

Digital Competences of Polish and Ukrainian Employees - Comparative Study According to the DigComp Model

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Abstract

Digital competencies, due to their relational and relative nature, have long posed a challenge for researchers striving to develop a systematic catalog. With the dynamic advancement of technology and changes in the work environment, this task is becoming increasingly complex, and the clear gradation of digital competencies is becoming blurred.

The European Parliament has recognized digital competencies as one of the eight key competencies essential for lifelong learning. They can be broadly defined as the ability to competently, consciously, and creatively use information and communication technologies in the context of work, education, and active participation in social life. The unique nature of digital competencies stems from their crucial role in acquiring other fundamental skills, such as communication in one's native and foreign languages, learning ability, and social and civic competencies. Today, they constitute a fundamental resource enabling European citizens of the 21st century to function effectively in a knowledge-based society and economy.

In the context of dynamic changes in the Polish labor market and the increasing number of workers from Ukraine, managers face numerous challenges related to managing multicultural teams. It is estimated that over 701,000 Ukrainian citizens are currently employed in Poland, making them the largest group of foreigners in the national labor market. Key questions regarding the management of digital competencies among employees include: What skills constitute digital competencies? Do employees from different countries exhibit similar levels of these competencies? How can their level be effectively verified? How do possessed e-skills influence the execution of assigned tasks?

The COVID-19 pandemic has further emphasized the importance of digital competencies, necessitating the widespread implementation of remote and hybrid work. Despite numerous scientific studies, a standardized methodology for assessing digital

competencies in the workplace is still lacking. Data indicate that out of 27 million economically active Poles, only 55.6% possess digital skills (Schwab & Zahidi, 2020). In 2021, Poland ranked 41st out of 64 surveyed countries in the World Digital Competitiveness ranking (IMD World Competitiveness Center, 2021). Meanwhile, research conducted by SWPS University in Warsaw indicates a high level of digital skills among war refugees from Ukraine.

The aim of this study is to assess the level of digital competencies among employees of different nationalities (Poles and Ukrainians) employed in Polish enterprises. The study utilized a diagnostic survey based on the European DigComp model, which enabled the diagnosis of digital competencies in five key areas: information and data, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, security, and problem-solving.

The research findings indicate significant differences in employees' perception of their digital competencies across nationalities, their use of digital tools to optimize work, and their approach to lifelong learning. Furthermore, the results highlight the necessity of updating training programs to equalize and enhance employees' digital competency levels across all five areas of the DigComp model.

Keywords: digital competences of employees, e-skills, information and communication technologies (ICT), culturally diverse work teams, DigComp framework