

Transforming public relations practices in the digital age: A case study of the role of AI influencer Arbie Seo

Nur'aeni Nur'aeni¹, Dasrun Hidayat², Gita Melati³

¹Department of Communication Science, Subang University, Indonesia

^{2,3}Department of Communication and Design, Adhirajasa Reswara Sanjaya University, Indonesia
Corresponding Author, ✉ nuraeni@unsub.ac.id

Abstract

Article History:

Received 2024-02-26.

Revised 2024-04-04.

Accepted 2025-07-24.

Published 2025-07-24.

Keywords:

Digital Public Relations,
Artificial Intelligence (AI),
Influencer, New Media.

Digital transformation has brought significant changes in Public Relations (PR) practices, including the emergence of the phenomenon of AI influence that is influencing the way organizations build relationships with the public. This study aims to explore the role of AI influencers in PR communication strategies through a case study of Arbie Seo, one of the AI influencers active on social media. The method used is qualitative with a constructivism paradigm, involving eight informants who were deliberately selected, consisting of practitioners, academics, and PR students. The data was obtained through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically. The results show that AI influencers play a strategic role in improving the effectiveness of communication with audiences through interactive, personalized, and data-driven approaches. However, there are obstacles in the integration between technology and the human element, especially in the context of empathy and credibility. Therefore, collaboration between human communication expertise and AI technology capabilities is essential to achieve a sustainable communication strategy. This research makes a theoretical contribution by enriching digital PR literature and emphasizing the importance of technological adaptation in the PR profession. Practically, the results emphasize the need for PR actors to be ready to respond to changes in the communication landscape due to the development of artificial intelligence technology.

Introduction

Rapid technological advances have led to various new innovations that replaced old methods that were considered less effective and efficient (Akinola & Telukdarie, 2023). One of the most distinctive innovations in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 is the presence of artificial intelligence (AI) (Tjandrawina, 2016). AI, often referred to as a technological masterpiece, has brought civilization into an era of hyperreality, where the boundaries between the real and virtual worlds are increasingly blurred (Mustikaningsih & Fahrudin, 2024). This transformation not only affects business systems, but also extends to various professions including marketing, journalism, and public relations (PR) (Hidayat et al., 2024).

Public Relations, which was originally understood as the practice of managing the distribution of information between individuals or organizations, such as businesses, governments, institutions, or non-profit organizations to the public (Permatasari, 2021), is now undergoing a redefinition of meaning as technology advances. Meanwhile, the change in the concept of Public Relations in line with the current era of artificial intelligence can be reflected in the definition by The Chartered Institute of Public Relations, which emphasizes that “PR is about reputation the results of actions taken, communications delivered, and other people’s views of you” (Arief, 2019). This interpretation is particularly relevant today, as almost all disseminated information is stored in large digital data, which can be accessed and analyzed by anyone. In this context, AI plays a crucial role in processing and interpreting this vast amount of data to monitor public sentiment, predict audience behavior, and personalize communication strategies. The synergy between AI and big data allows PR practitioners to make more informed real-time decisions that directly impact reputation management and stakeholder engagement (Gustini et al., 2023).

Additionally, PR must understand that reputation is shaped by a wide range of interactions ranging from organizational activities and communicated messages to public responses and user-generated content (Nur’aeni et al., 2024). In line with the evolving meaning and function of PR, a new paradigm has emerged: Digital Public Relations. This concept highlights the growing importance of integrating digital technology, especially AI, into communication practices. According to Daugherty, AI is a collection of advanced technologies that allow machines to feel, understand, act and learn (Abdullah, 2020). AI is an application of advanced technology where machines show human cognitive functions such as learning, analysis and problem solving (Valin, 2018). AI enables PR practitioners to analyze large amounts of digital data and extract meaningful insights, thereby improving their understanding of audience behavior, evaluating campaign effectiveness, and adjusting communication strategies with greater precision. However, despite its many advantages, AI also brings considerable challenges to the field of PR. As noted by Valin, (2018) from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, while human professionals have critical thinking and ethical judgment, certain PR tasks are increasingly at risk of being automated and replaced by AI systems. This duality between opportunity and disruption demands that PR professionals adapt by integrating technological capabilities without leaving the human touch that remains essential in strategic communication.

A clear example of AI integration in the realm of public relations is the rise of AI influencers, such as Arbie Seo, who are starting to change the conventional communication paradigm traditionally upheld by human PR practitioners. Arbie Seo is a metahuman created with AI technology in Indonesia, designed to be very similar to a real human (Saputra, 2024). Arbie Seo has gained public attention mainly through social media, especially after his appearance on a 2021 podcast with his creator, Aelke. Several factors contribute to Arbie’s effectiveness as a brand communicator. His dynamic personality, confident demeanor, and ability to engage in seemingly natural conversations in his content have managed to capture the interest of many social media users. The Arbie Seo phenomenon exemplifies the transformation of public relations from one-way communication that relies on traditional media to a more interactive, personalized, and data-driven model. Additionally, AI influencers introduced a new communication approach in which organizations maintain complete control over messaging and narrative construction, aspects that are significantly in contrast to the more decentralized and interpretive nature of conventional PR strategies (Mikalef et al., 2022).

AI influencers offer a distinct and seemingly authentic way to engage with audiences, largely due to their unique identities as metahuman representations powered by artificial intelligence (Ferreira et al., 2024). The increasing adoption of AI influencers is closely linked

to the phenomenon of democratization of influence, where the ability to shape, public opinion is no longer limited to traditional celebrities or public figures (Jayasingh et al., 2025). This shift opens new opportunities for brands to connect with consumers through a variety of voices and perspectives that feel more relatable and diverse. Additionally, AI influencers often command a large and loyal following and are considered credible figures or specialized experts in a particular industry. Zhou et al. (2021) Emphasize that individuals with large online followers significantly influence public opinion, brand perception, and even consumer purchasing decisions. Therefore, the integration of AI into communication strategies allows for a more adaptive and personalized approach, allowing messages to be effectively tailored to the target audience based on data-driven insights (Rizomyliotis et al., 2024).

The growing trend of utilizing AI influencers as part of a brand's communication strategy has gained momentum along with the rapid development of social media platforms, which serve as the primary channel for two-way interaction between brands and consumers (Cheng & Wang, 2025). This trend reflects a shift in public relations practices, where technology-based personas are used to drive engagement, convey messages, and shape public perception more effectively (Sheng et al., 2025). In the context of public relations, Kent, as quoted by Carr & Hayes (2015), defines social media as a collection of interactive communication platforms that facilitate a two-way dialogue between the sender and receiver of the message. A clear illustration of this trend can be seen in the case of AI influencer Arbie Seo, who is actively utilizing TikTok as a medium for Digital PR. Through this platform, Arbie engages audiences in a dynamic and relatable way, helping organizations build relationships and shape their corporate image. Arbie's presence demonstrates how AI technology is strategically used to create personalized and interactive experiences, marking a significant evolution in modern public relations.

Broadly speaking, the rise of AI signals a fundamental shift in the way brands interact with their audiences, especially within the framework of Digital PR. The adoption of AI technology has enabled brands to build relationships and influence public perception in a more immediate, personalized, and data-driven way. While the core functions of traditional PR such as strategic communication planning and stakeholder relationship management remain important, the boundaries are increasingly blurred. AI influencers now contribute to several key PR functions, including brand storytelling, messaging, and digital audience engagement.

Although the presence of this technology presents several questions regarding the existence of conventional PR communication in the future, AI Influencers can also open strategic opportunities to strengthen the effectiveness of communication in the digital era. This is in line with research on AI that refers to previous results which states that the main purpose of AI is not to replace the role of humans in work, but rather to improve and complement human performance (Mo & Zhou, 2024). This can result in a decrease in human workload and open the door to innovation that is not only driven by financial considerations (Vita et al., 2023). With a comprehensive understanding of the development of digital instruments, a PR can use them as relevant tools and strategies in forming, maintaining, and enhancing the image of a brand or organization in an increasingly connected environment.

Meanwhile, other studies have also found that the existence of AI contributing to the performance of the Public Relations of the Garut Regency communication and information office in building the right communication channels (Nugraha et al., 2022). The message conveyed is proven to be influential and accepted by the audience as can be seen from the feedback on each content uploaded (Hidayat et al., 2025). The shift in fashion product

marketing using AI could result in the replacement of influencer roles (Cheng & Wang, 2025). Emotional appeal can increase the communication effectiveness of virtual (vs. human) influencers' PSAs (Mo & Zhou, 2024). Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) have prompted companies to incorporate AI chatbots into service interactions. Previous research explored how to balance human and AI interactions in service interactions for brand-building strategies (Sheng et al., 2025). Therefore, according to the researchers, this research also needs to be studied further, because previous research only highlighted the role of AI in general in communication or PR, but has not specifically examined the role of AI influencers as an entity that shapes public opinion in digital PR strategy.

The difference in this study lies in the object of the study which focuses on the transformation of AI Influencers and its impact on the role of Conventional Public Relations, with the case study of Arbie Seo. The research focus is directed to explore the relationship between the presence of AI Influencers and conventional PR practices through a new media theory approach submitted by W. Russell Neuman. Neuman himself is an important figure in the study of new media theory because it provides a deep understanding of how media technology changes social and cultural interactions. Meanwhile, new media, according to Neuman, apart from being a neutral means of communication, also brings significant social and cultural implications (Vita et al., 2023). One of the main ideas he discussed was "the end of the *audience*", which marks a shift from passive audiences to active audiences that not only consume media content but also produce and disseminate content. This shift has resulted in a more vibrant and participatory media culture, where everyone has a dual role as a media consumer and producer (Achmad, 2020). Therefore, Neuman's explanation is crucial to explaining how new media is not only changing the way we communicate but also shaping a broad social and cultural structure, while demanding an awareness of the social and cultural implications of such technologies (Vita et al., 2023).

Based on the background explanation, this study aims to explore the existence of AI Influencers such as Arbie Seo and its impact on conventional Public Relations practices in the digital era. Thus, the results of this research are expected to make a real contribution to PR practitioners in answering the challenges and opportunities of technological advancement, especially in utilizing influencer AI as part of relevant communication strategies in the digital era.

Method

This research uses a qualitative method, which aims to understand social phenomena from the perspective of participants and analyze a comprehensive and complex picture through expressions in words (Jordan et al., 2022) the scholarly productivity of trainees is highly variable. The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of residents who have been highly productive in scholarship. Methods: We performed a qualitative study using a constructivist–interpretivist paradigm and conducted semistructured interviews at seven Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education–accredited emergency medicine residency programs in the United States. We included sites of diverse locations and training formats (PGY-1 to -4 vs. PGY-1 to -3. This method facilitates a deeper and more detailed study (Angin & Zainal, 2018). This approach is in accordance with the use of the constructivism paradigm in this study, which is a perspective to understand the complexity of the real world (Sari et al., 2020). The constructivist paradigm is deeply embedded in the process of socialization of its followers and practitioners, which determines what is considered important, legitimate, and reasonable (Skamagki et al., 2024). In addition to being normative, this paradigm also provides direction to practitioners regarding actions that must be taken without requiring deep existential or epistemological considerations. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009)

This study also adopts a holistic single case study approach, i.e. studies that focus attention on one case as the core of the research research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). In this study, the focus of the case is how the role dynamics of AI Influencer Arbie Seo as digital public relations for conventional PR practices in the digital era. In general, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of computer science that creates systems capable of mimicking human cognitive abilities, such as learning and making decisions automatically. AI Influencer or virtual influencer is a digital entity created with AI technology and computer graphics to resemble humans and behave like humans, so that they can interact and build engagement with audiences on social media. Arbie Seo is an example of an AI influencer in Indonesia, embodied as a metahuman character developed by G Studios Company Indonesia, a subsidiary of Nabati Group, combining motion capture and AI technology. A 17-year-old high school girl with a friendly personality and Sundanese Korean style, Arbie Seo is active on the TikTok (arbie_seo) platform with more than 1.3 million followers. This character was created by celebgram Aelke Mariskha, not a real human but a digital representation that brings together elements of local culture and the technology of the industrial revolution 5.0 to create unique and interesting interactions on social media. Thus, Arbie Seo as an AI influencer is the focus of the main case and the object of this study.

Meanwhile, to determine the information or research subject, purposive techniques are used. Purposive techniques require the right criteria to be determined based on research needs (Pratama & Hidayat, 2020). The technique of selecting informants or research subjects is carried out purposively. Purposive techniques require the right criteria to be determined based on research needs. The subject of this study consists of eight samples with experienced conventional PR criteria and academic PR. PR students who have followed Arbie seo on social media. The criteria for informants in this study were selected based on their ability to provide relevant and in-depth information related to Public Relations (PR) practices in the context of digital and AI Influencers. First, a PR practitioner with 7 years of work experience was selected, consisting of 2 years at the Ministry of Public Works and Construction Services Region IV Jayapura Papua, 2 years at The British Institute Bandung, and 3 years at the Indonesian Computer University. Experience in these various agencies ensures that practitioners have broad insight and a deep understanding of the dynamics of conventional and digital PR. Second, a PR academic who teaches PR-related materials at ARS University, so that he can provide strong theoretical analysis and critical views based on academic studies. Third, PR students who are active followers of AI Influencer Arbie Seo on social media and understand the dynamics of PR and the current phenomenon of digital influencers, thus providing perspective from the perspective of the next generation of social media users and future practitioners. The selection of the three informants was carried out to obtain comprehensive data by triangulating perspectives from the practices, theories, and direct experiences of social media users, so that the results of the research are valid and representative of the phenomenon being studied.

Table 1 Informant Profile

Code	Name	Jobs
P1	A	PR Practitioner
P2	F	Academic PR
P3	IL	PR Students
P4	ATS	PR Students
P5	NN	PR Students
P6	RS	PR Students
P7	I	PR Students
P8	RS	PR Students

Data was collected through in-depth online and face-to-face interviews over 2 months in 2023 and then systematically analyzed. The analysis process includes transcription, encoding the data to find patterns, and grouping the code into relevant themes. Researchers also reflect on connecting findings conceptually to achieve a deeper understanding. The data is presented in a structured manner to facilitate interpretation, then conclusions are drawn based on a comprehensive and scientifically accountable analysis. The data validity technique in this study refers to the method proposed by Moleong (Hidayat & Hafiar, 2019), such as expanding participation, perseverance, triangulation, negative case analysis, and the use of relevant references. The researcher used triangulation as the main step by doing *Cross-examination* data through three aspects, namely method, time, and data source. The goal is to ensure the authenticity and consistency of the data so that the research results are more valid and reliable.

Results and Discussion

The development of Artificial intelligence (AI) has brought significant changes in Public Relations (PR) practices, especially with the presence of AI Influencers who are now part of digital communication strategies. Based on the results of the research conducted, it was found that the presence of AI Influencers shows two sides that go hand in hand, namely as an innovative opportunity as well as a serious challenge to the existence of human roles in conventional PR practices. As revealed by the P7 informant, the use of AI as digital PR is considered interesting and new in the current digital era, but it still raises concerns about the possibility of diminishing human roles as AI becomes more dominant in the world of work. The following is the statement expressed by P7.

"It can be called half opportunity and half threat, the opportunity in question is a marketing strategy with AI that is quite interesting and new, especially in this sophisticated era, but the threat is that the role of humans will be reduced if AI continues to occupy the top level of humans." (informant interview P7, 16/12/2023).

While AI allows for more efficient and faster communication strategies in the dissemination of messages, the transition of communicators from humans to machines creates an imbalance of roles. The presence of AI Influencers clearly creates ambivalent conditions that reflect the challenges and dynamics of AI in the field of Public Relations. While it may be too early to categorize AI as a threat, it is important for conventional PR practitioners to maintain control over the utilization of this technology. The goal is to ensure that the use of AI Influencers does not erode the role of humans or even reduce the authenticity of the message being conveyed. Informant P5 further emphasized that,

"Subjective can be a threat or an opportunity, back to how everyone sees it. as an opportunity because AI can provide efficiency in disseminating messages and rapid data analysis. While the threat is caused by the replacement of the human element and the lack of authenticity that technology can provide." (P5 informant interview, 16/12/2023).

In this context, the use of this technology needs to be aligned with the role of humans in communication, so as not to replace the personal value that can only be provided by conventional PR approaches. Although digital transformation continues to evolve, the role of PR remains important because it provides an honest personal dimension in managing relationships with the public. This view is also supported by academic PR informants who emphasize the importance of combining digital and conventional strategies to build a comprehensive and sustainable corporate reputation. P2 explains that,

"The use of AI should be an added attraction that follows technology, not a substitute for PR practitioners. While AI can reduce the role of PR practitioners in some respects, their role is still indispensable. AI may potentially be a supporting tool for companies to build specific roles, but the involvement of both human and technological, remains important." (P2 informant interview, 19/12/2023).

Adapting to the advancement of digital technology is the main prerequisite for PR practitioners so that this profession remains relevant and optimal in an era of rapid change. PR professionals are required to be able to understand, learn and utilize various tools and technologies to support communication strategies, while maintaining personal values in building an approach with the community. Public relations practice informants support that the success of public relations communication is highly dependent on adaptation. The P1 informant highlighted the importance of human adaptation to remain relevant during technological advancements.

"Because from a technological perspective we must be able to adapt to any technological development, and this is a big challenge for humans to be wise, better able to survive with the concept of adaptation. How to adapt, yes, follow the times" (P1 informant interview, 19/12/2023).

In addition, some informants even explicitly see AI Influencer as a strategic opportunity that PR can leverage in creating a combination of new and unique relationships between brands and the public. This technology not only helps improve work efficiency in strategy implementation, but can also increase the effectiveness of a company's digital communication if used optimally by PR. This opinion was reinforced by the P3 informant who stated that AI provides a new nuance,

"I see this as an opportunity that can be leveraged, because the use of AI is much more unique and efficient, giving a new nuance to the relationship between the brand and its public." (P3 informant interview, 19/12/2023).

In an era where the speed of information dissemination is critical, AI Influencers can be the right solution in helping PR practices to establish close relationships with their audiences. Through collaboration, AI influencers can provide great benefits in improving PR strategies because they allow the creation of new brand imagery on social media platforms. This way, companies can maintain a consistent image while creating unique and engaging interactions with their followers. This statement is in line with what the P4 informant conveyed, namely,

"If I see this as an opportunity, why is it that because the world now needs fast, we want to get information quickly. AI Influencers can be a new face or image in digital media to interact with the public." (P4 informant interview, 18/12/2023).

Similar points were further raised by the P8 informant who added that AI can open up opportunities in creating a wider audience,

"I see AI influencers as an opportunity to build and maintain relationships between brands and the public through digital media. The existence of AI influencers can open up new opportunities in reaching a wider audience." (informant interview P8, 16/12/2023).

Integrating AI technology into PR practices opens the door to innovation in building bonds between brands and the public on social media. Where, by maximizing AI Influencers, PR can better understand the market, adjust the right audience preferences, and improve interaction with the audience. This suggests that, ultimately, AI won't overtake humans, if

it's clear who and for what. This explanation is in line with the statement of informant P6,

"I don't think this would be a threat if it was clear who and for what." (informant interview P6, 19/12/2023).

The following are some of the key points found regarding AI influencers as challenges and opportunities in PR practice.

Table 2. Thematic Dynamics of AI Influencers in Public Relations Practice

Informant	Statement
P1	Adaptation required
P2	PR and Technology Collaboration
P3 & P4 & P8	Chance
P5 & P7	Ambivalent
P6	It's not a threat if it's clear who and for what

Source: Research Results (2023)

Public Relations (PR) practices are currently in the vortex of an increasingly complex technological revolution, especially with the presence of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The results show that the presence of AI, including AI Influencers, symbolizes a paradigm shift in the digital communication landscape. This transformation is inevitable and corresponds to the philosophy of Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher who stated that nothing remains except change itself (Nothing survives except change) (Abdullah, 2020). In line with this philosophy, the PR industry consisting of various agencies, both large and small, is now in the adjustment stage with a metamorphosis driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology.

AI itself is not fundamentally a new concept, as an academic discipline, it emerged in 1956, and since then, it has undergone a series of optimism and pessimism. AI, the field of computer science, emphasizes the creation of intelligent machines to work and react like humans. However, this rapid development has led to an ambivalent situation. On the one hand, AI Influencer is considered a strategic opportunity because it increases efficiency, accelerates data analysis, and aids in the creation of relevant strategies, but on the other hand, AI Influencer also triggers several concerns about the implications for work and possible shifting dynamics between technology and humans. Researchers in (Johnson & Verdicchio, 2017) even confirms that the impact of AI on work can vary greatly depending on the type of work. This has sparked anxiety among PR practitioners regarding the changes that may occur in their profession, especially in terms of the stability and role of AI Influencers today.

It reflects the classic debate between the efficiency of technology and the essence of humanity. In 2018, several universities and international PR professional organizations discussed the relationship between PR and AI in more depth. For example, the 2018 World Public Relations Forum in Oslo took on the subtheme of intelligence, while the 2018 Barcelona Critical PR Conference highlighted three key topics about AI. In Indonesia, the ANPOR international conference in collaboration with Padjadjaran University in November 2018 also put social media, big data, and AI as the focus of discussion. In addition, several domestic PR conventions also discuss similar issues. Various literature and studies show diverse views on AI in PR. Some support the use of AI because of its potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication. However, others warn of the need for

caution (Arief & Saputra, 2019). Thus, the ambivalent view of AI, especially AI influence, shows the need for a critical and reflective attitude in integrating this technology into PR practices.

During this complexity, another perspective emerged from several speakers who explained that at this point there is a new perspective, namely that when AI takes over mechanical functions, PR practitioners can focus on strategic aspects by utilizing the technology to improve the effectiveness of their communication. Where AI in general has the potential to be an opportunity for PR practice. It is supported by (Yaxley, 2018) which states that AI itself can allow PR practitioners to focus more on strategies that are important in their work. This approach shows that AI, if used correctly, can be a supportive tool for PR practitioners, allowing them to expand their strategic skills and increase efficiency in their daily tasks. Some companies have even managed to integrate AI in their PR strategies.

Meanwhile, AI Influencer is the most interesting embodiment of AI integration in the digital realm of PR. Arbie itself can build a good image, convey strategic messages, influence public perception, increase engagement, and form opinions through digital platforms. This is not without basis but because Arbie as a digital PR has managed to build a unique relationship with its fans through social media platforms, this shows the flexibility of AI beyond its conventional functions. Two-way communication on social media by influencing AI as digital PR also encourages the realization of effective messages. This is in line with the explanation of Permatasari, A.N et al in (Hutabarat, 2022), that digital PR plays an important role in managing reputation through interactive and responsive online media. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and podcasts have become a medium for digital PR, and AI Influencers are now one of the actors in this space. However, based on the results of the research conducted, several other crucial challenges have arisen. Although AI Influencers are effective in reaching a fast and wide audience, they still have limitations such as credibility and ethical issues. Case studies from global companies such as Apple, Coca-Cola, IBM, and Sephora even show that the application of AI in Public Relations strategies can improve audience interaction, engagement rates, and return on investment (ROI) campaigns. However, such success requires careful and planned implementation for optimal results (Mustikaningsih & Fahrudin, 2024).

This challenge emphasizes that the presence of AI influencers does not necessarily replace the role of humans but rather demands collaboration between technology and human values in PR practices so that the function of technology does not get out of control or even deviate from ethical communication values. In addition, Valin's research revealed that while AI can support the execution of routine tasks and data analysis, the ability of humans to capture emotional nuances and cultural contexts remains irreplaceable. The main challenge for PR practitioners is finding the right balance between using AI and maintaining a human touch in their communication strategies. Therefore, they must be able to adapt to technology, because this adaptability can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of technology utilization in achieving the desired goals (Nata et al., 2022). Furthermore, according to (Abdullah, 2020) The existence and role of PR today must be very maintained, where PR is encouraged to be able to redefine, re-actualize, reposition new strategies and tools and prepare competencies in the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology.

Meanwhile, Public Relations must improve their various skills to compete in the future. This is also supported by research from (Mustikaningsih & Fahrudin, 2024) which states that continuous skill development is actually vital in maximizing the potential of AI in the field of PR. In fact, previous research has consistently emphasized the importance of digital skills in dealing with this era (Deursen & Dijk, 2011). The lack of technical

understanding among PR practitioners regarding the use of AI technology is an obstacle that must be overcome as soon as possible. This is based on research from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) in 2020, which identified that 75% of respondents feel less confident in using AI technology due to limited knowledge and expertise (Mustikaningsih & Fahrudin, 2024). In this case, practitioners need to actively take part in training and update their skills to maximize AI primarily AI influencer in communication strategies. In this way, the challenges and opportunities that arise in the era of artificial intelligence can be managed more effectively, thus making a significant contribution to improving the efficiency of PR operations. In addition, currently public relations are no longer only dealing with various PR practitioners from other organizations or countries but with technological developments in the form of AI which are now starting to develop into AI Influencers. Therefore, PR needs to integrate AI Influencer as a digital tool that can help it achieve the company's goals in a relevant way. AI itself is a technology created to make it easier for humans, not to exploit humans.

Basically, AI trends have now become an integral part of our daily lives, which is closely linked to digitalization. The relationship between AI and digitalization is mutually beneficial, as one drives the growth of the other (Mikalef et al., 2022). AI Influencer as a digital PR practice is one of the most valuable elements in creating connected experiences and strengthening brand image in the digital world, especially on social media. However, the key to the application of AI in PR is not becoming an AI expert itself, but rather the ability to use AI as a tool to bring better solutions to companies (Galloway & Swiatek, 2018). Overall, in an era where technology is rapidly evolving, the role of PR remains relevant even as new media and technologies such as AI influences increasingly penetrate PR practices. In fact, the role of PR is unique and profound in building relationships with the community. In line with this, Neuman emphasized the role of power in shaping the impact of new media technologies. While these technologies have the potential to challenge existing power structures, it needs to be recognized that they can also be co-opted and leveraged to reinforce existing power dynamics (Vita et al., 2023).

Thus, while AI Influencers offer a range of advantages, such as the ability to automatically personalize messages, and efficiency in distributing content to audiences, these technologies still have limitations in understanding the social contexts, emotions, and cultural values that are at the core of effective public communication. Therefore, public relations practitioners not only need to understand how this technology works but also be able to bridge the sophistication of technology with the human needs and strategic communication of a company's brand.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in Public Relations (PR) practices opens opportunities for companies to further develop communication strategies that are more adaptive, effective, and in line with the demands of the digital era. The findings of the study show that AI, particularly in the form of AI Influencers, plays a strategic role as a strategic tool that can improve the quality of organizational communication through an innovative and responsive approach to the characteristics of current audiences. The P1 informant emphasized that the application of AI as a tool reflects the organization's readiness to keep up with the times and gives the impression that the company has successfully adapted and updated communication methods in line with technological advances. The following is P1's explanation that,

"The strategy is how AI influences these as digital objects or tools to introduce that our company has made peace with the times and uses technology to maintain its image and reputation.".
(P1 informant interview, 19/12/2023).

AI Influencer itself is one of the innovations that is increasingly relevant to support public communication, especially in today's digital era. AI Influencer is seen as a new tool in maximizing the innovative and creative ideas of a PR person, especially related to the development of interesting PR strategies. This is in accordance with the opinion of informant P2 that,

"AI influencers are tools. Therefore, we need to focus on how we can generate ideas or creativity that can be conveyed through AI." (P2 informant interview, 19/12/2023).

In addition, the presence of AI Influencers in PR practices is considered as an intermediary brand that brings new nuances, where the approach taken becomes dynamic, especially reaching young audiences who are very familiar with technology. AI Influencers can present an easy-to-understand communication approach, so that the message conveyed is quickly received by several Indonesian people who are very familiar with digital developments. The P3 informant confirmed that,

"I think AI gives a new color to PR practitioners, of course it has a good impact, because through AI Influencers the message conveyed is much more attractive and easier to accept." (informant interview P3, 19/12/2023).

In fact, Arbie Seo's ability to adapt language and communication styles, as well as messages that are in harmony with local culture, make his content easier to enter and remember by young audiences in Indonesia. Arbie Seo's digital representation also opens another attraction for the interaction between technology and culture and facilitates the formation of a loyal digital community. In essence, AI influencers like Arbie can create corporate PR strategies that not only capture the audience's attention but are also measurable in building interactions. This is in line with P7's view that,

"I think AI influencers like Arbie Seo can be a tool for creating more measurable strategies because they have attention-grabbing communication and can provide helpful insights in PR strategies." (informant interview P7, 16/12/2023).

The same thing was also expressed by the P6 informant, adding that AI influencers are interestingly used in PR strategies,

"The presence of AI influencers like Arbie Seo will be a new attraction tool for the public who sees it. Moreover, today's society cannot be separated from the role of internet technology, the use of AI influencers is quite interesting if used in PR strategies." (informant interview P6, 19/12/2023).

The integration of AI Influencers into PR strategies will strengthen the role of PR practitioners in brand communication with the public, as the resulting messages have been designed to the maximum to build relationships better and in accordance with the wishes and targets of the audience. By utilizing AI, PR practitioners can convey the relevance of the objectives of the message strategy to the company's vision and mission as well as the desired vital aspects. This view is in line with the statement of the P4 informant who affirms that,

"AI Influencers including Arbie Seo are able to convey messages well. Because the message produced is designed as best as possible so that it can build a relationship with the audience and adjust the desired strategy". (P4 informant interview, 18/12/2023).

Additionally, P8 states that AI influences improving PR interactions with audiences, making them an inventive approach in an increasingly advanced and unavoidable digital

age. Here is P8's statement.

"As an element that enriches the interaction of conventional PR practitioners with the community. The use of AI influencers can be an innovative strategy in reaching audiences in the digital era" (P8 informant interview, 16/12/2023).

Overall, incorporating cognitive and technological aspects into a company's strategy can optimize the achievement of goals and outcomes. AI encourages continuous cooperation between practitioners and technology due to the ability to continuously learn environmental dynamics and audience characteristics according to trends. P5 briefly explains that,

"These changes must be confronted and learned by integrating AI capabilities with conventional PR skills to achieve optimal outcomes in interacting with the public in the digital age." (P5 informant interview, 16/12/2023).

The following are some of the key points found regarding AI Optimization as a Strategic Tool in Public Relations Practice

Table 3. Optimizing AI Influencers as a Strategic Tool in Public Relations Practice

Informant	Statement
P1	Strategies that show companies are adapting
P2	Help develop ideas or creativity
P3	The message conveyed is much more attractive and easy to receive
P4	Be able to build relationships and adjust the desired strategy
P5	AI capabilities with conventional PR skills can achieve optimal results
P6	Arbie Seo can be a new attraction
P7	Create a more scalable strategy
P8	Elements that enrich interactions and reach audiences

Source: Research Results (2023)

The results of the study show that AI Influencers are now strong evidence that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer limited to just a task tool but has made significant progress in helping PR practices. Previously, PR only focused on building and maintaining good relationships with the community through traditional communication. However, with the inclusion of AI, PR practices have changed drastically.

The presence of AI Influencers encourages large investments in branding efforts, which PR practitioners can use to optimize organizational communication activities more effectively and efficiently. This change can be seen as a natural evolution from conventional PR to PR powered by AI technology (Vita et al., 2023). With the ability to process big data, create content, and reach a wider audience, AI can support the main task of PR in building reputation and delivering messages consistently, so that communication strategies become more targeted and targeted.

More so, AI Influencer Arbie Seo herself is currently not only acting as a brand ambassador for a particular company, but she has also become a new face and changing the culture. Its success with 1.5 million followers on Tiktok has encouraged the rapid

development of the AI Influencer industry, especially in Indonesia. AI influencers are slowly proving the existence of a meaningful dynamic culture, transforming the image of AI that was previously considered scientifically rigid into one capable of attracting a social audience. In fact, the influence of AI Influencers is more than just following trends, spearheading a real change in the way society views and accepts AI (Vita et al., 2023).

In line with this, global companies are using AI Influencers or virtual influencers to engage younger, tech-savvy audiences with a lower risk of scandal and full control over their image and messaging (Kembau et al., 2024). Where, in fact, brands such as Samsung, Prada and Louis Vuitton have managed to use virtual influencers in their campaigns, increasing engagement and increasing brand perception (Belanche et al., 2021). In fact, according to (Statista, 2023), it is estimated that virtual influencers will increase the effectiveness of digital campaigns by 30% by 2024, especially in the fields of technology, fashion, and beauty.

In addition to these advantages, recent research shows that sophisticated visual factors, engaging storytelling, and overall polished content increase audience interest and engagement (Schouten et al., 2020). According to Kim and song, when virtual influencers create high-quality content, they serve as effective media that resonates with young audiences and produces more engaging and memorable marketing messages (Kembau et al., 2024). These characteristics foster a sense of professionalism as well as uniqueness, in attracting the attention of the audience and increasing consumer engagement.

In this context, the presence of AI Influencers is now starting to become an effective strategy to reach a generation that is very familiar with the digital world. This younger generation typically wants personalized, interactive, and technology-based interaction experiences. With AI adaptability, companies can present relevant content while building an emotional closeness to their audience. Research (Muttamimah & Irwansyah, 2023) also identifies that Virtual Influncer provides a new perspective in marketing communications, thanks to its ability to create a consistent, innovative, and engaging brand image through creative content presented continuously.

Based on W. Russell Neuman's new media theory, these findings confirm that the presence of AI Influencers in PR indicates an important change in the relationship between media producers and audiences. AI Influencers, such as Arbie Seo and global brands, serve as content producers capable of building dynamic and personalized interactions with audiences, especially the younger generation who are very tech-savvy. Neuman also said that social and cultural contexts are crucial to understanding the impact of these new media, where technologies such as AI can strengthen or destroy existing power structures.

Therefore, it is important to remember that AI Influencers should be optimized as a tool only, not as full control, so that ethics, narratives, and messages remain in the hands of professionals who understand the social and cultural context of the audience. Additionally, in the social media industry, this issue is especially important because these platforms are often the main source of information and public opinion formation.

Artificially created characters often lead to debates about authenticity, transparency, and responsibility in delivering messages to the public. Therefore, the cognitive role of Public Relations practitioners is needed as the main manager of communication strategies.

For PR practitioners, this phenomenon certainly presents new challenges and opportunities. They must keep up with the times and master the use of AI technology as an integral part of modern communication strategies. On the other hand, this technology opens great opportunities to develop a more measurable PR strategy in managing a company's reputation during rapid digital change. In essence, with AI capabilities, PR

practitioners can design communication campaigns that are more targeted and have a long-term impact on public perception of brands. The role of AI Influencers in the world of PR is not just a momentary trend but has become part of a profound transformation in strategic communication practices.

Conclusion

The presence of AI influencers like Arbie Seo has brought about significant changes in the practice of Public Relations (PR) in the digital age. AI is now starting to take over conventional PR tasks such as content production and imaging, offering high efficiency, sophisticated data analysis, and broader and measurable audience engagement. However, the use of AI also poses serious challenges, including the reduction of human roles and the loss of social elements such as sensitivity, ethics, authenticity and credibility. Therefore, hybrid competencies that combine traditional communication skills and digital technology literacy are needed to keep communication strategies relevant and meaningful.

This research shows that optimising AI as a strategic tool can open great opportunities for PR to update communication strategies, improve work effectiveness, and build more targeted and impactful engagement. AI influencers, if used wisely, can become strategic partners in strengthening relationships with the public. Theoretically, these findings reinforce the constructivist paradigm and new media theory that sees digital technology as an active actor in reshaping communication patterns and social relations. Although this study is limited to one qualitative case study, this approach enriches the contextual understanding of PR in the digital era. Further research is recommended to use comparative and quantitative approaches to expand theoretical generalisations.

References

- Abdullah, A. (2020). Public relations in the era of artificial intelligence: Peluang atau ancaman? *Aristo*, 8(2), 406. <https://doi.org/10.24269/ars.v8i2.2629>
- Achmad, Z. A. (2020). Review buku: Mediamorphosis: Understanding new media by Roger Fidler. In *Potret Masyarakat dan Kebijakan Pemerintah dalam menghadapi tantangan Pandemi Covid-19* (pp. 71–77).
- Akinola, S., & Telukdarie, A. (2023). Sustainable digital transformation in healthcare: advancing a digital vascular health innovation solution. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 15(13). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151310417>
- Angin, L. L. K. P., & Zainal, M. (2018). Partisipasi politik pemilih pemula dalam bingkai jejaring sosial di media sosial. *Jurnal ASPIKOM*, 3(4), 737–754. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24329/aspikom.v3i4.210>
- Arief, N. N. (2019). *Public Relations in the era of artificial intelligence: bagaimana big data dan AI merevolusi dunia PR*. Simbiosis Rekatama Media.
- Arief, N. N., & Saputra, M. A. A. (2019). Kompetensi baru public relations (PR) pada era artificial intelligence. *Jurnal Sistem Cerdas*, 2(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.37396/jsc.v2i1.19>
- Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., Flavián, M., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2021). Understanding influencer marketing: The role of congruence between influencers, products and consumers. *Journal of Business Research*, 132(April), 186–195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbr.2021.04.016>

jbusres.2021.03.067

- Carr, C. T., & Hayes, R. A. (2015). Social media: Defining, developing, and divining. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 23(1), 46–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2015.972282>
- Cheng, J., & Wang, J. (2025). Influencer-product attractiveness transference in interactive fashion marketing: the moderated moderating effect of speciesism against AI. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 19(4), 712–729. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-06-2024-0299>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2009). *Handbook of qualitative research (2nd ed.)*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Deursen, A. van, & Dijk, J. van. (2011). Internet skills and the digital divide. *New Media and Society*, 13(6), 893–911. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444810386774>
- Ferreira, A. G., Crespo, C. F., Ribeiro, F. M., & Barreiros, P. (2024). The social media theatre: New guidelines to foster parasocial interactions with followers and improve influencer marketing communication effectiveness. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 14(2), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2024.2318696>
- Galloway, C., & Swiatek, L. (2018). Public relations and artificial intelligence: It's not (just) about robots. *Public Relations Review*, 44(5), 734–740. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2018.10.008>
- Gustini, L. K., Hidayat, D., Aulia, E. F., & Karamani, D. D. (2023). Cultural public relations approach to angklung bamboo musical instrument craft workshop activities. *PRofesi Humas Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Hubungan Masyarakat*, 8(1), 127. <https://doi.org/10.24198/prh.v8i1.47212>
- Hidayat, D., Gustini, L. K., & Lampe, I. (2025). *Komunikasi massa dan media digital (1st ed.)*. Simbiosis Rekayasa Media.
- Hidayat, D., & Hafiar, H. (2019). Nilai-nilai budaya soméah pada perilaku komunikasi masyarakat Suku Sunda. *Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi*, 7(1), 84–96. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkk.v7i1.19595>
- Hidayat, D., Marzaman, N. D., & Christin, M. (2024). Public reception on the use of AI influencers in beauty brand campaigns on Instagram. *SEARCH Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 16(1), 101–115.
- Hutabarat, P. M. (2022). Tren dan kebutuhan talenta penyiaran pada kehumasan pemerintah di era digital. *Jurnal Sosial Humaniora Terapan*, 4(2), 97–104.
- Jayasingh, S., Sivakumar, A., & Vanathaiyan, A. A. (2025). Artificial intelligence influencers' credibility effect on consumer engagement and purchase intention. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 20(1), 17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jtaer20010017>.
- Johnson, D. G., & Verdicchio, M. (2017). Kecemasan AI. *Jurnal Asosiasi Ilmu Pengetahuan Dan Teknologi Informasi*, 68(9), 2267–2270. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.23867>
- Jordan, J., Berger, M., Curato, M., Ilgen, J. S., Hopson, L. R., Clarke, S. O., Chipman, A. K., Janicki, A., & Gottlieb, M. (2022). “Not just a checkbox”: A qualitative study of the resident scholarly experience. *AEM Education and Training*, 6(6). <https://doi.org/10.1002/aet2.10824>
- Kembau, A. S., Kolondam, A., & Mandey, N. H. J. (2024). Virtual influencers and digital engagement: key insights from indonesia's younger consumers. *Jurnal Manajemen Pemasaran*, 18(2), 123–136. <https://doi.org/10.9744/pemasaran.18.2.123-136>.

- Mikalef, P., Conboy, K., Lundström, J. E., & Popovič, A. (2022). Thinking responsibly about responsible AI and 'the dark side' of AI. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 31(3), 257–268. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0960085X.2022.2026621>
- Mo, Z., & Zhou, M. (2024). Don't like them but take what they said: The effectiveness of virtual influencers in public service announcements. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 19(3), 2269–2288.
- Mustikaningsih, M., & Fahrudin, A. (2024). Tantangan dan peluang dunia pr di era kecerdasan buatan: Sebuah tinjauan literatur. *JIKA (Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Andalan)*, 7(1), 99–110. <https://doi.org/10.31949/jika.v7i1.10145>
- Muttamimah, L., & Irwansyah. (2023). Pemanfaatan influencer berbasis virtual dalam komunikasi pemasaran. *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi*, 22(1), 31–42. <https://doi.org/10.32509/wacana.v22i1.2322>
- Nata, A., Helmiah, F., & Marpaung, N. (2022). Workshop adaptasi teknologi pengisian rapor. *Communnity Development Journal*, 3(3), 2103–2106.
- Nugraha, A., Septiani, Z. A., Nurasyfa, S. E., & Nurhadi, F. N. (2022). Strategi pemanfaatan artificial intelligence dalam penyebaran informasi. *Jurnal Ilmiah Multi Disiplin Indonesia*, 1(9), 1278–1285.
- Nur'aeni, N., Hidayat, D., Nurhadi, Z. F., & Taufik, R. R. (2024). User-generated content and cultural public relations approach to the virtual branding of lombok tourism pendekatan user-generated content dan public relations budaya pada branding virtual pariwisata di Lombok. *Komunikasi*, 16(1), 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.24912/jk.v16i1.26365>
- Permatasari, A. N. (2021). Digital public relations: Trend and required skills kehumasan digital: Tren dan kompetensi yang dibutuhkan. *Jurnal ASPIKOM*, 6(2), 373–386. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.24329/aspikom.v6i2.836>
- Pratama, N. A., & Hidayat, D. (2020). Pengetahuan dan Perilaku masyarakat memaknai social distancing. *Jurnal Digital Media Dan Relationship*, 2(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.51977/jdigital.v2i1.270>
- Rizomyliotis, I., Konstantoulaki, K., & Giovanis, A. (2024). Social media influencers' credibility and purchase intention: The moderating role of green consumption values. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 00027642241236172.
- Saputra, G. H. (2024). *Siapa Arbie Seo? Robot AI asal Indonesia*. Bulatin.com. <https://bulatin.com/siapa-arbie-seo-robot-ai-asal-indonesia/>
- Sari, Y., Afiatin, T., Subandi, & Setiawan, H. W. (2020). Sundanese family strength: A preliminary study. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 8(3), 567–586. <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v8i3.513>
- Schouten, A. P., Janssen, L., & Verspaget, M. (2020). Celebrity vs. influencer endorsements in advertising: the role of identification, credibility, and product-endorser fit. *International Journal of Advertising*, 39(2), 258–281. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1634898>
- Sheng, M. L., Natalia, N., & Rusfian, E. Z. (2025). AI chatbot, human, and in-between: examining the broader spectrum of technology-human interactions in driving customer-brand relationships across experience and credence services. *Psychology & Marketing*, 42(4), 1051–1071.
- Skamagki, G., King, A., Carpenter, C., & Wåhlin, C. (2024). The concept of integration

in mixed methods research: a step-by-step guide using an example study in physiotherapy. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice*, 40(2), 197–204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09593985.2022.2120375>

Statista. (2023). *Global digital influencer marketing market size from 2020 to 2023*. Statista.

Tjandrawina. (2016). Industri 4.0: Revolusi industri abad ini dan pengaruhnya pada bidang kesehatan dan bioteknologi. *Jurnal Medicinus*, Vol 29, No(1), 31–39.

Valin, J. (2018). *Humans still needed: An analysis of skills and tools in public relations*. May, 12. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22233.01120>

Vita, N. I., Encluna, V. E., Siregar, N. S. S., Rusmardiana, A., & Anantadjaya, S. (2023). AI public relations: the early rise of Kizuna AI. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi (Indonesian Journal of Communications Studies)*, 7(2), 417–429. <https://doi.org/10.25139/jsk.v7i2.6689>

Yaxley, H. (2018). *Perangkat strategis hubungan masyarakat: Panduan penting untuk praktik hubungan masyarakat yang sukses* (Outro, p. hlm. 147-150). Theaker & H. Yaxley (Eds.).

Zhou, S., Blazquez, M., McCormick, H., & Barnes, L. (2021). How social media influencers' narrative strategies benefit cultivating influencer marketing: Tackling issues of cultural barriers, commercialised content, and sponsorship disclosure. *Journal of Business Research*, 134(November 2019), 122–142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.05.011>

Copyright holder :

© Dasrun Hidayat, and Gita Melati

First publication right :

Jurnal ASPIKOM

This article is licensed under:



