Communication as the Missing Dimension in AI Recruitment: Human Interaction, Technology, and Society 5.0

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Abstract

Background: Recruitment communication is undergoing substantial change in Society 5.0, where AI and advanced digital tools increasingly shape interactions between employers and candidates. This evolving landscape raises questions about how to maintain human-centred, ethical communication while embracing technological efficiency. **Objectives:** This study seeks to develop a communication model that supports effective and responsible AI integration in recruitment. The aim is to understand how communication practices can balance personalisation and automation with empathy, transparency, and fairness. **Methods/Approach:** A qualitative research design was implemented, drawing on 11 in-depth interviews with practitioners and researchers specialising in communication or human resources. Thematic analysis synthesised participant insights, grounded in communication theory, human-centred design principles, and AI implementation frameworks. **Results:** Participants described a shift from traditional, one-way communication toward more interactive, AI-supported, and candidate-focused systems. Participants highlighted AI's ability to enhance efficiency, customisation, and decision-making, while also expressing concerns about ethical risks, opacity, and potential bias. **Conclusions:** By connecting technological advancements with human-centred communication principles, the research provides a timely framework for ethical and effective recruitment communication in the digital era.

Keywords: Society 5.0; recruitment communication; artificial intelligence; human-centred design; ethical recruitment; HRM; digital transformation

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Introduction

Communication in organisations is not merely a technical process of exchanging information but a fundamental mechanism through which relationships are shaped, trust is built, and organisational culture is co-created. Early theories of organisation emphasised clear, effective communication as central to coordination and leadership (Barnard, 1938). Contemporary research further highlights that communication in human resource (HR) processes is a strategic factor influencing employee engagement, satisfaction, and organisations' long-term success (Chimakati & Kelemba, 2023; Deepalakshmi et al., 2024; Sypniewska et al., 2023).

Societies have continuously reshaped communication practices. In industrial society, communication was predominantly hierarchical, one-directional, and strictly formalised, reflecting the bureaucratic organisational model (Weber, 1947). The transition to the information society brought more accessible information, increased transparency, and greater employee participation (Castells, 2011). In today's digital society, these processes are further amplified – rapid information flow, global interconnectedness, and the growing role of digital communication channels and artificial intelligence (AI) challenge organisations not only to adapt technically but also to develop new competencies in digital communication, trust-building, and ethical frameworks (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

HR processes are particularly dependent on the quality of communication. Recruitment, selection, onboarding, development, and retention are only effective when they rely on two-way, open, and fair communication between stakeholders (Kaufman, 2015). In this context, communication extends beyond sharing procedural information; it shapes the psychological contract between employees and the organisation (Rousseau, 1995). When expectations and commitments are communicated clearly, employees develop greater trust and attachment, which, in turn, enhances their engagement and productivity. Conversely, poor or ambiguous communication creates uncertainty, dissatisfaction, and turnover (Narayan et al., 2018). In a survey of workers in Japan, Koizumi and Kato (2025) found that an empathetic company philosophy was associated with greater job satisfaction, while the introduction of advanced technologies was associated with stronger turnover intentions.

Theories of organisational communication, such as social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the psychological contract concept, emphasise that communication quality is a crucial determinant of employee–organisation relationships. Employees interpret their organisational experiences through communication practices, shaping their attitudes and behaviours at work (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Empirical studies confirm that open communication enhances perceptions of organisational justice (Colquitt, 2001) and positively affects engagement and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Despite its recognised importance, gaps remain in the literature. Few integrated models link traditional HR functions with new digital communication forms while simultaneously addressing organisational justice, trust, and ethics. Moreover, additional empirical studies are needed to examine how HR communication adapts across cultural and industry-specific contexts, particularly amid the digital transformation reshaping organisational practices and human–technology relationships.

This study is motivated by these gaps and aims to develop a comprehensive model of communication in HR processes. Such a model must move beyond a functional

view and embrace communication as a dynamic, multidimensional process that connects people, technology, and organisational culture. Society 5.0 is a Japanese policy vision that places human well-being and the response to social challenges at the centre of technological development (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, n.d.). This article addresses the communicative dimension of AI-enabled recruitment explicitly and proposes a Communication Model for AI Recruitment in Society 5.0, integrating technological efficiency, ethical safeguards, and human-centred values.

Three research questions guide the analysis:

- RQ1. How did interviewees in 2021–2022 expect recruitment communication to evolve by 2030 in the context of Society 5.0?
- RQ2. How did interviewed practitioners and researchers describe recruitment communication practices at the time of the interviews, and what changes did they anticipate?
- RQ3. Which technologies did interviewees expect to shape recruitment communication, and what implications did they foresee for personalisation, efficiency, and ethics?

To address these questions, we conducted 11 semi-structured interviews between December 2021 and December 2022 with purposively selected practitioners and researchers specialising in communication or human resources. The interviews explored participants' accounts of recruitment practices, their views on the use of AI and other digital tools, and their expectations for recruitment communication by 2030. We used thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and differences across interviews. These themes informed the development of a conceptual model of AI-mediated recruitment communication.

The study contributes a four-dimensional model that brings together the technical–informational, organisational–pragmatic, ethical–reflective, and human–empathic aspects of recruitment communication. Drawing on signalling theory, social exchange theory, and organisational justice theory, the model links practical decisions about how and when to communicate with candidates to questions of transparency, reciprocity, and respectful treatment. In the context of Society 5.0, this perspective helps specify where automation can support routine exchanges, such as scheduling and status updates, and where clear explanations, opportunities to ask questions, and access to a recruiter may be particularly valuable.

The paper is composed as follows. The literature review situates the study within research on AI-enabled recruitment and introduces the communication theories that guide the analysis. The methodology section describes participant selection, the interview procedure, and the thematic analysis. The results address the three research questions and present the proposed model. The discussion interprets the findings considering prior research and considers their implications for recruitment practice and future studies.

Literature review

Artificial intelligence has become an increasingly significant dimension of human resource management, particularly in recruitment and selection. Organisations worldwide are adopting algorithmic tools, from automated résumé screening to chatbots and AI-assisted video interviews, to achieve higher levels of efficiency, objectivity, and scalability (van Esch et al., 2019). While technological advancements are celebrated for their potential to reduce administrative burden and accelerate decision-making, they often obscure the fact that recruitment is not only a technical procedure but also a fundamentally communicative process. Recruitment encompasses meaning-making, relationship-building, and the exchange of signals

between candidates and organisations, and it is at this intersection that integrating AI becomes problematic: automation may enhance efficiency, but it also risks weakening or even erasing the communicative foundations on which recruitment is built.

From the perspective of organisational communication, recruitment is not a unidirectional transfer of information but a dialogical exchange in which meanings are co-constructed (Eisenberg et al., 2014). Candidates interpret not only explicit content, such as job descriptions, but also the implicit relational cues embedded in communication style, tone, and responsiveness (Turban et al., 1998). For instance, a delayed response or an overly standardised message may be perceived as disinterested or a lack of transparency, regardless of the organisation's actual intent. AI-mediated recruitment tools, such as automated email responses or chatbot-driven application portals, frequently strip away these subtle communicative dimensions. Instead of co-constructing meaning, candidates often face rigid, pre-programmed scripts that fail to adapt to nuanced relational contexts. This shift affects not only applicant experiences but also employer branding, as organisations risk being perceived as depersonalised, opaque, or overly transactional. In a survey of professionals in Costa Rica, Okot et al. (2025) found that interesting work and opportunities to apply and develop skills were important to employer attractiveness, illustrating the kinds of organisational attributes that recruitment messages can convey. Korsgaard et al. (2002) emphasise that such dynamics must be examined within the broader context of management psychology, where communication quality is directly linked to perceptions of fairness, trust, and organisational attractiveness.

Recruitment processes can also be understood through the lens of signalling theory (Spence, 1973). In this framework, job seekers interpret signals organisations emit to infer deeper, less observable qualities, such as culture, fairness, and growth opportunities. Communication – whether in the form of job advertisements, recruiter interactions, or interview feedback – constitutes the primary channel through which these signals are transmitted and decoded. For example, Pejic-Bach et al. (2020) used LinkedIn job advertisements to identify distinct competency profiles for Industry 4.0 roles, illustrating how advertisements communicate employers' skill expectations. When AI mediates or replaces human communication, the richness of signals may be compromised. Automated résumé screening, for example, conveys efficiency but may simultaneously signal impersonality, lack of empathy, or even unfair treatment if the decision-making logic is opaque (Black & van Esch, 2020). Candidates may interpret this opacity as a negative organisational signal, questioning whether fairness, inclusivity, or transparency is truly valued. This misalignment between organisational intent and candidate interpretation highlights how fragile communication is in AI-mediated recruitment. Moreover, signalling theory emphasises the relational and interpretive nature of signals: their effectiveness depends not only on the accuracy of transmission but also on the contextual decoding by candidates (Connelly et al., 2011). Without deliberate communicative framing, AI tools risk producing ambiguous or distorted signals. As Yanamala (2023) argues, organisations need to invest not only in algorithmic accuracy but also in communicative transparency – explaining to candidates how AI systems operate, how decisions are made, and how human oversight is ensured.

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) offers a complementary perspective, underscoring the reciprocal and relational nature of organisational interactions. Recruitment is not merely about selecting the "best" candidate; it is also about initiating a long-term relationship grounded in trust, fairness, and mutual commitment

(Bamberger et al., 2014). In this view, every communicative act – whether a personalised message, constructive feedback, or empathetic response – constitutes an investment in relational capital. AI systems, however, often prioritise transactional efficiency over relational reciprocity. Automated rejection emails or standardised interview feedback may save time, but they provide little to no recognition of the candidate's individual investment in the process. This lack of reciprocity violates expectations set by social exchange theory, potentially leading to adverse reactions from applicants, reputational damage, and reduced willingness to reapply. What is often overlooked in the current discourse is that reciprocity is not only an ethical obligation but also a strategic resource. Candidates who perceive recruitment as fair and relationally balanced are more likely to become organisational ambassadors, regardless of the selection outcome (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Communication therefore serves as the critical mechanism through which reciprocity is enacted, and without intentional communicative design, AI recruitment systems risk eroding this delicate balance.

A crucial aspect of AI-driven recruitment concerns issues of justice, ethics, and transparency. Organisational justice theory emphasises that candidates evaluate not only selection outcomes but also the fairness of both procedures and interpersonal treatment (Colquitt et al., 2001). In traditional recruitment, fairness perceptions are primarily shaped by direct communication with recruiters, including timely responses, clear expectations, and respectful treatment. When AI tools mediate or replace these interactions, the communicative foundation of fairness may be weakened. For example, a lack of explanation about how algorithms evaluate applications can create perceptions of opacity and procedural injustice, even when the system is technically accurate (Leicht-Deobald et al., 2019). Candidates often expect to understand the reasons behind rejection or advancement; automated decisions that lack explanation fail to meet this expectation, undermining trust and increasing perceptions of arbitrariness.

Ethical debates on AI in HRM further underscore the importance of transparent communication. Scholars have highlighted risks such as algorithmic bias, lack of accountability, and the potential for discrimination (Raghavan et al., 2020). These risks are not merely technical but deeply communicative: candidates interpret the absence of transparency as evidence of hidden agendas or structural inequities (Bodie et al., 2017). Rodgers et al. (2023) emphasise that AI-based management tools must incorporate ethical safeguards, particularly by ensuring that candidates are explicitly informed about how their data is used, how AI contributes to decision-making, and how human oversight is exercised.

Classical communication models offer a vocabulary for identifying who sends a recruitment message, what it conveys, which channel it reaches the applicant through, and what effect it may have (Lasswell, 1948; Shannon & Weaver, 1949). Dialogic communication shifts attention to the opportunity for a response (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Applied to AI-assisted recruitment, these perspectives raise questions about who can explain a message sent by an automated system and who is responsible for responding to the applicant. Recent research on AI in organisational communication similarly emphasises the need to make human–technology arrangements understandable and accountable (Gulbrandsen & Just, 2024). Research in other professional settings offers a parallel. A review of generative AI in creative industries highlights questions of human agency and changing professional roles (Bervar et al., 2026). In hospitality, Bocić and Jagodič (2025) describe a digital concierge tool designed to help staff personalise service while retaining direct interaction with guests. In agile project management, Radulović and Klobučar (2025)

propose examining the team and organisational conditions under which AI supports workflow efficiency or disrupts collaboration. In recruitment, these examples motivate a closer look at which exchanges technology can support and where applicants may need a person to respond. Organisational readiness also depends on staff skills. In a study of hospital nurses in Croatia, Marković (2023) linked computer and information literacy to less time spent on administrative work.

Recent applicant-reaction studies show why these questions matter. In an experimental recruitment scenario, Ochmann et al. (2024) found that transparency and human-like interface cues mainly influenced perceptions of informational and interpersonal justice. Luo et al. (2025) found that AI-enabled interviews elicited less favourable perceptions of procedural justice and organisational attractiveness, alongside lower intentions to apply. Costa et al. (2026), studying digital selection more broadly, found that applicants and job incumbents did not weigh procedural justice rules in the same way across online applications, tests, and interviews. These findings suggest that an intervention's effects depend on both the selection procedure and the aspect of fairness that it addresses. In a broader labour-market context, a survey of working-age adults in Croatia found that greater trust in AI and higher AI self-efficacy were associated with more frequent AI use (Palić et al., 2026). This finding motivates examining whether applicants enter AI-assisted selection with different expectations about the technology.

The experience of being evaluated also depends on whether people feel that their circumstances have been considered. Across studies of algorithmic evaluation, Chun et al. (2024) linked unfavourable reactions to perceptions of reduced respect and individualised consideration. In recruitment specifically, candidates interviewed by Kurniawan (2025) described opaque processes and impersonal treatment. Together, these studies motivate a distinction between making a decision understandable and giving applicants a meaningful opportunity to ask about their own case. The first concerns the explanation candidates receive. The second also requires an accessible channel and someone who can respond.

Applicants' perceptions of fairness address one part of the broader problem of algorithmic fairness. Fabris et al. (2025) survey sources of bias, assessment methods, and mitigation strategies across hiring stages, while Chen (2023) discusses data quality and transparency as possible safeguards. Research on applicant reactions likewise suggests that the timing and framing of AI involvement deserve attention (Açıkgöz et al., 2020; Hunkenschroer & Lütge, 2021). Hybrid arrangements can therefore be analysed by how recruitment teams allocate responsibilities, including who monitors the system, communicates its role, and handles questions about decisions (Chang, 2024; Morin, 2024; Rigotti & Fosch-Villaronga, 2024). Data governance also shapes what organisations can tell applicants. Fernández Delgado and Cazurro Barahona (2026) examine the difficulty of rectifying or removing personal information once it has been incorporated into machine-learning models. In recruitment, this issue gives organisations a reason to specify how they use candidate data and where applicants can direct questions.

This literature provides evidence on particular interface features, selection stages, and fairness concerns. A remaining question is how those elements fit together when a hiring organisation must communicate an AI-assisted decision to an applicant. The present study examines four aspects of that exchange: the technology that delivers the message, the workflow that assigns responsibility, the explanation that makes the decision intelligible, and the interpersonal response available to the applicant. This question links the human-centred orientation of Society 5.0 to the design of a specific organisational process.

Methodology

Research design

The study used a qualitative research paradigm, enabling an in-depth understanding of subjective meanings, diverse experiences, and multiple perspectives among relevant stakeholders. A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for investigating complex, multi-layered phenomena, such as transformations in recruitment communication triggered by technological innovations. The aim was not to achieve statistical generalisation but to provide a deeper interpretative insight into how experts make sense of the role of digital tools and artificial intelligence in recruitment processes.

Sample

Data were collected through 11 semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted between December 2021 and December 2022. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select participants with recognised expertise at the intersection of human resources, communication, and technology. The inclusion criteria required direct involvement in implementing artificial intelligence and digital tools in hiring processes, as well as the ability to reflect on communication practices from interdisciplinary perspectives.

The final sample comprised:

- Practitioners from Slovenian and international companies (n = 5), including specialists in communication (n = 3) and recruitment/human resources (n = 2). Gender distribution: two women, three men.
- Researchers and academics from universities and research institutions in Slovenia and abroad (n = 6), specialising in communication (n = 4) and human resources (n = 2). Gender distribution: four women, two men.

Participants held senior professional or research positions, which ensured both practical and strategic insights.

Instruments

A semi-structured interview guide was developed, consisting of six main questions with follow-up prompts. The guide covered the following thematic areas: (i) conceptualisations of Society 5.0 and its relation to Industry 4.0, (ii) the perceived impact of digitalisation and the COVID-19 pandemic on everyday life and organisational practices, (iii) expected changes in communication and recruitment practices, (iv) the role of artificial intelligence and digital platforms in candidate search, (v) ethical issues such as fairness, inclusion, and transparency, and (vi) challenges and advantages of emerging communication models in recruitment by 2030.

The structure enabled comparability across interviews while allowing participants to elaborate on their own experiences and perspectives.

Procedure

All interviews were conducted online via Zoom, allowing for geographical flexibility. Conversations lasted 45 to 90 minutes, were audio-recorded with participants' consent, and were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were anonymised by removing direct identifiers and specific details or characteristics that could enable participant identification. No formal ethics approval was obtained for this study. Notes were taken throughout to capture contextual observations and the researchers' reflexive position.

The data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Two independent researchers conducted the coding. The analytical process unfolded in several stages:

1. Familiarisation and transcription – Interviews were fully transcribed, and the researcher immersed herself in the data through repeated readings.
2. Initial coding – Two independent researchers examined the interview transcripts and identified meaning units, assigning open codes to statements, metaphors, dilemmas, and expectations.
3. Theme development – Themes were developed on the basis of the analysis of the interview material. The researchers grouped related codes into broader categories, identifying recurring patterns and differences across the interviews.
4. Interpretation and modelling – The resulting themes were synthesised into a conceptual model of recruitment communication in the context of digitalisation and Society 5.0, structured around four interrelated dimensions: technical-informational, organisational-pragmatic, ethical-reflective, and human-empathic.

The analysis distinguished between participants' accounts of recruitment practices at the time of the interviews and their expectations about how these practices might evolve by 2030. These expectations were interpreted as expert perspectives shaped by the technological and organisational context of 2021–2022. Participants' observations about candidate experiences were likewise interpreted as expert accounts. The resulting model synthesises these perspectives and provides a basis for further research with candidates and recruiters across different organisational settings.

Results

Interviewees described a move towards hybrid recruitment communication that combines automated tools with direct contact with recruiters. Participants acknowledged benefits such as speed, efficiency, and scalable personalisation, while repeatedly highlighting pain points tied to generic rejections, lack of feedback, and opaque decision criteria. Interviewees described a gap between the effort candidates invest and the responses they receive. Remarks described algorithms as black boxes and noted that silence or templated messages can make efforts feel disregarded; conversely, clear updates and simple explanations were seen as meaningful signs of care. Interviewees reported that candidates expected access to a recruiter at consequential stages and brief, comprehensible status updates, including when the outcome was adverse.

To synthesise these patterns, the material was grouped into four recurring analytical categories that capture how communication is organised and interpreted in AI-assisted recruitment, as presented in Table 1. The categories were developed through analysis of the interviews and represent an interpretative synthesis of participants' accounts; they were not predefined interview topics.

Illustrative interview excerpts by dimension

Interviewees anticipated that by 2030 recruitment would combine multiple communication channels, with automation supporting early and intermediate tasks such as screening, scheduling, and reminders. They expected human contact to remain important at consequential stages and brief status updates and feedback to become more routine (RQ1). Participants valued speed and the ability to tailor messages, while identifying generic rejections, limited feedback, and unclear criteria as recurring problems. They emphasised two-way communication, clear explanations, and visible human oversight (RQ2). Participants identified pre-screening, administration, and forecasting as applications for AI and analytics. They saw these

tools as supporting recruiters' final judgement and identified data quality checks, human oversight, and clear candidate-facing explanations as ways to address bias, exclusion, and opacity (RQ3).

Table 1
Dimensions of AI-Mediated Recruitment Communication: Findings and Illustrative Examples

Dimension / Category	Main findings	Illustrative examples from interviews
Technical–informational	Visible impact of AI, digital platforms, and automation on how information is prepared, delivered, and managed.	Automated screening, algorithmic CV parsing; system-generated reminders and status updates.
Organisational–pragmatic	New process flows and multichannel interaction; faster sequencing of steps with parallel touchpoints.	Chatbots and video interviews used alongside email/ATS portals; multiple platforms in the same process.
Ethical–reflective	Recurrent concerns about clarity of criteria, feedback gaps, and perceived opacity; requests for simple explanations.	Black box perceptions; negative reactions to generic rejection emails; expectation of short reasons for outcomes.
Human–empathic	Desire to maintain personal contact and recognition of effort; value placed on timely, respectful updates.	Recruiter as a bridge between systems and people; brief, humane messages at pivotal stages.

Source: Authors' work

Interviewees associated automation and personalisation with greater efficiency. Across the roles represented in the sample, participants emphasised the importance of timely, understandable, and respectful communication, particularly when conveying outcomes.

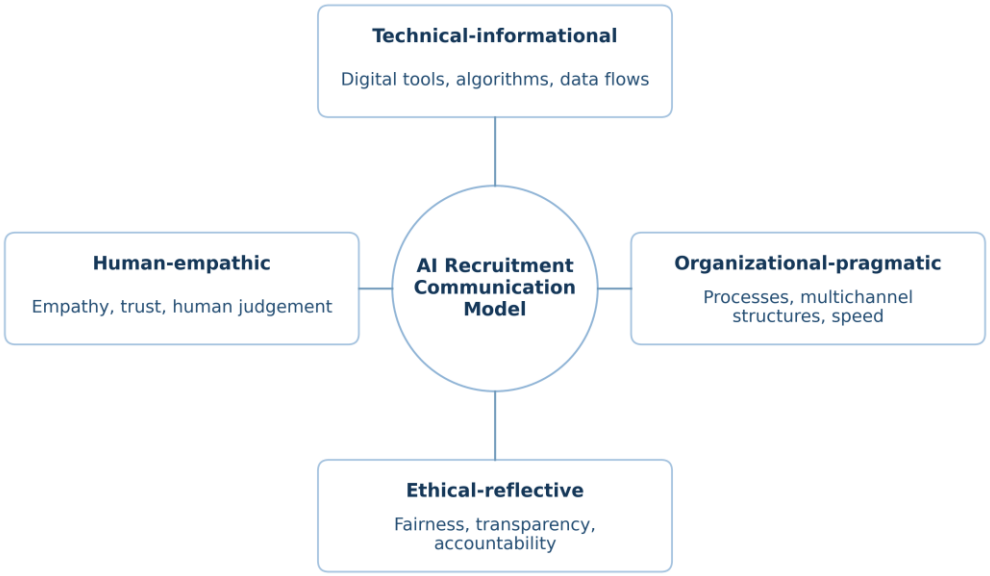
Figure 1 illustrates the proposed Communication Model for AI Recruitment in Society 5.0, which integrates technological, organisational, ethical, and human-empathic dimensions into a single framework.

The proposed model articulates four interrelated dimensions:

- Technical-informational: digital tools, algorithms, and data flows that provide efficiency and scalability.
- Organisational-pragmatic: structures, channels, and processes that shape coordination, speed, and clarity in recruitment.
- Ethical-reflective: fairness, transparency, and accountability as prerequisites for candidate trust and organisational legitimacy.
- Human-empathic: empathy, trust, and human judgment that ensure relational balance and preserve the human core of recruitment communication.

Applied to recruitment decisions mediated by AI, the model asks who communicates what, through which channel, and with what effect. It also asks who is accountable for the message and how the organisation can respond to the candidate.

Figure 1
Proposed Communication Model for AI Recruitment in Society 5.0



Source: Authors' work

Consider an illustrative case in which a candidate is screened out after an AI-assisted review. A recruitment system can send a timely notification (technical–informational), while the recruitment team determines who is responsible for communicating the outcome and which channel the candidate can use to reply (organisational–pragmatic). The notice explains the role of AI and gives an accessible account of the job-related criteria that informed the decision, and where this information can be provided (ethical–reflective). A recruiter is available to respond to questions in a way that recognises the candidate's effort and circumstances (human–empathic). The example shows how the four dimensions shape a single communication decision.

Discussion and conclusion

Summary of results

The interviews identified three related patterns. First, participants interviewed in 2021–2022 anticipated that recruitment communication by 2030 would combine automated exchanges with direct contact with recruiters, particularly at stages with important consequences for applicants (RQ1). Second, participants valued speed and the ability to tailor messages, while describing generic rejections, limited feedback, and unclear selection criteria as recurring problems (RQ2). Third, they identified pre-screening, administrative tasks, and forecasting as possible uses of AI and analytics and emphasised the role of human oversight, data quality checks, and clear explanations in addressing perceived risks (RQ3).

These findings informed a conceptual model with four dimensions: technical–informational, organisational–pragmatic, ethical–reflective, and human–empathic. The model brings together how information is generated and delivered, how responsibility is assigned, what candidates are told about the process, and how they can obtain a response from a recruiter.

Theoretical contributions

The first contribution is to treat a candidate-facing exchange as the unit of conceptual analysis. Recent research shows that reactions vary by selection procedure and by

the aspect of fairness a communication feature addresses (Costa et al., 2026; Luo et al., 2025; Ochmann et al., 2024). The model builds on this work by linking the applicant's experience of a message to two organisational decisions: how the message is generated and delivered, and who is responsible for following up. This link helps explain why the same communication feature may serve different purposes at different stages. A scheduled reminder mainly coordinates a task, whereas a rejection notice may also need to explain an outcome and identify someone who can respond.

The second contribution is to specify two ways in which a communication process can support perceived fairness. The ethical–reflective dimension concerns whether the organisation can explain the role of AI and give an intelligible account of a decision. The human–empathic dimension concerns whether an applicant can raise a case-specific question and receive a respectful response. This distinction builds on evidence about informational and interpersonal justice and about individualised consideration in algorithmic evaluation (Chun et al., 2024; Ochmann et al., 2024). It gives rise to a testable proposition: a clear explanation may improve understanding of the decision, while an opportunity for a responsive exchange may shape perceptions of how the applicant was treated.

The third contribution is to connect candidate communication with the governance of AI-assisted recruitment. Recent work identifies sources of bias and control points across the hiring process, and organisational communication research highlights the accountability of human–technology arrangements (Fabris et al., 2025; Gulbrandsen & Just, 2024). The model specifies where this accountability becomes visible to the applicant: the routing of messages, the explanation of AI's role, and the availability of a person responsible for follow-up. In the Society 5.0 context, this connection gives human-centred recruitment a concrete meaning and identifies relationships that future research can test.

Practical implications

Recruitment teams can use the four dimensions to review candidate communication at each stage of selection. Application acknowledgements, scheduling, and routine status updates are possible starting points for automation. For messages about progression or rejection, the team can assign responsibility for communicating the decision, provide an accessible explanation of AI's role where relevant, and identify a channel through which candidates can ask questions. The example in the Results section illustrates how these decisions can be combined in a single recruitment step.

Organisations piloting these practices could assess response times, whether candidates understand the next step and the role of AI, and how often candidate enquiries are resolved. Reviewing these indicators together would help teams assess whether faster communication is accompanied by clearer information and a workable route to a recruiter.

Limitations and future research directions

The study draws on a purposive sample of 11 practitioners and researchers. Its findings reflect the roles and organisational contexts represented in those interviews. Accounts of candidate experiences are indirect because candidates were outside the sample. The interviews were conducted in 2021–2022, so expectations for 2030 reflect the tools and recruitment practices familiar to participants at that time. The model remains conceptual, and its effects on candidate understanding, perceived fairness, and trust have yet to be tested.

Future studies could interview candidates and recruiters who participated in the same selection processes to compare how each group understood the messages,

decisions, and feedback options. Field studies or experiments could vary the timing and detail of explanations and the availability of recruiter contact, then assess candidate understanding, perceived procedural fairness, and recruiter workload. Replication across sectors and in multilingual or accessibility-constrained settings would help establish where the model applies, and which practices need adaptation.

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