Public Report – Generative AI Adoption in Emerging Economies

Overview

This report presents key findings from ten in-depth interviews conducted as part of the research *"Adoption of Generative AI in Emerging Economies."*
The qualitative analysis (175 coded segments across 8 macrothemes) reveals that organizations are moving from experimentation to **structured integration of Generative AI**, balancing enthusiasm for productivity with growing awareness of ethical, regulatory, and workforce challenges.

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1. Key Insights

Balanced Impact: Opportunity and Caution

The discourse around Generative AI is **ambivalent** — shaped by both technical optimism and ethical caution.
While **benefits** (39 coded segments) and **risks** (35) appear in almost equal proportion, they coexist as two sides of the same transformation process.

Adoption Patterns

- **Bottom-up experimentation** meets **top-down strategic direction**: leadership initiatives and developer-driven pilots coexist.

- Adoption is **internally motivated**, driven by curiosity and learning rather than external pressure.

- "*We use AI to generate documentation and prototypes for client projects.*" — Person 4, Consulting

Tangible Benefits

- **Productivity and speed** are the most cited gains, often quantified in time reduction (e.g., *"three days reduced to three hours"*).

- AI enhances **code quality, testing, and automation**, freeing teams to focus on creative or strategic work.

- Strategic benefits such as **knowledge management** and **competitive differentiation** are emerging in more mature organizations.

Barriers to Adoption

- **Bureaucracy and compliance approvals** are the most frequent obstacles in regulated sectors.

- **Cultural resistance** remains significant — from senior skepticism to lack of confidence in AI outputs.

- In some innovative contexts, the **absence of resistance** is itself risky, leading to adoption "without brakes."

- Technical barriers — connectivity, data legacy, and infrastructure — are relevant but secondary to governance and culture.

Risk Awareness and Responsible Use

- The most cited risk is **data security and confidentiality (15 mentions)**, followed by **overreliance on AI outputs (11)**.

- Ethical and legal accountability concerns are recurrent: *"Who is responsible when AI fails?"*

- This signals a **maturing sense of responsibility**: organizations want **AI value with control**.

Human Dimension

- The **digital literacy gap** is the single most frequent subcode across all interviews (16 occurrences).

- Organizations recognize that **human readiness defines AI readiness**.

- As one participant noted, *"There's no formal training; everyone learns on their own."*

Governance and Regulation

- Strong emphasis on **Regulation and Legal Frameworks (7 segments)**: the public and financial sectors seek clearer standards for AI ethics, data use, and accountability.

- The government is perceived as **reactive**, not proactive — creating uncertainty for large-scale adoption.

Infrastructure and Data Readiness

- **Cloud migration** is a dominant trend (4 mentions), but **data standardization is absent**, limiting advanced applications like RAGs or agent integration.

Best Practices and Recommendations

- **Start small, govern early:** MVP/POC pilots with governance are the most cited recommendation (5 segments).

- **Define clear usage policies** and invest in **specialized AI talent**.

- Focus on **real value creation** rather than marketing or hype.

- "*Use AI to generate real value, not just because it's trendy.*" — Person 8, Startup

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2. Cross-Cutting Patterns

- **Productivity ↔ Digital Literacy:** efficiency gains appear only where training is consistent.
- **Speed ↔ Overreliance:** rapid adoption increases risk of uncritical use.
- **Security ↔ Compliance ↔ Government:** these three codes form a "regulatory triangle" guiding responsible AI use.
- **Bureaucracy ↔ Resistance:** procedural rigidity often masks cultural hesitation.

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3. Sectoral Clusters

Cluster	Sectors	Key Focus	Maturity
Regulated & Governance-Oriented	Banking, Government	Security, Compliance, Data Legacy	**Medium**
Innovation & Development-Oriented	Tech, Consulting, EdTech	Prototyping, Speed, Learning	**High**

Synthesis:
Regulated sectors prioritize control and compliance, while innovative sectors focus on scale and experimentation.
Both converge on a shared principle: governance is the precondition for sustainable adoption.

Conclusion

Organizations in emerging economies are not merely adopting Generative AI — they are learning to institutionalize it responsibly.
The evidence shows that success depends less on technological sophistication and more on cultural readiness, governance discipline, and human capability.

Generative AI is not just transforming productivity — it is reshaping how organizations learn, decide, and govern innovation itself.