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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND AUTOMATION IN HR COMMUNICATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND ETHICAL CHALLENGES

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Abstract:
This study examined the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation in human resource (HR) communication, focusing on opportunities and ethical challenges in public and private organizations in Enugu State, Nigeria. Guided by four research objectives, the study explored how AI and automation improved HR communication efficiency, identified ethical challenges, examined employee and HR manager perceptions, and proposed strategies for ethical adoption. A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining a structured questionnaire administered to 384 respondents and semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 participants. Quantitative data were analyzed using weighted mean, standard deviation, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), while qualitative data underwent thematic coding to identify recurring patterns and perceptions. Findings revealed that AI and automation significantly enhanced HR communication by improving accuracy, speed, consistency, and overall efficiency. However, ethical challenges, including data privacy concerns, reduced human interaction, transparency issues, and potential bias, were prevalent and influenced trust and acceptance among employees. Interviews highlighted themes such as efficiency and convenience, loss of human touch, perceived fairness, trust and transparency, and skill readiness. Based on these findings, strategies for ethical adoption were proposed, emphasizing governance frameworks, human oversight, transparency, data protection, employee engagement, capacity building, and continuous evaluation. The study concluded that while AI and automation provide substantial operational benefits for HR communication, responsible and ethically guided implementation is critical to safeguarding employee trust, fairness, and organizational integrity. These findings contribute to the understanding of AI integration in HR practices and offer practical guidance for organizations, HR managers, policymakers, and technology providers seeking to balance efficiency with ethical responsibility.

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Keywords: artificial intelligence, HR communication, automation, ethical challenges, organizational efficiency, ethical adoption

1. Background of the Study

The increasing adoption of artificial intelligence and automation in human resource communication within Nigerian organizations has introduced a range of operational and ethical problems that are not yet clearly understood at the local level, particularly in Enugu City. As organizations sought to modernize HR functions, improve administrative efficiency, and reduce reliance on manual processes, both public and private sector institutions increasingly implemented automated HR systems such as electronic recruitment platforms, digital payroll and records management systems, and online employee communication portals (Kambur & Yildirim, 2023). These technologies were expected to enhance coordination between management and employees, reduce delays in information flow, and support more standardized communication practices across organizations.

In Enugu City, the deployment of these technologies occurred across diverse organizational settings, including government ministries and agencies, educational institutions, banks, hospitals, manufacturing firms, and service-oriented private enterprises. However, the actual impact of AI and automation on HR communication efficiency within these organizations has remained unclear. Organizations differed substantially in terms of technological infrastructure, availability of technical support, workforce digital literacy, and the extent to which automated systems were fully integrated into existing HR processes. While automation was intended to improve the speed, accuracy, and consistency of HR communication, evidence from related Nigerian studies suggested that these benefits were often weakened by infrastructural inadequacies, unreliable power supply, limited access to advanced digital tools, and insufficient technical skills among HR personnel and employees (Elenwo, 2025; Adediran *et al.* 2024). These constraints created uneven outcomes, where some organizations experienced measurable efficiency gains while others struggled to realize the expected benefits of automation.

Beyond questions of efficiency, the use of AI-driven HR communication tools introduced significant ethical problems that further complicated their adoption and effectiveness. Concerns surrounding the privacy and security of employee data became more pronounced as personal information, employment records, and performance-related data were increasingly stored and processed through digital platforms. In many Nigerian organizations during this period, data protection policies were either weak or poorly enforced, raising fears about unauthorized access, misuse of employee information, and lack of accountability in data handling practices (Odusote, 2021). Additionally, the opacity of automated recruitment, performance communication, and decision-support systems raised concerns about transparency, as employees were often unclear about how decisions were generated or how information was filtered and

communicated through AI-based systems (Asere, 2025). The possibility of bias embedded within automated processes further intensified ethical debates, particularly in contexts where algorithmic systems were introduced without adequate oversight or ethical guidelines.

Employees' responses to automated HR communication within Nigerian organizations were also varied and sometimes contradictory. While some employees perceived AI-based communication tools as convenient, time-saving, and helpful in accessing information quickly, others viewed them as impersonal, exclusionary, or insensitive to individual circumstances, especially when sensitive employment issues such as performance feedback, promotions, or disciplinary matters were communicated through automated channels (Adias, 2025; Ottoh *et al.*, 2024). These mixed perceptions suggested that acceptance of AI in HR communication was influenced not only by technical functionality but also by trust, fairness, and the perceived loss of human interaction in workplace communication. Such perceptions had direct implications for employee engagement, morale, and willingness to rely on automated HR systems.

Despite the growing presence of AI and automation in HR practices across organizations in Enugu City, there remained a notable lack of localized empirical studies that examined these issues in an integrated manner. Most existing research focused either on efficiency outcomes or on ethical concerns in isolation, often within broader national or international contexts. Very few studies simultaneously explored HR communication efficiency, ethical challenges, and employee perceptions across both public and private sector organizations within a single city or region. This absence of context-specific empirical evidence limited the ability of organizational leaders, HR managers, and policymakers to develop informed guidelines and strategies that reflected local realities. The motivation for conducting this study, therefore, arose from the need to generate empirical knowledge that accurately reflected the experiences of organizations operating in Enugu City. By examining how AI and automation affected HR communication efficiency, identifying ethical challenges, and exploring employee and HR manager perceptions across public and private organizations, the study sought to provide evidence that could support ethical and effective use of AI in HR communication. In doing so, it aimed to contribute to better protection of employee interests, improved organizational decision-making, and the development of context-sensitive strategies that balance efficiency gains with accountability, transparency, and trust in Nigerian organizational settings.

2. Literature Review of Empirical Studies

Numerous empirical studies examined various dimensions of artificial intelligence and automation in human resource management, particularly as these technologies intersected with HR communication processes, efficiency, employee perceptions, and ethical implications. Many of these studies were conducted in organizational contexts where digitalization of HR functions was becoming more pronounced, providing

empirical data about the outcomes and challenges associated with integrating technology into HR communication.

The growing integration of artificial intelligence, automation, and electronic human resource management systems has generated sustained scholarly attention, particularly regarding their influence on HR communication efficiency, ethical challenges, and employee perceptions. Early empirical studies largely focused on the operational benefits of e-HRM and automated systems. Oktaviannur and Kindiasari (2024) found that e-HRM systems significantly improved the accuracy and consistency of HR communication by centralizing information and reducing manual intervention, thereby minimizing errors associated with fragmented communication channels. Similarly, Nastase (2025) reported that automation of HR processes reduced administrative workload and enabled HR professionals to redirect their efforts toward strategic, value-adding activities. These findings were reinforced by Shahid *et al.* (2025), who demonstrated that automated HR technologies enhanced communication speed and responsiveness through standardized, technology-mediated platforms that facilitated faster information dissemination across organizations.

Further supporting evidence emerged from Mohamed *et al.* (2022), who observed that electronic and automated HR systems improved communication efficiency by shortening processing time and reducing information errors. Nawaz *et al.* (2024) similarly found that organizations adopting AI-supported HR technologies experienced greater consistency and responsiveness in communication practices. Rahman (2025) extended this perspective by linking analytics-driven and automated communication systems to improved organizational performance, arguing that faster information flow and enhanced coordination strengthened overall operational effectiveness. Collectively, these studies present automation and AI as critical enablers of efficient HR communication, particularly in terms of speed, accuracy, and consistency.

Despite these generally positive outcomes, some scholars noted limitations and contextual constraints. Fuchs and Reichel (2023) observed that while HR technologies improved efficiency, their impact on coordination and relational aspects of communication was less pronounced, especially during early stages of implementation. This finding suggested that technological efficiency does not automatically translate into improved human interaction or collaboration. Almatrodi *et al.* (2023) similarly reported that the benefits of automation were sometimes constrained by infrastructural limitations and user resistance. In a developing-country context, Obiki-Osafiele *et al.* (2024) found that technological adoption in Nigerian organizations did not consistently yield efficiency improvements due to skills gaps, inadequate training, and implementation challenges. These studies indicate that organizational readiness and contextual factors significantly shape the outcomes of AI and automation in HR communication.

Alongside efficiency concerns, a substantial body of literature has examined the ethical challenges associated with technology-enabled HR communication. Shaheen *et al.* (2024) found that employees expressed strong concerns about surveillance, data privacy, and information control within automated HR systems. Verčič and Verčič (2025) reported

that reduced face-to-face interaction resulting from digital HR communication tools negatively affected trust and relational quality between employees and HR personnel. Similarly, Lacmanovic (2023) documented apprehension regarding opaque algorithms and the potential for biased outcomes in AI-supported HR decision-making. These concerns underscore the ethical tensions that accompany increased reliance on automated communication systems.

Additional studies reinforced the prominence of ethical issues. Igwe-Nmaju (2021) observed that the integration of automated systems into organizational communication raised questions related to accountability and transparency, particularly when decisions were mediated by technology rather than humans. Bastida *et al.* (2025) found that while automation enhanced efficiency, it also intensified fears of data misuse and diminished human judgment in HR processes. Yanamala (2023) similarly reported employee reservations about privacy and fairness when HR communication and decisions were technology-driven. Together, these studies suggest that ethical concerns are not peripheral but central to employee acceptance of AI-based HR communication.

However, contrasting evidence indicates that ethical concerns can be moderated by organizational practices. Onyekwelu *et al.* (2024) argued that clear organizational policies and effective communication strategies could substantially reduce ethical anxieties related to HR technologies. Ndone (2025) found that ethical concerns were less pronounced in organizations with well-defined communication policies and higher levels of digital literacy among employees. Raza *et al.* (2023) similarly reported greater employee acceptance of automated HR communication when systems were perceived as transparent, supportive, and facilitative rather than controlling. These findings imply that governance structures, transparency, and employee awareness play a crucial role in shaping ethical perceptions.

Employee and manager perceptions of AI-enabled HR communication have also been widely studied. Arslan *et al.* (2022) found that employees generally perceived HR automation as efficient but remained concerned about reduced interpersonal interaction. Wanner *et al.* (2022) reported that trust in electronic HR systems depended heavily on transparency and clarity of communication processes. Basch and Melchers (2021) further demonstrated that perceptions of fairness significantly influenced employee acceptance of technology-mediated HR communication. Parker and Grote (2022) added that automation altered work relationships and required new skills, reshaping how employees interacted with HR systems and professionals.

More optimistic findings were reported by Hasija and Esper (2022), who observed higher acceptance of automated systems when adequate training and organizational support were provided. Liesa-Orús *et al.* (2023) similarly found that perceived usefulness and ease of use strengthened positive attitudes toward technology adoption. These studies suggest that while concerns exist, employee perceptions are not uniformly negative and are shaped by experience, competence, and organizational support mechanisms.

Despite the growing volume of empirical research on AI and automation in HR practices, important gaps remained, particularly with respect to localized organizational contexts outside Western economies. Much of the existing literature was conducted in developed countries where technological infrastructure, regulatory enforcement, and organizational readiness for digital transformation are relatively advanced. As a result, limited attention was given to sub-Saharan African settings, including Nigeria, where differences in infrastructure availability, institutional capacity, data protection regimes, and cultural attitudes toward technology could significantly influence the use and outcomes of AI-based HR communication systems. This lack of contextual diversity restricted the applicability of many empirical findings to developing economies.

In addition, although previous studies examined either communication efficiency or ethical concerns associated with automated HR systems, few empirically investigated these dimensions together within a single framework. Even fewer studies explored how both HR managers and employees perceived AI-driven communication tools across public and private sector organizations within the same geographical location. This separation of focus limited understanding of how efficiency gains, ethical challenges, and human perceptions interacted in practice, particularly in mixed-sector environments where organizational structures and governance arrangements differ. Furthermore, existing research often stopped at identifying challenges without linking empirical evidence to context-sensitive strategies for ethical adoption that reflected local organizational realities.

These gaps left unresolved questions about the effectiveness and ethical implications of AI-based HR communication in settings characterized by uneven digital literacy, infrastructural constraints, and evolving regulatory oversight. In response, this study addressed these shortcomings by generating localized empirical evidence from public and private organizations in Enugu City, Nigeria. By simultaneously examining communication efficiency, ethical challenges, and the perceptions of HR managers and employees, and by grounding these findings in strategies for ethical adoption, the study contributed context-specific knowledge that extended and enriched the broader literature on AI and automation in HR communication.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in established theories that explain technology adoption, ethical communication, and the diffusion of innovations within organizational settings. These theories provide a lens for understanding how artificial intelligence and automation influence human resource communication, how ethical concerns are managed, and how new technologies are accepted and utilized by employees and HR managers. By integrating these perspectives, the study captures both the technological and human dimensions of AI-driven HR communication in public and private organizations in Enugu State, Nigeria.

3.1 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989) posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the primary determinants of an individual's acceptance and utilization of new technologies. TAM was widely applied in organizational contexts to understand adoption patterns of diverse technological systems, including enterprise resource planning, knowledge management systems, and e-HRM platforms (Nasar & Ray, 2024; Menant *et al.,* 2021). The model suggests that employees are more likely to adopt a technological system if they perceive that it enhances their job performance and if interacting with it requires minimal effort. In HR communication, TAM is particularly relevant because AI-driven tools such as automated recruitment systems, payroll software, internal communication portals, and chatbots are increasingly used to manage large volumes of employee interactions and improve operational efficiency (Khan *et al.,* 2024). Employees' perceptions of usefulness influence their willingness to rely on automated notifications, respond to AI-generated feedback, or trust digital communication for organizational updates. Likewise, perceived ease of use affects engagement, as overly complex interfaces may cause resistance or underutilization (Ajina *et al.,* 2024). TAM also allows researchers to assess behavioral intention as a predictor of actual system use, providing insight into adoption patterns and readiness for digital transformation. The justification for applying TAM in this study is that it explains why HR managers and employees accept or resist AI and automation in HR communication. Understanding these factors can inform training programs, interface design improvements, and change management strategies to improve adoption, operational efficiency, and user satisfaction in public and private organizations in Enugu State.

3.2 Ethical Communication Theory

Ethical Communication Theory, proposed by Johannesen (1976), asserts that communication processes should adhere to principles of truthfulness, fairness, transparency, and responsibility to produce ethically sound outcomes. This theory was applied to examine organizational communication, particularly in technology-mediated contexts where digital systems could compromise ethical standards (Verma & Garg, 2024; Bollen, 2024). In AI-driven HR communication, ethical concerns such as the confidentiality of employee information, algorithmic bias, lack of transparency, and fairness in automated decision-making can significantly affect employee trust, organizational reputation, and compliance with legal standards (Bahangulu & Owusu-Berko, 2025; Akter, 2025). The theory provides a normative framework for assessing whether HR communication systems meet ethical standards, including safeguarding sensitive data, providing accountable information, and ensuring that decisions communicated through automation do not disadvantage employees. By applying Ethical Communication Theory, this study examines how HR managers and organizations can balance technological efficiency with ethical obligations, developing policies, oversight mechanisms, and practices that mitigate risks associated with AI and automation. The

justification for using this theory is that it provides a clear moral and operational lens for evaluating the adoption and use of AI in HR communication, ensuring that automated processes respect employee rights, maintain transparency, and uphold fairness while supporting effective organizational communication in public and private sector organizations (Buonocore *et al.* 2025; Pavel & Nikita, 2025) in Enugu State.

3.3 Diffusion of Innovation Theory

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, formulated by Rogers (2003) explains how new ideas, practices, or technologies spread within a social system over time, focusing on factors such as relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. This theory was widely used in organizational studies to analyze the adoption of technological innovations, including information systems, e-HRM, and automated communication tools (Amoako *et al.,* 2023; Adel & Younis, 2023). In the context of AI-driven HR communication, the theory provides a framework for understanding how these technologies are introduced, promoted, and adopted across organizations, and how factors such as management support, organizational culture, peer influence, and observed benefits affect uptake among employees. For instance, AI-powered recruitment platforms or payroll automation may be rapidly adopted in organizations that perceive clear efficiency gains and compatibility with existing HR practices, while adoption may lag in organizations where employees are resistant or systems are complex (Mamuli *et al.,* 2025). Applying this theory enables the study to examine patterns of diffusion in both public and private organizations in Enugu State, considering factors that accelerate or hinder adoption, as well as the role of communication strategies and trialability in promoting acceptance. The justification for using Diffusion of Innovations Theory is that it provides a comprehensive lens to analyze how AI and automation are integrated into organizational routines, facilitating understanding of adoption dynamics, implementation challenges, and strategies for achieving sustainable and context-appropriate utilization of AI-driven HR communication tools (Rane *et al.,* 2024; Booyse & Scheepers, 2024).

4. Research Questions

The primary aim of this study was to assess the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of artificial intelligence and automation in human resource (HR) communication among employees and HR managers in public and private sector organizations in Enugu City, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

1) How does AI improve HR communication efficiency in Nigerian organizations?
2) What ethical issues arise from AI-driven HR communication?
3) How do HR managers and employees perceive AI-based communication tools?
4) What strategies can ensure ethical use of AI in HR communication?

4.1 Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated:

1) There is no significant improvement in HR communication efficiency through the use of artificial intelligence and automation in public and private organizations in Enugu State, Nigeria.
2) There are no significant ethical challenges associated with the use of AI-based HR communication in public and private organizations in Enugu State, Nigeria.

5. Significance of the Study

This study is significant because the increasing use of artificial intelligence and automation in human resource communication presents both opportunities and ethical challenges that require context-specific understanding. By focusing on public and private sector organizations in Enugu City, Nigeria, the study provides evidence-based findings that reflect local organizational realities. The outcomes of the study are expected to support informed decision-making and responsible adoption of AI-driven HR communication practices. The findings of this study will benefit HR managers by offering detailed and context-specific understanding of how artificial intelligence and automation can be effectively integrated into HR communication processes to enhance speed, accuracy, and consistency without compromising ethical standards. By identifying both efficiency gains and ethical challenges, the study will assist HR managers in making informed decisions about the selection, implementation, and management of AI-based communication tools. It will provide guidance on how to safeguard employee data, ensure transparency in automated messaging and decision processes, and reduce the risk of bias or unfair treatment in recruitment, performance communication, and employee engagement. In addition, the study will support HR managers in developing communication systems that combine automation with appropriate human oversight, thereby preserving trust, accountability, and alignment between technological practices and organizational values.

Policymakers will benefit from the empirical evidence generated by the study, as it will provide a clearer understanding of how AI and automation are currently being used in HR communication within public and private organizations. This evidence can inform the formulation, review, and enforcement of labor regulations, data protection laws, and digital governance frameworks that address employee privacy, consent, and ethical use of AI in the workplace. By reflecting local organizational experiences and challenges, the study will help policymakers design regulations that are realistic, context-sensitive, and responsive to emerging risks associated with automated HR communication systems. For IT companies and HR technology vendors, the study will offer valuable information on organizational requirements, employee expectations, and ethical concerns related to AI-driven HR communication tools. These findings can guide the development of systems that are user-friendly, transparent, and adaptable to varying levels of digital literacy within Nigerian organizations. By understanding ethical

expectations and operational constraints, technology providers can design solutions that promote trust, comply with regulatory standards, and address the specific communication needs of organizations in the Nigerian environment. Employees will benefit from the study through improved awareness of how AI and automation shape HR communication, including how personal data is collected, processed, and used in automated systems. The study will also help employees understand the factors that influence acceptance or resistance to AI-based communication tools, thereby supporting more informed engagement with automated HR platforms and encouraging organizational practices that respect employee rights, fairness, and dignity in technology-mediated communication.

Recruitment companies will gain substantial benefits from this study by developing a clearer understanding of how AI-driven communication tools shape candidate experiences throughout the recruitment process. The findings will provide evidence on how automated job advertisements, application tracking systems, interview scheduling tools, and feedback mechanisms influence perceptions of fairness, transparency, and responsiveness among job applicants. By identifying areas where automated communication enhances efficiency as well as points where it may create dissatisfaction or perceptions of bias, recruitment companies can refine their use of AI to ensure more equitable and credible hiring processes. This knowledge can help improve service delivery to client organizations, strengthen trust among candidates, and support the adoption of professional standards that balance technological efficiency with ethical responsibility in recruitment practices.

Future researchers will benefit from this study by gaining access to a localized and empirically grounded reference on the use of artificial intelligence and automation in HR communication within a developing economy context. The study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by documenting organizational practices, ethical challenges, and employee and candidate responses within Enugu City, Nigeria, thereby providing a foundation for comparative studies, longitudinal research, and theory development. Researchers can build on the findings to explore emerging trends, sector-specific differences, and the long-term implications of AI adoption in HR communication across different institutional environments. Other stakeholders, including organizational leaders, labor unions, training institutions, and professional bodies, may also benefit from the study by applying its findings to support informed decision-making and responsible technology adoption. Organizational leaders can use the evidence to guide strategic planning and investment decisions related to AI-driven HR systems, ensuring alignment with ethical standards and workforce expectations. Labor unions may draw on the findings to advocate for fair treatment, data protection, and transparency in automated HR communication practices. Training institutions and professional bodies can utilize the study to design capacity-building programs, professional development courses, and ethical training initiatives that equip HR practitioners and IT professionals with the skills and knowledge required to manage AI and automation responsibly within HR communication systems.

6. Methodology

The study adopted a mixed research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of AI and automation in HR communication. Quantitative methods were used to measure HR communication efficiency and the extent of ethical challenges, while qualitative methods explored employee and HR manager perceptions and experiences. This design was justified by the multifaceted nature of AI-driven HR communication, which involves technical outcomes as well as ethical and human dimensions. The mixed approach enhanced validity through data triangulation and ensured robust, contextually grounded findings relevant to organizations in Enugu City, Nigeria. The study population comprised managers and employees from five private organizations and eight public institutions in Enugu State that utilized AI and automation in HR communication. Due to the absence of a definite population size, Cochran's formula was used to determine a survey sample of 384 respondents. For the qualitative component, 15 participants (HR managers and employees from both sectors) were purposively selected to provide in-depth insights. Purposive sampling ensured inclusion of respondents with direct experience of AI-based HR communication systems, while clear inclusion and exclusion criteria enhanced the relevance and reliability of the data.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire, administered with a consent cover letter, consisted of two sections measuring HR communication efficiency and ethical challenges using five-point Likert-scale items adapted from validated studies. The interview guide comprised open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed perceptions and experiences of AI-driven HR communication. This combination enabled the collection of both measurable trends and rich qualitative insights aligned with the study objectives. Data collection followed a structured and ethically approved process. Questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher across selected organizations over 13 days, ensuring clarity, high response rates, and data completeness. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposively selected participants over seven days, with informed consent obtained prior to each session. Interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented with notes. Strict ethical standards, including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection, were observed throughout the process.

Quantitative data were analyzed using weighted mean and standard deviation to assess HR communication efficiency and ethical challenges. One-Way ANOVA was employed to test the study's hypotheses and determine significant differences across respondent groups and sectors. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic coding to identify recurring patterns in perceptions and experiences. The integration of descriptive statistics, inferential analysis, and thematic interpretation ensured a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the research data.

7. Results and Discussion

This section presents a detailed discussion of the findings obtained from the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The results are examined in relation to the study's objectives, highlighting patterns, relationships, and variations observed among respondents. The discussion integrates statistical evidence with participants' perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of AI and automation in HR communication. Interpretations are made in the context of existing literature to explain the implications of the findings for practice and policy.

7.1 Research Objective 1

Table 1: Perception of How AI and Automation Improve HR Communication Efficiency

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Std.Dev	Description
1	The use of AI has improved the accuracy of information communicated by the HR department.	4.32	0.71	Strongly Agree
2	Automation has reduced the workload of HR staff by handling routine communication tasks.	4.30	0.69	Strongly Agree
3	Automated HR systems ensure consistency in messages sent to employees.	4.28	0.70	Strongly Agree
4	Automated HR communication tools have reduced delays in responding to employee inquiries.	4.22	0.71	Strongly Agree
5	The adoption of AI and automation has enhanced the overall effectiveness of HR communication in my organization.	4.20	0.73	Strongly Agree
6	The use of automation has improved the overall efficiency of recruitment communication processes.	4.25	0.68	Strongly Agree
7	AI-based systems have improved the speed of HR communication in my organization.	4.18	0.75	Agree
8	AI-based HR communication tools have improved coordination between HR managers and employees.	4.15	0.77	Agree
9	AI tools have made it easier for employees to access HR-related information when needed.	4.12	0.78	Agree
10	HR communication through AI platforms is more reliable than manual communication methods.	4.05	0.82	Agree
Overall		**4.21**	**0.74**	**Strongly Agree**

Legend: 1.00–1.79 = Strongly Disagree, 1.80–2.59 = Disagree, 2.60–3.39 = Neutral, 3.40–4.19 = Agree, 4.20–5.00 = Strongly Disagree.

Presented in Table 1 are the findings on the extent to which AI and automation improve HR communication efficiency. The results indicate a high level of agreement among respondents, with an overall weighted mean of 4.21 and a standard deviation of 0.74, corresponding to a "Strongly Agree" rating. This suggests that AI-driven systems are widely perceived as effective in enhancing HR communication processes. The highest-

rated item shows that AI improves the accuracy of HR information (WM = 4.32), indicating reduced errors associated with manual communication. This is closely followed by workload reduction for HR staff (WM = 4.30), reflecting the ability of automation to handle routine tasks such as announcements, inquiries, and policy dissemination. Respondents also strongly agreed that AI ensures consistency in HR messages (WM = 4.28), minimizing discrepancies that often arise when communication is handled manually by multiple personnel. Further results show that automation reduces delays in responding to employee inquiries (WM = 4.22), enhances overall HR communication effectiveness (WM = 4.20), and improves recruitment-related communication (WM = 4.25). These findings highlight the role of AI in supporting both internal communication and talent acquisition processes. Slightly lower, though still positive, ratings were recorded for speed of communication (WM = 4.18), coordination between HR managers and employees (WM = 4.15), ease of access to HR information (WM = 4.12), and reliability of AI platforms compared to manual methods (WM = 4.05). These results suggest that while respondents recognize broad efficiency gains, some areas may require further system refinement or user adaptation.

The implications of these findings extend to multiple stakeholders. For HR managers, automation enables a shift from routine administrative communication to more strategic and relational roles. Employees benefit from faster, more accurate, and consistent access to HR information, improving clarity and understanding of organizational policies and procedures. For organizational leadership, improved HR communication supports transparency, coordination, and operational efficiency, while for system developers, the positive ratings affirm user acceptance and justify continued investment in AI-enabled HR tools. The findings align closely with prior empirical studies. The findings are consistent with Oktaviannur and Kindiasari (2024), who reported that e-HRM systems significantly enhanced the accuracy and consistency of HR communication by centralizing information flows and minimizing manual intervention. In the present study, respondents strongly agreed that AI improved the accuracy of HR information, indicating that centralized and automated communication channels continue to play a critical role in reducing errors, misinterpretation, and inconsistencies in organizational messaging. This convergence of findings suggests that accuracy remains one of the most immediate and visible benefits of AI-enabled HR communication across different organizational and contextual settings.

Similarly, the results corroborate Nastase's (2025) observation that automation reduces the administrative workload of HR professionals, freeing time and resources for more strategic, value-oriented responsibilities. The high weighted mean recorded for workload reduction in this study reflects employee and manager recognition that routine communication tasks, such as information dissemination, inquiries, and updates, are efficiently handled by automated systems. This alignment indicates that the operational benefits of automation observed in earlier studies persist in contemporary organizational environments, including public and private organizations within developing economies. The implication is that automation not only enhances efficiency but also reshapes the

functional role of HR units by shifting emphasis from repetitive tasks to more analytical and relational functions.

The present findings further support Shahid *et al.* (2025), who found that automated HR technologies improved communication speed and responsiveness through standardized and technology-mediated channels. Respondents in this study rated improvements in communication speed and reduced response delays positively, reflecting the capacity of AI-based systems to deliver real-time or near-real-time communication. This correspondence reinforces the argument that automation enhances organizational responsiveness by eliminating bottlenecks associated with manual processing and hierarchical communication structures. The consistency between these findings underscores the robustness of automation as a mechanism for accelerating HR communication processes across varied institutional contexts.

However, the findings also reveal nuanced divergence when compared with Mohamed *et al.* (2022), who argued that although HR technologies improve efficiency, their influence on coordination and relational dimensions of communication is less pronounced, particularly during the early stages of adoption. While the present study recorded positive perceptions regarding improved coordination between HR managers and employees, this indicator received comparatively lower ratings than accuracy, workload reduction, and message consistency. This pattern suggests that coordination benefits, while present, may not be as immediately apparent or uniformly experienced as technical efficiency gains. The contrast with Lin's findings implies that coordination and relational outcomes may evolve over time as users gain familiarity, trust, and competence in interacting with AI-based communication systems. Overall, the analysis indicates that AI and automation are perceived as effective tools for enhancing HR communication efficiency, with strong implications for operational accuracy, consistency, and responsiveness. The convergence of these findings with much of the existing literature strengthens the evidence that AI-enabled HR communication systems play a substantive role in improving organizational communication processes, even as certain dimensions continue to evolve alongside technological adoption and user adaptation.

7.2 Research Hypothesis 1

Table 2: AI and Automation on HR Communication Efficiency

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	Sig. (p-value)
Between Groups	18.462	1	18.462	32.845	0.000
Within Groups	214.376	382	0.561		
Total	**232.838**	**383**			

Presented in Table 2 are the results of the ANOVA test conducted to examine the effect of artificial intelligence and automation on HR communication efficiency in public and private organizations in Enugu State, Nigeria. The analysis revealed a between-groups sum of squares of 18.462 (df = 1) and a within-groups sum of squares of 214.376 (df = 382), producing a total sum of squares of 232.838. The computed F-value of 32.845 with a p-

value of 0.000 indicated statistical significance at the 0.05 level. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that the adoption of AI and automation had a significant effect on HR communication efficiency. This result demonstrates that the observed improvements in communication outcomes were unlikely to have occurred by chance.

The significant finding indicates that organizations utilizing AI-driven and automated HR communication systems experienced measurable improvements in accuracy, speed, consistency, and overall effectiveness of HR communication. The higher between-groups variance relative to within-groups variance suggests that AI and automation created meaningful differences in communication performance across organizations. These improvements translated into reduced response delays, streamlined information dissemination, and enhanced access to HR services for both employees and managers, indicating that AI-enabled HR communication had become an operational driver of efficiency in the organizations studied. The implications of this result extend to multiple stakeholders. For HR managers, AI and automation facilitated more efficient handling of routine communication tasks, allowing greater focus on strategic HR responsibilities. Employees benefited from clearer, faster, and more reliable communication, which can positively influence satisfaction and engagement. Organizational leaders gained from improved internal communication structures that support coordination, compliance, and timely decision-making, while policymakers were provided with empirical evidence supporting digital transformation initiatives in HR functions.

This finding corroborated several past empirical studies that have consistently documented the efficiency-enhancing role of electronic, automated, and AI-supported HR systems. The results aligned closely with the study by Nawaz *et al.* (2024), who reported that electronic and automated HR platforms significantly improved communication efficiency by shortening processing time and reducing the incidence of information errors. In the present study, the statistically significant effect observed suggests that similar mechanisms were at work, with automation enabling faster dissemination of HR information and minimizing distortions associated with manual communication processes. This convergence indicates that the efficiency gains attributed to automation are not limited to specific organizational contexts but can be observed across diverse institutional settings when systems are properly integrated into HR communication workflows.

The findings also supported the work of Rahman (2025), who found that organizations adopting AI-supported HR technologies experienced notable improvements in message consistency and responsiveness. In both studies, automation facilitated standardized communication, ensuring that employees received uniform and timely information regardless of organizational size or structure. The present study reinforces this conclusion by demonstrating that respondents perceived AI-based communication tools as effective in delivering consistent messages and responding promptly to employee inquiries. This alignment suggests that automation strengthens

the reliability of HR communication by reducing dependence on individual discretion and variability, thereby enhancing organizational coherence.

Similarly, the results were consistent with Almatrodi *et al.* (2023), who documented that analytics-driven and automated communication systems enhanced overall organizational performance by enabling faster information flow and improved coordination. The significant effect identified in this study implies that AI and automation contribute not only to communication efficiency but also to broader organizational effectiveness by supporting quicker decision-making and smoother coordination between HR units and employees. This correspondence highlights the strategic value of AI-enabled HR communication as a facilitator of organizational agility and responsiveness in dynamic work environments.

However, the findings diverged from some empirical evidence drawn from developing contexts that reported more uneven outcomes associated with HR technology adoption. Fuchs and Reichel (2023) observed that although automation improved efficiency in principle, its practical impact was often constrained by infrastructural limitations, system reliability issues, and user resistance. Such challenges suggested that the benefits of automation were not uniformly realized across organizations, particularly where technological readiness was limited. In contrast, the present study recorded a statistically significant improvement in HR communication efficiency, indicating that these potential barriers were either less pronounced or effectively managed within the sampled organizations in Enugu State.

Likewise, Obiki-Osafiele *et al.* (2024) noted that technological adoption in Nigerian organizations did not automatically result in efficiency improvements due to skills gaps, inadequate training, and implementation challenges. The present findings suggest a different outcome, implying that the organizations included in this study may have developed sufficient user competence, institutional support, or adaptive practices to translate AI adoption into measurable efficiency gains. This contrast underscores the importance of organizational context in shaping the outcomes of technology implementation, as similar tools may yield different results depending on readiness, capacity, and management practices. Overall, the hypothesis test result demonstrated that AI and automation played a significant role in enhancing HR communication efficiency, while also situating this outcome within broader empirical evidence that both supported and questioned the extent of technology-driven efficiency gains depending on organizational context.

7.3 Research Objective 3

Table 3: Ethical Challenges Associated with AI-based HR Communication

	Indicators	Weighted Mean	Std.Dev	Description
1	I am concerned about how my personal information is stored and used in AI-based HR systems.	4.35	0.68	Strongly Agree
2	AI-driven HR communication reduces meaningful human interaction between employees and HR managers.	4.28	0.71	Strongly Agree
3	The use of AI in HR communication raises concerns about employee data privacy.	4.22	0.74	Strongly Agree
4	Automated HR communication systems lack transparency in how decisions are made.	4.15	0.79	Agree
5	There is a risk of bias in automated HR communication and decision-making processes.	4.10	0.76	Agree
6	Employees are not always adequately informed about how AI is used in HR communication.	4.05	0.82	Agree
7	The use of AI in HR communication increases the risk of misuse of employee information.	3.95	0.85	Agree
8	AI-based communication tools may lead to unfair treatment of employees.	3.88	0.81	Agree
9	Ethical concerns affect my level of trust in AI-based HR communication systems.	3.75	0.87	Agree
10	There are insufficient organizational policies guiding the ethical use of AI in HR communication.	3.60	0.90	Agree
Overall		**4.07**	**0.79**	**Agree**

Legend: 1.00–1.79 = Strongly Disagree, 1.80–2.59 = Disagree, 2.60–3.39 = Neutral, 3.40–4.19 = Agree, 4.20–5.00 = Strongly Disagree.

Presented in Table 3 are the findings on the ethical challenges associated with AI-based HR communication, which indicate a generally high level of concern among respondents, as reflected in the overall weighted mean of 4.07 with a standard deviation of 0.79, corresponding to an "Agree" description. The highest-rated concern relates to how personal information is stored and used in AI-based HR systems (WM = 4.35), suggesting that employees and managers remain highly sensitive to issues of data handling, access, and potential misuse in digitally mediated HR environments. Closely associated with this is the perception that AI-driven HR communication reduces meaningful human interaction between employees and HR managers (WM = 4.28), indicating apprehension that increased reliance on automated systems may weaken interpersonal relationships and diminish opportunities for dialogue and empathy in HR processes.

Respondents expressed strong agreement that the use of AI in HR communication raises significant ethical concerns, particularly regarding employee data privacy (WM = 4.22), underscoring privacy as a central issue in evaluations of AI-enabled HR systems. Additional concerns included lack of transparency in automated HR decision-making (WM = 4.15) and the risk of bias in automated communication and decision processes

(WM = 4.10), reflecting unease about how AI systems function and how outcomes are generated and justified. Although slightly lower, other indicators remained within the "Agree" range, indicating persistent ethical apprehensions. These included inadequate employee awareness of how AI is used in HR communication (WM = 4.05), potential misuse of employee information (WM = 3.95), and the possibility of unfair treatment resulting from automated systems (WM = 3.88). Ethical concerns were also found to negatively influence trust in AI-based HR communication (WM = 3.75), while insufficient organizational policies guiding ethical AI use (WM = 3.60) suggested that existing governance frameworks were perceived as inadequate.

These findings have important implications for key stakeholders. Employees' strong concerns about privacy, fairness, and information misuse point to heightened perceptions of vulnerability in AI-mediated HR communication, which may affect engagement and willingness to share personal data. HR managers are positioned as critical intermediaries, tasked with balancing efficiency gains with ethical responsibility, transparency, and relational sensitivity. Organizational leadership is similarly implicated, as widespread agreement on ethical challenges highlights the need for robust governance structures, clear policies, and accountability mechanisms. For technology developers and vendors, the results emphasize the importance of embedding data protection, fairness, and explainability into system design to strengthen user confidence and ethical acceptance. Overall, the findings indicate that ethical considerations are integral to AI adoption in HR communication and significantly shape stakeholder perceptions.

In relation to past empirical findings, the present results strongly aligned with earlier studies that documented ethical concerns associated with technology-enabled HR communication. The findings corroborated the work of Shaheen *et al.* (2024) who reported that employees expressed pronounced concerns regarding surveillance, data privacy, and control over personal information in digitally mediated HR systems. In the present study, respondents' high levels of agreement on issues relating to data storage, misuse of employee information, and privacy risks suggested that similar apprehensions persisted, indicating that the expansion of AI-based HR communication has intensified awareness of information vulnerability rather than alleviating it.

The results also aligned with those of Verčič and Verčič (2025), who found that reduced face-to-face interaction arising from digital HR communication tools negatively affected trust and relational quality between employees and HR personnel. In the current study, respondents strongly agreed that AI-driven HR communication reduced meaningful human interaction, reinforcing the view that technology-mediated communication can weaken interpersonal relationships within organizations. This parallel suggests that while AI systems improve efficiency, they may simultaneously alter the social dynamics of HR communication, creating emotional distance and limiting opportunities for dialogue, reassurance, and personalized engagement.

Furthermore, the observed concerns regarding transparency and bias were consistent with the findings of Lacmanovic (2023), who documented employee

apprehension about opaque algorithms and the potential for biased outcomes in AI-supported HR decision-making. In the present study, respondents agreed that automated HR communication systems lacked transparency and carried risks of unfair treatment and biased decisions. This convergence indicates that algorithmic opacity remains a central ethical issue, as employees often lack clarity on how AI systems process information, make recommendations, or influence HR-related outcomes, thereby undermining perceptions of fairness and accountability.

However, the present findings contrasted partially with those of Igwe-Nmaju (2021), who suggested that ethical concerns related to HR technologies could be substantially mitigated through clear organizational policies, effective communication strategies, and structured governance frameworks. While Zafar's study implied that formal guidelines and transparency mechanisms could reduce employee anxiety, the current study revealed that respondents continued to agree that organizational policies guiding the ethical use of AI in HR communication were insufficient. This divergence suggests that, within the study context, such mitigating structures may either be underdeveloped, poorly implemented, or inadequately communicated to employees. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that while AI-based HR communication offers functional advantages, it is accompanied by substantial ethical concerns centered on privacy, transparency, fairness, and human interaction. The consistency of these findings with much of the existing literature reinforces the view that ethical challenges remain a defining issue in the adoption and use of AI in HR communication, shaping stakeholder trust, acceptance, and engagement with these systems.

7.4 Research Hypothesis 2

Table 4: Ethical Challenges Associated with AI-Based HR Communication

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	Sig. (p-value)
Between Groups	14.287	1	14.287	24.916	0.000
Within Groups	219.183	382	0.573		
Total	**233.470**	**383**			

Presented in Table 4 are the results of the ANOVA test examining the ethical challenges associated with AI-based HR communication in public and private organizations in Enugu State, Nigeria. The analysis revealed a between-groups sum of squares of 14.287 (df = 1) and a within-groups sum of squares of 219.183 (df = 382), yielding a total sum of squares of 233.470. The computed F-value of 24.916 with a p-value of 0.000 was statistically significant at the 0.05 level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This result indicates that ethical challenges related to the use of AI-based HR communication systems were significant among the organizations studied.

The statistically significant difference suggests that concerns about data privacy, transparency, fairness, and reduced human interaction were substantial rather than incidental. The greater variation between groups implies that the adoption of AI-driven HR communication introduced measurable ethical tensions into organizational practices.

As organizations increasingly relied on automated communication tools, uncertainties regarding data handling, lack of clarity in automated decision-making, and perceived risks of bias became more pronounced. These findings indicate that efficiency gains from AI adoption were accompanied by ethical costs that influenced trust, acceptance, and confidence in HR communication systems. The implications of this finding extend to multiple stakeholders. For HR managers, the presence of significant ethical challenges highlights the need to balance technical efficiency with responsibilities related to data protection, fairness, and trust-building. Employees were directly affected, as ethical concerns shaped their confidence in AI-mediated communication and perceptions of organizational integrity. Organizational leaders were implicated due to the potential impact of ethical challenges on employee relations, legitimacy, and internal cohesion, while policymakers were presented with evidence that existing governance frameworks may be insufficient to address emerging ethical risks. Technology developers and HR system providers were also affected, as ethical system design and deployment influence user trust and acceptance.

This finding was consistent with several past empirical studies that documented the ethical implications of integrating automated systems into organizational communication processes. Bastida *et al.* (2025) reported that the adoption of automated communication technologies introduced critical ethical questions related to accountability, responsibility, and transparency, particularly when decision-making processes became less visible to employees. This observation supported the statistically significant ethical concerns identified in the present study, where respondents expressed agreement that AI-based HR communication systems often lacked clarity regarding how decisions were generated and who was accountable for their outcomes. The convergence of these findings indicated that ethical uncertainty remains a central issue when automation mediates sensitive HR information and interactions.

Similarly, the findings aligned with Onyekwelu *et al.* (2024), who observed that although automation enhanced organizational efficiency, it simultaneously intensified concerns about data misuse and the erosion of human judgment in organizational processes. In the present study, respondents' concerns about the misuse of employee information and the reduced role of human discretion in HR communication reflected this dual effect of automation. This consistency suggested that efficiency gains achieved through AI systems may be accompanied by heightened ethical tension, particularly in areas involving personal data, confidentiality, and the perceived fairness of automated communication. The results also corroborated Yanamala (2023), who found that employees expressed reservations about privacy and fairness when HR decisions and communications were mediated by technology. In the current study, participants similarly agreed that AI-based HR communication raised issues related to privacy, potential bias, and unfair treatment, indicating that such reservations persist across different organizational and national contexts. This alignment reinforced the argument that ethical challenges are not incidental but rather inherent to technology-mediated HR

communication, especially when employees feel excluded from understanding or influencing automated processes.

In contrast, some empirical findings suggested a more moderate ethical impact under certain organizational conditions. Ndone (2025) reported that ethical concerns were less pronounced in organizations characterized by clearer communication policies and higher levels of digital literacy among employees. This implied that employee awareness and institutional clarity could reduce uncertainty and anxiety surrounding automated systems. Likewise, Raza *et al.* (2023) noted that employees were more accepting of automated HR communication when systems were perceived as transparent, supportive, and facilitative rather than controlling. These contrasting findings suggested that ethical challenges associated with AI-based HR communication are not uniform but vary according to organizational capacity, governance frameworks, and the extent to which employees understand and trust the technology. Overall, the hypothesis test results demonstrated that ethical challenges were a significant dimension of AI-based HR communication, reinforcing the need to understand how technological efficiency and ethical responsibility coexisted within organizational HR practices.

7.5 Research Objective 3: HR Manager and Employee Perceptions of AI Communication Tools

The findings in this section of the chapter were derived from the semi-structured interviews conducted with HR managers and employees, and they revealed diverse perceptions of AI communication tools within public and private organizations in Enugu State, Nigeria. Analysis of the interview data led to the identification of five major themes: perceived efficiency and convenience, concerns about loss of human touch, trust and transparency issues, perceived fairness and bias, and adaptability and skill readiness. These themes reflected how participants made sense of AI-driven HR communication in their daily work experiences and interactions with organizational systems. The first theme, perceived efficiency and convenience, showed that many HR managers and employees viewed AI communication tools as beneficial in speeding up information flow, reducing repetitive tasks, and ensuring timely responses to routine inquiries. Participants noted that automated emails, HR portals, and notification systems reduced delays and improved access to information, especially in large organizations. The second theme, concerns about loss of human touch, revealed apprehension among employees who felt that automated communication reduced personal interaction with HR managers. Several participants expressed those sensitive issues such as grievances, promotions, or disciplinary matters were better handled through direct human engagement rather than automated platforms. This perception suggested that while AI tools improved operational efficiency, they altered the relational aspect of HR communication.

The third theme focused on trust and transparency issues. Interviewees frequently raised questions about how AI systems processed information, made decisions, and stored personal data. Employees, in particular, expressed uncertainty about who had

access to their information and how automated decisions were generated. HR managers also acknowledged that limited transparency in AI systems sometimes made it difficult to explain outcomes to employees, which affected confidence in the communication process. The fourth theme, perceived fairness and bias, reflected concerns that AI communication tools could unintentionally favor certain groups or produce outcomes that appeared unfair. Participants indicated that automated recruitment messages, screening feedback, or performance-related communication could be influenced by flawed data or system design, raising doubts about impartiality. The fifth theme, adaptability and skill readiness, showed mixed perceptions regarding users' ability to effectively interact with AI tools. While some participants felt comfortable adapting to digital HR platforms, others reported difficulties due to limited technical skills or inadequate training.

The implications of these findings extended to several stakeholders identified in the study. For HR managers, the themes suggested that their roles increasingly involved managing both technological systems and employee perceptions, particularly around trust, fairness, and communication quality. Employees were directly affected, as their acceptance of AI communication tools depended on how these systems aligned with their expectations of fairness, transparency, and interpersonal engagement. Organizational leaders were implicated because employee perceptions influenced morale, cooperation, and confidence in management practices. Policymakers were indirectly affected, as the concerns expressed by participants pointed to gaps in regulatory clarity regarding data protection and ethical communication practices. IT companies and HR technology providers were also impacted, since user perceptions reflected how system design, usability, and transparency shaped acceptance and trust. Recruitment companies faced similar implications, as perceptions of fairness and bias in AI communication influenced candidate experiences and organizational reputation.

These findings were supported by several past empirical studies and were further reinforced by the personal accounts of interview participants, which provided context-specific meaning to the patterns observed. Arslan *et al.* (2022) reported that employees generally perceived HR automation as efficient but simultaneously expressed concern about reduced interpersonal interaction and weakened relational bonds between employees and HR personnel. This pattern was clearly reflected in the present study, where participants acknowledged the speed and convenience of AI-based HR communication while lamenting the diminished opportunity for face-to-face engagement. One respondent explained, *"I can get information faster now, but I miss being able to walk into HR and talk to someone directly"* (Interviewee "A"), indicating that efficiency did not fully compensate for the absence of human contact. Another participant added, *"The system replies quickly, but it does not understand how I feel when the issue is sensitive"* (Interviewee "B"), suggesting that automated responses were perceived as emotionally limited, particularly in situations requiring empathy or discretion. These accounts demonstrated that while AI tools improved operational efficiency, they altered the social dimension of HR communication.

The findings also aligned with Wanner *et al.* (2022) who found that trust in electronic HR systems was closely tied to transparency, clarity of communication, and users' understanding of how systems functioned. In the present study, several participants expressed uncertainty about data handling and system logic, which undermined their confidence in AI-based communication tools. One interviewee remarked, *"I don't really know what happens to my data after I submit it on the HR platform"* (Interviewee "C"), reflecting concerns about data control and privacy. Another participant stated, *"Sometimes I am not sure how the system decides what message or response to give"* (Interviewee "D"), highlighting a lack of visibility into decision-making processes. These personal accounts mirrored earlier empirical observations that opacity in automated systems can weaken trust, even when such systems are perceived as efficient.

In addition, the findings corroborated Basch and Melchers (2021) who observed that employee perceptions of fairness significantly influenced acceptance of technology-mediated HR communication. Participants in this study similarly questioned whether automated systems treated all employees equitably. One respondent noted, *"When feedback comes automatically, I wonder if everyone is treated the same way or if the system favors some people"* (Interviewee "E"), indicating apprehension about potential bias embedded within AI-driven communication. This concern suggested that perceptions of fairness remained central to how employees evaluated the legitimacy of automated HR interactions.

The study further resonated with Parker and Grote (2022), who reported that automation reshaped work relationships and required employees to develop new skills to effectively engage with technology. Participants in this study described initial challenges in adapting to AI-based communication tools, often due to limited guidance or training. One respondent explained, *"At first I struggled to use the system because nobody trained us properly"* (Interviewee "F"), pointing to skill readiness as a factor shaping early perceptions. However, another participant observed, *"Once I learned how it works, I realized it actually makes my work easier"* (Interviewee "G"), suggesting that familiarity and competence could transform initial resistance into acceptance. Together, these narratives demonstrated that employee perceptions of AI communication tools were shaped by a combination of efficiency gains, ethical concerns, relational changes, and individual capacity to adapt to new technologies.

In contrast, some empirical findings suggested more favorable perceptions of AI and automated HR systems when certain organizational conditions were present, particularly adequate training, continuous support, and system usability. Hasija and Esper (2022) reported that employees demonstrated higher levels of acceptance and confidence in automated systems when they received sufficient training and technical assistance, indicating that resistance to HR technologies was not an inherent or permanent response. This contrasted with the experiences of some respondents in the present study who initially felt unprepared to use AI-based HR communication tools, yet it aligned closely with the experiences of others who adapted gradually over time. For

example, one participant noted, *"After some time and practice, I became comfortable using the HR portal"* (Interviewee "H"), suggesting that familiarity and repeated use reduced anxiety and improved perceptions. This indicated that early discomfort could evolve into acceptance when employees were given time and opportunities to build competence.

Similarly, Liesa-Orús *et al.* (2023) found that perceived usefulness and ease of use played a central role in shaping positive attitudes toward technology, reinforcing the argument that user experience could moderate ethical and relational concerns. In the present study, several participants acknowledged that despite reservations about reduced human interaction or data handling, the functional benefits of AI tools influenced their willingness to engage with them. One respondent remarked, *"As long as the system helps me get things done faster, I don't mind using it"* (Interviewee "C"), reflecting a pragmatic orientation in which efficiency outweighed certain apprehensions. This perspective suggested that when AI systems clearly supported task completion and reduced procedural delays, employees were more inclined to tolerate or overlook perceived shortcomings.

In essence, these contrasting findings demonstrated that perceptions of AI communication tools among HR managers and employees in Enugu State were neither uniformly negative nor entirely positive. Rather, they were shaped by organizational context, the transparency and usability of systems, the availability of training and support, and individual readiness to adapt to technological change. While some respondents expressed caution rooted in ethical and relational concerns, others developed more positive attitudes as they gained experience and recognized the practical value of AI-based HR communication. This complexity underscored that employee perceptions were dynamic and context-dependent, reflecting an ongoing process of adjustment rather than a fixed stance toward automation in HR communication.

7.6 Research Objective 4: **Strategies for Ethical Adoption of AI in HR Communication**

The strategies for ethical adoption of AI in HR communication, as derived from the findings of this study, reflected the need for a balanced approach that aligned technological efficiency with ethical responsibility, employee trust, and organizational accountability. A central strategy involved the establishment of clear internal governance structures to guide the use of AI in HR communication. Organizations needed defined rules that clarified how AI tools were deployed, the scope of their use, and the limits of automation in sensitive HR matters. Such structures helped ensure that AI systems supported, rather than replaced, human judgment, particularly in areas involving employee welfare, grievances, and performance-related communication. Closely related to this was the strategy of maintaining human oversight over AI-driven communication processes. The findings showed that employees valued efficiency but remained concerned about depersonalization, making it necessary for HR managers to retain active roles in interpreting, validating, and contextualizing automated messages before or after they reached employees.

Another important strategy involved transparency in AI operations and communication processes. Ethical adoption required organizations to clearly communicate to employees how AI systems functioned, what types of data were collected, how decisions or messages were generated, and who had access to such data. Transparency helped reduce uncertainty and suspicion, which were evident in employee perceptions identified in this study. Providing clear explanations in simple language, rather than technical descriptions, supported understanding across different employee groups and improved confidence in AI-based HR communication. Data protection and confidentiality also emerged as a core strategy. Ethical adoption required strict controls over the collection, storage, and use of employee data, with access limited to authorized personnel only. Secure digital infrastructure and careful handling of information were essential to prevent misuse, unauthorized access, or unintended exposure of sensitive employee records, all of which were concerns raised by participants.

Capacity building and user preparedness formed another key strategy. The findings showed that acceptance of AI communication tools was influenced by employees' ability to use them effectively. Ethical adoption therefore required organizations to invest in training programs that equipped both HR managers and employees with the necessary skills to interact confidently with AI systems. Training helped reduce anxiety, minimized errors, and enabled users to recognize the appropriate and inappropriate uses of automated communication tools. Alongside training, continuous support mechanisms, such as help desks or designated HR personnel, allowed employees to seek clarification or assistance when challenges arose. This approach reinforced the idea that AI was a supportive tool rather than a controlling system.

Figure 1: Strategies for Ethical Adoption of AI in HR Communication

Fairness and inclusiveness were also critical strategies for ethical adoption. Organizations needed to ensure that AI communication tools did not disadvantage specific groups of employees due to system design, data limitations, or unequal access to technology. Ethical adoption required regular monitoring of AI outputs to identify patterns that could indicate bias or unfair treatment. This involved reviewing automated messages, recruitment feedback, or performance-related communications to confirm that they aligned with organizational values and principles of equity. Inclusiveness also required consideration of employees with limited digital skills or access challenges, ensuring that alternative communication channels remained available where necessary.
Employee engagement and participation constituted another strategy identified in the findings. Ethical adoption was strengthened when employees were involved in discussions about the introduction and use of AI in HR communication. Providing opportunities for feedback allowed organizations to understand employee concerns, expectations, and experiences, which in turn informed adjustments to AI practices. Engagement fostered a sense of ownership and reduced resistance, as employees felt their voices were acknowledged in shaping how technology affected their work lives. This participatory approach also supported trust, as it demonstrated organizational willingness to listen and respond to ethical concerns.

Finally, continuous evaluation and accountability were essential strategies for ethical adoption. The findings indicated that ethical challenges evolved alongside technological use, making it necessary for organizations to regularly assess the impact of AI communication tools on employees and HR practices. Periodic reviews helped identify emerging issues related to privacy, fairness, or communication quality and allowed organizations to respond proactively. Accountability mechanisms, including clear assignment of responsibility for AI-related decisions within HR units, ensured that ethical lapses could be addressed promptly. Together, these strategies reflected a comprehensive approach to ethical adoption, grounded in the study's findings, that recognized AI in HR communication as both a technological and human-centered practice requiring ongoing attention, responsibility, and balance.

8. Conclusions

The evidence from both quantitative and qualitative analyses demonstrated that AI and automation significantly enhanced HR communication efficiency in public and private organizations, facilitating timely, accurate, and consistent information dissemination, reducing workload, and improving coordination between HR managers and employees. Despite these operational advantages, the study concluded that ethical challenges such as concerns about data privacy, reduced human interaction, lack of transparency, and potential algorithmic bias continued to influence employee trust and acceptance of AI systems. The perceptions of HR managers and employees were nuanced; while they recognized the benefits of efficiency, speed, and accessibility, they were simultaneously cautious about the social and ethical implications of automated communication.

The study further concluded that effective adoption of AI in HR communication requires a deliberate, structured, and ethically guided approach. Organizations need governance frameworks to guide AI deployment, maintain human oversight to ensure contextual judgment, enforce transparency to build trust, secure employee data to prevent misuse, provide training and capacity-building initiatives to enhance system usability, engage employees in decision-making, and continuously evaluate AI systems to ensure fairness and accountability. Collectively, these conclusions indicate that AI and automation can improve organizational efficiency without compromising ethical standards, but only when the integration of technology is carefully managed to address employee concerns, maintain relational dynamics, and uphold organizational values.

9. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, several actionable measures can be taken to optimize the use of AI and automation in HR communication.

First, organizations should continue leveraging AI tools to improve communication efficiency, ensuring that information is accurate, consistent, timely, and accessible, while also monitoring system performance to sustain these benefits.

Second, HR managers and policymakers should implement measures to safeguard employee data, enhance transparency, and monitor automated systems for fairness, mitigating ethical risks associated with privacy, bias, and decision-making. Third, comprehensive training programs and continuous support mechanisms should be established to enable employees and HR managers to effectively engage with AI communication tools, enhancing trust, usability, and relational engagement while reducing resistance to automated processes.

Fourth, organizations should adopt comprehensive strategies for the ethical adoption of AI, including the creation of clear governance frameworks, maintenance of human oversight, active employee engagement in AI-related decisions, regular evaluation of system performance, and robust data protection policies. Collectively, these recommendations provide a roadmap for organizations to maximize the operational benefits of AI in HR communication while responsibly addressing ethical, social, and relational challenges, ensuring sustainable and effective integration of technology within human resource management.

Future researchers are encouraged to build on the findings of this study by examining AI and automation in HR communication across a wider range of organizational contexts, including different states and regions of Nigeria, to allow for broader comparison and generalization of results. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to examine how employee and HR manager perceptions, ethical concerns, and communication efficiency evolve over time as organizations gain more experience with AI-based systems. Researchers may further explore sector-specific dynamics by comparing public and private organizations in greater depth, as well as extending

analysis to small and medium-sized enterprises where technological capacity and governance structures may differ.

In addition, future studies could extend this line of inquiry by incorporating variables such as organizational culture, leadership support, digital literacy, and regulatory compliance, as these factors are likely to shape how AI-driven HR communication systems are accepted and ethically managed within organizations. Examining these variables would allow researchers to better explain differences in employee trust, system usage, and ethical outcomes across organizations and sectors. Furthermore, the use of mixed or more advanced methodological approaches, such as experimental designs, longitudinal studies, or multi-level analysis, could provide a clearer understanding of causal relationships between AI adoption, HR communication efficiency, and ethical challenges. Such approaches would strengthen empirical evidence by capturing both short-term and long-term effects of AI implementation and by accounting for interactions between individual, organizational, and institutional factors.

Conflict of Interest Declaration
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest associated with this study. The research was conducted independently, and no financial, professional, or personal relationships influenced the design, data collection, analysis, or reporting of the findings.

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