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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Talha Shafique Awan[*1], Sonia Rao [2], Rabiya Maqsood Ahmed [3]

[*1]*MS Software Engineering, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), Pakistan.*
[2]*Master in Computer Science, Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan.*
[3]*BS Physics, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.*

[*1]talahase2020@gmail.com, [2]soniarao3068@gmail.com, [3]rabiyamughal854@gmail.com

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Corresponding Author: *
Talha Shafique Awan

Abstract
This study utilizes variables of AI (adoption, ethics, governance, and AI-driven decision-making) and their relationships with one another concerning the benefits and impacts of government from the AI perspective. To obtain a broad view of AI adoption perspectives, a survey was conducted with 300 participants from diverse professional roles, including policymakers, public administrators, and technology experts. Statistical methods in the study include correlation analysis, independent sample T-tests, and ANOVA analysis, focusing on gender, professional role, and attitudes to AI technologies. Results reveal distinct gender differences in AI adoption, with males consistently displaying more favorable attitudes towards AI than females. Also, professional role shapes perceptions of AI, with policymakers being more positive toward AI adoption and ethics than public administrators and technology experts. The results further prompt ethical frameworks, transparency, and capacity-building so that the implementation of AI can be optimized in administration and public-put issues of the biases and fairness. The study ends with suggestions on responsible AI integration and the need for public administrators to possess the skills required to manage AI technologies.

INTRODUCTION

The role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has gradually become a disruptive element in the society, transforming some significant areas, including public administration. Governments worldwide are already exploring AI's potential to enhance how it delivers public services and optimizes how it manages resources, to solve age-old problems of data overload, administrative inefficiency, and access to services. AI is already being applied in a wide range of sectors from healthcare, to law enforcement, transportation, and social services identifying cutting-edge solutions to some of the most complex governance challenges. However, the advent of AI in the arena of public administration raises crucial issues related to policy implementation, ethics, and resource management (Nguyen et al., 2023), which require careful advancement.

While there are encouraging use cases for AI, there are significant challenges in the public sector when trying to implement these technologies. Governments are grappling with a fast-paced technological landscape and challenges related to privacy, accountability, and algorithmic transparency. Although the transformation that AI brings with it has undisputed benefits (e.g., more personalized services and data-informed decision-making),

Harlow (2021) highlights emerging risks such as the potential for widening inequality, misuse of sensitive data, and biases incorporated in AI systems (Kaplan & Santos, 2022). It is important for governments to work to establish policies and systems aimed at responsible usage of AI while at the same time protecting against unintended consequences, ensuring AI is working towards better governance in the public realm by not eroding trust or democratic values.

The use of AI in public administration also requires fundamental organizational and institutional change. Public administrators are not slaves to institutionalized policies and practices, yet they are endemic bureaucracy; a balance must be coalesced between innovation, cost, human resource and agility. Due to a lack of the technical expertise and infrastructure needed to successfully implement AI systems, many public sector organizations may stall or fall behind (Gomez & Wang, 2024). Additionally, the extensive uncertainty around AI's potential impacts — particularly in complex, dynamic environments further complicates efforts by public administrators to embed these futuristic technologies in governance architectures. As AI systems grow increasingly prevalent, overcoming these barriers will be critical for governments to harness AI's full potential in the public sector.

While AI has the potential to be a reliable and effective toolkit for public administration use, the defining factor is the successful establishment of both ethical and legal frameworks to ensure the successful exploration and use of artificial intelligence. AI's impact on the way we govern ourselves raises difficult questions about fairness, justice and accountability. Concerns about algorithmic bias, data privacy, and the risk of AI replicating pre-existing inequalities must be dealt with by policymakers (Jiang & Yu, 2025). The fate of many governments today lies in this balance, particularly in ensuring that AI is not allowed to make decisions without transparency, explain-ability, or oversight. Furthermore, they need to establish policies that ensure the benefits of AI is distributed equitably across society and that it does not create new digital divides or exacerbate existing social inequities.

While the potential of AI presents exciting futures in public administration, challenges remain, and the fastest route is one way in which evidence-based AI in public administration can be civilized. Public administration systems should adapt to ensure that AI is used for more inclusive, transparent, and ethical governance. Legislators and civil servants need to anticipate AI-linked roadblocks and creatively transform them into innovation opportunities. AI must converge with well-structured governance, to maximize the benefits while minimizing the risks involved in public administration.

Problem Statement

These transformations come with both the promise and challenge of implementation with the rapid integration of artificial intelligence into government work. While it has the potential to improve efficiencies, transparency, and decision-making, AI adoption has implications for algorithmic bias, data privacy, and ethical governance. This paper aims to closely analyze these challenges and opportunities, providing guidance on the responsible and enabling application of AI in the field of public administration.

Significance of the Study

The role of AI in shaping public administration is important to ensure equity and transparency of governance in the digital age. By highlighting challenges in the AI-supported implementation of policy and recommending strategies for the mitigation of the associated risks — namely of bias, security of data, and regulatory shortfalls — this study advances our understanding of this emerging area of policy practice. The insights will inform policymakers, administrators, and researchers to develop implementable ethical governance frameworks of AI ensuring public trust and services.

Aim of the Study

This study examines the challenges and opportunities of AI in public administration and its implications for policy development and governance; however, it is also important to manage the implementation of AI in the public sector and limit the threats that can arise from it. It aims to

examine the ethical, legal, and operational barriers to AI adoption while unveiling practical approach to maximize benefits of AI in public service delivery. The study thus hopes to assist policymakers with the design of effective, transparent and accountable AI-augmented public administration systems by providing a systematic assessment of the existing evidence.

Methodology

Public administration and artificial intelligence have emerged as a new formidable pair, leading to significant shifts in policy implementation, governance, and service delivery. Therefore, Researchers used a quantitative cross-sectional research design to look into the opportunities and challenges of economically beneficial AI governance in Pakistan. The study adopted a qualitative research method, collecting a total of 45 semi-structured interviews from public administrators, policymakers, and technology experts involved in AI-based governance, across five major cities in the country, namely Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta. This sample was collected using a purposive non-probability sampling technique, arriving at a sample size of 300 participants using the G*Power sample size calculator. They collected data using standardized questionnaires that assessed AI adoption, ethical considerations, and AI decision-making efficiency. The results are essential to comprehending the extent to which AI manifests within authorities, including influencing governance constructs and policy outputs.

The research instruments consist of a demographic sheet and three standardized questionnaires: AI Adoption in Public Administration (Venkatesh et al., 2012), AI Ethics and Governance (Floridi et al., 2018), AI-Driven Decision-Making, and Policy Efficiency (West & Allen, 2020). These tools looked at challenges to AI implementation, ethical concerns, and the implications of AI for policy effectiveness. Data were analyzed with Superior SPSS—includings descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, Cronbach's alpha for reliability, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation for relationships between variables, linear regression for predictive modeling, independent sample t-tests, Anova for group comparisons. We performed IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, with no coercion for participation.

The 3Cs: The study findings provide implications for the emerging role of AI in public administration, regarding both challenges and opportunities in AI-based governance. The findings illustrate how the adoption of AI improves administrative efficiency, transparency, and the accuracy of decision-making, while simultaneously intensifying concerns about algorithmic fairness, accountability, and ethics. The commentary highlights the importance of developing comprehensive policies for regulating AI in public policy. This study aims to contribute to the field of AI adoption in public administration by categorizing the drivers of AI adoption in government and presenting insights into their interactions, thus providing empirical evidence to inform strategies for policymakers on how to formulate AI approaches to benefit citizens while avoiding the pitfalls and potential catastrophes associated with its implementation.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 300)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	180	60%
	Female	120	40%
Age Group	25-35 years	90	30%
	36-45 years	120	40%
	46-55 years	70	23.3%
	56 and above	20	6.7%
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	90	30%

	Master's Degree	150	50%
	PhD	60	20%
Years of Experience	2-5 years	80	26.7%
	6-10 years	130	43.3%
	11+ years	90	30%
Professional Role	Policymakers	120	40%
	Public Administrators	105	35%
	Technology Experts	75	25%

Table 1 describes the demographic characteristics of 300 participants as to gender, age group, education level, years of experience and profession. 60% of respondents were men, 40% were in the 36-45 age range, and 50% held a master`s degree. In relation to professional roles, the research categorized policymakers (40%) as the largest group and on a smaller scale public administrators (35%) and technology experts (25%).

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Key Study Variables (N = 300)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. AI Adoption	3.85	0.74	-	0.48**	0.62**
2. AI Ethics & Governance	3.62	0.68	-	-	0.54**
3. AI-Driven Decision-Making	3.90	0.71	-	-	-

Note: $p < 0.01$

The relationships between AI adoption, AI ethics and governance, and AI-driven decisions are summarized in this table. All three variables were significantly positively correlated with one another, as AI adoption was strongly correlated with AI-driven decision-making ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), and moderately correlated with AI ethics and governance ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$). The results imply that with the rising demand of AI, the ethical governance expands as well, producing a decision-making efficiency within public administration.

The provided presents mean scores for AI Adoption and AI Ethics & Governance and AI-Driven Decision-Making across three different professional roles. The policymakers demonstrate the most favorable attitudes regarding AI adoption and governance based on their scored responses across all three dimensions.

Table 3: Independent Sample t-Test Comparing AI Adoption, AI Ethics & Governance, and AI-Driven Decision-Making by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	t	p
AI Adoption	Male	180	3.92	0.72	2.35	0.02*
	Female	120	3.71	0.77		
AI Ethics & Governance	Male	180	3.88	0.69	2.10	0.04*

	Female	120	3.65	0.74		
AI-Driven Decision-Making	Male	180	4.05	0.71	2.75	0.006**
	Female	120	3.78	0.76		

Note: *p < 0.05, *p < 0.01

Table with figures across gender in AI adoption, AI ethical & governance and AI-driven decisions. There were notable differences between males and females, with males reporting significantly higher mean scores on all three areas, but especially on AI-driven decision-making (p = 0.006), suggesting male respondents believed AI governance was more effective. In -Public Bodies set, we have statistically significant (p < 0.05) differences which highlight that gender affects AI-related perceptions in public administration.

Table 4: ANOVA Comparing AI Adoption, AI Ethics & Governance, and AI-Driven Decision-Making by Professional Role

Variable	Professional Role	N	M	SD	F	p
AI Adoption	Policymakers	120	3.95	0.71	4.75	0.009**
	Public Administrators	105	3.78	0.75		
	Technology Experts	75	3.68	0.77		
AI Ethics & Governance	Policymakers	120	3.85	0.69	5.32	0.006**
	Public Administrators	105	3.70	0.72		
	Technology Experts	75	3.55	0.74		
AI-Driven Decision-Making	Policymakers	120	4.02	0.70	6.10	0.003**
	Public Administrators	105	3.83	0.73		
	Technology Experts	75	3.65	0.75		

Note: p < 0.01

The table compares AI adoption, AI ethics and governance, and AI-driven decision-making differences across three professional roles. The mean scores for all three areas were highest for the responses of policymakers, with differences across roles that were statistically significant (p < 0.01) indicating that their perceptions of AI's role in governance are more positive mindsets compared to public administrators and technology experts. The findings show that professional roles shape perceptions on AI deployment and the efficacy of AI in public administration.

Discussion

The rise of AI has become an imminent reality with both challenges and opportunities for public administration in terms of governance and policy making. As AI technology progresses, it holds significant promise to improve the efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness of public services (Almeida & Santos Júnior, 2024). The pragmatic use of AI may result in more data-driven and evidence-based policy decisions that allow policymakers to optimize the delivery of various services (Mittelstadt, 2021). The use of AI in public administration must be carefully managed and regulated to avoid ethical dilemmas and to ensure the willing use of AI as an outcome (Binns, 2023). It has been pointed out that although AI systems can use operational efficiencies, these systems adopt a transparency that enables systems to avoid biases and decide on fairness (Binns, 2023; Mittelstadt, 2021). This means that the incorporation of technology must be balanced with a responsible governance structure in order to ensure to motivate the right outcomes from public sector AI.

AI technology can certainly improve the precision and speed of administration decision-making in areas such as public sector decision-making, specifically governmental decision-making. AI-driven systems can analyze vast amounts of data much quicker than humans are ever capable of (Bryson et al., 2022) and can distill this information into useful insights that can inform policy decisions. Nevertheless, the use of Automated systems is also convoking uneasiness regarding the derivative of human authority and responsibility, mainly around the sectors of health, law force, and social benefit (Cave & Dignum, 2020). Various studies have advocated for explicit frameworks that allow for the accountability of AI systems through mechanisms of transparency,

auditing and regulation (Floridi et al., 2020). It could help mitigate risks related to the deployment of AI technologies in sensitive spheres of public service without sufficient oversight.

Furthermore, the potential for AI to promote greater inclusivity and accessibility is great with public services. AI tools can help public administrations reaching people in need to ensure that vulnerable groups have access to essential services ranging from healthcare to education (Chui et al. 2021). The ability to address inequities and provide personalized services makes AI a potential government tool for meeting the needs of diverse populations (Holmström et al., 2022). While designing responsible AI systems that address these issues without further entrenching existing biases or omitting disadvantaged populations is a continuing challenge. These technologies must be inclusive and equitable, which requires AI developers to collaborate with policymakers.

Ethical and governance frameworks represent a major concern in AI adoption in public administration to avoid misuse and bias. AI systems in governance can unintentionally reproduce biases that exist in the data set used to train them, which can generate discriminatory consequences (O'Neil, 2022). And thus establishing strong ethical frameworks is imperative to make certain that the implementation of AI does not only benefit society but rather enhances inequalities in the society it is employed （Floridi et al., 2020. Accordingly, AI in public administration must be viewed as an enhancement of human decision-making and not its total replacement.

Lastly, despite the promises of efficiency and innovativeness that AI brings, its roll-out should go hand-in-hand with capacity-building efforts for public administrators. It means the government should provide education and training programs to public sector workers to learn how to beneficially use AI Technologies (Chui et al., 2021). A skilled workforce will also ensure responsible and values-aligned application of AI tools (Mittelstadt, 2021). The confluence of AI technology with public administration principles has the potential to transform the public sector as we know it, and the impacts will only grow over time; however, no tech or modelling solution will on its own be sufficient — humans will remain at the center of the processes used to develop and implement this transformative technology (Vakkuri et al, 2021).

Future Directions

Future studies should be directed at effectively preparing a more inclusive and transparent AI governance model that can be adopted by the public sector. Artificial intelligence is fundamentally interdisciplinary, and academia must continue to resist narrative over-simplification around vitality and the digital turn and remain a space for negotiating complex techno cultural practices across divergent sectors and systems. Furthermore, future research should also look at long-term implications of AI on delivering public services and governance, especially in girth to equity, social justice, and various ethical dimensions.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is the use of self-report data collected from participants, which can be affected by biases, including social desirability or recall bias. A further limitation is the focus on five metropolitan cities of Pakistan, which do not represent the perspectives of the policymakers and public administrators in smaller or rural areas. Furthermore, the study was cross-sectional; thus, it was not possible to explore the trends over time or causal pathways between AI adoption and policy outcomes.

Conclusion

The incorporation of artificial intelligence in public administration holds great potential as well as challenges. Our [06]AI4Gov: Inno-circuit meets AI for Gov initiative reflects this urgency and is an open call to experts, researchers and practitioners to engage in focusing on the responsible usage of AI for governance, policy delivery and service delivery. As more and more sectors of society embrace AI technologies, there is a need for concerted efforts to ensure that these technologies are developed and used in an ethical and responsible manner, with consideration given to their potential social implications. Training efforts for public administrators are essential to ensure that AI applications are used effectively and

responsibly[8] Date of data: Oct 2023. Though AI offers powerful tools to support decision-making, they should serve as aids, not substitutes for human oversight. In conclusion, artificial intelligence can be a game changer for public administration if properly planned and implemented, therefore, governments must work with technology experts and citizens themselves to prepare a framework for a sustainable and ethical AI governance.

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