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Innovation influencer's identity supports micro entrepreneur in accelerating artificial intelligence adoption process

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ABSTRACT

Background: Despite the rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in marketing communication activity, many micro-entrepreneurs in Indonesia face a significant innovation gap characterized by technological stagnation and low technological proficiency. Adapting to the digital environment through AI-integrated visual marketing is now crucial for micro-business competitiveness. However, adoption remains challenging due to ingrained self-concepts and cultural barriers in collective societies like Indonesia. **Purpose:** This study aims to identify the communication identities underlying AI adoption rates among micro-entrepreneurs and to formulate a framework to accelerate the diffusion of innovation. **Methods:** This study used a qualitative approach and conducted interviews with 28 micro-entrepreneurs who attended the AI Visual Promotion Content workshop. Data was analyzed using NVivo 12 Pro software and linked to Diffusion and Innovation by Rogers' and Communication Theory of Identity from Hecht's in the discussion. **Results:** 69 % of participants in this study are positioned as Late Majority Level, while the rest are in Early Majority. The adoption can be influence by the presence of innovation influencer from among them to accelerate AI Adoption. All the informants considered that the training and workshop is the moment of truth for them as a critical turning point to adopt AI to support their promotional content. Besides, it is also the time to move from the fear of being left behind. **Conclusion:** This investigation presents a new archetype, "The Innovation Influencer," that comes from the local community of micro-entrepreneurs. This new terminology comes from the identity traits that show as open growth-mindset, initiative, goal orientation, and self-acceptance as their main personal characteristics. **Implications:** The presence of an innovation influencer in the community becomes the bandwagon effect, contributing to the transformation of the change attitude from skeptic become active adoption in the microbusiness ecosystem.

Keywords: AI Adoption; communication identity; innovation diffusion; innovation influencer; MSMe

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INTRODUCTION

The presence of a new digital environment requires micro-business owners to adopt artificial intelligence (AI) to develop content for promotional activities. The applications of AI encompass conversational systems (Zou et al., 2023)the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI and supporting sustainable practices (Li et al., 2024). AI facilitates micro-enterprises for visual promotions encourages product purchases (Mohamed, 2024). Visual marketing significantly influences perceptions and consumer behavior (Dao Cam et al., 2025) and across various environments (Reyes-Villalba et al., 2024).

The accessibility of the digital realm offers individuals, including micro-business operators, the opportunity to assume roles as Artificial Leaders, thereby streamlining workflows (Spatola & Macdorman, 2021). The AI Adoption in Indonesia shows in a significant percentage at 31.7% in 2025 shows digital transformation for MSMe, even though it still concentrate in certain area (Sajadieh et al., 2026). Micro enterprises within the MSME sector frequently face challenges, including a lack of innovation and technological stagnation (Sandi, 2023). The adoption of technology can enhance competitiveness (Nur et al., 2025; Wibowo et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the decision to embrace or reject innovation is contingent upon the characteristics of micro-business actors (Zulkifli, 2023). Rogers (2003) observes that innovators' traits influence the adoption of new ideas, while cultural factors also play a significant role. Moreover, adoption of the innovation process differs between people with individual and collective cultural backgrounds, as in China, Korea, and Indonesia (Pamungkas et al., 2025).

The technological stagnations that are present among micro-entrepreneurs have become primarily a gap in the innovation process, which becomes the urgency of this investigation. The researchers begin this study based on the premise that the process of adoption of willingness to adopt AI is based on recipients' characteristics, self-concept, the adoption rate, and effective strategies for fostering innovation. Moreover, it becomes a promotional challenge, especially for Indonesian micro-businesses to grow their business (Azizah, 2022).

Based on data, the primary barriers related to digital proficiency among MSMEs show that approximately 80% from all of them have a senior high school or below background, with the Baby Boomer and Gen X group categories. Moreover, these conditions make the presence of AI technology still considered a luxury rather than production tools to support productivity (BRIN, 2025). There are many MSMEs in

West Java that are further trapped by structural issues, including people mindset through digitalization and an insufficient promotion ecosystem (Susanti, 2025). Furthermore, there is a substantial disparity between the status of West Javanese cities as technological hubs and the reality on the ground that the participation of those who attended training is still below 20 % for the ideal threshold (Wirati et al., 2025).

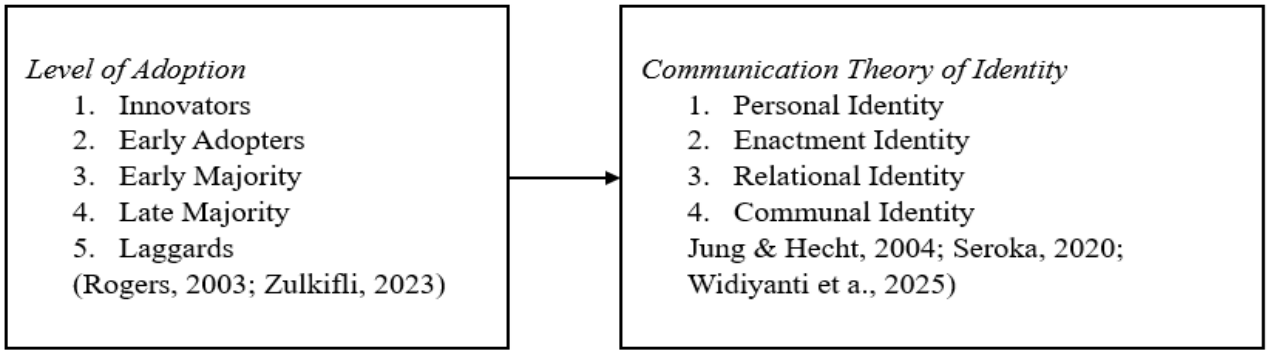
The researcher used the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) and the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) approach to analyse the process of human and technical factors, while micro-entrepreneurs adopt AI for their digital promotional content. A key research gap arises from limited empirical testing of integrated models and a lack of longitudinal studies on influencer identity in resource-constrained micro-enterprise settings (Luo et al., 2025).

The novelty of this work lies in combining communication identity constructs with the level of innovation adoption. The study aims to develop an integrated framework that emphasizes psychological and cultural factors that can accelerate AI adoption in micro-enterprises. This research is essential amid rapid technological advances and digital transformation, which demand inclusive communication strategies and ecosystem policies to address barriers like technostress and the digital skills gap (Aditiya, 2025; Duong et al., 2025).

The researchers employed Rogers's (2003) framework to ascertain that micro-entrepreneurs are in the initial stages of adopting artificial intelligence (AI) for visual marketing. Rogers' five categories of adopters, as outlined by Zulkifli (2023), include: [1] The innovators' category usually refers to the pioneers of innovation; [2] Early adopters are individuals who serve as opinion leaders and are comfortable adopting new ideas; [3] The early majority refers to individuals who were willing to embrace change but needed to see evidence that the innovation process and products work before doing so. The strategies to appeal to these individuals include success stories and tangible evidence of the innovation's usefulness.

[4] The late majority involves a group of individuals who are reluctant and more sceptical of changes around them. Similarly, to the early majority group, individuals in this category required extensive information on how many people have tried the innovation. If it was adopted successfully or otherwise, and [5] Laggards, individuals who are bound by tradition and very conservative in their thoughts and views.

Rogers (2003), building on the premise that the acceptance of innovation is contingent on an individual's characteristics or self-concept (Zulkifli, 2023), has introduced the



Source: Researchers, 2025

Figure 1 Research Framework

Communication Theory of Identity. This theory is grounded in the work of Jung and Hecht (2004) and delineates four layers of identity (Widiyanti & Pamungkas, 2025) [1] Personal layer, which pertains to how micro-business actors perceive themselves; [2] Enactment Layer, which involves the expression of identity through communication and social behavior; [3] Relational Layer, wherein identities are developed and negotiated within interpersonal relationships; and [4] the Communal Layer, which encompasses societal perceptions of micro-enterprises and the influence these perceptions exert on members.

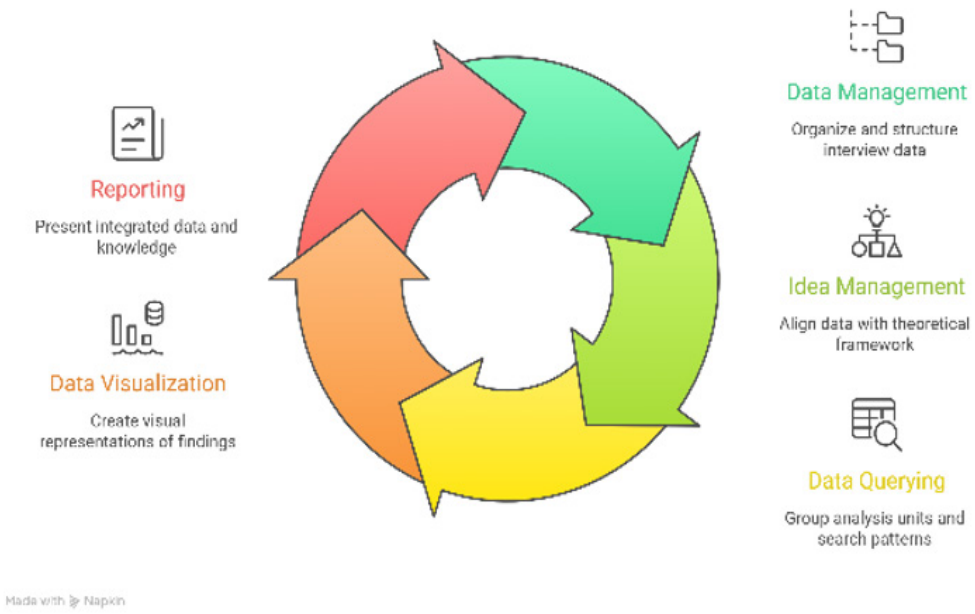
Moreover, Wackerly et al., (2018) explain CTI in more depth, noting that the personal frame is an individual's self-concept or self-image. The enacted frame is an individual's performed or expressed identity. Relational frames emerge in four levels, showing the mutual construction of identity. Ascribed relational describes how individual identity is shaped by internalizing how others view you.

Second, relationships are formed with others, such as identifying as co-workers. Third, multiple relationships exist simultaneously and in relation to each other. Fourth, relationships form units of identity. The final of the four CTI frames is the communal frame, which highlights identities held in common by groups with a shared collective history, such as religious, collegiate, or ethnic affiliations, or even a fandom.

These theoretical frameworks assist researchers in identifying factors that facilitate the diffusion of innovation, with particular consideration of self-concept in determining adoption levels. Refer to Figure 1.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study apply for a descriptive qualitative approach to systematically explore communication identity across AI adoption stages (Reyes-Villalba et al., 2024). Purposive sampling yielded 28 micro-business owners from West Java, selected from 50 participants



Source: Illustration by Napkin.ai, 2025

Figure 2 NVivo Analysis Cycle

Table 1 Research Informants

No	Initial	Origin	No	Initial	Origin
1	AFG	Bandung	15	LFR	Kab Bandung
2	TDR	Kab Bandung	16	IDA	Tasikmalaya
3	CCS	Cimahi	17	ANA	Bandung
4	KMS	Ciamis	18	STA	Bandung
5	AAL	Kab Bandung	19	SSI	Tasikmalaya
6	BEW	Tasikmalaya	20	AHT	Cimahi
7	SDQ	Kab Bandung	21	ARA	Bandung
8	FIR	Bandung	22	HMI	Garut
9	BOR	Bandung	23	NIS	Ciamis
10	TAR	Tasikmalaya	24	ASR	Kab Bandung
11	MIN	Bandung	24	INY	Garut
12	NIE	Kab Bandung	25	MAR	Cimahi
13	INT	Bandung	26	ANT	Garut
14	ANE	Cimahi	27	HAT	Bandung
			28	PUR	Garut

Source: Research Result, 2025

of an AI promotional workshop conducted by Telkom University and Rumah Kreatif BUMN. Data collection occurred between July and October 2025 through recorded Zoom interviews, subsequently transcribed verbatim for accuracy. To ensure data trustworthiness, time triangulation was implemented by re-verifying informant responses at different intervals during the interview sessions.

Data were processed using NVivo 12 Pro following the five-stage framework by (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013): (1) Data Management,

organizing interview transcripts; (2) Idea Management, coding responses to align with the conceptual framework; (3) Querying, identifying patterns; (4) Visualization, employing coding reference tables, word clouds for thematic dominance, and cluster analysis to map inter-code relationships; and (5) Reporting, synthesizing findings with empirical evidence and relevant literature (see Figure 2).

The following are the data of research informants who have expressed willingness to be interviewed by the researchers, as outlined in Table 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers present data analysist that concern with all units of coding reference, cluster analysis to label thematic connections and inter-code relationships. Moreover, each coding reference serves as specific unit data that to a thematic node, as summarized in Table 2.

The researchers summarize the reference coding results obtained from respondents. It indicates that 69% of micro-entrepreneurs in West Java are at the "Late Majority' adoption stage. The study underscores the importance of training in transforming their communication identity, as evidenced by the most frequently used word in the responses being "Training."

> The 3rd Informant: "After the training, even though I stuttered with technology, I became enthusiastic, especially inspired by participants who were already reliable in using AI" (personal communication, July 2, 2025).

The groups of late majority shows that they are skepticism when adopting innovation because of the are concern of economic or social pressure (Miranda et al., 2024; Rogers, 2003). Micro-business owners' technical anxiety can be solve by joining training or workshop also with their peer support (Dahal et al., 2018). These environments provide a secure space

Table 2 Reference and Percentage of Coding

Adoption Level		
Codes	Reference	Percentage
Late Majority	112	69%
Early Majority	50	31%
Total	162	100%
Personal Identity		
Codes	Reference	Percentage
Open Mindset	87	64%
Self-Criticism	29	21%
Self-Negotiation	21	15%
Total	137	100%
Enactment Identity		
Codes	Reference	Percentage
Growth Mindset	78	91%
Initiative Awareness	8	9%
Total	86	100%
Relational Identity		
Codes	Reference	Percentage
Goal-Orientation	27	44%
Enthusiastic	20	33%
Self-Reward	14	23%
Total	61	100%
Communal Identity		
Codes	Reference	Percentage
Self-Acceptance	14	52%
Self- Actualization	13	48%
Total	27	100%

Source: Research Result, 2025

for observation and trial, which are critical precursors to adoption (Lee & Park, 2022). Consequently, collective training acts as a mediator to reduce perceived risks and stimulate a bandwagon effect, accelerating knowledge acquisition and AI integration (Wang & Zhu, 2019)

The researcher found that training-driven social interactions facilitate the evolution among micro-entrepreneurs' communication identities. Moreover, it shos that micro -entrepreneur has tranform them sleves from "technology rejecters" to be "active users." It supports them to adopt AI in new ecosystem among them in collective environment. In this surronding they need validation also as cultural validation. Table 2 shows that there is 31 % early majority represents primary adoption rather than organic growth. It is shown in one of the informants' answered:

> The 7th Informant: "I think I must use Ai for making content sometimes" (personal communication, July 2, 2025).

The adoption of AI seems to be delayed among micro-entrepreneur both in this level. Mostly people in this level of adoption will adopt some innovation as long as the see the evidence. Moreover they will do some impulsive thing (Dearing & Cox, 2018). The reason why the adopt a new thing because of pragmatic think about the demand in promotional action needs as in captioning content (Al-Dhaen et al., 2023; Sziklai & Lengyel, 2022).

Micro entrepreneur consider it as evaluation moment in the process of transition as active adopter (Lund et al., 2020), at the same time their communication identity find the gaps in informational process acceptance. The Table 2 shows that 64 % of micro-entrepreneur shows their "open mindset" characteristics in their personal identity layer.

Training and workshops become the stimulant moment for them to change their mind to be open to accept AI in their activities (Reyes-Villalba et al., 2024; Thangavel & Chandra, 2024). Both of the activity become a moment to reinforce their self-efficacy rather than digital transformation (Rana et al., 2022). They start to think that AI as tools to empower them rather that as the something intimidating them (Spatola & Macdorman, 2021). Besides, it also make them as their motivation to innovate a new thing (Verhoef et al., 2021).

In the beginning, most of micro-entrepreneurs in West Java think AI as tools but now they consider it as effective thing to do for supporting their promotional activity. Furthermore, it takes them to be open-minded and also has become adaptable identity (Dahal et al., 2018; Lugo-Morin, 2017).

Moreover, they have their own awareness to continue to learn AI and also think everything

critically to solve their problem. As it shows in table 2 that 21 % show "self-criticism" become important thing in the periods of technological transition.

In the opposite direction, micro-entrepreneur 's personal identity also shape by confession because they have low proficiency to adopt new technologies (Jung & Hecht, 2004; Pamungkas et al., 2026).

> The 11th Informant: "Actually, I don't have many employee so no one can use AI yet" (Personal communication, July 10, 2025).

Mostly people show it as negative description that labeled them self-related to digital proficiency. Indirectly, it will influence to their way of thinking and becomes their identity before adopting AI. On one hand, micro-entrepreneurs need to have self-criticism in order to enhance enthusiastic as authentic character as long as the dissemination process to integrate AI for Promotional purposes (Lund et al., 2020). On the other hand, there must be consideration related to the self-criticism can impact to technology oversight management (Kamberidou, 2020). So, it needs coaching.

The 18th Informant: "We have followed digitalization, maybe it is late for me, but I need to upgrade myself in order not to miss it. Digital is growing now" (Personal communication, August 15, 2025).

Micro-entrepreneurs in West Java needs to counter with their own identity by compensating the anxiety about digital disuse. It can be done by pragmatic drive to think appropriately to assist creative task and use AI (Dahal et al., 2018). Micro-entrepreneurs with competitive tension, bring them to have "flexible" character to answer the market demand in the shape of real promotional outcome even though they must face the insecurities (Doshi, 2025). The table 2 show the empirical data that shows 91 % of coding that reflect "Growth Mindset" that manifest in one of the informants' responses.

> 11th Informant: "It is necessary to show the spirit and enthusiasm among us in order to have positive vibes. Especially when we are in the training and workshop moment" (Personal communication, July 10, 2025).

Communication identity for micro-entrepreneurs in West Java can support AI learning process and upgrade themselves in collective live (Solberg et al., 2020). Besides, they can upgrade to demonstrate their credibility as a change agent among community. This comes up with initiative awareness coding shows that 9 % represents about "interaction" proactively with the stakeholder. They also contribute to the digital transformation processing in using AI.

> 1st Informant answered:" I want to show who I am when having interaction with another micro-entrepreneur. It seems like when I meet my customer, employee and also community (Personal communication, July 1, 2025).

This investigation shows that micro-

entrepreneurs in West Java can dynamically adopt AI within the digital ecosystem. They show themselves when sharing information in society to discuss, together, technical barriers related to using AI. They do it on their own initiative to overcome anxiety while facing the new technology. They transform anxiety into strength for themselves and, indirectly, become a community that strengthens (Tubaro et al., 2020). Table 2 shows that relational identity is a time to show their "goal orientation," with 41% of total coding. It shows that micro-entrepreneurs in West Java create fundamental relationships, as indicated by the word "positive."

> 24th Informant: "It is necessary to build a positive relationship to share information about the use of AI. We can share with each other about training and workshops as a bridge to make our business has better future" (Personal Communication, August 18, 2025).

Micro-entrepreneurs in West Java can regulate their emotions, especially in operations and knowledge exchange (Chan & Zhou, 2023). Every interaction has a purpose and is oriented to the result while using AI, and to make the standard of digital skills a collective competitiveness (Giroux et al., 2022). The relationship with goal orientation can make AI adoption for promotional purposes faster. Table 2 shows that "enthusiasm" appear as main characteristic (33%) that show relational identity can be built through technology experiment in the community. It also shows that communication is a reciprocal process of identity construction among communication is a reciprocal process of identity construction (Cruz-González et al., 2021).

> 7th Informant: "When the meet me, I always asked them to learn AI in order that we can adapt with a new thing and we can motivate each other" (Personal Communication, July 2, 2025).

Enthusiasm becomes a stimulant across the demography among Micro-entrepreneurs in West Java. It also demonstrates a passion for using AI and strengthens their relational identity within the innovation ecosystem. It aims to develop explorative activity among them in society to change perception from the "complex" to "explore" a new technology utilization in the community (Nevi et al., 2025). In the CTI framework, relational identity acts as a "social glue" that facilitates social relationships that support the emotional and sustainability aspects of innovation adoption. The researcher also found that "self-reward" accounted for 23% of total coding, indicating that micro-entrepreneurs recognize what they have achieved when applying AI.

> The 6th Informant: "I would like to say Alhamdulillah for the positive side in learning AI as a new spirit of business. This is our self-reward for us in the age that not young anymore" (Personal Communication, July 2, 2025).

The researcher analyzes that AI adoption can make micro-entrepreneurs' in West Java self-esteem become more forceful. Moreover, AI Adoption can also strengthen their identity in communal as an innovative entrepreneur (Mhlanga, 2022). As shown in table 2 that "self-acceptance" shows 52 % from the total coding. It shows that group identity has a function as a moral benchmark for collective life In Addition, positive circle among micro-entrepreneurs shows that the community has success and become the bridge to overcome barrier of adopting technology (Oumlil & Balloun, 2017).

> 11th Informant: "There are some friends who cannot adopt a new technology easily but I can push them to follow and appreciate the AI process learning from Training and workshop. It brings self-acceptance among us and creates a positive circle and able to create positive interaction while we are making prompt" (Personal Communication, July 10, 2025).

Self-acceptance supports the presence of an adaptive community with the development of strategic dialogue and feedback among micro-entrepreneurs in the community. It also safely communal space where they can admit their weakness and failure become a learning process (Frei-Landau et al., 2022). This situation supports sustainable of innovation in using AI through togetherness among them in the community and also become self-actualization. The table 2 shows that "self-actualization" appeared 48 % from total coding. In this communal layer, micro-entrepreneurs have transcended in creating skill and resilience in collective live.

> The 27th Informant: "By having digital and technological literacy, we can show our business existence. At least we can share our progress to public. Take the positives and benefits from every problem of digital promotion as a new business environment and technology that must be immediately adapted through the training that we follow and show to community friends, so that we are technologically literate" (Personal communication, August 26, 2025).

The researchers indicate that some micro-business owners reflect on their own progression from technical ignorance to proficiency because they attended the training. It shows that their communal identity is shaped when one of them contributes to the group improvement (Weaver et al., 2021). Micro-business owners who master prompting demonstrate that self-actualization within the community is both dynamic and transformative. Technological literacy among micro-business owners in the community signifies a business presence and collective progress (Frei-Landau et al., 2022).

The success of one micro-business validates individual competence and establishes benchmarks for members. Self-actualization for a micro-business owner serves as a link between technical capacity and the community's innovative image. It is accelerating the

dissemination of AI innovation at the grassroots level (Henry et al., 2023).

The researchers use the cluster analysis feature to further examine the discussion path and identify connections among codes, as shown in the dendrogram in Figure 3. The researcher connected one code to another by finding the new word that represents the connection. This figure shows a close relationship between the dimensions of Self-Concept and the stages of Innovation Adoption in the use of AI for content promotion in research contexts.

This research finding aligns with Rogers' (2003) perspective related to the one's trait that contributes to the adoption of new ideas (Matthews, 2017). This study aims to investigate the relationships among data codes.

The researchers began to analyze CTI layers on Figure 3 shows that an "open mindset" (Personal Identity) and a "growth mindset" (Enacted Identity) are foundational for AI adoption, reinforcing the premise that intelligence is malleable and performance improves through strategic dedication (Canning et al., 2020; Mhlanga, 2022). By prioritizing continuous self-maintenance, micro-entrepreneurs cultivate adaptable personalities necessary to keep pace with AI-driven (Reyes-Villalba et al., 2024) for promotional advancements. Adaptability and enthusiasm are present in resilient learners among micro-entrepreneurs. They can navigate challenges that show in the relational layer (Lugo-Morin, 2017).

Rogers, (2003) explained that the late and early majority that each constitute 34 % from total population with adopt from a goal orientation point of view (Zulkifli, 2023).

Source: Research Result, 2025

Figure 3 Cluster Analysis and Research Findings

From the point of view of CTI, this group shows their resilient learner and also shows their self-actualization while adopting AI in the communal layer. Furthermore, this group creates effective communication with the aim to build professional relationships within the community. Moreover, it is also enhancing relationships in terms of professional and societal (Rohim, 2024).

Rogers, (2003) explained that one of the important things for the adoption process is "time" in diffusion and innovation. It is known as five-stage of Innovation-decision process. It shows that the rate of AI for promotional purposes also need time until the decision to adopt and based on temporal benchmark (Frei-Landau et al., 2022).

With this framework, micro-entrepreneurs in West Java integrate identity with adoption levels. For instance, there is a connection between "self-reward" (Relational Identity) and "self-acceptance" (Communal Identity). It shows the integration also between internal motivation and external recognition. It is important for micro-entrepreneurs to validate their self-reward to show their capability and capacities in their community. The validity not only happened in the community, but also for external purpose (Eastman et al., 2018).

The researcher finds that the Late Majority relies on social pressure to mitigate their feeling afraid of fear of failure. While the early majority choose a pragmatic approach as long as there is evidence to follow (Miranda et al., 2024; Rogers, 2003). The researcher also analyzes as pragmatism position for the micro-entrepreneur in the early-majority group to be an opinion leader in the community.

The opinion leader can help to solve the skepticism of members in the community within the Personal Layer, the interconnected processes of "Self-Criticism" and "Self-Negotiation" serve as the foundation for individual self-perception.

The micro entrepreneur with self-criticism enables an honest evaluation of weaknesses. The adoption in Indonesian Context is influence by collective culture (Pamungkas et al., 2025) and the presence of "bandwagon effect" (Rehman, 2022). The bandwagon effect happens while a micro-entrepreneur follows other members in the community who have success adopting something new. Besides that micro-entrepreneur who become influencer can leverage an "opinion-poll effect," harmonizing individual preferences with collective conduct (Arnesen et al., 2018). An innovation influencer can be the bridge from the internal enterprise and contribute diffusion mechanism in transformation process (Hamanaka, 2018). Communication among them in the society become a moment to create momentum of

innovation in the business ecosystem.

The researcher finds three steps of Innovation Influencer construction from the findings of this research. [1] Change Agent Mindset, it deals with goal-orientation and an open mindset. It aims to change people with skeptic into adaptive. [2] Internalized Validation, there are collaboration between self-reward and self-acceptance. It develops credibility. [3] Trustworthiness, this is combination between self-criticism and integrity to make people adopt the innovation.

The researcher analyzes that there is an indication in AI adoption related to the efficacy of communication. It has shifted the functional of macro to communal influencer. There is a transition related to terminology of influencer that connects to the CTI concept.

There is a transition the premise of CTI related to identity in communal and social life. The researchers find there is a connection across communication tradition as in cybernetic and sociocultural (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). The terminology of "Innovation Influencers" presence new transition from popularity to relatability based in the process to influence people to adopt an innovation.

The researchers analyze further related to classical theory that defines opinion leader connected with informal influence process (Pinariya et al., 2020; Rogers, 2003). This investigation considers that the critical thing to make a micro-entrepreneur adopting AI for promotional purposes can be built from someone among them rather than recruiting somebody externally for social status.

The innovation influencer that comes from micro-entrepreneurs among them can be a translator for technological purposes. Indirectly, it supports the operational stimulus across identity layers as in projecting grounded competence (personal), facilitating experience-based instruction (enacted), leveraging social capital to mitigate disruption fears (relational), and framing AI as a tool for collective competitiveness (communal).

The researchers also find that the process of adoption AI cannot be separated from social prove rather than just technical demonstration from an external party (Spatola & Macdorman, 2021). Besides, micro-entrepreneurs need someone to address their psychological barriers.

The researchers analyze that there is an integration that signifies a transition especially in the tradition in Cybernetic to Socio-Cultural. It shows that information is filtered through communal ethics and practical utility. Moreover, the adoption rate is often connected to the layer of identity. The innovation influence that comes from the community can reinterpret AI as a "peer-tool" rather than "work replacement-tool." Moreover, Innovation Influencer can be

the bridge to face skeptical micro-entrepreneurs while adopting AI.

The researcher offers three primary theoretical contributions. [1] Introduces the "In-Group Innovation Influencer" as the opinion leader to support the diffusion process.[2] The evolution the two biggest theory as Diffusion of Innovations (DoI) and Communication Theory of Identity (CTI). [3] Innovation champion, there is a need to position innovation influencer from a circle of community as "Local or In-house Innovation Champions."

The researchers offer strategic guidance by adopting AI to support promotion activities in the digital era. This research also reminder that business can be driven by local people in the community with the aim to sustainability reasons by testimonial and experiential sharing (Almufareh et al., 2024).

There is a new reclaim related to the authority of "In-Group Innovation Influencers" over technological utility. There is a human-centric identity performance as reframing adoption process. In-Group Innovation Influencers are able to be a new actor that can contribute as a new public opinion and guardian of innovation in the process of diffusion.

This study also shows the integration between the adoption of AI bases on community's economy in the process of diffusion. There is a process of digital transformation so that, the stakeholder should concern to build communication inclusively in the process of adoption.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the acceleration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption among micro-entrepreneurs is driven by local innovation influencers within the community. It needs to synthesize the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) and the Diffusion of Innovations in synergy to develop the profile of an innovation influencer. The profile comes from a multi-layered identity transformation that shows personal openness, proactive enactment, and goal-oriented relational trust converge to dismantle technological skepticism. An innovation influencer serves as a bridge, especially for the Late Majority, in the transition from skepticism to more active adoption. The synergy in the communal life among micro-businesses has mitigated "technostress" and replaced digital anxiety with a collective "bandwagon effect."

The role of "Innovation Influencer" is a vital intermediary in bridging the diffusion gap among micro-business owners when adopting AI for promotion purposes. The future researcher may apply longitudinal methodologies to assess other kinds of cognitive

and information processing in developing a micro-business understanding of AI. Future investigation might also develop the scope into another aspect of technology acceptance related to collective cultural background. Furthermore, future researchers may examine the relationship between AI adoption and specific quantitative business performance indicators.

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AI declaration: The authors declare that, in the preparation of this article, Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology was used solely as a research object and as a tool for qualitative data analysis using Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS). AI was not employed to generate substantive content, interpret findings, or formulate scientific conclusions. All analyses and interpretations remain the full intellectual responsibility of the authors.

Ethical clearance: This study adhered to the ethical principles governing qualitative research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before conducting the interviews. The authors ensure the confidentiality of informants' identities by using initial codes when presenting data in the manuscript.

Data Availability Statement: The primary data supporting the findings of this study are integrated into the manuscript (as informant initial tables and coding summaries). More detailed, de-identified interview transcripts are available upon reasonable request to the corresponding author, subject to participant privacy and confidentiality considerations.

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