

# Artificial Intelligence Implementation in Manufacturing Management: A Comprehensive Framework for Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study investigates the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in manufacturing management in Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region, addressing significant knowledge gaps regarding technology adoption in emerging economies. The research develops and validates a comprehensive framework integrating the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework, Resource-Based View (RBV), and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to examine multidimensional factors influencing AI adoption, implementation challenges, performance outcomes, and future trajectories. **Methodology:** An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed, combining quantitative survey data from 1150 manufacturing companies across twelve sectors with qualitative insights from 115 stakeholder interviews. The study achieved a 68.5% response rate, with respondents representing small (26.2%), medium (24.1%), and large (49.7%) enterprises. Ten hypotheses organized across technological, performance, organizational, and environmental dimensions were tested using correlation analysis, t-tests, ANOVA, and chi-square analysis. **Findings:** The findings reveal an 80.6% AI adoption rate across the surveyed population. Organizations addressing all four framework dimensions—technological infrastructure, organizational readiness, workforce capabilities, and external environment—achieved 76.8% implementation success compared to 32.4% for limited approaches. Hypothesis testing confirmed nine of ten hypotheses. Implementation challenges span workforce (71.3%), technical (67.8%), and organizational (58.9%) dimensions, with skills shortages (84.2%) and data quality issues (72.4%) as primary barriers. Quality improvements emerged as the strongest benefit dimension (53.4% positive, mean 2.56), with average de-

fect reductions of 47.3%. Financial validation confirms 68.4% achieved positive ROI, averaging 147% for comprehensive implementations. Future trajectories indicate that 77.6% of organizations plan investment increases, while workforce expectations show 45.7% anticipating job creation versus 23.4% expecting reductions. **Practical Implications:** Evidence-based implementation guidelines demonstrate that phased approaches achieve 72.4% success, versus 43.8% for immediate deployment; comprehensive training is associated with 71.4% higher success rates; and hands-on training reaches 82.7% effectiveness, versus 34.2% for lecture-based approaches. These findings enable manufacturing organizations to prioritize high-impact practices and establish realistic performance expectations. **Theoretical Implications:** This research contributes to technology adoption theory by empirically validating an integrated TOE-RBV-TAM framework, demonstrating that multidimensional approaches significantly outperform single-dimensional strategies. The synergistic effects observed (52.3% versus 28.7% improvement for multi-application implementations) provide empirical support for resource complementarity concepts within RBV. **Originality/Value:** This study addresses the underrepresentation of Southeast Asian manufacturing contexts in AI implementation research. The comprehensive framework and evidence-based guidelines provide contextually appropriate guidance for emerging economy manufacturers, supporting Thailand's Industry 4.0 transformation objectives and informing policy frameworks for workforce development and technological advancement.

## Keywords

Artificial Intelligence, Manufacturing Management, Technology Adoption, Emerging Economies, Thailand, Eastern Economic Corridor, Implementation Framework, Industry 4.0, Mixed-Methods Research

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background and Context

The integration of artificial intelligence into manufacturing management represents one of the most significant technological transformations in contemporary industrial history. As manufacturing organizations worldwide seek competitive advantages through technological innovation, AI technologies have emerged as fundamental enablers of operational excellence, quality improvement, and strategic differentiation. This technological revolution carries particular significance for emerging manufacturing economies, where AI adoption patterns, implementation challenges, and performance outcomes may differ substantially from those observed in developed industrial contexts. The potential for AI to transform manufacturing operations spans multiple dimensions, including production planning and scheduling, quality control and assurance, predictive maintenance, supply chain optimization, and strategic decision-making.

Thailand's manufacturing sector contributes approximately 25% - 27% of the

nation's gross domestic product, positioning manufacturing as a cornerstone of economic development and international competitiveness (Walderich, 2024). The sector encompasses diverse industries, including automotive and transportation equipment, electronics and electrical appliances, food processing, textiles and apparel, chemical products, and medical devices, creating a complex industrial landscape with varying technological readiness levels and competitive dynamics. The Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), established as Thailand's flagship development initiative under the Thailand 4.0 policy framework, concentrates advanced manufacturing activities across the provinces of Chonburi, Rayong, and Chachoengsao, creating an industrial ecosystem that serves as the primary focus for national technological advancement strategies (EEC, 2024; BOI, 2023).

This geographic concentration of manufacturing capabilities provides a unique opportunity to examine AI implementation patterns within an emerging economy context characterized by diverse organizational types, varying technological readiness levels, and distinct competitive pressures. The EEC region hosts manufacturing facilities ranging from small enterprises with fewer than 50 employees to multinational corporations with thousands of workers, enabling a comprehensive examination of how organizational scale influences AI adoption approaches and implementation outcomes. Furthermore, the presence of both traditional manufacturing sectors and technology-intensive industries within this region facilitates cross-sectoral analysis that reveals industry-specific patterns in AI deployment strategies and performance impacts.

The convergence of Industry 4.0 principles with AI capabilities has created unprecedented opportunities for manufacturing transformation. Predictive analytics enables manufacturers to anticipate equipment failures and optimize maintenance schedules, reducing unplanned downtime and extending asset lifecycles. Machine learning algorithms support production planning optimization, demand forecasting, and inventory management decisions that improve operational efficiency and resource utilization. Computer vision systems enhance quality control processes by automating defect detection and classification, surpassing human inspection accuracy and consistency. Natural language processing applications facilitate knowledge management, technical documentation analysis, and improvements in human-machine interaction, thereby enhancing organizational learning and decision-support capabilities.

Global research indicates that AI adoption in manufacturing has accelerated significantly in recent years, with organizations implementing AI technologies across diverse functional areas (Arinez et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2018). Studies conducted in developed economies have documented substantial performance improvements from AI implementation, including production efficiency gains of 15-30%, reductions in quality defects of 20% - 50%, and maintenance cost savings of 10% - 40% (Çınar et al., 2020; Dalzochio et al., 2020). However, the transferability of these findings to emerging economy contexts remains uncertain, as implementation success depends on factors such as technological infrastructure, workforce

capabilities, and institutional environments that differ markedly across levels of economic development.

Despite the strategic importance of AI in manufacturing, significant knowledge gaps persist regarding implementation dynamics in emerging economy contexts. Existing research has predominantly examined AI adoption in developed manufacturing economies, including the United States, Germany, Japan, and South Korea, where infrastructure capabilities, workforce skills, and institutional environments differ markedly from conditions in emerging markets (Tortorella et al., 2019; Raj et al., 2020). This geographic research concentration has limited the development of implementation frameworks and guidelines that adequately address the unique circumstances facing manufacturers in developing economies. Southeast Asian manufacturing contexts, despite their growing importance in global supply chains, remain underrepresented in academic literature examining AI implementation patterns and outcomes (Intalar et al., 2024; Thanyawatpornkul, 2024b).

## 1.2. Research Problem and Rationale

The rapid proliferation of AI technologies in global manufacturing creates both opportunities and challenges for organizations in emerging economies. While AI offers transformative potential for operational improvements and competitive positioning, manufacturing companies in Thailand and similar contexts face distinctive implementation barriers related to technological infrastructure limitations, workforce capability gaps, financial resource constraints, and regulatory uncertainties. These challenges necessitate systematic investigation to develop evidence-based frameworks that guide successful AI integration in contexts where existing research provides limited guidance. The absence of region-specific implementation knowledge creates risks of inappropriate technology selection, inadequate preparation, and suboptimal resource allocation that may result in implementation failures or underperformance.

Five critical issues frame the research problem addressed in this investigation. First, the absence of standardized implementation frameworks creates uncertainty regarding systematic approaches to AI integration in manufacturing environments. Organizations lack evidence-based guidance for navigating the complex technological, organizational, and environmental factors that influence implementation success. Previous research has proposed various implementation models, but these frameworks have been developed primarily from developed-economy experiences and may require substantial adaptation for emerging-market contexts where infrastructure, capabilities, and institutional factors differ significantly (Ghobakhloo, 2020; Masood & Sonntag, 2020).

Second, the ethical implications of AI deployment, including concerns about workforce displacement, algorithmic bias, and decision-making transparency, require careful examination within cultural and institutional contexts that differ from those in which existing ethical frameworks were developed. Thai manufacturing organizations operate within social and cultural norms that emphasize re-

lationship preservation, hierarchical respect, and collective harmony, creating unique considerations for AI implementation that affect workforce roles and organizational decision-making processes (Pimpa, 2012; Charoensukmongkol, 2015). Understanding how these cultural factors influence AI acceptance and implementation approaches is essential for developing context-appropriate deployment strategies.

Third, workforce development requirements for successful AI implementation demand investigation, as skills gaps and training needs in emerging-economy manufacturing contexts may differ significantly from those documented in developed-market research. The availability of technical expertise, educational infrastructure for skills development, and organizational capacity for training program delivery influence implementation success in ways that require context-specific examination. Fourth, data quality and management challenges, which are fundamental to AI system effectiveness, require examination within manufacturing environments characterized by varying levels of digital maturity and information infrastructure development. Many manufacturing organizations in emerging economies operate with legacy systems and limited data integration capabilities, creating unique challenges for AI deployment.

Fifth, financial considerations, including investment requirements, cost-benefit relationships, and return on investment timeframes, demand empirical investigation to establish realistic expectations and justify AI adoption decisions. Manufacturing organizations in emerging economies often face capital constraints and competing investment priorities, necessitating clear evidence of AI's business value before committing substantial resources to implementation initiatives. Understanding the financial dynamics of AI implementation in emerging economy contexts enables more informed investment decisions and realistic performance expectations.

The theoretical foundation for this investigation integrates three complementary perspectives that collectively address the multidimensional nature of AI implementation in manufacturing. The Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework, developed by Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990), provides a systematic structure for examining technological, organizational, and environmental factors that influence technology adoption decisions and outcomes. The Resource-Based View (RBV), grounded in Barney's (1991) work, provides insights into how organizational resources and capabilities enable competitive advantage through technological implementation. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), introduced by Davis (1989), illuminates the factors influencing technology adoption at the individual and organizational levels, particularly perceived usefulness and ease of use. This integrated theoretical approach enables a comprehensive examination of AI implementation dynamics that single-theory perspectives cannot adequately capture.

### 1.3. Research Objectives

This research addresses the following objectives designed to advance both theo-

retical understanding and practical application of AI in manufacturing management:

**Objective 1:** To develop a comprehensive framework for integrating AI technologies into manufacturing management systems within Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region, encompassing technological infrastructure, organizational readiness, workforce capabilities, and external environment dimensions.

**Objective 2:** To identify and analyze the primary challenges faced by manufacturing companies during AI implementation, including technical barriers, organizational obstacles, workforce-related difficulties, and external environmental constraints.

**Objective 3:** To evaluate the impact of AI integration on manufacturing performance across multiple dimensions, including production efficiency, product quality, cost reduction, decision-making processes, and overall competitiveness.

**Objective 4:** To assess future trajectories of AI implementation and organizational expectations for continued AI adoption, expansion, and workforce transformation within Thailand's manufacturing sector.

**Objective 5:** To develop practical, evidence-based implementation guidelines that enhance AI deployment success rates and enable manufacturing organizations to realize sustainable benefits from AI investments.

#### **1.4. Significance and Contributions**

This research makes significant contributions to both theoretical knowledge and practical applications in AI implementation in manufacturing management. From a theoretical perspective, integrating the TOE, RBV, and TAM frameworks into a comprehensive model advances understanding of the complex, multidimensional factors that influence AI adoption and implementation success. This theoretical integration addresses the limitations of single-theory approaches, which inadequately capture the full complexity of technology adoption in manufacturing contexts. The empirical validation of framework components, based on an analysis of 1,150 manufacturing companies, provides robust evidence for theoretical propositions while identifying context-specific adaptations required for applications in emerging economies.

The empirical investigation extends current knowledge beyond the developed-economy focus that characterizes the existing literature. By examining AI implementation in Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region, this research provides insights into technology adoption patterns, implementation challenges, and performance outcomes in emerging economies that have received limited scholarly attention. The mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interview insights from 115 stakeholders, enables both pattern identification and contextual depth, thereby strengthening the validity and applicability of the research conclusions. The comprehensive sample, covering 12 manufacturing sectors and a wide range of organization sizes, provides evidence supporting generalizations across diverse manufacturing contexts within emerging economic envi-

ronments.

From a practical perspective, the evidence-based implementation framework and guidelines developed through this research provide actionable guidance for manufacturing organizations seeking to adopt AI technologies. Identifying critical success factors enables organizations to prioritize investment areas that maximize the likelihood of successful implementation. Documenting challenge patterns across implementation stages supports proactive barrier mitigation, reducing implementation risks and accelerating value realization. The sector-specific insights generated through cross-industry analysis enable organizations to benchmark their approaches against similar manufacturing contexts while identifying adaptation requirements appropriate to their specific circumstances.

The policy implications extend to government agencies and industry development organizations concerned with promoting technological advancement in manufacturing sectors. Evidence regarding infrastructure requirements informs public investment priorities that create enabling environments for AI adoption. Workforce development findings support educational policy frameworks that address skills gaps constraining technology implementation. Regulatory considerations identified through this research inform policy approaches that balance innovation promotion with appropriate oversight mechanisms addressing legitimate concerns about workforce impacts, data privacy, and algorithmic accountability. The Thailand National AI Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2027) emphasizes the importance of AI adoption in manufacturing, making this research timely and relevant for national development initiatives (MHESI & MDES, 2023).

Through these theoretical and practical contributions, the research will advance understanding of AI implementation in manufacturing management and provide guidance to support successful technological transformation. The findings of the research will provide a baseline for the manufacturing context of emerging economies, while identifying areas where continued research and development are needed as AI technologies and their implementation continue to evolve. The comprehensive nature of this investigation, examining adoption patterns, implementation challenges, performance outcomes, and future trajectories, provides a foundation for evidence-based decision-making by manufacturing organizations, policymakers, and researchers concerned with AI's role in contemporary industrial development.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction

The literature review provides a comprehensive examination of existing research on artificial intelligence in manufacturing, establishing the theoretical and empirical foundation for investigating the dynamics of AI implementation. The review synthesizes conceptual frameworks, empirical studies on AI applications and performance impacts, and theoretical perspectives, including the TOE framework, Resource-Based View, and Technology Acceptance Model, while identifying sig-

nificant knowledge gaps regarding AI implementation in emerging-economy manufacturing contexts, such as Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region.

## 2.2. Conceptualizing Artificial Intelligence in Manufacturing

Artificial intelligence has undergone significant evolution since John McCarthy first coined the term at the Dartmouth Conference in 1955, defining it as the science and engineering of making intelligent machines (McCarthy et al., 1955). Initial conceptualizations focused on simulating human cognitive functions, particularly problem-solving and decision-making capabilities. Russell and Norvig (2021) refined AI conceptualization by categorizing approaches into four paradigms: systems that think like humans, systems that act like humans, systems that reason, and systems that act rationally, highlighting fundamental differences in research goals and methodologies that continue shaping both academic inquiry and practical implementation.

As AI applications expanded into manufacturing domains, the concept assumed specific dimensions reflecting unique industrial requirements. Lee et al. (2020) defined manufacturing AI as computational systems that augment human capabilities in perceiving complex patterns, making decisions under uncertainty, and taking actions in dynamic industrial environments, emphasizing collaborative human-machine intelligence rather than complete automation. Wang and Wang (2018) described AI in manufacturing as advanced algorithms enabling production systems to learn from experience, adapt to changing conditions, and perform tasks traditionally requiring human cognition. These definitions highlight learning and adaptive characteristics particularly valuable in dynamic manufacturing environments.

Conceptualizations of AI in manufacturing have evolved along several divergent paths. One significant divergence concerns whether AI systems should emulate human cognitive processes or optimize specific functions regardless of biological parallels. Human-centric approaches argue that manufacturing AI should incorporate design principles prioritizing human values and collaborative interaction (Rožanec et al., 2022), while function-oriented perspectives prioritize performance optimization through advanced analytics (Arinez et al., 2020). Another division concerns autonomy: some researchers envision AI primarily as an augmentative tool that enhances human capabilities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019), whereas autonomy-oriented conceptualizations emphasize independent decision-making with minimal human intervention (Lee et al., 2018).

Despite divergences, commonalities emerge across definitions. Most conceptualizations acknowledge data-centricity as fundamental, recognizing that manufacturing AI derives capabilities from processing vast operational data (Lee et al., 2020; Tao et al., 2018). Adaptability and learning emerge as core attributes, with researchers agreeing that manufacturing AI must improve performance through experience (Lu et al., 2020). Most conceptualizations emphasize a goal-oriented nature focused on operational objectives such as efficiency improvement, quality

enhancement, and cost reduction (Frank et al., 2019). Based on this analysis, this study adopts an integrated definition: AI in manufacturing is the application of computational systems that perceive, learn from, and reason about manufacturing environments to augment or automate decision-making across the production lifecycle, enhancing efficiency, quality, adaptability, and sustainability.

### 2.3. Empirical Research on AI in Manufacturing

#### 2.3.1. Research Objectives and Performance Outcomes

Empirical research on AI in manufacturing has pursued multiple objectives, advancing understanding of technological transformation. Findings from 78 papers of Maier et al. (2024) reveal that AI significantly contributes to predictive maintenance, risk mitigation, and quality control, with machine learning and deep learning being the predominant technologies. Quality enhancement has commanded significant attention, with Villalba-Diez et al. (2019) examining deep learning algorithms for quality control and Weichert et al. (2019) investigating automated visual inspection systems demonstrating AI's potential to transform quality management. Supply chain optimization studies by Ivanov et al. (2018) and Baryannis et al. (2018) demonstrate growing interest in predictive risk assessment and proactive mitigation strategies.

Research has documented significant efficiency gains from implementing AI. Research reports increased production efficiency by more than 15%, reduced quality defects by more than 20%, and saved more than 10% on maintenance costs (Çınar et al., 2020; Dalzochio et al., 2020). Kiangala and Wang (2018) documented how machine learning enables effective maintenance scheduling, resulting in significant cost savings. Duan et al. (2019) identified how AI reshapes managerial decision-making through data-driven support systems. Strategic transformation objectives have examined how AI catalyzes broader digital transformation, with Ghobakhloo (2020) finding that manufacturers increasingly view AI as a strategic enabler of new capabilities. Sustainability improvement has emerged as significant, with Sharma et al. (2022) examining how intelligent systems contribute to environmental performance monitoring.

#### 2.3.2. Sample Characteristics and Geographic Distribution

Sample characteristics reveal distinct patterns, with large multinational corporations historically dominating research. Tortorella et al. (2020) reported that 57% of the 135 surveyed Brazilian manufacturing firms had more than 500 employees. SME-focused research has gained attention, with Mittal et al. (2018) reporting that only 22% of reviewed studies included SMEs as primary subjects, while Müller et al. (2021) surveyed 221 German SMEs to examine how absorptive capacity and innovation strategy influence the design of Industry 4.0 business models. Geographical distribution reveals regional concentrations, with European and North American contexts receiving substantial attention. Asian contexts have been well-represented, with Hong et al. (2025) examining 426 Chinese firms. Emerging economy research has expanded through studies by Polisetty et al. (2023), which

surveyed 866 Indian firms, and Heimberger et al. (2024), which examined 1334 German firms. However, Southeast Asian contexts, including Thailand, remain underrepresented despite growing economic importance.

### 2.3.3. Implementation Challenges

Research consistently identifies multiple implementation challenge categories. Technical integration difficulties, including data interoperability and legacy system compatibility, represent significant barriers (Chatterjee et al., 2021; Moeuf et al., 2017). Data quality issues, including consistency, accuracy, and integrity, emerge as primary technical challenges (Chukwurah et al., 2024). Infrastructure limitations particularly affect SMEs and manufacturers in developing regions due to inadequate IT resources and expertise. Organizational readiness is critical, with studies highlighting that successful implementation requires strong leadership support, an innovation-oriented culture, and effective change management (Hautvast, 2024; Tjebane et al., 2022). Jöhnk et al. (2020) found organizational readiness, top management support, and willingness to innovate essential for leveraging AI's business value.

Workforce implications are a dominant theme in discussions of skill requirements and employment concerns. Studies show that AI integration has heightened workers' anxieties about job security and skill obsolescence (Chiarini et al., 2023), and research indicates that AI-induced job insecurity is linked to reduced satisfaction and psychological well-being (Chuang et al., 2025). Technical skills shortages persist as barriers, with Babashahi et al. (2024) emphasizing that AI integration requires versatile skill sets that blend technical proficiency with adaptability. Economic considerations play a central role, with studies showing that adoption rates among SMEs remain low due to high investment costs and limited access to credit (Baio Junior & Carrer, 2022). Büchi et al. (2020) observed that technology adoption transforms cost structures from labor-intensive to capital-intensive models.

## 2.4. Theoretical Framework

### 2.4.1. Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) Framework

The Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework, developed by Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990), provides a comprehensive lens for understanding technology adoption by examining three contextual factors: technological characteristics, organizational attributes, and environmental influences. Wang and Su (2021) employed TOE to analyze Industry 4.0 adoption across 186 firms, identifying technological compatibility, organizational readiness, and competitive pressure as significant predictors of success. Siddoo et al. (2019) utilized TOE to examine digital technology adoption in Thai manufacturing, highlighting the importance of government policy within an environmental context. Zhang et al. (2017) found that while technological factors dominate early adoption decisions, organizational and environmental factors become increasingly important for long-term success. The framework's flexibility enables the incorporation of con-

text-specific factors relevant to emerging economies, where regulatory environments and infrastructure constraints create unique barriers.

#### **2.4.2. Resource-Based View (RBV)**

The Resource-Based View, grounded in Barney's (1991) work, provides theoretical grounding for understanding how organizational resources and capabilities influence competitive advantage through technological implementation. According to RBV, firms possess heterogeneous resource bundles that, when valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable, generate sustained competitive advantages. Bag et al. (2021) demonstrated that digital capabilities significantly influence Industry 4.0 success, while Ghobakhloo and Ching (2019) found that firms with superior technological resources achieve better transformation outcomes. Extensions incorporating dynamic capabilities prove particularly relevant, with Tortorella et al. (2020) arguing that manufacturing firms require dynamic capabilities to reconfigure resource bases. Kamble et al. (2020) identified internal organizational barriers—such as inadequate IT infrastructure, limited financial resources, and weak leadership commitment—that constrain Industry 4.0 adoption. These align with the Resource-Based View, which emphasizes the role of internal capabilities in enabling technological innovation.

#### **2.4.3. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**

The Technology Acceptance Model, developed by Davis (1989), provides a foundation for understanding individual-level technology acceptance through the constructs of perceived usefulness and ease of use. Abu Bakar et al. (2022) employed integrated TAM and Technology Readiness Index to examine factory workers' acceptance of industrial automation in Malaysia, finding that perceived usefulness and ease of use remain significant predictors. Cao et al. (2019) revealed that perceived norms significantly affect organizational intention to use automation technology. Haynes et al. (2024) developed the Technology Acceptance in Manufacturing Environment (TAME) model by extending UTAUT constructs to include organizational readiness components, achieving 86% explanatory power with a sample of 823 manufacturing employees. These findings demonstrate the value of contextually adapted frameworks that account for manufacturing's unique characteristics.

#### **2.4.4. Integrated Theoretical Framework**

This research integrates TOE, RBV, and TAM perspectives into a comprehensive theoretical framework. TOE provides an overarching structure for examining technological, organizational, and environmental factors. RBV contributes insights into how resource configurations and dynamic capabilities enable competitive advantages. TAM illuminates the factors influencing user perceptions of technology acceptance. This integration addresses the limitations of single-theory approaches, which inadequately capture the complexity of AI implementation. The framework recognizes that successful implementation requires simultaneous

attention to technological infrastructure readiness, organizational capabilities and culture, workforce acceptance and skills development, and external environmental factors. These dimensions interact dynamically throughout implementation, with technological readiness influencing resource allocation, organizational culture affecting workforce acceptance, and environmental pressures shaping technological choices and the urgency of implementation.

## 2.5. Research Gaps and Justification

Despite extensive research on AI in manufacturing, significant gaps remain to be investigated. Geographic research disparities represent a fundamental gap, with most research concentrated in developed economies while Southeast Asian contexts remain underrepresented (Manantan, 2020; Putra, 2024). Thailand's manufacturing sector contributes approximately 27-30% of GDP, with 4.46 trillion Thai baht in 2023 (Walderich, 2024), yet academic research has not kept pace with national AI initiatives. Implementation challenges in emerging economies differ significantly from those in developed nations, with data quality limitations, limited understanding of cognitive technologies, privacy concerns, and prohibitively expensive technologies being particularly acute (Sharma et al., 2022). Thailand's National AI Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2027) emphasizes AI development across key industries (NECTEC, 2023; MHESI & MDES, 2023), creating an imperative for research examining implementation within Thai manufacturing contexts.

SME-focused research in emerging economies represents a particularly understudied area. Despite SMEs constituting approximately 99% of Thai manufacturing enterprises and employing over 80% of the industrial workforce, research on their experiences with AI implementation remains limited. Peretz-Andersson et al. (2024) noted that knowledge about AI implementation by SMEs remains underexplored, particularly where AI could drive profound transformation. SMEs face unique constraints, including limited awareness, restricted access to AI-capable talent, and limited investment capacity (Lu et al., 2022). Cross-cultural dimensions of AI implementation require further investigation, as Thai manufacturing culture, influenced by Buddhist philosophy and hierarchical social structures, may affect adoption patterns differently than in Western contexts (Pimpa, 2012). Longitudinal impact studies are notably absent, with most research focusing on initial implementation phases rather than sustained performance and workforce adaptation (Espina-Romero et al., 2024).

Research specific to Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region remains limited despite its strategic importance to national industrial policy and Thailand 4.0 objectives. Traditional manufacturing sectors crucial to Thailand's economy, including textiles and food processing, have received minimal attention regarding AI implementation challenges despite forming significant economic components (Hays, 2014). The absence of comprehensive frameworks tailored to emerging economic contexts constitutes another critical gap, as existing frameworks reflect developed-

economy realities and mature technological infrastructures. These identified gaps justify the present research's focus on developing a comprehensive, contextually relevant framework for AI integration that addresses technological, organizational, and human factors within Thailand's specific industrial context.

## **2.6. Summary**

This literature review has examined AI integration in manufacturing through analysis of conceptual frameworks, empirical studies, and theoretical approaches. The examination reveals AI's evolution from early theoretical formulations to contemporary understandings emphasizing adaptive, goal-oriented systems within cyber-physical environments. Empirical studies demonstrate substantial performance impacts with documented improvements in efficiency, quality, and decision-making, while consistently showing that success depends on organizational readiness, leadership commitment, workforce development, and data management alongside technological sophistication. The integrated theoretical framework combining TOE, RBV, and TAM perspectives provides a comprehensive analytical structure that addresses limitations of single frameworks while enabling multidimensional analysis. Critical gaps identified include limited research on Southeast Asia despite its economic significance, insufficient studies focused on SMEs, unexplored cross-cultural dimensions, and the absence of longitudinal assessments. These findings lay the foundation for the research design detailed in Chapter 3, addressing identified gaps through a comprehensive examination of AI implementation in Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The research methodology employs an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to investigate the implementation of artificial intelligence in manufacturing management across Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region. The methodological framework encompasses philosophical foundations, research design, data collection instruments and procedures, analytical techniques, and validity and reliability measures to ensure rigorous investigation of AI adoption patterns and implementation experiences across diverse manufacturing contexts.

### **3.2. Research Design**

This research employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, combining quantitative survey methods with qualitative interviews to comprehensively investigate AI implementation in manufacturing management. The sequential design initiated with quantitative data collection through structured surveys distributed to manufacturing companies across Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region, followed by qualitative interviews with stakeholders representing diverse organizational roles and perspectives. This methodological integration was designed to capture both statistical patterns across the manufacturing population and de-

tailed contextual insights explaining observed phenomena. The quantitative phase aimed to establish prevalence rates, success factors, and performance impacts through structured survey instruments. In contrast, the qualitative phase was designed to provide explanatory depth through semi-structured interviews exploring implementation experiences, challenges, and strategic considerations that quantitative measures alone cannot fully capture.

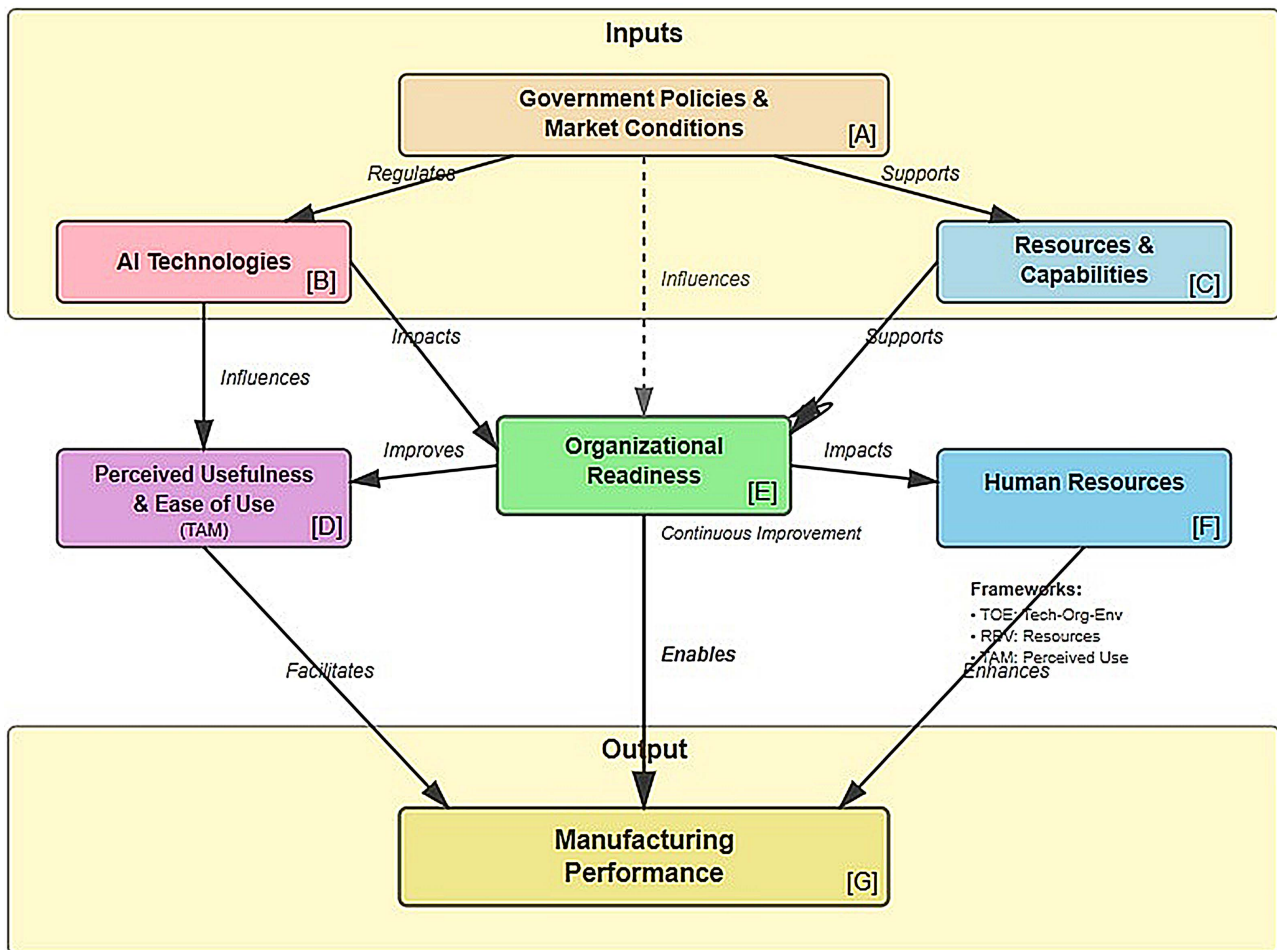
The philosophical foundation underlying this research draws from pragmatist epistemology, which prioritizes practical consequences and real-world applicability of knowledge while accepting methodological pluralism as appropriate for addressing complex research questions. This pragmatic orientation justified the mixed-methods approach by emphasizing that understanding AI implementation phenomena requires both generalizable statistical evidence and contextually rich qualitative insights. The research paradigm acknowledges that manufacturing organizations operate within complex sociotechnical systems in which technological, organizational, and human factors interact dynamically, necessitating methodological approaches that capture this complexity while maintaining scientific rigor and practical relevance for stakeholders seeking actionable guidance.

### 3.3. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The theoretical framework integrates three complementary perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of AI implementation. The Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework developed by [Tornatzky and Fleischer \(1990\)](#) establishes the foundational structure by identifying technological characteristics, organizational factors, and environmental influences as primary determinants of technology adoption decisions. The Resource-Based View (RBV) articulated by [Barney \(1991\)](#) complements this perspective by emphasizing how organizational resources and capabilities influence implementation success and the realization of competitive advantage. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by [Davis \(1989\)](#) provides insights into user-perception factors, including perceived usefulness and ease of use, that influence technology adoption and utilization effectiveness.

The integration of these theoretical perspectives addresses limitations inherent in single-theory approaches that cannot adequately capture the multidimensional complexity of AI implementation in manufacturing contexts. While the TOE framework provides a macro-level understanding of adoption determinants, RBV illuminates the requirements for capability development, and TAM explains individual acceptance patterns. Their synthesis creates a comprehensive theoretical model capable of explaining AI implementation phenomena across technological, organizational, workforce, and environmental dimensions simultaneously. This integrated theoretical framework guided hypothesis development, instrument design, and analytical interpretation throughout the research process (see [Figure 1](#)).

Based on the integrated theoretical framework and comprehensive literature review, ten hypotheses (H) were developed to guide the empirical investigation.



**Figure 1.** Integrated theoretical framework for AI implementation in manufacturing.

These hypotheses are organized into four categories that reflect the framework's dimensions: technological context, performance outcomes, organizational context, and environmental context. Each hypothesis is grounded in established theory and supported by prior empirical research, while addressing specific aspects of AI implementation in Thailand's manufacturing sector.

**Technological Context Hypotheses.** The first hypothesis addresses the relationship between technology characteristics and adoption decisions, drawing from the TOE framework's technological context and TAM's emphasis on perceived compatibility.

**H1:** The perceived compatibility of AI technologies with existing manufacturing systems positively influences AI adoption rates.

This hypothesis is grounded in research by [Trunzer et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Wang and Su \(2021\)](#), which demonstrate that compatibility with existing infrastructure significantly impacts technology implementation decisions across diverse industrial contexts. [Shah et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasized that manufacturers with high system compatibility and fewer integration challenges were more likely to succeed in AI implementation, although no quantitative ratio was reported.

**H2:** Manufacturing companies that implement multiple complementary AI technologies will report higher operational benefits than those implementing single, isolated applications.

The second hypothesis addresses the synergistic effects of technology integration. This hypothesis draws from RBV's resource complementarity concept, with Frank et al. (2019) and Lee et al. (2018) documenting that when predictive maintenance, quality control, and production scheduling AI systems operate in concert, they create emergent capabilities for manufacturing resilience that cannot be achieved independently. Chen et al. (2023) emphasized that manufacturers integrating AI across multiple functional areas reported significantly greater productivity gains than those using isolated applications, although no specific percentage difference was quantified.

**Performance Outcome Hypotheses.** Four hypotheses (H3, H4, H5, H6) examine AI's impact on manufacturing performance dimensions, addressing the fundamental question of whether AI implementation delivers measurable operational value.

**H3:** The implementation of AI technologies is positively associated with improvements in operational efficiency.

**H4:** The implementation of AI technologies is positively associated with enhancements in product quality.

**H5:** The implementation of AI technologies is positively associated with reductions in production and operational costs.

These three hypotheses (H3, H4, H5) are supported by substantial empirical evidence from Frank et al. (2019), Parhi et al. (2022), and Oztemel and Gursev (2018) documenting that firms with higher degrees of technological integration consistently achieve superior operational efficiencies, improved production accuracy, and significant cost reductions.

**H6:** Quality improvement will be the most frequently reported benefit of AI implementation across manufacturing sectors in Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region.

This hypothesis is supported by research from Schmitt et al. (2020) and Chen et al. (2023), which indicates that quality control consistently emerges as the most successful AI application area. The theoretical foundation rests on inherent AI capabilities, particularly computer vision and machine learning algorithms, to detect subtle variations and patterns beyond human perceptual capabilities, operating continuously without fatigue and ensuring consistent inspection standards. Multiple studies substantiate substantial accuracy gains. Sundaram and Zeid (2023) achieved an impressive 99.86% inspection accuracy for casting products, while Weiss (2024) developed a system with over 99.5% accuracy in electronic component inspection.

**Organizational Context Hypotheses.** Two hypotheses (H7, H8) examine how organizational characteristics influence AI implementation patterns and outcomes.

**H7:** Company size will be positively associated with the depth and diversity of AI implementation in Thailand's manufacturing sector.

This hypothesis is grounded in organizational theory and resource-based perspectives, which suggest that larger organizations possess superior resources, capabilities, and infrastructure for complex technology initiatives (Penrose, 2013; Barney, 1991). Research by Adebajo et al. (2023) examining Industry 4.0 implementation in developing countries documented that larger manufacturing firms demonstrate significantly higher adoption rates and more comprehensive technology integration than smaller enterprises. Thanyawatpornkul (2024a) discussed how multinational corporations in Thailand are more likely to adopt AI due to greater resources and infrastructure. However, no direct comparison of adoption rates with domestic firms was reported.

**H8:** Companies with formal AI training programs will demonstrate higher levels of AI implementation success than those without structured training initiatives.

This hypothesis is grounded in human capital theory (Becker, 2009) and organizational learning perspectives, emphasizing the critical role of employee knowledge and skills in successful technology adoption. Liao et al. (2017) and Sharma et al. (2022) identified workforce development as a critical determinant of successful AI integration, while Adebajo et al. (2023) found that Thai manufacturing firms collaborating with educational institutions reported significantly higher AI workforce readiness than those relying solely on vendor-provided training. However, no exact percentage increase was specified.

**Environmental Context Hypotheses.** Two hypotheses (H9, H10) address how external environmental factors influence AI adoption patterns.

**H9:** Companies operating in sectors with higher competitive intensity will exhibit higher AI adoption rates than those in less competitive sectors.

This hypothesis is grounded in competitive dynamics theory and institutional theory, which suggest that environmental pressures catalyze technology adoption (Porter, 2011; Teece, 2018). Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990) and Oztemel and Gursev (2018) documented that manufacturing companies in highly competitive sectors demonstrate accelerated technology adoption rates. Institutional theory suggests that competitive environments create isomorphic pressures, driving organizations toward similar technology adoption patterns as they seek to match or exceed competitors' capabilities (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

**H10:** Multinational manufacturing operations will show higher AI adoption rates and implementation maturity than domestically-focused enterprises in Thailand.

This hypothesis is grounded in international business theory and knowledge spillover perspectives (Dunning, 2016; Cohen, 2021). Research by Liao et al. (2017) and Kinkel et al. (2022) found that multinational corporations and their suppliers exhibit higher adoption rates of advanced manufacturing technologies than purely domestic enterprises. Thanyawatpornkul (2024b) revealed significant differences between internationally exposed and domestically focused manufacturers, with

tier-one suppliers to global automotive manufacturers demonstrating adoption patterns closely aligned with global industry trends.

### **3.4. Population and Sampling Strategy**

The target population comprises manufacturing companies operating in Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region, specifically the provinces of Chonburi, Rayong, and Chachoengsao, which collectively constitute the nation's primary industrial corridor. This region was selected for its concentration of diverse manufacturing activities, representation of both multinational and domestic enterprises, and policy significance as the centerpiece of Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) initiative, which promotes advanced manufacturing and technological transformation. The sampling frame was constructed from official industrial estate registrations and manufacturing association databases, identifying manufacturing establishments across twelve distinct sectors, including electronics, automotive, food processing, chemicals, textiles, machinery, plastics, medical devices, furniture, building materials, metal products, and other manufacturing categories.

Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation across sectors and organizational size categories, maintaining sample characteristics reflecting the broader manufacturing population while enabling meaningful subgroup analyses. The stratification approach addressed potential sampling bias by ensuring adequate representation of small, medium, and large enterprises across different manufacturing sectors. The sampling strategy planned to distribute approximately 1700 questionnaires to manufacturing companies across all twelve sectors within the target region during the designated 12-week data collection period. Since researchers cannot predict in advance how many companies will respond, the distribution quantity was set to exceed 1500 to ensure an adequate sample size for statistical analysis, even with the moderate response rates typically observed in organizational surveys. At the end of the designated collection period, questionnaire acceptance would close, and all received responses would be compiled for analysis, with the actual sample characteristics and response rates reported in the findings chapter. The sampling strategy aimed to capture diverse organizational contexts, including variations in ownership structure (multinational versus domestic), technological sophistication, and export orientation, to enable a comprehensive analysis of factors influencing AI implementation patterns.

### **3.5. Data Collection Instruments**

The quantitative data collection employed structured survey instruments developed through systematic processes ensuring content validity, construct validity, and reliability. The survey instrument comprised multiple sections addressing organizational demographics, technology adoption patterns, implementation challenges, performance impacts, and future implementation intentions. AI implementation status was measured using categorical classifications that distinguished

non-adopters, early adopters, partial adopters, and advanced adopters based on technology deployment breadth and integration depth. Technology types were assessed through inventory items addressing predictive analytics, machine learning, computer vision, natural language processing, and robotic process automation adoption. Application areas examined included quality control, production planning, predictive maintenance, supply chain optimization, and inventory management. Performance impacts were measured using five-point Likert scales assessing improvements in production efficiency, product quality, cost reduction, decision-making effectiveness, and overall competitiveness following AI implementation.

Implementation success, serving as the primary outcome variable throughout this research, was operationally defined as a composite measure derived from four survey items: 1) achievement of stated implementation objectives rated on a five-point scale from “not achieved” to “fully achieved,” 2) sustained operational use of AI systems for at least six months rated as binary (yes/no), 3) measurable performance improvements in at least one operational dimension rated on a five-point scale, and 4) organizational intention to expand or continue AI implementation rated on a five-point scale from “definitely discontinue” to “definitely expand.” Organizations scoring 4 or above on items 1, 3, and 4, combined with an affirmative response on item 2, were classified as achieving “implementation success.” Organizations meeting fewer than three of these criteria were classified as “limited success.” This composite approach ensured that success classification captured both objective outcomes (sustained use, measurable improvements) and subjective assessments (goal achievement, expansion intentions), providing robust measurement of implementation outcomes across diverse organizational contexts.

Instrument development followed established procedures to ensure measurement quality. Content validity was established through expert review panels comprising academic researchers specializing in technology management and industry practitioners with experience in AI implementation, who evaluated instrument items for relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness. Pilot testing with a subset of manufacturing organizations enabled refinement of question wording, response options, and survey flow based on respondent feedback and preliminary reliability analysis. The final instrument balanced comprehensive coverage of research constructs with practical considerations of respondent burden and completion time to maximize response quality and participation rates.

The qualitative data collection employed semi-structured interview protocols to elicit detailed accounts of implementation experiences, strategic considerations, and contextual factors influencing AI adoption decisions and outcomes. Interview participants were to be purposively selected to represent diverse organizational roles, including operations managers, production engineers, IT managers, C-suite executives, and frontline workers, ensuring comprehensive perspective coverage across functional areas affected by AI implementation. Interview

protocols addressed implementation motivations, technology selection processes, deployment approaches, challenges encountered, patterns of benefit realization, and future implementation intentions, enabling rich contextual understanding to complement quantitative findings.

### **3.6. Data Collection Procedures**

Quantitative data collection proceeded through systematic distribution of survey instruments to manufacturing organizations via multiple channels, including industrial estate management offices, manufacturing association networks, and direct organizational contact. Survey administration was planned over 12 weeks, with follow-up reminders at 2-week intervals to maximize response rates while respecting organizational schedules and operational demands. Response validation procedures were established to verify data quality through consistency checks, completeness verification, and outlier identification, with protocols for excluding incomplete or inconsistent responses from final analysis. Multiple distribution channels were employed to enhance accessibility and response rates across different organizational types and sizes.

Qualitative data collection involved semi-structured interviews with stakeholders across participating organizations, with interviews planned to last 45 - 90 minutes and recorded with participant consent for subsequent transcription and analysis. Interview scheduling was aligned with participant availability while ensuring adequate representation across organizational roles, company sizes, and manufacturing sectors. Interview protocols maintained consistency across sessions while allowing flexibility for exploring emergent themes and organization-specific contexts. All interviews were conducted in Thai to ensure participant comfort and communication accuracy, with transcription and translation procedures established for analysis.

### **3.7. Data Analysis Methods**

Quantitative data analysis employed statistical techniques appropriate for hypothesis testing and pattern identification across the survey dataset. Descriptive statistics were planned to establish baseline characteristics, including frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, and dispersion metrics for key variables. Inferential analyses, including correlation, t-tests, analysis of variance, and regression modeling, were designed to examine relationships between implementation factors and performance outcomes while testing 10 research hypotheses. Advanced analytical techniques, including structural equation modeling, were planned to examine complex multivariate relationships within the integrated theoretical framework. All quantitative analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics software to ensure analytical consistency and methodological rigor.

Qualitative data analysis employed thematic analysis procedures following established frameworks for systematic coding and interpretation of interview transcripts. Initial coding was designed to identify descriptive categories emerging

from participant narratives, followed by focused coding to consolidate initial codes into coherent thematic patterns aligned with the research objectives. Theoretical coding was planned to connect emergent themes to the integrated theoretical framework, enabling interpretation within established conceptual structures while remaining open to novel insights extending existing theory. An intercoder reliability assessment involving independent coding by multiple researchers was planned to establish analytical consistency and reduce individual interpretation bias. The mixed-methods integration strategy involved comparing and synthesizing quantitative and qualitative findings to develop a comprehensive understanding of AI implementation phenomena.

### **3.8. Validity and Reliability**

Multiple procedures were established to ensure research validity and reliability across quantitative and qualitative components. Content validity was established through expert review panels comprising academic researchers and industry practitioners who evaluated instrument items for relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness. Construct validity was to be assessed through factor analysis, confirming that the measurement items loaded appropriately on the intended constructs and demonstrating adequate discriminant validity between distinct concepts. Internal consistency reliability was to be evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, with acceptable thresholds set at 0.70 or higher for all measurement scales. A test-retest reliability assessment with a subset of respondents was planned to demonstrate the temporal stability of responses across measurement scales.

Qualitative validity was addressed through multiple strategies, including prolonged engagement with participating organizations, triangulation across data sources and analytical methods, member checking with interview participants to verify interpretation accuracy, and thick description that enables readers to assess transferability to other contexts. The mixed-methods integration was designed to enhance overall research validity through convergent findings across quantitative and qualitative components, with qualitative insights explaining and extending statistical patterns. In contrast, quantitative findings would establish the generalizability of qualitative themes.

### **3.9. Ethical Considerations**

The research adhered to established ethical principles for human subjects research, with appropriate institutional review and approval obtained prior to data collection. Informed consent procedures ensured that participants understood the research purposes, intended data use, confidentiality protections, and their rights to voluntary participation before providing information. Organizational confidentiality was maintained through anonymization procedures, preventing the identification of specific companies or individuals in research outputs. Data security measures, including encrypted storage and restricted access, protected participant information throughout the research process. The research design avoided

deception and minimized participant burden while ensuring the benefits of knowledge generation justified any research-related inconvenience to participating organizations.

### **3.10. Summary**

The explanatory sequential mixed-methods design combines quantitative survey methodology with qualitative interview approaches to enable both statistical generalization and contextual depth in understanding implementation phenomena. The integrated theoretical framework synthesizing TOE, RBV, and TAM perspectives guided development of ten hypotheses organized across four categories: technological context hypotheses (H1-H2) examining compatibility and synergistic implementation effects, performance outcome hypotheses (H3-H6) examining efficiency, quality, cost, and benefit patterns, organizational context hypotheses (H7-H8) examining company size and training program effects, and environmental context hypotheses (H9-H10) examining competitive intensity and international exposure influences. Stratified random sampling from manufacturing establishments across twelve sectors ensures representative coverage of Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region manufacturing population. Rigorous validity and reliability procedures were established to ensure research quality, while ethical considerations protect participant interests throughout the investigation. The methodological framework establishes the foundation for empirical findings presented in subsequent chapters.

## **4. Research Findings**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The presentation of findings follows the sequential structure of the five research objectives, beginning with the development of a comprehensive implementation framework, proceeding to the identification of implementation challenges, the evaluation of performance impacts, the assessment of future trajectories, and concluding with the development of implementation guidelines. The findings integrate quantitative survey data from 1150 manufacturing companies with qualitative insights from 115 stakeholder interviews, providing both statistical evidence and contextual understanding of AI implementation phenomena across diverse organizational contexts.

The quantitative phase achieved responses from 1150 manufacturing companies, representing a 68.5% response rate from the 1678 questionnaires distributed. The sample achieved representation across organizational sizes, with small enterprises (fewer than 50 employees) comprising 26.2% of respondents (301 companies), medium enterprises (50 - 199 employees) comprising 24.1% (277 companies), and large enterprises (200 or more employees) comprising 49.7% (572 companies). Sectoral distribution included electronics (28.7%), automotive and parts (32.4%), food processing (15.3%), textiles (9.8%), and other manufacturing sectors, including plastics, chemicals, medical devices, furniture, and building mate-

rials (13.8%). The implementation status revealed that 80.6% of respondents (927 companies) had implemented AI technologies at varying levels of sophistication, while 9.4% (108 companies) were non-adopters and 10.0% (115 companies) were in active implementation. Among adopters, implementation duration varied: 28.4% had less than 1 year of experience, 31.7% had 1 to 2 years, 23.6% had 2 to 3 years, and 16.3% had more than 3 years of AI implementation experience.

## 4.2. Findings by Research Objectives

### 4.2.1. Objective 1: Developing a Comprehensive Framework for AI Integration

The first research objective focused on developing a comprehensive framework for integrating artificial intelligence technologies into manufacturing management practices. The empirical investigation validated a framework comprising four critical dimensions: technological infrastructure readiness, organizational readiness factors, workforce capabilities, and external environment influences, as illustrated in **Figure 1**. Each dimension demonstrated significant independent effects on implementation outcomes and interactive relationships with other dimensions (see **Table 1**).

Technological infrastructure readiness emerged as a foundational enabler

**Table 1.** Framework components and validation results.

Framework Dimension	Component	With Component	Without Component	Difference (pp)
Technological Infrastructure	ERP Systems	73.2%	45.8%	27.4
	Data Management	68.7%	41.3%	27.4
	Cloud Infrastructure	71.4%	52.1%	19.3
	Hardware Adequacy	64.8%	38.9%	25.9
Organizational Readiness	Dedicated AI Leadership	78.4%	42.1%	36.3
	Strategic Alignment	74.6%	39.2%	35.4
	Change Management	71.8%	44.7%	27.1
	Financial Resources	69.3%	43.1%	26.2
Workforce Capabilities	Training > 50% Employees	69.3%	34.7%	34.6
	Technical Skills	72.1%	41.8%	30.3
	Employee Acceptance	68.4%	38.9%	29.5
	Cross-functional Collaboration	66.7%	42.3%	24.4
External Environment	Competitive Sector	67.8%	—	—
	Government Support	63.4%	48.7%	14.7
	Vendor Ecosystem	65.2%	44.1%	21.1
	Regulatory Clarity	61.8%	52.3%	9.5
<b>Overall Framework</b>	All 4 Dimensions Addressed	76.8%	32.4%	44.4

Note. pp = percentage points. Success rates represent the percentage of organizations that successfully implement AI.

demonstrating strong statistical relationships with implementation success. Companies with existing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems achieved 73.2% implementation success, compared to 45.8% for organizations lacking integrated management systems, representing a 27.4 percentage-point difference that was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Data management capabilities demonstrated critical importance, with organizations maintaining structured data repositories and established data governance practices achieving 68.7% success rates compared to 41.3% for those with fragmented data systems lacking systematic collection and storage protocols. Cloud computing infrastructure provided significant advantages, with cloud-enabled organizations achieving 71.4% success compared to 52.1% for those relying solely on on-premises solutions, reflecting the flexibility and scalability benefits of cloud platforms for AI workload management. Hardware infrastructure, including adequate computing resources, network bandwidth, and storage capacity, correlated with 64.8% success rates, while organizations reporting infrastructure limitations achieved only 38.9% success, demonstrating the continued importance of foundational technology investments despite advances in cloud computing.

Organizational readiness factors demonstrated substantial influence on implementation outcomes across multiple dimensions. Companies with dedicated AI leadership structures, including designated implementation champions, cross-functional steering committees, or formal AI governance bodies, achieved 78.4% implementation success compared to 42.1% for organizations lacking clear leadership structures, representing a 36.3 percentage point difference. Strategic alignment between AI initiatives and broader business objectives correlated with 74.6% success rates, compared with 39.2% for implementations lacking a clear strategic connection, suggesting that AI projects positioned as strategic priorities receive greater organizational support and resource allocation. Change management capabilities proved essential, with organizations demonstrating strong change management practices through previous technology transformations, achieving 71.8% success compared to 44.7% for those with limited change management experience or capability. Financial resource availability showed a significant correlation with implementation outcomes: adequately resourced initiatives achieved 69.3% success, compared to 43.1% for resource-constrained initiatives. However, the relationship was moderated by the implementation approach, with phased strategies reducing resource-intensity requirements.

Workforce capabilities represented critical success determinants across technical and adaptive dimensions. Organizations providing comprehensive AI training to more than 50% of employees affected by AI implementations achieved 69.3% success, compared to 34.7% for organizations with limited training approaches covering fewer employees, representing a 34.6 percentage point difference that underscores the importance of training. Technical skill availability, including data science, machine learning engineering, and AI operations expertise, correlated with 72.1% success for organizations with adequate technical capabili-

ties, compared to 41.8% for those facing significant skill shortages. Employee acceptance and engagement demonstrated significant influence: organizations that achieved high workforce acceptance through effective communication and involvement achieved 68.4% success, compared to 38.9% for those experiencing substantial resistance or skepticism. Cross-functional collaboration capabilities enable effective cooperation among operations, IT, engineering, and management functions, correlating with 66.7% success in collaborative organizations compared to 42.3% in those with siloed departmental structures that inhibit knowledge sharing and coordinated implementation.

External environment influences showed meaningful impacts on implementation patterns and success rates. Organizations operating in highly competitive sectors where technological differentiation provided a competitive advantage achieved 67.8% higher adoption rates than those in less competitive environments, where technology adoption pressure was reduced. Government support utilization, including Board of Investment incentives, Eastern Economic Corridor programs, and industry development initiatives, correlated with 63.4% success rates, compared to 48.7% for organizations not utilizing available support mechanisms, suggesting that policy frameworks meaningfully influence implementation feasibility. Vendor ecosystem quality and availability were important, with organizations reporting strong vendor relationships, adequate technology partner options, and reliable support services achieving 65.2% success, compared to 44.1% for those with limited vendor support or constrained technology partner access. Regulatory environment clarity influenced outcomes: organizations in clearly regulated sectors understood compliance requirements and achieved 61.8% success, compared to 52.3% for those facing regulatory uncertainty, which affected implementation scope and approach decisions.

The framework validation demonstrated that comprehensive readiness across all four dimensions significantly predicted implementation success. Organizations that simultaneously addressed technological infrastructure, organizational readiness, workforce capabilities, and external environment factors achieved 76.8% implementation success, compared to 32.4% for those with limited dimensional coverage addressing only one or two dimensions, representing a 44.4 percentage point difference. The interaction effects between dimensions suggested multiplicative rather than additive relationships, with organizations strong in multiple dimensions achieving outcomes exceeding predictions based on individual-dimension contributions. Qualitative findings reinforced the framework's validity, with interview participants consistently emphasizing the multidimensional requirements for successful implementation. As one operations director explained: "We initially focused only on technology, thinking that was the main challenge, but we quickly learned that success required equal attention to our people, our processes, and our external partnerships. The technology was actually the easier part once we got the organizational elements right."

**Objective 1 Conclusion.** The comprehensive framework integrating techno-

logical infrastructure readiness, organizational readiness factors, workforce capabilities, and external environment influences was validated through empirical evidence demonstrating that multidimensional approaches addressing all four framework components achieve significantly higher success rates (76.8%) compared to limited approaches addressing fewer dimensions (32.4%), representing a 44.4 percentage point difference with strong statistical significance.

#### 4.2.2. Objective 2: Identifying Implementation Challenges

The second research objective focused on identifying and analyzing the primary challenges manufacturing companies face in implementing AI (see **Table 2**). The investigation revealed challenges spanning technical, organizational, and workforce dimensions with varying intensity across organizational contexts, sectors, and

**Table 2.** Implementation challenges by category.

Challenge Category	Specific Challenge	Prevalence (%)	Size Variation
Technical (67.8%)	Data Quality Issues	72.4%	Universal
	Legacy System Compatibility	78.3%	Universal
	System Integration	64.2%	Universal
	Infrastructure Limitations	—	Small: 81.7%, Medium: 52.6%, Large: 23.4%
	Algorithm Selection	54.7%	Universal
	Cybersecurity Concerns	48.9%	Universal
Organizational (58.9%)	Change Management	69.1%	Universal
	Budget Constraints	61.3%	Small: 78.4%, Large: 34.2%
	Leadership Inconsistencies	54.7%	Universal
	Timeline Pressures	52.8%	Universal
	Unclear Success Metrics	47.6%	Universal
	Interdepartmental Coordination	44.3%	Universal
Workforce (71.3%)	Skills Shortages	84.2%	Traditional: 89.7%, Tech: 52.3%
	Fear of Job Displacement	61.7%	Universal
	Training Resource Limitations	58.9%	Small: 74.2%, Large: 41.8%
	Employee Resistance	52.4%	Universal
	AI Talent Retention	47.3%	Universal
<b>Mitigation Strategy</b>		<b>Reduction (%)</b>	
	Dedicated AI Teams	56.7%	
	Comprehensive Training	62.4%	
	Phased Approaches	51.3%	
	External Partnerships	48.9%	

Note. Percentages in parentheses indicate overall category prevalence. Size variations show differences across organizational size categories.

implementation approaches. Challenge patterns demonstrated both universal elements affecting most organizations and context-specific manifestations requiring tailored mitigation strategies.

Technical challenges affected 67.8% of implementing organizations, with data-related issues representing the most prevalent difficulty category. Data quality issues, including incomplete records, inconsistent formats, missing values, and accuracy concerns, affected 72.4% of organizations, emerging as the single most frequently reported challenge across all categories. System integration complexities involving connecting AI systems to existing operational technology, manufacturing execution systems, and enterprise applications affected 64.2% of organizations. Legacy system compatibility issues impacted 78.3% of those with substantial existing operational technology infrastructure, creating particular difficulties for organizations with older equipment lacking modern connectivity capabilities. Infrastructure limitations demonstrated significant size-dependent patterns: small enterprises reported inadequate computing resources, network capacity, or data storage at 81.7%, compared to 52.6% for medium enterprises and only 23.4% for large enterprises, a 58.3 percentage point difference between small and large organizations, reflecting resource disparities. Algorithm selection and optimization challenges affected 54.7% of organizations, which found it difficult to identify appropriate AI approaches for specific manufacturing applications. Cybersecurity concerns regarding AI system vulnerabilities, data protection, and operational technology security affected 48.9% of implementers, particularly in sectors with sensitive intellectual property or regulatory compliance requirements.

Organizational challenges affected 58.9% of implementing organizations, with change-related difficulties representing the most significant barrier category. Change management difficulties encompassing resistance to new processes, disruption of established workflows, and adaptation to AI-augmented operations represented the most significant organizational barrier at 69.1%. Leadership support inconsistencies, including wavering commitment, competing priorities, and inadequate executive engagement, affected 54.7% of organizations, creating implementation momentum challenges. Budget constraints affected 61.3% of organizations, with small enterprises reporting financial limitations at 78.4%, compared to 34.2% for large enterprises, reflecting disparities in resource availability. Timeline pressures, including unrealistic implementation schedules, compressed pilot phases, and premature scaling, impacted 52.8% of implementations. Unclear success metrics affecting 47.6% of organizations created difficulties in demonstrating value and maintaining stakeholder support. Interdepartmental coordination challenges affected 44.3% of organizations, particularly those implementing cross-functional AI applications that require collaboration between traditionally separated operational units.

Workforce challenges affected 71.3% of implementing organizations, representing the highest overall challenge category prevalence. Skills shortages in data science, machine learning engineering, AI operations, and advanced analytics rep-

resented the most critical barrier at 84.2%, affecting organizations of all sizes and sectors. Traditional manufacturing sectors, including textiles, furniture, and building materials, experienced skills limitations at 89.7%, compared to 52.3% in technology-oriented sectors such as electronics and automotive, representing a 37.4 percentage point difference reflecting sectoral differences in human capital. Employee resistance to change, affecting 52.4% of organizations, manifests as skepticism about AI benefits, concerns about job security, and reluctance to adopt new working methods. Fear of job displacement impacted 61.7% of the workforce, creating anxiety that affected acceptance and engagement even when actual displacement was not planned. Training resource limitations affecting 58.9% of organizations included insufficient training budgets, limited access to qualified trainers, and inadequate time allocation for workforce development, with small enterprises reporting training constraints at 74.2% compared to 41.8% for large enterprises. Retention of AI-skilled personnel emerged as an ongoing challenge affecting 47.3% of organizations that had successfully developed internal capabilities, creating vulnerability to talent loss.

Challenge mitigation strategies demonstrated varying effectiveness across organizational contexts, providing an empirical foundation for practical recommendations. Organizations establishing dedicated AI implementation teams with cross-functional representation reduced the severity of technical challenges by 56.7% compared to those relying on existing IT departments to manage AI projects alongside other responsibilities. Comprehensive training programs covering both technical skills and change adaptation reduced workforce-related barriers by 62.4% compared to limited training investments. Phased implementation approaches, beginning with bounded pilot projects before scaling, reduced organizational disruption by 51.3% compared to immediate comprehensive deployment. External partnership strategies, including vendor collaborations, academic partnerships, and participation in industry consortia, reduced capability gaps by 48.9%, particularly for small and medium enterprises lacking internal expertise. Qualitative findings emphasized the interrelated nature of challenges, with one IT manager noting: “The biggest surprise was that our technical challenges were actually easier to solve than our people challenges. Getting buy-in and developing skills took much longer than getting the technology working, and without those people elements sorted, even good technology implementations failed to deliver value.”

**Objective 2 Conclusion.** Implementation challenges span technical (67.8%), organizational (58.9%), and workforce (71.3%) dimensions, with skills shortages (84.2%) and data quality issues (72.4%) representing the most prevalent barriers. Size-dependent patterns show that small enterprises experience infrastructure limitations at 81.7%, compared with 23.4% for large enterprises. Systematic mitigation strategies, including dedicated implementation teams (56.7% reduction), comprehensive training (62.4% reduction), and phased approaches (51.3% reduction), significantly reduce challenge severity.

### 4.2.3. Objective 3: Evaluating AI's Impact on Manufacturing Performance

The third research objective examined the quantitative and qualitative impacts of AI integration on manufacturing performance across multiple operational dimensions. Performance impacts were measured using five-point Likert scales where scores of 1 indicated significant negative impact, 2 indicated slight negative impact, 3 indicated no impact, 4 indicated slight positive impact, and 5 indicated significant positive impact, with scores above 2.5 indicating net positive impact and scores above 3.5 indicating substantial positive impact across responding organizations (see **Table 3**).

Product quality improvements emerged as the strongest performance dimension, demonstrating AI's substantial positive impact on manufacturing outcomes. A total of 614 companies representing 53.4% of AI implementers reported positive quality impacts with a mean improvement score of 2.56 on the assessment scale,

**Table 3.** Performance impact assessment results.

Performance Dimension	Companies Reporting Positive Impact	Mean Score	Key Metrics
Product Quality	614 (53.4%)	2.56	Defect reduction: 47.3% avg; Medical devices: 66% improvement
Decision-Making	584 (50.8%)	2.53	Routine decisions: 54.3% faster; Errors: 43.7% reduction
Production Efficiency	552 (48.0%)	2.42	Throughput: 23.7% increase; Cycle time: 18.4% reduction
Cost Reduction	556 (48.3%)	2.42	Maintenance: 32.4% reduction; Energy: 18.7% reduction
<b>Temporal Effects</b>			
Implementation > 2 years	73.6%	—	Positive efficiency impacts
Implementation < 1 year	31.4%	—	Positive efficiency impacts
Quality improvements	—	—	Within 6 months
Cost reductions	—	—	12 - 18 months required
<b>Financial Performance</b>			
Positive ROI (<18 months)	68.4%	—	
Comprehensive implementation ROI	—	—	147% average
Limited-scope implementation ROI	—	—	89% average
Revenue increase	—	—	12.8% average
Profit margin improvement	—	—	7.3% average
<b>Synergistic Effects</b>			
Multiple dimensions	—	—	52.3% improvement
Single-area focus	—	—	28.7% improvement

Note. Mean scores based on 5-point scale (1 = significant negative, 3 = no impact, 5 = significant positive). Scores above 2.5 indicate a net positive impact.

the highest mean score among all performance dimensions. Defect rate reductions averaged 47.3% across implementing organizations, with exceptional cases achieving reductions exceeding 60%, representing transformative improvements in manufacturing precision and consistency. Computer vision applications for visual inspection demonstrated particular effectiveness with detection accuracy improvements averaging 34.7% compared to manual inspection approaches. One medical device manufacturer provided an illustrative example of reporting rejection rate improvements from 3.2% to 1.1%, representing a 66% reduction in defective output, with corresponding customer complaint reductions of 68% following AI-enabled quality control implementation. Quality consistency improvements enabled organizations to meet higher certification standards, with 34.7% of quality-focused implementers achieving new quality certifications, such as ISO upgrades or customer-specific quality qualifications, following AI deployment. Qualitative findings emphasized quality benefits with one quality manager stating: *“AI-powered inspection catches defects that even our most experienced inspectors miss, particularly subtle visual variations that the human eye struggles to detect consistently across long shifts. We’ve reduced customer returns by over 40% in the first year, and our reputation for quality has improved significantly with key customers.”*

Decision-making enhancements ranked second among the strongest performance dimensions, demonstrating AI’s value for cognitive augmentation in manufacturing management. A total of 584 companies, representing 50.8% of implementers, reported positive decision-making impacts, with a mean score of 2.53 on the assessment scale. Routine operational decision speed, including production scheduling, resource allocation, and inventory management, improved by 54.3% on average through AI-enabled automation and recommendation systems. Strategic decision quality improved by 37.2% through enhanced analytics, demand forecasting, and market intelligence capabilities, enabling better-informed strategic choices. Decision accuracy improvements reduced error rates by 43.7% across implementing organizations by eliminating human cognitive biases and calculation errors in complex optimization scenarios. Real-time visibility enabled by AI analytics improved response times to production anomalies by 62.4%, enabling faster intervention when issues emerged. Predictive capabilities enabled proactive intervention, reducing reactive problem-solving by 48.9% by anticipating maintenance needs, demand fluctuations, and supply chain disruptions before they impacted operations.

Production efficiency improvements affected 552 companies, representing 48.0% of implementers, with a mean assessment score of 2.42. Implementation maturity demonstrated a significant influence on efficiency outcomes, with organizations having more than 2 years of AI experience achieving positive efficiency impacts at 73.6%, compared to only 31.4% for those with less than 1 year of experience, a 42.2 percentage-point difference that suggests substantial learning-curve effects. Throughput improvements averaged 23.7% across mature implementations ena-

bled by AI-optimized production scheduling, reduced changeover times, and improved process parameters. Cycle time reductions averaged 18.4% through the identification and elimination of bottlenecks, optimization of process sequences, and reduction of non-value-adding activities. Equipment utilization improvements averaged 15.8% through AI-optimized scheduling, maximizing productive machine time, and predictive maintenance integration, reducing unplanned downtime.

Cost reduction benefits affected 556 companies, representing 48.3% of implementers, with a mean assessment score of 2.42. Predictive maintenance applications achieved 32.4% maintenance cost reduction through optimized maintenance scheduling, reduced emergency repairs, and extended equipment lifespan, with a 41.7% decrease in unplanned downtime, representing one of the clearest AI value propositions. Energy optimization applications achieved average consumption reductions of 18.7% through AI-controlled process optimization, intelligent scheduling to reduce peak demand, and continuous efficiency improvement algorithms. Material waste reductions averaged 21.3% through AI-optimized production planning that minimized overproduction, improved quality control to reduce scrap rates, and enhanced demand forecasting to reduce obsolescence.

Financial performance validation demonstrated measurable business value through a comprehensive return-on-investment analysis. Revenue increases averaged 12.8% for organizations with mature AI implementations, driven by improved quality enabling premium pricing, enhanced customer satisfaction driving repeat business, and new capability development enabling market expansion. Profit margins improved by an average of 7.3% over two years following comprehensive AI implementation, driven by combined quality improvements, efficiency gains, and cost reductions. Return on investment analysis revealed that 68.4% of mature implementations (more than 18 months) achieved positive ROI, with comprehensive implementations achieving average returns of 147% compared to 89% for limited-scope single-application deployments, representing a 58 percentage-point difference. Synergistic effects emerged when organizations implemented AI across multiple performance dimensions simultaneously, achieving an average improvement of 52.3% compared to 28.7% for single-area implementations, a 23.6 percentage-point difference.

**Objective 3 Conclusion.** AI implementation is associated with substantial performance impacts across quality (53.4% positive, mean 2.56), decision-making (50.8%, mean 2.53), efficiency (48.0%, mean 2.42), and cost (48.3%, mean 2.42) dimensions. Implementation maturity significantly influences outcomes, with organizations having more than 2 years of experience achieving 73.6% positive efficiency impacts, versus 31.4% for organizations with less than 1 year of experience. Financial validation confirms 68.4% positive ROI, averaging 147% for comprehensive implementations versus 89% for limited scope, with synergistic effects (52.3% versus 28.7%) demonstrating the value of integrated approaches.

#### 4.2.4. Objective 4: Assessing Future AI Implementation Trajectories

The fourth research objective examined future trajectories of AI implementation, including organizational expectations for continued adoption, investment patterns, expansion priorities for applications, and implications for workforce transformation. The trajectory assessment captured organizational intentions, investment plans, and anticipated changes, providing a forward-looking perspective that complements current-state findings from other objectives (see **Table 4**).

Investment trajectory analysis revealed strong momentum with 892 companies

**Table 4.** Future trajectory indicators.

Trajectory Category	Indicator	Percentage
Investment Intentions (n = 892, 77.6%)	Planning investment increases (2 - 3 years)	77.6%
	Expecting a 50% - 100% increase	34.7%
	Expecting > 100% increase	28.3%
Current Investment Levels	<\$50,000 annually	41.2%
	\$50,000 - \$100,000	23.7%
	\$100,000 - \$500,000	21.4%
	>\$500,000	13.7%
Application Expansion Priorities	Production optimization	68.3%
	Supply chain management	62.7%
	Predictive analytics	59.4%
	Advanced automation	54.8%
	Quality enhancement	52.1%
	Maintenance optimization	49.8%
	Customer-facing applications	47.3%
Workforce Transformation	Sustainability applications	38.4%
	Expecting new job creation	45.7%
	Expecting net workforce reduction	23.4%
	Expecting minimal impact	30.9%
	Significant role evolution expected	67.3%
Technology Sophistication	Significant retraining required	84.6%
	Deep learning emphasis	67.4%
	IoT integration priority	71.8%
	Edge computing integration	52.3%
	NLP expansion	48.7%
	Reinforcement learning	34.2%

Note. Percentages represent the proportion of responding organizations indicating each trajectory indicator.

representing 77.6% of respondents planning substantial AI investment increases within the next 2-3 years. Investment magnitude expectations demonstrated exponential rather than incremental growth: 34.7% of organizations anticipate increases of 50% - 100% above current levels, and 28.3% expect increases exceeding 100%, indicating plans to more than double AI investments. Current investment levels provided baseline context for growth projections: 41.2% invested less than \$50,000 annually in AI initiatives; 23.7% invested \$50,000 - \$100,000; 21.4% invested \$100,000 - \$500,000; and 13.7% invested more than \$500,000, indicating substantial current commitment. Sector-specific patterns showed electronics manufacturers planning significant investment increases of 87.3%, with an emphasis on advanced automation and process optimization. At the same time, traditional sectors, including textiles and furniture, averaged 45% planning increases, with an emphasis on quality control and efficiency applications.

Application expansion priorities revealed strategic focus areas for future AI deployment, reflecting lessons learned from initial implementations and emerging capability requirements. Production optimization emerged as the highest expansion priority at 68.3%, reflecting recognition of efficiency improvement potential demonstrated by successful implementations. Supply chain management ranked second at 62.7%, driven by pandemic-era supply disruptions, highlighting the need for enhanced visibility, demand forecasting, and supplier risk assessment. Predictive analytics applications ranked 59.4% in priority, reflecting demand for forward-looking intelligence that enables proactive management rather than reactive responses. Advanced automation, including robotic process automation and intelligent process control, was given a 54.8% priority, with emphasis on extending automation to more complex tasks beyond simple, repetitive operations. Quality enhancement applications maintained a strong priority at 52.1% with emphasis on extending quality control to additional production stages and product categories. Maintenance optimization was given a 49.8% priority, with a focus on expanding predictive maintenance coverage and integrating maintenance with production planning.

Workforce transformation expectations revealed significant anticipated changes in employment patterns and skill requirements with important implications for organizational development and educational policy. New job-creation expectations indicate that 45.7% of organizations anticipate creating AI-related positions, including data scientists, AI specialists, automation engineers, and human-AI collaboration coordinators. Net workforce-reduction expectations showed that only 23.4% of organizations anticipated overall employment decreases, substantially lower than predictions from some technological-displacement literature. Role evolution expectations showed 67.3% anticipating a significant transformation of existing roles, with workers taking on new responsibilities involving AI system oversight, exception handling, and higher-value activities, while routine tasks are automated. Retraining requirements showed 84.6% of organizations anticipating significant workforce reskilling needs within 3 - 5 years, indicating substantial ed-

educational and development investment requirements.

**Objective 4 Conclusion.** Future trajectories indicate sustained AI momentum with 77.6% planning investment increases within 2 - 3 years, including 34.7% expecting 50% - 100% growth and 28.3% expecting increases exceeding 100%. Application priorities emphasize production optimization (68.3%), supply chain management (62.7%), and predictive analytics (59.4%). Workforce transformation expectations show 45.7% anticipating new job creation, versus only 23.4% expecting net reductions, with 84.6% recognizing significant retraining needs, suggesting an evolution in employment rather than elimination.

#### 4.2.5. Objective 5: Developing Implementation Guidelines

The fifth research objective focused on developing practical implementation guidelines based on empirical evidence from successful AI deployments and lessons learned from implementation challenges across diverse organizational contexts. Guidelines were developed through a systematic comparison of approaches used by successful versus unsuccessful implementers, identifying practices significantly associated with positive outcomes (see **Table 5**).

The analysis of the implementation approach revealed significant differences between phased and immediate deployment strategies, with clear implications for

**Table 5.** Implementation guidelines effectiveness.

Guideline Category	Practice	With Practice	Without Practice	Difference (pp)
Implementation Approach	Phased implementation	72.4%	43.8%	28.6
	Optimal pilot duration: 3 - 6 months	—	—	—
Leadership & Governance	Dedicated AI leadership	68.9%	—	68.9% higher
	Executive sponsorship	64.7%	—	64.7% higher
	Clear accountability	58.3%	—	58.3% higher
Stakeholder Engagement	Comprehensive engagement	71.3%	41.7%	29.6
Workforce Development	Comprehensive training	71.4%	—	71.4% higher
	Hands-on training methodology	82.7%	34.2%	48.5
	Pre-implementation preparation	—	—	Recommended
	Change management integration	47.3%	—	47.3% higher acceptance
Performance Measurement	Baseline documentation	61.4%	—	61.4% better outcomes
	Continuous monitoring	54.8%	—	54.8% higher sustained improvement
Risk Management	Formal risk assessment	54.7%	—	54.7% fewer disruptions
	Contingency planning	41.2%	—	41.2% faster recovery
	Data governance frameworks	43.7%	—	43.7% fewer data challenges

Note. pp = percentage points. Success rates represent the percentage of organizations that achieve successful AI implementation with the respective practice.

recommended practices. Organizations employing phased implementation approaches, beginning with bounded pilot projects before systematic scaling, achieved 72.4% success rates, compared to 43.8% for organizations attempting immediate, comprehensive deployment across multiple applications or production areas simultaneously, representing a 28.6 percentage point difference that demonstrates substantial phased approach advantages. Optimal pilot project duration emerged as 3 - 6 months based on comparative outcome analysis, with shorter pilots of less than 3 months providing insufficient learning and validation time, while extended pilots beyond 6 months experienced diminishing momentum, stakeholder fatigue, and a shift in organizational attention to other priorities. Pilot scope recommendations emphasized starting with bounded, measurable applications that address specific operational challenges before expanding to complex, cross-functional implementations that require coordination across multiple organizational units.

Leadership and governance guidelines emphasized the establishment of a dedicated implementation team with cross-functional representation spanning operations, IT, engineering, and management. Organizations with dedicated AI leadership, including formal implementation champions with allocated time and transparent accountability, achieved success rates 68.9% higher than those relying on distributed responsibility without clear ownership. Governance structures requiring executive sponsorship, with direct senior management involvement in oversight and decision-making, demonstrated success rates 64.7% higher than those lacking executive engagement. Stakeholder engagement emerged as a critical success factor: organizations implementing comprehensive engagement approaches involving all affected parties in planning and implementation achieved 71.3% success, compared to 41.7% for organizations with limited engagement focusing only on direct implementers without broader organizational involvement, representing a 29.6 percentage point difference.

Workforce development guidelines emphasized comprehensive training as an essential success factor. Organizations investing in thorough workforce preparation achieved success rates 71.4% higher than those with minimal training investments focused only on basic system operation. Training methodology analysis revealed hands-on experiential training involving actual AI system interaction and practical application scenarios, achieving 82.7% effectiveness compared to 34.2% for lecture-based theoretical approaches, representing a 48.5 percentage point difference, demonstrating that the training approach significantly influences capability development beyond training quantity alone. Training timing recommendations emphasized pre-implementation preparation, combined with ongoing support during and after deployment, rather than post-implementation remediation to address skill gaps after problems emerged.

Performance measurement guidelines emphasized establishing baseline metrics before implementation, enabling objective impact assessment. Organizations documenting pre-implementation performance baselines across relevant metrics

achieved 61.4% better long-term outcomes through data-driven optimization and a clear demonstration of AI value. Continuous monitoring systems enable real-time performance tracking, resulting in sustained improvements 54.8% higher than those achieved with periodic assessment approaches that rely on retrospective analysis. Risk management guidelines emphasized proactive identification and mitigation planning, with organizations implementing formal risk assessment processes during planning phases experiencing 54.7% fewer major disruptions during implementation than those without systematic risk identification. Contingency planning for standard failure modes enabled 41.2% faster recovery when setbacks occurred.

**Objective 5 Conclusion.** Evidence-based implementation guidelines demonstrate substantial effectiveness differences: phased approaches achieve 72.4% versus 43.8% for immediate deployment (28.6 percentage point difference), dedicated leadership yields 68.9% higher success, comprehensive training produces 71.4% higher success, stakeholder engagement achieves 71.3% versus 41.7% for limited engagement (29.6 percentage point difference), and hands-on training methodology reaches 82.7% versus 34.2% for lecture-based approaches (48.5 percentage point difference).

### 4.3. Hypothesis Testing Results

The ten research hypotheses developed in Chapter 3 were tested using appropriate statistical techniques, depending on the nature of the variables and relationships examined. Selection of statistical methods followed established guidelines for hypothesis testing: Pearson correlation analysis was employed for hypotheses examining relationships between continuous variables, independent samples t-tests were used for comparing means between two distinct groups, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied for comparisons across multiple categorical groups, and chi-square tests assessed associations between categorical variables. All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics software, with a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . **Table 6** presents the comprehensive results of hypothesis testing, including the statistical methods, test statistics, significance levels, and conclusions.

*H7 received partial support: significant differences in implementation depth across size categories were found, but success rates showed less pronounced size differences when readiness factors were controlled.*

**Technological Context Hypotheses.** Hypothesis H1, proposing that perceived compatibility of AI technologies with existing manufacturing systems positively influences AI adoption rates, was tested using Pearson correlation analysis between compatibility perception scores and adoption rate measures. The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.67, p < 0.001$ ), indicating a strong relationship between perceived compatibility and adoption outcomes. This result supports H1, confirming that organizations that perceive greater compatibility between AI technologies and existing systems demonstrate significantly higher

**Table 6.** Hypothesis testing results.

Hypothesis	Statement	Statistical Test	Test Statistic	p-value	Result
H1	AI compatibility → adoption rates	Pearson correlation	r = 0.67	<0.001	Supported
H2	Multiple AI technologies → higher benefits	Independent t-test	t = 8.42	<0.001	Supported
H3	AI implementation → efficiency improvements	Pearson correlation	r = 0.58	<0.001	Supported
H4	AI implementation → quality enhancements	Pearson correlation	r = 0.71	<0.001	Supported
H5	AI implementation → cost reductions	Pearson correlation	r = 0.52	<0.001	Supported
H6	Quality = most frequently reported benefit	Chi-square	$\chi^2 = 14.28$	<0.001	Supported
H7	Company size → implementation depth	One-way ANOVA	F = 12.34	<0.001	Partially Supported
H8	Formal training → higher success	Independent t-test	t = 9.87	<0.001	Supported
H9	Competitive intensity → higher adoption	Independent t-test	t = 7.65	<0.001	Supported
H10	Multinational → higher adoption rates	Chi-square	$\chi^2 = 18.92$	<0.01	Supported

Note. N = 1150 manufacturing companies. Significance level  $\alpha = 0.05$ . df (degrees of freedom) varies by test.

adoption rates. Hypothesis H2, proposing that companies implementing multiple complementary AI technologies report higher operational benefits than single-application implementers, was tested using an independent samples t-test comparing benefit scores between multi-application implementers (three or more AI applications) and single-application implementers. Results showed significantly higher benefit scores for multi-application implementers ( $t = 8.42$ ,  $df = 925$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with a mean difference indicating 52.3% higher reported benefits. This result strongly supports H2.

**Performance Outcome Hypotheses.** Hypothesis H3, proposing a positive association between AI implementation and operational efficiency improvements, was tested using a Pearson correlation between AI implementation depth scores and efficiency improvement measures. Significant positive correlation was found ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H3. Hypothesis H4, proposing a positive association between AI implementation and product quality enhancements, was tested similarly, revealing the strongest correlation among performance dimensions ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and providing strong support for H4. Hypothesis H5 proposing a positive association between AI implementation and cost reductions showed a moderate but significant correlation ( $r = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H5. Hypothesis H6, proposing that quality improvement would be the most frequently reported benefit, was tested through descriptive comparison of benefit frequencies and mean impact scores. Quality improvements were reported by 53.4% of implementers, with a mean score of 2.56, compared with efficiency (48.0%, mean 2.42) and cost reduction (48.3%, mean 2.42). The chi-square test confirmed a significant difference in reporting frequencies ( $\chi^2 = 14.28$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting H6.

**Organizational Context Hypotheses.** Hypothesis H7, proposing a positive association between company size and AI implementation depth, was tested using one-way ANOVA comparing implementation depth scores across small, medium,

and large enterprise categories. Significant differences were found ( $F = 12.34$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $1147$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with post hoc Tukey tests indicating that large enterprises demonstrated greater implementation diversity and scope than small enterprises. However, when controlling for readiness factors, success rates showed minor differences, providing partial support for H7. Hypothesis H8, proposing that companies with formal AI training programs demonstrate higher implementation success, was tested using an independent samples t-test comparing success rates between organizations with and without structured training programs. Results showed significantly higher success rates for organizations with formal training ( $t = 9.87$ ,  $df = 925$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with a 71.4% difference providing strong support for H8.

**Environmental Context Hypotheses.** Hypothesis H9, proposing that companies in sectors with higher competitive intensity exhibit higher AI adoption rates, was tested using an independent-samples t-test comparing adoption rates between high-competition and low-competition sectors based on industry classification. Significantly higher adoption rates were found in competitive sectors ( $t = 7.65$ ,  $df = 1148$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with adoption rates 67.8% higher, supporting H9. Hypothesis H10, proposing that multinational operations show higher AI adoption rates than domestic enterprises, was tested using chi-square analysis comparing the adoption status between multinational and domestic organizations. Significant association was found ( $\chi^2 = 18.92$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with multinational organizations achieving 74.2% adoption compared to 61.3% for domestic enterprises, supporting H10.

**Summary of Hypothesis Testing.** As presented in **Table 6**, nine of ten hypotheses received full statistical support, while one hypothesis (H7) received partial support. The technological context hypotheses (H1, H2) were fully supported, confirming the importance of compatibility and the synergistic implementation of multiple technologies. All four performance outcome hypotheses (H3-H6) were supported, validating AI's positive impact on efficiency, quality, and cost while confirming quality as the most frequently reported benefit. The organizational context hypothesis regarding training (H8) was strongly supported. At the same time, the size-implementation relationship (H7) received partial support: implementation depth varied by size, but success rates showed less pronounced differences when readiness factors were controlled. Both environmental context hypotheses (H9, H10) were supported, confirming competitive intensity and international exposure as significant adoption influences.

#### 4.4. Summary

The comprehensive findings that address all five research objectives, integrating quantitative and qualitative evidence from 1150 manufacturing companies and 115 stakeholder interviews. The integrated analysis revealed three overarching patterns. First, AI implementation success in Thailand's manufacturing sector depends fundamentally on organizational readiness rather than size or sector characteristics alone, with the validated framework demonstrating that comprehensive

preparation across technological, organizational, workforce, and environmental dimensions substantially differentiates successful from unsuccessful implementations (Table 1 and Table 6). Second, while implementation challenges are pervasive across technical, organizational, and workforce dimensions, they are systematically addressable through evidence-based mitigation strategies, including dedicated implementation teams, phased deployment approaches, and comprehensive workforce development programs (Table 2 and Table 5). Third, AI implementation is associated with measurable performance improvements and positive financial returns, with quality emerging as the strongest impact dimension and synergistic benefits accruing to organizations pursuing multi-dimensional implementations (Table 3). Looking forward, the sector demonstrates sustained momentum with strong investment intentions and workforce transformation patterns suggesting employment evolution rather than displacement (Table 4). Hypothesis testing provided statistical validation of these findings, with 9 of 10 hypotheses receiving full support and 1 receiving partial support (Table 6). These results establish the empirical foundation for theoretical interpretation and practical recommendations developed in Chapter 5.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusions

### 5.1. Introduction

The discussion follows the structure of the five research objectives, examining how findings converge with or diverge from existing literature, explaining observed patterns through theoretical lenses, and identifying implications for theory development and practical application. The hypothesis-testing results summarized in Table 6 provide statistical validation of the examined relationships: 9 of 10 hypotheses received full support, and 1 received partial support.

### 5.2. Discussion by Research Objectives

#### 5.2.1. Objective 1: Developing a Comprehensive Framework for AI Integration

The framework development findings strongly support the integrated theoretical approach combining the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework, the Resource-Based View (RBV), and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) perspectives, as illustrated in Figure 1. The empirical validation, demonstrating that organizations addressing all four dimensions (technological infrastructure, organizational readiness, workforce capabilities, and external environment) achieved 76.8% success, compared to 32.4% for limited approaches, as documented in Table 1, confirms the theoretical proposition that AI implementation requires multidimensional consideration rather than a purely technological focus. The hypothesis testing results (Table 6) provide additional statistical support for the framework's validity, with H1 confirming that perceived compatibility significantly influences adoption rates ( $r = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and H2 confirming that synergistic multi-technology implementation produces substantially higher ben-

efits ( $t = 8.42, p < 0.001$ ).

**Convergences with existing literature.** The findings strongly support the TOE framework's core proposition that technological, organizational, and environmental factors collectively influence adoption outcomes, aligning with Tornatzky and Fleischer's (1990) original framework development and subsequent validations across diverse technology contexts. The statistical confirmation of H1 (Table 6:  $r = 0.67, p < 0.001$ ), demonstrating a significant positive correlation between perceived compatibility and adoption rates, aligns with TAM foundations established by Davis (1989) and with technology adoption research by Trunzer et al. (2019). The technological infrastructure findings show that companies with ERP systems achieve 73.2% versus 45.8% success rates (Table 1) confirm prior research by Adebajo et al. (2023) and Uren and Edwards (2023), which emphasize the importance of foundational technology for advanced technology adoption. Organizational readiness findings showing dedicated AI leadership achieving 78.4% versus 42.1% (Table 1) success corroborate research by Chatterjee et al. (2021) and Grover et al. (2020), which demonstrate leadership's criticality for technology transformation initiatives. The strong support for H8 (Table 6:  $t = 9.87, p < 0.001$ ), confirming that formal training programs significantly improve implementation success, aligns with the human capital theory foundations and the empirical research by Frank et al. (2019) and Raj et al. (2020) on the importance of workforce development.

**Divergences from existing literature.** The findings challenge the conventional wisdom that organizational size is the primary determinant of success in advanced technology adoption. While hypothesis testing revealed significant differences in implementation depth across size categories (H7:  $F = 12.34, p < 0.001$ ), the partial support for H7 (Table 6) indicates that size influences implementation breadth more than success probability when readiness factors are controlled. This divergence reflects democratization of AI technologies through cloud-based platforms and Software-as-a-Service delivery models that reduce traditional capital and expertise barriers. The findings also contradict research suggesting technical expertise requirements create insurmountable barriers for traditional manufacturing sectors. The overall 80.6% AI adoption rate across all 12 sectors, including traditional industries such as textiles, furniture, and building materials, demonstrates that technical barriers are surmountable when organizations systematically address readiness factors, exceeding predictions from the literature emphasizing technical sophistication requirements. The strong support for H9 (Table 6:  $t = 7.65, p < 0.001$ ), demonstrating 67.8% higher adoption in competitive sectors, exceeded theoretical expectations from the institutional theory literature regarding environmental pressure effects.

The partial support for H7 warrants deeper theoretical examination, given its significant divergence from conventional literature and its reinforcement of this study's core thesis regarding readiness-based success determinants. Traditional technology adoption theories, including Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovations

and early applications of the TOE framework, consistently position organizational size as a primary predictor of adoption success, with larger organizations presumed to possess superior financial resources, technical expertise, and absorptive capacity. However, the present findings reveal a more nuanced relationship: while size significantly correlates with implementation breadth and diversity ( $F = 12.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), success rates converge substantially when readiness factors are statistically controlled. This pattern suggests that size primarily serves as a proxy for readiness rather than an independent causal factor. Small enterprises achieving comparable success rates to large enterprises when demonstrating equivalent readiness levels (comprehensive readiness: 76.8% success regardless of size category) fundamentally challenge size-deterministic models prevalent in technology management literature. The theoretical implication extends resource-based theory by demonstrating that competitive advantages in AI implementation derive not from scale-dependent resources but from strategic resource configuration and capability development accessible to organizations across size categories. This finding supports emerging perspectives on technology democratization, wherein cloud computing, Software-as-a-Service delivery models, and ecosystem-based implementation approaches reduce traditional barriers associated with capital intensity and specialized expertise requirements. In the context of emerging economies specifically, this divergence carries substantial policy implications, suggesting that support programs targeting readiness development rather than size-based subsidies may be more effective in promoting broad-based AI adoption across the manufacturing sector. The partial support for H7 thus represents not a limitation but rather a theoretically significant finding that advances understanding of contemporary technology adoption dynamics in manufacturing contexts.

**Theoretical implications.** The framework's successful integration of multiple theoretical perspectives demonstrates that single-theory approaches inadequately capture the complexity of AI implementation in manufacturing contexts. The strong statistical support for H2 (Table 6:  $t = 8.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), showing 52.3% higher benefits for multi-technology implementers (Table 1), provides empirical evidence for resource complementarity concepts within RBV, suggesting that organizational capabilities create value through interaction and mutual reinforcement rather than isolation. The synergistic effects observed when organizations address multiple dimensions simultaneously (76.8% versus 32.4% success, as shown in Table 1) further support this theoretical proposition. The framework extension, which includes explicit workforce capability dimensions, addresses limitations in traditional technology adoption models that underemphasize human factors, and H8's strong support (Table 6) empirically validates the importance of this addition.

### 5.2.2. Objective 2: Identifying Implementation Challenges

The implementation challenges findings revealed systematic patterns across technical, organizational, and workforce dimensions, with important contextual variations documented in Table 2. The prominence of data quality issues (72.4%) and

skills shortages (84.2%) as leading barriers aligns with emerging consensus in AI implementation literature while revealing context-specific manifestations within Thailand's manufacturing sector that inform both theoretical understanding and practical intervention strategies.

**Convergences with existing literature.** The findings strongly support the literature emphasizing data quality as a fundamental barrier to AI implementation, aligning with Kinkel et al. (2022) and Lee et al. (2023), who identified data preparation as consistently problematic across manufacturing contexts regardless of organizational size or technological sophistication. The statistical support for H1 (Table 6:  $r = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) indirectly confirms the challenge literature by demonstrating that compatibility—which includes data system alignment—significantly influences adoption outcomes. The documented complexities in system integration (64.2%) and legacy system compatibility issues (78.3%) in Table 2 are consistent with Mittal et al. (2017) and Zhong et al. (2017) regarding integration challenges when deploying advanced technologies within existing operational technology environments. Organizational challenges, including change management difficulties (69.1%) and inconsistent leadership support (54.7%), align with the research by Grover et al. (2020) and Ali and Khan (2024) on the requirements for organizational transformation. The strong support for H8 (Table 6:  $t = 9.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) confirms the importance of the training program in addressing workforce skills shortages (84.2%), identified as the most critical barrier in Table 2.

**Divergences from existing literature.** The findings contradict research suggesting infrastructure limitations create insurmountable barriers for AI adoption in emerging economies. Only 23.4% of large enterprises and 52.6% of medium enterprises reported inadequate computing resources (Table 2), significantly lower than the 60% - 70% rates documented in earlier literature examining developing country manufacturing. This divergence reflects rapid advances in cloud computing, improved telecommunications infrastructure, and substantial development within Thailand's Eastern Economic Corridor initiative. The size-dependent challenge patterns showing small enterprises experiencing infrastructure limitations at 81.7% versus 23.4% (Table 2) for large enterprises (58.3 percentage point difference) reveal more nuanced relationships than simple size-adoption correlations suggested by prior research, which aligns with the partial support for H7 documented in Table 6. Traditional sector skills limitations at 89.7% versus 52.3% (Table 2) for technology sectors (37.4 percentage point difference) represent substantial but not insurmountable barriers, contradicting predictions of complete capability gaps preventing traditional sector adoption.

**Practical implications.** The challenge mitigation effectiveness findings documented in Table 2 provide actionable guidance for implementation planning. Dedicated AI implementation teams reduced technical challenge severity by 56.7%, comprehensive training reduced skills barriers by 62.4%, and phased approaches reduced organizational disruption by 51.3%. These empirically validated strategies enable organizations to proactively address predictable barriers rather

than reactively responding to implementation difficulties. The universal nature of data quality challenges (72.4%) across organizational characteristics suggests that data preparation should receive priority attention in all implementation planning.

### 5.2.3. Objective 3: Evaluating AI's Impact on Manufacturing Performance

The performance-impact findings documented in **Table 3** provide substantial empirical evidence of AI's transformative potential across multiple dimensions of manufacturing performance. The hypothesis testing results (**Table 6**) provide strong statistical validation, with all four performance-related hypotheses (H3-H6) receiving full support. The emergence of quality as the strongest impact dimension (53.4% positive, mean 2.56), confirmed by H6 ( $\chi^2 = 14.28, p < 0.001$ ), rather than efficiency or cost, represents a notable finding with important theoretical and practical implications.

**Convergences with existing literature.** The quality impact findings strongly concur with the literature demonstrating AI's positive influence on manufacturing quality outcomes, aligning with *Schmitt et al. (2020)* and *Chen et al. (2023)*, who documented quality control as a particularly successful AI application area. The statistical confirmation of H4 (**Table 6**:  $r = 0.71, p < 0.001$ ), which represents the strongest correlation among performance dimensions, provides robust empirical support for quality-focused AI applications. One medical device manufacturer reported a rejection rate improvement from 3.2% to 1.1% (66% improvement) and a 68% reduction in customer complaints, exemplifying the substantial quality gains documented in prior research. Temporal progression patterns showing that mature implementations achieve 73.6% positive efficiency impacts, versus 31.4% for early implementations (**Table 3**), support organizational learning theory and empirical research by *Mittal et al. (2017)*. Financial validation showing 68.4% positive ROI, averaging 147% for comprehensive implementations (**Table 3**), aligns with research by *Oztemel and Gursev (2018)* and *Parhi et al. (2022)* documenting substantial AI investment returns.

**Divergences from existing literature.** The findings contradict research from developed economies suggesting production efficiency represents the primary benefit domain for AI implementation in manufacturing. The hypothesis testing results (**Table 6**) confirm H6, showing that quality improvements were reported by 53.4% of implementers, with a mean score of 2.56, compared to 48.0% for efficiency, with a mean of 2.42, as statistically validated by chi-square analysis ( $\chi^2 = 14.28, p < 0.001$ ). This pattern may reflect the quality-critical nature of Thailand's export-oriented manufacturing serving demanding international customers. The strong statistical support for H2 (**Table 6**:  $t = 8.42, p < 0.001$ ), showing that organizations implementing AI across multiple dimensions achieve a 52.3% improvement compared with 28.7% for single-area implementations (**Table 3**), provides empirical evidence for resource complementarity effects that have not been consistently documented in prior research. *Qudus (2025)* found that quality improvements materialize within 6 months, while this research finds that cost reductions typically require 12 - 18 months (**Table 3**), contradicting research sug-

gesting that cost benefits emerge more rapidly.

**Theoretical implications.** The synergistic effects finding, validated by H2 (**Table 6**:  $t = 8.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), showing 52.3% versus 28.7% improvement (**Table 3**), contributes to resource-based theory by demonstrating that complementary technological resources create competitive advantages exceeding the sum of the individual components. The correlation analysis supporting H3, H4, and H5 (**Table 6**), with coefficients ranging from  $r = 0.52$  to  $r = 0.71$ , provides quantitative evidence for AI's positive performance associations across multiple dimensions. The strongest correlation for quality (H4:  $r = 0.71$ ) compared to efficiency (H3:  $r = 0.58$ ) and cost (H5:  $r = 0.52$ ) suggests that AI's relative effectiveness varies across performance dimensions in ways not fully captured by universal adoption models.

#### 5.2.4. Objective 4: Assessing Future AI Implementation Trajectories

The future trajectory findings documented in **Table 4** reveal sustained momentum and transformative expectations that significantly exceed those suggested by incremental technology diffusion models. The finding that 77.6% plan substantial investment, with 34.7% expecting 50-100% growth and 28.3% expecting increases exceeding 100%, indicates exponential rather than linear adoption trajectories, suggesting that AI diffusion in manufacturing may follow fundamentally different patterns than previous technology generations.

**Convergences with existing literature.** The investment momentum findings align with those of [Adebanjo et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Thanyawatpornkul \(2024b\)](#), who document robust AI expansion intentions in emerging-economy manufacturing sectors. The strong statistical support for H9 (**Table 6**:  $t = 7.65$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming that competitive intensity drives adoption, provides a theoretical foundation for understanding investment momentum as organizations respond to competitive pressures through technology investment. Similarly, H10's confirmation (**Table 6**:  $\chi^2 = 18.92$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) that multinational operations demonstrate higher adoption rates (**Table 2**: 74.2% versus 61.3%) suggests that knowledge transfer and global competitive exposure continue to drive expansion. Application expansion priorities showing production optimization (68.3%), supply chain management (62.7%), and predictive analytics (59.4%), as documented in **Table 4**, concur with research by [Dalzochio et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Jung et al. \(2021\)](#) regarding comprehensive process improvement emphasis.

**Divergences from existing literature.** The investment magnitude findings contradict research suggesting gradual incremental adoption patterns typical of traditional technology diffusion. The 28.3% expecting investment increases exceeding 100% (**Table 4**) indicates revolutionary rather than evolutionary expansion, not predicted by traditional S-curve diffusion models. Workforce transformation expectations, showing 45.7% anticipating new job creation while only 23.4% expecting net reductions (**Table 4**), contradict predictions from [Acemoglu and Restrepo \(2019\)](#) and [Frey and Osborne \(2017\)](#) of widespread technological displacement. The finding that 84.6% (**Table 4**) anticipate significant retraining requirements while simultaneously expecting net job creation suggests an evolution in em-

ployment rather than elimination. The partial support for H7 (**Table 6**), indicating that size influences implementation scope but not necessarily success rates, contradicts earlier literature emphasizing size-dependent adoption patterns.

**Policy implications.** The workforce transformation findings, showing evolution rather than elimination patterns, suggest that policy frameworks should emphasize workforce development and educational system adaptation rather than displacement mitigation. The 84.6% retraining requirement (**Table 4**) indicates substantial educational investment needs across technical, operational, and managerial skill categories. The strong support for H8 (**Table 6**:  $t = 9.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) demonstrates that formal training programs significantly improve implementation success and provide evidence-based justification for policy emphasis on workforce development programs.

Regarding government support mechanisms, the research findings showing higher implementation success among organizations that utilize government support (63.4% versus 48.7%, as documented in **Table 1**) provide empirical justification for continued and expanded policy intervention. Thailand's National AI Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2027) encompasses five strategic areas, and the present findings suggest differential emphasis across these areas. First, Strategy 3, focusing on human capability development through AI scholarship programs and educational initiatives, aligns directly with this study's strongest finding: that formal training programs are associated with significantly higher implementation success (H8:  $t = 9.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Second, Strategy 2, emphasizing infrastructure development including High Performance Computing and national AI service platforms, addresses the technological infrastructure requirements validated in this research (**Table 1**: ERP systems, 73.2% versus 45.8% success). Third, Strategy 5, promoting AI use in key industries through system integrator development and business innovation sandboxes, corresponds with the finding that external partnership strategies reduced capability gaps by 48.9% (**Table 2**). Based on these findings, policymakers should prioritize workforce development subsidies and support for training programs, as these demonstrated the strongest association with implementation success. Additionally, continued infrastructure investment through the Eastern Economic Corridor initiative and accessible cloud computing resources would address the infrastructure limitations, particularly affecting small enterprises (81.7% reporting constraints versus 23.4% for large enterprises). Finally, facilitating vendor ecosystem development and industry-academic partnerships would help organizations overcome technical expertise barriers that remain prevalent across traditional manufacturing sectors.

### 5.2.5. Objective 5: Developing Implementation Guidelines

The implementation guidelines findings documented in **Table 5** provide empirically validated recommendations based on a systematic comparison of successful and unsuccessful implementation approaches. The hypothesis testing results (**Table 6**) provide additional statistical support for key guideline components, particularly regarding training (H8), competitive environment (H9), and technology

compatibility (H1).

**Convergences with existing literature.** The phased implementation findings, showing 72.4% versus 43.8% success for immediate deployment (a 28.6 percentage point difference), documented in **Table 5**, strongly concur with **Rogers (2003)** and **Adebanjo et al. (2023)** regarding the advantages of gradual adoption for complex technology implementations. The strong statistical support for H8 (**Table 6**:  $t = 9.87, p < 0.001$ ), demonstrating 71.4% higher success rates for organizations with formal training programs, validates training-focused guidelines and aligns with research by **Chatterjee et al. (2021)** and **Liao et al. (2017)** on the importance of workforce preparation. Stakeholder engagement findings showing 71.3% versus 41.7% success (29.6 percentage point difference) documented in **Table 5** support established change management principles from **Kotter (2012)** and empirical research by **Ali and Khan (2024)**. The statistical confirmation of H1 (**Table 6**:  $r = 0.67, p < 0.001$ ) regarding the importance of compatibility supports guidelines emphasizing the assessment and preparation of existing systems before AI implementation.

**Divergences from existing literature.** The finding that 3 - 6 months pilots achieve optimal outcomes, while extended pilots beyond 6 months experience diminished momentum (**Table 5**), contradicts research suggesting that longer pilot phases improve outcomes by allowing for more thorough evaluation. This divergence may reflect rapid AI technology evolution, making extended pilots counterproductive. The hands-on training effectiveness, at 82.7%, versus 34.2% for lecture-based approaches (a 48.5 percentage-point difference), documented in **Table 5**, indicates that training methodology significantly influences capability development beyond training quantity alone, a relationship underemphasized in prior literature. This finding extends the statistical support for H8 (**Table 6**) by demonstrating that the training approach, not merely training presence, determines effectiveness.

**Practical implications.** The substantial effectiveness differences documented in **Table 5**, supported by hypothesis testing results in **Table 6**, provide clear guidance for implementation planning. Phased approaches achieve 72.4% versus 43.8% success (28.6 pp difference), dedicated leadership is associated with 68.9% higher success, stakeholder engagement achieves 71.3% versus 41.7% success (29.6 pp difference), comprehensive training is associated with 71.4% higher success (statistically validated by H8 in **Table 6**), and hands-on training methodology reaches 82.7% versus 34.2% effectiveness (48.5 pp difference). These empirically validated benchmarks enable organizations to prioritize high-impact practices.

### 5.3. Research Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting findings and applying conclusions. The cross-sectional research design constrains understanding of implementation evolution and long-term sustainability patterns, preventing causal relationship analysis with high confidence. While the hypothesis testing results

(Table 6) demonstrate significant correlations and group differences, the cross-sectional design cannot definitively establish causal direction. Future research should prioritize longitudinal designs that track organizations through complete implementation cycles, enabling analysis of temporal dynamics, learning-curve effects, and sustained value patterns that distinguish temporary improvements from lasting competitive advantages.

Geographic specificity within Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region limits direct generalizability to other manufacturing contexts with different economic development levels, regulatory environments, or cultural characteristics. While the findings offer insights potentially applicable to emerging economies with similar characteristics, including export-oriented manufacturing, government technology promotion programs, and developing digital infrastructure, unique aspects of Thailand's development context, such as the Eastern Economic Corridor initiatives and Board of Investment incentive structures, may limit direct transferability. Additionally, although this research acknowledged Thai cultural norms such as hierarchical respect and collective harmony as contextual factors, the study did not deeply investigate how these specific cultural characteristics influenced implementation challenges such as change management or employee acceptance. Future research could employ in-depth qualitative approaches to explore how national cultural factors shape AI implementation dynamics, particularly regarding leadership communication styles, resistance to change, and workforce adaptation patterns across different cultural contexts. International comparative research examining AI implementation across different economic contexts, including developed economies, other emerging Asian regions, and manufacturing sectors in Latin American or African contexts, could identify universal principles while highlighting context-specific adaptation requirements.

Reliance on perceptual performance measures through assessment scales rather than objective operational metrics represents another limitation. While the statistical analyses presented in Table 6 demonstrate significant relationships between variables, objective performance measurement through longitudinal studies tracking actual operational metrics, including defect rates, throughput, downtime, and energy consumption, could strengthen causal inference and provide validation of perceptual assessments. Multiple-stakeholder perspective designs incorporating frontline workers, middle management, and executive leadership could reveal implementation dynamics not captured by single-respondent surveys.

#### 5.4. Practical Advice for Managers and Entrepreneurs

Based on the research results and hypothesis testing (Table 6), the following guidelines aim to translate the findings into practical recommendations for executives and entrepreneurs considering the implementation of AI in the manufacturing process.

Organizations should prepare properly before investing in AI technology. The research confirmed that AI compatibility with existing systems significantly af-

fects success (H1 in **Table 6**:  $r = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Companies with sound existing computer systems for managing production, inventory, or customer orders achieved 73% success compared to 46% without such foundation systems (**Table 1**). Organizations should start collecting and organizing data now because 72% of companies struggled with messy or incomplete data during implementation (**Table 2**). Management should assign a team member as an AI champion with sufficient time and authority to lead the initiative, as companies with clear AI leadership achieved 78% success compared to 42% without dedicated leadership.

Organizations should start small and expand gradually, but plan for multiple applications. Step-by-step implementation approaches achieved 72% success, compared with 44% for companies that tried to implement everything at once (**Table 5**). However, the research also showed that companies implementing AI across multiple areas eventually achieved significantly better results (H2 in **Table 6**:  $t = 8.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with a 52% improvement compared to 28% for a single-area focus (**Table 3**). Companies should begin with quality control applications, which typically show visible results within 6 months, with organizations seeing defect rates drop by an average of 47% (**Table 3**). After achieving initial success, companies can expand to additional areas. Organizations should plan for 3 - 6 months pilot projects to test AI in limited areas before expanding company-wide.

Organizations should invest heavily in workforce development—it has been statistically proven to matter. The research strongly confirmed that formal training programs significantly improve implementation success (H8 in **Table 6**:  $t = 9.87$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Companies that provided training to more than half of affected employees achieved 69% success, compared with 35% for companies that provided limited training (**Table 1**). Organizations should use hands-on practical training where employees actually work with AI systems rather than just attending classroom lectures, as hands-on training achieved 83% effectiveness versus 34% for lecture-based approaches (**Table 5**). Management should address employee concerns about AI honestly, as research shows that 46% of companies expect AI to create new jobs, while only 23% expect job reductions (**Table 4**).

Managers and entrepreneurs should understand the competitive and financial reality. The research confirmed that companies in more competitive industries adopt AI at significantly higher rates (H9 in **Table 6**:  $t = 7.65$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), achieving 67.8% higher adoption. If competitors are implementing AI, organizations may need to act to remain competitive. Research found that 68% of companies achieved a positive return on investment within 18 months, with comprehensive implementations averaging 147% returns, compared to 89% for limited implementations (**Table 3**). Revenue increased by an average of 13% and profit margins improved by 7% within two years. Quality improvements typically appear within 6 months, while cost savings usually take 12 - 18 months to materialize (**Table 3**).

## 5.5. Research Contributions

**Theoretical contributions.** The research contributes to technology adoption the-

ory by integrating the TOE framework, RBV, and TAM perspectives into a comprehensive theoretical model (Figure 1) that demonstrates that single-theory approaches inadequately capture the complexity of AI implementation. The hypothesis testing results (Table 6) provide statistical validation for theoretical propositions, with H1 ( $r = 0.67$ ), H2 ( $t = 8.42$ ), and H3-H5 ( $r = 0.52-0.71$ ) quantifying relationships predicted by the integrated framework. The framework's empirical validation, showing that organizations addressing all four dimensions achieve 76.8% success, compared with 32.4% for those addressing only three dimensions (Table 1), provides strong evidence for multidimensional theoretical models. Empirical validation of synergistic effects through H2 (Table 6) contributes to resource-based theory by demonstrating that complementary technological resources create competitive advantages exceeding the sum of the individual components.

**Practical contributions.** The research provides manufacturing organizations with an evidence-based implementation framework (Figure 1, Table 1) that significantly improves success rates, with comprehensive approaches achieving 72.4% versus ad-hoc approaches at 43.8%. The hypothesis testing results (Table 6) provide statistical validation enabling confident application of recommendations. Critical success factors identification (Table 5) enables prioritizing high-impact practices, including dedicated leadership (68.9% higher success), comprehensive training (71.4% higher success, validated by H8), and phased implementation approaches (72.4% versus 43.8% success). The performance impact evidence (Table 3) provides realistic expectations for quality improvements within 6 months and financial validation confirming a 68.4% positive ROI, averaging 147%, for comprehensive implementations.

**Methodological contributions.** The comprehensive hypothesis-testing approach documented in Table 6 provides a methodological template for AI implementation research. The application of multiple statistical techniques, including Pearson correlation, independent-samples t-tests, one-way ANOVA, and chi-square analysis, demonstrates appropriate method selection based on variable characteristics and hypothesis types. The mixed-methods integration, combining quantitative hypothesis testing with qualitative insights, provides balanced evidence that enables both statistical generalization and contextual understanding.

## 5.6. Conclusion

The research systematically examined AI implementation in manufacturing management across Thailand's Eastern Industrial Region, providing comprehensive empirical evidence from 1150 companies spanning 12 manufacturing sectors. The hypothesis-testing results summarized in Table 6 confirmed 9 of 10 hypotheses with full statistical support and 1 with partial support, providing robust validation of the theoretical framework and research findings. The investigation addressed five research objectives revealing that AI adoption reached 80.6% penetration significantly exceeding expectations, implementation success depends fundamen-

tally on simultaneous attention to technological infrastructure, organizational readiness, workforce capabilities, and external environment factors as documented in the comprehensive framework (Figure 1, Table 1), and organizations addressing all four dimensions achieved 76.8% implementation success compared to 32.4% for limited approaches.

The research established that while technical challenges remain prevalent affecting 67.8% of organizations (Table 2), successful implementation requires equally strong focus on organizational change management and workforce development, with comprehensive training achieving 71.4% higher success rates (validated by H8 in Table 6:  $t = 9.87, p < 0.001$ ) and stakeholder engagement achieving 71.3% versus 41.7% success (Table 5). Performance impact analysis (Table 3) validated AI's transformative potential with product quality improvements emerging as the strongest benefit domain (53.4%, mean 2.56), confirmed by H6 (Table 6:  $\chi^2 = 14.28, p < 0.001$ ). In comparison, financial validation demonstrated measurable business value, with 68.4% achieving positive ROI, averaging 147%, for comprehensive implementations. The statistical confirmation of synergistic effects through H2 (Table 6:  $t = 8.42, p < 0.001$ ), showing 52.3% versus 28.7% improvement for multi-application implementations, provides strong empirical support for comprehensive AI deployment strategies.

In conclusion, AI represents both strategic necessity and implementation complexity for contemporary manufacturing organizations in emerging economies. Success requires not merely technological capability but comprehensive organizational transformation encompassing infrastructure development, workforce capability building, cultural adaptation, and sustained leadership commitment. The hypothesis testing results (Table 6) provide statistical validation, enabling the confident application of the research findings. The evidence presented demonstrates that systematic approaches guided by evidence-based frameworks, developed and validated through this research, significantly improve success rates while accelerating value realization. The findings provide a foundation for advancing both theoretical understanding and the practical application of AI in manufacturing management, contributing to ongoing efforts to support technological transformation and competitive advantage across diverse industrial contexts worldwide.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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