

We Are Not Afraid of the Wolf! - AI Usage Attitudes Among Hungarian Informatics Students

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Abstract

This study investigates the attitudes and usage patterns of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools among Hungarian informatics students majoring in Software Engineering and Business Informatics. Conducted at Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, the research explores how students utilize large language models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT and GitHub Copilot, in programming tasks, exam preparation, software design, and game development.

The central aim is to assess whether these students fear that AI advancements might negatively affect their future employment opportunities. The research employs a mixed-method approach using five extensive questionnaires distributed before and after AI-assisted programming assignments, as well as a general survey encompassing over 30 minutes of questions, covering technical behavior, psychological attitude, and labor market expectations.

Key hypotheses include: (1) proficient programmers leverage AI tools more effectively; (2) more frequent AI usage correlates with higher self-efficacy in programming; (3) students do not perceive AI as a threat to their job security.

Early findings suggest that students often trust AI for generating short and medium-length code but remain critical of its reliability for larger codebases, reflecting observations in similar studies [2, 4, 5]. In addition, students commonly follow self-developed protocols when using AI-generated code, such as testing, code review, and style adaptation.

The study finds that students who actively, but critically integrate AI generated code into personal projects or collaborative assignments demonstrate improved

exam results and higher confidence in solving novel programming challenges.

Moreover, many students appreciate the tutorial-like capabilities of LLMs for learning new programming languages, as reflected in a Go language acquisition experiment embedded in the survey.

A second practical experiment involved the development of a simple Snake game, a well-known challenge among novice programmers. Students were asked to implement the game mechanics within 40 minutes using AI assistance. This task aimed to measure their ability to rapidly apply AI-generated code in creative and time-constrained scenarios. Pre- and post-task questionnaires assessed their expectations, development strategies, and satisfaction with the AI support. Many participants reported that AI tools enabled them to reach a working version significantly faster than they could have done unaided, while also inspiring them to explore optional features such as score counters. The exercise highlighted how AI can serve not only as a problem-solving assistant but also as a creative co-pilot in project-based learning contexts.

Ethical concerns and team collaboration dynamics were also explored, revealing a nuanced perception of AI's role as both a collaborative asset and a potential challenge in shared code ownership.

These findings contribute to the growing literature on educational AI adoption [1, 3], offering localized insights into Central European higher education. The title "We Are Not Afraid of the Wolf!" metaphorically positions AI as the 'wolf'—a powerful, potentially disruptive force—while reflecting the optimistic attitude observed among respondents.

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