Understanding Organizational Decision to Adopt AI Technologies: A Qualitative Study

About

This qualitative study investigates how organizations decide to adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. Through 15 semi-structured interviews across various industries, the research applies Gioia's method to identify the key motivations, triggers, and decision-making factors influencing AI adoption. The study proposes a process model to explain this complex decision-making journey.

Problem

Many organizations struggle with the critical decision of when and how to adopt AI, often rushing into implementation without strategic clarity, which leads to disappointing results. Existing research models often overlook the complex, contextual processes through which organizations deliberate and evaluate AI, creating a gap in understanding the practical decision-making journey.

Study Outcome

- AI adoption is not a singular, technical decision but a complex, multi-stage reasoning process involving feedback loops.
- The decision is shaped by three interdependent dimensions: strategic motivations (the 'why'), preconditions and triggers (the 'when'), and evaluation criteria (the 'how').
- Systemic challenges, such as poor data quality, act not only as barriers but also as catalysts that prompt organizations to explore AI solutions.
- Organizations evaluate AI adoption based on a layered process that includes strategic alignment and organizational readiness, not just financial ROI or technical feasibility.
- The study produced a process model that illustrates how organizations move through various phases of AI adoption decision-making, including stages for re-evaluation and reconsideration.

Keywords

AI adoption • motivations • challenges • decision making • organizational change