

Artificial Intelligence-Assisted Decision-Making and Inclusive Government Services: Exploring Agency Managers' Leadership Strategies

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an emerging tool in public administration by supporting evidence-based decision-making, improving organizational efficiency, and enhancing the delivery of inclusive government services. Despite the increasing adoption of AI in governance, limited qualitative studies have explored how AI-assisted decision-making influences agency managers' leadership strategies in promoting inclusive public service delivery. This study explored how Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making influences agency managers' leadership strategies for inclusive government services. Guided by Transformational Leadership Theory and Evidence-Based Public Management, the study employed an exploratory qualitative research design. Eighteen (18) purposively selected agency managers and academic leaders participated in semi-structured interviews. The collected narratives were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The findings revealed that AI-assisted decision-making strengthens strategic planning and decision support by enabling leaders to make informed, data-driven decisions. Furthermore, Artificial Intelligence enhances stakeholder responsiveness, promotes inclusive service delivery, strengthens transparency, and supports evidence-based leadership through timely access to relevant organizational information. The study concludes that Artificial Intelligence functions as a complementary leadership resource that enhances, rather than replaces, human judgment in public administration. Integrating AI-assisted decision-making with participatory leadership, ethical governance, and transparent public service practices can strengthen inclusive governance and improve the accessibility, fairness, and effectiveness of government services for diverse communities.

Keywords Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making, inclusive government services, leadership strategies, public administration, agency managers

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming public administration by enhancing decision-making processes, improving service delivery, and supporting evidence-based governance. AI-assisted decision-making systems, including predictive analytics, intelligent data management, machine learning applications, and generative AI platforms, enable public sector leaders to analyze complex information, identify service gaps, and develop more responsive public policies. These technologies have expanded the capacity of government institutions to make timely, data-informed, and citizen-centered decisions while improving transparency, operational efficiency, and accountability (Dwivedi et al., 2023; OECD, 2024). As governments continue to pursue digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence is increasingly recognized not merely as a technological innovation but as a strategic resource that supports inclusive governance and equitable public service delivery.

The demand for inclusive government services has likewise intensified as governments seek to respond to increasingly diverse populations characterized by differences in socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, language, disability, and geographic location. Inclusive governance extends beyond equal service provision by ensuring that public policies and government programs are responsive to the unique needs of marginalized and underserved communities (Frederickson, 2010; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). Consequently, public institutions are expected to develop leadership approaches that promote accessibility, fairness, participation, and social equity while maintaining effective governance and public accountability.

Agency managers occupy a critical position within public organizations because they bridge the gap between policy formulation and frontline service implementation. Their leadership decisions directly influence how

government programs are planned, implemented, monitored, and evaluated. Modern public administration increasingly requires agency managers to exercise adaptive leadership that balances organizational efficiency with inclusive decision-making and stakeholder engagement (Van Wart, 2013; Pierre & Peters, 2020). Effective leadership therefore extends beyond administrative competence and requires leaders to understand diverse community needs, allocate resources equitably, and foster collaborative governance that encourages citizen participation.

Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making has introduced new opportunities for strengthening leadership practices within government institutions. AI technologies allow agency managers to analyze large volumes of administrative data, identify patterns of service utilization, forecast community needs, and evaluate program effectiveness with greater efficiency than conventional decision-making approaches. AI-assisted systems also facilitate real-time access to information, enabling leaders to respond more proactively to emerging governance challenges while reducing reliance on intuition alone (OECD, 2024). UNESCO (2023) further emphasized that responsible AI implementation should support human-centered decision-making by promoting transparency, accountability, and ethical governance rather than replacing human judgment.

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that inclusive leadership improves organizational effectiveness by promoting stakeholder participation, equitable decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving. Participatory leadership approaches encourage public managers to involve diverse stakeholders in planning and decision-making processes, thereby strengthening public trust and improving service outcomes (Osborne et al., 2013; Kettunen & Kallio, 2020). Likewise, Fernandez and Rainey (2006) argued that successful organizational change within public institutions depends largely on leadership practices that encourage participation, communication, and institutional adaptability. These perspectives suggest that leadership remains central to achieving inclusive governance regardless of technological advancement.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into public administration, however, introduces a new dimension to leadership practice. Rather than replacing managerial responsibilities, AI-assisted decision-making has the potential to augment leaders' ability to evaluate evidence, identify underserved populations, monitor organizational performance, and make informed decisions that support equitable service delivery. Dwivedi et al. (2023) explained that generative AI enhances decision quality by synthesizing complex information into actionable insights, allowing leaders to respond more efficiently to organizational challenges. Similarly, the OECD (2024) emphasized that trustworthy AI should strengthen public sector decision-making through transparency, explainability, and responsible governance while maintaining human oversight throughout the decision-making process.

Despite growing interest in Artificial Intelligence within public administration, limited qualitative studies have explored how AI-assisted decision-making influences agency managers' leadership strategies for inclusive government services. Existing research has primarily examined leadership, governance, and inclusivity from organizational or policy perspectives (Frederickson, 2010; Pierre & Peters, 2020; Chavez & Unga, 2024) while paying relatively little attention to the experiences of agency managers who increasingly utilize AI-supported technologies in administrative decision-making. Moreover, previous investigations have focused largely on digital transformation and e-government initiatives without examining how Artificial Intelligence shapes leadership practices that promote accessibility, equity, and stakeholder responsiveness in public service delivery.

Guided by Transformational Leadership Theory, which emphasizes leaders' capacity to inspire innovation, adaptability, and organizational change (Van Wart, 2013), and Evidence-Based Public Management, which advocates the use of reliable information and data to improve public sector decision-making (Bovaird & Löffler, 2009), this study seeks to explore how Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making influences agency managers' leadership strategies for inclusive government services. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing discourse on Artificial Intelligence in public administration by providing qualitative insights into how AI-supported leadership practices can strengthen inclusive governance, enhance public service delivery, and promote equitable outcomes for diverse communities.

METHODS

2.1. Research design

This study employed an exploratory qualitative research design to examine how Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making influences agency managers' leadership strategies for inclusive government services. An exploratory qualitative approach was considered appropriate because it facilitates an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, leadership practices, and decision-making processes within the evolving context of AI-supported public administration. The design enabled the researcher to capture rich narratives regarding how Artificial Intelligence informs leadership decisions aimed at promoting accessibility, equity, and inclusivity in government services (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

2.2. Participants and sampling

The study involved eighteen (18) agency managers and academic leaders from selected government institutions and public higher education institutions who were purposively selected based on their leadership responsibilities and experience in managing inclusive government services. Participants met the following inclusion criteria: (1) currently occupying a managerial or administrative leadership position; (2) directly involved in planning, implementing, or evaluating government programs or public services; (3) have experience utilizing Artificial Intelligence-assisted tools or digital decision-support systems in administrative or leadership functions; (4) have served in their current leadership position for at least one year; and (5) were willing to participate in the study. Purposive sampling ensured the inclusion of information-rich participants capable of providing meaningful insights into AI-assisted leadership and inclusive governance.

2.3. Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide composed of three open-ended questions aligned with the study's objective. The interview guide explored participants' experiences with Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making, its influence on leadership strategies, stakeholder responsiveness, and inclusive government service delivery. Follow-up probing questions were employed to clarify responses and encourage participants to elaborate on their experiences. Prior to data collection, the interview guide was reviewed by experts in public administration and qualitative research to establish its content validity, clarity, and alignment with the research objective.

Table 1. Interview guide questions.

Objective	Interview Guide Questions
1. To explore how Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making influences agency managers' leadership strategies for inclusive government services.	1. How has Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making influenced your leadership strategies in delivering inclusive government services? 2. How does Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making support your ability to address the diverse needs of stakeholders in government service delivery? 3. How has Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making influenced transparency, fairness, and effectiveness in your leadership decisions for inclusive government services?

2.4. Data Gathering Procedure

After securing the necessary institutional permission, participants were recruited through purposive sampling. The purpose of the study was explained, and written informed consent was obtained before conducting the interviews. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through secure online communication platforms, depending on participants' availability. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, was audio-recorded with participants' permission, and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate representation of participants' narratives.

2.5. Data analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis involved repeated reading of the transcripts, generation of initial codes, identification of meaningful patterns, and refinement of themes that reflected participants' experiences with Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making and inclusive leadership practices. Throughout the analytical process, reflexivity was maintained to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in participants' perspectives while enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

RESULTS

Objective. To explore how Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making influences agency managers' leadership strategies for inclusive government services.

Interview Question 1. How has Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making influenced your leadership strategies in delivering inclusive government services?

Theme 1. Strategic Planning

10 participants described Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making as an important resource for improving strategic planning and leadership decisions. They explained that AI-enabled tools assist in analyzing organizational data, identifying service gaps, and prioritizing programs that respond to the needs of diverse communities. Rather than relying solely on intuition or previous experience, participants emphasized that AI provides timely information that supports more informed planning and resource allocation for inclusive government services.

"AI helps us identify which communities need immediate attention, making our planning more focused and responsive."

"Instead of relying only on assumptions, we use AI-generated reports to prioritize programs for underserved sectors."

Theme 2. Decision Support

8 participants viewed Artificial Intelligence as a decision-support tool that strengthens leadership by providing evidence-based recommendations during planning and policy implementation. They explained that AI-assisted systems organize relevant information, summarize reports, and generate insights that facilitate faster and more informed administrative decisions. However, participants emphasized that final decisions remain dependent on human judgment and organizational policies.

"AI helps organize information quickly, but leadership decisions still require careful human evaluation."

"The recommendations generated by AI help us make better decisions, especially when dealing with complex issues."

Interview Question 2. How does Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making support your ability to address the diverse needs of stakeholders in government service delivery?

Theme 1. Stakeholder Responsiveness

12 participants shared that Artificial Intelligence enables them to better understand stakeholder concerns by analyzing feedback, identifying recurring issues, and recognizing service patterns among different sectors of society. They explained that AI-assisted decision-making helps leaders respond more efficiently to the changing needs of marginalized communities while supporting more inclusive planning and service delivery.

"AI helps us identify the concerns that different communities repeatedly raise, allowing us to respond more quickly."

"Using AI makes it easier to recognize which sectors require additional government support."

Theme 2. Inclusive Services

6 participants explained that Artificial Intelligence contributes to more inclusive government services by supporting equitable resource allocation and improving access to information for underserved populations. AI-

assisted systems allow leaders to evaluate service coverage, monitor participation, and identify communities that may require additional interventions. Participants believed that these insights contribute to fairer and more responsive public service delivery.

"AI helps us determine whether certain groups are being left behind so we can adjust our services."

"It provides information that helps us improve the accessibility of government programs."

Interview Question 3. How has Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making influenced transparency, fairness, and effectiveness in your leadership decisions for inclusive government services?

Theme 1. Transparent Governance

9 participants described Artificial Intelligence as a tool that promotes transparency by organizing information, documenting decision-making processes, and providing accessible records for monitoring government programs. They explained that AI-assisted systems improve accountability by making leadership decisions more evidence-based and easier to communicate to stakeholders.

"AI allows us to document our decisions clearly, making it easier to explain why certain actions were taken."

"It improves transparency because decisions are supported by available data rather than personal opinions."

Theme 2. Evidence-Based Leadership

9 participants emphasized that Artificial Intelligence strengthens evidence-based leadership by enabling managers to evaluate organizational performance using reliable information and measurable indicators. They explained that AI-generated insights help leaders assess program outcomes, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments that enhance the effectiveness of inclusive government services.

"AI provides reliable information that helps us evaluate whether our programs are achieving their objectives."

"Leadership becomes more objective because decisions are supported by data rather than assumptions."

DISCUSSION

Strategic Planning. The findings suggest that Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making strengthens strategic leadership by enabling agency managers to make more informed and proactive decisions grounded in available organizational data. Rather than replacing managerial expertise, AI functions as a strategic support mechanism that enhances leaders' ability to anticipate community needs, prioritize government interventions, and allocate resources more effectively. This demonstrates that contemporary public leadership increasingly relies on technological capabilities to improve planning while maintaining human judgment in governance.

These findings are consistent with Dwivedi et al. (2023), who argued that generative Artificial Intelligence enhances organizational decision-making by synthesizing large volumes of information into actionable insights that support managerial planning. Similarly, the OECD (2024) emphasized that AI enables public institutions to improve policy development and service planning through evidence-informed decision-making while preserving human oversight. Guided by Transformational Leadership Theory, these findings indicate that agency managers utilize AI not merely as a technological innovation but as a strategic resource that supports adaptive and forward-looking leadership capable of responding to evolving public needs (Van Wart, 2013).

Decision Support. The findings further indicate that Artificial Intelligence serves as an important decision-support mechanism by improving the quality, efficiency, and consistency of leadership decisions. Participants' experiences suggest that AI contributes to administrative effectiveness by organizing information and generating evidence that informs complex governance decisions without diminishing leaders' accountability for final judgments. This reflects an emerging leadership model in which technological intelligence complements rather than substitutes managerial expertise.

This finding aligns with Bovaird and Löffler (2009), who emphasized that effective public management increasingly depends on the integration of reliable evidence into administrative decision-making. Likewise, UNESCO (2023) highlighted that responsible Artificial Intelligence should function as a human-centered decision support system that promotes ethical governance, transparency, and informed leadership. The present study extends these perspectives by demonstrating that AI-assisted decision-making strengthens administrative leadership while preserving the central role of professional judgment in public service.

Stakeholder Responsiveness. The findings suggest that Artificial Intelligence enhances leaders' responsiveness by enabling them to better understand stakeholder concerns and identify emerging community needs through data-driven analysis. Such responsiveness strengthens inclusive governance because leadership decisions become increasingly informed by patterns of public feedback rather than solely by routine administrative processes. This enables agency managers to respond more effectively to the diverse expectations of citizens while improving the relevance of government programs.

These findings support Osborne et al. (2013), who argued that public service management should prioritize continuous engagement with citizens to create more responsive and collaborative governance systems. Similarly, Kettunen and Kallio (2020) emphasized that fairness in public service delivery depends largely on leaders' capacity to recognize and address the diverse circumstances of service recipients. The present findings contribute to this discourse by illustrating that Artificial Intelligence expands leaders' ability to identify stakeholder needs through systematic analysis of available information, thereby strengthening citizen-centered governance.

Inclusive Services. The findings demonstrate that Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making contributes to more inclusive government services by enabling leaders to identify underserved populations and improve the equitable distribution of public resources. Rather than relying exclusively on generalized administrative approaches, AI-assisted systems allow managers to recognize disparities in service access and implement targeted interventions that better address community-specific needs. This suggests that AI can strengthen inclusive governance by supporting more equitable and evidence-informed public service delivery.

This observation is consistent with Frederickson (2010), who argued that social equity should remain a central objective of public administration. Likewise, Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) emphasized that effective public service requires governments to prioritize citizen needs through participatory and equitable governance practices. The present study extends these perspectives by demonstrating that Artificial Intelligence provides agency managers with additional analytical capacity to operationalize inclusivity within contemporary government institutions.

Transparent Governance. The findings indicate that Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making promotes transparency by improving documentation, facilitating access to organizational information, and strengthening the traceability of leadership decisions. Greater transparency enhances organizational accountability because leadership actions become more evidence-based and easier to communicate to stakeholders. Consequently, AI may strengthen institutional trust when implemented within ethical governance frameworks that prioritize openness and accountability.

These findings support Christensen and Lægreid (2020), who emphasized that public institutions strengthen legitimacy through transparent administrative processes and accountable governance. Similarly, the OECD (2024) argued that trustworthy Artificial Intelligence should enhance transparency by ensuring that AI-assisted decisions remain explainable, accountable, and subject to human oversight. The present findings therefore suggest that AI contributes to transparent governance not through automation alone but through its capacity to support responsible and accountable public administration.

Evidence-Based Leadership. Perhaps the most significant contribution of this study is its demonstration that Artificial Intelligence strengthens evidence-based leadership by encouraging agency managers to evaluate government programs using reliable information and measurable performance indicators. Rather than depending primarily on intuition or traditional administrative practices, leaders increasingly integrate AI-generated insights into organizational evaluation and strategic decision-making. This reflects the growing importance of evidence-informed governance in improving the effectiveness of public institutions.

These findings align with Fernandez and Rainey (2006), who argued that successful organizational improvement depends on leaders' ability to utilize reliable information when implementing change. Likewise, Pierre and Peters (2020) emphasized that contemporary governance increasingly requires adaptive leadership capable of integrating innovation into administrative practice. Guided by the principles of Evidence-Based Public Management (Bovaird & Löffler, 2009), the findings suggest that Artificial Intelligence strengthens leadership effectiveness by supporting systematic analysis, continuous organizational learning, and informed public decision-making while maintaining accountability and ethical responsibility.

Overall, the study demonstrates that Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making functions as a strategic leadership resource that enhances planning, supports evidence-based decisions, strengthens stakeholder

responsiveness, promotes inclusive service delivery, improves transparency, and reinforces accountable governance. Rather than replacing agency managers, AI complements leadership by providing timely and reliable information that supports more responsive, equitable, and effective government services. These findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on Artificial Intelligence in public administration by illustrating how AI-assisted leadership can advance inclusive governance while preserving the essential role of human judgment in public decision-making.

CONCLUSION

This study explored how Artificial Intelligence-assisted decision-making influences agency managers' leadership strategies for inclusive government services. The findings revealed that AI serves as a strategic decision-support resource that enhances leadership through improved planning, evidence-based decision-making, stakeholder responsiveness, and transparent governance. By providing timely and data-driven insights, AI enables agency managers to better identify community needs, allocate resources more equitably, and implement more inclusive government services. However, the findings also indicate that Artificial Intelligence functions as a complementary tool, with effective leadership continuing to depend on human judgment, ethical decision-making, and accountability.

The study further underscores that the successful integration of Artificial Intelligence into public administration requires responsible governance practices that balance technological innovation with inclusive leadership principles. AI-assisted decision-making is most effective when combined with participatory governance, transparent communication, and continuous stakeholder engagement to ensure that public services remain accessible, equitable, and responsive to diverse communities. These findings contribute to the growing discourse on Artificial Intelligence in public administration by highlighting its potential to strengthen inclusive governance while reinforcing the indispensable role of agency managers in promoting fair, accountable, and citizen-centered government services....

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