

The Early Adopter Gets the Worm: Innovation Adoption of AI within a Multinational Agency

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Abstract

This study explores the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in advertising content production, focusing on its characteristics and scalability as this phenomenon rapidly advances in the advertising industry, driving multinational agencies to embrace this innovation. Everett M. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory serves as the conceptual framework. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method by collecting data through in-depth interviews with creative teams from Dentsu Indonesia, a multinational agency, which later analyzed through pattern matching. The findings reveal that Dentsu Indonesia demonstrates a proactive understanding and positive attitude toward AI, supported by an innovative organizational culture. The agency provides facilities for its creative teams and implements AI in varied and extensive ways. However, the sustainability of AI adoption faces challenges, including regulatory, copyright, and ethical issues. This study offers conceptual insights into AI adoption, providing strategic perspectives to optimize AI for enhancing efficiency and productivity in the advertising industry.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Advertising, Innovation Adoption, Creative Industry, Diffusion of Innovation

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, driving innovation across various sectors (Akter et al., 2023) including advertising. An IBM (2024) survey revealed a 22% global increase in AI adoption within these fields. An illustrative example of AI's creative potential is The North Face's "How Further We Can Go?" campaign, which utilized ChatGPT to generate 10,000 responses. Those responses inspired a two-minute video developed by the agency Fred & Farid, demonstrating how AI can drive innovation in creative processes (B&T Magazine, 2023).

Similarly, research by (Zhang & Gosline, 2023) highlights how AI tools like ChatGPT and DALL-E can generate meaningful interpretations from detailed prompts,

aligning AI-generated content with brand personality and characteristics (H. Chen et al., 2022). AI is adopted in the advertising industry due to its ability to enable personalized experiences, predictive capabilities across various sectors, adaptability to existing needs, and support for data-driven decision-making, all of which contribute to enhanced productivity (Singh & Singh; Krishnan & Mariappan; Salma et al., 2024).

Despite its promising potential, AI in advertising raises several challenges, particularly concerning its impact on human creativity and ethical considerations. Studies such as those by (Ratten & Jones, 2023; Vimpari et al., 2023) caution that AI's capacity to produce high-quality visuals at lower costs could reduce demand for human-created artwork. Ethical concerns, including intellectual property rights and the risk of AI-generated content violating copyright laws, further complicate its adoption (Kumar & Suthar, 2024). This concern is justified, as negative discourse surrounding the adoption of new technologies often arises as a natural response to their advancements. Nevertheless, the advertising industry has entered a new phase in AI innovations, and the relevance of this adoption is expected to grow significantly in the future.

The adoption of AI in advertising can be explored through Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 1995) which outlines the stages of initiation, adoption decision, and implementation. These stages involve identifying organizational needs, forming attitudes toward the innovation, evaluating alternatives, and ultimately deciding to adopt and implement the technology. Jöhnk et al., (2021) emphasize that understanding these stages is critical to managing the AI adoption in dynamic industries. While global studies have explored AI adoption has extensively highlighted the adoption of AI across various industries, there remains a gap in studies focusing specifically on the advertising industry. Furthermore, studies on the adoption of AI innovations in content production within these agencies, using communication theories or concepts through qualitative approaches in Indonesia remain limited.

Dentsu Indonesia serves as an evident example of a multinational agency in Indonesia that is successfully integrating AI into its content production. Supported by its headquarters in Japan, Dentsu Indonesia benefits from a centralized management structure. Fortune stated that this approach allows the agency to optimize campaigns, enhance efficiency, and improve client outcomes (Satito, 2024). However, according to (Jöhnk et al., 2021), AI adoption still faces technical challenges, such as technological limitations, and non-technical ones, such as insufficient managerial support. At the industry level, AI innovation disseminated internally within organizations using a top-down approach (Crespin-Mazet et al., 2021).

This centralized structure, commonly found in multinational agencies, facilitates uniform implementation across different regional offices. Interestingly, as highlighted by (H. Chen et al., 2021) the success of centralized AI strategies does not necessarily correlate with an organization's size or degree of affiliation. Nonetheless, findings by (Prasad Agrawal, 2024) indicate that AI adoption tends to be more prevalent in larger firms due to their greater access to resources, expertise, and the ability to leverage economies of scale. These findings offer a more nuanced understanding of why multinational agencies, such as Dentsu, possess structural advantages that support the adoption and scaling of AI innovations.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore the adoption of AI within a multinational advertising agency, focusing on the key factors influencing decision-making processes and the integration of AI into content production. Exploring these dynamics will provide valuable insights into the strategic role of AI in the advertising industry, contributing to a deeper understanding of how technological advancements can shape creative processes in content production and challenges that may arise in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory explains how new ideas or technologies are adopted within organizations and societies, exploring reasons and the pace of diffusion, categorized into five adopter groups (Rogers, 2010), with adopter categories ranging from innovators to laggards, reflecting varying readiness levels. Key elements influencing adoption include: (1) innovation refers to any idea, practice, or object perceived as new, (2) communication channels, a medium of information between those familiar with the innovation and potential adopters, (3) time measures period from awareness to the decision to adopt or reject, and (4) social System which describes interconnected entities collaborating to achieve shared goals, influencing adoption dynamics.

Furthermore, characteristics that impact adoption include (1) relative advantage refers to the extent to which a technology is perceived as superior in performance compared to previous methods or products, (2) compatibility describes how well an innovation aligns with users' values, experiences, and needs, (3) complexity relates to how easy an innovation is to understand and use, (4) trialability refers to degree to which an innovation can be tested before full adoption, and (5) observability measures how visible the results and benefits of an innovation are to potential adopters.

The adoption process comprises five stages: (1) awareness refers to initial stage in the innovation decision-making process, where an individual becomes aware of the existence of an innovation and gains a basic understanding of how it functions, (2) persuasion refers to second stage in which an individual forms an attitude toward the innovation, whether positive or negative. During this phase, they seek further information and evaluate the benefits and potential value of the innovation to determine its relevance, (3) decision which the stage in which an individual decides to adopt or reject the innovation. Adoption often involves trial usage to reduce uncertainty, (4) implementation the stage in which an individual actively begins using the innovation, although they may still be assessing its utility, and (5) continuation as the final evaluation stage, where an individual confirms or reconsiders their decision based on usage outcomes and new information. This continuation decision may persist over time, but discontinuation remains a possibility if the innovation fails to meet expectations.

Previous studies on AI adoption across industries, frequently employ Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Chen et al., 2021; Lund et al., (2023); Xu et al., 2023). While some focus solely on diffusion, others integrate it with complementary theories. For instance, H. Chen et al. (2021) combine Diffusion of Innovation with Organization Capability to explore AI adoption success factors in China's telecommunications sector. Similarly (Horani et al., 2023) and (Prasad Agrawal, 2024) utilize the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework to identify organizational and environmental factors influencing AI adoption, while (Ishengoma & John, 2024) integrate the Mobile Service Acceptance Model (MSAM) to address AI challenges for Tanzanian SMEs. Other research highlights the importance of organizational readiness in AI adoption, emphasizing management support, resource availability, innovative culture, and robust IT infrastructure (Pumplun et al., 2019; Najdawi, 2020; Jöhnk et al., 2021).

External factors, including competitive pressure, government incentives, and supportive regulations, also play significant roles. Notably, compatibility, how well an innovation aligns with adopters' values and needs emerges as a consistent factor across studies, alongside knowledge and awareness of AI's benefits. Despite these findings, relative advantage is not always significant (Prasad Agrawal, 2024), and additional factors such as cost-effectiveness, AI strategy alignment, and vendor support influence adoption in developing contexts (Horani et al., 2023). These studies underscore the nuanced decision-making involved in AI adoption, warranting further qualitative research, particularly on AI's role in the advertising industry. This would allow for a deeper exploration of innovation characteristics, decision processes, and adopter categories.

AI in advertising agency

Communication and social organizations are closely linked to technology. Communication is an integral part of the concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which also affects professional work related to communication (Gunkel, 2025). The term AI was first introduced during a research workshop in 1956, but its definition in terms of function and implications is still being explored. AI, as defined by (De Bruyn et al., 2020) is a machine that mimics human intelligence in tasks such as learning, planning, and problem-solving through advanced automation. With the rapidly evolving dynamics of advertising agencies, integrating AI innovations in content creation has become a new way of working.

Martinez-Sala et al., (2024) emphasize that AI enables the automation of communication processes, personalization of advertisements, and alignment of strategic messages, significantly improving the effectiveness of advertising. This advancement bridges the creation of more interactive, dynamic, and data-driven communication strategies. AI has the potential to revolutionize professional communication in three main areas: (1) tools for text and language development, (2) tools for creating static images (graphics), and (3) tools for creating dynamic visual content (audiovisual).

The development of AI can also be found in a feature known as Generative AI (GAI). Referring to (Wang et al., 2023) modern applications and prototypes of Generative AI Content are as text, image, audio, video, 3D content, digital humans, cross-modal generation. In addition to the types of GAI, its potential is very strong, offering significant benefits for both brands and marketers, particularly agencies working on various projects for different clients.

The use of AI highlights the benefits and challenges experienced by agencies. Kshetri (2024) outlines the benefits of AI as follows (1) Personalization at Scale, (2) Simplification and Optimization, (3) Efficiency (4) Speed, and (5) Effectiveness. However, (Kshetri, 2024) also highlights several challenges that may limit the effectiveness of AI, including ethical issues, bias, copyright concerns, and a decline in brand authenticity. These challenges are outlined as follows (1) Bias and Inaccuracy, (2) Intellectual Property and Copyright Issues, (3) Decline in Originality and Trust, and (4) Brand Homogenization and Loss of Uniqueness.

In advertising agencies, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed content production, automating tasks and enhancing personalization, efficiency, and speed (Martinez-Sala et al., 2024). Generative AI (GAI) facilitates diverse applications, including text, image, audio, video, and 3D content generation, as well

as creating digital humans. While AI offers benefits such as cost reduction and improved engagement, challenges like ethical concerns, bias, intellectual property issues, and diminished originality persist.

Studies on AI adoption using qualitative approaches often rely on case studies or literature reviews. While (Jayanthiladevi et al., 2020) (Anantrasirichai & Bull, 2022); and (Wang et al., 2023) focus on literature-based analysis, data collection through interviews is highlighted in (Y. Chen et al., 2021). However, research on AI adoption in communication, particularly in the advertising industry focused on content production, remains limited. Previous studies agree that AI enhances efficiency, idea generation, and creative processes in content production (Jayanthiladevi et al., 2020); (Promsombut et al., 2024). Nonetheless, challenges persist, including concerns over content quality, copyright issues, regulatory constraints, and a lack of emotional depth in AI-generated outputs.

Content Production in Agency

In content production, an agency typically follows various stages of production, adapting them to its workflow to ensure each step aligns with the creative brief. The creative brief, as defined by (Clow & Baack, 2018), is a key document used by agencies to guide advertising content strategies. This document serves as the primary reference that ensures alignment between client objectives, the intended message, and the creative strategy employed, facilitating more effective and efficient communication between the agency and the client for a comprehensive content production. Content production involves three key stages (De Pelsmacker, 2018) :

1. Creative Ideation: Developing original, goal-oriented concepts.
2. Communication Tactics: Selecting media and tools to engage target audiences.
3. Control and Evaluation: Measuring content performance through metrics like engagement and conversions to refine future campaigns.

Therefore, AI-driven strategies have optimized advertising workflows, enabling agencies to deliver more efficient, data-driven content solutions.

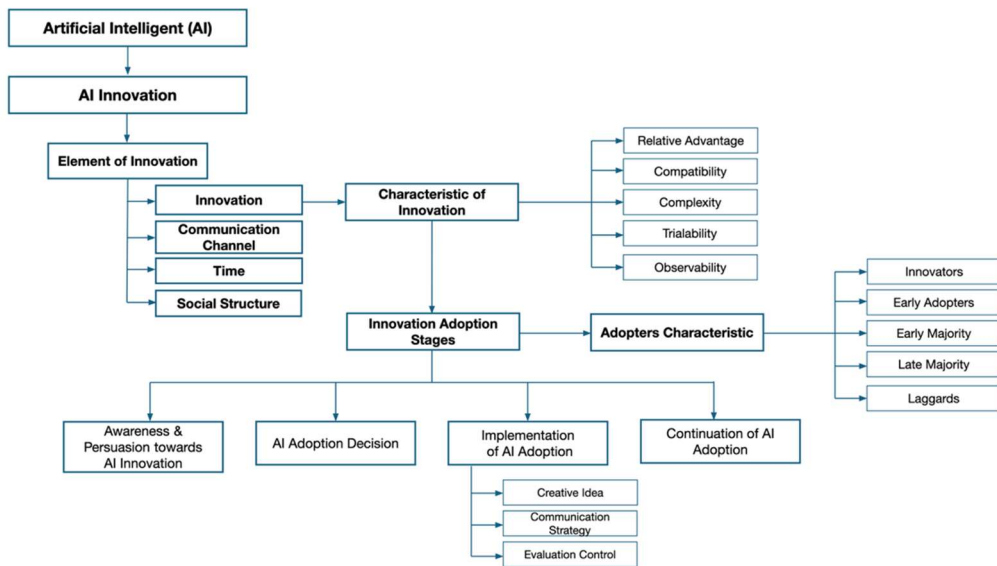


Figure 1. Research Flowchart
Source: (Researcher's Work, 2024)

METHODOLOGY

The research utilizes a post-positivistic paradigm, reflecting the belief that reality exists but is not fully comprehensible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This paradigm emphasizes a structured process fit to qualitative research, such as this study, which explores the adoption phase of AI in a multinational agency. A qualitative approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the nuanced processes involved in AI adoption, particularly in creative workflows within a multinational agency. The study employs a descriptive design to provide detailed and accurate insights into AI adoption in the industry, addressing how an agency incorporates AI to enhance content production. Using a case study method (Yin, 2018), the research examines AI adoption in a multinational agency. Along with descriptive case study research design, this study utilizes a single-case study where (Yin, 2018) states that the single-case study approach is employed when one case is deemed sufficient to provide in-depth and comprehensive insights into the research topic.

Informants are selected through purposive sampling, focusing on individuals with heavy involvement in AI adoption, through criteria as follows: (1) belong to a creative team, allowing in-depth exploration of AI innovation adoption within creative work environments, (2) familiar with content production phases which fully understand the conceptualization to execution, focusing on the strategies and practices employed in transforming creative ideas into final content, (3) key informants, focusing on strategic positions with decision-making authority

regarding the adoption of AI innovations within the agency, and (4) operational informants who is responsible for narrative, visual, and audio-visual content creation on the practical use of AI innovations in day-to-day content production. Data is collected through semi-structured interviews and supplemented with secondary sources, ensuring flexibility and comprehensive coverage of key topics (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020).

Table 1. Profiles of Interview Participants

No	Initial	Role	Period of Work	Background
1	RI	Creative Director Dentsu Indonesia	4 years 8 months	With over a decade of experience in the creative industry, responsible for the performance and decision-making of the creative team.
2	RRA	Senior Creative Copywriter Dentsu Indonesia	2 years 8 months	Actively involved in the ideation process and client needs, as well as creating guidelines for above-the-line (ATL) and digital teams.
3	NI	Art Director Dentsu Indonesia	1 year 8 months	Actively involved in creating graphics, key visuals, and audio-visual production for various projects.

Source: Researcher's data (2024)

Construct validity is ensured through data triangulation, a cross-referencing interview with document analysis to enhance credibility. This study employs data source triangulation involving the use of various data sources to support consistent findings. Therefore, the conclusions of this research will be drawn based on the results of in-depth interviews. To analyze data, the study employs pattern matching (Yin, 2018) by comparing observed data with theoretical expectations derived from the Diffusion of Innovations theory. This approach enables a detailed examination of adoption characteristics, decisions, and adopter categories, aligning observed patterns with theoretical constructs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are based on in-depth interviews conducted with key informants and informants. These findings provide an answer research question, including how the adoption of AI innovations occurs in a multinational agency, Dentsu Indonesia.

Exploring Perspectives on AI as an Innovation

The advertising industry has undergone significant transformations, moving from traditional print ads to complex digital content strategies, including social media, influencer marketing, and interactive content. In earlier phases, advertising was primarily limited to print media, before expanding to include audiovisual formats such as television and radio. With the advent of digital technologies, social media emerged as a dominant platform, leading to a proliferation of advertising formats and channels. This transformation has required creative professionals to adapt continuously. In the past, a practitioner's responsibilities were often confined to producing television and print advertisements. Today, however, the role demands engagement across multiple touchpoints, including managing content on social media, monitoring the narratives of key opinion leaders (KOLs), and tracking real-time conversations on platforms like Twitter. As a result, although the target audience remains relatively unchanged, the resources, time, and strategic efforts required to reach and influence them have increased significantly.

This shift underscores the growing complexity of advertising work in the digital age where AI has become a critical tool in streamlining processes, enabling agencies to produce multiple variations of content and explore broader creative options in a shorter time.

"AI is extremely helpful for crafting taglines or headlines. What used to take hours of brainstorming can now be refined and optimized in minutes." (RRA, November, 2024)

"It cut off very time-consuming work. For example, when we talk about storyboards. When you're creating a board, to make it, you have to browse, for instance, browse through Shutterstock or other vendor pages, and that takes up a lot of time." (NI, November 2024)

In the early stages, the results produced by AI tended to be very standard and limited in terms of complexity and creativity. However, with the advancement of technology, the way humans approach and utilize AI has also transformed. The approach to AI is now more adaptive, with its usage tailored to the needs and potential of the technology, which continues to evolve.

Over time, the approach to AI has become more adaptive, enabling its use to be adjusted to specific needs and the ever-evolving potential of the technology. For Dentsu Indonesia, AI has become a strategic solution for content production, especially due to the time and cost efficiencies it offers. However, despite AI's ability

to enhance productivity, the quality of the output often still remains easily recognizable as AI-generated.

"And when we don't use AI, we're left with two options: composition or photoshoots. But composing takes time, and photoshoots cost a lot of money. Photoshoots are way more expensive. That's why AI makes it easier, because you don't have to search for tons of assets or do a photoshoot. But the downside is that the quality still doesn't feel quite human, it's still like, 'oh, that's just an image.' You can definitely tell it's an AI." – (RRA, November 2024)

The adoption of AI in advertising at Dentsu Indonesia relies on interpersonal communication to drive team engagement and experimentation. Creative team members are tasked with testing AI tools and sharing insights, complemented by management-backed integration into workflows. This approach aligns operational needs with business goals while enhancing workplace efficiency.

The initial phase of AI adoption within the creative team at Dentsu Indonesia involved a bottom-up approach, beginning with a small group of selected team members. These individuals were provided with the necessary resources, including access to AI tools through subscriptions, to explore and experiment independently. Through hands-on testing and iterative learning, they gradually developed a practical understanding of how the technology could enhance creative workflows. This knowledge was then disseminated to other team members, fostering a culture of peer learning.

Concurrently, the creative team initiated a proposal to management to formally integrate these AI tools into the agency's standard creative toolkit, marking a transition from informal experimentation to institutional adoption. However, acceptance varies, with some staff adapting quickly and others resisting due to fear of change or lack of confidence, highlighting the need for leadership strategies adjustment.

Dentsu Indonesia's openness to AI is influenced by the strategic approach of Dentsu Japan, which has established an extensive research and development division that addresses technological advancements beyond the advertising industry. Innovation is embedded as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI), driving the creation of solutions that extend to broader issues, including government policy challenges. In Japan, advertising professionals, including creative directors, pursue formal education in technologies like machine learning, reflecting a high level of discipline and adaptation to macroeconomic demands. This contrasts with the Indonesian context, where the focus remains primarily on communication and advertising solutions.

“What’s great about Dentsu Japan is its reputation for technological R&D, even recognized by the Japanese government. Innovation is part of their KPIs, solving problems that often go beyond advertising. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, most clients still seek communication or advertising solutions. Building on AI here feels like a distant goal. In Japan, professionals like creative directors even go back to school to learn AI and machine learning, reflecting a different level of discipline.” – (RI, November 2024).

Innovation and Control in AI Adoption: A Focus on Decision-Making Stages

Dentsu Indonesia demonstrates a strong awareness of AI's dynamic and evolving nature, recognizing its capabilities in responding to industry needs. As an innovation, AI has been utilized for a considerable period, particularly within Dentsu Japan, where technological advancement is notably more mature. The organization's early adoption reflects a high level of technological readiness and positions it as a frontrunner in leveraging AI to support creative and strategic functions. This advanced integration serves as a foundation for broader implementation across its regional branches, including Dentsu Indonesia, where AI adoption continues to evolve in alignment with the parent company's innovation trajectory.

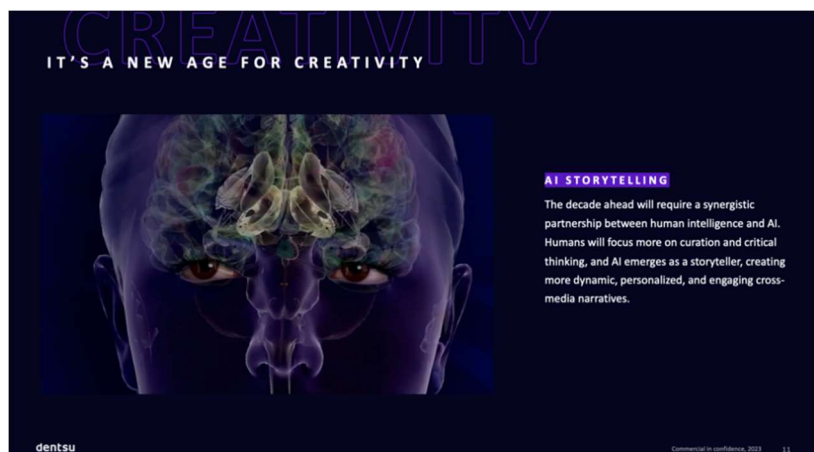


Figure 2. Summary of Dentsu Future Entertainment APAC
Source: Internal Document of Dentsu Indonesia (2024)

As outlined in the *Dentsu Future of Entertainment 2024* report, the agency highlights the increasing synergy between AI and human collaboration in the future. Accordingly, Dentsu Indonesia views AI acceptance as inevitable, integrating a strategic approach to maximize its potential benefits.

Beyond following trends, Dentsu Indonesia evaluates AI's value strategically, balancing internal and external pressures, including intense competition within the creative industry. To ensure collective support for AI adoption, the agency focuses on addressing team skepticism through training, sharing positive experiences from early adopters, and demonstrating tangible results. These efforts aim to foster trust and alignment within the organization, positioning Dentsu Indonesia to stay competitive in the evolving advertising landscape. The growing collaboration between humans and AI has accelerated the adoption of AI innovations in both multinational and national advertising agencies. At Dentsu Indonesia, observing peers and competitors effectively leveraging AI has strengthened the team's motivation to integrate the technology into their creative operations. As RI notes, the pressure to adopt AI arises as individuals see widespread usage around them. "If AI evolves, humans also need to evolve to take on bigger roles—roles that require more ideas, not just execution. Which is a good thing, so humans become the thinkers, and let the computers handle the execution." (RI, November 2024).

Dentsu Indonesia views AI as a tool to enhance creativity by allowing teams to focus on developing more engaging content. While AI handles execution, human roles shift toward ideation and strategic thinking, a transition that the agency perceives as beneficial. AI's ability to translate human ideas into content makes it more efficient in the advertising industry. However, the agency emphasizes that the effectiveness of AI depends on the clarity of human communication. Strengthening communication skills ensures that AI outputs align with creative visions and client needs.

"Over time, AI will get smarter, become more creative, and so on. And our ability to refine, choose, and feel which of the alternatives provided by AI actually resonates with us as humans..." — (RI, November 2024).

Although AI offers opportunities for innovation, Dentsu Indonesia recognizes the importance of maintaining a local perspective in advertising. While AI may eventually be capable of fully managing certain tasks within the creative and communication industries, it is unlikely to replace the human element entirely. Creative concepts require human insight to remain relatable to audiences. Strategic direction, in particular, must remain a human responsibility. Creative judgment, cultural sensitivity, and emotional nuance are aspects that AI has yet to replicate with the same depth and context-awareness as human professionals. Therefore, despite the growing capabilities of AI, the role of human direction remains essential in ensuring that outputs are not only functional but also meaningful and contextually appropriate.

Prior to the establishment of formal regulations or collective organizational decisions regarding the use of emerging technologies, creative professionals often take the initiative to experiment independently. Within the context of Dentsu Indonesia, for example, the adoption of AI tools in creative processes began as an individual effort among team members. This proactive exploration reflects the dynamic nature of the creative industry, where practitioners frequently test and adapt new innovations ahead of institutional frameworks. Such experimentation not only demonstrates a high level of autonomy but also contributes to shaping future organizational strategies and guidelines.

Following the next stage, Dentsu Indonesia integrates AI across multiple stages of the creative workflow, from problem insight to execution. In the initial stage, AI helps in data exploration to identify problems and set strategic directions. During ideation, AI tools like ChatGPT assist in structuring narratives, exploring storytelling flows, and supporting comprehensive brand planning that includes media and communication strategies.

In the creative expression phase, AI is employed to generate taglines, headlines, and visual concepts using tools such as MidJourney and Bing Image Generator. These outputs enhance visual consistency and storytelling appeal, with some visuals further developed into animations using tools like Runway. The final execution stage incorporates AI for technical implementations, such as creating visual filters and integrating AI-driven elements into presentations and physical installations.

"We have the touch points, the talk points, we create the narrative, and sometimes we compare the storytelling flow, like what kind of flow we want. Sometimes we even give it to ChatGPT, like 'I have these talk points ABC, please arrange them.'"—(RRA, November 2024).

"For the brand plan, it's a long one, covering a whole year—what media to use, what the communications will be, what the derivatives are, and so on. Then, depending on the outlook, we'll figure out what's needed."—(NI, November 2024).

While AI enriches internal processes and client presentations with interactive and innovative technologies, its application remains largely exploratory, focusing on ideation, concept visualization, and non-commercial projects. Limitations stem from Indonesian regulations that prohibit AI-generated content as final deliverables, emphasizing its role as a supplementary tool rather than a primary production resource. This cautious adoption highlights both the potential and constraints of AI in the creative industry.

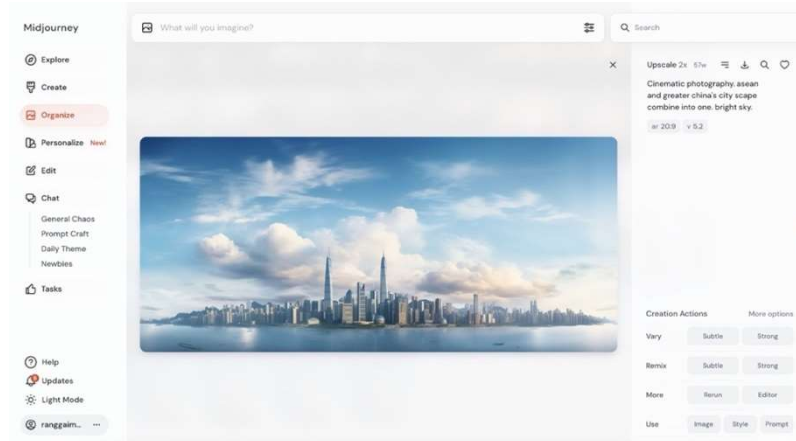


Figure 3. Prompting process in MidJourney
Source: Internal documents of Dentsu Indonesia (2024)



Figure 4. Prompting Results and MidJourney
Source: Internal Document of Dentsu Indonesia (2024)

Despite its benefits, AI integration at Dentsu Indonesia still encountered challenges. Language proficiency is a notable barrier, particularly as many AI platforms require clear and precise English prompts. For example, when using MidJourney to create visuals, team members often rely on ChatGPT to assist in constructing detailed and effective prompts.

"Prompting in English can be challenging. To overcome this, I often use ChatGPT to craft clear instructions, ensuring the output aligns with our needs." (NI, November 2024).

For instance, AI cannot yet determine the specific gesture that can move an audience to tears or structure the pacing of a narrative in a way that provokes laughter. These subtle, context-sensitive creative choices are currently beyond AI's capabilities and remain fundamentally human.

Moreover, local advertising often requires a strong sense of cultural and social familiarity. Advertisements for highly localized products, for example, tend to avoid using talent with foreign appearances, as Indonesian audiences seek relatability and representation. Viewers want to see themselves reflected in the advertisement—engaging with the product, and imagining themselves in that scenario. This form of cultural and emotional resonance, grounded in lived experience and local identity, remains a significant gap in AI-generated content. While it is uncertain whether AI will ever fully bridge this gap, at present it cannot replicate the human ability to convey delicate emotional gestures. Therefore, the role of human creatives remains indispensable in guiding direction and making sensitive, impactful choices within the creative process.

Ethical and legal concerns also present significant hurdles. Issues surrounding copyright and the legitimacy of AI-generated visuals remain in a "gray area." Dentsu Indonesia's leadership has emphasized the importance of respecting intellectual property rights and ensuring compliance with legal standards. While AI-generated content is utilized internally and for pitching, it is not used as a final product to avoid potential regulatory complications.

"Our regulation allows us to freely use AI for ideation and internal work, but AI-generated content cannot be the end product. This ensures we maintain compliance and uphold ethical standards," (RI, November 2024)

Originality and trust of AI

Dentsu Indonesia approaches content production while preparing for the advancement of AI in the landscape of advertising industry. For instance, in managing communications for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives such as one of financial institutions, all content elements are required to maintain authenticity. Visual materials, including photography and event documentation, must be sourced from actual occurrences, without digital manipulation or re-composition. This approach is deliberately chosen to preserve the genuineness of the message and to reinforce the brand's credibility in its social engagement.

As digital communication technologies and trends continue to evolve, the distinction between authentic and composed content is likely to become increasingly subtle. In the future, this strategy may adapt to accommodate the growing demand for both efficiency and aesthetic quality. Nonetheless, any evolution in this approach must still uphold the fundamental principles of transparency and honesty in brand communication.

The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) into creative content production offers new possibilities for efficiency and innovation, yet it also presents distinct challenges—particularly in ensuring emotional authenticity. In creative industries, especially in contexts involving emotionally nuanced content such as visuals of children, the need for a personal and human-centered approach remains critical. The process of sourcing accurate gestures and expressions through stock platforms, such as Shutterstock, often proves inadequate. The inconsistency of visual elements drawn from multiple sources frequently undermines the visual harmony necessary for effective storytelling.

However, in terms of image quality, AI has not yet reached the level of producing photo series, at least not consistently. Currently, that is the stage we are in. Although there are websites that can enhance the visual quality of AI-generated images, they still have not reached that level of sophistication. (RRA, November 2024).

Therefore, despite these advancements, Dentsu Indonesia continues to face persistent limitations in AI's ability to replicate authentic human emotion. The emotional subtlety necessary for content that resonates with audiences is often lost in AI-generated outputs, underscoring a significant gap between the technical capabilities of current AI tools and the expressive demands of the creative industries. This disconnect reinforces the ongoing need for human oversight and intervention, particularly in the development of emotionally compelling narratives.

Thus, while AI continues to evolve as a valuable asset in creative production, its role remains supplementary rather than substitutive. Future strategies should emphasize cross-disciplinary skill development, particularly in areas that bridge technical proficiency with creative intuition, to ensure that AI enhances rather than diminishes the human-centered essence of storytelling in the creative sector.

Adopter's characteristic in Multinational Agency

Dentsu Indonesia has adopted a proactive approach to AI, facilitating exploration and skill-building within its teams. Creative professionals are encouraged to experiment with tools like MidJourney, DALL-E, and ChatGPT through company-funded subscriptions. Workshops and peer-led training sessions foster a culture of innovation, allowing teams to share knowledge and collaboratively explore AI's potential.

"We have creative sessions every Friday where the team discusses new tools and techniques, including AI. It's a space for sharing and growing together." (NI, November 2024).

This inclusive and exploratory approach has helped Dentsu Indonesia establish itself as an early adopter of AI in the advertising industry. The agency continuously evaluates new technologies and integrates them strategically to enhance its creative output.

Dentsu Indonesia exemplifies the characteristics of an early adopter in AI innovation. Guided by insights from its global headquarters in Japan, the agency has integrated AI tools to optimize workflows and enrich creative processes. Reports like the Dentsu Future of Entertainment 2024 highlight the increasing role of human-AI collaboration, which Dentsu Indonesia actively incorporates into its operations.

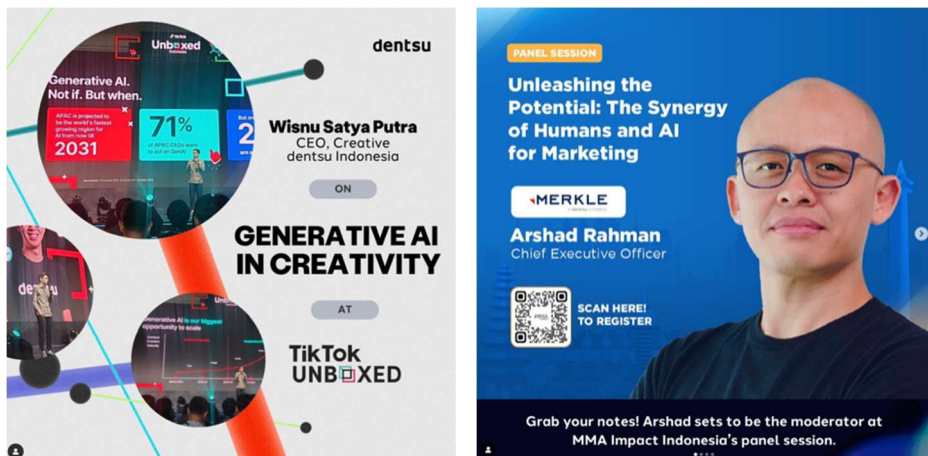


Figure 5. Dentsu Indonesia Discusses AI Utilization in the Industry
Source: Dentsu Indonesia Instagram (2024)

This strategic alignment allows Dentsu Indonesia to maintain a competitive edge in the industry, leveraging AI not only for efficiency but also as a catalyst for creative breakthroughs.

Table 2. Summary of Innovation Adoption of AI in Dentsu Indonesia

Categorization of AI Innovation Adoption Based on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory	Dentsu Indonesia
Innovation characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relative advantage - Compatibility - Observability
Time	Since the early surge of AI adoption.
Communication channel	Interpersonal
Social system	<i>Top-down structural</i>
Awareness	Extensive, dynamic
System	Positive, adaptive
Environment	Innovative
Adoption	Dentsu Indonesia has adopted and integrated AI into its creative system for content production.
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem insight - Brand Plan - Creative expression - Execution Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ChatGPT+ - MidJourney - Bing - Dall-E - Runway
Continuation/confirmation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supports the use of AI in content creation. - Considers AI as an assistive tool that cannot replace the role of humans. - Legal considerations, copyright issues, and potential impacts are key factors in not using AI as the final end product at this stage.

Source: Researcher's interview data (2024)

To conclude, the research findings indicate that Dentsu Indonesia responds to AI as an innovation within the advertising industry employed on Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (2010) and examining how AI adoption plays a key role in shaping the agency's creative processes. The findings reveal that AI offers a significant relative advantage to Dentsu Indonesia, enhancing work efficiency and fostering a variety of creative ideas aligned to prior studies (H. Chen et al., 2021; Horani et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2023),

AI's adoption at Dentsu Indonesia is grounded in its perceived benefits, particularly in terms of time efficiency and creative flexibility. Compared to traditional methods, AI is seen as accelerating workflows by automating repetitive tasks and providing quick alternatives to support the creative process and it aligns with previous research, suggesting that AI adoption is particularly beneficial for industries requiring high creativity and fast-paced output (H. Chen et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2023).

AI tools such as ChatGPT, MidJourney, Luma, and Runway have enabled Dentsu's creative team to generate both visual and textual content with remarkable efficiency and it highlights the compatibility aspect. A wide variety of content types, including visual, audiovisual, and audio formats have been supported by AI to meet these diverse needs. This is supported by prior studies which emphasize AI's compatibility with diverse work environments (Horani et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2023), enhancing the flexibility required by the creative team. Dentsu Indonesia sees AI as a means to optimize structured tasks, such as content generation, which allows creative professionals to focus on higher-level strategic activities. By supporting routine tasks, AI provides more time for creativity and ideation, which aligns with findings by Mikalef & Gupta (2021) and Kshetri (2024), who argue that AI complements human creativity rather than replacing it.

Observability and trialability are crucial in the diffusion process, and Dentsu Indonesia demonstrates observable results from AI adoption. Time efficiency, the reduction of repetitive tasks, and enhanced work outcomes all contribute to significant improvements in overall team productivity. The agency's investment in infrastructure, including subscriptions to AI tools and training for its creative teams, provides a robust foundation for AI experimentation and integration, as emphasized in earlier research (Jayanthiladevi et al., 2020; Lyu et al., 2022).

As Rogers (2010) notes, time plays a significant role in the adoption of innovation. Dentsu Indonesia's early adoption of AI was largely influenced by its parent company's innovative, top-down structure, particularly the influence of Dentsu Japan. The adoption of AI at Dentsu Indonesia was fostered by the innovation-driven culture established by Dentsu's headquarters in Japan, which has long embraced AI in its operations. This highlights the importance of organizational

context in shaping the diffusion process according to prior studies (Crespin-Mazet et al., 2021; Pumplun et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Dentsu Indonesia's awareness of AI technologies was further cultivated through an extensive training ecosystem. Creative team members were given access to cutting-edge AI tools and trained on how to leverage these technologies for content creation. This approach aligns with Rogers' (2010) theory of innovation, which highlights how early exposure and training can impact adoption.

Despite the overall enthusiasm for AI, its adoption at Dentsu Indonesia is not uniform across the team. Some members are more accepting and excited about the potential of AI, while others remain skeptical or are slower to adopt the technology. This variation in acceptance mirrors findings by Lund et al. (2023), who noted that individual differences in interest and optimism toward AI influence adoption. While Dentsu Indonesia has worked to foster a culture of innovation, it must also address the varying levels of AI acceptance within its team.

In content production, AI is primarily used in the early stages which involves developing original ideas, conducting data exploration, and generating content. During the ideation phase, AI helps in data analysis to gain a deeper understanding of client challenges, thus enabling more targeted and effective strategy development. AI tools like ChatGPT and MidJourney assist in the ideation phase by generating narratives and providing visual alternatives. Although creative implementation processes may vary across agencies, the essence remains consistent. Where conventional methods rely on metadata, current visual generation often employs deep learning techniques, enabling image-to-image searches that form semantic representations of reference visuals, as discussed in Anantrasirichai & Bull (2022). Therefore, this integration supports the development of cohesive storylines and facilitates creative exploration according to (De Pelsmacker, 2018).

AI-generated outputs are also used to rapidly produce a variety of creative ideas, giving the creative team multiple options to consider. As Chaisatitkul et al. (2024) noted, AI is becoming more accessible for creative teams to experiment with, offering a broad range of options in less time. However, AI-generated ideas are not seen as final products but rather as preliminary concepts that need to be refined and curated by the human creative team to ensure they meet client needs and align with brand identity.

Despite the integration of AI, challenges remain regarding its use during the final execution stages of advertising projects. In Indonesia, regulatory constraints prevent AI-generated outputs from being used as final products in commercial campaigns. These limitations reflect broader concerns about the ethical implications of AI-generated content, particularly regarding copyright issues and the potential for misuse of intellectual property. This concern is reflected in the findings by Kshetri (2024), which highlight the ethical and regulatory challenges in AI adoption for commercial use.

The final phase of De Pelsmacker (2018), which involves measuring content effectiveness, is not yet fully applicable at Dentsu Indonesia, as AI-generated outputs are not used as final products due to internal regulations. These policies reflect the agency's commitment to maintaining creative, ethical, and professional standards. Although AI is integrated into workflows, its use remains in the exploratory phase, primarily for concepting, ideation, and non-commercial projects. The continuation phase, according to Rogers (2010), is crucial in evaluating innovation adoption performance. At Dentsu Indonesia, this phase is clearly evident through a structured approach to AI integration, where AI plays a strategic role across various stages of content production. However, with the increasing complexity of AI, strong communication and writing skills have become essential for effective interaction with the technology. Prompting serves as a bridge between humans and AI, requiring precision and detail in delivering instructions. This aligns with studies by (Cardon et al., 2023), who found that AI literacy and prompting training are equally important.

The continued adoption of AI at Dentsu Indonesia involves both organizational and ethical considerations. Dentsu Indonesia ensures that AI is used in a manner consistent with ethical standards. However, there is an ongoing need for clear regulatory guidelines to ensure responsible use of the technology. This aligns with prior studies (Lyu et al., 2022; Huh et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023), which emphasize the importance of legal and ethical frameworks in AI adoption. In Indonesia, AI development has sparked concerns over copyright and ethics, especially regarding the use of data without creators' consent Mardianti, D. L. (2025) and the lack of clear regulations has fueled public backlash, as seen in the criticism of the *Makan Bergizi Gratis* AI campaign, despite government defense of it as creative expression (Sulistyo, P. D., Jaluardi, H., Dewabrata, W., & Gandhawangi, S. (2025). This finding demonstrate that technological infrastructure and investment readiness remain limited. This mirrors the early stages of AI adoption in other industries, where infrastructure gaps and limited resources hindered widespread implementation.

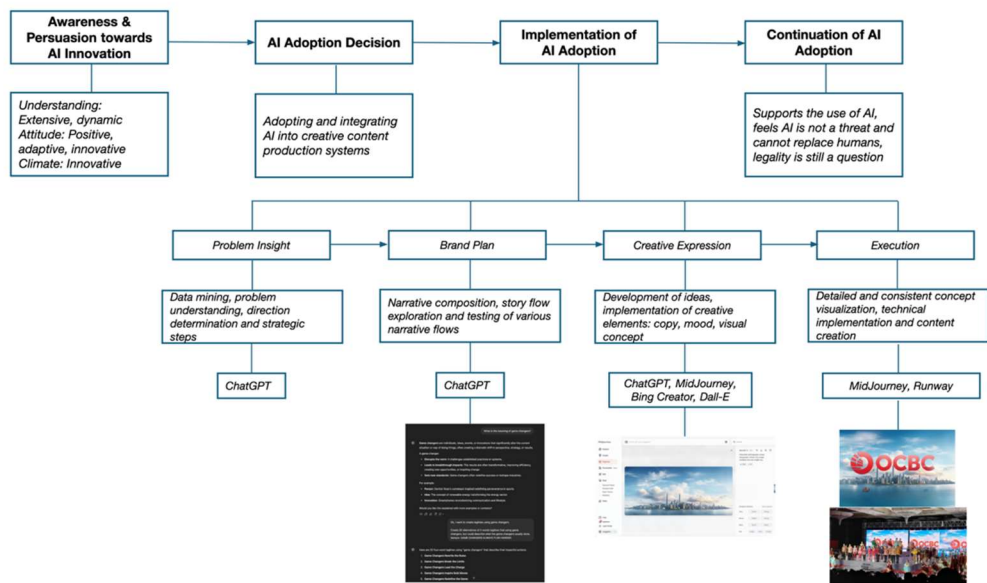


Figure 6. Flowchart Innovation Adoption of AI in Dentsu Indonesia

In conclusion, Dentsu Indonesia's response to AI innovation within the advertising industry underscores the advantages and challenges associated with AI adoption. While AI has proven to be a valuable tool for improving operational efficiency, its full integration into the advertising industry in Indonesia remains a work in progress. The research reveals that while AI adoption is widely accepted in certain areas of the creative process, ethical concerns, regulatory limitations, and variations in team acceptance remain key challenges. To foster more widespread adoption of AI, Dentsu Indonesia must continue to address these challenges while nurturing a culture of innovation and cross-disciplinary skill development. Furthermore, the Indonesian regulatory landscape must evolve to provide clearer guidelines for the ethical and legal use of AI in creative industries, ensuring that AI can be effectively harnessed while respecting intellectual property rights and promoting sustainable creative practices.

CONCLUSION

This study found that Dentsu Indonesia adopts a structured and proactive approach to AI innovations, supported by directives and resources from its Japanese headquarters. This centralized support enables an effective implementation of AI technologies, enhancing creative workflows and driving operational efficiency. The agency's focus on observability is evident in tangible outcomes, such as improved creative exploration and output, reflecting its commitment to innovation, competitiveness, and regulatory compliance. As an early adopter, Dentsu Indonesia leverages better infrastructure, managerial support, and a culture of technological

exploration to position itself as a leader in AI integration within the creative industry.

This finding also emphasizes organizational dynamics over individual perspectives which further explore how social systems, such as collaborative cultures, influence innovation adoption stages within the diffusion of innovation framework. Future research could integrate this framework with organizational or cultural communication theories to enhance awareness and acceptance of AI innovations from a multitude perspective. Additionally, researching legal and ethical concerns, such as copyright and regulatory issues, is still critical for shaping responsible AI use in Indonesia's creative sector. Therefore, strategic recommendations should be exercised including regularly evaluating AI's impact on efficiency and outputs, adapting strategies to ensure sustainable innovation, and addressing evolving ethical and regulatory challenges. Agency should advocate for integrating AI-related provisions into local regulations, such as the Indonesian Advertising Ethics Code. The regulation not only democratizes the use of AI but also ensures alignment with support and protection for creative workers. Internal training and collaboration are also essential to build team expertise in AI tools, particularly in developing effective prompting skills.

Although the research makes valuable contributions, there are several limitations. The study's scope is limited to a single case study of Dentsu Indonesia, with data collected over a brief period in November 2024. This focus restricts generalizability across the industry and excludes client and audience perspectives. Future research should expand to a wider range of agencies and extend the study period to provide more comprehensive insights into AI adoption in advertising, considering the rapid development of AI technologies.

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