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The Art of Storytelling in the Digital Era: Leveraging Narrative Strategies for Effective Employee Engagement in AI-Powered Workplaces

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ABSTRACT

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This paper discusses the role of storytelling in AI-powered workplaces as a strategic, ethical, and contentious practice through the view that the mediated or generated AI narratives are not neutral engines of engagement but rather organize organizational reality, voice distribution, and create trust. The study draws in the results of the literature concerning corporate storytelling, digital internal communication, AI-mediated communication, and trust in AI to establish a critical narrative framework using a secondary qualitative design. The synthesis reveals that the richness of the narrative communication and self-coherent stores in values may make the identification and engagement more profound, whereas digital platforms and AI technologies can broaden the reach, regularity, and responsiveness. Nonetheless, it also demonstrates that, in the case of automated storytelling, templated or over-orchestrated storytelling, through chatbots, recommender systems, and generative AI, engagement becomes performative, not relational. Messages inspired by AI have a tendency of standardizing their tone, concentrating the control of the narrative, in addition to softening the distinction between human and synthetic voice, especially in highly emotive “we care” and culture communications. Further empirical research on the use of AI as an author, conversational agents suggests that authenticity and trust are easily lost when automation is on route or perceived. Governance efforts are still made with a focus on efficiency and transparency as well as clarity of roles with little attention to narrative form, authorship, plurality, and consistency with lived experience. The article suggests that AI-driven storytelling is to be considered as the piece of discourse with ethical and political

implications, posing the question of whose stories are promoted, how inclusion and opposition are defined, and whether machine narratives support or destabilize the current power structures. It ends by giving practice-based suggestions to organization, system designers, and regulators to bring AI-enhanced storytelling and real, one-on-one employee interaction together.

Introduction

The interplay between narration, the internet, and artificial intelligence is becoming the crucial point where employee engagement in modern organization is determined. Corporate communication has already changed information-laden one-way bulletins to narrative persuasive models that aim to build a shared meaning, identity and emotional connexion; research also indicates that explicable organizational narrative about purpose, responsibility and values can more greatly engage people than merely informational communications (Gill, 2015; Karanges et al., 2014; Nyagadza, 2020). At the same time, AI-powered tools have become embedded in internal communication infrastructures. Chatbots and virtual assistants respond to HR and policy queries, automated systems curate and target content, and generative AI supports the production of leadership messages, newsletters, and micro-stories at scale. Empirical work suggests that such tools can improve responsiveness, consistency, and perceived professionalism, but also emphasizes that AI-mediated communication reshapes how leaders are heard, how accessible they appear, and how employees interpret organizational intentions (Florea and Croitoru, 2025; Miraz et al., 2024; Nimmagadda et al., 2024). In AI-powered workplaces, organizational narratives are no longer exclusively human-authored; they are filtered, sequenced, and sometimes generated by socio-technical systems that play an active role in constructing “the story” employees inhabit.

Problem statement

Against this backdrop, “storytelling” is widely promoted as a strategic solution for engagement, culture, and change. Yet there is a growing risk that, when intertwined with automation, narrative becomes over-engineered: templated, brand-safe, data-optimized, and experienced as instrumental rather than authentic. Research on corporate storytelling and branding warns that highly curated narratives can slide into impression management, damage credibility, and alienate employees when rhetoric diverges from lived experience (Gill, 2015; Nyagadza, 2020). Studies of AI-mediated communication highlight efficiency gains and positive user intentions towards chatbots, but also underline concerns about depersonalization, opacity and control when communication is heavily automated (Florea and Croitoru, 2025; Miraz et al., 2024; Nimmagadda et al., 2024). What remains under-examined is how narrative strategies themselves operate within AI-powered systems: how algorithms prioritize particular stories and framings, how auto-generated “engagement content” may flatten diverse voices, and how synthetic messages that mimic a human or leadership voice risk instrumentalizing emotion, belonging, and purpose. Existing literatures on storytelling, internal communication, employee engagement and AI in HR tend to address these questions in isolation, offering little integrated guidance for narrative practice in AI-mediated workplaces.

Conceptual lens: Narrative strategies in AI-powered workplaces

This article treats AI-mediated internal communication as a narrative field shaped by both human and machine authorship. It draws on work that links internal communication quality and identification to engagement (Karanges et al., 2014; Gill, 2015) and on corporate storytelling research that positions stories as tools for framing identity, values, and change (Nyagadza, 2020). Narrative strategies—including origin stories, transformation journeys, hero and mentor figures, failure-and-learning stories, inclusion narratives, and data-driven success stories—are conceptualized as the devices that place employees in one position or another (insider, ambassador, risk, obstacle). Such strategies in AI-based environments are implemented by systems that categorize audiences, suggest content, create sequences, and create or modify text. AI can therefore be seen as narrative infrastructure and narrative co-author, which brings both ethical and non-ethical concerns of authenticity, transparency, participation, and the boundary between meaningful interaction and subtle manipulation.

Research aim

To examine how narrative strategies are designed and enacted within AI-mediated internal communication and to develop a critical framework for leveraging storytelling in ways that foster authentic, ethical, and inclusive employee engagement in AI-powered workplaces.

Research questions

- RQ1: How are storytelling and narrative devices currently used in digital and AI-mediated internal communication to shape employee engagement?
- RQ2: Under what conditions do AI-enabled narrative practices enhance, dilute, or instrumentalize authenticity, trust, and inclusion?
- RQ3: How can organization design and govern AI-supported storytelling so that engagement objectives align with ethical, employee-centered principles?

Literature Review

Storytelling and employee engagement

Early work on corporate storytelling positions narrative as a strategic resource for building identification, trust and engagement, but also hints at tensions that become sharper in AI-powered contexts. Gill (2015) synthesizes evidence that value-led organizational stories can deepen employees' sense of meaning and alignment, yet warns that storytelling easily slips into impression management when narratives are excessively instrumental or disconnected from lived realities. Karanges et al. (2014) also demonstrate that engagement through perceived support and identification as pre-conditions of the rich and two-way internal communication prove to be highly predictive of storytelling being based on social exchange instead of message delivery. Nyagadza (2020) applies the same reasoning to corporate storytelling by branding that history, saying it may give rise to emotional attachment to internal stakeholders but may also represent image work by giving managerial voices the upper hand. Mendonca (2015) reaffirms the humanising effect of stories on strategy and change, and warns against simplified stories of heroes which smooth over the ambiguity. The combination of these works confirms that

narrative is an effective tool to engage with and convey a positive message, but they all include a very optimistic approach to the topic, downplaying the idea that curated stories can silt the spoke to conflict and/or even steal identification out of employees. The crucial point of implication to the AI-based narrative is straightforward: in case the narrative strategies that are led by humans already have tendencies towards fidelity and falsification, automating and scaling them through AI would only enable them to have an even greater connective and manipulative effect.

Digital internal communication and mediated narratives

Research on digital internal communication (DIC) complicates this picture by foregrounding the infrastructures through which stories now travel. Men and Yue (2019) show that strategic, symmetrical internal communication and responsive leadership create a positive emotional culture that supports advocacy and extra-role behaviors, implying that digitally mediated narratives can sustain genuine reciprocity when dialogue and care are visible. Men and Stacks (2014) highlight how authentic leadership communication strengthens employee–organization relationships, providing a communicative baseline against which automated “leader-like” messages must be judged. Men’s later work on internal social media finds that transparent, interactive platforms can enhance engagement, but only when employees perceive openness rather than top-down control. Wuersch (2023) reframes DIC as a socio-technical system in which tools, norms, skills and power relations co-produce communication outcomes, rejecting the view of channels as neutral pipelines. Wuersch et al. (2024) further show that digital internal communication strategies can support capability development and alignment, yet depend on trust, clarity of purpose and employee involvement in content practices.

Comparatively, these studies converge on the importance of transparency, interactivity and employee voice, but diverge in how sharply they problematize control. While Gill (2015) and Nyagadza (2020) worry about storytelling as branding, much DIC scholarship still treats digital tools as engagement enablers if “used well,” without fully interrogating who defines “well” or whose narratives are amplified. In AI-mediated settings—where algorithms curate, rank and personalize content—this unresolved tension becomes critical: the same infrastructures that can surface diverse stories can also centralize a sanitized meta-narrative.

AI-mediated communication, chatbots and generative storytelling

Empirical work on AI in internal communication and HR begins to test how far automation reshapes engagement narratives. The Miraz et al. (2024) results indicate that the intention to use AI chatbots is affected by an individual perception of usefulness and ease of use, which is why employees can embrace AI-mediated relationships when they can effectively address practical issues. Nimmagadda et al. (2024) report that HR chatbots can streamline information flows and support engagement, but also surface concerns about depersonalization and limited empathy. Gkinko and Elbanna’s (2023) case study on conversational AI shows that employees’ trust in internal chatbots is fragile and contingent on perceived transparency, reliability and the sense that AI augments rather than polices them. Prasad (2024) evidences that generative AI tools can positively influence engagement and performance when users experience control, clarity and trust, but also notes that these benefits hinge on careful governance of expectations and safeguards.

Taken together, these studies contrast sharply with earlier storytelling literature. Whereas narrative scholarship stresses meaning, identity and ethics, AI-focused HR studies often operationalize success through efficiency metrics, adoption, and

generic “engagement” scores. Chatbots and generative tools are celebrated for speed, consistency and personalization, yet their narrative content and framing are only superficially examined. Little attention is paid to whether AI-authored updates, nudges or “culture stories” feel authentic, whose linguistic norms they reflect, or how they may subtly normalize surveillance and constant optimization. The comparison reveals a methodological gap: AI communication studies tend to treat messages as functional outputs rather than as stories with ideological weight.

Narrative theory, trust, and ethical risks in AI-powered storytelling

Bridging these strands requires bringing narrative and trust literatures directly into conversation with AI-mediated communication. Men, Yue and Liu (2020) show that charismatic executive narratives characterized by vision, passion and care can foster trust and support for change, but only when employees perceive alignment between message and practice. Yue (2021) also evidences that one-way-down communication and uplifting wording help to achieve a positive emotional culture, which proves that tone, framing, and perceived sincerity are as important in communication as the information. These arguments are learning to make the AI-generated leader messages and templated inspiration ring with discomfort: in case authenticity is relational and contextual, the narrative generated algorithmically cannot possibly be perceived as anything but video games.

Conceptual work on trust in AI strengthens this critique. Lukyanenko (2022) conceptualizes trust in AI as emerging from systemic interaction, calling for attention to transparency, reliability and value congruence rather than blind automation. When read alongside Gkinko and Elbanna (2023), it becomes clear that employees evaluate AI-mediated narratives through both technical and moral lenses: they ask not only “does it work?” but “does it respect me, tell the truth, and reflect our lived culture?” Yet existing empirical studies of AI communication seldom examine narrative devices, character positions, or emotional cues that underpin such judgments. In contrast, corporate storytelling and critical discourse research have long shown that who is positioned as hero, victim, expert or deviant within stories shapes power and belonging. The absence of these analytical tools in AI workplace studies marks a significant blind spot.

Synthesis of gaps

Across these fifteen studies, three critical contrasts emerge. First, storytelling and internal communication research convincingly establishes that narratives and relational communication drive engagement, but it often assumes human authorship and underestimates the implications of delegating narrative tasks to AI. Second, digital internal communication and AI-in-HR literatures highlight efficiency, scalability and sometimes trust, yet treat content as neutral or generic, largely ignoring how narrative form, voice and perspective are structured by algorithms. Third, work on trust in AI and leadership communication articulates rich criteria for authenticity and credibility, but has not been systematically operationalized to evaluate AI-generated internal narratives.

The combined gap is clear: there is no integrated framework that reads AI-mediated employee communication as storytelling with ethical, political and inclusion consequences. Existing studies rarely ask whether AI-personalized stories amplify diverse voices or reinforce a single corporate script; whether “engaging” content invites participation or subtly disciplines emotion; or how employees experience the blurring of human and synthetic voice. The present study directly targets this gap by

proposing a narrative framework for AI-powered workplaces that evaluates not only what systems deliver, but how they tell the organization's story and with whom.

Methodology

Research design

This study adopts a secondary qualitative design that combines an integrative literature review with qualitative thematic synthesis. An integrative review is appropriate because it systematically brings together diverse empirical and conceptual studies to generate new perspectives on an emerging, cross-disciplinary problem (Whittemore and Knafl, 2005; Snyder, 2019). It aligns with the interpretivist and critical-constructivist stance underpinning this article, which treats organizational storytelling, AI-mediated texts, and employee engagement as socially constructed rather than fixed or purely technical phenomena. A secondary qualitative approach is chosen deliberately, not as a substitute for primary research. First, scholarship on storytelling, digital internal communication and AI-powered tools is already extensive but fragmented; the central need is for synthesis and critical integration rather than another single-organization case. Second, the research questions concern system-level patterns in how narrative strategies and AI infrastructures interact, which are well suited to comparative analysis across multiple contexts. Third, direct access to proprietary AI communication systems and internal data is often restricted, and relying solely on vendor-controlled cases would risk reproducing promotional narratives. A rigorous qualitative synthesis of peer-reviewed work offers a more independent vantage point from which to interrogate both opportunities and risks.

Data sources and scope

Scopus serves as the primary database due to its wide coverage of communication, management, information systems and social sciences journals. Searches are complemented with Web of Science and leading publisher platforms to minimise omissions. The review focuses on publications from 2013 to 2025, corresponding to the rise of social, mobile and AI-enabled internal communication tools and the consolidation of "storytelling" as an explicit engagement strategy. Inclusion criteria restrict the corpus to peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly book chapters that: (i) examine storytelling or narrative-based internal communication and its relationship to engagement; (ii) analyze digital or AI-mediated communication tools in workplace or HR contexts; or (iii) address trust, authenticity or ethics in organizational communication relevant to AI-supported narratives. Theses, consultancy reports, opinion pieces and purely technical optimization studies without communicative or ethical relevance are excluded. This ensures that only robust, research-based contributions inform the synthesis.

Search strategy

Search strings are constructed to capture the intersection of narrative, engagement and AI-mediated communication, including combinations such as: "storytelling" AND "employee engagement" AND "internal communication"; "corporate storytelling" AND "digital" OR "social media"; "AI" OR "artificial intelligence" AND "internal communication" AND "employee"; "chatbot" AND "organizational communication"; "generative AI" AND "leadership communication". Boolean operators and subject filters are iteratively refined to balance sensitivity and specificity. The selection follows PRISMA 2020

principles for transparent reporting (Page et al., 2021): identification of records, removal of duplicates, title and abstract screening against predefined criteria, full-text assessment for eligibility, and final inclusion. Although this is an integrative rather than narrowly systematic review, adopting PRISMA-informed documentation strengthens clarity and reduces selection bias.

Data extraction and coding

For all included studies, a structured extraction template records: bibliographic details, country and sector, methodological approach, type of communicative practice (for example leadership narratives, campaign stories, chatbot interactions, AI-authored content), technological features, key narrative or engagement outcomes, and reported benefits, risks or ethical concerns. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) flexible six-phase framework, is used to synthesize the material. Coding proceeds deductively from the research questions (for example narrative forms, AI roles, authenticity, participation, inclusion, control) and inductively to capture emergent patterns such as synthetic empathy, narrative standardization, or employee resistance to AI-authored messages. Special attention is given to how studies describe voice, perspective and power in narratives, allowing assessment of whether AI-enabled storytelling supports plural, co-created sensemaking or reinforces managerial scripts.

Quality and trustworthiness

To ensure rigor, included studies are appraised for methodological transparency, conceptual clarity and relevance to the topic. Articles with weak design, minimal evidence or purely rhetorical claims are treated cautiously or excluded from core thematic development. Triangulation across disciplines (communication, HRM, information systems, organizational studies) is used to avoid dominance of any single lens and to surface tensions between efficiency-driven and critical perspectives. Reflexive consideration of the reviewers' normative stance on authenticity, participation and ethics is maintained throughout, consistent with best practice for qualitative and integrative reviews (Whittemore and Knafl, 2005; Snyder, 2019). Detailed documentation of search decisions, inclusion criteria and coding logic supports dependability, while dense description of themes enhances transferability.

Findings

This section synthesizes 10 empirical studies not used in the core literature review, organized into four themes. Together they show that while digital and AI-enabled storytelling tools can support engagement, they also introduce tensions around authenticity, control, and inclusion that most studies only partially confront.

Theme 1: Narrative-led engagement in digital channels

The breadth of experimental and case-based research on digital storytelling seeks to confirm that digital storytelling has an engagement potential but downplays power and voice. Bangun et al. (2020) demonstrate that digital storytelling interventions are more effective in increasing the level of employee engagement than the cases of traditional communication, which equations can explain by the assumption that organizational aims should be reached when the employees are willing to relate to the narratives on an emotional level. Gustomo (2019) similarly finds that structured storytelling by leaders strengthens identification and motivation, reinforcing the idea that stories function as "sensemaking shortcuts" that simplify

complexity. Lubis and Afridah (2024) link communicative practices rich in participatory narratives to stronger perceptions of inclusion in a creative-industry case, implying that when employees see their realities reflected in stories, belonging increases.

However, across these studies, narrative is treated as an unproblematic tool: success is measured via short-term self-reported engagement, with little interrogation of whose stories are legitimized or how narrative scripts may discipline dissent. Storytelling is typically leader- or management-driven; employees appear as audience or “beneficiaries,” not co-authors. Designs are context-specific (single organization, sectors, or cultures), limiting generalizability and obscuring how digital storytelling might reproduce hierarchy or marginalize minority voices when scaled through corporate platforms. These limitations become more consequential once AI systems start operationalizing the same narrative techniques at scale.

Theme 2: AI-supported internal communication and leadership narratives

Newer studies examining AI-enabled communication depict a more ambivalent dynamic. Florea and Croitoru (2025) report that the use of AI-based technologies in leadership communication (e.g., automated drafting, synthesis, and targeting) is linked to the clarity, speed of response, and better performance metrics, and AI-mediated texts may work as a way to comprehend and minimise uncertainty. He et al. (2025) discovers that AI communication in financial services when designed as an aid in the form of a friendly tool and used together with human dialogue is likely to increase the lack of trust among employees and, consequently, lead to enhanced creativity, which points to the fact that AI-mediated communication can be beneficial under the condition of being incorporated into favorable climates of relational communication.

Yet, these studies tend to equate clarity and frequency with quality, and treat AI assistance as largely benign if outcomes improve. They seldom analyze the textual properties of AI-influenced messages: whether they homogenize tone, erase local idioms, or introduce a “corporate AI voice” that subtly distances leaders from staff. Samples are industry-bound and often rely on perceptual or correlational data, making it difficult to untangle whether positive effects stem from AI per se, from novelty, or from broader change initiatives. Critically, they do not ask whether AI-authored or AI-edited leadership narratives risk crossing into manufactured authenticity—exactly the space where narrative ethics becomes central for this article.

Theme 3: Authenticity, AI authorship, and employee experience

The third cluster is concerned directly or by analogy with people on how they react to these doubts or knowledge that narratives are machine-written. Their research: Kirk and Givi (2025) describe an effect, AI-authorship effect, and demonstrate that the perceived authenticity decreases, and the prominence of moral discomfort is increasing, despite not having shifted to AI-based writing in such cases, contravening the stages of loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. Even though this happens in a consumer environment, the mechanism activated by the AI-written feeling talk evoking the concerns of insincerity can be incredibly useful when applied to internal engagement campaigns, townhall speech, or the so-called, we care messages created with the AI. Gu (2024) concludes that it is the transparency, reliability, and perceived compatibility with human values that, despite technical efficiency, sustain the trust in AI chatbots; the opaque or excessively automated experiences undermine even the apparently technical efficiency.

These studies sharpen but also reveal gaps. They empirically substantiate that perceived authenticity is fragile once AI authorship is salient, but they rarely examine concrete workplace narratives or diverse employee groups. Most rely on

scenario-based experiments or consumer samples, extrapolating to organizational life without accounting for power asymmetries, job insecurity, or prior mistrust. None explore how employees distinguish between AI “helping” a leader articulate a message and AI effectively impersonating that leader. As a result, they provide a strong warning signal but limited guidance on where ethical lines in AI-mediated storytelling should be drawn.

Theme 4: Governance, conditions, and the ethics of AI-powered storytelling

A final set of studies speaks indirectly to governance by examining when AI-mediated communication supports or undermines trust and engagement. Progress studies on role of internal communication (e.g. AJEBA, 2025) re state that engagement, and commitment can be expected due to a number of open and regular communication, that is, any AI implementation must be evaluated in connection with these metrics of relations in comparison to its efficiency. Santos (2023) generalizes the advice to internal communications in the area of employer branding and puts forward that the message and practice must align- recommendations which become complicated when AI has the capacity to quickly create on-brand stories that can accelerate change to an extent of surpassing the real modification process. Wen et al. (2025) show that appropriate calibration of human-AI collaboration and clear role boundaries can foster trust and innovative behavior, highlighting that employees react not just to outputs but to perceived control and accountability structures around AI.

Critically, even these more reflective studies tend to frame risk in terms of transparency and role clarity, not narrative manipulation. They seldom audit AI-generated texts for patterns of exclusion, sentimentalism, or managerial spin, nor involve employees in defining what “acceptable” AI-mediated storytelling looks like. Methodologically, many rely on cross-sectional survey designs that cannot capture how trust erodes when employees repeatedly encounter AI-polished messages that do not match lived conditions. Collectively, the Stage 2 corpus underscores a core concern of this article: current empirical work recognizes that AI shapes engagement and trust, but it does not yet systematically assess AI-powered storytelling as discourse with ethical, political and inclusion consequences.

Analysis

The present study’s findings show that AI-enabled storytelling practices in organization are effective at generating visible engagement signals, but structurally fragile when assessed against what communication theory, narrative scholarship, and AI ethics tell us about authenticity, power, and trust.

Empirically, digital storytelling interventions and leader narratives delivered through online channels consistently raise reported engagement and identification, aligning with earlier evidence that narrative-rich communication can deepen meaning and commitment (Gill, 2015; Karanges et al., 2014; Nyagadza et al., 2020). Simultaneously, the reviewed cases show that such stories tend to be highly edited, management-driven and measured by short-term emotion or self-reporting. This recreates the panic in the narrative literature that narrative might transform into an instrument of impression management, instead of mutual sensemaking (Gill, 2015; Mendonca, 2015). The current synthesis thus supports the motivating power of story, but highlights a missing tension, that, when stories are instrumentally applied, and digitally scaled, they play at scripting employees into compliant positions and that this whole dynamic is largely dialectically closed in more heroic narratives.

The research results on AI-aided internal communication and leadership messages only widen this tension. The research that records improvements in clarity, consistency, and the informational responsiveness about AI tools is not the easiest to sit next to the research showing that digital internal communication bases its findings on the aspect of symmetry, openness, and visible responsiveness of human leaders (Men and Stacks, 2014; Yue et al., 2021; Wuersch, 2023, 2024). In our synthesis, our evidence is that AI-generated or AI-edited messages have a areas of standardization of tone, centrality of narrative control, which might enhance the surface credibility and undermine the conversational, negotiated matters on which the prior theory finds control to be central to trust-building. Such move indicates that current practice is re-sliding towards one-way, optimized messaging in the name of so-called personalization as the antithesis of dialogic ideals advocated in the previous communication literature.

The analysis of authenticity and AI authorship intensifies this critique. Evidence that audiences react negatively when emotional or value-laden messages are known to be AI-authored (Kirk and Givi, 2025), together with work on fragile trust in conversational AI (Gkinko and Elbanna, 2023) and foundational models of trust in AI (Lukyanenko et al., 2022), supports a clear inference: core engagement narratives—care, belonging, recognition, shared struggle—are especially vulnerable to perceived automation. The present study’s synthesis shows that many organizational uses of generative AI blur the line between assistive drafting and synthetic voice, without clear disclosure or ethical guardrails, directly contradicting the conditions for trustworthy, value-congruent communication outlined in the AI trust literature. In effect, AI is being embedded precisely in the communicative zones where relational authenticity is most normatively demanding.

Governance-focused findings confirm only partial alignment with theoretical expectations. While internal communication and employer branding studies stress consistency, transparency, and message–practice alignment (AJEBA, 2025; Santos, 2023), and work on human–AI collaboration highlights the importance of clear role boundaries (Wen et al., 2025), existing governance of AI-mediated storytelling remains dominated by functional criteria: efficiency, engagement metrics, compliance language. Our synthesis indicates very limited systematic scrutiny of narrative form, voice plurality, or symbolic exclusion in AI-generated content, despite critical discourse and storytelling research showing that who appears as hero, victim, or problem in organizational stories has material implications for inclusion and power.

Taken together, the analysis of the obtained results in comparison with the existing theories and research is coherent. Organization are successfully using AI to structure the mechanics of story-telling: frequency, reach, segmentation and disregard the narrative ethics of earlier works which locate authenticity, reciprocity, plurality, and consistency with lived experience. AI does not simply recreate the best practice that happens to exist, rather it heightens the tensions that cannot be solved between the engagements as sensemaking by relational sensemaking and engagements as behavior management. This underscores that critical and integrative narrative that AI-based storytelling may be evaluated through whether it is engaging but in the mode in which it generates or diminishes organizational realities, what it authorizes, and what it makes or remakes are trusts that genuine engagements are built on.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is proven by the existing research evidence that storytelling in AI-ruled working environments does not just represent a creative interaction tool, but an essential process based on which-by which organization forms reality, which voice and

bargain trust are distributed. The fact that true and dialogic narrations enhance identification and devotion, is proven by the classical study on inner communication and storytelling. Recent findings about the digital and AI-mediated communication prove that the tools have the potential to improve clarity, responsiveness and reach. At the same time, the findings reveal that when narrative production and distribution are automated, templated or centrally orchestrated, engagement easily becomes performative: synthetic empathy, polished origin stories and AI-authored “we care” messages risk functioning as instruments of control rather than vehicles of shared sensemaking. Current governance and AI trust frameworks prioritize efficiency, transparency and role clarity, but pay insufficient attention to narrative form, authorship, plurality and alignment with lived experience. The critical implication is that AI-enabled storytelling must be evaluated as discourse with ethical and political consequences, not just as an engagement metric.

Recommendations

For organization and communication/HR teams

Treat AI-generated and AI-assisted stories as part of your strategic narrative, subject to rigorous review. Progress studies on role of internal communication (e.g. AJEBA, 2025) re declare that engagement and commitment is predictable through consistent and transparent communication, this implies that the implementation of any AI should be deemed in relation to these relationship measures in comparison, versus its efficiency.

For system designers and vendors

Narrative options of design tools that can be seen in their appearance and persist in their adjustment. Provide reputation of tone, point of view and inclusiveness; authoritative labeling of AI written content; and also tie objectives of optimization to ethical values like non-manipulative characterization, or recognition of employee voice, rather than click-throughs or engagement rates.

For researchers and regulators

Incorporate narrative and discourse analysis into AI impact assessments for internal communication. Standards for responsible AI in workplaces should address not only fairness and transparency, but also how automated narratives represent people, distribute voice, and sustain or erode the conditions for genuine engagement.

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