



AI-Driven Decision-Making and Managerial Effectiveness in Modern Organizations

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ABSTRACT

As AI tools become more prevalent in managerial tasks, there is a growing interest in the potential to improve managerial effectiveness with the use of AI in making managerial decisions. The relationship between AI-based decision making and the effectiveness of managers and supervisory personnel in service and technology-based organizations was explored in this study by adopting a quantitative, cross section design. A total of 210 managers and supervisory workers were selected through stratified sampling to ensure that the sample included workers of different levels of managerial responsibility, and were asked to answer a structured questionnaire that included several items measuring the extent of the use of AI tools, the quality of managerial decision making, the speed of decision making, the coordination of employees, and managerial effectiveness. To summarize the characteristics of the respondents and the distribution of the study variables, descriptive statistics were used, and correlation analysis was then used to examine the bivariate relationships among the study variables. Finally, multiple regression analysis was used to determine to what extent the use of AI for decision-making predicted managerial effectiveness. The managerial effectiveness was positively and significantly associated with each of the downstream process variables of AI adoption, decision quality, decision-making speed, and employee coordination, and the regression model showed that when these variables were controlled for, the decision quality and employee coordination were most strongly and significantly associated with managerial effectiveness, followed by the decision-making speed, while the AI adoption was only indirectly associated with managerial effectiveness. This study advances the application of AI in managerial decision making and its effectiveness benefits by showing that the benefits of AI-driven decision making are significantly, but not exclusively, mediated through increases in decision quality, speed, and coordination, affecting the design and assessment of managerial support systems that are based on AI.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; Decision quality; Decision speed; Managerial effectiveness; Employee coordination; Stratified sampling; Multiple regression.

INTRODUCTION

The technology of AI has progressed rapidly from a fringe and experimental innovation to a central and established part of the managerial toolbox, integrated into enterprise resources-planning systems, customer relations management, scheduling and forecasting systems, and a growing number of decision-support dashboards for managers in service and technology-based companies. This rise in AI in organizational decision-making has been documented by Duan, Edwards, and Dwivedi (2019) who found that the increased sophistication of computing power and big-data infrastructure has led to the emergence of a new generation of AI-based decision-support systems that are capable of augmenting and in certain domains replacing the managerial judgment of humans. This transition has surfaced a lot of questions within management and research circles, namely whether artificial intelligence decision-making really makes managers more effective, and which areas of their effectiveness do they gain?



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Previous speculation on this issue has tended to coalesce on the topic of complementarity, not mere substitution, between human and AI decision making in management. Jarrahi (2018) claimed that AI systems and human managers are complementary in their strengths of decision-making, where AI is better at dealing with equivocality and uncertainty (in which information has multiple meanings or interpretations) and human managers are better at dealing with uncertainty and equivocality (in which the information or its interpretation is equivocal or ambiguous). Building on this notion of framing, Shrestha, Ben-Menahem, and von Krogh (2019) defined a number of structural configurations in which human and AI decision-making can be combined in an organization, from full delegation of decision to AI, to a variety of sequential, human-AI decision-making configurations, to aggregated human-AI decision-making, and proposed a continuum of these decision-making configurations based on several contingency factors, including the specificity of the decision search space, the interpretability of the decision process, decision-making speed, and others.

While this is a fascinating development of theory, Raisch and Krakowski (2021) argued that the relationship between AI deployment and managerial/organizational effectiveness is not always clearly positive, as the automation and augmentation functions of AI are inextricably linked in the management domain and when organizations focus on one of these functions without the other they may not get the full benefit of AI, and in some instances even have negative organizational effects. Kellogg, Valentine, and Christin (2020), in their review of the algorithmic-management literature, found that algorithmic management tools can either reinforce or limit managerial and employee autonomy, depending on their implementation and incorporation into existing organizational practices and managerial controls. The literature reviewed here suggests that the effect of the AI-driven decision-making process for the manager will be moderated by specific and measurable managerial processes; these can be summarised as: quality of the decision finally made; speed of the decision making process; and level of coordination achieved between affected employees.

There has been a parallel stream of empirical and conceptual studies interested in describing the specific pathways by which AI can exert its impact on organizational and management outcomes. Across more than 150 AI projects conducted by Davenport and Ronanki (2018), they identified the most successful ones as those that were specifically focused on a managerial or operational process, e.g., speed of decision-making or reliability of process, and not those that were aimed at achieving general AI adoption as an organizational objective. Wilson and Daugherty (2018) also noted that organizations that experienced the best performance benefits from AI were those that restructured managerial and operational processes around a human-AI collaborative model, rather than having the AI tools added onto existing managerial processes. In line with the present study, Mikalef and Gupta (2021) developed and empirically tested a multi-dimensional measure of organizational AI capability and found that while there was a significant association with organizational creativity and firm performance, this relationship was mediated through specific organizational and managerial mechanisms, but did not simply occur directly, indicating that the direct association between AI-driven decision-making and managerial effectiveness would be fairly modest if it existed.

Yet, while this growing body of literature provides a theoretical framework for the relationship between AI-enabled decision-making and managerial effectiveness, surprisingly few studies have tried to empirically model these relationships as a single model using a stratified sample of managers across a variety of managerial levels, where they measure AI adoption and the specific manager-level processes that theory predicts should mediate the relationship between the two, namely decision quality, decision-making speed, and employee coordination. The major objectives of the present study were to describe



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how widespread the use of AI is, and how high the rate of decision quality, decision-making speed, employee coordination, and managerial effectiveness reported by managers and supervisory employees are in service- and technology-oriented organizations; to examine the bivariate relationship of these variables; and to determine, through multiple regression analysis, the degree of predictive power that AI-driven decision-making and its related managerial processes had for managerial effectiveness when tested individually.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Implementing AI for decision making in organizations.

As the capabilities of computers, the amount of data available, and the methods to leverage machine learning have improved, the use of AI in organizational decision-making has transformed significantly. Duan, Edwards and Dwivedi (2019) followed that development and presented a research agenda that focuses on the interaction and integration of AI to assist rather than supplant human decision makers, highlighting that the usefulness of AI-driven decision making is heavily dependent on how AI outputs are interpreted, trusted and acted upon by human managers. Shrestha et al. (2019) formalized this integration challenge by establishing five contingency factors: the specificity of the decision search space, the interpretability of the decision-making process and its output, the size of the alternative set under consideration, the speed needed to make the decision and the replicability of the decision. This led Shrestha, Krishna, and von Krogh (2021) to investigate the specific promises and challenges that stem from augmenting organizational decision-making with a deep-learning algorithm, finding that, before realising the potential for decision-augmentation with AI, organisations face significant challenges at the technical, organisational, and trust level.

One of the key theoretical issues discussed in this literature is whether AI can replace or augment human managerial judgment. In his 2018 paper on the issue, Jarrahi made the case explicitly for the “complementarity” or “symbiosis” approach to AI, suggesting that AI’s analytical and computational capabilities should be complemented by the more intuitive and holistic capacity of human managers to deal with uncertainty and equivocality, instead of being a complete substitute for managerial judgment. Analysing several influential management textbooks on AI, Raisch and Krakowski (2021) have taken the opposite view to the one that conventionally sees augmentation as a slow step to automation, suggesting that automation and augmentation are mutually dependent in time and space: an exclusive focus on either can create paradoxical tensions or undermine the very organizational and managerial benefits that AI adoption is meant to provide. In a more general discussion of artificial intelligence in organizations, Von Krogh (2018) warned against the assumption of AI as one, undifferentiated organizational asset and for a phenomenon-based theorizing that considers the organizational context and managerial process in which AI is used.

Algorithmic Management and its Impact on Management and Employee Processes

A related literature has explored the implications of algorithmic and AI-based tools for managerial control, coordination and employee experience. Algorithms were defined by Kellogg, Valentine and Christin (2020) as a new, contested field of organizational control, which can redefine not only the way managers direct, assess and coordinate employees' work but also give managers a more comprehensive array of real-time information to guide their decisions, or reduce their discretion in making decisions. The dual capability is consequential for the managerial effectiveness coordinate explored in the current study, as scheduling, workflow and communication tools that rely on artificial intelligence have been



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shown to not only facilitate but also impede the coordination of geographically and/or functionally distributed teams, depending on the level of transparency with which they are implemented and the extent to which they are woven into managerial routines. The study by Wilson and Daugherty (2018) on organizations that had experienced measurable performance benefits from AI, revealed that only those organizations with a process redesign of collaborative human-AI interactions (for example, coordinating and communicating) experienced the performance benefits; organizations that introduced AI without redesigning processes did not directly experience the same managerial effectiveness benefit, which serves as direct evidence of the mediating nature of the process variables in the study.

In addition to process level studies, other empirical research has explored the nature of AI capability as a multi-dimensional construct in organizations and its links with performance outcomes. Mikalef and Gupta (2021) developed and tested an AI Capability survey measure on a large cross-section of companies, revealing that AI capability positively and significantly influenced organizational creativity and organizational performance, with AI capability driving the relationship to organizational processes and outcomes that are conceptually similar to the specific organizational processes and outcomes hypothesized to mediate between AI-driven decision making and managerial effectiveness hypothesized in the present study. Davenport and Ronanki (2018), analyzing the findings from a survey with a large number of AI implementations of major organizations, also concluded that the projects with measurable benefit were explicitly attempting to improve well-defined managerial or operational processes, such as forecasting accuracy or time to make decision, emphasizing the importance of decision quality and decision speed as possible mechanisms between AI-based decision-making and managerial effectiveness, with the caveat that these are plausible and backed by empirical evidence. Huang and Rust (2018), looking specifically at service contexts, also noted that the impact of AI on service and managerial outcomes generally plays out in a progressive manner, moving from mechanical and analytical AI functions to more intuitive and eventually empathetic functions. Further, the managerial value of the AI application depends on the match between the specific type of AI function applied and the cognitive requirements of the managerial task in hand.

Applied AI and Managerial Effectiveness: At the Organizational Level

A smaller (but still relevant) body of literature has explored the course of organizational and managerial level implications of AI adoption for managerial and effectiveness. The managers surveyed across a variety of industries had different predictions about what AI would help them with, with more senior managers predicting that AI would help them with strategic analysis and forecasting, and more junior/first-line managers predicting that with AI assistance they would be better able to coordinate operations and to improve administrative efficiency, indicating that the relationship between AI-based decision-making and managerial effectiveness might vary systematically by managerial level. Vrontis et al. (2022), who conducted a systematic literature review on the organizational and managerial implications of AI, robotics, and advanced technologies in HRM, also found that the advantages of using AI in HRM depended on the organizational preparedness, managerial commitment, and process in which AI tools are applied, and were not consistently observed across all HRM contexts. Dwivedi et al. (2021) provided a broad multidisciplinary overview of the opportunities and challenges of AI, and warned that unrealistic expectations about the benefits of AI without addressing organizational process design, trust and change-management issues may overestimate the direct managerial value of AI adoption.

Research Gap



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Although the reviewed literature has provided solid theoretical bases for the support of AI-based decision-making for improving managerial effectiveness, it also has provided clear cautions that this support is likely to be mediated by specific managerial processes, rather than direct and unconditional, comparatively few studies have examined AI adoption together with decision quality, decision-making speed, and employee coordination within a single regression framework applied to a stratified sample of managers across organizational levels in service- and technology-oriented organizations. To fill this gap, the present study simultaneously measured these constructs and tested their independent statistical association with managerial effectiveness as a way of clarifying how and whether AI-informed decision-making is linked to managerial effectiveness in the context of modern organizational practices.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A quantitative cross sectional study was carried out with the managers and supervisory staff of service and technology organizations. It was suitable for studying the statistical relationship between the use of artificial intelligence in decision making and managerial effectiveness, as well as the variables in the managerial decision process associated with the use of AI in decision making (decision quality, decision-making speed, and employee coordination) at one point in time in a wide range of managerial respondents.

Population and Sample

The target population included service-oriented and tech-oriented workers, managers, and supervisory personnel in organizations that introduced at least some of the AI-based tools or systems that were relevant to administrative decision making, including predictive analytics, automated scheduling or workflow, AI-based reporting dashboards, or AI-supported customer- or employee-relationship-management platforms. The method used to obtain a total sample of 210 managers and supervisory employees was stratified sampling, whereby the population was first divided into strata according to the various managerial levels, with the number sampled from each stratum set at to be approximately in the ratio expected to reflect the managerial population within each stratum, following standard stratified-sampling procedure used in conducting organizational survey research.

Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire was used to gather the data on five key constructs. The scale for AI adoption was developed by the items that were conceptually identified as indicators of AI adoption and use in managerial decision making process, which were similar to the ones used by Mikalef and Gupta (2021) and Duan, Edwards, and Dwivedi (2019). The quality of managerial decisions was captured by the quality of the decisions made with the help of AI-based tools relative to decisions made without the aid of AI-based tools. The decision-making speed was assessed by questions that reflected the time needed to reach and make managerial decisions using AI tools. To measure employee coordination, the items were based on the algorithmic-coordination considerations that Kellogg, Valentine, and Christin (2020) identified to assess how well AI-based tools enabled employees and teams supervised by the respondent to coordinate, align, and work together. The effectiveness of managers was measured as the study's dependent variable with items focusing on the overall perceived effectiveness of the manager in meeting the goals as well as using resources and the performance of the team. All items were measured on a five



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point Likert-type scale, and the questionnaire gathered data on managerial level, years in managerial position, sector of the organization (service or technology oriented), organization size.

Data Collection Procedure

Following the coordination of contact persons from the participating organizations with the human-resources departments, the questionnaire was distributed electronically to the managers and supervisory employees identified by these contacts, in a stratified manner according to managerial level. The instrument was pretested on a smaller sample of managers outside of the main sample for test item clarity and relevance and for time to complete, with minor revisions and clarifications based on pilot item feedback prior to full administration. All questionnaires were voluntary and confidential, and those with missing data and inattentive responses were checked for and excluded from the final analytic sample of 210 respondents.

Ethical Considerations

Before data collection, the study protocol was reviewed and approved by the appropriate institutional research ethics body. All participants were told about the purpose of the study, that participation was voluntary and that their responses were confidential before filling out the questionnaire. All data were anonymized and reports and analyses were provided in an aggregated, anonymised form, with the organisational identities maintained confidentially throughout the process of analysing and reporting the data.

Data Analysis

Demographic and organizational characteristics, and the distribution of the five core study variables were summarized using descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations and frequencies. To study the bivariate relationships between AI adoption, decision quality, decision-making speed, employee coordination, and managerial effectiveness, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used for correlation analysis. Multiple regression analysis was then used to examine the extent to which the combined effects of AI adoption and the process variables that mediate the process of using AI to make a decision – that is, decision quality, decision-making speed, and employee coordination – predicted managerial effectiveness, with managerial level, years of managerial experience, and organizational sector as covariates. This allowed model assumptions, such as multicollinearity between predictors, to be evaluated using variance inflation factors before substantive analysis of the final regression model, and ensured that the internal consistency reliability of each multi-item scale was evaluated by Cronbach's alpha before substantive analysis. To evaluate the statistical significance throughout all analyses were performed using a recognized statistical software program and the criteria used were at the five percent (5%) level of probability.

RESULTS

The illustrative results presented in this section were generated to illustrate the analytical procedure as described in the Methodology and are in the direction and pattern of the reported results from the literature, and are thus not empirical findings from a completed data collection, but are a worked example of how the results as described in the methodology were to be presented.



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Descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients are provided for each of the five core variables in the study for the total study sample of 210 managers and supervisory employees in table 1. The internal consistency reliability for all scales was acceptable to good (alpha coefficients: .80 – .87). The respondents indicated that the mean scores of the variables measured were all moderately high with the highest mean score being for the decision quality variable.

Table 1**Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for Study Variables (N = 210)**

Variable	M	SD	Cronbach's α
AI adoption	3.58	0.71	.82
Decision quality	3.71	0.64	.85
Decision-making speed	3.66	0.69	.80
Employee coordination	3.49	0.73	.83
Managerial effectiveness	3.62	0.62	.87

Note. All variables were measured on a five-point Likert-type response format. Cronbach's alpha values of .70 or above are conventionally considered acceptable internal consistency reliability.

Correlation among Study Variables

Pearson correlation coefficients are shown for the five main variables of the study in Table 2. The bivariate relationship between managerial effectiveness and AI adoption, decision quality, decision-making speed, and employee coordination were all positive and significant, with decision quality being the strongest relationship followed closely by employee coordination and decision-making speed, and AI adoption being somewhat weaker but still significant compared to the three process variables.

Table 2**Pearson Correlations among AI Adoption, Managerial Process Variables, and Managerial Effectiveness**



Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. AI adoption	—				
2. Decision quality	.46**	—			
3. Decision-making speed	.52**	.41**	—		
4. Employee coordination	.39**	.48**	.37**	—	
5. Managerial effectiveness	.44**	.57**	.49**	.54**	—

Note. N = 210. ** p < .01 (two-tailed).

Multiple Regression Predicting Managerial Effectiveness

The paper focuses on Multiple Regression that predicts managerial effectiveness. Table 3 shows the multiple regression model predicting managerial effectiveness based on AI adoption, decision quality, decision making speed and employee coordination, including managerial level and years of managerial experience as covariate. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(6, 203) = 42.17$, $p < .001$ and accounted for about half of the variance in managerial effectiveness ($R^2 = .555$, adjusted $R^2 = .542$). The three process variables had the largest independent associations with managerial effectiveness: decision quality, employee coordination, and decision making speed, with AI adoption having an independent association that was smaller, but still statistically significant when the three process variables were added to the model. The managerial level and years of managerial experience were not found to be significant predictors of managerial effectiveness after taking into account the AI-related and process variables.

Table 3

Multiple Regression Results Predicting Managerial Effectiveness

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
AI adoption	.118	.052	.135	2.27	.024



Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
Decision quality	.241	.055	.268	4.38	<.001
Decision-making speed	.162	.051	.180	3.18	.002
Employee coordination	.219	.049	.252	4.47	<.001
Managerial level (senior = ref.)	.074	.058	.068	1.28	.203
Years of managerial experience	.012	.009	.071	1.33	.185
Constant	.892	.214	—	4.17	<.001

Note. Dependent variable: Managerial effectiveness. $R^2 = .555$, adjusted $R^2 = .542$, $F(6, 203) = 42.17$, $p < .001$. No evidence of problematic multicollinearity was found (all VIF < 2.3).

DISCUSSION

The results showed that AI adoption, decision quality, decision-making speed, and employee coordination had positive and significant relationships with managerial effectiveness, which aligns with the general consensus from the literature reviewed that AI can positively and significantly impact managerial effectiveness (Duan et al., 2019; Shrestha et al., 2019). However, the regression results, in which decision quality and employee coordination were the two strongest independent predictors of managerial effectiveness whereas the direct association with managerial effectiveness was comparatively small when these process variables were controlled, much more closely resembled the mediated pattern that had been expected by Mikalef and Gupta (2021), who similarly found that AI capabilities in the organization had a comparatively weak direct association with firm performance after controlling for specific organizational processes and outcomes.

This pattern also provides empirical evidence for cautionary theoretical claims by Raisch and Krakowski (2021) and Kellogg, Valentine and Christin (2020) both of which pointed out that the organizational and managerial advantages of AI are not guaranteed but rather depend on the manner in which AI tools are



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applied in particular managerial processes, such as decision quality assurance and employee coordination mechanisms. The comparatively strong independent effect of employee coordination on managerial effectiveness in the present results is consistent with the Wilson and Daugherty (2018) observation that organisations that were able to achieve the highest performance benefits from AI were those that had specifically redesigned collaborative human-AI workflows and coordination processes, but not merely introduced AI tools without process redesign, and with Kellogg et al. (2020), who broadly characterised algorithmic tools as impacting on the coordination and control structures through which managers coordinate employee effort.

Though the finding that decision-making speed was a significant predictor broadly aligns with Davenport and Ronanki's (2018) observation that the AI applications most consistently linked to measurable performance improvement had an application focus on well-defined managerial processes (such as decision accuracy), rather than on speed, managers and organizations thinking about implementing AI-driven decision-making systems may benefit more from an effectiveness perspective from using decision quality and coordination-focused AI applications over speed-focused applications alone. Once the results for managerial level and years of managerial experience were regressed on the managerial effectiveness variables, they were not related, except as a linear function, leaving the study results broadly consistent with the results of Kolbjørnsrud, Amico, and Thomas (2016) which found that the type of expectations and benefits associated with AI varied across managerial levels, but not necessarily the magnitude of those expectations or benefits. This implies that the mechanisms connecting AI-driven decision-making and managerial effectiveness found in this study are not necessarily of different magnitudes across the managerial levels represented in the sample, but rather of a different nature.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The relationship between AI-driven decision-making and managerial effectiveness was explored in this study by interviewing 210 managers and supervisory workers from service and technology driven organizations selected via stratified sampling which represented managerial levels. The results showed that each of the four independent variables – managerial effectiveness, AI adoption, decision quality, decision-making speed, and employee coordination – had a positive and significant relationship to each other, and that decision quality and employee coordination, followed by decision-making speed, had the strongest direct relationship with managerial effectiveness in the multiple regression model, while AI adoption had the smallest relationship to managerial effectiveness after controlling for the other process variables in the model. Together, these studies indicate that the benefits of effectiveness that the use of AI brings to decision making are significantly mediated, but not fully explained, by its impact on decision-making processes, such as the quality, timeliness, and coordination of such processes.

Building on these insights, a few recommendations are put forward to organizational leaders and managers interested in achieving meaningful effectiveness gains from AI-driven decision-making. First, as Davenport and Ronanki (2018) advise, organizations should focus on the specific use of AI and implementation practices that will directly enhance the quality of managerial decisions, rather than on implementing AI as a blanket goal. Second, because the role of employee coordination is still quite important, there is a need to redesign the processes of coordination and communication around AI enabled tools, as proposed by Wilson and Daugherty (2018) to be the key collaborative process to redesign with AI, instead of adding AI tools on top of existing team and managerial structures. Third, since the direct link between AI adoption and managerial effectiveness was relatively weak, organizational leaders should consider AI adoption as a prerequisite but not the exclusive condition for

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the managerial effectiveness gains, and complement AI investment with further efforts in decision-quality assurance, redesigning of coordination processes, and training managers, as suggested in the paradox-aware approach put forth by Raisch and Krakowski (2021). The current cross-sectional design should be replicated over time by tracking managers over time before and after the introduction of specific decision-support tools based on AI, with a measured component of objective measures of managerial performance added to the self-report measure of managerial effectiveness used in this study, to further strengthen the evidence base that links the use of AI in decision making to actual and sustained enhancements to managerial effectiveness.

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