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Integrating Artificial Intelligence into Strategic Communication During Organisational Crises

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Abstract

Organizational crises test both operational capacity and communicative resilience, as rapid information flows, misinformation, and shifting public sentiment create complex challenges for strategic communication. Traditional approaches often struggle to respond in real time, resulting in inconsistent messaging, delayed corrections, and diminished stakeholder trust. This study examines these challenges and explores the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance crisis communication. Using a desk review method, the research synthesises existing literature and integrates insights from Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), providing a framework that addresses both strategic priorities and practical adoption of AI. Findings indicate that AI can accelerate response times, filter and prioritise vast information streams, detect and counter misinformation, track public sentiment, maintain consistency across communication channels, and predict crisis escalation. However, dilemmas such as balancing speed with accuracy, algorithmic biases, ethical concerns, and the need for human oversight remain central to effective deployment. The study concludes that AI is not merely a technological supplement but a transformative enabler of strategic communication during crises. Its success depends on thoughtful integration, continuous human supervision, ethical safeguards, and ensuring that users trust and understand the technology, thereby enhancing both responsiveness and credibility.

Keywords: Strategic, crises, organizational, communication, Artificial, Intelligence

Introduction

Organisational crises test not only operational capacity but also communicative resilience. In moments of uncertainty, whether triggered by financial disruption, reputational threats, political pressure, or



humanitarian emergencies, communication becomes the primary mechanism through which organizations explain events, manage stakeholder expectations, and preserve legitimacy. Governments, international institutions such as the United Nations, development agencies like the United States Agency for International Development, corporations, and non-profit organizations all depend on strategic communication to navigate turbulence and maintain trust. As Coombs (2015) argues, crisis communication is not simply about responding to events; it is about shaping interpretations in ways that protect relationships and sustain credibility.

Strategic communication during crises operates within compressed timelines and heightened emotional climates. Information flows rapidly, public scrutiny intensifies, and narratives form before institutions can fully assess unfolding situations. Digital media ecosystems further complicate this landscape by enabling instantaneous commentary, viral amplification, and the circulation of unverified claims. Scholars have emphasised that contemporary crises are communicative as much as operational, meaning that perception management and meaning construction are central to crisis outcomes (Heath & Johansen, 2018). In such environments, organisations must coordinate internal and external messaging while remaining transparent, consistent, and responsive to diverse stakeholder concerns.

At the same time, crisis environments generate overwhelming volumes of data social media reactions, news cycles, stakeholder feedback, and internal communication streams. The scale and velocity of this information can exceed the analytical capacity of traditional communication teams. As a result, strategic decisions are often made under conditions of uncertainty, partial visibility, and fragmented insight. The challenge is no longer merely crafting the right message, but interpreting dynamic communication patterns in real time while anticipating emerging risks.

It is within this evolving communicative terrain that artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly relevant. Osei-Mensah et al. (2023) note that AI holds significant potential to enhance strategic communication during crises, enabling organisations to respond more effectively to rapidly changing information and stakeholder dynamics. Hence, this study sought to examine the key challenges organisations face in strategic communication during crises and to explore the potential of artificial intelligence to enhance strategic communication in crisis contexts.

Theoretical framework

This study is built on two main theories: Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) (Coombs, 2007, 2015) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). These theories help explain both how organizations communicate during crises and how AI can be used to improve communication. Together, they provide a complete lens for understanding the challenges of crisis communication and the potential role of technology.

Situational Crisis Communication Theory explains that the way an organisation communicates during a crisis should depend on the type of crisis, the organisation's responsibility for it, and how stakeholders see the situation. The goal is to protect the organisation's reputation, maintain trust, and reduce negative consequences (Coombs, 2015). SCCT helps us understand the difficult environment organisations face during crises where information changes quickly, audiences are anxious, and every message counts. In this study, SCCT shows why clear, timely, and targeted communication is so important. It also helps explain how AI could make crisis communication more effective by giving organizations real-time insights into stakeholder reactions, tracking emerging stories or rumours, and allowing messages to be



adjusted quickly. In other words, AI can strengthen the organisation's ability to communicate according to SCCT principles, making responses faster, more relevant, and more trustworthy.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) complements SCCT by focusing on how organizations actually adopt and use new technologies. According to TAM, individuals are more likely to accept and use a technology when they believe it is both useful and easy to use (Davis, 1989). In the context of this study, TAM helps us understand the human side of AI adoption in crisis communication. It explains how communication teams and organizational leaders evaluate whether AI tools are valuable for improving their work and whether these tools fit smoothly into their existing processes. Importantly, TAM highlights that even if AI has great potential, it will only be effective if the people using it trust it, understand how it works, and feel confident applying it. Without this acceptance, the benefits of AI in enhancing strategic communication during crises may not be fully realized

By combining SCCT and TAM, this study addresses both the strategic and practical sides of crisis communication. SCCT explains what organizations need to communicate and why to protect their reputation and maintain trust during crises. TAM explains how AI can be adopted and used effectively to support these communication strategies. Together, the two theories provide a solid framework for the study.

Method

This study adopts a desk review method, which involves systematically collecting, analysing, and synthesising existing literature, documents, reports, policies, and other secondary sources relevant to strategic communication and artificial intelligence in crisis contexts. A desk review enables the researcher to develop a contextual understanding of existing knowledge, identify key themes and gaps, and build a conceptual foundation for answering the research questions without primary data collection (Barbieri et al., 2025). This method is appropriate for exploratory studies and theoretical examinations, as it allows the integration of multidisciplinary insights from communication studies, crisis management, and information technology.

The desk review process in this study includes:

The study followed a systematic approach by first defining clear search parameters and keywords such as "crisis communication," "strategic communication," "artificial intelligence," and "AI in crisis response" to guide the scope of the inquiry. Academic databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar, as well as relevant organizational repositories, were then searched to identify scholarly and professional sources. Retrieved materials were carefully evaluated for relevance, credibility, and methodological rigor to ensure the reliability of the review. Finally, the selected literature was thematically organized to address the research objectives, particularly examining the challenges of strategic communication during crises and exploring how artificial intelligence can enhance communication practices.

Desk reviews are widely recognised as a rigorous and transparent method for organising and analysing existing knowledge, especially when structured procedures are applied to improve consistency and adaptability in review practice (Barbieri et al., 2025). Literature reviews, including desk reviews, serve to establish a foundation of knowledge, contextualise research, and justify the relevance of the study by synthesising and critically evaluating prior work (Kraus et al., 2024). A well-conducted desk review thus helps position new research within existing evidence, highlighting theoretical and practical gaps to be explored.



Findings

This section presents the findings of the study, highlighting key insights and patterns identified in line with its objectives.

Practical Cases of Strategic Communication Without AI

Several high-profile organisational crises illustrate the limitations of traditional strategic communication and how delays, inconsistency, and insufficient stakeholder insight can exacerbate reputational damage. During the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, public outrage intensified due to defensive messaging and statements perceived as insensitive, revealing the company's inability to quickly gauge and respond to stakeholder sentiment. Communication failure: slow, insensitive messaging that ignored public concerns, worsening reputational damage (Sociabble, 2021).

Similarly, United Airlines faced intense backlash in 2017 after forcibly removing a passenger, as its initial communications failed to address the viral spread of videos and public perception. Communication failure: delayed and reactive messaging that allowed negative narratives to dominate social media, damaging credibility (Sociabble, 2021).

The Equifax data breach of 2017 further demonstrates the risks of delayed and unclear notifications, which left millions of customers uninformed and confused, undermining trust and prolonging reputational harm. Communication failure: delayed, unclear communication that failed to reassure stakeholders or prevent misinformation from spreading (Deb Schoen, 2020).

Boeing's handling of the 737 MAX crisis between 2018 and 2019 similarly underscores the consequences of slow acknowledgment of safety concerns and defensive messaging, which contributed to widespread criticism and regulatory scrutiny. Communication failure: defensive and untimely communication that intensified public fear and regulatory pressure (Everything-PR, 2020).

Other notable cases, such as the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 in 2014, the Dreamworld Theme Park tragedy in 2016, and Volkswagen's Dieselgate scandal in 2015, demonstrate that inconsistent, delayed, or tone-deaf communication can exacerbate stakeholder anxiety, propagate misinformation, and erode credibility. Communication failure: inconsistent and slow responses that amplified confusion, fear, and negative media narratives (NewswireJet, 2020; Crisis Compass, 2020; Sentiment.io, 2020).

Also, during the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, governments in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone struggled with ineffective communication strategies. Delayed information dissemination, inconsistent messaging, and a lack of proactive engagement with the public led to confusion, mistrust, and even riots in some areas. This case highlights how traditional strategic communication approaches, when poorly executed, can exacerbate crises instead of mitigating them (World Economic Forum, 2019).

These examples collectively indicate that organisations lacking the ability to process large volumes of information, track real-time public sentiment, and coordinate messaging effectively could have benefited from AI tools such as automated alerts, chatbots, and sentiment analysis. Integrating AI into crisis communication strategies can enhance responsiveness, accuracy, and stakeholder trust, mitigating the negative impacts seen in these cases.



Rationale for Incorporating Artificial Intelligence in Strategic Communication During Crises

Speed of information Spread

During a crisis, information spreads at an unprecedented speed, especially through social media platforms, where news, opinions, and rumors can reach large audiences within minutes. Research shows that information, including misinformation, circulates rapidly during crisis events, often faster than organizations can verify facts or craft responses (Vosoughi et al., 2018). Social media's algorithmic design, which prioritises engagement over accuracy, further accelerates this flow, making it difficult for official messages to gain traction before alternative narratives take hold (Hilberts et al. 2025).

The challenge for strategic communication teams is that this rapid flow compresses response windows. Organisations often struggle to respond quickly enough before narratives, especially inaccurate or emotionally charged ones, dominate public discourse (Liang & Chou, 2025). Delays in communicating accurate information can lead audiences to rely on third-party sources, fill informational gaps with speculation, or adopt misinformation, undermining organizational credibility. Effectively managing information flow in such fast-moving contexts requires strategies that can keep pace with social media dynamics while maintaining accuracy and trust, a balance that many teams find difficult to achieve (Larisu&Zulham, 2024).

Misinformation and Disinformation

False information, whether shared unintentionally (misinformation) or deliberately (disinformation), can spread just as quickly as accurate updates during a crisis, and in some cases even faster because it is emotional or sensational. Studies show that misinformation often triggers strong emotional responses such as outrage, fear, and anger, which make people more likely to share inaccurate content without verifying it (Liang & Chou, 2025). Platforms' algorithms also amplify emotionally charged false content by prioritising engagement, further accelerating its spread (Surjatmodjo et al., 2024).

This rapid spread creates a significant challenge for organizations: harmful rumors and false narratives may circulate widely before communication teams even recognize them. When misinformation takes hold early in a crisis, it can damage public trust, distort perceptions, and make it harder for accurate information to gain traction later (Liang & Chou, 2025; Surjatmodjo et al., 2024).

Information Overload

Crises generate massive amounts of information, including media coverage, internal reports, stakeholder communications, and reactions across social media platforms. This flood of data can overwhelm organizations, making it difficult to identify what is relevant, accurate, or urgent (Liu et al., 2019; Veil et al., 2011).

The challenge is that human teams cannot manually process all this information in real time. Delays in interpreting and responding to large volumes of data can reduce the effectiveness of communication, slow decision-making, and allow misinformation or critical issues to go unaddressed, ultimately impacting stakeholder trust and organizational credibility (Liu et al., 2019; Veil et al., 2011).

Understanding Public Sentiment



During a crisis, public emotions can run high, with stakeholders experiencing fear, anger, confusion, and frustration. These emotions strongly influence how people perceive an organisation's response and how they share or act on information (Coombs, 2015; Jin et al., 2014). Understanding these sentiments is critical because they shape trust, compliance with organisational instructions, and the overall reputation of the organisation.

The challenge for communication teams is that it is often difficult to accurately gauge how stakeholders are feeling and how these feelings shift over time. Traditional methods, such as surveys, focus groups, or monitoring news coverage, may be too slow or limited to capture real-time changes in public sentiment (Liu et al., 2019). Without timely insights, organisations risk responding in ways that do not align with stakeholder needs, potentially exacerbating confusion, mistrust, or negative perceptions. Accurately tracking and interpreting public sentiment requires constant attention and tools capable of analysing large volumes of dynamic data from multiple channels.

Consistency Across Channels

Organisations often communicate through multiple platforms during a crisis, including press conferences, social media, websites, and internal memos. Each channel has its own audience, tone, and speed, which makes it challenging to maintain a unified message (Coombs, 2015; Liu et al., 2019). Consistency across these channels is critical because conflicting or contradictory messages can confuse stakeholders, undermine trust, and damage the organization's credibility.

The challenge is that under the high-pressure conditions of a crisis, different teams may respond independently, resulting in inconsistencies in messaging. Without careful coordination, messages may vary in content, timing, or tone, which can create uncertainty among stakeholders and weaken the effectiveness of crisis communication efforts (Jin et al., 2014; Veil et al., 2011). Ensuring consistency requires strong internal coordination, clear communication protocols, and ongoing monitoring of all channels to align messages in real time.

Anticipating Escalation

Crises often unfold in unpredictable ways, with situations evolving rapidly, new issues emerging, and public responses shifting without warning. What may begin as a localised problem can quickly escalate into a broader reputational, operational, or social crisis if early signals are missed (Coombs, 2015; Liu et al., 2019). Research on crisis dynamics highlights that unexpected escalation is common, particularly when organisations lack mechanisms to detect subtle warning signs or changing stakeholder perceptions (Sellnow & Seeger, 2022). In such environments, crises are not static events but ongoing processes shaped by multiple internal and external forces that can quickly compound if not addressed proactively.

The challenge for organisations is that many tend to respond after events unfold rather than anticipate how situations might escalate. Traditional crisis response models are often reactive, focusing on immediate communication after a crisis becomes visible, rather than on early detection and pattern recognition (Fearn-Banks, 2016; Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2018). Without proactive monitoring, scenario planning, and sensitivity to emerging signals, organisations may miss opportunities to intervene early, allowing small issues to become major vulnerabilities. This reactive stance can erode stakeholder confidence and diminish an organisation's ability to control the narrative, especially as crises grow more complex and interconnected (Seeger, 2020).

Limited Evaluation Beyond Metrics



Many organisations evaluate the effectiveness of their crisis communication efforts using basic quantitative metrics such as social media engagement, reach, likes, shares, or the number of press mentions. While these metrics provide useful indicators of activity and visibility, they often fail to capture deeper dimensions of communication success, such as stakeholder trust, perceived credibility, or the long-term impact on organisational reputation (Coombs, 2015; Liu et al., 2019).

The challenge is that relying solely on these surface-level metrics can give a misleading picture of how communication is truly resonating with audiences. High engagement does not necessarily mean that stakeholders trust the organization or understand the message as intended (Austin et al., 2012). Moreover, long-term reputational recovery and stakeholder loyalty are difficult to measure using simple quantitative indicators. To address this gap, scholars emphasize the importance of incorporating qualitative methods, sentiment analysis, and stakeholder feedback to complement traditional metrics and provide a more holistic assessment of crisis communication effectiveness (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Veil et al., 2011).

Potential of Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Strategic Communication

Accelerating Response Times

AI can significantly improve the speed at which organizations respond during crises by processing large volumes of data in real time. In fast-moving digital environments, where information spreads within minutes, traditional manual monitoring is often too slow. AI-powered systems, particularly those using machine learning and natural language processing, can automatically scan social media posts, news reports, and online discussions to detect emerging issues, trending narratives, or abnormal spikes in attention (Liu et al., 2019). This real-time monitoring enables communication teams to identify potential threats early and craft timely responses before misinformation or negative narratives become dominant.

Research also shows that AI-driven analytics can support rapid decision-making by filtering and prioritizing relevant information from large datasets, reducing the burden of information overload on human teams (Hilberts et al., 2025). In addition, studies on AI in strategic communication suggest that automated monitoring tools enhance situational awareness and improve response efficiency during crisis events (Osei et al., 2023). By accelerating data analysis and highlighting critical signals, AI helps organizations move from reactive communication to more timely and proactive engagement.

Countering Misinformation

Machine learning algorithms can play a critical role in identifying and limiting the spread of misinformation during crises. Studies show that false information often spreads rapidly and widely on social media, sometimes even faster than accurate information, largely because it is novel or emotionally charged (Vosoughi et al., 2018). AI systems trained on large datasets can detect patterns associated with misleading or false content, such as unusual sharing behaviour, coordinated amplification, or emotionally manipulative language. By flagging suspicious posts in real time, these systems enable organizations to intervene earlier and issue timely corrections.

Research on misinformation management also highlights that automated detection tools can support fact-checking efforts and prioritize high-risk content before it gains significant traction (Liang & Chou, 2025). In crisis contexts, where delays can undermine trust, AI-assisted monitoring enhances an organization's ability to track emerging rumors, assess their potential impact, and respond strategically. By combining speed, scale, and pattern recognition, machine learning helps communication teams move from reactive rumor control to proactive misinformation management.



Managing Information Overload

AI-driven dashboards and monitoring systems can help organisations manage the enormous influx of crisis-related information by filtering, categorising, and summarising data for decision-makers in real time. Crises generate continuous streams of data from social media, news feeds, internal reports, and stakeholder feedback, which can overwhelm human teams trying to make sense of it all (Hossain et al., 2025).

AI tools such as machine learning classifiers and natural language processing models are designed to sort through this information at scale, extracting relevant insights while suppressing noise and redundancy (Hossain et al., 2025)

Platforms like AI-assisted crisis monitoring systems (e.g., AIDR Artificial Intelligence for Digital Response) have been specifically developed to filter and classify social media messages related to emergencies, enabling responders to focus on actionable information rather than sifting through raw data manually (Artificial Intelligence for Digital Response). Similarly, commercial real-time monitoring tools such as Meltwater scan massive datasets from thousands of online sources, giving crisis teams structured alerts when patterns of concern emerge, such as sudden sentiment shifts or spikes in discussion volume (Hossain et al., 2025). The use of AI not only reduces the burden of data overload but also enhances situational awareness by presenting summarised, prioritised insights that support rapid decision-making, helping communication teams stay ahead of emerging narratives rather than falling behind them (Imran et al., 2020)

Understanding Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis tools powered by artificial intelligence can help organisations track public emotions and opinions in real time across social media platforms, news outlets, blogs, and other digital channels. During crises, stakeholder reactions often shift rapidly, and emotions such as fear, anger, or frustration can significantly influence how messages are received and interpreted (Jin et al., 2014). AI-driven sentiment analysis uses natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning techniques to analyse large volumes of text data, detect emotional tone, and identify patterns in public discourse, enabling communication teams to better understand stakeholder perceptions as they evolve (Liu et al., 2019).

Research further shows that sentiment analysis can enhance situational awareness by identifying spikes in negative sentiment or emerging concerns before they escalate into reputational threats (Liang & Chou, 2025). By transforming unstructured online conversations into structured insights, AI tools provide organisations with evidence-based feedback on how their messages are being received. This allows crisis communication teams to adjust tone, clarify information, and respond more empathetically and strategically, thereby strengthening trust and credibility during uncertain situations.

Ensuring Consistency Across Channels

During a crisis, organisations communicate through many different platforms press releases, social media, websites, newsletters, and internal messaging. Ensuring that all messages stay consistent in tone and content is difficult, especially when multiple teams are responding under pressure. Inconsistent messages can confuse stakeholders and reduce trust (Coombs, 2015).

AI tools can help with this problem by automatically checking communications across channels and alerting teams if something doesn't align. For example, AI-driven platforms can scan text from social



posts, emails, and web updates to detect differences in wording or sentiment that might send mixed signals (Cambria & White, 2014; Dinçer et al., 2022). Research on AI-assisted communication systems shows that machine learning models can support cross-platform coherence by suggesting edits or flagging contradictions before messages are published (van Dijck et al., 2018). By helping teams keep messages consistent, AI strengthens clarity and credibility during fast-moving crises.

Predicting Crisis Escalation

Crises rarely unfold in a linear or predictable manner, and small issues can quickly escalate into major events if not addressed early. Predictive models powered by artificial intelligence can help organizations identify early-warning signs and potential escalation patterns before they spiral out of control. Machine learning algorithms analyze historical crisis data, social media activity, news trends, and stakeholder responses to detect signals that a situation may worsen (Hossain et al., 2025; Dinçer et al., 2022).

These predictive tools enable proactive crisis management by giving communication teams more time to prepare responses, allocate resources, and engage stakeholders strategically. For example, AI systems can detect sudden spikes in negative sentiment, coordinated online campaigns, or emerging rumors, allowing organisations to intervene before public perception or reputational damage escalates (Hilberts et al., 2025). Research also highlights that combining predictive analytics with real-time monitoring improves situational awareness and decision-making, helping organizations stay one step ahead during high-pressure situations (Liang & Chou, 2025). By integrating predictive AI into crisis communication strategies, organizations can shift from reactive to proactive approaches, mitigating risks, preserving trust, and enhancing overall crisis resilience.

Measuring Impact Beyond Evaluations

While traditional metrics such as likes, shares, and reach provide a snapshot of activity, they fail to capture deeper organizational outcomes like stakeholder trust, credibility, and long-term reputational effects (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Austin et al., 2012). AI offers a more holistic approach by integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Machine learning algorithms can analyze engagement patterns alongside sentiment, emotion, and relational interactions to evaluate how messages are perceived and how they influence stakeholder attitudes over time (Liang & Chou, 2025; Hossain et al., 2025).

For example, AI can track shifts in public sentiment, identify influential voices, and detect whether stakeholders are responding positively or negatively to communications. This allows organizations not only to measure immediate engagement but also to understand the long-term impact on trust and credibility, enabling more informed strategic decisions and improving overall crisis communication effectiveness. By providing these deeper insights, AI helps communication teams move beyond surface-level numbers toward meaningful evaluation of organizational performance during crises.

Dilemmas of deploying AI in strategic communication during organizational crises

Speed Vs. Accuracy

AI excels at processing massive amounts of data and generating responses rapidly. During crises, this speed can help organizations act before misinformation spreads widely. However, rapid AI-generated messages may misinterpret context or nuance, leading to errors. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, some automated social media alerts inadvertently shared outdated or inaccurate health guidance because the AI could not distinguish evolving official updates (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018).



Such mistakes can amplify confusion, damage credibility, and worsen public perception. Organizations must therefore carefully balance speed with accuracy, ensuring that AI outputs are verified before dissemination.

Ethical and Bias Concerns

AI systems learn from historical data, which often includes societal biases. In crisis communication, this can result in unequal treatment of stakeholders or skewed prioritization. For example, sentiment analysis tools may under represent minority voices if training data over represents certain demographics (Dinçer et al., 2022). Similarly, AI chatbots designed to respond to stakeholder inquiries may inadvertently reinforce stereotypes or provide less empathetic responses to some groups. These ethical dilemmas require organisations to implement safeguards, continuously monitor AI outputs, and ensure inclusivity in both data and algorithm design.

Human Oversight VS. Automation

AI can monitor social media, detect emerging crises, and even draft messages, but it cannot replicate human judgment, empathy, or cultural sensitivity. For example, an AI system may flag a spike in negative sentiment but fail to understand the underlying social or cultural factors causing that reaction. If organisations rely solely on AI without human oversight, responses may appear tone-deaf or insensitive, potentially worsening the crisis (Coombs, 2015; Cambria & White, 2014). Therefore, human communicators must remain central to decision-making, using AI as a supportive tool

Discussion

Organizational crises present complex challenges for strategic communication, as information spreads rapidly, public emotions fluctuate, and stakeholders scrutinise every message. The findings of this study confirm that the speed and volume of information, particularly through social media, pose significant hurdles for communication teams. As Vosoughi et al. (2018) show, news, rumours, and opinions often circulate faster than organisations can verify facts or craft accurate responses, while platform algorithms that prioritise engagement over accuracy further complicate efforts to reach audiences with official messages (Hilberts et al., , 2025). SCCT provides a valuable lens here, emphasizing that timely, targeted, and credible communication is critical to maintain trust and protect organizational reputation (Coombs, 2015).

AI emerges as a powerful tool to address these challenges. Real-time monitoring systems powered by machine learning and natural language processing allow organizations to track emerging narratives, detect misinformation, and rapidly adjust messaging (Osei et al., 2023; Liang & Chou, 2025). For instance, AI-driven dashboards can filter social media streams, categorise relevant content, and flag abnormal spikes in attention, reducing information overload and enabling teams to respond proactively rather than reactively (Lv& Li, 2021; All Digital PR, 2025; Using AI and Social Media Multimodal Content for Disaster Response, 2020).

Misinformation and disinformation are especially problematic during crises, as emotionally charged false content spreads faster than factual updates (Surjatmodjo et al., 2024). AI-based detection systems identify patterns indicative of misleading content, enabling teams to prioritize corrections and issue timely clarifications, thereby preserving credibility (Liang & Chou, 2025; Vosoughi et al., 2018). Sentiment analysis tools further enhance situational awareness by tracking shifts in public emotions across multiple channels, transforming unstructured online conversations into actionable insights (Jin et al., 2014; Liu et



al., 2019; Liang & Chou, 2025). Such analysis allows organisations to adapt tone, messaging, and engagement strategies to evolving stakeholder perceptions, reinforcing trust and effective communication.

Maintaining message consistency across platforms is another persistent challenge (Coombs, 2015). AI platforms can automatically scan multiple communication channels for inconsistencies in tone, content, or sentiment, alerting teams to discrepancies before messages are published (Cambria & White, 2014; Dinçer et al., 2022; van Dijck et al., 2018). Similarly, predictive AI models can identify early-warning signs of crisis escalation, analyzing historical data, social media activity, and stakeholder responses to anticipate potential risks (Hossain et al., 2025; Hilberts et al., 2025; Dinçer et al., 2022). This capability shifts organisations from reactive crisis response toward proactive engagement, mitigating risks before they intensify (Sellnow & Seeger, 2022).

While AI enhances strategic communication, dilemmas persist. Speed versus accuracy presents a constant tension: rapid AI-generated outputs can misinterpret context, as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic when automated alerts occasionally shared outdated health guidance (Vosoughi et al., 2018). Ethical concerns and algorithmic biases also require attention; AI may underrepresent minority voices or inadvertently reinforce stereotypes if training data is skewed (Dinçer et al., 2022). Finally, human oversight remains critical, as AI cannot replicate judgment, empathy, or cultural sensitivity, making collaborative human–AI decision-making essential for effective and ethical crisis communication (Coombs, 2015; Cambria & White, 2014).

Integrating SCCT and TAM offers a comprehensive framework for leveraging AI in crisis contexts. SCCT clarifies the strategic priorities of messaging what to communicate and while TAM addresses adoption and practical use, emphasizing that AI's effectiveness depends on user acceptance, perceived usefulness, and ease of integration into existing processes (Coombs, 2015; Davis, 1989). Together, these theories demonstrate that AI can enhance speed, accuracy, and stakeholder engagement, but only when combined with thoughtful human oversight, ethical safeguards, and contextual awareness.

In conclusion, the findings reveal that AI is not merely a technological supplement but a transformative enabler for strategic communication during organizational crises. By reducing information overload, countering misinformation, enhancing sentiment understanding, maintaining cross-channel consistency, and predicting escalation, AI strengthens the organization's capacity to respond proactively. However, successful integration requires balancing automation with human judgment, addressing ethical and bias concerns, and fostering adoption among communication teams. The combination of SCCT and TAM provides a robust theoretical foundation to guide the integration of AI, ensuring that technology enhances, not replaces, the human-centered practice of crisis communication.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Organisational crises test both operational capacity and communicative resilience, requiring timely, transparent, and coordinated responses to maintain trust and credibility. The rapid spread of information, misinformation, and shifting public sentiment creates a complex environment where traditional communication approaches are often insufficient. Artificial intelligence offers significant potential to support crisis communication by enhancing real-time monitoring, managing information overload, improving stakeholder insight, and maintaining message consistency.

However, the adoption of AI introduces dilemmas, including balancing speed with accuracy, ethical concerns, algorithmic bias, and the need for human oversight. To ensure that AI strengthens rather than undermines communication, these challenges must be carefully addressed.



Recommendations for Addressing AI Integration Dilemmas

Organizations should implement human verification processes by using AI to analyze data and draft messages while ensuring that human professionals review all content before release to confirm accuracy, contextual relevance, and appropriateness. In addition, AI systems should be audited regularly, with continuous evaluation of algorithms and training data to detect and reduce bias, incorporating diverse perspectives to promote fairness and ethical decision-making. Most importantly, human leadership must remain central; AI should function as a supportive tool rather than a replacement for communication professionals, who must stay actively involved in message development to preserve empathy, cultural sensitivity, and sound strategic judgment.

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