CORPORATE AI USAGE SURVEY REPORT IN CHINA: INSIGHTS FROM SWEDCHAM CHINA'S MEMBERS

A Survey of AI Utilization Among SwedCham Member Firms

SWEDCHAM.CHINA
中国瑞典商会

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **High Frequency of AI Usage Across Organizational Levels**
   The survey indicates robust engagement with AI tools, with 50% of respondents utilizing AI daily in their operations. Western AI solutions, such as OpenAI and Microsoft AI, are prominently used by 60% of respondents on a daily or weekly basis.

2. **AI's Significant Impact on Efficiency and Productivity**
   A substantial majority of businesses acknowledge a high to very high impact of AI on their efficiency and productivity. 75% of respondents recognize the benefits of tools like generative AI, natural language processing (NLP), and predictive AI.

3. **Strong Preparedness for AI Adoption**
   Over half of the respondents (55%) feel their organizations are well-prepared to adopt AI technologies, indicating a solid foundation for further AI integration.

4. **Growing Need for Localized AI Solutions**
   While Western AI tools remain prevalent, 25% of respondents are keen to explore Chinese AI applications tailored to local market conditions. This interest is particularly notable among companies in the manufacturing, technology, and consulting sectors, seeking solutions compliant with local regulations, data privacy standards, and consumer behaviors.

The Swedish Chamber of Commerce in China was established in 1998 with the mission of supporting its members' business interests in China. As a non-governmental and non-profit organization, SwedCham China operates with offices in Shanghai and Beijing, serving a growing network of over 210 member companies. The organization plays a vital role as a facilitator of networking and information flow, promoting business collaboration between Sweden and China.

The Swedish Chamber of Commerce in China focuses on three key pillars:

- Information
- Facilitation
- Networking

Through a wide range of events, including webinars, seminars, factory tours, and executive dialogues, SwedCham China helps its members navigate the dynamic Chinese market. Additionally, it collaborates with "Team Sweden" partners, such as the Swedish Embassy, Consulate General, and Business Sweden, to strengthen Sino-Swedish business ties and promote the Swedish brand.

The Swedish Chamber of Commerce in China continually adapts itself to meet the evolving needs of its members, prioritizing strategic partnerships and sector-specific support to deliver high-impact events and valuable business insights.

THE SWEDISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN CHINA

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INTRODUCTION

The SwedCham AI Survey aims to give a snapshot of how our member firms employ AI tools, assess the impact of AI on their operations, and evaluate their readiness to embrace further AI advancements. The findings represent diverse sectors, including manufacturing, automotive, technology, finance, and healthcare, with significant input from executives and senior managers.

Integrating AI technologies into business operations presents unparalleled opportunities for enhancing efficiency, fostering innovation, and securing competitive advantages.

According to the McKinsey Global Survey on AI (2024), **65%** of respondents reported regular use of generative AI in their operations, with Asia Pacific and Greater China regions experiencing the highest increase in Gen AI adoption.

For Swedish firms operating within China's dynamic market, the adoption and utilization of AI tools necessitate a multicultural understanding of both global and local technological landscapes to ensure seamless integration into their global operations.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

The survey received 20 complete responses, representing a diverse range of companies in terms of size, industry, and location. Respondents were primarily based in major hubs such as Shanghai, Beijing, and surrounding regions. The breakdown is as follows:

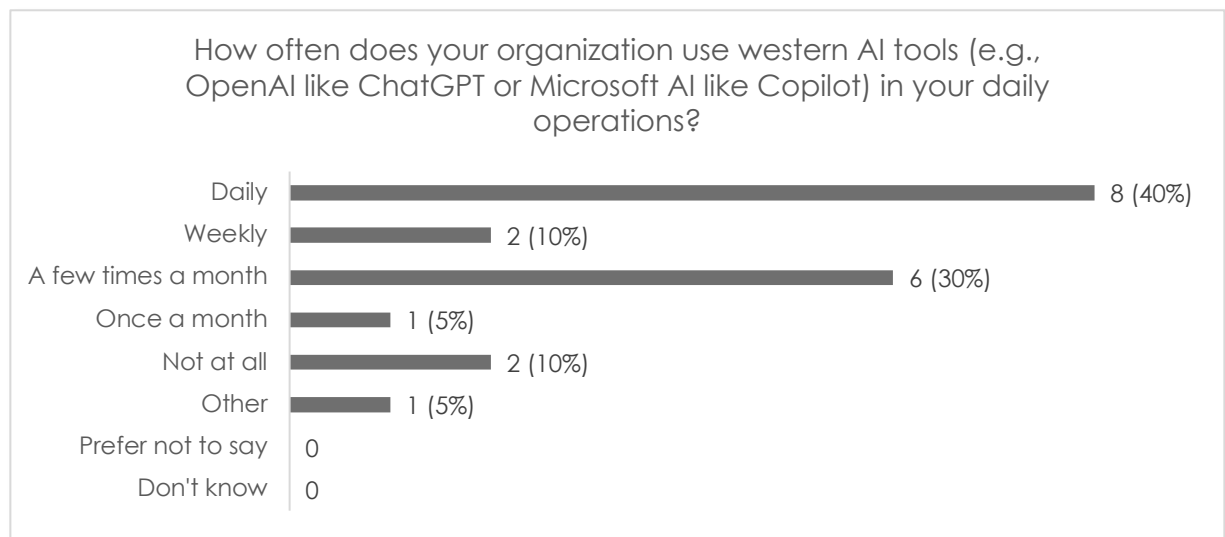**Company Size**: Startups (25%), SMEs (30%), and Multinational Corporations (35%), Blank Answers (10%)

Industry Representation: Manufacturing, Automotive, Technology, Finance, Healthcare, professional services and others.

Seniority Level: Executives (60%), Senior-Level Managers (25%), Mid-Level Managers (10%), and Entry-Level employees (5%).
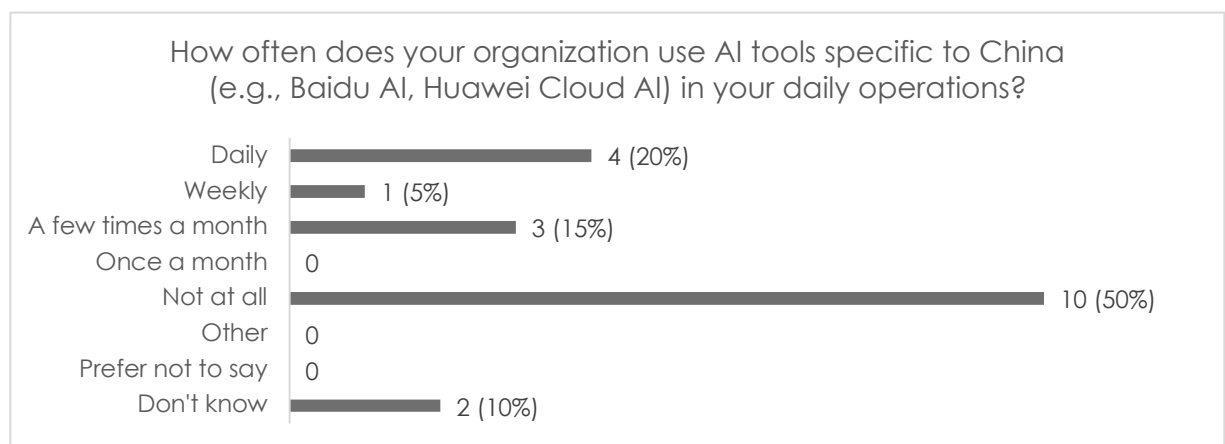
SWEDCHAM MEMBER'S AI USAGE PATTERNS

A key characteristic of SwedCham member firms is their international structure, with most companies either headquartered in Sweden or having significant Swedish stakeholders. This internationalization influences the preference for IT tools, with Swedish headquarters often holding global licenses for Western AI tools, while Chinese subsidiaries, despite familiarity with these tools, encounter regulatory challenges.

EXHIBIT 1: AMONG THE RESPONDENTS, THEY ARE MORE FREQUENTLY USING WESTERN AI TOOLS THAN CHINESE AI TOOLS:

How often does your organization use western AI tools (e.g., OpenAI like ChatGPT or Microsoft AI like Copilot) in your daily operations?

Daily	8 (40%)
Weekly	2 (10%)
A few times a month	6 (30%)
Once a month	1 (5%)
Not at all	2 (10%)
Other	1 (5%)
Prefer not to say	0
Don't know	0

Half of the respondents reported using Western AI tools, such as ChatGPT or Microsoft's Copilot, on a weekly or daily basis, indicating substantial comfort and integration within their professional environments.

EXHIBIT 2: A MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS HAVE LIMITED EXPERIENCE WITH CHINESE AI TOOLS:

How often does your organization use AI tools specific to China (e.g., Baidu AI, Huawei Cloud AI) in your daily operations?

Daily	4 (20%)
Weekly	1 (5%)
A few times a month	3 (15%)
Once a month	0
Not at all	10 (50%)
Other	0
Prefer not to say	0
Don't know	2 (10%)

A closer analysis of the data from Exhibits 1 and 2 reveals a notable trend: **8 out of 12 executives** use Western AI tools daily, compared to only **4 executives** using Chinese AI tools similarly. This preference is more pronounced among executives based in Shanghai, whereas respondents from regions outside Tier 1 cities show varied usage patterns.

How often do you or your colleagues use AI tools in your work?

Daily	7 (35%)
Weekly	4 (20%)
A few times a month	7 (35%)
Once a month	1 (5%)
Not at all	1 (5%)
Prefer not to say	0
Don't know	0
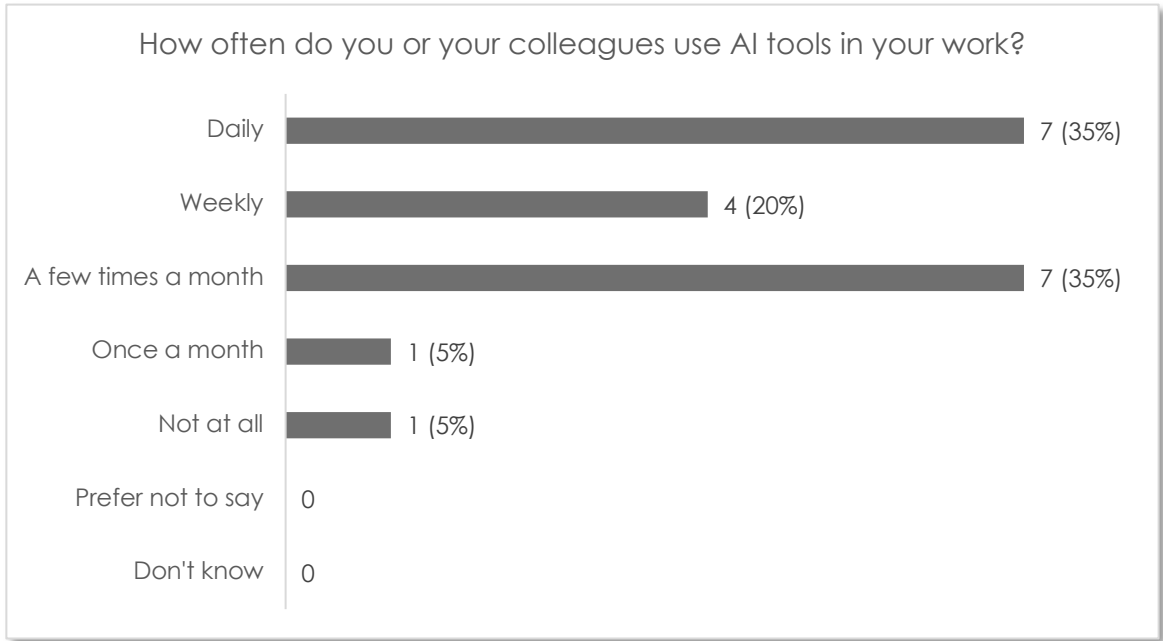
55% of respondents incorporate AI tools into their workflow at least weekly, To contextualize these insights. It's interesting to compare them with findings from Google Workspace's (2024) recent study, which surveyed over 1,000 young knowledge workers aged 22-39 in the U.S. This study revealed that 82% of these workers are already leveraging AI tools in their work, and 93% of Gen Z respondents, along with 79% of millennials, use two or more AI tools on a weekly basis.

EXECUTIVES ARE CHAMPIONS OF AI AT SWEDCHAM MEMBER FIRMS.

Executive engagement with AI tools is a critical indicator of organizational commitment to AI-driven strategic growth. Among the **12** executives surveyed, **7 (58%)** reported daily AI tool usage, while the remaining **5 (42%)** use them weekly or monthly. This high level of executive involvement underscores leadership recognition of AI's value in enhancing decision-making and operational efficiency.

However, the disparity between executive and non-executive AI usage highlights a potential knowledge gap. While executives spearhead AI adoption, broader organizational levels may lag, necessitating efforts to bridge this gap to maximize AI's organizational impact.

MU USAGE OF AI IN BUSINESS OPERATIONS

MU is committed to utilise advanced technology to support operational excellence and consistent delivery of high-quality services. At MU, AI is used to augment, optimize and enhance efficiency and quality in several key areas, e.g., unnecessary manual administration, sales, marketing, content augmentation (for example quality improvement of texts and efficient analysis of information) and save time and money on administrative processes by reducing manual labour. The AI applications used by MU complies with GDPR and the EU AI Act, to ensure that MU maintains data privacy and ethical AI use.
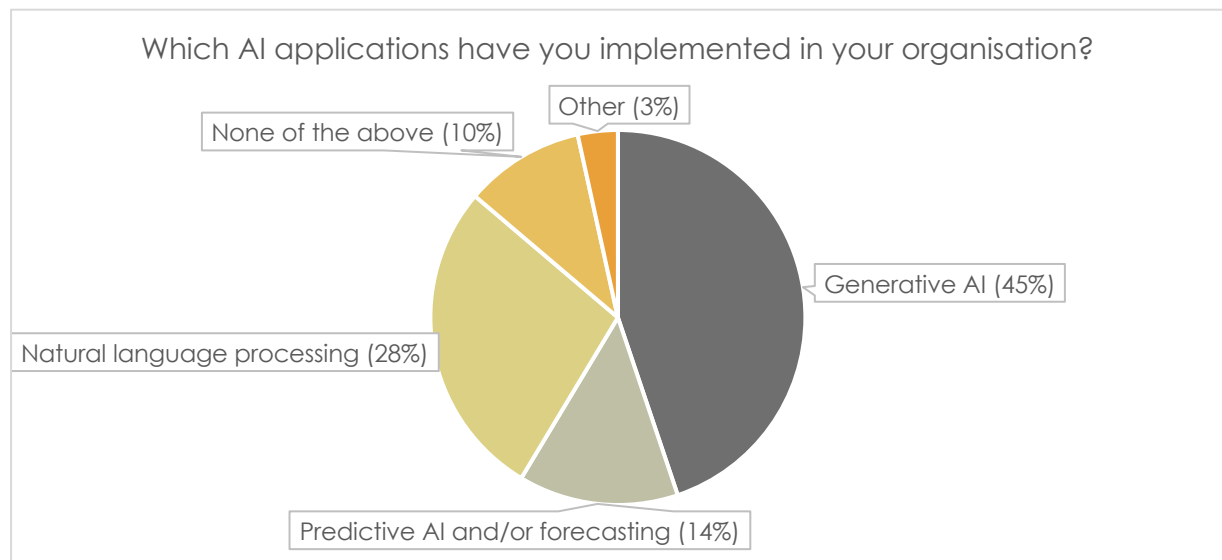
MU STANCE FOR AI WITHIN PERSONNEL SELECTION

Based on current research, regulations, and industry standards, AI—as defined by the EU AI Act (2021)—is a system that predicts, recommends, or decides to achieve human-defined goals, impacting real or virtual environments. It refers to specific technical solutions and software whose quality, effectiveness, and fairness in personnel selection must be individually assessed and validated. Mercuri Urval (MU) continuously monitors developments in the AI field through published research and evaluates the legal implications for both clients and service providers involved in leadership assessment. Our current evaluation is that AI methods can make candidate sourcing more efficient, but they have not been shown to significantly enhance the validity, fairness, or effectiveness of leadership assessment and personnel selection. MU therefore uses AI in candidate sourcing but not in personnel selection.

AI USE CASES AT SWEDCHAM MEMBER FIRMS

SwedCham members increasingly utilize Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Generative AI applications, driven by the availability of user-friendly tools like ChatGPT. These technologies facilitate conversational AI, content generation, and text analysis across various industries.

EXHIBIT 8: WORDS, NOT NUMBERS, ARE THE MOST COMMON AI IMPLEMENTATION:

Which AI applications have you implemented in your organisation?

Other (3%)
None of the above (10%)
Generative AI (45%)
Natural language processing (28%)
Predictive AI and/or forecasting (14%)

Established AI methodologies, such as forecasting and predictive modeling, remain integral in sectors like finance, manufacturing, and logistics, supporting data-driven decision-making.

INSIGHT FROM OUR MEMBER: NBH

THE ROLE OF AI IN CHINESE DIGITAL MARKETING: INSIGHTS FOR SWEDCHAM MEMBERS

The growing adoption of AI among SwedCham members highlights its transformative potential across industries. However, in the context of Chinese marketing, the involvement of experienced marketing professionals with deep knowledge of China is indispensable.

Platforms like RED (Xiaohongshu) and WeChat, which incorporate AI capabilities, offer immense opportunities for targeted content creation and user engagement. Yet, Western tools such as ChatGPT often struggle to address the subtle nuances of Chinese language, culture, and compliance. To bridge this gap, firms operating in China must integrate localized AI solutions, such as Baidu AI or Alibaba Cloud, while ensuring these tools align with local regulations.

AI can provide real-time market insights and predictive analytics, enabling companies to tailor campaigns that resonate with Chinese audiences while maintaining global brand standards. However, creating truly effective content requires human expertise. Experienced marketers who understand the complexities of Chinese culture and humor are essential, particularly in a market where playful language is a popular and impactful strategy.

NBH believes that by combining generative AI with localized strategies and involving knowledgeable marketing professionals, SwedCham members can unlock efficiencies and strengthen their presence in China.
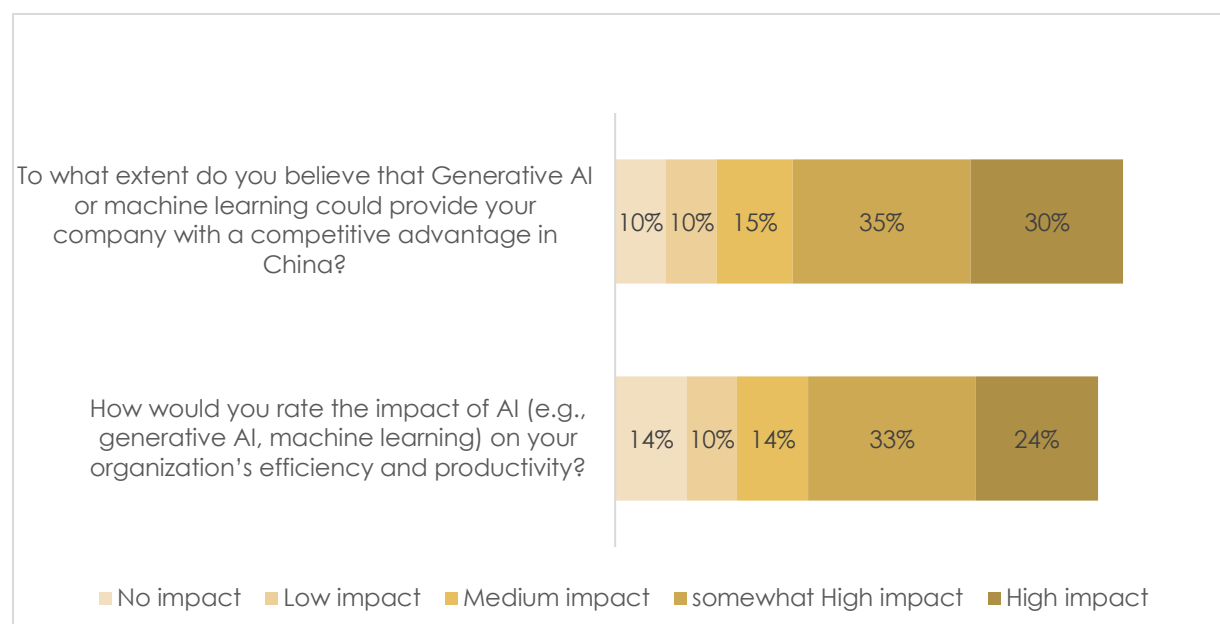
Jonathan Kullman, CEO

UNLOCKING AI POTENTIAL: IMPACTS AND PREPAREDNESS IN SWEDCHAM

AI is poised to be a cornerstone of technological advancement for many SwedCham members. McKinsey's global AI survey (2024) indicates that **67%** of respondents anticipate increased AI investments over the next three years, reflecting a robust belief in AI's expanding role across organizations.
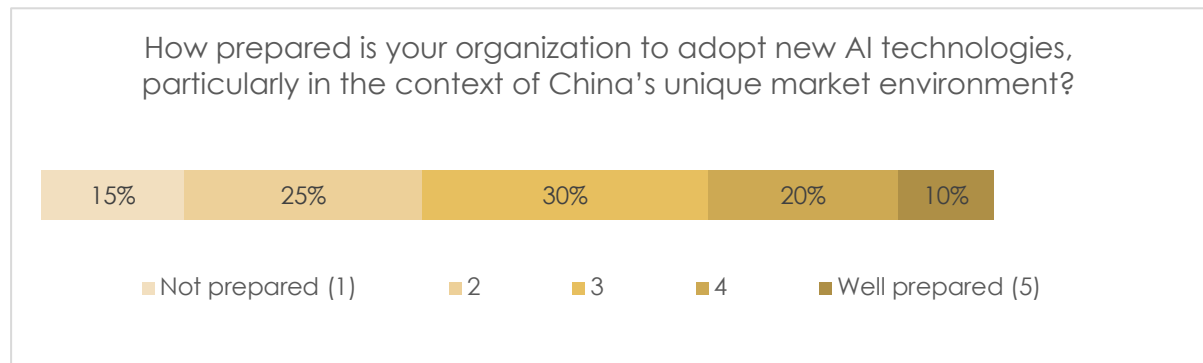
EXHIBIT 4: AMONG THE RESPONDENTS, THERE IS A STRONG BELIEF THAT AI IMPLEMENTATION WILL HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY:

A significant majority view AI as a tool for enhancing efficiency and gaining a competitive advantage in China. **75%** rated AI's impact on productivity as high or very high, though perceptions vary based on company size, industry, and adoption maturity.

	No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	somewhat High impact	High impact
To what extent do you believe that Generative AI or machine learning could provide your company with a competitive advantage in China?	10%	10%	15%	35%	30%
How would you rate the impact of AI (e.g., generative AI, machine learning) on your organization's efficiency and productivity?	14%	10%	14%	33%	24%

Despite the strong interest, respondents report only moderate preparedness to fully leverage AI tools, citing gaps in skills and resources as potential barriers to further adoption.

How prepared is your organization to adopt new AI technologies, particularly in the context of China's unique market environment?

15%	25%	30%	20%	10%

■ Not prepared (1) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ Well prepared (5)

Privacy and security remain significant concerns, with **45%** of respondents wary of privacy risks associated with generative AI, especially in sensitive sectors like finance, healthcare, and manufacturing.

How concerned are you about privacy risks and security issues related to the use of Generative AI in your organization?

15%	10%	25%	40%	10%

■ Not prepared (1) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ Well prepared (5)
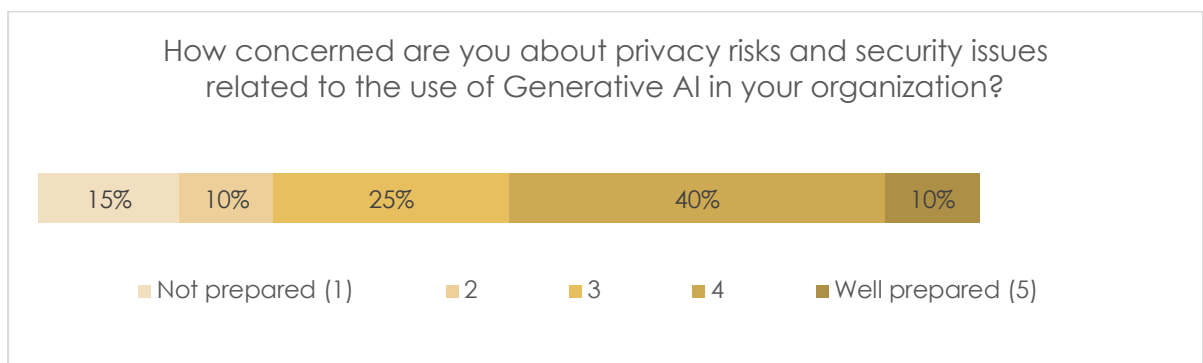
METHODOLOGY

The purpose of SwedCham's corporate AI survey was to provide insight into the current state of AI usage among member firms, focusing on differences between Western and Chinese AI tools, as well as identifying training needs and future interests. The survey was conducted between October 15th and November 1st, 2024, inviting SwedCham members to participate via email.

The survey consisted of 15 questions grouped into several sections, including:

- **Company Profile**: Questions about company size, industry, and location.

- **AI Usage Patterns**: Frequency and type of AI tool usage, both Western and Chinese.

- **Impact and Preparedness**: Assessing the perceived impact of AI on business operations and readiness to adopt new technologies.

- **Training and Future Interests**: Areas of AI that firms are interested in exploring further and desired support from SwedCham.

The survey was sent via email to 8,448 recipients who are members of SwedCham China. Of these, 853 opened the email, and 31 clicked the link to the survey, resulting in 20 complete responses. Microsoft Forms was used as the survey platform.

The respondents represented a diverse range of industries, company sizes, and regions, providing a broad view of AI adoption within the SwedCham network. For simplicity, all survey results are rounded to the nearest whole number, which may result in some totals not adding up precisely to 100%

Johan Chen, SwedCham Scholar at the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in China, authored this report, with the front-page design created by Louise Lau, Project Coordinator at the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Taipei.

The author extends sincere thanks to Mercuri Urval and Jonathan Kullman of NBH for their valuable contributions, as well as to Stephane Monsallier from Systems in Motion for his insightful input during the process.

APPENDIX

SOURCES:

Google Workspace. (2024, November 25). *New research from Google Workspace and The Harris Poll shows rising leaders are embracing AI to drive impact at work*. PR Newswire. Retrieved from: https://www.googlecloudpresscorner.com/2024-11-25-New-research-from-Google-Workspace-and-The-Harris-Poll-shows-rising-leaders-are-embracing-AI-to-drive-impact-at-work

Singla, A., Sukharevsky, A., Yee, L., Chui, M., & Hall, B. (2024, May 30). *The state of AI in early 2024: Gen AI adoption spikes and starts to generate value*. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from: https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/quantumblack/our-insights/the-state-of-ai#/

SURVEY RESULTS:

1. How often do you or your colleagues use AI tools in your work?

- Daily: 10/20 (50%)
- Weekly: 6/20 (30%)
- A few times a month: 3/20 (15%)
- Not at all: 1/20 (5%)

2. How often does your organization use Western AI tools (e.g., OpenAI, Microsoft AI like Copilot) in your daily operations?

- Daily: 12/20 (60%)
- Weekly: 5/20 (25%)
- A few times a month: 2/20 (10%)
- Not at all: 1/20 (5%)

3. How often does your organization use AI tools specific to China (e.g., Baidu AI, Huawei Cloud AI) in your daily operations?

- Daily: 5/20 (25%)
- Weekly: 6/20 (30%)
- A few times a month: 4/20 (20%)
- Not at all: 5/20 (25%)

4. How would you rate the impact of AI (e.g., generative AI, machine learning) on your organization's efficiency and productivity?

- Very high impact: 7/20 (35%)
- High impact: 8/20 (40%)
- Moderate impact: 4/20 (20%)
- Low impact: 1/20 (5%)
- No impact: 0/20 (0%)

5. How prepared is your organization to adopt new AI technologies, particularly in the context of China's unique market environment?

- Very well prepared: 5/20 (25%)
- Well prepared: 6/20 (30%)
- Moderately prepared: 5/20 (25%)
- Not prepared: 3/20 (15%)
- Not at all prepared: 1/20 (5%)

6. To what extent do you believe that Generative AI or machine learning could provide your company with a competitive advantage in China?

- Very critical: 9/20 (45%)
- Critical: 5/20 (25%)
- Moderate: 4/20 (20%)
- Not critical: 2/20 (10%)
- Not at all critical: 0/20 (0%)

7. How concerned are you about privacy risks and security issues related to the use of Generative AI in your organization?

- Very concerned: 3/20 (15%)
- Concerned: 5/20 (25%)
- Moderately concerned: 3/20 (15%)
- Not concerned: 9/20 (45%)
- Not at all concerned: 0/20 (0%)

8. Which AI applications have you implemented in your organization?

- Generative AI: 10/20 (50%)
- Predictive AI and/or forecasting: 9/20 (45%)
- Natural Language Processing (NLP): 7/20 (35%)
- None of the above: 2/20 (10%)
- Other AI applications: 2/20 (10%)

9. What areas of AI are you and your organization most interested in exploring further, and what kind of AI training or support would you like to see offered by SwedCham in the future?

Natural language processing (NLP): 5/20 (25%)

Generative AI: 7/20 (35%)

Predictive AI and forecasting: 6/20 (30%)

AI for sales and marketing: 4/20 (20%)

AI regulation and best practices: 3/20 (15%)

AI for executive-level decision-making: 2/20 (10%)