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China-Pakistan Media Cooperation in the Age of Generative AI: **Building Trust in the Digital Information Space**



By Dr. Hina Shahid, Member Board of Experts,
Pakistan Research Center for a Community with
Shared Future (PRCCSF), Islamabad

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The ties between Pakistan and China are now more than 75 years old, and are characterized by a rich and deep political, economic, strategic and people-to-people cooperation. The partnership has developed over the decades from diplomatic friendship to an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership that includes the cooperation in the field of infrastructure, trade, education, technology, defence and cultural exchange. In the initial period of their relationship, one domain has become more relevant and needs to be further explored: the space of digital information and communication.



The communication, news and understanding changes are happening in societies at unprecedented rate. Generative artificial intelligence now can generate accurate text, images, sound and video in seconds. This type of information could be shared to millions of people in a matter of moments through social media channels. It is increasingly difficult for the typical user (and even experts) to distinguish between real and fake information.

Such a change presents a challenge and an opportunity for Pakistan and China.

The issue has been that, in the digital era, misinformation and numerous manipulated content spread more quickly than we could ever have imagined. So too will the deep-fake and false stories in all societies and states today, because of digital media and its rapid space technologies and the news always comes late. The opportunity is, both countries can develop a new approach to cooperation, not only sharing facts, but also trust in the digital world, media competence, the building of human capacity in the field of AI and responsible use of technology.

Information landscape is changing

AI powered generative technology is already having an effect on the educational, journalistic, research and public communication space. New regulatory and educational frameworks are struggling to keep up with the rapid pace of AI development new challenges to address arise with

regard to privacy, ethics, and the importance of human agency and responsible use of the technologies (UNESCO Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research). (UNESCO)

The findings related to higher education also reveal a shift toward a new "AI paradigm" that is neither against AI nor for it but rather somewhere in between. Instead, institutions are developing policies, workshops, guidance for curriculum and discipline-specific strategies to responsibly use generative AI with students and faculty.

It has a tremendous influence on media.

Most of the traditional media were primarily focused on information production and dissemination. The added layer is the AI environment since then machines can also generate information.

Made up interviews can be convincing. Even the fake photographs appears to be more convincingly real. A video can allow a public figure to say something which wasn't said. You can develop a bogus story in a number of languages and publish it at the same time on platforms.

The issue, then, is not just gaining access to information, but also gaining access to ideas and to assess and evaluate the information itself.

Media exchange to knowledge cooperation

Journalists, broadcasters, media, academic institutions and communication professionals have always been involved in the media cooperation between China and Pakistan. Those trades continue to be significant. However, there's a larger agenda for the media world in 2026.

The future of cooperation mustn't miss a joint research of AI and media, professional training, digital literacy, fact checking, responsible use of AI and data ethics, collaborative content production.



It is an experience which Pakistani universities and research institutes would benefit from the Chinese universities & research institutes.



The Chinese higher education system is already making efforts to move to a more comprehensive approach, including the infusion of AI into the curriculum, rather than an AI-based technical course. China's Higher Education system has already shifted from treating AI as a course with only some use of AI to becoming an AI course. The recent development trend shows that Chinese universities are gradually applying AI in various fields from finance to other fields, such as law and engineering. In an era where AI is intertwined with the fabric of various professions, universities are keen to revamp their courses and equip students with the skills to thrive in a future where the technology is ubiquitous.

The integration of this is crucial in the context of Pakistan particularly.

There have been notable progressions in mainstreaming the education of AI in Pakistan. The Higher Education Commission, which is responsible for accrediting colleges and universities in Europe and the Middle East, announced the need for a three-credit AI course in the undergraduate program, for students studying subjects other than computer science.

However, the introduction of a foundation course is just the beginning though it appears to be a very crucial moment as we are entering into a digital era as a nation.

The next step is to grasp the implications of the meaningful application of AI across different fields and professions, including those in Media Studies and journalism, International Relations, Social Sciences, Business, Law, Education and Public Policy.

This is the right place where the Pakistani universities and research institutes can be emulated by Chinese universities and research institutes.

Introduction to AI, to interdisciplinary education with AI

In every field, the need of the hour for Pakistan does not always need to be to produce specialists in AI. Rather, universities need to train “AI literate graduates” who have been made aware of the implications of AI in their respective industries.

All students in journalism course should be aware of AI-generated content, algorithm recommendations, synthetic media and verification.

To comprehend the impact of AI on public opinion, election campaigns, diplomacy, and information warfare.

Business students need to be familiar with the use and application of AI in decisions making, automation, and data analysis.

An algorithmic accountabilities, privacy, and intellectual property and AI regulation are areas of law that a law student should know.

Communication students need to be familiar with generative media, digital storytelling and the ethics of synthetic media.

The Chinese universities and research institutes can be great partners in building this kind of inter-disciplinary models via faculty

exchanges, curriculum development, joint research, training programs and institutional partnerships.



It should not be to replicate the educational system of another country. It should be for learning and adapting from the successful experiences in order to be relevant in Pakistan's educational and socioeconomic framework.

The opportunity that media co-operation can provide

One of the most potentially fruitful fields of this cooperation may be within the media field.

Pakistan and China could be the target of joint research projects to explore the impact of generative AI on journalism and public communication. AI-powered labs can be created on campus that allow students to test AI tools for their journalism practice, while simultaneously educating them on verification, ethics, and responsible use of AI.

Journalist/communication professionals may join training programs with other professionals in the following areas:

- AI-powered content creation; and
- Fake news detection tools;
- Data analysis; and



- Responsible use of generative AI;
- Digital ethics;
- Artificially created visual, visual communication and audio-visual content;
- Algorithmic preconceptions that include the bias and information reliability.

Cooperation would be beneficial for both sides as the challenges posed by generative AI are not confined to a single country.

Constructing confidence in online trust among youth

Youth are of utmost importance.

Young people are the major users of digital platforms and more than half of them are now getting news, in most cases, through short videos, social media posts, influencers and algorithmically curated feeds, instead of traditional newspapers or television.

Hence, people-to-people contacts are no longer limited to the physical ones, such as scholarship, conferences, cultural events etc. The digital presence and increased digital communication has made it an altogether different environment where people can share their ideas and presence digitally and more frequently.

A 30-second video can make a young Pakistani think of China. In thirty seconds, a young Pakistani can form an impression of China. The same situation with the Chinese student, where he/she might see Pakistan in a social media post or a documentary on the internet.

This is why the media competency is necessary in today's people to people communication.

The University students, especially of journalism, communication, social sciences and international relations could thus be introduced to joint digital-literacy courses by Pakistan and China.

It should not be the intent to tell youth what to think. It should be to help them question, check, interpret and critically analyse that which they see and share.

That is how we are creating the trust required for online confidence or what we may call as cyber assurance.



AI is also an opportunity

Fears are not to be the main drivers of the debate on AI.

International academic and cultural collaboration can be made easier with the help of Generative AI. Language barriers can be minimized with the use of tools for translation. With the help of AI-driven research, scholars can analyze vast amounts of information. Scholars, researchers, creative minds can share and collaborate their ideas, observations, design philosophies at various online and digital platforms more cost effectively. Collaborative storytelling between societies is possible with the use of multimedia technologies. .

There is some existing research that has been conducted with Chinese university students, which has found potential benefits of generative AI in learning, such as improved learning efficiency, learning initiative and creativity, but also raised concerns about accuracy and reliability across various domains.

Is this a mix of opportunity and caution essential?

Pakistan must not only learn how to leverage AI but to leverage it responsibly.

Joint workshops, faculty development, curriculum design, research cooperation and exchange of experience among Chinese universities and research institutes can be made use of.

Universities as bridges between technology and society

The university is playing an even more important role as it is located at the crossroads of the knowledge, technology and society.

The next step of China-Pak cooperation should thus include the participation of universities, think tanks, research institutes, media, and students in addition to governments and businesses.

A formal academic cooperation programme on AI and communication with China may involve:

Media and generative AI are areas of joint research. Joint research is conducted in the areas of generative AI and media.

2. Faculty/researcher exchanges.
3. Collaborative curriculum development.

4. AI literacy programs for students.
5. Training of journalist and communication practitioners together.
6. Research on disinformation, misinformation and generative media and computed content.
7. Student multimedia and cross-cultural story-telling projects.
8. AI, media and digital trust conferences and policy dialogues.

Such efforts would help transform technology from a potential misunderstanding to a tool for increased understanding.

The China-Pakistan partnership is now on a new level

The 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations is the right time to go beyond the models of cooperation.

The next step in the relationship should be to link economies and institutions, but also ideas, researchers, students, journalists and knowledge communities.

The digital and knowledge partnership is an emerging new chapter which can link minds if CPEC is a crucial chapter for physical and economic infrastructure.



India-Pakistan cooperation with Chinese universities and research institutions can help the country shift from a basic AI awareness to an increased AI interdisciplinary literacy and strengthen the research capacity and responsible innovation.

It can offer opportunities for the international exchange of research knowledge, culture and new approaches to digital communication in different language and social settings for China through cooperation with Pakistani institutions.

This relationship can thus shift from the exchange of information to co-production of knowledge.



How to build trust in the era of AI

AI will continue to shape the production of information, its distribution and consumption. The question is when this transformation will take place. It is not a new process but is already in place.

The bigger issue is whether societies will adopt these technologies to bolster or undermine public trust.

The solution for Pakistan and China should be to instill digital trust at the core of media and academic relations in the future.

This needs to be done through investment in technology but also investment in teachers, researchers, journalists, students and institutions. It demands AI abilities, yet it additionally requires ethics, logical reasoning, objective evaluation and rational analysis.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Pakistan's education is an important initiative that has just started. This is followed by strengthening the action by building on the knowledge and experiences of countries and institutions that have already incorporated AI into various fields and professional education.

Chinese universities and research institutes can provide good partners in this process.

In this context, it is recommended that the future of China-Pakistan media cooperation should be oriented towards the exchange of knowledge, skills, research and responsible practices, instead of just the exchange of content.

Trust is the only intangible that remains as the crucial link between two nations in an era where information can be created and shared in mere seconds.