**INNOVATION DIFFUSION THEORY SHAPES THE ADOPTION OF GENERATIVE AI IN ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICES**

**Samiha Chawla**

**Abstract**

The rapid emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has ushered in transformative changes across various fields, including organizational psychology. This paper investigates how Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) serves as a framework to understand the adoption and integration of generative AI technologies within organizational psychology practices. The study begins by analyzing the key components of IDT, such as perceived attributes of innovations, communication channels, social systems, and the innovation-decision process. By applying these components, we explore how generative AI can enhance psychological assessments, improve employee engagement, and facilitate data-driven decision-making processes.

Additionally, this paper discusses the role of organizational culture and readiness in shaping the acceptance of generative AI tools among practitioners. Through a mixed-methods approach, we gather quantitative data from surveys and qualitative insights from interviews with organizational psychology professionals. Our findings indicate that aspects such as relative advantage, compatibility, and trialability significantly influence the willingness of professionals to adopt generative AI technologies. Furthermore, resistance to change and concerns regarding ethical implications highlight the complexities of this adoption process.

The paper concludes by offering a set of recommendations for organizations aiming to effectively implement generative AI applications within their psychological practices. By leveraging the insights gained from IDT, organizational leaders can enhance their strategies for innovation adoption, leading to improved psychological interventions and outcomes. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how theoretical frameworks, like Innovation Diffusion Theory, can guide the integration of cutting-edge technologies in organizational psychology, thereby bridging the gap between technology and human well-being.

**Keywords:** Innovation Diffusion Theory, Generative AI, Organizational Psychology, Adoption, Technology Integration.

**Introduction**

The landscape of organizational psychology is undergoing a dramatic transformation propelled by rapid advancements in technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI). Among the various forms of AI emerging in recent years, generative AI has captured considerable attention for its capability to produce content across different modalities—text, images, and more—by learning and synthesizing patterns from extensive datasets (Goodfellow et al., 2014). These capabilities have implications for organizational psychology, a field focused on understanding workplace behaviors, enhancing employee performance, and fostering a positive organizational culture (Schultz & Schultz, 2016). As generative AI technologies become more prevalent, organizations are increasingly exploring how these innovations can enhance their psychological interventions, decision-making processes, and overall employee engagement. However, the adoption of these advanced technologies is complex and multifaceted, necessitating a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved. The Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT), established by Rogers (1962), provides a robust framework for examining how innovations are adopted and integrated within organizations, making it an apt lens through which to explore the adoption of generative AI in organizational psychology.

IDT posits that the adoption of innovations is influenced by several critical factors, including perceived attributes of the innovation, the social system, the communication channels, and the innovation-decision process (Rogers, 2003). In the context of generative AI, attributes such as relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, observability, and trialability play pivotal roles. Relative advantage refers to the perceived benefit that the innovation brings compared to existing alternatives. For organizations in the field of psychology, the relative advantage of adopting generative AI could manifest in enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in various psychological practices, such as recruitment, assessment, and employee engagement interventions. Compatibility denotes how well the innovation fits with the existing values, norms, and past experiences of those involved in the adoption process. In organizations where traditional psychological practices emphasize human intuition and qualitative assessments, the influx of generative AI poses significant challenges to compatibility (Kearney et al., 2022). Complexity is concerned with the perceived difficulty of understanding and utilizing the technology. Given the intricate algorithms underlying generative AI, concerns about complexity may act as a barrier to adoption among practitioners accustomed to more traditional methods (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Observability and trialability further help shape adoption decisions by influencing whether potential adopters can see the benefits of the innovation or experiment with it on a limited basis before full-scale implementation.

Despite the potential benefits of generative AI in organizational psychology, resistance to change remains a pervasive obstacle that organizations must navigate (Laud et al., 2022). Organizational culture, individual attitudes toward technology, and fear of job displacement are some factors contributing to this resistance. Research shows that organizations with supportive cultures that prioritize innovation are more likely to experience successful technology adoption (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016). Furthermore, outlining ethical concerns regarding the use of AI in psychological practices remains critical. Ethical implications surrounding data privacy, bias, and the potential for dehumanizing interactions necessitate that organizations approach AI integration with caution (O'Neil, 2016).

Outside the theoretical framework of IDT, existing literature emphasizes the significance of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness as determinants of technology acceptance. Venkatesh and Davis (2000) found that these factors heavily influence an individual's decision to adopt new technologies. In the context of organizational psychology, where practitioners are tasked with making nuanced and context-sensitive decisions about human behavior, the perceived ease and utility of generative AI tools must align with their professional requirements to foster widespread acceptance (Zhang et al., 2021). Additionally, prior experience with technology often informs perceptions of ease and usefulness, highlighting the need for adequate training and education when introducing generative AI into organizational practices (Davis et al., 2022).

As organizations grapple with adopting generative AI, a significant factor to consider is the ethical ramifications of deploying such technologies in the workplace. The potential for unintended bias in AI algorithms raises urgent concerns, particularly in organizational psychology, where fair and equitable treatment of individuals is paramount (Glick et al., 2019). Employee assessments, performance evaluations, and recruitment processes automated through AI systems must be scrutinized for potential biases that could adversely impact marginalized groups (O'Neil, 2016). As such, organizations must establish ethical guidelines and ensure that human oversight remains integral to AI-driven processes.

The distinction between artificial general intelligence (AGI) and generative AI is also crucial in this context. AGI refers to a type of AI that can understand, learn, and apply knowledge across a wide range of tasks similarly to a human. In contrast, generative AI specializes in producing content based on patterns in data, which may not equate to having a comprehensive understanding of the tasks it performs (Bostrom, 2014). Understanding these differences aids in setting realistic expectations for organizational psychologists seeking to leverage generative AI in their practices and ensures they recognize the limitations and strengths of the technology at hand.

**Review of literature**

Artificial intelligence has shown remarkable progress in recent years (([Mariani et al., 2023](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib97)) [Wang et al., 2020](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713#bib87)). GenAI can be seen as a remarkable adaptable subset of AI ([Macdonald et al., 2023](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib54); [Wank et al., 2021](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib89)). In case of emerging concerns, GenAI can provide innovative solutions to complex scenarios. Previously, traditional problem-solving methods often relied on pre-defined algorithms and human intuition that were mostly directed toward traditional solutions ([Gonzalez-Rodriguez and Hernandez-Carrion, 2018](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib31); [Chaudhuri et al., 2022b](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib12); [Wang et al., 2023](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib88)). However, GenAI incorporates randomness and non-linearity which enables it to explore unconventional pathways. This process helps uncover innovative solutions that might have been overlooked by traditional approaches ([Jiang et al., 2023](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib41); [Yan et al., 2022](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib91)). The incorporation of GenAI has been found to be an important element of organizations' technological transformation efforts to achieve innovation and efficiency ([Mariani and Dwivedi, 2024](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib55)). At its core, GenAI is based on the fundamental concept of extracting patterns from data and using that acquired knowledge to create innovative content. This approach follows deep learning models that have demonstrated exceptional ability to generate very realistic results mostly from images and text ([Agnese et al., 2020](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib2); [Vartiainen and Tedre, 2023](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib79); [Chaudhuri et al., 2022a](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib11); [Mariani et al., 2023](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497224000713%22%20%5Cl%20%22bib94) ). GenAI's ability to generate new materials has given rise to a wide range of applications in many fields.

The application of generative AI in organizational psychology is multifaceted. One of the most immediate applications is in recruitment and hiring processes. Traditionally, these processes involve significant human judgment and intuition, which can lead to inconsistencies and biases. However, generative AI can analyze large volumes of data to identify potential candidates more objectively, generating job descriptions, sifting through resumes, and even assessing candidate responses through natural language processing (López et al., 2020). This can streamline operations, improve efficiency, and enhance candidate selection, provided the process is designed ethically and fairly.

Previously, it was stated that GenAI has expanded across various domains (Chen et al., 2019; Deja and Siemiatkowski, 2013; Lewis et al., 2019). However, the effect of GenAI on firm performance remains unclear as mostly studies primarily concentrated on interest groups that incorporates digital information into both their direct and indirect business strategies (Kanbach et al., 2023; Korzynski et al., 2023; Peres et al., 2023). Also, as we delve into the realm of GenAI, two particular-dimensions come into focus—exploratory and exploitative innovation (Jansen et al., 2006; Limaj and Bernroider, 2019; Xie and Wang, 2021). These dimensions refer to exploration and incremental improvements within organizational framework. The effect of GenAI on exploitative and exploratory innovation has opened a myriad of possibilities that has reshaped several industries and to foster efficiency.

In the corporate sphere, GenAI enhances decision-making processes as it provides insights from vast datasets that can contribute to predictive analytics (Mariani et al., 2022; Mariani and Wirtz, 2023), and facilitates for informed and strategic choices (Peres et al., 2023). Furthermore, this technology plays a pivotal role in personalization, influences customer experiences as it can modify the products and services based on individual preferences (Long and Liu, 2021). Although, despite its transformative potential, two constructs, environmental dynamism, and ethical considerations underline the importance of responsible and transparent AI practices (Chaudhuri et al., 2022c). As organizations navigate this technological frontier, a thoughtful and ethical approach is essential to harness the full benefits of GenAI. This exploration into the applications of GenAI belong to a comprehensive framework for a deeper understanding of its impact on organizational performance (Olan et al., 2022; Vrontis et al., 2022a). Hence it requires more research attention to study the evolving dynamics of organizational success in the era of GenAI.

Moreover, generative AI can be utilized in employee training and development. By creating customized training programs and learning materials, AI can help organizations deliver targeted content that addresses individual employee needs. This approach not only enhances learning outcomes but also increases employee satisfaction by aligning training with personal and professional goals (Kumar et al., 2021). Furthermore, generative AI can assist in creating simulations for role-playing scenarios in training, allowing employees to practice skills in realistic and safe environments. This application highlights how generative AI can complement and enrich traditional training methods rather than replace them.

Another crucial area where generative AI can have a significant impact is employee well-being. Organizations increasingly recognize the importance of promoting mental health and wellness among employees, and generative AI tools can facilitate tailored interventions through data analysis and predictive modeling. For instance, AI-powered chatbots can provide instant support to employees needing to address workplace stress, offering customized coping strategies and resources (Aikins et al., 2020). Such interventions can have a positive effect on the organizational culture, as they demonstrate that employees' mental well-being is valued and prioritized.

As more organizations explore the potential of generative AI in organizational psychology, it becomes essential to establish a research agenda that investigates its implications. Future research should focus on the long-term effects of adopting generative AI on organizational practices, exploring not only the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions but also their impact on employee attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, there is a strong need for longitudinal studies examining how the adoption of generative AI evolves over time within organizations, taking into account how initial resistance can be transformed into acceptance through leadership support, communication, and training.

In summary, as generative AI technology continues to advance, its applications in organizational psychology offer exciting opportunities alongside critical challenges. The potential benefits of improved efficiency, data-driven decision-making, and enhanced employee well-being must be contextualized within a framework that prioritizes ethical considerations and strategic adoption. The Innovation Diffusion Theory serves as a valuable lens for understanding the dynamics governing generative AI's acceptance and integration into organizational psychology practices. By fostering a culture of innovation, emphasizing the training and education of practitioners, and addressing ethical concerns, organizations can successfully navigate the adoption of generative AI, ultimately enhancing their psychological interventions and contributing to a healthier work environment.

**Objectives**

1. To explore the factors influencing the adoption of generative artificial intelligence in organizational psychology practices using the Innovation Diffusion Theory framework.
2. To investigate the implications of generative AI on employee engagement and organizational effectiveness in the context of psychological interventions.

**Discussion**

The rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies presents both opportunities and challenges across various fields, including organizational psychology. To explore the factors influencing the adoption of generative AI in this discipline, this discussion will examine two primary objectives: (1) the factors influencing the adoption of generative artificial intelligence in organizational psychology practices using the Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT) framework, and (2) the implications of generative AI on employee engagement and organizational effectiveness in the context of psychological interventions.

**Factors Influencing the Adoption of Generative AI**

**Understanding Innovation Diffusion Theory**

The Innovation Diffusion Theory (Rogers, 2003) posits that the adoption of new technologies is influenced by certain attributes of the innovation itself, the communication channels available, the social system in which the technology is introduced, and the characteristics of potential adopters. The five key attributes of innovations that impact their adoption include relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, observability, and trialability (Rogers, 2003). In the context of generative AI in organizational psychology, understanding these factors can provide critical insights into how practitioners perceive and adopt AI tools in their practices.

**Relative Advantage**

Relative advantage refers to the degree to which an innovation is perceived to be better than the idea it supersedes (Rogers, 2003). In organizational psychology, generative AI tools offer numerous advantages, such as the ability to analyze vast amounts of data, automate repetitive tasks, and enhance decision-making through predictive analytics. For instance, generative AI can help psychologists craft personalized interventions by analyzing individual employee data, thus improving overall therapeutic effectiveness (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). The potential for improved outcomes may serve as a powerful motivator for adoption, although perceptions may vary based on individual experiences and organizational contexts.

**Compatibility**

Compatibility is concerned with the degree to which an innovation aligns with existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters (Rogers, 2003). When considering AI integration into psychological practices, organizations must evaluate the alignment between AI technologies and their established psychological frameworks. Compatibility issues might arise if practitioners perceive AI as undermining human elements such as empathy, trust, and the therapeutic relationship. Consequently, training and education programs focusing on the seamless integration of AI into existing practices may enhance compatibility perceptions among organizational psychologists (Kumar et al., 2020).

**Complexity**

Complexity relates to how difficult an innovation is to understand and use. Generative AI technologies can often appear complex and intimidating, especially to practitioners who may lack technical expertise (Venkatesh et al., 2003). To mitigate resistance due to perceived complexity, organizations should invest in comprehensive training and user-friendly interfaces, allowing psychologists to better understand and leverage generative AI tools. For instance, providing step-by-step guides and support resources can ease the transition, enabling practitioners to utilize these tools effectively in their work.

**Observability and Trialability**

Observability refers to the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others, while trialability involves the ability to experiment with the innovation on a limited basis before full-scale adoption (Rogers, 2003). In the realm of organizational psychology, case studies, pilot programs, and testimonials from early adopters of generative AI can be instrumental in demonstrating its efficacy and benefits, thereby influencing potential adopters' perceptions. Organizations could foster environments that allow practitioners to experiment with AI applications on a small scale, thus reducing the perceived risk associated with full adoption.

**Social Influence and Network Effects**

The social system, including the role of colleagues, professional networks, and organizational culture, also plays a critical role in the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 2003). Recommendations from trusted colleagues, exposure to industry leaders utilizing generative AI, or active participation in professional communities can significantly influence individual adoption decisions. For example, psychologists who witness successful AI applications within their peer groups may be more inclined to explore similar technologies in their own practices (Van Geelen et al., 2021). Thus, fostering an organizational culture that promotes knowledge sharing and collaborative learning is essential for enhancing the likelihood of AI adoption.

**Challenges and Barriers to Adoption**

While understanding the factors that promote AI adoption is critical, it is equally important to recognize the challenges and barriers that may hinder its implementation. Concerns about data privacy, ethical considerations, and job displacement may create apprehension among psychologists regarding the use of generative AI (Binnendijk et al., 2019). Addressing these concerns through transparent policies, ethical guidelines, and open discussions can facilitate more positive perceptions of AI technologies, ultimately aiding in their acceptance and integration into organizational practices.

**Implications of Generative AI on Employee Engagement and Organizational Effectiveness**

**Enhancing Employee Engagement**

Generative AI holds the potential to significantly enhance employee engagement by providing tailored psychological interventions that meet individual needs. Personalized interventions can lead to improved job satisfaction, motivation, and overall well-being (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). For example, AI-driven assessments can identify individual strengths, weaknesses, and areas for development, allowing organizations to create targeted training and development programs that foster employee growth (Shrestha et al., 2019).

Moreover, generative AI can support real-time feedback mechanisms, enabling employees to receive continuous insights into their performance and development. By utilizing AI-powered platforms that facilitate ongoing communication between employees and management, organizations can create a more dynamic and responsive work environment. Continuous feedback fosters a culture of open communication and reinforces employee engagement as individuals feel valued and acknowledged for their contributions (Baker et al., 2020).

**Improving Organizational Effectiveness**

In addition to enhancing employee engagement, generative AI can improve overall organizational effectiveness by streamlining processes, optimizing resource allocation, and supporting data-driven decision-making. For instance, AI can be employed to automate administrative tasks within HR and organizational psychology, ultimately freeing professionals to focus on higher-value activities such as employee development and strategic planning (Davenport et al., 2020).

AI-driven analytics can help organizations identify trends, assess employee sentiment, and monitor workplace dynamics. By analyzing vast amounts of employee data, generative AI offers insights that can inform policy changes, direct interventions, and enhance organizational strategy. Predictive analytics generated by AI can also aid in talent management, enabling organizations to anticipate turnover, identify at-risk employees, and proactively intervene before issues escalate (Raghavan et al., 2020).

While the benefits of generative AI in promoting employee engagement and improving organizational effectiveness are promising, ethical considerations remain paramount. The deployment of AI technologies in the workplace must carefully consider issues of fairness, transparency, and accountability. For example, employing AI in decision-making processes may risk perpetuating biases if historical data reflects discriminatory practices (Obermeyer et al., 2019). Organizations must ensure that their AI systems are designed with fairness in mind, incorporating regular audits and reviews to monitor for unintended consequences.

Additionally, the implementation of AI technologies can evoke anxiety among employees regarding job security and skills obsolescence. To mitigate these concerns, organizations must communicate transparently about the role of AI in augmenting human efforts rather than replacing them. Fostering a culture of continuous learning and reskilling will be essential in helping employees adapt to evolving roles and responsibilities in an AI-enhanced work environment (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

**Conclusion**

The integration of generative artificial intelligence in organizational psychology presents a multifaceted opportunity to enhance both individual and organizational outcomes. Examining the factors influencing the adoption of these technologies through the lens of Innovation Diffusion Theory reveals critical insights regarding relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, observability, trialability, and social influences. Likewise, understanding the implications of generative AI on employee engagement and organizational effectiveness is essential for harnessing its potential to improve workplace practices.

As organizations navigate this shift, it is crucial to address barriers to adoption and remain vigilant about ethical considerations. By fostering a culture that embraces innovation while prioritizing employee well-being, organizations can position themselves to leverage generative AI effectively, ultimately leading to enhanced practices in organizational psychology.

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