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The Challenges of Prophetic Digital Public Relations in the Disruptive Era

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how prophetic values are integrated into digital Public Relations (PR) practices and identifies the challenges of their implementation in the disruptive era. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with the PRISMA framework, this study analyzes selected scholarly articles published between 2018 and 2025 from indexed national and international journals. The selection process involved keyword-based searches, screening, eligibility assessment, and thematic coding of relevant studies. The findings indicate three main patterns. First, prophetic values are operationalized through ethical storytelling, transparent communication, and socially responsible content strategies. Second, the implementation of these values faces structural, cultural, and technological challenges, including algorithmic bias, market-driven communication logic, and institutional constraints. Third, prophetic digital PR contributes to building trust and fostering more sustainable and human-centered communication, although its application remains limited and context-dependent. This study contributes theoretically by bridging classical PR models, particularly two-way symmetrical communication, with prophetic ethics, and empirically by mapping current research trends and gaps in value-based digital communication.

Keywords: Digital Public Relations, Prophetic Communication, Ethics, Disruption Era, Systematic Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), digital public relations (PR) is an evolution of traditional public relations practices that utilize digital platforms such as social media and websites to build relationships with the public. As time goes by, image-building activities carried out by digital PR are now conducted online, ranging from social media, blogs, content marketing to collaboration with influencers. The current digital PR phenomenon shows a shift from conventional communication strategies to the use of social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. PR no longer relies solely on press releases or conventional media such as print, but actively builds images and establishes direct interactions with the public through digital content. On the other hand, the speed of digital information flow also presents serious challenges, such as the spread of hoaxes and negative comments that can go viral in seconds. Therefore, PR practitioners are required to be responsive, careful, and continue to uphold ethical values to maintain the organization's image.

Research by Imran, Hasan, and Syahputra (2022) shows that the rapid and unverified flow of digital communication has led to a crisis of public trust in formal institutions. Meanwhile, Pribadi (2021) emphasizes the importance of strengthening values in digital communication so that the communication process is not merely an exchange of messages but also carries ethical values and social responsibility. Continuing this, Fabriar (2022) states that integrating prophetic values into communication, such as honesty, trustworthiness, and responsibility, can be a relevant approach in facing an era of disruption rife with moral and ethical uncertainty. Based on this reality, it is important to examine how digital PR communication can be integrated with prophetic values to address communication challenges in the era of disruption. This study is relevant because PR communication in today's digital space not only demands message effectiveness but also must be able to maintain values, ethics, and public trust, which are increasingly vulnerable in a dynamic and challenging digital environment. This development is increasingly relevant in the era of technological disruption, where

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digital PR not only functions as an information channel but also as a dynamic interaction space and data-based reputation management (Breakenridge, 2018).

The concept of prophetic digital PR emphasizes the importance of spiritual and ethical values in communication practices. The concept of "prophetic" here refers to ethical principles inspired by religious teachings, such as honesty, justice, empathy, and social responsibility (Kuntowijoyo, 2006). These values serve as the moral foundation for PR, which not only pursues organizational profits but also contributes to the common good. In this context, the theory of Two-Way Symmetrical Communication (Grunig, 1992) is relevant because it emphasizes the importance of equal dialogue between organizations and the public. This theory can be further developed within a prophetic framework, where communication is not only dialogic but also carries moral values that transform society. Furthermore, Neil Postman's Media Ecology theory (1970) is also relevant for understanding how digital communication technology shapes ways of thinking, interacting, and even social values in modern society. In facing the challenges of the disruptive era characterized by rapid change, uncertainty, and shifting social values, a prophetic approach can serve as a way to maintain the integrity and social orientation of digital PR practices. In this case, the integration between modern communication theory and prophetic values becomes an important foundation in developing a PR communication model that is not only technically effective but also spiritually and socially meaningful.

Although previous studies have emphasized the importance of ethics in digital communication and the growing role of values in public relations practices, most of them remain fragmented and normative. Existing literature tends to discuss digital PR either from a technical-strategic perspective or from a general ethical standpoint, without systematically integrating a value-based framework rooted in prophetic principles. Moreover, limited attention has been given to how these values are operationalized in practice and what structural constraints hinder their implementation in digital environments.

Therefore, this study positions itself at the intersection of digital PR, communication ethics, and prophetic social theory by offering a structured synthesis of how prophetic values are conceptualized, implemented, and challenged in contemporary digital communication practices.

Amidst the massive digital disruption, Public Relations practices are experiencing fundamental shifts in terms of strategy, media, and communication approaches. However, there are not many studies that deeply examine how prophetic principles such as transcendence, humanization, and liberation are internalized in digital PR practices. Therefore, this study attempts to formulate the following main problems: (1) How are prophetic values integrated into digital PR communication strategies in the era of disruption? (2) What are the challenges faced by PR practitioners in implementing prophetic approaches in the digital context? (3) To what extent are digital PR practices based on prophetic values able to answer the need for ethical, humanistic, and sustainable communication? The purpose of this literature review is to identify and analyze the integration of prophetic values in digital Public Relations (PR) communication practices, especially in the ongoing era of digital disruption. This study aims to formulate a deep understanding of how prophetic values, such as transcendence, humanization, and liberation, can be internalized in the increasingly developing digital PR strategies. In addition, this study also aims to identify the challenges faced by PR practitioners in implementing a prophetic approach into digital communication strategies, as well as assessing the extent to which communication strategies based on prophetic values can contribute to more ethical, humanistic, and sustainable PR practices.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method. The process of collecting and analyzing literature is carried out

systematically through four main stages, namely identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. Literature is collected through Google Scholar, with the help of the Publish or Perish application and accreditation checks through Sinta and other reputable journals. In the literature collection process, searches are conducted using a number of keywords formulated based on the core topic of the research, namely the integration of prophetic values in digital Public Relations (PR) communication practices in the era of disruption. The keywords used include: "digital public relations communication," "prophetic values in communication," "prophetic communication in social media," "digital PR strategy in the era of disruption," "AI in digital communication," and "ethics and values in digital PR." This combination of keywords is used systematically in several online databases such as Google Scholar and assisted by the Publish or Perish application to facilitate the mapping of relevant articles.

During the literature selection stage, a number of inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure the relevance and quality of the sources analyzed. The inclusion criteria for this study included: (1) articles published between 2018 and 2025 to ensure topical relevance; (2) articles published in accredited journals, both national and international; (3) articles that substantially discuss digital PR communication issues, prophetic values, ethics in digital communication, or the influence of technology on communication strategies. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria were established to filter out articles that were irrelevant to the focus of the study. Articles were excluded from the analysis if: (1) they did not explicitly discuss aspects of PR communication, prophetic values, or the ethical challenges of digital communication; (2) they were duplicated or not available in full-text; or (3) they were merely opinion pieces without clear academic methodological support. The application of these criteria aimed to maintain the quality of the literature analyzed and ensure that each article made a meaningful contribution to understanding the integration of prophetic values in contemporary digital PR practice. From the articles collected, a selection was made based on relevance and quality, resulting in six main articles for in-depth analysis. Although the final number of selected articles (n=6) appears limited, the selection prioritizes conceptual relevance and methodological rigor, ensuring in-depth qualitative synthesis rather than broad but superficial coverage.

The data analysis process was conducted using thematic analysis. Each selected article was coded based on three analytical dimensions: (1) conceptualization of prophetic values; (2) forms of implementation in digital PR practices; and (3) identified challenges and limitations. Coding was conducted iteratively to identify recurring themes and patterns across studies. The results were then synthesized to generate higher-level analytical categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are organized into three analytical themes: (1) operationalization of prophetic values, (2) structural and cultural constraints, and (3) implications for ethical digital communication.

Integrating Prophetic Values into Digital PR Communication Strategies in the Era of Disruption

In the era of disruption, implementing a digital PR communication strategy is not simply focused on technical effectiveness; it also requires ethical direction. Integrating prophetic values into digital PR communication practices is a strategic approach that offers ethical direction amidst technological disruption and the public communication crisis. Based on the literature analyzed, it is clear that values such as humanization, transcendence, and liberation are not only moral ideals but can also be practically implemented in digital communication strategies. The value of humanization is reflected in PR practices that prioritize emotional engagement and empathy with audiences. Muhlis and Musliadi (2022) emphasize that prophetic communication directs communication toward respect for human dignity, not merely as an object of persuasion. In the digital context, this is realized through educational content, narratives that build emotional connections, and adaptive responses to public needs.

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Meanwhile, the value of transcendence in digital PR communications implies an effort to incorporate spiritual dimensions and moral responsibility into conveying messages to the public. Fania Alzaira Rahma (2024) points out that openness, honesty, and transparency are key elements in building audience trust on social media. Digital PR that prioritizes these values not only pursues exposure or engagement but also builds a sustainable reputation through message integrity. The value of liberation is evident in communication strategies that free the public from the dominance of biased, hoax, or manipulative information. Values-based PR communications must be able to counter disinformation and create a healthy space for discussion in the digital space. In a study by Solihin et al. (2025), the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in digital content analysis demonstrated the potential to efficiently identify public sentiment and discourse, but also raised ethical challenges related to algorithmic bias and the limitations of contextual interpretation. This is where the importance of a prophetic approach as a moral guideline in the use of PR technology becomes crucial.

Ultimately, based on the literature synthesis conducted, it can be concluded that prophetic values provide a highly relevant framework for digital PR practice amidst the complexities of the disruptive era. PR practices that internalize spiritual and ethical values not only strengthen the institution's reputation, but also contribute to the creation of a more humane, just, and socially conscious digital space.

Challenges Facing PR in Implementing a Prophetic Approach in a Digital Context

The prophetic approach provides ethical guidance for PR practitioners, but on the other hand, implementing digital PR in this era of disruption certainly faces various new challenges. The challenges in applying prophetic values in the digital era were also raised by Simamora et al. (2024), who highlighted how disruptive technologies such as blockchain and AI are driving a paradigm shift in digital communication. Digital PR is faced with a fast-paced, personalized, and big data-driven environment, which, if not accompanied by values, risks becoming an instrument of commercialization without ethical direction. PR that is not critical of the data obtained by AI has the potential to ignore the surrounding social and cultural dimensions. This challenge requires PR practitioners to be more selective and understand the use of technology well. PR communication strategies that are considered effective in the era of disruption are those that align technology with values. This includes the use of values-based storytelling, collaboration with morally credible influencers, and the use of digital media for educational purposes. This approach aligns with the findings of the journal Puspita et al. (2024), which, although focusing on digital cultural applications, emphasizes the importance of educating local values as a foundation for strengthening public identity in the digital realm.

The implementation of a prophetic approach in digital Public Relations (PR) practice is inseparable from a number of structural, cultural, and technological challenges. These challenges arise from the complexity of the rapidly changing digital ecosystem and the dominance of pragmatic values in the communications industry (Herdiana et al., 2024). PR practitioners seeking to integrate the values of transcendence, humanization, and liberation face systemic resistance, both from internal organizational structures and from public expectations that tend to favor sensation over substance (Hidayatullah, 2019). Structurally, many organizations still view digital PR as merely a promotional or marketing tool. PR's role as a guardian of communication ethics has not been fully recognized, resulting in efforts to convey prophetic values often lacking institutional support (Satria, 2024). PR practitioners seeking to produce content that educates, builds empathy, or promotes honesty often struggle with quantitative targets such as views, likes, and virality (Maulidia & Sanjani, 2023). The logic of the digital market, which demands speed and popularity, places prophetic values in a marginal position.

Today's digital communication culture tends to shape a society that consumes short, visual, and sensational information (Pribadi, 2021). Attempts to incorporate spiritual or moral values are often deemed uninteresting and irrelevant. In fact, in some cases, PR content that conveys values of social responsibility

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and truth actually receives negative reactions or is misunderstood as propaganda (Laksamana, 2018). Hyper-responsive, emotional, and polarizing public communication patterns mean that prophetic messages must be carefully designed to avoid bias or public resistance. Challenges in implementing prophetic values through digital PR come not only from outside but also from within the communication system itself. Although the digital landscape is fraught with the pitfalls of pragmatism and information manipulation, there is still room to champion ethical, spiritual, and transformative communication. Perseverance and moral courage are required for digital PR to become more than just a reputational tool, but also a means of social outreach that enlightens and liberates the public from shallow and misleading information flows.

Despite their normative appeal, prophetic values are often difficult to operationalize within algorithm-driven environments that prioritize visibility and engagement over ethical depth. This tension suggests that the adoption of prophetic digital PR is not merely a technical issue, but a structural one embedded in the political economy of digital platforms.

Prophetic Value-Based Digital PR in Answering the Need for Ethical, Humanistic, and Sustainable Communication

The relevance of digital PR in implementing prophetic values can address the need for ethical, humanistic, and sustainable communication. Value-oriented communication will certainly have a sustainable positive impact and strengthen long-term relationships between an organization and its public, which then shapes the organization's reputation in the public eye. Digital Public Relations (PR) rooted in prophetic values has great potential to address the need for more ethical, humanistic, and sustainable communication. Prophetic values, including humanization, liberation, and transcendence, provide moral direction in digital communication practices, especially when the public sphere is now dominated by fast, shallow, and commercially motivated information. A prophetic approach in digital PR demands engagement that is not only technical, but also emotional and spiritual. Communication is no longer understood as simply a process of conveying messages, but as a meaningful interaction that respects human dignity, speaks the truth, and touches the public's moral conscience. In practice, prophetic digital PR prioritizes educational and constructive content, rather than simply going viral. This is evident in Anwar's (2020) research, which emphasizes the importance of quality, ethically based communication to build long-term trust between organizations and the public. The value of humanization is reflected in PR efforts to build equal relationships with audiences, such as through empathetic content and open social responses.

Such an approach is especially crucial as digital communication culture shifts toward social fragmentation and algorithmic dominance. Research by Priastuty et al. (2022) demonstrates that communication based on empathy and tolerance can mitigate digital conflict and create healthier spaces for interaction. By prioritizing humanization, prophetic digital PR can re-establish equal, non-transactional, and information-free relationships between people. Meanwhile, the value of liberation in digital PR is realized through the courage to voice public issues, correct disinformation, and provide access to information free from opinion manipulation. Risdayandini's (2024) study demonstrates how media with a prophetic approach actively plays a role in building positive narratives and empowering readers. PR that takes on a similar role can serve as a guardian of message integrity and a driver of social transformation in the digital space.

Furthermore, the value of transcendence provides a spiritual dimension that strengthens moral responsibility in digital communication. Communicators prioritize not only institutional interests but also consider the message's impact on social welfare and the integrity of human values. Muhlis and Musliadi (2022) emphasize that prophetic communication conveys messages that are not only factually accurate but also rooted in sincere and constructive intentions. In the era of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data, this responsibility becomes even more crucial. Algorithms tend to prioritize engagement over accuracy or honesty, and PR plays a role in balancing this with a more ethical approach.

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The implementation of prophetic digital PR can be achieved through several key strategies, such as developing robust digital ethics guidelines, value literacy for internal teams, and training in developing morally substantial content. Putri and Qurniawati (2024) explain the importance of ethical awareness in the use of AI by PR practitioners to avoid becoming trapped in mere data efficiency. Furthermore, public literacy efforts on digital ethics are considered effective in establishing a healthy communication ecosystem, as found in research by Yuliyanti et al. (2024). Another important strategy is maintaining open, two-way communication on digital platforms. This practice is considered successful in building a civilized and inclusive organizational culture, as noted by Yuniani et al. (2023). Meanwhile, Constantin et al. (2024) emphasize that content innovation that combines technology and social responsibility plays a significant role in building a long-term reputation. Prophetic value-based digital Public Relations (PR) is not an unrealistic idealism, but rather a strategic communication model that is relevant and urgent amidst the rapid flow of digital information. This approach not only strengthens an institution's reputation but also contributes to a more humane and ethical social order.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that integrating prophetic values into digital Public Relations provides a critical ethical framework for addressing the challenges of the disruptive communication environment. However, the findings also reveal a significant gap between normative ideals and practical implementation, largely shaped by technological systems, market pressures, and institutional constraints.

Theoretically, this study contributes by extending the two-way symmetrical communication model into a value-based framework grounded in prophetic ethics. It also enriches media ecology perspectives by highlighting how moral values interact with digital infrastructures. Practically, the study suggests that PR practitioners must move beyond instrumental communication and adopt ethically reflective strategies that balance technological efficiency with social responsibility. Future research should focus on empirical case studies to examine how prophetic digital PR is practiced in real organizational contexts and how it influences public trust and engagement.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1 : Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft.
Author 2 : Data Collection, Investigation, Writing – Review and Editing.
Author 3 : Supervision, Validation, Writing – Review and Editing.
Author 4 : Data Collection, Investigation, Writing – Review and Editing.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

AI USE DECLARATION

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Ethical clearance was not required for this study because the research did not involve human participants, identifiable personal data, or procedures requiring formal ethical approval.

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