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Review / Derleme

Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare Management: Leadership Transformation and Strategic Directions

Sağlık Yönetiminde Yapay Zekâ: Liderlik Dönüşümü ve Stratejik Yönelimler

Zübeyde AĞALDAY[a*], Bünyamin AĞALDAY[b]

[a] Master of Arts, Department of Health Administration, The Institute for Graduate Educational Studies, Mardin Artuklu University, Mardin, Türkiye. ROR
[a] Bilim Uzmanı, Sağlık Yönetimi Anabilim Dalı, Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi, Mardin, Türkiye. ROR
[b] Associate Professor, Department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Letters, Mardin Artuklu University, Mardin, Türkiye. ROR
[b] Doçent Doktor, Eğitim Yönetimi Anabilim Dalı, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi, Mardin, Türkiye ROR
[*] Corresponding Author / İletişimden Sorumlu Yazar, E-mail: zubeydeagalday@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Artificial intelligence has rapidly gained importance as a transformative force in healthcare, influencing not only clinical processes but also management practices, leadership models, and strategic decision-making. This review explores the evolving role of AI in health management, focusing on its impact on institutional transformation, leadership paradigms, and strategic orientations.
Methods: This article adopts a narrative literature review approach to synthesize recent theoretical and empirical studies on artificial intelligence and leadership in healthcare. Peer-reviewed studies published between 2017 and 2025 were identified through databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science, using keywords including "artificial intelligence in healthcare," "healthcare leadership," "digital transformation," and "strategic management in healthcare." Studies were selected based on their relevance to AI's role in organizational change and leadership development in health systems.
Results: The reviewed literature identifies three major themes: (1) the integration of AI in healthcare operations, including resource allocation, patient flow management, and crisis response; (2) the transformation of leadership styles from hierarchical to data-driven, agile, and ethically responsible models; and (3) the strategic positioning of AI in fostering sustainable, inclusive, and future-oriented organizational cultures. These findings suggest a shift in leadership expectations from operational control to strategic vision and ethical AI governance.
Conclusion: AI is reshaping health management by enabling leaders to develop strategic foresight, support evidence-based decision-making, and drive digital transformation. The success of AI integration depends not only on technological adoption but also on ethical frameworks, organizational learning, and leadership vision. Future healthcare leaders should combine digital competencies and emotional intelligence with a human-centered approach to leadership.

Keywords: Health management, Artificial intelligence, Leadership, Strategic directions

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ÖZET

Giriş: Yapay zekâ, yalnızca klinik süreçlerde değil, aynı zamanda sağlık yönetimi uygulamalarında, liderlik modellerinde ve stratejik karar alma süreçlerinde dönüştürücü bir güç olarak hızla önem kazanmaktadır. Bu derleme çalışması, sağlık yönetiminde yapay zekânın kurumsal dönüşüm, liderlik paradigmaları ve stratejik yönelimler üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir.
Yöntem: Bu makale, sağlık alanında yapay zekâ ve liderlik konularına odaklanan güncel kuramsal ve ampirik çalışmaları sentezlemek amacıyla anlatı (narrative) türde bir literatür taraması yaklaşımını benimsemektedir. 2017-2025 yılları arasında yayımlanmış hakemli çalışmalar, "sağlıkta yapay zekâ", "sağlık liderliği", "dijital dönüşüm" ve "sağlıkta stratejik yönetim" anahtar kelimeleri kullanılarak PubMed, Scopus ve Web of Science gibi veri tabanlarında taranmıştır. İncelemeye, sağlık sistemlerinde yapay zekânın örgütsel değişim ve liderlik gelişimi üzerindeki rolünü ele alan çalışmalar dahil edilmiştir.
Bulgular: İncelenen literatür üç temel tema etrafında toplanmaktadır: (1) kaynak tahsisi, hasta akış yönetimi ve kriz yanıtı gibi sağlık hizmeti operasyonlarında YZ'nin entegrasyonu; (2) hiyerarşik liderlik anlayışından veri temelli, çevik ve etik duyarlılığı yüksek liderlik modellerine geçiş; (3) YZ'nin sürdürülebilir, kapsayıcı ve geleceğe yönelik örgütsel kültürlerin inşasında stratejik bir unsur hâline gelmesi. Bu bulgular, liderlik rollerinin operasyonel kontrol yerine stratejik vizyon ve etik YZ yönetişimi doğrultusunda yeniden tanımlandığını göstermektedir.
Sonuç: YZ, sağlık yöneticilerine stratejik öngörü geliştirme, kanıta dayalı karar alma süreçlerini destekleme ve dijital dönüşümü yönlendirme kapasitesi kazandırarak sağlık yönetimini köklü biçimde dönüştürmektedir. Ancak bu dönüşümün başarısı yalnızca teknolojik entegrasyona değil, aynı zamanda etik çerçevelere, kurumsal öğrenmeye ve liderlik vizyonuna bağlıdır. Geleceğin sağlık liderlerinin dijital yetkinliklerle birlikte duygusal zekâya ve insan odaklı bir liderlik anlayışına sahip olması gerekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sağlık yönetimi, Yapay zekâ, Liderlik, Stratejik yönelimler

1. Introduction

Healthcare systems are increasingly evolving into complex and multi-stakeholder structures due to rapid technological advancements. Digitalization transforms clinical practices. It also redefines organizational structures, service operations, and decision-making mechanisms within healthcare institutions (Abdelgawad, 2024; Abidi and Abidi, 2019). In this context, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have begun to play a strategic role in healthcare management (Al Farabe et al., 2024).

AI's capabilities in algorithmic decision support, big data analytics, and predictive modeling offer substantial operational advantages to healthcare managers. These technologies contribute to organizational agility, strategic foresight, and enhanced service quality (Austin et al., 2024). AI has evolved beyond a technical innovation into a paradigm shift, reshaping leadership styles, decision-making structures, and organizational culture (Bock and von der Oelsnitz, 2025).

As the pace of digital transformation accelerates, the roles of healthcare leaders are being redefined. Leaders are no longer merely technology users but are expected to manage, guide, and strategically integrate it into their institutions (Chen and Decary, 2020). This shift demands a departure from traditional hierarchical leadership models and more agile, data-informed, and ethically grounded approaches (Dissanayake and Keppetipola, 2024). Moreover, the increasing complexity and uncertainty within healthcare environments underscore the need for advanced decision-support systems. This trend has led to a growing reliance on AI technologies (Dixit et al., 2021). Research suggests that data-driven leadership provides considerable benefits in crisis management, resource planning, and quality of care (Fink et al., 2020; Gupta and Kumar, 2023).

In light of these transformations, this review aims to examine the impact of AI on leadership within the context of healthcare management, trace the evolution of leadership styles, and explore emerging strategic directions.

2. Methods

This study employs a narrative literature review design to examine the evolving role of AI in healthcare management, focusing on its implications for leadership transformation and strategic orientation. The narrative review approach was selected to enable a broad interpretive synthesis of theoretical and empirical findings, rather than a quantitative meta-analysis, as the existing literature includes diverse methodologies, conceptual frameworks, and contexts.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic, studies published between 2017 and 2025 were reviewed. The literature search was conducted in databases including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using keywords such as "AI in healthcare," "healthcare leadership," "digital transformation," and "strategic management in healthcare." Peer-reviewed articles, dissertations, conference proceedings and scholarly books/book chapters were included in the scope of the review.

Studies were included if they (a) examined AI applications within healthcare organizations, and (b) discussed implications for leadership or strategic management. Publications that were purely technical, clinical, or unrelated to managerial or leadership issues were excluded. In total, 72 studies were initially identified through database and manual searches. After screening for relevance and removing duplicates, 39 studies were included in the final synthesis. The distribution of these sources by publication type is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the Sources

Type of source	Number included	%
Peer-reviewed journal articles	26	66.7
Dissertations	4	10.3
Conference proceedings	3	7.7
Books/book chapters	6	15.3

The selected studies were carefully reviewed and coded according to their conceptual focus and methodological orientation. The synthesis procedure combined descriptive mapping with conceptual interpretation, allowing the review to move beyond a mere summary of the literature toward the identification of theoretical linkages between AI adoption, leadership transformation, and strategic foresight in healthcare organizations. This approach enhances the transparency, credibility, and reproducibility of the review process, while remaining consistent with the flexible nature of the narrative review methodology.

3. Conceptual Framework

The rapid integration of AI into healthcare systems necessitates a fundamental rethinking of leadership practices. Traditional models of leadership-often grounded in hierarchy, intuition, and experiential knowledge-are increasingly insufficient in environments shaped by digital transformation, algorithmic complexity, and data-driven decision-making (Chen and Decary, 2020). As AI technologies restructure organizational processes and enhance institutional intelligence, healthcare leaders are called to adopt new roles that blend technical proficiency with strategic vision, ethical responsibility, and cultural adaptability (Dissanayake and Keppetipola, 2024).

This transformation requires moving beyond seeing leadership as an individual trait toward understanding it as a collective and strategic capability-anchored in digital fluency, adaptive governance, and human-centered values (Secinaro et al., 2021). Within this emerging paradigm, the literature highlights three key domains: the impact of AI on health management, the transformation of leadership styles toward digital and ethical models, and strategic directions toward sustainable and inclusive organizational cultures.

3.1. The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Healthcare Management

Initially regarded as a tool primarily used for clinical decision support and diagnostic algorithms, AI has evolved into a strategic actor that significantly shapes administrative functions in healthcare organizations (Austin et al., 2024; Hamet and Tremblay, 2017). AI enhances numerous managerial functions, including patient flow optimization, resource allocation, intensive care unit (ICU) management, and demand forecasting (Hassan et al., 2025). Among its most prominent contributions are accelerating decision-making processes, reducing administrative errors, and developing data-driven strategies (Bock and von der Oelsnitz, 2025).

Big data technologies and machine learning algorithms offer predictive insights that grant healthcare managers operational flexibility and strategic foresight (Hoelscher et al., 2024; Jassar et al., 2022). When integrated with hospital information systems, AI enables more accurate evaluation of key indicators such as bed occupancy, workforce capacity, and resource utilization (Jiang et al., 2017). These capabilities were particularly valuable during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which AI-supported systems played a crucial role in managerial decision-making under conditions of uncertainty (Khan and Yairi, 2018). Furthermore, AI-driven administrative tools can enhance internal communication and improve patient satisfaction (Briganti and Le Moine, 2020; Larsson et al., 2025). Several studies also emphasize AI's role in supporting operations and reshaping leadership practices and organizational thinking (Laukka et al., 2022).

Recent research indicates that AI facilitates a paradigm shift from reactive, retrospective decision-making toward proactive, forward-looking strategic planning (Michou, 2024). This transition promotes the development of agile, adaptive, and data-informed leadership structures (Miller, 2023). Moreover, AI-powered decision support systems enable leaders to manage uncertainty more effectively and align operational goals with long-term institutional vision (Mohapatra and Swarnkar, 2020). From a strategic management perspective, AI is increasingly seen not merely as a tool to improve efficiency but as a critical enabler of institutional foresight and transformation (Morley et al., 2020), influencing leadership behavior, organizational culture, and service delivery values (Musa et al., 2024).

In this regard, the impact of AI on healthcare management extends across technological, organizational, and strategic domains. Thus, AI systems should be recognized as instruments of operational efficiency and integral components of institutional development and leadership transformation (Rajkomar et al., 2019).

3.2. Transformation of Leadership Styles

The increasing implementation of AI in healthcare not only transforms technological infrastructures but also profoundly reshapes leadership paradigms. Traditional models-often hierarchical and grounded in individual experience-are giving way to expectations for leaders to adopt agile, data-driven, and technologically fluent roles within the digital health ecosystem (Bock and von der Oelsnitz, 2025; Cato et al., 2020).

This transformation has prompted the emergence of new leadership models in the literature, including *digital leadership*, *algorithmic governance*, and *ethically informed decision-making* (Ranschaert et al., 2019). In this evolving context, leaders are no longer seen as mere technology users but as strategic actors responsible for balancing data security, ethical imperatives, digital equity, and human-centered care (Chen and Decary, 2020; Sahiwal and Chaturvedi, 2024).

Recent studies suggest that health leaders are increasingly positioned as agents of organizational transformation- those who manage and actively guide institutions through periods of digital change (Salehnejad and Proudlove, 2023; Sarkis and Pallotta, 2020). Accordingly, leadership is reframed not solely as an individual capacity, but as a collective institutional competence that integrates technological innovation with human values (Secinaro et al., 2021).

Empirical research, particularly in public hospitals and large healthcare systems, underscores that a leader's vision, adaptability, and openness to change are critical for effective AI integration (Shickel et al., 2018). The nature of a leader's engagement with technology strategically influences both the pace and trajectory of digital transformation (Singh et al., 2022). In this context, modern healthcare leaders are expected to possess a diverse range of competencies, including (Solderits, 2022; Sriharan et al., 2024):

- Coordinating interdisciplinary teams that interact with AI systems,
- Ensuring algorithmic governance based on ethical standards,
- Combining digital literacy with strategic management skills,
- Leading institutional learning and innovation initiatives.

This evolving leadership model emphasizes performance and the creation of a human-centered digital culture (Gupta and Kumar, 2023; Teixeira and Pacione, 2024). AI-driven leadership thus seeks to ensure that technological innovation in healthcare ultimately serves humanity, not the other way around (Topol, 2019).

3.3. Strategic Directions for the Future

The institutionalization of AI in healthcare management is not limited to operational efficiency; it also redefines strategic foresight, vision-building, and transformational leadership (Chen and Decary, 2020; Dissanayake and Keppetipola, 2024). Contemporary leaders are increasingly expected to navigate complex systems while providing strategic guidance throughout the digital transformation (Sahiwal and Chaturvedi, 2024).

Recent research positions AI not merely as a technological tool but as a foundational infrastructure shaping the future strategic orientation of healthcare institutions (Nene, 2023; Sarkis and Pallotta, 2020). Within this framework, the concept of *technology-enabled leadership* has gained prominence. Leaders are now tasked with managing digital adaptation, ensuring data integrity, and upholding ethical standards across decision-making processes (Shickel et al., 2018).

AI-enhanced decision support systems enable proactive strategy development in workforce optimization, service innovation, patient safety, and crisis management (Hassan et al., 2025; Mohapatra and Swarnkar, 2020). Predictive analytics tools, in particular, offer unprecedented capabilities for risk assessment, capacity planning, and resource allocation (Hoelscher et al., 2024; Morley et al., 2020). Therefore, the strategic role of healthcare leaders now encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including (Ranschaert et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2022):

- Developing long-term, data-informed institutional visions,
- Ensuring the ethical deployment and monitoring of AI systems,
- Designing inclusive digital strategies involving multiple stakeholders,
- Fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

However, strategic leadership in the digital age extends beyond the technical aspects of AI deployment. It also requires an emphasis on human-centric values such as team member engagement, cultural transformation, and organizational sustainability (Sriharan et al., 2024; Teixeira and Pacione, 2024). The long-term success of AI integration in healthcare will depend on technological capabilities and the ethical, transparent, and inclusive nature of leadership practices (Topol, 2019).

In this regard, future-ready leaders must cultivate a unique blend of competencies-merging emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and transformational leadership with digital fluency (Zarzeczny et al., 2021). As AI continues to shape strategic healthcare landscapes, visionary leadership will ensure that digital transformation is pursued as both a technological advancement and an ethically grounded human process (Musa et al., 2024). This review contributes to the existing literature by offering an integrative framework that connects artificial intelligence with leadership transformation and strategic foresight. Unlike previous reviews that examine these concepts

separately, this study highlights their interdependence, providing a synthesized perspective on how AI-driven decision-making reshapes leadership paradigms in healthcare institutions.

4. Conclusion and Practical Implications

This review has illustrated that AI is a technological tool and a transformative force in healthcare management, reshaping leadership models, operational dynamics, and institutional strategies. The increasing reliance on AI in decision-making processes compels health leaders to shift from traditional, hierarchical leadership to agile, data-driven, and ethically guided practices (Hassan et al., 2025; Sahiwal and Chaturvedi, 2024). In particular, AI enhances strategic foresight by optimizing patient flow management, resource allocation, crisis preparedness, and service quality.

However, successful digital transformation extends beyond the mere adoption of AI tools. It necessitates a holistic organizational adaptation that includes leadership vision, digital competencies, ethical awareness, and cultural readiness (Secinaro et al., 2021). Leadership in this context must evolve into a strategic, interdisciplinary, and human-centered function that bridges technology with institutional values and social responsibility.

Drawing upon the synthesized insights of this review, several practical implications and recommendations can be identified for healthcare leaders, policymakers, institutional decision-makers, and researchers aiming to advance the effective integration of AI into healthcare management:

- Develop continuous education and leadership development programs focusing on digital literacy, algorithmic thinking, and ethical governance in AI-driven contexts.
- Establish internal ethical frameworks and oversight mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability, and fairness in AI-supported decisions, particularly in patient care and administrative management.
- Foster an organizational culture of learning and innovation that embraces change, encourages experimentation, and promotes staff engagement in digital adaptation.
- Integrate AI-based predictive analytics into strategic planning processes such as workforce design, clinical pathways, risk management, and service optimization.
- Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration between healthcare professionals, data scientists, ethicists, and administrators to enable responsible and sustainable AI integration.
- Prepare future leaders with a blended skill set**,** combining technological fluency with strategic vision, emotional intelligence, and ethical sensitivity.
- Future research could empirically test the leadership models proposed in this review, particularly in different healthcare contexts such as public hospitals and private clinics.
- Further studies might also investigate the ethical and organizational challenges of AI integration in low-resource settings, expanding the generalizability of current theoretical insights.

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It is declared that scientific and ethical principles were complied with during the preparation of this study and all the studies used in this study were cited in the bibliography.

No artificial intelligence-based tools or applications were utilized in the preparation of this manuscript. All content was generated solely by the author(s) in adherence to scientific research methodologies and academic ethical standards.

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