Chapter 8
Metropolitan Managers' Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technologies

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines the perspectives of 60 public authorities from six metropolitan areas: Copenhagen, Helsinki, Bucharest, Milan, Prague, and Berlin, regarding the use of AI technologies in public service provision. The research explores both the potential benefits and challenges associated with AI implementation. Many respondents expressed positive attitudes towards AI as a tool to improve public service delivery, while others voiced concerns about AI's developmental stage. A portion of the participants indicated that their lack of familiarity and technological literacy regarding AI was a barrier to its effective adoption. This highlights the need for training programs to equip local authorities with the skills to utilize AI in enhancing public services. The study also analyzes the data using MAXQDA software to categorize themes and provide structured insights. The findings emphasize the importance of preparing metropolitan managers for AI integration and offer strategic proposals for its successful implementation in public administration.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in local services is growing in popularity every day. Undoubtedly, in this case, there is an opportunity for AI to improve all phases of the services provided to citizens, both for the practitioner and the beneficiary. It can help relevant processes run more smoothly, so to speak, and decisions can be made better (Mulyana, 2023). Globally, local/metropolitan governments are exploring how AI can help make public works and operations more effective and efficient and improve services (Algosaibi et al. 2020; Sousa et al. 2019).

AI usage in the local services has been increasingly utilized to streamline workflows (Yolvi et al., 2021). Particularly adept, at managing repetitive tasks like organizing documents and handling citizen queries AI technology allows public servants to dedicate their time to projects and strategic initiatives. This enhanced efficiency is not onlyboosts productivity but also ensures quicker responses and improved service quality for citizens as per the study (Levesque et al., 2023).

Public agencies benefit greatly from utilizing AI driven analytics and decision support tools alongside automation. These tools provide insights that enable agencies to make decisions based on data and strategy. They are adept, at recognizing patterns and predicting requirements while enhancing the allocation of resources, for improved policies and increased citizen satisfaction (Alenezi 2022; Hamirul et al., 2023; OECD 2020).

AI is also essential, in improving safety and security by detecting threats to maintaining order, in society early on through advanced AI systems—like unusual behavior or irregular data patterns—thus enhancing law enforcement actions and ensuring the safety of the public (Shams et al., 2018; Ardabili et al., 2023).

While there are benefits, to using AI in services there are also various obstacles to overcome. Issues such as safeguardin data privacy upholding standards in AI applications and building public confidence, in these new technologies are major concerns. To maximize the advantages of AI while minimizing risks, governments must implement thought out policies and establish strong regulatory frameworks (Schiff et al., 2024; Ben Ishai et al., 2024; Hamirul et al., 2023; Madhavan et al., 2020).

In the end AI technologies hold promise, for transforming administration. There is a shift towards using these technologies not to boost the efficiency of public services and manage resources better but also to improve transparency in governance. However the crucial factor in fully harnesslng the potential of AI is the integration and utilization of these technologies, by governments. This, in depth research project delves into the perceptions of AI in public service delivery by conducting interviews with 60 authorities across six metropolitan regions (including Copenhagen, Helsinki, Bucharest, Milan, Prague and Berlin). It explores the challenges encountered during