audiences. Production of traditional and digital media publicity materials are enhanced by AI features of image generation applications and software. However, respondents claim cautious use of said platforms, since how they generate images and designs may be subject to issues on copyright and licensing.

Respondents also acknowledge AI's assistance in analyzing browser behavior and other data points, enabling it to offer suggestions on creating content and advertisements that strategically tap into their organizations' stakeholders' needs and interests. This, in turn, could spark potential areas for collaboration and enable increased visibility and favorable outcomes (van der Wilt 2023).

As for communications monitoring and evaluation, respondents share how data, normally in the form of results and feedback from engagement surveys, inform them of how best to strategize communication plans and strategies to achieve their targets. However, disagreement is expressed on the use of chatbots for stakeholder engagement. This may be attributed with what Zhou et al. (2023) write, that while chatbots are being utilized by some companies for their efficiency and cost-effectiveness, they often fail to foster empathy, negatively influencing customer experience.

In terms of Hancock, Naaman, and Levy's (2020) AI-MC framework, respondents' AI use for communication, while open and active, is limited to an assistive function. Proof of this is how respondents express disagreement on AI reliance for full-text automation in crafting emails and automated conversation analysis. Another is their disagreement with AI use for employee performance and evaluation (89). This aligns with Pletcher's (2023) writing, which highlights how, despite AI's capacity for processing quantitative data, it may still fail to capture granular data, and therefore, fail to effectively gauge ancillary attributes that make employees valuable. Ancillary attributes are non-quantifiable characteristics indicative of excellent employee performance (i.e., helping colleagues, or having good problem-solving skills, among others).

In sum, this section reflects respondents' adoption of AI (specifically narrow AI) for assistive functions in managing communication among their academic organizations. Adoption is particularly evident in email assistance and management (smart compose and smart reply), writing assistance

(grammar and proofreading suggestions, plagiarism detection), and targeted communication (text analysis, browser behavior analysis, targeted advertising, and engagement feedback). Autonomy, however, remains with human managers as reflected by the respondents' disagreement with full reliance on AI for conversation intelligence, streamlining processes, stakeholder engagement, and employee related decision-making. It is also worth noting that most of the academic organizations the respondents represent do not have strict policies on AI use as of writing. This entails, among other issues, inconsistent use and adoption among organization members, which could limit their exploration of the technology's advantages on boosting performance.

RESPONDENTS' VIEW OF AI-MC AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

As discussed in the Literature Review, technology improves organizational communication and overall performance by enabling routine task automation, remote work, cost reduction, and brand visibility and expansion (Sarokin 2020; Henderson 2020; and Harris-Briggs 2023). The following Table summarizes how HEI managers view AI-mediated communication (AI-MC)'s influence on organizational performance.

Respondents agree that the technology carries good potential (2.09); that it improves communication management (2.01); and that it enables effective interpersonal communication (2.09). Moreover, respondents agree that AI allows for fast (1.98) and timely (2.06) delivery of generally correct information (2.16) within their organizations. They even agree (2.18) that AI use can help their HEIs fulfill their mission and vision.

Statement	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
AI use carries good potential for academic environments.	2.09	Agree
Using AI improves our college/university's communication management.	2.01	Agree
AI tools help members of our college/university effectively communicate with each other.	2.09	Agree
AI tools allow faster communication among employees of our college/university.	1.98	Agree
AI tools enable timely communication among members of our college/university.	2.06	Agree
AI generates content that is generally correct, making communication effective.	2.16	Agree
AI tools help our college/university achieve its goals and fulfill its mission.	2.18	Agree

Table 2. Respondents' View of AI-Mediated Communication and Organizational Performance. Source: author.

This openness to embrace technological strides at an organizational level, Kaczmarek-Śliwińska (2019) writes, is considered a competitive advantage in a knowledge economy. She furthers, by citing the Global Industry Vision, that the world's largest international companies intend to implement AI-based solutions come 2025 (62–63). This aligns well with Gilli, Lettner, and Guettel's

(2023) position that with digitalization potentially effecting social distances among organizations, leaders should actively manage social processes and shape change processes. Such capacities are dependent on strong communication and digitization skills.

Among characteristics of AI that, respondents agree, make it a useful tool for effective communication are speed, timeliness, and general correctness. From a matter of information and computation, AI has distinct advantages over human intelligence—among these are speed, connectivity, and accuracy. Korteling et al. (2021) stress that AI operates on digital systems that propagate at almost the speed of light, accounting for its ability to quickly provide information or generate and process huge amounts of data the human brain physically cannot (1–5). AI's digital nature also allows it to connect through integrated algorithms, making it easy to reconfigure functionalities as necessary. This allows it to generate and analyze data with accuracy rates ranging from 80–95% (Pacchiega 2021).

The respondents' positive view of these characteristics suggests optimism towards AI's capabilities and functionalities. This aligns with the systems perspective, which views critical the networks of information and interaction in maintaining organizational equilibrium, thus enhancing productivity and overall performance. AI can be viewed as an agent that interfaces with both human and technologies in facilitating effective information and knowledge creation, sharing, and application, helping advance communication among academic organizations (Jarrahi et al. 2023, 87–90).

AI-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION—ISSUES AND DIRECTIONS

While open to AI use for communication within academic organizations and environments, respondents raise critical issues and outline recommendations as summarized in the following table and discussion.

Statement	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
AI tools are accessible only to a few members of our college/university.	2.43	Agree
Use of AI tools poses ethical issues (i.e., content bias and inaccuracy).	1.91	Agree
Accuracy and consistency of information exchanged is maintained when using AI tools for communication.	2.56	Disagree
AI tools are just as effective as face-to-face contact when communicating with or managing colleagues.	2.63	Disagree
AI tools help members of our college/university nurture human engagement.	2.5	Disagree
Using AI poses data privacy risks.	1.93	Agree

Table 3. Issues Encountered on Using AI for Communication and Organizational Performance in Calabarzon HEIs. Source: author.

Table 3 shows that respondents experience issues with AI use for communicating in their respective HEIs. Specifically, respondents believe that while AI is already acknowledged in their institutions, not all employees can access them (2.43). Disagreement is expressed in AI's capacity

to maintain accuracy and consistency of information (2.56); in its ability to foster effective communication the way face-to-face interactions can (2.63); and its potential to nurture human engagement (2.5). Also, respondents agree that AI poses both privacy risks (1.93) and ethical issues (1.91).

Respondents claim that AI's potential for enhancing productivity is limited to accessibility and user ability. As Božić (2023, 96–97) writes, effective AI systems necessitate computing power, infrastructure, resources, and specialized skills, which not everyone has access to. Moreover, with AI's structure and functionalities that involve deep text, machine learning, or reinforcement learning, among others, users, particularly those who are not very comfortable with advanced technology, tend to shy away from them and stick to AI's analogue or manual counterparts (Sasaki 2023). This may result in slower operations with results vulnerable to human error.

Disagreement is also expressed in terms of the respondents' view of AI as able to generate content that is accurate and bias-free. Studies warn about inaccuracies in AI-generated content. Jensen (2023), for instance, stresses how generative AI "learns" and bases its responses only on the data it is fed. This means that AI may also consider outdated, plagiarized, or biased datasets. The author also explains that AI might also be insensitive to what humans would consider original or unoriginal thought, because they merely reintegrate data given to them. As an effect, generated content may be subject to copyright infringement. AI-generated content may likewise be based on biased data that are reflective of social or historical inequalities. While automation certainly has its advantages, these cases highlight how AI computation still necessitates thorough human analysis and review.

Another ethical dilemma, according to Hancock, Naaman, and Levy (2020), is misrepresentation and manipulation. Aside from convenience, a reason why users employ AI is to create or establish a specific impression. However, some techniques utilized by the technology seem to go beyond representation and veer into misrepresentation, shifting from persuasion to manipulation (96–97). Manipulation through AI and associated digital technologies, according to Ienca (2023), is intentionally designed to bypass reason and exploit a subject's cognitive defenses. This lays bare a challenge for policymakers to have communicative intentions clearly defined, so as to avoid misrepresentation and manipulation.

Moreover, respondents raise AI's constrained capacity to nurture human connection, claiming it is not as effective as in-person communication. Christian (2023) writes that when faced with important or complex situations, people prefer empathy, understanding, and personalized touch, which are reduced or altogether absent in AI-MC. Such preference reinforces a constant need to invest in face-to-face human interactions.

Lastly, AI use poses issues with data privacy. As discussed by The Economic Times (2023), with the continuous evolution of AI comes greater involvement of personal information, since its systems depend on vast amounts of data to train algorithms and enhance performance. Over time, this increases risks of data breach, given that how data processing—how data is used and who has access to it—is not fully disclosed.

To address these issues, the respondents recommend inclusive capacity building efforts to orient organization members on AI technologies that are available and allowed for utilization.

Capacity building initiatives should enable organizations to acknowledge and harness AI's potential for strategic alignment and enhanced collaboration. Policies should also be implemented to counter the lack of formalized regulatory measures surrounding AI use for organizational communication and overall performance. In crafting policies, Nagelhout (2023) challenges academic organizations to focus attention on how AI use impinges on academic policies; how AI use in a scholarly work should be stated (should it be allowed); how to manage possible bias or inaccuracy on AI-generated content; how AI use stands given copyright or licensing laws and protocols; and how AI use may violate data privacy.

CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized various areas of life. Its potential is strongly explored and documented in different fields of expertise, but is understudied within academic environments, where strong critical thinking and human connection are hallmarks of organizational success. This quantitative study was conducted to add knowledge to this research area.

Surveying 50 academic and administrative managers from various colleges and universities in the Philippines' Calabarzon region and hinging on the General Systems Theory, the Organizational Information Theory (von Bertalanffy 1986; Weick 1993 in West and Turner 2012, 294), and Hancock, Naaman, and Levy's (2020) AI-MC framework, the present study described AI use for communication among Calabarzon higher education institutions (HEIs) by: 1) determining the communicative functions that utilize AI among Calabarzon higher education institutions (HEIs); 2) discussing the respondents' general view of AI-mediated communication (AI-MC) and organizational performance; 3) enumerating issues on AI-mediated communication (AI-MC) observed by the respondents; and 4) outlining means by which respondents suggest resolving these issues.

Findings conclude that AI use within academic environments is assistive in nature and expedites communication management, specifically message creation and distribution. Autonomy remains with human managers, who express disagreement with overreliance on automation, especially on matters concerning organizational processes and decision-making. While deemed promising, AI use in examined organizations poses ethical and functional issues such as: inaccessibility and user inexperience; content bias and inaccuracy; constrained capacity to nurture human connection; and data privacy risks. Respondents recommend capacity building efforts and policy implementation to manage said issues and maximize AI use without compromising human agency.

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