State of art (WP2.1)

Level of knowledge of digital entrepreneurship between youth

Complete report of the research

Co-funded by
the European Union

A NEW ENTREPRENEURSHIP APPROACH IN THE DIGITAL AGE: DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

NEWDIGISHIP

WP2. 2nd Wave of Survey Report

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The results of the survey can be consulted at the following link:

https://eu.jotform.com/tables/230225274040038

Introduction

With digital change accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic effect, consumers, customers, businesses, enterprises, supply chains, industries and the ecosystem are exposed to digital change much faster than the usual pace. These major changes are: new technologies such as mobile computing, data analytics, e-learning, cloud computing, blockchain, social media marketing and SEO, which have created the beginning of a new era in entrepreneurship.

NEWDIGISHIP was born to reduce the rising unemployment rates among youth in an ever-changing world; make young people aware of how social media and digital technology can be used for entrepreneurship opportunities and enable them to benefit from digital opportunities. This will consider that today's young people (digital natives) are both consumers and producers on the Internet and will take as a starting point the daily lives and experiences of young people, focusing on social, cultural, and critical thinking issues. This project covers the priority of strengthening the employability of young people, promoting active citizenship, young people's sense of initiative and youth entrepreneurship including social entrepreneurship and addressing digital transformation through development of digital readiness, resilience, and capacity.

All young people and people interested in digital entrepreneurship and who want to have digital entrepreneurship opportunities must have ICT/digital competences. Since most of our unemployed youth had admitted at the initial states of project testing that they lack digital job skills, with this project we were aiming to contribute to the development of their ICT/digital competences, i.e. relevant and high-quality skills and competences. As mentioned in the EU Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027), consolidating the digital market to adapt digital transformation and digital culture to the 21st century and compete in the digital age is one of Europe's priorities. The EU Digital Single Market strategy defines that the EU prioritizes digital transformation as the core of its actions. In the next five years, efforts will have to be redoubled to create digital opportunities in a cohesive European market.

NEWDIGISHIP targets young people aged 18-28, with a special focus on low-income households, women, and young people with fewer opportunities. Our NEWDIGISHIP project has brought together an innovative approach to digital entrepreneurship by focusing on the methods and effects of digital tools and entrepreneurship opportunities in different countries, which are indispensable for the digital world.

Research methodology: the survey

In the initial stages of needs assessment of work package development (WP2.1)-Developing a curriculum for digital entrepreneurship for young people (promoting digital entrepreneurship start-ups among young people) of the NEWDIGISHIP project, a first wave of survey was developed and applied to establish starting points, lines of action and the state of the art of the topic in the consortium member countries.

This paper concludes the results of the second wave of the survey that reflects and reports on the results of the digital entrepreneurship/tools sensitivity run at the final stages of the project.

The objectives of the survey were of the same manner as the ones of the first wave, however, at this stage the measures were deeply focused on the progress the participants made in the theoretical and practical knowledge using the tools developed and provided by NEWDIGISHIP project professionals:

- To assess the knowledge that exists among the project's target group on issues related to digital entrepreneurship after participation in the project

- To know their degree of familiarity with digital skills and their usefulness in the work environment after participation in the project

- Obtain information regarding the digital competencies that need to be reinforced.

- To identify the teaching methods on digital entrepreneurship best suited to current needs.

The consortium in the latter case repeatedly decided to use the survey as a research tool to make the evaluation phase conditions identical to obtain the data with the most precision.

For Sierra Bravo[1], observation by survey, which consists of obtaining data of sociological interest by questioning members of society, is the most important and most widely used sociological research procedure. Among its characteristics we can highlight the following:

1. The information is obtained through an indirect observation of the facts, through the statements made by the respondents, so it is possible that the information obtained does not always reflect reality and only shows possible trends and lines of interpretation.

2. The survey allows massive applications, which by means of adequate sampling techniques can extend the results to entire communities.

3. The researcher's interest is not the specific subject who answers the questionnaire, but the population to which he/she belongs.

4. It allows the simultaneous collection of data on a wide variety of subjects.

5. The information is collected in a standardized way by means of a questionnaire (same instructions for all subjects, identical formulation of the questions, etc.), which makes it possible to make intra-group comparisons.

6. It is particularly suitable for collecting opinions, beliefs, or attitudes.

7. In general terms, this methodology is especially indicated in studies with descriptive objectives and where large samples are required for the study of some aspect of the population.

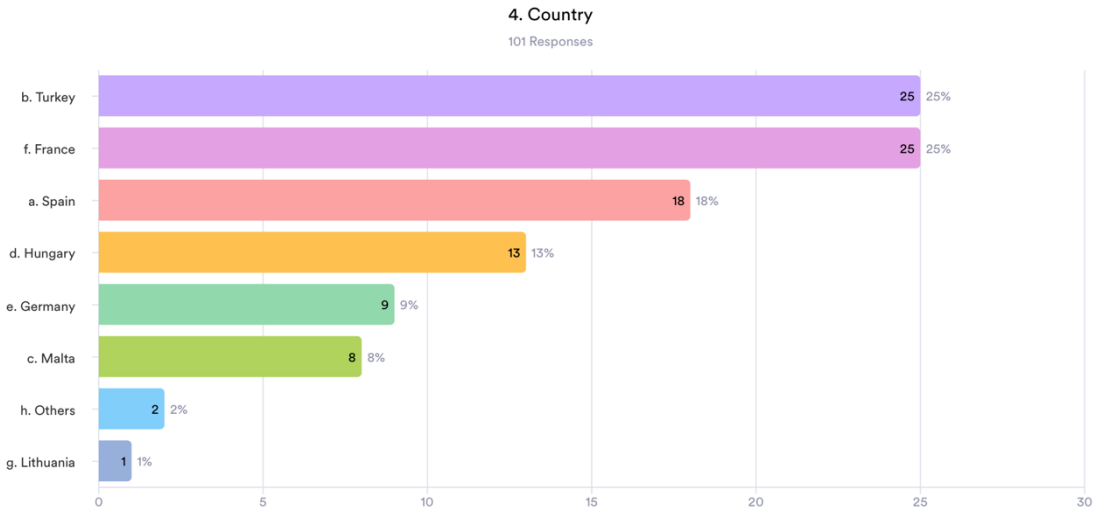
Among its disadvantages are the difficulties in establishing causal relationships, the fact that it does not consider contextual factors that may interfere with the subject's

[1] Sierra Bravo, Restituto. Técnicas de Investigación social. Madrid: Paraninfo, 2001.

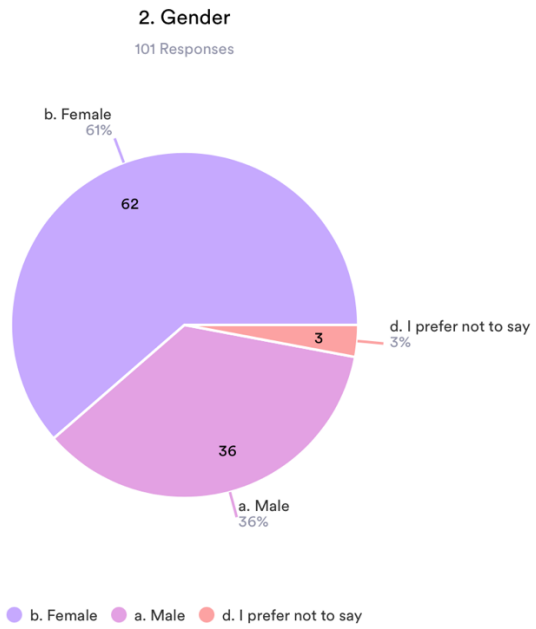
responses, and that depending on the size and diversity of the sample, it only allows us to speak of trends rather than generalizations of behavior.

Survey results

The second wave of NEWDIGISHIP survey followed the application in 7 partnering countries (Hungary, France, Spain, Lithuania, Germany, Turkey, Malta) and the sample reached 101 respondents. Once again, it is essential to keep in mind that due to the small size of the sample it is not possible to make generalizations, and it is necessary to speak at all times of trends detected among the surveyed population.



Sixty-two percent of the sample consisted of women while 36% were men and 3% marked as a suitable option – I prefer not to say.



Sixty-six percent of the respondents were young people between the ages of 16 and 30. The age range of the respondents was as follows:

-1% between 14-16 years old

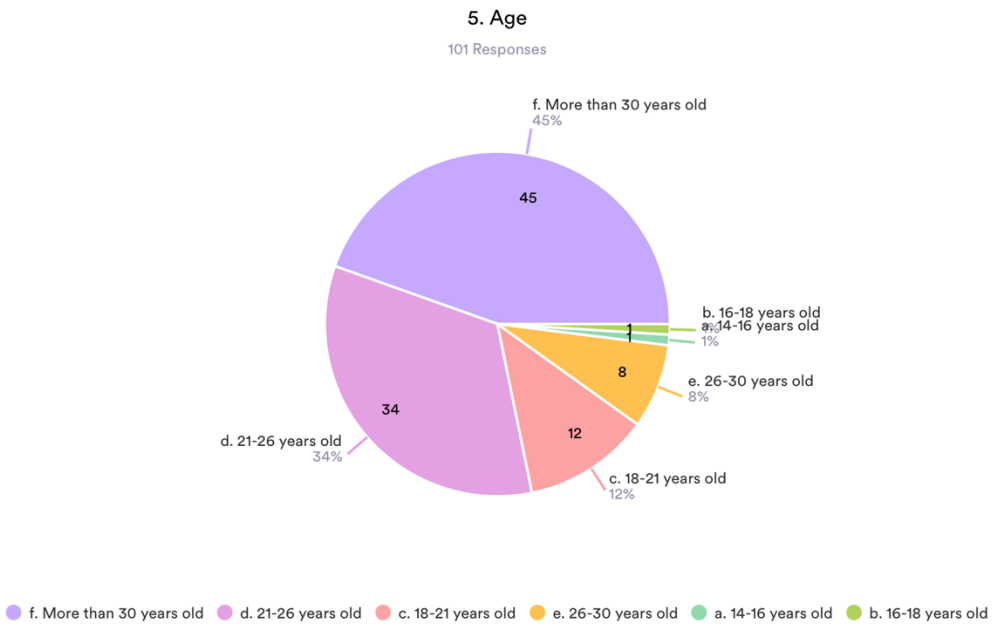
-1% between 16-18 years old

-12% between 18-21 years old

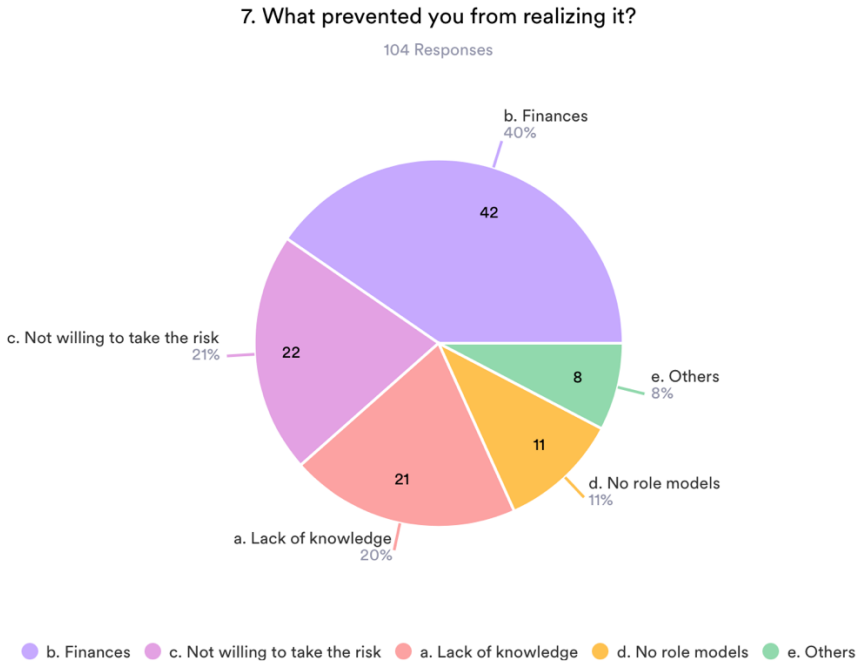
-34% between 21 and 26 years old

-8% between 26 and 30 years of age

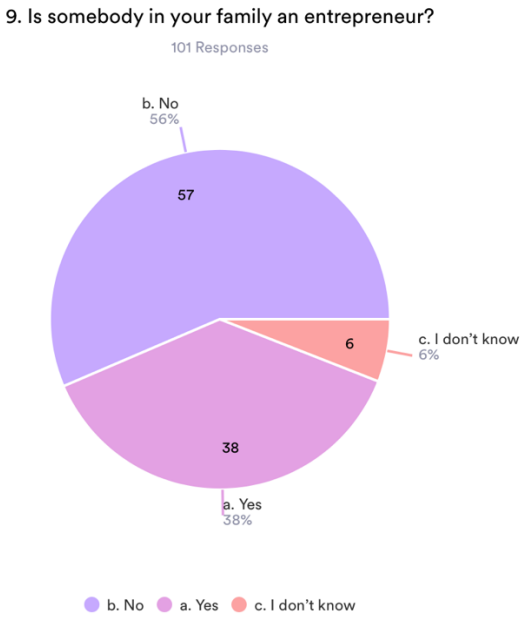
- 45% over 30 years old



Sixty-seven percent of those surveyed responded that they had had an excellent business idea, while 33% claimed that they had not. Among the causes that hindered entrepreneurial initiatives, the issue of finances ranked first with 42%, followed by lack of knowledge with 21%, lack of willingness to take risks with 22% and lack of examples to follow within the scope of personal interaction with 11%.



When asked if they had an entrepreneur in the family or someone who carried out an entrepreneurial initiative, 57% of the respondents answered no, 38% had a family member who was an entrepreneur and 6% did not know if they had a family member who carried out these tasks in their family circle.



On a scale of 1 to 10, an average of 6.81 individuals surveyed were familiar with the idea of digital entrepreneurship, which is only slightly above the average and indicates that there is no solid knowledge of this modality among the surveyed population.

Regarding the following work characteristics, the respondents gave their assessment of the degree of relevance they attach to them in the work environment:

a. 84% considered the flexible working hours as important and very important.

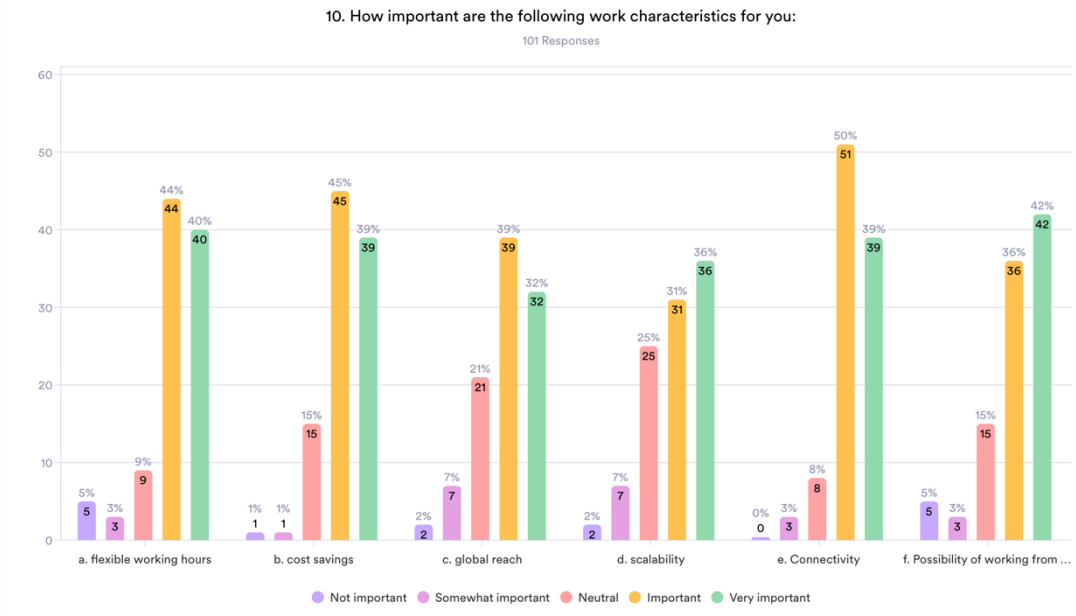
b. 84% considered the cost savings as important and very important.

c. 71 % considered the global reach as important and very important.

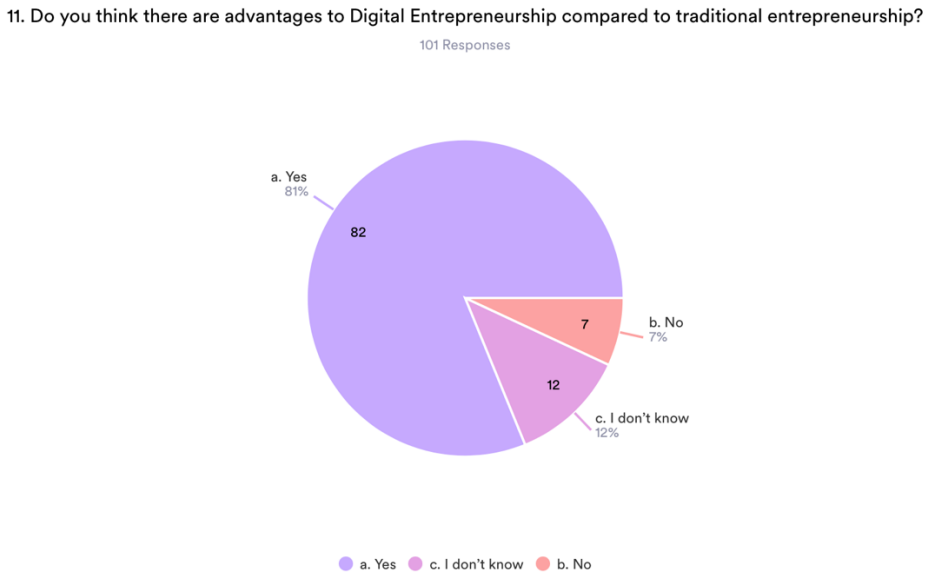
d. 67% rated the scalability as important and very important.

e. 90% rated connectivity as important or very important.

f. Finally, 78% considered as important and very important the possibility of working from home.

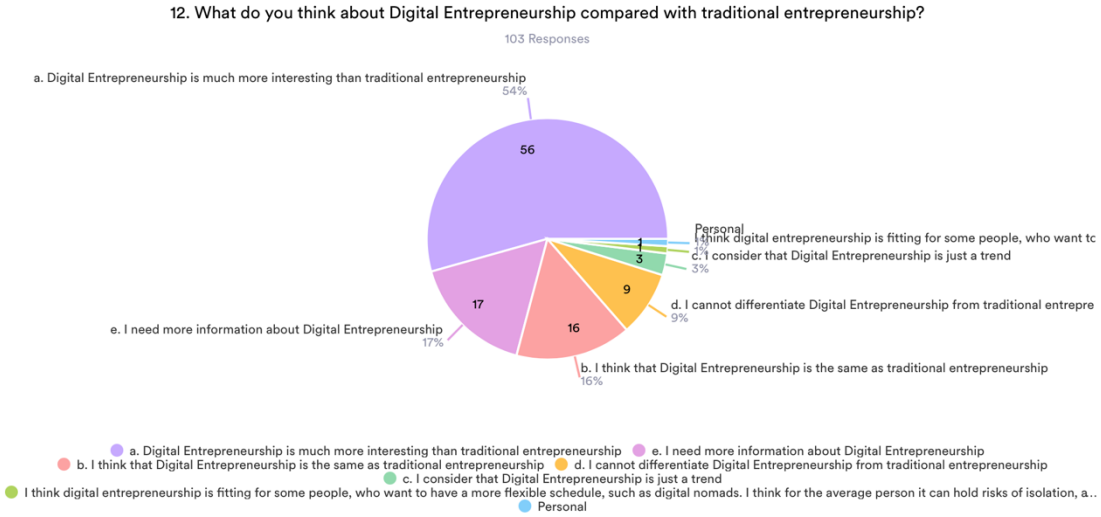


Eighty-two percent of respondents considered that digital entrepreneurship has advantages over traditional entrepreneurship, while only 7% considered that it has no significant advantages and 12% said that they do not know if it has more merits.

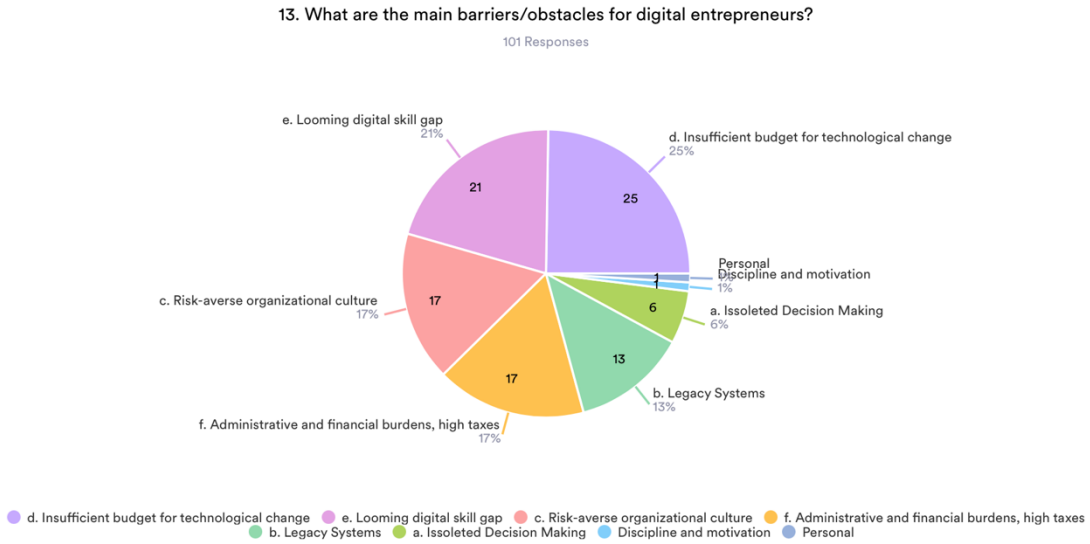


Regarding the relationship between traditional entrepreneurship and digital entrepreneurship, 54% considered that the latter is much more interesting than traditional entrepreneurship. On the other hand, in the second round only 17% of the respondents claim to need more information about digital entrepreneurship.

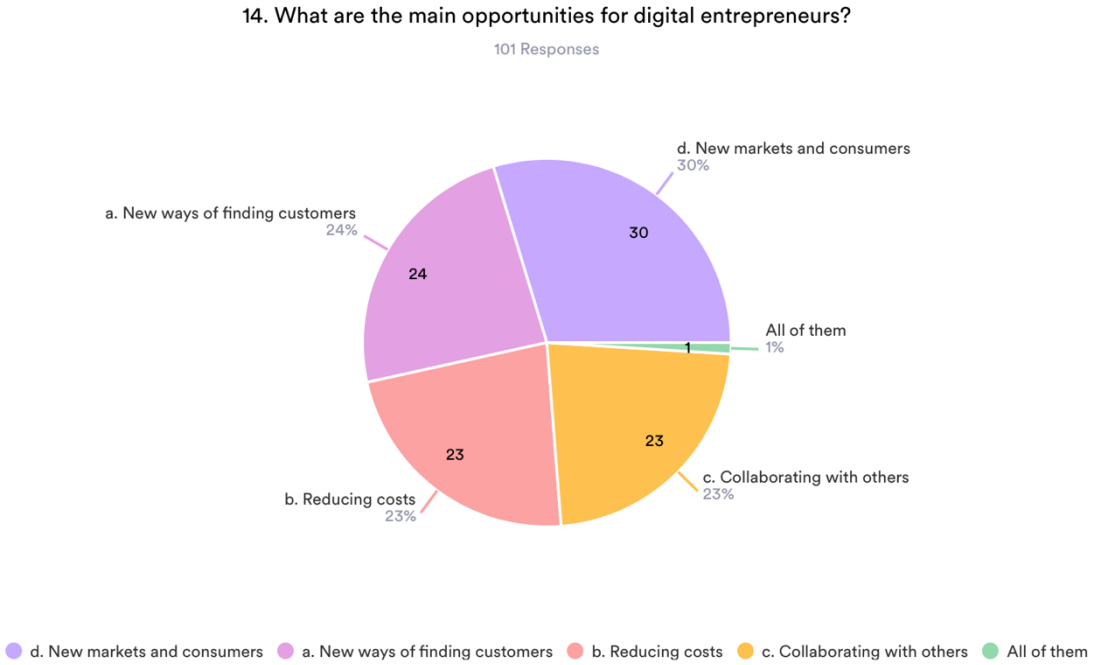
Sixteen percent believe that digital entrepreneurship is similar to traditional entrepreneurship and 9% are not able to differentiate between the two types of entrepreneurships.



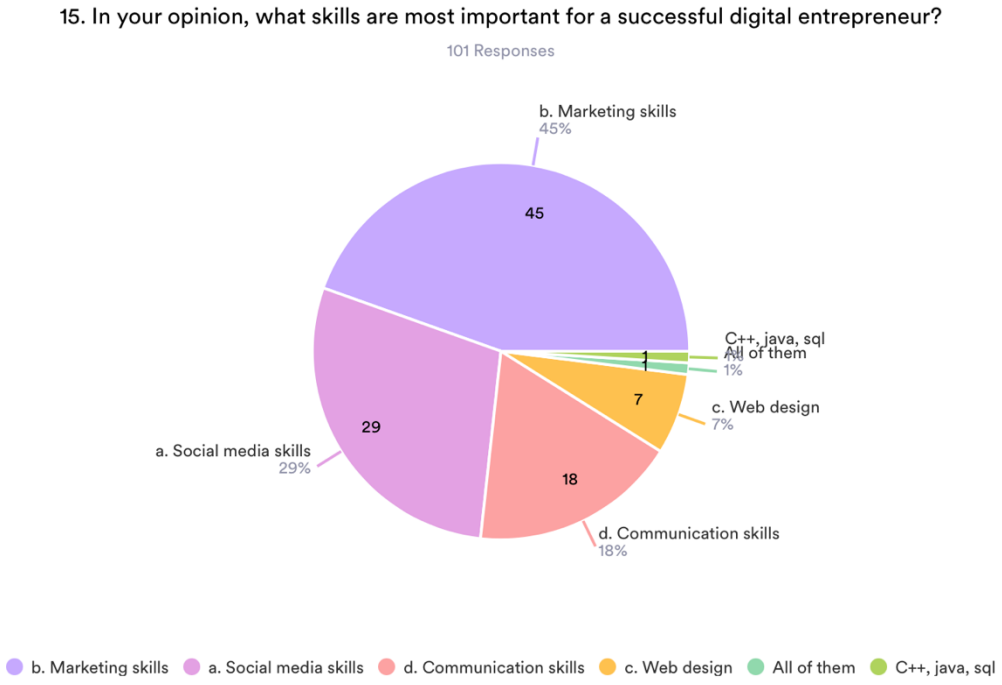
In terms of the barriers or main obstacles mentioned by the respondents for the development of digital entrepreneurship, the first one is the insufficient budget for technological change, which was mentioned by 25% of the participants in the survey. This was followed by legacy systems, which was mentioned by 13%, followed by risk-averse organizational culture, which was mentioned by 17% of the respondents, looming digital skill gap 21% and administrative and financial burdens, high taxes proceeded to 17%. Another barrier mentioned by 6% was the isolated decision making.



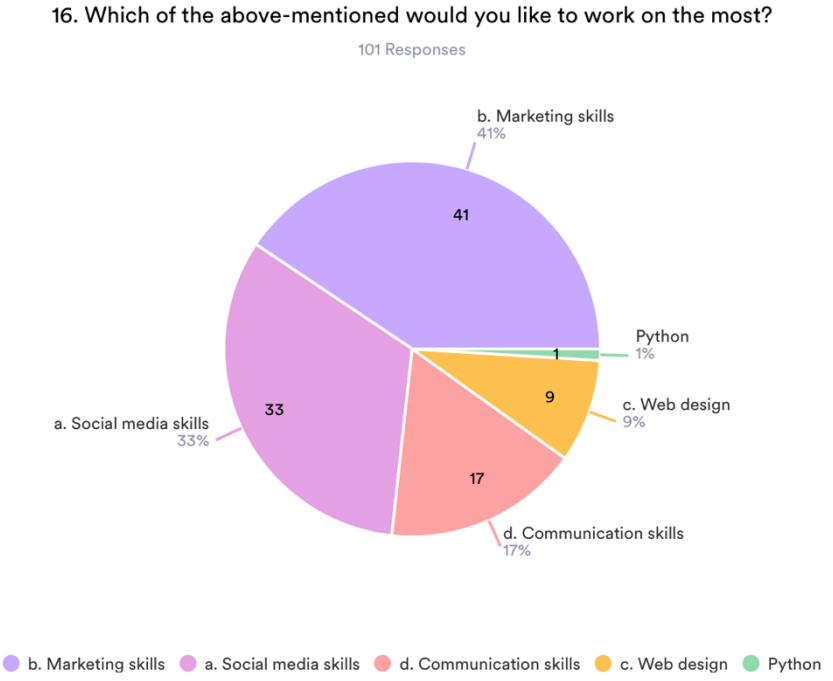
Regarding the main opportunities for digital entrepreneurs, 30% of respondents favored the existence of new markets and consumers, while 24% claimed the possibility of finding new ways of finding customers. On the other hand, 23% of the participants valued positively the possibility of reducing cost and 23% the idea of collaborating with others.



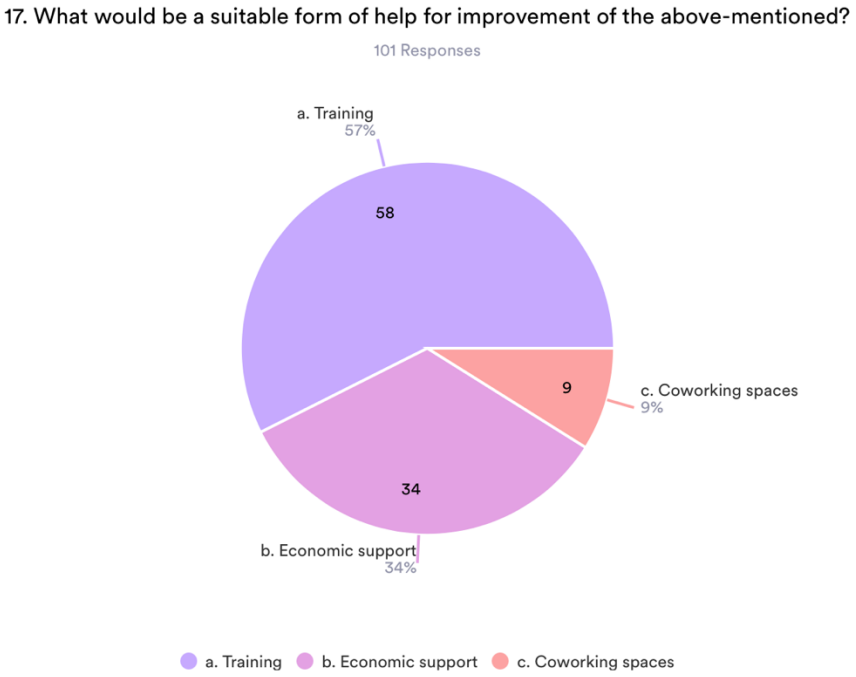
Respondents also rated the skills they consider most important to positively influence the development of the digital entrepreneur. In this case, 45% of the participants positively valued marketing skills and 18% communication skills. On the other hand, 29% considered social media skills to be very important and 7% considered web design skills to be very important.



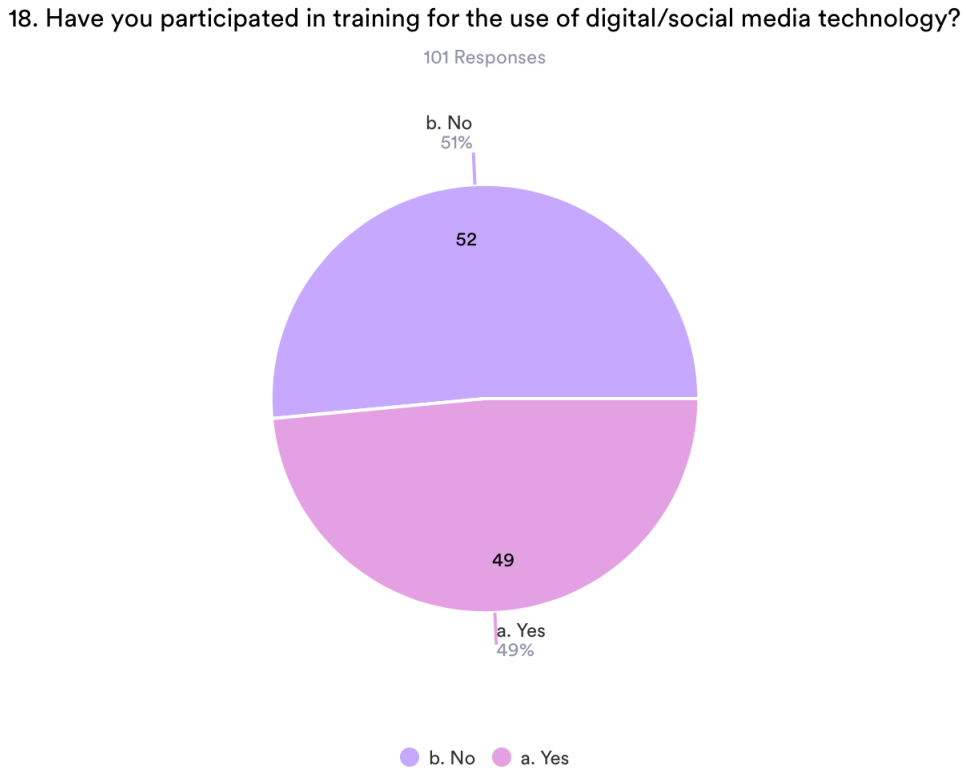
Similarly, the participants also evaluated the competencies on which additional work should be done to improve the results obtained. Only 9% considered that the skill that should be enhanced the most is web design, marketing skills were pointed out by 41% of the participants. Also 17% highlighted the importance of working with communication skills and 33% did the same with social media skills.



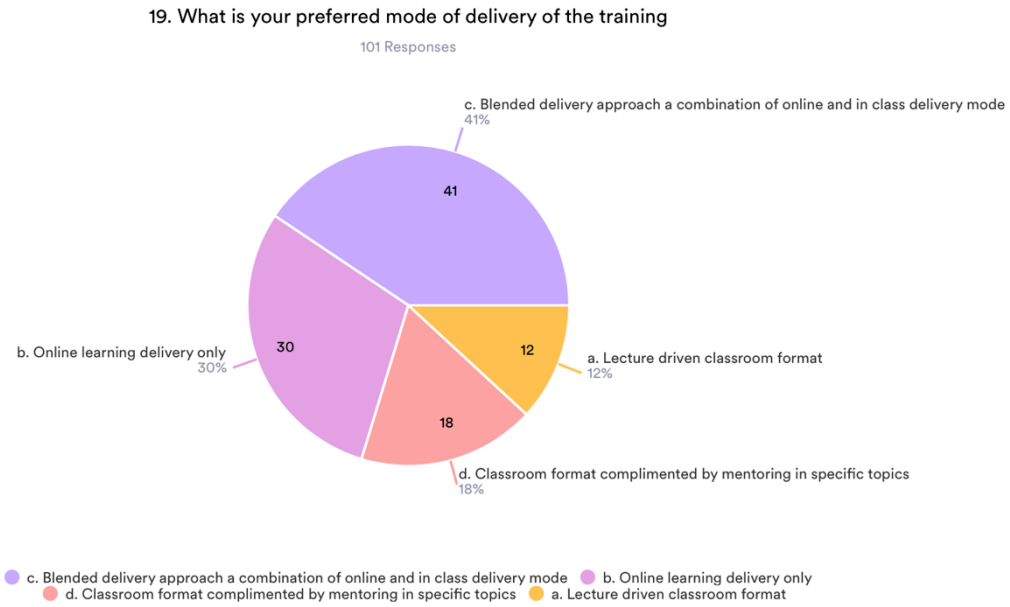
Among the proposed ways to improve the different skills necessary for digital entrepreneurship, 57% of the participants opted to promote training, 34% to favor economic support and only 9% to encourage coworking spaces.



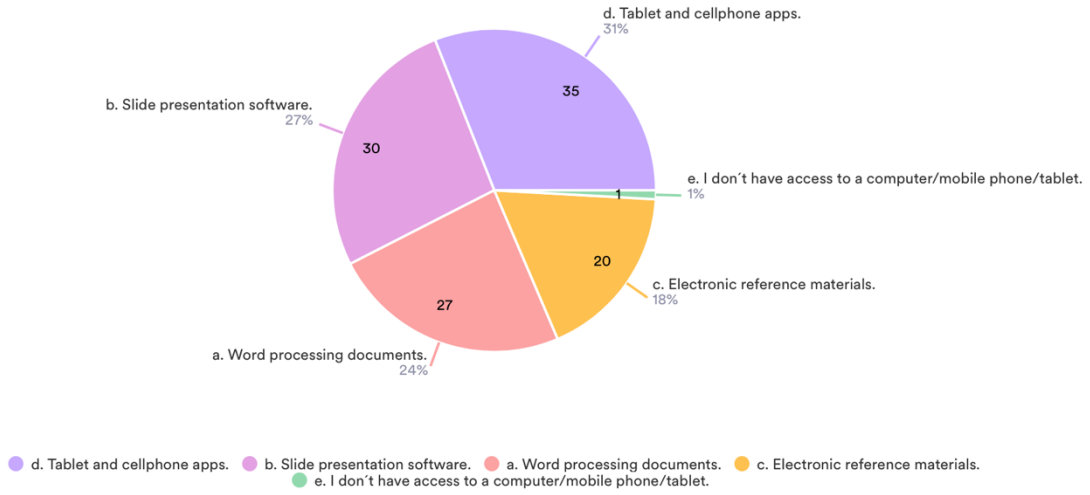
Fifty-one percent of the participants claimed that they had not participated in training on the use of digital/social media technology, compared to 49% who said they had participated in some training of this type. This illustrates the growth in the area of training offerings that meet this educational need with a high impact on employability and professional growth and their actual attendance.



Concerning the type of training best adapted to meet these needs, 41% of respondents preferred the blended delivery approach a combination of online and in class delivery mode, while 18% considered the classroom format complimented by mentoring in specific topics to be the best option. On the other hand, 30% claimed that it would be more beneficial to use the online learning delivery only and 12% opted for the lecture driven classroom format.

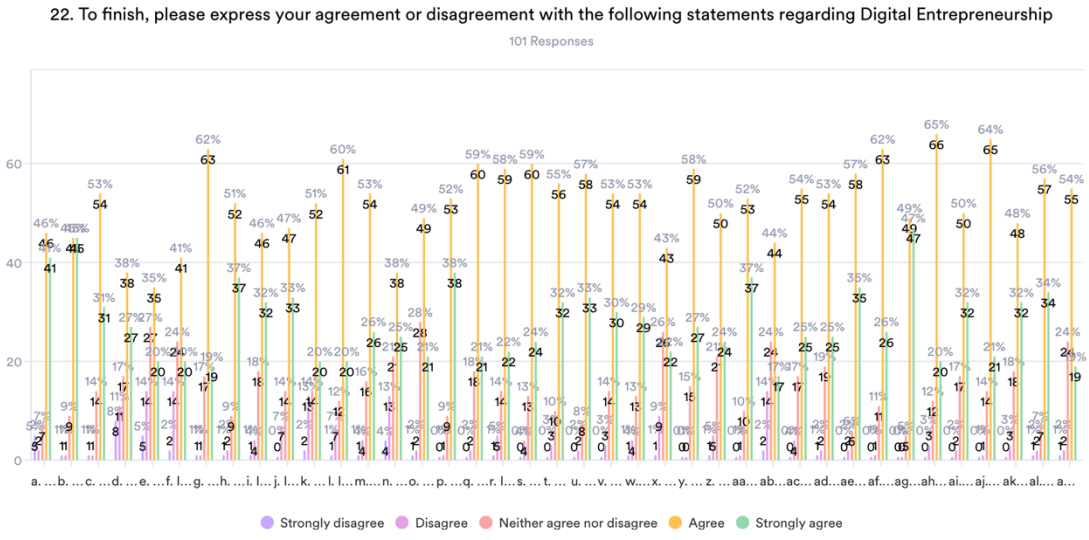


The survey participants also had the opportunity to evaluate their own digital competencies and to highlight the digital tools with which they are most familiar. Twenty-four percent claimed to be familiar with the Word processing documents and 30% with the slide presentation software. On the other hand, 35% stated to be familiar with the tablet and cellphone apps and 20% with the electronic reference materials. These results from the surveyed group point positively to the possibility of continuing to work for the development of digital competencies, in generational cohorts that have already lived most of their lives with digital technology and have basic knowledge in these matters.



Participants generally know without hesitation the names of various prominent figures associated with recent advancements in technology, digital business, social networks, and communication. Many participants recognized personalities such as Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Oprah Winfrey.

To conclude the 2nd wave of a survey, respondents in a very exact sequel expressed their agreement or disagreement with the following statements related to digital entrepreneurship and digital competencies.



The following table illustrates the highest and lowest values (by rank of importance) reflected in the above chart:

Statements	Agree	Strongly agree
I use digital tools to improve my job performance.	46%	41%
I use digital tools to make my job easier.	45%	45%
I use digital tools to develop the skills required by my job.	53%	31%
I use digital project design programs necessary for my job. (For example...).	38%	27%
I know what I need to start a business in the digital world.	35%	20%
I know what skills are needed to run my current/ future business on digital platforms.	41%	20%
I use digital world tool content to overcome the challenges of my job.	62%	19%
I can collaborate with people in a digital environment.	51%	37%
I do not hesitate to try things I have not tried in business life.	46%	32%
I feel the energy to do different jobs.	47%	33%
I tell my friends about my business ideas that can be done in the digital environment.	52%	20%
I am aware of digital areas where I can use my knowledge and skills.	60%	20%
I do not hesitate to participate in projects in the digital field from my friends.	38%	25%
I do not hesitate to take risks.	38%	17%
I ensure the security of the content I create in the digital space.	49%	21%

I think I can shape my life with my decisions.	52%	38%
I can see the future and make preparations for it.	53%	18 %
I renew myself for digital transformation.	58%	22%
I like working on digital projects that allow me to try something new.	59%	24%
I like to challenge old ideas and practices and look for better ones.	55%	32%
I engage in projects and tasks that allow me to see things from a new perspective.	57%	53%
I try new ways of working that haven't been used by others in the past.	53%	30%
I believe in going outside the comfort zone to solve problems encountered in business life.	53%	29%
I have the knowledge and skills to execute the digital business plans I make.	43%	22%
I have no problem adapting to a new situation and practice.	58%	27%
I do not hesitate to make mistakes in something I am working on.	50%	24%
There are also risks involved in digital businesses.	52%	27%
I know the appropriate methods and techniques to ensure success in the digital field.	44%	17%
I take advantage of digital opportunities that come my way.	54%	25%
I transform the resources I have into productivity by bringing them together.	53%	25%
It is necessary to be ready for changes that may occur in the business environment.	57%	35%
I can manage the changes that may occur in the work environment.	62%	26%

It is necessary to use creativity in the work environment.	49%	47%
I can work with any team or individual while performing my job.	65%	20%
I do not hesitate to take the lead in a job or practice.	50%	32%
I can make effective decisions about the future at work.	64%	21%
I have strong motivation and inclination towards different jobs.	48%	32%
It is necessary to promote businesses using social media tools.	56%	34%
Entrepreneurship skills are developed by using social media.	54%	19%

The second wave of the survey reveals a noticeable and measurable increase in participants' appreciation and understanding of various topics. There has been a significant rise in the number of respondents who value knowledge about digital entrepreneurship, including the use of resources and digital tools that facilitate business operations. Additionally, there is an enhanced recognition of the importance of effective decision-making processes and strategic thinking. Participants also expressed greater interest in learning about social and business marketing strategies, reflecting an awareness of their impact on business success. Overall, the findings suggest a growing recognition of the importance of entrepreneurship skills and the benefits they bring to personal and professional development.

Most responses in the second wave of the survey indicate that agreement levels hover around 50% or higher, suggesting a moderate level of concurrence among participants. However, there is a noticeable pattern of respondents agreeing without expressing strong agreement, which highlights a gap in their level of certainty and commitment. This trend suggests that while participants generally align with the statements presented, there is a lack of full consensus and confidence in their decisions. The absence of strong agreement may reflect hesitancy or the

need for further clarification and information before participants can fully endorse the viewpoints or recommendations being evaluated.

Conclusions of the 2nd wave of a survey

- Most of the people surveyed confirmed the statement of having different business ideas that could be carried out through entrepreneurship.

- Financial resources and lack of adequate knowledge keeps on being elements that have negatively influenced the development of these entrepreneurial initiatives.

- In general, the surveyed population has increased in numbers, considering the familiarity with the notions and potential of digital entrepreneurship.

- It is essential to create accessible training and educational tools that make up for the lack of information available on digital entrepreneurship.

- Most of the participants would still opt for a hybrid training that includes fully digital training spaces and tools lowering the need for an exchange in face-to-face mode.

- The training needs related to digital entrepreneurship most acclaimed by the participants stayed the very same - marketing and communication, social media skills and web design.

- Information should be provided on local, state, and European programs to help overcome the barriers to the development of digital entrepreneurship identified in the survey, in terms of funding opportunities, mentoring, legacy systems, administrative and financial burdens, taxes, etc.

- For most of the people surveyed, digital entrepreneurship continues to be an opportunity to reach new markets and consumers, to find new customers, as well as to reduce investment and production costs, so it becomes a very beneficial alternative for young people who want to start a business, which results in an increase in their chances of professional integration.

- Most of the respondents (16-30 years old) were familiar with different digital tools from the 1st wave of the survey, which was a massive advantage in terms of digital entrepreneurship compared to other generational cohorts that have more difficulties in approaching this medium.

Comparative Analysis Report

The project, NEWDIGISHIP, over last two years has focused on promoting digital entrepreneurship among young people, particularly those from low-income households, women, and those with fewer opportunities. The initiative aims to equip youth with digital skills and knowledge necessary for entrepreneurship in the digital age.

Throughout 24 intensive months the team of experts has developed set of practical tools and platforms to support the initiative of young digital entrepreneurs.

The respondents were acquainted with a precise Curriculum for digital entrepreneurship for young people, Handbook (Mentoring and support for the start of digital entrepreneurship for young people), Digital Entrepreneurship Handbook, Web tools and E-learning tools, Digital Entrepreneurial Touchpoint as well as an interactive mobile game developed into 2 separate modes based on the level of knowledge and skill as a digital entrepreneur.

- **Purpose of Surveys**:
    - **Wave 1**: Conducted at the beginning to assess baseline digital competencies and entrepreneurial intentions.
    - **Wave 2**: Conducted at the end to evaluate the progress made in digital entrepreneurship knowledge and skills.
- **Survey Methodology**

- Both waves used similar methodologies to maintain consistency in data collection.
- Surveys were administered across seven countries: Hungary, France, Spain, Lithuania, Germany, Turkey, and Malta.

- **Demographics**:
    - Majority of respondents were between 16-30 years old, with 62% women and 36% men in Wave 2.

3. Key Findings from Each Wave of a Survey

- **Entrepreneurial Intentions**:
    - **Wave 1**: Initial assessment showed a lack of digital job skills and a moderate level of interest in digital entrepreneurship.
    - **Wave 2**: 67% of respondents claimed to have an excellent business idea, an increase from 1st wave, showing improved confidence and interest in entrepreneurship.
- **Barriers to Entrepreneurship**:
    - **Wave 1**: Financial constraints and lack of digital skills were the main barriers.
    - **Wave 2**: Financial constraints (42%), lack of willingness to take risks (22%), and lack of knowledge (21%) continued to be significant barriers. However, the percentage mentioning lack of knowledge decreased, indicating improved awareness and skills.
- **Digital Skills and Familiarity**:
    - **Wave 1**: Limited familiarity with digital entrepreneurship concepts.
    - **Wave 2**: An average familiarity rating of 6.81 out of 10, indicating a positive shift in knowledge and understanding.

- **Importance of Digital Entrepreneurship**:
  - **Wave 1**: Moderate interest in digital over traditional entrepreneurship.
  - **Wave 2**: 82% acknowledged the advantages of digital entrepreneurship over traditional methods.
- **Training and Skills Development**:
  - **Wave 1**: High demand for training in digital skills and entrepreneurship.
  - **Wave 2**: Significant participation in digital skills training, with a preference for blended learning (41% of respondents).

4. Comparative Insights

- **Overall Improvement**: There is a noticeable improvement in digital skills and entrepreneurial confidence among participants from 1st 1 to 2nd wave.
- **Increased Awareness**: 2nd wave results show enhanced awareness of the potential of digital entrepreneurship, with more respondents recognizing its advantages and expressing a desire for further skill development.
- **Skill Gaps and Training Needs**: Despite improvements, respondents still identified gaps in digital skills, particularly in web design and social media management. This indicates a need for continued education and training.

Conclusions

The numbers and percentages support project success in increasing participants' digital competencies and entrepreneurial intentions. However, ongoing support is needed to address remaining barriers such as financial resources and deeper digital skill development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly accelerated the digital transformation across various sectors, fundamentally altering how individuals and organizations operate. This rapid shift has also been reflected in educational and professional

training contexts, where there is a growing preference for digital solutions. The constraints imposed by the pandemic led many to explore and adopt online learning as a viable alternative to traditional classroom settings. As a result, the trend has moved towards a blended learning approach, where participants favor online courses complemented by occasional face-to-face interactions. This hybrid model not only offers flexibility and accessibility but also maintains the benefits of in-person engagement, making it an increasingly popular choice among learners who value both convenience and the opportunity for direct personal interaction.

Future initiatives could continue to focus on accessible training formats and provide resources for overcoming financial and administrative barriers to digital entrepreneurship.

PROJECT

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