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AI-Driven Corporate Social Responsibility Communication: Practical Applications, Ethical Considerations, and Development Pathways

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Abstract: The deployment of artificial intelligence in corporate philanthropy communication confers distinct advantages: algorithmic analytics afford a granular diagnosis of social needs, while generative models facilitate the orchestration of imaginative intervention scenarios. By open-sourcing AI assets and fostering co-creation among heterogeneous actors, firms can automatically produce multimodal philanthropic content, thereby catalyzing a paradigmatic shift away from legacy charitable formats. Yet this technologization simultaneously surfaces salient ethical tensions. Restrictive interpretations of corporate social responsibility, precarious protection of user privacy and rights, and technological over-dependence that erodes user autonomy exemplify the emergent dilemmas. To countervail these risks, corporations must integrate AI-based social initiatives into strategic master plans, intensify comprehensive technological application and iterative innovation, and bolster internal governance mechanisms while refining external philanthropic legitimacy. Moreover, cross-sector alliances with diverse non-profit organizations should be cultivated to constitute an interstitial "philanthropic ecosystem" that aggregates multi-actor resources, jointly addresses complex social problems, and accelerates societal advancement and sustainable development.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; Corporation social responsibility communication; Ethical consideration; Development path

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1. Introduction

As the pivotal engine of global digital transformation, artificial intelligence (AI) is precipitating a new cycle of scientific-technological revolution and industrial reconfiguration. Since 2015, the Chinese state has promulgated a succession of policy instruments to accelerate AI innovation and diffusion; most notably, the 2017 New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan elevated AI to the status of a national strategic priority. With society's transition from the conventional "Internet Plus" era to an emergent "Intelligence Plus" epoch, domestic enterprises are vigorously expanding R&D investment in AI and embedding algorithmic systems across

production, circulation, and consumption circuits to enhance productive efficiency and innovative capacity. While pursuing technological advances, firms are simultaneously fulfilling social obligations by channeling resources into philanthropic initiatives. The maturation of AI and big-data architectures has markedly augmented corporate capabilities in prosocial communication. The 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of the Advertising Industry foregrounds the primacy of social value and mandates technological innovation to catalyze digital upgrades of public-service advertising products and services. By harnessing AI to energize philanthropic messaging, corporations unlock novel opportunities for reputational construction; this reciprocal empowerment enables the realization of simultaneous rent-seeking and social value creation, yielding a Pareto-optimal equilibrium between economic returns and public welfare.

The notion of "philanthropic communication" (gongyi chuanbo) was first explicitly theorized in the Chinese context by Ma Xiaoli and Zhang Jiankang, who delineated it as a non-profit constellation of communicative practices—encompassing public-service advertising, news reportage, websites, campaigns, projects and donations—whose telos is the advancement of the collective good and the catalysis of cultural development and social progress [1]. Xia Jiaxin and Yang Weifang subsequently expanded the conceptual perimeter, foregrounding the polycentric agency characteristic of the digital ecology and the imperative of dialogic engagement with individuated publics embedded in algorithmic networks [2]. As the technological repertoire evolves, so too does the praxis of philanthropic communication: scholars interrogate not only the efficacy of persuasive strategies but also the structural impediments that constrain them, proffering corresponding remedial protocols. Lü Wenkai and Chen Weijian, for instance, argue that short-form video—by virtue of its interactivity, persuasive potency, granular targeting capacity, and synergistic articulation of user-generated content with celebrity capital—opens a new affordance space for prosocial messaging [3]. Lai Zheli, turning to the intelligent-media epoch, explicates how big-data analytics, augmented reality, blockchain infrastructures, and location-based services reconfigure the pathways through which philanthropic discourse is produced, circulated, and monetized [4]. Yet, within China's internet polity, philanthropic communication remains fraught with challenges pertaining to legal-policy articulation, content quality assurance, and transactional transparency—deficits that necessitate coordinated governance by state organs, platform operators, corporations, and networked citizenries alike.

The philanthropic-communication arena is intrinsically polyphonic; the corporation constitutes merely one node within a heterogeneous constellation of actors. As early as 2009, Wang Yanlong et al. situated philanthropic communication within an emergent civil society, theorizing it as a multidimensional value system co-produced through the recursive interaction and discursive hybridization of disparate communicative agents [5]. These scholars taxonomize four primary modalities: media-led philanthropic dissemination, corporate philanthropic marketing, state philanthropic governance, and civic philanthropic participation. Chen Xiaodong legitimizes the instrumentalization of philanthropic communication, contending that no brand engages social issues without strategic calculi of reputational return [6]. Shu Yongping and Gu Yu, conversely, argue that corporate philanthropic communication transcends the marketing frame, its axiological nucleus being the centering of public interest within the firm's operative rationality [7]. Contemporary scholarship predominantly privileges corporate-centric analyses, foregrounding instrumental efficacy and tactical explication. Yang Linya posits that philanthropic marketing yields brand-image appreciation, profit accretion, and public legitimation, while Bian Wei prescribes, for the digital-media epoch, granular attunement to everyday life-worlds, dialogic interactivity, strategic temporalization, platform polyvalence, and thematic sustainability [8–9]. Notwithstanding these contributions, theorization of philanthropic communication under the epistemic conditions of the algorithmic age remains

conspicuously underdeveloped.

1.1. AI helps corporate public welfare: The application and advantages of intelligent technology in the field of communication

1.1.1. Penetrating social demand and architecting arenas for philanthropic participation

Philanthropic praxis is oriented toward the advancement of collective welfare, prioritizing constituencies confronting structural disadvantage and ameliorating entrenched social predicaments. Corporations must therefore cultivate acute socio-diagnostic acuity prior to orchestrating philanthropic communication. Artificial intelligence (AI), via its algorithmic data-mining and machine-learning capacities, exfiltrates latent patterns and correlations from multi-stratal social datasets, enabling granular identification of heterogeneous group-specific needs and the consequent calibration of contextually appropriate philanthropic scenarios, thereby intensifying the precision of prosocial messaging. In recent years, leading internet enterprises have operationalized AI to intervene in salient social problems. In 2020, Alibaba Group and Unilever co-launched the "Plastic Free" sustainable-development initiative, co-engineering an AI-empowered closed-loop plastics-recycling system whose intelligent recovery apparatuses have been instantiated across multiple empirical contexts. In 2021, Baidu introduced the "Five Blessings AI for the Elderly" program, integrating functionalities from Baidu Brain 7.0 to address senior citizens' requirements in social interaction, quotidian life-services, and health-care support, thereby facilitating dignified ageing. In 2022, the Ministry of Science and Technology, in concert with five ministerial counterparts, promulgated the Guiding Opinions on Accelerating Scenario-Based Innovation to Foster High-Quality Economic Development via High-Level AI Application, mandating the consolidation of corporate hegemony in AI scenario innovation and enjoining sectoral leaders to fabricate inventive scenarios targeted at national strategic imperatives and critical livelihood issues.

1.1.2. AI technology commons: Architecting an ecology of participatory innovation

Historically, philanthropic initiatives were orchestrated under the aegis of state organs. The diffusion of Internet infrastructures subsequently pluralized the agentic landscape of philanthropic communication; nevertheless, the "AI + philanthropy" paradigm has yet to permeate the civic stratum. Algorithmic capabilities remain largely sequestered within research institutes and large-scale enterprises, while the public's AI literacy and affordances for praxis remain underdeveloped. To enroll heterogeneous actors in prosocial propagation, apex Internet and AI corporations have converted proprietary technological capital into a commons by releasing AI assets, thereby catalyzing mass-participatory innovation. The Tencent Charitable Foundation's "Light Tech for Social Good Incubator", in collaboration with Tencent Youtu Lab, open-sources standardized AI APIs and vertical solutions, incentivizing civic communities to redeploy Tencent Cloud's algorithmic stack to address salient social issues. Since its inception, the incubator has mobilized more than 3,600 teams and 18,000 developers. Baidu's "Stellar Initiative" (a CSR technology-enablement platform) discloses not only AI models but also traffic, infrastructural and financial resources, convening developers, content creators and ecosystem partners to co-produce algorithmic remedies for social problems. iFlytek likewise democratizes its service portfolio, granting philanthropic projects cost-free access to its AI platform and end-to-end technical support. Through the commodification of AI as a public good, corporations extend the semiotic reach of philanthropic communication, excavate latent innovative trajectories and emergent thematic foci, and sustain socio-algorithmic support for populations in need.

1.2. Ethical considerations: The challenge of corporate public welfare communication in the intelligent era

Obstacles to AI-enabled philanthropy: Deficient corporate sense-making. Although the last decade has witnessed a monotonic rise in corporate engagement with social causes and philanthropic communication has become a privileged vehicle for signaling CSR commitment, empirical observation reveals that a considerable proportion of firms remain cognitively entrenched in superficial interpretations of social responsibility. Despite near-consensus in both scholarly and practitioner communities that CSR is a tetradic construct encompassing economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic accountabilities, many enterprises continue to conflate regulatory compliance with exhaustive CSR fulfilment. This reductive equation betrays a residual profit-centric episteme that impedes deeper apprehension of the normative and civic dimensions of corporate accountability, thereby constraining the imaginative and moral bandwidth necessary for algorithmically mediated philanthropic innovation.

2. Build a lasting impact: The development blueprint of the intelligent era of corporate public welfare communication

When interrogating the nexus between technology and social responsibility, Emmanuel G. Mesthene's Technological Change: Its Impact on Man and Society furnishes this study with a cardinal heuristic: technological artefacts are morally indeterminate—neither intrinsically benevolent nor malign; their societal valence is wholly contingent upon the modes of human appropriation. This axiom exhorts corporations to transcend inherited cognitive schemata and cultivate inventive trajectories in mobilizing technology for philanthropic communication and CSR praxis. Guided by this maxim, firms can architect and deploy AI systems to parse heterogeneous social datasets, thereby calibrating hyper-specific philanthropic interventions. Algorithmic analytics render visible previously occluded vulnerable constituencies and emergent social deficits, permitting the formulation of targeted remedial strategies. Moreover, AI-enabled feedback loops can be embedded throughout project implementation and evaluation cycles, ensuring dynamic resource optimization and continuous process refinement.

3. Discussion

In the emergent epoch of artificial intelligence, corporations are ethically enjoined to assume proactive custodianship of social responsibility by sustaining an unwavering commitment to philanthropic communication. While algorithmic architectures inaugurate unprecedented affordances for prosocial messaging, firms must simultaneously institutionalize reflexive vigilance, iteratively surfacing and redressing the ethical externalities that co-evolve with AI deployment. Through strategic deepening, intensified techno-governance, and continuous algorithmic recursivity, enterprises must enshrine human centrality and praxis-oriented rationality as axiomatic constraints, thereby steering AI trajectories toward socially generative teloi and co-optimizing corporate growth with societal flourishing. In so doing, corporations not only harmonize technological innovation with fiduciary responsibility but also ensure that the development and diffusion of AI remain subordinated to the commonweal, propelling the polity toward a more equitable and sustainable futurity.

4. Conclusion

In the era of artificial intelligence (AI), enterprises should be more proactive in fulfilling their social responsibilities while continuously paying attention to and practicing public welfare communication. However,

while recognizing the numerous benefits and opportunities that AI brings to public welfare communication, enterprises need to constantly reflect on and make every effort to mitigate or address the ethical issues inherent in AI applications. By means of strategic upgrading, technological supervision and advancement, as well as upholding the subjectivity and practicality of human beings, enterprises should continuously guide the "ethical application of AI" (AI for good), thereby achieving a win-win situation for both their own development and social progress.

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