AI-based Functionalities for Project Communication Management

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Abstract

The paper explores the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) functionalities in project communication management (PCM), highlighting its application areas and associated risks. It outlines how AI technologies support key PCM activities such as communication planning, execution, and monitoring, while also addressing key challenges such as data privacy, bias, and over-reliance on automation. The paper defines PCM and presents a comprehensive list of its tasks and processes. A content analysis of AI tool webpages is conducted to identify applications offering AI-based functionalities supporting specific PCM tasks. The empirical section presents findings from a survey of project professionals, revealing which communication management tasks are currently supported by AI in practice and highlighting existing gaps. Notably, over 40% of respondents reported working primarily in agile project environments, providing insights into how AI tools are used in adaptive, fast-paced contexts. The study offers a grounded perspective on the evolving role of AI in PCM across various project management approaches.

Keywords: AI applications in projects, project communication management, agile environments.

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping numerous areas of project management, including project communication management (PCM) [12]. The integration of AI tools enables project managers to automate routine tasks, facilitate real-time communication among team members and stakeholders, and minimize misunderstandings and delays [38]. By leveraging natural language processing and machine learning algorithms, AI can analyze large volumes of communication data to identify patterns and provide actionable recommendations, ultimately leading to more efficient project execution and stronger alignment with project objectives [33]. AI-based tools enhance collaboration, streamline processes, and support data-driven decision-making [20].

Despite the many advantages AI offers to project management, its implementation also presents significant challenges and risks, including legal, ethical, and social concerns related to data privacy, transparency, accountability, and human–AI collaboration [41]. While the application of AI to project management tasks such as resource allocation, risk assessment, and performance monitoring has been explored in several studies (e.g. [1], [3], [31]), the support of AI specifically for enhancing communication management tasks and processes remains under-researched [21]. It is unclear whether available tools offer AI-supported functionalities that can aid communication management or if specific barriers, such as data privacy concerns, ethical concerns, or technical barriers, impede their adoption. Furthermore, the broader impacts of AI applications on project management processes warrant further investigation [30].

To address these gaps, this study posits the following research questions: RQ1 – which PCM tasks can be supported by AI-based functionalities, RQ2 – which PCM tasks are currently supported by AI in real-world projects, and RQ3 – which threats and challenges

associated with the use of AI in communication management are perceived as most significant by project managers and other project professionals.

2.   AI in Project Communication Management

Project communication management (PCM) "includes the processes necessary to ensure that the information needs of the project and its stakeholders are met through development of artifacts and implementation of activities designed to achieve effective information exchange" [36, p. 359]. These processes involve developing a communication plan, ensuring the timely and appropriate collection, creation, distribution, storage, retrieval, management, control, monitoring, and disposition of project information [36].

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping PCM by automating routine interactions, enhancing collaboration, and improving decision-making. AI technologies such as natural language processing (NLP) enable the interpretation and generation of human language, which streamlines tasks like report generation, sentiment analysis, and feedback processing, ultimately enhancing the clarity and timeliness of communication [15], [31]. Concurrently, machine learning algorithms support project managers by analyzing communication patterns to detect potential breakdowns, allowing for proactive interventions [17], [31]. In agile environments, AI contributes to efficiency by reducing administrative overhead and extracting actionable insights from real-time communication data. AI-powered platforms offer dynamic channels for collaboration, fostering operational transparency and reinforcing team cohesion across distributed teams [4], [22,23].

Tools like ChatGPT have been used to automate meeting summaries, generate updates, and disseminate information consistently, thus enhancing both communication efficiency and accuracy [32]. Beyond automation, AI plays a strategic role in communication planning. Predictive analytics, informed by historical communication data, can reveal patterns that indicate risks such as delays or misalignment [34]. Sentiment analysis further supports this by identifying early signs of disengagement or interpersonal conflict, helping project managers maintain team morale and performance [24].

Practical applications of AI in PCM have been demonstrated across various industries. In software development, chatbots manage routine scheduling and reminders, minimizing manual workload [32]. In the healthcare sector, sentiment analysis has proven valuable for monitoring team dynamics, enabling timely conflict resolution [24], [40]. These examples underscore AI's ability to support both operational and human aspects of communication.

The benefits of AI in PCM include reduced workload, faster issue resolution, and more consistent stakeholder communication [4], [22]. Real-time responsiveness helps minimize project delays, while transparent and timely updates enhance trust, a critical factor for project success [15], [17], [23]. Additional AI functionalities beneficial to project communication include text interpretation and analysis, content creation and optimization, pattern recognition, and prediction. NLP-driven tools also enable multilingual communication and offer accessibility features that promote inclusivity across global teams [26].

However, the integration of AI into PCM is not without challenges. Over-reliance on automation may limit human judgment and creativity in strategic communication [4]. Ethical concerns, including data privacy, algorithmic transparency, and responsible AI use, must be addressed [15], [22]. Additionally, organizations frequently encounter technical and organizational barriers when integrating AI tools into existing systems, necessitating significant investments in infrastructure and employee upskilling [17], [31]. A detailed list of potential challenges, categorized as technical, organizational, and environmental, is presented in [28]. Particularly relevant to communication management are challenges related to data availability and quality, limited resources, insufficient technical expertise among project managers and team members, and the lack of generalizability across projects, as historical project data may not always yield the best insights for new initiatives. Also, historical communication data is very difficult to collect and is highly sensitive.

As AI adoption remains in its early stages, there is a pressing need for targeted education and training for project management professionals [30]. Expanding research into

AI applications will further support its integration into communication strategies and ensure informed, ethical use.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods design to address the research questions (Figure 1). To answer RQ1, firstly, a list of PCM processes and tasks was derived from literature analysis. Secondly, data were collected through desk research focused on the websites of AI-powered software tools to identify AI functionalities supporting the PCM processes and tasks. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis based on a deductively developed coding scheme [25], in this case, the identified PCM processes and tasks.
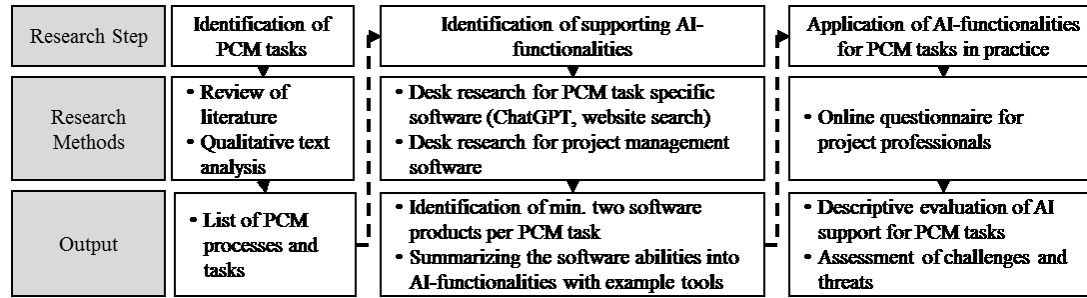
Research Step	Identification of PCM tasks	Identification of supporting AI-functionalities	Application of AI-functionalities for PCM tasks in practice
Research Methods	• Review of literature • Qualitative text analysis	• Desk research for PCM task specific software (ChatGPT, website search) • Desk research for project management software	• Online questionnaire for project professionals
Output	• List of PCM processes and tasks	• Identification of min. two software products per PCM task • Summarizing the software abilities into AI-functionalities with example tools	• Descriptive evaluation of AI support for PCM tasks • Assessment of challenges and threats

Fig. 1. Research Design

Sampling of relevant AI-based tools for desk research was conducted through two approaches. Firstly, identifying at least two AI tools per PCM task should demonstrate the availability of AI support. The purposive sampling [39] was designed to replicate a typical information-seeking behavior. OpenAI's ChatGPT-4o model (without deep search) was initially used to suggest relevant tools for each PCM task. These tools were then manually verified by browsing their official web pages as well as websites with user reviews to confirm AI-based functionality for the respective task. Where tools suggested by ChatGPT were found irrelevant, additional web searches were conducted. Secondly, for triangulation, the presence of AI-based support in widely adopted project management platforms was examined. Three tools, Monday.com, Asana, and Smartsheet, were selected, purposively chosen based on having the highest number of user ratings over the past year in the Gartner list for "Adaptive Project Management and Reporting" [13]. Ultimately, the identified AI tools for each PCM task were organized into a reference table.

In addition to matching tools to PCM tasks, a separate analysis was conducted across all the investigated tools to identify various AI-powered functionalities they offered. These functionalities were then mapped to the corresponding communication management tasks and processes. This broader analysis provided insights into the specific AI capabilities (e.g., predictive analytics, smart automation) that support different aspects of PCM.

To address Research Questions 2 and 3, a questionnaire-based survey was conducted among project professionals. The aim was to identify which AI-based functionalities are currently used in project teams for PCM, along with perceived challenges and threats.

The online questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section included six general questions regarding the respondent's work environment: the type of teams (Virtual, Co-located, Mixed), the type of projects [14, p. 38], the primary project management approach used [43], their typical project role [9], [43], the size of the organization [10], and their geographical location.

In the second section, respondents were asked to indicate for each PCM task whether AI-powered tools were used in their projects. AI-based tools were defined within the survey as digital applications utilizing machine learning, natural language processing, predictive analytics, or smart automation. For each task, respondents could select one of four responses: "AI used", "AI not used", "I don't know", or "Task not performed". The PCM tasks listed corresponded to those in Table 1, along with AI functionalities as per Table 2. No specific tools were suggested to the respondents in the questionnaire.

The third section addressed challenges and threats associated with AI integration in PCM. Respondents were asked to assess the severity of predefined threats related to the use of AI-based tools. They were also given the opportunity to identify additional threats.

Before distribution, the questionnaire was reviewed by five experts (project managers and communication specialists), whose feedback informed minor refinements. For example, based on their comments, the survey incorporated clearer definitions for terms such as "AI-based tools" and "mixed teams". The questionnaire was disseminated via LinkedIn, through the authors' professional networks, and a post in a LinkedIn group (ProjectManagement.com). This distribution method represents self-selected sampling within a purposefully chosen professional environment.

4.   Research Results

Drawing from established project management methodologies, knowledge bases, and best practices, such as *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge* [35,36] *PRINCE2* [6], *Agile Project Management* [2], and several additional sources ([7,8], [11], [16], [18,19], [27], [37]), a list of tasks and processes comprising communication management in project teams has been compiled and is presented in Table 1. Text analysis included browsing the mentioned sources for phrases "communication management" and "communication". The identified paragraphs were then manually analyzed in search of associated tasks and/or processes. The identified tasks and processes were grouped into ten categories.

Table 1. Communication management categories with tasks and processes

Communication planning (CP): **CP1** identifying stakeholders and their communication needs/ **CP2** developing a communication management plan, including change communication protocols and risk communication strategies/ **CP3** defining communication objectives and goals/ **CP4** determining frequency, timing, and format of communications
Information Collection and Distribution (ID): **ID1** gathering relevant project data/ **ID2** preparing status reports or summaries/ **ID3** distributing tailored project information to stakeholders
Performance Reporting (PR): **PR1** developing performance reports/ **PR2** communicating project performance metrics, including major project changes and their impact)/ **PR3** alerting stakeholders of deviations, risks, or issues and mitigation actions
Stakeholder Engagement (SE): **SE1** identifying stakeholder preferences and expectations/ **SE2** maintaining stakeholder engagement through regular updates/ **SE3** gathering stakeholder feedback/ **SE4** facilitating two-way communication between the project team and stakeholders
Conflict Resolution and Negotiation (CN): **CN1** identifying communication issues and misunderstandings/ **CN2** mediating conflicts and disagreements within the team/ **CN3** negotiating solutions to communication-related issues
Meeting Management (MM): **MM1** scheduling and coordinating meetings/ **MM2** preparing agendas and setting clear objectives/ **MM3** conducting and facilitating project meetings/ **MM4** documenting meeting minutes, action items, and follow-ups
Communication Skills Development (CD): **CD1** enhancing verbal communication of team members/ **CD2** conducting training in communication skills
Monitoring and Controlling Communications (MC): **MC1** tracking and ensuring adherence to the communication plan/ **MC2** evaluating the effectiveness of communication processes, including change and risk communication processes/ **MC3** ensuring communication compliance with company policies and regulatory requirements
Information Security and Confidentiality (IC): **IC1** managing sensitive or confidential project information/ **IC2** ensuring compliance with data protection and privacy regulations/ **IC3** defining and enforcing information security guidelines
Closure and Archiving Communications (CC): **CC1** capturing lessons learned regarding communication/ **CC2** archiving communications for future reference

The content analysis of the selected websites resulted in the identification of numerous tools having AI-based functionalities supporting the execution of PCM tasks and processes. Some of them were project management applications, while others were of a more general type or dedicated to different market domains. Table 2 presents a summary of the AI-powered functionalities, with examples of tools offering these functionalities and the communication tasks they can support. The three selected project management software tools – Monday.com, Asana, and Smartsheet – all integrate AI-based

functionalities, yet mostly not explicitly mentioning support for PCM. Monday.com [29] presents AI functionalities as modular components for automating work: categorizing, extracting information from files, sentiment detection, summarizing, and translating, as well as enabling users to create custom AI-supported workflows directly within the platform. Asana [5] organizes its AI-supported functionalities into three areas: project management, workflow building, and goals and reporting. Its AI capabilities focus on core project management, supported by automated reporting, categorization, project setup, and writing support tailored to different tones and communication lengths. However, sentiment analysis functionality was not identified. Smartsheet [42] presents AI functionalities among a broader set of features, including AI-generated charts and metrics, formula generation, text summarization, and translation, along with sentiment analysis. Overall, the advertised generic AI functionalities, such as summarization, information extraction, translation, and text generation, can support the majority of PCM tasks, thus confirming the findings of individual tool searches per PCM task, that AI support for such tasks is available in the market at the time of research.

Table 2. AI-based functionalities for supporting communication management tasks with example tools

AI-based functionality with example tools	Supported communication management task/process
AI-based stakeholder and sentiment analysis (e.g., Borealis, Simply Stakeholders, Digitalfirst.ai, ClickUp, MonkeyLearn)	CP1, SE1, SE3
Automated reporting and analytics (e.g., Easy AI, ClickUp Brain, IBM Cognos Analytics, Tableau Next, Asana, Worklytics, Zoho Analytics)	ID2, PR1, PR2, MC2
Intelligent meeting assistance (transcription and note-taking) (e.g., Otter.ai, Zoom AI Companion, Fireflies.ai, Sembly AI)	MM3, MM4
AI-driven scheduling assistance (e.g., Clockwise.ai, Reclaim.ai, Praxie, Wrike)	MM1, CP4
Predictive analytics and alerting systems (e.g., IBM Watson Natural Language Understanding, Insight7, Wrike, Forecast)	CN1, PR3
AI-powered content creation (e.g., ClickUp, Taskade, Asana, Fellow, Spinach.ai)	CP2, CP3, MM2
Communication training and refinement (e.g., Poised, Grammarly, Yoodli, CoachHub (AIMY™))	CD1, CD2
Intelligent document and knowledge management (e.g., Lessonflow, BuildPrompt, Theta Lake, Smarsh)	CC1, CC2
Conflict resolution and AI mediation (e.g., TheMediator.AI, Conflict Mediator)	CN2, CN3
Information security and compliance (e.g., Microsoft Purview, Varonis, TrustArc, OneTrust, Darktrace, Netskope, Smartsheet)	IC1, IC2, IC3, MC3
Conversational AI and chatbots (e.g., ContactMonkey, ClickUp)	SE4
Automation and integration (e.g., Smartsheet, Asana, PPM Express, Insight7, ClickUp, Monday.com, Trello Butler)	ID1, ID3, SE2, MC1

Source: own elaboration based on the content analysis of the websites of the mentioned AI-based tools

The second research question aimed to determine which PCM tasks and processes are supported by AI-powered tools in real-life projects. The third research question sought to identify which challenges and threats related to using these tools are perceived as most significant by project managers and other project professionals.

The survey in March 2025 received 34 valid responses with these demographics:

- Team Type: Mixed teams (56%), virtual teams (32%), co-located teams (12%).
- Project Type: External Customer Projects (35%) and Internal Research & Development/New Product Development Projects (32%). Other project types selected by multiple respondents included Internal IT Projects (15%), Internal Marketing/Sales Projects (9%), and Internal Organization/HR Projects (6%).
- Project Management Approach: Agile (41%), Hybrid (32%), and Plan-based/Traditional (26%).
- Project Role: 44% Project Managers, 41% Team Members, and 12% as Team Coordinators/Scrum Masters.
- Organization Size: Large (47%), medium-sized (23%), small (18%), and micro (12%).

- Geographical Location: 33 in Europe, 1 in North America.

In the second section of the survey, respondents assessed the use of AI-based tools in supporting 31 PCM tasks and processes grouped into 10 categories. The tasks "Preparing status reports or summaries" and "Documenting meeting minutes, action items, and follow-ups" were most frequently supported by AI, with 44% of respondents indicating AI usage. Other tasks frequently supported by AI included: "Preparing agendas and setting clear objectives" (38%), "Gathering relevant project data" (35%), "Developing a communication management plan" (32%), and "Conducting and facilitating project meetings" (29%).

Among respondents using primarily agile project management approaches, the two tasks most frequently supported by AI were "Documenting meeting minutes, action items, and follow-ups" (50%) and "Preparing agendas and setting clear objectives" (43%). Interestingly, two tasks, "Determining frequency, timing, and format of communications" and "Maintaining stakeholder engagement through regular updates," were not supported by AI among any respondents in the agile group. Conversely, tasks and processes most often indicated as not supported by AI were: "Maintaining stakeholder engagement through regular updates" (79%), "Negotiating solutions to communication-related issues" (79%), "Scheduling and coordinating meetings" (76%), "Defining and enforcing information security guidelines" (74%), "Alerting stakeholders of deviations or issues" (74%), and "Communicating project performance metrics" (74%).
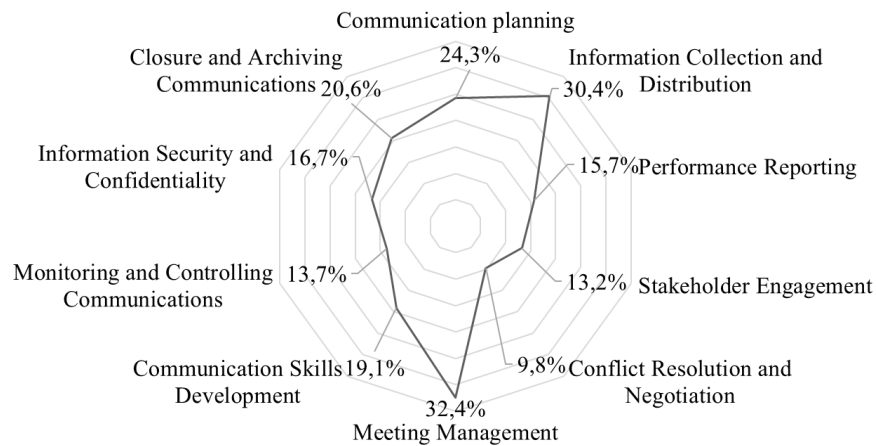

Fig. 2. AI used (% average of PCM tasks in category) (n=34)

The average usage rates of AI across the 10 PCM categories reveal that AI is most frequently applied in communication planning, information collection and distribution, and meeting management (Figure 2). Tasks most frequently reported as "not performed" included "Determining frequency, timing, and format of communications" and "Mediating conflicts and disagreements within the team" (15% each). Few respondents selected "I do not know" when assessing the use of AI for specific tasks.
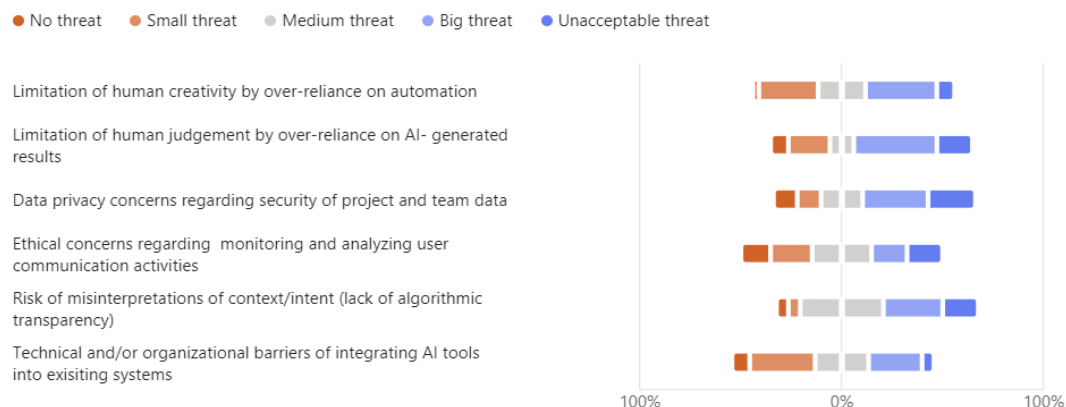

Fig. 3. Threats associated with the use of AI-based tools for communication management tasks and processes

The third survey section addressed perceived threats associated with AI-based tools for PCM (Figure 3). The threats most frequently assessed as "Big threat" included: "Limitation of human judgment by over-reliance on AI-generated results" (41% of respondents), and "Limitation of human creativity by over-reliance on automation" (35%).

5. Discussion of the Results and Conclusions

The findings of this study contribute to a better understanding of the current capabilities and limitations of AI in supporting PCM. While technological solutions are increasingly available and offer significant potential, their practical application in real-world projects appears to be more limited than the technological offerings suggest. This section discusses the main findings concerning the research questions, identifies possible explanations for observed patterns, and outlines implications for practice and future research.

In response to RQ1, the content analysis revealed that all listed PCM tasks and processes can, in principle, be supported by AI-based tools. This enhances the previous findings, which present the availability of AI-based functionalities for selected PCM tasks [32], [40] or concentrate on AI functionalities used in other project management areas [15], [31]. Furthermore, project management platforms such as Monday.com, Asana, and Smartsheet offer functionalities that support several communication management tasks. However, certain tasks, such as conflict resolution, meeting facilitation, or communication skills training, are not yet comprehensively addressed by these tools. These areas may require future technological developments, such as synchronous recording of data (e.g., meeting transcription) and AI-driven facilitation methods, or even AI assuming a facilitator role during meetings.

The questionnaire-based survey addressed RQ2 and RQ3, revealing that AI-based tools are not yet widely adopted among the surveyed project professionals. Although the sample size is relatively small and does not allow for broad generalizations, the results suggest that AI currently supports only a limited set of tasks, primarily in the areas of communication planning, information collection and distribution, and meeting management. This is in contrast to the content analysis of project management tools, where a significant emphasis was placed on AI-supported performance reporting.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy may be a lack of awareness among project professionals regarding the capabilities of AI-supported tools, or the application of AI functionalities such as performance reporting predominantly in areas outside communication management, such as financial or operational reporting. Another reason could be the dynamic development in the field with a broad range of specialized AI tools for individual PCM tasks and an evolving AI capability in project management tools, meaning that for full support of PCM many different tools would have to be used and this could be technically, organizationally and financially difficult, what has been reported in [28]. Furthermore, the limited adoption of AI functionalities in communication management may be linked to the challenges and threats identified by respondents as most severe, particularly concerns regarding data privacy, risk of misinterpretations, and potential over-reliance on AI-generated outputs at the expense of human judgment and creativity, what has been also highlighted in previous research [4], [17].

Other limitations, apart from the small sample size, include reliance on a single sample source (LinkedIn) which could account for some bias, as well as using the Gartner's list of Adaptive Project Management and Reporting tools as a benchmark for choosing project management platforms, although the amount of reviews seemed to justify this choice. Finally, using ChatGPT to identify tools could be seen as biased, but it was used only to suggest relevant tools which were then manually verified by browsing their official web pages and user reviews website, and additionally, triangulation with project management software tools was performed.

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that, despite the growing availability of AI-based tools, their potential remains underutilized in the domain of PCM. Organizations and project teams may need targeted education and trainings to raise awareness of AI capabilities and address ethical, legal, and operational risks.

Future research should explore the factors that either encourage or inhibit the adoption of AI-based solutions, specifically in the PCM domain. Further investigation is needed into which communication management tasks and processes can most benefit from AI functionalities, and how project professionals can be better prepared for the responsible and effective adoption and use of AI in managing project communications.

Acknowledgements

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