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AI-Mediated Communication: Public Perceptions and Attitudes Toward AI Generative Content in Journalism

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Abstract

This study explored public perceptions and attitudes toward AI-mediated communication (AI-MC), with a special focus on AI-generated content (AIGC) in journalism. As AI technologies become more embedded in current news production, understanding societal responses is crucial for guiding AI development and regulation. By reviewing selected empirical studies, this paper identified three major trends: (1) widespread public awareness of AIGC, (2) optimism about its capacity to enhance journalism, and (3) fear of AIGC from both the public and journalists' perspectives. This study also illustrated a significant trust gap among the public due to the opaque nature of AI systems and limited public knowledge. This study contributed to the dynamic discourse on AI-MC and suggested a more ethical algorithm design and timely legislation to promote responsible AI-MC.

Keywords

artificial intelligence (AI), AI-generated content (AIGC), AI-mediated communication (AI-MC), computer-mediated communication (CMC)

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI), large language models (LLMs), and machine learning (ML) are among the most widely discussed topics in current discourse. Researchers and journalists dive into the ocean of AI, exploring its boundaries and vast potential benefits to society. The influence and application of AI have grown rapidly, playing a significant role in various fields, especially in the realm of computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Hancock et al., 2020). One of the most prominent applications of AI is content creation, where AI-powered writing tools are being increasingly utilized across different industries.

The rapid growth of AI is closely tied to broader changes in communication and information dissemination (Fast & Horvitz, 2017). In particular, the journalism industry is one of the industries most affected by AI. In the new communication transmission approach, information is becoming more decentralized and shifting to social media networks (Yang & Sun, 2019). Monitoring mass information on social media platforms and generating trending short content are key areas where AI is widely applied in journalism. For example, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Associated Press, and most other news outlets have applied AI writers to the news production process (Yang & Sun, 2019).

At present, the rapid development and application of AI generative content (AIGC) have become an inevitable trend in the CMC, significantly altering the interpersonal communication process, challenging traditional agency and gatekeeping mechanisms in journalism, and necessitating careful consideration of

ethical implications (Li & Ma, 2019). Thus, Hancock et al. (2020) explored and expanded CMC theory and proposed a new communication method, AI-mediated communication (AI-MC). They integrate AI and CMC conceptualizations to define AI-MC as a new form of interpersonal communication where AI plays an active role in modifying, augmenting, or even generating messages. This concept is distinguished from the traditional CMC concept and encouraged a new research agenda.

Considering the transformative potential of AI-MC, much research has focused on improving the algorithm and work efficiency, conducting studies on its logic, economic, structure, and ethical impacts (Brauner et al., 2023). While technological advancements remain at the forefront of AI development, understanding public perception is equally critical, as societal attitudes toward AIGC can either boost or delay adoption. Greater public acceptance can drive investment, regulatory support, and widespread implementation, enabling AI-driven innovations to integrate seamlessly into various industries. Conversely, concerns regarding misinformation, bias, authorship, and ethical risks may lead to resistance, stricter regulations, or even rejection of AIGC in specific domains (Brauner et al., 2023). As AIGC is deeply embedded in AI-MC, it is essential to examine how individuals perceive and engage with AI-MC, as these perceptions can translate into AI regulation and governance to foster appropriate usage (Fast & Horvitz, 2017). Thus, analysing the public perception of AIGC in journalism not only provides valuable insights into the societal impacts of AI-MC but also informs the responsible ethical development and implementation of AIGC techniques.

In this article, I take a step toward understanding AI-MC by reviewing several studies to assess general public perceptions of AIGC. This analysis examines AIGC within the journalistic field, considering both its potential benefits and associated anxieties. First and foremost, I illustrated a widespread awareness of AIGC in journalism. Most people know that AI is widely applied in news production. Second, I investigated the favourable aspects of AIGC from the public. Understanding these positive perceptions provides insights into why AIGC is increasingly accepted by the public across various domains, including journalism. Third, aligned with this optimism, it is equally crucial to examine the anxieties surrounding AI technologies. These concerns contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of public attitudes toward AIGC. I analysed common apprehensions, including fear of AIGC and job loss. Moreover, I concentrated on the issue of credibility regarding AIGC. AI becomes more embedded in everyday communication, but why cannot people build trust in it? Finally, I revisited the broader implications of AI-MC, emphasizing the need for a fair and progressive regulatory framework for AI-MC, promoting responsible AIGC usage. By critically exploring the dynamics of AI-MC, we can adopt a more objective perspective to evaluate AIGC and navigate the opportunities and challenges posed by AI-MC in a highly AI-driven communication landscape.

2. Related Works

AI is an umbrella term with no consensus definition (Kelly et al., 2021). This section aims to introduce and narrow down related definitions and concepts of AI-MC.

2.1 CMC

The development of computers and associated technology makes electronic communication possible for all individuals (University of Washington, 2024). The advent of CMC revolutionized interpersonal communication, enabling individuals to interact with others across time and space (Hancock et al., 2020). Some scholars suggest that the CMC began with the development of the information network and flourished during the rapid expansion of personal computers (Thorne, 2008; Yao & Ling, 2020). ARPANET was first developed in 1969 and functions as a network system to operate even when component parts are disabled. ARPANET subsequently rapidly evolved into a public technology that included interpersonal communication, learning platforms, and email applications, foreshadowing the evolution of the internet (Rankin, 2019; Thorne, 2008). As the technical infrastructure expanded, especially with the widespread adoption of personal computers and the internet in the 1990s, the forms of CMC also evolved, acquiring new meaning within the changing technical context (Romiszowski & Mason, 2004).

In the 1990s, personal computers were bulky, heavy, and used as stationary terminals; the internet was only finding its clients in corporations and academic institutions (Rankin, 2019). In contrast, computing technologies have become increasingly embedded in mobile and ubiquitous environments, and people are surrounded by CMC tools, including smartphones, smartwatches, and AI assistants (e.g., Siri, Alexa, Gemini) (Yao & Ling, 2020). Moreover, the focus in the field of CMC research has shifted from "What is CMC?" to "What is not CMC?" in the last quarter-century (Yao & Ling, 2020). In other words, the technical landscape has undergone dramatic changes, and the concept of CMC has also changed with context (Romiszowski & Mason, 2004). This dramatic change in CMC has prompted researchers and scholars to reconsider the definition and theoretical frameworks of CMC, recognizing it from both technological and social perspectives. Romiszowski and Mason (2004) proposed a working definition of CMC from the technological perspective, describing CMC as "*the process by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked telecommunications systems that facilitate coding, transmitting, and decoding messages*" (p. 398). Complementing this view, Jones (1998) offered another interpretation of CMC from a social perspective, namely, that CMC is not only a tool but also the technology, medium, and engine of social relations; CMC is a space for building social relations and a tool for individuals to enter this space. Taken together, the authors suggest that the rapidly changing nature of CMC blurred the boundaries between interpersonal and mass communication, with platforms such as Facebook and YouTube enabling users to simultaneously engage with global audiences and personal networks. Moreover, the development of sophisticated CMC platforms has significantly changed and expanded synchronous and asynchronous interactions, giving rise to new social norms, interpersonal communication, and digital literacy (Romiszowski & Mason, 2004).

In summary, the evolving nature of CMC demonstrates a flexible form and definition, providing unlimited possibilities for communication and interaction between participants (Romiszowski & Mason, 2004). As digital technologies continue to evolve and shape interpersonal communication, CMC remains a vital lens for scholars to understand the evolving landscape of mediated human interaction. Therefore, to establish a holistic understanding of AI-MC, the CMC provides a theoretical foundation and plays an active role in current discourses and future research.

2.2 AI and AIGC

With the rapid advancements in computing, algorithms, and data science, AI has evolved from a conceptual ambition to a transformative force that shapes how humans interact with technology and information (Fetzer, 1990). Early AI systems, such as the General Problem Solver and Eliza developed in the mid-20th century, laid the groundwork for modern AI technologies. However, these groundbreaking creations were followed by a long stagnation of AI development due to limitations in computing capacity and the failure to meet expectations for the performance of AI. The resurgence of AI in the 21st century was catalyzed by the exponential growth of the personal computer and chip industry, promoting landmark innovations such as AlphaGo and ChatGPT (Nah et al., 2023). These milestone AI applications demonstrated unlimited practical capabilities and economic potential. Currently, AI has entered multiple fields of industry and organization, gradually playing a critical role and providing new challenges and opportunities (Li & Ma, 2019). By 2030, researchers estimate that the AI industry will grow into a 15.7 trillion-dollar business, greatly altering the world economy (Holmes, 2019). Like CMC, AI is a flexible and evolving terminology that is subject to varied interpretations and definitions. AI is a system capable of interpreting data, learning from data, and using that learning results to achieve goals with adaptive precision (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019).

Under this wave of revolutionary AI technologies, information technology has changed and expanded rapidly and dramatically (Li & Ma, 2019), enabling the rise of AIGC. Technically, AIGC refers to the use of AI to produce multimodal content, including but not limited to texts, videos, and pictures, on the basis of human prompts and instructions (Nah et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2023). Unlike general AI, which focuses mainly on word prediction or knowledge classification, AIGC technologies leverage vast datasets and neural network architectures to learn complex patterns, enabling AI to produce content that is coherent and relevant, using professional knowledge to improve the quality of production (Wu et al., 2023). This advance in AIGC has introduced revolutionary consequences that will shape patterns of future communication. The journalism

industry is one of the fields that has been radically changed by the AIGC (Nah et al., 2023). News robots such as Tencent's DreamWriter and the Los Angeles Times' QuakeBot have been introduced in the news production process (Yang & Sun, 2019). These news robots could help journalists improve their writing efficiency and news production. A report from the Associated Press noted that with the help of news robots, news production has increased by 12 times compared with the situation without news robots (Yang & Sun, 2019), allowing journalists to have more time to handle more complicated work. However, despite these benefits, AIGC is not a silver bullet for future communication. This automation of content production raises concerns such as news reliability, transparency, and the potential erosion of journalistic standards (Yang, 2021). Therefore, many scholars have proposed that collaboration between journalists and AIGC is even more important during the surge of AI technologies (Li & Ma, 2019; Peng, 2023; Yang, 2021; Yang & Sun, 2019). Rather than replacing professional journalists, AIGC should be seen as a complementary tool for journalistic work. It can improve efficiency without undermining accuracy, credibility, or ethical responsibility (Li & Ma, 2019).

In the end, while AIGC represent a significant transformation in content creation and communication, their application should be assessed critically. Future AI-MC is built on this technological innovation, which will consistently modify the traditional communication framework, finding a balance between human expertise and machine efficiency. As AI-MC continues to evolve, AI and AIGC could provide a solid background to understand its technical benefits and limitations in fields such as journalism and beyond.

2.3 AI-MC

The introduction of AI into the traditional CMC has demonstrated its potential to change conventional communication patterns in the internet-mediated context (Jakesch et al., 2019). Thus, Hancock et al. (2020) expanded the CMC theory to include AI agency, coined the term AI-MC. The classic understanding of CMC technology as a medium for transmitting messages between individuals, illustrating the role of human agency in communication patterns (Hancock et al., 2020). In contrast, AI-MC illustrates how AI itself can be an active participant in communication. The addition of AI to CMC represents a new paradigm in which communication occurs within AI systems, where computational agents not only transmit but also modify, augment, or even generate communicative content on behalf of users (Mieczkowski & Hancock, 2022).

AI systems are increasingly being embedded into electronic devices such as laptops, smartphones, and smart TVs, as well as being widely integrated into software platforms such as Twitter, Gmail, and other messaging applications. As Goldenthal et al. (2021) noted, many users already rely on AI–MC tools in daily communication but are not conscious of their presence. For example, in text-based communication, tools such as grammar checks, autocorrects, and autocompletion are standard features of word processors, email applications, and social media platforms. These systems subtly shape how people compose and perceive messages in a low-intervention way (Hohenstein & Jung, 2020). In addition, while the applications of AI-MC in text-based messaging demonstrate a minimal intervention role, new AI-MC tools such as AI assistants display much greater intervention and autonomy. According to Goldenthal et al. (2021), AI assistants such as Apple's Siri and Amazon's Alexa demonstrate a greater degree of communicative agency. These AI assistants receive users' voice commands and respond verbally with a human-like voice and tone. In this situation, the AI functions as both an information receiver and sender; the AI becomes the active participant in the communication. This communication pattern demonstrates a classic AI–MC framework in which communication is mediated and conducted by technology through interactions between AI agents and human beings.

The introduction of AI-MC invites the reconsideration of traditional CMC frameworks. While AI-MC is directly aimed at shaping message content and altering communication patterns, the impact of AI-MC on interpersonal dynamics and interaction outcomes remains unclear (Hohenstein & Jung, 2020). Understanding the effects of AI-MC in human interactions and future communication becomes increasingly important. Building on this, AI-MC constitutes a critical theoretical foundation for understanding AI-human-mediated communication within journalism.

3. Observed Trends

By reviewing and analysing several studies related to the public perception of the AIGC, I found some common ground in the reports. First, there is board awareness of AIGC in journalism. People know that AI helps journalists produce content. Second, a majority of people hold a positive attitude toward AI and AIGC; people believe that journalism could benefit from AI tools. Finally, AIGC also raises ethical concerns and a sense of fear that AI could cause job loss and replace traditional journalism. This section discusses these observed trends in detail.

3.1 Broad Awareness of AIGC

AI is increasingly engaged in daily life and is becoming a regular part of daily life, shaping how people work, play, and receive information from news outlets and social media (Fast & Horvitz, 2017; Kennedy et al., 2023). One of the most expected trends across multiple empirical studies is the growing awareness of AIGC in journalism. As AI becomes more influential in daily practice, people are highly exposed to AI technologies, including AIGC. The public is accepting and normalizing the existence of AI tools in content creation. This exposure fosters evolving public perceptions and expectations related to the role of AIGC in news production. A recent study from Turkey captured this awareness (Karaaslan et al., 2024). According to Karaaslan et al. (2024), 99% of participants are familiar with AI, and more than half (51.5%) of the participants understand that AIGC is widely applied in journalistic contexts, especially weather news (30.1%), economic news (23.6%), and sports news (12.3%). Notably, 50.8% of the participants thought that all of the economic, weather, and sports news was generated automatically. These findings demonstrate not only widespread awareness but also a perceived dominance of AIGC in journalism.

Similarly, a China-based survey yielded comparable results, despite cultural and internet context differences (Sun et al., 2024). Sun et al. (2024) reported that most participants are aware of AI in journalism. Most people are familiar with various AI applications and their use in news production, with respondents demonstrating familiarity with AI-generated content, such as AI-generated news articles and algorithm-based news anchors (Sun et al., 2024). The integration of AIGC into journalistic practice is no longer a furturistic concept but rather a contemporary reality (Owsley & Greenwood, 2024). As Karaaslan et al. (2024) noted, many newspapers commonly use AI to support journalism and include it in news production. Similarly, Owsley and Greenwood (2024) provided explicit explanations of how AI tools were integrated into contemporary news production. For example, Forbes developed Berties, which is an AI tool for their content management system, to perform the roles of newsroom assistants and asset managers. Berties can help journalists structure news articles, monitor social trends, and provide potential visual content to match news stories. Additionally, other news AI applications, such as The Washington Post's Heliograf, actively produce thousands of automated news stories, particularly in weather and political news (Owsley & Greenwood, 2024; Yang & Sun, 2019).

When combined, all the studies across the national border suggest that public awareness of AIGC is widespread and increasingly nuanced in detail. Modern audiences could not only realize the AIGC from news reports but also build expectations of AIGC usage in news practices. As AI and AIGC continue to develop and evolve, this awareness and perception are likely to become more widespread and deeply embedded in public perception. Researchers might continue to observe this pattern in future research.

3.2 Optimism Toward AIGC

The comprehensive awareness of AIGC in today's news production is the first step in investigating broader public attitudes toward the role of AI (Kennedy et al., 2023). The public perception of AIGC in journalism is characterized by a growing sense of optimism surrounding its implementation. Recent empirical research and interviews suggest that the public views AIGC as a promising and innovative tool to increase journalistic efficiency, accuracy, and capability while relieving human editors from the heavy burden and repetitive work (Noain-Sánchez, 2022). For example, according to Sun et al. (2024), their China-based survey captures more positive emotions than negative emotions toward AIGC in journalism. The participants described AIGC as “interesting”, “novel”, or “comfortable”. In other words, participants view AI technologies as innovative and novel, reflecting a widespread belief in AI’s advancement and seeing AI as a force to enhance news presentation and beyond.

Moreover, this positive sentiment is further reinforced by another research conducted in Turkey. Karaaslan et al. (2024) reported that more participants perceived AIGC as a qualified and efficient approach to news production. Half of the participants (50.5%) thought that the use of AIGC in the journalistic industry had advantages, whereas 47.5% of participants who did not view it as beneficial. This comparison demonstrates that more people are satisfied with AIGC, acknowledging the increasing prevalence of AI and its convenience. Among the people who believe that AIGC is advantageous, the most noteworthy reason is that AIGC can be used to assess data quickly, with 36.6% agreement. Other reasons include fast news flow, with 33.8% agreement; evaluation of social media interaction, with 24.6% agreement; and providing personalized news analyses, with 21.6% agreement. These data suggest that a considerable portion of the public believes that AIGC can meet daily information demands, underscoring its contribution to timely, accurate, and personalized news content. Therefore, both studies from China and Turkey captured optimism toward AIGC. Most people are happy to see the integration of AIGC in journalism and value its benefits and contributions to news content. Therefore, this optimism toward AIGC is not only aspirational but also grounded in tangible benefits that align with audience expectations in this rapidly evolving digital world.

While the public has a positive outlook toward AIGC, professional journalists and media experts have expressed positive expectations and analysis of AIGC in journalism. A longitudinal study conducted by Fast and Horvitz (2017) examined the viewpoints expressed about AI in the New York Times (NYT) over 30 years. The results suggest that the overall AI discourses in the NYT have consistently been more optimistic than pessimistic, with approximately 2--3 times more positive articles than negative ones (Fast & Horvitz, 2017). Even though there is increasing pessimistic coverage in response to concerns about AI's ethical implications and job displacement, the prevailing narratives tend to emphasize AI's potential applications, such as AI in healthcare, AI in education, and AI in transportation, to enhance and assist in daily life practices rather than replace humans. This finding aligns with Sharadga et al.'s (2022) study on journalists' attitudes toward AIGC. The authors found that employing AI in the newsroom could provide journalists with a more comfortable working environment. These AI technologies changed the role of journalists, devoting them to creative tasks and freeing them from routine tasks. Moreover, AI cannot replace professional journalists because they have some important skills that AI does not possess, such as the use of video tools, information distribution, and the ability to publish news stories (Sharadga et al., 2022). Furthermore, Noain-Sánchez (2022) elaborated on how journalists can collaborate with AI in news production. Noain-Sánchez (2022) interviewed several journalists, experts, and media technologists from different countries. According to the interviewees' experiences and perceptions, AIGC entering the newsroom is a good way to enhance and complement journalists' capabilities rather than replace them. For example, AI can analyse patterns from large datasets, generate personalized content, and support the fact-checking process. These tasks are usually labor intensive and time consuming in newsrooms, but by collaborating with AI, journalists can significantly reduce the time consumed, allowing newsrooms to operate more effectively and respond more promptly to instant events (Noain-Sánchez, 2022). Thus, AI enhances the capabilities of journalists and the efficiency of news production, and cooperation between AI professionals and professional journalists is not negligible in providing high-quality information flows.

Overall, the findings described above suggest that the general perception of AIGC from both the public and professional domains is more optimistic than pessimistic, characterized by wide acceptance and recognition. The studies discussed above have shown some concerns, but these issues have not significantly dampened the positive perception of AI. As AI-MC continues to evolve, the public's engagement with AI technologies is expected to grow, further expanding the role of AI in shaping the future media and communication process.

3.3 Fear of AIGC

While public discourses often demonstrate positivity about AI technologies in AI-MC, their rapid expansion has also been accomplished with concerns and uncertainties. As AI becomes increasingly integrated into daily life, public skepticism and anxiety about its risks and apprehension are increasing. Recent studies underscore this increasing anxiety associated with AI technologies. Kelley et al. (2021) reported that among the four dominant public perceptions of AI, the second keyword is "worrying", accounting for 22.7% of the responses. Unlike positive emotions such as "exciting" and "useful", "worrying"

captures a broad spectrum of relatively negative attitudes toward AI technologies, such as AI's potential to disrupt employment. A Nigerian participant represents this apprehension in the study, stating, "*A little bit of fear because I do not know the limit of AI (if there is a limit)*" (Kelley et al., 2021, p. 643). This sentiment reflects a fundamental uncertainty and nervousness about the ability of AI. Similar sentiments have been observed across cultures and different national media landscapes. Sun et al.'s (2024) results from their China-based survey revealed that while most respondents hold a positive attitude toward AIGC, others describe it as "weird", "nervous", and even "scary".

This growing skepticism also resonates among journalists themselves. According to Noain-Sánchez (2022), while AI could improve efficiency and change workflows, some journalists remain skeptical of AIGC and related technologies. The participants expressed concern that AIGC might erode the essence of journalism and potentially replace human journalists. A report from the research laboratory, *Journalism AI,* also captured this resistance to new technology (Beckett, 2019). According to the survey, approximately 24% of journalists are resistant to adopting AI tools because of the fear of job losses and changing work habits. These studies reveal that greater anxiety about the value and role of journalists might be overshadowed by AIGC efficiency and convenience in this dynamic information landscape. Likewise, public perception reflects a similar trajectory. In a recent study, Moravec et al. (2024) reported that 53% of participants believed that the AI reporter was already close to the human reporter and that 13.3% believed that the AI reporter was already better than the human reporter. These data demonstrate a significant shift in how audiences evaluate AI journalism and human journalism. Owsley and Greenwood (2024) further reported that 28.3% of participants thought it was true that AIGC could replace human journalists, while an additional 34.4% think it was probably true that AIGC could replace human journalists. Together, these findings illustrate that AIGC involves close-to-human writing and has reached a nearly undetectable level (Owsley & Greenwood, 2024).

The use of AIGC in journalism has become an inevitable trend (Karaaslan et al., 2024). The fear of the AIGC is not only a reaction to its current capabilities but also a reflection of broader uncertainties about its future impact. As AI continues to evolve, addressing these fears through transparent policies, ethical AI development, and public education will be crucial in shaping a future where AI is viewed not as an existential threat but as a beneficial tool integrated into human society.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

AI-MC is a broad framework that includes AIGC and all AI technologies that facilitate the communication process (Hancock et al., 2020). This study specifically focuses on AIGC usage in journalism to investigate public attitudes and perceptions. This specific research agenda provides an unique lens through which to understand the potential effects of AI-MC. These observed trends of both positive and negative aspects of AI-MC indicate that the public's attitude towards AI-MC is binary, whereas the public's understanding of AI-MC is comprehensive.

Numerous studies highlight positive public attitudes and high acceptance of AIGC, and most people believe that AI can replace professional journalism in certain aspects (Karaaslan et al., 2024; Moravec et al., 2024; Owsley & Greenwood, 2024; Sun et al., 2024). However, this optimism did not translate directly into trust. Paes (2024) noted that there is no significant connection to participants' perceived news credibility. People still prefer traditional human journalists as their daily information processors. The author concludes that participants perceive that news written by AI was less credible than traditional news written by human journalists, even though there is a high acceptance rate of AIGC. Similarly, other studies reported a comparable result. For example, in Sun et al.'s (2024) study, respondents believed that AI journalism is more advantageous in most aspects, but traditional human journalists still received the most preference in terms of subject planning (57.1%), writing (66.3%), and news fact-checking (69.1%). Karaaslan et al. (2024) reinforced this finding, reporting that the majority of the participants (78.2%) trust traditional journalism news more than AIGC news does. These results collectively present a pattern in which the public generally lacks trust in AI-MC.

The public can recognize different forms of AI in medicine, autonomous vehicles, smartphones, and journalism, but people do not view AI as credible and dependable (Owsley & Greenwood, 2024). People are concerned about how AI and its operation work behind this stage. One of the most likely explanations for this distrust is the lack of transparency in AI-MC. Stein and Ohler (2017) noted that individuals often fail to distinguish between AIGC and natural content; most people often do not perform better than random guessing. In some cases, AIGC is indistinguishable from natural content (Moravec et al., 2024). When people are not prepared for machines that operate and function close to human capability and cannot understand how AI mimics human behavior, they may interpret it as deceptive and artificial. Thus, these factors generate some level of uncertainty and distrust in AIGC (Stein & Ohler, 2017). Moreover, according to Moravec et al. (2024), the algorithms behind AI technologies are the most controversial and insufficiently researched aspects. Most journalistic companies are less likely to open-source their algorithm structures or explain how algorithms affect AI-MC agency, resulting in a knowledge gap that undermines public trust (Moravec et al., 2024). The "black box" nature of AI-MC accelerates the distrust of AI-MC.

To address this distrust of AI-MC among the public, researchers and journalists should promote the application of ethical algorithms. Ethical algorithms refer to those algorithms that conform to humanistic ethics and general social behavioral norms (Yang, 2021). When implemented appropriately, such algorithms enhance the security and reliability of autonomous information processing and decision-making systems. Crucially, before initiating any AI-driven journalistic tasks, media professionals must engage critically with AI datasets. This involves ensuring that the data used to train AI systems are accurate and free from biased or unreliable information. The inclusion of biased or unreliable data could lead to skewed or misleading narratives, thereby amplifying public distrust and threatening the credibility of AI-MC (Noain-Sánchez, 2022). By prioritizing ethical algorithm design and data integrity, journalists can reduce the risk of algorithmic bias and reinforce the neutral position of AI-MC in the public.

In addition, policymakers should introduce and complement new AI regulations, enhancing public credibility of AI-MC. With the continuous development and evolution of AI-MC, countries and institutions are attempting to formulate different policies to regulate the ethical use of AI. For example, the European Union (EU) introduced the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018. This regulation aims to improve the application fields of AI and ensure that developers handle personal data in a manner that respects users' personal data and rights (Yang, 2021). Moreover, in the U.S., a California legislative proposal, the B.O.T. Act of 2018 stated that any AI chatbot is not a natural personal (Hancock et al., 2020). Such regulatory efforts demonstrate that formal governance mechanisms are beginning to catch up with technological advancements, addressing technological transparency and ethical considerations. As more policymakers begin to consider similar legislation, these policies may play a pivotal role in enhancing public credibility in AI-MC.

However, this study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the scope of the research review is neither systematic nor comprehensive. A review of selected empirical studies related to AIGC and AI-MC can provide a brief overview of a specific topic and clarify research trends and results. However, the findings discussed above cannot capture the full complexity or diversity of scholarship in this evolving research field. Future researchers would benefit from conducting a systematic literature review that includes a wider range of empirical, theoretical, and cross-disciplinary articles. Second, the research focused only on the journalistic field. The AI-MC is a broad research field. By concentrating on journalism, it overlooks other fields in AI-MC, such as AI voice, AI video, and AI images. To strengthen the generalizability of findings, future studies should include different AI tools for analysis, providing a comprehensive understanding of AI-MC.

Finally, this study provides an overview of public perceptions and attitudes toward AIGC, with a specific focus on its application in journalism. By reviewing selected empirical studies related to AIGC, this study offers insight into AI-MC, understanding public awareness and concerns related to AI technologies. By doing so, it contributes to the understanding of how AI shapes the current media landscape and influences AI-MC practices.

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Conflicts of Interest

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