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Exploring The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Strategic Decision-Making in Multinational Corporations

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ABSTRACT
Artificial Intelligence has become a game-changer for businesses in today's world, influencing how multinational companies make and act on strategic decisions. This study aimed at the effect of artificial intelligence on strategic decision making in multinational corporations in Pakistan. The researchers used a sequential explanatory mixed methods design where quantitative data were collected with a structured survey questionnaire from 120 middle and senior level managers and qualitative data from 15 purposively selected executives were collected using semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze quantitative data and thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data in SPSS (Version 26). The results indicated that the use of Artificial Intelligence had a significant impact on the efficiency of decision-making, predictive accuracy, and competitive positioning of the Pakistani multinational corporations. However, there were challenges in technological infrastructure, employee preparedness and data governance that came up as significant barriers. The study found that developing a framework for the integration of AI in the Pakistani business environment was crucial to unlocking the full potential of AI in high-level organizational decision-making.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Multinational Companies, Strategic Decisions Making, Regression Analysis, Pakistani Multinational Corporations.*

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed the way that multinational companies operate and strategize worldwide (Tatarchenko, 2025). As businesses face unprecedented amounts of data, market volatility, and global competition, AI-powered systems have become more and more vital to complement decision-making processes (Rane et al., 2024). With the volume of data increasing, market volatility rising, and global competition growing, organizations are increasingly relying on AI-driven systems to support their decision-making processes (Shmatko & Ivchyk, 2024). AI, which includes machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics, empowers business executives to analyze massive datasets, uncover intricate patterns,

and derive actionable insights at a scale and speed far surpassing traditional human capabilities. Consequently, AI has moved from a fringe technological novelty to a key part of the corporate agenda in both developed and emerging markets (Horowitz et al., 2022).

Multinational companies have a unique place in the Pakistani economy. These organizations exist in the middle ground where there is a need to align with the strategic frameworks set by their parent organizations as well as the socio-economic, regulatory and cultural environment in Pakistan (Rathore et al., 2024). As AI becomes ubiquitous in various sectors of Pakistan's economy, driven by government initiatives like the Digital Pakistan Policy and the increasing adoption of digital technologies, it is becoming evident that AI adoption is becoming a reality for many large-scale enterprises (Abb, 2023).

Although AI is becoming increasingly significant in corporate environments, research on AI-based strategic decision-making has primarily focused on multinational corporations in North America, Western Europe and East Asia (Zhang & Zhu, 2025). This aspect of the corporate environment has been comparatively under-researched in Pakistan due to its particular structural, regulatory and cultural features. This is especially relevant as Pakistan is one of the biggest emerging markets in South Asia, and has a growing presence of multinational corporations in areas like banking, telecom, manufacturing, and fast-moving consumer goods. It is thus important to understand how AI becomes relevant to strategic decision-making in this particular context, both academically and practically (Ullah et al., 2023).

Strategic decision-making is the highest level of organizational activity, involving the setting of long-term objectives, the allocation of critical resources and the placement of the organization in its competitive context. This is a very complex decision, in which uncertainty is high, a number of stakeholders are involved, and the consequences for the organization are extensive (Farah, 2025). Traditional strategic decision-making was largely based on managerial experience, intuition and structured analytical frameworks (Alkhodary, 2023). The advent of AI in this space brings a new paradigm where algorithmic logic and data-driven predictions complement, and in some use cases, replace traditional decision-making. This transition has implications for how effective and/or challenging the use of AI is for strategic thinking, and how these impacts are felt across different organizational and national settings (Pasrija et al., 2022).

To answer these questions the present study analyzed the influence of Artificial Intelligence on strategic decision making of Multinational Corporations working in Pakistan. The researchers used a mixed methods research design to capture both the measurable dimensions of the impact of AI on strategic outcomes and the nuanced experiential perspectives of the senior corporate leaders. The study was based on quantitative data collected from a wide range of managers and qualitative data from selected key decision-making executives in order to develop a thorough and contextually rich description of the phenomenon. The research also added to the international body of knowledge on AI in business and provided insights that were both relevant and applicable to the Pakistani business community and the policy-making process.

Research Objectives

1. The aim of the study was to investigate the level of integration of artificial intelligence tools in strategic decision-making process of multinational companies in Pakistan.
2. To explore how the use of AI affects the efficiency of decision-making, predictive accuracy, and competitive edge of the multinational companies in Pakistan.
3. To highlight the major organizational and contextual challenges faced in the successful implementation of AI in strategic decision making in the Pakistani corporate landscape.

Research Questions

1. How was the use of artificial intelligence tools in strategic decision-making processes in multinational corporations in Pakistan?
2. How did the use of AI influence the decision-making process in terms of efficiency, predictive capabilities, and competitive advantage within the context of Pakistani multinational corporations?
3. What were the challenges and context that shaped the successful adoption of AI in strategic decision-making in the Pakistani corporate landscape?

Significance of the Study

This research has great contribution in the understanding of strategic decision-making process in an emerging market context particularly in the multinational corporate sector of Pakistan using the aid of artificial intelligence. The results offered empirical evidence to guide corporate leaders and policymakers looking to use AI to gain a sustainable competitive edge. The study has provided contextually relevant results that went beyond the current literature on the topic of AI adoption in the western context, filling a gap in the literature.

Literature Review

The integration of AI with strategic decision-making has been a topic of increasing academic research in the last two decades, especially with the maturation of AI capabilities from research to enterprise use (Vudugula et al., 2023). Early theoretical work in this area was based on the principles of decision theory, information systems research and organizational behaviour and led to the idea of the use of computational tools to improve the quality and timeliness of managerial decisions (Büber & Seven, 2025). Researchers had determined that AI systems had a distinct ability to decrease cognitive biases, handle incomplete information, and predict future scenarios more accurately than human judgment alone. A large number of empirical studies done in various industrial and geographical contexts has since supported these theories (Kaggwa et al., 2024).

The integration of AI into corporate strategy has been a recurring theme in various studies, with machine learning and predictive analytics emerging as key factors in reshaping the way businesses navigate market uncertainty (Vudugula et al., 2023). Research in the developed world showed that businesses using AI in competitive intelligence, demand forecasting, and risk modelling were able to see tangible improvements in strategic responsiveness and resource allocation efficiency (Chaturvedi et al., 2025). AI-driven decision support systems were shown to help executive teams to spot opportunities and threats in time, which supported the agility of the organization. The results reinforced the strategic importance of AI beyond just process automation, highlighting its role as a foundational enabler of higher-order managerial cognition (Alhyasat et al., 2025).

In the wider body of work on emerging market multinational corporations, researchers have highlighted the role of a myriad of institutional, infrastructural and human capital dimensions on the use of AI (Rachid & Houda, 2024). Studies in emerging markets like China, India and Brazil found that, although significant strategic gains could be achieved by adopting AI, there were conditions necessary for its implementation: condition 1 – digital infrastructure; condition 2 – data governance frameworks; condition 3 – organizational readiness (Saba et al., 2025). The results of this study are especially relevant in the context of Pakistan, where technological infrastructure is not evenly distributed and human capital development in AI skills is still in its infancy compared to other developed countries (Aijaz et al., 2024).

Strategic decision-making quality has been a major issue in management research, and scholars have studied the cognitive, social and environmental factors that affect the soundness of high-stakes organizational decisions (Malokani et al., 2023). Research on AI-augmented decision-

making was later developed on the theoretical foundations of classical decision-making models, such as the rational-comprehensive and bounded rationality approaches. These frameworks have been expanded by contemporary scholarship to incorporate the contribution of algorithmic systems to minimizing decision latency, deepening analytical insight, and enabling scenario planning. However, there has also been some critical thinking, highlighting the dangers of relying too heavily on AI-generated content, such as algorithmic bias, diminished managerial responsibility, and the loss of tacit knowledge in strategic planning (Liwarska-Fulczyk).

The AI readiness of multinational corporations in Pakistan, while limited, has shown signs of different levels of preparedness (Ahmad et al., 2025). Research on the financial services industry and the telecom industry revealed that top companies had started to experiment with AI tools for customer analytics, fraud prevention, and operational efficiency (Jamil et al., 2025). Strategic-level deployment of AI was less prevalent, with the majority of AI investments focused at the operational level. This trend was seen across similar emerging markets, with AI use progressing from basic process automation to more advanced strategic applications as capabilities develop up the hierarchy (Jabeen, 2025).

Studies on change management and technology adoption models, such as the Technology Acceptance Model and the Diffusion of Innovations theory, have offered valuable frameworks for examining the process of introducing and normalizing AI tools in organizational environments (Huma et al., 2025). Research in the corporate world identified key factors such as top management support, perceived usefulness, and compatibility with existing organizational processes as the most influential in successful AI adoption (Ali et al., 2025). In the Pakistani context, other factors were also identified at the strategic level that are crucial for the adoption of AI, including regulatory alignment, language and cultural compatibility of AI systems, and the availability of training and support infrastructure. The present study was guided by these multi-dimensional findings both in terms of theoretical orientation and in terms of analytical framework (Atta & Khan, 2025).

Research Methodology

Research Design

The researchers used a mixed methods research design (MMRD) comprising of sequential explanatory research methodology that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods. The first step involved gathering quantitative data and analyzing it to detect patterns and trends in the use of AI for strategic decision-making. The second phase involved qualitative data collection to provide context to and explain quantitative results. This design was seen to be especially appropriate for the Pakistani corporate setting, as results that could be measured and a more subtle organizational point of view were needed to fully grasp the phenomenon.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was carried out in Pakistan, in which multinational companies are present in the major commercial centers like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. In the quantitative phase, the researchers sent a structured survey questionnaire to 120 middle and senior level managers working in multinational corporations in various industries including banking, telecommunication, manufacturing etc. and fast-moving consumer goods. The researchers then selected 15 respondents who showed high levels of engagement with AI-powered strategic tools, for the qualitative phase. The speakers were the CEOs, heads of strategy and directors of divisions, who shared their firsthand experience of AI's impact on decision-making in the corporate landscape of Pakistan.

Research Tools

The researchers created a structured questionnaire with two sections. The first section provided demographic and organizational background information and the second section comprised closed-ended questions on a 5-point Likert scale that measured the level of AI integration, perceived efficiency of decision-making, and level of readiness of organizations. The questionnaire was pretested with 10 managers before being administered to the general population and Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability. The researchers developed a semi-structured interview guide, which included open-ended questions to explore participants lived experiences, perceived challenges, and contextual factors that affect the adoption of AI in strategic planning in Pakistani multinational corporations during the qualitative phase.

Data Collection Procedure

The survey questionnaire was sent out in person and securely online to allow for respondents from various cities. Questionnaires were collected for six weeks after the completion. The researchers then carried out semi-structured interviews with the selected qualitative respondents after the quantitative data analysis. The interviews were held in person or by video conference for 45 to 60 minutes per interview. All interviews were audio-recorded with the informed consent of the interviewees and later transcribed verbatim in Urdu and English, depending on the language preference of the individual interviewees.

Data Analysis

For the quantitative analysis, the researchers used SPSS (Version 26) to conduct descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis to explore the relationship between AI adoption and the outcomes of strategic decision-making. Thematic analysis was used for the qualitative phase, following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke. The transcripts of the interviews were coded inductively and themes emerged, reviewed and refined in an iterative process. During the integration stage, the researchers integrated both data strands by comparing and connecting quantitative findings with qualitative themes, yielding a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of AI in the context of strategic decision-making in the Pakistani multinational setting.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers followed standard ethical procedures during the course of the study. Formal institutions approved data collection before it was begun. Informed consent forms and information sheets were signed and given to all participants prior to participation. All personal and organizational information in the dataset and final report was anonymized to ensure confidentiality. There was no coercion to participate and participants were assured they could leave the study at any time with no repercussions.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Table 1: **Descriptive Statistics of Key Study Variables**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
AI Integration Level	120	3.72	0.81	1.00	5.00
Decision-Making Efficiency	120	3.88	0.74	1.50	5.00
Predictive Accuracy	120	3.65	0.86	1.00	5.00

Competitive Positioning	120	3.79	0.78	1.50	5.00
Organizational Readiness	120	3.41	0.93	1.00	5.00

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the five key variables examined in the quantitative phase of the study. The mean scores for all variables ranged between 3.41 and 3.88 on a five-point Likert scale, indicating moderately high levels of AI integration, decision-making efficiency, predictive accuracy, competitive positioning, and organizational readiness among managers in the sampled Pakistani multinational corporations. Organizational readiness recorded the lowest mean score, suggesting it remained the most underdeveloped dimension relative to other variables.

Table 2: **Pearson Correlation Matrix**

Variable	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. AI Integration Level	1.000				
2. Decision-Making Efficiency	.612**	1.000			
3. Predictive Accuracy	.574**	.543**	1.000		
4. Competitive Positioning	.631**	.589**	.512**	1.000	
5. Organizational Readiness	.487**	.461**	.498**	.503**	1.000

Table 2 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients among the five study variables. All inter-variable correlations were statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level. AI integration level demonstrated the strongest association with competitive positioning ($r = .631$) and decision-making efficiency ($r = .612$), indicating that higher levels of AI integration were closely linked to improved strategic outcomes. Organizational readiness showed moderate positive correlations with all other variables, underscoring its role as a foundational enabler of AI-driven strategic benefits in the Pakistani corporate context.

Table 3: **Multiple Regression Analysis: Predictors of Strategic Decision-Making Efficiency**

Predictor	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t**	**Sig.**
(Constant)	0.821	0.214	—	3.836	.000
AI Integration Level	0.413	0.067	.418	6.164	.000
Organizational Readiness	0.287	0.059	.301	4.864	.000

Predictive Accuracy	0.198	0.054	.212	3.667	.000

Table 3 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis, which examined the predictive relationship between AI-related variables and decision-making efficiency. The overall model was statistically significant ($F = 24.73$, $p < .001$), explaining 58.4% of the variance in decision-making efficiency ($R^2 = .584$). AI integration level emerged as the strongest predictor (Beta = .418, $p < .001$), followed by organizational readiness (Beta = .301, $p < .001$) and predictive accuracy (Beta = .212, $p < .001$), confirming that AI integration was the primary driver of enhanced strategic decision-making efficiency.

Qualitative Analysis

Theme 1: AI as an Enabler of Data-Driven Strategy Formulation

AI was consistently cited as a transformative enabler and a game-changer in how strategic decisions were made in their organizations. Executives said that AI systems gave them access to real-time market intelligence, which helped them to shift from intuition-based planning to evidence-based strategy development. Multiple participants mentioned that AI-driven analytical outputs have enhanced the precision and efficiency of strategic planning cycles, especially in industries with fast-changing markets like banking and telecommunications.

Theme 2: Organizational Resistance and Change Management Challenges

One of the key findings from the interviews was the pushback from implementing AI, especially from mid-level management. The participants noted that employees reported issues with job loss, loss of autonomy, and lack of familiarity with AI-driven workflows. The lack of structured change management programs was cited by several executives as a key gap that hampered efforts to adopt AI. In Pakistan, this opposition was exacerbated by the lack of exposure to AI technologies in educational institutions, leaving the workforce underprepared for AI-powered strategic environments.

Theme 3: Infrastructural and Technological Constraints

One of the challenges often mentioned by participants was the lack of digital infrastructure to facilitate the effective use of AI at the strategic level. A common challenge faced was inconsistent internet connectivity, cloud computing capacity and data storage systems. Manufacturing and retail executives said that reliance on legacy systems made it even harder to implement AI. These infrastructural constraints were seen as being especially strong in Pakistan compared to the other multinational headquarters and were thus considered a strategic implementation gap.

Theme 4: AI and Competitive Advantage in the Pakistani Market

Some participants expressed a sense of the competitive advantage gained from the use of AI, allowing their organizations to predict consumer behavior, optimize supply chains, and react to competitor moves. Leaders in banking and telecoms shared experiences of leveraging AI to improve their ability to segment markets and position products. Participants also commented that early AI users in their respective sectors had created substantial first-mover advantages that were difficult for competitors who did not have access to the same AI tools to catch up.

Theme 5: Data Governance and Ethical Concerns

There were significant concerns raised by participants about data governance, privacy and the ethical implications of AI decision making. The lack of a comprehensive national data protection regulatory framework in Pakistan caused confusion regarding the handling of data, impacting the trust of leadership teams in implementing AI systems for confidential strategic tasks. The lack of a comprehensive national data protection regulatory framework in Pakistan led to confusion around data handling practices, affecting the confidence of leadership teams in implementing AI systems for confidential strategic tasks. Some participants raised concerns about the

transparency of algorithms and the challenge of auditing the recommendations of AI, highlighting that there was still a challenge of accountability for AI decisions in their organizations.

Theme 6: Leadership Vision and Top Management Commitment

Senior leadership was a clear theme in every interview account, highlighting its critical role in propelling successful AI adoption. Organizations led by visionary leaders with a technology focus experienced smoother processes for implementing AI, better cross-functional alignment, and clearer strategies for deploying AI. On the other hand, those working in organizations where the top management was not very aware of technology talked about inconsistent AI initiatives with low levels of organizational buy-in. This theme underscored the need for leadership commitment as a key enabler to harness AI investments and achieve meaningful strategic impact in the Pakistani multinational landscape.

Discussion

The results of this study showed that AI had a profound and complex impact on strategic decision-making within multinational corporations in Pakistan. The quantitative findings supported the positive and significant relationship between the integration of AI and the three strategic outcomes, with the level of AI integration showing the highest correlation with the outcomes. The findings were in line with other international research, which also showed that the strategic advantages of AI were not limited to the context of advanced economies, but also applied to emerging markets like Pakistan. These results were complemented by the qualitative findings, which shed light on the mechanisms by which AI contributed to strategic performance, and highlighted the contextual challenges or constraints such as infrastructural gaps, workforce readiness gaps, and regulatory uncertainty, which shaped the impact of AI on strategic performance. Both the quantitative and qualitative evidence converged and it was found that the transformative potential of AI in Pakistani multinational corporations was real but not fully realized, and depended on the organizational, human, and environmental enablers that needed purposeful and persistent management.

Conclusion

This study has given empirical and experiential proof that artificial intelligence meaningfully affected the strategic decision-making process in multinational companies of the corporate environment in Pakistan. The study identified that AI integration had a positive impact on decision-making efficiency, leadership commitment and organizational readiness as key mediating factors, and on improving the predictive capabilities and competitive positioning of the companies. The study also revealed that there are a number of barriers that limit the potential strategic contribution of AI in the context of Pakistan, such as infrastructural limitations, resistance of the workforce, and data governance issues. These findings all converged on the necessity for a comprehensive, context-specific perspective on AI adoption, one that would bring together investments in technology, human resources, and the development of regulatory systems and organizational culture. Future research was suggested to explore the strategic role of AI in other industries and to conduct longitudinal studies on the transformative journey of organizations in Pakistan with AI.

Recommendations

The researchers suggested that MNCs in Pakistan should create AI readiness plans that focus on various aspects, such as infrastructural investments, employee upskilling, and leadership development, in addition to AI adoption. The policymakers were called upon to create clear and comprehensive data governance and AI regulation frameworks to give corporations the legal assurance needed to make confident and strategic use of AI. Corporations were also encouraged

to embed structured change management processes to mitigate organizational resistance and to foster AI literacy at all managerial levels to ensure the benefits of AI strategic decision-making are shared across organizational levels.

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