

STRATEGIC EMBEDDING OF RESPONSIBLE AI: GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE AND HYBRID HUMAN–AI VALUE CREATION

VALTTERI TOMMINEN,^{1,2} MATTI LEPPÄNIEMI,¹
TIINA KEMPPAINEN,¹ LAURI FRANK²

¹ University of Jyväskylä, School of Business and Economics, Jyväskylä, Finland
valtteri.j.tomminen@jyu.fi, matti.leppaniemi@jyu.fi, tiina.j.kemppainen@jyu.fi

² University of Jyväskylä, Faculty of Information Technology, Jyväskylä, Finland
valtteri.j.tomminen@jyu.fi, lauri.frank@jyu.fi

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative and agentic systems, is increasingly embedded in organizational processes and customer-facing interactions. While responsible AI research emphasizes governance frameworks and ethical considerations, strategic and digital transformation research focuses on performance and innovation outcomes. These perspectives remain insufficiently integrated, and we lack empirical insight into how responsibility becomes structurally embedded within AI-enabled value creation. Drawing on 44 semi-structured interviews with senior professionals, this study develops a conceptual framework explaining how organizations embed responsible AI through (1) strategic AI governance architecture and (2) hybrid human–AI value creation design. The findings show that responsibility is not treated as a compliance layer but enacted as a structural and operational design feature. Governance architectures align AI with strategy and accountability, while hybrid configurations operationalize responsibility through human oversight, controlled autonomy, transparency, and workflow integration. The study contributes by conceptualizing responsible AI as a strategic embedding process that integrates governance and hybrid human–AI design in organizational value creation.

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1 Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly embedded in the core processes of contemporary organizations. In particular, generative AI (GenAI) and emerging agentic AI systems are transforming how organizations design interactions, automate workflows, and support strategic decision-making (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Grewal et al., 2024; Hosseini & Seilani, 2025; Hughes et al., 2025). AI systems are becoming integral components of organizational infrastructures, shaping operational processes and organizational interactions with stakeholders (Davenport et al., 2020; Schneider et al., 2023). At the same time, the rapid expansion of AI has intensified ethical and governance concerns raising questions related to transparency, bias, fairness, accountability, and data protection (Balasubramaniam et al., 2023; Meske et al., 2022; Mittelstadt et al., 2016). In response, a growing body of research has developed principles and frameworks for responsible AI governance (Mäntymäki et al., 2022; Papagiannidis et al., 2025; Rakova et al., 2021).

However, the existing research streams remain largely fragmented. Responsible AI research tends to frame governance primarily as a compliance, risk-management, or ethical oversight issue (Ashok et al., 2022; Papagiannidis et al., 2025). On the other hand, strategic management and digital transformation research highlight AI's potential for competitive advantage, personalization, and performance improvement (Alsheibani et al., 2020; Keding, 2021; Ruokonen & Ritala, 2024), often without fully integrating responsible governance into core strategy formulation and value creation processes. This separation becomes increasingly problematic as AI systems gain autonomy and directly shape customer-facing interactions and organizational decisions.

Despite the growing importance of responsible AI governance, we lack empirically grounded insights into how responsibility becomes strategically embedded in organizations and how governance mechanisms interact with hybrid human–AI desing in organizational value creation. To address this gap, this study is guided by the following research question: *How do organizations strategically embed responsible AI governance and hybrid human–AI design in organizational value creation?*

Based on 44 semi-structured interviews with senior professionals across industries, this study develops a strategic embedding framework that explains how responsible AI governance becomes integrated into organizational value creation. The findings show that responsibility is embedded through two interrelated dimensions: strategic AI governance architecture and hybrid human–AI value creation design. Together, these dimensions explain how organizations translate responsible AI principles into organizational practices and value creation outcomes.

2 Theoretical Background

Artificial intelligence, especially technologies like Generative and Agentic AI, has evolved from a decision-support technology to an increasingly autonomous actor in organizational processes (Chan & Choi, 2025; Grewal et al., 2024; Baird & Maruping, 2021; Brohi et al., 2025). As these technologies become integrated into customer interactions and internal workflows, they reshape organizational decision-making structures and value creation processes. This development has amplified ethical and governance challenges, as AI systems often operate as complex and partially opaque socio-technical systems, raising concerns about explainability, bias, discrimination, and accountability (Balasubramaniam et al., 2023; Meske et al., 2022; Mittelstadt et al., 2016). In response, scholars have proposed frameworks for responsible AI governance that emphasize transparency, accountability, documentation, and stakeholder-oriented oversight (Akbarighatar, 2025; Papagiannidis et al., 2025; Rakova et al., 2021).

Responsible AI refers to the design, development, and deployment of AI systems in ways that ensure transparency, accountability, fairness, and alignment with organizational and societal values (Papagiannidis et al., 2025; Zimmer et al., 2022). It emphasizes the governance structures, organizational practices, and oversight mechanisms that guide how AI systems are implemented and used in practice, extending beyond ethical principles toward organizational capabilities that enable the safe and accountable use of AI technologies. AI governance refers to the organizational structures, processes, and practices that translate responsible AI principles into concrete organizational arrangements and guide the responsible use of AI systems in organizations (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025; Papagiannidis et al., 2025). Governance is not limited to technical safeguards; it also concerns how decision-making authority and accountability are distributed within organizations

(Gasser & Almeida, 2017; Mäntymäki et al., 2022), including the definition of roles and responsibilities, data governance mechanisms, and lifecycle traceability (Meske et al., 2022). Furthermore, as AI systems are increasingly developed and deployed within broader ecosystems involving technology providers, data suppliers, and partners, responsibility cannot be confined to internal processes but must also encompass ecosystem-level coordination and stakeholder considerations (Mäntymäki et al., 2022; Minkkinen et al., 2023).

This broadens strategic governance from internal compliance to inter-organizational accountability. As AI systems become embedded in organizational workflows, value creation increasingly occurs through hybrid configurations that combine human and artificial intelligence capabilities (Heyder et al., 2023; Mortati & Freitas, 2025). In this study, value creation refers to organizational outcomes that emerge when AI capabilities are effectively integrated into workflows, decision-making, and stakeholder interactions. Therefore, AI-enabled value creation depends on how AI systems are embedded in organizational processes and coordinated with human expertise.

This leads to the concept of hybrid intelligence that emphasizes the complementary integration of human judgment and machine capabilities to enhance performance (Dellermann et al., 2019). Rather than replacing humans, AI augments expertise, automates routine tasks, and enables new forms of coordination (Alsheibani et al., 2020; Heyder et al., 2023; Keding, 2021). However, this hybridization also introduces new ethical and organizational complexities. AI systems may generate plausible yet inaccurate or biased outputs, requiring human oversight and validation (Meske et al., 2022). As Heyder et al. (2023) argue, ethical management of human–AI interaction must consider both structural governance mechanisms and everyday practices through which AI is designed and used. Responsibility thus resides not only in formal policies but also in how human actors interpret, supervise, and correct AI outputs.

Therefore, transparency and disclosure practices therefore become central to maintaining trust in AI-mediated interactions (Balasubramaniam et al., 2023). From a value creation design perspective, hybrid human–AI systems must balance autonomy and control. Strategic management of hybrid intelligence therefore requires appropriate design choices regarding human oversight, workflow

integration, and decision authority leading to value creation outcomes (Dellermann et al., 2019; Heyder et al., 2023). Table 1 summarizes the key theoretical concepts guiding this study.

Table 1: Key theoretical concepts

Theoretical concept	Definition	Key studies
Responsible AI	The design, development, deployment, and use of AI systems in ways that support transparency, accountability, fairness, and alignment with organizational and societal values.	Papagiannidis et al. (2025); Zimmer et al. (2022); Balasubramaniam et al. (2023); Mittelstadt et al. (2016)
Responsible AI Governance	The organizational structures, processes, and practices through which organizations guide, monitor, and control the responsible use of AI systems.	Mäntymäki et al. (2022); Papagiannidis et al. (2025); Rakova et al. (2021)
Hybrid Intelligence	The complementary integration of human judgment and AI capabilities to enhance organizational performance and decision-making.	Dellermann et al. (2019); Heyder et al. (2023); Mortati & Freitas (2025)
Human-AI Value Creation	Value creation that emerges when AI capabilities are integrated into workflows, decision-making, and stakeholder interactions together with human expertise and oversight.	Dellermann et al. (2019); Heyder et al. (2023); Davenport et al. (2020); Blümel et al. (2024)

3 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, inductive research design to examine how organizations strategically embed responsible AI governance and hybrid human-AI structures in practice. Accordingly, the design emphasizes rich, context-sensitive accounts of managerial interpretations, organizational practices, and governance mechanisms (Langley, 1999), enabling an in-depth exploration of how governance structures and hybrid configurations are constructed and enacted within organizations.

Empirical data were collected through 44 semi-structured interviews with senior professionals in AI-intensive and digitally transforming organizations. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure representation from AI-intensive and digitally transforming organizations across multiple industries. Selection criteria emphasized senior professionals with direct strategic, governance, or implementation responsibilities related to AI adoption. Informants represented diverse roles, including CEOs, CIOs, AI directors, marketing directors, strategy

managers, and transformation leaders across industries. Interviews were conducted between February and December 2025 and ranged from 34 to 87 minutes, resulting in approximately 2,400 minutes of recorded material. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview guide followed a semi-structured format that ensured consistency while allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The guide covered themes such as AI adoption, governance structures, human oversight, workflow integration, and value creation. Interviews continued until thematic saturation was reached, meaning that later interviews generated limited new conceptual insights and primarily reinforced existing themes.

Data analysis followed an inductive approach. Rather than applying a predefined theoretical framework, the analysis sought to identify recurring patterns in how organizations described embedding responsibility into AI-enabled value creation. Interview transcripts were first reviewed and coded to capture themes related to governance structures, data management, accountability mechanisms, hybrid work practices, and customer-facing value creation processes. To enhance credibility and consistency, coding was done by the author team using Nvivo, and coding decision were discussed among the authors. The coding process remained open to unexpected insights and cross-cutting themes. Emerging codes were then compared and grouped into higher-level categories reflecting broader organizational patterns. Particular attention was paid to how governance mechanisms connected to strategic objectives and how human oversight and workflow design shaped hybrid value creation. Through constant comparison across cases, conceptual distinctions were refined and patterns clarified (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In the final stage, two overarching dimensions were identified: (1) strategic AI governance architecture and (2) hybrid human–AI value creation design. These dimensions synthesize how responsibility becomes structurally embedded in governance arrangements and operationalized within value creation processes.

4 Findings

The findings show that responsible AI is not treated as a separate compliance initiative but becomes strategically embedded through two interrelated dimensions: strategic AI governance architecture and hybrid human–AI value creation design.

Together, these dimensions explain how organizations integrate responsibility into both structural governance arrangements and value creation processes.

The first dimension captures how organizations construct strategic AI governance architectures that embed AI into business strategy, formal accountability mechanisms, and cross-functional coordination. Rather than viewing governance as a restrictive layer, informants described it as an enabling structure that supports AI-driven innovation while managing risk and accountability. Interviewees repeatedly emphasized that AI must be integrated into business strategy and core processes rather than treated as a technological experiment: *"You don't gain a competitive advantage from just adopting AI. It's about how you implement them and how deeply you can integrate them into your processes, that's where you can gain a competitive advantage."* (CEO & Co-Founder). Beyond strategic alignment, organizations described the implementation of formal governance mechanisms, including clear rules, documentation practices, and defined roles. Governance was characterized as systematic and disciplined rather than bureaucratic obstruction: *"You need to have some kind of understanding of AI governance and you need to have your own AI strategy for what you do, what customer data you use, what employee data you use"* (Development Director).

Data governance and information control were central components of this architecture. Informants emphasized restrictions regarding sensitive data and explicit accountability structures: *"So we have ethical restrictions for AI. For example, we don't feed personal data into AI at all, which is a no-brainer for us. All business-critical personal data is excluded."* (Growth Marketing Director). Importantly, even as AI systems become more autonomous, ultimate responsibility was consistently anchored in human actors: *"We always have human oversight into these matters. Ultimately, we ourselves are responsible for what we do"* (VP, Digital Customer Experience). Strategic governance was also described as extending beyond internal structures toward ecosystem-level responsibility. Collaboration with external partners, agencies, and technology providers complicated accountability arrangements: *"In our case, this is a bit problematic because we have our own organization, but we also work with external stakeholders and partners. This perhaps adds an extra challenge to AI management, as not all parts of the process take place in-house."* (Director, Digital).

The second dimension explains how responsibility is enacted within everyday value creation processes through hybrid human–AI configurations. Informants consistently described AI not as a fully autonomous substitute for human judgment, but as part of a deliberately designed hybrid system. AI systems were perceived as powerful yet imperfect, requiring validation and supervision: *“How to make AI sufficiently reliable and high-quality is still partly unresolved, we want to maintain human oversight, because ultimately, whether what we do is done by humans or AI, we are still responsible for the end result and we need to know these things.”* (VP, Digital Customer Experience). Some interviewees described layered control mechanisms embedded within AI systems: *“AI errors and bias can be reduced by having, for example, an agent generating an email, and then having another agent check the email before it is sent.”* (AI Lead & Senior Consultant).

Human oversight was therefore not a temporary safeguard but a structural feature of hybrid system design. Hybrid human-AI value creation was particularly visible in customer-facing processes, where AI enables personalization and automation. However, informants also recognized ethical tensions associated with hyper-personalization and predictive reasoning: *“Where customers and their expectations are going right now is that they expect personalization. We are already talking about hyper-personalization, and when AI is included in that, we can build an even more personalized shopping experience.”* (Vice President, Marketing). However, excessive personalization was also perceived as potentially intrusive: *“Yes, AI personalizes, but that can be both good and bad. On the one hand, the experiences are so seamless and personalized, but on the other, there are privacy issues, which can lead to manipulation and a loss of consumer trust.”* (Creative Strategist). Transparency emerged as a key mechanism for maintaining legitimacy and trust in AI-mediated interactions: *“From my point of view, transparency is vital in the utilization of AI in a company, for its customers, employees, and all stakeholders.”* (Chief Marketing Officer).

Organizations also emphasized that automation must be introduced in a controlled and context-sensitive manner. Rather than maximizing autonomy, firms described deliberate decisions about where and how AI should operate: *“It's not necessarily smart to automate everything with AI, and then there's the fact that someone still has to check that everything is right, that it's not removing people from the equation.”* (Team Manager, Customer Service). Hybrid systems were designed to integrate AI into existing workflows instead of introducing detached tools: *“Then you have to think about different strategies, it*

has to be connected to the workflow, so that it's not something new that you have to start using a new tool, but rather something that you experience as part of your work.” (GenAI Lead).

Overall, the findings are summarized in table 2 indicating that responsible AI governance is enacted as a strategic architecture combining leadership commitment, formalized rules, data control, human accountability, and ecosystem awareness. Governance architecture defines the structural conditions of AI deployment, while hybrid design operationalizes responsibility through human oversight, controlled autonomy, personalization boundaries, and workflow integration. Together, these dimensions illustrate how responsibility becomes embedded in both organizational structures and AI-driven practices.

Table 2: Overview of Findings

Dimension	Core Subthemes	Illustrative Evidence
Strategic AI governance architecture	Leadership commitment; AI-strategy alignment; accountability roles; data governance; ecosystem coordination	<i>“You need to have AI governance and your own AI strategy”</i> (Development Director). <i>“We have our own organization, but we also work with external stakeholders and partners. This perhaps adds an extra challenge to AI management”</i> (Director, Digital)
Hybrid human-AI value creation design	Human oversight; autonomy boundaries; layered validation; workflow integration; transparency	<i>“We want to maintain human oversight, because ultimately, whether what we do is done by humans or AI, we are still responsible for the end result and we need to know these things.”</i> (VP, Digital Customer Experience). <i>“Then you have to think about different strategies, it has to be connected to the workflow”</i> (GenAI lead).

5 Discussion

This study examined how organizations strategically embed responsible AI governance and hybrid human–AI structures to enable value creation. The findings indicate that responsibility does not emerge from abstract ethical principles alone, nor from isolated governance mechanisms. Instead, responsible AI becomes embedded through the interplay of strategic AI governance architecture and deliberately designed hybrid human–AI value creation. The findings and main contribution of the study culminate in the *Strategic Embedding Framework of Responsible AI* (Figure 1). The framework integrates strategic AI governance architecture and hybrid human–AI value creation design into a unified explanatory framework. It conceptualizes responsible AI as a dynamic organizational capability that emerges from the reciprocal interaction between structural governance mechanisms and

operational hybrid configurations, thereby generating distinct value creation outcomes that arise when responsible AI governance and hybrid human–AI value creation design operate together. This perspective shifts responsible AI from a compliance-oriented concern to a strategic design challenge embedded in governance structures and hybrid human–AI value creation.

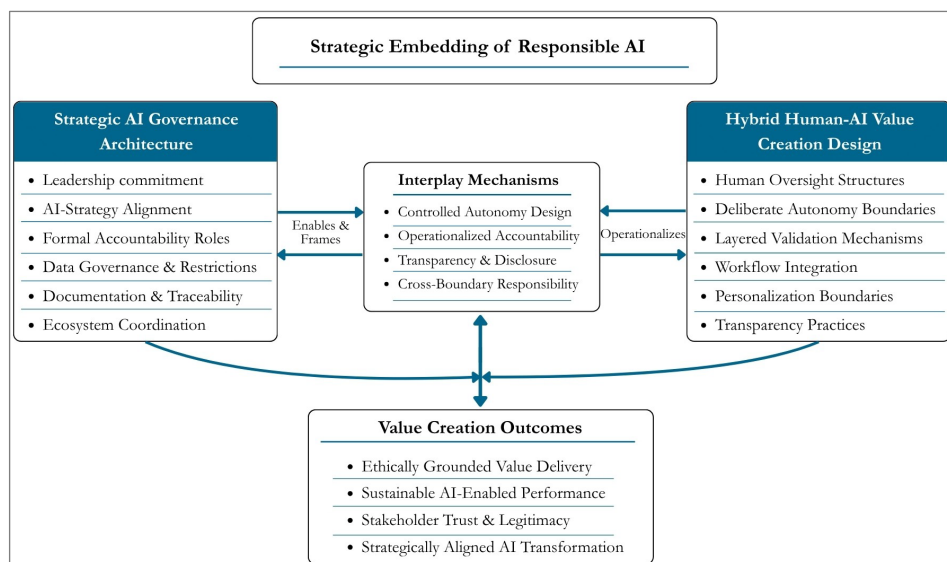


Figure 1: Strategic Embedding Framework of Responsible AI

The first core dimension of the framework, strategic AI governance architecture, captures how organizations anchor responsibility at the structural level. Governance is embedded in leadership commitment, AI–strategy alignment, formal accountability roles, data governance infrastructures, documentation practices, and ecosystem coordination mechanisms. Rather than functioning as an external compliance layer, governance operates as an enabling architecture that shapes the scope, conditions, and boundaries of AI deployment. In this respect, governance constitutes a strategic capability that supports innovation, performance, and ethical alignment simultaneously.

The second core dimension, hybrid human–AI value creation design, explains how responsibility is operationalized in practice. Hybrid configurations translate governance principles into workflows, customer-facing processes, and decision-

making routines. The findings show that organizations deliberately design human oversight structures, layered validation mechanisms, autonomy boundaries, workflow integration practices, and transparency mechanisms to ensure that AI outputs remain accountable, contextually appropriate, and aligned with stakeholder expectations. Hybrid design thus functions not only as a performance-enhancing arrangement but also as an ethical infrastructure that distributes authority and responsibility across human and artificial actors.

The framework further explicates the mechanisms linking governance architecture and hybrid system design. Governance enables controlled autonomy by defining the strategic and ethical parameters within which AI systems operate, while hybrid configurations operationalize accountability by embedding oversight and validation into daily work processes. Transparency mechanisms connect internal governance arrangements to external legitimacy by making AI-mediated activities visible and interpretable to stakeholders. As AI systems operate within broader ecosystems of technology providers and partners, cross-boundary coordination becomes central to responsible AI embedding.

Together, these dimensions generate value creation outcomes when strategic AI governance architecture and hybrid human-AI value creation design operate together. Organizations create value not merely by adopting AI technologies but by embedding responsibility into how AI is governed and applied in practice. These outcomes include ethically grounded value delivery, sustainable AI-enabled performance, stakeholder trust and legitimacy, and strategically aligned AI transformation. Controlled autonomy and human oversight support durable performance, while transparency and accountability strengthen legitimacy in AI-mediated interactions. Together, these outcomes suggest that responsible AI creates value by enabling AI deployment that is reliable, accountable, and strategically integrated across organizational processes.

This study contributes to the responsible AI governance literature in several ways. Prior research has emphasized ethical principles, transparency, documentation, and accountability mechanisms (Mäntymäki et al., 2022; Papagiannidis et al., 2025; Rakova et al., 2021), often framing governance as a compliance-oriented or risk-mitigation activity (Ashok et al., 2022). Our findings extend this perspective by showing that governance becomes strategically embedded within organizational

architecture. Leadership commitment, AI–strategy alignment, formal accountability structures, and disciplined data governance are not peripheral safeguards but core components of AI strategy. Consistent with calls to conceptualize AI governance as a strategic element (Papagiannidis et al., 2025), the framework suggests how governance defines the parameters of controlled autonomy and shapes AI deployment from the outset. Governance thus operates as an enabling infrastructure that supports innovation while constraining risk, bridging strategic management perspectives on AI capability development (Alsheibani et al., 2020; Keding, 2021; Schneider et al., 2023) with responsible AI scholarship.

Furthermore, the study contributes to research on hybrid intelligence and human–AI interaction. Prior work conceptualizes hybrid intelligence as the complementary integration of human and machine capabilities to enhance performance (Dellermann et al., 2019). Our findings extend this perspective by suggesting that hybrid design functions as an ethical infrastructure. Human oversight structures, layered validation mechanisms, autonomy boundaries, workflow integration, and transparency practices institutionalize responsibility within value creation. Rather than treating human involvement as a temporary corrective to imperfect AI systems, organizations embed it as a structural design principle. Hybrid intelligence is thus framed not merely as a logic of augmentation, but as a mechanism through which accountability and explainability are enacted in practice.

6 Conclusion

This study examined how organizations strategically embed responsible AI governance and hybrid human–AI structures in value creation processes. Based on 44 interviews, we developed a conceptual framework demonstrating that responsible AI is enacted through (1) strategic AI governance architecture and (2) hybrid human–AI value creation design. Together, these dimensions explain how organizations balance autonomy and accountability, personalization and trust, and innovation and control. The study advances responsible AI governance research by reframing governance as strategic embedding rather than regulatory compliance, extends hybrid intelligence research by conceptualizing hybrid configurations as ethical infrastructures, and shows that responsible AI constitutes an organizational capability reflected in value creation outcomes. As AI systems become increasingly autonomous and organizationally embedded, responsibility depends on

organizations' capacity to design governance architectures and hybrid configurations that continuously align autonomy with accountability. Future research may build on this framework by examining longitudinal developments, sectoral variations, and regulatory influences on governance–hybrid interplay.

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