TeleGrow

Enhancing the Teleworking Digital Skills for the Middle aged employees

TeleGrow Report 2021

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Erasmus+ KA226 – Partnerships for digital education readiness

Erasmus+ Partnership TeleGrow Project:
Enhancing the TeleWorking Digital Skills for the Middle Aged Employees

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1 INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Telework has hardly ever been a commonly used work tool across countries until the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant that most workers suddenly had to adapt to this new way of remote working with hardly any teleworking experience and no digital skills to cope with it successfully. Consequently, only the most experienced teleworkers were able to continue their activities and adapt to the new situation in a more or less straightforward way, while for the rest of the workers it was a challenge to overcome. Among the latter, workers over the age of 50 are particularly vulnerable to the general situation, as they are not only threatened by the virus itself, but also by rapidly changing working conditions, since they tend to have lower digital and ICT skills than younger people and face more challenges in terms of acquiring new digital skills ("ICT for work-EC", 2016).

With a 30,4% of them started working from home, as a result of the COVID-19 situation (“Working during COVID-19”, 2020), there is a crucial need for acquiring some basic digital knowledge. Teleworking requires a variety of different digital skills, and indeed, it is observed that the level of digital skills and the amount of provided opportunities regarding ICT training has a positive correlation with the quantity and quality of teleworking in each EU country. (“JRC:Telework in the EU”, 2020). Although remote working skills can be developed with frequent exposure to a proper training environment, it can be twice as hard for a middle-aged adult to enhance them and there seems to be a reluctance of older people to participate in upskilling training programs. (McIvor, 2020). Meanwhile, the rise in telework during the pandemic has highlighted the blurring of lines between work and private life. It will be critical for governments and social partners to introduce ‘right to disconnect’ initiatives in order to prevent large segments of workers becoming at risk of physical and emotional exhaustion (Eurofound, October 2020).

The current situation of COVID-19 has highlighted the immediate necessity of keeping a balance between health and economy. Therefore, working from home is without a doubt a prominent solution. Early estimates suggested that close to 40% of those currently working in the EU began to telework fulltime as a result of the pandemic (Eurofound, 2020). However, digital skill gaps have already revealed the upcoming challenges of teleworking, especially for the older employees (OECD,2020).

The TeleGrow project aims to deliver a useful training tool to help employees over the age of 50 develop their digital skills and adapt effectively in the new reality of remote working. In order to

achieve the aforementioned objectives, the partnership seeks to enhance the skills and the training methods of VET trainers and offer support for the digital integration of older employees in the teleworking environment.

The first phase of Telegrow Project has consisted in the development of a research in each partner's country to obtain valuable insights to prepare the following project phases. The result of this research has been reflected on this report and its interactive version, available on the project website: https://telegrow.erasmus.site/

The geographical scope of the analysis is Italy, France, Greece, Poland and Spain.

This TeleGrow Report has been developed in two main phases:

1) Desk research in each country, identifying legislation, state-wise, opportunities and challenges regarding teleworking, to provide an outline of the overall framework that exists in each partner's country.

2) Quantitative and qualitative study to reach an in-depth understanding of the target groups needs and worries regarding teleworking: VET Learners and employees, VET Providers and Employers.

   On the one hand, we have developed a survey for VET learners/employees aged 50+ that have provided information on the issues they face as a "group at risk", thus facilitating the identification and prioritization of the digital skills that need to develop, in order to assimilate in the new working environment.

   On the other hand, we have developed a different survey for VET providers that have offered insights both on the skills needed but also on the main problems they face to approach learners over the age of 50 and to provide them efficient digital training.

   In addition, we have carried out a Focus Group with representatives from companies in order to identify good practices, and the main advantages and barriers that they identify to foster teleworking in the future.

This report contains all the results obtained during the research phase. It includes the desk research, the analysis of the questionnaires and focus group from each country, and a comparable analysis with global conclusions of the research.

The interactive version of the report will be available from October 2021 into the website of the project (https://telegrow.erasmus.site/) and will be translated into all the partners' national languages.

2 TELEWORKING CONTEXT

The first phase of the research had the objective to look into the national legislation and practices on teleworking from each partner's country: Italy, France, Greece, Poland and Spain.

The topics discussed were:

- Teleworking country adoption: to identify the level of adoption of teleworking before and after pandemic, and reference studies published on teleworking.
- Legislation that regulates teleworking: regulatory situation before the pandemic, and the improvements during the pandemic, with initiatives raised to regulate and foster teleworking.
    - Teleworking definition described on legislation, if any.
    - Regulatory conditions from the point of employees: rights and obligations.
    - Regulatory conditions from the point of employers: rights and obligations.
- Digital skills development:
    - Citizen's digital skills level.
    - National strategy to boost digital transformation.
    - Policies and initiatives to develop digital skills, especially for employees over 50 years old.
- Good practices: Identification of two good practices on teleworking in each country, description and explanation about how they can be transferred.

A summary with all the information to facilitate comparison from countries has been also included.

DESK RESEARCH REPORT (Italy)

by (Euro-Net), May 2021

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2.1.

2.1.1. Teleworking country adoption

Smart working or agile work has become one of the protagonists of the Covid era also in Italy. Before the health emergency, it was practically unknown in Italy to most workers. Yet during the lockdown, it allowed businesses to continue in business and employees to keep their jobs.

When the Covid-19 pandemic started, for millions of workers in the EU and worldwide working from home has become the normality. Moreover, in Italy, millions of people faced the smart working as their first remote experience due to this situation as an intelligent work, used to guarantee the safety of workers and, at the same time, ensure the continuation of national economic activity. A disruptive external event, such as the spread of COVID-19, accelerated, especially in Italy, the adoption of remote working as the only way for organizations to continue their activity and survive. Thus, we have seen a forced transition to this model, or rather 'remote work' (especially from home) without any prior preparation and without a preliminary test or adaptation phase.

Looking at a recent report from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) – 90% of large enterprises (with over 250 employees) and 73% of medium-sized enterprises (between 50 and 249 employees) introduced or extended the possibility for their employees to engage in Smart Working during the emergency period – which is of course still ongoing.

Even Italian small businesses (10-49 employees) saw an increased use of Smart Working by 37.2% – while micro-enterprises (2-9 employees) allowed an estimated 18.3% of their employees to use this innovative working method. (Pintaldi, 2020)

There are many differences in the diffusion of Smart Working practices between the private and the public sector. While much of the private sector has transformed over the past two decades, the public sector moves slower.

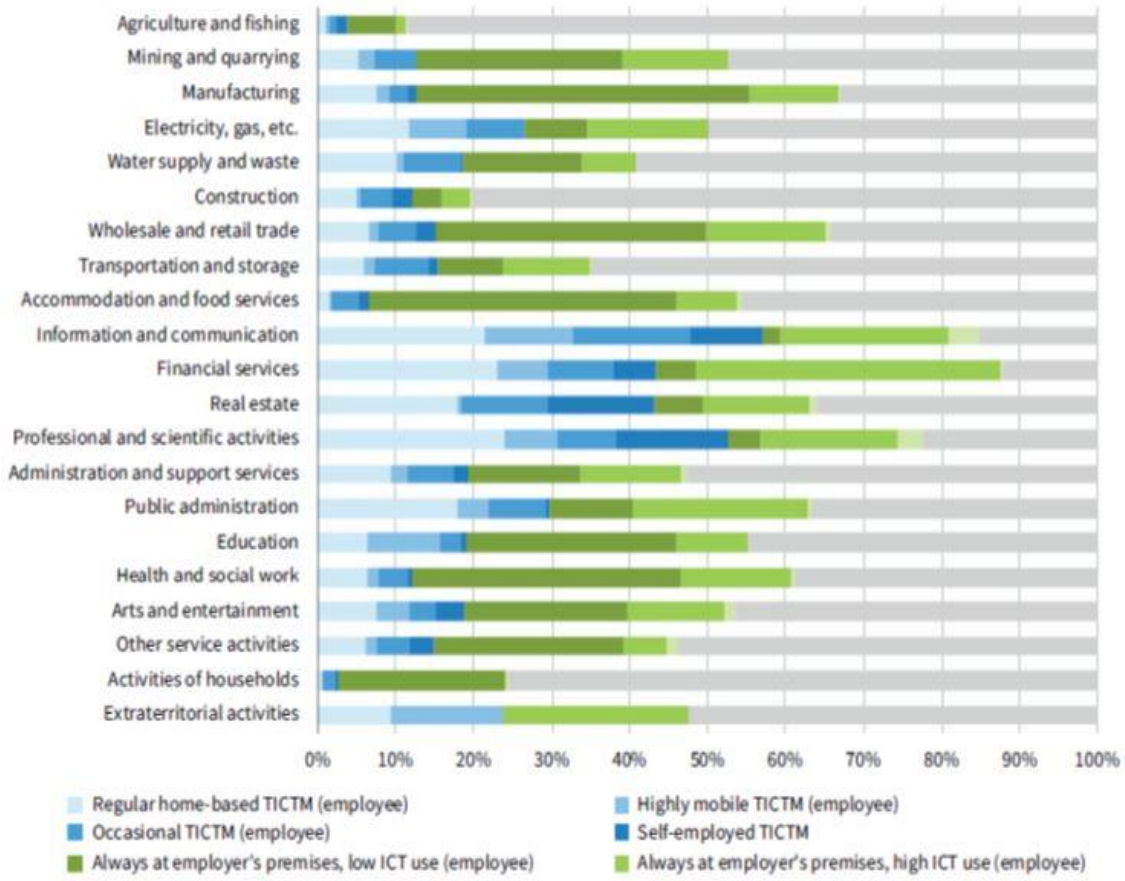
Smart working, also commonly called agile working, represented, therefore, in the period of the pandemic, the evolution of teleworking as the physical workplace is always decentralized, but it is no longer fixed. Furthermore, the smart working worker, thanks to the support of technology, enjoys ample flexibility and autonomy not only in the choice of the workplace, but also in the management of the number of hours and workloads. It is therefore a way of organizing work that can increase productivity, while at the same time favouring the harmonization between people's life and work times and environmental sustainability, aimed at achieving the so-called "Work life balance". The company is required to invest in software and technologies.

A recent 2020 Eurofound research report provided some evidence on the spread of ICT-based teleworking and mobile work in Europe, before the health emergency. According to data from the 2015 edition of the European Working Condition Survey (EWCS), 19% of European workers

worked in a teleworking regime, but this average value hides important differences between countries. The analysis shows that teleworking is more widespread in Scandinavian countries, with a percentage that stands at 38% in Denmark and 33% in Sweden. Other European countries with a large share of teleworkers are the Netherlands (31%), Luxembourg (29%), the United Kingdom (27%), France (26%) and Estonia (25%). Italy is the country with the lowest share of workers who use ICT to be able to operate remotely (8%). (Eurofound,2021)

As regards the sector of economic activity, telework is more widespread in information and communication services (57% of workers in the sector), in professional and scientific activities (53%), in financial activities (43%), real estate (43%) and, finally, in the public administration (30%). As for the diffusion between professional categories, 6.5% of the European workforce is represented by professionals who operate in a teleworking regime. These are followed by the technical professions (4.5% of the EU workforce) and office workers (2.5%).

Image 2.1.1. Spread of teleworking according the productive sector in Europe

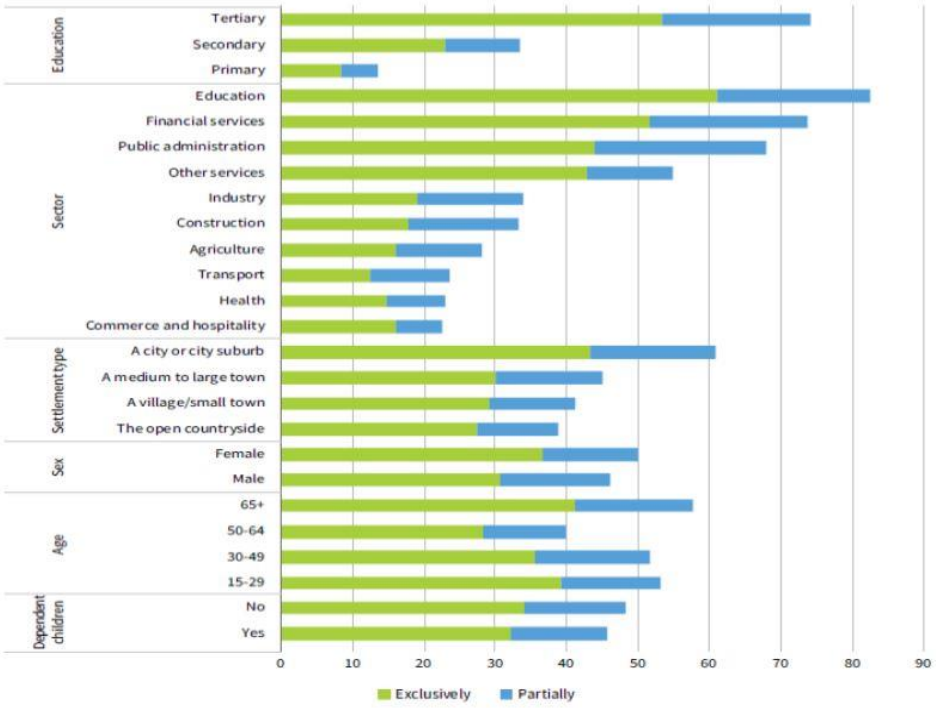


Source: EWCS (2015) and Eurofund (2020). https://www.eticaeconomia.it/ee/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2.jpg

With the advent of the pandemic, the scenario presented up to now has changed and since the health emergency the use of remote work "forced" has been considered as the only possible mean of safeguarding both health and the economy.

And Italy, which before the pandemic was rearmost for the spread of teleworking, between April and July 2020, according to the results of this survey, was one of the countries that made the most massive use of agile work to be able to arrest the spread of the Coronavirus infection.

Image 2.1.2 Spread of teleworking in Italy according the productive sector



Source: EWCS (2015) and Eurofund (2020). https://www.eticaeconomia.it/ee/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/4.jpg

Therefore, in Italy, smart working was born or in any case, it has spread in an emergency mode, in an improvised manner, without any previous training for workers.

So, the COVID-19 emergency has brought out themes like “smart working”, “agile working”, “remote working”, and “teleworking” starting from February 2020, at the time when the news related to the contagion in Italy started spreading.

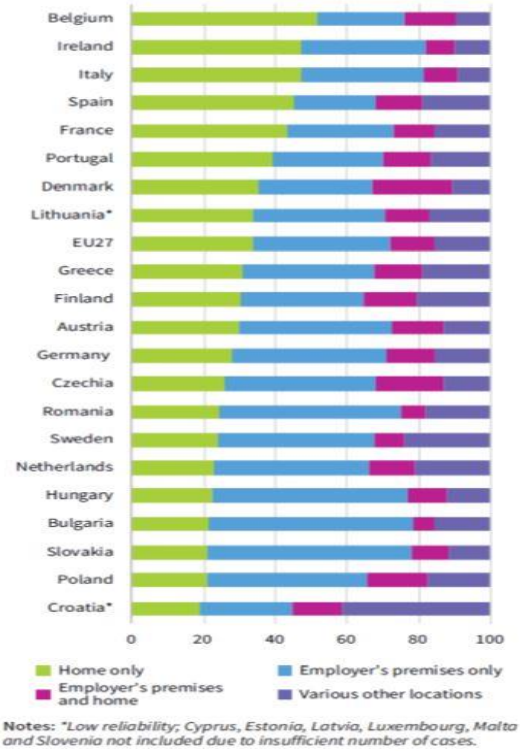
In Italy, according to the ISTAT note on the economic trend of the month of March 2020, “the activities of 2.2 million companies, 49% of the total, have been suspended, investing the exporting companies to a greater extent, involving 65% of the total. The blockade of production activities involved 44.3% of employees and 42.1% of employees. The first response recorded by the National Statistical Institute is an important collapse in consumer and business confidence” (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2020a). We never thought we would live a similar situation like COVID-19 epidemic, which overcome each border and spreads rapidly producing unease and uncertainty about the present. This disease limited our freedoms and forcing us to completely rethink our social lives, reorganize work activities and temporarily change our daily habits. Moreover, we would never have imagined that the spread of a virus would have given such a strong acceleration towards the adoption of Smart Working never considered enough in Italy in the past as a good way to work.

Compared with other countries, in the past the practice of remote working has been extremely scarce in Italy, thus occupying the bottom position among the 28 European countries as a percentage of employees doing telework/ICT-mobile work across various locations (home, office or another location) (Eurofound, 2017). A relevant change has been determined by the spread

of the COVID-19 emergency, which required social isolation and, consequently, severe restrictions on movements and a lockdown of productive activities.

Image 2.1.3 Comparison of teleworking percentage in EU's countries

Source: EWCS (2015) and Eurofund (2020). https://www.eticaeconomia.it/ee/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/5-1.jpg



Notes: **Low reliability; Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovenia not included due to insufficient number of cases.*

In Italy Smart working is not teleworking (Law No. 191 of 1998, Presidential Decree No. 70 of 1999, National Framework Agreement for the PA 23 March 2000). Teleworking is regulated by law only in public administrations. In the private sector, both Teleworking and SmartWorking are carried out on the basis of collective / supplementary agreements. It is also necessary to clarify the terminological confusion between Smart Working also called agile working, and teleworking, since they are not synonymous. With Smart Working, unlike teleworking, the employee is not obliged to carry out his activity in a fixed physical place, in fact with Smart Working the workplace can be, for example, the employee's home, a branch office but also a restaurant, a park or any place where you can bring the equipment to perform the work. Furthermore, in Smart Working, unlike teleworking, the hours are self-determined, that is, the important thing is to reach the set goal within the limits of working hours imposed by the legislation. Smart Working therefore constitutes a more innovative way of carrying out work than telework, which is more advantageous both for the employer at the level of organization and cost reduction, as well as for the employee, in terms of conciliation of free time with work.

For this reason, it is wrong to consider Smart Working as a new kind of contract between employer and employee, it is in fact a different way of carrying out work performance. The way of working in Smart Working is a voluntary choice and that, therefore, the employer can propose it and the employee is free to accept or reject it. It is therefore necessary to know that the

employee who decides to accept to work in Smart Working has the right to training (lifelong learning and the related certification of skills) as well as employees who carry out their activities in the company. Furthermore, Smart Working can be applied to different types of employment contracts: from part time to fixed-term contracts, from leasing contracts to employment in public administrations.

Looking at the Smart Working after a year adoption, many are the advantages and the risks connected and following the daily use of the Smart Working mode, which came into use during the lockdown for the pandemic. Many investigations have been made in Italy by trade associations, national institutes and private individuals responsible, above all, to safeguard the health and psychophysical well-being of workers and private individuals, both to better point out the positive aspects and effects brought about by the new "working system" but also to shed light on the negative sides it has caused.

INAP - the National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies - has recently developed research that has highlighted what are - at the moment - as the "undesirable" effects of smart working. A situation that, on the one hand, allows those who already had a high income to continue working and, on the other, suspends the jobs in which they cannot be employed. In this way, it accentuates even more the inequalities between genders and job categories.

Analyzing the data, we discover a further aggravation of the differences between genders and categories of workers. The greater aptitude to work remotely is more frequent in women, in adult and married workers, with a high level of education, with permanent and full-time contracts and in possession of strong soft and digital-skills and excellent use of ICT. Furthermore, those "who live in small families without minors, in metropolitan areas and in the provinces that have reported less Covid-19 contagion," have a greater "Smart Working Attitude (ASW)".

Smart working tends to be more frequent in some sectors such as Finance and Insurance, Information and Communication and Public Administration. Other factors of inequality are the educational qualification (graduates have an advantage), gender (men more than women) and age.

Many reflections then arose on the critical points that emerged from the beginning of the pandemic, and which concern the possibility of using this new way of working more widely, even after the pandemic. Companies may have advantages in terms of cost reduction and workers of a better balance of their lifetimes, but smart working could also represent a worsening for those categories of subjects, who are not very familiar with ICT. Another point to think about is that everyone would stay at home and lose all the advantages of socialization, both formal and informal, and which leads to the circulation of knowledge.

Until last year, smart working was a niche reality: according to data from the Milan Polytechnic Observatory, in 2019 smart working concerned only 570,000 workers, less than 2% of the total workforce. The emergency situation was needed to overcome cultural blocks and demonstrate that agile work can be a reality for millions of workers: according to BVA-Doxa surveys, 26% of respondents worked from home in March 2020.

In total, it is estimated that 35% of all Italian workers could take advantage of smart working, given the structure of our production fabric, compared to the actual 26% of workers in smart working during the lockdown and only 2% in 2019.

There is no coincidence that several **studies** now recognize that an effective application of smart working translates into an increase in productivity and greater satisfaction with the work-life balance (up by 5.4% for men and by 9% for women), according to data processed by the **Dondena Center** for social and public policy dynamics of the **Bocconi University (**Del Boca D., Oggero N., Profeta P., Rossi M.C., 2020). Precisely by virtue of this second aspect, agile work could help many women to enter or remain in the labor market, thus filling - albeit partially - the enormous gender gap that our country suffers (in 76th place in the world for gender equality, according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020), with positive consequences not only for the people directly involved, but for the economy as a whole: the Women in Work Index 2020, prepared by **PwC**, calculates that if female employment reached the level of Sweden (where 60% of women of working age are employed full-time, compared to 32% in Italy), the impact on Italian GDP would be equal to 659 billion dollars.

Another research conducted by **LinkedIn** in collaboration with the **Order of Psychologists** on 2000 Italians who worked in smart working during the lockdown highlighted the difficulties in managing stress (46%) and concentration (26%), with problems related to sleep (27%) and mental health in general (18%). Furthermore, for one in two workers (48%) of the interviewees, the flexibility of smart working resulted in an increase in the workload of at least an hour more per day (equivalent to just under three days of work more than month). When asked what was the main difficulty encountered in carrying out their business remotely, the 3,500 smart workers interviewed by Buffer for the realization of the "State of Remote Work 2020" report answered, in order: communication difficulties (20%), loneliness (20%) and difficulty in unplugging at the end of the day (18%) (Buffer, 2020). According to an **InfoJobs** survey, 72% of Italians consider it very important to develop friendships with colleagues, while 28% also see the development of romantic relationships in the workplace as positive.

To summarize and conclude, the future challenge for Italy will be to be able to complete a real cultural revolution that links modern concepts like digitalism, sustainability and resilience.

2.1.2. Legislation that regulates teleworking

The Corona Virus Pandemic spreading has completely changed the life of every human being. The world of work is experiencing a drastic revolution mainly due to the dispositions imposed by governments to stop the epidemy. Many changes in the organizational culture of public and private organizations are required in order to abandon hold business schemes and embrace digital transformation. The survival of the global economy has been supported by an extensive use of a new managerial philosophy “Smart Working”. This new way of work destroys the physical barriers of the office enabling employees to work at any time from everywhere.

The current COVID-19 emergency has provided the opportunity for lots of workers and entrepreneurs to imagine the possibility of a different way of organising work.

As consequence, recently “Smart Working” (or “Agile Work” as we refer to it in Italy – that is governed by Articles 18 to 23 of Law No. 81/2017) has been named in many Decrees issued by the Italian Government during the COVID-19 emergency phase of the pandemic. It has been mentioned as a method of being able to continue carrying out the work performance, as a preference and even at times, as compulsory, or as a remote service which has proved to be a

solution (perhaps the only one possible) to connect the limitations due to the lockdown of travel and workplaces with the need to ensure business continuity.

Looking at a recent report from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) – 90% of large enterprises (with over 250 employees) and 73% of medium-sized enterprises (between 50 and 249 employees) introduced or extended the possibility for their employees to engage in Smart Working during the emergency period – which is of course still ongoing. Even Italian small businesses (10-49 employees) saw an increased use of Smart Working by 37.2% – while micro-enterprises (2-9 employees) allowed an estimated 18.3% of their employees to use this innovative working method.

The notion of Smart Working, present in the text of Law no. 81/2017 takes into account some essential elements such as organizational flexibility, the will of the parties (who write an individual agreement) and the use of tools that allow you to perform the work remotely (personal computer, smartphone or tablet). Art. 18, paragraph 1, of Law no. 81/2017, defines agile work as a mode of execution of the subordinate employment relationship, established by agreement between the parties, achievable, also period – which is of course still ongoing.

Basically, in Italy the Smart Working that is different from “Remote Working” (or “Teleworking”) has been adopted mainly to prevent the contagion.

Considering the private and the public sector there are many remarkable differences in the diffusion of Smart Working practice. If much of the private has transformed over the past two decades, the public sector moves slower. Even the rigid bureaucratic structures underlying the Government workforce systems, public organizations are trying to follow the new paths undertaken by modern technology-driven organizations.

Smart Working (or Agile Work) is a mode of execution of the employment relationship characterized by the absence of time or spatial constraints and an organization by phases, cycles and objectives, established by agreement between employee and employer; a method that helps the worker to reconcile life and work times and, at the same time, favour the growth of his productivity "New managerial philosophy based on restoring flexibility and autonomy to people in the choice of spaces, times and tools to use in the face of greater responsibility for results” (Osservatorio Politecnico di Milano 2015). Conventionally, agile work is a translation of Smart Work, even if there are different basic approaches (agility as an active but partial independence, linked to life and work times, while “smart” more competence oriented.

As for the Italian legislation, it began its path that led to the approval of the legislation in force in 2014 with an embryonic bill aimed at giving greater flexibility to the labor market. The proposal was then relaunched in a bill linked to the 2016 Stability Pact to complete the labor market reform (Jobs Act). Subsequently, on 22 May 2017, after a long parliamentary process, Law no. 81/2017 which (in the articles through forms of organization by phases, cycles and objectives and in the absence of precise time constraints Law no. 165/2017: "Provisions for the promotion of flexible and simplified forms of teleworking". Law no. 81/2017: "Measures for the protection of non-entrepreneurial self-employment and measures aimed at encouraging flexible articulation in the times and places of subordinate work or workplace, with the aid of technological tools essential for carrying out the work activity”. According to this, the work performed in Smart Working is, partly performed inside company premises and partly outside without a fixed position, within the limits of maximum duration of daily and weekly working hours, as established by law and collective agreements.

Thus, the essential elements of Smart Working are:

- The agreement between the parties on the "agile" method of executing the relationship;
- The organization of work by phases, cycles or objectives;
- The absence of specific time constraints, without prejudice to the maximum duration limits established by law and collective bargaining;
- The absence of a specific workplace, with a service performed partly inside the company premises and partly outside, without a fixed location;
- The possible use of technological tools for carrying out work.

Speaking about Smart Working it is also necessary established a relationship based on the trust between the employer and the worker or both contractors and on the control that the employer can exercise over his employee. The role of trust and of accountability is a very important aspect in Smart Working for this way of executing the employment relationship to work.

The Law no. 81/2017 led to activate initiatives for both the private and public sectors.

So Italy has adopted in time a law on smart working (Law 22 May 2017, n.81; article from 18 to 24) and this has allowed all the actors to suddenly switch to smart working within a framework of relative certainty during the pandemic emergency. This law provides a definition of Agile Work based on organizational flexibility, the voluntary nature of the parties and the adoption of technological tools. The Directive n. 3 of 2017 of the Public Administration specifies that the regulatory provisions also apply to "employment relationships employed by the public administrations***". Anyhow, the law was conceived at a time when agile working was, if not an experiment, at least a niche phenomenon***.

November 15, 2017, an IT platform for the transmission of individual agile work agreements is also available on the portal of the Ministry of Labor. The 2019 Budget Law defined some priority criteria for access to Smart Working initiatives (e.g. priority to female workers in the 3 years following the end of the compulsory maternity leave period and to workers with disabled children).

Previously, Article 14 of the Law of 7 August 2015, no. 124 had predicted that within three years, at least 10% of public workers who requested it should make use of agile work, on equal terms.

As already said, we must underline that Smart working is not teleworking (Law No. 191 of 1998, Presidential Decree No. 70 of 1999, National Framework Agreement for the PA 23 March 2000). **In Italy Teleworking is regulated by law only in public administrations**. In the private sector, both Telework and Smart Work are carried out based on collective/supplementary agreements.

Telework proper provides for: 1. the movement (in whole or in part) of the workplace to another location (traditionally the worker's home). 2. the constraint to a fixed and pre-established position, with the same time limits as it would in the office. 3. the workload, costs and times of performance, equivalent to those of the workers operating within the workplace.

Agile or Smart-working provides, instead, that: 1. You can work from anywhere (inside and outside the institution / company). 2. Fixed location not established. There are no space and time constraints, only the limits of maximum duration of daily and weekly working hours, as

required by law and collective bargaining. 3. The company and the employee flexibly redefine their working methods, with a focus on achieving objectives.

With the arrival of the health emergency from Covid 19, Legislative Decree no. 6 of 23 February 2020: Agile work "is automatically applicable to any employment relationship in areas considered at risk in national or local emergency situations even in the absence of the individual agreements provided for therein" (with Legislative Decree no. 9 of 2 March 2020, the experimental regime for administrations is exceeded).

As regards the public sector, the PUBLIC FUNCTION Directive n. 2 of 12 March 2020 (which replaces 1/2020) established that smart working becomes the ordinary organizational form for the Public Administration (PA).

With the DL «CURA ITALIA», n. 18 of March 17, 2020 (converted, with amendments, by law April 24, 2020, n. 27 - which deals with the topic in articles 39, 74, 85, 87): "**Agile work is the ordinary way of carrying out work in the Public Administration**" to limit the presence of staff in the offices and regardless of the individual agreements already drawn up. In the event that the SW cannot be adopted, "the administrations use the tools of previous holidays, leave, the hour bank, rotation and other similar institutions, in compliance with collective bargaining".

The DL "RELAUNCH" N.34 of May 19, 2020 (converted into law July 17, 2020, n. 77) provides that for 50% of public administration employees with tasks that can be carried out from home, smart working is extended until December 31st. Furthermore, by January 31, 2021 (and subsequently by January of each year), each public administration will draw up the "organizational plan for agile work" (POLA).

The Prime Ministerial Decree of 18 October 2020 and the Ministerial Decree of the PA of 19 October 2020 implements the rules of the Relaunch Decree, in the light of the Dpcm of 13 and 18 October. Objective: to reconcile the need to combat the pandemic with the need for continuity in the provision of services. Each administration must ensure the carrying out of agile work (on a daily, weekly or multi-weekly basis) at least 50% of the staff (in activities that can be carried out in this way) until 31 December 2020.

With the Ministerial Decree PA of 19 October 2020: ➢ The institutions, also taking into account the evolution of the epidemiological situation, ensure in any case the highest possible percentages of agile work, compatible with their organizational potential and with the quality and effectiveness of the service provided; ➢ adapt the performance measurement and evaluation systems to the specificities of agile work; ➢ smart working usually takes place without constraints of time and place of work, but can be organized by specific contact bands, without greater workloads. In any case, the worker is guaranteed rest times and disconnection from the technological work tools. Furthermore, employees in agile mode must not suffer professional and career penalties; ➢ the administrations endeavor to make available the IT and digital devices deemed necessary, but the use of employee-owned equipment remains permitted; ➢ the administration favors agile work for disabled or frail workers also through the assignment of different tasks and of the same classification. In any case, it promotes their commitment to training activities; ➢ in the rotation of personnel, the institution refers to priority criteria that also consider: - the health conditions of the members of the employee's family unit, - the presence of children under fourteen years of age, - the distance between the area of residence o domicile and place of work, - the number and type of means of transport used and the relative travel times;

The Public Function Decree of 4 November 2020 establishes the National Observatory of agile work in public administrations, as required by the Relaunch Decree.

The so-called **Pola** (Organizational plan for agile work) **provides that by January 31 of each year (starting from January 2021) the public administrations must draw up, after consulting the trade unions, the Pola (Organizational Plan for agile work).** The POLA identifies: - the methods of implementing agile work by providing, for the activities that can be carried out in an agile mode, that at least 60% of employees can make use of them, ensuring that they do not suffer penalties for the purposes of recognition of professionalism and progression career; - the organizational measures, the technological requirements, the training courses of the personnel, including management, and the tools for detecting and periodically verifying the results achieved, also in terms of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative action, digitalization processes, as well as the quality of the services provided, also involving citizens, both individually and in their associative forms. The document is subject to monitoring by the Ministry of Public Administration, through a specific commission within the Public Function Decree (DFP).

As regards to Agile work in the private sector, article 90, paragraph 4, of Legislative Decree 34/2020 provides that, until 31 July 2021 - as most recently provided by decree-law 52/2021 -, the aforementioned method of carrying out the working activity can be applied by private employers to any subordinate employment relationship even in the absence of the individual agreements provided for by current legislation. Furthermore, the same article introduced a right to work in an agile way in favor of private sector workers, parents of children under the age of 14, as well as workers most exposed to the risk of Covid-19 infection, even in the absence of individual agreements. provided for by current legislation, without prejudice to compliance with the disclosure obligations provided for by current legislation.

2.1.3. Digital skills development

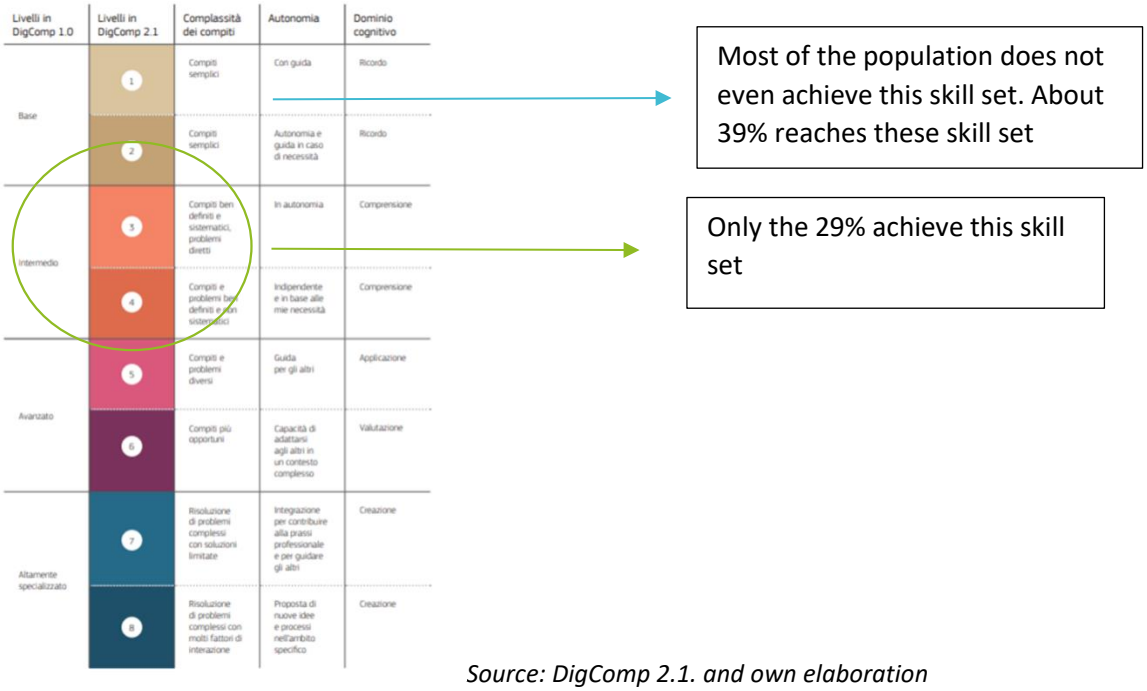
The latest ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics) analysis has revealed a still discouraging picture of the diffusion of digital skills in Italy. We will proceed first with an overview of the population's relationship with ICT and then to a focus on the more mature age group. Among the main causes of the lack of ICT diffusion, there are two main ones:

- The lack of access to a broadband network that allows a faster and more stable navigation, which occurs especially in the most isolated areas of the peninsula and in small towns, which in fact in Italy are very frequent compared to large urban conglomerates
- The second reason is attributed to the cost of internet service: many families consider it still too expensive, therefore they give up or use the connection granted by mobile phone operators, through the use of smartphones, on which, however, you have easy access only to certain possible functions of the web (Istat, 2019).

The tools used is a very interesting factor: it has emerged, in fact, that most of the population, regardless of age, prefers to use portable devices to computers (Agenda digitale, 2019). This factor has a considerable impact on the digital skills exploited or acquired: in fact, digital natives are able to effectively exploit all the features of smartphones, managing in large part to replace them with PCs; adults, however, who have not had access to computer education and use smartphones as their own access point to the Internet, acquire limited skills that are restricted

to the use of a limited number of functions, closely interconnected to messaging and communication applications. DigComp's analysis has shown that there is a close correlation between access to the internet and digital skills: those who do not have access to the internet lack digital skills and do not easily use or are, in fact, without a computer device. This phenomenon, of course, affects only the more mature segments of the population, while the very young, even the less educated, have basic digital skills, while it is not common for even the most educated young people to achieve high digital skills. (Carretero, Vourikari, Punie, 2017).

Image 2.1.4 Level of digital competencies



Source: DigComp 2.1. and own elaboration

In this case, too, there emerges a strong familiarity with the means of communication, which are used transversally by all users belonging to different age groups and different territories. The more advanced the level of skills to be analysed, the wider the gap between age groups and territories. The use of software for the creation of digital content, for example, is very widespread among the under-45 age group, and is especially so in larger urban and metropolitan areas.

Therefore, summarizing the proposed data, a sub-optimal picture of Italy emerges with respect to the diffusion of digital skills, which particularly affect the over-40 age group, whose shortcomings are also measured in the effectiveness of work actions. In Italy, before the pandemic, the rate of digitization of work was still very low, despite the actions taken to try to innovate the productive system. A significant difference in the rate of business and production digitization was, and still is, found between large companies with more than 250 employees and SMEs with less than 100.

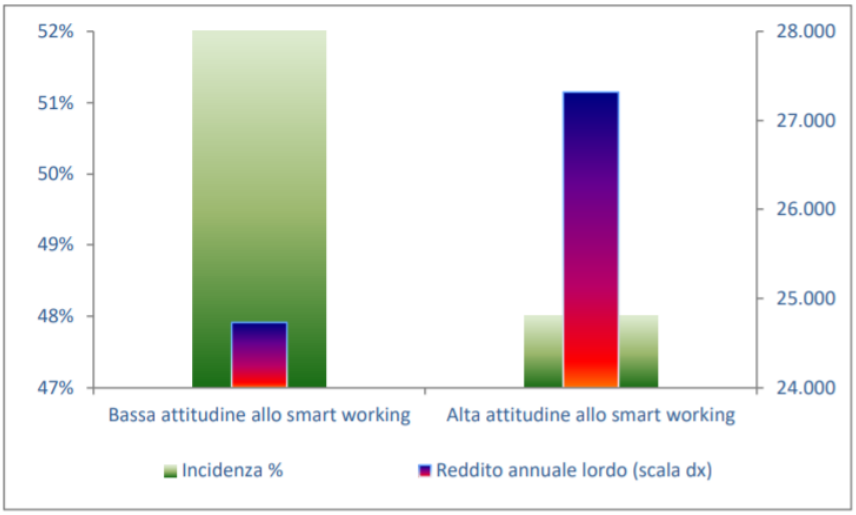
In addition, a survey by INAPP showed how the Smart Working phenomenon has considerably different effects, not only considering the production sector. (Bonacini, Gallo, Sicchitano, 2020)

One of these unintended effects relates to the impact on income inequality across job categories: it has been shown, in fact, that those who are more inclined to and more familiar with the dynamics of digital working will benefit from a considerable change in their income, which will increase by virtue of a positive assessment in terms of quantity and quality of work.

Those, on the other hand, who are less likely to adopt smart working due to a lack of skills or familiarity with digital work processes, will risk experiencing the opposite effect or stagnation.

This phenomenon is clearly visible in the chart below. Those who show little aptitude for Smart Working will risk remaining in a lower income bracket (first column), while those who are strongly inclined to Smart Working will be able to improve their income situation (second column).

Image 2.1.5. Share of workers and gross annual income by smart working attitude



Source: "Gli Effetti Indesiderabili Dello Smart Working Sulla Disuguaglianza Dei Redditi In Italia", INAPP, 2020, pg. 5

From the statistics always provided by Inapp this poor attitude to Smart Working there is a good attitude of workers over 50 years old to Smart Working, however on the percentage shown act factors related to the degree of education and family situation. Obviously, the higher the level of education, the greater the propensity, which correlates to a better skill set.

Image 2.1.6. Sample composition, earned income, and smartworking attitude distribution by worker group

Variabili	Composizione del campione		Reddito lordo annuale		Attitudine allo SW	
	Media	Std. Dev.	Media	Indice Gini	Media	% di lavoratori con alta ASW
Bassa ASW	0,518	0,500	24.731	0,261	40,5	0,0
Alta ASW	0,482	0,500	27.320	0,296	65,1	100,0
Maschi	0,537	0,499	29.321	0,283	52,3	45,3
Femmine	0,463	0,499	22.098	0,256	52,5	51,5
Età 25-35	0,204	0,403	21.962	0,257	51,7	46,9
Età 36-50	0,467	0,499	26.146	0,279	52,5	47,9
Età 51-64	0,329	0,470	28.232	0,282	52,5	49,4
Istruzione primaria	0,313	0,464	23.500	0,284	46,7	27,4
Istruzione secondaria	0,464	0,499	25.670	0,267	54,6	54,7
Istruzione terziaria	0,224	0,417	30.082	0,277	55,8	63,7
Cittadino italiano	0,882	0,322	25.912	0,276	52,4	48,4
Migrante interno (Regioni)	0,031	0,173	28.434	0,360	53,2	52,1
Migrante interno (Paese)	0,066	0,248	26.839	0,276	52,8	51,5
Cittadino straniero	0,021	0,143	22.429	0,306	48,2	22,8
Single	0,429	0,495	24.045	0,261	52,3	47,6
Sposato	0,571	0,495	27.432	0,290	52,4	48,6

Source: "Gli Effetti Indesiderabili Dello Smart Working Sulla Disuguaglianza Dei Redditi In Italia", INAPP, 2020, pg. 3

These data are certainly influenced by the forced transition to smartworking resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic: many workers until before the pandemic had ignored or otherwise considered less relevant digital skills in the execution of their work tasks, with the cessation of

production activities and the forced transition to autonomous and digital work from home, many workers have had to accept this challenge and invest in their skills to keep their jobs strong. Many have improved their basic skills to continue to perform their usual tasks, while others have taken the opportunity to leverage the potential of digital to reinvent their work, enriching it with services that did not exist until then.

Forced digital work has thus demonstrated to the most sceptical the inherent potential of the digital medium, spurring them to invest in their own skills. However, there are still few opportunities for the more mature to improve their digital skills in an effective and practical way.

In Italy, the problem of digital transition is very much felt and on the various institutional levels actions have been observed aimed at intervening to generally improve the skills of the population and access to them. Just at the beginning of the year 2021, coinciding with the start of the Draghi government, the Ministry for Technological Innovation and Digital Innovation was set up, whose main purpose will be to support and encourage the spread of simple, inclusive and efficient digital services. It also deals with innovation by proposing new technologies in the productive fabric. Among the main aims of the Ministry is to support the growth of the population's digital skills to 70%, encourage the spread of broadband connection to 100%, integrate online public services to at least 80%. By virtue of what has been decided by European policy regarding the management of funds put in place to stem the Covid emergency, the Ministry has presented a draft of a strategic plan of intervention valid for the five-year period 2021-26. The plan is organized into 6 main missions:

1. Digitize the Public Administration, both through major structural reforms and wide-ranging technological interventions;
2. Enable PA reform efforts by simplifying procedures and investing in skills and innovation;
3. Support interventions for justice reform through investments in digitalization;
4. Support digital transition for the entire Italian productive fabric, with particular attention to SMEs, production chains, technological and digital skills;
5. Bring high-performance connectivity, within certain time frames, throughout the country;
6. Invest in digital infrastructure for satellite monitoring and, more generally, in the space economy and emerging technologies.

With this in mind, therefore, the Ministry will intervene on both the public and private sectors, promoting actions through funding calls that encourage greater digitalization of the various aspects of citizens' lives, offering both better working tools and more efficient and faster public services. (https://innovazione.gov.it/)

In this perspective of intervening on SMEs and workers, the Ministry of Economy and Development also operates with the "Development Plan 4.0" with which manoeuvres of tax relief and financial support are provided both in the digital transition of companies and in the training of employees and entrepreneurs.

Another important body within the government organization chart is the AGID (Agency for Digital Italy) whose task is to ensure the realization of the objectives of the Italian Digital Agenda and contribute to the diffusion of the use of information and communication technologies, promoting innovation and economic growth. AGID's main strategies are:

1. contribute to the diffusion of the use of information and communication technologies, in order to encourage innovation and economic growth;
2. to elaborate addresses, technical rules and guidelines on the homogeneity of languages, procedures and standards for the full interoperability and uniformity of the information systems of the public administration;
3. supervise the quality of services and the rationalization of IT expenditure of the public administration;
4. promote and disseminate digital literacy initiatives.

In addition to the actions of national matrix, also the regions have the faculty to undertake initiatives to support the digital transition or for the diffusion of digital practices. Among these, a praiseworthy initiative is led by the Emilia-Romagna region, which has set up a project called "Emilia Romagna Smart Working", which aims to implement and consolidate Smart Working practices within PAs and which is, however, replicable in IPs through the "VELA" toolkit. (https://www.smartworkingvela.it/)

Smart working experiences, both active and in the planning stage, are an opportunity to work on change and modernization of the administrative system, an essential driver for the Digital and Organizational Transformation of PA and a means, therefore, to respond more effectively to the needs of citizens, businesses and territories.

This through:

1. the construction of a common and experimental path for the diffusion of agile work on the territory of Emilia-Romagna;
2. the development of a system for the exchange of knowledge and continuous growth on the subject;
3. the search for organizational, technological and infrastructural solutions necessary to spread smart working.
   (https://lavorasmart.emilia-romagna.it/general/il-progetto)

The government has provided support measures for digital transformation, with one of the largest being supported by the Ministry of Economic Development. The Directorial Decree of June 9, 2020 governs the facilitating intervention on Digital Transformation established in Article 29, paragraphs 5 to 8, of the Growth Decree, aimed at supporting the technological and digital transformation of the production processes of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises through the implementation of projects aimed at the implementation of enabling technologies identified in the National Plan Impresa 4.0 as well as other technologies related to digital technological solutions of the supply chain. It is aimed at SMEs and finances projects must be directed to the technological and digital transformation of production processes, including:

1. enabling technologies identified by the National Enterprise 4.0 Plan;
2. technologies related to digital technological solutions of supply chain.

(https://www.mise.gov.it/images/stories/Bandi/incentivi/innovazione/2020/DD_1_ottobre_2020_-_Digital_Transformation_per_web.pdf)

2.1.4. Practices on Teleworking.

Good practice 1:

Enterprise/organization	**Credem – Banca (https://www.credem.it/content/credem/it)**
Good practice description	
Credem bank was founded in Italy, in the Emilia-Romagna region and is now a group that operates and has offices throughout the territory. In 2020 it was awarded by the Smart working Observatory of the School of Management of the Politecnico di Milano, which rewards companies that stand out for their ability to innovate business practices in smart working. The innovation project brought by Credem is based on two fundamental pillars: - Agile working for everyone: during the lockdown period, the institution extended smartworking for all operators and employees, even in the smallest branches, except for cashiers. A volume of about 5 thousand employees all working from their own homes, creating a digital working system thus guaranteeing the operativity of services without diminishing their quality and efficiency. - Investment in people: smartworking is an opportunity for Credem to invest in people. The aim of this strategy is to improve the working environment, to understand the needs of employees and support them in achieving their personal goals. The institution's commitment in this sense is also demonstrated by the constant expansion of welfare services related to health and prevention, the launch of projects for the enhancement of differences and individual skills and the development of paths for growth and sharing of professional experiences. Another investment strategy that Credem is implementing is in the creation of 500 agile workstations, without landline telephones and bookable by individual employees and work teams. In addition to the possibility of being able to work in an agile and flexible way, there is also an investment in continuous training, with a total of about 60 hours per year with the "Training 4.0" program that focuses mainly on the development of digital skills, thanks to which the institute was awarded the "Top Employers Institute Best Practice HR Report 2020" prize. The 2018 "Smart Working Awards" were also assigned to the companies that stood out for their ability to innovate smart working methods. They are A2A, Gruppo Hera, Intesa Sanpaolo for the initiative "Hive Project - The Future at Work" and Maire Tecnimont. Thanks to the "Atom" project, Zurich instead obtained the "Smart Working Impact Award" for the winning organizations whose project has had a significant impact on the organization. (Venini, 2020)	
Learnings and transferability	
The smart working conversion project implemented by Credem, although developed in a large company, is ideal for replication in much smaller companies. The first lesson and the first transferable action of the smart working project implemented lies in the importance of investing in employee training. Every company must invest in the training of its employees, which constitutes an enrichment of individual skills that, in turn, will have a positive impact on the production and efficiency rates of the company. Training employees to use new digital technologies is the key to a company's success, even in the most difficult times. The second principle is to try to create an agile and flexible environment, where standard office hours are abolished and employees are given the choice of when and where to work. Flexibility and agility in the workplace is an important variable in ensuring employee wellbeing and consequently on firm productivity. It is necessary to abandon the view of urgency, but embrace the vision of proceeding by objectives, which goes well with the logic of flexible working.	

Good practice 2:

Enterprise/organization	**Fincantieri - https://www.fincantieri.com/it/sostenibilita/gestione-risorse-umane/le-nostre-iniziative-per-il-covid-19/**
Good practice description	

Another project supporting smart working has been implemented by Fincantieri, a large Italian company operating in the shipbuilding sector, for which, of course, it is difficult to imagine a concrete possibility of smart working adoption. During the period of the pandemic, in which production facilities were stopped in order to avoid contagion, Fincantieri decided to invest in its employees and allow them to work in smart working, thus avoiding layoffs for some of its employees. The volume of employees involved in this new working modality was 1700, who then evaluated the experience positively, so much so that in July 2020 the company signed an agreement to implement this working modality in a stable manner over the next 12 months.
The company is experimenting with the most congenial methods, obviously involving those who do not work in the production plant, but carry out intellectual work. In the experimentation, workers will be allowed to choose to work from home for 2 days a week, a quota that may increase if the employee is resident in a place far from the office or has dependent minor children.
Another investment made by Fincantieri concerns the training of its staff, organizing two main activities
- launch for all employees of a one-month online English course through the interactive platform of EF Education First, the Company's language training partner for several years. The course provides access to over 2,000 hours of General English, Business skills and Industry-specific training content;
- organization of a cycle of three webinars in collaboration with MIP - Graduate School of Business, on the topic "Working remotely at the time of COVID-19" aimed at all managers with smart-working resources. The training objective was to accelerate the reaction and ability to adapt to change, encourage the development of a new leadership style to be effective and efficient in working remotely, as well as stimulate reflection on the new challenges that may arise and prepare for "the aftermath".
The training area will continue to be promoted, also through online education, through the agreement with Research Institutes and Universities.

Learnings and transferability

Fincantieri's project demonstrates that even companies in the production-manufacturing sector and not only those in the goods and services sector can concretely invest in smart working, so its model could be effectively adopted by both large and small/medium-sized companies.
The principles applied by Fincantieri's model both enjoy a possible transferability, since they actually have to focus on a slow process of organization and adaptation to the digital working mode: introducing the measure in offices, in administrative or development and research sectors, can be achieved by proceeding in several steps, including the possibility of teleworking even for just a few days a week, thus favouring the worker's flexibility and avoiding his estrangement from the production context. The decision to take into account the individual situation of each worker is also extremely effective. In this way, he/she will be able to benefit from the advantages of remote work without having to affect his/her productivity, thus promoting a balance between professional and private life.
The second strategy implemented is that of training, which turns out to be the key to the successful adoption of smart working and is a constant in all companies that decide to adopt it. The decision to invest in specific smart working training is a key step in the smart working adoption process. Educating employees on the potential, the use of teleworking significantly reduces the possibility of confusion and frustration that can affect workers who experience this mode for the first time.

2.1.5. Summary

Question	Findings
REGULATIONS	
Did there exist a law that regulates teleworking before the pandemic?	Yes
	As for the Italian legislation, it began its path that led to the approval of the legislation in force in 2014 with an embryonic bill aimed at giving greater flexibility to the labour market. The proposal was then relaunched in a bill linked to the 2016 Stability Pact to complete the labour market reform (Jobs Act). Subsequently, on 22 May 2017, after a long parliamentary process, Law no. 81/2017 which (in the articles through forms of organization by phases, cycles and objectives and in the absence of precise time constraints Law no. 165/2017: "Provisions for the promotion of flexible and simplified forms of teleworking". Law no. 81/2017: "Measures for the protection of non-entrepreneurial self-employment and measures aimed at encouraging flexible articulation in the times and places of subordinate work or workplace, with the aid of technological tools essential for carrying out the work activity". - https://www.morningfuture.com/en/article/2020/11/02/smart-working-best-practices-italian-companies/1058/ - https://knowledge.leglobal.org/corona/country/italy/italy-smart-working-beyond-the-covid-19-emergency-the-challenge-is-to-change-the-mentality/
Does there exist a law that regulates teleworking after the pandemic?	Yes
	Legislative Decree no. 6 of 23 February 2020: Agile work "is automatically applicable to any employment relationship in areas considered at risk in national or local emergency situations even in the absence of the individual agreements provided for therein" (with Legislative Decree no. 9 of 2 March 2020, the experimental regime for administrations is exceeded). - https://www.esteri.it/mae/resource/doc/2020/04/dpcm_-__2020_04_26_totale_en.pdf - https://www.unlaw.it/covid-19/employment-law-updates-covid-19-government-salary-integrations-termination-ban-and-more/
Which public organism regulates / defines policies for teleworking in your country?	**The Italian Government in accordance with the Union Trade** - https://www.salute.gov.it/portale/nuovocoronavirus/dettaglioFaqNuovoCoronavirus.jsp?lingua=english&id=230 - https://www.lavoro.gov.it/Pagine/default.aspx

TELEWORKING FOR EMPLOYEES	
Main rights for employees to telework according to regulations	1. You can work from anywhere (inside and outside the institution / company). 2. Fixed location not established. There are no space and time constraints, only the limits of maximum duration of daily and weekly working hours, as required by law and collective bargaining. 3. The company and the employee flexibly redefine their working methods, with a focus on achieving objectives
Main obligations for employees to telework according to regulations	Smart working agreements are still recommended in all Italian regions, especially in red areas, provided that such working mode may still be profitable. -The body temperature of employees should be measured before they enter company premises. Employees who have a body temperature higher than 37.5 C° are not permitted access to corporate premises. Restrictions on the collection and processing of this data are outlined further below. -Employers should opt for voice calls or video conferences where possible (especially in red areas). -Any scheduled fairs, conferences, events or conventions of whatever nature must be delayed, in addition to any meetings due to be attended by physicians or people in charge of public services. -Employers must restrict access to common areas such as canteens, relaxation areas, coffee rooms and smoking areas. The number of people who can have access to such areas must be limited and a "security distance" of at least one meter must be ensured among people standing in the same room. In addition, people must wear face masks. -Employers should limit the access of third parties (e.g. suppliers and providers) to corporate offices/premises to those that are strictly necessary. Employers must provide a notice to employees and visitors at the entrance of corporate offices, informing them that anyone who (i) has a fever higher than 37.5 C°, (ii) has flu symptoms, or (iii) has come in contact with people infected by COVID-19, must not enter the office. -Employers must notify the Health Authority of any data or information they have become aware of in relation to persons possibly infected, to allow the Health Authority to investigate potential spread of the virus. If an employee was infected, the offices must be sanitised. In addition to the above, all employers have health and safety obligations to keep employees informed of the health risks that may

	arise in carrying out their duties and to ensure that working practices do not create undue risks to employees. https://www.twobirds.com/en/news/articles/2020/global/covid-19-guidance-for-employers-in-italy
TELEWORKING FOR EMPLOYERS	
Main rights for employers on teleworking according to regulations:	From a health and safety perspective, employers should assess the existence of a specific biological risk related to COVID-19 (in coordination with the company physician and the Head of the Prevention and Protection Service (RSPP)). If such a risk exists, a Risk Assessment Document (DVR) must be updated and a specific prevention and protection plan must be implemented with the aim of eliminating (or at least reducing) the occurrence of dangerous situations, and possibly providing for individual protection measures. In principle, employers may therefore require an employee to confirm and specify where he/she has spent the past 15 days in order to assess the level of risk to the workforce. Employers may not, however, ask employees to confirm that they are not infected or request a medical certificate to the same effect. Employers may also face situations where a customer/client requires travel or health information relating to their employees when visiting the customer/client's site.
Main obligations for employers to facilitate telework according to regulations:	According to the current Italian laws in force, the way of working in Smart Working is a voluntary choice and that, therefore, the employer can propose it and the employee is free to accept or reject it. It is therefore necessary to know that the employee who decides to accept to work in Smart Working has the right to training (lifelong learning and the related certification of skills) as well as employees who carry out their activities in the company.
TELEWORKING ADOPTION	
Do you have any enterprise association or confederation that has published recommendations or studies?	PWC https://www.pwc.com/it/it.html Psychologist Association https://aipass.org/en, Università Bocconi https://www.unibocconi.it/wps/wcm/connect/Bocconi/SitoPubblico_IT/Albero+di+navigazione/Home/ LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/ INAP - the National Institute for the Analysis of Public Policies https://www.inapp.org/
Do you have any workers union that has published	INAIL https://www.inail.it/cs/internet/comunicazione/pubblicazioni/catal

recommendations or studies?	ogo-generale/pubbl-esperienza-lavoro-agile-impatti-sul-benessere.html UIL http://www.federazioneuilscuolarualatina.it/public/lt/download/smart-working-stato-dellarte-e-prospettive-future/
Do you have any other institution/research group that has published recommendations or studies?	Ministero Pubblica Amministrazione http://www.funzionepubblica.gov.it/
DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	
Which public organism boost digital transformation on your country? Is there any plan or strategy including digital skills development?	Ministero per l'innovazione e la transizione tecnologica http://www.funzionepubblica.gov.it/ AGID https://www.agid.gov.it/
Main policies and initiatives that impact on digital skills improvement on your country.	National strategy for digital competencies https://docs.italia.it/italia/mid/strategia-nazionale-competenze-digitali-docs/it/1.0/competenze-digitali-nel-ciclo-dellistruzione-e-della-formazione-superiore/iniziative-in-corso.html Servizio Civile Digitale https://innovazione.gov.it/notizie/comunicati-stampa/servizio-civile-digitale-pubblicato-il-primo-avviso-che-coinvolgera-1-000-giovani/
BEST PRACTICE 1	
Enterprise/organism	Credem – IBank
Main learnings to be transferred	-Full smart working adoption system, through a flexible and adaptive concept of work - Training and education for employees in order to give them a useful and concrete kit of digital competencies
BEST PRACTICE 2	
Enterprise/organism	Fincantieri – Manifacturing company
Main learnings to be transferred	-Ability to implement smartworking into a productive company. - Smart organization of work with the adoption of flexible strategies for each employees taking in account their personal situation - Education and trainings about smartworking to let employees more familiar to it.

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2.2.

2.2.1. Teleworking country adoption

Telework is a recent model implemented by enterprises and organisations. In France, this new model appeared in 1990 together with the development of ICT. "However, telework has limited success for reasons essentially linked to the legal concept of "subordination" which characterizes the employment relationship. This concept did not fit well with the physical distance involved in teleworking and the inherent fear of a loss of control over the employee."[1]

According to the study realized in France by ATTAC, before the COVID19 pandemic, 15.7% of employees worked occasionally from home and 7% habitually. The majority of teleworkers were managers (61%) and more numerous in the IT and telecommunication professions.[2] Before the pandemic, regular telework was still a limited practice even for managers (3%). But the higher the share of managers in the company, the more telework is developing. Conversely, in establishments where blue-collar and white-collar workers are in the majority, the proportion of employees (including managers) who telework is lower. During the pandemic, the acceleration of the digitalisation process was massive and radical. Teleworking ensured continuity of work while protecting workers from the Coronavirus.

According to the barometer Malakoff-Humanis published in February 2021[3], during a year of COVID19 outbreak the number of teleworkers increased and reached 41%, while after a year the percentage has slightly decreased and consisted of 31% in December 2020. However, the number of days teleworked continues to be high with an average of 3.6 days per week

[1] Joëlle Hannelais and Sarah Machrhoul Lhotellier, Vivien & Associés, Telework in France: before and after the Covid-19 pandemic, https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=3e61eff2-b39d-4f6d-a731-bbe6f75ac315, Lexology, April 2021

[2] Attac, Laurence Pelta, « *Le télétravail avant, pendant et après la pandémie de Covid-19* » , https://france.attac.org/nos-publications/les-possibles/numero-27-printemps-2021/dossier-numerisation-et-transformation-des-rapports-sociaux/article/le-teletravail-avant-pendant-et-apres-la-pandemie-de-covid-19, March 2021

[3] *Baromètre annuel Télétravail 2021 Malakoff-Humanis*, https://newsroom.malakoffhumanis.com/actualites/barometre-annuel-teletravail-2021-de-malakoff-humanis-db57-63a59.html, February 2021

(compared to 1.6 days at the end of 2019), and 45% of teleworking employees still telework 100% of their working time.

At the end of 2020, 31% of employees were teleworking full or part time (62% for Banking/Insurance, 62% for Services, 23% for Health, 19% for Trade and 17% for Industry). While the number of teleworkers has decreased compared to the beginning of the crisis, the number of days teleworked remains above the average rate before the pandemic: 3.6 days per week vs. 1.6 days per week at the end of 2019.

Only 14% of teleworkers say they no longer wish to telework after the pandemic. A large majority of managers (67%) are in favour of telework in their company. 43% of the respondents said that they telework regularly or occasionally[4].

2.2.2. Legislation that regulates teleworking

1. Legislation and definition of teleworking

Before COVID-19, a National Interprofessional Agreement (ANI) signed between the national representatives of employers and employees on July 19, 2005, defined the term" telework" as "a form of organization and / or performance of the work, using information technologies within the framework of an employment contract and in which work, which could also have been carried out on the employer's premises, is carried out outside these premises on a regular basis." Telework therefore covers any form of regular remote work, carried out through an Internet connection.[5]

The French labour code adopted the definition of telework in 2012, but with one condition: telework must be voluntary. In other words, the employer cannot force the employee to switch to telework. Teleworking was defined in the Labour Code as a form of organised labour, where the work that could have been carried out at the usual place of work, is carried out away from that place, on a regular and voluntary basis with using ICTs. Teleworking is established within the framework of the employment contract or an amendment to it (Art. L1222-9).[6]

The reform of the labour code launched under the presidency of Emmanuel Macron gave rise to an ordinance n° 2017-1387 of September 22, 2017 on teleworking, which relaxed the legal framework to encourage telework, including on an occasional basis. Branch or company agreements can be used to complete the legal frame when appropriate.

The ordinance of September 2017 modified the definition of teleworking and the procedures for its implementation; the regularity criterion was removed, before it was the obligatory to

[4] *Baromètre annuel Télétravail 2021 Malakoff-Humanis*, https://newsroom.malakoffhumanis.com/actualites/barometre-annuel-teletravail-2021-de-malakoff-humanis-db57-63a59.html, February 2021

[5] Joëlle Hannelais and Sarah Machrhoul Lhotellier, Vivien & Associés, Telework in France: before and after the Covid-19 pandemic, https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=3e61eff2-b39d-4f6d-a731-bbe6f75ac315, Lexology, April 2021

[6] Legifrance, article L1222-9 on telework: https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/id/LEGISCTA000025558058/#:~:text=Article%20L1222%2D9,-Modifi%C3%A9%20par%20LOI&text=Le%20t%C3%A9l%C3%A9travail%20est%20mis%20en,%C3%A9conomique%2C%20s'il%20existe

mention telework in the employment contract (or an amendment). The ordinance provides for telework to be formalised by any means by the employer and the employee: collective agreement, company charter, and in the case of occasional telework and in the absence of a collective agreement or charter, a written agreement, even just by e-mail.

Some employees telework on an occasional basis, usually on the basis of a mutual agreement between the employee and his or her management, within the establishment ("grey telework"). Previously, these occasional or non-formalised practices did not fall within the legal definition of telework. In the past, these occasional or non-formalised practices were not included in the legal definition of telework, whereas now the Labour Code covers these practices to a certain extent, as long as there is a written formalisation.

However, the law article dedicated to telework which regulated the relations worker-employer L1222-11[7] mentions that "in exceptional circumstances, such as pandemic, or in cases of force majeure, the implementation of telework may be considered as an adjustment to the workstation which is necessary to allow the continuity of the company's activity and guarantee the protection of employees." This law was followed by employers during the COVID-19 crisis, when the effective use of telework was strengthened as part of the measures implemented by the government. The rule encouraged telework in certain fields and many business activities shifted online. On November 26th 2021, a new National Interprofessional Agreement was signed by almost all trade unions and business confederations[8]. It contains many useful recommendations, good practices and tips that can be used by employers to implement telework in a balanced way and to manage its implementation especially in case of exceptional circumstances, such as a pandemic. Five new articles were mentioned: double voluntary work, the form of the agreement, refusal of telework, the adaptation period and reversibility. This amendment removed the need to formalise regular telework by means of an addendum. This formalisation could be done by any means, the text nevertheless recalling the usefulness of the writing in order to establish the proof of the agreement between the parties.

From June 9, 2021, based on discussions between management and employee representatives, companies are required to determine a minimum number of teleworking days for each employee.

2. Regulatory conditions on teleworking

Teleworkers enjoy the same legal and contractual rights and benefits as those working at the company's premises. Employers are obliged to explain their decisions in case they refuse to grant rights of telework to their employees.[9] Also, refusal of accepting a telework is not a reason to terminate an employment contract.

[7] Legifrance, article L1222-11 on telework: https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/article_lc/LEGIARTI000035643952

[8] National Interprofessional Agreement (ANI) prepared by the « *Confédération des petites et moyennes entreprises* » (CPME) : http://www.cpme23.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Sant%C3%A9-au-travail-ANI-du-9-d%C3%A9cembre-2020-Version-d%C3%A9finitive-rectificatif.pdf

[9] CCI Paris Ile de France Entreprises, https://www.entreprises.cci-paris-idf.fr/web/reglementation/developpement-entreprise/droit-social/le-teletravail

An accident occurring at the telework location during the teleworker's professional activity is presumed to be an accident at work within the meaning of Article L.411-1 of the Social Security Code.

Teleworkers are nevertheless subject to the same obligations as any other employee and may therefore be subject to disciplinary sanctions under the same conditions if they do not respect the obligations stated in their employment contract. Also, employees are not allowed to choose their days of teleworking.

The employer has the same obligations towards all employees, whether they are teleworkers or not, especially in terms of prevention of occupational risks. The Labour Code specifies that "the employer shall take the necessary measures to ensure the safety and protect the physical and mental health of workers."

These measures include:

- actions to prevent occupational risks;
- information and training measures;
- the establishment of an organisation and appropriate means.

The employer shall ensure that these measures are adapted to changing circumstances and aim to improve existing situations (Article L. 4121-1)[10].

When the employee works outside the company, the employer remains subject to the same obligations: he/she therefore remains responsible for the health and safety of the teleworker. However, the employer does not have control over the setting and conditions in which the teleworking employee is working. When he/she is at home, it is the employee alone who will configure his/her workspace, his/her organisation, adapt and use the computer tools that the employer provides. In a third place, the environment is provided by a third party who does not have the same responsibilities as the employer in terms of health and safety at work.[11]

Besides, the employer should:

- inform employees of the restrictions on the use of IT equipment and tools provided to them, as well as of the possible sanctions to which they are exposed.
- agree with their employees on the time slots during which they can be contacted.
- organise an annual interview with each employee, in particular on the employee's working conditions and workload.
- give priority to teleworkers to take up or return to a non-teleworking job that matches their qualifications and skills and inform them of the availability of any such job.

[10] INRS, *Employeur : de la responsabilité à la mise en œuvre de la prévention* https://www.inrs.fr/demarche/employeur/ce-qu-il-faut-retenir.html
[11] INRS, « *Le télétravail : Quelles risques ? Quelles pistes de prévention ?* » https://www.inrs.fr/media.html?refINRS=ED%206384, 2020

2.2.3. Digital skills development

1. Digitalization of the society: a political will

In France, digitalization increased in the aim of simplifying French citizens' lives. The administrative procedures and services usually done in offices had been put online.

In the framework of the French economic digital recovery plan launched in March 2021 ("Plan de relance"), the government implemented the "France Num Initiative." It contributes to the economic development of **enterprises** (VSEs/SMEs) by increasing the use of digital technology in response to their needs (building customer loyalty, saving time, raising awareness, selling from distance, etc.)[12]. The digital transformation concerns all sectors of activity and structures of all sizes. It is also an important growth factor through social media, IoT, big data, the cloud, artificial intelligence or virtual reality[13].

For **French citizens**, the idea is to facilitate the administrative procedures online with the development of "France Connect" platform: https://franceconnect.gouv.fr/ and the website: https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/. This service was designed by the State to access numerous services with a single identifier and a single password. It is a service for guaranteeing the identity of a user by relying on existing accounts for which his or her identity has already been verified. This device is a common good available to all administrative authorities. Thanks to "France Connect", online procedures are made easier and more secure. Nowadays, one third of the French population uses this pass (23.781.149 habitants)[14].

With "France Connect", users can have access to 900 online services. Among those services, French citizens can manage their taxes, check their medical record, manage and consult your retirement rights and check their town's procedures as well as their health insurance and soon they will be able to check their bank account.

The last target group focused by the public bodies under the "Plan de Relance", is the **public officials**. The idea is to improve their level of equipment to ensure that 100% of staff who can telework are properly equipped[15].

2. Digital skills at work

Digital technology is becoming a basic skill and is also a foundation for professional knowledge and skills. The development of digital technology in operational activities requires the use of new tools and adaptation to new ways of doing things. However, some employees do not have a sufficient command of basic skills to cope calmly with these changes[16].

[12] French portal of digital transformation of enterprises: https://www.francenum.gouv.fr/

[13] *La transformation numérique : une nécessité,* https://www.bpifrance.fr/A-la-une/Dossiers/Transformation-digitale-une-necessite/La-transformation-numerique-une-necessite-32915

[14] https://franceconnect.gouv.fr/#services

[15] *Transformation numérique de l'État : un canal d'accès aux services publics à renforcer :* https://www.vie-publique.fr/en-bref/278873-transformation-numerique-de-letat-un-milliard-deuros-investis

[16] French Senat, Information Report, « *La formation des salariés au numérique, un impératif national* », https://www.senat.fr/rap/r19-711/r19-7117.html

The study France Stratégie "Numérique: nouveaux usages, nouvelles interrogations"[17] written in April 2020, pointed out that during the Covid-19 health crisis, in terms of work, the widespread switch to digital technology had only served to underline the precariousness that the world of work has seen develop over the last ten years. Some inequalities appeared among employees. More than half of private sector employees found themselves unable to work, either because their sector was largely 'face-to-face' and therefore at a standstill, or because they lacked the tools and skills to work remotely.

The intensity of technological and organisational change tends to increase the rate of obsolescence of skills and requires an increased capacity for adaptation by employees, especially the older ones. The need for training increases with such changes, whether they involve the introduction of new software or hardware or other technical production equipment, or the implementation of new work organisation (new division of labour, application of safety or quality standards)[18].

The need for employees aged over 50 years old to become familiar with new technologies and especially with the evolution of digital tools used at work is increasing. This need became a necessity with the obligation to use teleworking during the pandemic. Employers should now take their role of support to address employees' needs and requirements in terms of digital training.

2.2.4. Practices on Teleworking.

Good practice 1:

Enterprise/organization	La Poste (French post office), https://www.laposte.fr/
Good practice description	
An agreement on telework at La Poste was signed on July 27, 2018 with the trade unions. The agreement makes telework more flexible and broadens the possibilities to exercise this form of work, which is already implemented since 2013[19]. Regular telework, which could be previously carried out on average two days a week, over the chosen reference period (week or month), can be now carried out three days for postal workers over 55 years of age. The agreement also allows occasional telework in case of unusual or emergency circumstances that make it impossible to travel to the workplace. The implementation of this occasional telework is simple as it does not require the signing of an agreement.	

[17] Study France Stratégie, *« Nouveaux usages, nouvelles interrogations » :* https://www.strategie.gouv.fr/sites/strategie.gouv.fr/files/atoms/files/soutenabilites-axe-numerique-avril-2020_0.pdf

[18] Report DARES, *« Formation professionnelle : quels facteurs limitent l'accès des salariés seniors » :* https://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/pdf/2016-031.pdf

[19] Agreement on telework at La Poste: http://www.cgtfapt77.fr/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Accord-T%C3%A9l%C3%A9travail-Poste.pdf

Also, teleworkers are supported with the following points[20]:

- Provision of an ergonomic chair - a chair whose shape is particularly adapted to the user's working conditions (or 50% reimbursement, up to a maximum of 150€).
- Footrest and wrist rest provided on request.
- Allowances for the costs of teleworking are paid for teleworking at home (Internet connexion, printing costs.
- Two mandatory e-learning courses for teleworkers and managers.
- IT: necessary equipment (laptop, bag, key, guide) and hotline.

The impact of this agreement on teleworkers' health and well-being is significant. The results of the internal survey realized by employers among employees at La Poste proposed to the employees can be found below:

1. A better distribution of time between work, personal and family life: time saved on commuting to and from work partly reallocated to personal time and reduced fatigue and stress
2. Improvement of work conditions: teleworking reduces the noise of open space, improves organisation (planning, concentration) and increases autonomy.
3. A better adaptation of work organisation compared with the biological rhythm of the employees: autonomy in the organisation of the working day (moments of concentration, meal times, rest times etc.), the possibility to adopt postures adapted to the needs (standing, walking etc.), recovery from the fatigue accumulated during the week.
4. Reduction of absenteeism: less sick leave, the possibility of managing procedures without taking half a day off, solutions to transport problems or sick children.
5. Reduction of delays: traffic problems, medical appointments, etc.

Learnings and transferability

The support proposed in the framework of this agreement is adapted to general employees specifically to people over 50 years old:

1. Health conditions are taken into account with ergonomic equipment provided.
2. Proposals to follow e-learning courses for employees less familiar with new technologies are good ideas to become familiar with digital tools.

[20] Agreement at La Poste « *Accord relatif au télétravail à La Poste SA, Un levier pour mieux concilier vie professionnelle et vie privée* » https://www.cig929394.fr/sites/default/files/commun/teletravail_a_la_poste.pdf

Good practice 2:

Enterprise/organization	L'Oréal, https://www.loreal.com/fr/

Good practice description

L'Oréal, French industrial group of cosmetic products, signed an agreement on telework with the representatives of the trade unions on 21 October 2020 for an indefinite period. The agreement contains 14 articles. Teleworking constitutes a work modality that allows an employee, on a voluntary basis and in agreement with his/her manager, to work outside the company's premises. Teleworking is open to employees who are capable of carrying out activities independently. Some employees are excluded: those who are on a trial period, alternating work experience, trainees. However, pregnant women and employees over 55 years of age have priority for teleworking.

L'Oréal provides for an adaptation period of 3 months in order for the employee to experience working remotely. Telework is also reversible. It can be terminated at any time, at the initiative of the employee or the manager. The number of days of telework is fixed at 2 days per week, seniors may have 3 days. Exceptional telework - the agreement provides for this in the event of an epidemic, for example

Locations for telework - any private home where any private dwelling for which the employee can prove that he/she has comprehensive home insurance, that the electrical installations are in order, that the location is suitable and secure, and that in some cases it is even abroad.

Work equipment

The company guarantees work equipment, in conjunction with the occupational health authorities, in addition to a laptop, a laptop booster, a portable keyboard, a USB hub, a mouse with an ergonomic mat and headphones.

Telework does not change the employee's usual activity or workload. In the event of difficulties, the company provides e-learning training for its employees on the practice of remote work, making them aware of the potential risks to their physical and mental health. The company provides for agreements relating to end-of-career arrangements and part-time work for seniors and for medical reasons recommended by the occupational physician[21].

Learnings and transferability

- e-learning trainings on the practice of remote work (on potential risks to their physical and mental health) offered to teleworkers for ensuring employees' well-being

[21] Article detailing the regulation for teleworking at L'Oréal: https://www.droits-salaries.com/632012100-l-oreal/63201210000012-siege/T07520025758-accord-sur-le-travail-distance-au-sein-de-la-societe-l-oreal-s.a-teletravail.shtml

2.2.5. Summary

Question	Findings
REGULATIONS	
Did there exist a law that regulates teleworking before the pandemic?	Yes
	"Telework refers to any form of work organisation in which work that could also have been carried out on the employer's premises is carried out by an employee away from these premises, on a voluntary basis, using information and communication technologies" (art. L.1222-9 paragraph 1 of the Labour Code). Link
Does there exist a law that regulates teleworking after the pandemic?	Yes
	"In exceptional circumstances, such as the threat of an epidemic, or in cases of force majeure, the implementation of telework may be considered as an adjustment of the workstation made necessary to allow the continuity of the company's activity and guarantee the protection of employees." (art. art. L.1222-11): Link
Which public organism regulates / defines policies for teleworking in your country?	The law defines the regulation for teleworking. There is no entity regulating teleworking. Telework is implemented within the framework of a collective agreement or, failing that, within the framework of a charter drawn up by the employer after consulting the social and economic committee, if it exists. In the absence of a charter or collective agreement, when the employee and the employer agree to exercise telework, they formalise their agreement by any means. A teleworker is any employee of the company who teleworks, either at the time of hiring or subsequently. In exceptional circumstances or in cases of "force majeure" (e.g. Covid-19), teleworking can be imposed by the employer without the employees' agreement. Link
TELEWORKING FOR EMPLOYEES	
Main rights for employees to telework according to regulations	Teleworkers enjoy the same legal and contractual rights and benefits as those applicable to employees in a comparable situation working on the company's premises. An employer who refuses to offer teleworking activities to an employee who occupies a position eligible for teleworking must give reasons for his or her decision. Refusal of accepting a telework position is not a reason for termination of the employment contract. An accident occurring at the telework location during the teleworker's professional activity is presumed to be an accident at work within the meaning of Article L.411-1 of the Social Security Code (link).

Main obligations for employees to telework according to regulations	Teleworkers are subject to the same obligations as any other employee and may, therefore, be subject to disciplinary sanctions under the same conditions if they do not respect the obligations arising from their employment contract. They are not allowed to choose their days of teleworking. Link
TELEWORKING FOR EMPLOYERS	
Main rights for employers on teleworking according to regulations:	Conditions for imposing teleworking: Article L. 1222-11 of the Labour Code mentions the risk of an epidemic as a reason for justify the use of telework without the employee's agreement. The implementation of telework in this context does not require any particular formality. Conditions for refusing teleworking: if the employer considers that the conditions for returning to work are in accordance with the health regulations at the office, he/she can refuse teleworking. In all cases, your employer must give reasons for refusal. Since March 17, 2020 and until further notice, telework must be systematically favoured. The employer must therefore demonstrate that the presence at the workplace is indispensable for the operation of the business activity. Link
Main obligations for employers to facilitate telework according to regulations:	The employer has the same obligations towards all employees, whether they are teleworkers or not, especially in terms of prevention of occupational risks. The Labour Code specifies that "the employer shall take the necessary measures to ensure the safety and protect the physical and mental health of workers." These measures include: 1° actions to prevent occupational risks; 2° information and training measures; 3° the establishment of an organisation and appropriate means. The employer shall ensure that these measures are adapted to take account of changing circumstances and aim to improve existing situations (Article L. 4121-1). When the employee works outside the company, the employer remains subject to the same obligations: he/she therefore remains responsible for the health and safety of the teleworker. However, the employer does not have control over the setting and conditions in which the teleworking employee is working. When he/she is at home, it is the employee alone who will configure his/her workspace, his/her organisation, adapt and use the computer tools that the employer provides. In a third place, the environment is provided by a third party who does not have the same responsibilities as the employer in terms of health and safety at work (link).

	Also, the employer should: - inform employees of the restrictions on the use of IT equipment and tools provided to them, as well as of the possible sanctions to which they are exposed. - agree with the employees on the time slots during which they can be contacted. - organise an annual interview with each employee, in particular on the employee's working conditions and workload. - give priority to teleworkers to take up or return to a non-teleworking job that matches their qualifications and skills and inform them of the availability of any such job.
TELEWORKING ADOPTION	
Do you have any enterprise association or confederation that has published recommendations or studies?	Yes, CPME, French confederation of small and medium enterprises, prepared this document about teleworking: link[22]. It was signed by trade unions and business confederation one the 26th of November 2020.
Do you have any workers union that has published recommendations or studies?	For executive managers « *CFDT cadres* », the worker union CFDT created this study for negotiating and organizing teleworking: link
Do you have any other institution/research group that has published recommendations or studies?	The ministry of labour published the national protocol to ensure the health and safety of employees in companies during the COVID19 pandemic. This is a reference document to ensure the health and safety of employees and the continuation of economic activity: link
DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	

[22] Agreement http://www.cpme23.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Sant%C3%A9-au-travail-ANI-du-9-d%C3%A9cembre-2020-Version-d%C3%A9finitive-rectificatif.pdf

Which public organism boost digital transformation on your country? Is there any plan or strategy including digital skills development?	In the framework of the French economic digital recovery plan launched in March 2021 ("Plan de relance"), the government implemented the "France Num initiative." It contributes to the economic development of **enterprises** (VSEs/SMEs) by increasing the use of digital technology in response to their needs (building customer loyalty, saving time, raising awareness, selling from distance, etc.): link For **French citizens**, the idea is to facilitate the administrative procedures online with the development of "France Connect" platform: https://franceconnect.gouv.fr/ and the website: https://www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/. The last target group focused by the public bodies is the **public officials**. The idea is to improve their level of equipment to ensure that 100% of staff who can telework are properly equipped. Link
Main policies and initiatives that impact on digital skills improvement on your country.	N/A (see above)
BEST PRACTICE 1	
Enterprise/organism	La Poste
Main learnings to be transferred	• Health conditions are taken into account with ergonomic equipment provided. • Offering e-learning courses to employees who are less familiar with new technologies.
BEST PRACTICE 2	
Enterprise/organism	L'Oréal
Main learnings to be transferred	• Offering e-learning trainings on the practice of remote work (on potential risks to their physical and mental health)

2.2.6. References

1) Joëlle Hannelais and Sarah Machrhoul Lhotellier, Vivien & Associés, Telework in France: before and after the Covid-19 pandemic, https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=3e61eff2-b39d-4f6d-a731-bbe6f75ac315, Lexology, April 2021
2) CNIL: https://www.cnil.fr/fr/teletravail-les-regles-et-les-bonnes-pratiques-suivre
3) Legifrance: https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/id/LEGISCTA000025558058/#:~:text=Article%20L1222%2D9,-Modifi%C3%A9%20par%20LOI&text=Le%20t%C3%A9l%C3%A9travail%20est%20mis%20en,%C3%A9conomique%2C%20s'il%20existe
4) INRS: https://www.inrs.fr/media.html?refINRS=ED%206384
5) CCI Paris Ile de France Entreprises : https://www.entreprises.cci-paris-idf.fr/web/reglementation/developpement-entreprise/droit-social/le-teletravail
6) National Interprofessional Agreement (ANI) prepared by the « Confédération des petites et moyennes entreprises » (CPME) : http://www.cpme23.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Sant%C3%A9-au-travail-ANI-du-9-d%C3%A9cembre-2020-Version-d%C3%A9finitive-rectificatif.pdf
7) Protocole national pour assurer la santé et la sécurité des salariés en entreprise face à l'épidémie de Covid-19 « *National Protocol to ensure employees' health and security in entreprises duing Covid-19* » : https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/protocole-national-sante-securite-en-entreprise_18_mai_9_juin.pdf
8) Ministry of Labour: https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/qr-teletravail-deconfinement.pdf
9) French portal of digital transformation of enterprises: https://www.francenum.gouv.fr/
10) Digital transformation, the website is produced by the direction of legal and administrative issues of the Prime Minister's office, "*Transformation numérique de l'État : un canal d'accès aux services publics à renforcer*" : : https://www.vie-publique.fr/en-bref/278873-transformation-numerique-de-letat-un-milliard-deuros-investis
11) CFDT study: https://www.cadrescfdt.fr/sites/default/files/inline-files-two/2018%20-%20Guide%20du%20t%C3%A9l%C3%A9travail_0.pdf
12) Baromètre annuel Télétravail 2021 de Malakoff-Humanis : https://newsroom.malakoffhumanis.com/actualites/barometre-annuel-teletravail-2021-de-malakoff-humanis-db57-63a59.html
13) ATTAC, Florence Pelta, « *Le télétravail avant, pendant et après la pandémie de Covid-19* », https://france.attac.org/nos-publications/les-possibles/numero-27-printemps-2021/dossier-numerisation-et-transformation-des-rapports-sociaux/article/le-teletravail-avant-pendant-et-apres-la-pandemie-de-covid-19, March 2021
14) *La Transformation numérique : une nécessité*, https://www.bpifrance.fr/A-la-une/Dossiers/Transformation-digitale-une-necessite/La-transformation-numerique-une-necessite-32915
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DESK RESEARCH REPORT (Greece)

by (KAINOTOMIA), May 2021

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2.3.

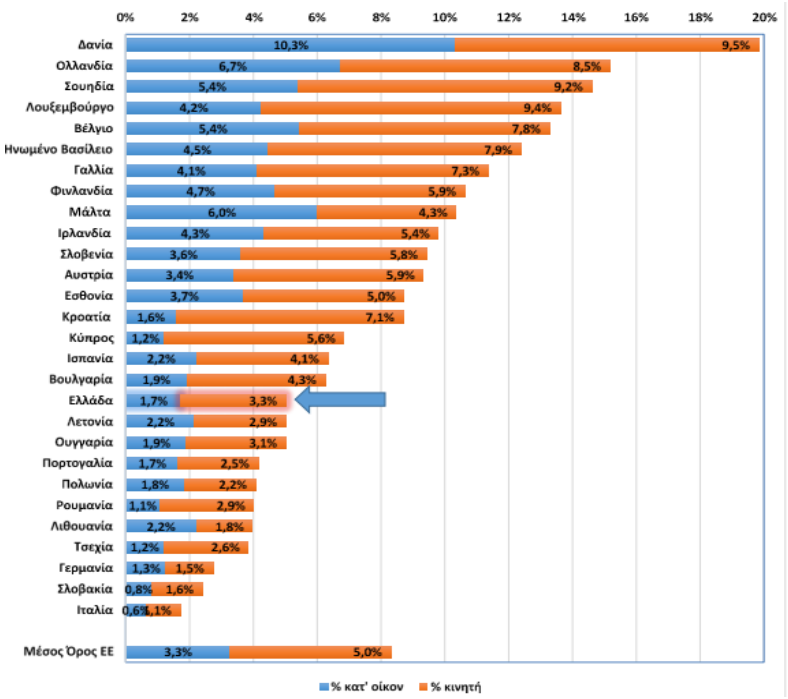
2.3.1. Teleworking country adoption

It is difficult to precisely determine the number of people who are teleworkers in Greece, due to inadequate statistical monitoring.

A 2002 survey by the Institute of Labour, the Greek General Confederation of Labour and the Confederation of Public Servants showed the prevalence of telework to be particularly limited, with just 1.1% of the companies surveyed using such practices. A 2003 study by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security reports that the actual number of people working from home is probably unknown. However, unofficial statistics estimate the number of teleworkers to be approximately 50,000 people – or 1.14% of the country's total workforce of 4.4 million people. Large enterprises or multinationals were mainly interested in that new formation of employment mostly because their parent companies abroad have begun adopting practices of teleworking. In addition, self-employed people whose occupations require familiarity and use of ICT like authors, journalists, translators, accountants, programmers and architects, performed also telework.

Greece has one of the lowest teleworking rates in the EU. In our country, teleworking was estimated at 4.3% in 2009 and 5% in 2019. In Greece, the self-employed worked at a rate of 4.9% "sometimes" from home and 3% "usually" in 2019, while the percentages for employees the same year are 2.9% and 1.4% correspondingly.

Image 2.3.1: Teleworking in Europe 2019



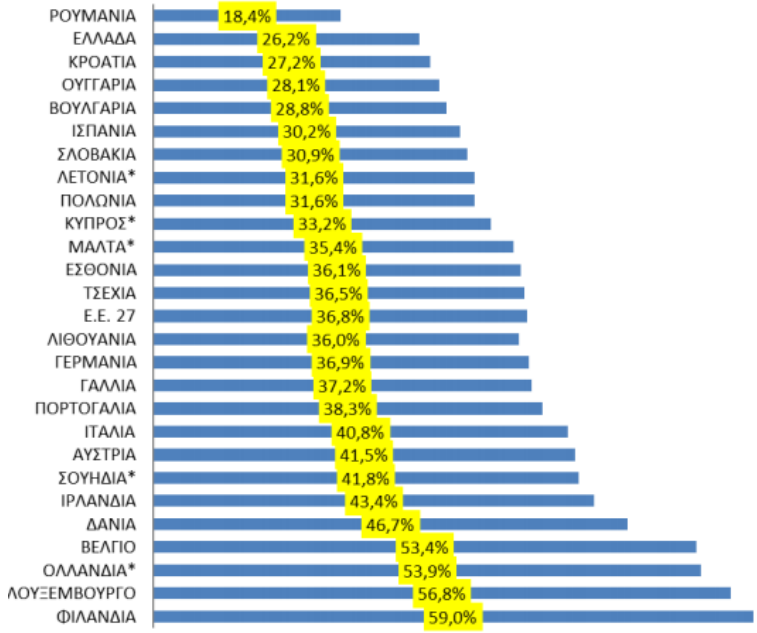
Source: [SEV Hellenic Federation of Entreprises, 2019]

In particular, the occasional teleworking stood at 2.4% in 2009 to increase by just one percentage point in 2019, at 3.4%. Fixed teleworking in both 2009 and 2019 does not exceeds 2% of total employment (precisely 1.9%)

In general teleworking experience prior to the pandemic is limited (36%), with 63.4% of the respondents have no previous teleworking experience. The majority of them worked away from office for the first time during the pandemic.

The difficulty of adjusting to changing conditions is the reason why Greece has an obvious lag introducing teleworking in significant percentages. The industries with the highest percentages of teleworking in our country is in the sector of knowledge-intensive businesses, such as IT, communications, education and logistics.

Image 2.3.2: Teleworking in Europe 2020



Source: Eurofound, 2020

During the pandemic, 26,2 % (2020) of the employees started working from home with the majority of them (83%) working exclusively from home. 81% of them have adapted in less than a week while 73% of the Greek companies adapted immediately.

In 2021 the percentage shows an increase to 30-35% for teleworkers that work exclusively from their home.

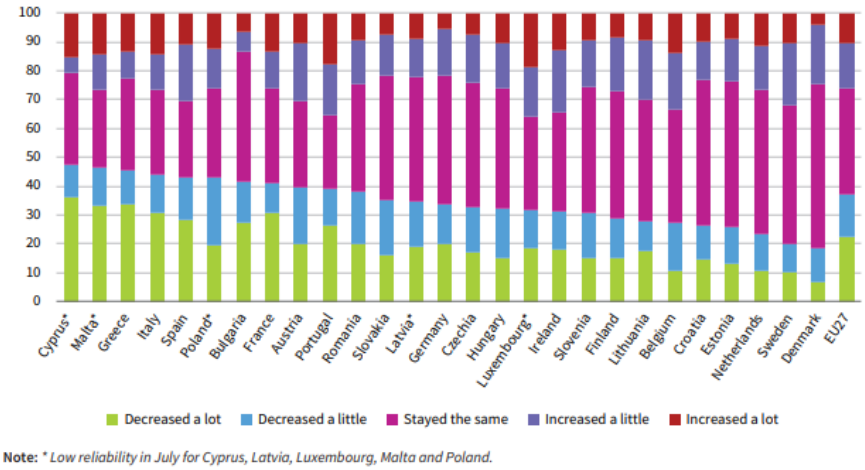
Image 2.3.3: Teleworking in Greece exclusively from home, 2021

Source: Eurofound, 2020

The majority of the employees (88%) was satisfied with remote work in addition with companies that find teleworking ''quite of very effective''.

Despite the satisfaction, 61% of employees consider teleworking a negative development in terms of working hours, and almost an equal percentage consider it a negative development in terms of the development of their pay. 52% of them evaluate teleworking negatively in terms of his personal life and 45% in terms of professional development.

Image 2.3.4: Changes in workhours



Note: ** Low reliability in July for Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Poland.*

Source: Eurofound, 2019

It is estimated that about 25% of employees (up to 500,000 employees) could work fully through teleworking with an additional 12% of employees having high rotational working capabilities.

Distance work is now a formation of work that is accepted by all hierarchical levels and all age groups. It is accepted that it came to stay even after the COVID-19 era. The initial suspicions that teleworking will negatively affect employee productivity have been overcome and there is a general acceptance by both employees and employers. From the perspective of managers, there is still difficulty to manage their teams from distance and it is clear that all companies, or even public agencies were not ready to switch to teleworking mode.

Older people are the ones who feel less familiar with new technologies and more disconnected from the rest of the team. Working remotely does not help them to devote time to socializing within the group. COVID-19 has highlighted the need to acquire the basic principles of technological knowledge, especially by experienced professionals, to help them better adapt to the new working conditions created by the pandemic and the need to further exploit technology.

Regarding the use of the internet by the older age groups (65-74 years), in 2020, in Greece the percentage was 33%.

2.3.2. Legislation that regulates teleworking

The Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Security is responsible for the laws and legislation regarding teleworking. The contribution of work unions, like GSEE, that act like push factors, plays a significant role in the formation of legislation.

At a European level, in 2002 it was signed into a framework of the European Social Dialogue, between European employers' organizations and employees the famous "Agreement - Framework for teleworking". This Agreement was designed to fill the legislative gap for this type of work. However, the framework agreement on teleworking has never taken the form of a European Directive.

In Greece, this European Framework Agreement has been incorporated into Greek legal order as an appendix to the National General Collective Agreement of Labour (EGSSE) from 12.04.2006.

In order for the Ministry to set a base line, a general guide for teleworking was drafted. In this guide the employer and the employee could find general information concerning teleworking. That information concerned the definition of teleworking, ways of teleworking, working rights, data protection, personal life, working conditions, equipment, health and safety, organization, training and union rights. It is also highlighted that teleworking has a volitional character and has to be introduced in the job description or be a part of a subsequent agreement.

The definition:

Teleworking is a form of organization and/or execution of work using information technology, based on a contract or employment relationship, where a job that could also be performed at the employer's premises is normally executed outside of these facilities.

This agreement covers teleworkers. A teleworker is a natural person who offers to telework.

Rights and Obligations for employees:

- An employee has the right to expresses a desire for a teleworking position, the employer may accept or deny this request.
- An employee's refusal to accept telework is not the sole reason for termination of employment or a change in that employee's terms and conditions of employment.
- Establishment of an adjustment period of three months during which unilateral revocation of the conversion of regular work into telework.

Rights and Obligations for employers:

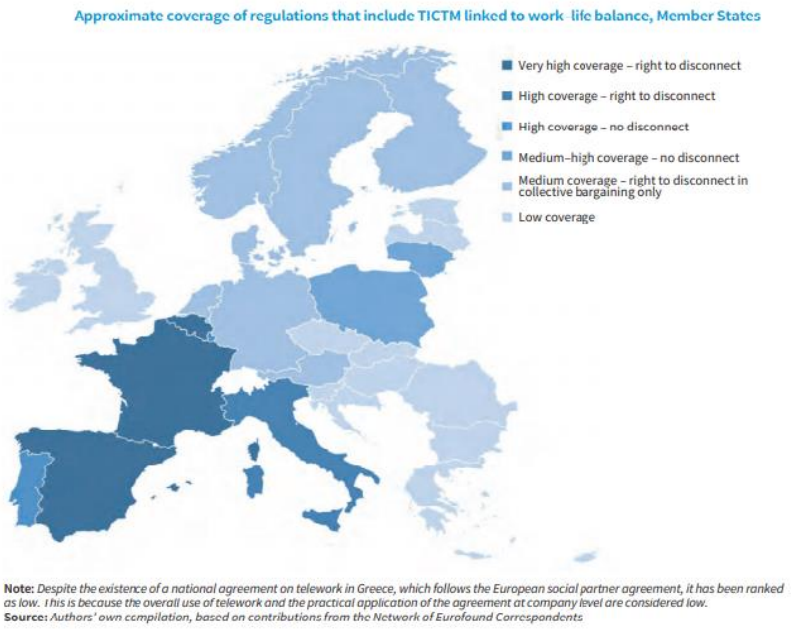
- If teleworking is not part of the initial job description and the employer notices a teleworking offer, the employee may accept or decline the offer.
- The obligation of the employer to inform the employee in writing 8 days after preparation of the contract for all matters relating to the execution of the work.
- Establish an adjustment period of three months during which unilateral revocation of the conversion of regular work into telework.
- The obligation to provide to the teleworker everything that required to perform teleworking.
- Employer is responsible for the health and safety of the teleworker and the safety of teleworker’s professional and personal data.

Due to covid-19 pandemic the employer, can decide if the work provided by the employee could be in the form of teleworking.

However, there are individual problems in the implementation of teleworking, mainly due to the complexity and rigidity of the current labor and tax law. For example, while employers are responsible for covering the costs of teleworking, and in particular telecommunications, the strict restrictions concerning non-wage benefits do not make it easier for the company to cover the costs, without requiring the employee to pay additional tax on payments that are essentially part of the company's productive expenses and should therefore not be charged as non-wage benefits (for an excess of € 300 per year). Similarly, while part-time teleworking is not prohibited by the institutional framework, it is difficult to be combined in practice with regular work on a daily basis, as there is no clear if the business is covered in the event of scrutiny by the competent authorities.

In the following image it is clear that Greece is one of the countries that despite the existence of national agreement on teleworking, its implementation is low.

Image 2.3.5: Coverage of regulation



Source: Euagenda, 2020

The complexity of Greek law and the inadequacy to easily adapt to new situations are not the only reasons why the implementation of teleworking in our country is at a low range. In addition to those, the formal application of the legal framework regarding compliance working hours cannot be fully controlled regarding teleworking, creating a difficult ground to control its start and end time. On the contrary, there is room for abusive practices regarding overtime, either on the part of the employer (imposition of informal overtime) or the employee (invoking unfulfilled overtime). Additionally, the restrictions that exist regarding the application of increased and variable break time cancel out one of the most important advantages of teleworking: the convenience of teleworker to adjust his/her time in order to handle personal and professional issues in an optimal way.

During the pandemic, the Ministry of Labour is announcing impermanent guidelines regarding teleworking for the health and safety of employees, employers and the general population. In the private sector till the 31st of May, the industries that were legitimate to work, had to conform to the guideline of the Ministry of Labour and implement 50% teleworking to their workforce. From 1st of June and till 30th of June the percentage of teleworking for each private company is 20%.

Finally, Greece is one of the first EU and OECD countries, after France and Italy, to legislate the recognition of the right of disconnection. That is, the right of the teleworker to abstain from the provision of work by telephone, electronic or digital means, beyond working hours.

This legislation also provides that:

- The employer pays the cost of equipment, maintenance and telecommunications.

- It is forbidden to use the camera to control the performance of the teleworker.
- Any discrimination against a teleworker is prohibited because he exercised the right of disconnection.
- The employer is responsible for protecting the health and occupational safety of the teleworker.
- Teleworkers have the same rights and obligations as employees within the company's premises.
- The Labour Inspector Agency has the right to access the communication data of the company and the teleworker for the control of the observance of working hours.

2.3.3. Digital skills development

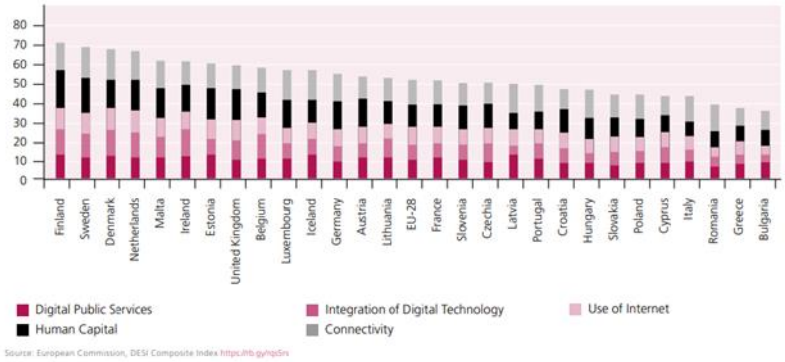
The rapidly increasing use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in all aspects of our lives, in accordance with the rising necessity to acquire or update gained digital skills, to the same grade as literacy and numeracy, are major transformations that create new challenges in the modern world. The recent sudden situation accrued by the COVID-19 pandemic, further emphasized the grade of capability of modern economies and societies to replace traditional models in fields of employment, education, communication, and entertainment with new approaches, where digitalization has a crucial role. And this situation and new conditions are not limited in one certain already advanced local or national community, but in many places around the world at different levels of digital maturity.

In the current situation, systems and organizations are being deconstructed and reformed according to a new reality, where people are interchangeably linked to the new digital era. Despite the rapidly evolving digital era, there is a significant portion of the population who are unable to take part in this digitally dependent reality and feel unfamiliar with the new trends adopted, either due to lack of access, infrastructure, knowledge, and skills essential to use and make the most of digital tools and capabilities. Unfortunately, this situation of division of population has resulted not only in long-term social inequalities, but also in the creation of new ones. People without any or with minor access to the basic digital skills face the threat of exclusion, given that they may be unable to participate in work, education, communication, society in general. The majority of people with no access to ICT skills, lack of being active members of this new reality. Especially people from disentangled groups, such as elderly people, people with disabilities, unemployed, and people with low levels of education are the most vulnerable and exposed to the risk of digital and, by extension, social exclusion.

Digitalization process in European context is measured through the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), which is one of the most reliable reference regarding digital readiness of European Member States. The results from DESI along with Eurostat, provide us a full perspective of the situation concerning digital literacy and transformation in Greece.

According to the general ranking of DESI (2020), Greece is ranked 28th in connectivity, 25th in human capital and use of internet services, 24th in integration of digital technologies by businesses and 27th in digital public services. (Table 1.1)

Image 2.3.6. DESI and its dimensions 1



Source: FES, 2020

Further up to the DESI 2020 for human capital, Greece takes the 25th position with a score of 34.8 as compared to 49.3 for the EU-28 average. According to the individual indicators for the human capital dimension, in 2019, 51% of Greek individuals between 16-74 gained at least basic digital skills (58% in the EU). There was a similar percentage of individuals with at least basic software skills, 56% (61% in the EU-28). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specialists as a percentage of total employees in Greece was low compared to the EU-28 average (1.8% as opposed to 3.9%). One of the lowest percentages was referring to the female ICT specialists in Greece, with only 0.5%, meaning three times lower than the EU-28 average (1.4%). Moreover, in Greece ICT graduates was 2.9% of all degree holders (3.6% in the EU-28) (Table 4).

Table 2.3.1: DESI 2020-Digital skills of human capital

	Greece	EU-28
At least basic digital skills	51%	58%
Above basic digital skills	23%	33%
At least basic software skills	56%	61%
ICT specialists	1,8%	3,9%
Female ICT specialists	0,5%	1,4%
ICT graduates	2,9%	3,6%

Source: European Commission (2020)

Source: FES, 2020

The level of readiness in digital skills differs depending on the degree of integration in the labour market. In Greece, the majority of employed people have at least basic digital skills (64%), as distinct to the lower percentage of 53% of the unemployed and the 51% of the (economically inactive) population aged 16-74.

Regarding other, more specific indicators, such as gender disparity there are no significant gender-specific differences. The differences on digital skills between genders is significant only when referring to individuals without digital skills, where men are proportionately fewer, as well

as individuals with advanced digital skills, where men are ahead – both in Greece and in the EU-28.

According to the same data collected from DESI, significant disparities have been detected in terms of digital readiness per industry. The lower percentages are detected in the fields of agriculture, forestry and fishery, where individuals with basic digital skills are proportionately fewer compared to other sectors, amounting to just 16% in Greece and 19% in the EU-28. The greatest surprise comes from the percentages of people with basic skills in the fields of public administration, defense, education and health sectors in Greece, where the rates do not exceed the 12%, while the rate percent of individuals with advanced digital skills is limited to 20% (32% and 45%, respectively, in the EU-28). In sector with more digital, informative and communication orientation, individuals with basic digital skills in Greece are at 42%, while just 12% have advanced digital skills. The percentages in the EU-28 are 20% for individuals with basic digital skills and 73% for individuals with advanced digital skills.

Concerning the relationship of specific age groups with digital skills, there have been detected very large differences. In the younger age groups (16-24), there are only a few individuals without digital skills. In addition, in this age group, proportionately more individuals in Greece compared to the EU-28 have at least basic digital skills (47% as opposed to 23%), even if the EU-28 is ahead in the percentage of young people with advanced digital skills (59% as opposed to 45%).

Concluding, digitalization is creating a new context and introducing radical changes to the everyday lives, communication, and employment of citizens. This process of change is not gender-neutral and brings to light new inequalities between men and women. Two major sectors for intervention are education and employment of women in ICT- and AI-related fields, given that, as evidenced by the findings presented in this text, women have lower participation compared to men both in related tertiary-level studies and in the labor market.

The transition of the EU member states to the Digital Single Market is monitored and evaluated through specific Reports and Indexes, such as the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI). The current action plan is focusing on the “Human Capital” dimension of the DESI Index, which monitors the level of digital skills in each member state. Greece ranks among the lowest position, being 26th in the Human Capital dimension, with only the 45% having basic digital skills while in EU the average rate is 57%.

Greece also faces a lack of capacity to digital transform the economy, fact arising from the lack of ICT specialists, being only 1,4 per 1000 employees. The same gap is spotted also on women ICT specialists, representing only the 0,4% of the total employment, which ranks Greece in the 28th position of the EU.

It is clear from the above that Greece lacks people with the necessary digital skills to be employed in new job opening, while at the same time the number of ICT specialists is importantly low in order to support the digital transformation of the country.

This weakness arises mostly from the digital public services with the Greek public governance ranking in the 27th position and the rate of digital public services users being just 38% of the Internet users in total, fact that strongly proves the inability of the users to support this digital transformation.

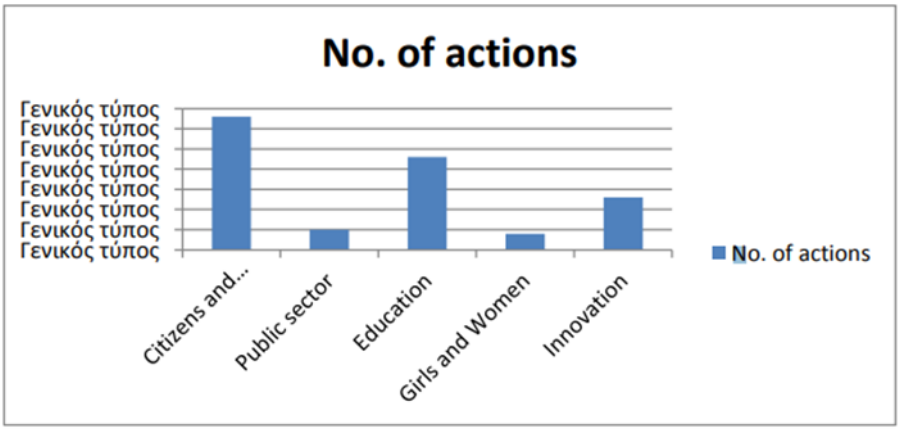
According to the DESI Report, Greece coordinates the policy related to digital skills with specific actions and initiatives, such as the National Coalition for Digital Skills, in order to quickly close the gap of digital skills in the country, giving emphasis to the 50% of people who do not possess basic digital skills.

The Unit of Innovation and Best Practices of the Ministry of the Administrative Reconstruction has taken all the above information into account and took the initiative to design and complete with success the strategy for the integration of the country to the Digital Map of the EU with the approval of the first National Action Plan for Digital Skills on March 2018 from the European Commission.

The goal of the Action Plan for 2019 is to define the new digital jobs and the digital profiles, to define the training needs in specific digital skills and the staffing of job positions with specific digital skills and is part of the general context for a strategic framework for the development of digital skills for the period 2020-2022. The plan is also targeting at the development of skills of important organization, which design digital policies, to be the basis for this continuous improvement.

Another crucial priority is understanding the real economical and societal needs in order to plan actions that support economic growth and start-ups, inclusion and the development of specific digital skills in public governance, as well as the connection with the international and national priorities within the Digital Single Market.

Image 2.3.7: Number of digital actions



Source: National Coalition, ActionPlan 2019

The management of this Action plan results from synergies and experience from different organizations that implement digital skills actions.

The Ministry of Administrative Reconstruction has the horizontal responsibility for the support of digital transformation of public governance in all policy areas. Digital transformation includes the creation of a safe legislative environment, the development of structures and redesign of procedures, the design of public governance projects and their support with projects to promote the necessary digital skills in public governance.

The General Directorate for Public Organizations and specifically the Unit of Innovation and Best Practices has overtaken responsibility for the management of the Action Plan, its creation, monitoring and evaluation. In this context, the actions have been clearly defined to contribute effectively to the priorities, their monitoring and evaluation, according to the expected results.

The Unit of Innovation and Best Practices also works with the General Directorate of Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DGCNECT) of the European Commission and the Governing Board of the Coalition for Digital Skills and Jobs. The Action Plan is part of an overall design work for the creation of strategy for the digital transformation of public governance and the priority area of innovation is based on innovation policy and introduces in the form of actions the innovation agenda in public governance, targeting the development of digital skills through innovative actions.

Priorities

Priority 1	Improving the digital skills of citizens and businesses: - Reskilling - Upskilling - Events
Priority 2	Improving digital skills in the public sector: - Advanced digital skills - Upskilling - Events
Priority 3	Improving digital skills in education: - Training actions - Events
Priority 4	Improving digital skills of girls and women (horizontal priority)
Priority 5	Empowering innovation, experimentation and innovation skills in the public sector: - Advanced digital skills - Events

It is important to note that by 2019, there was no formal strategy for the digital transformation of the public sector at national level, especially in areas such the development of digital skills and the identification of digital profiles.

The Covid 19 pandemic acted as accelerator for the digital transformation of the country as several services needed to get digitalized quickly and efficiently. The Greek Ministry of Digital Governance recently presented a Digital Transformation bible for the years 2020-2025 outlining a holistic digital strategy that was initially designed before the pandemic outbreak, it had though to move faster due to the urgent situation. The bible outlines the guiding principles, the strategic axes and the horizontal and vertical interventions that will lead to the digital transformation of the Greek society and economy. Through collaborations with stakeholders from the public and private sector as well as with the research & academic community and the civil society, the bible describes the objectives but also the implementation measures of the digital transformation strategy. This new strategy sets seven objectives:

Table 2.3.2: The seven objectives of the Digital Transformation "bible"

Source: Greek News Agenda, 2021

Under the framework of the government's national strategy for growth and overcoming the financial crisis, a new approach to commissioning the development of digital skills has been set for the Action Plan based on the digital governance priority and the need for a high digitalization level of Greece's economy and society.

The Minister of Administrative Reconstruction, representatives of the Local Government, the Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Greece and members of the local Chambers and SMEs in the field of tourism were among those attending the official launch of the Greek National Coalition - Enhancing Digital Skills and Jobs in Greece (EDSGR) . The Greek Coalition is led by the Ministry of Administrative Reconstruction. Members of the coalition include Central Government agencies, Local Government agencies, businesses, social partners and NGOs.

The main goal of the National Coalition initiative is the creation of a civil society based on public-private sector cooperation, intergovernmental organizations and industry working together to promote digital technology and its connection with the labor market, and to yield immediate results fostering equal employment opportunities.

The existing line policies of i) E-Governance in Public Sector, ii) Digital economy and society, iii) Education, iv) Employment & Training, and the WGGD Pledge included, as well as the actions related to the development of digital skills or e-leadership, were mapping and an evaluation regarding their horizontal and/or vertical policy aims and possible synergies between stakeholders examined. Regardless and beyond the existing members of the Cooperation Protocol, new possible key stakeholders identified against their complementarity with the main objectives set.

In defining the Action Plan's main pillars, priorities and strategic objectives, the representatives of Ministries have been asked to submit their recommendations taking into account the Greek national policy and E.U. principles and guidelines such as shared concept notes on digital skills, so that specific targeted actions to be discussed and evaluated under specific criteria and KPIs.

Clearly, the aim of any policies is to increase the digital skills of the entire population and mainly those of older individuals, so as to close the aged-based digital divide. The actions adopted

should be adapted to the target group followed by proper planning and implementation and, lastly, scientific evaluation, which will provide useful feedback on the procedure.

It is clear that individual groups with a low level of digital skills, even among older individuals, must be handled differently. Of course, a matter that keeps arising in social policy issues is whether priority should be given to those who are in the worst situation or those who will be able to escape from the worst situation more easily. The answer will also depend on the significance attached to the issue of upgrading digital inclusion. Any policy recommendations should also take into account both the place of older individuals in the social hierarchy and how the hierarchy in question is affecting the planning of actions and the response of participants to the relevant programmers.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight that the recent COVID-19 health crisis is creating the right conditions for reinforcing digital inclusion not only for the entire population, but also for those who are most underprivileged in this sector. Naturally, it is necessary to design suitable policy programmes to bridge the digital divide. These policies will be based on reliable studies of the parameters that create the problems of the digital divide for the individual social groups, so that they are adequately adapted to the needs of each group.

The issue of digital inclusion or digital divide in Greece is of major concern, both compared to other countries and in relation to the momentum within the country and the performances recorded for individual social groups. Technology affects every aspect of our lives on personal, as well as on macro level. Technology also changes the way we address the issue of digital inclusion or digital divide. Various surveys have highlighted that Greece is lagging behind in digital skills in general and among certain population groups, such as older individuals, in particular.

The opportunity to telework, especially from home, can offer an added incentive for many workers, especially to those of older age groups who are to delay retirement or re-enter the workforce. At the same time, employers could tap into this expanded labor pool without having to meet the costs associated with office space and commuting. However, there are a number of considerations that need to be addressed to maximize this opportunity for older people, including the technological demands of telework jobs, the technology skills required and managers' attitudes toward telework and older workers.

Table 2.3.3: Basic or above basic digital skills

Basic or above basic digital skills

	2015	2016	2017	2019
EU-27	54	54	55	56
Greece	44	46	46	51
EU-27, 55-64 years	35	37	38	40
Greece, 55-64 years	14	17	20	28
EU-27, 55-74 years	29	30	31	33
Greece, 55-74 years	9	12	14	19
EU-27, Women, 16-74 years	51	52	53	54
Greece, Women, 16-74 years	40	45	44	49
EU-27, Men, 16-74 years	57	57	58	58
Greece, Men, 16-74 years	48	47	49	52
EU-27, Women, 55-74 years	23	25	26	28
Greece, Women, 55-74 years	6	9	10	15
EU-27, Men, 55-74 years	35	35	37	38
Greece, Men, 55-74 years	12	15	19	23
EU, Women, low level of education	27	27	27	29
Greece, Women, low level of education	8	12	10	14
EU, Men, low level of education	35	35	35	36
Greece, Men, low level of education	16	14	15	15
EU, 55-74 years, low level of education	10	10	11	12
Greece, 55-74 years, low level of education	1	2	1	2

Source: Eurostat (ES5)

Source: FES, 2020

The previous table, provide us with a more specific overview of the digital divide regarding the specific age group of people mainly those among 55-64 or 55-74 years old and all the linked parameters to it. Moreover, the same table shows the changes over years in digital skills in Greece and the EU for various demographic groups.

The key conclusions arising from the findings of this survey are:

- Greece is lagging behind the European average in digital skills.
- Greece is gradually converging towards the EU-27 in terms of digital skills.
- Convergence is observed between Greece and the EU27 in the **older ages**.
- The combination of females and **older individuals** is linked to the lowest level of digital skills.
- Gender disparities in digital skills are greater in **older age groups**.
- The educational level is a significant correlation factor to the level of digital skills.
- Improvement in the digital skills of individuals with a low level of education is not observed in most cases over time.

This difference and inequality with the age group of individuals between 65-74 and the younger ones, has also been identified by the results of Eurostat (2020), where 72% of people between 65-74 have no digital skills (41% in the EU28), while just 7% have basic digital skills in Greece (19% in the EU-28). In contrast to the age distribution of individuals without digital skills, younger ages seem to have advanced digital skills, which are decrease as age increases: 45% of people in the 16-24 age group in Greece and 59% in the EU-28 have above basic digital skills, while the corresponding rates for the 65-74 age group are just 2% in Greece and 8% in the EU-28.

Additionally, to the findings presented in the previous table, the table below represents the proficiency of people of different age groups in several EU countries regarding problem-solving skills in technology rich- environments.

Table 2.3.4: Proficiency in problem solving in tech-environments

Average proficiency in problem-solving in technology-rich environments per age, sample list of countries

	<=24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55+ years	Average score differences between older and younger individuals
Singapore	305	302	285	271	248	57
Slovenia	2	280	270	253	235	52
Finland	303	310	296	277	253	50
Korea	304	293	277	261	256	48
Chile	264	263	246	236	218	46
Estonia	293	289	275	259	249	44
Poland	287	280	271	258	244	43
Sweden	302	305	294	278	259	39
Netherlands	300	301	293	278	261	39
Denmark	294	303	291	275	254	38
Japan	300	310	302	282	262	36
Norway	296	302	293	277	259	36
Israel	279	285	275	267	243	36
Lithuania	272	270	256	244	236	35
Germany	295	296	285	273	260	35
OECD	290	290	280	268	255	35
Austria	294	296	285	274	260	34
Ireland	286	285	275	266	251	34
Czechia	297	297	277	270	263	33
Canada	294	292	288	274	261	30
N. Zealand	296	298	291	281	266	25
England (UK)	295	296	291	283	270	25
Russia	288	292	283	272	263	24
USA	285	283	279	271	267	18
Turkey	255	260	247	248	239	16
Slovakia	287	284	279	275	271	16
Greece	262	260	261	246	248	14

Source: PIAAC (2015), from: Chatzigiannis, et al. (pending publication

Source: FES, 2020

The conclusions of different surveys presented in the tables above, demonstrate, on the one hand, that Greece is not at the same pace in terms of social inclusion and, on the other, that an age-based digital divide exists. But the fact is, all surveys show that an age-based gender divide exists. Other surveys provide useful information on the progress of this phenomenon. For example, there is lower acceptance of technology among older individuals (Morris & Venkatesh, 2000), while stress, fear and even lack of self-esteem when it comes to learning new things are seen in older people (Jimoyiannis & Gravani, 2011).

When analyzing the digital divide issue, it is important to review the comparative position of Greece, as well as the country's disparity based on demographic, geographic and socio-economic traits. The available surveys clearly show that, despite its convergence trend, Greece's level of digital skills remains low compared to other countries. Note that apart from reviewing the averages per country, it is also important to review the skills levels. The age factor is one of the most significant inequality factors in terms of digital inclusion.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight that the recent COVID-19 health crisis is creating the right conditions for reinforcing digital inclusion not only for the entire population, but also for those who are most underprivileged in this sector. Naturally, it is necessary to design suitable policy programs to bridge the digital divide especially for older people. These policies will be based on reliable studies of the parameters that create the problems of the digital divide for the individual social groups, so that they are adequately adapted to the needs of each group.

2.3.4. Practices on Teleworking.

Good practice 1:

Enterprise/organization	**Beat** https://www.capital.gr/epixeiriseis/3523707/beat-euelixia-gia-100-tilergasia-olo-to-2021
Good practice description	
The association Free Now, which includes in its dynamic the Beat enterprise located in Greece, constitutes a technology company with almost 1,200 employees and 26 offices in 10 European countries. Since the first outburst of Covid-19 pandemic, the company adopted remote work for all its employees, but still could not imagine that remote work would become its main mode of operation. In this transitional phase, the company found the opportunity to create and adopt a new hybrid model of teleworking that could remain a realistic plan even after the pandemic. The idea came across when company's managers were striving to find out an effective way of daily working that will not exhaust the employees by overtimes. Main concerns of the company, that shaped the realization of hybrid teleworking model, were the following to cornerstones: 1. to ensure a convenient and productive working environment for all the employees. This is why employees were encouraged to take home the equipment needed from their offices, in order to create a convenient and functional workplace for performing the maximum in their tasks. 2. to inform the employees regarding the potential risks that they may face during working remotely. In particular, employees elaborated on how to use safe communication channels (e.g. VPN, RAS) in collaboration with the IT department. Other issues were concerning the avoidance to store professional documents in a personal computer or laptop and to stay away from malicious software.	

3. Beat considered team culture, cooperation and sense of belonging as values of high importance that need to be sustained. Working remotely constitutes a challenge for the sustainability of a team work spirit, since each employee does not have a face-to-face contact with his/her colleague.

By adopting a hybrid model of teleworking, Beat combined the freedom and flexibility of remote work with the connection offered by the physical presence in the workplace. Employees are allowed to work remotely if they want to, except for places where physical presence is required. In this new context of operation, the company's offices will become social hubs, open to any employee for collective work and social interaction when allowed after the recovery of Covid-19 pandemic- but not part of a mandatory presence. In that way, Beat offers a meeting point for its employees, in order to bring them together, foster the collaborative spirit and promote creative thinking.

Besides the benefits related to professional issues, hybrid teleworking model seems to have a positive impact on employees' personal life, as it contributes to a better balance between work and private life, giving employees the potential to choose where and how they want to work. A few months after the beginning of teleworking, Beat conducted a survey to explore the employees' attitude towards the new working reality. In specific, 4 out of 5 stated that they were satisfied with the flexibility in the working hours, while 83% suggested a hybrid model of teleworking and office work as an alternative solution when needed. Finally, the results showed that there was no reduction in productivity during the teleworking period.

Learnings and transferability

The hybrid model implemented by the Beat company can be transferred to any other company that does not require physical presence. Small businesses can also proceed to the adoption of this model, while the team work spirit will be easier to build with fewer employees. The good practices worth adopting are the following:

1. Focus on employees' safety: since the first period of the pandemic, the company moved fast forward to the design of a remote work model in order to ensure health for its employees and their families. In this vein, employees were not being left at home office unprotected from digital risks (e.g. malicious software), as company's managers took care of their training regarding teleworking.
2. Balance between personal and work life: as employees said in the survey conducted a few months after the adoption of teleworking model, the flexibility of teleworking and the defined working hours offer a sense of balance between personal and work life, giving more free time with family and friends. This kind of teleworking model that Beat implemented abolishes the overtimes that became a reality of many employees in Greece during lockdown. This means that the employees feel free to create his/her own schedule without having to work overtimes.
3. Transformation of the workplace: the operation of the traditional work office as "social hubs" will give the solution to the sustainability of teamwork sense and creative thinking among the colleague. Remote work gives also employees the possibility to work in a company that is not located in the place of residence, creating new opportunities for both the employees and businesses.

Good practice 2:

Enterprise/organization	**Resolutionmkg** https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2647315385528947&id=2102585396668618

Good practice description

Resolutionmkg is a marketing and sales company, representing global customers in the field of Energy, Telecommunications and Charity. During the second outburst of covid-19 pandemic, in autumn of 2020, when both employees and employers were familiar with the teleworking, but also exhausted from the lockdown conditions, Resolutionmkg thought a way to capture the interest of its employees and keep them motivated, inspired and creative in their daily routine at home. In that way, the company proceeded to the design and implementation of an online campaign called "Takeover", which started from the 10th of November using the hashtag #resolutionquarantinedays. Aim of this campaign was to take the experience of teleworking a step forward from the ordinary by creating a network among the employees. Given that the employees have already worked with teleworking during the first outburst of COVID-19 in March 2020, Resolutionmkg found out a creative and entertaining way to keep its workforce motivated and focused on their work routine. As the company shared in its Facebook page *"@Resolutionmkg suspends the operation of its activities until 30/11. But it does not "suspend" its purpose for continuous learning and education!"* and closed with the moto *"Keep yourself safe. Keep yourself creative!"*.

In the context of "Takeover" campaign, employees had to monitor alternately their daily routine through their mobile phone, starting from the working hours and proceeding to the rest of their day including their hobbies inside home. They were free to present their own good practices from working remotely, such as organization of space and documents, how to create a convenient and productive workspace, etc. By implementing this campaign, the company encouraged its employees to:

1. share good practices: organization of space and documents, how to create a convenient and productive workspace, tips for staying focused, how to balance private and work life without working overtimes.
2. inspire others: through the creation of an online community on Facebook, Instagram and Youtube, where the videos were shared, people with same experiences- remote work, lockdown, psychological burden- were brought together, in order to support others, share good practices and get inspired.
3. develop their skills: as the company stated in its post, the aim was to be extremely creative with the ultimate goal of returning to normality with an air of renewal and upgrading to the level of knowledge of its potential! Implementing the "Takeover" campaign, Resolutionmkg managed to keep its employees motivated, inspired and focused on the maximum of their working performance and personal development too. Finally, the creation of this "Takeover" community increased incorporated other people, who also were working remotely that period.

Learnings and transferability

The follow-up of a campaign, like "Takeover" is easily transferable even in small-scale local businesses, either keeping a closed community consisted of the employees or proceeding to a broader community by sharing their videos on online channels. It is obvious that this choice offers potential of transferability by selecting the communicative channel from a closed chat room to an online channel (e.g. YouTube, Instagram, Facebook), ensuring that each of them suits best to employees' preferences. The good practices worth adopting are the following:

1. Share of good practices: colleagues or employees from other sectors can offer useful advices.
2. Creation of a communication channel between the company and its customers: in that way the company does not lose its connection with clients that the physical presence offers
3. Teamwork building: the employees are brought together by sharing their daily routine, replacing- even temporarily- the face-to-face communication and promoting collaboration.
4. Personal development: employees are encouraged to stay creative and active, upgrading their skills until they return to the normalcy.

2.3.5. Summary

Question	Findings
REGULATIONS	
Did there exist a law that regulates teleworking before the pandemic?	Yes
	http://www.opengov.gr/minlab/?p=4911
Does there exist a law that regulates teleworking after the pandemic?	Yes
	http://www.opengov.gr/minlab/?p=4911
Which public organism regulates / defines policies for teleworking in your country?	https://ypergasias.gov.gr
TELEWORKING FOR EMPLOYEES	
Main rights for employees to telework according to regulations	• An employee has the right to express a desire for a teleworking position, the employer may accept or deny this request. • An employee's refusal to accept telework is not the sole reason for termination of employment or a change in that employee's terms and conditions of employment. • Teleworkers have the same rights and obligations as employees within the company's premises.
Main obligations for employees to telework according to regulations	• Establish an adjustment period of three months during which unilateral revocation of the conversion of regular work into telework.
TELEWORKING FOR EMPLOYERS	

Main rights for employers on teleworking according to regulations:	• If teleworking is not part of the initial job description and the employer notices a teleworking offer, the employee may accept or decline the offer.
Main obligations for employers to facilitate telework according to regulations:	• Establishment of an adjustment period of three months during which unilateral revocation of the conversion of regular work into telework. • Any discrimination against a teleworker is prohibited because he exercised the right of disconnection. • The obligation of the employer to inform the employee in writing 8 days after preparation of the contract for all matters relating to the execution of the work. • The obligation to provide to the teleworker everything that required to perform teleworking. • Employer is responsible for the health and safety of the teleworker and the safety of teleworker's professional and personal data. • The employer pays the cost of equipment, maintenance and telecommunications. • It is forbidden to use the camera to control the performance of the teleworker.
TELEWORKING ADOPTION	
Do you have any enterprise association or confederation that has published recommendations or studies?	Greek federation of Enterprises (SEV) in collaboration with the Association of Thessalian Enterprises and Industries (STHEV) has published the Teleworking Q&A and Implementation Guide https://www.sev.org.gr/Uploads/Documents/52761/SEV_Thlergasia%20(1B).pdf
Do you have any workers union that has published recommendations or studies?	Association of Security Technicians of Greece has published the guide: «WORK FROM HOME/PRACTICAL GUIDE-WORKING FROM HOME/COVID-19» https://sbe.org.gr/newsletters/covid/covid_20/6.pdf GREEK GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR (GSEE) https://gsee.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/4783_DIKTESSEP2020.pdf
Do you have any other institution/research group that has published	KPMG has published the "The Barometre of the Teleworking condition in Covid19 era". https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/gr/pdf/2020/04/Covid-19_Employment_Conditions_Barometer-Report.pdf

recommendations or studies?	The National Documentation Center has published the survey: Digital Transformation of Greek Enterprises in 2020: The Impact of COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 https://metrics.ekt.gr/publications/456 EAD (National Transparency Authority) has published the Guide for Safe Teleworking https://cyberalert.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/EAD-teleworking-guide.pdf Human Resource Management Laboratory Research: "Pandemic and Digital Adaptation in Human Resource Management: Teleworking and Distance Learning" https://www.aueb.gr/sites/default/files/hrm/Research/report_digital_covid_public.pdf
DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	
Which public organism boost digital transformation on your country? Is there any plan or strategy including digital skills development?	- The General Directorate for Public Organizations -The Unit of Innovation and Best Practices of the Ministry of the Administrative Reconstruction Link: https://innovation.gov.gr/en/contact-us-en/ -The Greek Ministry of Digital Governance Link: https://mindigital.gr/ Plan-Strategy -Action Plan 2019 for the period 2020-2022 Link: https://www.nationalcoalition.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NC-Action-Plan-2019_EN-v5_272178237_signed.pdf -The Digital Transformation “bible” of Greece (2020-2025) Link: Βίβλος Ψηφιακού Μετασχηματισμού 2020-2025 (digitalstrategy.gov.gr)
Main policies and initiatives that impact on digital skills improvement on your country.	DIGITAL SKILLS FOR DIGITAL GREECE Action Plan 2019 - https://www.nationalcoalition.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NC-Action-Plan-2019_EN-v5_272178237_signed.pdf Greek National Coalition for Digital Skills, https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/greece-launches-national-coalition-digital-skills-and-jobs-taking-overall-number-national

	GREEK NATIONAL COALITION FOR DIGITAL SKILLS & JOBS, 2017-2020 http://elke.eap.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/dsgr_action_plan_eng_subm4_no-memo.pdf The Greek Ministry of Digital Governance recently presented a Digital Transformation "bible" for the years 2020-2025 : https://www.greeknewsagenda.gr/topics/business-r-d/7379-the-digital-transformation-%E2%80%9Cbible%E2%80%9D-of-greece-2020-2025
BEST PRACTICE 1	
Enterprise/organism	Beat https://www.capital.gr/epixeiriseis/3523707/beat-euelixia-gia-100-tilergasia-olo-to-2021
Main learnings to be transferred	1. Focus on employees' safety 2. Balance between personal and work life 3. Transformation of the workplace-Flexibility
BEST PRACTICE 2	
Enterprise/organism	Resolutionmkg https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2647315385528947&id=2102585396668618
Main learnings to be transferred	1. Sharing good practices 2. Creation of a communication channel between the company and its customers 3. Teamwork building 4. Personal development

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DESK RESEARCH REPORT (Poland)

by CWEP (May 2021)

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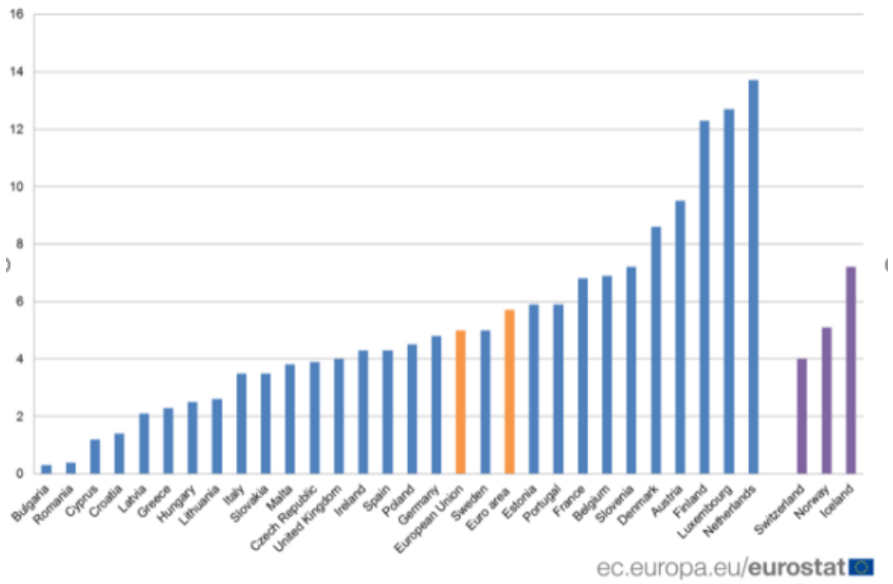
2.4.

2.4.1. Teleworking country adoption

During the pandemic many countries in Europe have been struggling and facing various problems – Poland is no exception. This has been a difficult time: "the COVID-19 health crisis prompted governments to take the unprecedented step of shutting down all workplaces, apart from those providing essential goods and services, to control the spread of the virus" (Vargas LIave, 2020). Many companies have lost their clients who chose to isolate at home. Another important issue has now been the closure of schools and kindergartens – how could the employees work and take care of their children at the same time? The employers have decided to use digital tools like teleworking. Most workers (whose place of work wasn't shut down), begun to "to work from home, initiating a social experiment of a type and on a scale unseen before". Their home became their office as well – this is a new work reality. For many people, telework has become the only solution in the time of crisis. This is why teleworking has become so popular in Poland – it has enabled employees to keep their job and earn money during the time of the worldwide pandemic.

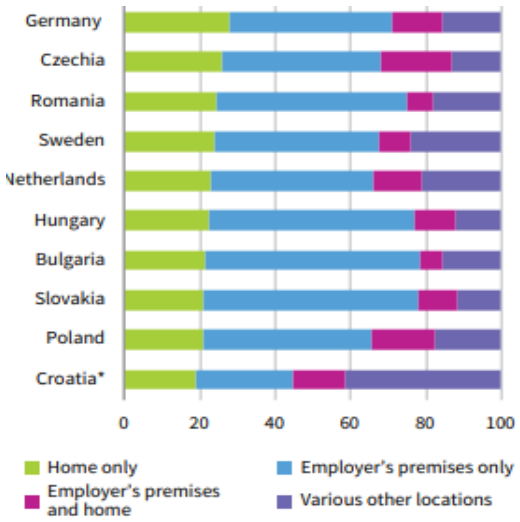
There were many international surveys conducted by Eurostat and Eurofound. They convey the figures and data which prove that teleworking techniques in Poland have developed since March 2020 when the first COVID-19 infection was confirmed in the country. The charts and tables presented by Eurostat and Eurofound show that **the percentage of people working from home is constantly rising in Poland.** Before the pandemic the standard rate of telework in Poland was below 10% - which is not a high rate compared to northern European countries like Finland or Denmark. For instance, in Finland in 2017 the rate was over 12% while in Poland it was above 4%.

Image 2.4.1.Employees aged 15-65 usually working from home (Eurostat, 2017).



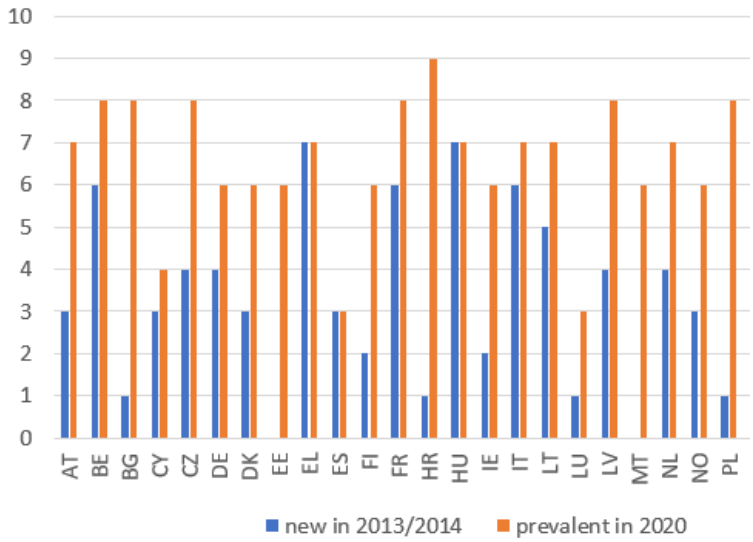
The percentage of employees working from home before the pandemic started was still below 10%. A rapid increase of rates was observed in 2020. This is presented by a survey conducted by Eurofound and published in 2020 (see the chart below). The percentage of Polish citizens working exclusively from home was over 20%.

Image 2.4.2. Employees' place of work during the pandemic (Eurofound, 2020).



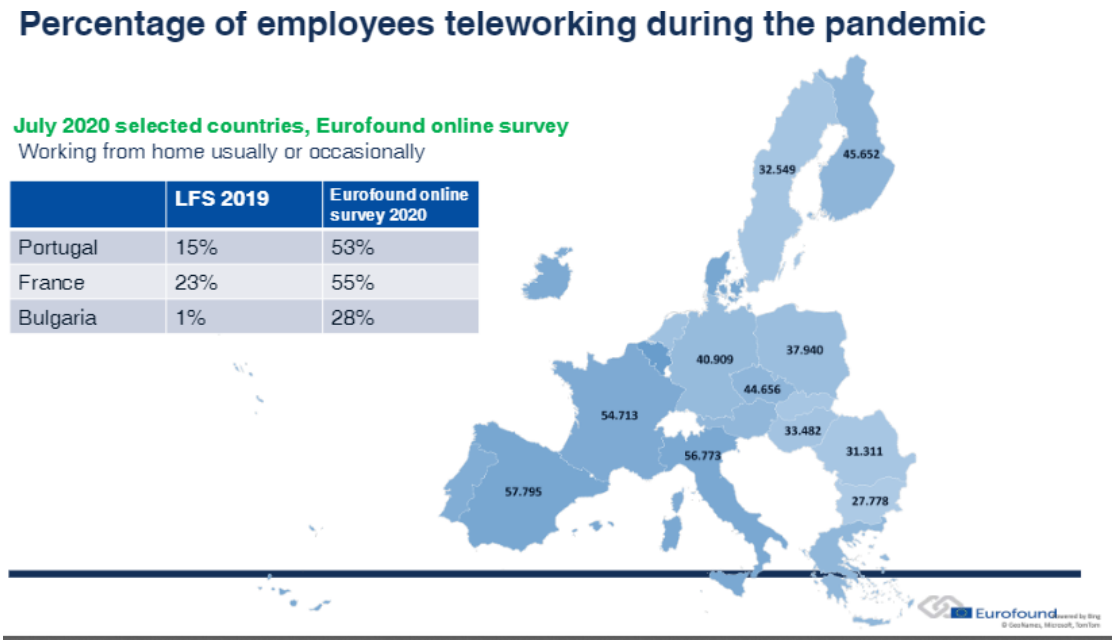
The fact that more and more people have been working from home now is strongly connected with the use of teleworking techniques – the employees need technology and new skills in order to effectively work from home. An article published online by Eurofound discovers that although standard forms of employment (like full-time job), are still the most dominant in Europe "employment is becoming more diverse, and policy must accordingly become more tailored" (Mandl, 2020). The article published in December 2020 explores "how prevalent the nine previously new forms of employment had become". New forms of employment included ICT-based mobile work (Information and Communication Technology) which is even "less place-bound than traditional telework" and enabling employees to work anywhere they wish – including their home. The development of digital skills is essential in order to work from home (or telework) and the fact that new forms of employment have developed in Poland during last years (and especially during pandemic), shows that Polish people use new technology more often in order to work effectively from home – please see the chart below.

Image 2.4.3. New forms of employment in Europe between 2013 and 2020 (Eurofound 2015,2020).



Finally the Eurofound study from July 2020 shows **that teleworking in Poland is constantly rising** with the rate over 37% (please see the below data).

Image 2.4.4. Employees telworking during pandemic (Vargas LIave, 2021).



Not only European studies show that teleworking in Poland has become popular. Recent research conducted by Anna Dolot proved **the growth of telework popularity in the country**. Anna is a business coach with over 14 years of experience conducting research in the area of human resource management. She has also her PhD in Economics which enables her to work with university students in Cracow.

The study was conducted on a national level. The target group consisted of 327 people – 54% of them were women. Most of the interviewees (73%), worked in bigger companies meaning the company consisted of at least 251 employees. The goal of the research was to find out about the level of teleworking in Poland during the pandemic. Over 33% of Polish people declared that they had never worked from home until March 2020. While 43% worked from home occasionally, only 1,9% declared they teleworked 5 days a week. This proves that Polish people

– although sometimes preferred teleworking to office – still enjoyed the standard work environment. Again – the report shows that **Polish people choose teleworking during the difficult time of COVID-19**. Over 85% of interviewees declared that since the beginning of the pandemic they have been working from home 5 days a week. Another interesting thing is that only 0,6% have declared they still work from office. The result of the research is not only the fact there has been a rapid growth of popularity of telework in Poland - the report shows that it is more likely for telework to be continued more often than ever, even after the pandemic is over: "The conclusion from the research is the feedback for employers and superiors that employees saw numerous benefits of this form of work" (Dolot, 2020).

Another research shows that Polish people work from home more often than ever before. A study conducted by Gumtree.pl in cooperation with Randstad Polska not only proves the popularity of telework in Poland but also presents the positive approach towards teleworking in the future.

Randstad in an international chain of job centres founded in Holland back in 1960. Today the company has expanded to 38 countries and its activities go beyond the standard job consultancy. Randstad is a research centre as well. An interesting article occurred on Randstad Polska in June, 2020. It presents the results of a research on forms of work during pandemic of Covid-19 in Poland. It turns out that numbers have grown from 41% of employees allowed to work from home before 2020, to 76%. Moreover, the place of work is indeed an employee's home (95% interviewees).

The research conducted by Gumtree.pl in cooperation with Randstad Polska - key conclusions:

- Seven out of ten interviewees using teleworking techniques find this new form of work easy to organize;
- Over 50% of entrepreneurs have declared they would allow their employees work from home in the future as well;
- 29% of employers have declared that teleworking has not decreased the quality of work – or even improved the quality.

Moreover, Polish people are content with teleworking – 69% of interviewees claim that this form of work does not trouble them at all. On the contrary, organizing the work is easy and effective: "two out of three employees have declared that organization of remote work does not cause them much trouble" (Randstad, 2020).

2.4.2. Legislation that regulates teleworking

In Poland there is one main document which regulates the working conditions along with the rights and obligations of both: the employee and the employer. The document is called ***The Labour Code*** (in Polish: Kodeks Pracy), and it was published back in 1974. Until March 2020, when the very first case of Covid-19 was officially confirmed in Poland, The Labour Code was the main document which described the notion of Telework as well – it is important to mention that Polish law differentiates the two notions as separate things: telework and remote work. The first concept is defined in the official document (The Labour Code) in the second section: "Work may be performed regularly outside the workplace, using electronic means of communication according to the principles on providing services using electronic means […]". Therefore, a

teleworking employee "provides the employer with the results of work, in particular via electronic means of communication". Furthermore, a general description of teleworking in Poland can be found on official government websites (based on the Labour Code). Telework in Poland is "regulated in detail by labour law and requires an agreement between the employee and the employer" (Service of the Republic of Poland). Thus, the conditions and duties of an employee while teleworking should be precisely described in the contract of employment. Moreover, it is the employer's obligation to make sure the employee has all the necessary tools in order to perform this type of work (according to work and safety regulations). If the employee decides to use his own equipment the employer should pay a special equivalent. The employer has the right to control the teleworking conditions of the employee (and the work itself). An interesting issue is the fact that the employee does not have to telework 5 days a week – he can choose for example two days during the week for performing this type of work (for example due to childcare).

While the notion of Teleworking appeared in official Polish documents in 1974, and means a regulated form of work which is discussed in detail and which is based on an agreement between the worker and the employer, the concept of remote work and home office is relatively new - even though Polish people have been using this technique for a while now. The *remote work* notion "appeared in the regulations for the first time in 2020" (Lis, 2020). In March 2020 a new special Bill was passed in Polish Parliament and signed by the President. The document states that: "in order to counteract COVID-19, the employer may recommend the employee performing, for a specified period of time, the work specified in the contract for a job, outside the place of its permanent performance (remote work)" (The Polish Parliament Office, 2020).

In conclusion, **telework has been an official form of work in Poland since 1974, while the notion of remote work is relatively new** since it occurred in official documents in March 2020 due to the pandemic of Covid-19 and as a way to fight against the virus. Remote work does not require signing new/additional contracts between the employee and the employer and is considered to be a short period change of working conditions.

The below table presents the main differences between teleworking and remote work in Poland (Deloitte, 2020).

	Teleworking	Remote Work (home office)
Official Act	The Labour Code (1974).	The act on special solutions related to the prevention, counteraction and combating COVID-19, other infectious diseases and crisis situations caused by them (March 2020).
Definition	Work performed **regularly** outside the workplace, using electronic means of communication and according to the principles on providing services using electronic means.	Performing, for a **specified period of time**, the work specified in the contract for a job, outside the place of its permanent performance
Implementation	Defined by the Employment Contract or an agreement between the employer and the employee.	By the order of the employer – the nature of work must allow this type of working conditions; the employee

	Teleworking	Remote Work (home office)
		needs to have specific digital skills to complete the tasks
Period	Depends on the agreement between the employee and the employer	Specific period of time
Tools and equipment	It is the employer's obligation to make sure the employee has all the necessary tools in order to perform this type of work. If the employee decides to use his own equipment the employer should pay a special equivalent.	It is the employer's obligation to make sure the employee has all the necessary tools in order to perform this type of work – the employee should respect the sensitive data if he chooses to use his own equipment (the special equivalent in money is not mentioned in the Bill).
The acceptance of the employee	Needed	Not needed

The Act On Special Solutions Related To The Prevention, Counteraction And Combating COVID-19, Other Infectious Diseases And Crisis Situations Caused By Them (March, 2020) did not provide further explanation on the working conditions or the employer's/ employee's duties. Thus, Polish entrepreneurs needed a new source of information which would have given them more details on the regulations of working conditions during the pandemic. A document appeared in June 2020 and it was commonly known as the ***Anti-Crisis Shield 4.0*.** The aim was to protect Polish entrepreneurs and places of work in the difficult time of pandemic. The document presents more regulations regarding the remote work during the time of crisis:

- only employees with essential technical and digital skills can perform this type of work;
- the employer should provide tools and equipment needed;
- the employee can use his own tools only if he respects the sensitive data and confidentiality principles of the company;
- the employer has the right to request a report from his employees (a report on work done by the employee;
- the employer has the right to change the working system any time and ask the employees to work from office again (once he/she makes sure the safe conditions are provided for the workers in the office).

In Poland the remote work was considered and approved by law until 4th September 2020. However, the date does not apply any more since the accepted rule in the country is that remote work or home office is possible "during the period of the epidemic threat or epidemic state announced due to COVID-19, and within 3 months after their cancellation" (The Polish Bill from March, 2020).

Furthermore, Polish government plans to introduce the notion of home office/ remote work in the Labour Code which remains the most important document in terms of regulating working conditions and duties of the employer and the employee. At the same time a kind of hybrid working conditions are being discussed (traditional office work and home office). Additionally, the new version of the Labour Code shall include information on:

- the costs to be paid by the employer and directly related to remote work;
- rules for determining a cash equivalent (or a different form of an equivalent), for the use of employees' private tools and materials in order to perform their tasks;
- rules on communication between the employer and the employee performing remote work, including the method of confirming the presence of the employee performing remote work at the workplace;
- the manner and form of work control to be done by an employer (so that he does not act against his employees' privacy rights).

Moreover, it will be the employer's duty to create a risk assessment plan: "The employer will be obliged to prepare an occupational risk assessment and, on the basis of its results, prepare information containing the principles of safe and hygienic performance of remote work. It should contain information about the impact of this work on eyesight and the muscular and skeletal systems" (Smulewicz, 2021). Nevertheless, the employee will be responsible for organising his workplace according to safety rules and following the ergonomics' principles. Therefore, the employee will probably need to sign a special statement before starting to perform his duties from home.

All these rules are essential in order to make sure that the employee can do the job effectively and in a safely manner. The new principles are essential to establish a plan of action in case of emergency during working hours and while performing work duties by employees.

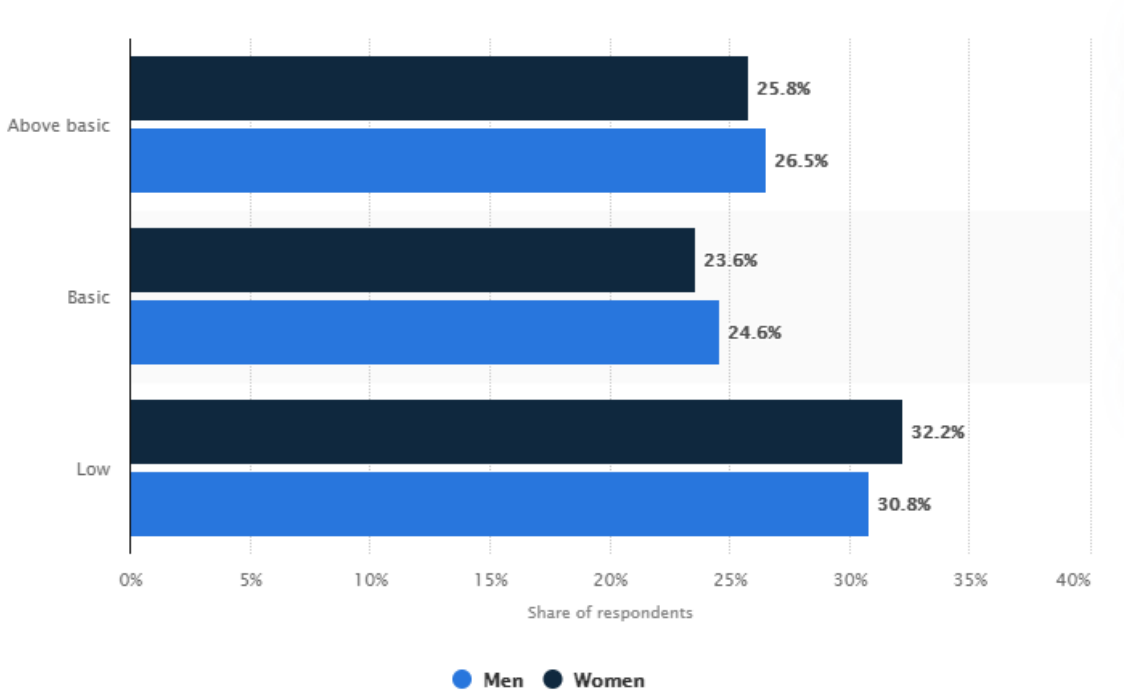
Currently in Poland, there are strict rules on the steps to be taken by the employer along with the rights and duties of the employee in case of an accident occurring at work. At normal circumstance (while work at an office), an employer is obliged to appoint an accident team – its task is to investigate on the circumstances and reasons of an accident which took place during working hours. There is a special document which provides clear information on the duties of the team. For example, the team is obliged to see the scene of the accident and "examine the conditions of work and other circumstances that may have contributed to the accident" (Coucil of Ministers' decree, 2009). Moreover, the team should talk to both – the injured and the witnesses. All these actions are not really easy to perform while an employee works from home and there are not enough data or documents which would advise on the exact scenario of an accident during home office hours.

2.4.3. Digital skills development

The very first part of this research has already presented the fact that the major impulse for the growth of teleworking popularity in Poland is connected with the start of pandemic in the country (March 2020). The number of Polish people using teleworking techniques and digital tools has rapidly grown since that specific month. But were the Polish people prepared for the process and educated on the new technology which enabled remote work?

The below chart presents a recent situation on using digital skills by Polish citizens.

Image 2.4.5. Share of people with general digital skills (Poland, 2020 – statista.com)



We can observe that around 23-24% of the citizens have basic digital skills. In addition, 25% of the citizens have better skills (above basic), and 30-32% of the Polish citizens have low digital skills. We could now look at the data provided and compare the information presented to other European countries to check the general abilities of Polish people in terms of digitalization. However, we would like to focus on Poland exclusively – the above chart shows that the major number of the citizens still has low digital skills.

"Kometa" is a Polish website connected to digital processes and techniques. In August, 2020 there was an article published which described the digital process occurring in Poland during the time of Covid-19 pandemic. The article draws the reader's attention to the fact that the process of digitalization is not equal in Poland – it depends on the given area or industry. For example, it turns out that the business sector has adjusted to the new reality during the pandemic well and so remote work or telework has not been a problematic issue for most of the entrepreneurs (those who could continue the business via online tools). On the other hand, the authors of the article noticed that "The legal sector was not ready for lockdown" – that would mean that some offices and institutions responsible for issuing important documents for the citizens were not ready for remote work (eg. a notary's office). Nevertheless, the authors state that even the legal and administrative services are about to change in the future as "there is a light in the tunnel. The thinking in the conservative notary is also slowly changing" (KOMETA, 2020).

Another article proves that **the process of digitalization continues in Poland**. This article was published in June 2020 and is a summary of the EU report (Digital Economy and Society Index). The text describes first the process of digitalization in Poland in general. Please find the most important outcomes of the report:

- The overall mark is 45 points (the EU average is 52.6).
- "Poland has the highest level of mobile broadband use in the EU. Additionally, our prices are very competitive. The high coverage scores for ultra-high speed fixed networks and 4G networks contributed to an improvement in the overall score in the connectivity

category. We took 15th place with a score of 51.3, which is higher than the EU average (50.1)." (CyberDefence24, 2020).

- Digital Competences rated – Poland took 22nd place.

A proof for changes occurring in the country's digitalisation process is presented by another article published on kometa.edu.pl. It is a brief text which aims to report the data from 2020 about *Trusted Profiles*. The idea is, in order to promote digitalisation process in the country, **the government tries to encourage the citizens to use online services for dealing with administrative tasks**, like issuing documents. The citizen needs a special online profile (the Trusted Profile) to use governmental e-service.

The article was published in December 2020 – thus it is possible to summarize the action taken throughout the whole year and collect the appropriate and clear data. It turns out that in 2020 the Trusted Profile online was created for 4 million people which has become a "historical record" proving the "constant growing interest of e-services". In general, the number of Polish citizens who have already created such an online profile has exceeded 8 million people.

In Poland there have been several projects connected to digitalization in the recent years. It is worth noticing that all the different plans and programmes (including governmental ones) aim to increase the level of digitalization in general within the country and not only the skills and competences of individuals. For example, the digitalization may include the digitalization of schools, hospitals or governmental offices.

More and more various and innovative projects have been developed in Poland to increase the digital skills of the citizens. However, there has been one main programme within the country which consisted of many manor projects – please see the description below.

"Polska cyfrowa" (The digitalised Poland)

This is a programme which was co-funded by the European Union. The project started in 2014 and finished in 2020. This was the main programme aimed to develop the level of digitalization in Poland. The main objectives of the programme were: "wider access to high-speed Internet, the ability to deal with official matters online, online education and access to cultural heritage thanks to the Internet, as well as increasing digital competences" (Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy). The main target groups were eg. entrepreneurs, government administration units, non-governmental organizations and research units.

Some of the results:

- 13 448 schools that gained access to the Internet;
- 185 710 students/ pupils gained access to the digital skills training;
- 191 public services available online;
- 384 267 479 - number of cases handled by the public service online;
- 2 087 525 – number of households that have gained access to broadband Internet.

Within the main program ("the digitalised Poland"), there were many projects run, including the ones which focused on the digital skills of the citizens. Some examples would be:

- "E-citizen" project - strengthening digital competences of the local community; building and developing digital competences of 8338 residents of different age and profession.

- "Me on the Internet". Training program in the development of digital competences." – This project aimed to train 14 650 people; the participants would gain knowledge on using online services, problem solving and software support.

To conclude, there have been many projects in Poland in recent years which goal is to increase the digital skills of the Polish people. Please see some more examples of the good practice in the below section.

2.4.4. Practices on Teleworking.

Good practice 1:

Enterprise/organization	**A Polish Government's Project – Technical Support Line for Teachers** **https://www.gov.pl/web/techniczna-infolinia-dla-nauczycieli**
Good practice description	
The Polish Government has opened a special line for teachers. While calling a special number teachers can find out more about popular online teaching tools, and more. The line is open for teachers and directors of schools and educational institutions. The aim is to increase teachers'/ trainers' digital skills so that they can fulfil their duties properly while teleworking. The line is open Monday-Friday between 6 am and 8 pm and at weekends between 8 am and 6 pm. "Support will be provided by a team of professional consultants who have been trained in the use of the most popular distance learning tools." (The Polish Ministry of Education and Science, 2021). This line is open for all representatives of the education system – including all age groups.	
Learnings and transferability	
The Support Line is easily accessible – the interested person needs to call and he/she gains access to the support team immediately. It is important that the technical support team consists of people who obtained the necessary digital skills so that they can guide others – especially teachers, on how to use online teaching tools.	

Good practice 2:

Enterprise/organization	**"Latarnicy w akcji" ("Lamplighters at work")** Latarnicywakcji.pl
Good practice description	
This is an example of a "nationwide initiative for the development of digital competences of adult Poles" (KOMETA, 2021). The trainings are organized for free and they are available for all age groups, within the country. The training is open for everyone but there are four main target groups: • Teachers and parents • Local government employees (e-service) • Seniors • Non- formal groups willing to participate	

Apart from the groups that need to be organized the project is open for trainers - the *lamplighters*. They need to register online in order to get the job (they will receive a contract). It is worth noticing that a trainer does not need to have IT qualifications – it is the bond with the society and "creative ideas for digital education of adults" that matter (LATARNICY W AKCJI). Thus, anyone can become a trainer – students, entrepreneurs, teachers, politicians and more.

The main features of the trainings are:

- "A personalised teaching approach.
- Inclusion of digital themes in the mainstream of life activities.
- Guidance from the Lamplighter.
- Geographical/ local proximity."

Learnings and transferability

This is a great example of a nationwide initiative. On the one hand the trainings are open for all adults interested – all age groups. The groups will more likely be arranged within the closest society (a village/ town/ city) so that the participants will know each other and help each other to develop their skills.

On the other side there is the trainer – the lamplighter – whose job is to engage the participants and make the IT world and digital processes easy for the groups.

It is the emotional bond within the society that matters here – we should all work together and with passion so that our everyday duties are more than a typical everyday obligation.

2.4.5. Summary

Question	Findings
REGULATIONS	
Did there exist a law that regulates teleworking before the pandemic?	Yes
	The Labour Code (1974) http://kodeks-pracy.org/
Does there exist a law that regulates teleworking after the pandemic?	Yes
	Specustawa w sprawie koronawirusa - tekst jednolity | Serwis Samorządowy PAP https://dziennikustaw.gov.pl/D2020000108601.pdf
Which public organism regulates / defines policies for teleworking in your country?	The Labour Code and the two Bills mentioned above (during the pandemic): • *The act on special solutions related to the prevention, counteraction and combating COVID-19, other infectious diseases and crisis situations caused by them* (March 2020). • A document from June, 2020 commonly known as the *Anti-crisis shield 4.0*.
TELEWORKING FOR EMPLOYEES	
Main rights for employees to telework according to regulations	Only employees with essential technical and digital skills can perform this type of work. In case of teleworking: if the employee decides to use his own equipment, he has the right to receive a special equivalent (eg. in money).
Main obligations for employees to telework according to regulations	The employee shall perform his duties and tasks. While teleworking: he should discuss in detail the division of work with the employer.
TELEWORKING FOR EMPLOYERS	
Main rights for employers on teleworking according to regulations:	The right to control the teleworking conditions of the employee (and the work itself). In case of home office (which is different than teleworking in Poland): the right to change the working environment to office environment any time/ the right to request a report from employees.

Main obligations for employers to facilitate telework according to regulations:	It is the employer's obligation to make sure the employee has all the necessary tools in order to perform this type of work.
TELEWORKING ADOPTION	
Do you have any enterprise association or confederation that has published recommendations or studies?	-
Do you have any workers union that has published recommendations or studies?	-
Do you have any other institution/research group that has published recommendations or studies?	"Kometa" is a Polish website connected to digital processes and techniques. https://kometa.edu.pl/
DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	
Which public organism boost digital transformation on your country? Is there any plan or strategy including digital skills development?	Polish Government - Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy https://www.gov.pl/web/fundusze-regiony
Main policies and initiatives that impact on digital skills	*Polska cyfrowa* (The digitalised Poland) https://www.polskacyfrowa.gov.pl/

improvement on your country.	
BEST PRACTICE 1	
Enterprise/organism	A Polish Government's Project – Technical Support Line for Teachers
Main learnings to be transferred	The Support Line is easily accessible – the interested person needs to call and he/she gains access to the support team immediately. It is important that the technical support team consists of people who obtained the necessary digital skills so that they can guide others – especially teachers, on how to use online teaching tools.
BEST PRACTICE 2	
Enterprise/organism	*Latarnicy w akcji* (Lamplighters at work)
Main learnings to be transferred	Learning through an emotional bond within the society - we should all work together and with passion so that our everyday duties are more than a typical everyday obligation. This way we can make the intergenerational bond possible so that the Target Group of our TeleGrow project (50+) feel comfortable while acquiring new (digital) competences.

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DESK RESEARCH REPORT (Spain)

by MEUS, May 2021

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2.5.

2.5.1. Teleworking country adoption

Undoubtedly, the pandemic has affected our lifestyle in many ways, but, without a doubt, the introduction of teleworking in all the sectors in which it has been possible has been one of the most notable changes that our society has undergone.

2.5.1.1. Teleworking in Europe:

Although through this document we will analyse the changes in the adoption of telework that have taken place in Spain, first, we will briefly analyse the situation of telework at the European level:

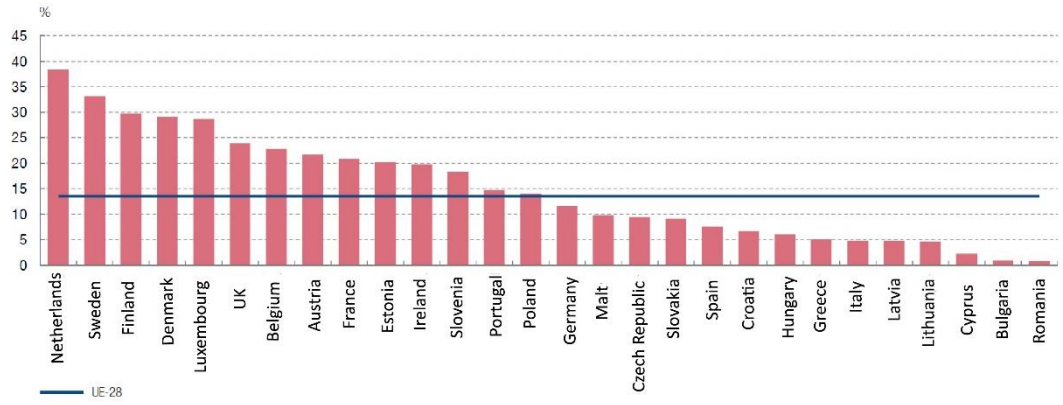
On May 20th, 2020, the European Commission in its communication: European Semester: Country-specific recommendations, highlighted the important role of telework in preserving jobs and production in the context of the Covid-19 crisis, and since the beginning of the pandemic until now, working from home has become the norm for millions of workers in the EU as well as worldwide. Eurofund (2020) suggests that close to 40% of those currently working in the EU began to telework full-time due to the pandemic. In fact, as of 2019, only 5,4% of employed in the EU-27 usually worked from home – a share that remained rather constant since 2009. However, over the same period, the share of employed working at least sometimes from their homes increased from 5,2% in 2009 to 9% in 2019. Working from home was considerably more common among the self-employed than dependent employees, although it increased similarly for both categories over the past decade. In 2109, almost 36% of the self-employed was sometimes or usually working from home in the EU-27, up from 30% in 2009. The prevalence of telework among dependent employees was just above 11% in 2019, up from 7,5% in 2009 (source: Eurostat LFS).

2.5.1.2. Teleworking in Spain before COVID-19:

At the Spanish level, the adoption of teleworking has followed the same trend as at the European level. Lock-down, put in place since March 2020 in Spain, has promoted teleworking, that was little developed in our country in the pre-COVID-19 era.

In 2019, only 4,8% of workers enjoyed teleworking in Spain according to data from the INE. Figures are very far from other countries such as Finland, with 13,3% or the Netherlands, with 14%, thus, according to Eurostat, in northern European countries, there was a greater root of telework, while in southern and eastern countries, this practice is used less frequently:

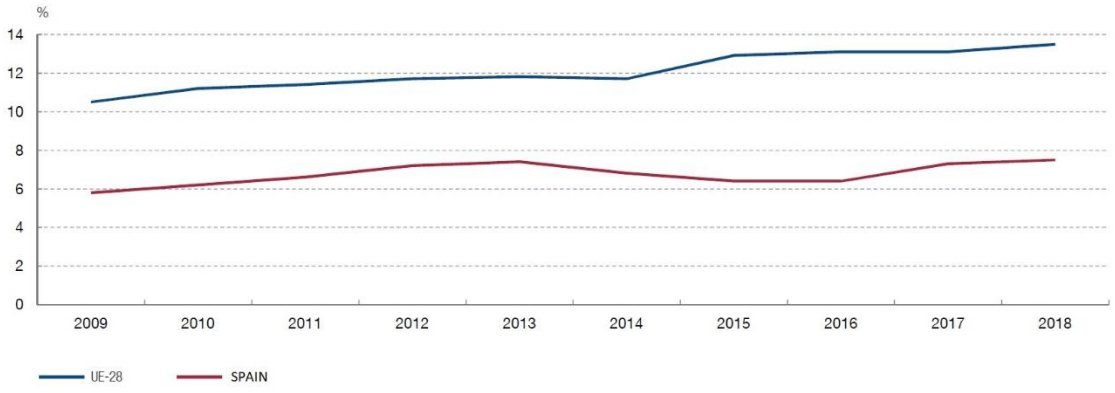
Image 2.5.1: Percentage of employed workers aged 15-64 with telework (2018)



Source: Eurostat (Labor Force Survey, 2018).

As can be seen, Spain is below the European average, with 7,5%, 6 percentage points (pp) less than the European average and distant from the figures of other large countries, such as France (20,8 %) or Germany (11,6%).

Image 2.5.2: Workers 15-64 years old with teleworking Spain versus the EU-28



Source: Eurostat (Labor Force Survey).

Thus, from 2009 to 2018, most European countries increased the incidence of teleworking. On average, the percentage of those who work remotely has increased by 3 pp between 2009 and 2018, and, although Spain was no exception, its growth has been much more limited (1,7 pp), being also below the average European.

Concerning the characteristics of teleworking in Spain, taking as a basis the analytical article of the Bank of Spain 2/2020 (where they use the data from the Active Population Survey, of the national statistical institute), the data on the number of people who carried out part of their work from home in Spain in 2019 are as follows:

Table 2.5.1: Number of workers that telework on 2019

TELEWORK						
	Any day		Occasionally		More than half of the days worked	
Year	Number of workers	%	Number of workers	%	Number of workers	%
2019	17.933.285	91,6%	688.671	3,5%	951.783	4,9%

Source: Own elaboration based on Bank of Spain article 2/20

Of the almost 20 million employed persons in Spain in 2019, 1.640.000 (8,4%) indicated that they worked at home occasionally, and 950.000 (4,5%), that they did so more than half of the working days.

According to data from the Active Population Survey, the possibility of working from home depends on the type of work and the degree of preparation of the company to allow this activity to be carried out from home, on the conditions of the person's habitual residence and their ability to work remotely, as well as the networks and infrastructures available in their area of residence. For this reason, some of the characteristics that the Active Population Survey provides on these three aspects are analysed below:

By type of work, the self-employed are the ones who work occasionally from home more frequently. In many cases, it is a necessity since the habitual residence is also his place of work. Among salaried employees, workers with a permanent contract are the ones who telecommute the most.

By company size, small companies are the ones that use telework the most. In part, this is related to self-employment. If the sample is restricted to salaried employees, teleworking is more frequent in medium-sized companies (between 50 and 250 employees).

However, in recent years, the largest companies have been increasing their participation in teleworking. According to Active Population Survey data, in the 2009-2019 period the proportion of teleworked employees in companies with more than 50 workers went from 16% to almost 20%.

By occupation, directors, managers, technicians, and professionals, whether scientific or support, have been able to work from home occasionally. However, this has not been the case for the military, accountants, clerks, catering or personal service workers, vendors or protection personnel, artisans, plant and machinery operators.

By activity sector, work from home is especially relevant in the provision of some services that do not require physical contact between supplier and client, such as education, scientific and technical professional activities, real estate activities, information, and communications, artistic, recreational and entertainment activities, and financial and insurance activities.

There are no large differences by sex in the probability of working occasionally from their habitual residence, although men use this type of work more frequently:

Table 2.5.2: Number of workers that telework on 2019 by sex

	Employed with some teleworking (more than half the days and occasionally)		Employed who could telework		Total employed
	Number workers	% In total occupied	Number workers	% In total occupied	Number workers
Total	**1.640.454**	**8,3**	**6.044.671**	**30,6**	**19.779.313**
Men	947.708	8,8	3.256.860	30,3	10.745.617
Woman	692.746	7,7	2.787.811	30,9	9.033.696

Source: Own elaboration based on Bank of Spain article 2/20

In conclusion, before the pandemic, Spain was at the tail end of the introduction of teleworking in Europe, being that in 2019 only 8,4% of the population worked occasionally from home. The situation that was more common in the self-employed, workers with permanent contracts and small companies; without presenting a relevant difference between men and women, when working temporarily from home.

Thus, some of the barriers that perhaps prevented Spain from developing telework could be:

- Lack of regulation
- Investment in computer and technological equipment
- Computer training by workers
- Lack of flexible hours

2.5.2.3. Teleworking in Spain after COVID-19:

As a result of the health crisis, the data previously analysed changed and, 80% of companies increased teleworking to make their activity suffer as little as possible. Thus, although in previous years it was difficult to imagine, teleworking in 2020 is a reality for many companies.

In Spain, as in the rest of the world, we have had to immediately adapt to the new reality that COVID-19 brought with it, many companies finding in teleworking the solution to keep their companies afloat, at the same time as it has been a challenge.

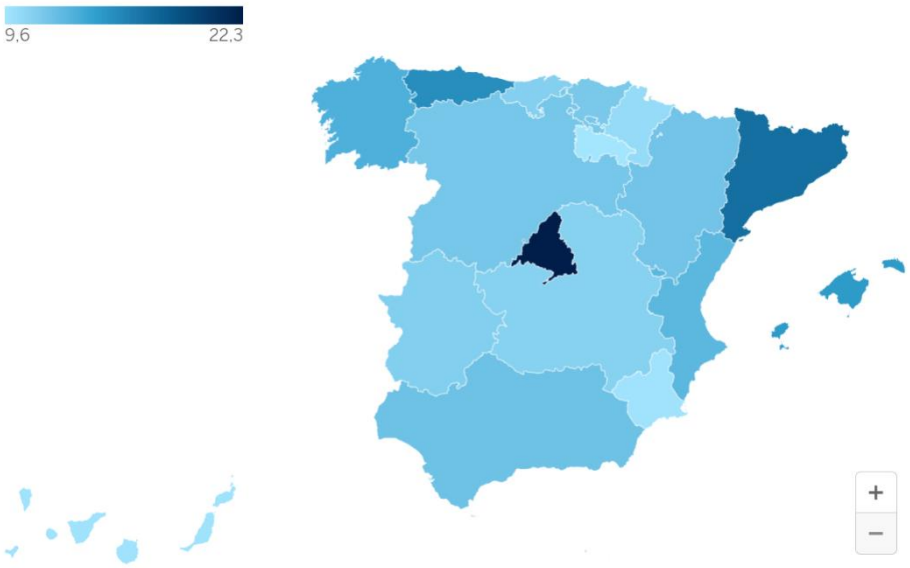
According to data from Adecco Group Institute, 2,86 million Spaniards telework from home at the moment, 1,2 million more than a year ago, when the pandemic struck. This figure, a record in Spain —is an increase of 74,2% concerning pre-pandemic registrations—, is deflated, however, compared to the volumes handled by other European countries and warns of the decline in labour market flexibility of national work concerning that of its main competitors.

These almost three million employees who telework in Spain account for 14,7% of the total employed persons — 19.344.300, according to data from the Labor Force Survey for the fourth quarter of 2020—, a percentage much lower than the of the European Union average (21,5%).

The introduction of teleworking has also been uneven in the different territories of the country. The presence of larger companies, more prone to the implementation of this formula, has

caused both the Community of Madrid and Catalonia to present the highest rates of increase in teleworking in the country: 200% and 118%, respectively.

Image 2.5.1: Percentage of employed persons who work from home in Spain. Data for the 4th quarter of 2020



Source: Adecco Group Institute.

Now, the question we ask ourselves is if once we recover normality, this teleworking data will be maintained. What is certain is that, for teleworking to be incorporated into the corporate culture, companies must:

- Train workers in digital skills.
- Bet on digital profiles.
- Implement secures VPNs to access company systems.
- Make backup copies.
- Encrypt work teams, etc.

In any case, the implementation of teleworking will largely depend on the type of business and that it does not have followers in all sectors. Lack of resources can be one of the main reluctances. So much so that up to 2 out of 5 SMEs affirm that, they currently cannot manage their businesses with the teleworking modality. Further evidence that there is still much to do.

2.5.2. Legislation that regulates teleworking

2.5.2.1. Regulation of telework:

In Spain, before the pandemic, telework was regulated by Law 3/2012, of July 6, on urgent measures for the reform of the labour market, which modified the organization of traditional homework to accommodate remote work based on the intensive use of new technologies. The explanatory memorandum of said law recognized teleworking as a particular form of work

organization that fits perfectly into the productive and economic model, by favouring the flexibility of companies in the organization of work, increasing employment opportunities, and optimizing the relationship between work time and personal and family life. In accordance with this modification, remote work is defined in article 13 of the consolidated text of the Workers' Statute Law, approved by Royal Legislative Decree 2/2015, of October 23.

However, article 13 of the Workers' Statute was insufficient to apply it to the peculiarities of teleworking, which requires not only a labour benefit that takes place preferably outside the premises of the company but also an intensive use of the new computer and communication technologies.

COVID-19 made it necessary and urgent to develop a new regulation of telework in our country, thus, Royal Decree-Law 28/2020, of September 22, on remote work was approved.

2.5.2.2. Definition of "teleworking" according to Royal Decree-Law 28/2020, of September 22, on remote work.

In article 2.b) of the decree, telework is defined as "that distance work that is carried out through the exclusive or prevalent use of a computer, telematic and telecommunication means and systems."

2.5.2.3. Some key elements of the law:

Area of application:

The royal decree-law establishes that distance work is that which is provided at the worker's home -or the place was chosen by them- during all or part of their working day, "on a regular basis." In other words, the one carried out "in a reference period of three months, a minimum of 30% of the working day, or the equivalent proportional percentage depending on the duration of the employment contract." That is two full-time days a week.

It is important to highlight that the Law states that distance work implemented "exceptionally" because of Covid-19 is outside the new legislative framework and "ordinary labour regulations" will be applied to it. In any case, companies are obliged to provide the means, equipment, tools and consumables "that the development of remote work requires.

Workers' rights:

Employees who work remotely will have the same rights as those who provide their services in the company's workplace, that is, they have the right to receive the same remuneration - according to their professional group, level, position, and functions - as if they worked in person.

They will not be able to see modified conditions agreed with the company, especially in terms of working time or pay, but also training and professional promotion. In addition, the company must consider these workers when implementing its equality and conciliation measures and plans.

About expenses, the regulations make it clear that remote workers will have the right to have the company provide them - and maintain them in an adequate manner - with "all the means, equipment and tools necessary for the development of the activity." These means must be

included in the inventory included in the work agreement. Its cost will be "borne or compensated by the company".

Regarding the schedule, the new law says that the remote worker will be entitled to flexible hours, always respecting the mandatory availability times and the regulations on work and rest time.

In addition, it is foreseen in the law that the company guarantees the digital disconnection of the employee outside working hours, which entails a limitation in the use of technological means of business and work communication during rest periods and respect for the duration maximum of the day.

It should be noted that this law will not apply to labour personnel at the service of Public Administrations, for whom remote work will continue to be regulated by article 13 of the Workers' Statute.

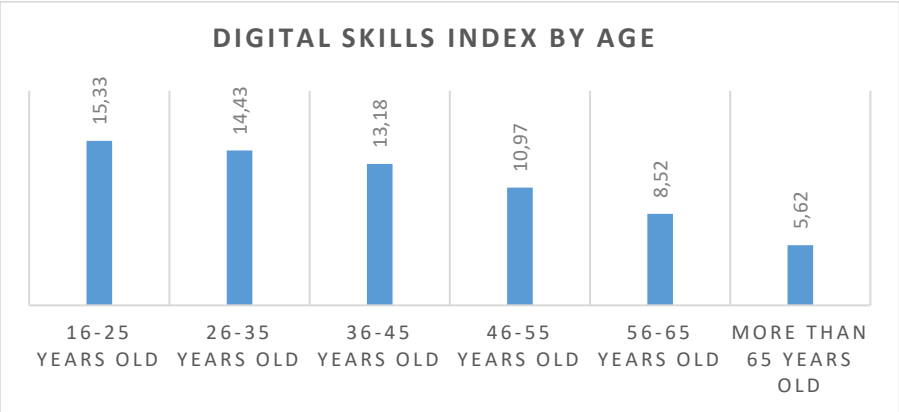
2.5.3. Digital skills development

2.5.3.1. The situation of Spain concerning digital transformation:

The first report of the Observatory of digital skills and employability prepared by the Department of Sociology of the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) and the IMANcorp Foundation concludes that almost a quarter of the Spanish population, 24% do not have digital skills or have very few.

Age is one of the factors that show clear differences in these digital skills. Between 16 and 25 years of age, the index of digital skills is 15,33% and is decreasing according to each group. From 26 to 35 years old, the index is 14,43%, from 36 to 45 years old is 13,18%, from 46 to 55 years old it is 10,97%, from 56 to 65 years old it is 8,52% and from over 65 it is 5,62%.

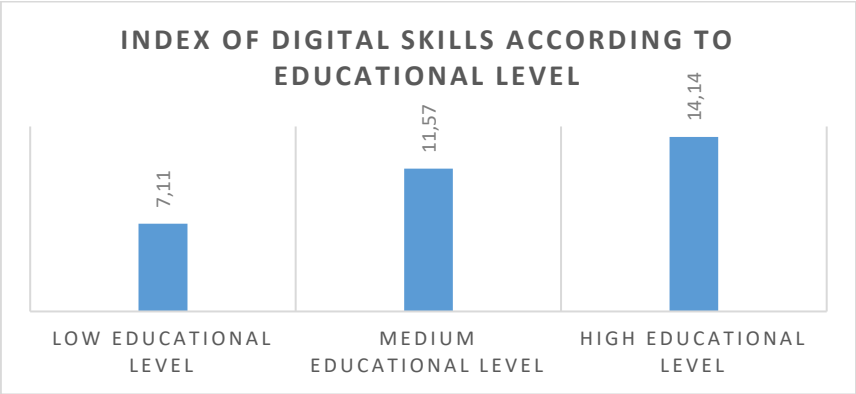
Image 2.5.2: Digital skills index by age



Source: Observatory of digital skills and employability (UAB)

But other characteristics influence the level of digital skills. The educational degree is one of them. With a low level of education, the index is 7,11%, with a medium level, it rises to 11,57%, while with a high level (higher education), the index is 14,14%.

Image 2.5.3: Digital skills index by educational level



Source: Observatory of digital skills and employability (UAB)

Although another factor that has a direct relationship with digital skills is household income, the authors of the report point out that the variables that have greater intensity in determining the index of digital skills are education level, occupation principal and age. This confirms that through TELEGROW, we will help improve digital skills, offering training to those over 50 years of age.

This first report of the Observatory of digital competences and employability, according to the authors, must be interpreted in a prepandemic key, since, although it was prepared from May to December 2020, it was made from data before the Covid-19 outbreak.

2.5.3.2. National Plan for Digital Skills:

Regarding the digital transformation process in Spain, on January 27, 2021, the government approved a National Plan for Digital Competences, which will mobilize a total of 3.750 million euros in the period 2021-2023 and aims to reach a level of digital training among Spanish citizens that is up to the challenge of the digitization process.

The objective of promoting the reforms and transformations necessary to advance in the digitization process of Spain and towards a more resilient and inclusive economy.

This National Plan for Digital Competences is divided into three plans:

A) Digitization Plan for SMEs, whose lines of action are:

- The impulse to the basic digitization of the company to ensure that the largest number of SMEs integrate existing digital solutions to modernize, for example, their internal management, the relationship with clients and with the Administration, or digital marketing.

- Support for change management, aimed at promoting the training of managers and staff in the digital management of the company, with special attention to reducing the digital divide due to gender and training young experts in digitization who can act as agents of the transformation of SMEs.

- Disruptive innovation and digital entrepreneurship for SMEs and start-ups to seize the opportunities of the green and data-driven digital economy.

- Support for sectoral digitization, aimed at promoting the digitization of the industry, commerce, and tourism sectors.

- The reform of the instruments and support networks for entrepreneurship, innovation, and digitization of SMEs to reinforce their complementarity and effectiveness throughout the national territory.

B) Digitalization Plan for Public Administrations, it is structured in three axes:

- Digitally transform the Administration with transversal initiatives for the deployment of efficient, safe, and easy-to-use public services and the generalization of access to emerging technologies.

- Deploy leading digitization projects, for example, in the areas of Health, Justice or Employment.

- Support the digitization of territorial administrations, Autonomous Communities and Local Entities.

C) National Plan for Digital Skills:

Its objective is to achieve a level of digital training among Spanish citizens that is up to the challenge of the digitization process.

For this, seven lines of action have been established:

- The digital training of citizens with special emphasis on groups at risk of digital exclusion and which also includes a free online mass access offer (MOOC).

- The fight against the digital gender gap by promoting the digital empowerment of women.

- The digitization of education and the development of digital skills for learning with the incorporation of digital skills and programming in the curricula of the compulsory stages.

- Training in digital skills throughout working life for unemployed and employed people in the private sector.

- Training in digital skills for public employment.

- The development of digital skills for SMEs.

- The promotion of ICT specialists (both vocational training graduates and university graduates).

2.5.3.3. Skills of the employees over 50 years in Spain:

The study on Digital Competences by "Edix, Digital Workers", UNIR's Institute of Digital Experts, carried out in February, where some 800 people over 50 years old were interviewed, reveals the following results:

1. Digital training:

More than 80% of those surveyed believe that the future of employment lies in the digital world, and 53% of the participants between 50 and 59 years old are interested in learning digital skills to improve their professional profile. Those between 60 and 69 years old, too, although to a lesser extent: 42,7% consider it compared to 41,2%. And among those who have already passed the barrier of 70, 24,4% also consider that they should be trained in digital skills.

2. Digital Habits in 2020:

68% claim to have used technology or digital services more than last year, a result that is a consequence of the situation experienced with Covid-19, which is also reflected in the fact that video calling was the most used in 2020 by the over 50 years old.

These data confirm that, in Spain, TELEGROW will be well received by those over 50, since they not only have an interest in training but are also aware of the importance of digital skills for future jobs.

2.5.4. Practices on Teleworking.

Good practice 1:

Enterprise/organization	Name and web link/URL **CapGemini Spain** www.capgemini.com/es-es/
Good practice description	
The safety and health of its employees have been a priority for this consultancy, with 5.200 employees in Spain. All of them began to telework with the onset of the pandemic, and, from the HR department, they reinforced internal communication through town holds - virtual meetings between the president and CEOs every week, and every fifteen days with employees-; and implement online hobbies and activities that employees shared, in addition to organizing virtual coffees and after hours to motivate their professionals. To this are added the volunteer activities, where, among other things, they carry out a volunteer service where their volunteers get in touch with people with disabilities through a mental health helpline to improve their daily lives a little as they face physical and emotional challenges. Reference: Las grandes empresas desvelan el secreto del trabajo en remoto.	
Learnings and transferability	
What we can learn from this good practice is that, when implementing teleworking, the importance of the worker feeling linked to his colleagues and the company should not be lost sight of. Organizing regular online meetings, or activities that generate a feeling of "team", even remotely, will favor the performance of the worker and reinforce the feeling of belonging to the company, which will improve their results.	

Good practice 2:

Enterprise/organization	Name and web link/URL **Astrazeneca Spain** www.astrazeneca.es
Good practice description	
Among the policies of people that have been implemented when teleworking, the increased flexibility of the working day stands out, trying to respect the breaks for lunch and without calling meetings after 5:00 p.m. They have also expanded training programs to take advantage of digital tools and promote the use of all communication channels.	

Learnings and transferability
From the good practice of this company, two things should be highlighted: 1. The need to respect rest times in teleworking. Being working from home does not mean that the employee has full availability; rest time must be set, and respect for these times is important for the worker's performance. 2. The training and accompaniment of workers, so that they develop the skills and competencies necessary for teleworking, since a new way of working cannot be implemented without giving workers the tools, they need to carry it out. This acquires special relevance in the case of workers over 50 years of age

2.5.5. Summary

Question	Findings
REGULATIONS	
Did there exist a law that regulates teleworking before the pandemic?	Yes/no No, teleworking was only contemplated succinctly in an article of the workers' statute.
	If yes, which one? Please, name it (with link to internet publication)
Does there exist a law that regulates teleworking after the pandemic?	Yes/no Yes
	If yes or it is getting prepared, please refer it here (with link to internet publication). Royal Decree-Law 28/2020, of September 22, on remote work
Which public organism regulates / defines policies for teleworking in your country?	Please, name it (with link to internet publication) The government of Spain. Royal Decree-Law 28/2020, of September 22, on remote work
TELEWORKING FOR EMPLOYEES	

Main rights for employees to telework according to regulations	Please, resume the rights for employees 1. Teleworking is voluntary and reversible; a worker cannot be forced to telework. 2. Teleworkers have the same rights that they would have had if they provided services in the company's workplace. 3. The working person shall not bear expenses related to the equipment, tools, and means linked to the development of their work activity. 4. The person who performs remote work may make the established service provision schedule more flexible while respecting the mandatory availability times and the regulations on work and rest time. 5. Right to digital disconnection outside of their working hours. 6. Right to professional promotion. 7. Right to training, at the same level as people who work in person. 8. Right to receive the necessary training to carry out their work remotely. 9. Teleworkers have the right to a time record like the rest of the workers
Main obligations for employees to telework according to regulations	Please, resume the obligations for employees 1. Respect for mandatory availability times and regulations on work and rest time. 2. The teleworking agreement must be in writing and must be formalized before telework begins. 3. Remote workers must comply with the instructions of their company on data protection and information security of the company, as well as the conditions and instructions for use and conservation established in the company concerning computer equipment or tools.
TELEWORKING FOR EMPLOYERS	
Main rights for employers on teleworking according to regulations:	Please resume the enterprise/employers' rights 1. Teleworking is voluntary and reversible. 2. Although the worker may make his work schedule more flexible, he must respect the mandatory availability times and the regulations on work and rest time.
Main obligations for employers to facilitate telework according to regulations:	Please resume the enterprise/employers' obligations 1. They must respect the working conditions, including remuneration, job stability, working time, training, and professional promotion, of teleworkers. 2. The expenses related to the equipment, tools, and means related to the development of their work activity will be borne by the company. 3. Facilitate the digital disconnection of the worker outside their working hours. 4. Ensure the priority of people who carry out remote work from the beginning of the employment relationship during the entire working day to fill jobs that are carried out totally or partially in person. 5. Inform people who telecommute, expressly and in writing, of the possibilities of promotion that may occur, whether it is face-to-face

	or remote development positions; to ensure the opportunity for career advancement. 6. Guarantee the effective participation in the training actions of people who work remotely, in terms equivalent to those of people who provide services in the company's workplace. 7. The company must guarantee the people who work remotely the necessary training for the proper development of their activity. 8. The teleworking agreement must be in writing and must be formalized before teleworking begins. 9. Keep the record of working hours up to date.
TELEWORKING ADOPTION	
Do you have any enterprise association or confederation that has published recommendations or studies?	Please, name it (with link to internet publication) NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TELEWORKERS, SPANISH ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING COMPANIES, Los trabajadores opinan: el teletrabajo influye positivamente en la conciliación, pero no en materia de salud y bienestar SPANISH ASSOCIATION OF EXPERTS IN CUSTOMER RELATIONS, Guía Interactiva sobre el teletrabajo y el empleo de personas con Discapacidad
Do you have any workers union that has published recommendations or studies?	Please, name it (with link to internet publication) UGT (Workers union): UGT exige una vigilancia más exhaustiva del cumplimiento de la ley de teletrabajo.
Do you have any other institution/research group that has published recommendations or studies?	Please, name it (with link to internet publication) EUROFUND, Living, working and COVID-19. EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Telework in the EU before and after the COVID-19: where we were, where we head to BANK OF SPAIN, Economic bulletin of the bank of Spain THE ADDECCO GROUP INSTITUTE, La evolución del teletrabajo y el empleo a tiempo parcial durante la pandemia.
DIGITAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	
Which public organism boost digital transformation on your country? Is there any plan or strategy including digital	Please, name it (with link to internet publication) GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN, National Plan for Digital Competences GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN, España Digital 2025

skills development?	
Main policies and initiatives that impact on digital skills improvement on your country.	Please, name it (with link to internet publication) Chamber of Commerce of Spain, 45+ programme Ikanos, www.ikanos.eus
BEST PRACTICE 1	
Enterprise/organism	**CapGemini Spain** www.capgemini.com/es-es/
Main learnings to be transferred	What we can learn from this good practice is that, when implementing teleworking, the importance of the worker feeling linked to his colleagues and the company should not be lost sight of. Organizing regular online meetings, or activities that generate a feeling of "team", even remotely, will favor the performance of the worker and reinforce the feeling of belonging to the company, which will improve their results.
BEST PRACTICE 2	
Enterprise/organism	**Astrazeneca Spain** www.astrazeneca.es
Main learnings to be transferred	From the good practice of this company, two things should be highlighted: 1. The need to respect rest times in teleworking. Being working from home does not mean that the employee has full availability; rest time must be set, and respect for these times is important for the worker's performance. 2. The training and accompaniment of workers, so that they develop the skills and competencies necessary for teleworking, since a new way of working cannot be implemented without giving workers the tools, they need to carry it out.

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3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Following the desk research, this phase of the research has taken an eminently descriptive approach. The major objective of this phase is to describe the current state and needs stemming foreground about teleworkers from the age of 50th, from the perspective of the VET providers, employers, and the VET learners themselves, to estimate (1) digital soft and hard skills priority for teleworking, and (2) barriers and beliefs to provide efficient digital training to learners/employees from 50th.

First, to develop the research plan it must be identified secondary sources that help to recollect relevant and useful information to respond to the specific objectives of the research. In this way, the researchers find a large group of studies that evaluate part of the digital soft and hard skills associated to teleworking, as well as scales to measure the different beliefs, and barriers about telework.

This secondary data supports the designed tools to recollect primary data, specifically questionnaires and focus group, providing hypothesis to formulate the questions and scales to ask both in the survey and in the focus group.

Then, we are going to explain the principal findings from previous studies that show the fundamental skills needed to telework, and beliefs and barriers about it.

The main findings of previous studies showing the key skills needed for teleworking, as well as the beliefs and barriers to teleworking, are explained below.

3.1. Telework adoption

The adoption of telework is linked to the use of technology and communication tools (ICTs) that must be employed by users, in order to be able to undertake the tasks of their job regardless of the place from which these tasks are performed, in a fixed or flexible schedule (Moreno, 2010). In order to carry out these tasks it is necessary that employees adopt this behaviour, it is therefore relevant to apply an analysis based on theories of human behaviour, to help us understand how users accept and use a technology, since it is necessary that employees accept it (Ollo-López et al., 2020). Several authors have assessed that the most appropriate theory to

analyse this process is the **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)** proposed by Davis in 1986 (McFarland y Hamilton, 2006).

The TAM model, an adaptation of Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), propose that ***perceived usefulness*** and ***perceived ease of use*** determine the overall attitude of a person towards the acceptance and use of a given technology. This attitude indicates the intention to use, and this future intention indicates the acceptance and, in turn, the usage behaviour. *Perceived usefulness* refers to the extent to which, a subject considers that the use of technologies will improve his or her performance in carrying out his or her job. On the other hand, the perceived ease of use is defined as the extent to which, the potential user of a technology expects that using it will not involve effort (Ollo-López et al., 2020).

The TAM model postulates that telework is determined by the intention to use it, considering two direct determinants of intention: attitude towards telework and perceived usefulness of telework. Likewise, perceived usefulness also affects attitude. According to this model, perceived ease of use of telework conditions both attitude towards telework and perceived usefulness (Davis et al., 1989; Ollo-López et al., 2020). Therefore, the TAM model is a specific model for predicting the use of information technologies (Pérez et al., 2004).

Therefore, it is proposed that the present study applies the TAM theory (Davis, 1986) in order to assess the level of adoption of telework among students over 50 years old. And thus, to be able to identify acceptance factors and normative factors that may explain the adoption of telework in the future (Langa and Conradie, 2003). According to Peral et al. (2014), if older employees have fewer opportunities to access communication technologies, they cannot appreciate their advantages, which negatively influences their use and acceptance. Thus, it should be essential to understand that an individual's acceptance of technology is influenced by his or her beliefs about the consequences of its use. To analyse the behavioural intention and use of technologies by the elderly, the framework of TAM models (Davis, 1985) is useful. The TAM predicts that users adopt a new technology when their perceptions of the ease of use and usefulness of the technology are positive (Davis, 1989; Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw, 1989).

Likewise, several authors have evaluated the beliefs and barriers about the adoption of telework beyond behavioural theories (Moreno, 2014; Silva, 2019; Kotera and Correa, 2020). There is research that analyses new ways of working, in this case telework, and the needs of employees. According to Kotera and Vione (2020), the digitization of knowledge work is essential for today's organizations, responding to the diversified needs of employees. Many organizations are already implementing some form of flexibility to help workers perform work and non-work tasks. It is essential to recognize the recommendations and objectives for the sustainable development of telework to companies, and to know the needs and possible barriers of workers to implement telework, as well as what could happen to make the employee see telework as something negative Huuhtanen (1997).

3.2 Teleworking skills

On the other hand, we must bear in mind that we cannot assess future teleworking behaviour, without taking into account that skills, i.e. competencies, are necessary for the use of ICTs that involve the development of the tasks of these future workers over 50 years old. If one of the main barriers to telework involves the low skills in digital competences of the individuals under study, it is important to analyse the general level in this respect that they possess. It is for this reason that the proposal has been approached by Carrero et al. (2017) defining a digital

competence framework for citizens with proficiency levels. Based on this framework, it is developing a scale to measure the ability of each digital skill to telework from the point of view of VET learners. Also, it is asked to responders how important is each digital skill for teleworking.

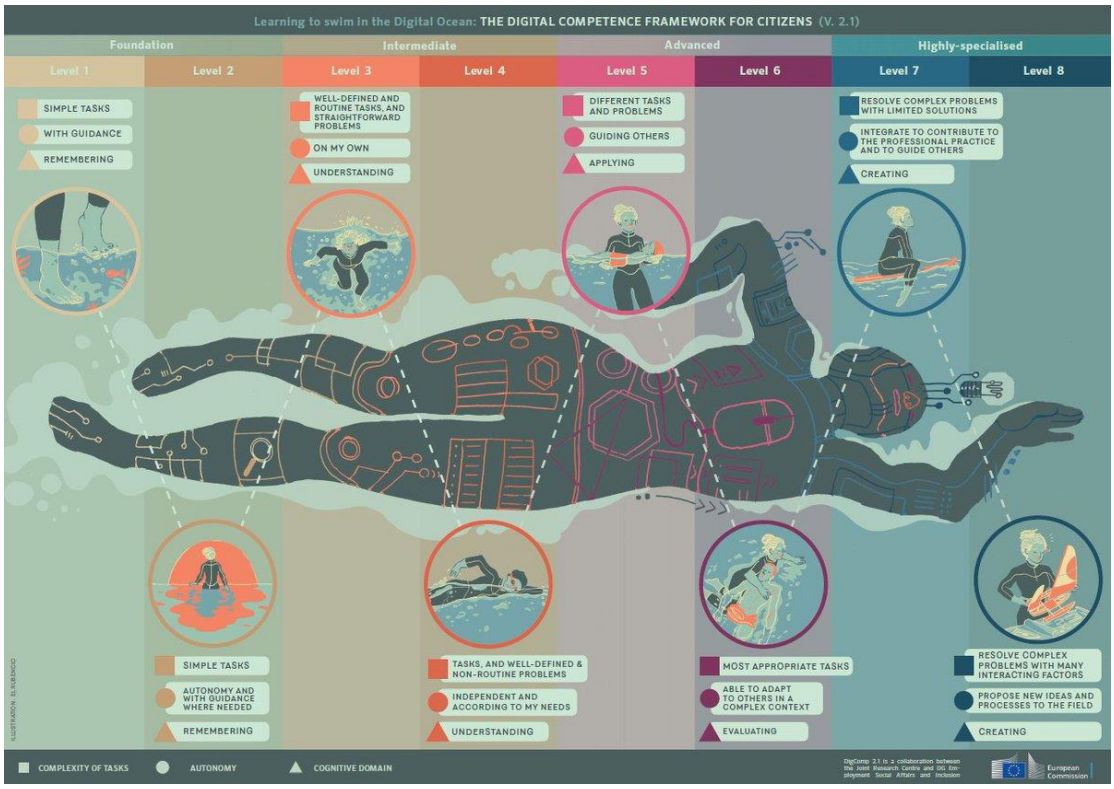
Digital competences are divided into 5 main areas: information, communication, content creation, security and problem solving. Each of these areas is composed of different competencies, a total of 21, which are evaluated based on the following performance levels: Foundation, Intermediate, advanced and highly-specialized. The European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens, also known as DigComp, establishes 8 differentiated levels, 2 of each Carrero et al. (2017). establishes 8 differentiated levels, 2 of each Carrero et al. (2017).

The DigComp 2.1. Model offers a tool to improve citizens' digital competence. DigComp was first published in 2013 and has become a reference for many digital competence initiatives at both European and Member State levels (Ferrari, 2013). This document introduces DigComp 2.0. It constitutes phase 1 of the update of the framework which focuses on the conceptual reference model, new vocabulary and streamlined descriptors. The current document also gives examples of how DigComp is used at the European, national and regional levels. The current document also gives examples of how DigComp is used at the European, national and regional levels.

Five digital competences areas are focused:

1. Information and data literacy
2. Communication and collaboration
3. Digital content creation
4. Safety
5. Problem solving

Image 3.1. The digital competence framework for citizens



Source: Carrero et al. (2017)

3.3 Teaching teleworking skills

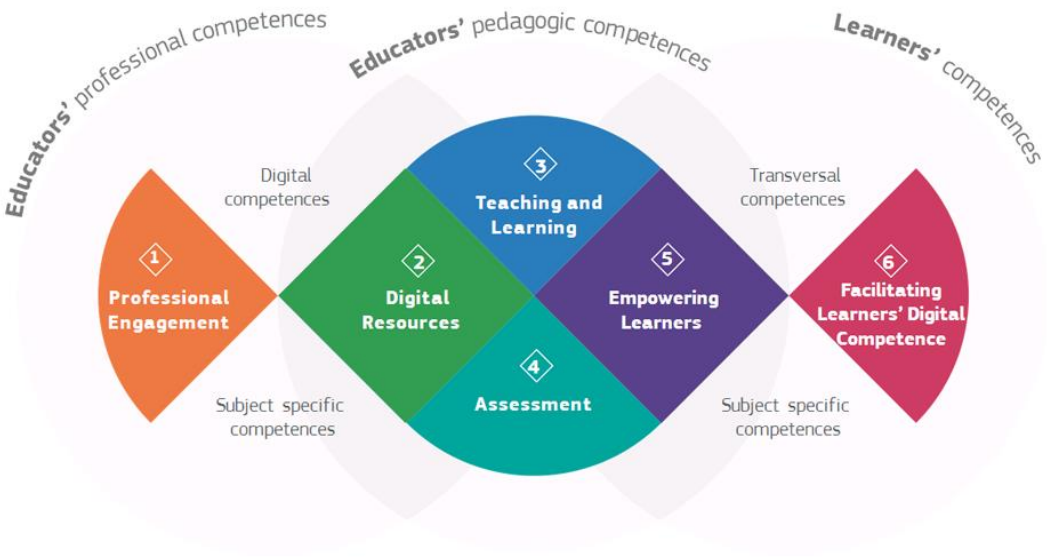
The teacher questionnaire was based on the European framework of digital competencies for educators.

Teaching professions are confronted with rapidly changing requirements that call for a new, broader and more demanding range of competences than before. The ubiquity of digital devices and applications requires educators in particular to develop their digital literacy.

The European Framework For the Digital Competence of Educators (DigCompEdu) (Redecker, 2017) is a science-based framework that describes what it means for educators to be digitally literate. It provides a general reference framework to support the development of educational digital competences in Europe. DigCompEdu is aimed at educators at all levels of education, from early childhood to higher and adult education, including general and vocational education, special education and non-formal learning contexts. The six areas which are in focus related to digital competences are: (i) Professional engagement, (ii) Digital resources, Teaching and Learning, (iv) Assessment, (v) Empowering Learners, and (vi) Facilitating Learners Digital Competences. As can be noticed six areas are presented and even both digital competences, subject specific competences and transversal competences. In addition, the framework covers both the educators and the learners' perspectives.

Each of these areas is composed of different digital competencies that are evaluated based on a performance level that is divided between A1: Beginner, A2: Explorer, B1: Integrator, B2: Expert, C1: Leader, and C2: Pioneer (Carrero et al., 2017).

Image 3.2. DigCompEdu areas and scope



Source: Redecker (2017)

It is important not only that students evaluate themselves in the performance of these competencies associated with teleworking, but also that the trainers/teachers themselves, as well as the students, identify to what extent they believe it is important to develop each of these competencies in order to relate their training strategies with the objective of developing them. (Redecker, 2017).

The characteristics of adults as Learners are different and need a teaching strategy specific that several authors have describe as the concept andragogy (Domenech, 2015; Rasmussen, 2015). Andragogy is a concept known as the art and science of how adults learn, was defining by Malcom Knowles (1970). Likewise, it is developing a scale to know which strategies develops VET providers to teach students' digital skills (Redecker, 2017). According to studies as Hillage & Aston (2001), the most important barriers to encountered in adult digital skills training are involving attitudinal barriers, but also physical and material, and structural barriers. It is creating a scale to measure the importance of this barriers from the educators' point of view in order to understand how could provide a more efficient digital training to learners from 50th, and evaluate the likely to receive training on how to foster your students' digital skills.

In addition, not only will digital skills be necessary to be able to develop telework in their jobs, as well as acquire them thanks to trainers/teachers, but employees over 50 need the support of their SOFT SKILLS in order to be able to handle the situations they will face in a telework environment and be able to be more productive and happier (Huuhtanen, 1997; Kotera y Vione, 2020; Kazekami, 2020)

Likewise, according to studies as Huuhtanen (1997), it could be recognized soft skills that teleworkers need to develop their work. Evaluating physical setting, organizational and psychosocial environments, risk assessment, surveillance, and control of the application of health and safety at work provisions, it is easy to identify so that soft skills it is needed to telework and develop it with success and do not fall in bad practices. E.g., related with the organizational and psychosocial environments, it can be seen in Huuhtanen (1997), how it is divided between appropriate use of equipment, work rhythms, duration of work and time patterns, work isolation, job content, autonomy and control, training and retraining possibilities, and at last privacy. If analysed one per one, it could be observed that autonomy is related with self-management, and on the other hand work isolation with emotional control, or training and retraining possibilities with learnability and intention to train their skills to telework in the future. That is why it is needed to identified soft skills necessary for successfully develop of telework That is why it is necessary to identify the soft skills necessary for the successful development of telework of the over-50s.

3.4. Research plan

To address both targets, employees and VET learners and VET providers, it is useful to use two kinds of research, Qualitative and Quantitative.

On the one hand, qualitative research provides a greater understanding of the environmental context of the problem, in this way employ workers over 50th years old to telework. This framework is experienced by companies, that know how this employee age range can be related with some barriers and beliefs that can influence the performance of their tasks. We want to ask directly to these employers to get a deep understanding of the environmental context of the problem with a direct approach.

So, a Focus Group can be used for this purpose. It is needed a small number of individuals to implement, and they provide an outcome that supports to develop a deep understanding of the problem from the outlook of the employees.

A focus group is an interview conducted by a formed moderator in an unstructured and natural manner with a small group of respondents. The moderator leads the discussion. This tool is the most important qualitative research procedure and in the present study will be adapted to get

the main objective: to know barriers and beliefs that can influence the performance of the teleworker over 50th years old.

On the other hand, this study uses quantitative research based on a popular tool, a survey. The survey method has several advantages. First, the questionnaire is simple to administer. Second, the data obtained are reliable because the responses are limited to the alternatives stated. The use of fixed response question reduces the variability in the results that may be caused by differences in interviewers. Finally, coding, analysis, and interpretation of data are relatively simple. An electronic survey has been used and has been delivered via e-mail. Two questionnaires will be developed, one for VET Learners and one for VET providers. In this case, the email addresses of both groups are known, and the surveys will be sent to them in order to achieve the target sample of 30 surveys answered by VET learners and another 30 surveys answered by VET providers.

3.5. Focus group

Developing a primary information collection tool, as a focus group, it will help to obtain first-person information from human resources managers to know their perspective on the implementation of teleworking. In this sense, the advantages of using this type of tools are multiple, since it allows to know both verbal and non-verbal information, that the snowball effect occurs, even that as a result of the debate of conflicting opinions, contradictions arise that help to improve the understanding of the problem to be studied and its complexity.

To develop it, each project partner will organize a Focus Group with the participation of at least 5 participants -each representing the business world from the perspective of employers- following the instructions from the coordinator project, who will monitor the completion of the whole research.

The focus group can be organised online or face-to-face, depending on the COVID-19 restrictions that apply in each country. In case of online focus group, each partner is free to use the most convenient tool for him, Skype, Zoom, Teams or any other web application. It is not mandatory to record the session, but partners are free to do it so if they wish to transcript the discussions. In this case, partners should make sure to inform adequately the participants about the recording and confidentiality rules, as well as the use of data. In any case, they should make screenshots as proof that the event took place.

Focus group method strives to produce good conversation about teleworking beliefs, barriers and needs to apply. This conversation must flow into a personal story, revisit an earlier question, disagree, contradict themselves, and interrupt. However, the researcher must balance the needs of participants to 'have their say' against the need to stay focused (Grudens-Schuck *et al*., 2004).

A focus group moderator wants both natural features of conversation as well as focused discussion into the proposal questions. The moderator as an interview guide assists group members to relax, open up, think deeply, and consider alternatives, allows for synergy to occur, which produces greater insight due to the fact that participants work together during the session. Questions in an interview guide flow from general to specific. They invite openness and avoid bias (Grudens-Schuck *et al*., 2004).

The result of a focus group should not be a series of short burst responses. Each focus group must last a maximum of 60 minutes and contain the following content.

Partners should start with a welcome word and introduction about the project. Then they should pursue the introduction with a presentation of the focus group activity, go through the main questions of the document, open the debate to further comments and conclude the session with a summary of the main points developed during the activity.

In detail:

1. Introduction to focus group activity

1. Welcome and acknowledgement for participation
2. Presentation of moderator
3. Short project presentation: suggestion: prepare a short PPT presentation with basic features about the project + distribution of (online) leaflets.
4. Presentation of the activity
5. Information on how we will record / report the session and how we will keep confidentiality about what is being discussed.
6. Telling participants that they are not obliged to answer a question if they do not feel comfortable with it.
7. Set up of focus group maximum duration

2. Core content of the focus group

Here are some questions aimed at orienting the discussions toward our research area. All the questions are not mandatory, as the method relies on letting flew the dialogue among participants so they feel confident and can share their critical perceptions of the topics, but also insight feeling about how to reach success. You should just make sure that all the key elements to be answered are properly approached so to enable you to complete the national report.

Proposed topics to conduct the Focus Group. This is a draft to be discussed and developed:

1. Introduce your organisation, sector, size and location.
2. Describe the situation of your organization / enterprise dealing with teleworking before and during the pandemic and explain if you will foster teleworking on the future.
3. Which are the main advantages of teleworking for your enterprise?
4. Which are the main barriers/difficulties your enterprise has found to implement teleworking?
5. Which are the needs to foster teleworking on the future?
6. Which digital skills do you consider the most essential for teleworking?
7. Do you find teleworking a good tool in this digital transformation context? Do you find gaps between younger and older people?
8. Please share what you consider a best practice to foster teleworking implemented on your enterprise or that you will implement on the future.

3. Conclusion

1. Last question to end the discussion (Suppose that you had a one-minute talk with an educator or VET provider that works in the teaching field, what would you advise him to teach regarding the needs stemming from teleworking?)
2. Again, acknowledgement for participating in the activity
3. Information about what will be done with the collected information and availability of the report.

A report of results from focus groups should not present major findings via frequencies or statistics because 'counting' leads readers to believe that percentages or frequencies are true for a much wider population (which they are not). Quantitative survey researchers go to great lengths to design a study so that numerical data generalize to a wider population with mathematical precision. Focus groups method is not meant to create generalizations of this type and its procedures offer none of the protections that would permit them to do so (Grudens-Schuck *et al*., 2004- p. 6)

3.6. Survey

To the survey design, the objectives of the research have been considered, depending on each group. On one hand, VET **learners' questionnaires,** the objective is to facilitate the identification and prioritization of the digital skills that they need to develop, in order to assimilate in the new working environment, as well as beliefs on teleworking and barriers for teleworking by learners' perception.

Likewise, Teleworking requires non-cognitive and digital skills. Using technology acceptance model (TAM) and DigComp 2.0 framework we will develop a survey to identify the main barriers and digital skills needs to orientate the development of our Stay GOLD and Digital Skills trainings modules.

On the other hand, **VET providers' questionnaires** analyse the skills needed for teleworking and the main problems to provide efficient digital training to learners from the age of 50th, to facilitate the identification and prioritization of the digital skills for telework and barriers and beliefs to provide efficient digital training to learners from 50th.

Below is the design's description for each question of the survey. It is explaining the source of each scale apply, to the account that each of the scales has a path of 1 to 5 points.

VET learners' questionnaires

Questions from 1 to 9 should reflect the profile of the respondents in order to be able to identify their most notable characteristics (Malhotra, 2015). This classification questions provide the sample profile of the research and verify hypothesis about correlation of variables.

The next section involves questions from 10 and 11 relating adoption of teleworking. According to Peral et al. (2014), if older employees have fewer opportunities to access communication technologies, they cannot appreciate its advantages, which negatively influences their use and acceptance. In this way must be essential to understand an individual's acceptance of technology is influenced by his beliefs about the consequences of its use. To analyze the intention of behavior and the use of the technologies by the elderly, it is useful the framework of TAM models (Technology Acceptance Model; Davis, 1985). TAM predicts that users adopt a

new technology when their perceptions of the ease of use and usefulness of the technology are positive (Davis, 1989; Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989). There is research that has used TAM to understand Internet adoption decisions (e.g., Moon and Kim, 2001). Likewise, the perception about how easy and useful is teleworking, describe the attitude from teleworking, and their behavioural intentions to telework are essential to know the future behaviour towards telework, as well as the use that has been given or is currently being given to it.

To measure barriers and beliefs about telework, it is proposed questions from 12 and 13. According to Kotera & Vione (2020), digitalization of knowledge work is essential for today's organizations, responding to diversified employee needs. Many organizations are already implementing some form of flexibility to help workers perform work and non-work duties. It is essential to recognize recommendations and goals for sustainable development of telework to the companies, and to know needs and possible barriers to the workers to implement teleworking, as well that could happen so that the employee sees teleworking as something negative Huuhtanen (1997).

On the other hand, Carrero et al. (2017) defining a digital competences framework for citizens with proficiency levels. Based on this framework, it is developing a scale to measure the capable of handling each digital skill to telework from the point of view of VET learners. Also, it is asked to responders how important each digital skill for teleworking is. These scales are questions from 14 to 20.

Another section it is about soft skills. Question 21 try to identify the level of importance that the soft skills are necessary to successfully endure the tasks on telework from the point of view of the VET learners. Studies as Huuhtanen (1997), it could be recognized soft skills that teleworkers need to develop their work. Evaluating physical setting, organizational and psychosocial environments, risk assessment, surveillance, and control of the application of health and safety at work provisions, it is easy to identify so that soft skills it is needed to telework and develop it with success and do not fall in bad practices. E.g., related with the organizational and psychosocial environments, it can see in Huuhtanen (1997), that how that it is divided between appropriate use of equipment, work rhythms, duration of work and time patterns, work isolation, job content, autonomy and control, training, and retraining possibilities, and at last privacy. If it analyses one per one it could see that autonomy it is related with self-management, and on the other hand work isolation with emotional control, or training and retraining possibilities with learnability. On the other hand, question 22 it is about intention to train their skills to telework in the future.

The last part of the survey includes open questions (Malhotra, 2015). Questions 23 and 24 try to implicate the respondent and know if have some contribution to add on the skills. If they have any interest to know more about the project could leave us their e-mail to receive information about it.

VET Providers' questionnaires

Questions from 1 to 8, should reflect the profile of the respondents in order to be able to identify their most notable characteristics (Malhotra, 2015). This classification questions provide the sample profile of the research and verify hypothesis about correlation of variables.

The following section try to measure the importance from each digital skill to teleworker from the point of view of VET providers. Questions from 9 to 17 are scales developed in relation to defining a digital competences framework for citizens with proficiency levels de Carrero *et al*.

(2017). Then, it is asked an open question to implicate the respondent and know if have some contribution to add on the skills. Finally, it is necessary to know from each respondent the level of digital competence as a teacher, to correlate with the other responses. (Malhotra, 2015)

Question 18, it is in order to classify how VET Providers have trained their digital skills to find a correlation with their level of involving or capabilities.

About teaching strategies and barriers to teach adult learners are proposed questions from 19 to 21 and 23. The characteristics of adults as Learners are different and need a teaching strategy specific that several authors have describe as the concept andragogy (Domenech; Rasmussen, 2015). Andragogy is a concept known as the art and science of how adults learn, was defining by Malcom Knowles (1970). Likewise, question 19 it is develop a scale to know which strategies develops VET providers to teach students' digital skills (Redecker, 2017). According to studies as Hillage & Aston (2001), the most important barriers to encountered in adult digital skills training are involving attitudinal barriers, but also physical and material, and structural barriers. It is create a scale to measure the importance of this barriers from the educators' point of view in order to understand how could provide a more efficient digital training to learners from 50th, and evaluate the likely to receive training on how to foster your students' digital skills.

In relation to this, question 23 try to know if the interviewee have any intention to train their skills to foster their students' digital skills in the future.

The last part of the survey includes open questions (Malhotra, 2015). Questions 22 and 24 try to implicate the respondent and to know if they have some contribution to add teaching technique to train digital skills. If they have any interest to know more about the project could leave us their e-mail to receive information about it.

The following tables summarize the sources used to develop the questions that make up the questionnaires developed in the study:

Table 3.1. Scales for VET LEARNERS

Question/scale	References	Content
1 to 9	Malhotra (2015)	Sample Profile
10 and 11	Davis (1985); Davis et al. (1989); Taylor & Todd (1995); Moon & Kim (2001); Peral et al. (2014)	TAM Model
12 and 13	Huuhtanen (1997); Kotera & Vione (2020)	Barriers and beliefs about telework
14 to 20	DigComp (Carretero et al., 2017)	Digital skills
21 and 22	Huuhtanen (1997); Kotera & Vione (2020)	Soft Skills
23 and 24	Malhotra (2015)1	Open Questions

Source: own elaboration

Table 3.2. Scales for VET PROVIDERS

Question/scale	References	Content

1 to 8 and 18	Malhotra (2015)	Sample Profile
9 to 15 and 17	DigComp (Carretero et al., 2017)	Digital skills
19 to 21 and 23	Rasmussen (2015, June) Knowles (1970) Domenech et al. (2015) Redecker (2017) Hillage & Aston (2001)	Teaching strategies and Barriers to teach adult learners
16, 22 and 24	Malhotra (2015)	Open Questions

Source: own elaboration

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RESULTS ANALYSIS 4

The second research phase of the TeleGrow project consists of conducting a survey for VET providers and VET learners/employees to find out their current state and needs stemming from teleworking.

- **VET learners' and employees questionnaires.** The objective is to facilitate the identification and prioritization of the digital skills that they need to develop, in order to assimilate in the new working environment.

  Teleworking requires non-cognitive and digital skills. Using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and DigComp 2.0 framework we developed a survey to identify the main barriers and digital skills needed to orientate the development of our Stay GOLD and Digital Skills training modules.
  o Beliefs on teleworking.
  o Barriers for teleworking.
  o Digital soft and hard skills level perception.
  o Digital soft and hard skills priority for teleworking.

- **VET providers' questionnaires.** It analyses the skills needed for teleworking and the main problems to provide efficient digital training to learners from the age of 50th.
  o Digital soft and hard skills priority for teleworking.
  o Barriers and beliefs to provide efficient digital training to learners from 50th

The surveys have been implemented online via Adminproject (a project management platform used at TeleGrow Project: https://www.adminproject.eu/) to facilitate the compilation and preparing the interactive report. Each partner has developed a report based on the results of the surveys that can be consulted below.

Each partner has also organized a **Focus Group** with the participation of at least 5 to 7 participants each representing the business world to discuss about teleworking adoption from the perspective of employers, and has conducted an in-depth interview. The participants were employers (with employees in charge) and experience with teleworking conditions.

The topics discussed during the Focus Group have been:

- Introduction of their organisation, sector, size and location.
- Description of the situation of their organisation / enterprise dealing with teleworking before and during the pandemic and if they plan to foster teleworking on the future.
- Discussion about the main advantages and barriers/difficulties of teleworking for their enterprises.
- Discussion about their needs to foster teleworking in the future.
- Analysis of the digital skills they consider the most essential for teleworking, and if they have found gaps between younger and elder people.
- Sharing best practices to foster teleworking implemented on their enterprises or that they will implement in the future.

The focus groups have been organised online because of COVID-19 situation. Each partner has prepared a report with interesting results that can be consulted below.

SURVEY REPORT (Italy)

by Euro-Net, May 2021

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4.1.

1. Introduction

TeleGrow Questionnaire survey aims to reach a deep and accurate understanding on the needs of VET sector related with the Teleworking condition that has been promoted and other times imposed by the current Covid19 crisis. On the one hand, the participants will offer their valuable and experiential inputs, identifying the needs of VET sector for digital training material and for trainers' guidance to empower the trainees and promote the digital skills development. On the other hand, they will present the needs of the middle aged and over VET learners/employees, identifying the digital skills lacking and prioritizing those needed to cope with this vast digital and teleworking transformation.

EURO-NET launched the survey in Italy for about 20 days. The survey was sent to its database of contacts trying to involve potential providers and teachers also aged about 50, so as to fit with the criteria established by the consortium. The survey was sent in electronic format by email and through social networks mainly (including Facebook, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp groups), ensuring a direct access to the target groups. The TG1 (VET trainers and providers)'s questionnaire was provided to Italian people in order to finalise the data on the current situation regarding teleworking and the issues that arise for employees of older age as well as to explore their self-management digital soft skills and their teleworking capabilities and how VET providers will use sufficient knowledge on how to approach and train in particular learners over the age of 50 in order to develop their ICT skills, needed for teleworking. The second questionnaire TG2 (VET learners and employees) aim to understand the current vision of teleworking and which skills are really diffused and need to be implemented.

The objective of this activity was to collect answers from at least 30 VET learners/Employees and 30 VET Providers from each partner. During this period, Italy collected a total of 46 answers from VET learners and 41 VET providers, for a total of 87 answers, thus achieving an objective largely over the expected minimum sample, which will enable us to reach high credibility of results.

2. VET Learner's and employee's questionnaire

2.1. Respondent's profile.

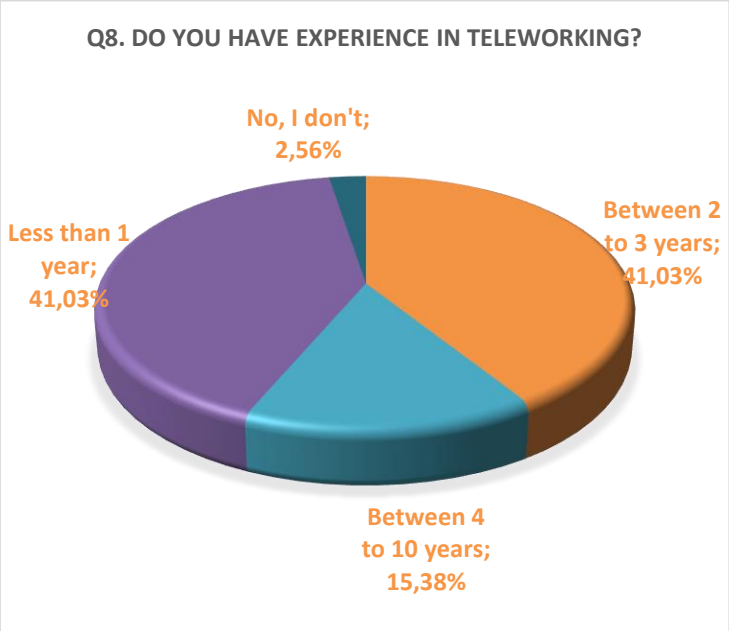
The sample of respondents is all of Italian nationality, almost equally divided between men and women. The percentage of respondents in the 50-59 age group is 58%, while the percentage for the 30-49 age group is 28%.

The majority of respondents in our sample have a high level of education; in fact, 61% have a master's degree, while the remaining part have a bachelor's degree.

Almost the entire sample is currently working, with a significant percentage of 94%, and almost half of this sample has been working for over 11 years, while the remainder is evenly distributed across the remaining items in the survey.

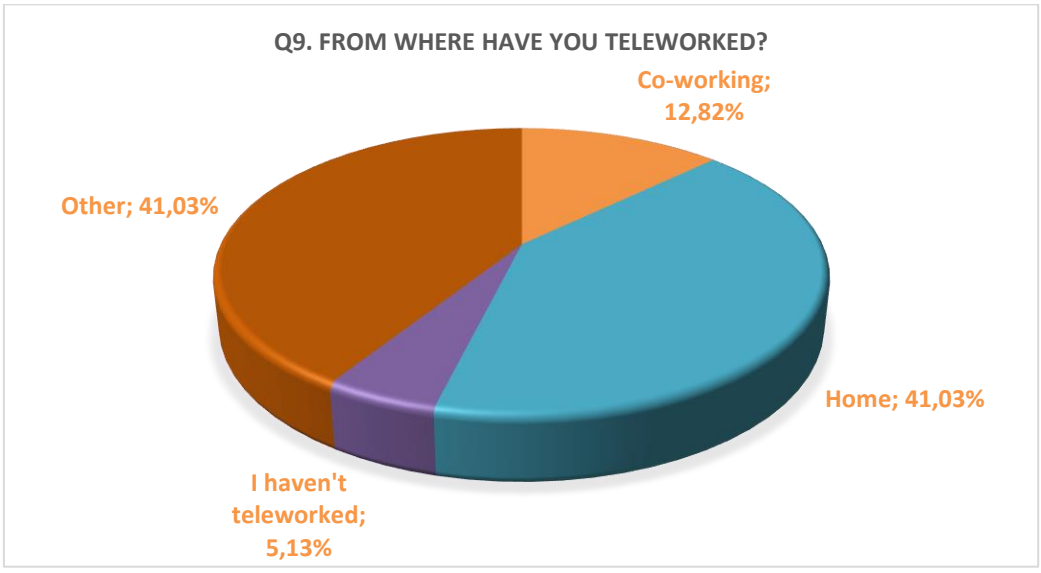
2.2. Teleworking adoption.

Image 4.1.1. Experience in teleworking for VET Learners from Italy



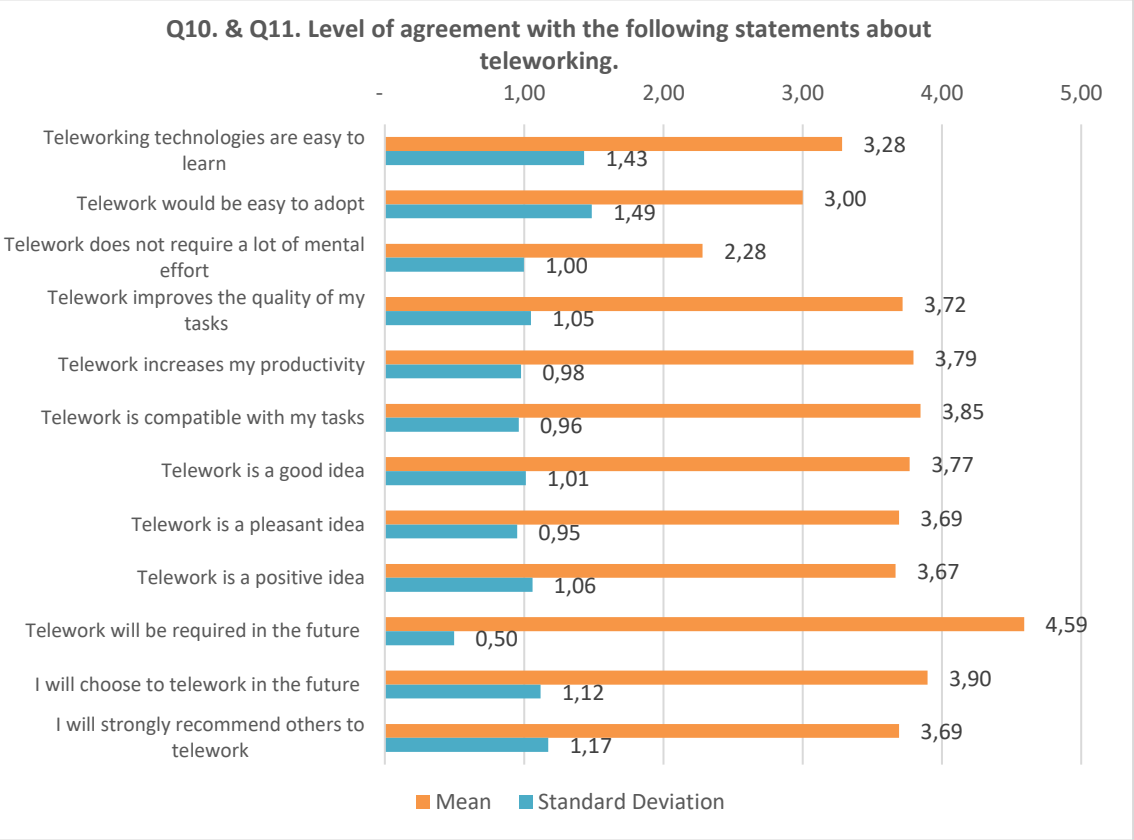
The figure for teleworking interesting: the same percentage of 41.03% is recorded for both the 2 to 3 years option and the less than 1 year option. This data points to a lack of diffusion of telework that only in recent years has begun to be adopted by companies as a response to cutting infrastructure costs, then boosted by the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Image 4.1.2. From where have VET Learners from Italy teleworked?



The preferred location for smart working remains home, while other participants selected "Other." Regarding the "Other" option, mixed formulas can be considered which involve attending more than one of the proposed places or other places that are not properly used for work.

Image 4.1.3. Teleworking attitudes of VET Learners from Italy

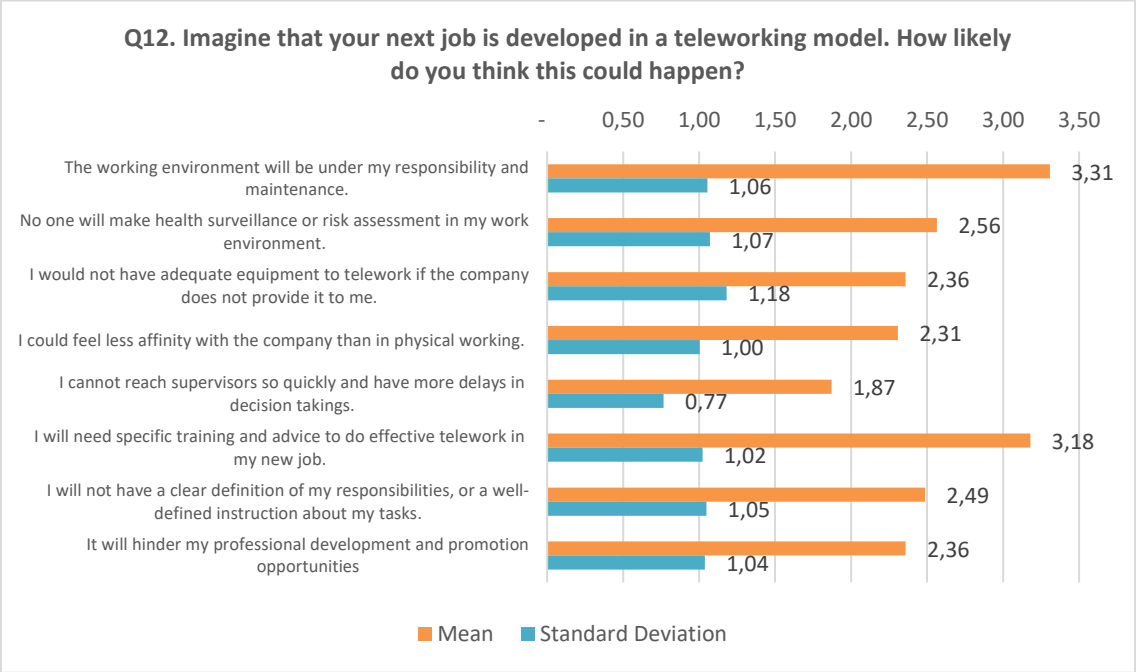


The sample revealed a rather positive attitude towards smart working, generally considering it as a good and pleasant idea. Interestingly, the average shows that the sample believes that smart working will be very popular in the future. This statement is strongly consistent across all respondents, with even those who are most sceptical about the adoption of smart working recognising that it will become increasingly popular.

Conversely, the sample was less consistent in their assessment of the simplicity of smart working adoption and the ease of learning the technologies: while the mean reports a neutral result, the standard deviation shows that some results lean towards the extremes of the liking scale.

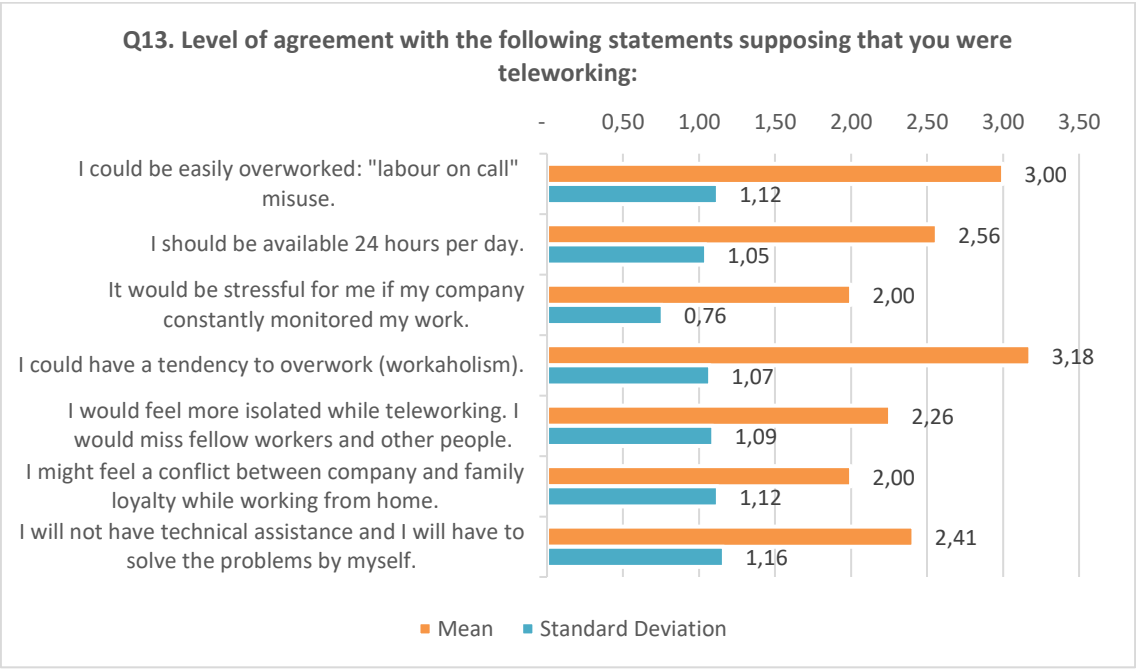
2.3. Teleworking barriers

Image 4.1.4. Teleworking beliefs of VET Learners from Italy



From the analysis of these answers, the average of the answers would indicate a rather confident attitude towards the evolution of digital work dynamics. On average, it is considered unlikely that there will be no relationship with supervisors or that the relationship with the company will disappear. On the other hand, it is more likely that specific training is required to carry out one's tasks in smart working and that one must be responsible for it.

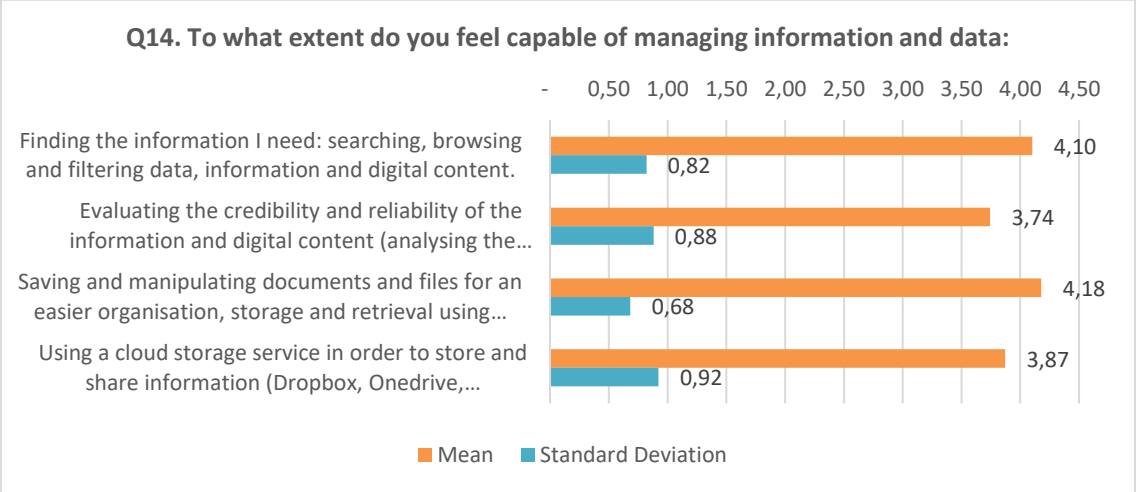
Image 4.1.5. Teleworking barriers of VET Learners from Italy



In these question the attitude of the sample is neutral towards the possibility of becoming work slave or to develop a work dependence addiction, by the way it must be highlighted that the standard deviation in these case goes over the 1, so some answers are really far from the media registered. Probably the neutrality of the attitude dealt with the impossibility to value which will be the real work conditions. The sample is also quite sure that they won't develop conflict in family caused by the smartworking.

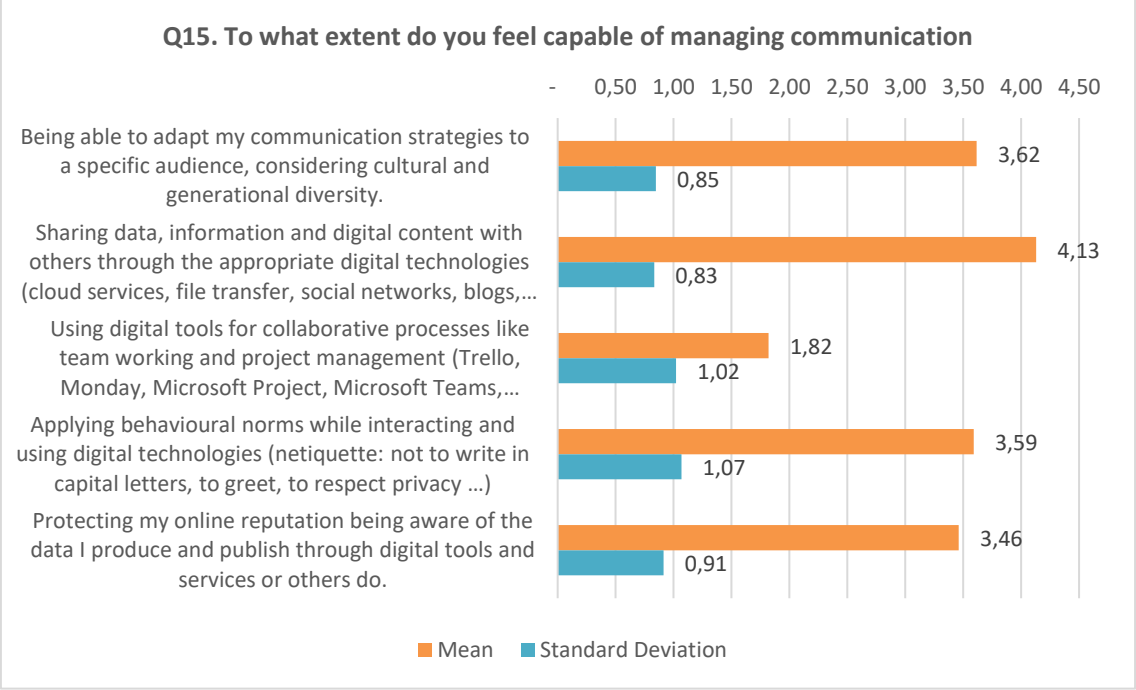
2.4. Digital skills for teleworking.

Image 4.1.6. Information and data capability of VET Learners from Italy



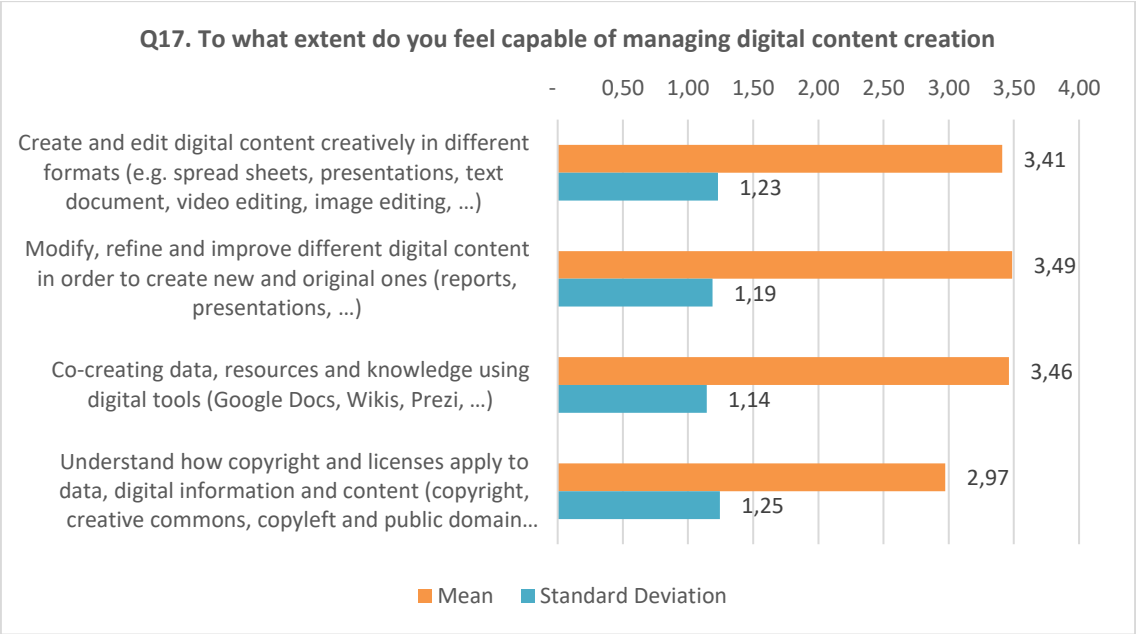
According to this statistic in our sample, the participants have a good knowledge in searching and manipulating data and files, but on the other hand they are not really sure to be really able in evaluating the sources they use.

Image 4.1.7. Communication capability of VET Learners from Italy



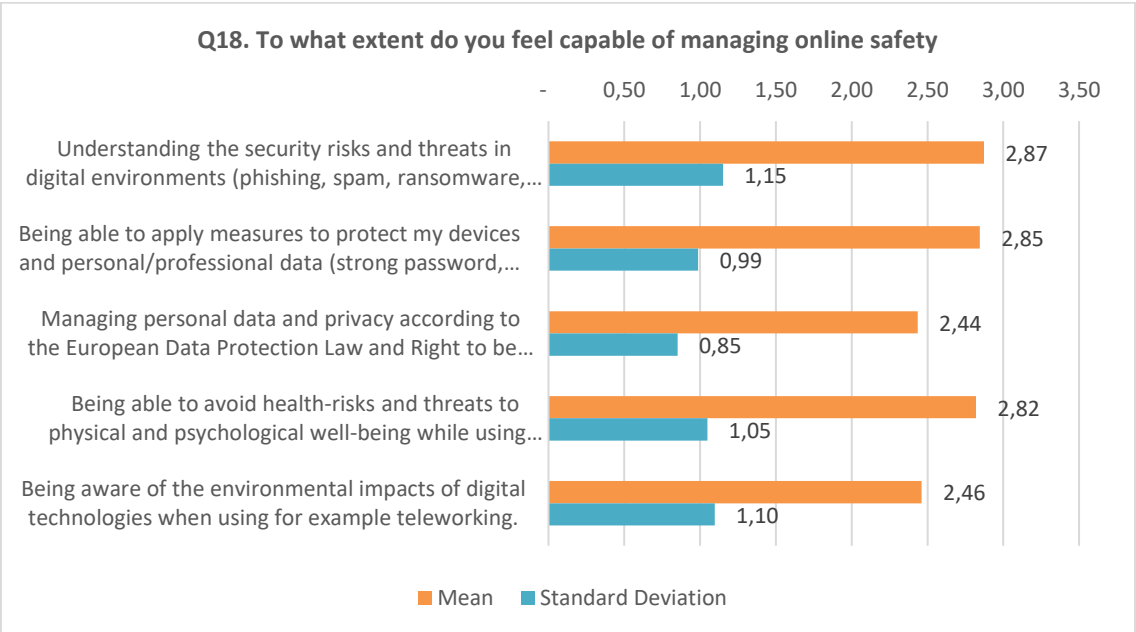
The participants are good in communicate and sharing information with others, but on the other they have not knowledge on using project management tools.

Image 4.1.8. Digital content creation capability of VET Learners from Italy



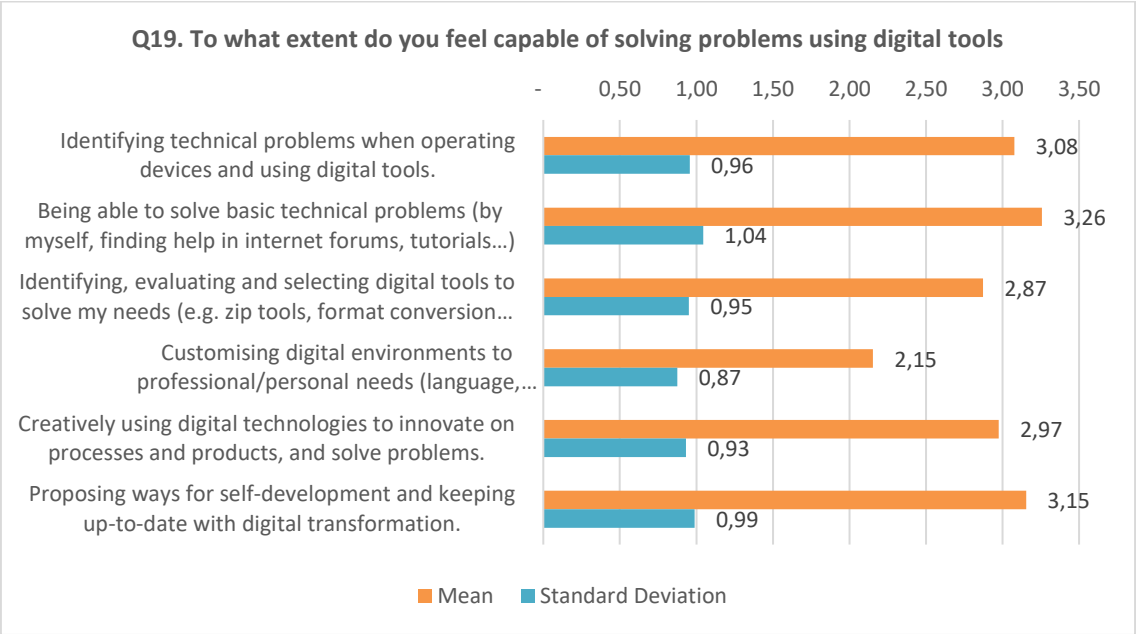
In this case the media show a quite good diffuse capacity in creating digital media contents, by the way the standard deviation demonstrate that the registered answers are not homogeneous among them. This can be explained with a distinction between older participants belonging to the 50-59 range and the younger participants who are for sure more confident in using tools for media contents creation.

Image 4.1.9. Online Safety capability of VET Learners from Italy



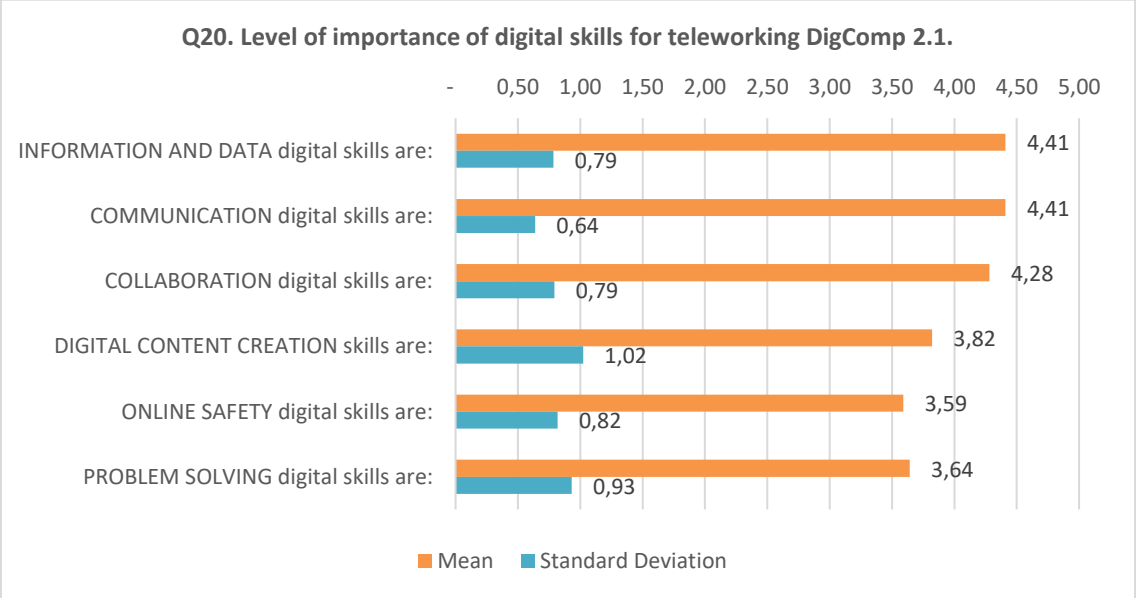
In this case, the average shows a lower familiarity of the sample in field of cyber security, in fact they are not capable of understanding which risks they run on internet. The lower average regards the managing of personal data and privacy according the GDPR law.

Image 4.1.10. Problem solving capability of VET Learners from Italy



The graphics show that our sample is able to recognize and solve some basic problems in order to continue their work, probably with the auxilium of tutorial and online guide, but are not able to apply more complex procedures.

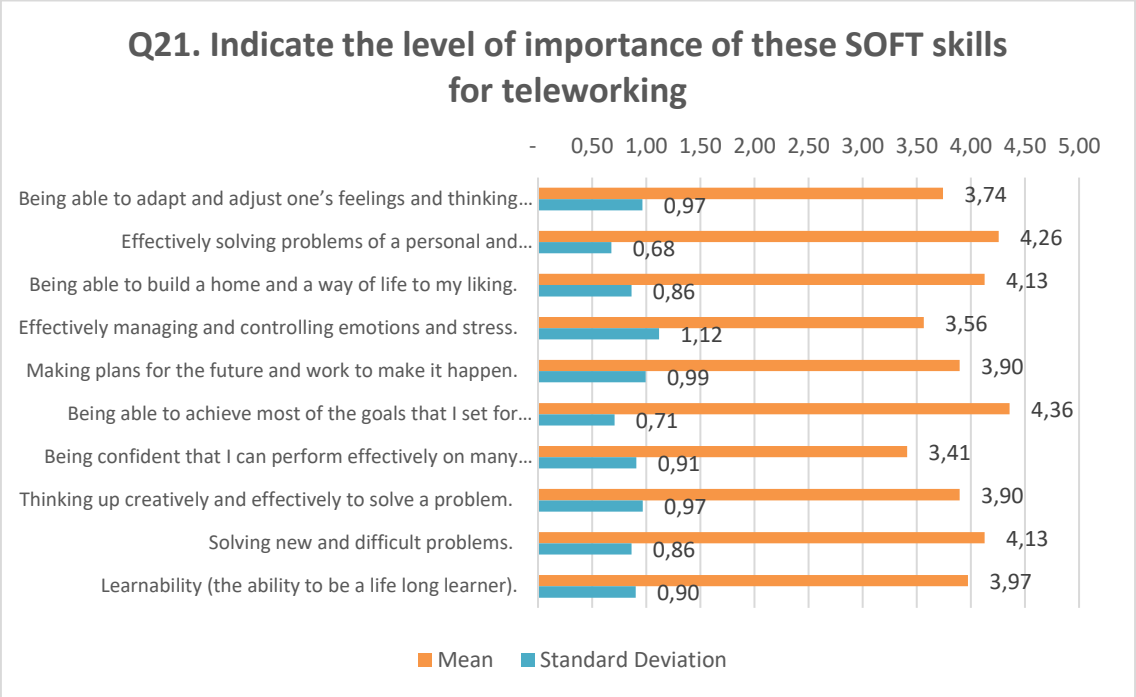
Image 4.1.11. Level of importance of digital skills of VET Learners from Italy



The graphics show that according to our sample all the proposed skills are important with a particular attention to “Information and Data”, “Communication” and “Collaboration”. This focusing can be justified by the diffuse habit to work with documents, files and in cooperation with others through communication tools.

2.5. Soft skills for teleworking.

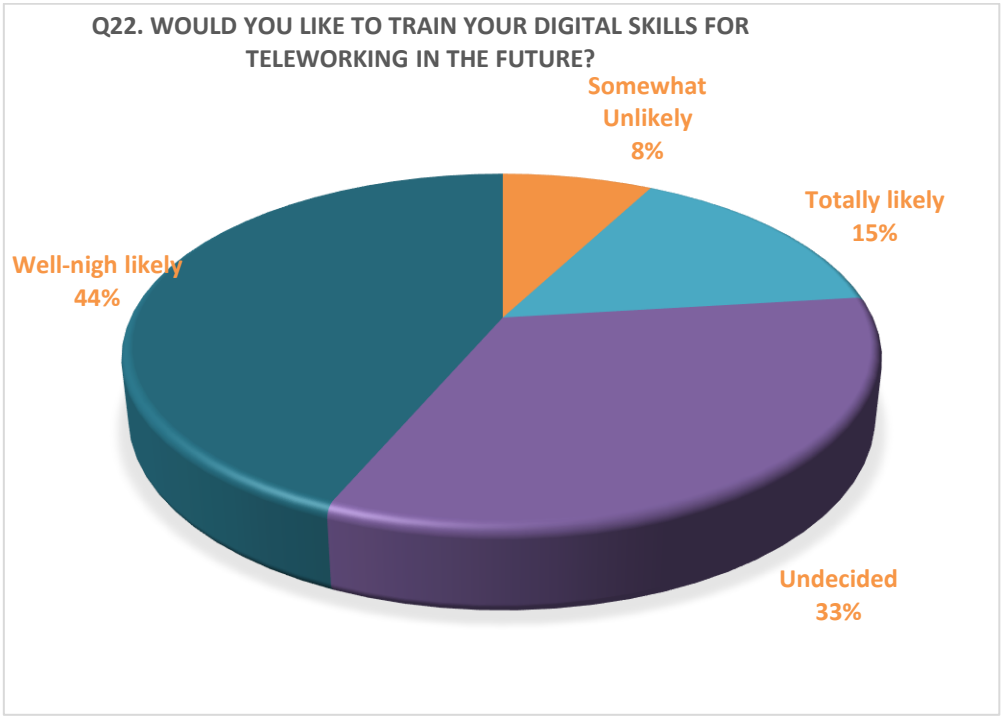
Image 4.1.12. Level of importance of soft skills of VET Learners from Italy



All the proposed soft skills are considered important and the sample opinions are highly homogeneous. Particularly important are considered the capacity of solving problems, to create a balance between work and personal life and the ability of setting goals.

2.6. Digital skills training.

Image 4.1.13. Interest on training digital skills of VET Learners from Italy



A good percentage of participants want to increase digital skills, and the another one is undecided. This answer can be justified by the method to be used for this implementation.

3. VET Providers questionnaire

3.1. Respondent's profile.

Some initial questions were asked to respondents as to get a better image of the profile of teachers and providers who participated to the research.

50% of the interviewers are Italian male and the other 50% are Italian women.

About 1/3 of the interviewers belongs to 30-49 years old and another 1/3 belongs to 50-59 years old. The rest belongs to under 30 and over 60. This data shall be taken care of during the analyse of results, as the young age of respondents might bias the results regarding the use of new technologies. However, it can be contrasted by the next answers about the level of education and the years of working experience.

All respondents were educated, with an important part having a PhD degree (70%) or a Master's degree (32%).

About the 50% of them belong to a university.

About the 50% has got more than 4years experience as teacher and about 50% less.

Most of them taught in different kind of schools or Institutes.

Regarding the acquisition of digital skills, most of participants have learned by themselves about the use of digital tools. Surprisingly, most of the participants have experience in teleworking since long time so underlying that they were already familiar to teleworking opportunity.

Summarising:

1) Nationality: **41** Italians

2) Sex: **21** Men, **20** Women, Their profile was rather equilibrated in terms of gender.

3) Age: **5** < 30years old; **16** 30-49 years; **14** 50-59 years; **6** 60-69 years

4) Educational level: **2** High School; **8** Batchelor; **17** Ph Degree; **14** Master's degree

5) Organization: **10** Training Center; **13** VET School; **18** University

6) Teaching experience: **10** < 1y; **12** between 2-3y; **7** between 4-10y; **12** +11Y;

7) Level of education taught: **14** Secondary School: **32** Vocational School; **27** High School; **33** University. The majority of respondents teaches to more than one level / profile of students.

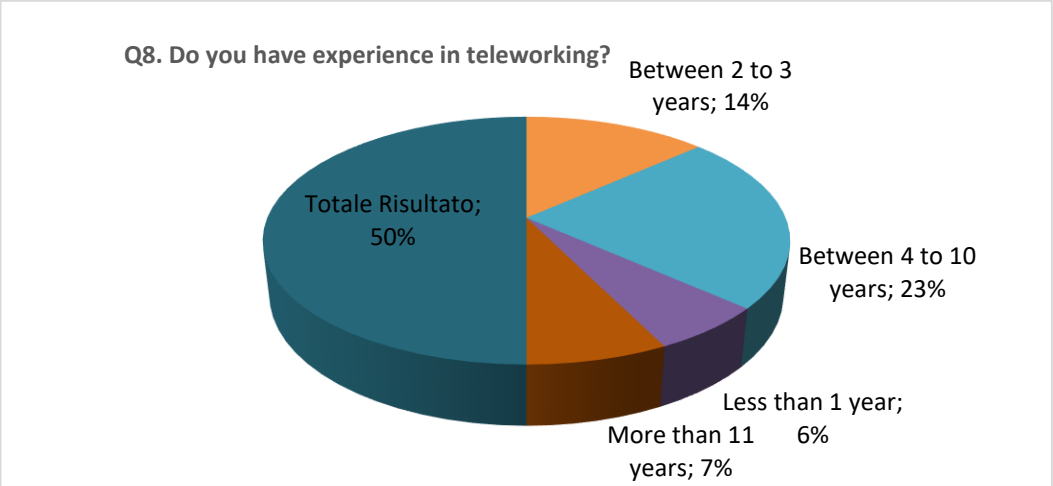
To conclude, the dominant profile obtained to the survey among teachers and provider VET would be a women/men aged about 50 years old, with a university degree and currently having a teaching experience since more than 11 years and having a teaching experience in different contexts with high digital technologies skills competence mostly acquired by his/her own and who is totally likely and agree to train to promote his/her students' digital

skills. Among others, “Learnability” is ranked above the rest of soft skills, and has been considered the most important soft skill for teleworking.

3.2. Digital skills for teleworking.

The next set of questions was focused on specific competences, with the objective of detecting eventual gaps of training to better prepare people for teleworking. Participants were asked to auto-evaluate their capacity in different areas of competences, in particular soft skills.

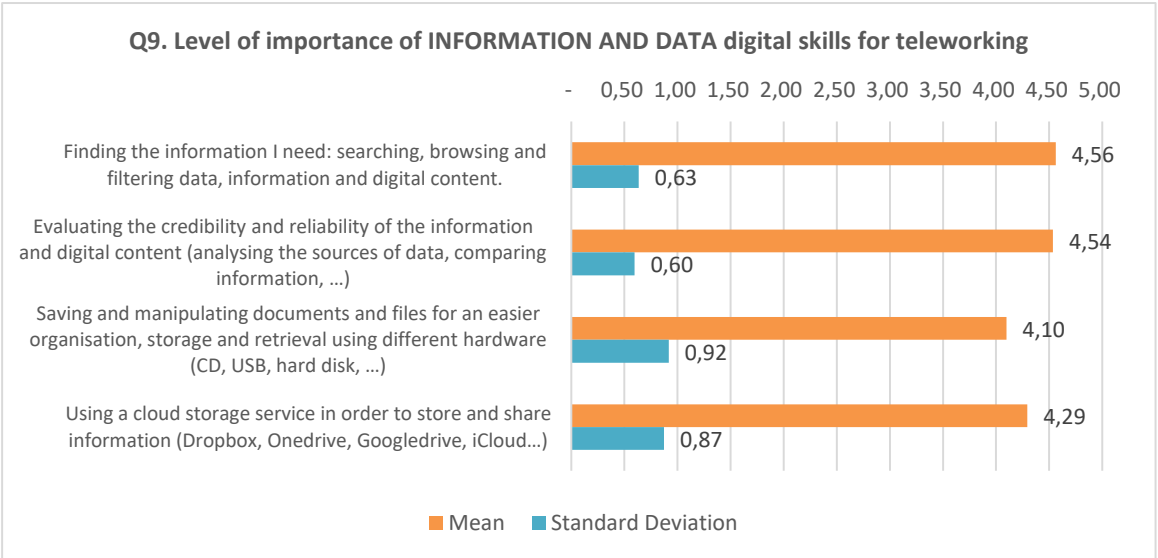
Image 4.1.14. Experience in teleworking for VET Providers from Italy



Q8 Most of them has got a 4-10 years' experience in teleworking.

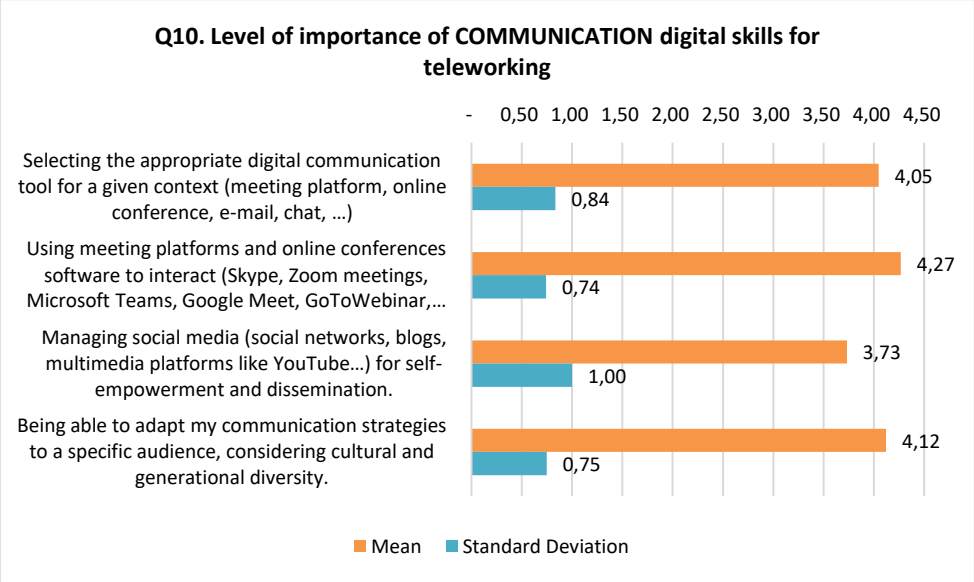
According to the Q9 graph, all of the interviewers believe “Finding the information need: searching, browsing and filtering data, information and digital content.” and “Evaluating the credibility and reliability of the information of digital content (analysing the sources of data, comparing information, …)” of INFORMATION AND DATA digital skills for teleworking equally very important almost reaching the same mean and deviation.

Image 4.1.15. Information and data importance for VET Providers from Italy



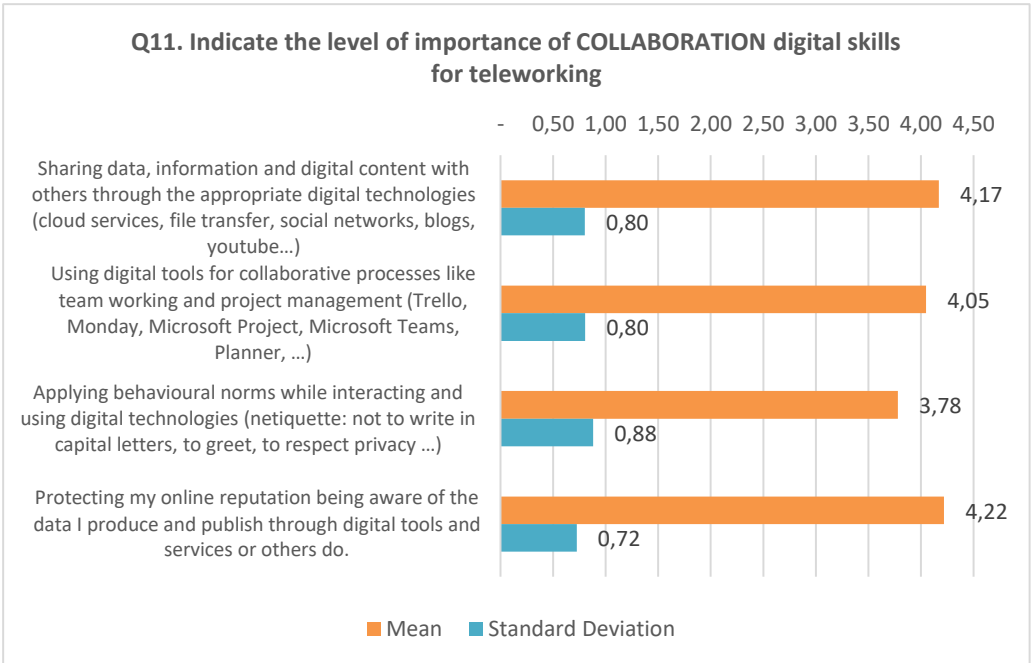
Looking at Q10, speaking about digital skills for teleworking "Using meeting platforms and conference software to interact (Skype, Zoom meeting, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, GoToWebinar, WebEx …)" is considered as much interesting as "Being able to adapt my communication strategies to a specific audience, considering the cultural generational diversity".

Image 4.1.16. Communication importance for VET Providers from Italy



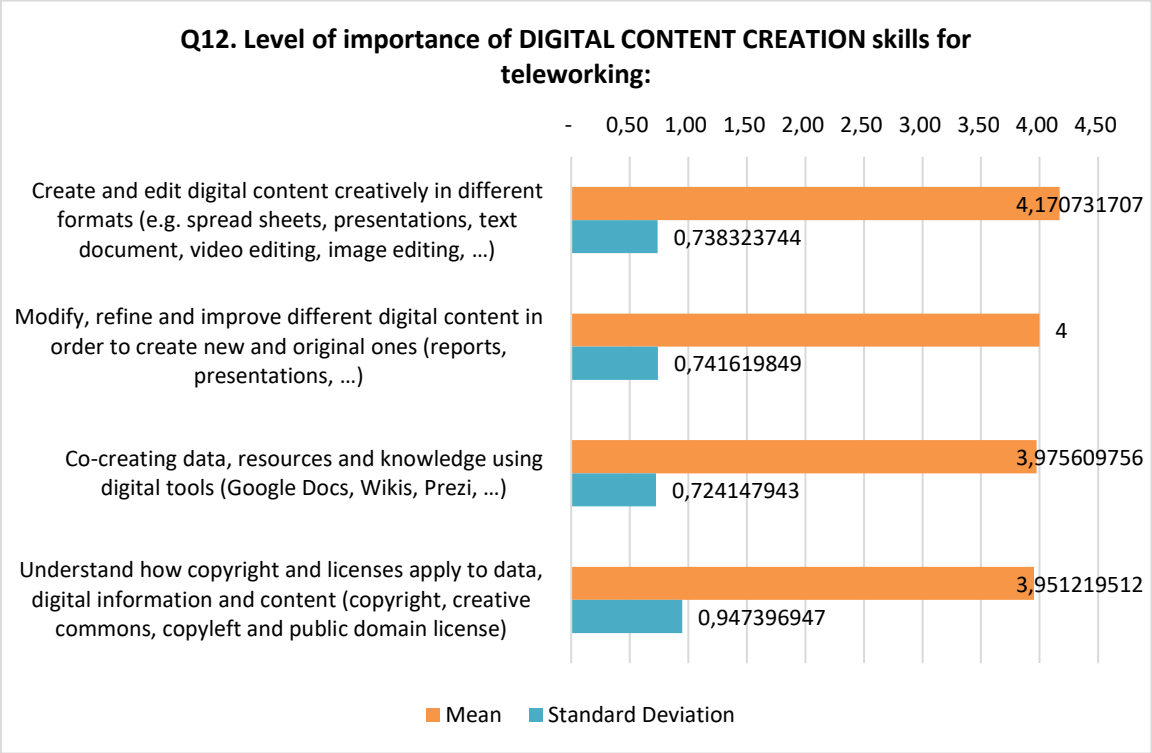
In Q11, about the importance of Collaboration digital skills for teleworking "Sharing data, information and digital content with others through appropriate digital technologies (cloud services, file transfer, social network, blog, youtube …) and "Protecting my online reputation being aware of the data I produce and publish through digital tools and services or others" show the higher appreciation level with less deviation.

Image 4.1.17. Collaboration importance for VET Providers from Italy



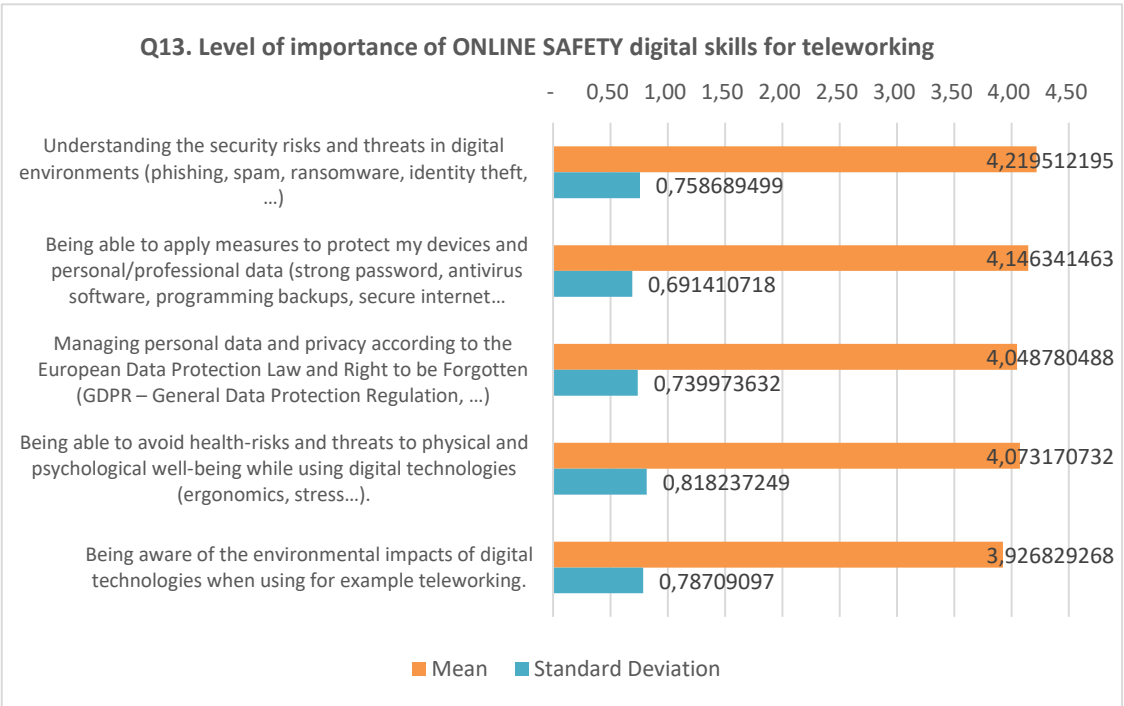
As concerns Q12 about the DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION skills for teleworking, the most meaningful answer is “Create and edit content digitally creatively in different formats (e.g. sheets of calculation, presentations, text documents, editing video, image editing, …).

Image 4.1.18. Digital Content Creation importance for VET Providers from Italy



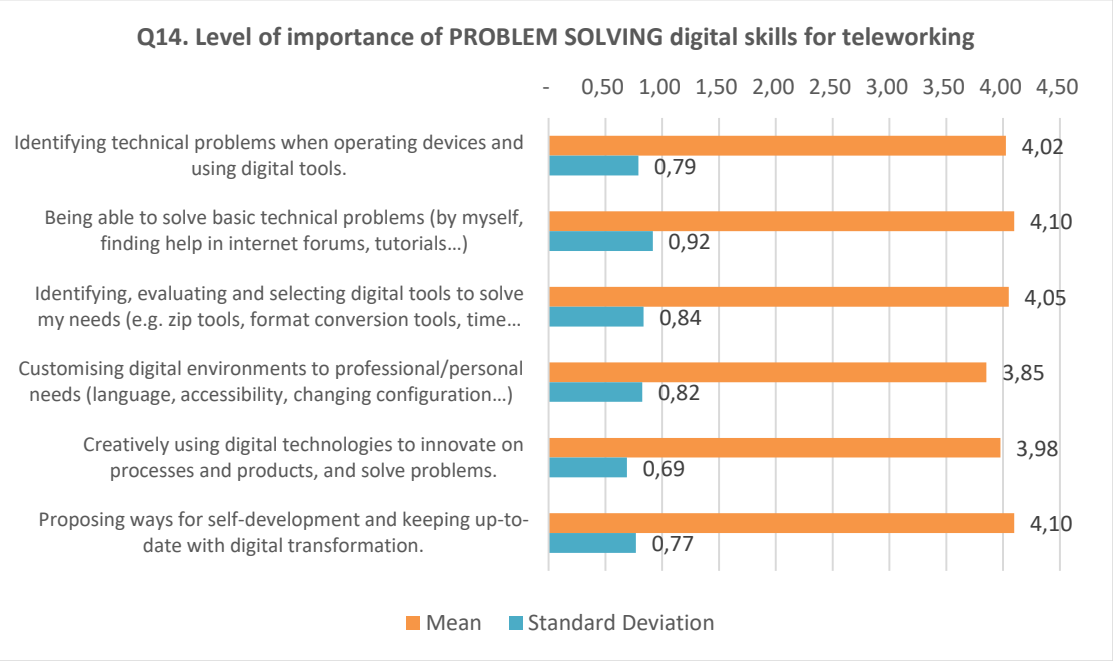
Looking at Q13 “Being able to apply measures to protect devices and personal/professional data…” has reached the best mean and the best deviation so indicating that it was the most considered answer by the majority of the interviewers.

Image 4.1.19. Online Safety importance for VET Providers from Italy



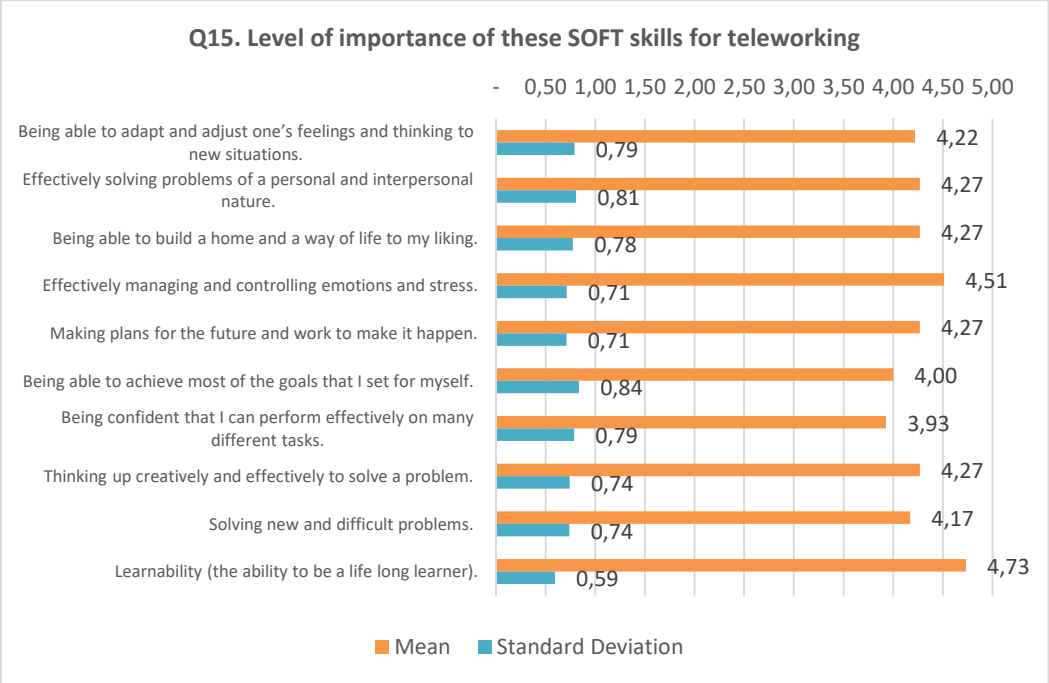
In Q14 the most important level of skills concerning problem solving is to be able to solve basic technical problems on his own. So, we have the best answer with the less deviation in "Identify technical problems when operating devices and the use digital tools."

Image 4.1.20. Problem Solving importance for VET Providers from Italy



Q15 About the importance of the soft skills in teleworking, the interviewers believe "Learnability (the ability to be a life long learner)" as the most important while "Being able to achieve most of the goals I set for myself" as the less meaningful.

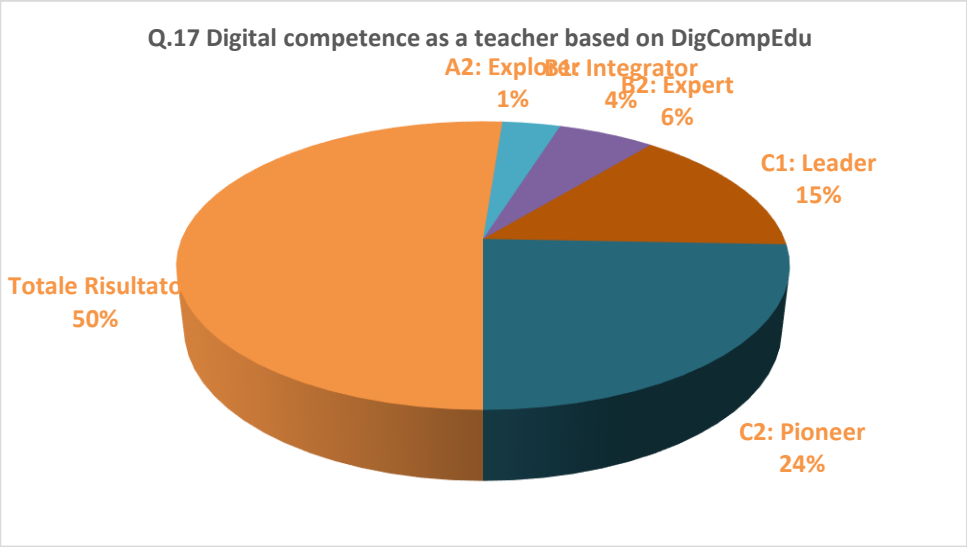
Image 4.1.21. Soft skills importance for VET Providers from Italy



3.3. Digital skills for education.

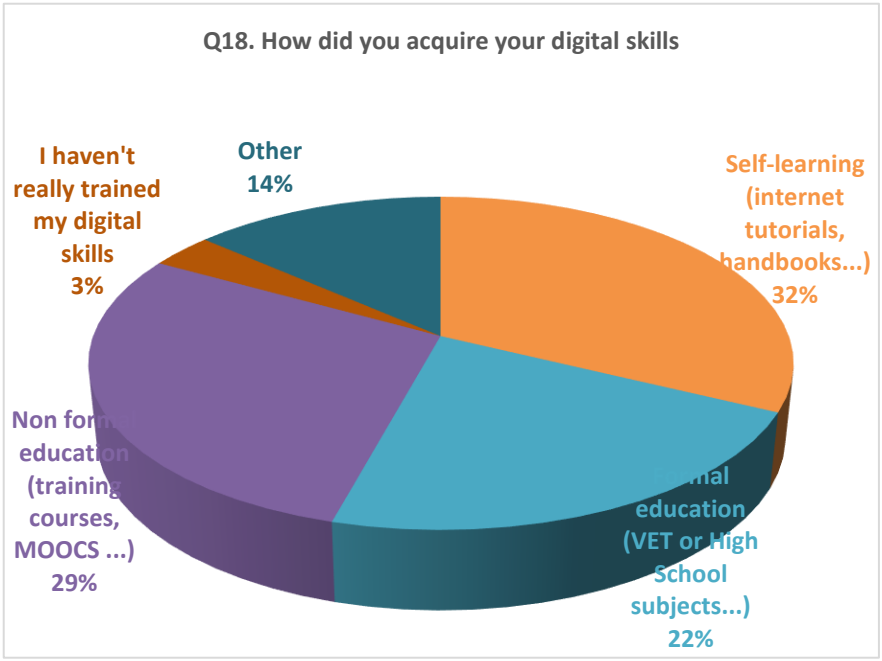
Q17 About the 50% of the auditors believe to be a "Pioneer" as regards his digital competences as teacher.

Image 4.1.22. Digital competence as teacher (DigCompEdu) for VET Providers from Italy



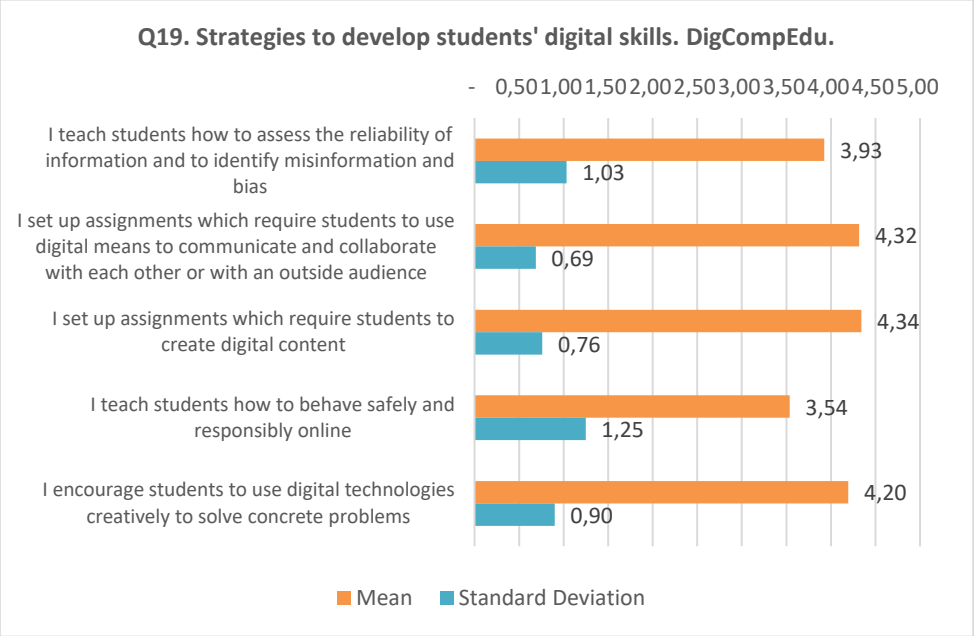
Q18 And the 32% declares to have acquired competences by Self-learning & non-Formal education.

Image 4.1.23. Digital skills acquisition for VET Providers from Italy



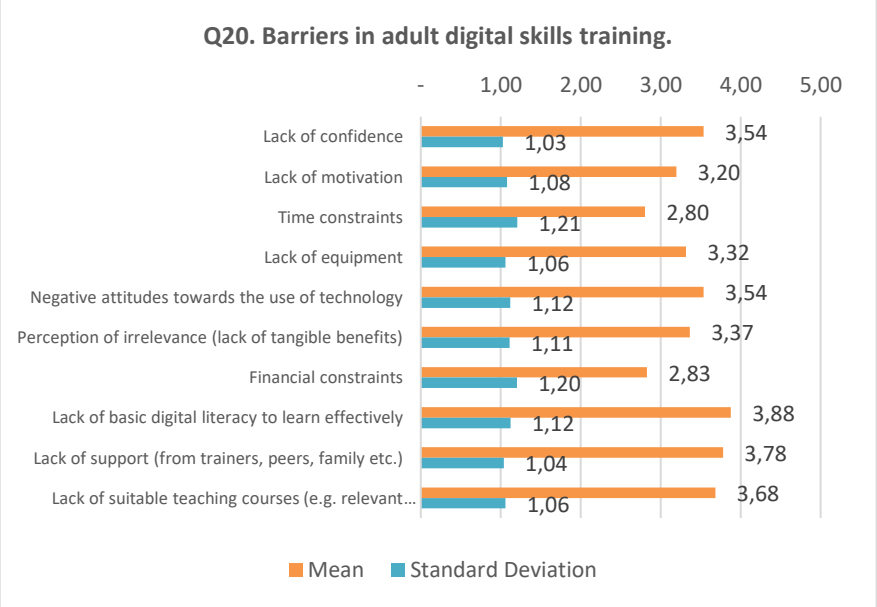
Q19 Enquiring about "to what extent do you use the following strategies to develop your students' digital skills" the option with less deviation and high percentage is "I set up assignments which require students to use digital means to communicate e collaborate with each other or with an external audience"

Image 4.1.24. Strategies to develop digital skills for VET Providers from Italy



Q20 About the most important barriers you have encountered in adult digital skills training, looking at the deviation, the two most meaningful answers are the "lack of confidence" and "the lack of support (from trainers, peers, family, etc.)

Image 4.1.25. Barriers in adult digital skills training for VET Providers from Italy

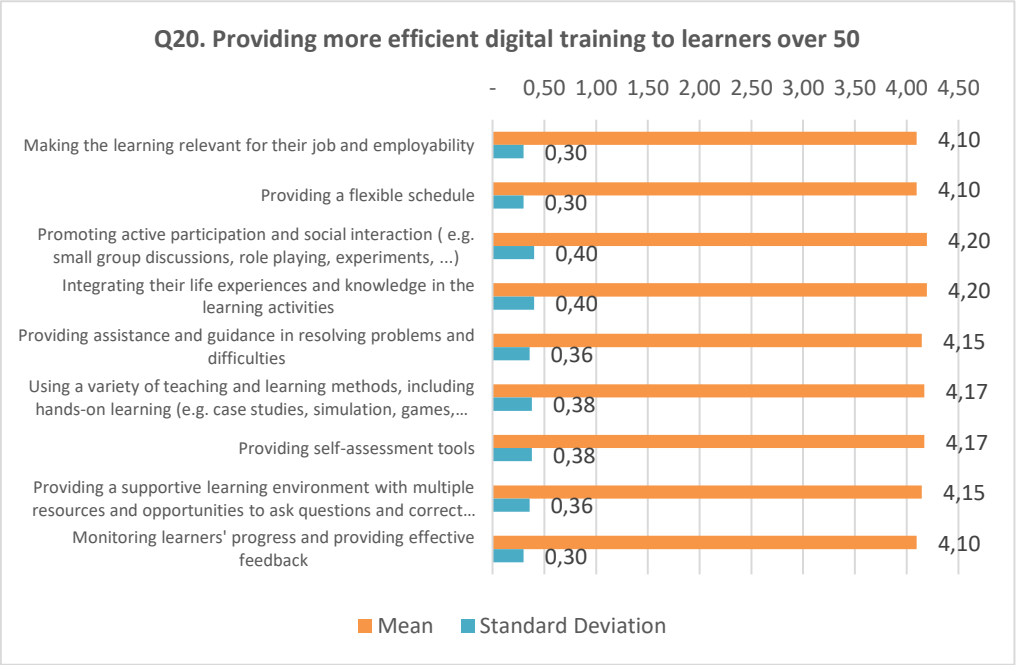


Q21

Concerning how could we provide a more efficient digital training to learners over 50 looking at the graph all the possible options have been highly appreciated and voted. In fact we can register a slight deviation as well as mean. In particular, the two best percentage can be

found in these answers “Making learning relevant to their work and employability” and “Monitoring the learners’ progress and provide effective feedback”

Image 4.1.26. Strategies to provide efficient digital training for VET Providers from Italy

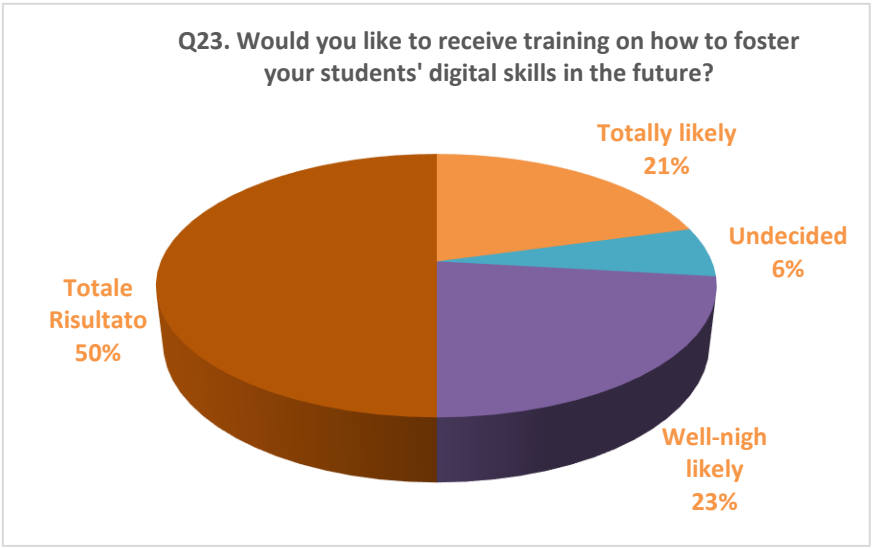


3.4. Digital skills training for education.

Q22 Training courses has been the most used answer concerning any teaching technique that provides effective digital training for students over the age of 50.

Q23 Almost the 100% of the interviewers are well-nigh likely or totally likely to foster their students’ digital skills in the future.

Image 4.1.27. Training for VET Providers from Italy



3. Conclusions

The survey conducted by EURO-NET among Italians reached a large sample covering the expectation in terms of profile.

The questionnaires have been designed and developed in order to identify the real needs of these two groups and the demanded skills, especially digital ones, that the current conditions impose them to be trained into.

Even if teleworking is a recent experience due to Covid pandemic, for most of the interviewers, in particular for providers target group (TG1 of Provider VET), it was a well-known possibility of working which might be associated in many cases to the new way of working under shut down of the country during the COVID pandemic. Teachers and providers have got high digital skills competences and consider themselves as pioneer. Learners and Employees are less positive judging their skills with a particular concentration on the ones that concern with everyday work such as manipulating files and sharing them with others, instead they aren't so good in recognizing the risks present on web and internet.

Both the sample consider really important to have a good knowledge in communication, management and collaboration in order to well-exploit teleworking.

Speaking about the level in digital and soft skills needed to telework, in general, all skills are considered as important as well as managing communication and collaboration. "Learnability (the ability to be a lifelong learner)" has been considered as the most important soft skills for VET providers, while the most important for learners and employees is the "being able to achieve most of the goals that I set for my-self". The most important level of skills concerning problem solving is to be able to solve basic technical problems on his own. So "Identify technical problems when operating devices and the use digital tools" is the meaningful skills to have. For Learners and Employees also problem solving is considered one of the most important skills to have, but regarding the interpersonal and personal sphere.

"Making learning relevant to their work and employability" and "Monitoring the learners' progress and provide effective feedback" are the two best answers considering how could we provide a more efficient digital training to learners over 50.

Several strategies were proposed to develop students' digital skills, and all were considered as relevant to be implemented by trainers.

Most participants from both groups say that they mostly learnt through own channels and self-learning (internet, tutorials, handbooks, etc.), but also though non formal and formal education. Also, in both groups, about 60% of respondents stated that they would like to receive more training in the field and more support by teachers or parents.

These results are perfectly in line with many the state of the art of the Telegrow project to enhance the skills and the training methods of VET trainers and offer support for the digital integration of older employees in the teleworking environment and for this we are very confident that the project's goals will be achieved. The TeleGrow's aim is to create a teletraining and teleworking environment, inclusive and accessible to all, which will maximize the efficiency of the users while safeguarding public health.

SURVEY REPORT (France)

by (E-Seniors), June 2021

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4.2.

1. Introduction

In France, E-Seniors distributed two surveys dedicated to VET learners and employees as well as VET providers. E-Seniors used its own channels and local networks by proposing the questionnaires through a newsletter and direct emails sent to contacts and stakeholders used to work and collaborate with E-Seniors. The association succeeded in collecting 30 answers from learners and employees and 34 answers from VET providers and trainers.

2. VET Learner's and employee's questionnaire

2.1. Respondents' profile.

1. General profile

The respondents of this survey are VET learners living in France for 96,7% while 3,3% are living in Italy. The gender repartition is quite balanced since 56,67% are women and 43,33% are men. Regarding the age range, the majority are aged between 60 and 69 years old (36.67%). Then the second largest group over 70 years old represents 30% of the answers. The age range between 50 and 59 years old represents the third group with 26,67% of the respondents. The last group less represented in this survey is between 30-49 years old (6,67%).

2. Education and occupation

The respondents also filled in their level of education. Among the answers received, 26,67% have a Master degree, 23,33% followed vocational training and 20% have a Bachelor degree. Also, 13,3% followed a secondary education and 13,3% achieved a high school level. Only 3,3% have a PhD degree.

Among the occupations proposed to the respondents, the majority is retired (46,67%). The people still active and working represents 36,67%. The volunteers reflect 10% of the respondents. Finally, the people in housework or unemployed represent both 3,33%.

3. Acquisition of digital skills

At the question, "How did you acquire your digital skills?", the respondents mostly declare that they didn't follow any specific training course (62,5%), and 61,22% say that to be self-

taught and 61,22% say they had a non-formal education. Also, 53,57% declared that they have a formal education on digital skills through a VET school or a high school.

Regarding their work experience, we can see that 80% of the learners have more than 11 years of experience. Then 13,33% have between 4 and 10 years of experience.

2.2. Teleworking adoption.

1. Experience in teleworking

To the question related to experience in teleworking, 50% of the respondents in France mention that they don't have any. Then, 23,3% declared having between 2 to 3 years of experience (figure 1). Among those having the opportunity to telework, 40% say that they did it from home and 16,6% were in another place like co-working space etc. (figure 2) These statements can be seen in the pie charts below.

Image 4.2.1. Experience in teleworking for VET Learners from France

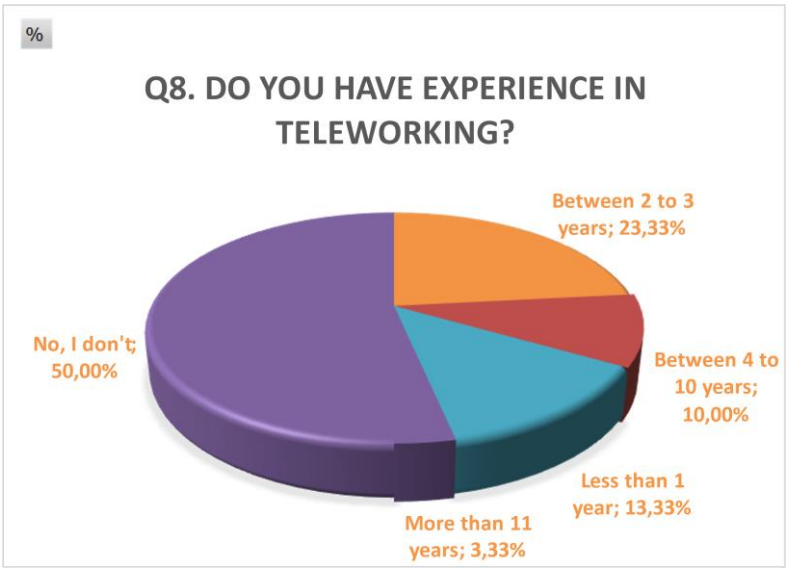
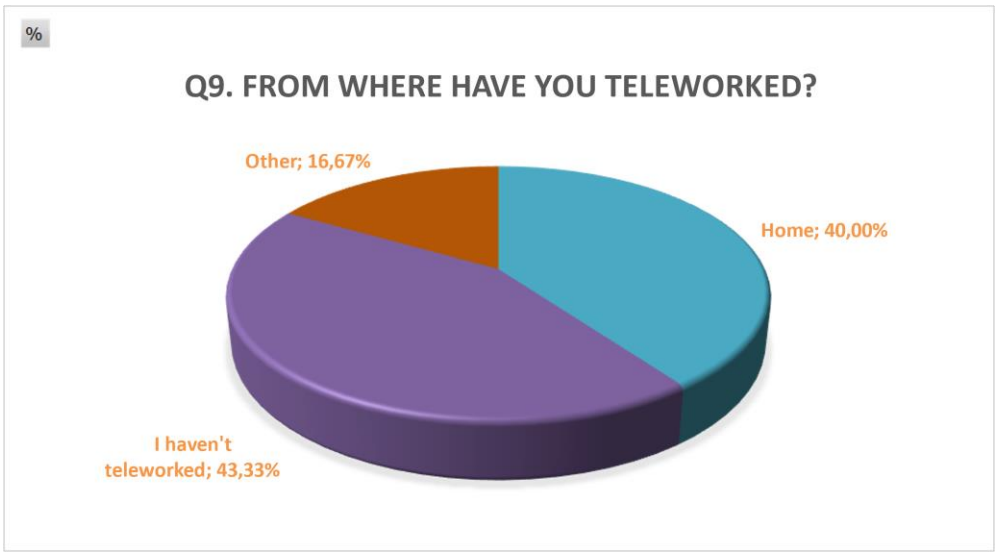


Image 4.2.2. From where have VET Learners from Italy teleworked?



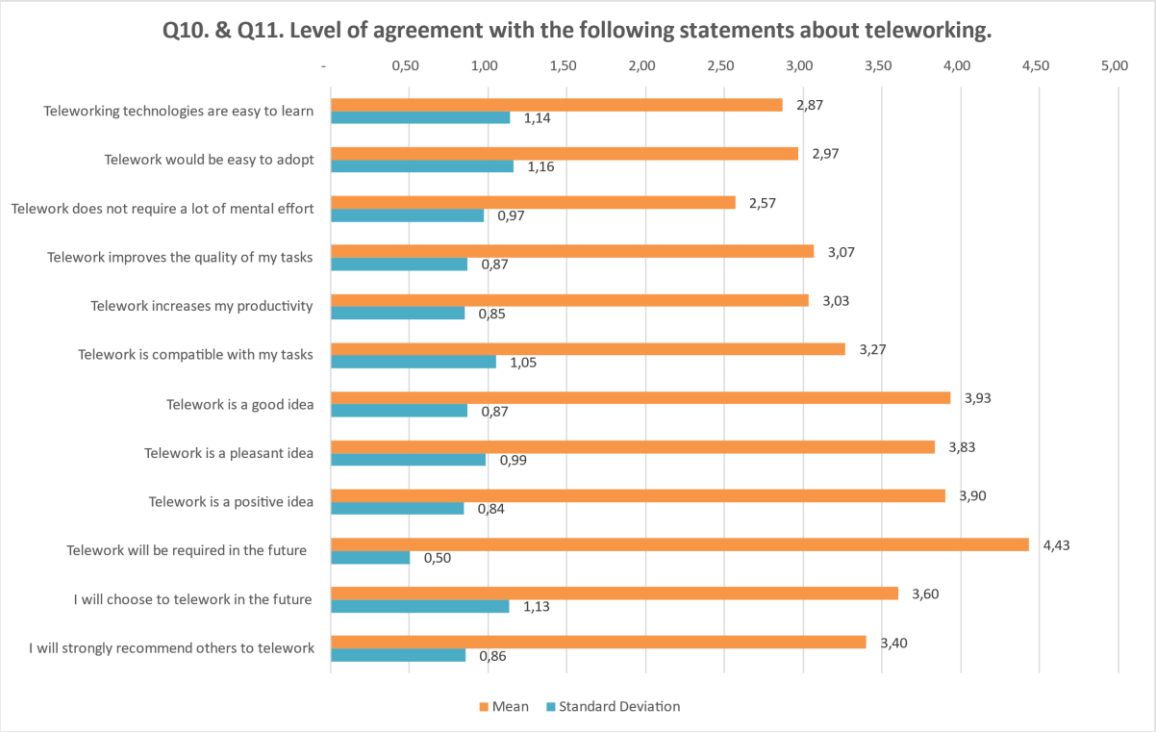
2. General opinion about teleworking

Through the statements presented in the graph below (figure 3), the respondents are asked to give their general opinion about teleworking. To the statement "Teleworking technologies are easy to learn", the answers are quite balanced. More than a third of them declare that they agree and the same number declare the opposite. Also, according to 36,7% of the participants, teleworking is not so easy to adopt and 46,7% even mention that it requires a lot of mental effort.

The participants mostly agree on the fact that teleworking improves the quality of their tasks (36,7%). The same number are neutral regarding this statement. At the statement "Teleworking increases my productivity", the participants are also quite neutral (40%) while 33,3% agree and 23,3% don't agree. Also, to the question related to the compatibility between teleworking and their own tasks, the respondents are quite neutral (36,7%) or are in agreement at 26,7%.

Moreover, the respondents to this survey mostly agree on the fact that teleworking is a positive and a good idea. The whole panel totally agreed to say that teleworking will be required in the future. More than half of the respondents agree on the fact they will choose teleworking in the future and that they will recommend others to telework.

Image 4.2.3. Teleworking attitudes of VET Learners from France



2.3. Teleworking barriers.

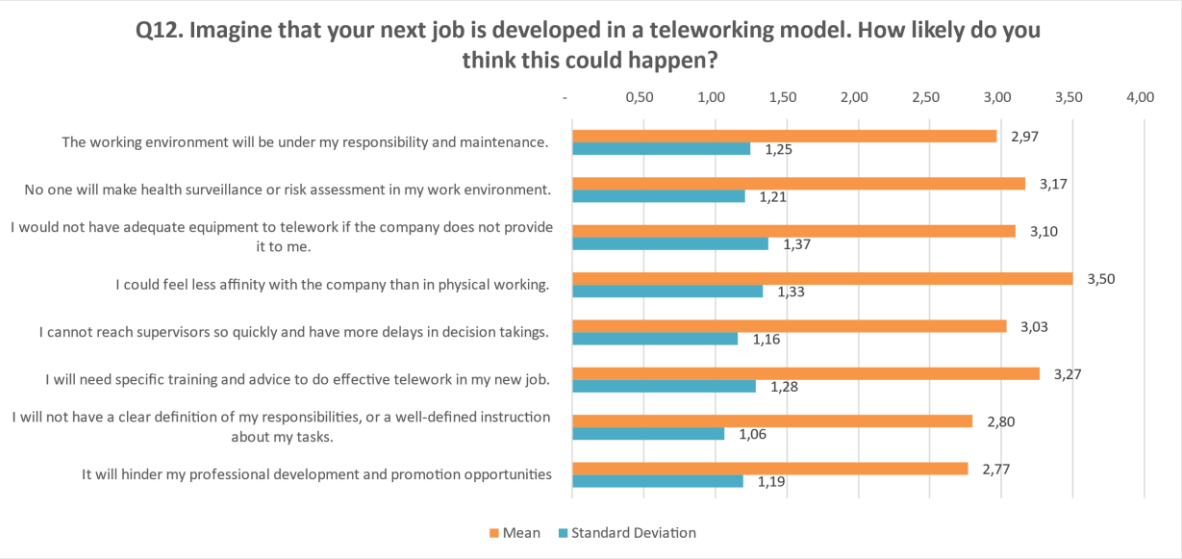
In the questions below, the respondents were asked to answer the potential barriers encountered for teleworking. Among the answers received, more than half of participants disagree on the fact that the working environment will be under their responsibility and maintenance. Around 40% agree with this statement. On the contrary, the majority of the respondents say that "no one will make health surveillance or risk assessment in [their] work environment". Regarding the statement related to equipment available at home, the

answers are quite balanced: some of them say that they will receive the appropriate equipment while others mention that they will not have access to this equipment if the company doesn't provide it.

At the statement "I could feel less affinity with the company than in physical working", the participants mostly agree or even totally agree. Then, the participants give their opinion on the fact that they will not be able to reach their supervisors very quickly and will encounter some delays in decision takings. More than half disagree with this statement and consider that teleworking won't affect their relations with their hierarchy. Moreover, they believe that teleworking won't hinder their professional development and promotion opportunities, and they say that they will receive clear responsibilities and instructions about their tasks.

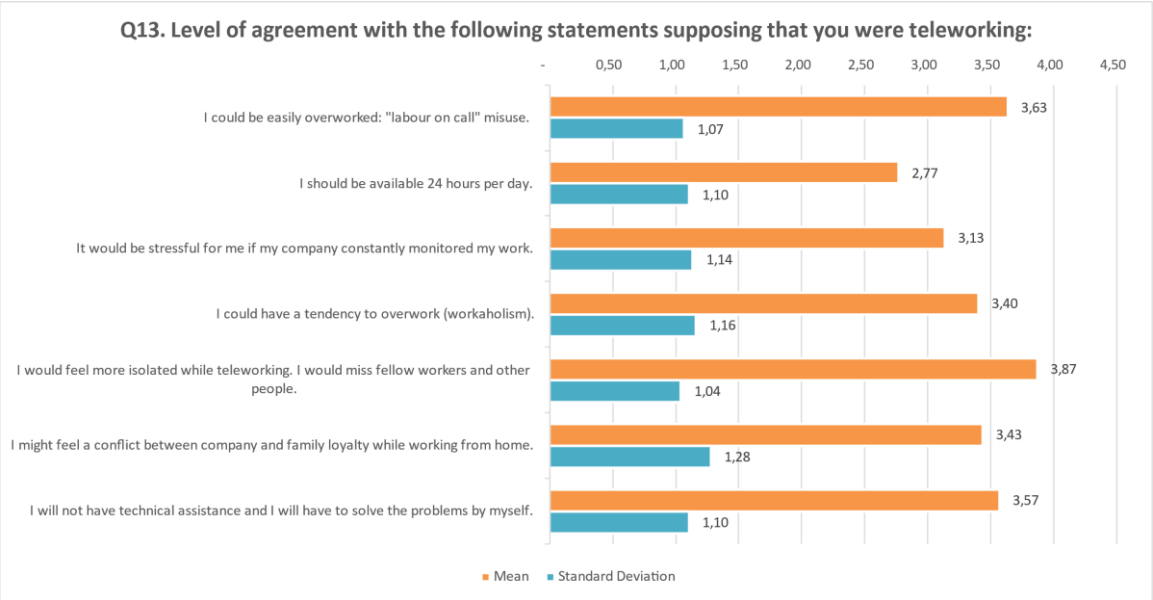
However, the large majority think that they will need specific training and advice in order to telework in an efficient way.

Image 4.2.4. Teleworking beliefs of VET Learners from France



Then, the questionnaire proposes specific statements dedicated to the consequences of teleworking on learners and employees' well-being. More than half of respondents in France declare that they could have a tendency to overwork and to be overworked. They also esteem that they would feel more isolated while teleworking. Also, the majority say that they might feel a conflict between company and family loyalty while they are working from home. However, they mostly disagree with the statement mentioning that they should be available 24 hours per day. Finally, regarding the statement about the impossibility to have technical assistance and solve problems on your own while people are working from home, the answers are quite balanced: one half agree and the second half disagree and consider that they should receive technical support in case of any problems.

Image 4.2.5. Teleworking barriers of VET Learners from France



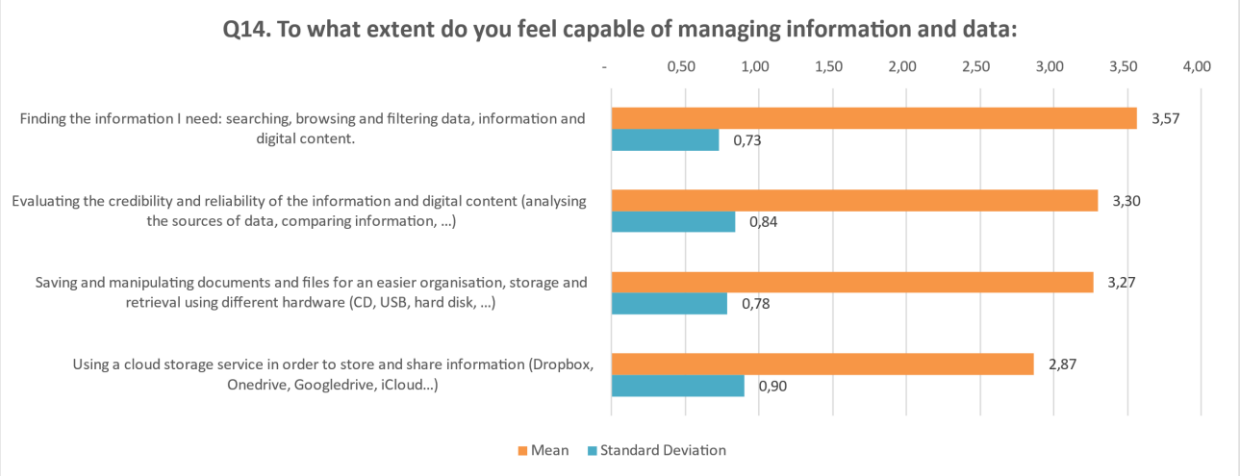
2.4. Digital skills for teleworking.

This section is dedicated to the analysis of the answers received about the digital competences of respondents in a view of teleworking.

1. Digital information and data management

The first statement concerned the digital management of data and information. In this statement, a large majority of participants said that they are able to easily find information they need and they can evaluate the credibility and reliability of it. Also, more than half of the respondents mentioned being capable of saving, storing and handling documents on their digital materials. They are finally quite comfortable in using “cloud storage”.

Image 4.2.6. Information and data capability of VET Learners from France

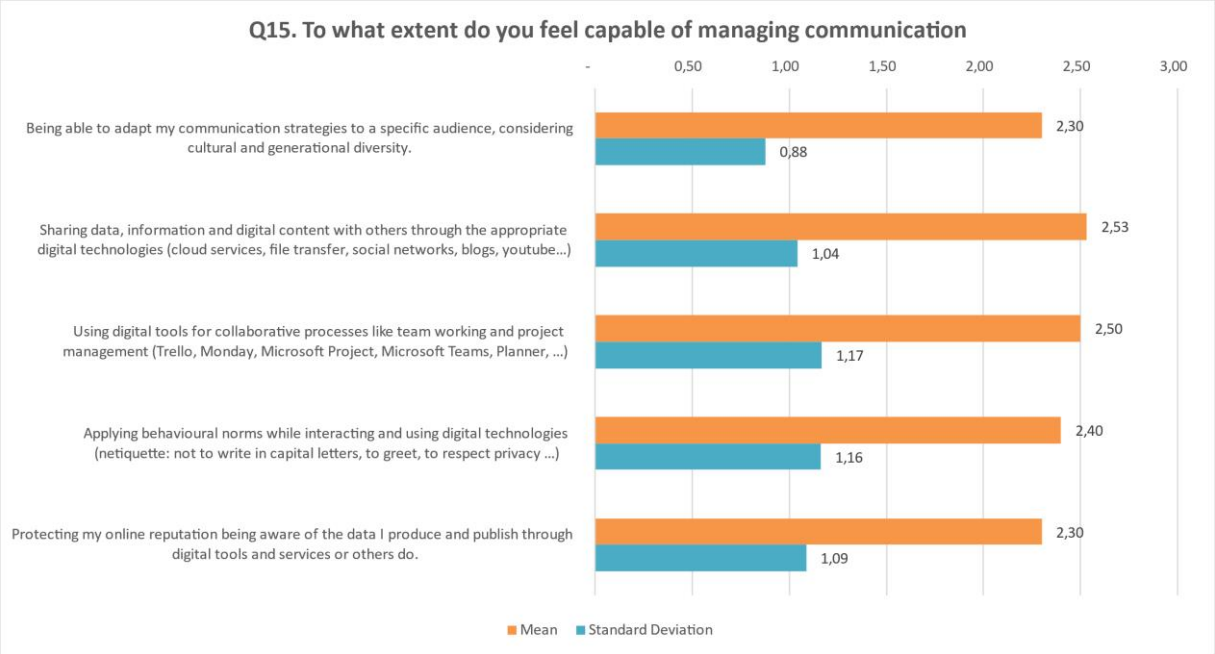


2. Digital communication management

To the statements dedicated to the competences in managing communication issues, the respondents admit that they are not totally able to adapt their communication strategies

to specific audiences and to handle social networks very well. However, they can easily choose a digital communication tool or software for accessing a meeting or a conference.

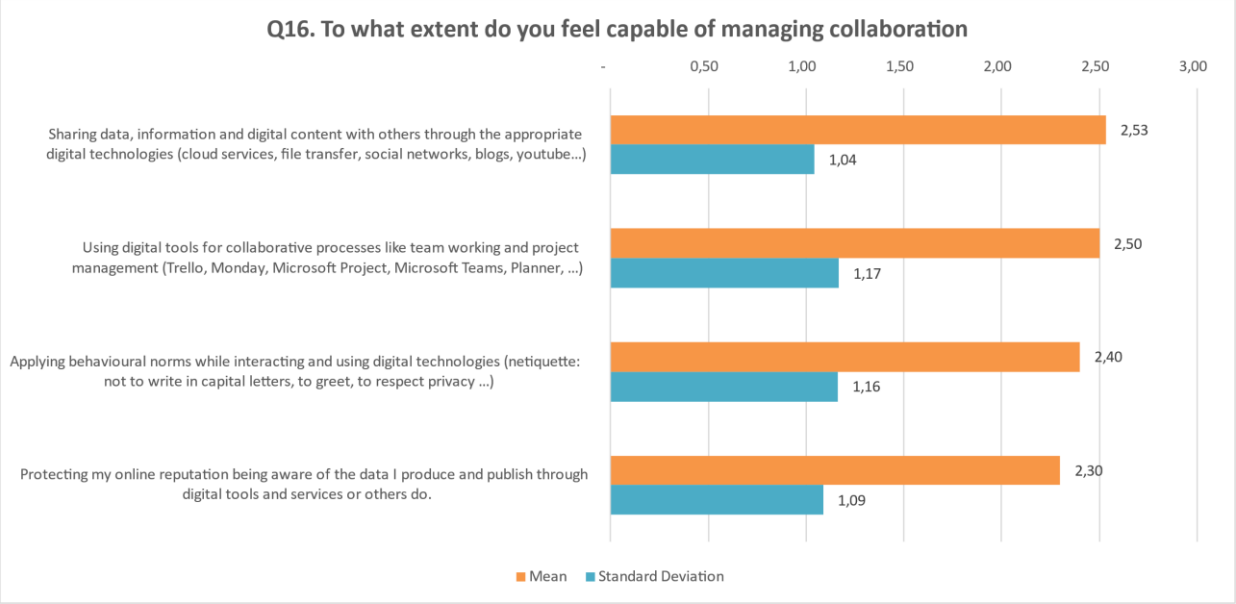
Image 4.2.7. Communication capability of VET Learners from France



3. Digital collaboration management

Regarding the management of collaboration tools, the answers are more balanced: one half don't have specific problems in handling those tools while others consider they don't have enough digital capacities. Also, the majority of the learners and employees participating in this survey mentioned that they are not very comfortable in applying normal behavioural norms while interacting and using digital technologies, but also in protecting their online reputation, or even being aware of the data they produce or publish.

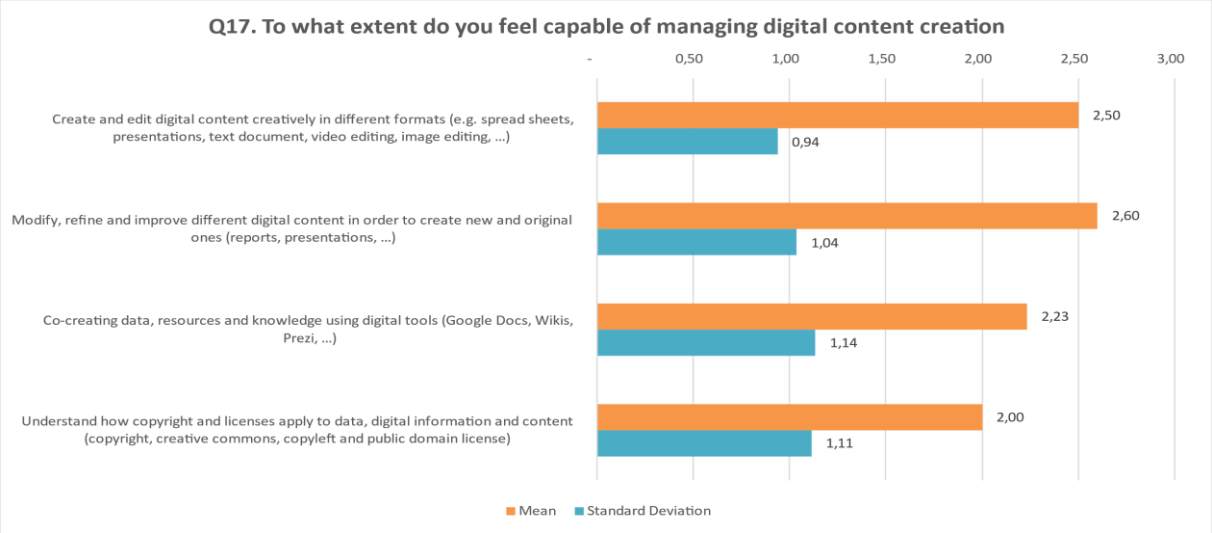
Image 4.2.8. Collaboration capability of VET Learners from France



4. Digital content creation management

About their ability to create digital content, we can see that more than half of respondents do not really feel able to use different formats or tools, and they are not able to co-create data, resources and knowledge using digital tools, or to understand copyrights and licenses issues related to the digital content.

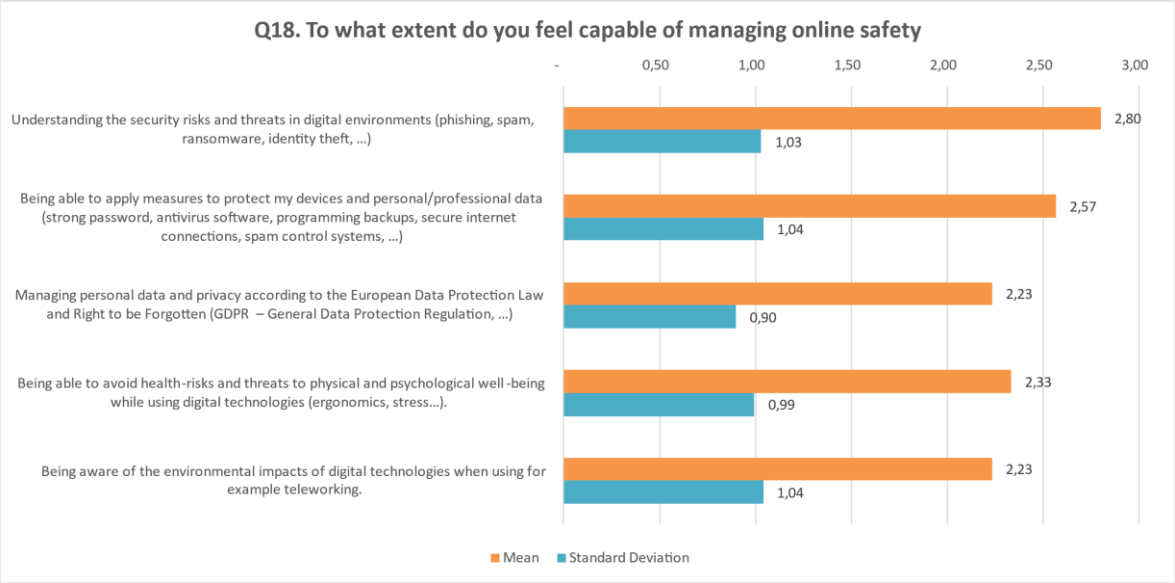
Image 4.2.9. Digital content creation capability of VET Learners from France



5. Online safety management

In the part of managing online security, the answers are not very well defined. Even if a part of the respondents say that they are able to understand risks and threats in digital environments, they have more problems in applying security measures to protect their devices and their data. On the other hand, the majority is not able to manage their data according to the GDPR – "General Data Protection Regulation" and to avoid risks for health and well-being while they are using digital materials. Finally, they admit that they are not able to detect the environmental impacts of digital technologies.

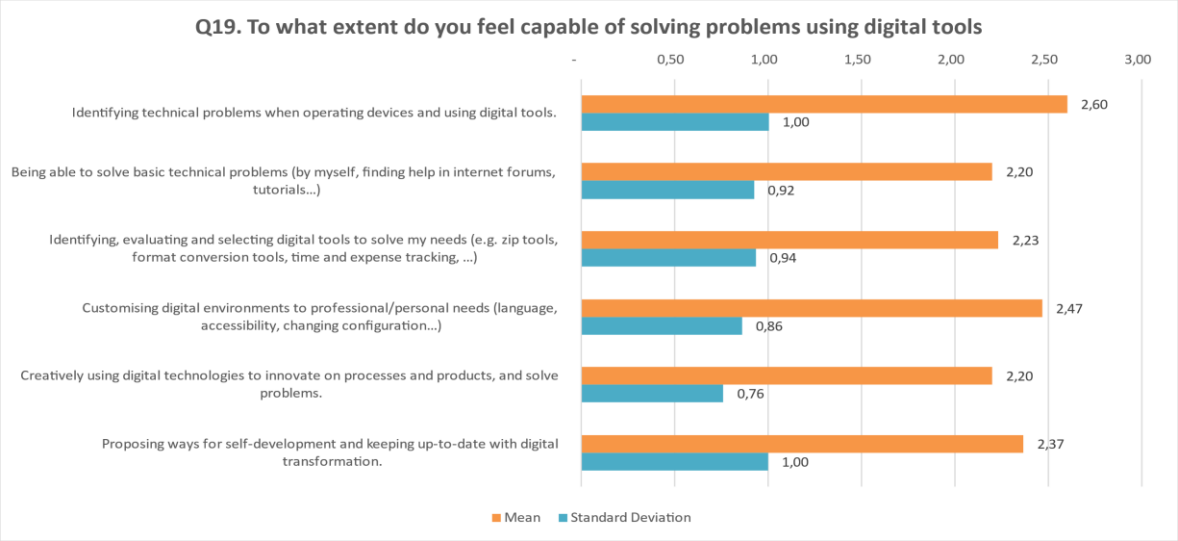
Image 4.2.10. Online Safety capability of VET Learners from France



6. Problem solving

A half of respondents declare that they are capable of identifying technical problems, while the other half are not. Moreover, they do not feel comfortable in identifying, evaluating or selecting digital tools to solve their needs, in using digital tools in a creative way or in proposing ways for self-development. The answer is more balanced (agree-disagree) regarding the customization of digital environments to professional or personal needs.

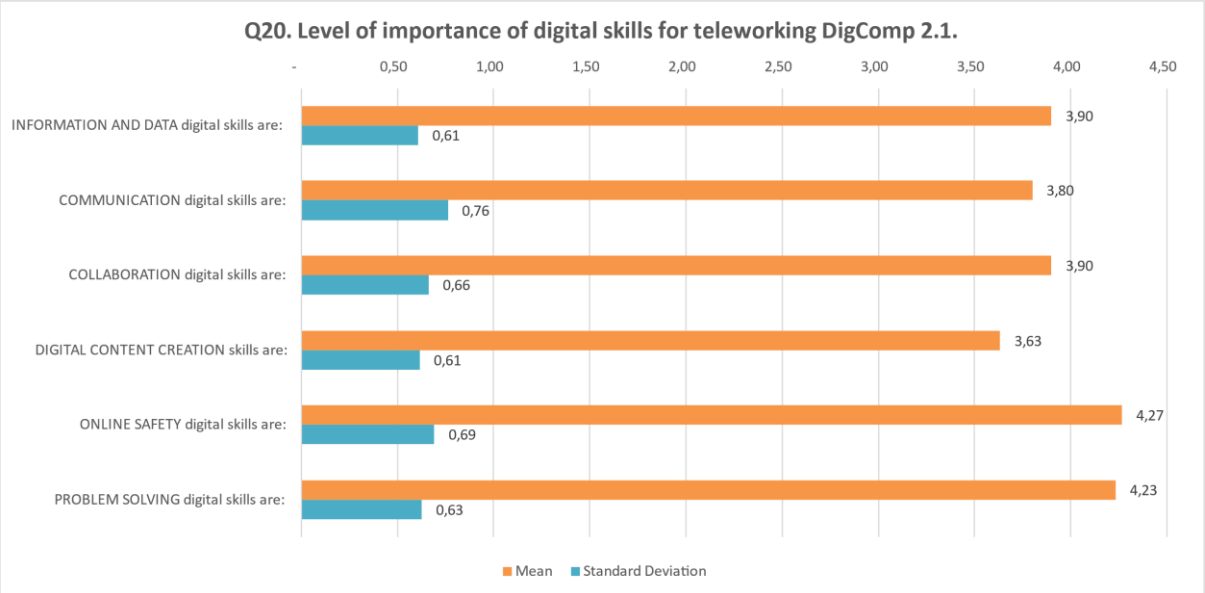
Image 4.2.11. Problem solving capability of VET Learners from France



7. Level of importance of digital skills for teleworking

The respondents gave their opinion about the level of importance of digital competences for teleworking. They consider that having digital competences for managing data and information for managing communication and collaboration is very important. Having digital competences for creating digital content is quite important. Finally, digital skills for managing online safety and problem solving are also very important or essential for teleworking.

Image 4.2.12. Level of importance of digital skills of VET Learners from France



2.5. Soft skills for teleworking.

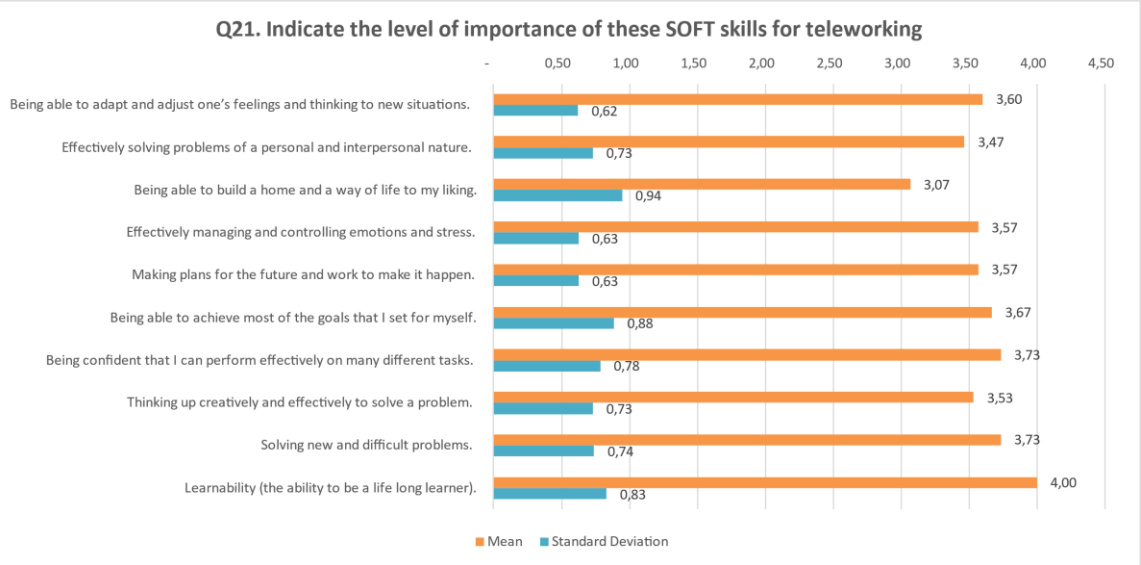
This section is dedicated to the soft skills needed to telework. According to the respondents, “being able to adapt and adjust one’s feelings and thinking to new situations” is quite very important for one half and very important for the other. It is the same observation regarding the capacity to solve professional or personal problems. The ability to build a home and away of life corresponding to their tastes is less important to one third while the others consider it as important or very important.

The effective management of emotions and stress as well as the planification of future projects are also important skills for the majority of respondents.

Being able to achieve the goals and to perform different tasks is also considered as important skills for teleworking. However, creative skills are quite important but not very important for half of the respondents.

Finally, the capacity to solve problems and to learn throughout life is considered as very important and even essential for some of the respondents.

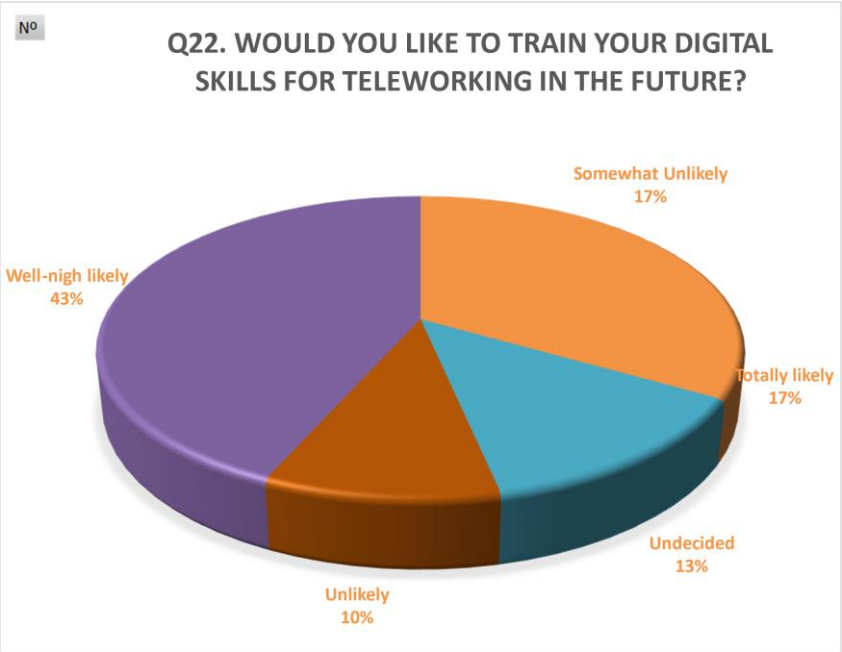
Image 4.2.13. Level of importance of soft skills of VET Learners from France



2.6. Digital skills training.

After gathering respondents’ opinions about the skills needed for teleworking, the participants indicated their willingness to strengthen their digital skills or not, which is introduced on the pie chart below. 43,3% answered “well-nigh likely” and 16,7% “totally likely” while 13,3% are still “undecided”, the rest are not very interested or not interested at all.

Image 4.2.14. Interest on training digital skills of VET Learners from France



Among the answers received to the open question "Are there any essential skills for telework that have been omitted in the above questions?" one person mentions that the competences to better manage his/her working time is also important for teleworking.

3. VET Providers questionnaire

3.1. Respondents' profile.

1. General profile

This survey respondents are VET providers and trainers out of which 97,06% live and 2,94% in Spain. The gender representation is quite balanced since 52,94% of the respondents are women and 47,06% - men. Regarding the age range, the majority are aged between 30 and 49 years old (32,35%). Then the second largest group is between 50 and 59 years old and represents 29,41% of the answers. The age range under 30 years old represents the third group with 26,47% of the respondents. The last group less represented in this survey is between 60 and 69 years old (11,76%).

2. Education and occupation

The respondents also filled in their level of education. Among the answers received, 41,18% have a Master degree, 38,24% followed vocational training and 17,65% have a Bachelor degree. Also, 2,94% followed a secondary education.

The respondents mostly work in training centres or adult education schools (both 23,53%), then in VET schools (14,71%) and finally in universities (11,76%). However, 26,47% of the participants to this survey declare working in another type of organisation. To the question "Do you have work experience as a teacher, and for how long?", the respondents declare having between 4 and 10 years of experience (32,35%), between 2 and 3 years (23,53%), or

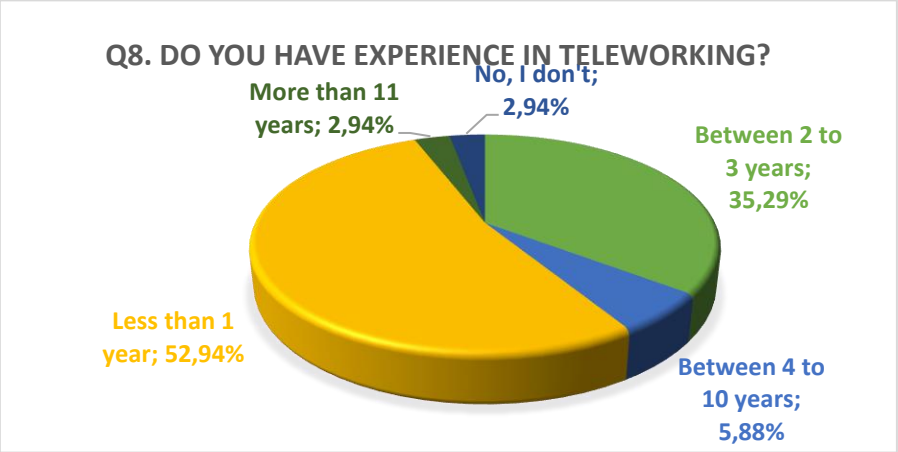
more than 11 years (20,59%). However, 14,71% of the panel declare not having any experience as a teacher. They mainly taught for adult education and training organisations, or in vocational training or complementary training and more than half also taught in universities or schools.

3.2. Digital skills for teleworking.

1. Experience in teleworking

Regarding the experience in teleworking, the survey showed that over a half of respondents (52,94%) mainly teleworked for less than 1 year or between 2 and 3 years (35,29%). Thanks to these results, we can confirm that teleworking is quite new for the large majority of the participants in France.

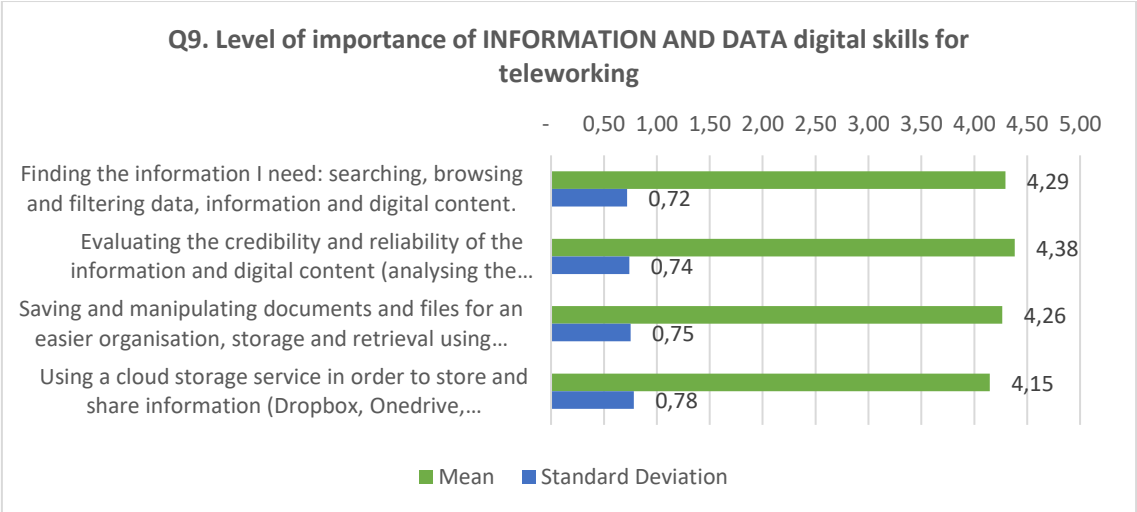
Image 4.2.15. Experience in teleworking for VET Providers from France



2. Digital information and data management

VET providers are questioned about the level of importance of digital skills for teleworking. The first section is dedicated to the management of data and information. The respondents consider that finding relevant information in need is very important. The other statements are all considered mostly as “essential”: evaluating the credibility and reliability of information was chosen by 50%, saving and manipulating documents and files by 44,1%, using a cloud storage service by 38,4%.

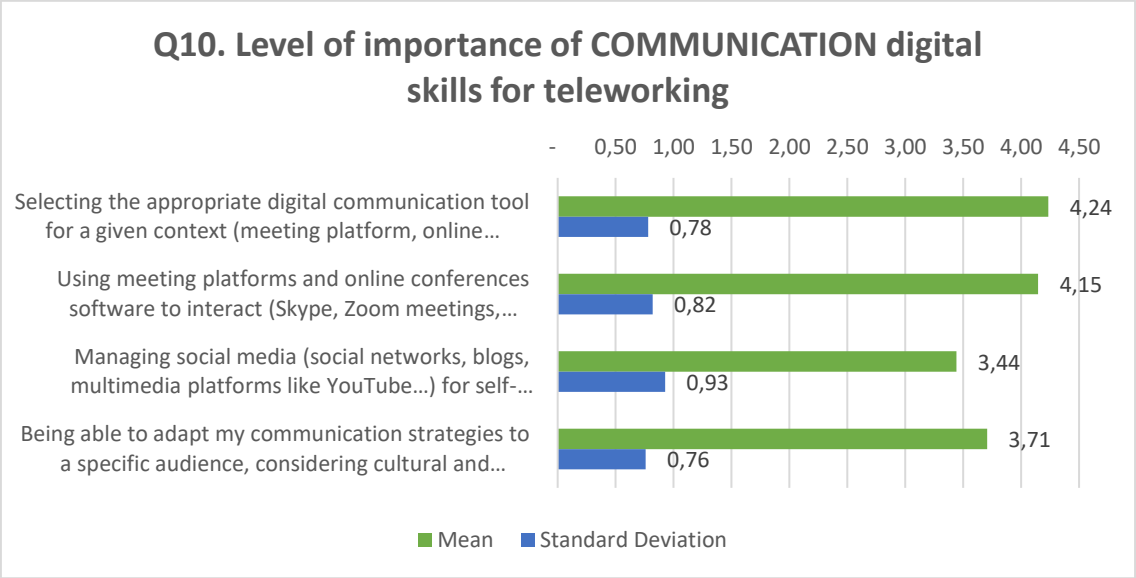
Image 4.2.16. Information and data importance for VET Providers from France



3. Digital communication management

The second section concerns the digital skills dedicated to communication. 44,1% of the respondents assessed knowing how to select an appropriate digital tool as essential, while the other 41,2% believed using the right platform or software for online meetings was crucial. The management of social networks and the adaptability to a specific audience is seen as less essential but still quite important or very important.

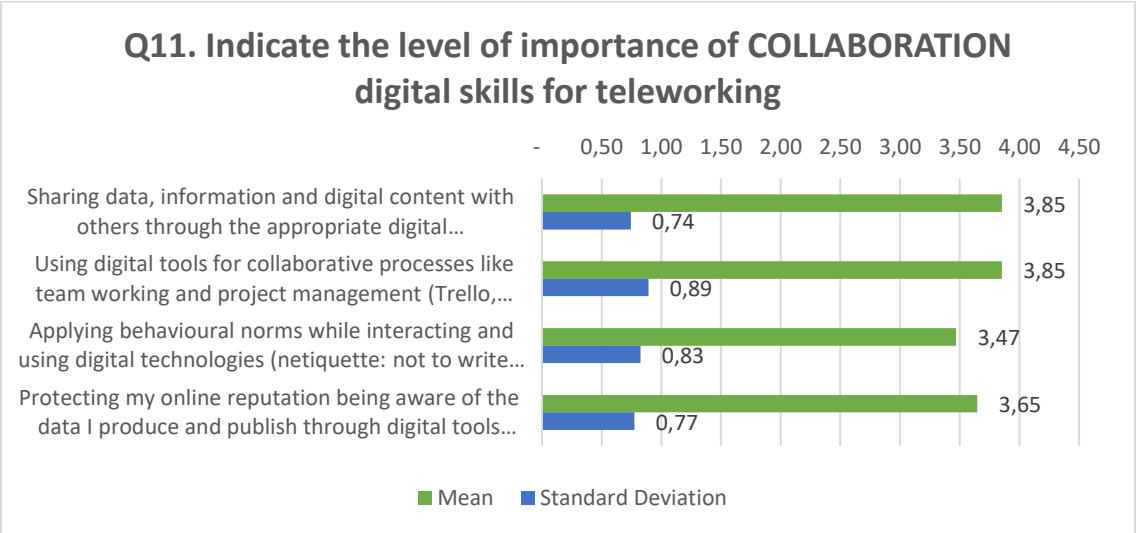
Image 4.2.17. Communication importance for VET Providers from France



4. Digital collaboration management

The third part is about the digital skills dedicated to collaboration tools. 44,1%) of the respondents consider that sharing data and information with others is very important. The use of digital tools for team working or project management is also very important according to 38,2%. The same observation is noted for protecting users' online reputation, which was chosen by 47,1% of surveyed respondents. Finally, the ability to apply behavioural norms while interacting and using digital tools is quite important for 55,9%.

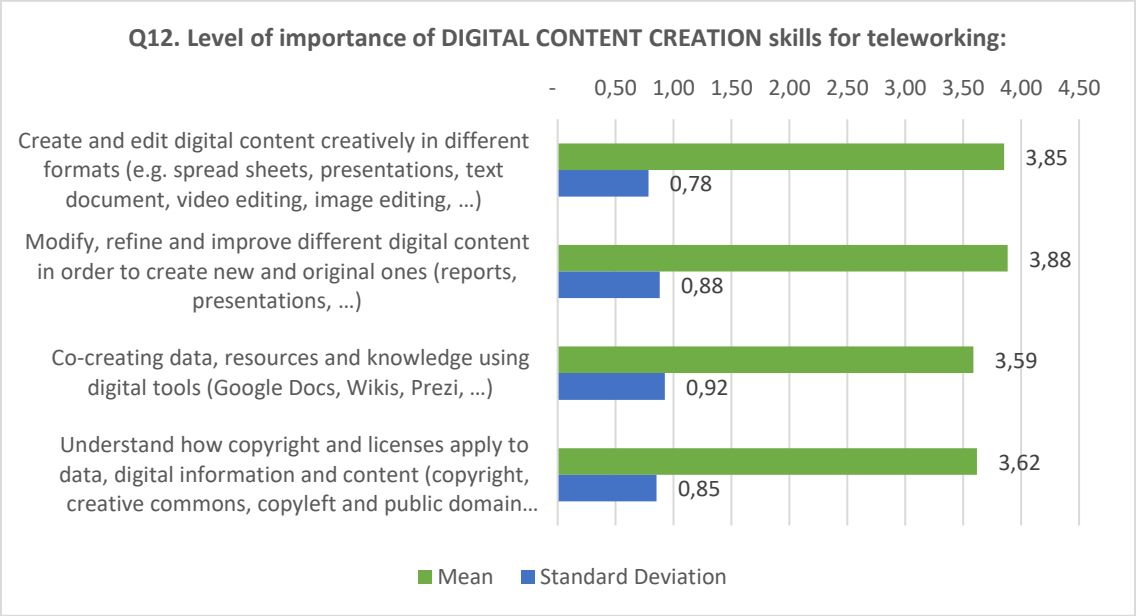
Image 4.2.18. Collaboration importance for VET Providers from France



5. Digital content creation management

Regarding the creation of digital content, 55,9% of respondents believe that using and editing different tools and formats is very important while 41,2% consider modifying and refining digital content to create new ones as important. Understanding how the copyright and license apply to data or information is seen also as very important by 41,2%. The co-creation of data and resources is quite important or very important for 35,3%.

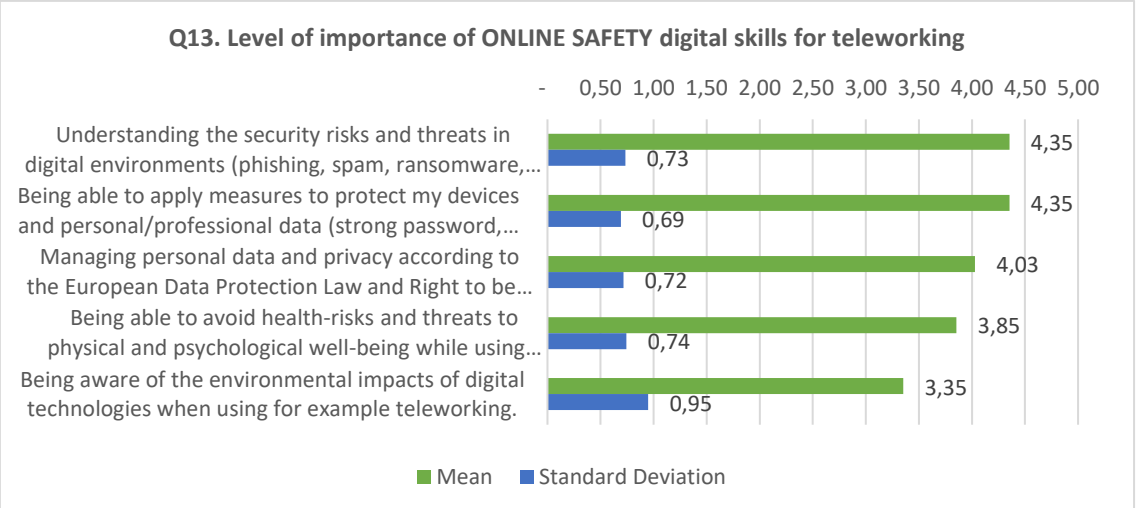
Image 4.2.19. Digital Content Creation importance for VET Providers from France



6. Online safety management

Knowing how to handle digital procedures for online safety is seen as essential or very important for all statements proposed in the section: understanding security risks and threats in digital tools and being able to apply security measures are both essential or very important. Also, personal data management and being able to avoid threats to physical and psychological well-being are very important. However, being aware of the environmental impacts of digital technologies is less important for the inquired respondents.

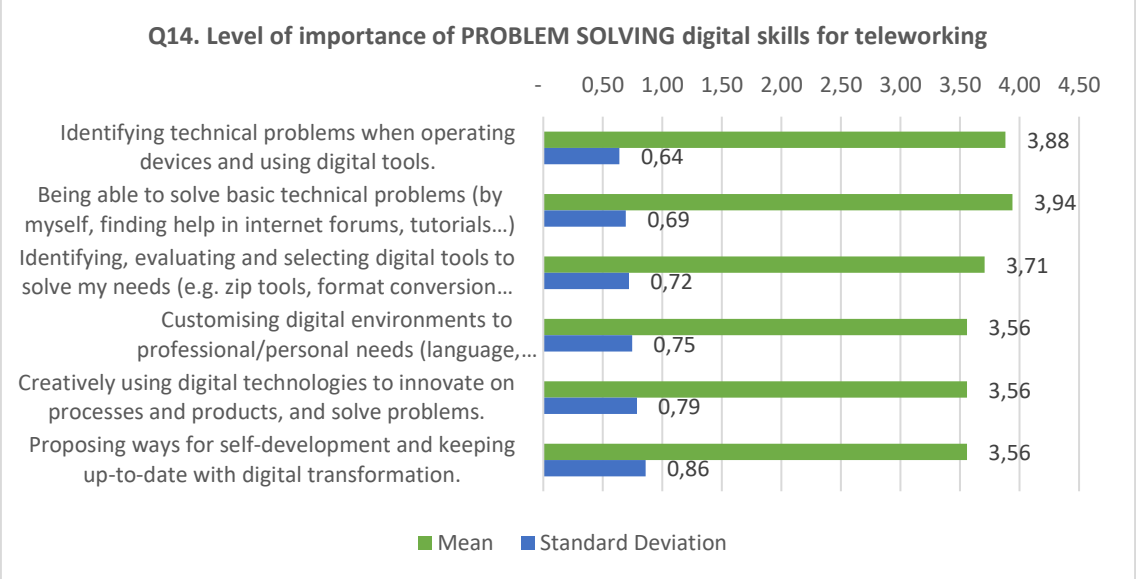
Image 4.2.20. Online Safety importance for VET Providers from France



7. Problem solving

All statements in this section dedicated to problem solving are considered quite important and even very important for identifying technical problems or for solving basic problems.

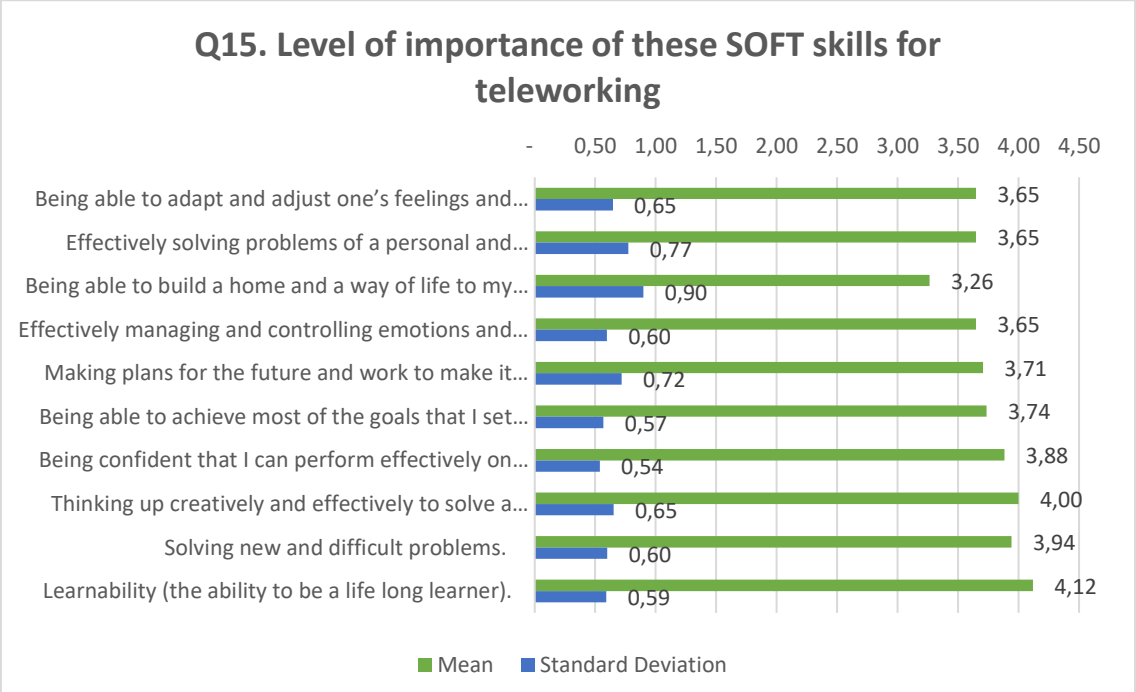
Image 4.2.21. Problem Solving importance for VET Providers from France



8. Soft skills for teleworking

According to the respondents, the most important soft skills to have for teleworking are the learnability, the ability to think creatively and effectively to solve a problem, and the confidence in accomplishing some tasks. Less important is being able to build a home and a way of life corresponding to his/her own taste.

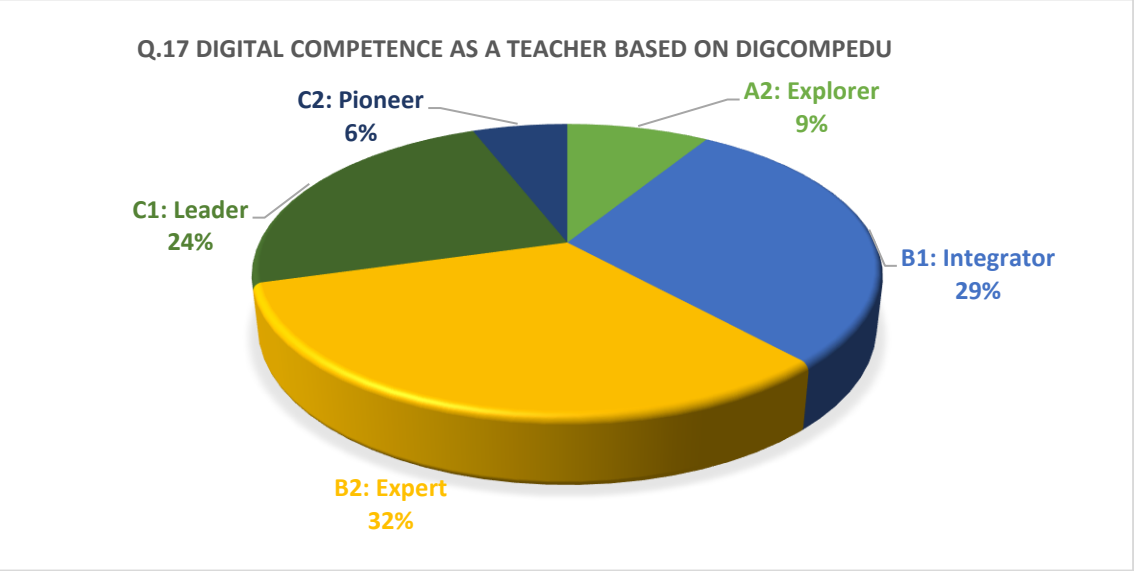
Image 4.2.22. Soft skills importance for VET Providers from France



3.3. Digital skills for education.

The following question analyses how the VET providers evaluate their level of digital competences as a teacher. The majority (32%) evaluated themselves as experts, while 29% voted for integrators, and 24% for leaders.

Image 4.2.23. Digital competence as teacher (DigCompEdu) for VET Providers from France



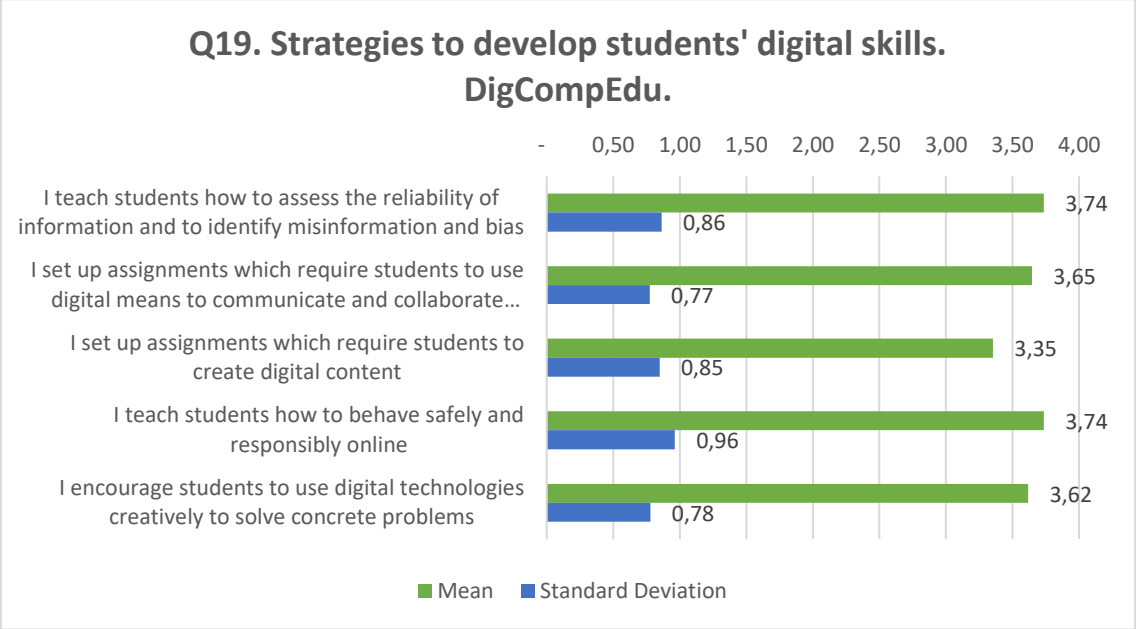
A large part of respondents (34%) stated that they acquire their digital skills by themselves with tutorials or handbooks, or following a formal education (29%) or a non-formal education (27%).

Image 4.2.24. Digital skills acquisition for VET Providers from France

This section analyses the types of strategies developed by the VET learners to develop students' digital skills and their frequency of use. They declared that they teach students on how to assess the reliability of information quite often. They often asked the students to use

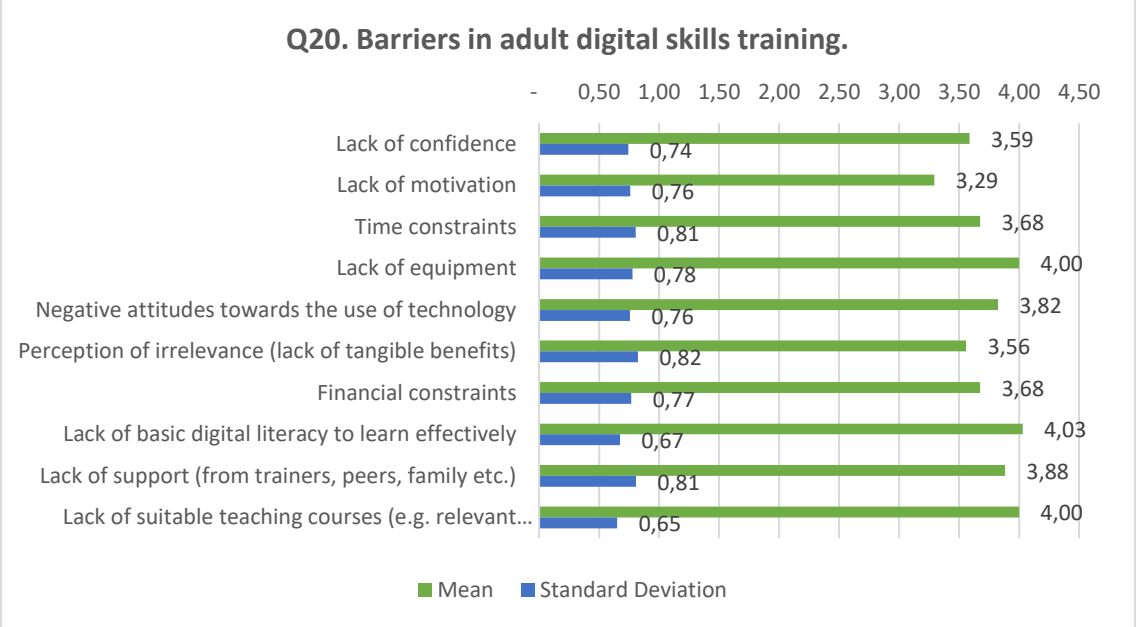
digital tools to communicate and collaborate. Occasionally, they also ask students to create digital content and also to solve problems thanks to these tools.

Image 4.2.25. Strategies to develop digital skills for VET Providers from France



The main barriers noted by the respondents in teaching digital competences to adults is the lack of equipment, the lack of basic digital literacy to learn effectively and the lack of suitable teaching courses. They also mentioned the lack of support from peers and the negative attitudes towards the use of technology.

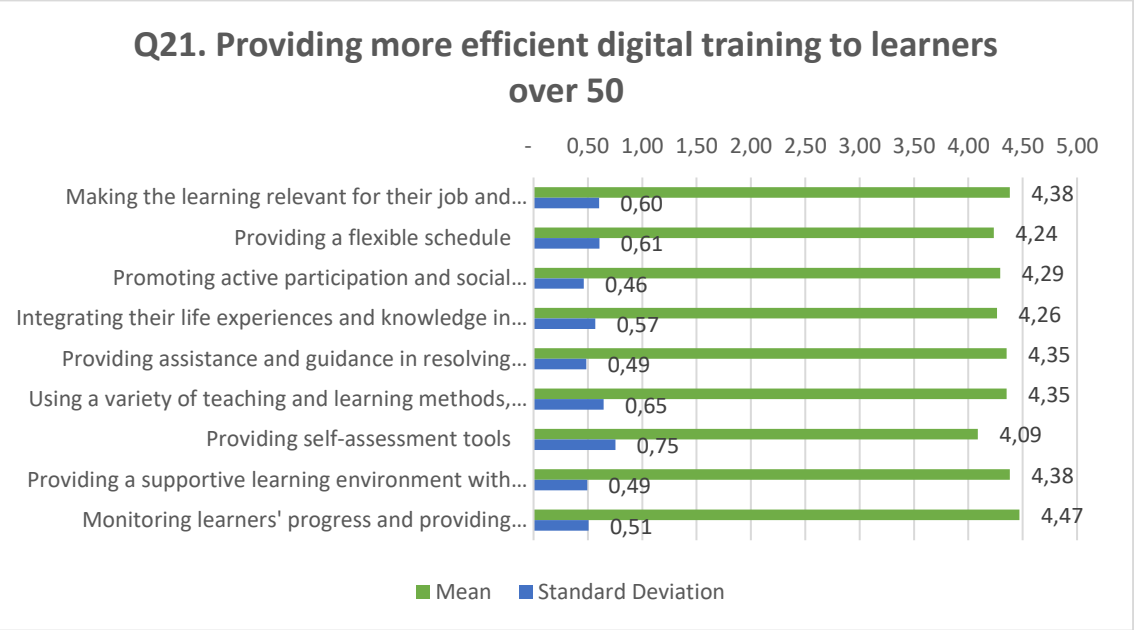
Image 4.2.26. Barriers in adult digital skills training for VET Providers from France



In order to propose a more efficient training course to adults aged over 50 years old, the respondents give the degree of agreement with the following statement described in the table below. For them, the main important method is to monitor learners' progress and to

give them useful feedback. Besides, an important thing would be the adaptability and the fact to make the learning relevant in their job context. Finally, the use of different learning methods and the support given to the learners is also very important in their view.

Image 4.2.27. Strategies to provide efficient digital training for VET Providers from France

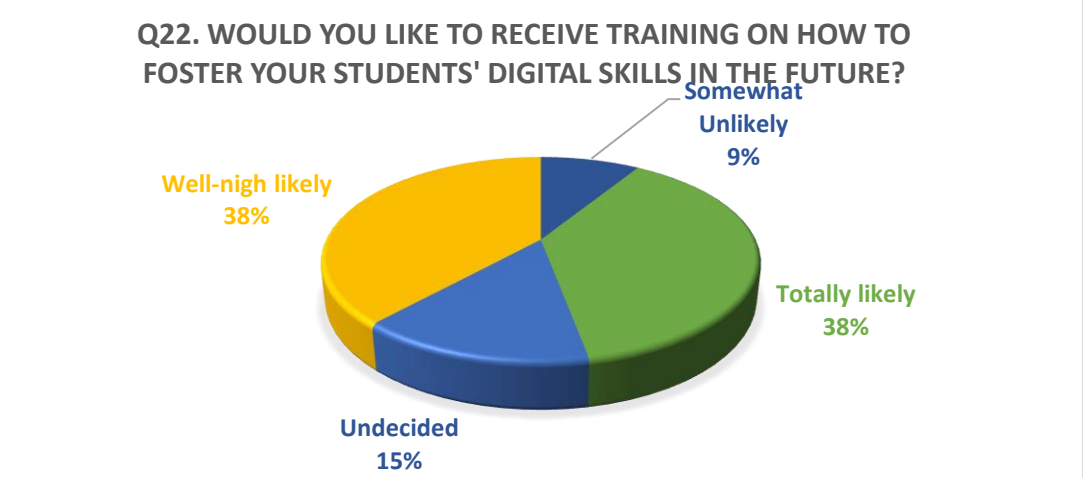


Furthermore, The VET providers proposed other methods important to teach digital skills: listening, being patient, using different methods with interactive activities, encouraging and motivating the learners. A complementary method would be also to propose materials in paper format to summarize what has been previously studied and to give them the opportunity to revise the content.

3.4. Digital skills training for education.

To the question “Would you like to receive training on how to foster your students' digital skills in the future?”, the answers are very encouraging and positive since 38% answered “totally likely” and 38% “well-nigh likely”. Among the panel, 15% are undecided.

Image 4.2.28. Training for VET Providers from France



3. Conclusions

The report analysed the survey distributed by E-Seniors in France. The main idea was to identify digital skills in need for the seniors over 50 and understanding of the VET providers' attitudes to the digital and soft skills important for teleworking.

Due to the accelerated shift on teleworking affected by COVID19, the seniors need to acquire skills and competences required for teleworking and adapting to the digital environment. For this reason, the TeleGrow project consortium targeted two main groups to survey: (1) VET providers and (2) VET learners.

The respondents gender representation was balanced among men and women. The age categories were a bit different, in case of VET learners the majority of respondents were 60-70 years old (63,34%), while in VET providers the most of the inquired groups represented the 30-60 (61,76%) age category.

The questionnaires were divided into different thematic sections for both VET learners and providers. Doing so, the survey equally examined both target groups and enabled them to compare the received results. The topical questions from each section made it possible to identify teleworking barriers or to evaluate the level of digital and soft skills important for teleworking.

As the results showed, teleworking is not popular among VET learners as 50% of respondents do not have any experience in teleworking, while about 53% of inquired VET providers worked from distance (teleworking). In digital skills section two means- "online safety digital skills" and "problem solving digital skills" turned out to be the highest indicator for the VET learners. In case of VET providers a few means had the highest indicators. In particular, VET providers marked as most important the means of "evaluate the credibility and reliability of the information and digital content." As it seems VET providers give high priority to understanding the security risks in the digital environment and preventing them rather than solving problems after, like it was a case for VET learners. It can be explained by the fact that the VET learners do not seem confident in managing online safety, especially, following the GDPR – "General Data Protection Regulation." On the other hand, the VET providers highlighted the importance of managing personal data and privacy according to the European Data Protection Law.

In the section of soft skills for teleworking both target groups granted priority to the meaning of "learnability" as the most important soft skill in teleworking. The highest indicators were granted by both learners and providers to creative thinking and solving new problems. The data gained in this section is not characterized by imbalances, which means that all listed soft skills turned out fairly important for the respondents from the both target groups.

Interestingly, the VET providers considered that a lack of suitable courses and equipment as well as the low level of digital literacy are the biggest obstacles in adults' digital skills training. In order to provide efficient training for 50+ adults, the VET providers suggest monitoring the learner's progress, using various teaching methods and creating a learning environment. As for the VET learners, about 60% of respondents are willing to improve their teleworking skills in future, while 76% of the VET providers would like to participate in training concerning fostering students' digital skills.

Overall, the received results were fairly balanced and there were no radical deviations between means. In most cases, the both target groups the VET learners and the VET providers remained coherent in their answers and all the respondents seem to feel the importance of digital skills development. At the same time, online safety, reliability of information and personal data protection are prioritized by the respondents. Noteworthy, the gathered data may require further detailed analysis.

SURVEY REPORT (Greece)

by KAINOTOMIA, May 2021

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4.3.

4. Introduction

Under the framework of the TeleGrow project, KAINOTOMIA launched the questionnaire survey from 24th of May to 24th of June and managed to collect in total 60 answers by both VET learners and providers. Due to the digital nature of the project, as well as the formulation of the questionnaires, the distribution of the questionnaires was conducted through e-mails as well as through team pages on social media.

The main target groups were people from the close network of KAINOTOMIA such as staff, external partners, trainers etc., as well as relevant stakeholders coming from the VET field and trainees that have completed courses offered by our lifelong learning centre. After the distribution of the Questionnaires, KAINOTOMIA managed to receive 30 answers from VET providers and 30 answers from VET Learners of the Greek context.

5. VET Learner's and employee's questionnaire

2.1. Respondents' profile.

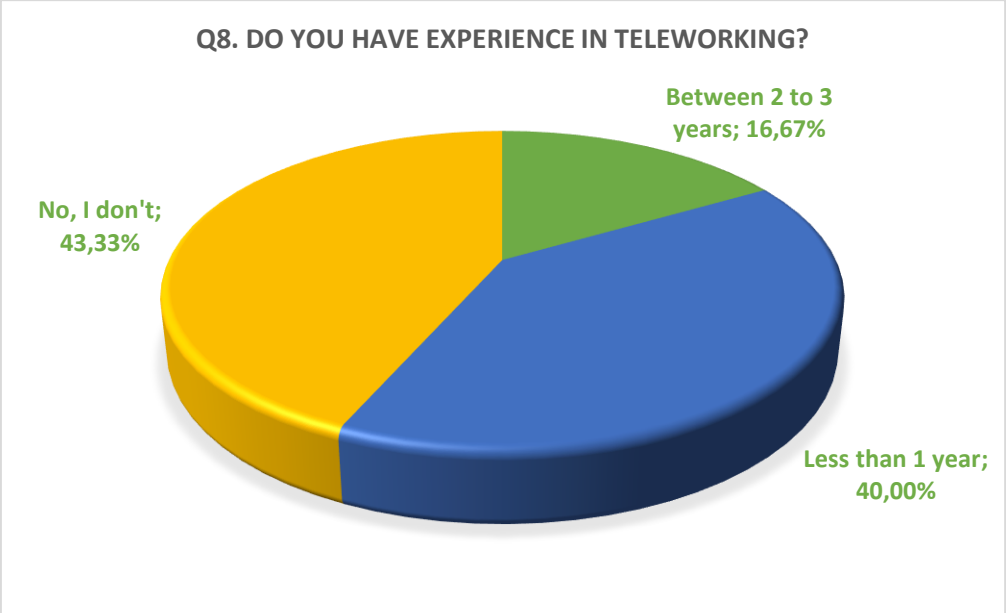
All the participants in the survey are VET Learners living in Greece. Although there was not great difference among respondents' genders, the majority of them (66.67%) were women. The highest percentage of the respondents belongs to the age group of 30-49 years old (30%), with those under 30 and those belonging to the age group of 50-59 years old to follow with 26,67%. Concerning the level of studies of the participants, the majority of the respondents (56,67%) holds a bachelor's degree or a master's degree (20%). The vast majority of the participants (63.33%) stated that they are currently working either as employees or self-employed, while the percentages of those who are currently unemployed or retired is 13,33%.

From the results extracted by the questionnaire, it was obvious that most of the participants have acquired their digital skills through formal education (65%) procedures. Nevertheless, non-formal education (57.69%) and different kinds of self-learning methods as internet tutorials or handbooks (63.83%) marked also high rates. Finally, in the question regarding previous working experience, the majority of the respondents stated that they have more than 11 years of working experience (33.33%) followed by those with 4 to 10 years of experience (26,67%), those with 2 to 3 years (23%) and those with less that a year of experience (13,33).

2.2. Teleworking adoption.

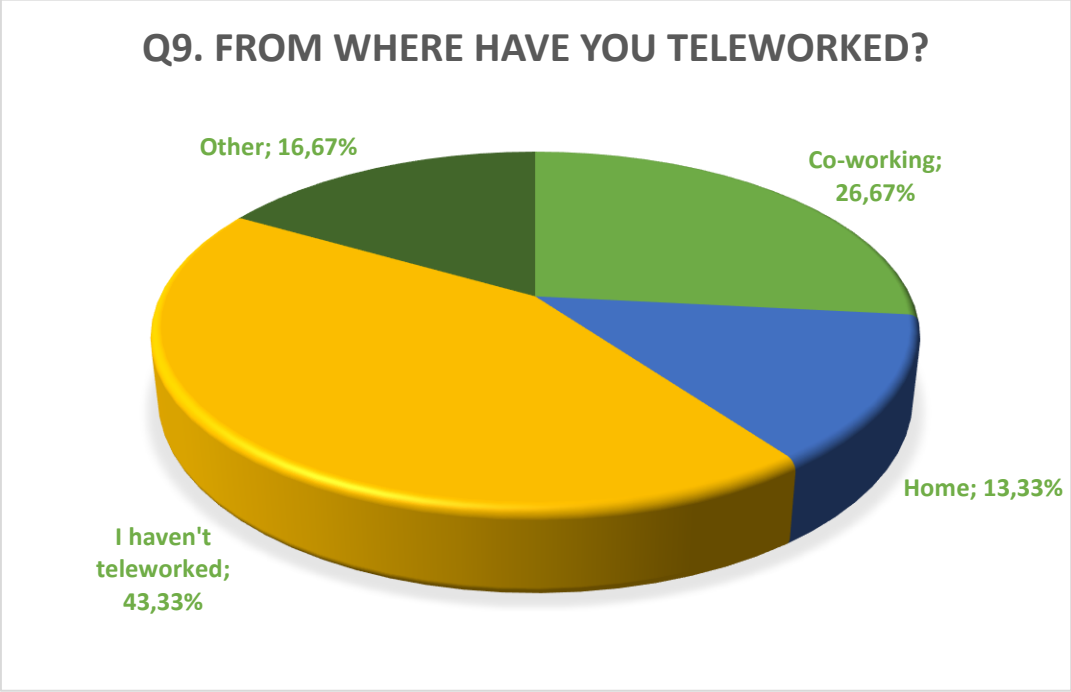
Participants were asked among else about their experience regarding teleworking, and the place from where they telework.

Image 4.3.1. Experience in teleworking for VET Learners from Greece



From those who have work experience the 43,33% had never had experience in teleworking, while the 40% stated that they have less than a year of teleworking experience. A lower percentage of 16,67% stated a teleworking experience of 2 to 3 years. These findings evince the major and rapid change in working arrangement and working conditions imposed by covid19 pandemics, forcing many employees going online.

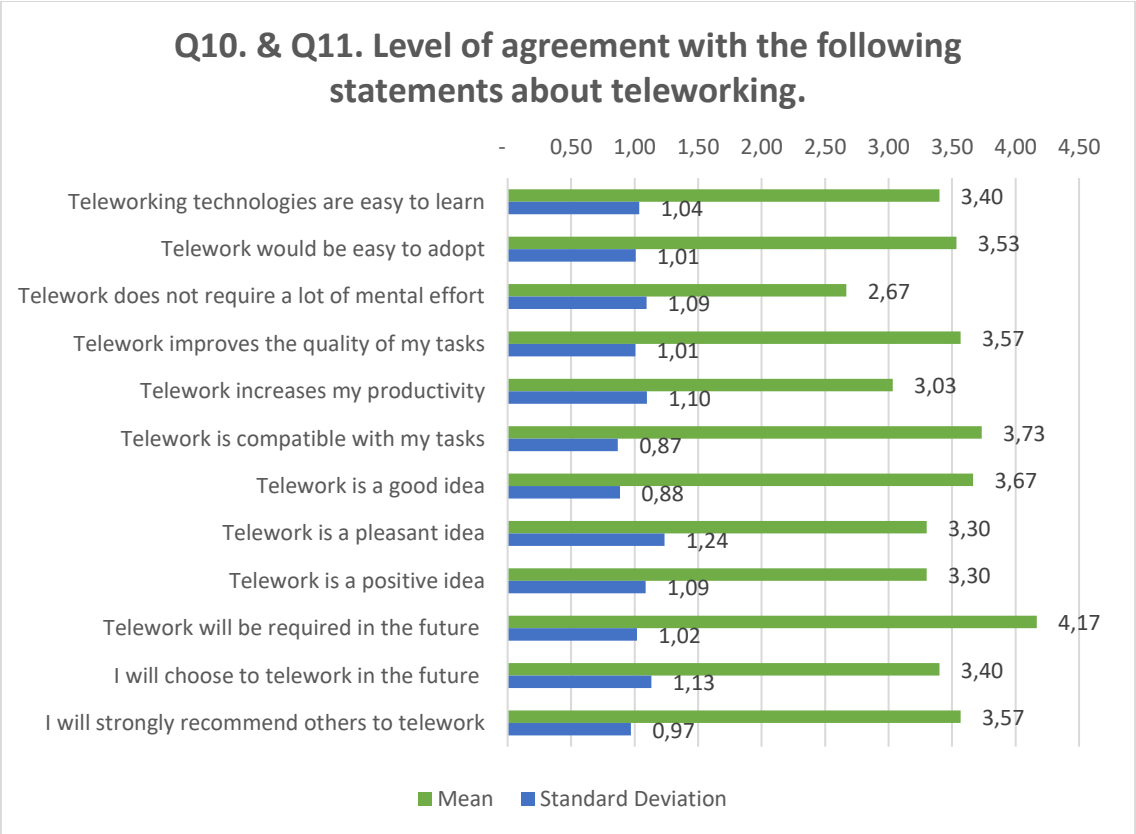
Image 4.3.2. From where have VET Learners from Greece teleworked?



All of the participants provided an answer to Q9, regardless the factor of having or not telework experience. The answers indicate that VET Learners teleworked either from co-working places (26.67%), home (13.33%) or other places (16,67%). Taking into account that 43,33% of the participants have not teleworked, it is necessary to eliminate this percentage from the Q9, in order to explicate the results of this question. Removing the number of people that have not teleworking experience we have the total amount of persons that have experience in teleworking conditions. 17 from 30 have a level of experience, from those 23,5% work from home, 47,05% work from a co-working place and 23,5 % work from home and coworking places.

The next questions in the survey, concerned the level of agreement upon statements regarding teleworking, teleworking technologies and digital skills. For the analysis, we used a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing those who totally disagree and 5 those totally agree, as well as the Mean and the Standard deviation of the given answers. The Mean indicates the average of the given responses to each statement or question. The Standard deviation shows if the Mean represents the most frequent answer or is just the average value of totally distributed answers around Mean or in the edges (1 or 5). The analysis took as a benchmark that a deviation > 1 is high and that means a great distribution around Mean, and deviation >0,5 and <1 is quite high showing a lower level of distribution around the Mean.

Image 4.3.3. Teleworking attitudes VET Learners from Greece



In the question regarding what respondents think of teleworking most of the answers are between 3 “nor agree nor disagree” and 4 “agree” showing that participants are in doubt about the nature of Telework. The majority of the participants kept a neutral attitude regarding the level of convenience of acquiring teleworking skills. In the same question,

some of the respondents agreed partially or totally that teleworking procedures and relevant technologies are easy to be acquired.

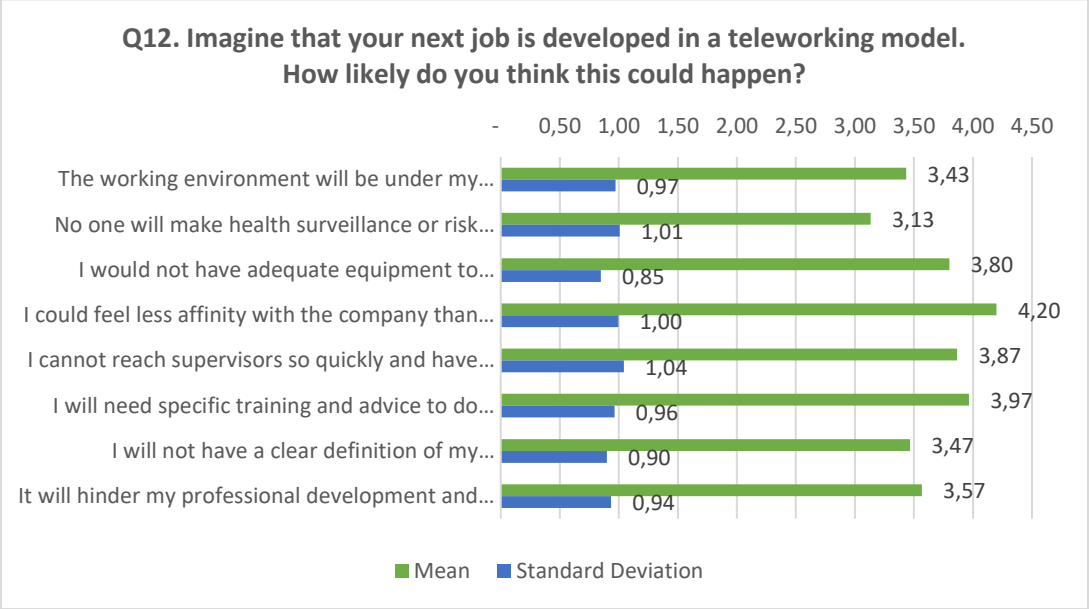
Additionally, regarding the easiness of adopting teleworking conditions, the majority of the respondents expressed their neutral opinion, while a small percentage stating their opposition to that statement and the rest of the respondents to be divided between the ranges of “agree” and “totally agree”.

When participants were asked whether they find teleworking a pleasant idea, we came across with one of the highest Standard Deviation (1.24), as a great division of the answers from strongly disagree to totally agree was marked. Nevertheless, the majority of answers was placed in the side of disagreement to this specific statement.

2.3. Teleworking barriers.

When referring to telework barriers, any dimension of the work that can cause issues or misconceptions to the worker is included. The following statements include any possible issues, hopes or fears that employees have concerning teleworking.

Image 4.3.4. Teleworking beliefs of VET Learners from Greece

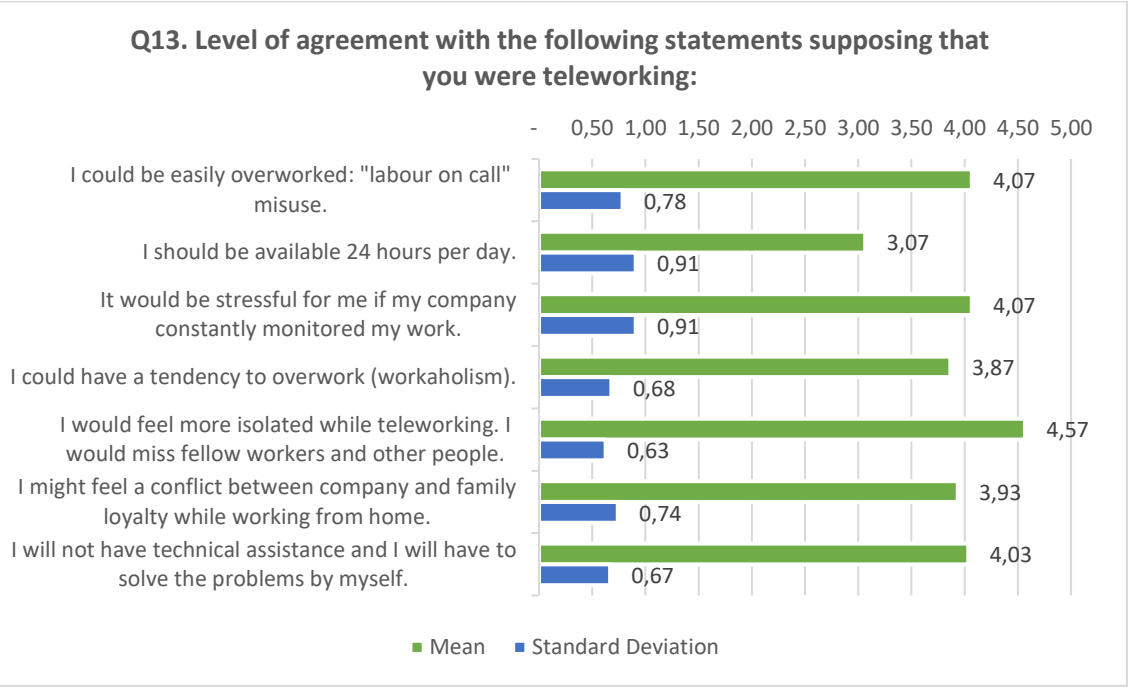


When respondents were asked regarding a possible next working career based on teleworking, there was a convergence to the answers provided regarding the responsibilities and barriers they may accrue with a clear agreeing tendency. More analytically, the average of the participants’ responses is around 3,5 showing no extreme opinions but with a tendency to agree that teleworking creates a working environment full of obstacles. One of the possible barriers spotted by the majority of respondents was the lack of the suitable equipment for teleworking.

Under this theoretical framework of adjusting respondents’ work into teleworking settings, the majority found it possible to feel disconnected with their company. The teleworking model seems to create some uncertainty regarding possible delays in taking the correct decisions due to slower reach of their supervisors or managers. Of course, as expected, a

new environment requires specific training with the majority of participants feeling the need to be trained in order to be fully adapted to the new conditions. In an environment of teleworking, participants believe that their personal and organizational responsibilities will not be clearly defined and these new conditions may affect their future careers.

Image 4.3.5. Teleworking barriers of VET Learners from Greece



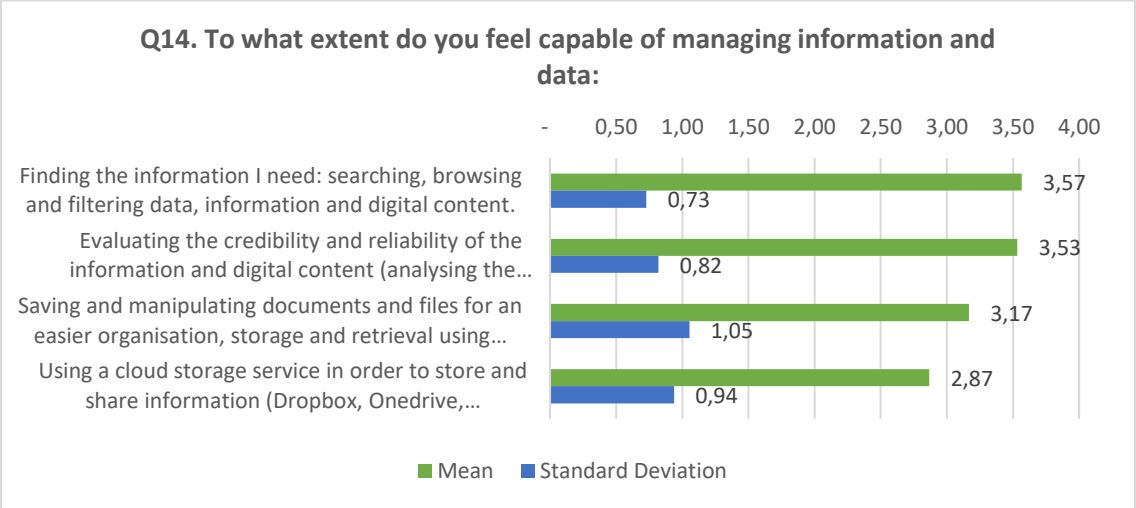
The questionnaire has provided results about the fears that participants have regarding Teleworking. The vast majority of the responses in the statement above were near 4, reflecting the fears and hesitation towards Telework. Participants aligned their opinions on the statement “I would feel more isolated while teleworking” as well as “I would miss fellow workers and other people”. This fear is common, as the Mean is 4,57 and the statement has the lowest Standard Deviation for that question, 0,63, showing that the agreement is almost unanimous. In addition, most of the participants believe that they could be easily overworked due to misuse of “labour on call”. It is clear that VET Learners, are afraid of losing their basic working rights and the ability to meet their personal communication needs.

While the majority of participants agreed on the previous questions, there was also one more question in which respondents expressed their neutral opinion. When participants were asked whether they should be available all day long, they answered that they are not sure if they agree or disagree with this statement.

2.4. Digital skills for teleworking.

The questionnaire included also a series of questions regarding digital skills of respondents on several activities. The participants had to answer a variety of statements under a self-evaluating prism and ranked their abilities and skills from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates less skilled individuals and 5 those that are the most skilled and confident. The answers showed a diversity in capacities for respondents and highlighted the needs of training in terms of Teleworking.

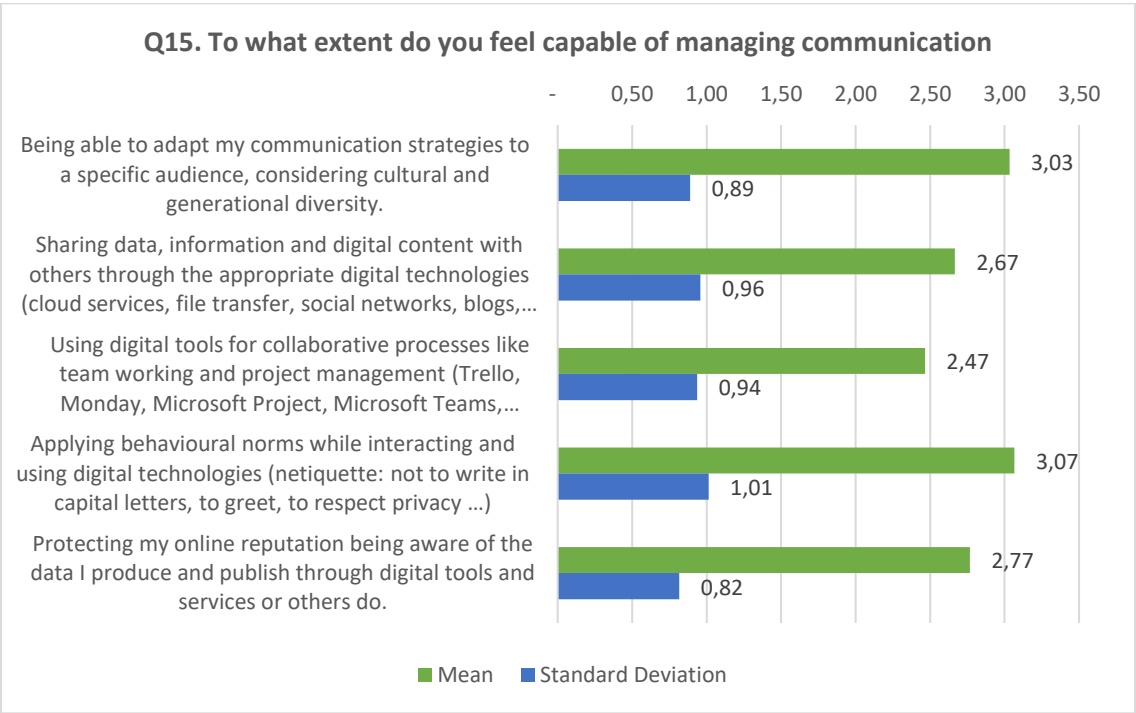
Image 4.3.6. Information and data capability of VET Learners from Greece



To the question Q14 the average Mean is 3,2 showing that participants feel capable and slightly very capable in some statements, to manage information and data.

On the other hand, participants evaluate themselves between somewhat capable or capable concerning the "Use of a cloud storage service in order to store and share information (Dropbox, Onedrive, Googledrive, iCloud…)".

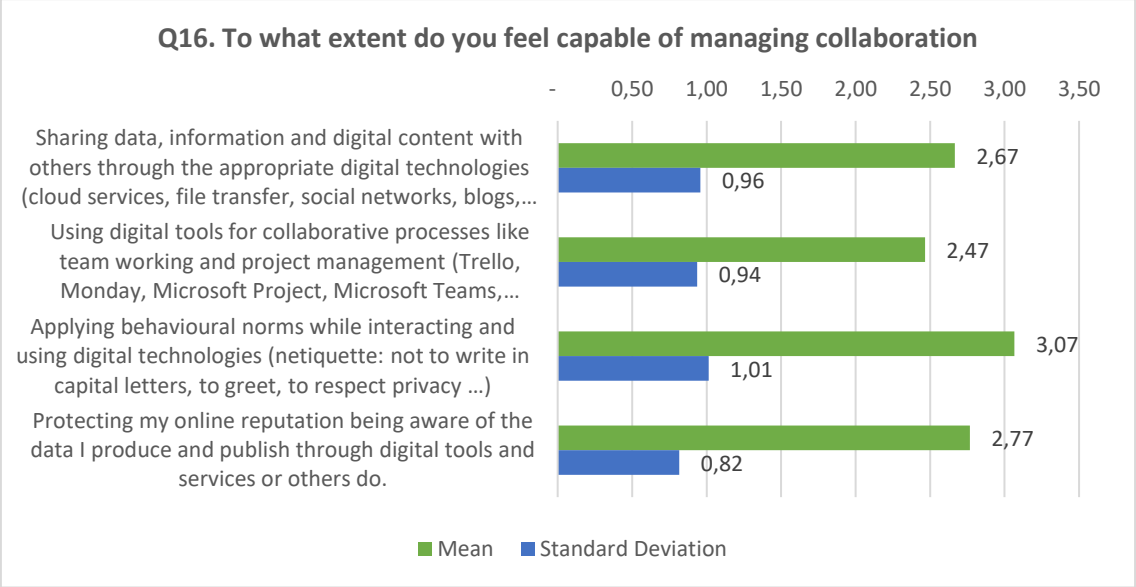
Image 4.3.7. Communication capability of VET Learners from Greece



The digital skills and the capacities of participants concerning communication in a digital environment, were almost at the same levels. The majority of participants felt somehow capable or capable in selecting the best tool for digital communication, using platforms for

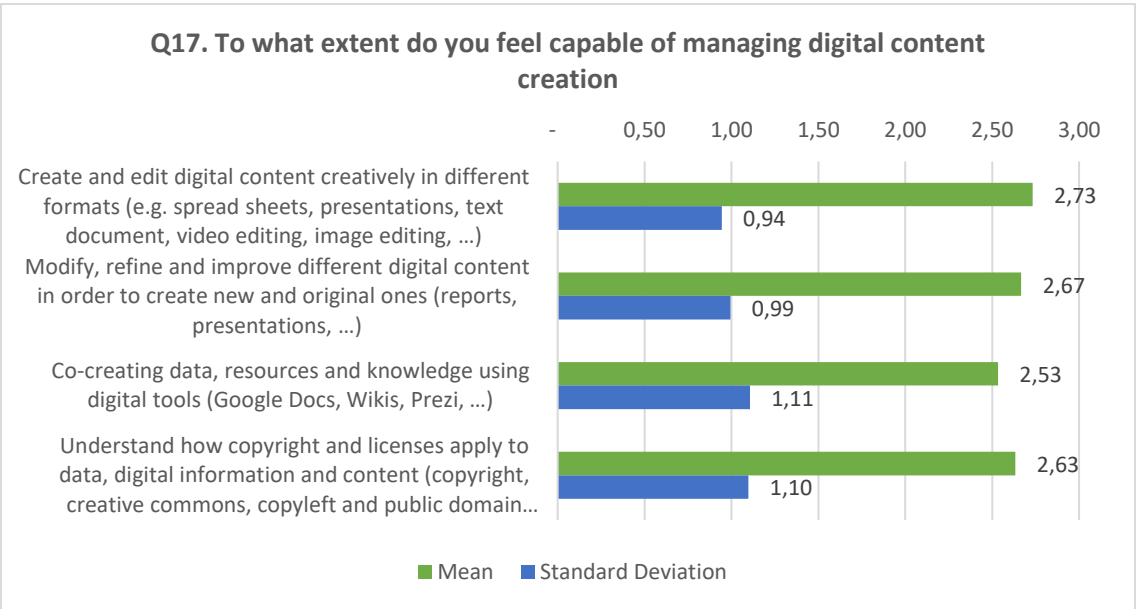
meetings, managing social media platforms and finally adjusting the communicative strategies to a certain audience and their needs.

Image 4.3.8. Collaboration capability of VET Learners from Greece



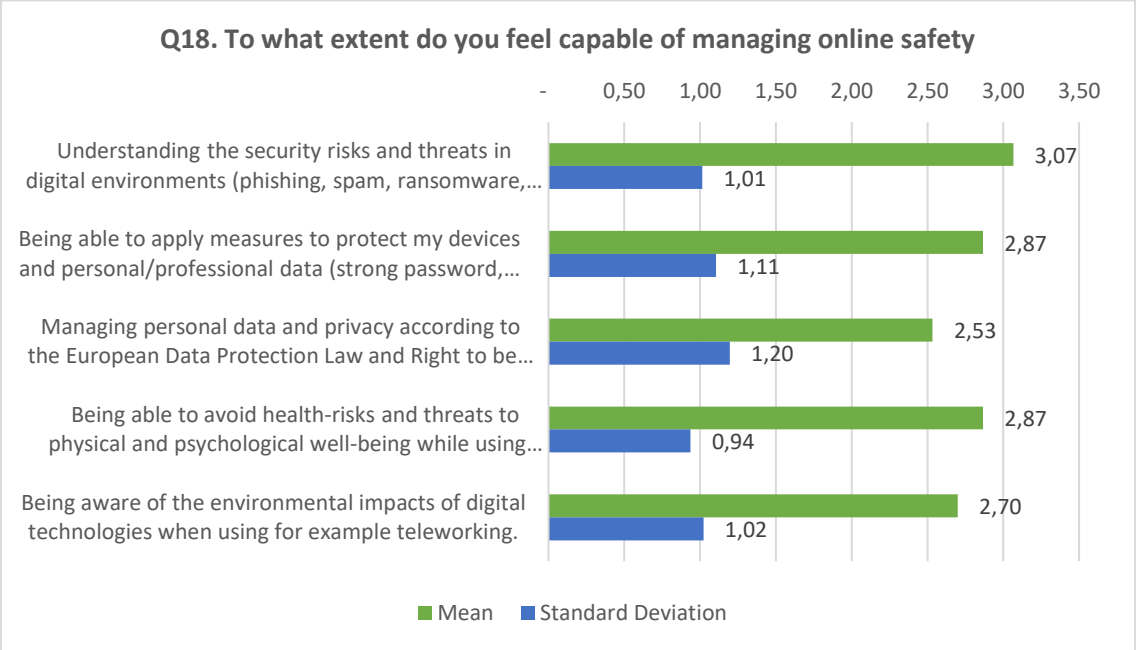
The answers to question Q16 were developed in the same scale as Q15, with the majority of responses to demonstrate medium level of capacities of participants in coping with collaboration. Respondents expressed a lower or medium capability of sharing data, information and digital content with others through with the use of appropriate digital technologies and digital tools for collaborative processes like team working and project management. The majority of them feel either somewhat capable or capable in terms of applying behavioural norms, while interacting and using digital technologies they were somewhat capable and capable. When asked about their capacity to protect their online reputation, respondents did not feel convenient to answer that they were totally capable to defend themselves in an online environment. Thus, the percentages were low.

Image 4.3.9. Digital content creation capability of VET Learners from Greece



VET learners through the questionnaire expressed their capacities regarding the development of digital content. Nevertheless, in this question the percentages indicated the need for upscaling the digital skills of VET learners. The answers on the question Q17 show that the majority of the participants feel between somewhat capable and capable to create and edit digital content creatively in different formats and modify, refine and improve different digital content in order to create new and original ones. Furthermore, participants feel in their majority somewhat capable regarding co-creating data, resources and knowledge using digital tools. While the Mean indicates that responses are placed around 2,5, the high rate of Standard Deviation shows a great distribution around the Mean with the majority of answers being placed at a lower level.

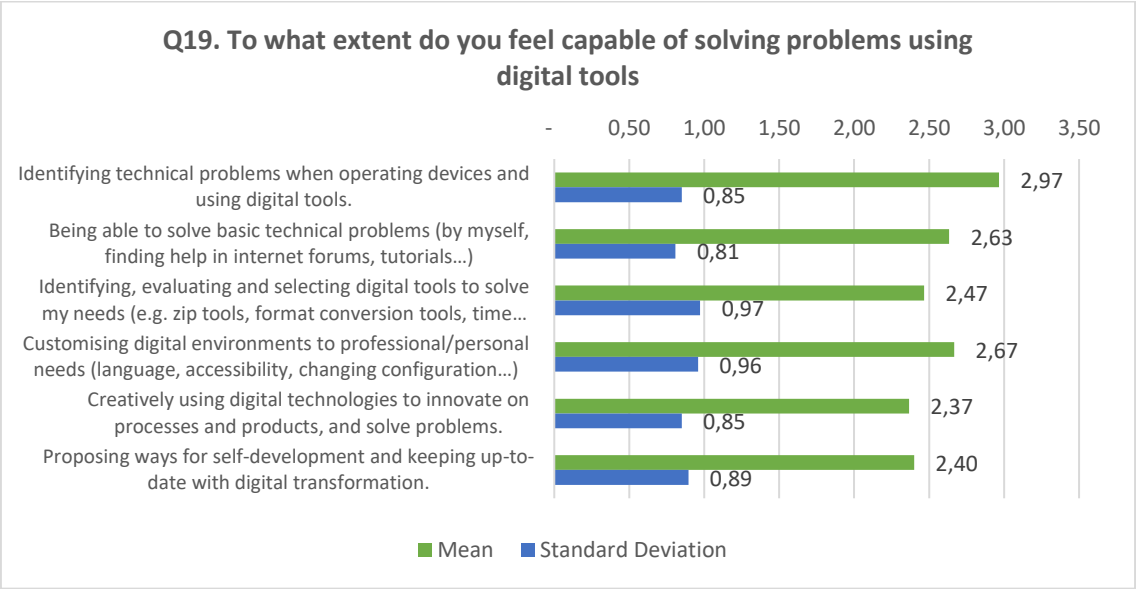
Image 4.3.10. Online Safety capability of VET Learners from Greece



Regarding online safety, the responses were quite satisfactory, as most participants felt near to capable on managing online safety but not very confident. Despite the low Mean, the high Standard Deviation doesn't reflect the most frequent answer because there are some extreme opinions. Looking at the general answers the results show that half of the participants feel capable to cope with online safety.

Among all the previous positive answers, there was one statement regarding management of personal data, where participants did not express their total capability. The majority of them is not so capable to manage personal data according to European Law.

Image 4.3.11. Problem solving capability of VET Learners from Greece

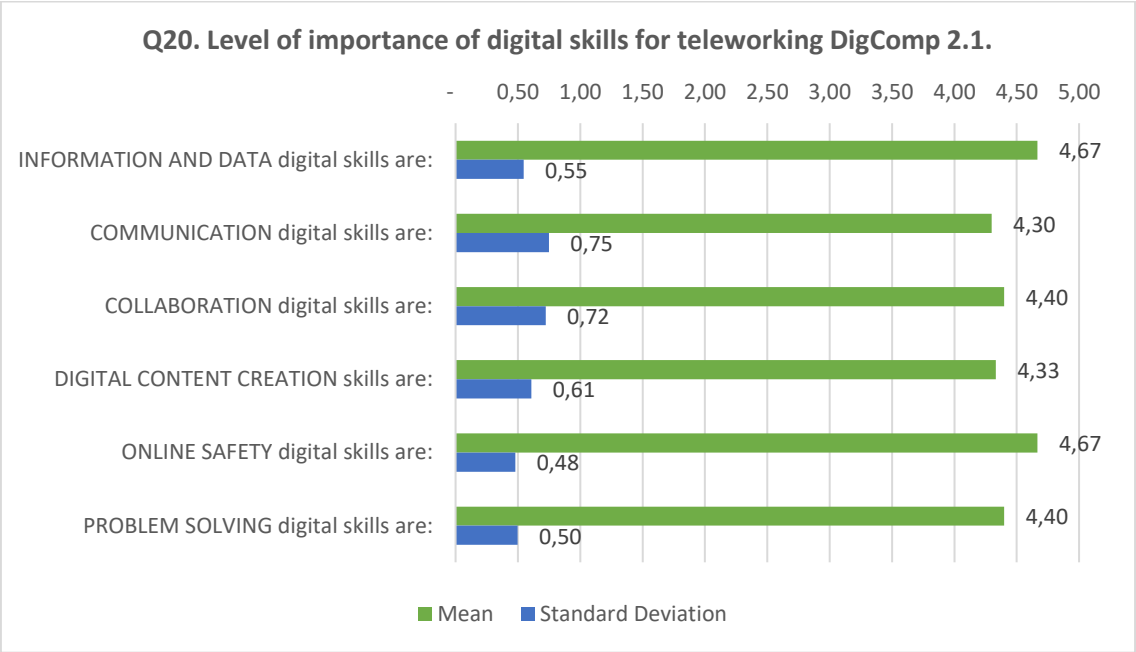


Another significant aspect of teleworking is related to the capability of providing solution to problems using digital tools. In this question, the outcomes indicate that there is also a great need of cultivating the methods on solving problems using digital tools. Proceeding one step further to this thematic, participants were asked to express their capability on identify technical problems when operating devices and use digital tools. In this question, the responses were differentiated between somewhat capable and capable.

The different profiles of participants and the high percentage of participants that have no experience in Teleworking, are reflected also in the results. The survey detects a gap and a hesitation in digital skills but without conclusions to a specific issue due to high deviation rates in most of the statements questioned.

Furthermore, the survey asked participants to indicate the level of importance of the digital skills that were mentioned in the previous questions regarding teleworking (Q20).

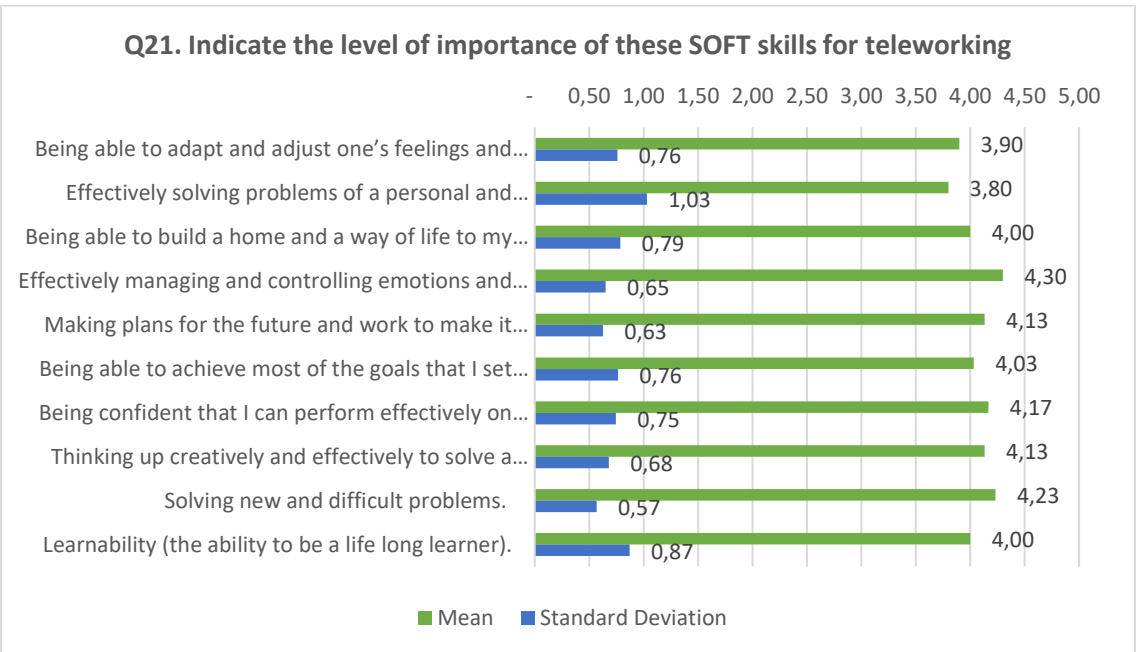
Image 4.3.12. Level of importance of digital skills of VET Learners from Greece



Participants in their majority believe that digital skills are very important to essential for someone to perform Teleworking, ranking all of the skills upper to 4,3 (Mean). The low Standard Deviation in the majority of the statements points to a meeting of minds between responders. The common opinion regarding the importance of those competencies completes the previously detected facts that there is a need for VET Learners to be trained in this field.

2.5. Soft skills for teleworking.

Image 4.3.13. Level of importance of soft skills of VET Learners from Greece



Regarding the significance of soft skills for teleworking, the majority of participants indicated that soft skills are of great importance. There was a vast convergence to the answers

presented by values starting from 3,80 till 4,30 and just one statement with a high Standard deviation. Based on the participants, the soft skill that was evaluated as the most essential, was the ability to achieve most of the personal goals.

2.6. Digital skills training.

Image 4.3.14. Interest on training digital skills of VET Learners from Greece

Concluding, the last question aimed to identify the level of willingness of the participants to be trained on digital teleworking skills in the future. The diagram shows the outcomes of the answers, with the half of the participants to confess that it is totally likely to upgrade their digital skills for teleworking.

6. VET Providers questionnaire

3.1. Respondents' profile.

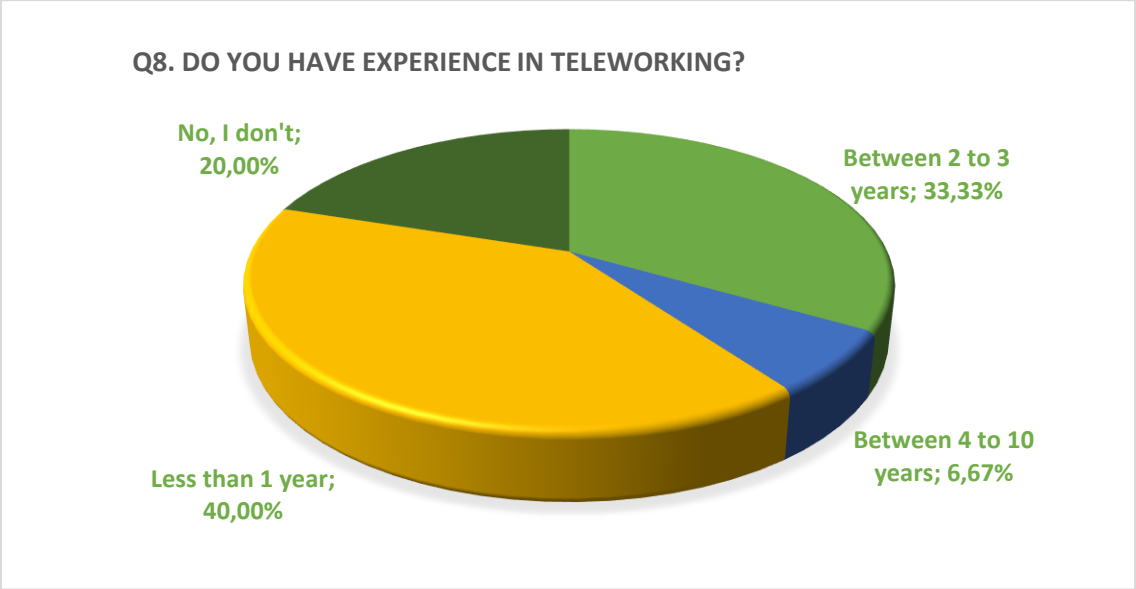
All people took part in the questionnaire, were VET providers who are now or were active in teaching in VET sector in Greece. The was an absolute majority of female participants, with (63.33%) being women. The greatest percentage among age groups was gathered by the age group of people 50-59 years old (36.67%), with those between 30 and 49 to follow with 33,33%. Regarding the studies of the participants, half of the respondents have gained a bachelor's degree and almost the rest of them hold a master's degree (40%). 33.33% of the participants stated that they belong to adult education schools, while 26.67% are teaching in VET Schools.

When asked about their previous work experience, the majority of participants stated that they have experience between 4 and 10 years (40%). Moreover, from the results extracted by the questionnaire, it was obvious that many of the participants (36,67%) have taught at

more than one educational level. Among all educational levels, adult education and training (56.67%) and Vocational Training (53.33%) reached the highest percentage rates.

3.2. Digital skills for teleworking.

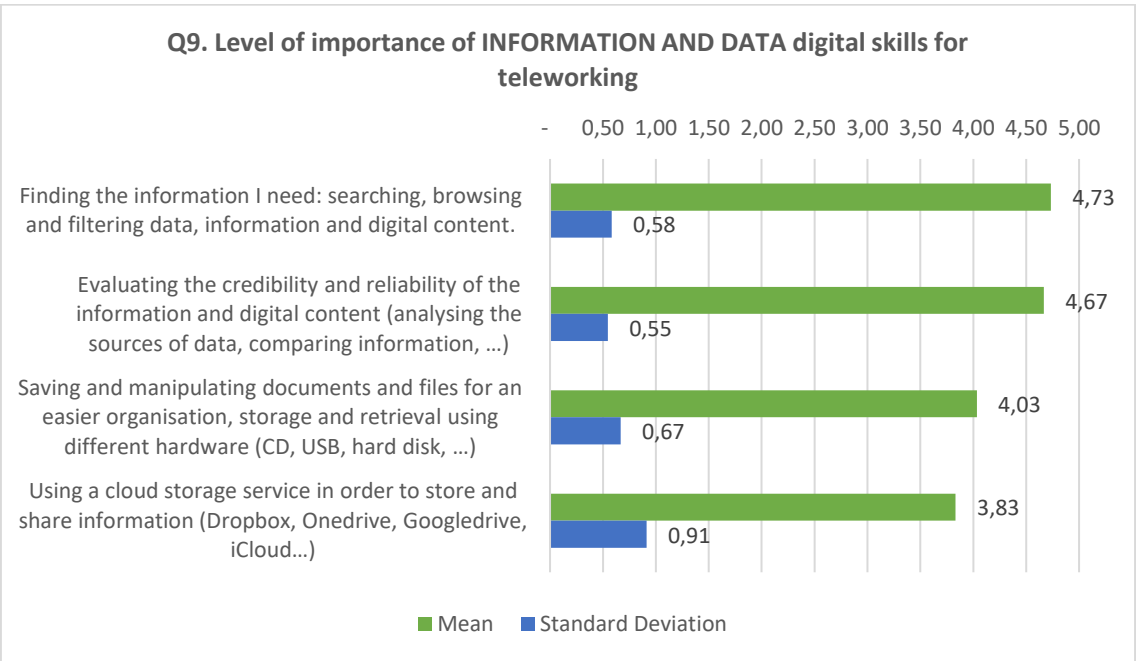
Image 4.3.15. Experience in teleworking for VET Providers from Greece



Regarding the question "Do you have any experience in teleworking?", 40% of the respondents had previous experience for less than a year, probably due to shift of the workplace into the virtual environment after the covid pandemic, while 33.33% had some experience between 2 and 3 years, as presented in the pie chart.

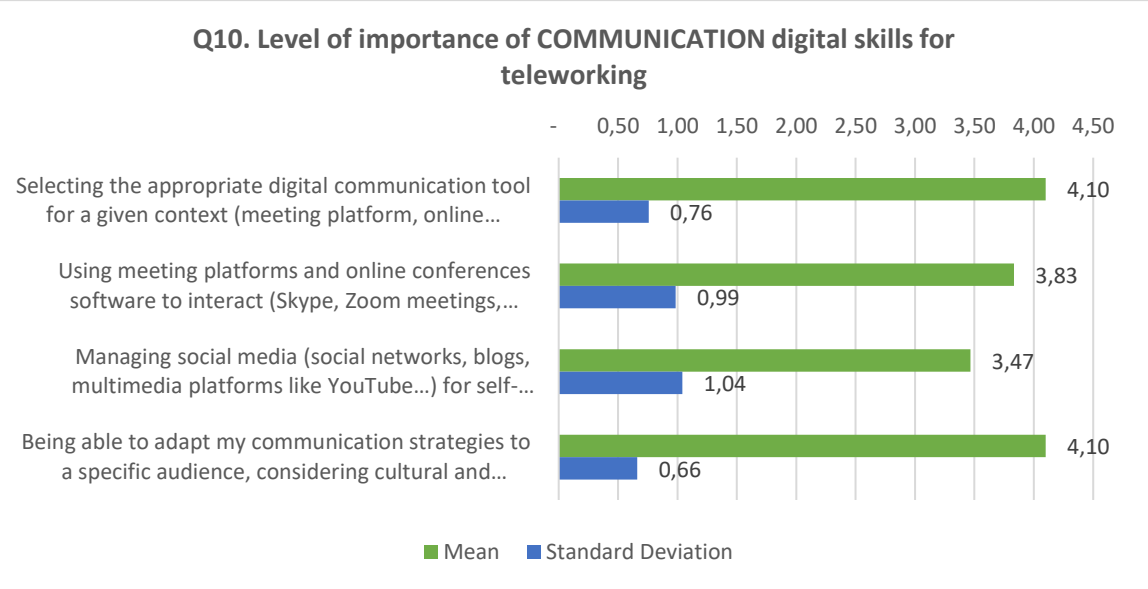
Following in the survey, VET providers had also to indicate the level of importance of different digital skills considered as necessary for telework.

Image 4.3.16. Information and data importance for VET Providers from Greece



The majority of the statements were characterized by respondents as very important with a clear tendency to essential. Regarding information and data, the majority of respondents consider it essential for someone to be able to find the appropriate information and evaluate them according to their credibility and reliability, as more than 80% and 70% accordingly validated with their responses the importance of those skills.

Image 4.3.17. Communication importance for VET Providers from Greece

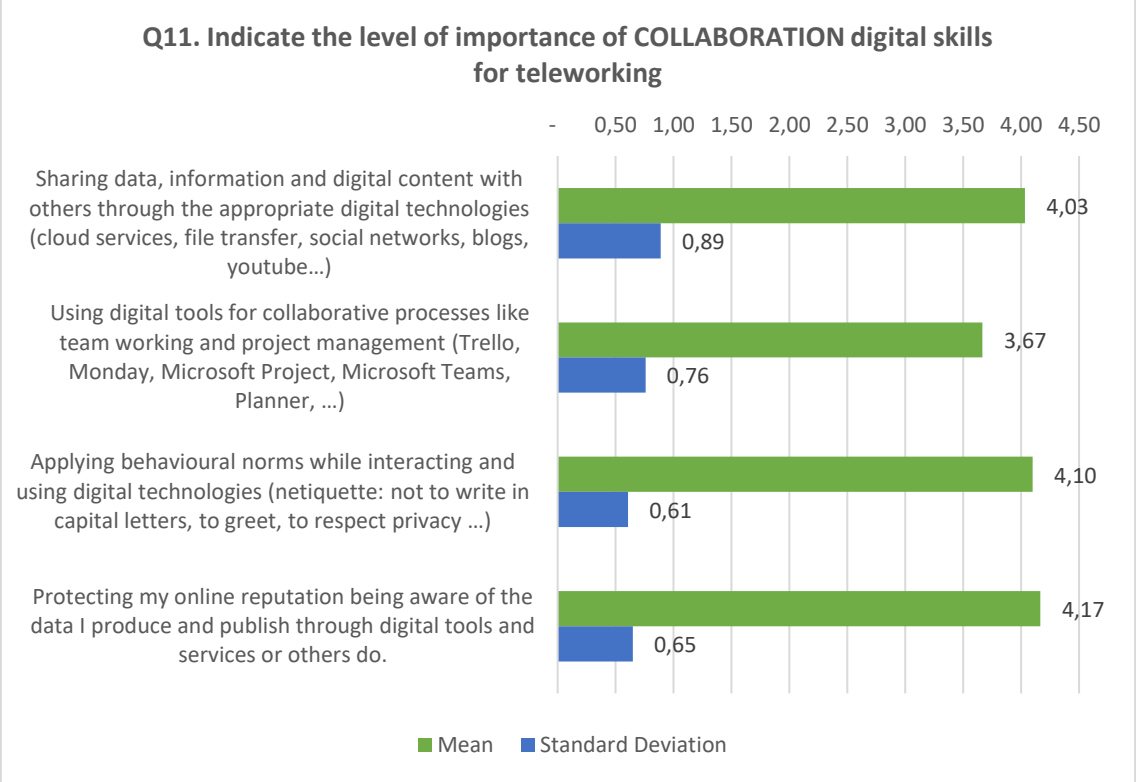


Concerning Q10 and the level of importance of digital skills regarding communication for teleworking, the respondents stated that the digital skills of communication are between important and very important without the existence of highly distributed opinion as the Standard deviation points. Responders highlight the ability to select the appropriate digital communication tool for a given context as very important or essential for teleworking. Besides the online shift of a large number of works the respondents did not evaluate the use of meeting platforms and online conferences software with the highest rates of importance. Specifically, the majority of respondents considered this statement as important, while a lower percentage as very important and essential.

Taking into account the age groups participated in that survey, it is clear that the management of social media for self-empowerment and dissemination purposes will have a big variation in the selected answers. Although the greatest number of participants assessed this skill as important there is still a 20% indicated this skill as essential.

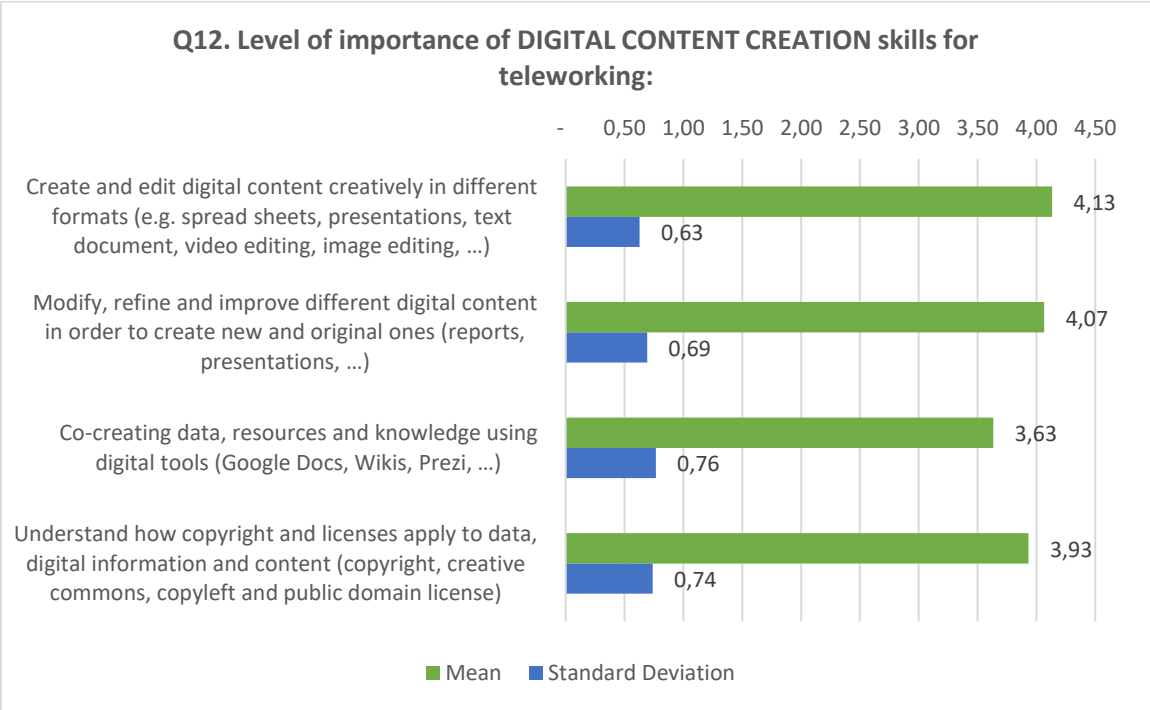
In contrary, the ability to adapt communication strategies to a specific audience, taking into account cultural and generational diversity is considered as a very important communication digital skill for teleworking according to the respondents.

Image 4.3.18. Collaboration importance for VET Providers from Greece



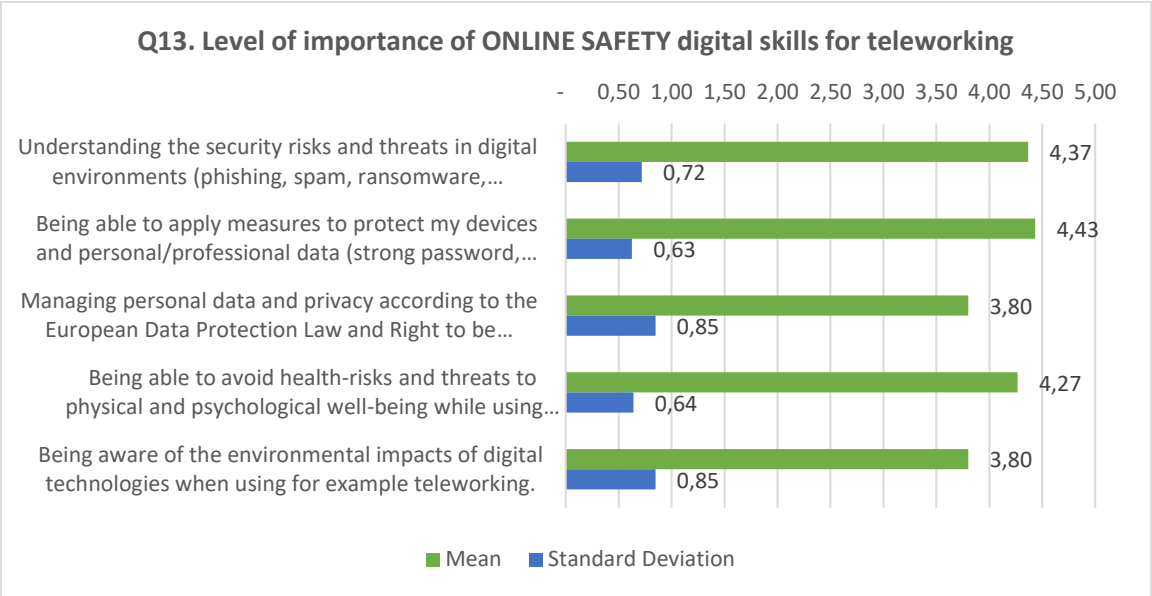
The digital skills for teleworking related to collaboration are overall considered as very important by the majority of participants in the survey. The vast majority believe that sharing data, information and digital content is very important or essential and just one out of thirty considered this skill as somewhat important.

Image 4.3.19. Digital Content Creation importance for VET Providers from Greece



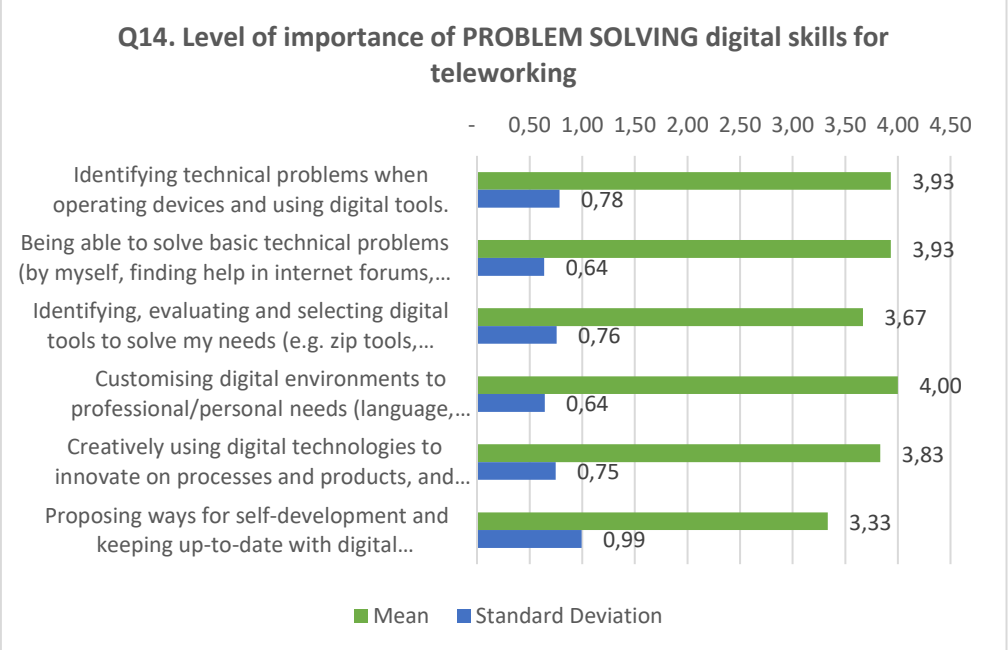
When VET providers asked about the level of importance of digital content creation skills for teleworking, the respondents had to rank four different digital skills. They assessed those skills in their majority as important and very important.

Image 4.3.20. Online Safety importance for VET Providers from Greece



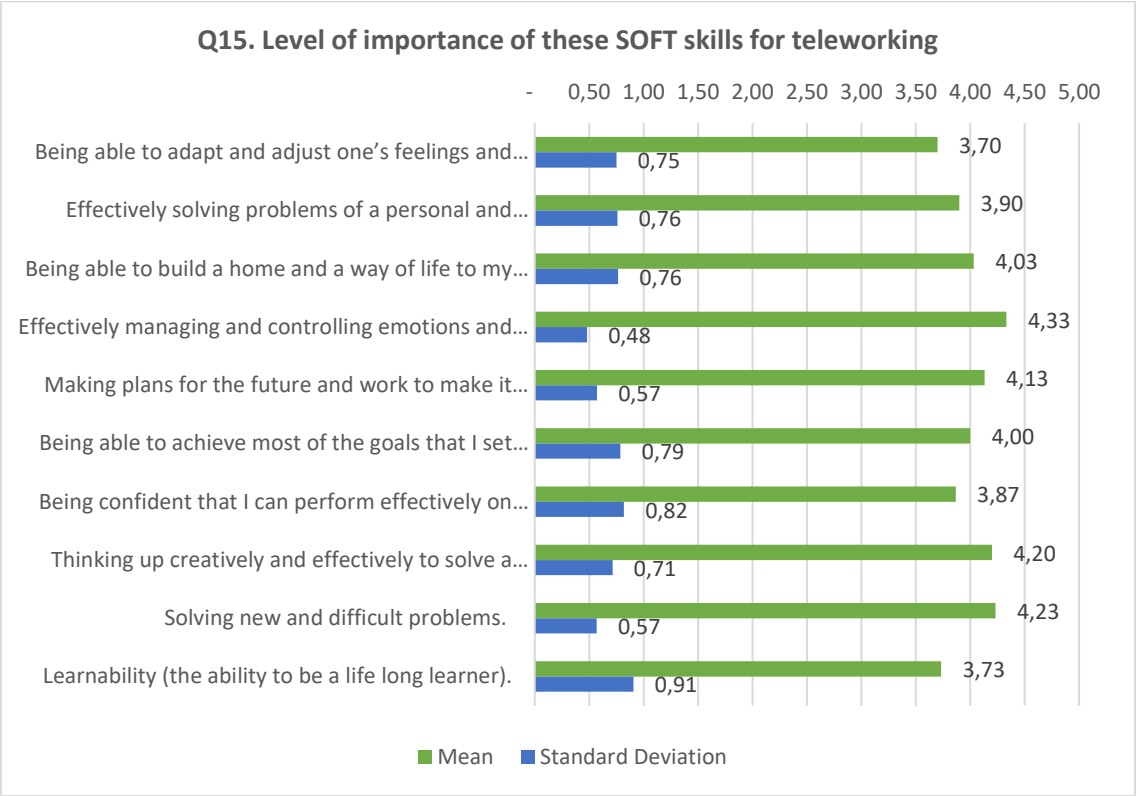
When it comes to the level of importance of online safety, digital skills are perceived as "Very Important" and "Essential" choices with only two respondents stating the opposite. Understanding the security risks and threats in digital environments, being able to apply measures to protect devices and personal/professional data and being able to avoid health-risks and threats to physical and psychological well-being are considered very important or essential by the majority of respondents (in some cases 93.4%), while managing personal data and privacy (GDPR)" and being aware of the environmental impacts of digital technologies are considered just important.

Image 4.3.21. Problem Solving importance for VET Providers from Greece



Another significant aspect of teleworking is problem-solving digital skills. The general opinion according to the outcomes of the survey considers these skills important, as they rank between 3 and 4. However, some of their subskills are considered as very important such as: "The customization of digital environments to professional/personal needs". Additionally, "The identification, evaluation and selection of digital tools to solve my needs" and "The suggestion of ways for self-development and keeping up-to-date with digital transformation" as the Mean value indicates, are important for VET Providers.

Image 4.3.22. Soft skills importance for VET Providers from Greece



Regarding the level of importance of the SOFT skills for teleworking, VET Providers gave almost the same answers as VET Learners, considering the soft skills of great importance. Based on Standard Deviation, which is not very high, this opinion tends to match the whole responded group's opinion.

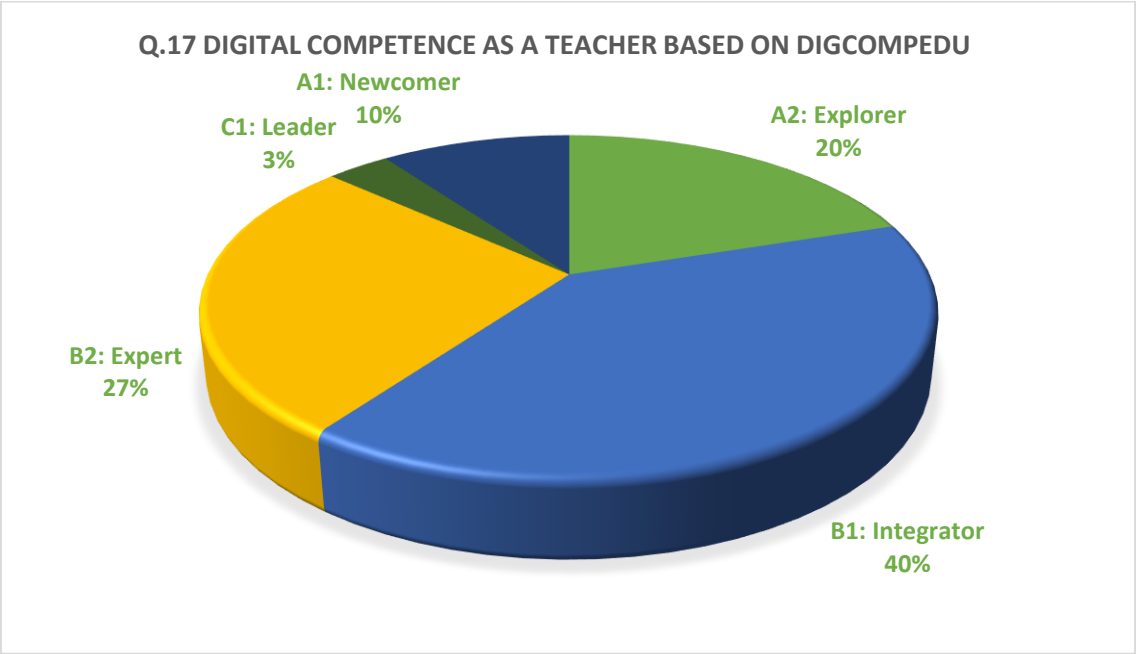
"Effectively managing and controlling emotions and stress" and "Making plans for the future and work to make it happen" are the soft skills that participants believe as most important.

When respondents were asked to add some more essential skills for teleworking, they did not add any more answers as they believe that all the essential skills for teleworking were included in the previous questions.

3.3. Digital skills for education.

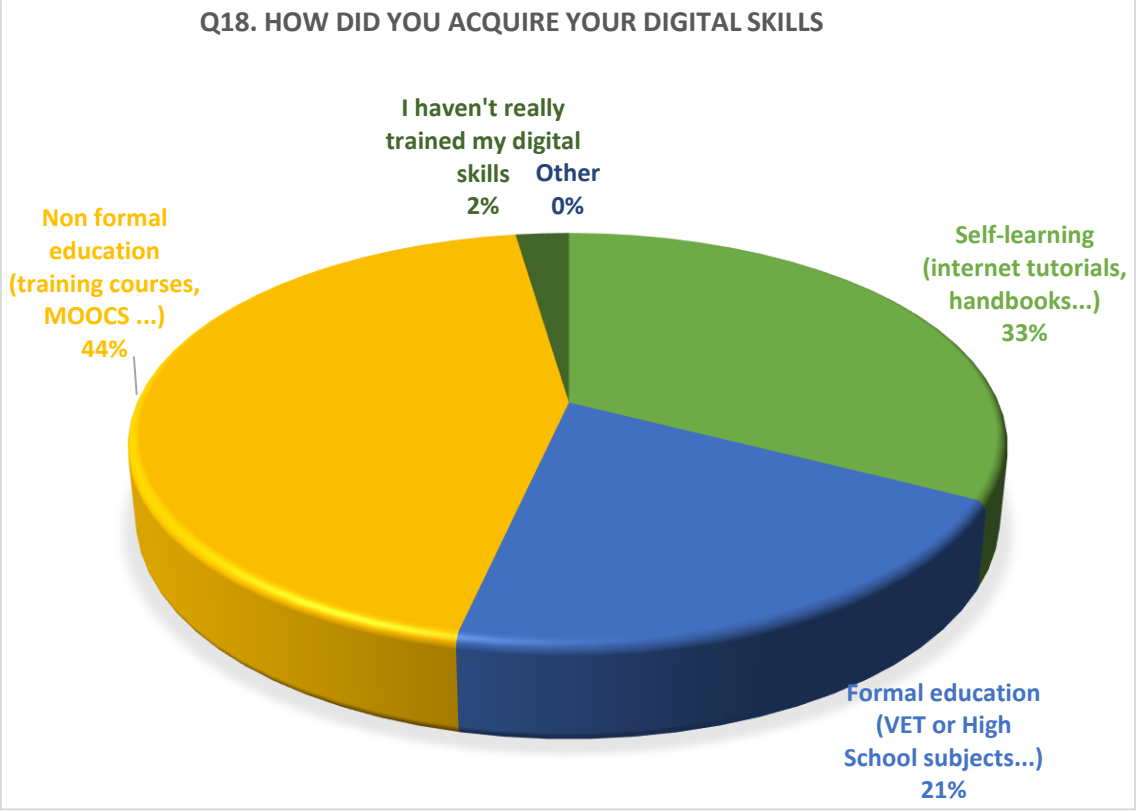
Participants in the survey had to evaluate their current digital competencies as trainers positioning themselves in one of the following categories: A1: Newcomer, A2: Explorer, B1: Integrator, B2: Expert, C1: Leader.

Image 4.3.23. Digital competence as teacher (DigCompEdu) for VET Providers from Greece



The majority of them characterized themselves as Integrators (40%), as you can see in the pie chart with the 27% percentage stating expert.

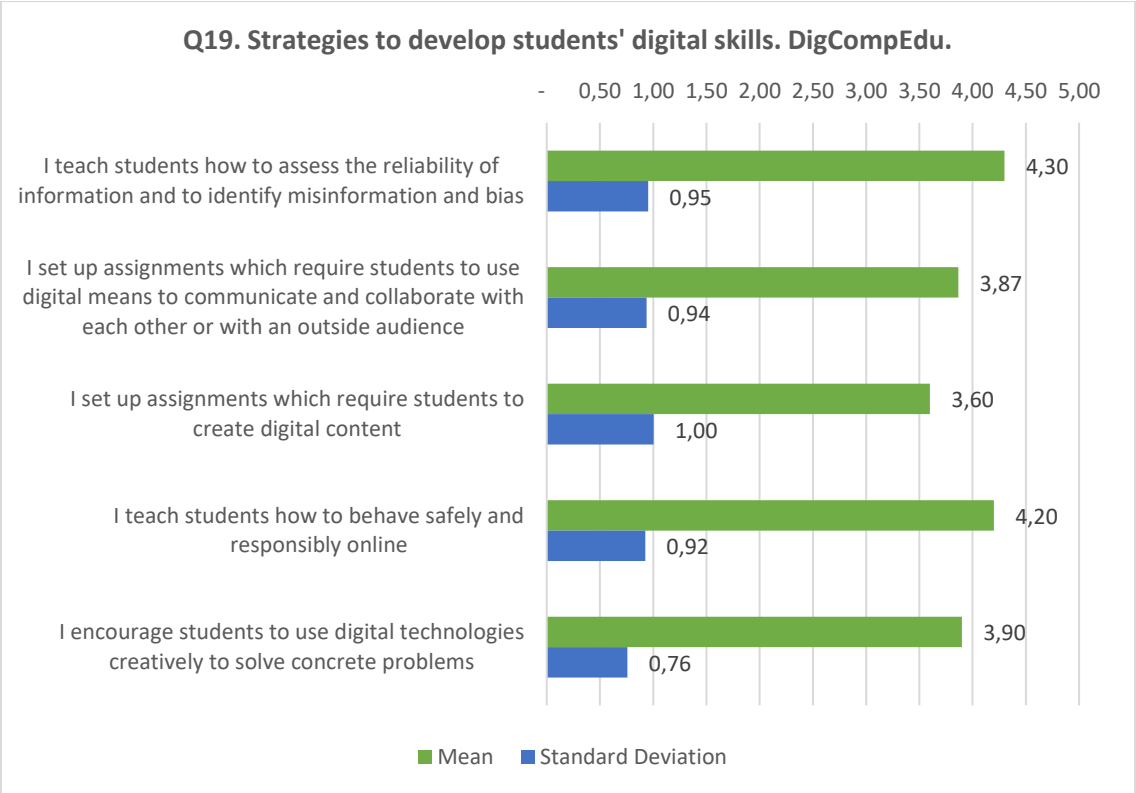
Image 4.3.24. Digital skills acquisition for VET Providers from Greece



From the results extracted by the questionnaire, it was obvious that most of the participants have acquired their digital skills through non formal education procedures (44%).

Nevertheless, formal education (VET or High School subjects) and different kind of self-learning methods as internet tutorials or handbooks gathered also high rates.

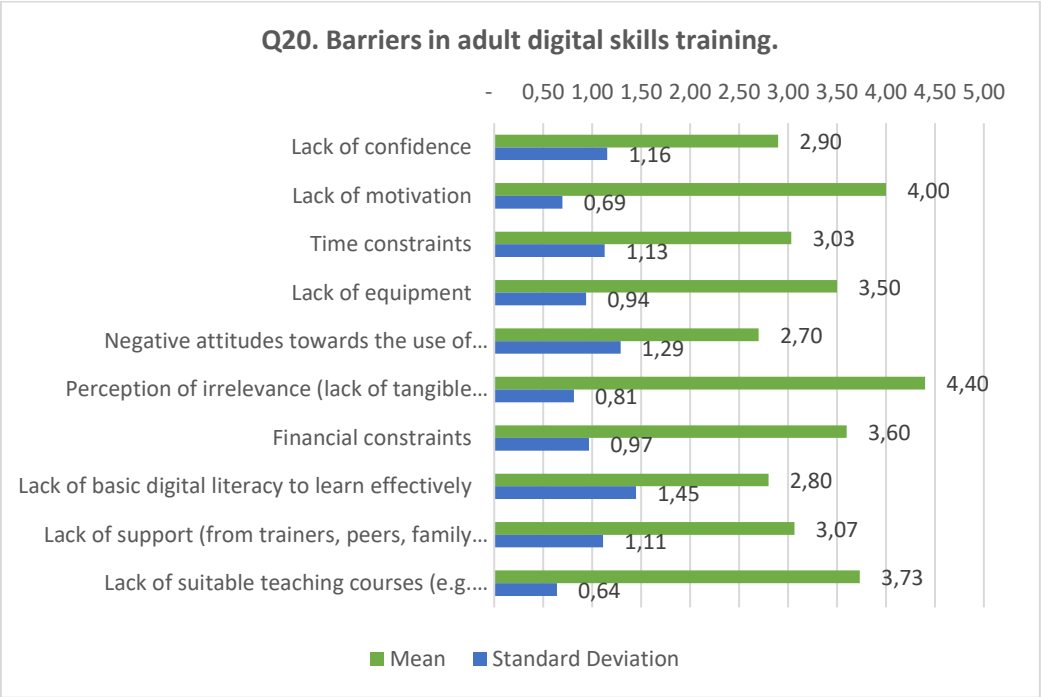
Image 4.3.25. Strategies to develop digital skills for VET Providers from Greece



As being partially responsible for strengthening the digital skills of their students, the survey addressed to VET Providers the question: “To what extent do you use the following strategies to develop your students' digital skills?”. Almost half of VET Providers teach systematically their students how to assess the reliability of information and how to identify misinformation and bias, while a slightly lower amount teaches their students how to behave safely and responsibly online.

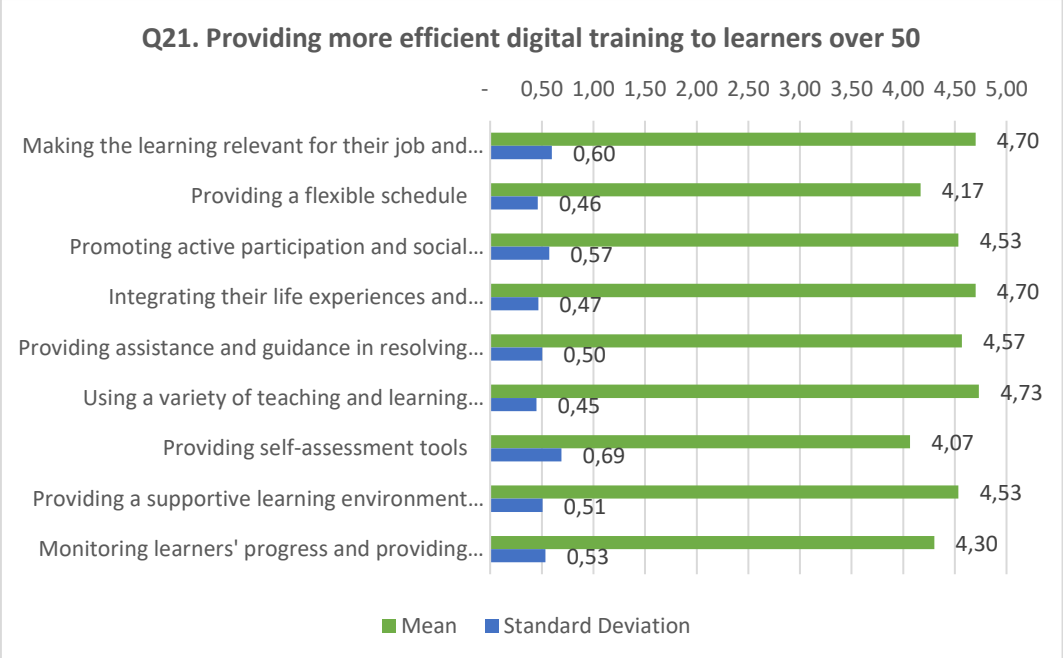
In general, VET Providers use sometimes or frequently all of the strategies based on Mean Value but the high rates of Standard Deviation indicate that this general opinion does not match all individuals’ point of view.

Image 4.3.26. Barriers in adult digital skills training for VET Providers from Greece



The survey aimed to identify the most important barriers that VET Providers have encountered in adult digital skills training. Participants considered as important the lack of equipment and the financial constraints, while lack of motivation and suitable teaching courses are believed to be very important. The perception of irrelevance is the only statement that respondents in their majority chose as an essential barrier in adult digital skills training. Furthermore, the results of the statement regarding the lack of basic digital literacy in order to learn effectively are very interesting, because they present the biggest variation.

Image 4.3.27. Strategies to provide efficient digital training for VET Providers from Greece



In Q21 regarding how digital training could be provided to learners over 50, the majority of respondents agreed or totally agreed with the statements provided in the survey, as all of them scored more than 4 ("Agree"). The relatively low rate of standard deviation highlights the unanimous opinion of VET Providers taking part in that survey. VET Providers believe that making the learning relevant for their job and employability is the most preferred strategy in order to improve the training for learners over 50, as the majority of the responders pointed the highest rate (5) for that specific statement.

3.4. Digital skills training for education.

Finally, the survey has set a big question to the audience regarding teaching techniques that provide effective digital training to learners over 50 years old. Only one respondent shared an opinion proposing that case studies are a great technique to teach learners after their fifties.

Image 4.3.28. Training for VET Providers from Greece

On the question regarding their willingness to receive training on how to foster students' digital skills in the future the majority of respondents (63%) gave the answer "totally likely", indicating their willingness and the need for attending training programs for VET Providers.

4. Conclusions

The interviewed groups were consisted by VET Learners and VET Providers coming from and living in Greece. The survey created a clear view of the profiles, characteristics and needs of the respondents and highlighted the urgency for supporting digital skills of VET Providers and VET Learners in the current and post COVID-19 period. A lot of people were forced to shift their conventional working environment to telework, having small or even no experience.

The survey identified the digital skills for teleworking, such as communication, collaboration, digital content creation, online safety and problem-solving skills, which are evaluated as the most important skills, according to the outcomes of the survey. Most of the abovementioned digital skills are considered important or very important by VET Providers while VET Learners feel mostly somewhat capable or capable to deal with tasks that involve digital skills. Regarding teleworking procedures, VET Learners provided in many cases neutral answers, fact that reveals their great uncertainty about these new conditions imposed and a fear of adapting into this rapidly changing environment due to lack of experience under such conditions.

From the results of the questionnaire, VET Providers and VET Learners have already obtained a level of digital literacy from non formal education, formal education and self-learning procedures.

Finally, both VET Learners and Providers are willing to train and update their digital skills, for different purposes, in the future. 50% of VET Learners believes that it is likely to train their digital skills for teleworking and 63% of VET Providers stated that it is totally likely to receive training on how to foster students' digital skill.

Concluding, from the results of the survey, the gaps in digital teleworking skills knowledge and training of VET learners and VET providers were clearly stated. Moreover, improvements on digital skills acquired are considered as essential in the new digital era, with TeleGrow project coming to bridge those gaps and cover the needs in digital skills training and acquisition. Finally, the willingness of VET learnes and providers to be trained to acquire digital skills, or upgrade their existing digital skills will enable a smoother transition to this new digital era and greater impact of the projects' results.

SURVEY REPORT (Poland)

by CWEP, May 2021

Magdalena Blizinska (CWEP) m.blizinska@danmar-computers.com.pl

4.4.

7. Introduction

CWEP has approached 60 people in total in order to collect data on VET Learners'/ VET Trainers' digital skills and techniques being used by them. CWEP is an association cooperating with schools and VET centres. Thus, approaching the VET Educators was possible thanks to the developed database and contacts' network. The educators were contacted by CWEP representatives via email and phone. They have received the survey link via email. After receiving the link for the Survey for Educators they were able to forward the email to other institutions and VET Trainers. Thus, collecting the feedback from the surveys among the educators was not a time-consuming process for CWEP. In general, there were 30 surveys filled in by the VET Educators.

In terms of the other survey (for VET Learners), again the Polish association relied on its database. VET educational centres were contacted so that they could distribute the survey amongst their learners and forward the email with the survey link to other institutions. The main assumption was to collect as many answers from the target groups of the project (Learners and Educators aged 50+) as possible. In total, CWEP collected data from 30 VET Learners.

The representatives of CWEP decided not to organize one big event during which the respondents would complete the surveys due to the pandemic and current restrictions. Moreover, since both surveys were accessible online, there was no need for a face-2-face meeting. The representatives of the Polish association felt that it would be the best to give the respondents some freedom and the feeling of comfort, since they could easily fill in the survey on their private computers.

8. VET Learner's and employee's questionnaire

2.1. Respondents profile.

The Survey for VET Learners and Employees opens with some basic questions which aim to build an interviewees' profile (age, education level etc).

All the respondents confirmed they come from Poland (100%). Regarding gender, there were more female respondents (around 53%) than men (around 47%). In terms of age –the vast majority of interviewees were the representatives of the project's target group which is a group of people at the age 50+. Around 63% of respondents confirmed that they belong to the group at the age 50-59 years old. To compare, there were: 23% of people at the age of 30-49, 10% of people at the age 60-69 and around 3% of interviewees were people over 70 years old. In terms of education, the vast majority (around 47 %) of respondents completed secondary education (including technical school). To compare: 27% had primary education, 13% completed vocational training, 10% indicated they did not have a higher education degree and around 3% indicated high school.

Having analysed the answers to question 5 it is indisputable that most of the interviewees confirmed they were employed/self-employed (53%). The remaining data would classify: 27% of respondents as people doing housework; 13% as unemployed and 7% as retired.
The next question was connected to the digital skills of the VET Learners. The interviewees could choose more than one answer, please find the most popular answers below:

Table 4.4.1: How did you acquire your digital skills? (Question 6)

Q6. How did you acquire your digital skills?	%
Self-learning (internet tutorials, handbooks...)	66,67
Formal education (VET or High School subjects...)	54,55
Non formal education (training courses, MOOCS ...)	60,00
I haven't really trained my digital skills	52,62
Other	3,33
Self-learning & Formal	7
Self-learning & Non Formal	0

The table above presents the collected data. The majority of respondents gained their digital skills by self-learning (around 67%), and non formal education (60%) The data shows that Polish people feel the need to train their skills – they search for training on their own. Furthermore, it is interesting that around 53% of the respondents feel no need to train their digital skills – that might mean that they are perfectly fine and satisfied with their digital competences or they don't use these particular skills at work. At this stage of the survey, it is not really possible to determine the cause.

The last question connected to the respondents' profile was about their career experience. Around 53% of respondents indicated they didn't have experience while the remaining data would be the following: more than 11 years of experience (30%); 4-10 years (10%); less than 1 year (7 %).

2.2. Teleworking adoption.

Question 8 and 9 were the enquiries about the interviewees' teleworking experience. An overwhelming majority of respondents stated that they did not have experience in teleworking at all (over 83%):

Image 4.4.1. Experience in teleworking for VET Learners from Poland

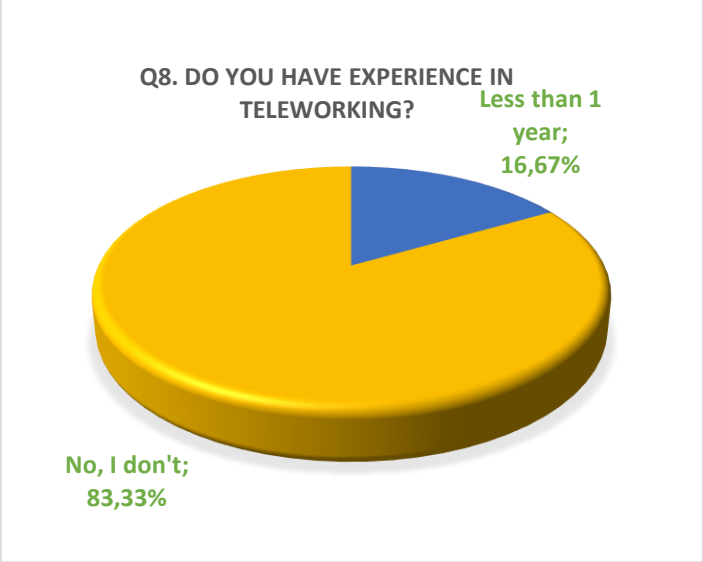
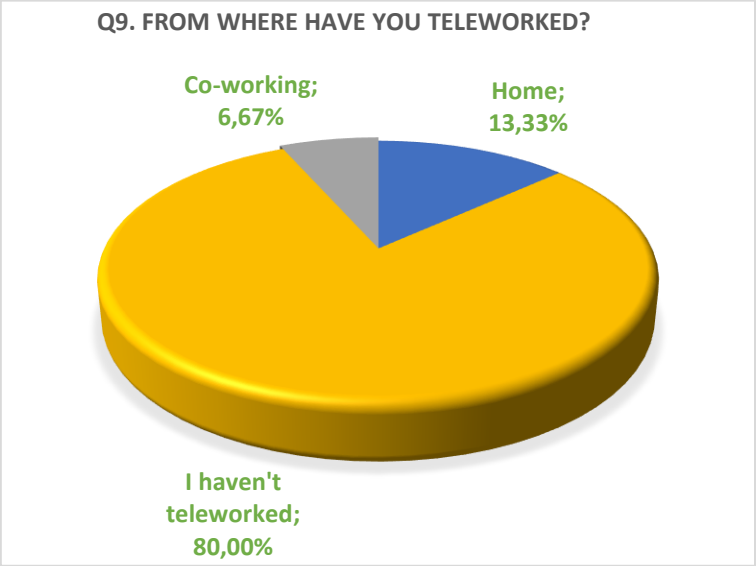
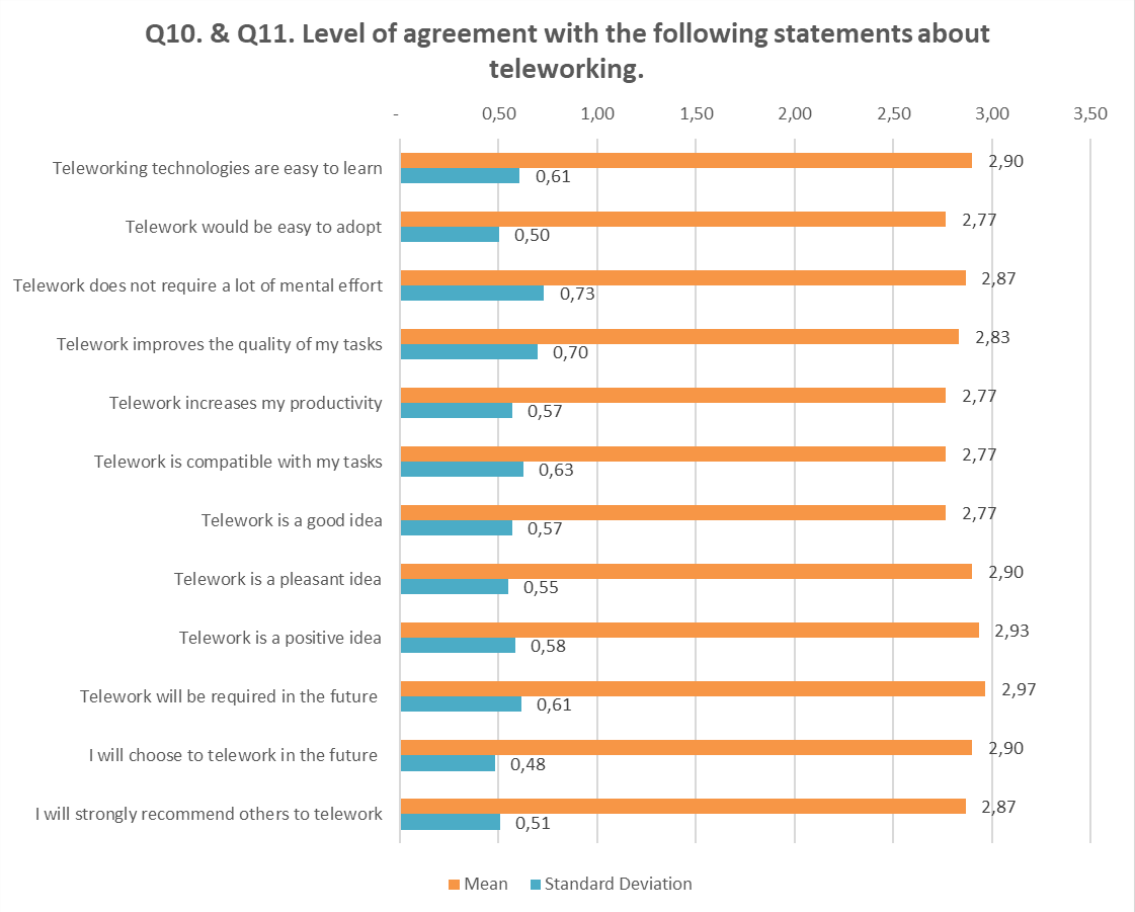


Image 4.4.2. From where have VET Learners from Poland teleworked?



The next two questions were more detailed questions regarding teleworking. The interviewees had to evaluate certain statements connected to the notion of teleworking and teleworking conditions. Please find the chart below which presents the average replies.

Image 4.4.3. Teleworking attitudes VET Learners from Poland

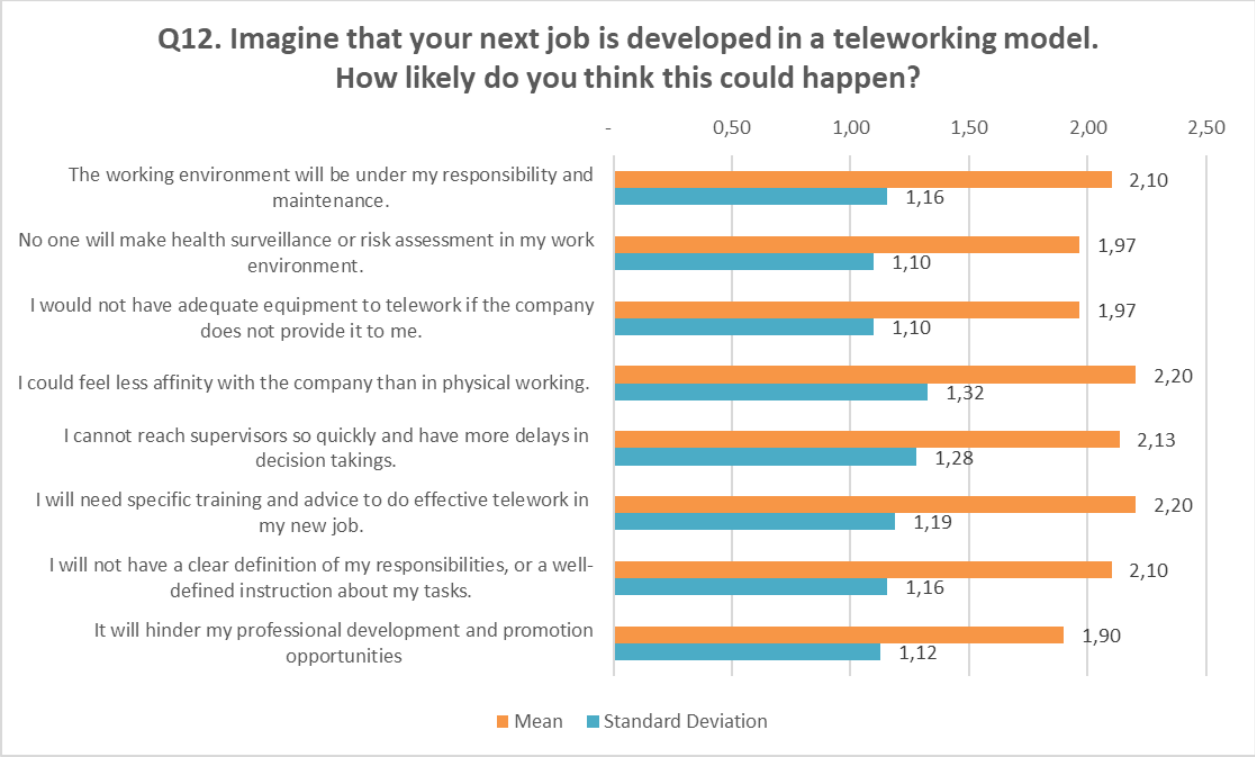


One can easily observe that the average rate for the statements would be around 3 – that would mean "neutral". It does not really provide much information at this point of the survey – it would be difficult to draw any conclusion from answers marked as neutral.
The statement with the biggest deviation rate was "Telework does not require a lot of mental effort" – standard deviation rate was 0,73 while the mean here was 2,87. Still, most of the interviewees chose the rate 3 (76.7%).

2.3. Teleworking barriers.

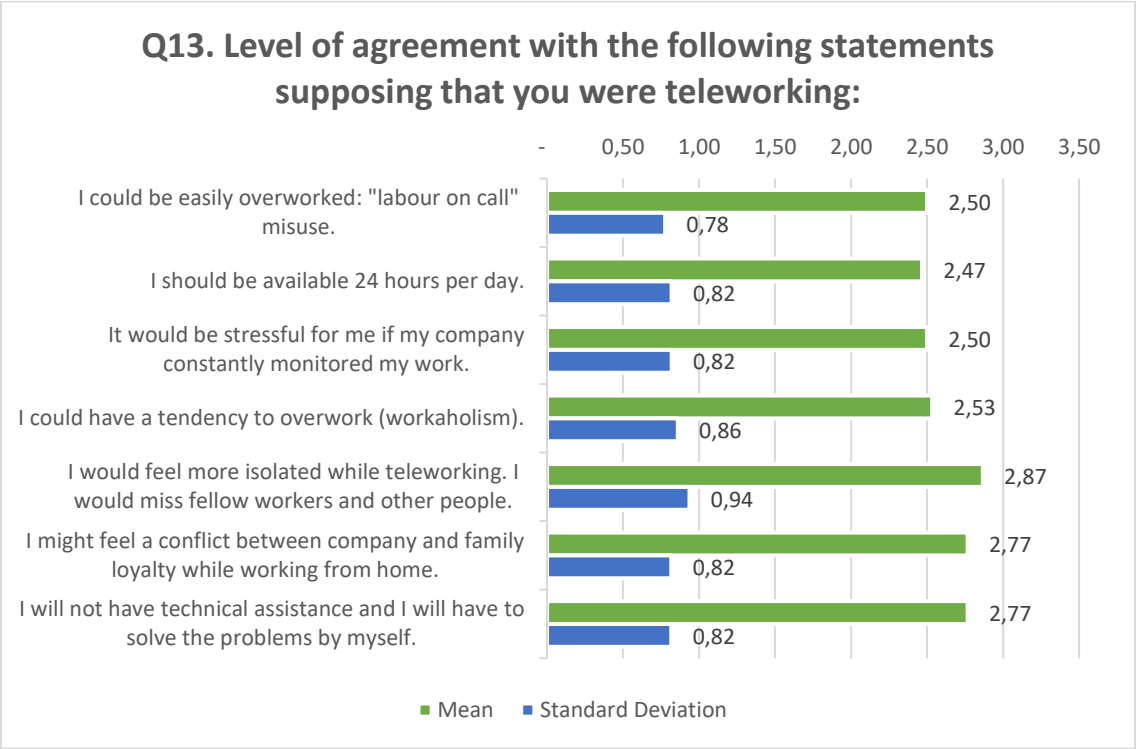
Question 12 was a hypothetical scenario – the interviewees had to escalate what are the chances for their work to be transferred to teleworking mode in the future. The mean here was between 1.90 and 2.20. Standard deviation rate was around 1.10 and 1.32. The deviation rate was quite high and that would mean that the general level of replies here could be even below the rate 2. The conclusion would be that Polish people don't really imagine working only in teleworking mode in the future. Please see the graph below.

Image 4.4.4. Teleworking beliefs of VET Learners from Poland



Question 13 was again an imaginary – but still possible - scenario. The question was to check the interviewees' attitude and expectations towards teleworking in the future. The standard (mean) rate was between 2.50 and 3 with standard deviation rate about 0.80-0.90. The most popular reply in general was the rate 3 (which means "neutral", "undecided"). This indicates that most of the respondents did not really express their opinions on the topic.

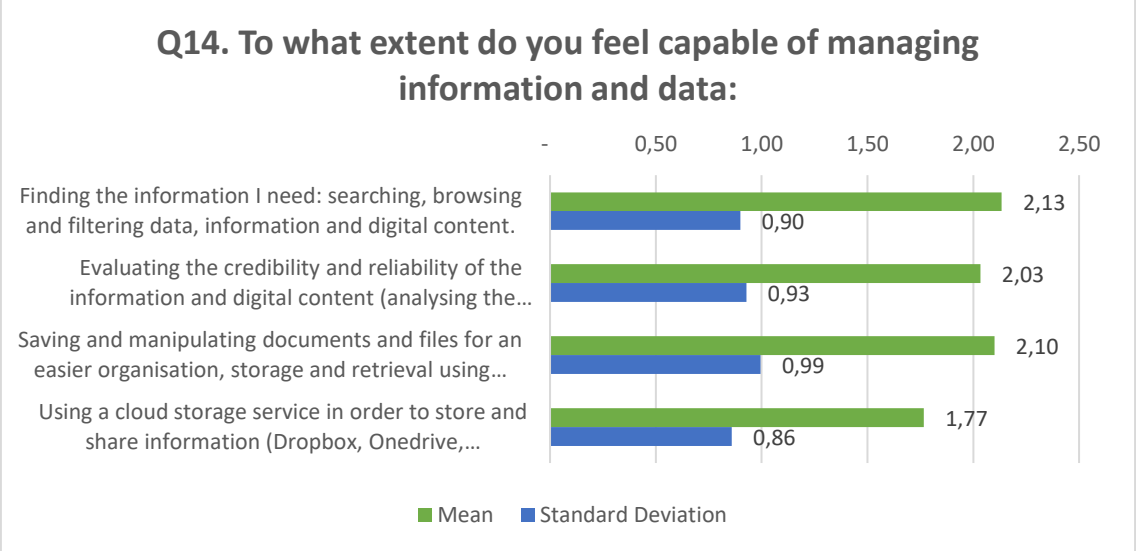
Image 4.4.5. Teleworking barriers of VET Learners from Poland



2.4. Digital skills for teleworking.

The next part of the survey was about the specific digital skills of the interviewees. Please see the graph representing the answers to question 14.

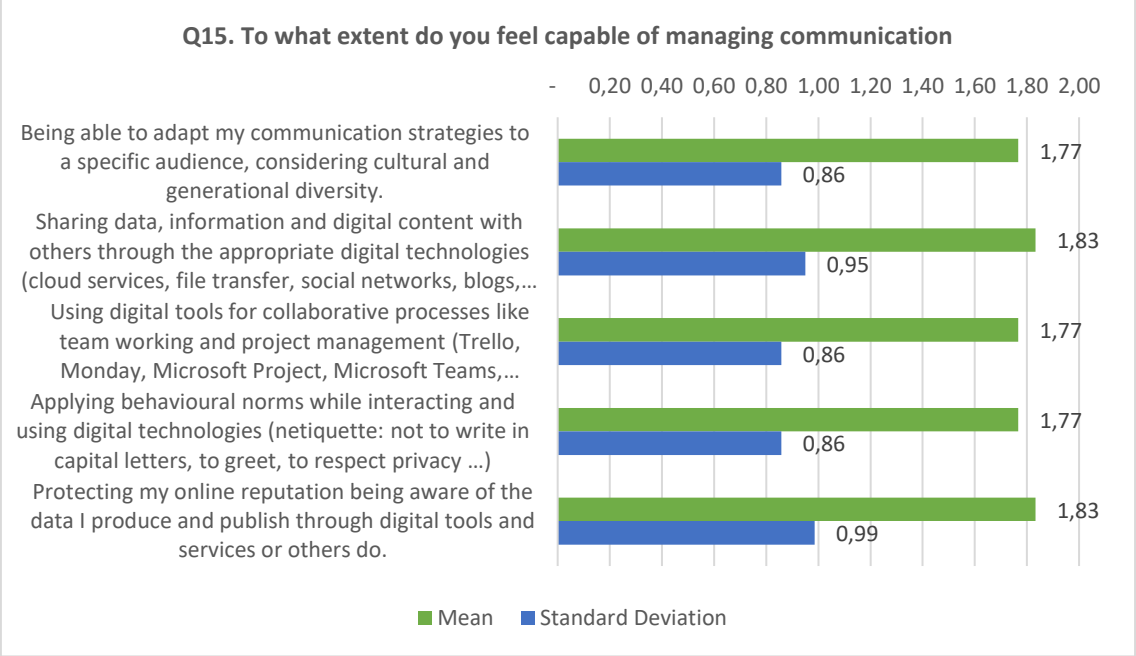
Image 4.4.6. Information and data capability of VET Learners from Poland



Question 14 was about digital skills of the interviewees connected to managing information and data (for instance searching for information online and using a cloud storage service). The mean rate representing most of the rates chosen by the respondents to all the four statements in question 14 is between 1.77 and 2,13 which would mean the respondents chose mainly the rate 1 (not capable) and 2 (somewhat capable). This indicates that Polish VET Learners do not feel confident while managing information online and using innovative

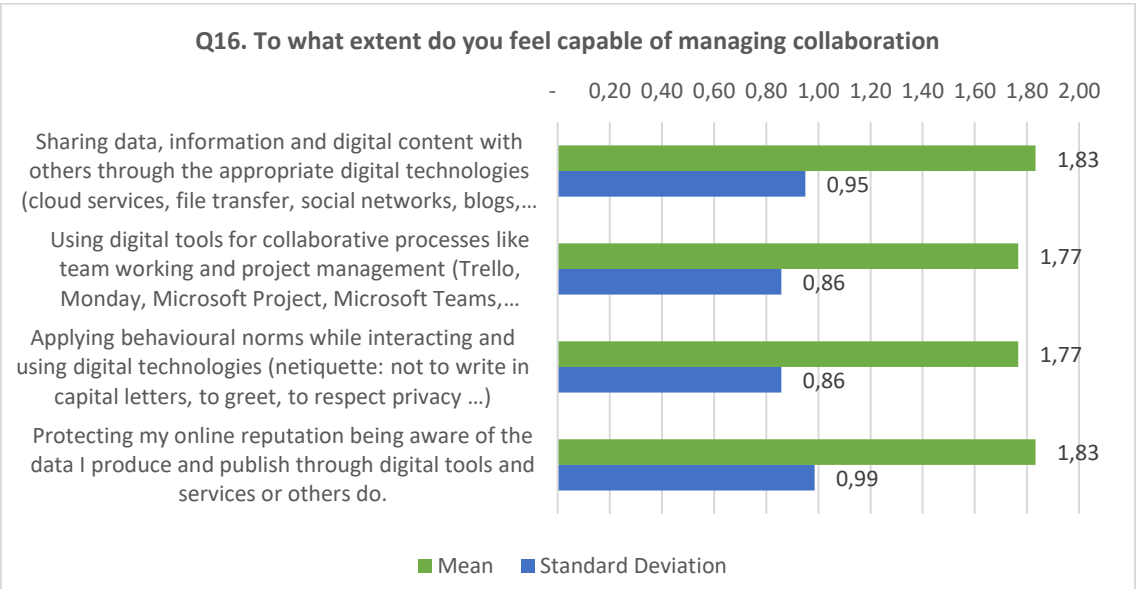
data storage techniques. Additionally, the deviation rate was quite high (almost 1). Still – most answers were rates 1 and 2, for example: "Using a cloud storage service" was rated with "1" by 43.3% of the respondents and with "3" by 43.3% as well.

Image 4.4.7. Communication capability of VET Learners from Poland



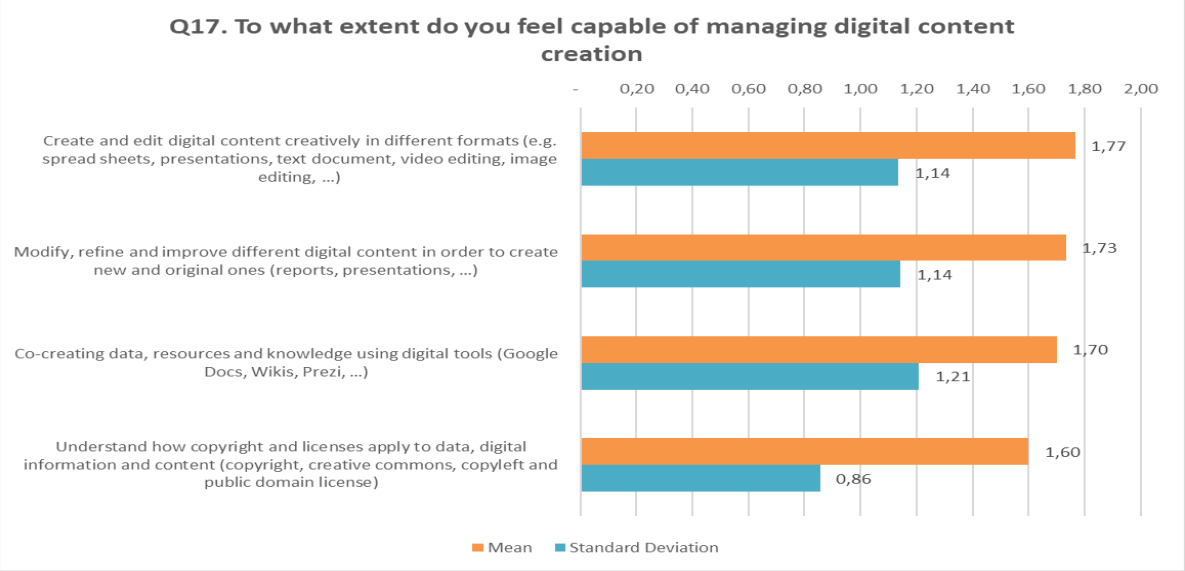
Question 15 was about online communication (especially using online platforms like Zoom and Skype and using social media in order to share data). Again, the overall rate to all the statements in question 15 was between 1 and 2. Once we analyse each and every statement, we can observe that the most popular reply would be rate 2 (which means here, again, "somewhat capable"). Nevertheless, the deviation scale was quite high and usually the interviewees would choose rate 1 instead ("not capable"). Again, the data collected proves that Vet Learners in Poland do not feel confident about their online communication skills.

Image 4.4.8. Collaboration capability of VET Learners from Poland



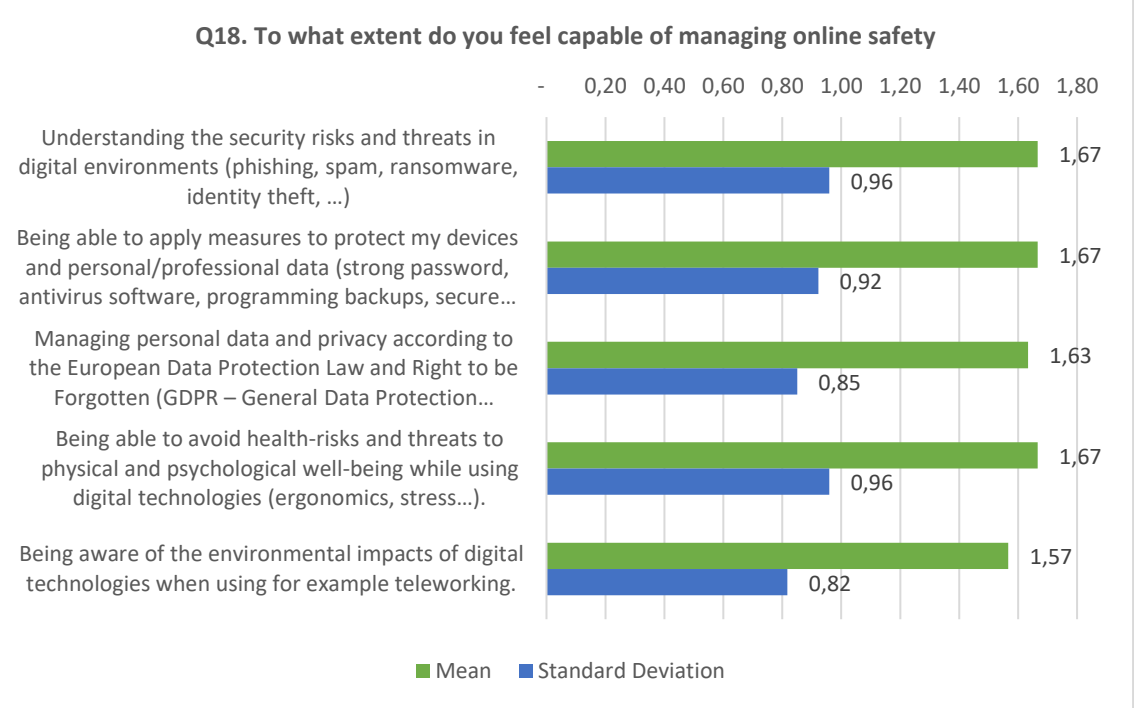
Question 16 was about innovative (remote) collaboration techniques. Again, the rates are similar (the mean rate is between 1.77 and 1.83) with quite high deviation rate. Most popular rates were again – rate 1 ("not capable") and 2 ("somehow capable").

Image 4.4.9. Digital content creation capability of VET Learners from Poland



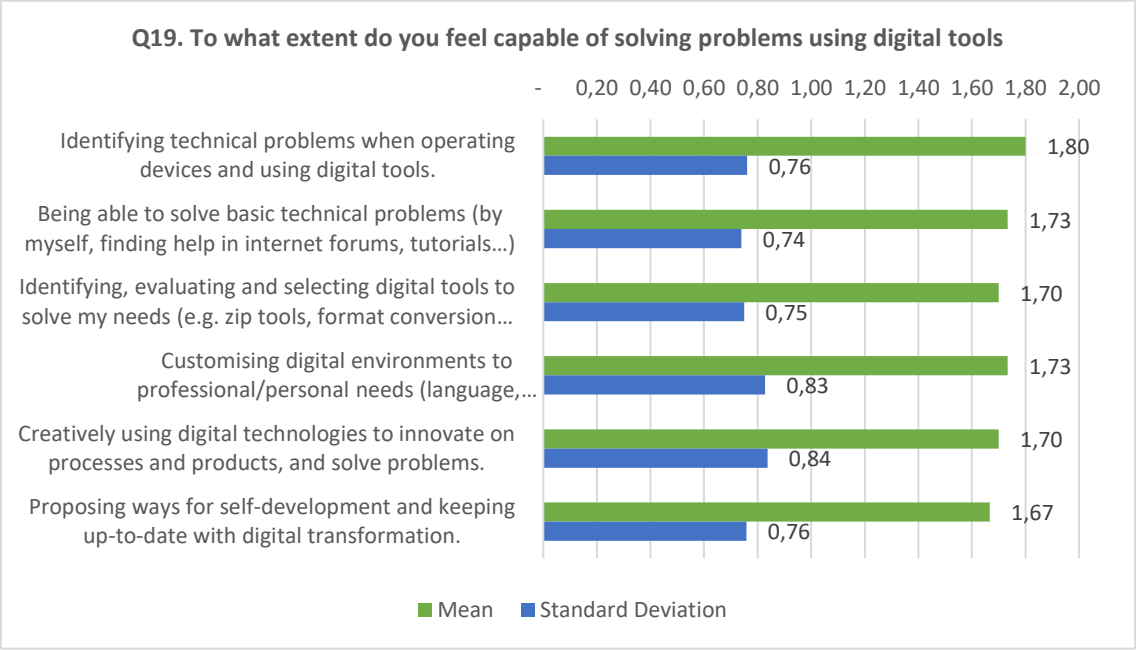
Question 17 was about creating digital content. The situation looks exactly the same here – high deviation rate and the mean rate which is between 1.60 and 1.73. The data proves that Vet Learners in Poland do not feel very confident about their skills connected to creation of digital content. Once we analyse statement by statement individually, we can observe that in question 17 the most popular rate was the rate 1 ("not capable"). For instance: "Co-creating data, resources and knowledge using digital tools" was marked as 1 by 60% of interviewees, while the rate 2 was given by 30%.

Image 4.4.10. Online Safety capability of VET Learners from Poland



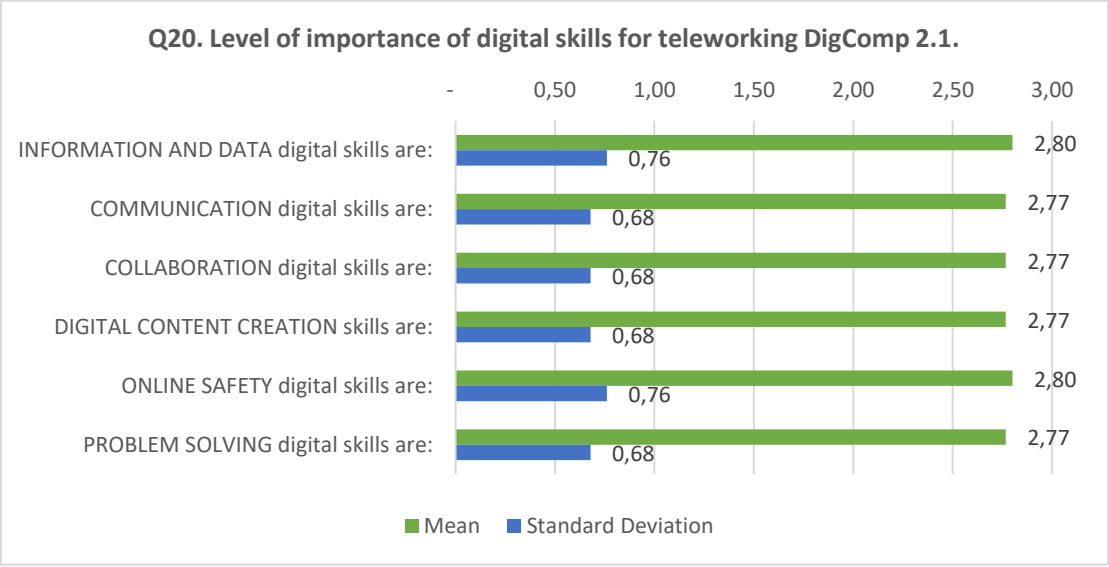
Question 18 was about online safety. Again, we observe a hight deviation scale (between 0.82 and 0.96) and the mean rate which is below 2. Again, most of the interviewees chose the rate 1 which means they do not feel safe online. For instance: "Understanding the security risks and threats in digital environment" was rated with 1 by 53.3% of respondents, while the rank 2 was chosen by 36.7%. To compare the mark 5 (meaning "confident") was chosen by 3.3% of the respondents.

Image 4.4.11. Problem solving capability of VET Learners from Poland



Question 19 was about solving problems using digital tools. Deviation rate was quite high (around 0.80) and the mean rate was between 1.67 and 1.80. The most popular marks were definitely ranks 1 and 2 which proves that Polish VET Learners do not feel confident while solving problems using digital tools.

Image 4.4.12. Level of importance of digital skills of VET Learners from Poland

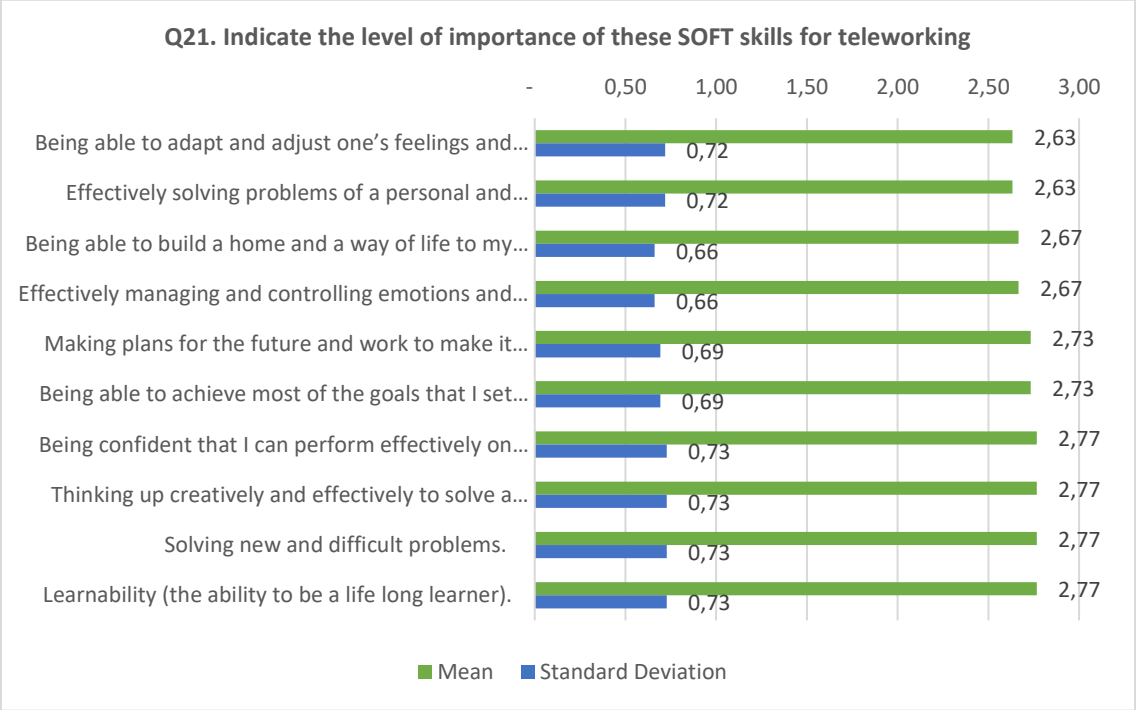


Question 20 was to check the level of importance of the forementioned digital skills for the interviewees. While the previous graphs show that VET Learners do not feel confident while using digital skills, question 20 proves that they are aware of the importance of each and every skill. The most popular rate in this question was surely rate 3 (meaning "important"). Each and every statement was ranked with "3" by 70% of respondents. The standard deviation is still quite high (between 0.68 and 0.76) which indicates that other replies and marks are meaningful as well. The mean rate for this question is almost "3".

2.5. Soft skills for teleworking.

The next question (question 21) was connected to soft skills. The interviewees had to escalate the level of importance of the given soft skill while teleworking. Please have a look at the graph below.

Image 4.4.13. Level of importance of soft skills of VET Learners from Poland

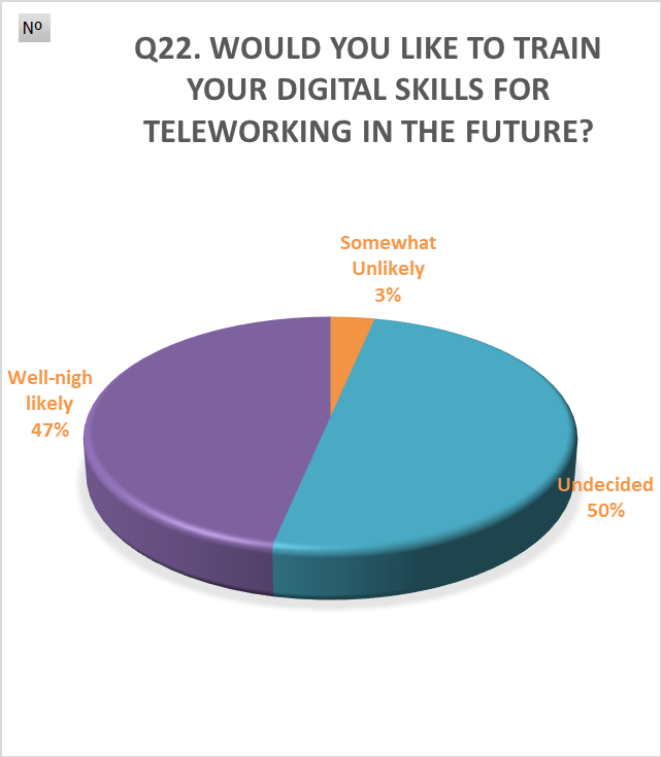


The graph represents all various soft skills indicated by the survey's authors. Again, the most popular rate here was 3 (meaning "important"). That means that the overall impression is that soft skills are important for the respondents. Nevertheless, we should notice that the deviation rate is still relatively high. The second most popular rate would be 2 (meaning "somewhat important") and chosen by around 20% of interviewees in each and every statement (to compare, rate 3 was chosen by 70%).

2.6. Digital skills training.

This section of the survey analyses training needs of the interviewees.
Please see the graph bellow.

Image 4.4.14. Interest on training digital skills of VET Learners from Poland



Question 22 was a direct question for the respondents: "Would you like to train your digital skills for teleworking in the future"? The graph above represents the replies of all 30 interviewees: "Undecided" (50%), "Somewhat unlikely" (3%) and "Well-nigh likely" (47%). The data collected indicates that almost all the interviewees are interested in attending a training which would help them develop their digital skills.

Question 23 was an open question – the interviewees were asked to indicate any other digital skills which they find important and which the survey did not include. There were no answers to these questions. That means that the survey focuses on all the important digital skills.

9. VET Providers questionnaire

3.1. Respondent's profile.

The Survey for VET Providers opens with establishing the profile of the interviewees (questions 1-7). This part of the questionnaire includes some basic information (country of origin; gender; age etc.). There were 30 respondents who took part in the survey. All of them confirmed they come from Poland (100%). In terms of gender the survey was filled in mostly by women (70%). To compare, there were 30% of men who filled in the questionnaire. Most of the respondents were middle-aged people: 46.67% of them were at the age of 30-49; 43.33% were at the age of 50-59. The remaining 10% were in their twenties. In terms of education, a definite majority of the interviewees hold their Master's Degree (around 57%) and work at a Training Centre. In terms of their work experience the interviewees chose all the different replies, it is not really possible to determine the exact career level of the respondents in general. What is important is the fact that only 16.67% of them claimed they

did not have experience. The remaining answers indicated various level of experience – please see the details below.

Table 4.4.2: Level of experience of VET Providers

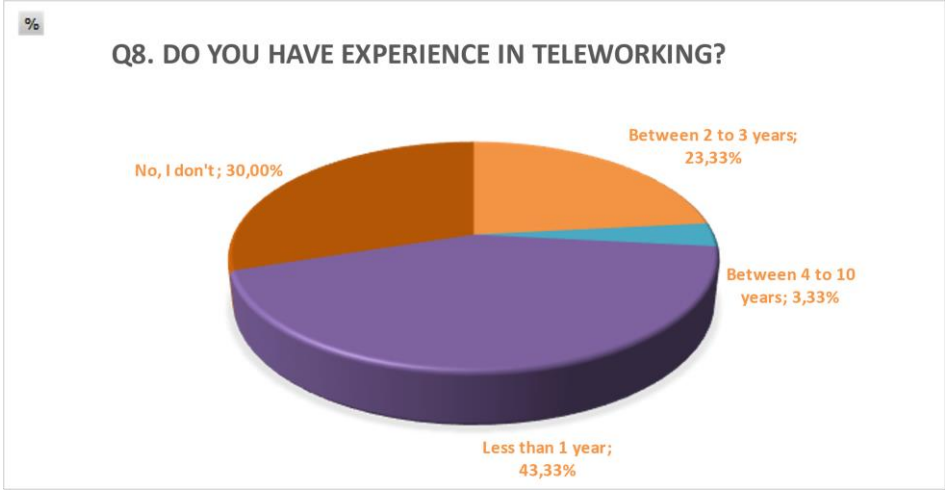
2-3 years	23.33%
4-10 years	20%
Less than 1 year	20%
More than 11 years	20%
No experience	16.67%

The very last question (7) in this section of the questionnaire was about the educational stage that the interviewees have experience with while providing training. Again, the answers are different here and they represent all various levels of experience in all possible educational settings. Nevertheless, the most popular reply chosen was "Adult education and training" marked by around 70% of respondents.

3.2. Digital skills for teleworking.

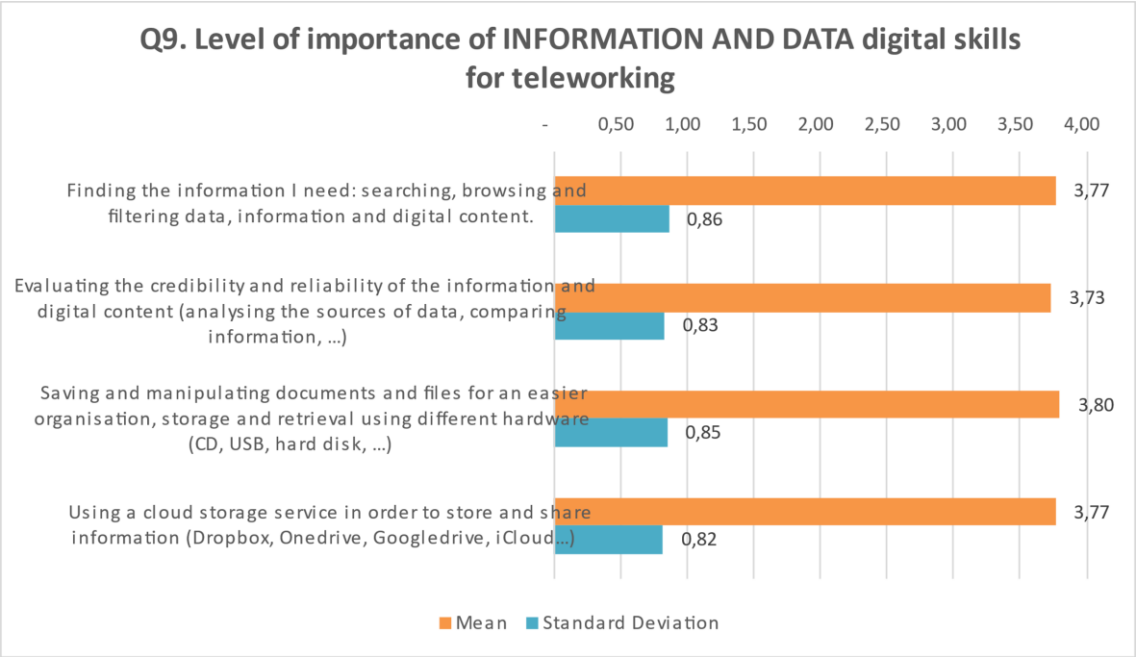
This section consists of eight questions (questions 8-16) and aims to identify the essential teleworking skills which VET Providers find important for the training needs of their learners.

Image 4.4.15. Experience in teleworking for VET Providers from Poland



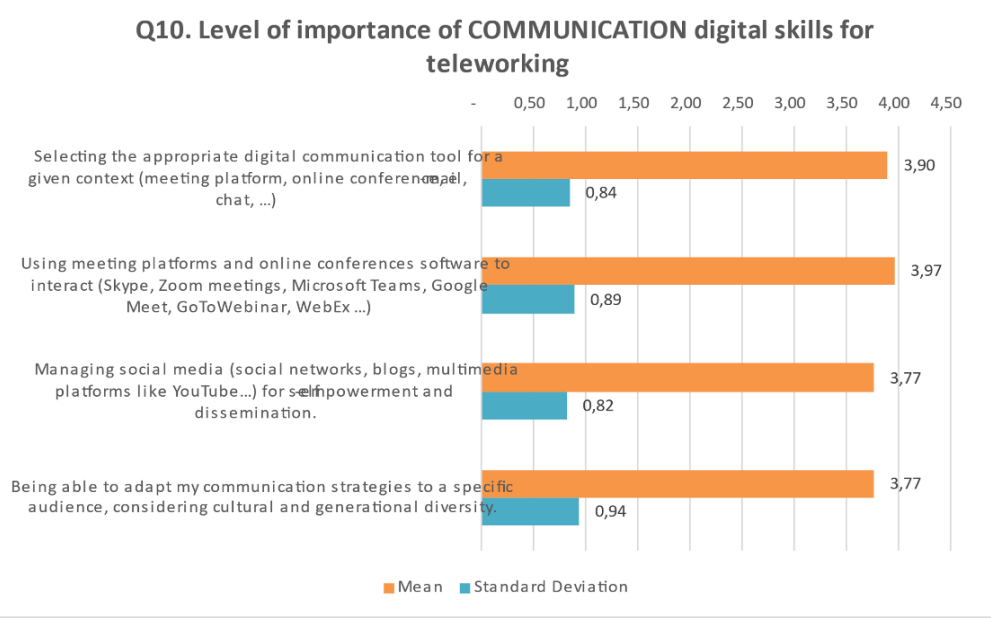
The above graph presents the teleworking experience of VET Providers. Most of the respondents do not have a significant teleworking experience– 43.33% of all the interviewees claimed they had less than 1 year of experience. To compare: 30% claimed they did not have experience with teleworking techniques at all and 23% had more than 2 years of experience (2-3 years).

Image 4.4.16. Information and data importance for VET Providers from Poland



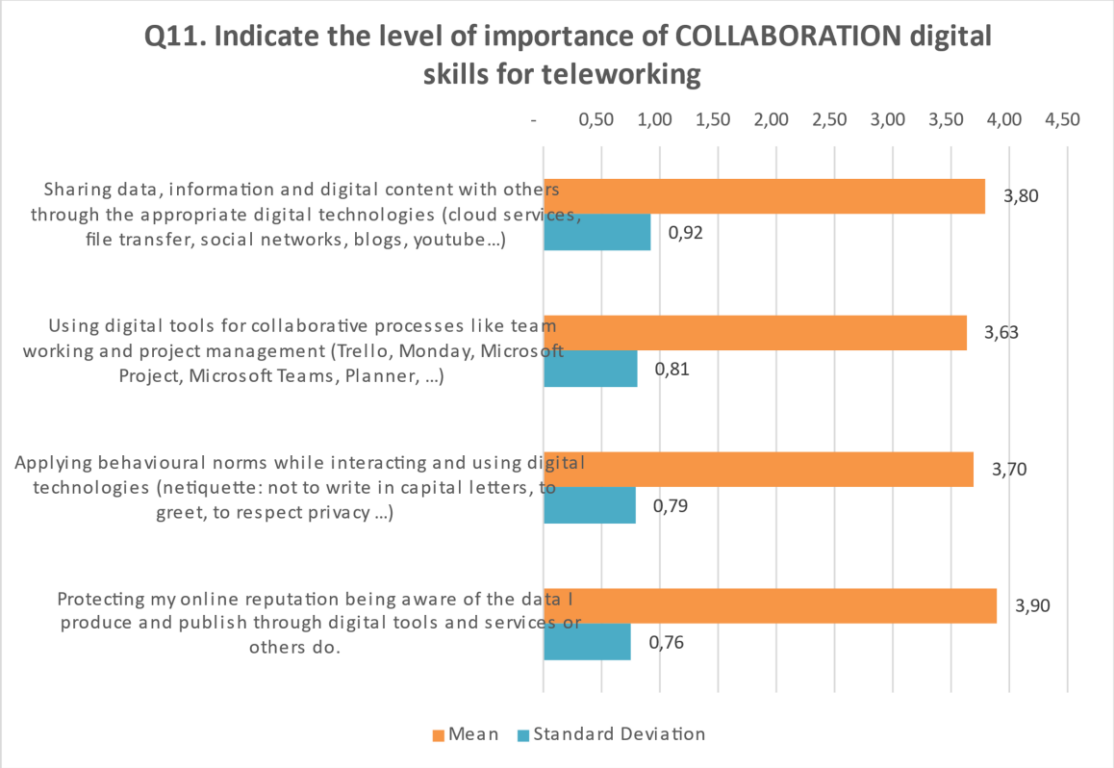
Question 9 (see the graph above) was connected to the information and data digital skills. The interviewees were asked to assess the level of importance of various digital skills in teleworking process in general (browsing and filtering data; saving data and files, data storage etc.). They had to choose the appropriate mark (1-5; "1" meaning that the skill listed was "not important" and "5" meaning "essential"). The mean rate chosen is around 3,70-3,80. This means that the respondents find the indicated digital skills important/ very important. At the same time, we can observe that standard deviation rate is quite high as well. However, when we check the ranks for each and every statement, we can observe that most of the interviewees chose the higher marks (4-5) instead of the ranks below the rate 3.

Image 4.4.17. Communication importance for VET Providers from Poland



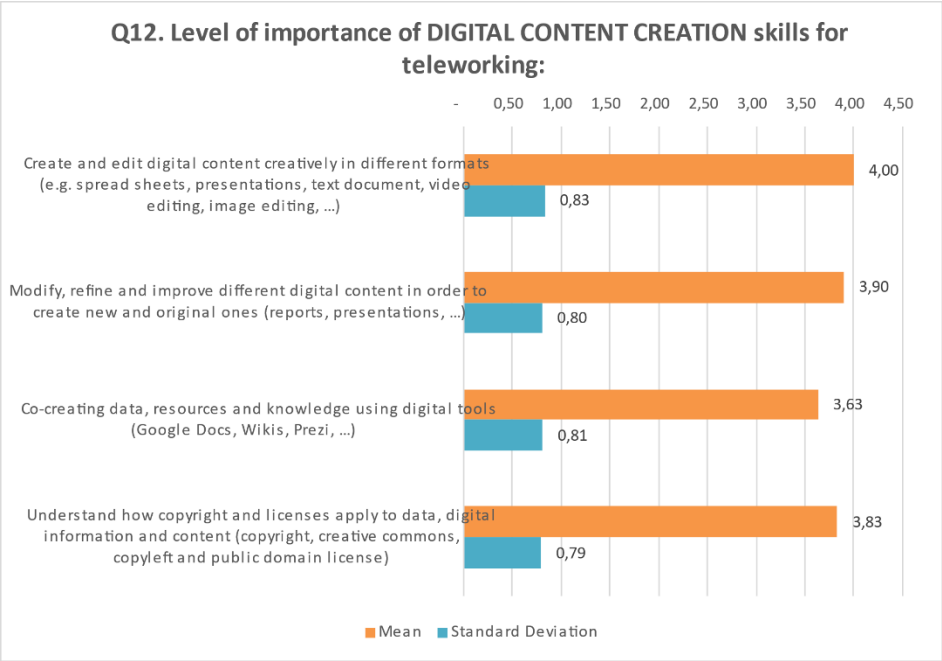
The next question (question 10) was connected to the communication digital skills and their importance for teleworking. We can observe a slightly increased mean rate (3,77-3,90). That would indicate that even more respondents find the skills important. At the same time, the deviation rate is similar than before (question 9).

Image 4.4.18. Collaboration importance for VET Providers from Poland



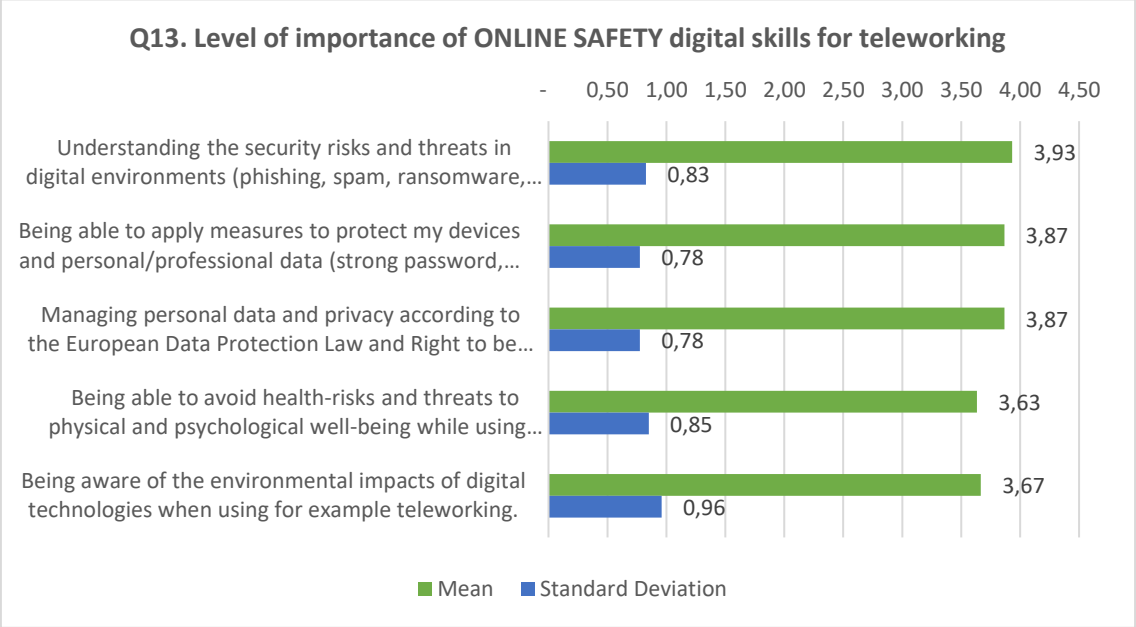
Question 11 was connected to collaboration (e.g. sharing data and information; using digital tools for team working). The interviewees found the indicated digital skills important which is represented by the mean rate: 3,63-3,90. The standard deviation is still below 1.

Image 4.4.19. Digital Content Creation importance for VET Providers from Poland



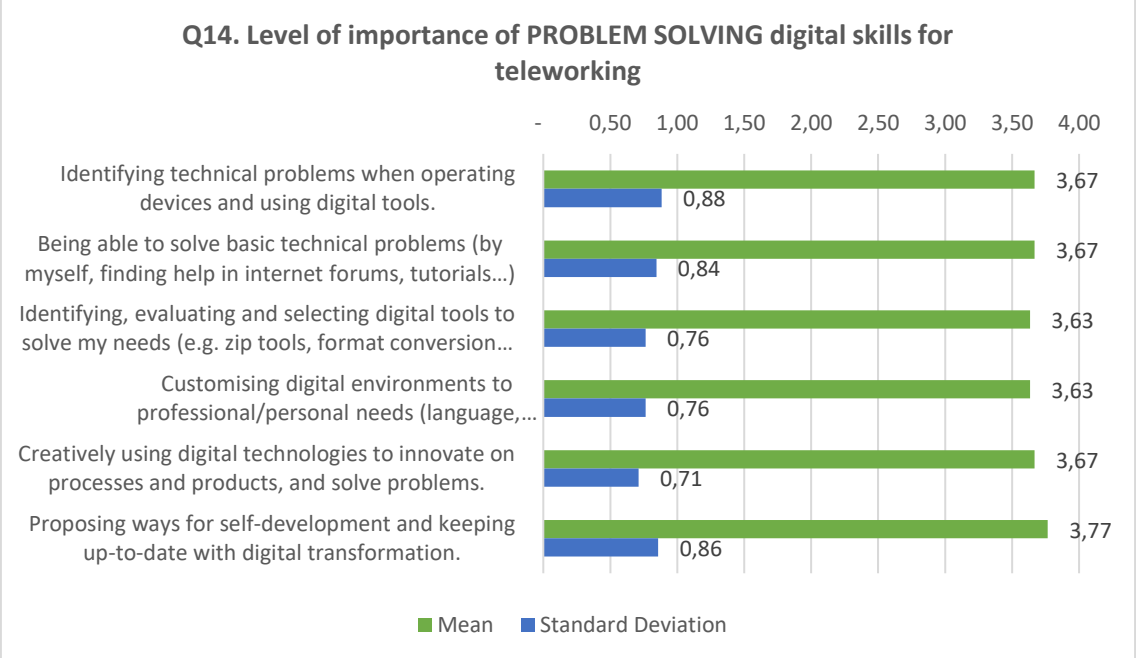
Question 12 was connected to digital content creation skills like: creating data using digital tools; improving digital content; understanding copyright. The mean rate for the first statement – "Create and edit digital content in different formats" – was 4.00 which would indicate that more interviewees acknowledged the importance of digital content creation skills. The remaining three statements received a slightly lower mean rate which still proves the importance of the skills for the VET Providers. The deviation rate was still below 1.

Image 4.4.20. Online Safety importance for VET Providers from Poland



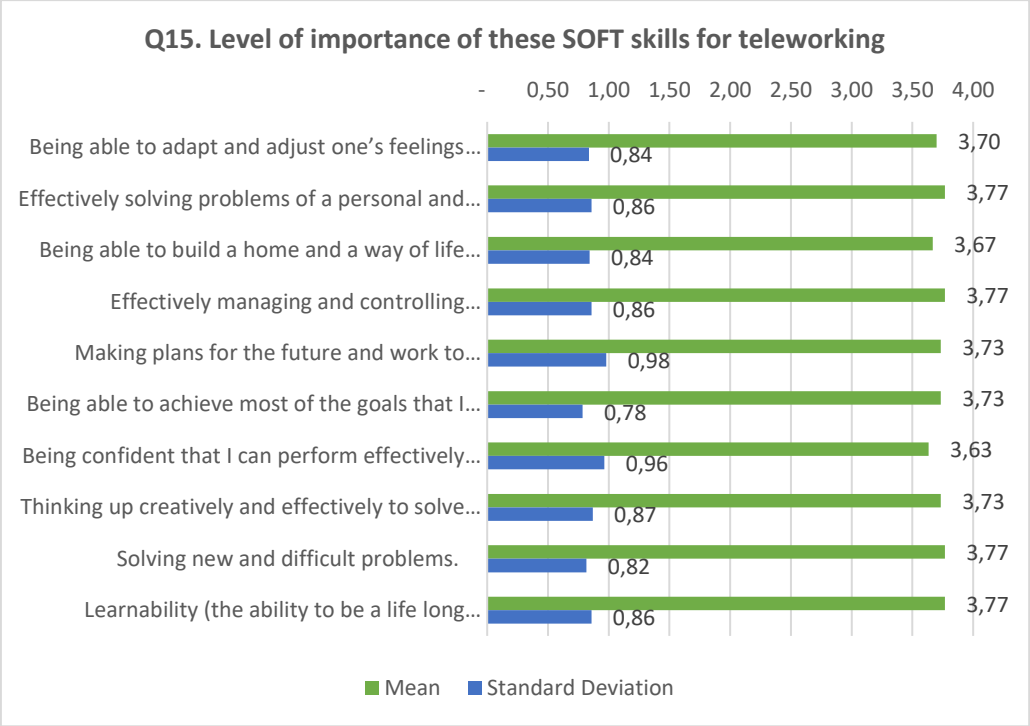
Question 13 focused on online safety. Again – the mean rates for each and every statement were similar than the ones in previous questions (slightly below the rate 4). That would mean the interviewees found the online safety issues and the digital skills involved important. The standard deviation rate is still below 1.

Image 4.4.21. Problem Solving importance for VET Providers from Poland



Question 14 was connected to problem solving and the digital skills involved (identifying technical problems, solving basic technical problems, creative use of digital technologies etc). The graph proves that the interviewees found the skills important. For instance, the statement "Creative use of digital technologies to innovate and solve problems" received the following marks: "3" (46.7% of the respondents); "4" (40%); and "5" (13.3%).

Image 4.4.22. Soft skills importance for VET Providers from Poland



The interviewees were also asked to indicate the level of importance of various soft skills while teleworking. The above graph proves that the respondents found them important (the average rate was around 3,70; with deviation rate around 0,85).

The next question (question 16) was an open question – interviewees were asked to indicate other digital skills that they found important for teleworking process. There were no answers to this question which proves the questionnaire focuses on all the necessary skills.

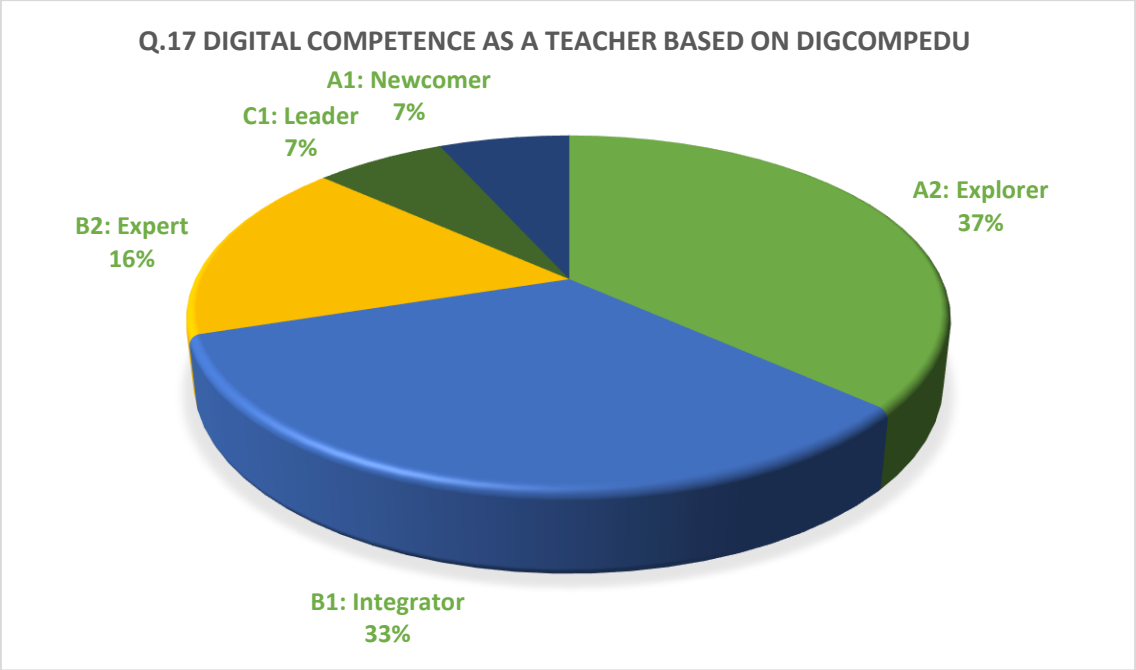
3.3. Digital skills for education.

This part of the questionnaire focuses on the interviewees' digital skills which may help them while providing online training for their learners.

Question 17 – How would you access your digital skills?

The interviewees were asked to assess their own digital skills, from previous section of the survey (communication; collaboration; soft skills for teleworking etc). Most of them perceived themselves as "Explorers" (36,67% of respondents). The second most popular answer was "Integrator" (around 33%). This data proves that the interviewees feel quite confident about their skills.

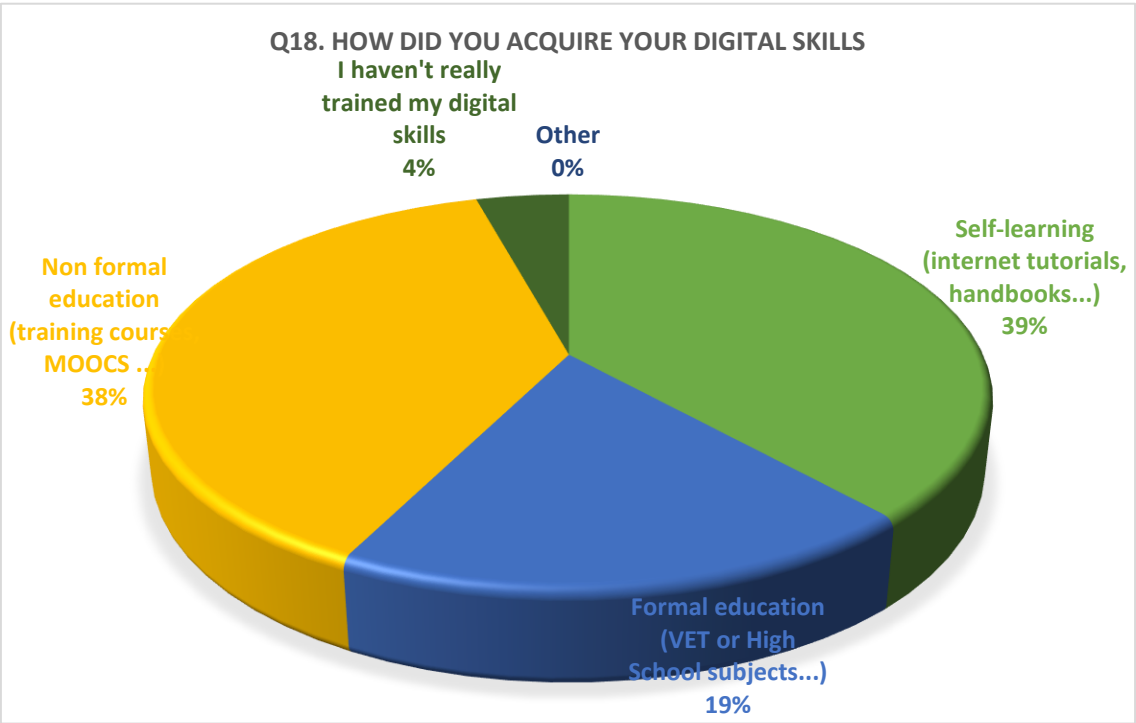
Image 4.4.23. Digital competence as teacher (DigCompEdu) for VET Providers from Poland



Question 18 – How did you acquire your digital skills?

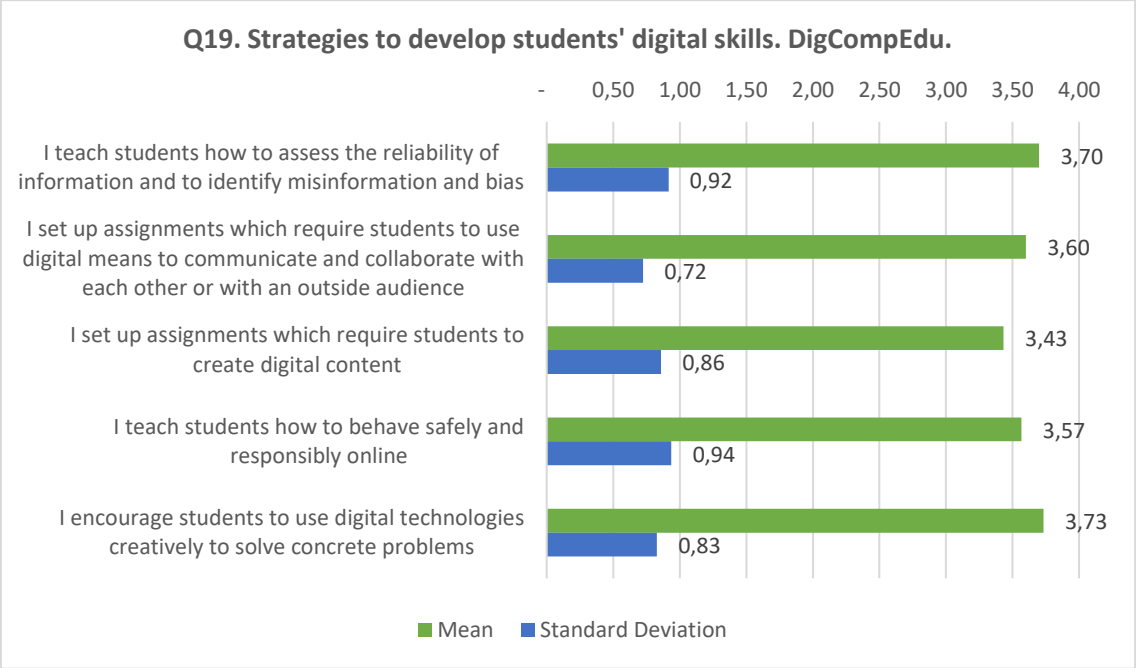
The interviewees were asked to identify the source of knowledge (experience) for acquiring their digital skills. They could choose more than answer. Most of them acquired the essential knowledge connected to digital skills on their own thanks to self-learning (39%). Non formal education like training and courses were also very important for the interviewees (38%).

Image 4.4.24. Digital skills acquisition for VET Providers from Poland



Question 19 – Strategies used by Educators and Trainers in order to develop students' digital skills

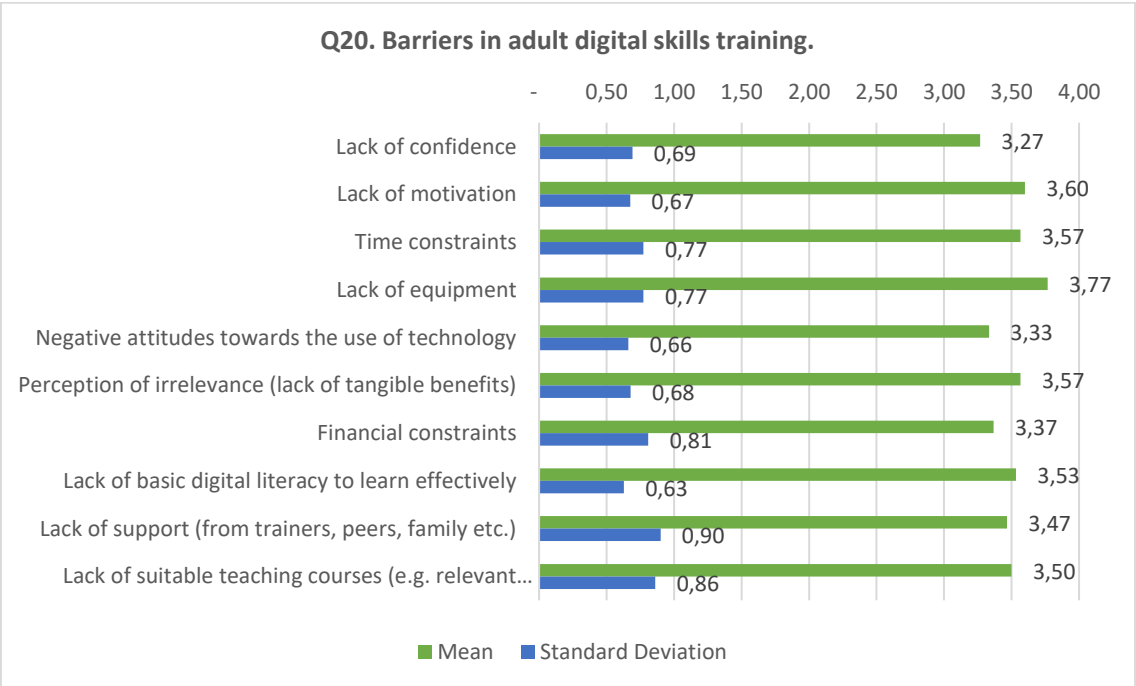
Image 4.4.25. Strategies to develop digital skills for VET Providers from Poland



Question 19 was connected to strategies used by VET Providers in order to help their students develop digital skills. There were many different strategies indicated in the survey. The average rate chosen by the interviewees in this question was between 3,43 and 3,73 (the rate 3 means "sometimes" and the rate 4 means "often"). That would indicate that the interviewees try to include various strategies to help learners develop their digital skills. Nevertheless, it must be noticed that deviation rate is still quite high (0,72-0,94) so the answers are less meaningful.

Question 20 – What are the barriers that you have encountered in adult digital skills training?

Image 4.4.26. Barriers in adult digital skills training for VET Providers from Poland

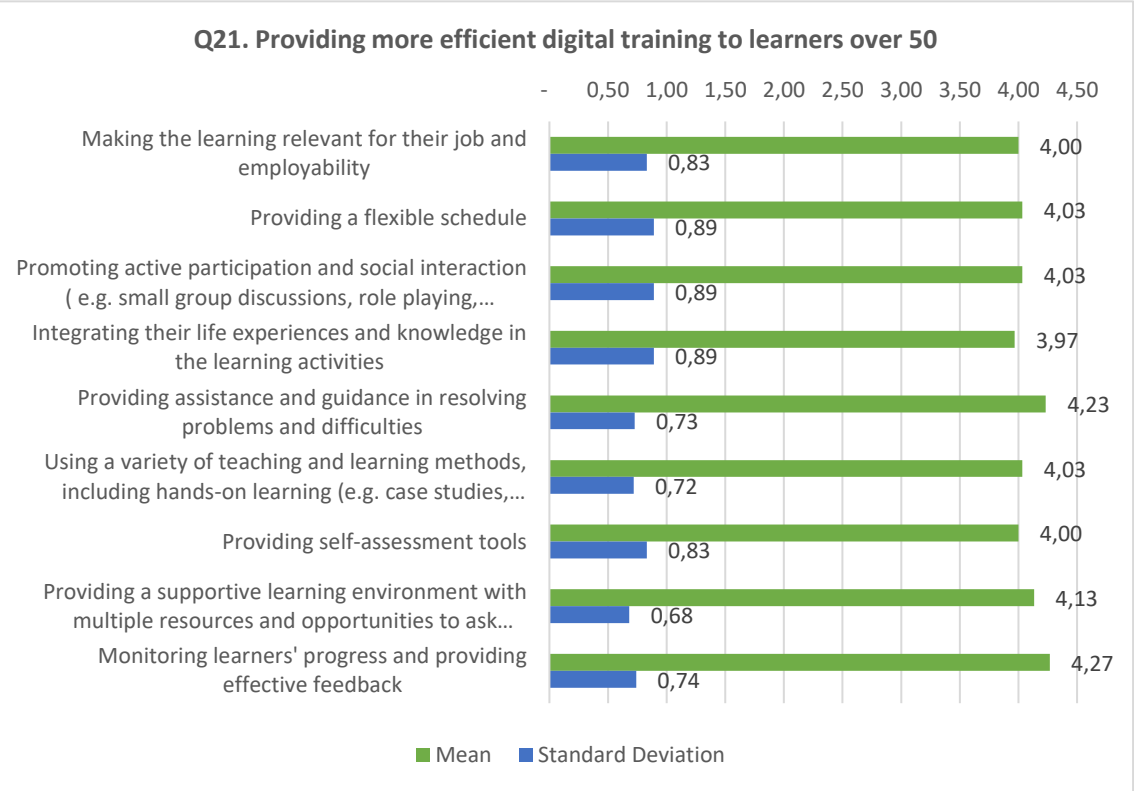


The interviewees were asked to identify the barriers in adult digital skills training. Most of them found the barriers listed to have a big impact on learning process. For instance, "lack of equipment" was identified as the barrier which affects the learning process by 33% of respondents. To compare, 47% of respondents found this barrier has significant effect on the training. The average opinion of the respondents presented by the graph above would be that the interviewees find the barriers significant and affecting the learning process.

Question 21 – How can we provide a more efficient digital training?

This question focuses on the possible improvements of the training programmes so that they can develop digital skills (especially of the learners at the age 50+). All the suggestions listed were considered by the VET Trainers to be important. For instance, the first suggestion "Making the learning relevant for the learners' job and employability" received the average rate of 4, which means that the interviewees "strongly agree" and support this idea. Most of the suggestions listed in this question received the rate 4 and above. Please see the graph below.

Image 4.4.27. Strategies to provide efficient digital training for VET Providers from Poland



Question 22 – more techniques on improving the training programme

This question was an open question. The Trainers were asked about any other techniques or suggestions in order to improve the digital skills training. Please find their answers below:

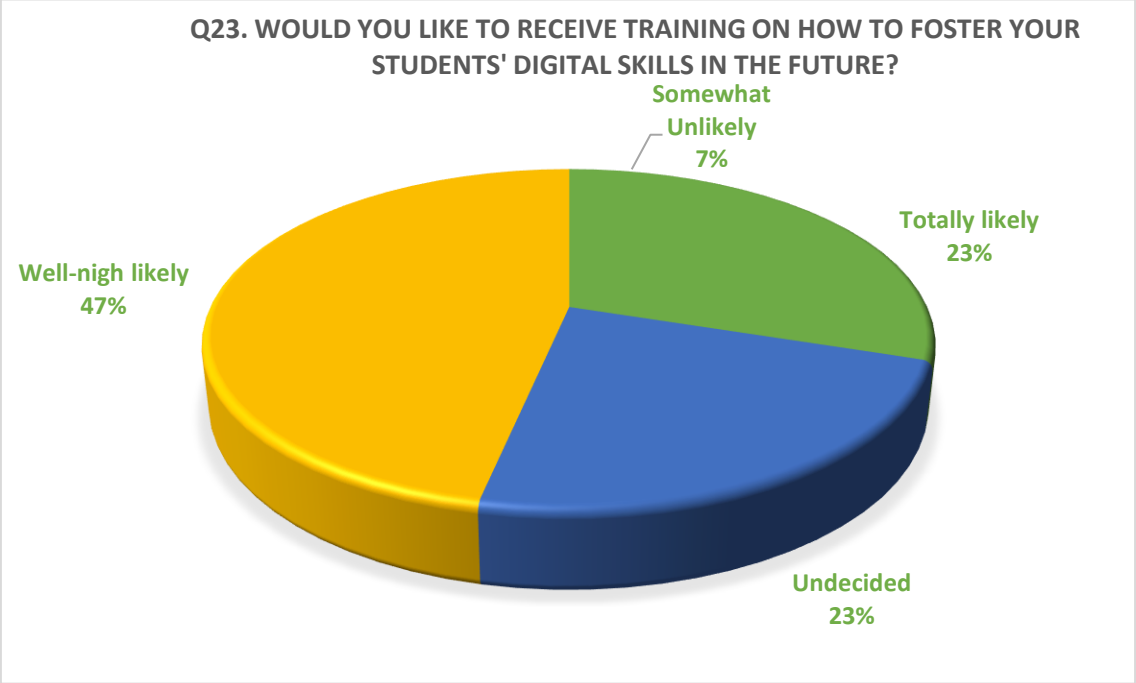
- Learning through experience
- Blended learning
- Education platforms
- Individual sessions with the trainer
- Having conversations (participants can talk and help each other)
- Dialogues, Presentations, Discussion,

- Intergeneration learning
- Face-2-face learning
- Various methods for transferring knowledge to learners

3.4. Digital skills training for education.

This very last part of the survey aimed to check the training needs of the trainers.

Image 4.4.28. Training for VET Providers from Poland



The graph above proves that the majority of respondents wish to join a training on fostering their students' digital skills in the future (47%).

One person left the email address in order to receive update on trainings in the future.

5. Conclusions

Having analysed the profile of both – VET Learner and VET Provider presented in the questionnaire – it can be easily noticed that the average age of the respondents would be 50+. This will indicate that the interviewees represent the target groups of the TeleGrow project.

- VET Learners

The Learners acquired their digital skills on their own, via self-learning process. Another source of knowledge was non formal education which again presents their need for further development. The interviewees did not have much teleworking experience. While having been asked about specific digital skills, the average rates were rather low which shows that the Learners do not feel confident about their digital abilities and

knowledge. While being asked about the future – hypothetical – scenario of using teleworking techniques only, the interviewees usually chose the answers like "undecided" or "neutral" which indicates they may not be acquaintance with various digital tools. Nevertheless, the respondents identify the importance of the digital skills and soft skills which may help develop teleworking techniques. Most of the Learners expressed their willingness to take part in trainings focused on increasing digital skills and competences.

- VET Providers
  The survey collected replies from experienced Trainers, most of them holding a Master's Degree and working in Training Centres. Most of them have teleworking experience though for the vast majority that would be less than 1 year of experience. Since the pandemic (Covid-19) started in Poland last year it is highly possible that this group of interviewees started teleworking because of the current restrictions. The interviewed trainers confirmed that various digital skills listed in the survey (questions 9-14) are important for teleworking. In terms of the digital skills of the VET Providers they perceive themselves as "Explorers" and "Integrators". They acquired the digital skills in the similar way to VET Learners – thanks to non-formal education and self-learning. Furthermore, most of the trainers find it important to convey the knowledge and increase the digital competences of their learners. Additionally, they are aware of various barriers in the learning process and perceive them to have a significant effect on the training. The fact that the VET Trainers provided us with some more ideas on how to develop learners' digital skills indicates that they find the issue of the high importance and they try to focus on the development of student's digital skills. The interviewees are eager to take part in a training in the future so that they know how to foster their students' digital skills.

To conclude, both groups of interviewees – VET Providers and VET Learners – acknowledge the importance of various digital skills for teleworking. Both groups express their willingness to take part in future trainings in order to develop their competences. The main difference between the two groups would be the level of their own digital skills. While VET Providers know the basic digital tools and competences, VET Learners do not feel confident about their digital skills at all.

Thus, project TeleGrow and its results will definitely have a positive effect on the improvement of digital capabilities of Polish Learners. Additionally, it will help VET Trainers develop the best training methods so that they may train the students efficiently.

SURVEY REPORT (Spain)

by MEUS, May 2021

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4.5.

1. Introduction

In Spain, the survey was launched by 2 project institutions that are based in Valencia Region: Florida and MEUS. The survey was open from 24th of May to 24th of June 2021. The survey was sent by these two partners to their respective databases of contacts. Florida disseminated the survey among its staff, who answer to the VET provider profile, and to adult learners in C-VET contexts. MEUS used its network to collect answers from VET providers, especially from non-formal or formal continuous training fields, and their adult students. Both institutions then enlarged the profile of students to potential students, workers and employees aged about 50, so as to fit with the criteria established by the consortium. The survey was sent in electronic format by email and through social networks mainly (including Facebook, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp groups), ensuring a direct access to the target groups. Occasionally, some respondents were contacted by phone calls. Both partners involved the following networks:

- Florida VET staff and students, and cooperatives from the educational group like Xúquer in C-VET context.
- MEUS training staff and 50+ students
- Partner organisations:
    - Folgado VET institution
    - Polytechnic University of Valencia- Gandia Campus
    - Trainers-Students master's degree Circular Economy and sustainable development of Valencia International University
    - UNIR, Rioja University
    - CEU VET Institution
    - Innohub Association
    - GoEurope Association
    - FyG
    - Binary Data Providers
    - Wide range of different workers
    - Valencian Chamber of Commerce
    - AKOE Educació
    - UCEV (Union of Valencian educational cooperatives)
    - Florida collaborating companies
    - University of Valencia

The objective of this activity was to collect answers from at least 30 VET learners/Employees and 30 VET Providers from each partner. For Spain, the objective was thus to obtain at least

60 answers from each profile. During this period, Spanish partners collected a total of 126 answers from VET learners and 97 VET providers, thus achieving an objective largely over the expected minimum sample, which will enable us to reach high credibility of results.

2. VET Learner's and employee's questionnaire

2.1. Respondent's profile.

Some initial questions were asked to respondents as to get a better image of the profile of learners and employees that participated to the research. 126 learners and employees answered to the questionnaire, being in their huge majority from Spain (97,62%). About two third of the respondents were women (61,90%). The profile of respondents is slightly younger than the expected: about the half of respondents were aged 50 and more, while 36% of them were aged 30 to 49, and 15% were under 30. This data shall be taken care of during the analyse of results, as the young age of respondents might bias the results regarding the use of new technologies. However, it can be contrasted by the next answers about the level of education and the years of working experience. Most respondents had at least a Bachelor and 77% of the respondents had more than 11 years of working experience. This let presume than the elevated number of answers received from the 30-49 age group were closer to 49 than 30, thus getting closer to our target group.

All respondents were educated, with an important part having a Bachelor's degree (32%) or a Master degree (32%). 10% had a PhD. 13% had performed VET studies while 12% had a high school level of education. Less than 1% had Primary education level. The huge majority of participants to the survey are in a working context, employees or self-employees. Only 6% were actually studying at the time of answering the survey.

Regarding the acquisition of digital skills, most of participants have learned by themselves about the use of digital tools (77%). About 60% said that they also received formal or non-formal education. However, still 51% declare that they have not really trained their digital skills. This calls the attention on the fact that despite most respondents actually received training, they give it little importance.

42% of the participants have experience in teleworking since less than 1 year, which let think that they started to telework with 2020 pandemic. 22% were teleworking since 2 to 3 years and 13% for 4 years or more. Still, 23% don't have any experience in teleworking. This is in line with the preliminary research made for the Telegrow project, where we found that 30,4% of employees started to work home due to COVID, and 45% of the 50+ were teleworking for the first time. About 60% of the respondents are teleworking do it from home, which represents about 75% of those that telework.

To conclude, the dominant profile obtained to the survey among learner and employees would be a women aged about 50 years old, with a university degree and currently working, since more than 11 years. She received some training about digital technologies but give it little importance. She is starting to telework from home due to pandemic context.

2.2. Teleworking adoption.

A set of questions from the Telegrow survey was aimed at knowing more about the adoption of telework made by workers and students from our panel. First, the respondents were asked about their experience in terms of year of teleworking, and the place of teleworking. Results obtained were the following:

Image 4.5.1. Experience in teleworking for VET Learners from Spain

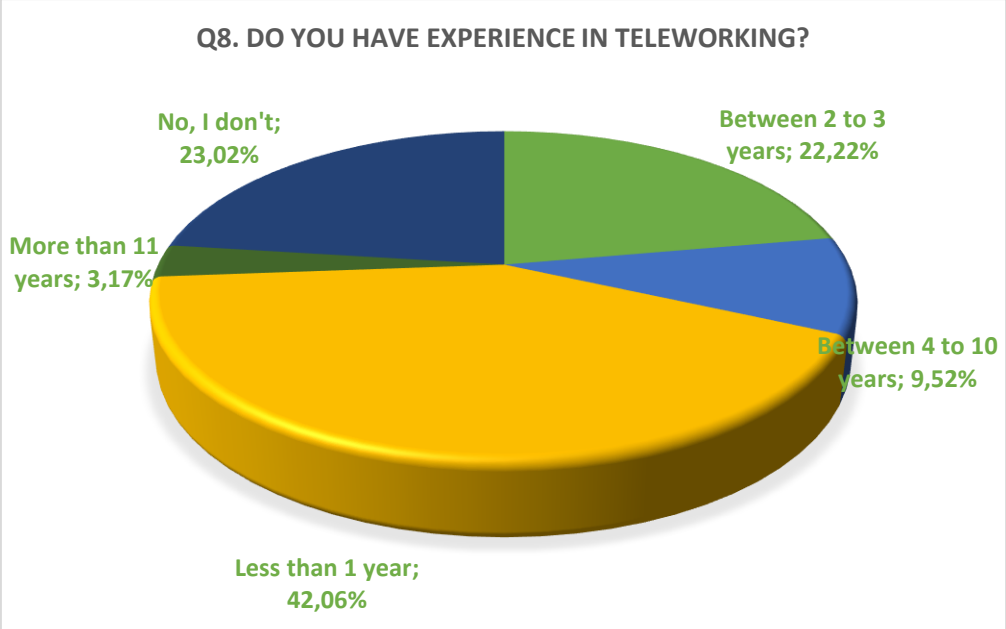
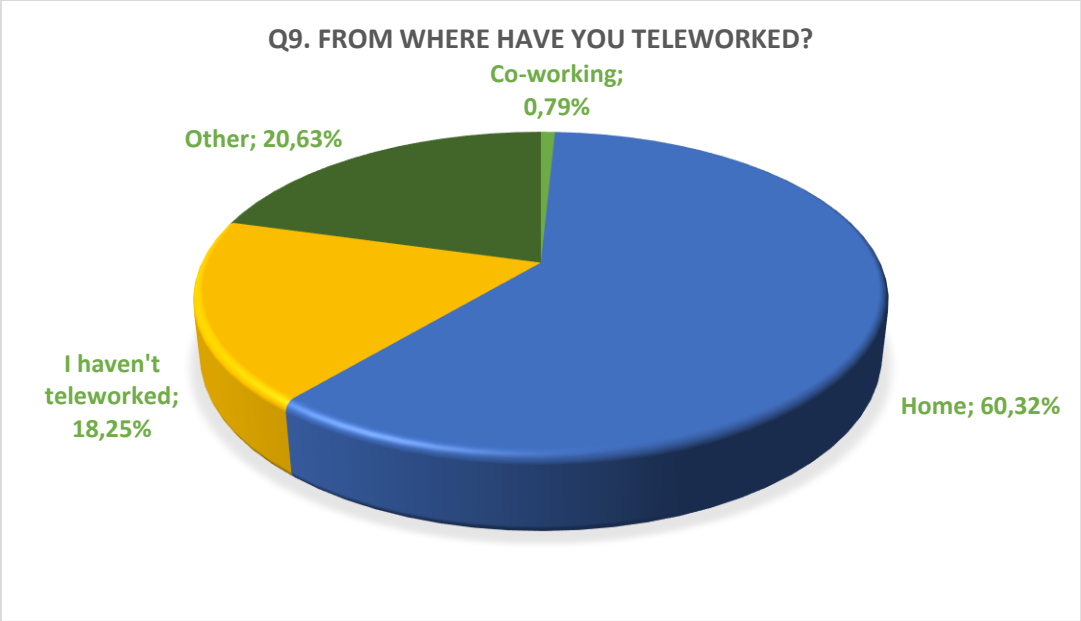


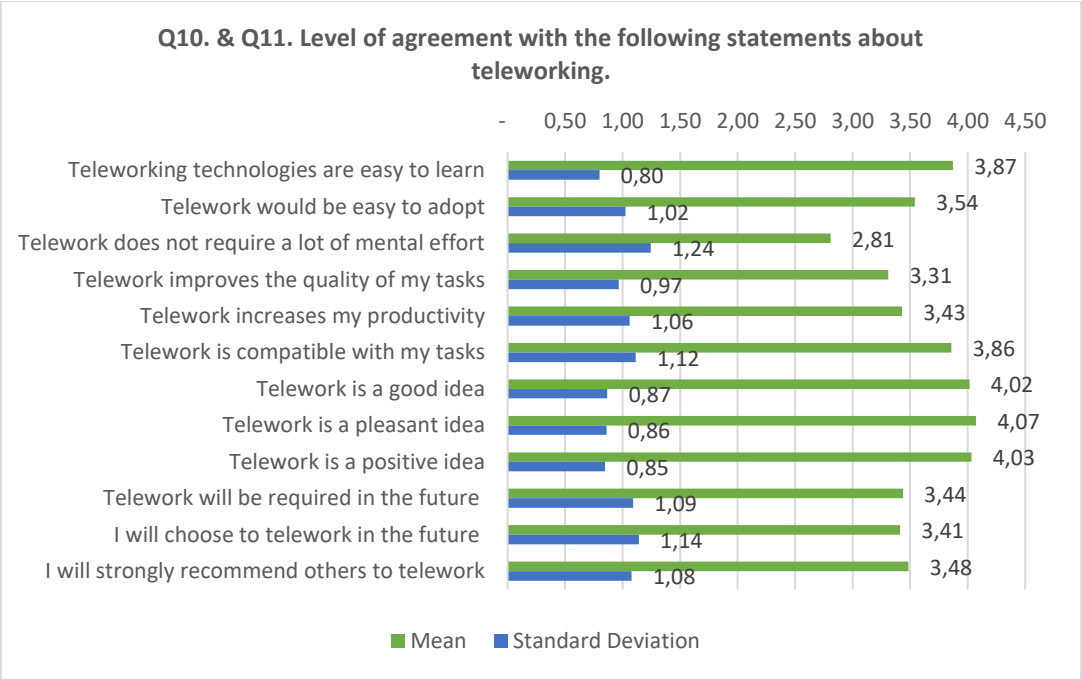
Image 4.5.2. From where have VET Learners from Spain teleworked?



As shown in those graphs, most respondents have experience of teleworking: over 126 participants, only 29 (23%) did not have experience of teleworking. Most of them had little experience, with 42% having less than 1 year of experience, corresponding with the beginning of the pandemic. By looking at the detail of the answers in the survey, we can see that still, 121 people answer to the Q9, which was not mandatory, and only for people who had experience of teleworking. This explains why 18,25% of respondents answered "I haven't teleworked" in Q9. To interpret correctly the Q9 graph, we should remove those answers, thus having about 75% of teleworkers that worked from home, and about 24% from a combination of different location (home and another working centre). Only 1% were working from a coworking space.

Then, participants were asked about their level of agreement regarding different statements about teleworking and the use of technologies. 0 was the most disagreement while 5 was the highest level of agreement. The Mean show the average score obtained for each statement, while the standard deviation reflects the variety of scores obtained +/- around the average. For the analysis, we will consider standard deviation > 1 as high and quite high >0,5 and <1. Thus, when the standard deviation of a statement is above 1, it means that some people gave higher, or quite lower score, and that things might be to be improved in the field.

Image 4.5.3. Teleworking attitudes VET Learners from Spain



The general answers regarding the statements on telework are around 3 – 3,5, which corresponds to something between "nor agree nor disagree" and "agree". The highest score of adhesion is for "telework is a good idea", "Telework is a pleasant idea" and "Telework is a positive idea". We can thus see that people are generally much in favour of telework, even if they are not sure about its implementation. Telework requires quite a lot of mental effort and they are not sure about if this solution will fit for the future.

Visions are very disparate, and no clear agreement is found on this subject.

2.3. Teleworking barriers.

Thus, questions were asked about the possible barriers to teleworking.

Image 4.5.4. Teleworking beliefs of VET Learners from Spain

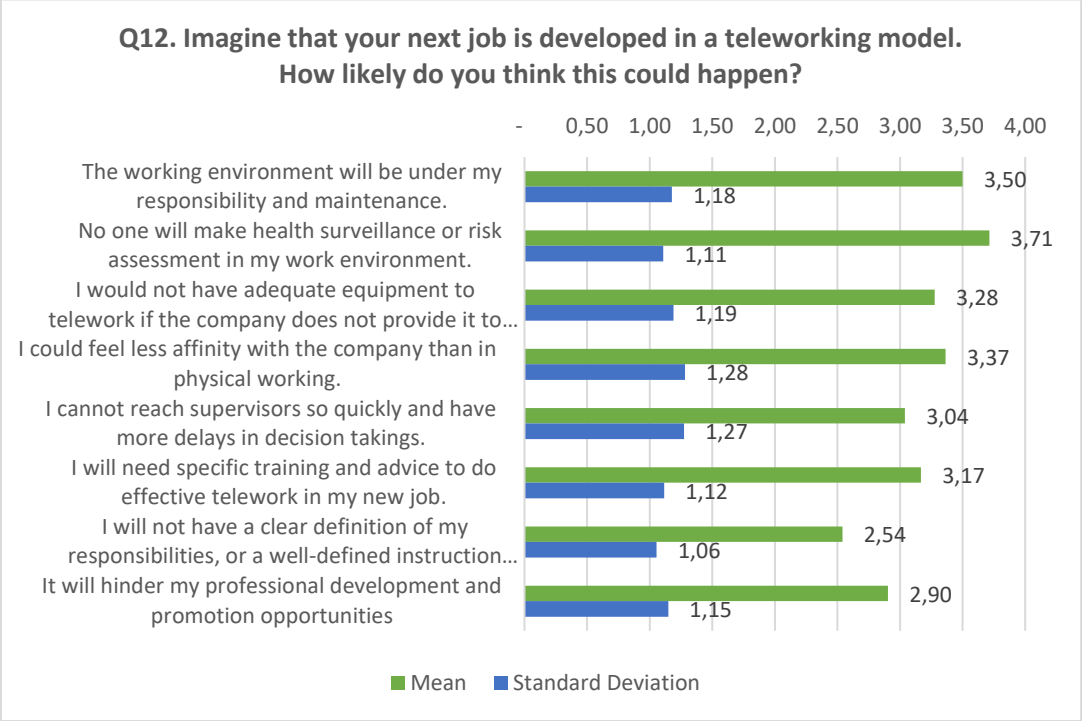
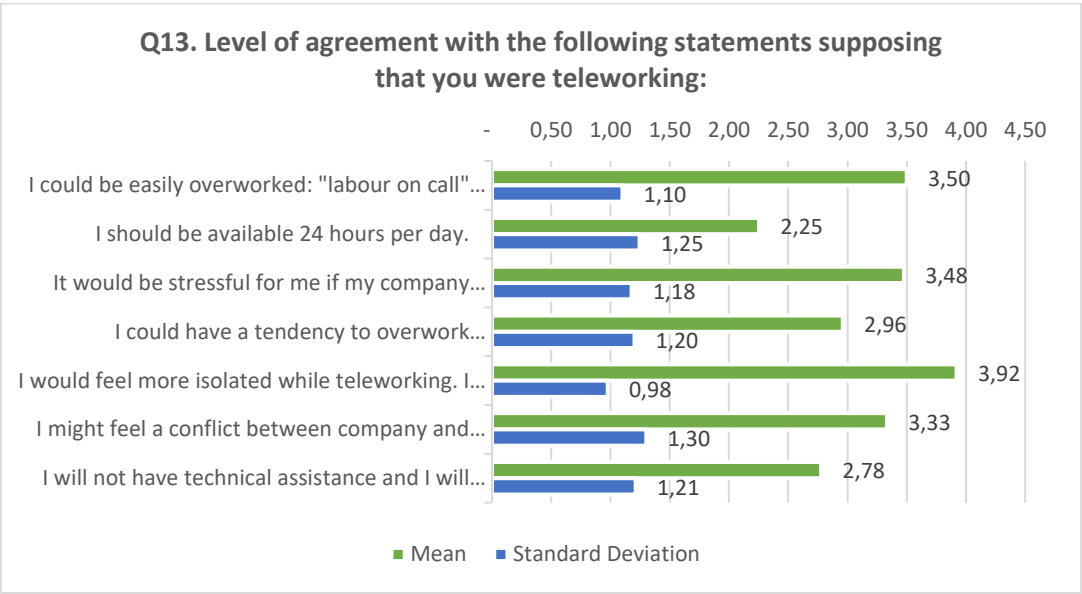


Image 4.5.5. Teleworking barriers of VET Learners from Spain

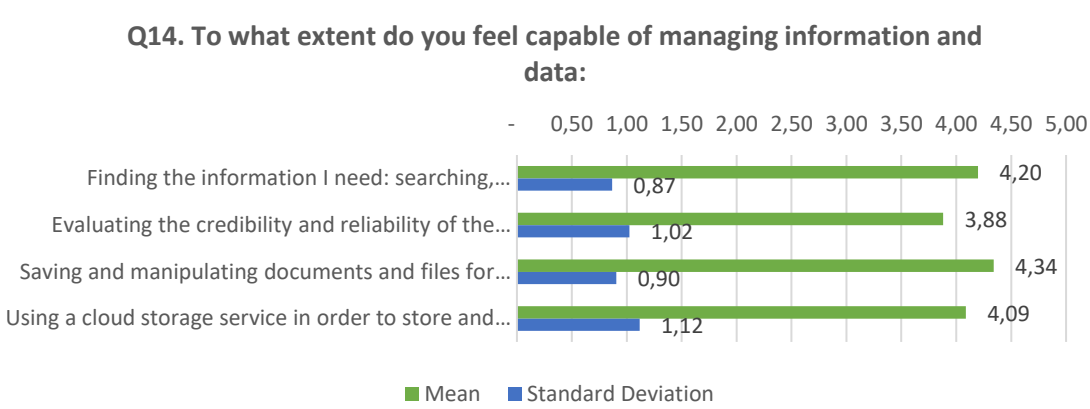


Again, the answers collected show that there is no clear trends or agreement on the perception of teleworking, but rather diverse opinions. However, most answers are rather high, meaning that people indeed associate telework with certain obstacles and prejudices for them regarding the professional performance, in terms of limited access to equipment or coordination with supervisors. They also fear and increased of their workload and loneliness, with less attention or solutions to solve problem.

2.4. Digital skills for teleworking.

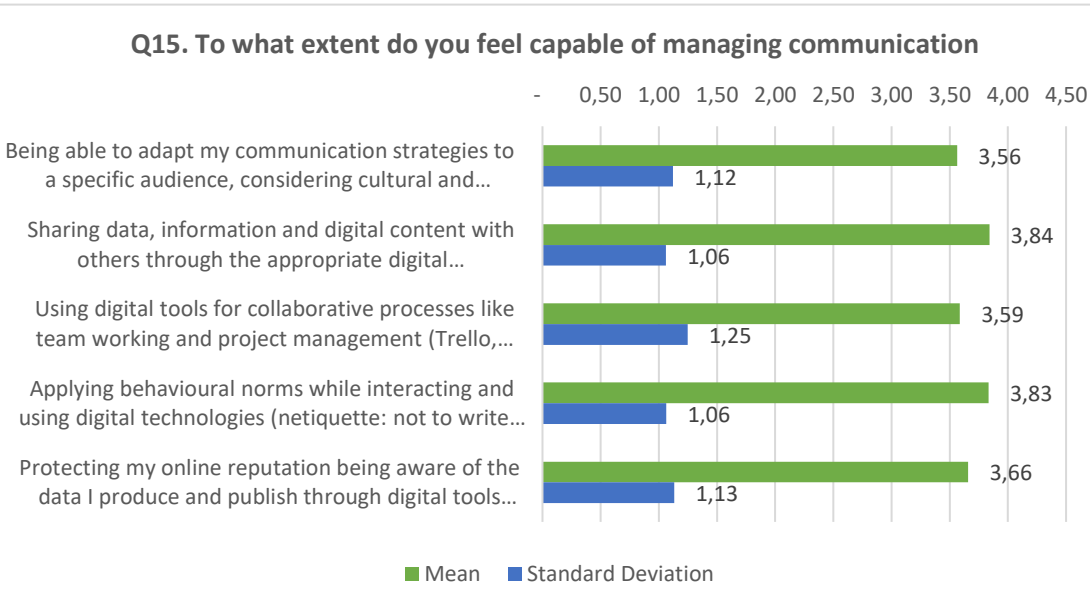
The next set of questions was focused on specific competences, with the objective of detecting eventual gaps of training to better prepare people for teleworking. Participants were asked to auto-evaluate their capacity in different areas of competences, as follows:

Image 4.5.6. Information and data capability of VET Learners from Spain



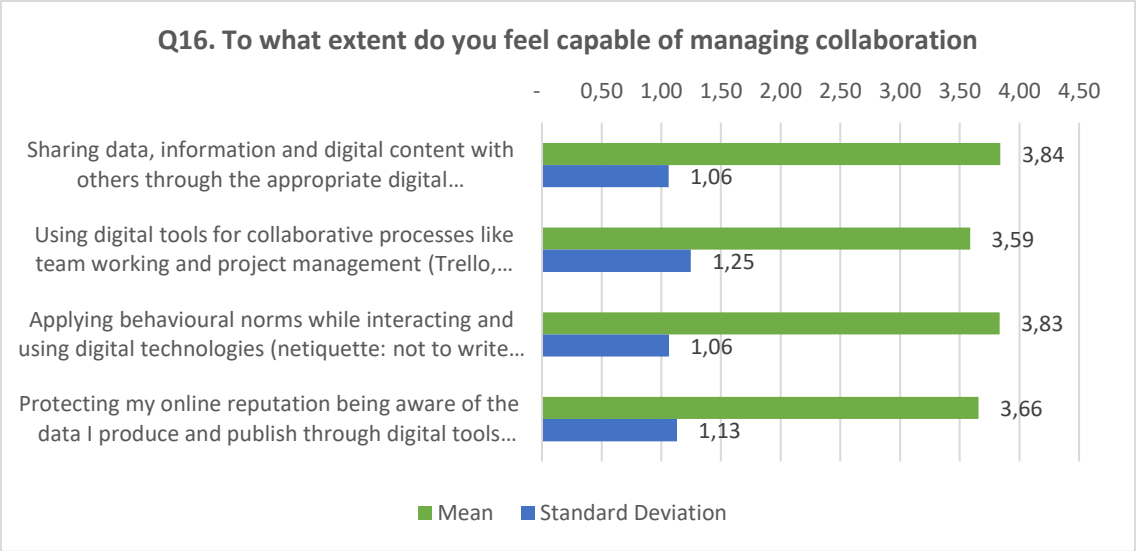
This area of competence is the one showing the highest score, showing the confidence of participants in their capacity of managing information and data. Having a look in the detail of this answer, it is possible to note that this level of confidence is slightly lower for the elder workers than for the younger, with higher number of 3 as an answer for the “50-59” than for the rest of participants.

Image 4.5.7. Communication capability of VET Learners from Spain



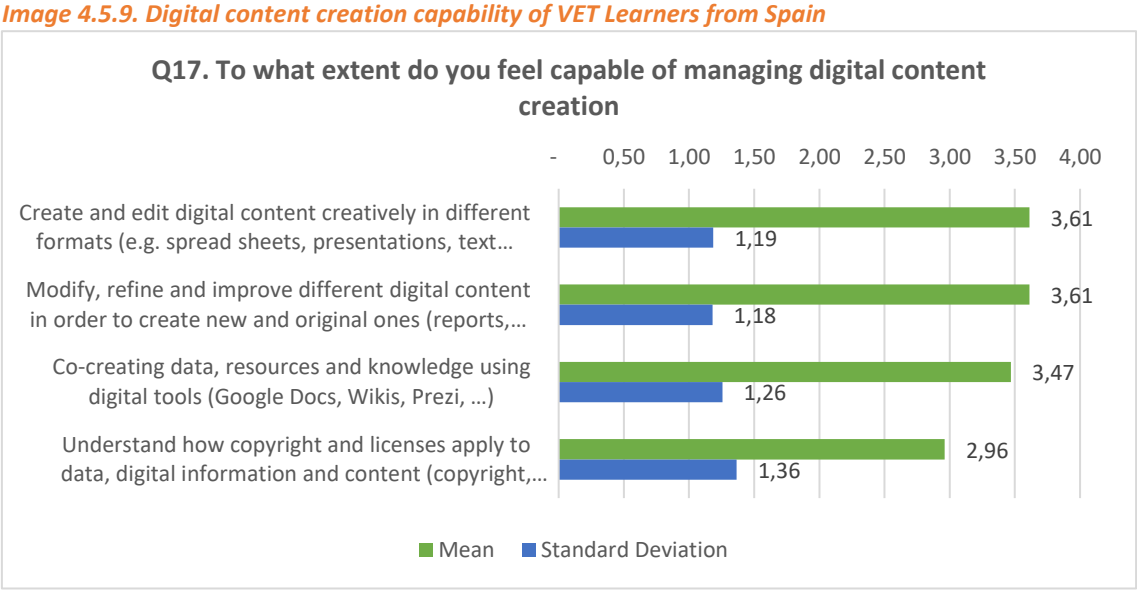
Answers to this question are varied. People generally think that they are able to manage communication in a teleworking context, at a medium level.

Image 4.5.8. Collaboration capability of VET Learners from Spain



Again, the score for managing collaboration using digital technologies is medium, with no clear trend observed.

Image 4.5.9. Digital content creation capability of VET Learners from Spain



The answers are slightly below the rest of competences regarding the digital content creation. Especially, we can observe a lower score regarding copyrights and licences, where the level of knowledge is the lowest.

Image 4.5.10. Online Safety capability of VET Learners from Spain

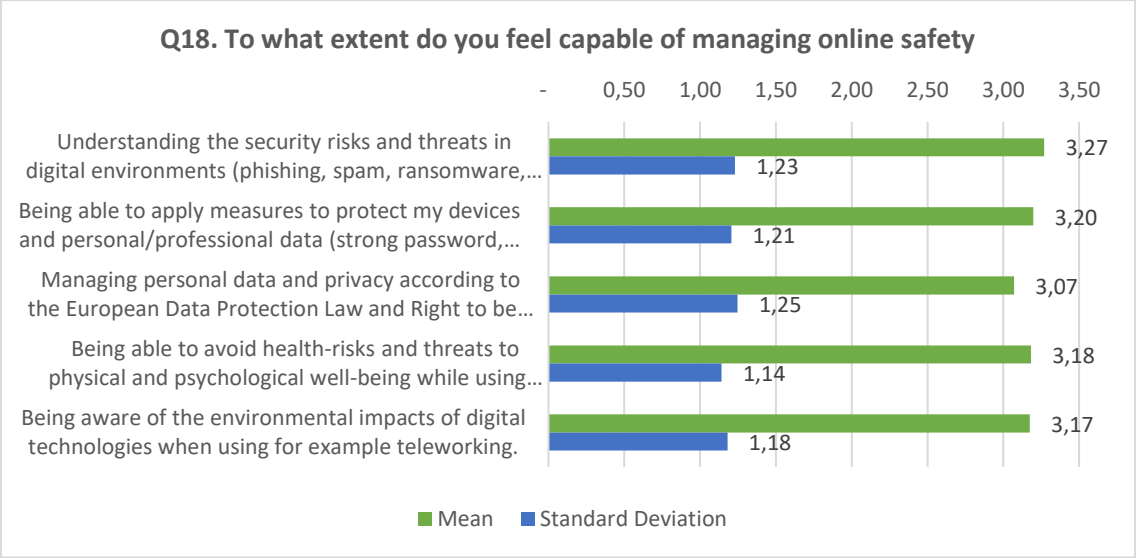
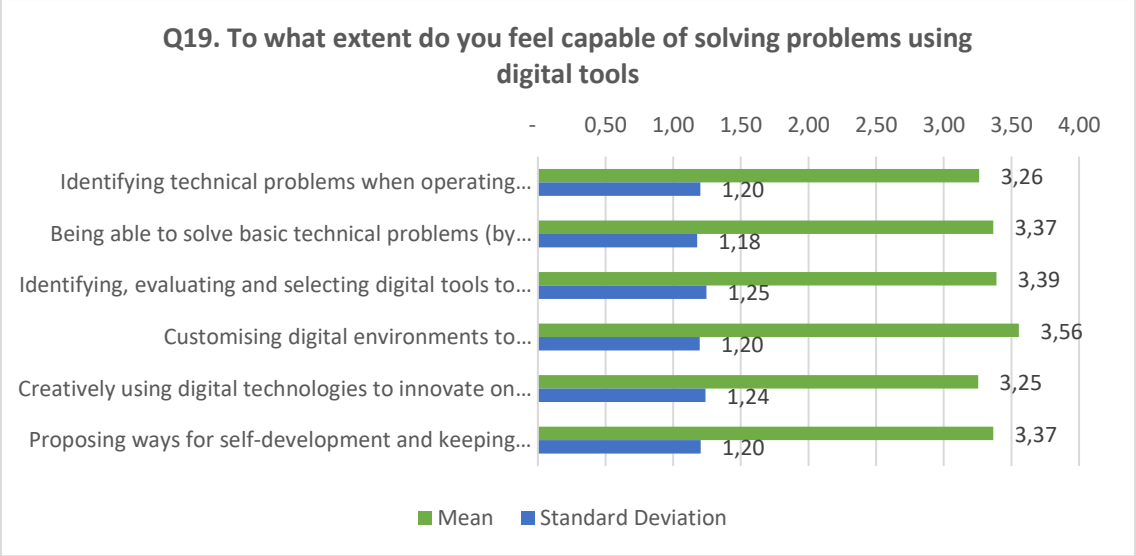


Image 4.5.11. Problem solving capability of VET Learners from Spain

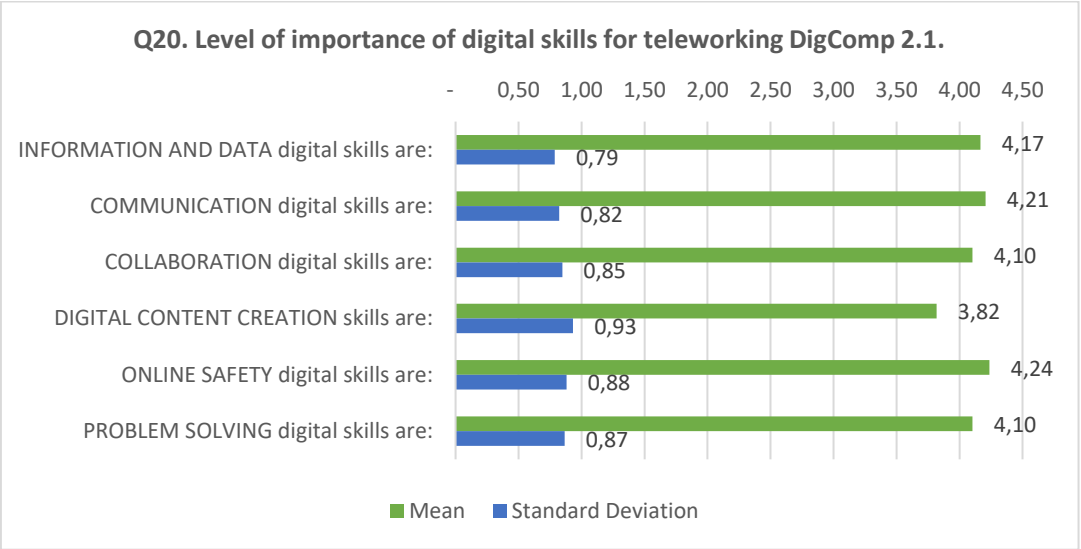


Online safety and solving problems are the two questions that obtained the lowest scores, thus were people feel less confidents.

No clear common level of competence from participants could be detected from this survey. It seems that the competences are diverse, and medium. As common element to all these questions, it is interesting to note the important standard of deviation observed in all the cases. Again, this shows that these questions do not reach general agreement among the participants. Answers are diverse, which is somehow a surprising result considering that the participating people had a quite similar initial profile, as shown in the initial section, excepted for the age. Thus, particular attention was focused on the detailed answer to research correlation between the average age of the respondents and the answer, but even though, no clear trend was detected.

Then, people were asked about the level of importance that digital skills have, in their opinion, for teleworking. A set of competences was proposed, taken out from the DigiComp 2.1 European framework.

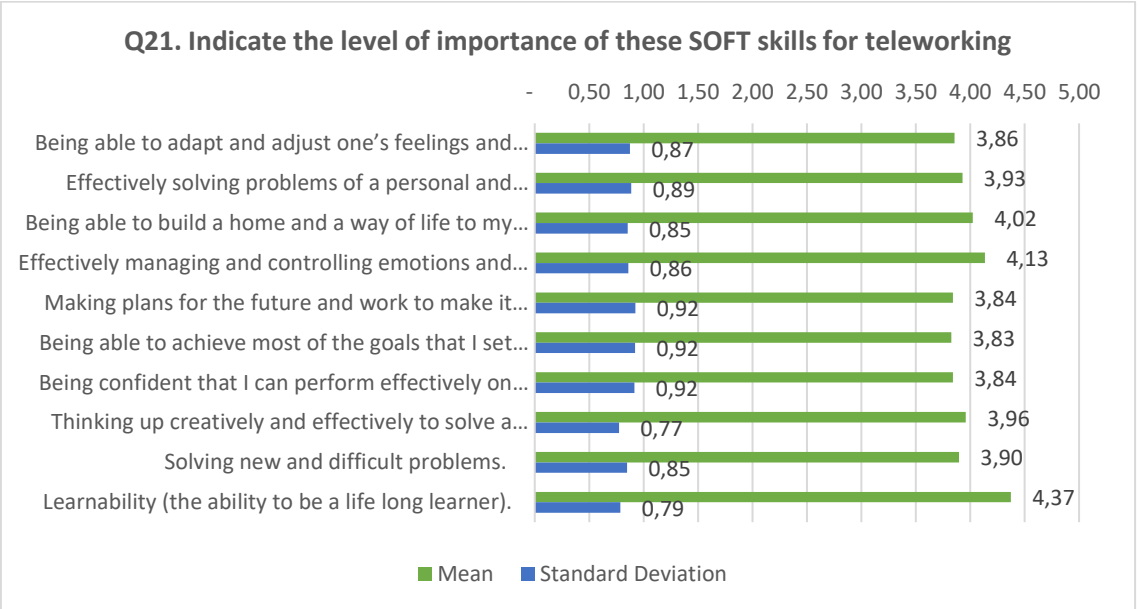
Image 4.5.12. Level of importance of digital skills of VET Learners from Spain



Here, a lower standard of deviation was found, showing a higher level of agreement among the participants. Also, the scores obtained for all the competences proposed except 1 (digital content creation) were above 4, showing the importance given to the digital skills. This answer would reinforce the detection of a need for training in digital technologies. The most important skill detected would be the online safety, which is also the skill where participants had a lower score in the auto-evaluation question.

2.5. Soft skills for teleworking.

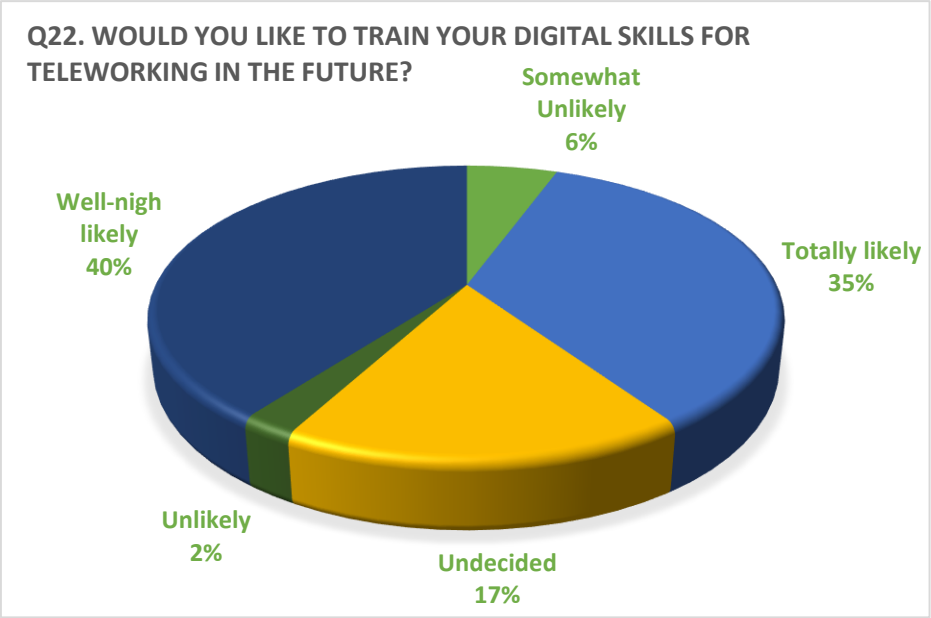
Image 4.5.13. Level of importance of soft skills of VET Learners from Spain



As a complementary question, participants were asked about the importance of soft skills for teleworking. The average score is slightly below the importance given to the digital skills; however, they are still mostly considered as importance, with a lower standard of deviation. Among those, solving problems is the one considered as the most important soft skill.

2.6. Digital skills training.

Image 4.5.14. Interest on training digital skills of VET Learners from Spain



A large majority of 75% answers that they would likely train their digital skills, which comfort partners in the detected need for training in this field.

Lastly, participants were asked to provide comments about other essential competences for teleworking that was not mentioned previously in the questionnaire. Few answers were collected, as this question was optional. Competences added by the respondents were the following:

- Motivation
- Conciliation
- Organisation
- Responsibility and honesty
- Be an independent worker and be capable of organising day to day tasks
- Auto-discipline

3. VET Providers questionnaire

3.1. Respondent's profile.

97 respondents participated to the survey addressed to VET provider from Spain. Their profile was rather equilibrated in terms of gender, with 52% of women and 48% of men. The majority of them were aged 30-49 (69%), which 29% had 50 or more, and 2% were under 30. All of them had as a minimum a bachelor's degree (21%) a Master (40%) or a PhD (40%). They mostly belong to universities (60%). 29% of them belong to a VET training school and 10% to other training centres. Most of them has over 11 years of teaching experience (58%).

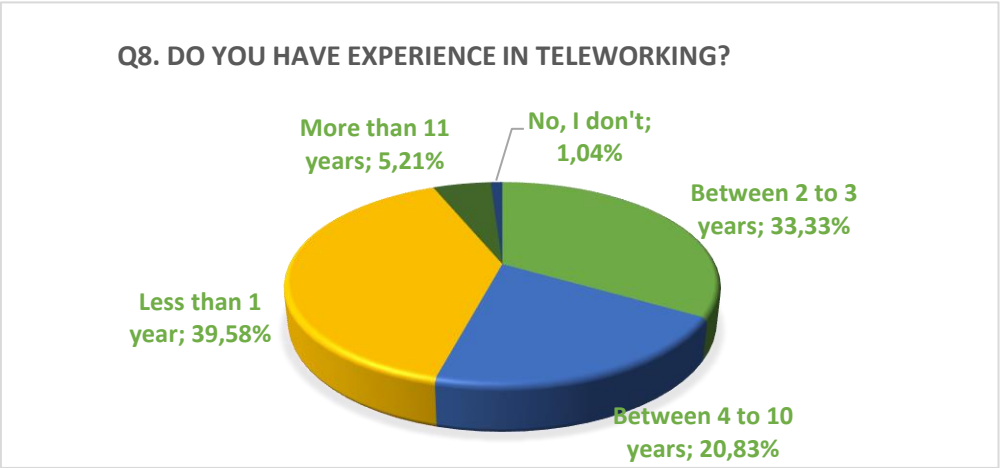
The majority of respondents teaches to more than one level / profile of students. Indeed, 79% of the respondents addressed more than one level. Most of them provide training at university

(83%), but also in VET (77%), Adult education (63%), Secondary education (59%) and high school (57%). The desired profile of respondents for this survey being VET providers, the high representation of university teachers is surprising. However, as most teachers address more than one level and VET and adult education also obtained high scores, the general profile of respondents globally suits to the expectation.

3.2. Digital skills for teleworking.

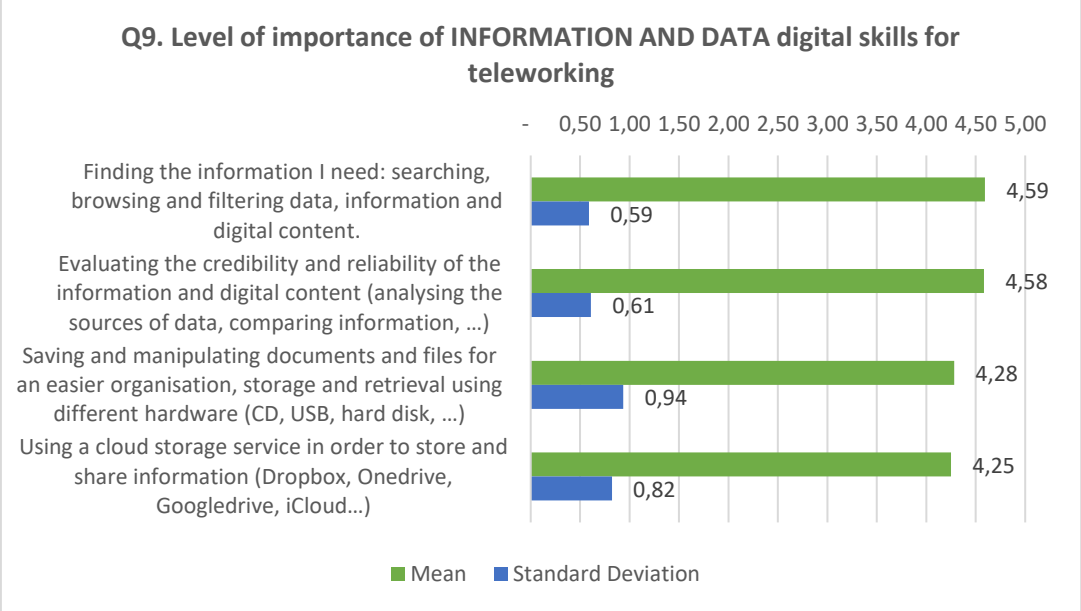
The experience in teleworking from the trainers' side is similar to the one obtained in the survey addressing workers and learners. About 40% have experience in teleworking since less than one year (42% in the case of workers). Again, the major assumption with regards to this result is that this important score was due to pandemic and mobility restrictions affecting education in Spain. However, some more have between 2 to 3 years of experience (33% vs 22 % for the workers).

Image 4.5.15. Experience in teleworking for VET Providers from Spain



Then, trainers were asked to score the importance given to digital skills from the DigiComp framework for teleworking.

Image 4.5.16. Information and data importance for VET Providers from Spain



In the same way than for the workers and learners, this digital skill obtained the highest skills. It is not only the skill in which people feel more confident, but also the one that trainers think most important to handle. In this case, finding information and evaluating the credibility and reliability of the information is estimated the most important, with also a quite low standard deviation, meaning a strong agreement on these subjects.

Image 4.5.17. Communication importance for VET Providers from Spain

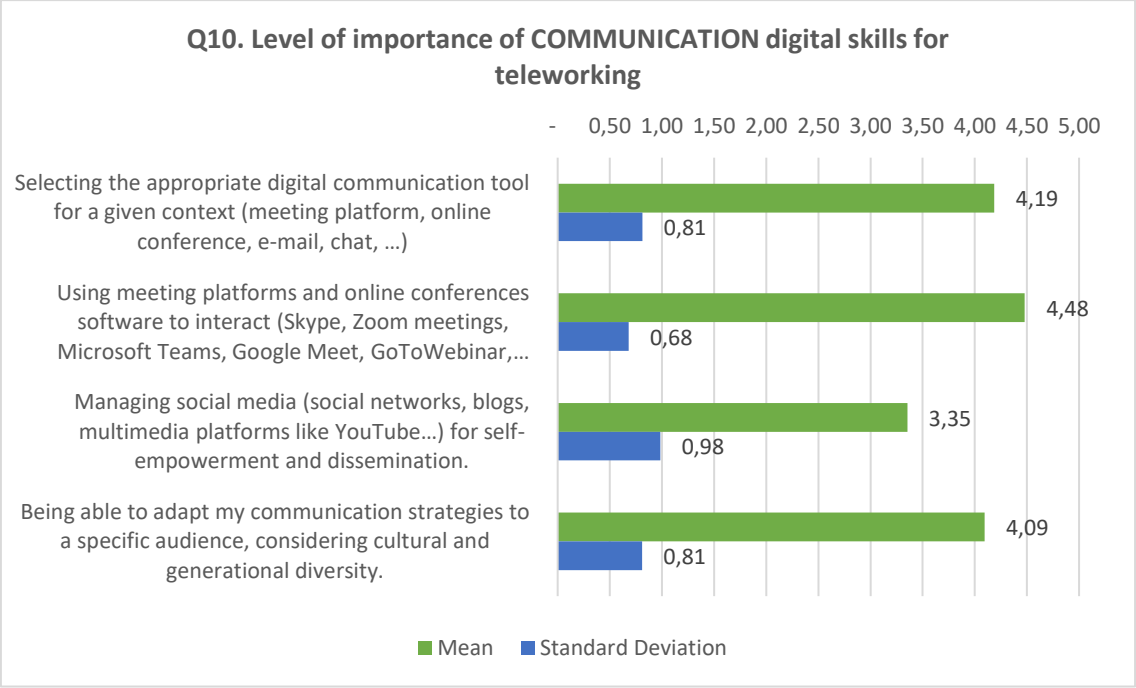
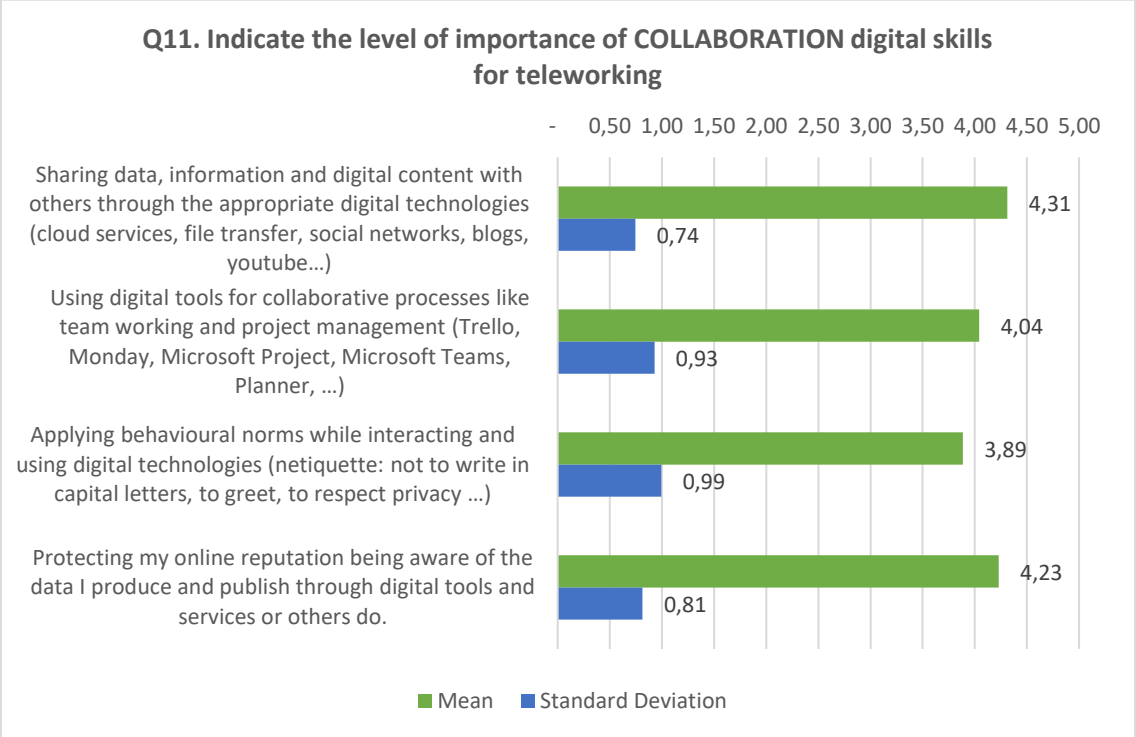


Image 4.5.18. Collaboration importance for VET Providers from Spain



The importance of communication and collaboration comes just after information and data, with also high scores reflecting the importance given to these topics by the trainers. In general,

the score here shows a major importance compared to the results obtained in the auto-evaluation regarding those skills requested to learners and workers, as well as a higher level of consensus.

Image 4.5.19. Digital Content Creation importance for VET Providers from Spain

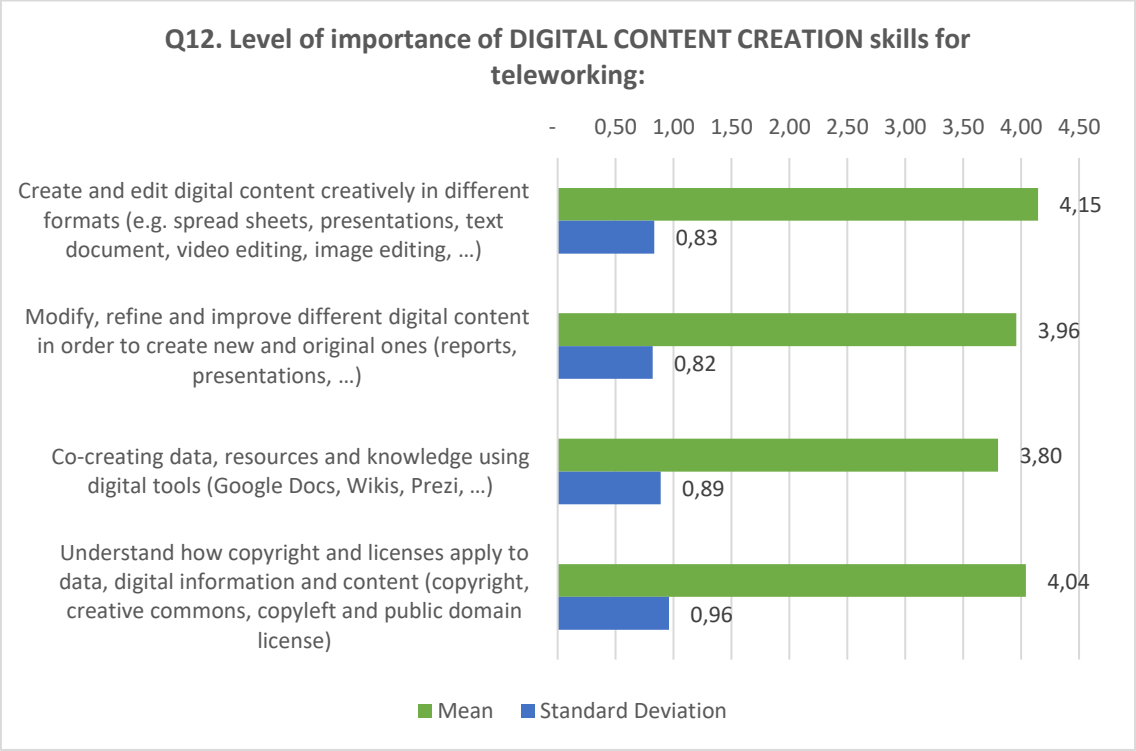


Image 4.5.20. Online Safety importance for VET Providers from Spain

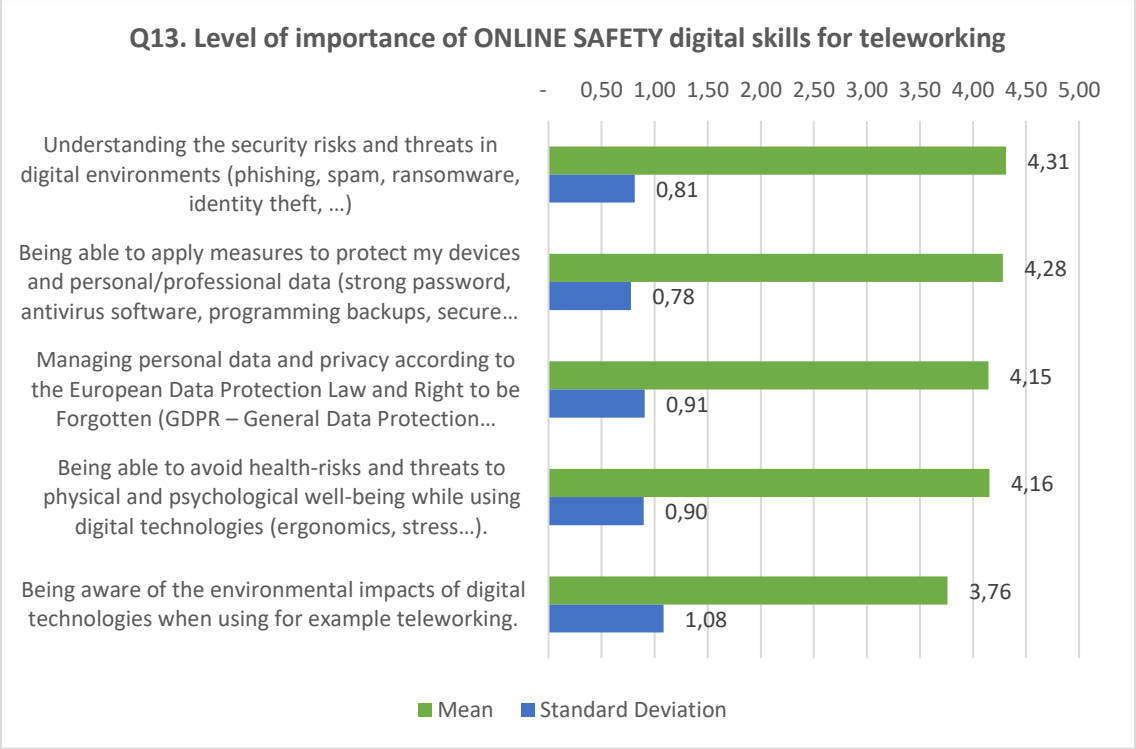
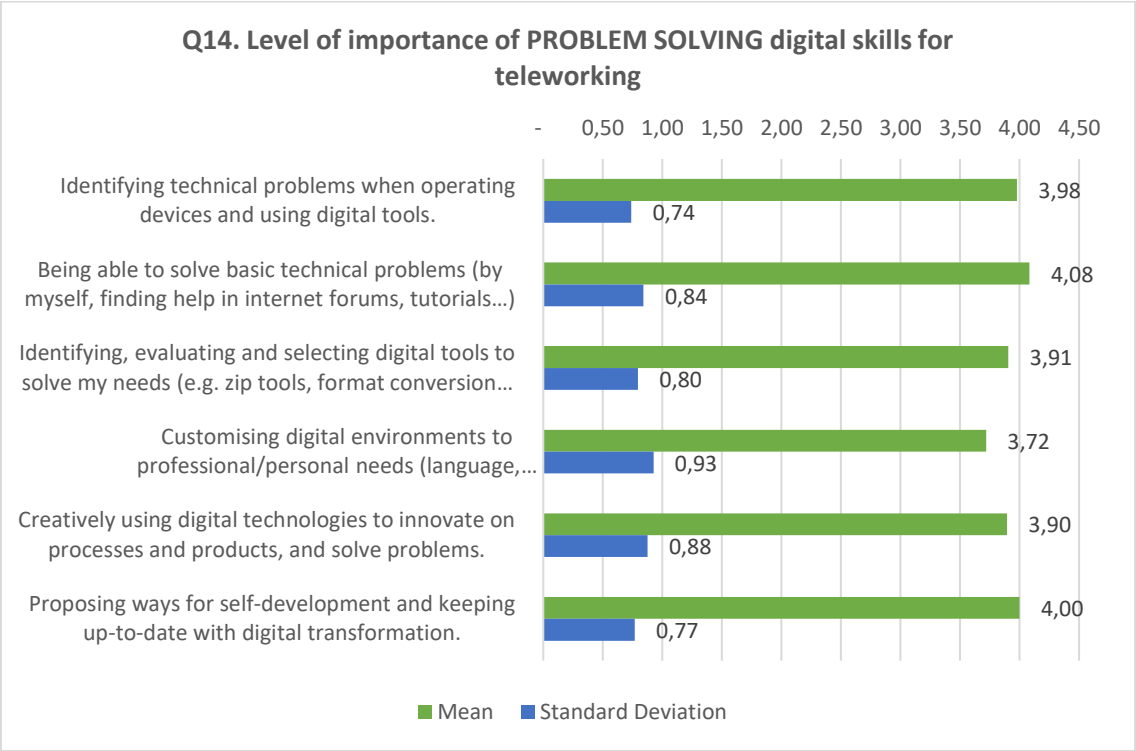


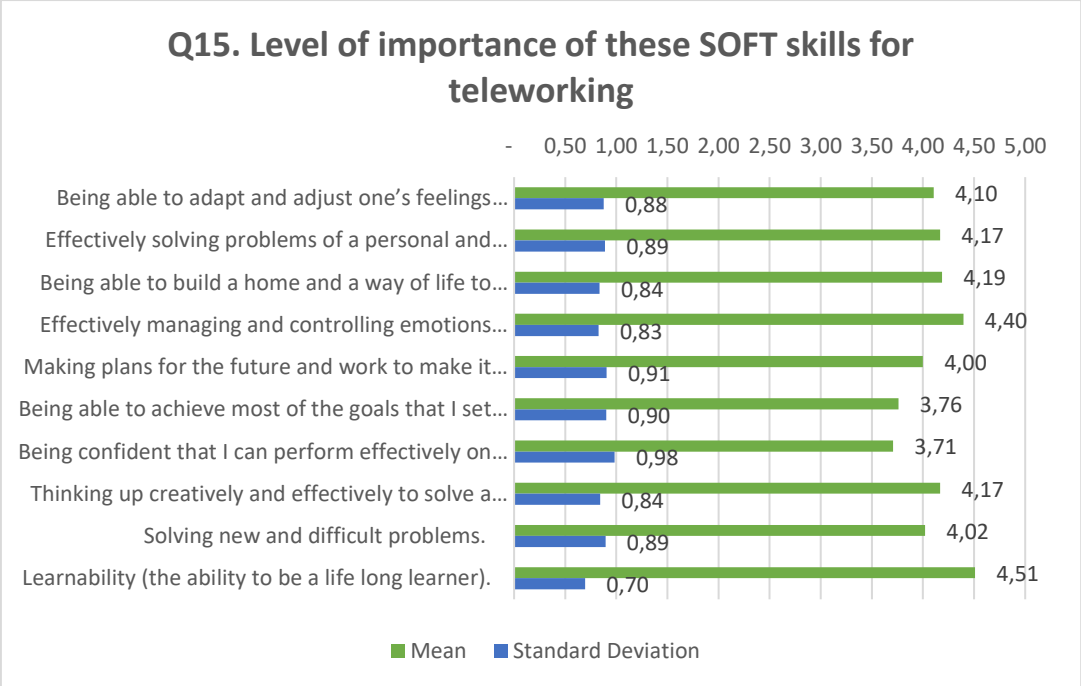
Image 4.5.21. Problem Solving importance for VET Providers from Spain



The same goes for digital creation, online safety and problem solving. All are given a high importance from the trainers, with scores that are around four (very important) for all sub-competences listed. Again, the standard deviation is always below 1, showing a higher grade of agreement on these questions.

Then, trainers were asked about the importance given to soft skills.

Image 4.5.22. Soft skills importance for VET Providers from Spain

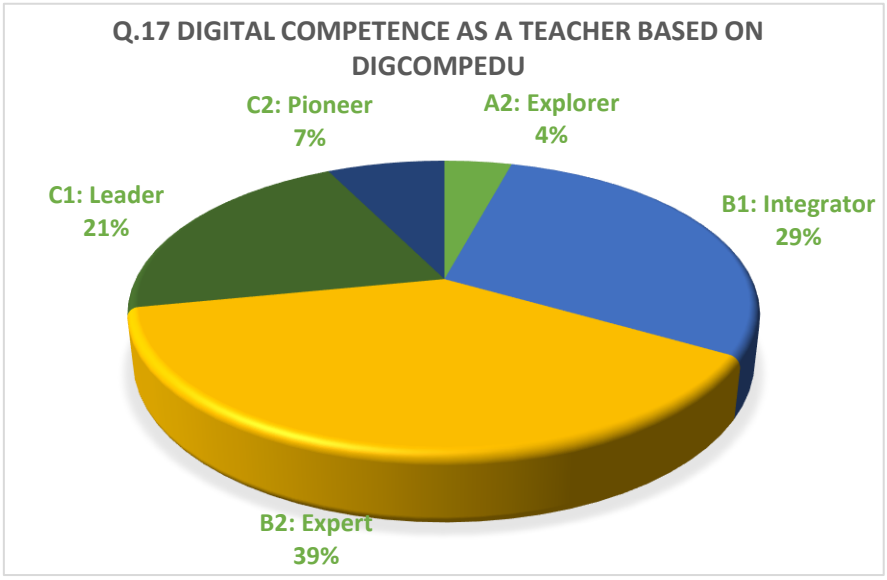


The score is similar in the case of soft skills as for digital skills. Trainer generally think that they are important. Learnability (ability to be a lifelong learner) is ranked above the rest of soft skills, which is a similar result than the one obtained in the survey for learners and workers. Indeed, they also estimated learnability the most important soft skill for teleworking (with a score of 4,37). In both surveys, effectively managing and controlling emotions comes right behind, followed by being able to build a home and way of life. Being confident about performance and goals achievement comes in last position in both surveys.

3.3. Digital skills for education.

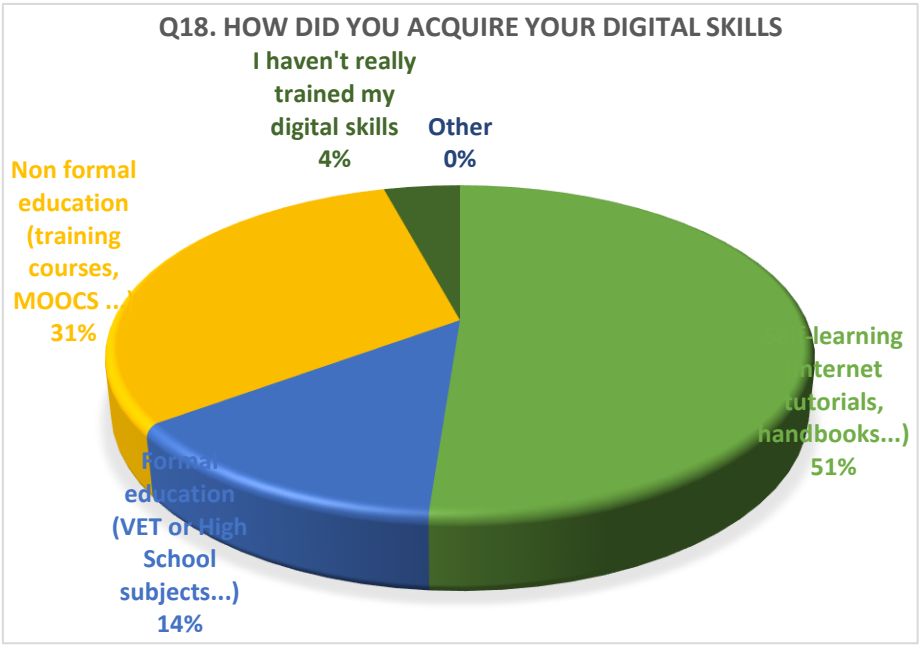
The next part of the survey was focused on the digital skills for education, and firstly about the digital competences of the teachers themselves.

Image 4.5.23. Digital competence as teacher (DigCompEdu) for VET Providers from Spain



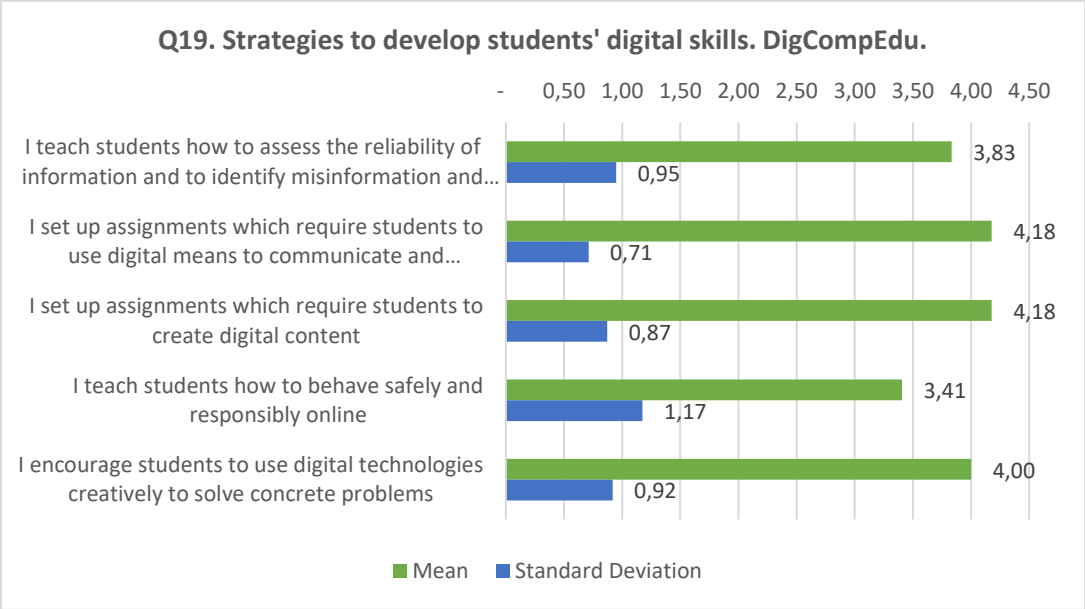
67% of trainers consider themselves as experts (39%), leaders (21%) or Pioneer (7%). Thus, still about a third of trainers have a medium – low level in digital competences.

Image 4.5.24. Digital skills acquisition for VET Providers from Spain



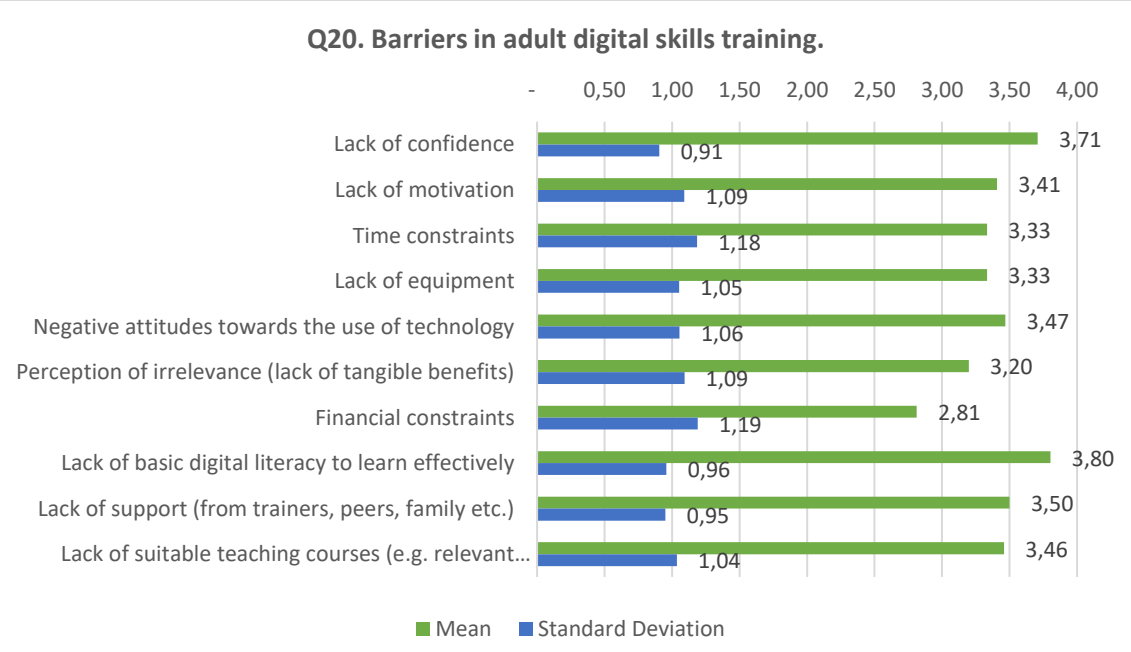
In the same way than for the workers and students, the self-learning is the major way of acquiring the digital skills for trainers, despite it is in a lower proportion (51% of them, vs 77% of workers and students). If about 60% of workers said that they also received formal or non-formal education, only 45% of trainers did so. However, it is to be noticed that workers and learners could chose more than 1 answer to this question, when trainers had to choose only one option. Thus, the result is quite similar in both cases.

Image 4.5.25. Strategies to develop digital skills for VET Providers from Spain



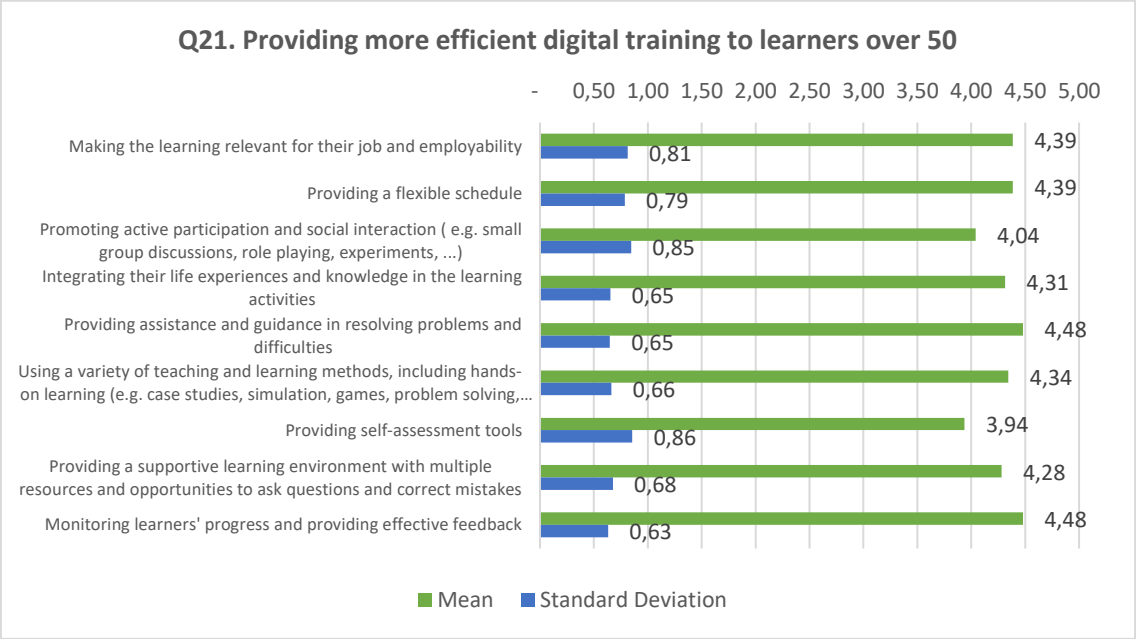
If “information and data” was ranked as the most important digital skills, showing the importance of assessing the reliability of information to student obtain a low score in the strategies actually implemented by trainers to deliver digital skills. The same goes for online safety which is surprisingly little addressed compared to the rest of strategies and considering the importance given to this skill in the previous question.

Image 4.5.26. Barriers in adult digital skills training for VET Providers from Spain



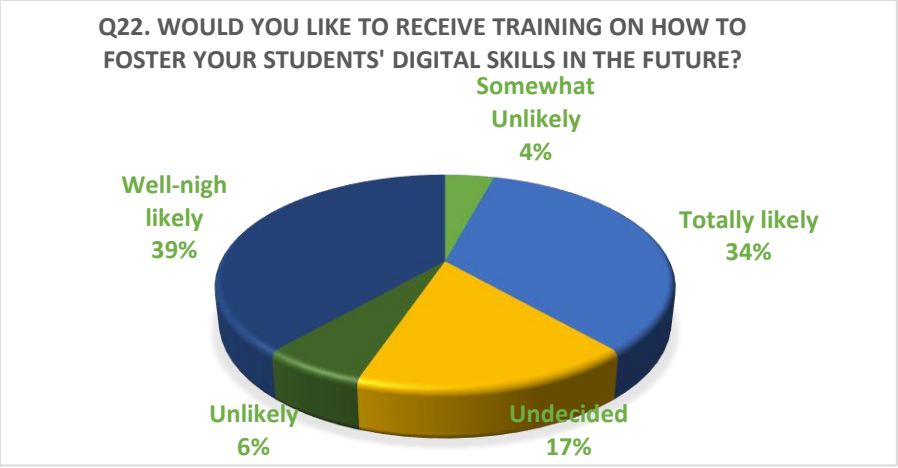
The above table shows that the barriers are still important for the digital skills training of adults. The lack of basic digital literacy is among the major issues, thus in contrast with the medium scores obtained in the auto-evaluation of workers and students about their level of digital competences. As they were high level of diversity among these levels, this new answer shows that in some cases, the need in skills start from the basics. Another important statement concerns the lack of confidence, negative attitude and lack of motivation, which remind the little importance that was given by workers on the training about digital skills and highlight the need to show the workers the importance of training in those skills.

Image 4.5.27. Strategies to provide efficient digital training for VET Providers from Spain



All strategies to provide more efficient digital training to learners seems relevant to trainers. All have score above 4 (very important), except providing self-assessment, which is just below, thus showing a major defiance from trainers regarding this technique. This result calls the attention, as self-learning was the main source of training for both workers and students and trainers in the field of digital skills. The standard of deviation in this question is always below 1, thus showing quite a high level of consensus on this topic.

Image 4.5.28. Training for VET Providers from Spain



Again, the result here is very similar to the one obtained in the survey addressed to workers and student. A large majority of 73% answers that they would likely train their digital skills.

At last, trainers were asked an open question about teaching methods that they would recommend providing efficient digital training to adults over 50 years old. There inputs were the following:

- self-study, trial and error
- Tutorials
- inverted class
- There should be in all languages, "step by step" guides to follow procedures for people over 50 years old, because this group is educated to learn that way. They need to follow a repetitive order, they are not used to thinking in parallel or circular, due to their Franco upbringing. They demand guided activities and need to repeat them many times to learn them because they forget.
- Creation of F.A.Q. so that they can read the most frequent doubts, feeling identified when they see that their doubt is common and find a solution to continue their learning.
- Flipped Classroom
- Personalization aided with phone calls.
- I have no experience in students over 50 years of age
- Projects O-City.org
- Active methodologies
- Give the students some essential tutorials so that they can use them at any time.
- Video capsules, which can be consulted at any time from any device
- The combination of the digital portfolio with the evaluation through self-correcting digital tests that provide feedback to the students.
- I think that a problem that has not been commented on is the way things are approached, a closed process is sought and memorized; But in reality, digital skills require the user to adapt and the process is much more open. Despite this problem, with motivation and insistence, everything is solved. Many people don't learn to do things in digital environments, simply because they don't need to.
- Basic formation
- Use of comparisons with the physical world (e-mail - postal mail, word processor - typing of documents, social networks - bar, meetings, etc.)
- As part of the teaching-learning process, I would give them qualitative feedback through the recording of a personalized video about the work / practices / tasks carried out by each person. Just because it's digital doesn't mean there should be a cold and distant relationship. The fact of seeing you makes the relationship closer, that they feel more involved and many times they need that audio-visual support so as not to feel the loneliness of having a solely digital format.
- Your answer
- Follow-up and continuous attendance at work
- Show that digital tool is usable for your day by day
- Gamification
- Project-based learning

6. Conclusions

The survey in Spain reached a large sample covering the expectation in terms of profile. The sample was slightly younger than the 50+ target for the group of learners and workers, however, the detail of answers collected show that there was no significant difference among the results depending on the group of age.

Teleworking is a recent experience for both target groups (TG1 of Learners and workers and TG2 of trainers), which might be associated in many cases to the new way of working under shut down of the country during the COVID pandemic. Workers are in general happy about the idea of teleworking; however, this way of working is still associated to a high level of uncertainty, with no clear agreement on its efficiency and many doubt regarding the organisational aspects and lack of support to implement it.

The survey addressed to students and workers requested participant to evaluate their level in digital and soft skills needed to telework, while trainers were asked to evaluate the importance of these same skills. In general, all skills are considered as important by trainers, with a large consensus on the need in training in those fields, the most important being managing information and data, but also managing communication and collaboration. On their side, workers and students' answers reflect a large disparity in the level of knowledge regarding those. If the general score would be about 3,5 -4 (over 5), important level of standard deviation shows that some workers are somehow deficient in those skills. In the case of trainers, it is to be noticed that still about one third of them do not reach a B2 level of competences regarding the mentioned digital skills.

Several strategies were proposed to develop students' digital skills, and all were considered as relevant to be implemented by trainers.

Most participants from both groups say that they mostly learnt through own channels and self-learning (internet, tutorials, handbooks, etc.), but also though non formal and formal education. Also, in both groups, about 75% of respondents stated that they would like to receive more training in the field.

These results generally comfort several assumptions made in the state of the art of the Telegrow project in the view of the elaboration of a future training:

- Teleworking is a growing trend
- This trend is linked to a high level of uncertainty, and in some cases, defiance
- It requests training to become a more effective way of working, especially in digital competences
- All competences mentioned all along the survey are important
- The current level of competences of workers and student is remarkably diverse
- In some cases, training should start with basic concepts
- The range of age of our target (50+), could be extended to a younger profile of adult learners, as no significant differences were found among the answers given by the different groups of age.

FOCUS GROUP REPORT (Italy)

4.6.

by Euro-Net, May 2021

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Katia Lacerra, Euro-Net, katialacerra2014@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The focus group was carried out in an online modality on the first of July, after agreeing on a date with the participants, who were sent the project brochures and a description of the activity and its aims. The focus group lasted about one hour and a half. The focus group was conducted according to the proposed question pattern and some aspects were discussed at greater length, as a result of the participants' lengthy reflections and constructive and deeply analytical discussions.

2. Focus Group participants' profile

The focus group was composed by 6 people: Four of them belong to the same organisation, Studiodomino, a vocational training centre with a long experience in organising courses that also involve non-formal teaching methodologies to improve their skills and employability. One of the interviewees is a vocational counsellor and trainer specialised in the dissemination of innovation in the labour market. During his information courses, all of which are mainly online, he disseminates new job search methodologies, explains new professions and the importance of personal branding. His interventions involve people of all age groups: young people still in training, adults who need to improve their professional skills.

The last person involved is a career counsellor and trainer mainly in public administration and employment centres. The aim of the profession is to train operators and employees also in the implementation of new ways of working and to improve their transversal competences. In addition, she trains jobseekers in job centres in the acquisition of knowledge useful to be reintegrated into the labour market.

Some of them operate in Potenza, while other in Melfi.

The participants were contacted as operators whose value is widely recognised in the area and who work in a pioneering context, knowing well the needs and conditions of the labour market and of operators in the VET context.

3. Discussion

Teleworking situation of the participant's organisation

V. explains that his work did not undergo a radical change: the transformation of his profession from an office dimension to a telematic one took place long before the pandemic.

V. realised the potential of smart working in his profession years ago, a choice he made as a result of his in-depth knowledge of the labour market and its innovation, of which he is a communicator. The only difference is that he only switched to the totally smart formula for his collaboration with a public body dealing with entrepreneurship, to which he went a few times a week. During the pandemic, he implemented all his activities in the smart mode with enormous ease and reaped excellent results. V. over the years, having decided to use eWork before the pandemic, concentrated his energies on improving his technical and digital skills, but the advent of the pandemic caused an acceleration in the development of computer systems and software useful for eWork that did not exist and of which he had to understand the functioning and potential. Some of these technologies he claims will permanently enter his working environment because they provide a flexibility that their predecessors did not have. V. observes that the nowadays market labour is more oriented on a hybrid formula that conciliates office work and smart working.

A. In Studiodomino, that is a private vocational and training centre, they don't have too much older of +50 age workers and for this reason, already being a smart and very High-Tech centre, they never had great difficulties to adapt the Covid 19 exigence of teleworking because they already worked in this modality since many years before and also considering the kind of services they made for public bodies or private sector. So, they did not really have to adapt to this "new" trend, but just get to know better the potential of the different available tools. Having changed the national legislation on training, and now it is possible to acquire the Professional Certifications by following the online course, this fact has helped them to use a new approach towards users and students who, despite the travel limitations, they had the opportunity to obtain important job titles that can be immediately spent to find a good job.

Advantages of teleworking

- Productivity
- Work-life Balance
- Flexibility
- Being Autonomous and possibility to work according personal biological clock
- Independency
- More trust between company and worker
- Less Impact on Environment
- More inclusivity for disadvantaged people (disabled, people with fewer opportunities)
- Working whatever you want.
- Work and family life conciliation
- Time and cost reduced
- Reduction in transport costs and travel time for the worker and the company, as well as the immediacy of many interventions, carried out through this type of work.

According our participants these are the most frequent advantages because teleworking fosters the productivity of employees which can work according their biological rhythms, as long as they are organised and show flexibility in managing tasks and deadlines. Smart-working could also have a positive impact on the relationship between the company and the worker, establishing a new paradigm of work that proceeds by objectives and results, rather than by individual tasks. In this perspective, one of the participants does not show the same

degree of agreement because he believes that the path to reach this kind of work maturity is still long: many workers are not educated to be autonomous and tend to get lost if not constantly guided and controlled. While smart-working grants enormous autonomy in achieving and reconciling professional and personal life, some workers may be leaning too much towards one or the other. About the environment all the participant are absolutely agree that smart-working will have a positive impact on environment and also about the inclusivity: people with physical disabilities will be able to have full working dignity, enabling them to work in a safe environment, but new parents will also be able to take advantage of smart-working to maintain their independence.

Participants, however, emphasised that these benefits are closely linked to the individual's ability to understand the working methods of smart-working, otherwise workers risk being overwhelmed by work, not being able to maintain a professional and family balance, alienation

Barriers, difficulties and needs to foster teleworking

- Lower Digital competencies
- Communication difficulties
- Deep knowledge of web's functioning
- Difficulties to coordinate a working group
- Have a good internet connection and good devices for teleworking

The difficulties that emerged are related to the digital world: many workers forced to convert to smart-working had great difficulty in adapting because they had to implement, in a very short time, the use of many software and applications in addition to their previous basic knowledge. In particular, the use of different video calling platforms and clouds, which have different ways of being used, has been puzzling. Certainly, for those involved in training, the shift to the digital dimension seemed to cause a loss of effectiveness, which, however, was implemented with the use of interactive applications.

Another problem highlighted by S. and A. is related to the effectiveness of communication, especially when the users involved are over 50, who find it more difficult to adapt to the digital tool, often falling into misunderstandings. In fact, S. states that some professions cannot do without the social dimension and that forcing them into the digital dimension leads to ineffectiveness and dispersion of forces. Communication also means the ability to maintain a high quality of dialogue, which tends to be easily corrupted by the nervousness arising from the difficulty of communicating and making oneself understood through the digital medium.

This dimension also includes the principle of NETiquette, which requires knowledge of the basic rules of conduct to be kept in the digital dimension, of which many people are aware. As already reported, participants also expressed the view that even supposed advantages can turn into disadvantages if one is not properly trained in digital work.

One of the needs considered fundamental by V. and R. is the education and the introduction of a new working scheme which proceeds by objectives and which frees itself from pyramid schemes, but converts to an elliptical configuration, in which each resource is fundamental for the achievement of the company's aim. There are no controllers and controllers, but people who must collaborate and cooperate, start planning long-term strategies to achieve

results, and not focus on individual daily activities. Definitely, e-skills have to be implemented starting with training to avoid further skill gaps between age groups.

S. argues that there should be an initiative to promote the use of new technologies across the board, but that at the same time the conditions for the realization of certain professions in an IT dimension should be considered.

In addition, a way has to be devised to track and assess those competences, both digital and non-digital.

A. underlined that the lack of direct contact and the lack of emotions played a very important role as negative barriers speaking about teleworking.

Digital skills considered as essential

Soft Skills:

- Learnability
- Autonomy
- Problem Solving
- Flexibility
- Time-scheduling
- Disconnection right

Hard Skills:

- Digital competences
- Communication
- Manuality
- Open mind attitude
- Use of English language (B2 Level minimum)
- Time management

Most of the participants have a strong uniform reaction to this aspect: some are firmly convinced that they will continue to implement smartworking in their business activities because it allows them to extend the reach of their company, increase the number of possible activities with a consequent economic benefit, while others will continue to use it to a reduced extent, using it only for administrative activities, as they believe that their activities are more effective if carried out in normal mode.

According to A. most +50s need to acquire both software and hardware skills and competences to have the chance to be on the market for a long time.

Differences on teleworking adoption for young or old people

Participants agreed on the obvious observation that millennials have a natural ability to adapt to working in a digital environment and are facilitated to do so, while the over-50s do not have the same tools and skills to make smart-working easy for them.

However, an interesting analysis emerged from the focus group: their experience as trainers showed them that these difficulties also affect much younger people. It emerged that this digital miseducation also greatly affects the over 35s, who, contrary to common thinking, appear to have many difficulties in using IT.

A. in recent times many +50s asked them for a specific full immersion ICT training course because they realised to be out of market having few or none ICT competence.

Best practices

V. implemented the use of software designed to organise work in real time with its collaborators and committed to maintaining constant contact through regular meetings that were based on the use of non-formal activities.

R. implemented a CRM platform/device to share all the contacts and infos to help the customers for all his/her needs in real time.

S. during the pandemic experimented with the implementation of experiential training, albeit in a digital environment using interactive technologies.

A. during the Covid 19 they organised an on-line training course for dental offices so giving many people to obtain a very important job title

3. Conclusions

There is no going back, so telework will become more and more a way of life for private companies and public bodies. For this to conclude, there are different opinions among our participants about teleworking. For the most of them, it is important to promote it due to the advantages it entails for the worker and the company, and other employers prefer face-to-face work. Opinions about teleworking are also diverse if we ask workers especially considering their age. What is agreed is that a "training plan" is needed to help workers, especially the elderly, to adapt to the new digital tools used when teleworking.

It was also highlighted during the focus group that not only training based on how to use certain tools is important, but that for good teleworking, training in soft skills is also needed that encourages the worker skills such as teamwork, time management, respect, commitment, or communication.

Last but not the least, to combine training, information technology and multimedia teleworking is very useful for all the people, especially for disabled or disadvantaged ones, to better face their world of work and find a good job.

FOCUS GROUP REPORT (France)

by E-Seniors, July 2021

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4.7.

1. Introduction

A focus group was organized by E-Seniors in the framework of the project TeleGrow in order to gather the experiences of the managers and directors of organisations with teleworking. E-Seniors' managers contacted through emails and phone calls its local and national network composed of associations and companies.

The focus group was held in E-Seniors' premises on the 24th of June and lasted around one hour and a half with two managers of E-Seniors' association: one was the moderator of the discussion and the second one was in charge of observing and writing the exchanges. At the beginning E-Seniors' managers presented the project to the panel and informed them about the goal of this meeting and the program. As a second step, the moderator asked questions for guiding the discussions and let the participants exchange ideas between them.

2. Focus Group participants' profile

In total, 6 participants attended this focus group:

- V.G.: General Manager of an association dedicated to non-formal education for youth in Paris. The association has 5 employees.
- M.P.: Manager of an association offering courses in the field of non-formal education to all types of publics in Paris. The association has 3 employees.
- M.E.: Director and general manager of an association dealing with seniors' digital inclusion and proposing training and workshops in Paris. In total, 3 trainers as well as 8 project managers are working in the association.
- E.F.: Manager of a Parisian company working for the design and implementation of working spaces (interior design in the building). The company has 50 employees.
- M.F.: Manager of a company specialized in ICT and computer engineering and based in Paris. The different buildings in the Parisian region gathered around 5000 employees.
- P.T.: Manager for a video game publisher based in Lyon offering video game experiences to a wide range of gamers around the world. The French branch has 200 employees.

3. Discussion

Teleworking situation of the participant's organisation

The first part of the discussion was dedicated to the general experience of the organizations with teleworking before and after pandemic.

V.G. underlined that before COVID19 pandemic the employees of the association always worked from distance twice per week but this was often interrupted by periods of travel. Since the pandemic, no more business trips have been possible, so they have switched to teleworking. Fortunately, employees can communicate on a daily basis thanks to tools like Zoom. The association has developed good working habits and intend to continue this. Meeting once a week is more for the social aspect of working relationships than anything else.

M.P. explained that teleworking was also allowed in her organization, but this method of working probably became more regular during the health crisis. The organisation had to stop many international meetings that were organized in the framework of the European projects. They have been replaced by video-conferences on Zoom, Google Meet or Skype.

On her side, E.F. admitted that teleworking was just starting to develop in the company before COVID-19. During the first containment, all employees switched to full-time telework, and the ongoing worksites were closed. They could be reopened with specific rules in order to respect the barrier actions on the construction sites. The employees have gradually resumed their on-site visits and visits to clients. Today, employees are allowed to telework twice a week.

Also, P.T. said that the company quickly organized some measures to facilitate telework during the pandemic, including the provision of suitable equipment and a grant to purchase the necessary supplies. The return to work has been gradual, with an attendance limit (50% of staff maximum), then days allowed, and finally mandatory days (2 per week). Although the company has not yet shared its plans for future telework, it has confirmed that it will expand the practice without allowing it on a full-time basis.

M.E. explained that before the pandemic, all workshops were organized face-to-face. The project management team worked from the premises in the 20th arrondissement. It was common (and tolerated) for project managers to work once a week from home. These same people also participated quite frequently in working meetings/partner meetings in different European countries. However, during the pandemic, most of the places where the workshops are held, have been closed. The social centre in the 14th arrondissement remained open, without any interruption. For other venues, there were periods of closure and then partial opening. The association offered workshops on Zoom with the option of a personalized installation and configuration for beginners (in person). For European projects, some 'meetings' or activities were replaced by ZOOM meetings. The project managers worked exclusively from home. M.E. hopes that travel abroad will gradually resume. For now, the managers come back to the office once or twice a week. A first large face-to-face meeting took place in early July.

Finally, M.F. admitted that the telework agreements initially provided for a maximum of 1 day per week, to be defined on a case-by-case basis with one's manager, and this has been the case since around 2017. However, very few employees had requested this. From March 2020 and until about October 2020, all employees went to 100% telework, with very exceptional authorizations to travel on site at first and then on a voluntary basis at the end of the year. The year 2021 finally saw the same evolution with strict telework followed by a gradual lightening up to date. However, in view of the closure of some Parisian sites and future moves, it is recommended to continue telework until the beginning of 2022 with occasional trips to sites to be organized between projects. Very recently, new agreements have been concluded and 2 days of telework per week are granted to employees.

Advantages of teleworking

On a second stage, the advantages of teleworking were discussed among the group of participants. Some of them were common to several managers and directors.

Regardless of the sectors, three of them agreed on the large flexibility allowed with teleworking. The work is rather measured by the task to do, not by the number of hours realized. Therefore, teleworking allows one to adapt completely his/her time. Employees can follow his/her own rhythm and can more easily organize their days between personal and professional tasks.

Another advantage underlined by three participants is the saving in travel time to move forward with projects and to avoid tiredness. It also means more free time for personal life which is a positive point for employees.

Finally, two last advantages detected by some managers is that sometimes employees need some quiet period to work on reports or on specific documents that require a high level of concentration. M.E mentioned that if a person works alone in a quiet room, it is easier to concentrate and the work can go faster. The second advantage is related to the sharing of information and online documents through various tools and video conference tools to keep a good level of communication between the different teams.

Barriers, difficulties and needs to foster teleworking

1. Barriers and difficulties with teleworking

Then, the moderator asked about the potential barriers and limits of teleworking. All partners agreed on the fact that the presence of employees on site is very important for the synergies between different teams and the work is sometimes more efficient for working on a common work or specific reports or documents with colleagues. Notions of sharing and exchange are at the heart of the corporate mindset.

Another obstacle detected by the half of participants is the autonomy of the employees and the fact that they organize his/her day in order to establish clear rules between hours dedicated to domestic tasks and hours dedicated to work. Besides, from a practical point of view, it is important to have the necessary equipment for working in good conditions (good Internet connection, computers proposed by the company, seats and working desk adapted

etc.). Some work needs a very high level of Internet connection and more advanced computer equipment (engineering, design for video games etc.).

For some organizations used to move locally, nationally or internationally for meeting clients or collaborators or partners, teleworking is not the best solution. Tools like Zoom, Teams or Meet cannot totally replace human exchange. Also, several participants mentioned that for some new colleagues or junior employees, it is complicated to follow remotely their integration and evolution in the organizations.

Finally, employees could be disturbed in their work by the number of emails, meetings or instant discussions arriving on their computers. This point was shared by all participants.

2. Needs for teleworking

Regarding the needs encounter by the organizations to implement teleworking in an efficient way, three main ideas were proposed by the participants:

- *Online collaborative tools:* these tools should be easily accessible and user friendly in order to gain some time in employees' work. Sharing spaces like Google Drive, Teams or Dropbox were mentioned by the participants. It is important to train or to guide the employees less familiar with digital devices for ensuring the quality of work.
- *Equipment adapted to teleworking:* two screens facilitate a lot of the work, chairs and desks adapted to the needs, a good Internet connection, good computers, and also securing emails and video calls organized between colleagues and between management staff etc. This implies a cost that must be paid by the organizations.
- *Ensuring the integration of employees* and not allowing a feeling of isolation. Indeed, the exchanges at work are essential for both employers and employees.

Digital skills considered as essential

The participants also gave their opinion about the main digital skills considered as essential for teleworking in good conditions.

They mainly talked about how to manage communication tools and shared working spaces to facilitate team work. It is also important to know how to use his/her own computer and being able to detect and manage technical issues that could appear as well as access to the security networks from the enterprises.

Noting that soft skills were not mentioned by the group, the moderator asked about specific soft skills necessary for teleworking and then the group agreed on the fact that a high level of autonomy is necessary for being efficient.

Finally, they admitted that teleworking will certainly be more important in employees' life and it is required to be prepared for it by organizing training or meetings for ensuring employees' wellbeing. Teleworking accelerated digital transformation but it was already well established in the professional world.

Differences on teleworking adoption for young or old people

Some of the managers from the enterprise world mentioned that they could detect some differences between younger and older generations. Young people are more used to handling communication software (Teams, Google Meet, Zoom, etc.) or social networks and are therefore more comfortable working from home in contrast to older generations. While the gap is expected to narrow as a generation further away from the internet ages, it is likely to persist for a few more years.

The values of younger generations are also different from older generations since it is very common for a modern employee to have shifting hours, to favor certain personal and private activities within what used to be a very defined framework of working hours. Telework brings a form of flexibility closer to these new values. However, it may contribute to creating a gap, or even a divide, with the “stricter” and more “conservative” generation.

For some other participants, they didn’t really observe a difference because they don’t have older generations among their employees.

Best practices

Finally, the group shared some interesting ideas in order to establish good practices in teleworking.

On a practical point of view, organizing the work with a common “to-do list” and having accessible platforms with shared work spaces to ensure collaborative work are necessary. The management teams should also be prepared to organize training for those (elders or younger) not being comfortable with new digital tools. Also, the adequate equipment must be made available to all employees.

The large majority of the participants mentioned that it is important to keep a team spirit and to encourage cohesion between colleagues. For this, having internal points by video conference for coffee breaks and for internal meetings are essential. It is important to keep the link between the teams so as not to “dehumanize” the work. The managers should pay attention to the integration of the team and to make the successes and productions of the different teams visible to everyone in order to maintain a team and group spirit.

3. Conclusion

The focus group facilitated by E-Seniors allows us to make a few concluding observations. Firstly, the COVID19 significantly increased teleworking as the organisations had to adapt the pandemic measures. Consequently, the employees rapidly adjust to the “new normal” that allows to reduce the commute time, increase the free time for personal life and keep work-life balance. Teleworking also improved a flexible approach to the work, as the employees are able to choose their own rhythm and organise themselves. The advantages of teleworking mentioned above impact the employees’ desire to work from home, even though some managers consider it important to work for a few days at the office. This is a significant aspect in the working environment, so that the employees are socialised within the team and the team- working is easy to implement.

However, teleworking has a few barriers, firstly it is utmost important that employees enjoy autonomous work because this kind of work form limits the communication with the colleagues and team discussions. Another problem can be proper facilities such as a good internet connection; convenient working space at home. And finally, online software such as Zoom, Teams, etc cannot entirely change human interactions which is one of the important aspects at work.

According to the inquired managers, the basic soft skills and digital literacy is sufficient to telework. Based on their managerial experience before the COVID19 pandemic and after, the majority of them believes teleworking will be more important in future and it is important to prepare for reorganisation of the working.

One interesting difference between the young and elder employees was observed, which is that elders prefer to work at the offices and have closer communication with their colleagues, while the digital generation prefer to work mostly from home.

The inquired managers observed that managing employees who telework is quite challenging. The focus group participants have shared a few examples of good practices. Primarily, having a common working platform and regular online meetings coupled with once or twice a week office meeting is a key to success. Besides, it is significant to organise training for those who are not comfortable with the digital tools such as using Zoom, Teamwork, etc. Eventually, keeping team spirit and supporting the team's social interaction is crucial. For this reason, it could be a good solution to organise virtual coffee breaks that allows employees to interact informally and remain socially integrated.

In conclusion, it must be noted that teleworking has its advantages and disadvantages and which outweighs another depends on the management and individuals. If the managers support and consider their employees' conditions and needs and twofold communication and permanent interaction is employed, the labour is organised and successful. However, teleworking still requires further improvements from both employees and employers' sides.

FOCUS GROUP REPORT (Greece)

by KAINOTOMIA, July 2021

Katerina Michale, project manager
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4.8.

1. Introduction

Due to the challenging period accrued from the pandemic and the general national restrictions by Greek government, the focus group session implemented by KAINOTOMIA, was conducted virtually on 20th of July. The discussion with the entrepreneurs lasted approximately two hours with the undivided willingness of the participants to exchange fruitful ideas regarding teleworking conditions. Participants were chosen due to their extensive expertise and experience on teleworking, as they are employers on different entrepreneurial sectors forced to shift their conventional working conditions to teleworking.

As our main objective was to gather experience and create a stable ground for fruitful exchange of ideas, KAINOTOMIA invited 5 representatives working on different entrepreneurial sectors (IT company, marketing company, retail store, NGO, private tutoring classes).

The focus group session started with a warming welcoming activity for the introduction of participants. In the first minutes of the focus groups, facilitator requested from participants authorization for using pictures taken during the focus group session, as well as usage of their names. As participants were hesitant and preferred not to swich on their cameras, the facilitator suggested to participate with their cameras switched off. After the introductory part, a visit through the website of the project, as well as the leaflet of the TELEGROW project followed and the facilitator explained the aim and objectives of the project.

The focus group session was structured according to the following program:

- Changes in the organization before and after teleworking conditions
- Advantages and Barriers accrued from teleworking conditions
- Needs and Skills for teleworking environment
- Main gaps between younger and older people on the matter of teleworking
- Sharing of best practises applied in teleworking context

The discussion finished with some inner thoughts of all participants regarding working conditions in the framework of COVID-19 and opportunities by fostering teleworking method.

2. Focus Group participants' profile

The profiles of the 5 participants of the focus group session were:

- T.G., manager of marketing company (Alpha Marketing Greece). Alpha Marketing is a company based in Thessaloniki and Larissa and addresses to Institutions and small and medium enterprises that operate in Greece and are active either in the Greek or in the international market and in companies from abroad that wish to settle in Greece. They combine strategic thinking, creativity and utilize modern technological tools to provide Strategic Planning and Organization, which we implement in practice with the production of the required material and the implementation of actions.

- K.G., manager of NGO implementing European projects (DRC). With offices in Athens, Thessaloniki, Larissa and until January 2020 on Lesvos Island, DRC is one of the key humanitarian actors operating in the country. DRC works at nine sites on the Greek mainland providing site management services, along with food, water and sanitation, protection, legal aid, and non-formal education. In urban settings, DRC supports migrants with cultural mediation and integration courses that include language and soft skills.

- E.T., owner of a retail store (From Scratch Store). “From Scratch Store” is a boutique with handmade clothing and accessories for kids, as well as handmade items for home decoration based in Larissa.

- V.D., owner of a private tutoring classes (Tsiantes). Tsiantes is a private organization offering private lessons to students of high school or undergraduate students.

- P.L., manager of IT company (Logon). Logon started its activity, with the establishment of a regular company P. Christou & Co. OE, with the distinctive title "Login Informatics" since 1989 and aims to cover the needs of the local market of Larissa with computer systems and standard software.

3. Discussion

Changes in the organization before and after teleworking conditions

T.K started presenting its company and explaining their role and main objectives. The purpose of this explanation was to offer a clear view of the nature of their work in Alpha Market company. As their main workload is based on the use of a computer, the shift to full teleworking conditions was smooth. Their organization started implementing teleworking of 50% of their employees in rotation every week. As national restrictions were increased, his organization was forced to shift to teleworking on its 100%. He confessed that the employees did not apprehend any significant change to their working conditions, instead they were more productive. He characteristically said “Firstly we were anxious about any disconnections among employees or

working responsibilities that may accrue from teleworking conditions. When weeks passed by, we recognized that the productivity of our employees was increased".

K.G. from DRC, an NGO implementing European projects, used to work remote partially, as his job is based on the use of computer. During the pandemic, he started teleworking daily due to national and regional restrictions. Fortunately, due to the nature of his work, his productivity was not affected.

On behalf of E.T., she told us that as an owner of a retail store she did not have any previous experience in teleworking, as she worked in her store in presence and communicated with her clients through face-to-face interaction. Although, as the situation in Greece was deteriorated and she was forced to shift her conditional way of work to teleworking. This shift was assistive for her, as it was a great opportunity for her to expand her knowledge and managerial, as well as IT skills. With the assistance of IT experts, she learned how to manage her Online Store and update it with new products.

V.D., as manager and teacher to students, faced a really challenging period. He confessed that lessons and classes took part only through face-to-face learning procedures. After the outbreak of the pandemic and the regional restrictions, they had to shift the learning procedures into a virtual class. At first, there were a lot of issues prompted, digital tools were required, students faced technical problems, time management was a constant factor of anxiety, etc. Finally, as young people are totally familiarized with new digital tools, the e-learning classes have been proved a cutting-edge solution for students in challenging periods like COVID-19.

When referring for an IT company, we all know that working from home can be a total convenience due to the nature of this work. This though confirmed our participant, P.L., who admitted that even she had the opportunity to telework even before the pandemic, she started remote working after regional restrictions. P.L. stated that this situation created the best ground for her in order to be totally concentrated to her work and not distracted at all, due to the calm environment of her home.

Advantages of teleworking

When participants were asked regarding the benefits of the benefits of teleworking, there was a mutual agreement on the following characteristics:

- Increased employee productivity
- Increased employee satisfaction
- Improved employee recruitment and retention
- A reduced need for office space
- The ability to reduce traffic and improve the community
- The flexibility to provide business continuity of operations during a regional crisis or weather emergency
- Reduction of conflicts among employees

Barriers, difficulties and needs to foster teleworking

Nevertheless, participants identified some barriers and difficulties accrued from teleworking conditions. Among the difficulties identified, the most common expressed were:

- Elimination of a creative and happy working environment.
- Emotional disengagement, less interaction, and feelings of isolation.
- Inability to control the time and work of our employees.
- Lack of collaboration between work teams.
- A more sedentary lifestyle and physical problems

Needs for boosting teleworking in the future:

- Need for good equipment
- Need for the appropriate training of the employees
- Need for upscaling digital needs
- Need for clearer policies regarding teleworking
- Need for active and fruitful exchange of experience among youngsters and older people

Digital skills considered as essential

When participants were asked about the soft and hard skills considered required in a teleworking environment, there was a total convergence of views of the participants. Everyone agreed that hard and soft skills are required for the smooth transition from conventional working conditions to teleworking. Nevertheless, participants agreed that soft skills are cornerstone for the assurance of smooth teleworking.

Digital skills:

- Cybersecurity
- Being able to solve technical problems
- Curiosity to explore new digital tools to increase productivity
- Development of digital content

Soft skills:

- Empathy
- Collaborative Problem-Solving
- Adaptability
- Time Management
- Oral Communication
- Decision making
- Flexible
- Building and maintaining trust

Differences on teleworking adoption for young or old people

When participants were asked to spot the basic differences regarding adoption of teleworking among younger or older people, most of the participants stated that youngsters are born and raised in a totally digital era. This generation is well known for their digital entrenchment and their digital skills are obvious. On the other hand, older people try to adapt to the new conditions, making significant digital steps towards teleworking. They show a remarkable willingness to adopt and familiarize themselves with new digital tools and technologies used in teleworking. Although older people make constant efforts to follow the pace and demands of teleworking, there is a clear division between the confidence of the two age groups when using digital tools and trying to solve technical issues. Nevertheless, there is clear need for providing older people with the necessary tools to raise their awareness on teleworking.

Best practices

During the focus group session, the employees shared with us some of the best practices that were applied to their companies:

T.G. supported that the provision of equipment (laptop, microphone, camera) to employees in conjunction with seminars for digital safety (e.g. malicious software, fishing) were key factors for making the transition to teleworking area seamless

K.G., as he is familiarized with remote working condition, admitted that the use of a digital platform that allows the storage and availability of documents to all employees, as well as the continuous interaction between colleagues, through individual or group chat rooms. This will allow the staff members of the organization to collaborated and feel included, even they are teleworking.

E.T., having no experience in teleworking, shared with us that the continuous exploration of different digital customized tools can reveal new opportunities for targeting more clients beyond the regional area.

V.D. stated that, although the adaption to teleworking was a challenge for both educators and learners, the exploration and acquisition of knowledge regarding educational digital tools (e.g. Kahoot) made the learning process more interesting for all.

P.L. focused on time management practices when someone works remotely, such as organized office, office clothing instead of leisure one, strict compliance with the working hours, decreased timed online after working hours.

7. Conclusions

Concluding, during the COVID-19 pandemic, teleworking has been proven an important aspect of ensuring business continuity, whereas under normal circumstances its benefits include reduced commuting time, increased opportunity for workers to focus on their work tasks away from the distractions of the office, as well as an opportunity for better work-life balance. After the completion of the discussion, the vast majority of the participants agreed

that teleworking is a working condition that soon will characterize almost every professional sector. In this framework, teleworking will be adopted in every entrepreneurial context and employees should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be part of it.

Throughout the focus group session, our entrepreneurs identified the advantages of teleworking, both on personal and organizational level. Among the most answered advantages of teleworking was the increased productivity of employees, while the feelings of isolation and disconnection from their workplace held the first position in the question regarding disadvantages.

When participants were asked regarding the needs that should be addressed by the contemporary companies, they stated that through constant trainings and learning procedures, staff members could raise their awareness on digital tools required for teleworking. As regards to the necessary skills for teleworking, our entrepreneurs also identified the necessity for both soft and hard skills in teleworking. Contrary to the acquired digital skills, the majority of the participants stated that soft skills are far more important for employees in the framework of teleworking.

The discussion ended with the conclusion that teleworking is a condition that is here to stay, and it offers great opportunities to both employers and employees, giving them the opportunity to expand their skills and knowledge and continue their work undistracted.

FOCUS GROUP REPORT (Poland)

by CWEP, July 2021

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4.9.

1. Introduction

CWEP relied on its database and contacted a few companies that the association used to cooperate with – five employers were chosen. The employers were contacted via email and then via phone to discuss the session in detail. CWEP suggested a date that would be suitable for all the employers to take part in the discussion. The focus group interview was organised online due to the worldwide pandemic. It did not affect the agenda prepared for the focus group organized. CWEP relied strongly on the Guidelines for organizing the focus groups which was prepared by the project's coordinator.

The interview started at 10 am. The participants – employers - were welcomed by a CWEP representative. The next point in the agenda was a brief presentation of the TeleGrow project prepared by CWEP. The main focus was to get the participants familiar with the topic of the project and its outcomes. The next step was to explain the structure of the interview. The goal was to make it a short but effective session. Thus, the participants were given a list of questions which were to be discussed. The questions were supposed to be a starting point for the discussion – the whole session took about 45 minutes.

2. Focus Group participants' profile

The employers who took part in the session were the representatives of different age groups. Please see the initials and details about each and every employer below:

- A.K. Project Manager (RAAR);
- T.B. Owner (Bottom Line);
- P.Z. Director of the Department (Rzeszow University of Technology);
- A.Z. Manager (Solar Pik)
- A.C.S. CEO (LABORATORIUM GERONTOPROFILAKTYKI).

Please see some details about the institutions below:

- RARR – Regional Development Agency in Rzeszow

The agency was founded in 1993 and the aim of the company is to help the local society of entrepreneurs constantly develop their business. The agency aims to provide support

for those who want to start their business as well. There are 180 people currently employed by the agency. Amongst the employees there are experts whose main topic of interest would include: economy, law, sociology, engineering, designing and finance. Additionally, RARR has been working on developing networks of experts who can assist if needed.

- Bottom Line

This is private company. The service offered is consulting.

- Rzeszow University of Technology

The University was founded back in 1951. Currently, there are 7 faculties and the number of students is more than 14k per year. Rzeszow University of Technology was the first technical university in the country that started to educate and train civil aviation pilots. The University is systematically developing.

- Solar Pik

The company was founded back in 2011 as part of construction company. Today the company has developed and Solar Pik is responsible for photovoltaic installations. People are the most important asset of the company – that would include both: clients and workers.

- LABORATORIUM GERONTOPROFILAKTYKI

The laboratory belongs to the University of Rzeszow. It is a research centre conducting research in the field of health prevention for seniors.

3. Discussion

Teleworking situation of the participant's organisation

All the employers confirmed that they had used teleworking technique in the past. Nevertheless, it was not on permanent basis – they tended to use it while they were out of the office and there was an urgent matter to be solved. Otherwise, the employers had rarely used teleworking tools in the past.

The turning point was March and April 2020, when the first Covid-19 cases were confirmed in Poland and the country slowly introduced the policy of lock-down. Office workers were then asked by employers to perform their duties online, using various connection tools like Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Office. The employers could not risk to meet in the office as usual because of the risk of spreading the virus.

The participants along with their employees started to work mainly from home. They used online platforms to communicate – mainly Skype and Zoom depending on the team. Most of them used these online techniques in 2020, especially during the two most difficult pandemic periods of increased Covid-19 cases being confirmed in the country (spring and autumn 2020). Nevertheless, not all the employees were allowed to work from home since

some of them – the employees of Solar Pik - had to continue their job outside the office and home due to the nature of the business.

Nowadays the situation in Poland is getting better – there are not many cases confirmed every single day in Poland. Thus, most of the companies have returned to the office. The same has happened for participants. Nevertheless, the teleworking experience during the pandemic has changed the way of work. The employers observed that their employees feel more freedom to use online tools now – instead of taking a day off they can request to work from home and this gives them more flexibility to take care of their personal life while performing their job-related duties at the same time.

Advantages of teleworking

Most of the employers confirmed that teleworking is highly advantageous. Firstly, using teleworking techniques is very convenient. The employers stated that it saved their time since they did not have to commute to the office every day and spend their time in the traffic jam on the way home. That would mean they did have some more time for themselves and their families. Moreover, the employers stated this technique was comfortable for their employees as well – they spent less time in the morning for preparation for work (preparing lunch; wearing smart clothes to the office) which gave them more time in the morning for themselves; the employees felt well rested in the morning and full of energy to start their new tasks at work. This meant they were more productive.

Barriers, difficulties and needs to foster teleworking

While all of the employers confirmed that using teleworking is very convenient for them, two of them expressed their hesitation as well. The employers shared their observation – while the participants of the focus group did not have much trouble with online platforms like Skype or Microsoft Teams, they did confirm that some of their employees struggled at first. For instance, some of the RARR's employees did not really know how to use online communication platforms, share their screens or adjust the microphone. Those problems were mainly connected with the middled aged employees or the employees at the age of 50+. The participants did discuss the matter – the conclusion was that it is a form of a generation gap between the digital skills of the middle-aged employees and the younger employees. The participants also stated that the current fast pace of life might be the problem here – young people are used to it while older employees are not. Furthermore, the employers also stated that although technology is a great tool and support for the office workers, it is not always reliable due to technical problems caused. All of the employers being interviewed shared their thoughts on the topic while they clearly remembered at least one online meeting during the pandemic while they either could not join an online meeting due to unstable Internet connection, or their account was suddenly logged off the online platform and they could not participate in the meeting any more.

Digital skills considered as essential

The participants claimed that a general level of digital literacy is essential. They did mention some skills which, according to them, were very important: using at least one online communication platform, downloading and sharing files, and using Microsoft Office (here they indicated the use of Microsoft Word and Excel). Apart from those abilities the participants brainstormed the soft skills that are needed while teleworking. There were many ideas but the participants chose three main skills that they found indisputable for the process. Firstly, they indicated the importance of team work. According to the employers' team work is always a highly desired value but while working online it is needed more than ever. This is due to the nature of online meetings – the participants did notice the fact that while teleworking team work is essential because the entire team needs to join the meeting and discuss the current matters. While working in the office there was a clear division of tasks and people focused on each and every individual task. It is different while arranging an online meeting - everyone needs to listen patiently and is encouraged to take part in the open discussion. So, the sense of team spirit is needed more than ever. Connected to this is another soft skill – communication. The communication process should be effective. The participants did notice the fact that communication is more challenging while teleworking. One cannot simply stand up and walk by a colleague's desk to ask a question. And some issues need to be discussed in person. Thus, having the ability to communicate effectively is an important skill. The third most important skill mentioned by the focus group was active listening – while attending an online meeting it was sometimes difficult to focus all the time on every detail of the conversation and sometimes, due to technical issues as well, it was impossible to get the clear picture mentioned by the employees. Thus, active listening and asking the right question was the key to effective communication.

Differences on teleworking adoption for young or old people

As forementioned, the participants did notice the differences while getting used to teleworking techniques. All the employers being interviewed had the digital skills needed and most of them did use the communication platforms before (Zoom and Skype). However, the employers did share their opinions with CWEP – some of the middle-aged workers and older workers at the age 50 and above had problems with Zoom and Microsoft Teams since they were used to Skype only. Some of the employees did not even use Skype. This was connected with the generation gap – technology was not as developed as today and as a consequence it was not used in all aspects of our live. Moreover, the participants did share the opinion that we are more connected to the Internet today – even small children have their mobile phones and their own laptops sometimes. So, they learn about digital communication from the earliest stages of life. The elder generation did not have this opportunity. That was the reason why some employees did have quite big problems with teleworking. One of the participants indicated that there were some employees in her team who refused to work from home, and there were small groups of people who continued to work from office at least one day per week.

Best practices

In order to help the middle-aged employees who had never used teleworking techniques before the employers organized an internal training. For example, since RARR has a wide list of collaborating experts they did find the appropriate IT trainer who conducted the workshops. Furthermore, the workers were helping each other to develop one's digital competences and provide advice when needed. Moreover, the employers themselves tried to help their employees to effectively use online communication since that was the key to successful home office work.

4. Conclusions

The discussion with the employers was a short though effective session. The focus group was organized in a form of a discussion with some questions showing the way for discussion. The employers who took part in the session did have the digital skills to telework. They were quite compatible in their opinions, thus there rarely were any points of disagreements between the participants. The most important conclusion is that the employers did notice a kind of generation gap between their employees – usually middle-aged people in their companies did have problems with digital skills needed for teleworking (like the use of online communication tools and sharing data). The younger employees usually did not have much trouble with using the digital tools for working from home. Moreover, the participants indicated the importance of soft skills while teleworking: effective communication, active listening, team work. The participants did notice some advantages of teleworking process (convenience for the worker, more freedom and time for themselves), and disadvantages (technical issues appearing while working online). However, the most important and the most widely discussed issue was the generation gap between the young and elder (50+) workers. Different pace of life and the constant growth of technology were indicated as the main factors which affect the digital skills of employees belonging to various age groups.

FOCUS GROUP REPORT (Spain)

by MEUS, May 2021

Clara Brotons, MEUS, clara@meuskills.eu

4.10.

5. Introduction

The Focus Group was organized online, among entrepreneurs with staff under their care, who are used to teleworking.

At the beginning of the session, the Telegrow project was explained to them, and afterwards, there was an open discussion, where they answered the questions and shared their experiences.

6. Focus Group participants' profile

The Focus Group participants were:

- F.G., manager of an association based in Valencia that helps entrepreneurs in their first steps through training and assessment.
- A.S., manager of an SME based in Valencia related to innovation and internationalisation consulting.
- P.A., manager of an SME based in Valencia dedicated to developing and manage European projects related to training, sustainability, entrepreneurship…
- S., manager of a start-up company based in Javea (Alicante) with expertise in project management and online learning.
- C., Manager of a company dedicated to the adaptation of the sales, production, and manufacturing processes of the companies they manage. They are currently 6 employees.

7. Discussion

Teleworking situation of the participant's organisation

On behalf of the organization where F.G. is manager, he told that before the pandemic they did not telework never, however, when the pandemic began, they start teleworking because there was no option. He considers that in his company, they manage the teleworking situation quite well, but he pointed out that he prefers that people go to work to the office.

A.S. told that before the pandemic they worked in remote only in some specific cases. As their work implies travelling, they must stop travelling and start having online meetings. Normally, they work from the office, although during the pandemic they had to adapt and work remotely most of the time.

The SME in which P.A. is one of the managers was born in 2017 already from a telework point of view, given that the company works internationally with different partners, and the high volume of work is remote, due to the international environment where the company is working in. Both partners decided to work under the teleworking modality from the beginning, and thus they have been working for 4 years. So, during the pandemic, they did not have an extra effort to adapt to the situation since they were already working under this modality. In fact, in November 2020 the company grew with a new worker, and she was already hired under the teleworking modality, is working very well and she has adapted perfectly to this work modality. In the future, now, the company does not consider working in any other way.

On behalf of the company of S. they were teleworking even before the pandemic, so they did not really have to adapt to this "new" trend, but just get to know better the potential of the different tools available for video calls, webinars, etc.

C. told us that due to the nature of their business, they can do almost 80% of it by telework, although during the pandemic this was 95% of the hours worked by telework. However, they believe that it is not good to spend so much work telematically, as the client does not always perceive their professional work on the other side of the cable.

Advantages of teleworking

The main advantages of teleworking that participants pointed out are:

- More flexibility and save on rent of office premises.
- The possibility of working from home, saving the time involved in going to and from an office, together with being able to take care of our family when we need it.
- Working whatever you want.
- Work and family life conciliation.
- Reduction in transport costs and travel time for the worker and the company, as well as the immediacy of many interventions, carried out through this type of work.

Barriers, difficulties and needs to foster teleworking

Some of the difficulties that the participants have found to implement teleworking are:

- Have a good internet connection and good devices for teleworking: during the pandemic, not all the employers had in their houses a good internet connection, also, on behalf of companies, they should invest in good devices for employers, and this was not possible for all companies.
- A thorough follow-up on employees.
- Not all employees enjoy working from home.

- Although teleworking on the one hand is comfortable, sometimes it is necessary to have contact with other people, in person. And this is missed when teleworking.
- One participant said that teleworking has more disadvantages as for the work content concern, as teamwork is key for the task development.
- The difficulty to discern timetables when at home or in one's office.

When talking about needs for boosting teleworking in the future, half of the participants, after the experience with the pandemic, do not want to continue teleworking (online in concrete cases, for example, if you must do a business trip and you must work since there), the other half of participants highlighted the following needs:

- A change of mentality in companies is needed: the supposed need to control workers, and the concept that is "necessary" to be in the company in presence to be productive. If the worker is given confidence, he can perfectly be productive without the need to be always in the office all the hours of your work.

- Accompaniment in digital transformation of the most traditional companies. Change of mentality in traditional companies is necessary. Right now, we find ourselves with young companies where their founders have "grown" and have been trained in a digital environment, and from the beginning, they implement teleworking. On the other hand, this new way of working costs more in traditional or family companies (those that were born many years ago and are passed from generation to generation). Nor is it easy to find who can accompany them in this process of digital transformation, which helps to promote teleworking.

- The investment of the company in good devices for employers.

- Good training in companies for their employers, to help them to telework (not only by learning how to use the different tools, but also accompanying them and helping them to reconcile family life with work, to disconnect from work and respect their rest times even if they work from home, etc.)

Digital skills considered as essential.

When participants have been asked about the skills, they consider the most essential for teleworking, they said:

- Communication (digital communication via the different digital tools available: e-mail, social media, WhatsApp, etc.) and these tools will also be important given the limitation of physical and verbal communication since it is more likely to have misunderstandings in written conversations.
- Teamwork.
- Personal skills of the worker such as trust, respect, commitment.
- Organisation.
- Use of ICT tools.

- Analytic tools.
- Social media.
- Time management.

Also, one participant said that, to make teleworking productive, it is necessary:

- Employee involvement with the company.
- Being responsible for mutually established schedules.
- Leveraging the resources provided by the company for mutual professional growth.

Differences on teleworking adoption for young or old people

The younger generations are more prepared for teleworking, although not everyone likes working from home. There are workers, old or young, who enjoy working in the office and lose "focus" working from home.

Older people need more preparation to adapt to a digital context, but they must "digitize" whether they work from home or the office.

Companies should have a practical training plan to help the use of digital tools, and not only that but also teach young and old the soft skills necessary to telework from home responsibly.

Best practices

Some of the best practices to foster teleworking that their organisations have implemented o are planning are:

- Work as a team, although is an "online team" and help workers to divide work time and leisure time.
- Working on the sustainability of the company under the teleworking modality, studying how to reduce environmental costs that are being generated when working from home, how to save energy with the position of the tables, the non-use of paper, renting printers, travel greens, etc.
- Given the diversity of workers and mindset one of the companies is planning to implement a mixture of office & teleworking, or at least offer both options to their employees: half the days of the week they will need to work from the office and the other half they can work from home, but it will be up to the choice of the individuals.

8. Conclusions

To conclude, there are varied opinions among our participants about teleworking, for some, it is important to promote it due to the advantages it entails for the worker and the company, and other employers prefer face-to-face work. Opinions about teleworking are

also diverse if we ask workers. What is agreed is that a "training plan" is needed to help workers, especially the elderly, to adapt to the new digital tools used when teleworking.

It was also highlighted during the focus group that not only training based on how to use certain tools is important, but that for good teleworking, training in soft skills is also needed that encourages the worker skills such as teamwork, time management, respect, commitment, or communication.

FOCUS GROUP REPORT (Spain)

by Florida Centre de Formació, July 2021

Victoria Gómez Rodríguez, Florida Centre de Formació S.C.V, (vgomez@florida-uni.es)

4.11.

8. Introduction

The Focus Group organized by Florida took place on July 6th by videoconference and generated a 2-hour discussion, among employers with employees in charge and experience with teleworking conditions.

We invite representatives of companies from different sectors with the aim of integrating different experiences and perspectives and enriching the debate.

We start the session welcoming the participants, requesting authorization for the treatment of images and video recording of the Focus Group to the participants, and presenting the context and the objectives of TeleGrow Project.

We structure the discussion in three parts:

- Introduction of each organization, and description of the situation dealing with **teleworking before and during the pandemic** and in future.
- **Advantages, barriers/difficulties and needs** to foster teleworking.
- **Skills for teleworking** and **digital divide** between younger and + 50 people.

And, we finished sharing **best practices** to foster teleworking implemented on their companies or that they will implement in the future.

9. Focus Group participants' profile

The Focus Group had 7 participants from different companies:

- E.T, manager of Adecco Learning and Consulting. Adecco is a multinational company present in more than 60 countries, 5,000 offices, 33,000 employees, 100,000 clients. It has different business areas among them, temporary work (staffing), selection (spring), and Learning & Consulting.
- A.C, manager of Fundación Florida. Labor intermediation entity that manages internships in companies, counselling and job and placement center for students and alumni of Florida. They manage 1,500 internships and 8,000 collaborating companies, and also offer consulting services for developing equality plans for enterprises.

- A.H, manager of La Tribu. Animation film studio, 25-30 people working depending on the projects. It is a 100% digital company.
- D.F, member of the Talent team in the Insurance Division of Sanitas in Madrid (health group that belongs to the multinational BUPA) with 10,000 employees in Spain (1.300 at the Insurance Division).
- R.P, manager of Siberia. Young advertising and communication agency, with 3 years of life. It has 8 permanent workers.
- J.M.O., manager of Sothis. Technology consulting company founded in 2008 located throughout Spain. 850 employees. They offer all kinds of solutions to companies like digital transformation, ERP implementation, Cybersecurity, etc.
- J.I.A, manager of Ediciones Plaza. 100% digital media management company: 4 digital magazines, 1 paper magazine and 1 radio and television station.

10. Discussion

Teleworking situation of the participant's organization

On behalf of Adecco Learning and Consulting, E.T. told that before the pandemic they had already implemented teleworking 1 day per week. During the pandemic, they were able to cope with the lockdown thanks to the fact that they were technologically prepared (i.e. collaborative tools and soft phone). In the future they are planning to increase the number of days for teleworking and made them flexible (maybe 2 days, but not necessarily by week). They also consider that they have to make changes on performance evaluation and KPI's.

A.C. from Fundación Florida told that before the pandemic they worked in remote only in some specific cases. During the pandemic they consider that they were technologically ready so they could cope with the lockdown. Even the students doing the internships in the companies did telework, and they adapt their services to the new conditions (i.e. online job counselling via videoconference). They think that they will promote teleworking in the future by making face-to-face work more flexible.

La Tribu in which A.H. is one of the managers, used to telework partially with external collaborators in projects before the pandemic. During the pandemic, they could continue with their activity because they were already using could computing, but they have return to face-to-face work as soon as was possible, because they consider it is important for their creativity activity. In the future, they will use telework as a mean to increase collaboration with external talents.

On behalf of Sanitas Insurance Division where D.F works at the talent team, he told as that they have already implemented policies to facilitate telework before the pandemic, but the pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation and telework demand from employees. At this moment, they are 50% teleworking and 50% face-to-face working. They will foster teleworking based on clear objectives measurement and trust.

R.P from Siberia told that before the pandemic they did not telework never, however, when the pandemic began, they start teleworking because there was no option. He considers that

in his company, they manage the teleworking situation quite well, but he pointed out that he prefers that people go to work to the office.

Sothis, the company represented by J.M.O. were teleworking even before the pandemic, but without an established and generalized policy. They have found that facilitating teleworking is already a criterion to hire new employees in a sector where there is a shortage of technological profiles. That is to say, employees consider having the possibility of teleworking as a positive value. In the future they will foster teleworking developing a general policy for the company.

J.I.A told us that due to the nature of their business, they can do almost 80% of it by telework. Only clerk and manager workers needed to work at the office during the pandemic because they have a local server not accessible from outside. They consider that teleworking is another resource available for the company but they consider that it cannot totally substitute the face-to-face work.

Advantages of teleworking

All the participants agreed on the following advantages of teleworking:

- Flexibility.
- Better conciliation with personal life.
- Increase of employees' wellbeing.
- Generates employees engaged with the company because they feel trust and freedom so they give their best.
- Greater access to talent. Spatial barriers disappear.
- Talent attraction to the company because it offers teleworking.
- Increase of productivity because it saves time travelling to the office, more efficient meetings, among others.
- Travel costs saving.

Barriers, difficulties and needs to foster teleworking

Some of the difficulties that the participants have found to implement teleworking were:

- Digital disconnect. It is difficult to establish limits and disconnect when your work environment is your home.
- Mental work overload. You have to attend simultaneously housework and family needs when you are working.
- Team cohesion. It is more difficult to generate team cohesion without face-to-face moments.
- Some activities like creativity needs face-to-face work.
- Lack of training for taking advantage of the technology.
- Lack of adequate equipment and workspace for teleworking from home.
- Cultural and generational barriers. Young people feel more comfortable with teleworking tools, although participants have pointed out that young people prefer face-to-face work.
- Isolation and less interaction. It is easy to feel more isolated if there are no planned activities to interact. Contact with people is missed when teleworking.

- Mistrust of managers regarding productivity. We need a new leadership and tools for performance evaluation and KPI's.
- Law is not helping to implement teleworking. The participants considers that Spain has legislated prematurely.

When talking about needs for boosting teleworking in the future:

- A change of leadership in companies is needed. E.T introduce the term: Hybrid Leadership. In the future, we will work in a hybrid workspace and this needs a new leadership approach and new skills.
- Define new performance evaluation and KPI's based on objectives, which generates trust between employees and managers.
- Guarantee good equipment and training for employees, including cybersecurity.
- Workspaces adapted to telework, isolated, without interruptions, etc…
- Continuous learning of Digital skills.
- Learn strategies for digital disconnection.
- We need to take more profit of teleworking possibilities changing processes.
- Normalize telework and establish clear policies.
- Learn from young people (Z Gen are digital natives) that can introduce new innovative tools in the company.
- Legislation should improve to foster teleworking.

Digital skills considered as essential

Participants were asked about the hard and soft digital skills, as TeleGrow project will develop training modules for both type of skills. It is interesting that all the participants consider the soft skills and cultural aspects the real barrier to implement teleworking. They consider that digital skills, nowadays, are easy to learn because they are very intuitive.

Digital skills:

- Remote collaboration.
- Produce digital content.
- Communication. Being able to use the best means of communication.
- Finding new strategies using new tools to improve productivity.
- Cybersecurity. Being able to protect from attacks (i.e. phishing).
- Digital culture. Being open to learn new digital tools and to find new ways of using technologies.
- Being able to solve technical problems.

Soft skills:

- Agility and adaptability
- Creativity and innovation
- Autonomy
- Being able to organize the work efficiently and automate whatever is possible
- Learn to learn and self-learning

- Work for projects
- Problem resolution
- Emotional well-being
- Remote team management
- Being able to unlearn to learn new ways of doing

Differences on teleworking adoption for young or old people

Participants consider that there is a generational digital divide. Z Gen is digital, they learn quickly, they adopt new tools in a very easy way. On the contrary, people +50 feels less comfortable with technology, and derived from this, with teleworking.

People +50, boomers gen, have as references that more presence implies more performance. They have a very compartmentalized mind but, although they are not digital natives, they have a good attitude to technology, and they want to learn and improve their work using it.

It has been also highlighted that we have to adapt the training methods for learning digital skills to people +50. Young and old people learn in a different way.

Best practices

- D.F. mention the initiative *Worklidays (Work + Holidays)* as a good practice that is being implemented in some companies, in order to promote the well-being and satisfaction of employees. It consists of working from a vacation location so that you can enjoy your free time in another way while you work. He mentions the experience of Redbrou, a card company, will allow its employees to Telework for 2 months abroad.
- D.F. introduce also a new term: ETW – *Eligible to Work*. It implies to have meetings without cameras. A study has revealed that using the camera creates stress because you are watching yourself all the time. It is a good way to make telework more efficient. When you book a meeting if you use ETW, means that people can connect to the meeting without the camera. This allows you to connect to the meeting from a mobile, when you are walking or being at the beach. He intends to implement it the company.
- E.T. have already implemented 1 day of teleworking. Now, they want to extend it to 2 days per week, and they are reflecting about being more flexible and not necessarily force it to be 2 days a week.
- A.H. is very satisfied with their experience using *Discord* for teleworking. It allows text, audio and video channels. For them has allowed them to be virtually connected as if they were working in the office. They use audio or video as they want or need.

9. Conclusions

To conclude, all the participants consider that teleworking has come to stay. Teleworking has shown great advantages and has offered excellent results to both, companies and employees. In that sense, there is no return and we have to look forward. Teleworking is a resource that must be standardized in the companies.

They also have pointed out that there is a lot to do to get the most out of it:

- It requires training and continuous learning of tools and new work organization strategies that provide efficiency.
- It is not just a matter of learning technological tools; it is a matter of managing adaptation to change.
- It requires a cultural change and new leaderships. We need *Hybrid Leadership* in order to cope with new ways of working. He/she has to be more collaborative, to promote working in a disruptive way, to use constant and clear communication, to have an adaptive mind, and manage remote teamwork. He/she has to empower people, delegate and trust them.
- Companies needs to have performance evaluation and productivity indicators, in order to increase trust on employees and foster teleworking.

They highlighted that efficient teleworking requires that employees have not only digital skills but soft skills are more important. They consider that technological tools are easy to learn, and what it is difficult is to learn soft skills, because it requires cultural change and unlearn other competences.

Finally, all participants agreed that teleworking, if it is well implemented, increases productivity, worker commitment and quality of life.

5 DISCUSSION

Below is a cross-country comparison of VET providers and VET learners/employees surveys and a comparison by age (+50 or less) in the responses from VET learners/employees. Cross reference tables, Chi-square analysis, and ANOVA analysis were applied to this analysis.

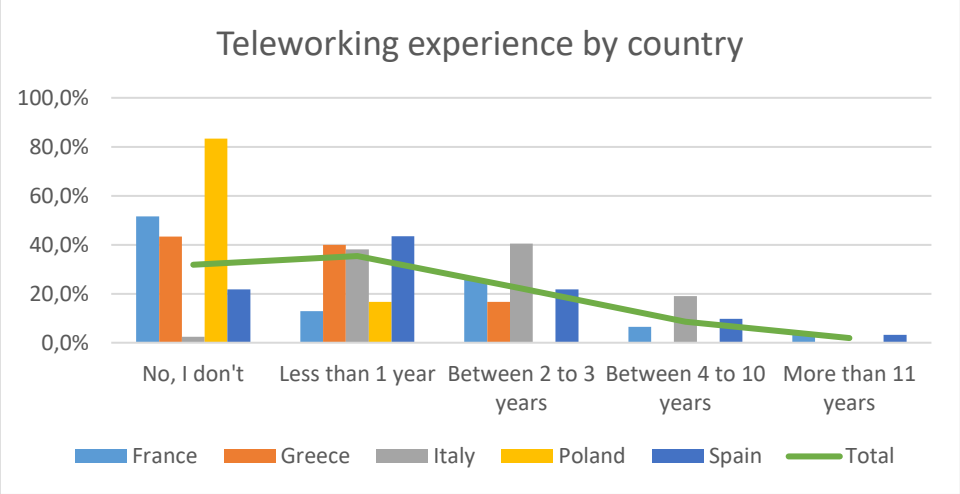
5.1. Telework adoption by VET Learners/employees

In this section we will analyze the telework adoption from VET Learners and employees: teleworking experience, perceived usefulness and ease of use, and barriers and beliefs. We will highlight the differences between countries and between older and younger than 50 years.

As for the experience in teleworking, as can be seen in the graphic, there is a significant percentage of responses that indicate that it is less than 1 year, which is clearly due to the pandemic situation. It is necessary emphasize that VET Learners from Poland indicate that they have no work experience. This condition will surely have affected their responses compared to the rest of the countries, since the 83.3% of people of Polish origin indicate that they have never worked. Considering the responses without taking into account the countries, the majority indicate that they have a work experience of more than 11 years, with 61.9% of the total responses.

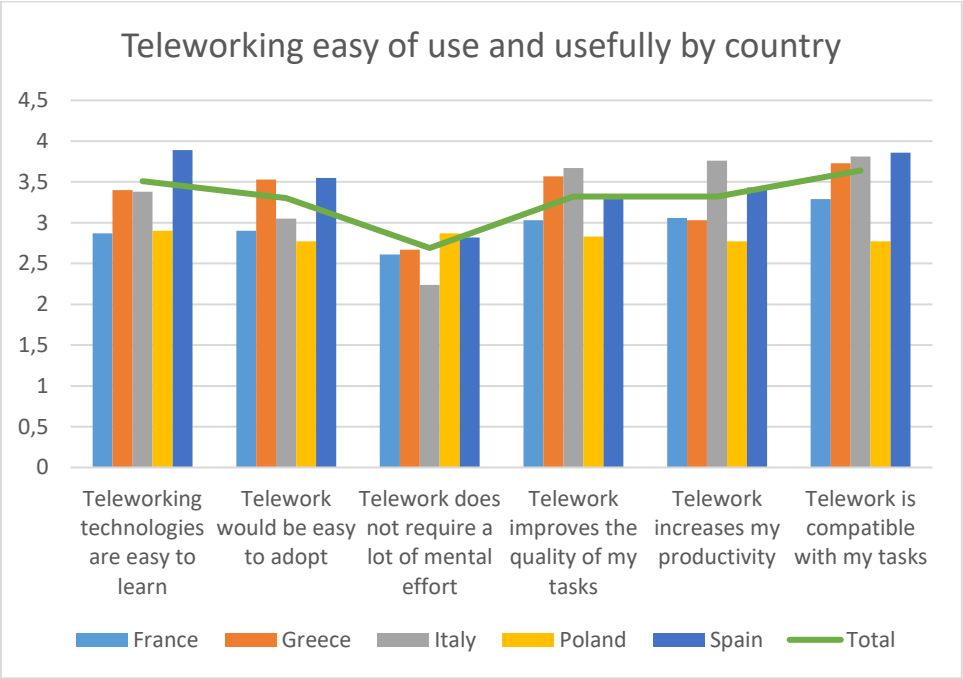
Likewise, the Chi-square test shows that the country of origin influenced the work experience.

Image 5.1: Teleworking experience by country



On the adoption of telework, beliefs about the ease of use and usefulness of telework have different levels of agreement according to the countries. It is significant to note that Poland is the country that least agrees with the usefulness of teleworking, and they also believe that it is not easy to adopt. On the other hand, Italy is the country that gives the most use to teleworking, but sometimes thinks that it requires a lot of mental effort to apply it, and has the lowest level of agreement on the ease of use of teleworking. Likewise, France is the country, after Poland, that gives telework the least ease of use, although it agrees with its usefulness. Spain stands out as the country that most values both the ease of use and the usefulness of teleworking.

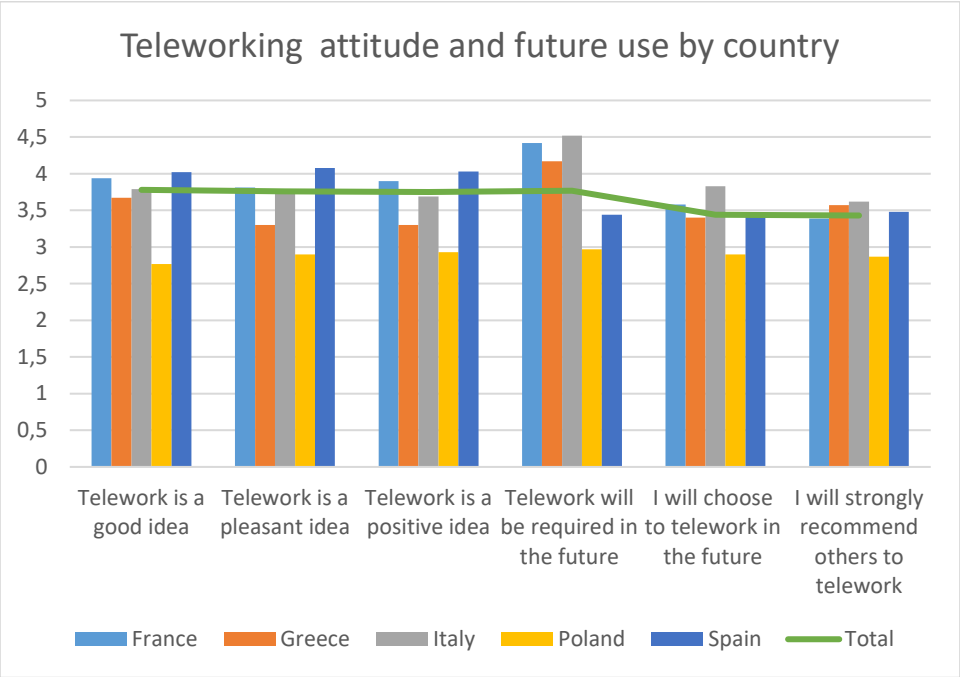
Image 5.2: Teleworking ease of use and usefully by country



In this case, the variable country of origin, as influence over perception of ease of use and usefulness of telework, it is not proved by the F test from the ANOVA analysis at the most part of the statements. The most significant relation by country is found in “Teleworking technologies are easy to learn”, on ease of use, and “Telework increases my productivity”, on the usefulness of teleworking.

Regarding the attitude and future use of teleworking, the lowest level of agreement is from Poland. They do not think that is a good idea to use teleworking and they do not think they will use it in the future. On the other hand, Spain is the country with the best attitude towards teleworking, and all its values are higher than 4 points on average (Agree), but these values drop to 3.4 points (Neutral) on average when they are asked about their future use of teleworking. Therefore, they are not very optimistic about whether they will telework in the future. The most optimistic countries about the future use of teleworking are Italy, France and Greece with an average higher than 4 points in relation to the statement that “teleworking will be necessary in the future”.

Image 5.3: Teleworking attitude and future use by country

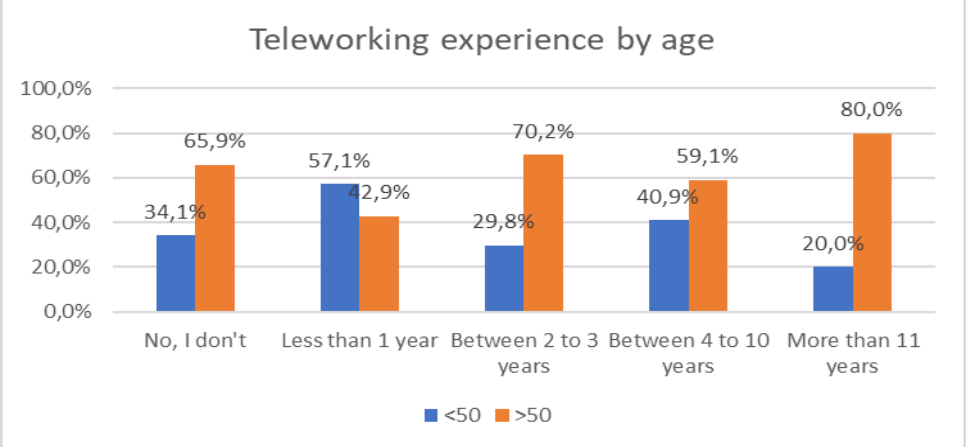


In this case, the variable country of origin, as influence over attitude and future use of telework, is proved by the F test from the ANOVA analysis at every statement, except "I will choose to telework in the future" and "I will strongly recommend others to telework". The most significant relation by country is found in "Telework is a good idea", on attitude, and "Telework will be required in the future", on the future of use of telework.

On the other hand, it can be observed that if the sample is divided between those over 50 years of age and those under 50 years of age, differences between the two groups are observed.

First, it is significant that older respondents telework more than younger VET Learners, taking as a measure that the range of young people is 16 to 49 years old. Therefore, they have a greater experience in teleworking and therefore greater knowledge of the virtual environment, which is why we will see their answers about the concepts associated with the adoption of telework later.

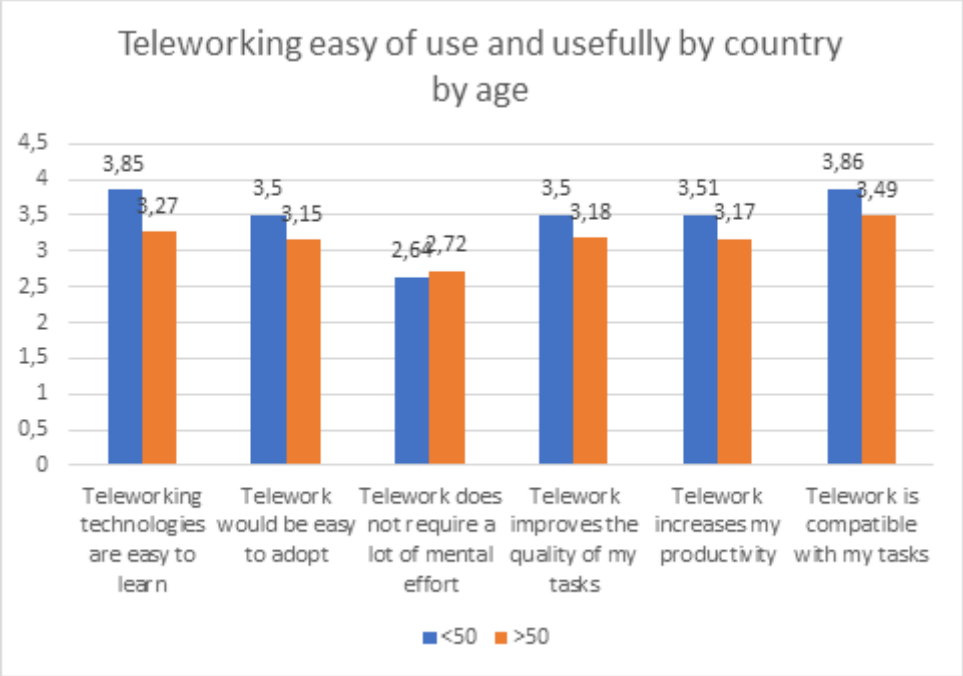
Image 5.4: Teleworking experience by age



However, the variable age, as influence over perception of ease of use and usability of telework, it is not proved by the F test from the ANOVA analysis at the most part of the statements. The only significant relation by age is “Telework increases my productivity”, on the usefulness of telework.

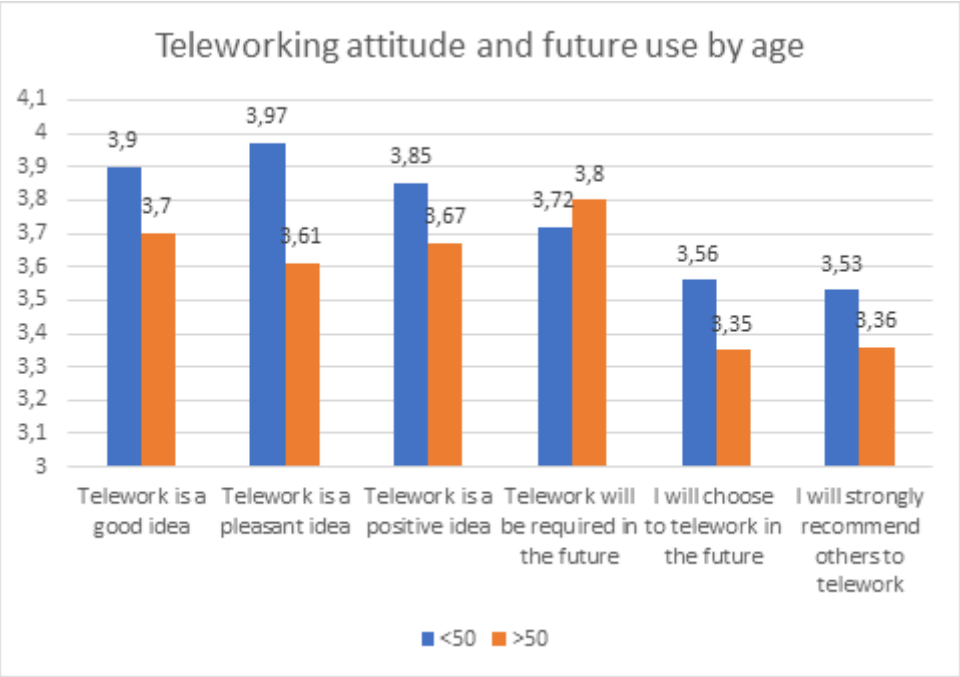
Regarding the adoption of teleworking, beliefs about the ease of use and usefulness of telework have a different level of agreement according to age. It is important to note that younger VET learners are more in agreement with the ease of use and usefulness of teleworking than older VET learners. On the other hand, the highest average is "Telework is compatible with my tasks" for both age groups, while the lowest average is "Telework does not require much mental effort", also for both.

Image 5.5: Teleworking ease of use and usefully by age



Ensuing, the variable age, as influence over attitude to telework and future use of telework, it is proved by the F test from the ANOVA analysis for each of the statement. But they are not significant by age for “Telework is a good idea” and “Telework is a positive idea”.

Image 5.6: Teleworking attitude and future use by age



Regarding the future use of teleworking, respondents over 50 are less in agreement that they will choose teleworking and recommend teleworking, but they are more in agreement that in the future their employment will require teleworking and, in fact, it is the only question that stands out over those under 50 years of age. All other topics find a higher level of agreement among young people than among those over 50 years of age.

BARRIERS AND BELIEFS BY VET LEARNERS

Furthermore, the barriers that VET Learners consider they will encounter if they telework are not relevant by country, the relationship between country and barriers is not verified by the F test of the ANOVA analysis.

Table 5.1: Teleworking barriers by VET Learners country

Imagine that your next job is developed in a teleworking model. How likely do you think this could happen?						
	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
The working environment will be under my responsibility and maintenance.	2,97	3,43	3,33	2,1	3,49	3,23
No one will make health surveillance or risk assessment in my work environment.	3,19	3,13	2,69	1,97	3,72	3,21
I would not have adequate equipment to telework if the company does not provide it to	3,06	3,8	2,5	1,97	3,3	3,04
I could feel less affinity with the company than in physical working.	3,45	4,2	2,43	2,2	3,37	3,19
I cannot reach supervisors so quickly and have more delays in decision takings.	3,03	3,87	1,98	2,13	3,04	2,86
I will need specific training and advice to do effective telework in my new job.	3,32	3,97	3,19	2,2	3,14	3,16
I will not have a clear definition of my responsibilities, or a well-defined instruction about my tasks.	2,77	3,47	2,55	2,1	2,52	2,62
It will hinder my professional development and promotion opportunities	2,81	3,57	2,43	1,9	2,89	2,77

From a descriptive point of view, the results show that the values of Poland are lower than the rest of the countries, while Greece has a better value on these barriers. The barrier with the highest rating in the total is “The work environment will be under my responsibility and maintenance”, followed by “No one will do health surveillance or risk assessment in my work environment”. On the other hand, the barriers that VET Learners think are less likely to occur while teleworking are “It will hinder my professional development and promotion opportunities” and “I will not have a clear definition of my responsibilities, or a well-defined instruction on my homework ”with the lowest average of the total.

Besides, the beliefs that VET Learners have about teleworking are not relevant by country, the relationship between country and barriers is not proven by the F test of the ANOVA analysis, except for the following statement “I would feel more isolated while teleworking, I would miss fellow workers and other people ”, that test F proves the relationship by country and their significance.

Table 5.2: Teleworking beliefs by VET Learners country

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements supposing that you were teleworking:						
	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
I could be easily overworked: "labour on call" misuse.	3,65	4,07	3,1	2,5	3,48	3,39
I should be available 24 hours per day.	2,65	3,07	2,64	2,47	2,23	2,47
It would be stressful for me if my company constantly monitored my work.	3,1	4,07	2,05	2,5	3,48	3,16
I could have a tendency to overwork (workaholism).	3,32	3,87	3,26	2,53	2,97	3,11
I would feel more isolated while teleworking. I would miss fellow workers and other people.	3,87	4,57	2,36	2,87	3,9	3,6
I might feel a conflict between company and family loyalty while working from home.	3,42	3,93	2,1	2,77	3,32	3,14
I will not have technical assistance and I will have to solve the problems by myself.	3,61	4,03	2,45	2,77	2,75	2,96

In this case, Italy is the country that least agrees with the proposed beliefs, while Greece is the country that most agrees with these beliefs, in fact giving the highest rate to “I would feel more isolated while teleworking. I would miss fellow workers and other people ”(4.57 points in totally agree). The lowest overall average is for “I should be available 24 hours per day” where countries agree least with this statement.

On the other hand, it can be observed that if the sample is divided between those over 50 years of age and those under 50 years of age, the differences between the two groups could be observed. However, it is necessary to comment that according to the ANOVA analysis, age is not related to the results obtained, so these comments are merely descriptive and not conclusive.

Older VET Learners are less in agreement than younger ones about what might happen with some of these barriers. Especially older VET Learners think that it is "almost impossible" that "I will not have a clear definition of my responsibilities, or a well-defined instruction on my tasks" and "It will hinder my professional development and promotion opportunities", although the younger VET Learners also agree less, but give an average close to "unlikely". The main difference is that "The working environment will be under my responsibility and maintenance", where younger VET Learners give an average close to "almost possible", while older VET students are closer to "unlikely" .

Table 5.3: Teleworking barriers by VET Learners age

Imagine that your next job is developed in a teleworking model. How likely do you think this could happen?	<50	>50
The working environment will be under my responsibility and maintenance.	3,54	3,01
No one will make health surveillance or risk assessment in my work environment.	3,46	3,04
I would not have adequate equipment to telework if the company does not provide it to me.	3,3	2,86
I could feel less affinity with the company than in physical working.	3,4	3,03
I cannot reach supervisors so quickly and have more delays in decision takings.	2,91	2,82
I will need specific training and advice to do effective telework in my new job.	3,27	3,07
I will not have a clear definition of my responsibilities, or a well-defined instruction about my tasks.	2,71	2,55
It will hinder my professional development and promotion opportunities	2,91	2,67

Ensuring, with beliefs about teleworking, that the values between older VET Learners and younger VET Learners are very similar. It is shown that the belief that each age thinks it is less likely to happen is "I should be available 24 hours a day", and most likely "I would feel more isolated while teleworking. I would miss fellow workers and other people".

Table 5.4: Teleworking beliefs by VET Learners age

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements supposing that you were teleworking:	<50	>50
I could be easily overworked: "labour on call" misuse.	3,51	3,3
I should be available 24 hours per day.	2,39	2,53
It would be stressful for me if my company constantly monitored my work.	3,21	3,11
I could have a tendency to overwork (workaholism).	3,11	3,11
I would feel more isolated while teleworking. I would miss fellow workers and other people.	3,78	3,48
I might feel a conflict between company and family loyalty while working from home.	3,29	3,03
I will not have technical assistance and I will have to solve the problems by myself.	2,89	3,01

In summary, the barriers and beliefs of VET Learners do not depend on age. Perhaps in future studies, researchers can analyze the differences by educational level or area of knowledge, based on the results obtained.

5.2. Digital skills for VET Learners and VET Providers

With regard to digital skills, VET providers were asked about the importance they attached to the different digital skills for teleworking, while VET Learners were asked about their level of acquisition of each of these skills, based in the DIGCOMP 2.1 framework.

Below is a graph comparing the digital skills that have been attributed to VET Learners and the importance of these skills from the point of view of VET Providers. It shows that there is a gap between the skill level of VET Learners and the importance that VET providers place on digital skills, especially digital skills associated with “Online Safety”, there is a big difference between both average assessments, following the “Problem Solving”, with differences of more than 1 point on a scale of 1 to 5 points. Meanwhile, the most similar assessments are found in the “Information and data digital management” skills group, precisely the smallest difference refers to the skill "Saving and manipulating documents and files for easier organization, storage and retrieval using different hardware (CD , USB, hard disk, etc.). ..) ", followed by" Managing social media (social networks, blogs, multimedia platforms such as YouTube ...) for self-empowerment and dissemination ", although the latter capacity is grouped in “Communication” digital skills.

VET Learners need more training on digital online safety and problem solving, which may be more technical and formal knowledge than others that can be acquired with practice, because identifying technical problems and knowing how to solve them, or knowing the Data Protection Legislation are qualified competencies that not all VET Learners acquire during their learning in formal education, if they are not in a branch of computer science knowledge.

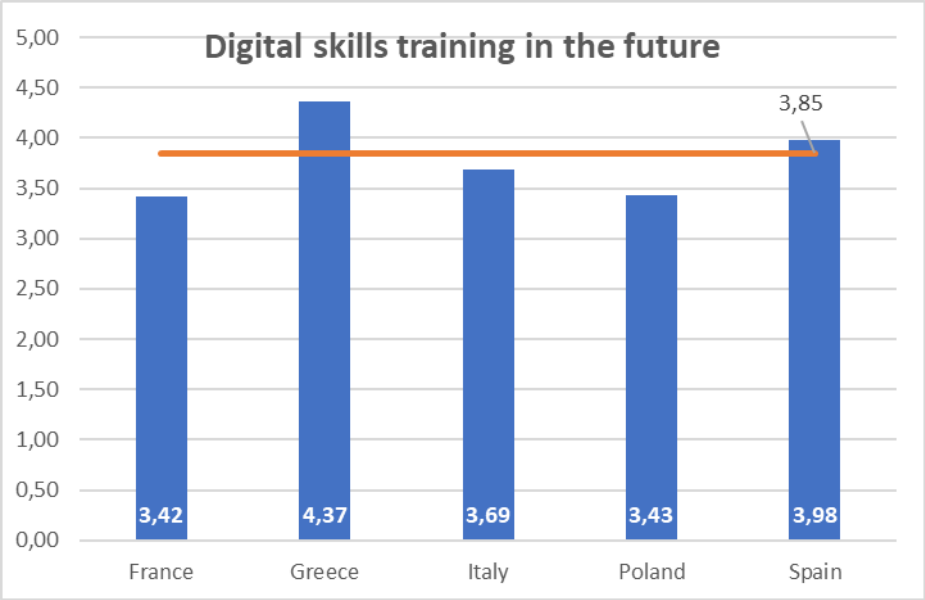
Image 5.7: Digital Skills GAP


Digital Skills GAP
(based on DIGCOMP 2.1)
0 0,5 1 1,5 2 2,5 3 3,5 4 4,5 5
1. INFORMATION AN DATA
1.1 Finding the information I need: searching, browsing and filtering data, information and digital content. 3,79 4,44
1.2 Evaluating the credibility and reliability of the information and digital content (analysing the… 3,54 4,44
1.3 Saving and manipulating documents and files for an easier organisation, storage and retrieval using… 3,8 4,14
1.4 Using a cloud storage service in order to store and share information (Dropbox, Onedrive,… 3,51 4,12
2. COMMUNICATION
2.1 Selecting the appropriate digital communication tool for a given context (meeting platform, online… 3,35 4,12
2.2 Using meeting platforms and online conferences software to interact (Skype, Zoom meetings,… 3,44 4,24
2.3 Managing social media (social networks, blogs, multimedia platforms like YouTube…) for self-… 3,13 3,51
2.4 Being able to adapt my communication strategies to a specific audience, considering cultural and… 3,16 4,01
2. COLLABORATION
2.5 Sharing data, information and digital content with others through the appropriate digital technologies… 3,36 4,12
2.6 Using digital tools for collaborative processes like team working and project management (Trello,… 2,85 3,91
2.7 Applying behavioural norms while interacting and using digital technologies (netiquette: not to write… 3,29 3,81
2.8 Protecting my online reputation being aware of the data I produce and publish through digital tools… 3,15 4,09
3. DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION
3.1 Create and edit digital content creatively in different formats (e.g. spread sheets, presentations, text… 3,13 4,09
3.2 Modify, refine and improve different digital content in order to create new and original ones (reports,… 3,14 3,96
3.3 Co-creating data, resources and knowledge using digital tools (Google Docs, Wikis, Prezi, …) 3,01 3,76
3.4 Understand how copyright and licenses apply to data, digital information and content (copyright,… 2,65 3,92
4. ONLINE SAFETY
4.1 Understanding the security risks and threats in digital environments (phishing, spam, ransomware,… 2,94 4,26
4.2 Being able to apply measures to protect my devices and personal/professional data (strong password,… 2,85 4,23
4.3 Managing personal data and privacy according to the European Data Protection Law and Right to be… 2,64 4,03
4.4 Being able to avoid health-risks and threats to physical and psychological well-being while using… 2,82 4,04
4.5 Being aware of the environmental impacts of digital technologies when using for example teleworking. 2,7 3,72
5. PROBLEM SOLVING
5.1 Identifying technical problems when operating devices and using digital tools. 2,95 3,93
5.2 Being able to solve basic technical problems (by myself, finding help in internet forums, tutorials…) 2,95 4
5.3 Identifying, evaluating and selecting digital tools to solve my needs (e.g. zip tools, format conversion… 2,88 3,84
5.4 Customising digital environments to professional/personal needs (language,… 2,89 3,75
5.5 Creatively using digital technologies to innovate on processes and products, and solve problems. 2,81 3,82
5.6 Proposing ways for self-development and keeping up-to-date with digital transformation. 2,89 3,84
VET Learners Capability
VET Providers Level of Importance

DIGITAL SKILLS VET LEARNERS BY COUNTRY

When we asked VET Learners if they would like to train in their digital skills for teleworking in the future, they agree on average (3.85 points). If we analyze it by country, it can be seen that VET Learners from France are the least interested in training their digital skills, followed by Poland, and the most interested are VET Learners from Greece (4.47 points; Strongly agree), followed by Spain (3.98 points; Agree).

Image 5.8: Digital skills training in the future by VET Learners



VET Learners valued the importance of digital skills for teleworking, and the results indicate that Poland gives less importance to each of the areas of digital skills than the other countries, but on the other hand, Greece is the country that most value gives them, evidencing that the most important digital skills are the area “Information and data” and “Online Safety” digital skills.

Table 5.5: Level of importance of digital skills by VET Learners country

Indicate the level of importance of digital skills mentioned above for teleworking:						
	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
INFORMATION AND DATA digital skills are:	3,87	4,67	4,36	2,8	4,17	4,06
COMMUNICATION digital skills are:	3,84	4,3	4,38	2,77	4,21	4,04
COLLABORATION digital skills are:	3,9	4,4	4,29	2,77	4,1	3,98
DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION skills are:	3,61	4,33	3,76	2,77	3,81	3,72
ONLINE SAFETY digital skills are:	4,29	4,67	3,67	2,8	4,21	4,02
PROBLEM SOLVING digital skills are:	4,23	4,4	3,69	2,77	4,08	3,92

In total, all the values of digital skills are close to 4 points, so the interviewees consider that all areas of digital skills are very important.

Below is the analysis by country of the level of competence perceived by VET Learners.

The most important difference between countries in the area of **INFORMATION AND DATA** for teleworking is found in the average of each item in Poland. VET Learners in Poland think that they have less ability about information and data competences than the rest of the countries, with an average close to 2 points (Somewhat capable), compared to the rest of the countries that score it above 4 points (Very capable), except for some skills such as “Using a cloud storage service to store and share information (Dropbox, Onedrive, Googledrive, iCloud…)” where

France and Greece average less than 3 points (Capable). Spanish VET Learners are the ones with the highest averages for each “Information and data” digital skills.

Table 5.6: Level of competence INFORMATION AND DATA digital skills by VET Learners country

		To what extent do you feel capable of …. VET LEARNERS	VET LEARNEARS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
AREA			France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
1. INFORMATION AN DATA	1.1	Finding the information I need: searching, browsing and filtering data, information and digital content.	3,61	3,57	4,14	2,13	4,18	3,79
	1.2	Evaluating the credibility and reliability of the information and digital content (analysing the sources of data, comparing	3,35	3,53	3,81	2,03	3,87	3,54
	1.3	Saving and manipulating documents and files for an easier organisation, storage and retrieval using different hardware (CD, USB, hard disk, …)	3,35	3,17	4,21	2,1	4,33	3,8
	1.4	Using a cloud storage service in order to store and share information (Dropbox, Onedrive, Googledrive, iCloud…)	2,94	2,87	3,93	1,77	4,08	3,51

In **INFORMATION AND DATA** Digital Skills the strongest and most significant relationship with the country of origin is "Saving and manipulating documents and files for easier organization, storage and retrieval using different hardware (CD, USB, hard disk, ...)", while that “Using a cloud storage service to store and share information (Dropbox, Onedrive, Googledrive, iCloud…)” is not related by country, according to the F-test performed with the ANOVA analysis.

Regarding the digital competences of **COMMUNICATION** area, for all the countries the digital competence that they least dominate is "Managing social networks (social networks, blogs, multimedia platforms such as YouTube ...) for self-empowerment and dissemination", with a lower average. Once again, Poland is the country with the least proficiency with an average of less than 2 points (Somewhat capable) and Spain is the country where its VET Learners think they are more capable of developing these communication skills.

Table 5.7: Level of competence COMMUNICATION digital skills by VET Learners country

		To what extent do you feel capable of …. VET LEARNERS	VET LEARNEARS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
AREA			France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
2. COMMUNICATION	2.1	Selecting the appropriate digital communication tool for a given context (meeting platform, online conference, e-mail, chat, …)	3,35	2,83	3,17	1,87	3,89	3,35
	2.2	Using meeting platforms and online conferences software to interact (Skype, Zoom meetings, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, GoToWebinar, WebEx …)	2,87	2,57	3,95	1,93	3,99	3,44
	2.3	Managing social media (social networks, blogs, multimedia platforms like YouTube…) for self-empowerment and dissemination.	2,35	2,63	3,07	1,9	3,76	3,13
	2.4	Being able to adapt my communication strategies to a specific audience, considering cultural and generational diversity.	2,39	3,03	3,6	1,77	3,56	3,16

According to test F of the ANOVA analysis, two of the digital competences of this group are not related to the country of origin. In this case, they are "Managing social media (social networks, blogs, multimedia platforms like YouTube…) for self-empowerment and dissemination” and “Being able to adapt my communication strategies to a specific audience, considering cultural and generational diversity”.

Likewise, Poland once again gives the lowest averages to digital skills in the **COLLABORATION** area, but there is also less agreement between countries on the ability to “Using digital tools for collaborative processes such as teamwork and project management (Trello, Monday, Microsoft Project, Microsoft Teams, Planner,…) ” with averages below 3 points (Capable), except Spain (3.6 points).

In this area, **COLLABORATION** Digital Skills, the F test of the ANOVA analysis does not show any relationship between the country of origin and the level of competence.

Table 5.8: Level of competence COLLABORATION digital skills by VET Learners country

		To what extent do you feel capable of …. VET LEARNERS	VET LEARNEARS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
AREA			France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
2. COLLABORATION	2.5	Sharing data, information and digital content with others through the appropriate digital technologies (cloud services, file transfer, social networks, blogs, youtube…)	2,58	2,67	4,12	1,83	3,84	3,36
	2.6	Using digital tools for collaborative processes like team working and project management (Trello, Monday, Microsoft Project, Microsoft Teams, Planner, …)	2,55	2,47	1,9	1,77	3,6	2,85
	2.7	Applying behavioural norms while interacting and using digital technologies (netiquette: not to write in capital letters, to greet, to respect privacy …)	2,52	3,07	3,57	1,77	3,81	3,29
	2.8	Protecting my online reputation being aware of the data I produce and publish through digital tools and services or others	2,45	2,77	3,45	1,83	3,63	3,15

Another digital skill area that has less agreement on its level across countries is **DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION**. With the lower average, "Understanding how copyright and licenses….", It is the one that obtains a value below 3 points (2.65) in this area, and is only exceeded by a skill from the following group ONLINE SECURITY (see table below); in this case "Managing personal data and privacy according to the European Data Protection Law and the Right to Be forgotten (GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation, ...)".

In this area, **DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION** Digital Skills, the F test of the ANOVA analysis does not show any relationship between the country of origin and the level of competence capacity.

Table 5.9: Level of competence DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION digital skills by VET Learners country

		To what extent do you feel capable of …. VET LEARNERS	VET LEARNEARS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
AREA			France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
3. DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION	3.1	Create and edit digital content creatively in different formats (e.g. spread sheets, presentations, text document, video editing, image editing, …)	2,55	2,73	3,43	1,77	3,6	3,13
	3.2	Modify, refine and improve different digital content in order to create new and original ones (reports, presentations, …)	2,68	2,67	3,48	1,73	3,6	3,14
	3.3	Co-creating data, resources and knowledge using digital tools (Google Docs, Wikis, Prezi, …)	2,35	2,53	3,43	1,7	3,47	3,01
	3.4	Understand how copyright and licenses apply to data, digital information and content (copyright, creative commons, copyleft and public domain license)	2,03	2,63	2,95	1,6	2,97	2,65

On the one hand, the **ONLINE SAFETY** digital skills mostly obtain values close to 3 (capable) and lower, standing out for being a group of digital skills with the lowest average values to assess the ability of VET Learners, among the different countries . Meanwhile, Poland is below the value 2 (Somewhat capable) in each skill, Spain obtains the better average followed by Italy.

In this area, **ONLINE SAFETY** Digital Skills, the test F of the ANOVA analysis does not show any relationship between the country origin and the level of competence capacity.

Table 5.10: Level of competence ONLINE SAFETY digital skills by VET Learners country

		To what extent do you feel capable of …. VET LEARNERS	VET LEARNEARS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
AREA			France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
4. ONLINE SAFETY	4.1	Understanding the security risks and threats in digital environments (phishing, spam, ransomware, identity theft, …)	2,87	3,07	2,9	1,67	3,24	2,94
	4.2	Being able to apply measures to protect my devices and personal/professional data (strong password, antivirus software, programming backups, secure internet connections, spam control systems, …)	2,61	2,87	2,83	1,67	3,19	2,85
	4.3	Managing personal data and privacy according to the European Data Protection Law and Right to be Forgotten (GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation, …)	2,23	2,53	2,43	1,63	3,09	2,64
	4.4	Being able to avoid health-risks and threats to physical and psychological well-being while using digital technologies (ergonomics, stress…).	2,39	2,87	2,88	1,67	3,17	2,82
	4.5	Being aware of the environmental impacts of digital technologies when using for example teleworking.	2,29	2,7	2,48	1,57	3,16	2,7

Any relation with significance between country of origin, and **PROBLEM-SOLVING** digital skills for teleworking is found. However, Poland once again gives less average to each competence of this area, and VET Learners from Spain are the ones who trust their digital skills the most to PROBLEM SOLVING.

Table 5.11: Level of competence PROBLEM SOLVING digital skills by VET Learners country

AREA		To what extent do you feel capable of …. VET LEARNERS	VET LEARNEARS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
			France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
5. PROBLEM SOLVING	5.1	Identifying technical problems when operating devices and using digital tools.	2,58	2,97	3,1	1,8	3,27	2,95
	5.2	Being able to solve basic technical problems (by myself, finding help in internet forums, tutorials…)	2,29	2,63	3,29	1,73	3,36	2,95
	5.3	needs (e.g. zip tools, format conversion tools, time and expense tracking, …)	2,29	2,47	2,93	1,7	3,39	2,88
	5.4	Customising digital environments to professional/personal needs (language, accessibility, changing configuration…)	2,58	2,67	2,19	1,73	3,55	2,89
	5.5	Creatively using digital technologies to innovate on processes and products, and solve problems.	2,29	2,37	2,98	1,7	3,25	2,81
	5.6	Proposing ways for self-development and keeping up-to-date with digital transformation.	2,39	2,4	3,1	1,67	3,37	2,89

In conclusion, it shows that Spanish VET learners rely on their digital skills to a greater extent than the rest of the countries, followed by Italy, while Polish value their capabilities on digital skills to a lesser extent.

DIGITAL SKILLS VET PROVIDERS BY COUNTRY

Below is a cross-country comparison of VET Providers surveys. Cross reference tables, Chi-square analysis, and ANOVA analysis were applied to this analysis.

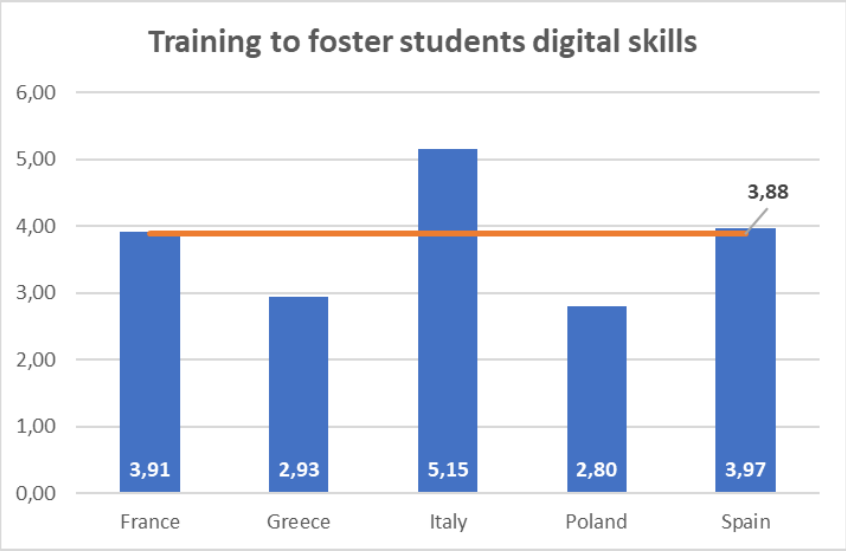
When we asked VET providers to assign themselves a level of digital competence, the majority answered a B2 expert (29.8%, followed by a B1 integrator (26.7%). According to the Chi-Square analysis, the country of origin is an influencing factor on the level of digital competence, as shown by the Chi-Square test with a value higher than 0.05 points. In fact, the country with the most C2 Pioneers (71.4%) is Italy, followed from Spain with 43.9% C1 Leaders. The country with the least digital skills level is Poland with 45.8% A 2 Explorer and 40% A1 Newcomer.

Table 5.12: Level of EDUCATIONAL DIGITAL SKILLS by VET Providers country

	Country					Total
	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	
A1: Newcomer	0.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
A2: Explorer	12.5%	25.0%	4.2%	45.8%	12.5%	100.0%
B1: Integrator	15.0%	20.0%	5.0%	15.0%	45.0%	100.0%
B2: Expert	16.4%	11.9%	7.5%	7.5%	56.7%	100.0%
C1: Leader	19.5%	2.4%	29.3%	4.9%	43.9%	100.0%
C2: Pioneer	7.1%	0.0%	71.4%	0.0%	21.4%	100.0%

On the other hand, most teachers answer the question "Would you like to receive training on how to enhance the digital skills of your students in the future?" that they likely do (78.5%). But the country of origin does not influence this opinion, as shown by the Chi-Square test with a value lower than 0.05 points. But from a descriptive point of view, VET providers from Italy are the most interested in receiving training on how to foster students' digital skills in the future, and fewer Polish VET providers.

Image 5.9: Training to foster students digital skills by VET Providers



The main differences by country based on the different digital skills areas are described below.

The most important difference between countries in the digital skills of **INFORMATION AND DATA** for teleworking is in the average of each item from Poland. Providers from Poland give less importance to these competences than the rest of countries, with an average below 4 points, compared to the rest of countries that score them above 4 points.

In **INFORMATION AND DATA** Digital Skills, the strongest relation and significance with the country of origin are obtained for the following competences:

- Finding the information, I need searching, browsing and filtering data, information and digital content.
- Evaluating the credibility and reliability of the information and digital content (analysing the sources of data, comparing information, …)

Table 5.13: Level of importance INFORMATION AND DATA digital skills by VET Providers country

			VET PROVIDERS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
AREA		Indicate the level of importance	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
1. INFORMATION AN DATA	1.1	browsing and filtering data, information and digital content.	4,27	4,73	4,56	3,77	4,57	4,44
	1.2	Evaluating the credibility and reliability of the information and digital content	4,39	4,67	4,54	3,73	4,57	4,44
	1.3	Saving and manipulating documents and files for an easier organisation, storage and retrieval using different hardware (CD, USB, hard disk, …)	4,27	4,03	4,1	3,8	4,25	4,14
	1.4	Using a cloud storage service in order to store and share information (Dropbox, Onedrive, Googledrive, iCloud…)	4,15	3,83	4,29	3,77	4,23	4,12

In **COMMUNICATION** digital skills for teleworking, for all the countries is less important the competence "Managing social media (social networks, blogs, multimedia platforms like YouTube…) for self-empowerment and dissemination", with the minor average, each one under 4 points, even in Spain the average is close to 3 point (3.36). Again, Poland is the country that gives less importance to this skill in average.

The strongest relation and significance with the country of origin are obtained for "Using meeting platforms and online conferences software to interact (Skype, Zoom meetings, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, GoToWebinar, WebEx …)".

Table 5.14: Level of importance COMMUNICATION digital skills by VET Providers country

			VET PROVIDERS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
AREA		Indicate the level of importance	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
2. COMMUNICATION	2.1	Selecting the appropriate digital communication tool for a given context (meeting platform, online conference, e-mail, chat, …)	4,27	4,1	4,05	3,9	4,17	4,12
	2.2	conferences software to interact (Skype, Zoom meetings, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, GoToWebinar, WebEx …)	4,18	3,83	4,27	3,97	4,44	4,24
	2.3	blogs, multimedia platforms like YouTube…) for self-empowerment and dissemination.	3,45	3,47	3,73	3,77	3,36	3,51
	2.4	strategies to a specific audience, considering cultural and generational	3,73	4,1	4,12	3,77	4,1	4,01

Likewise, Poland ones again gives the lowest rate to **COLLABORATION** digital skills for teleworking than the rest of the countries, but there is also less agreement among the countries on the importance of "Applying behavioural norms while interacting and using digital technologies (netiquette: not to write in capital letters, to greet, to respect privacy …)".

In **COLLABORATION** Digital Skill, the strongest relation and significance with the country of origin are obtained for the following competences:

- Sharing data, information and digital content with others through the appropriate digital technologies (cloud services, file transfer, social networks, blogs, YouTube…)
- Protecting my online reputation being aware of the data, I produce and publish through digital tools and services, or others do.

Table 5.15: Level of importance COLLABORATION digital skills by VET Providers country

			VET PROVIDERS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
AREA		Indicate the level of importance	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
2. COLLABORATION	2.5	Sharing data, information and digital content with others through the appropriate digital technologies (cloud services, file transfer, social networks, blogs, youtube…)	3,88	4,03	4,17	3,8	4,29	4,12
	2.6	processes like team working and project management (Trello, Monday, Microsoft Project, Microsoft Teams, Planner, …)	3,88	3,67	4,05	3,63	4,01	3,91
	2.7	interacting and using digital technologies (netiquette: not to write in capital letters, to greet, to respect privacy …)	3,48	4,1	3,78	3,7	3,88	3,81
	2.8	Protecting my online reputation being aware of the data I produce and publish	3,64	4,17	4,22	3,9	4,23	4,09

Other digital skill area that has less agreement about their level of importance between countries is **DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION**. With the major average, "Create and edit digital content creatively in different formats (e.g., spread sheets, presentations, text document, video

editing, image editing, …)" is the only competence that obtain a value over 4 point (4.09) among the countries, but any competence obtain significance this time.

Table 5.16: Level of importance DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION digital skills by VET Providers country

AREA		Indicate the level of importance	VET PROVIDERS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
			France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
3. DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION	3.1	Create and edit digital content creatively in different formats (e.g. spread sheets, presentations, text document, video editing, image editing, …)	3,82	4,13	4,17	4	4,16	4,09
	3.2	Modify, refine and improve different digital content in order to create new and original ones (reports, presentations, …)	3,88	4,07	4	3,9	3,96	3,96
	3.3	Co-creating data, resources and knowledge using digital tools (Google Docs, Wikis, Prezi, …)	3,58	3,63	3,98	3,63	3,81	3,76
	3.4	Understand how copyright and licenses apply to data, digital information and content (copyright, creative commons, copyleft and public domain license)	3,61	3,93	3,95	3,83	4,03	3,92

On the one hand, **ONLINE SAFETY** digital skill area obtains in the most part of their item's values over 4 points, but one of this do not achieve this level of importance for countries: Being aware of the environmental impacts of digital technologies when using for example teleworking. On the other hand, the strongest relation and significance with the country of origin are obtained for the following competences:

- Being able to apply measures to protect my devices and personal/professional data (strong password, antivirus software, programming backups, secure internet connections, spam control systems, …)
- Being able to avoid health-risks and threats to physical and psychological well-being while using digital technologies (ergonomics, stress…).

Table 5.17: Level of importance ONLINE SAFETY digital skills by VET Providers country

AREA		Indicate the level of importance	VET PROVIDERS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
			France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
4. ONLINE SAFETY	4.1	Understanding the security risks and threats in digital environments (phishing,	4,33	4,37	4,22	3,93	4,32	4,26
	4.2	Being able to apply measures to protect my devices and personal/professional data (strong password, antivirus software, programming backups, secure internet	4,36	4,43	4,15	3,87	4,28	4,23
	4.3	Managing personal data and privacy according to the European Data Protection Law and Right to be Forgotten (GDPR –	4,03	3,8	4,05	3,87	4,14	4,03
	4.4	Being able to avoid health-risks and threats to physical and psychological well-being while using digital technologies (ergonomics, stress…).	3,85	4,27	4,07	3,63	4,15	4,04
	4.5	Being aware of the environmental impacts of digital technologies when using for example teleworking.	3,33	3,8	3,93	3,67	3,77	3,72

No significant relationship is found between the country of origin and the importance of **PROBLEM-SOLVING** digital skills for teleworking. Poland once again gives less importance to each competence of this area, but in a single item, other countries like France give less importance to this area, this time. For example, France gives approximately 3.5 points to the following items:

- Customising digital environments to professional/personal needs (language, accessibility, changing configuration…)
- Creatively using digital technologies to innovate on processes and products and solve problems.
- Proposing ways for self-development and keeping up-to-date with digital transformation.

While countries such as Italy, Greece and Spain give them a value very close to 4 even higher than 4. Meanwhile this time only one item has a relation with significance: Proposing ways for self-development and keeping up-to-date with digital transformation.

Table 5.18: Level of importance PROBLEM SOLVING digital skills by VET Providers country

AREA		Indicate the level of importance	VET PROVIDERS - DIGITAL SKILLS					
			France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
5. PROBLEM SOLVING	5.1	Identifying technical problems when operating devices and using digital tools.	3,88	3,93	4,02	3,67	3,99	3,93
	5.2	Being able to solve basic technical problems (by myself, finding help in	3,94	3,93	4,1	3,67	4,09	4
	5.3	Identifying, evaluating and selecting digital tools to solve my needs (e.g. zip tools, format conversion tools, time and	3,7	3,67	4,05	3,63	3,91	3,84
	5.4	Customising digital environments to professional/personal needs (language,	3,55	4	3,85	3,63	3,72	3,75
	5.5	Creatively using digital technologies to innovate on processes and products, and solve problems.	3,52	3,83	3,98	3,67	3,91	3,82
	5.6	Proposing ways for self-development and keeping up-to-date with digital transformation.	3,52	3,33	4,1	3,77	4,02	3,84

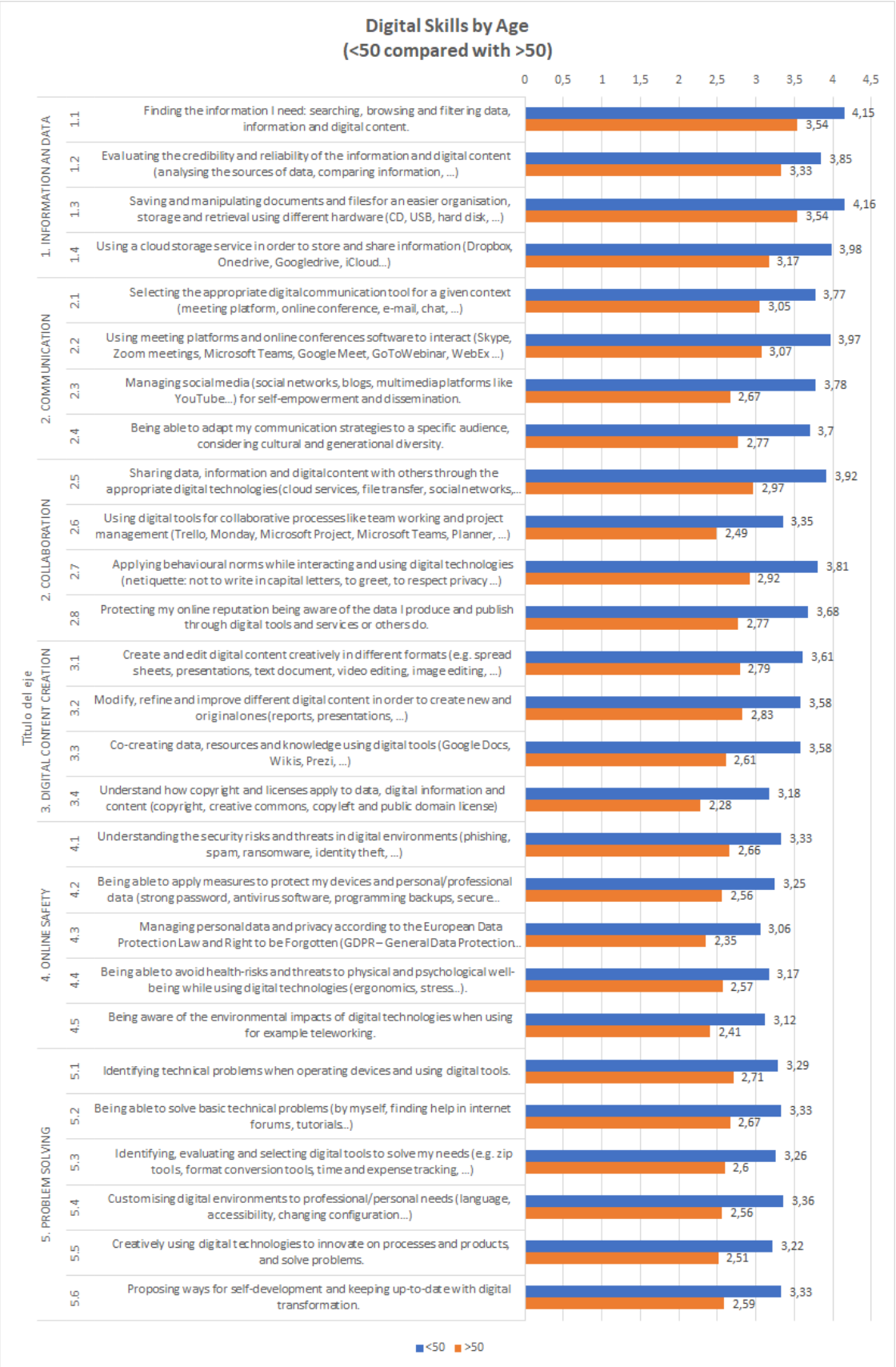
In conclusion, it is shown that Italian and Spanish VET providers gives highest level of importance to all digital skills areas than the rest of the countries, while Polish VET Providers would be the ones who value the level of importance of digital skills to a lesser extent.

DIGITAL SKILLS BY AGE VET LEARNERS

Below is a comparison between the responses of VET Learners over 50 and under 50. The ANOVA analysis was applied to this analysis.

The results show that age does not influence the value of the averages in each digital skill, and in each group of digital skills the interviewees under 50 years of age consider that their level is greater than those over 50 years of age. This indicates that there is a higher level of confidence in the development of digital skills among the youngest, being that the results go hand in hand when the confidence of young people decreases, in turn the confidence of those over 50 years of age is also lower . For example, while younger VET Learners think they feel capable of managing information and data with an average close to 4 points (very capable), the average of older VET Learners is closer to 3 points (Capable), but when in the online safety skills area the confidence of young VETs falls to averages close to 3 points (Capable), older VET students give averages close to 2 points (Somewhat capable). This condition also occurs in all areas of digital skills, the examples mentioned being the most disparate that can be found among the different areas of digital skills.

Image 5.10: Digital Skills by age on VET Learners



In conclusion, it is shown that the main differences between the averages of VET Learners under 50 and VET Learners over 50 are found in the Digital Communication and Collaboration Skills

areas, where younger students feel more confident than the older ones, in their capability over these digital skills.

5.3. Soft skills VET learners and VET providers

For each country, the most important soft skill is “Learnability”, followed by the “effective management and control of emotions and stress”. The least valued Soft Skill is "Have confidence that I can perform effectively on many different tasks." On this occasion, both France and Poland are the countries that least value the items in this block, even for France the item they least value is "Being able to build a house and a way of life to my liking", on the contrary Italy is the country that gives more importance to all the items in this block, especially “Management and effective control of emotions and stress”.

For Soft Skills, the strongest relation and significance with the country of origin are obtained for the following competences:

- Learnability (the ability to be a life long learner)

- Effectively managing and controlling emotions and stress

- Being able to build a home and a way of life to my liking

The other items obtain relation and significance except the following, that do not have any significance:

- Being able to achieve most of the goals that I set for myself.

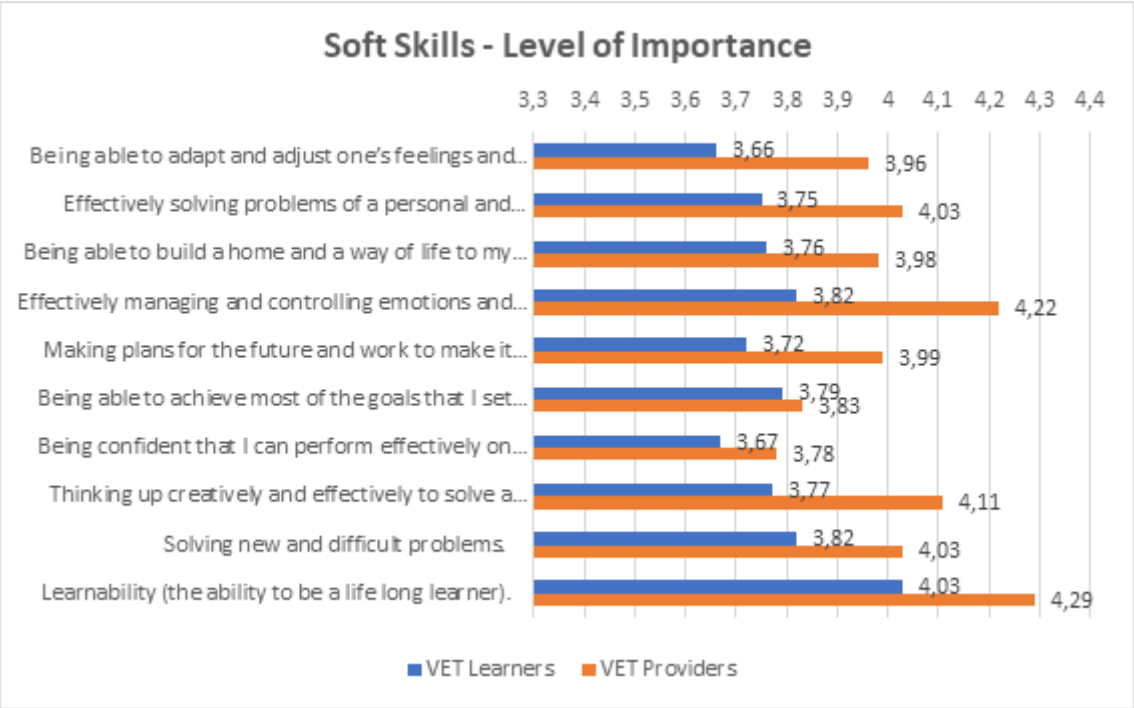
- Being confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.

- Thinking up creatively and effectively to solve a problem.

- Solving new and difficult problems.

If we compare the level of importance that VET providers and VET Learners place on Soft Skills, it should be noted that VET Learners value less the importance of soft skills compared to VET Providers, where the answer mean is higher in all soft skills evaluated. But the biggest gap is in the soft skill "Effectively manage and control emotions and stress", which is the highest valued skill, except for "Learning ability", which has been the most valued by VET providers and VET Learners, while the least valued by VET Learners has been "Being able to adapt and adjust feelings and thinking to new situations".

Image 5.11: Soft Skills level of importance for VET Learners and VET Providers



On the other hand, it could be seen that VET Learners older than 50 years give similar values to these soft skills than VET Providers, where the averages are very close when they indicate the level of importance of these Soft Skills, while VET Learners below 50 years gives a lower value to each soft skill.

In this case, the age variable has an influence on the level of importance given to Soft Skills is verified using the F test of the ANOVA analysis and this influence is significant in each soft skills relationship.

In brief, learnability and control of emotions and stress, are the most important soft skills valued by both, by country and between VET Learners and VET Providers. There are a difference between the values from VET Learners and VET Providers, but if it is filtered by age the values from the older VET Learners are very similar to the VET Providers values.

5.4. VET Providers' strategies to develop digital skills

For the VET Providers the most important strategies to develop their students' digital skills are "I set up assignments which require students to use digital means to communicate and collaborate with each other or with an outside audience" and "I set up assignments which require students to create digital content". These items obtain the strongest relation and significance with the country of origin, meanwhile other do not have relation as "I teach students how to behave safely and responsibly online" and have the minor average value by countries.

Table 5.19: Strategies to develop digital skills by VET Providers country

To what extent do you use the following strategies to develop your students' digital skills?						
	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
I teach students how to assess the reliability of information and to identify misinformation and bias	3,73	4,3	3,93	3,69	3,83	3,88
I set up assignments which require students to use digital means to communicate and collaborate with each other or with an outside audience	3,67	3,87	4,32	3,6	4,19	4,02
I set up assignments which require students to create digital content	3,36	3,6	4,34	3,47	4,18	3,92
I teach students how to behave safely and responsibly online	3,76	4,2	3,54	3,57	3,44	3,62
I encourage students to use digital technologies creatively to solve concrete problems	3,61	3,9	4,2	3,7	4,01	3,93

Italy highlights a high importance to both strategies “I set up assignments which require students to use digital means to communicate and collaborate with each other or with an outside audience” and “I set up assignments which require students to create digital content”, meanwhile Spain grants the lowest average of the entire block to the item “I teach students how to behave safely and responsibly online”.

In summary, Italy VET Providers are using more systematically these strategies to develop digital skills to their students than other countries, followed by Greece and Spain. But in this point, it is necessary to know the most important barriers that VET Providers identify when teaching adults digital skills, being that the main barrier detected is "Lack of suitable teaching courses (e.g., relevant syllabus & age friendly methodology)", while the barrier that they value least is "Financial constraints".

By country, it is worth mentioning that VET Providers from Greece value that the most important ability is “Perception of irrelevance (lack of tangible benefits)” and the less “Negative attitudes towards the use of technology", being the country that gives values with more unlike averages between the different digital skills. VET Providers from France consider that the greatest part of the barriers are very important with averages close to 4 points

Table 5.20: Barriers to develop students over 50 digital skills by VET Providers country

What are the most important barriers you have encountered in adult digital skills training?						
	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
Lack of confidence	3,58	2,9	3,54	3,27	3,72	3,5
Lack of motivation	3,27	4	3,2	3,6	3,38	3,44
Time constraints	3,67	3,03	2,8	3,57	3,35	3,28
Lack of equipment	4	3,5	3,32	3,77	3,34	3,51
Negative attitudes towards the use of technology	3,82	2,7	3,54	3,33	3,41	3,39
Perception of irrelevance (lack of tangible benefits)	3,55	4,4	3,37	3,57	3,21	3,49
Financial constraints	3,67	3,6	2,83	3,37	2,83	3,12
Lack of basic digital literacy to learn effectively	4,03	2,8	3,88	3,53	3,71	3,64
Lack of support (from trainers, peers, family etc.)	3,88	3,07	3,78	3,47	3,47	3,53
Lack of suitable teaching courses (e.g. relevant syllabus & age friendly methodology)	4	3,73	3,68	3,5	3,43	3,61

Regarding the level of agreement of VET provides for providing a more efficient digital training to learners over 50, Poland got the lowest value, even though they were values above 4 points on a scale of 1 to 5 where 4 means they agree, while countries like Greece got values very close to 5 points on average (Strongly agree).

Table 5.21: Strategies to provide efficient digital training by VET Providers country

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about how could we provide a more efficient digital training to learners over 50?	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Total
Making the learning relevant for their job and employability	4,39	4,7	4,1	4	4,41	4,34
Providing a flexible schedule	4,24	4,17	4,1	4,03	4,38	4,24
Promoting active participation and social interaction (e.g. small group discussions, role playing, experiments, ...)	4,3	4,53	4,2	4,03	4,05	4,17
Integrating their life experiences and knowledge in the learning activities	4,27	4,7	4,2	3,97	4,31	4,29
Providing assistance and guidance in resolving problems and difficulties	4,36	4,57	4,15	4,23	4,48	4,38
Using a variety of teaching and learning methods, including hands-on learning (e.g. case studies, simulation, games, problem solving, ...)	4,36	4,73	4,17	4,03	4,34	4,32
Providing self-assessment tools	4,09	4,07	4,17	4	3,98	4,04
Providing a supportive learning environment with multiple resources and opportunities to ask questions and correct mistakes	4,39	4,53	4,15	4,13	4,31	4,3
Monitoring learners' progress and providing effective feedback	4,48	4,3	4,1	4,27	4,48	4,36

To conclude, the strategy that the F test of the ANOVA analysis shows no relationship between the country of origin, is "I teach students how to behave safely and responsibly online", while the rest have a greater influence by country and significance , except "Making the learning relevant to your job and employability" which do not acquire significance like the others.

In the same way, it is shown that the value of most of the barriers that VET providers encounter in adult skills training is influenced and significant by the country of origin, except "Time constraints", "Attitudes negative towards the use of technology ", and" Financial limitations ".

At the very least, the level of agreement of VET providers on how they could provide more efficient digital training to students over 50 is influenced by the country on each item, and only two of these are not important, "Provide a flexible hours "and "Provide self-assessment tools".

6 CONCLUSIONS

The adoption of Teleworking has been accelerated due to the pandemic, doubling (Erofound, 2020). This new way of working has demonstrated that improves work-life balance, productivity and satisfaction of both employees and companies. Evidence indicates that companies and workers will continue to bet on this new way of working. Therefore, having the necessary skills to telework will be a key aspect for the future employability of workers.

The aim of this research carried out within the framework of the Telegrow European Project has been to provide an extensive and useful outline of the overall framework that exists in each partner's country (Italy, France, Greece, Poland and Spain) regarding **teleworking**, to better achieve the project objectives.

The TeleGrow project aims to deliver a useful training tool to help employees over the age of 50 develop their digital skills and adapt effectively in the new reality of remote working. In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the partnership seeks to enhance the skills and the training methods of VET trainers and offer support for the digital integration of older employees in the teleworking environment.

The research phase has consisted of an analysis of the teleworking context in each country, followed by a quantitative study to reach an in-depth understanding of the target groups needs and worries regarding teleworking: VET Learners and employees, and VET Providers, and a qualitative study aimed at employers to identify barriers and needs to promote teleworking.

The result of this research has been reflected on this report and in its interactive version, available on the project website: https://telegrow.erasmus.site/

The desk research has shown that the use of teleworking prior to the pandemic COVID'19 was very low in all partner countries, and it has been precisely the pandemic that has accelerated its implementation. The good assessment of the results of the telework implementation experience in general, despite improvisation and the short adaptation time during the pandemic period, suggests that it has come to stay. That is why all the partners' countries have updated their laws to facilitate their adoption in the future and establishing especial conditions during the pandemic period.

The concept of telework is defined in different ways according to the countries, but they have in common that is a form of work organisation that is carried out outside the employer's

premises, partially or totally, using computer, telematics and telecommunications means and systems. Teleworking is known as remote work with the prevalent use of technology (ICT). Italy is the country that has a more advanced concept called SmartWorking (or Agile Work) that is based on promoting flexibility and the autonomy of employees in the choice of spaces, times and tools to use, in the face of greater responsibility for results. For all the countries, the teleworking must be developed on volunteer basis, with an agreement between the employee and the employer, and guaranteeing the same rights and obligations as employees within the company's premises.

In other hand, the desk research developed has shown that all the countries have designed policies and initiatives to develop citizens' digital skills. They are aware that a low level of digital skills can weigh down the employability of workers and the future competitiveness of companies, being a barrier for digital transformation of the economy and, of course, the spread of teleworking. The analysis reflects that in all countries the low level of digital skills of those over 50 is worrying, which can lead to a digital divide. This reinforces that it is necessary to promote the training of this group in digital skills since it is the objective of TeleGrow Project.

The quantitative research work, based on surveys, has made it possible to describe the main characteristics of telework, from the perspective of different countries, emphasizing which digital skills of VET Learners over 50 years of age should be trained and which learning strategies should use VET Providers to teach them efficiently. DigComp 2.0 framework (The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens), DigCompEdu (Digital Competence Framework for Educators), TAM Model (Technology Acceptance Model) and other proven scales have been used to design the surveys.

The analysis of the results carried out indicates that when the age groups or the country origin of the interviewee have been compared, it has been possible to obtain significant evidence of the importance of training in digital and soft skills, and what are the barriers and beliefs that can slow down the progress of teleworking.

While countries that have more experience in teleworking, they have shown to have better digital and soft skills in VET Learners and employees, in addition to having less powerful beliefs and barriers. Thus, countries with less experience in teleworking have indicated that they would not choose it in the future, consider themselves less capable to do so, and have more powerful barriers to its adoption.

While teleworking is seen as an easy-to-use and a useful way of work and there is a positive attitude towards teleworking, the intention of future use goes down in most countries. This shows that although its use is comfortable, useful and a good idea, they do not believe that they will recommend it, or choose it, although, they do believe that companies will require it. This is also evident in an analysis by age, with those over 50, on the one hand, and those under 50 on the other, so regardless of age or country of origin the results are similar within their differences.

Regarding the barriers and beliefs about teleworking, age and country of origin are not decisive, but descriptively it can be indicated that the biggest barriers are that the work environment is completely open to the worker, followed by the fact that no one will control the health risks associated with teleworking.

Meanwhile, the greatest belief around teleworking relates it to the feeling of loneliness and being isolated when working in an environment without colleagues, while what they see less

likely is that they must be available 24 hours a day because they are teleworking. On the other hand, the less important barriers are not having well defined responsibilities and tasks to be carried out from home, as this affects their possibilities of promotion and professional development.

Regarding digital skills, it should be noted that there is a GAP between the level of importance given to it by VET Providers and the self-assessed ability of VET Learners, regardless of their age or country origin. This gap shows the improvement in the skills that VET Learners should develop.

It is recommended that training in digital skills be carried out especially in the areas of Online Safety and Problem Solving, since the levels of competence in areas such as Communication, Collaboration, and Information Management are better. However, if we attend to age groups over 50 years of age, it is observed that they also require training in these areas to reach the level of competencies of the youngest VET Learners and employees.

If we stop to observe the results related to soft skills, it is very clear that all groups agree that the learnability and the effective management and control of emotions and stress, are the most important, but perhaps it should be noted that they are a type of skill difficult to practice. Therefore, an effort should be made in the VET educational communities to improve the level of soft skills of their students.

In relation to educational strategies, the results indicate that it is important for students to be trained in online safety and responsibility, since digital skills around security have a lower level than other digital skills.

The barriers that VET Providers found when teaching students over 50 also reveal interesting issues, such as that their level of digital knowledge is lower, and they have been less trained in this digital area.

For this reason, VET providers think that the best way to teach digital skills to those over 50 is to motivate them by giving meaning to this knowledge in their work environment, while constant advice and guidance is provided during the learning process, as well as monitoring the progress of students and giving them feed-back.

The qualitative research has been carried out through a focus group with employers, developed by each partner country, to identify good practices, and the main advantages and barriers that they find to foster teleworking in the future.

The focus groups have highlighted that most of the companies will embrace teleworking after the pandemic. Only some companies considers that it is not appropriate for them because of their activity but they will adopt it occasionally and with flexibility as needed.

All the participants have agreed that teleworking increase productivity and it is highly valued by employees. However, teleworking has some barriers; first, it is the risk of isolation and the difficulty in developing a business commitment. Another problem noted is having adequate facilities, such as a good internet connection, suitable workspace at home, and adequate digital skills.

When it comes to digital skills, everyone considers them essential and a barrier if the employees do not have sufficient digital literacy. Efficient communication, collaboration, project management and online safety are the most valued. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that

they consider that soft skills are even more important than digital ones: teamwork, autonomy, stress management and learnability are the most highlighted. It is important to say that this is already included in the project proposal since the training materials contemplate the development of a guide for training soft skills as well as digital ones.

In other hand, the participants have considered that it exists a generation gap between the young and elder (50+) workers. That means it is important to address this digital divide by developing good training materials with good learning strategies tailored for adult learners. It should be noted, that they considered the attitudes of adults towards technology to be positive. This was evident in the interest in learning digital skills shown by workers 50+ and, without a doubt, will facilitate the adoption of teleworking.

Many changes in the organizational culture of public and private organizations are required in order to embrace teleworking. The world of work is experiencing a drastic revolution and it would never be the same as prior the pandemic. Teleworking requires further improvements from both employees and employers' sides, as it offers great opportunities and advantages. Trust and flexibility are shown as key aspects for the future of work. As different experts point out, we will be moving towards a hybrid format that will require also changes in companies' leadership that will imply the need of hybrid leaders.

All these findings give us some very interesting results to take into account when designing the TeleGrow Hub and learning materials using strategies that are more efficient for adults training, and thus improve the impact of the project.

Limitations

On the other hand, the limitations found when conducting this study can be summarized in the need to obtain these results in order to be able to recommend their conclusions to the educational community as soon as possible. This has meant that the field work has been carried out in a short term and it has been difficult to obtain a large sample, although the objectives of the project in terms of the number of responses obtained have been met and it has been enough to adequately perform the statistical analyzes.

Community recommendations

It is recommended to the educative community that it does not leave aside the training of more basic digital competences such as communication or content creation, as well as collaborative tools since older students, although they use digital tools daily, they do not do it in a teleworking context, and that can influence in their competence development or in the confidence that they have in their skills.

VET Providers would need to have a deep understanding of the implications of digitization and the importance of its contribution in the development of digital and transversal skills in addition to specific or technical ones to their students. It would be important for the educational community to be sensitized and trained in this regard.

Employers also play an important role promoting teleworking and developing the digital skills of their workers. It would be interesting to disseminate the results of the project with the companies, especially SMEs and entrepreneurs.

Future studies

Most of the comparative analyses in which the sample was divided by country or according to age have not been conclusive, so it is invited in future studies to carry out the application of moderators related to the level of studies of the participants, the experience in virtual environments, or even the area of knowledge in which they work or have been trained.

It will be also interesting to monitor the improvements produced by the project in both target groups: VET Learners and employees and VET Trainers, and the commitment of employers.