
How AI-Based Media Monitoring Tools Re-examined the field of Public Relations

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ABSTRAK

Technological disruption has brought many advancements, affecting the PR industry by reshaping old industries, markets, and processes. The rapid adoption of new PR technologies requires staff to be more adaptable. AI is increasingly integrated into public relations, leading to a shift from traditional to digital PR. AI and PR can collaborate effectively, and Indonesian public relations professionals use AI-driven media monitoring to gain faster, more useful information. Research in Indonesian multinational private enterprises tested AI (media monitoring) techniques for user experience, employing structured participant interviews for qualitative research. Results show that AI technology has positively impacted PR activities, transformed practices and increased efficiency and effectiveness. However, despite AI's sophistication, it cannot replace the primary role of humans in PR work.

Disrupsi teknologi telah membawa banyak kemajuan yang mempengaruhi industri PR dengan membentuk kembali industri, pasar, dan proses yang lama. Adopsi cepat teknologi PR baru memerlukan staf untuk lebih adaptif. AI semakin terintegrasi ke dalam hubungan masyarakat, yang mengarah ke pergeseran dari PR tradisional ke PR digital. AI dan PR dapat berkolaborasi dengan efektif, dan para profesional PR Indonesia menggunakan pemantauan media yang digerakkan oleh AI untuk mendapatkan informasi yang lebih cepat dan lebih berguna. Penelitian di perusahaan multinasional swasta di Indonesia menguji teknik AI (pemantauan media) untuk pengalaman pengguna, dengan menggunakan wawancara partisipan terstruktur untuk penelitian kualitatif. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa teknologi AI memiliki dampak positif pada kegiatan PR, mengubah praktik dan meningkatkan efisiensi serta efektivitas. Namun, meskipun AI sangat canggih, AI tidak dapat menggantikan peran utama manusia dalam pekerjaan PR.

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INTRODUCTION

The world is currently in an era of technological disruption, which involves significant changes driven by new technologies or innovative business models that transform traditional industries, markets, or processes. This disruption challenges existing norms and established players, acting as a primary catalyst for digital transformation in organizations (Stonehouse & Konina, 2020).

Digital transformation involves using information technology to enhance efficiency and effectiveness (Barja-Martinez et al., 2021). It can reshape existing technologies and business models within organizations (Matt et al., 2015), and is crucial for business sustainability (Fitzgerald et al., 2014). Leveraging digital technology knowledge and skills can significantly boost productivity, profitability, and performance.

Technological disruption affects the public relations (PR) industry, a strategic communication field that manages relationships between organizations or individuals and their target audiences (McKie & Sriramesh, 2017). PR develops strategies to shape public perception, enhance reputation, and foster positive relationships with stakeholders such as customers, employees, investors, media, government entities, and the general public (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019). The main goal

is to build and maintain a favourable image and reputation using various communication channels and tactics to deliver key messages, encourage understanding, and influence opinions. Media relations are crucial in building these relationships, which are central to public relations.

Technological advancements push the PR industry to adapt by engaging modern audiences, leveraging data-driven insights, expanding reach, managing crises, integrating multimedia elements, and improving efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Pollák & Markovič, 2021). Traditional PR tools are insufficient for timely customer information (Nuseir et al., 2022). As society increasingly relies on digital technology for credibility, PR professionals shift from traditional media to digital platforms (Zhou et al., 2017). Technological advances have reshaped PR campaigns, leading to the rise of digital PR (Abdullah, 2020).

Adopting digital technologies and strategies helps PR professionals stay effective and relevant in a rapidly evolving digital world. Some organizations have embraced new technologies for high performance and competitive advantage (Akhtar et al., 2019). Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a crucial role (Jarrahi, 2018) and draws attention from researchers and industry (Balog, 2020). AI enables

machines to learn, adapt, and perform tasks similar to humans (Duan et al., 2019; Panda et al., 2019; Lichtenthaler, 2020). AI is a fundamental technology in machine learning. To sustain and grow, PR must enhance digital skills, utilize AI, and effectively generate, share, and monitor information to influence behavior (Susilawati et al., 2022).

AI-related research remains a fascinating topic for researchers (Zuiderwijk et al., 2021). Studies have explored AI's role, benefits, applications, and PR's readiness for big data and AI impacts (Galloway & Swiatek, 2018; Panda et al., 2019; Arief & Gustomo, 2020). AI's implementation in public governance PR is ongoing (Zuiderwijk et al., 2021). AI research, though not new, has gained renewed attention due to significant progress (Balog, 2020). AI can automate and complete various tasks, leading to new applications, platforms, and tools supporting PR and communication work, simplifying tasks, automating processes, and analyzing complex data (Panda et al., 2019).

AI technology, including Media Monitoring tools, has significantly impacted PR work. PR uses Media Monitoring to gather extensive information from the media, helping various industries, government agencies, and organizations monitor important issues, identify potential

crises, and assess PR strategy effectiveness (Von der Porten et al., 2018). This study aims to strengthen existing research on AI benefits, focusing on the effectiveness of AI (Media Monitoring) tools in PR practices within Indonesian multinational private companies.

METHODOLOGY

The study used interviews to collect qualitative data directly from PR professionals using AI tools. This method was chosen for its flexibility in question order and format, reducing research bias (Oron et al., 2002). Each 20-minute interview began with an explanation of its purpose and covered three topics: PR transformation, AI implementation in PR, and the effectiveness of AI tools, with 16 questions. Case studies were conducted in two large Indonesian multinational companies, SINAR MAS and PT ASTRA, involving three PR professionals with over ten years of experience. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Secondary data came from books, scientific articles, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect.

The study employed the interview method, a qualitative research approach where data is collected directly from participants. This method was chosen to gain in-depth insights from PR professionals using AI tools in their work.

The flexibility of the interview format allows the interviewer to adjust the order of questions, modify their preparation as needed, ask follow-up questions for clarification, and use indirect questions to reduce research bias (Oron et al., 2002).

Each interview lasted 20 minutes, beginning with an explanation of its purpose to the participants. The interview topics were divided into three parts: PR transformation, AI implementation in PR activities, and the effectiveness of AI tools, totaling 16 questions. Case studies were conducted in two large Indonesian multinational companies, SINAR MAS and PT ASTRA, whose PR activities have incorporated AI tools. Three PR professionals, with over ten years of experience, participated in the study (Table 1). The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. In addition to primary data from interviews, secondary data were gathered from books, scientific articles, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect.

This study focused on Media Monitoring tools, a crucial aspect of AI in PR activities at two companies. Media Monitoring enables PR practitioners to analyze news from mass media, evaluate media relations, and gather data from media reports and responses. This process is vital for decision-making, performance

evaluation, and developing new strategies for the organization.

The interviews, conducted with three PR professionals, aimed to understand their use of Media Monitoring as an AI technology in their work. The interviews provided in-depth insights into how PR professionals perceive and utilize Media Monitoring. These insights were then compared with literature reviews to enrich the discussion (Von der Porten et al., 2018). The results highlighted the significance of Media Monitoring in PR, its role in improving efficiency, and its impact on strategic decision-making within the organizations studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The transformation of traditional PR to Digital PR in Indonesia

The transformation of PR in Indonesia has significantly changed PR practices. Previously focused on human relations and traditional media, PR now requires adaptation to digital platforms like social media, blogs, and websites. This shift aligns with research by Komodromos & Nicoli (2016). PR practitioners must fully utilize digital media and quickly adapt to changes. Amodu et al. (2019) noted that digital PR involves enhancing online journalism networks and issuing online

press releases for more effective stakeholder communication.

In PR, the main focus is on the external public environment, providing information to strengthen relations between the company and the public (Kurniawan et al., 2022). PR professionals recognize the urgent need for data analysis to measure effectiveness and target specific audiences. The speed of information dissemination has dramatically increased, requiring PR to respond quickly and accurately.

Interviews revealed that PR practitioners face challenges like media channel diversification and rapid news cycles. Access to information and response to issues have become easier, demanding more critical and creative communication strategies. While the digital age allows PR to reach a broader and more specific audience, it also brings risks.

The rapid spread of information can quickly lead to rumors or fake news, damaging a company's reputation. Thus, PR must be swift and prepared to handle such situations. Effective planning is crucial in PR transformation to ensure clear communication. PR must also consider the role of social media and changes in the media environment that

impact the company's reputation (Kurniawan et al., 2022).

The shift from traditional to digital PR, driven by the Internet of Things, has transformed PR practices. PR used to focus on traditional media relations and human-to-people communication, including press releases, press conferences, and journalist relations. Now, PR professionals must navigate online platforms. The speed of information dissemination today allows news to reach the public within seconds, unlike the days it used to take. This demands quick and accurate responses from PR. Additionally, the diversification of media channels makes it easier for people to access information and respond to issues (Komodromos & Nicoli, 2016; Amodu et al., 2019).

Facing changes in the digital era is a challenging task for PR professionals, with several challenges impacting PR activities. According to Informant 1, the rapid speed of information dissemination requires PR to respond quickly and accurately. Additionally, social media allows everyone to influence a company's reputation, necessitating proactive monitoring and image management (Name). Informant 2 highlights that PR must anticipate and address public questions via social and traditional media, particularly digital

and electronic platforms (Ciba Gangga). Informant 3 emphasizes the need for more critical and creative approaches in developing communication strategies, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (Elmeirillia Lonna).

Changes in the digital era have both positive and negative impacts on current PR work. According to Informant 1, PR can now more easily reach a broader and more specific target audience. Social media and digital platforms enable direct interaction with consumers and real-time feedback (Mahesa Jenar). Informant 2 highlighted that the public receives information much faster than before (Ciba Ganga). Informant 3 noted the increasing number of communication channels available for PR, including earned, shared, and owned media (Elmeirillia Lonna). These developments enhance PR's effectiveness but also present new challenges in managing rapid information dissemination and diverse media channels (Komodromos & Nicoli, 2016; Amodu et al., 2019).

The digital era's rapid information flow poses significant challenges for PR, as rumors or fake news can quickly damage a company's reputation, necessitating swift and effective crisis management (Mahesa Jenar). The rise of

social media significantly influences public response to corporate reputation, often overshadowing traditional media (Cibu Gangga). Consequently, PR must ensure meticulous planning and clear communication to maintain the distinctiveness and impact of their messages (Elmeirillia Lonna).

The interview showed that technology has fundamentally transformed PR, evolving from traditional PR to technology-based Digital Public Relations. This transformation in Indonesia has altered PR practices, demanding adaptation to rapid information dissemination, the use of various communication channels, and a more critical approach to developing communication strategies. The availability of diverse technologies supports this shift, requiring PR to leverage these tools to devise effective strategies. As consumer behavior and technological advances continue to evolve, PR must innovate and stay current to achieve corporate communication goals. Besides adapting to new digital habits, PR professionals also bear the responsibility of managing the company's reputation. Thus, in the digital era, PR must be more adaptive (Komodromos & Nicoli, 2016; Amodu et al., 2019).

2. AI in PR activities

From the interviews, it was concluded that AI implementation in PR activities positively impacts various technical aspects. According to Galloway & Swiatek (2018), AI can make PR practices more efficient and affordable, thus increasing organizational profits. AI refers to systems that combine and synthesize data sources at a scale beyond human understanding and control (Abdullah, 2020). The interview results highlighted that using AI tools reduces the manual workload and enhances the efficiency and productivity of PR work. These AI tools assist in automating news report creation, drafting press releases, writing content, collecting data, and analyzing data to support PR strategies.

Several studies have highlighted the involvement of machines across various sectors, from consumer goods and healthcare to crisis management (Moore & Hübscher, 2021). This includes exploring how technology in PR evolves to make decisions, navigate controversies, and control outcomes. AI, particularly when integrated with various tools, emerges as a pivotal risk mitigation asset. These tools are essential for PR, allowing professionals to analyze risks, prepare preventive measures, and mitigate potential crises.

Given that crises are unpredictable events threatening stakeholder expectations, PR plays a crucial role in managing these challenges. AI technology aids PR in controlling and detecting risks, enhancing the overall crisis management strategy (Brown-Devlin et al., 2022; Al Azis, 2021).

Participants argued that AI is not the primary determinant in PR work, as AI results still need human review and editing for quality and relevance. AI cannot replace the essential roles of PR professionals, such as personal and interpersonal relations with stakeholders. These functions require human touch, empathy, and creativity, which AI lacks. PR's role in presenting these aspects to society and stakeholders is crucial. AI tools support PR work but cannot substitute for human PR professionals (Guszcza et al., 2017). AI systems can aid analytical decision-making but are less effective in "common-sense situations" and unpredictable environments (Jarrahi, 2018). These operations require human reasoning about justice, societal acceptance, and morality (Guszcza et al., 2017).

The dynamic nature of work development requires Public Relations to be highly adaptive, especially with AI's growing presence. AI can

significantly facilitate PR work, but it is not the primary determinant. According to Informant 1, AI aids in technical tasks like automating news reports and writing press release content, but these outputs still need human review and editing for quality and relevance (Mahesa Jenar). Informant 2 noted that while AI helps publicists, it cannot replace the essential personal and interpersonal relations that PR professionals maintain with stakeholders (Cibu Ganga). Informant 3 acknowledged AI's potential to transform PR and assist with tasks such as content creation and media monitoring for the company's benefit (Elmeirillia Lonna). Thus, while AI enhances PR practices, human touch and creativity remain irreplaceable (Guszcza et al., 2017).

AI has significantly supported PR work by facilitating various technical tasks. According to Informant 1, AI helps create news reports and draft press releases while also aiding in data collection and analysis for PR strategies (Mahesa Jenar). Informant 2 noted that AI assists in searching for news, monitoring news tone, and retrieving old news quickly. It helps analyze, create content, map problems, and provide general recommendations about issues (Cibu Ganga). Informant 3 added that AI aids in press release creation, making it

easier for PR practitioners to attract media attention. Although AI is still developing, it has the potential to revolutionize the PR industry by making PR professionals more efficient, effective, and creative through task automation, insights, and idea generation (Elmeirillia Lonna).

AI is crucial in enhancing PR work life, significantly boosting efficiency and productivity. According to Informant 1, AI plays a vital role by reducing manual workloads and supporting data-driven decision-making, although it cannot replace human sense and creativity (Mahesa Jenar). Informant 2 emphasized that AI automates many previously manual tasks, allowing PR to focus on more creative work. AI also processes large amounts of data quickly and accurately, far beyond what humans can achieve without technology (Cibu Ganga). Informant 3 highlighted the benefits of AI in personalizing outreach to journalists and influencers, aiding relationship building, and securing coverage. This cost-efficient approach frees up budgets for other initiatives, such as content creation and influencer marketing, demonstrating AI's potential to revolutionize PR by making it more effective and creative (Elmeirillia Lonna).

The integration of AI into PR work has led to significant changes. AI can efficiently perform several tasks, such as generating news reports and drafting press releases, which speeds up the work process. However, this output still requires human review and editing to ensure quality and relevance, positioning AI as a support tool rather than a replacement for human roles (Mahesa Jenar). Empathy and human touch, which AI lacks, remain essential in PR. These human qualities enable collaboration and adaptation to AI advancements, turning challenges into opportunities for faster and scalable work (Cibu Gangga). Despite the transformative impact of AI technology, the distinct human touch in PR work remains irreplaceable. This human element is crucial for maintaining personal and interpersonal relations with stakeholders, highlighting the difference between AI-assisted and purely human PR practices (Elmeirillia Lonna).

From the interview results related to this sub-topic, participants acknowledge that AI significantly benefits PR work by enabling faster task completion through optimized information processing and public sentiment analysis, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of PR activities. They understand that while AI can streamline processes and increase

efficiency, it also has limitations, as it cannot replace human qualities such as empathy, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills. Consequently, a collaborative approach between humans and AI is essential to achieve the desired results, leveraging AI's capabilities while maintaining the human touch necessary for effective PR work (Guszcza et al., 2017; Jarrahi, 2018).

3. AI-based media Monitoring tools

Branding is essential for a company, as it shapes its image. With the rapid internet growth and abundant data, PR must strategize to manage widespread news. In Indonesia, this is known as media monitoring, which evaluates media spread and news dynamics online, offline, and on social media (Nuraniwati, 2020). Media monitoring also assesses PR and media relations, focusing on mass media feedback (Sukmayani & Jamroji, 2021). This analysis aids decision-making and helps companies mitigate potential issues using media monitoring tools.

Participants agreed that using media monitoring tools supported by AI is efficient and effective for information collection and analysis. AI enables faster information retrieval, making the process more efficient. These tools monitor news related to the company, its

business units, suppliers, partners, and competitors. They help measure public sentiment and classify news as positive, neutral, or negative, aiding PR in understanding public perception and sentiment. AI also provides early warnings of potential issues, identifies conflicts, and refines keywords for more relevant and focused monitoring (Nuraniwati, 2020).

Participants noted that media monitoring is conducted daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually to track news trends and sentiments and improve future processes. Despite AI technology, print media skimming remains important for exclusive, in-depth information. AI tools effectively identify and collect information quickly and analyze trends and public sentiment, helping PR anticipate potential crises (Nuraniwati, 2020).

The use of media monitoring tools has become integral for PR activities, as described by the participants. Informant 1 noted that these tools are used to monitor news related to the pulp and paper industry, forestry, environmental issues, social, and economic matters, as well as news about MAS, its business units, suppliers, partners, and competitors (Mahesa Jenar). Informant 2 emphasized that media monitoring helps identify client trends, including brands,

and understand public perception. It also measures PR campaign effectiveness by tracking media coverage, allowing PR to assess campaign impact from the client's perspective (Cibu Gangga). Informant 3 highlighted the importance of identifying potential issues early through tracking negative or critical media coverage, enabling proactive measures. Media monitoring also aids in building relationships with journalists by identifying those interested in clients or brands and facilitating contact (Elmeirillia Lonna). These insights underscore the comprehensive role of media monitoring tools in enhancing PR efficiency, effectiveness, and relationship-building (Nuraniwati, 2020).

Media Monitoring is an essential aspect of PR, as it involves closely tracking news and its various elements to gauge public sentiment and provide early warnings about current and future issues. According to Informant 1, this process includes monitoring the tonality of the news—whether positive, neutral, or negative—to understand public perception better and anticipate potential problems (Mahesa Jenar). Informant 2 emphasized the importance of monitoring the number of media exposures at events and keeping an eye on competitors' activities (Cibu Ganga).

Informant 3 noted that Media Monitoring encompasses tracking company news, subsidiaries, competitors, and relevant current issues (Elmeirillia Lonna). This comprehensive approach helps PR professionals stay informed, respond proactively to emerging trends, and manage their company's reputation effectively (Nuraniwati, 2020).

The frequency of media monitoring use varies, but it's an integral part of PR activities. According to Informant 1, monitoring is done daily for daily news, weekly to track news trends and sentiments, and monthly, quarterly, and annually to assess macro news trends and sentiment, aiding future improvements (Mahesa Jenar). Informant 2 mentioned that at Smartfren, media monitoring is used continuously to track news and calculate the PR value of news exposure (Cibu Gangga). Informant 3 stated that media monitoring is employed daily to assist in completing tasks (Elmeirillia Lonna). This regular and comprehensive approach ensures that PR professionals stay informed and responsive to news developments, enhancing their effectiveness in managing the company's reputation (Nuraniwati, 2020).

Participants emphasized the critical role of media monitoring in PR. According to Informant 1, it helps identify potential conflicts and issues, understand public perceptions and sentiments, and track trends and hot topics (Mahesa Jenar). Informant 2 highlighted the importance of real-time media monitoring, which accelerates the process and provides a comprehensive overview of media coverage, thereby aiding in agenda-setting and media framing (Cibu Gangga). Informant 3 stressed that media monitoring allows for comprehensive and automated information gathering, enhancing the PR team's ability to stay informed and responsive (Elmeirillia Lonna). These insights collectively illustrate the importance of media monitoring tools in streamlining PR activities, enhancing efficiency, and enabling proactive issue management (Nuraniwati, 2020).

Despite the adoption of media monitoring technology, traditional methods still play a role in PR activities. Informant 1 explained that PR professionals continue to skim print media for exclusive and in-depth information that is often available only in national mainstream print media. Although media monitoring technology simplifies and accelerates this skimming process (Mahesa Jenar), manual

skimming persists for issues or news that require traditional media treatment, as noted by Informant 2 (Cibu Gangga). However, some professionals, like Informant 3, reported not using the old method anymore (Elmeirillia Lonna). This highlights that while technology has streamlined PR practices, traditional methods remain relevant in certain contexts, emphasizing the necessity of a balanced approach (Nuraniwati, 2020).

Despite the benefits of media monitoring, several challenges persist. According to Informant 1, PR professionals struggle to ensure the validity and accuracy of obtained information and must adjust keywords precisely to get relevant results (Mahesa Jenar). Informant 2 highlighted that small, difficult-to-access media sources pose challenges, as does an unstable network, which can affect monitoring outcomes. This requires significant preparedness, from ensuring a stable internet connection to specifying search terms accurately to avoid biased results (Cibu Ganga). Informant 3 added that sometimes news is missed due to nonspecific keywords (Elmeirillia Lonna). These issues underscore the importance of precision and preparedness in using media monitoring tools effectively (Nuraniwati, 2020).

The convenience of using media monitoring tools is significant, as highlighted by the participants. According to Informant 1, media monitoring accelerates the discovery and information-gathering process, making PR work more efficient (Mahesa Jenar). Informant 2 noted that the automation provided by media monitoring saves time and streamlines tasks, enhancing overall productivity (Cibu Ganga). Informant 3 emphasized that media monitoring is very effective in facilitating analysis by providing easy access to news from search engine results and related news, simplifying the evaluation process (Elmeirillia Lonna). These benefits collectively demonstrate the crucial role of media monitoring tools in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of PR activities (Nuraniwati, 2020).

From the interviews, it can be concluded that participants understand the importance of combining media monitoring technology and human collaboration. These tools enable PR to identify issues, anticipate conflicts, and take actions to maintain the company's reputation more effectively. Media Monitoring enhances the ability to quickly and efficiently capture essential topics and mitigate potential crises.

However, improvements are needed in data validity (Nuraniwati, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Technological developments have caused significant disruption in various fields, including the PR industry. Interviews with PR professionals in Indonesia reveal that this transformation has brought substantial changes in PR practices, necessitating adaptation from traditional to digital PR. The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the PR environment provides numerous opportunities for PR development, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness. However, AI cannot replace the essential human role in PR. One frequently discussed AI tool is Media Monitoring, which automates information gathering and news sentiment analysis, increasing efficiency and effectiveness. Media monitoring allows PR to dissect issues and mitigate potential risks. However, AI's maximum potential is realized only through effective human collaboration. This research underscores the positive impact of AI implementation in PR activities, particularly media monitoring, across several companies. However, significant investment in technology and human resources is required. Further research could delve deeper into the impact of AI tools on PR for

enterprises, analyzing how AI enhances PR strategies and outcomes.

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