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Who is Using AI in Romania? A Socio – Economic Profile of AI Users

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ABSTRACT: Romania ranks last in the EU on AI usage. Whereas the AI knew an exponential growth worldwide over the last few years, especially after Chat GPT launch, Romania does not seem to have the capacity to catch up quickly.

The present study aims to showcase the influence of socio-economic predictors, such as age, education level, income and professional experience, on AI usage in the workplace in Romania. We use ordinal regression model to measure what drove AI usage at the workplace in Romania over the last 12 months, which may later stimulate AI uptake by the labor market.

We use for the first time the results of a survey targeting employees, applied online in Romania during December 2024 – January 2025.

We conclude that Romanian employees' income and work experience are key predictors of AI usage, whereas age and professional experience do not have a significant impact.

KEYWORDS: AI; AI usage; digitalization; Romania; socio-economic profiles

I. INTRODUCTION

The ecosystem of artificial intelligence adoption is a 3D picture characterized by regional and local disparities, increasing global growth, and AI adoption rates that are dependent on various socio - economic factors.

This research aims to conduct empirical research to understand how Romania is positioning itself in AI usage landscape compared to other EU Member States, and to analyze how various social economic characteristics such as the education, income age and professional experience can further influence AI uptake and adoption in workplace settings.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

AI has experienced a rapid exponential growth worldwide, especially following the launch of Chat GPT. The available data showcase that AI has developed into more than a swift transition from an emerging trend to a real tool for mainstream business. According to a 2024 analysis performed by Statista (2024) the adoption of artificial intelligence has increased by 72% globally, which represents a substantial increase from previous year with 55%. Significantly to notice is this exponential growth of generative AI observed in 65% of organization worldwide, which translates into more than 30% increase over the last year.

The pace of AI adoption is more advanced and rapid than previous technological revolutions. By comparison, according to Amazon Web Services (2024) AI adoption in Europe is currently outpacing the uptake of mobile phones. This took place between 2007 and 2008 when it was registered an increase of 18%. By comparison, the AI uptake showcase and increase of 27% over one year, which means that approximately five businesses adopt AI technology every minute across the EU, in total 3 million businesses used AI over the last year. Is it is expected that Europe will achieve universal AI adoption by 2030, even earlier, if the current phase of adoption is maintained. In absolute numbers, it is estimated that cloud enabled AI solutions could add on approx. 430 billion € to EU GDP by 2030 (Strand Partners, 2025).

However, one of the greatest challenges is to generate meaningful value from the AI implementation, which makes a huge difference between AI leaders and followers. Boston Consulting Groups paper (2024) has indicated that only 26% of companies at global level have succeeded to move beyond proof-of-concept stages and make meaningful value from AI. The report was elaborated following a survey applied on 1000 senior executives around 59 countries. The analysis revealed that only 4% of companies have developed cutting - edge AI capabilities to generate real value, while an additional 22% have just started to have a strategic AI usage approach and are just beginning to start making substantial gains. Overall, AI leaders have succeeded

to achieve 1.5 times higher revenue growth, 1.6 times greater shareholder returns, and 1.54 times higher returns on investment capital over a three year's period. The AI benefits are impactful when analyzing the effectiveness and importance of AI adoption. And this aspect is particularly important for a country like Romania that is one of the lagging countries in AI adoption in the EU.

The United States of America and China are world leaders in AI adoption (Peng et al., 2025; Roberts et al., 2023). However, the European Union is trying today to catch up rapidly (Draghi, 2024). However, the European landscape when discussing AI adoption is very different across the 27 EU member states, with various stages of AI adoption and important variation across regions, with leaders and laggers clusters of countries. According to latest Eurostat data available (2025), on average of 13.5% of enterprises with more than 10 employees are using AI technologies in 2024, which marks an important a 5.5% increase over one-year period (from 8% in 2023). In terms of variation of AI usage between the leaders and followers the cluster of countries that represent the leaders is made up of Northern European countries and Western countries led by Denmark, Sweden and Belgium. The pace of AI uptake is indeed very high: Sweden showed an extraordinary increase of approximately 15% within one single year period.

When looking at the types of AI technologies that are being adopted at EU level it is worth noticing that the language related AI application is currently the one that are driving European landscape adoption (Eurostat, 2025). Text mining (that is analysis of written language) is used by approximately 7% of enterprises. It is followed by natural language generation (which means generating written or spoken language), and speech recognition (that is converting spoken language into machine, readable format), each of these tools representing approximately 5% of overall AI usage.

However, the European Union is a pioneer in AI regulation, and it aims to balance innovation with safety and ethical considerations are important. A step forward in this field was made in 2024 when European Union adopted the Digital Compass 2030 and AI Act. This piece of legislation introduces a risk-based approach that allows to characterize AI applications based on different risk levels: unacceptable risk (which represents banning an application), high risk (subject to specific legal requirements) and minimal risk (largely unregulated). This act aims to be fully applied starting August 2026. The prohibited or the acceptable risks posed by AI systems have become applicable starting February 2025. Whereas governance rules for general purpose AI models would be effective from August 2025 onwards. It is well- known that the EU regulatory environment may influence or block future AI adoption. That is the reason why the legislative package was complemented other various initiatives that are designed in order to promote AI development and uptake at company level. The AI innovation package that was launched in 2024 offers more support to European startups for developing AI that respects AI values and rules and allows for a rapid uptake that is ethical and consistent with the regulatory framework. The package includes an initiative to stimulate generative AI uptake across the key EU strategic Industrial Ecosystems in partnership with AI start-ups and other industry deployers. In addition, the more targeted European programs on R&D investments, such as Horizon Europe and Digital Europe, plan to invest approximately €1 billion per year in AI uptake. Further on, it aims to mobilize private sector investments across member states in order to reach a volume of approximately 20 billion yearly over the course of digital decade.

Romania ranks last in the EU in terms of AI technology usage is only 3.1% of enterprises are you doing are using AI technology in 2024 according to Eurostat (2025). This figure shows that Romania is an outlier in AI usage when compared to EU average of 13.5% and with leading countries such as Denmark which has a 27.6% adoption rate, and 25% in Sweden and Belgium. Likewise, Romania showed one of the smallest improvements with just 1.6% increase between 2023 and 2024.

The Romanian Government succeeded to approve the National Strategy Regarding AI in July 2024, being one of the last countries in Europe. It tries to catch up with a broader European approach outlined in the AI Act. This is the strategic document most important in the AI landscape, as its main aim is to align the regulatory framework to the European one and also to incentivize, and to push forward AI adoption across the country. The strategy aligns with countries broader digital transformation challenges, including in the public sector, and this is despite Romania having a relatively strong IT sector. It will be heavily supported by the Recovery and Resilience Facility, with a total budget allocation for digital development across the EU of almost 134 billion euro, as there is an obligation to allocate at least 20% of the budget to digital transformation.

Not only that Romania occupies a challenging position in the regarding ER adoption, but Romania is lagging behind regarding the general attitudes towards AI. According to the latest Eurobarometer Survey data, in 2024 Romania also ranked last in the EU regarding the attitudes towards AI in the workplace, with only 50% of Romanians expressing favorable attitudes and perceptions compared to the EU average of 67%. It is important to mention that also Romania is lagging other European Eastern European countries such as Poland and Croatia, whose citizens appear to have more positive attitudes towards AI against relatively similar economic conditions.

Against the official not so encouraging statistics, the situation at the national level appears to be more nuanced. Various organizations' surveys that have been developed over the last two years showcase a rather different reality. Overall, 77% of the Romanian employees use AI either daily or occasionally, some more than 88% believe that automation tools should be

integrated especially in the office environment, whereas 70% want to develop a new AI skill according to a survey conducted in 2024 by Genesis Property (the survey was conducted among 1,175 respondents nationwide). The same study identified that irrespective of age, 70% of employees expressed interest in developing AI-related skills. Additionally, an eJobs survey data (eJobs is the largest private recruiting platform in Romania) showcase that 35% of respondents (from a total of 800 employees) declared that they are usually using AI, for different purposes: 68% of the respondents use it for research and documentation, 44% for writing emails and messages, 34% for translations, and 22 for generating reports and presentations. Thus, it appears that AI is used in Romania for making employees more efficient in their routine tasks and not for more complex applications.

According to recent research conducted in Romania to understand the attitudes of Romanians towards learning a new AI skill, the education and income level of the employees appear to be positively linked to AI adoption within the company and the willingness to learn a new AI related skill (Popescu et al., 2024). More general research on technology adoption in Romania partially contradicts the above as it found that income has a rather weaker effect when compared to other factors such as education level and occupational status (Ţurlea and Ciupagea, 2009). However, these findings may also indicate that there is a changing dynamic in technology adoption, and AI could have a very interesting and different effect that is worth investing further. Within the framework of this research, it was acknowledged that there is a gap in scientific literature regarding AI adoption in Romania and the numbers of years of experience of the employees. However, considering Romanian employees' reluctancy to AI usage (Eurobarometer, 2024), we would presume that more experienced employees would confide more in their professional skills and would be more willing to use AI without fear that their job would disappear (Autor, 2022).

As the literature review shows, AI adoption in Romania appears to follow more of a bottom up than a top-down adoption pattern, as the adoption being led specifically by employees that are using AI tools in an informal manner in the workplace. Against this context, the current paper aims to respond to the following research question: What are the main socio – economic characteristics of the Romanian employees that impact AI usage in the workplace? Therefore, we want to test the following hypothesis: AI usage in the workplace is positively impacted by the age, education, income and the level of professional experience.

III.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of the current research, we use for the first time the results of a self-selected survey, applied online, and conducted during December 14th, 2024 – February 7th, 2025, using the Survey Monkey platform. The survey targeted Romanian employees, aged 16 or higher, with access to Internet. The survey was distributed on social platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn), targeting all the regions of the country. It was based on the voluntary participation of the respondents. 201 responses were registered.

The sample of respondents comprised females (69%) and males (31%). The majority fall under the 40-49 age range (57%), followed by 50-59 (16%), and 35-39 (12%). The residential area is primarily urban (69%), while rural areas make up to 31%.

The variables have been prepared and scaled to be used in the regression analysis.

Since the dependent variable is an ordinal variable (Q1 below), the most appropriate statistical method is ordinal logistic regression. The regression analysis was performed in Stata.

The dependent variable (Y – the outcome) is the AI usage and it measures the degree of AI usage at the workplace for current activities over the last 12 months. It was measured using the following specific survey question:

Q1 - Considering the specifics of your current activity, do you use AI - artificial intelligence (such as ChatGPT) (estimate)? (last 12 months) – **ordinal variable**.

- *I do not use AI, my activity is not suitable - 0*
- *I don't know / No answer - 0*
- *I don't like to use AI at all, although I could -1*
- *I use AI between 0 - 25% of my activity -2*
- *I use AI between 25 - 50% of my activity -3*
- *I use AI between 50 - 75% of my activity -4*
- *I use AI between 75 - 100% of my activity - 5*

The independent variables (Y – the predictors) are represented by the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and were measured using the following survey questions:

Q2 – AGE - What is your age? (S*elected from the list – 16 - 65 years*) – **ordinal numeric variable**.

Q3 – EDUCATION - What is the highest school you graduated from? – ordinal variable.

- *No school -1*

- *Primary school -2*
- *Middle school -3*
- *High school -4*
- *Vocational school 1*
- *Higher education 2*
- *Master's degree 3*
- *PhD 4*

Q4 – INCOME - What is your net monthly income (after taxation)? – **ordinal variable**.

- *Under 500 euros - 1*
- *Between 500-1000 euros - 2*
- *Between 1000-2000 euros -3*
- *Between 2000-3000 euros-4*
- *Between 3000-4000 euros-5*
- *Over 4000 euros - 6*

Q5 - WORK EXPERIENCE - What work experience do you have? – **ordinal variable**.

- *Less than 1 year – 1*
- *Between 2 and 5 years - 2*
- *Between 5 and 10 years -3*
- *Between 10 and 15 years -4*
- *Between 15 and 25 years -5*
- *over 25 years of experience - 6*

Before conducting the regression analysis, we tested the variables for multicollinearity by using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The results showed that all variables had VIF values below 5 (mean VIF = 1.77), which indicated that there are no significant multicollinearity concerns, which ensure the stability of the coefficient estimates.

The results of the log-likelihood ratio test (LR Chi^2 = 9.09, p = 0.059) suggested that the independent variables collectively explain the variations in AI usage, although the overall model fit is modest (Pseudo R^2 = 0.0162).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis showcase an interesting picture, with AI usage being more related to income and work experience level and less to age and education, as seen below.

The respondent's socio – economic characteristics presented below showcases a set of results that provides the framework for understanding the results of the regression analysis further on.

The predominant age of respondents was 40-49, followed by the 50-59 age category (see figure 1 below).

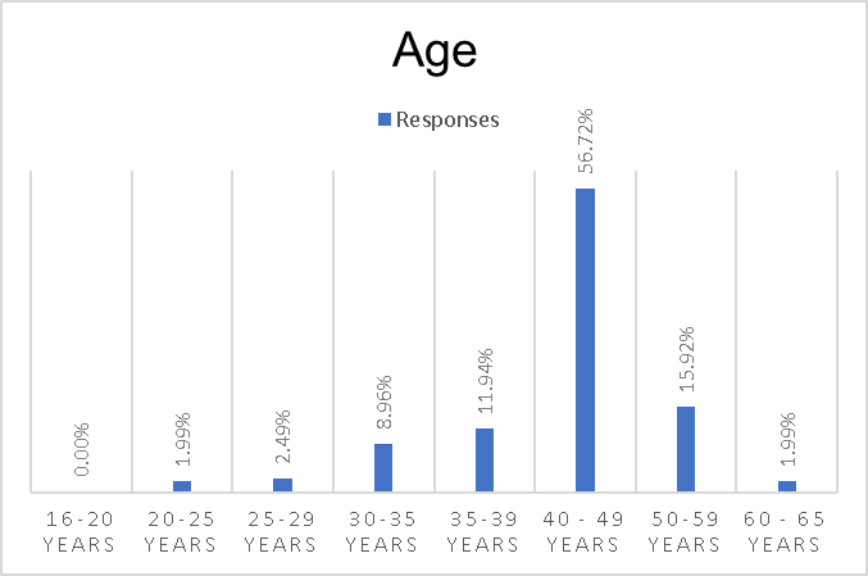

Figure 1: The distribution of the respondents by age

Source: Author's own calculations

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The majority of respondents are faculty graduates or higher (see Figure 2 below), most of them owning a master's degree (55.72%).

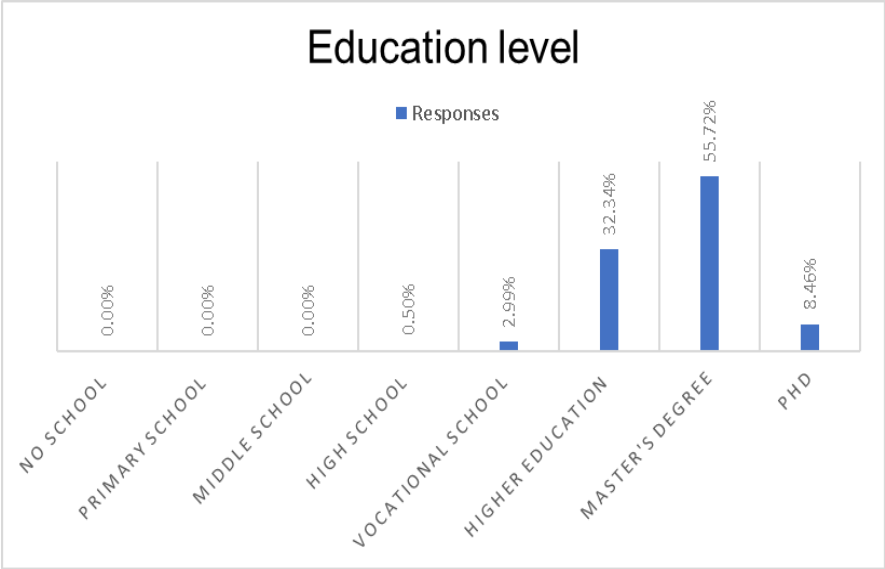

Figure 2: The distribution of the respondents by education level

Source: Author's own calculations

By monthly income (see Figure 3), the majority of respondents (41%) belong to the average net monthly income in Romania as of January 2025 (approximately 1.050 euros), followed by the next highest income range (between 2000 -3000 euros).

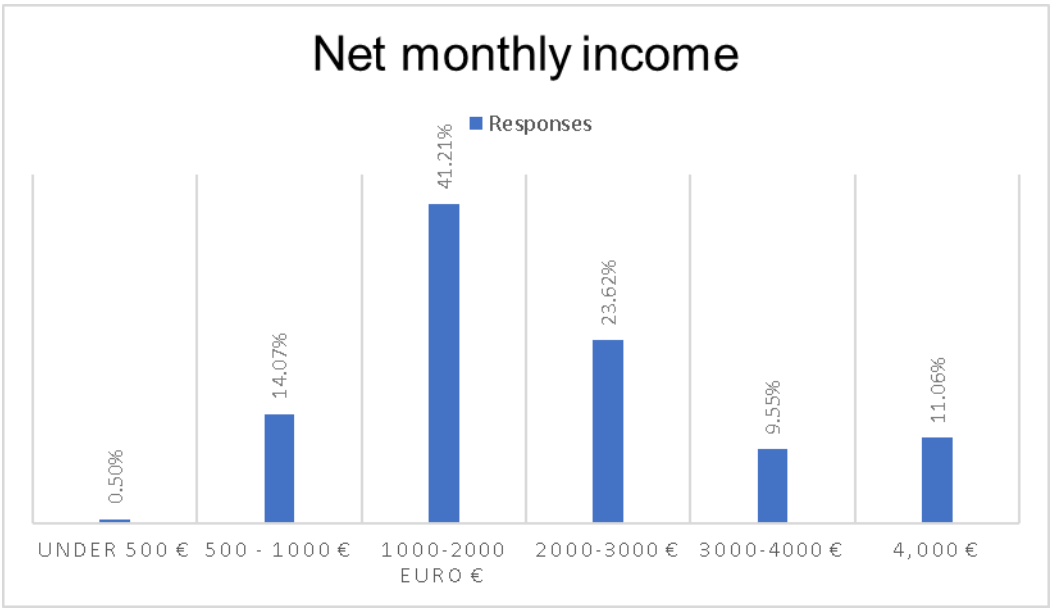

Figure 3: The distribution of the respondents by net monthly income

Source: Author's own calculations

The majority of respondents have more than 10 years of professional experience (see Figure 4 below). Almost half of respondents have between 15 -25 professional experience (53.2%), followed by the respondents with more than 25 years of experience (23.8%).

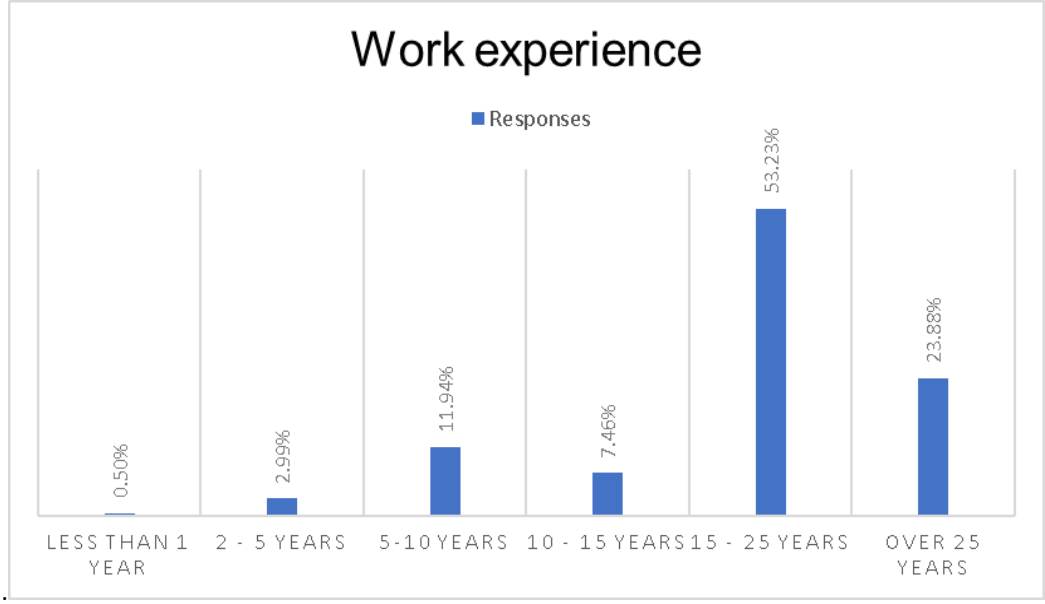

Figure 4: The distribution of the respondents by work experience

Source: Author's own calculations

The AI usage in the workplace over the last 12 months (throughout 2024) varies (see Figure 5 below). The majority of respondents are using AI for up to half of their activities, with 42.79% respondents using AI for up to a quarter of their activities. However, an interesting behavior is observed in 12% of the respondents who do not like to use AI at all, even though their activity is compatible with AI technology. This behavior could be explained by the overall reluctancy of the Romanian to use AI tools (Eurobarometer, 2024).

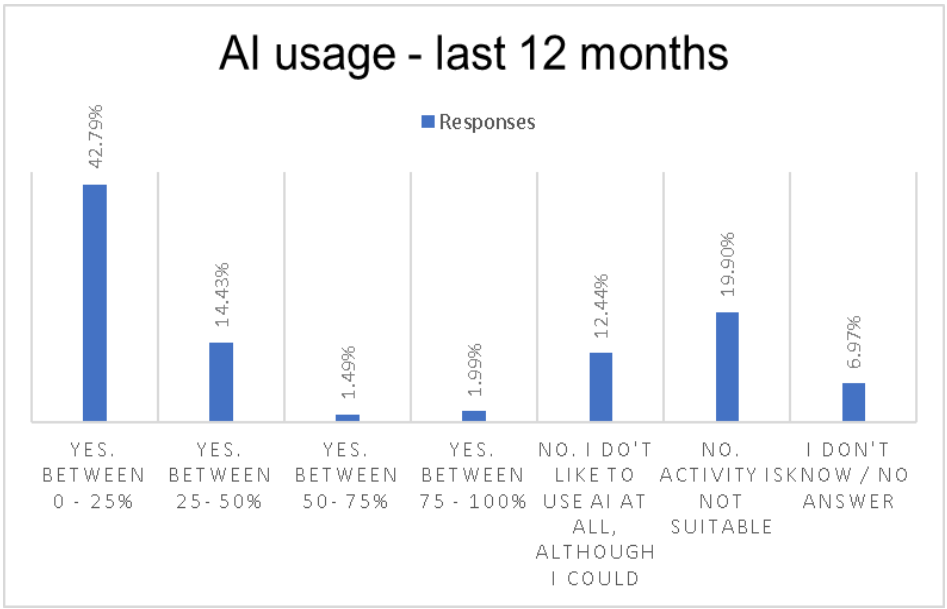

Figure 5: The distribution of the respondents by AI usage over the last 12 months

Source: Author's own calculations

The regression analysis examines the influence of the socio – economic factors (age, education, income, experience) on the AI usage in the workplace (Q1), which is suggestive for the current level of AI adoption in the workplace among the white collar's employees.

The hypothesis we aim to test is the following:

AI usage in the workplace is positively impacted by the age, education, income and the level of professional experience.

We performed the ordinal regression analysis that estimates the log-odds of being in a higher AI usage category compared to lower categories. The assessment of model (Regression Statistics) reveals the following (see Table 1):

Table 1. Results of the regression analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	z	P>|z|	95% Confidence Interval	
Age	0.227	0.1809	1.25	0.21	-0.1275	0.5815
Education	0.1531	0.1874	0.82	0.414	-0.2142	0.5204
Income	**0.2419**	0.1128	2.14	**0.032**	0.0208	0.4629
Work Experience	**-0.4158**	0.1933	-2.15	**0.031**	-0.7947	- 0.0369
Cut 1	*-0.5149*	*0.8823*			-2.2441	1.2143
Cut 2	*0.0733*	*0.8835*			-1.6580	1.8050
Cut 3	*2.0943*	*0.899*			0.3322	3.8563
Cut 4	*3.9027*	*0.9575*			2.025964	5.779405
Cut 5	*4.4777*	*1.0122*			2.493834	6.461519

Source: Author's own calculations performed in STATA.

The analysis shows that income is statistically significant, and it positively associated with AI usage (p = 0.032). This suggests that individuals with higher income are more likely to use Ai to a larger extend when compared to those with lower income.

On the other hand, though statistically significant (p = 0.031), the work experience has a negative effect on AI usage (*coefficient = -0.4158*). This suggests that individuals with more years of experience are less likely to use AI within their workplace.

Nevertheless, age (p = 0.210) and education (p = 0.414) are not statistically significant, meaning they do not strongly influence AI usage in this model.

Within the ordinal logistic regression, cut points (cut1 to cut5) set probability thresholds for different AI usage levels. Higher cut points mean respondents need higher logit values to move to a higher AI usage category. Table 1 shows that higher income respondents are more likely to exceed these thresholds (e.g., cut3 and cut4), indicating moderate-to-high AI usage. In contrast, more experienced workers tend to stay below these thresholds (e.g., cut2 or cut3), showing a lower AI adoption despite their professional experience. As a result, we can conclude that income has a positive impact on AI usage, while work experience negatively impacts AI adoption.

The results of the analysis of the marginal effects of the predictors are presented in table 2 below. The analysis aims to provide a better understanding of how the socio-economic characteristics of employees influence AI adoption at different levels. The analysis shows how much a one-unit increase in an independent variable changes the probability of falling into each AI usage category. We conclude that higher income decreases the probability of being in lower AI usage categories (ai_usage = 0 or ai_usage = 1) and increases the probability of being in higher usage categories (ai_usage = 3 or ai_usage = 4). The analysis shows that more work experience increases the probability of being in the lowest AI usage category (ai_usage = 0, by 7.98%) and decreases the probability of being in higher categories. Likewise, age and education have non-significant marginal effects, confirming their limited influence on AI adoption.

Table 2: Analysis of the marginal effects of predictors on AI usage (Q1)

Variable	ai_usage = 0	ai_usage = 1	ai_usage = 2	ai_usage = 3	ai_usage = 4	ai_usage = 5
Age	-0.0436	-0.0089	0.0202	0.0247	0.0032	0.0044
Education	-0.0294	-0.0060	0.0137	0.0167	0.0021	0.0030
Income	-0.0464	-0.0095	0.0216	0.0263	0.0034	0.0047
Work Experience	0.0798	0.0164	-0.0371	-0.0452	-0.0058	-0.0081

Source: Author's own calculations performed in STATA.

The hypothesis is partially validated by the regression analysis. The regression equation indicates that AI usage (YQ1) is positively influenced by work experience (Q5) and net monthly income (Q4), as both are statistically significant predictors. Which means that a one-unit increase in work experience increases the probability of being in the lowest AI usage category by 7.98%. and a one-unit increase in income significantly reduces the probability of being in the lowest AI usage category (ai_usage = 0) by 4.64%. The effects of age (Q2) and education level (Q3) are not statistically significant, which means that they do not predict AI usage. Overall, the analysis indicates that individuals with higher income levels tend to use AI more frequently in their activities, whereas the higher the work experience, the lower the probability of AI usage, irrespective of age or level of education, which partially validates the proposed hypothesis.

CONCLUSIONS

The regression analyses showcases that the factors influencing AI usage are the work experience and the income level of Romanian employees, as they have statistically significant effects on AI usage. These findings partially validate our hypothesis and aligns with broader trends highlighted by previous research (Popescu et al., 2024) demonstrating that employees with higher incomes are more likely to use AI, whereas work experience has the opposite effect. However, age and education do not have a clear and statistically significant effect on AI usage, thus partially invalidating our research hypothesis. Therefore, we can conclude that greater work experience does not automatically lead to greater AI usage, which could be explained either by greater resistance to change, or fear of losing their job due to automation (Autor, 2022). The findings are limited by the low number of respondents to the survey (*N*201), considering its voluntary participation. However, the last aspect should be further investigated under future research, along with specific other variables such as company's size, investments and R&D, skills availability, and others to effectively understand how AI usage could be scaled up in Romania using various policy interventions.

From a broader perspective, we can conclude that despite's Romania's last position on AI adoption in the EU, the optimism regarding the potential economic benefits of AI adoption is substantial and has the capacity to exponentially increase its uptake (McKinsey, 2024). Considering the advancement of both legislative and financing framework that are incentivizing a rapid pace of AI adoption, that is a top-down approach, Romania should likewise focus their efforts on stimulating the bottom - up approach.

This is the first research that looks into AI adoption in Romania from both the perspective of general policies and employees' socio-economic characteristics. The research results are extremely useful as they substantiate specific measures that the Romanian Government should undertake. The research could also useful for countries that share the same Ai adoption patters as Romania.

In order to achieve mass AI adoption, the Romanian Government should aim to remove specific barriers to AI adoption that could be extracted from this research, such as the high work experience and the low-income level of Ai adopters. From a practical perspective, these findings could translate in the following policy recommendations:

- design education and training programs that are easily available and affordable to all segments of population, irrespective of experience, age, education and income level;
- provide financing programs and solutions to stimulate AI uptake, by targeting especially small and medium size enterprises;
- design and provide free mass training/education programs that should allow for ethical usage of AI across the country, targeted for citizens, and public and private organizations.
- develop strong monitoring and evaluation systems that should track progress regarding AI adoption and jobs replacement rates, that should allow the Government to tale rapid measures to overcome adverse effects.
- design communication programs that should promote ethical AI usage to overcome fears of job loss due to AI and automation.

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