Review Article

The Nexus of Human Communication and AI in the Workplace

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ABSTRACT

Much has been said about how AI is transforming the workplace. Some quarters believe that AI will replace humans in the workplace, some do not, while others think there will be more collaboration between humans and AI. In addition, human communication keeps evolving in the workplace, especially with the influx of artificial intelligence tools. As such, an important area to study is how organisations can keep up with these changes and utilise them to their advantage, especially within the context of communication. Communication is an essential element in every organisation. Therefore, examining the nexus of human communication and AI in the workplace is imperative to understanding how organisations can benefit and be more productive. This paper posits that organisations benefit greatly when humans and AI collaborate in the area of communication. This study concludes that human-centric skills cannot be neglected in the workplace, and organisations cannot ignore the need to incorporate AI tools in their communication while doing so ethically. Thus, the paper recommends that organisations develop systems and processes that enable their staff to use artificial intelligence tools to their benefit effectively. They should also develop ethical codes for utilising AI tools while ensuring they invest in the right AI tools and stay updated with current AI trends and practices related to their field.

INTRODUCTION

The advancement in today's workplace, as well as the influx of tools that are driven mainly by artificial intelligence, have transformed how humans communicate. Human communication has been significantly altered and has continued to evolve in the light of constant technological updates, algorithms, and the latest tools. These changes affect not only individuals but also organisations. One such change in organisations is using artificial intelligence (AI) tools in the different areas of an organisation. According to Bergmann (2024), as AI systems accelerate and incorporate new streams and forms of information, they broaden the potential for communication and instruction following, as well as task automation.

Furthermore, there are several examples of these changes in the workplace. Zohuri and Rahmani (2020) note that recent advancements in robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and deep learning have ushered in a new era of automation. Also, Wilson and Daugherty (2018) opine that artificial intelligence is getting good and improving fast at many human jobs, such as disease diagnosis, language translation, and customer service. From the preceding, it is evident that there is a connection between human communication and AI tools, especially in the area of communication in the workplace. This paper opines that examining this connection and how it can be maximised for organisational benefit is imperative.

Problem Statement

Due to technological advances, there are fears in various quarters regarding the impact of AI in different facets of

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society, one of which is the workplace. For example, many fear that AI will replace a lot of roles and jobs. According to Georgieva (2024), about 60 per cent of jobs will likely be impacted by AI in advanced economies. This paper posits that humans should not view AI as a threat in the workplace; instead, humans should find ways to utilise AI to their advantage: be more productive, manage time better, work smarter, communicate effectively, and the like.

Christian (2023) explains that human-to-human communication will always be necessary, particularly in high-risk scenarios. While AI may eventually replace basic and repetitive customer service interactions, as the stakes rise, so does the necessity for human-to-human connection. This paper opines that to advance in workplace communication, humans must find ways to harness AI's potential rather than ignore it. The conversation around AI should not be about whether it will replace humans but whether humans will learn to work better with it to advance their work, especially when it comes to the area of communication. Without proper collaboration between humans and machines in the workplace, organisations cannot effectively utilise AI tools related to communication to their advantage.

Human Communication

In simple terms, human communication involves humans exchanging information among themselves. According to Lewis Jr (2014), human communication is the process of humans sending and receiving thoughts, information, and ideas in a context that incorporates human variables into a format that is prepared, transmitted, and interpreted by a human recipient.

Human communication is simply the exchange of information between two individuals. It is at the heart of human interactions at home, work, or elsewhere. In any human gathering, communication must take place, whether verbal or nonverbal. Thus, this paper opines that with the introduction of AI, human communication has taken a different turn, especially in the workplace.

What is Artificial Intelligence?

The evolution of AI started many years back. Marr (2023) notes that Alan Turing's groundbreaking work in the 1950s when he proposed the Turing Test to see if a machine could mimic human intelligence, marked the beginning of artificial intelligence (AI).

Research has shown that AI mimics human intelligence. Zohuri and Rahmani (2020) posit that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the study of computer systems that can accomplish tasks that typically need human intelligence. Madhugiri (2023) states that AI is the capacity of a machine to behave intelligently, similarly to a human, and carry out tasks that a human would. McCallum (2023) also explains that artificial intelligence systems are trained on a large amount of information, learning to spot patterns to perform tasks, such as human-like conversations or predicting which product an online shopper might purchase.

As AI advances, it offers more collaboration opportunities between humans and machines. Marr (2024) states that AI is now becoming more accessible and user-friendly today. Beyond that, it is making other technology facets more accessible by removing obstacles to communication between humans and machines.

Generative AI

There are different types of AI, one of which is generative AI. According to McCallum (2023), some examples of generative AI include ChatGPT and Midjourney. These programs learn from a large amount of data, such as online texts and images, to generate content that appears to have been made by humans. Gent (2024) opines that beyond chatbots like ChatGPT, generative AI tools and services are gradually making their way into the real world. Most major AI developers can now translate between languages, evaluate and summarise documents, and respond to user inquiries on a variety of topics.

McCallum (2023) also notes that generative AI is capable of making videos and music in the style of well-known musicians. The author, however, explains that these programs can provide incorrect responses and visuals and reproduce biases found in their original material. According to Bergmann (2024), in 2022, generative AI came to the public's consciousness, 2023 saw it start to take root in the business space, while 2024 will be a pivotal moment in the history of AI as academics and businesses strive to determine how it can be most practically integrated into our daily lives.

Machine Learning

Machine learning is another type of AI. According to Gent (2024), machine learning entails using a computer to examine data in order to discern patterns that can subsequently be employed to make predictions.

However, it is important also to mention one of its drawbacks. According to Alcantara (2023), machine learning algorithms are only as unbiased as the data on which they are trained. Therefore, if the data is biased, the algorithm will most likely perpetuate that bias. To ensure this does not happen, the author recommends that organisations employ data sampling strategies, data balance, and data preprocessing to reduce bias in training data; they can also perform regular audits.

Impact of AI on Human Communications

AI has a lot of impact on human communication, even beyond the walls of an organisation. AI permeates the different areas of human lives; however, this paper focuses on the workplace. According to Drogan (2023), AI is transforming how humans communicate, and some

fear that it will replace human communication, while others believe it will enhance and improve it. Wilson and Daugherty (2018) opine that many companies have utilised AI for process automation; however, those that use artificial intelligence to displace employees will not see long-term productivity gains; instead, they will see short-term ones.

One of AI's major advantages in communication is its ability to improve accessibility and efficiency. For instance, chatbots and virtual assistants can respond instantly to inquiries and customer service requests (Funk, 2023). In addition, Drogan (2023) explains that one can develop a chatbot from scratch or conduct research to discover the right ready-made service tailored to your organisation's needs to integrate conversational AI into one's firm. Likewise, Funk (2023) notes that AI can analyse and interpret large volumes of data and generate insights to help individuals and companies make better decisions.

The potentials of AI are numerous; it is left to organisations to utilise them carefully for their advantage; one such way is through strategic collaboration in the area of communication. Christian (2023) states that by investing in human-centric skills like communication, empathy, and negotiation, employees can maintain a competitive edge in the job market and enable them to stay ahead of the advancements in artificial intelligence. Funk (2023) also explains that AI can improve communication personalisation as AI-driven tools can analyse user behaviour and preferences and develop tailored communication for individuals. It can also utilise predictive capabilities to anticipate users' needs or wants, making ideas and recommendations to improve their experience.

However, it is important to note that the potential for human and AI collaboration in organisational communication continues to broaden as AI advances and human needs evolve. Christian (2023) observes that organisations prioritising and nurturing the human aspect in customer relations will have a significant advantage over those relying solely on AI-based solutions.

Downsides of AI on Human Communication

AI has many positive impacts on human communication in the workplace; however, it also has a lot of downsides that must be mentioned. One such issue is laziness because it replaces some tasks. According to Madhugiri (2023), tasks automation and the growing availability of digital assistants tend to increase reliance on machines, which may lead to an increase in human laziness. This issue is also closely related to the issue of the waning of creativity in the workplace. Madhugiri (2023) notes that AI systems, particularly in the content marketing industry, may lack creativity because their predictions are based on a set of algorithms.

The lack of emotions is also an issue with AI and its systems. Madhugiri (2023) also explains that although AI systems can operate faster and continuously, they are unable to evaluate emotions when making decisions.

Technology Acceptance Model

According to Venkatesh and Davis (2000), in the workplace, the adoption of information technology is a major concern of research and practice in the field of information systems. Chen et al. (2012) note that the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) has been seen to be useful in understanding and explaining user behaviour in information system implementation. According to Lee et al. (2003), the model proposes that the two variables that determine an individual's information system acceptance include Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness refers to an individual's belief that using a specific information system or technology will improve their job or life performance, while perceived ease of use refers to how easy it is to use (Chen et al., 2012).

Venkatesh and Davis (2000) explain that the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) posits that an individual's intention to use a system is influenced by two beliefs: perceived usefulness, which refers to the extent to which a person believes that using the system will improve their job performance, and perceived ease of use, which refers to the extent to which a person believes that using the system will require minimal effort. Chen et al. (2012) opines that perceived ease of use and usefulness have a positive impact on attitudes towards information systems, leading to increased usage intention and acceptance. Additionally, perceived ease of use has a beneficial impact on perceived usefulness, which is also influenced by external variables.

The Technology Acceptance Model anchors this paper because it helps to understand how individuals in organisations adapt AI to their communication at work. It also helps to assess the perceived ease of use and perceived use regarding human communication and artificial intelligence collaboration.

Collaborative Suite: Human Communication and Artificial Intelligence

There are numerous benefits of AI in the workplace, although some believe the benefits mean AI replacing humans in the workplace. However, this paper emphasises that this should not be so, as humans and AI have enormous collaboration potential for better communication in the workplace. According to Christian (2023), in an increasingly technologically advanced world, the key to achieving success and growth in both personal and professional spheres lies in embracing our humanity and nurturing human connections. Georgieva (2024) posits that the AI era is upon us, and it is still within our ability to guarantee that it prospers all.

In addition, Wilson and Daugherty (2018) state that artificial intelligence's larger impact will not be replacing human capabilities but rather complementing

and augmenting them. According to Christian (2023), in this era of expanding AI capabilities, one should look at the advantages of investing in human connections for businesses and how it ultimately helps employees.

Funk (2023) also observes that leveraging AI can improve accessibility and efficiency, personalise more effectively, and benefit from predictive capabilities. However, like with any new technology, knowing the dangers and challenges associated with AI integration is critical. Wilson and Daugherty (2018) opine that smart machines help humans enhance their abilities in three ways: amplify our cognitive capacities, communicate with customers and employees to free us up for higher-level tasks, and embody human skills to expand our physical capabilities.

As such, this paper posits that organisations must find ways to facilitate effective collaboration between humans and AI regarding communication in the workplace. Thus, here are a few collaboration potentials for humans and AI to collaborate in organisations as it relates to communication:

- Email templates drafting
- Content editing
- Proofreading
- Video editing
- Photo editing
- Work templates development
- Drawing insights from data
- Customer service support
- Meeting recaps formulation and much more.

Future Trends in AI

Many trends seem to emerge frequently in the area of AI. Harris (2023) observes that communications managers may use AI to study employee preferences, behaviours, and communication patterns, allowing for tailored content that resonates profoundly with a wide range of audiences.

A Web Management survey of 65 respondents from 48 listed European organisations revealed that firms use AI for various functions, including text generation and summarisation, proofreading, and providing ideas and feedback. It also reveals that content creation and strategy formulation are among the most widely used AI applications in corporate communication (Nilsson, 2024).

A lot awaits organisations as they seek to collaborate effectively with AI in the workplace. Mukherjee (2024) notes that AI can be a valuable tool for crisis management by analysing social media sentiment in real-time, predicting issues, and, in some cases, offering proactive solutions. In addition, Harris (2023) also observes that by using AI to sift through massive volumes of data, communications managers may identify valuable insights, trends, and themes, allowing them to create fresh, captivating content that effectively captivates and engages employees.

Ethical Issues in Human Communication and AI in the Workplace

As much as there are great benefits between human communication and AI in the workplace, ethical implications must be discussed. According to McCallum (2023), many experts are taken aback by how swiftly AI has evolved while being concerned that its rapid growth could be dangerous. Some even say that AI research should be discontinued. Marr (2023) observes that there are issues and ethical concerns that need to be resolved as AI develops. Security, privacy, and the possible misuse of AI are important issues that need to be carefully considered and regulated. Reducing the possibility of algorithmic bias and ensuring AI's explainability and transparency are equally crucial.

The ethical issues of AI usage come to the limelight as organisations seek ways of better utilising AI. According to Mukherjee (2024), ethical issues must be considered as artificial intelligence becomes more integrated into communication strategies. Professionals must lead the way in responsible AI use by guaranteeing openness, fairness, and ethical considerations in all communication projects and campaigns.

Bozickovic (2023) explains that biases in the data used to train AI algorithms can result in AI bias, which might unintentionally discriminate against particular groups. As such, it is important that datasets are inclusive and diverse. Also, Alcantara (2023) notes that as AI gets more autonomous, it becomes more difficult to identify who is to blame when things go wrong. To counter this, businesses can develop policies requiring human oversight and establish processes, as well as create liability frameworks and codes of conduct.

Furthermore, Bozickovic (2023) opines that some privacy and data protection problems relate to the collection and use of sensitive personal data. As such, organisations can employ various tools to protect personal data and prevent unauthorised access or processes.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that when it comes to the issue of communication, organisations cannot neglect human-centric skills or the need to incorporate AI tools. There are a lot of collaboration potentials between human communication and AI that organisations can explore to enjoy the benefits of both. Therefore, organisations must focus more on collaborating effectively with AI rather than deliberating on whether AI will replace some jobs. Doing this can lead to more creative and productive use of AI tools in the workplace. Some suggestions for future research include researchers exploring the different types of AI tools available in today's workplace and how organisations can use them for different areas of their work. In addition, future researchers can examine how

organisations can ethically use AI across the different areas of their businesses.

Recommendations

As a result of the foregoing, this paper recommends the following:

- Organisations should develop systems and processes that enable their staff to use artificial intelligence tools to their benefit effectively. Proper orientation and training regarding best use cases and safe practices regarding AI are also needed.
- Organisations should develop ethical codes for utilising AI tools at work so that team members ensure the correct and ethical usage of such tools.
- Organisations should ensure they invest in the right AI tools and stay updated with current AI trends and practices related to their field.

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