BLOSSOM

CONCEPTUAL MODEL FRAMEWORK

AUGUST, 2022

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

In order to develop the BLOSSOM Conceptual Model Framework, partner countries proceeded with interviewing twenty-five successful female entrepreneurs, from the five different countries, Cyprus, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Greece to form a data statistical analysis and a framework, based on what kind of competences led them to success with reference to the European tools DigiComp and EntreComp. On top of that, partner countries created and distributed specialized questionnaires to representatives of adult education, asked about women students' profile, skills, and lack of competencies in their educational institutions giving valuable insight into the popularity of their courses and what female students are looking to train in their further education. Additionally, with the purpose of validating the selected excelling competencies of the female entrepreneurs the partnership consulted 10 training experts, with the corresponding experience. Through this multi-case exploratory qualitative research took place in five different countries which led to the development of the BLOSSOM Conceptual Model Framework.
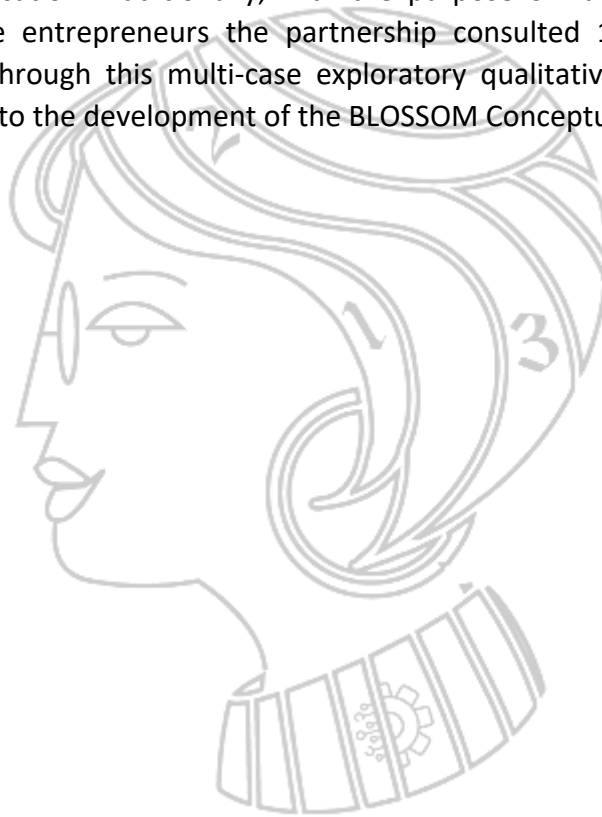
2. Results Summary

2.1 Literature Review Recap

Starting out, the partners defined the general profile of the low-skilled female population of the 5 countries of the consortium. Low-skilled women of Greece are being characterized by their limitation in accessing the educational system. Most of these women were school leavers, who were forced to leave compulsory education, due to poor heritage. In Spain, low-skilled women are found to have only completed primary education. In Poland, most of the low skilled women come from small and rural areas. In the case of Cyprus, women account for approximately 50% of the adult population with low level of education and 55% and 61% of the population with low digital and numerical skills, respectively, while in Romania, low-skilled women are economically and socially vulnerable.

The partners continued by presenting the counter-productive factors regarding further education of women, in the five counties of the consortium. Some of the common characteristics among the countries research are the following. Many women come from poor backgrounds and are forced to leave from compulsory education to support their family. Additionally, many women, due to the need of choosing between maternity and professional life, chose to drop out of education. However, the most vulnerable female group, are the women from different national backgrounds, who often face incidents of xenophobia, which made them reluctant from continuing to further educational levels and are even often exploited as "cheap" or illegal working force.

Moving on, the national literature reviews pointed out the obstacles that low-skilled women face, in the field of entrepreneurship. For example, women and especially women with low skills are being denied entrepreneurial opportunities, due to their lack of experience and knowledge. Moreover, the persistence of inequalities in household tasks acts as a burden to the participation of the low skilled women in entrepreneurship. Also, due to the limited opportunities that low skilled women have, regarding their participation in entrepreneurship, the fear of failure, alongside with the suffocating bureaucratic practices and the absence of entrepreneurial information, act as a deterrent to the participation of low skilled women in the field of entrepreneurship. This leads to limited chances and isolated cases where a woman, and especially a low-skilled woman, will start a business.

Lastly, the reviews presented a plethora of motivational practices, on personal, local and national level, in formal and non-formal education, capable of working as an impetus for the further development and amplification of female entrepreneurship. Apart from the efforts from policy makers to strengthen the position of the female low-skilled population in the field of entrepreneurship, the general conclusion of the literature reviews is that clearly stronger additional measures should be taken, aiming directly at optimizing the position of women in entrepreneurship, alongside with the elimination of any possible kind of discrimination.

2.2 Women Entrepreneurs Results

In this part of the research, partner countries proceeded with interviewing twenty-five successful female entrepreneurs from five project participating countries: Spain, Cyprus, Romania, Poland and Greece. Because of their various highly developed entrepreneurial and digital competences, they were able to overcome difficulties, such as economic crisis and the imposed lockdowns, while overcoming their local and international competition.

Additionally, the partnership created and distributed specialized questionnaires based on the Digital Competence Framework (DigComp) in order to fully understand their capabilities in terms of their digital knowledge, skills and competences, while also exploring questions based on the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp), to understand exactly which of these competences helped them to overcome the difficulties they faced while succeeding in their business venture.

Therefore, the selected competences for the framework were the following:

Digital Competences with reference to DigComp

- 11 (44%) of the surveyed women reported being competent at searching, recognizing and browsing digital content and navigating through digital environment, while 13 (52%) of the 25 female entrepreneurs can also help others.

- 12 (48%) entrepreneurs stated that they can organize and manipulate digital content easily and on their own and 10 (40%) of them even stated that they are capable of helping others.

- Moving on, one crucial component of their success was their ability to easily interact through digital technologies, smartphones, social networks, video conferences, emails. Specifically, 8 (32%) entrepreneurs out of the 25 entrepreneurs can perform this kind of ability on their own, while 16 (64%) business women can help people who are not in the position of performing the same task, as they do.

- 8 (32%) of them can easily participate in the society through public and private digital services (such as e-commerce and e-banking), while an additional 10 (40%) of the total entrepreneurs, are feeling able to help other people with the same task.

- Additionally, they have a high level of competency, regarding the sharing of digital content with other people. Specifically, 11 (44%) out of the 25 entrepreneurs stated that they are more than able to share different forms of digital content and 13 (52%) out of the total 25 entrepreneurs, are feeling able to help other people perform the same tasks.

Entrepreneurship Competences in reference to EntreComp

- 22 (88%) entrepreneurs hold good (8 entrepreneurs - 32%), very good (8 entrepreneurs - 32%) and excellent (6 entrepreneurs - 24%) leadership and inspirational level of competence.
- 21 (84%) entrepreneurs stated that their competence of having creativity in order to develop ideas, is at a good (5 entrepreneurs - 20%), very good (10 entrepreneurs - 40%) and excellent (6 entrepreneurs - 24%) level.

- 22 (88%) out of the total 25 entrepreneurs stated that their skills of <u>vision of future and business insight,</u> is at good (8 entrepreneurs – 32%), very good (9 entrepreneurs - 36%) and excellent (5 entrepreneurs - 20%) level.
- Moreover, 19 (76%) business women stated that their ability to stay <u>motivated</u> is at very good (10 entrepreneurs - 40%) and excellent level (9 entrepreneurs - 36%).
- As for <u>the ability of working with others</u>, 24 (96%) female entrepreneurs stated that their co-working ability is at good (7 entrepreneurs - 28%), very good (10 entrepreneurs - 40%) and excellent level (7 entrepreneurs - 28%).
- Regarding their last excelling competence, their ability of <u>learning through experience</u>, 21 (88%) of them stated their level is at a very good (8 entrepreneurs - 32%) and excellent level (13 entrepreneurs - 52%).

2.3 Adult Representatives Results

According to Spanish adult education experts, the vast majority of Spanish female students want to improve their communication, digital and economic skills, while in the Polish adult educational sectors women represent 65% of the student population. Female students lack motivational skills, perseverance, and planning and management competences. According to Polish adult education representatives, Polish women want to improve their business management, financial and business startup skills.

According to Greek adult education representatives 70% of their total student population are women, who are keen to upgrade their entrepreneurial skills, seeking corresponding courses about entrepreneurship and courses regarding their digital upgrade. Female students at the institutes seem to lack critical thinking skills and organization. Additionally, the Cypriot adult representatives stated that women constitute 70% of the students. The Cypriots female students lack leadership competences, business knowledge, communication, business behavior skills, business methodologies and computer skills. The Cypriot women students want to upgrade their digital, organizational, communicational and entrepreneurial skills.

As for the Romanian adult education representatives they state that the Romanian female students do not have the proper motivation, due to lack of confidence. The Romanian female students want to gain knowledge on business startup skills, time management and business resilience.

2.4 Validation Stage - Training experts

In order to validate the excelling competencies of female entrepreneurs, the partners consulted **10** training experts, through a digital questionnaire (Google Forms type), developed by the consortium, who operate as training experts from 2 to 12 years. The validated results are the following:

Starting with the <u>digital competencies,</u>

- 5 (50%) out of total 10 training experts consider the overall level of women, regarding the <u>ability of searching, recognizing, browsing digital content and navigating through digital environment</u>, to be very good, while 1 (10%) training expert stated that he considers the women's overall level to be excellent. 3

(30%) consider women's skills to be on average, but on an existent level. Only 1 of them stated that women hold a poor level, concerning this selected competence.

- Regarding the competence of <u>organizing and manipulating digital content,</u> 3 (30%) out of the total 10 training experts answered that they consider the overall women's level to be very good, while 2 (20%) out of the total 10, stated that the overall competence of the women to be excellent. 4 of them (40%) stated that the overall women's level is average but sufficient and only 1 (10%) consider the tier of the female's competence to be poor. According to the answers, the mean number of the results stays positive, so this competence is also validated.

- Regarding the selected competence of <u>participating in society through, through private and public digital services</u>, most of the training experts stated that the women's overall level can be regarded as extremely high. Specifically, 6 (60%) out of the total 10 training experts consider the overall female level to be very good and 1 (10%) training expert consider the overall level to be excellent. 2 (20%) consider the overall female level to be average, while only 1 (10%) of them stated that the overall women's level to be poor.

- Concerning the selected competence of <u>interacting through digital technologies (such as emails, video conferences, smartphones and social networks</u> the majority of training experts said that women's overall level, regarding this particular competence, belongs to an extremely high level. Specifically, out of the 10 total training experts, 6 (60%) of them stated that they consider the overall female level to be very good, while 3 (30%) of them mentioned that the overall women's level to be excellent. The last one stated that the overall female level is average.

- Regarding the last selected competence, the <u>ability of sharing digital content with others</u>, the training experts answered that they consider the women's overall level to be exceptionally high. Particularly, 7 (70%) out of the total 10 training experts, consider the overall female level, regarding this selected competence, to be very good, while an additional 2(20%) of them stated that the women's level is excellent.

By analyzing the results, the consortium can conclude that the training experts consider that women actually possess the selected competencies, included in the Framework model and in conclusion the <u>training experts were able to validate the selected digital competences.</u>

As per the selected <u>entrepreneurial competencies,</u>

- The overall women's level of <u>creativity, in order to develop ideas,</u> 4 (40%) out of the total 10 training experts stated that they consider the female level to be very good, while 1 (10%) of them consider the female level to be excellent. Additionally, 4 (40%) out of the total 10 training experts, consider the female level to be average, but sufficient. Only 1 (10%) consider the overall women's level, regarding this particular competence, to be poor. According to the answers of the training experts, the mean number of the results is positive, so this specific competence is validated.

- As for the overall <u>motivation</u> level of women, the majority of the training experts stated that it belongs at a satisfactory level. More specifically, 4 (40%) out of the total 10 training experts consider the female level of motivation to be very good, while an additional 2 (20%) training experts stated that the women's overall level of motivation to be excellent. Moreover, 4 (40%) training experts consider the overall female level,
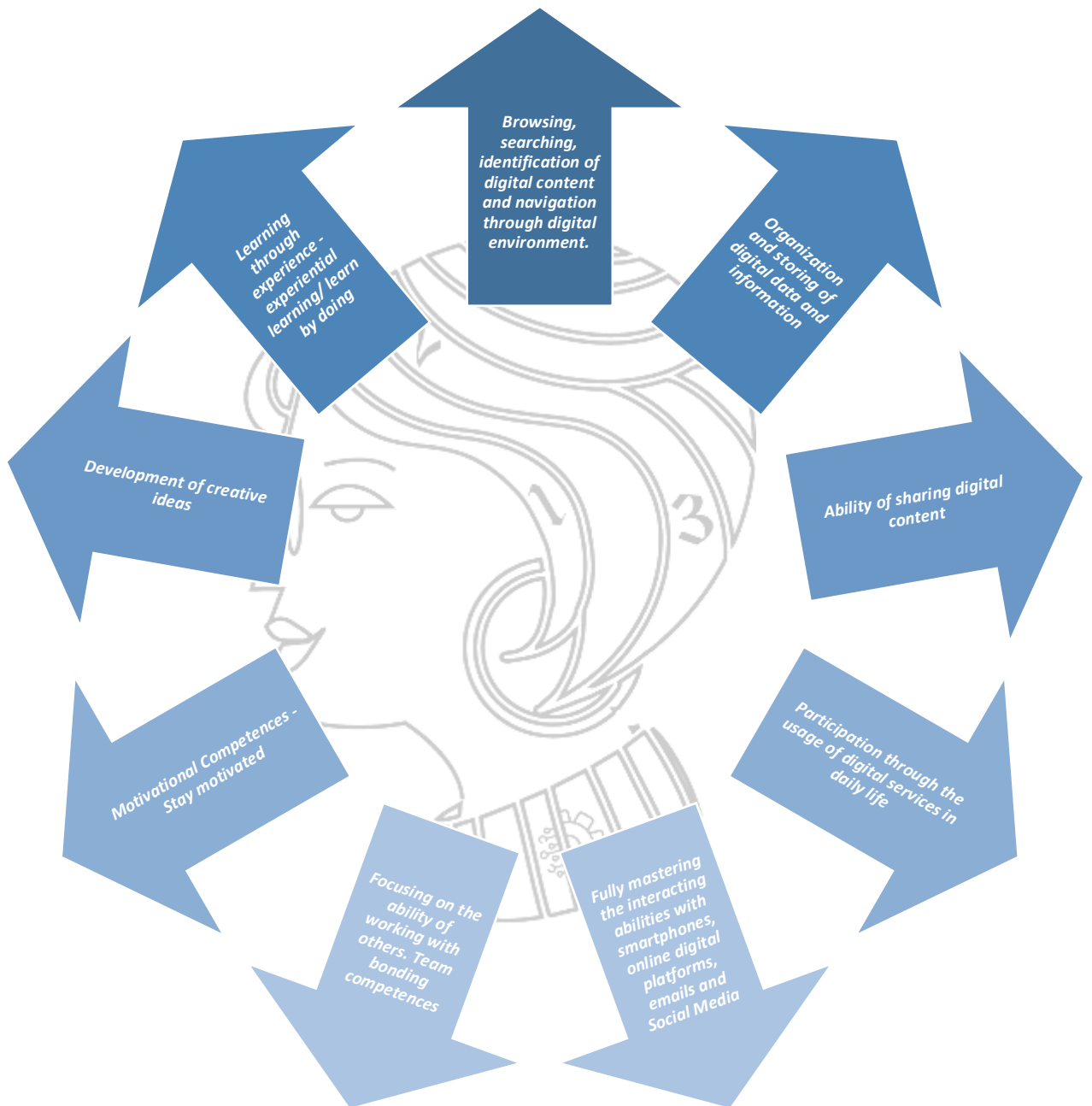
regarding this particular competence, to be average, but existing, meaning that at least they have a certain level of skills, regarding this competence.

- As for the selected entrepreneurial competence, regarding the ability of working with others, 5 (50%) out of the total 10 training experts, consider the women's overall level of co-working to be very good, while an addition of 4 (40%) experts consider the female level to be excellent.

- Regarding the selected competence of experiential learning/learn by doing, the majority of the training experts consider the women's overall level to be majorly high. Specifically, 6 (60%) out of the 10 total training experts, consider the overall women's level of experiential learning to be very good, while an additional 3 (30%) training experts stated that the female level, regarding this particular competence, is excellent.

However, regarding the competence of entrepreneurial insight and their vision of future, the majority of the training experts stated that the overall women's level is relatively low. Specifically, 3 (30%) out of the total 10 training experts, consider the overall women's level of vision of future to be poor, while an additional 4 (40%) of them, consider that the women hold average level of competence. So, according to these results, the combination of poor and average level responses outweighs the positive responses (3 in total) and thus, the selected competence cannot be validated by the training experts.

Similarly, regarding inspiring others and having leadership skills, 2 (20%) out of the 10 total experts, stated that they consider the overall women's level, regarding the competence of inspiring others, to be poor. Additionally, 4 (40%) stated that the overall female level, regarding this selected entrepreneurial competence, is average. So, by combining these categories, the partners can see that the poor and average answers, regarding the overall level of women, prevail in comparison to the very good and excellent answers (4 in total). So accordingly, this competence could not be validated.

3. Final Conceptual Model Framework – Blossom

Browsing, searching, identification of digital content and navigation through digital environment.

Learning through experience - experiential learning/ learn by doing

Organization and storing of digital data and information

Development of creative ideas

Ability of sharing digital content

Motivational Competences - Stay motivated

Participation through the usage of digital services in daily life

Focusing on the ability of working with others. Team bonding competences

Fully mastering the interacting abilities with smartphones, online digital platforms, emails and Social Media

Following the above-mentioned analyses stages, namely the answers of the 25 female entrepreneurs as well as the validation stage by the training experts, the partnership concluded to the most needed competencies women entrepreneurs should have, to help them launch and maintain a successful business in reference to the EntreComp and DigComp, which are the 9 following:

- **Digital competence:** *Browsing, searching, identification of digital content and navigation through digital environment*

- **Digital competence:** *Organization and storing of digital data and information*

- **Digital competence:** *Ability of sharing digital content*

- **Digital competence:** *Participation through the usage of digital services in daily life*

- **Digital competence:** *Fully mastering the interacting abilities with smartphones, online digital platforms, emails and Social Media*

- **Entrepreneurial competence:** *Focusing on the ability of working with others. Team bonding competences*

- **Entrepreneurial competence:** *Motivational Competence - Stay motivated*

- **Entrepreneurial competence:** *Development of creative ideas*

- **Entrepreneurial competence:** *Learning through experience - experiential learning/ learn by doing*

Entrepreneurial competences

Focusing on the ability of working with others/ Team bonding

Motivational Competence - Stay motivated

Development of creative ideas

Learning through experience/experiential learning/ learn by doing

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Digital Competences

Browsing, searching, identification of digital content and navigation through digital environment.

Organization and storing of digital data and information

Ability of sharing digital content

Participation through the usage of digital services in daily life

Fully mastering the interacting abilities with smartphones, online digital platforms, emails and Social Media

4. Conceptual Model Framework Analysis

Competence Area	1) Digital competences – Browsing, identification and navigation through digital content
Competence Statement	Digital competences are a "must-have" in the professional and personal space, due to the increase in digital content and devices. These digital competences will be useful in all aspects of business such as organization, browsing, and navigation though digital content and environment. According to UNESCO ''Digital skills are defined as a range of abilities to use digital devices, communication applications, and networks to access and manage information. They enable people to create and share digital content, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems for effective and creative self-fulfillment in life, learning, work, and social activities at large'' (Unesco. 2018):https://en.unesco.org/news/digital-skills-critical-jobs-and-social-inclusion
Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge	To be able to: ● perform better and with more ease in the digital environment ● handle information and various forms of contents of working environment ● identify digital content ● use digital creation tools
Skills	● Acquisition of skills regarding the labeling of digital content. ● Acquisition of adaptable digital skills, mandatory to the personal and professional needs ● Acquisition of skills, regarding the safe navigation through the digital world

Attitudes and Values	● Will improve the chances of a potential hiring or launch of a business. Everything is getting digitized ● Will be time saving

Competence Area	2) Entrepreneurial competence - Focusing on the ability of working with others. Team bonding competences
Competence Statement	By having high communicational skills, someone can understand data and various forms of information more easily and accurately, which will lead to the strengthening of the ability of working with others.

Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge	To be able to: ● write and speak properly ● observe and listen to the speaker ● to influence others ● to work with others ● to have higher tolerance
Skills	● Be able to express ideas of any kind easily through verbal and written form ● Body language skills, in order to create stronger and more effective connections ● Acquisition of Collaboration skills
Attitudes and Values	● Will help into building better and stronger connections, especially in working environment ● Resolve potential conflicts ● Create a healthy and non-toxic working environment

Competence Area	3) Entrepreneurial Competences. Ability of staying motivated
Competence Statement	The sole purpose of the motivational competences is to transfer the essential ability to make someone or yourself, to perform any given task with a fervent and with great passion.
Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge	To be able to: ● boost anyone mental state and feelings in any given circumstance, including own ● feel and sympathize co workers or employees (empathy) ● provide precise and effective feedback
Skills	● Acquisition of the skills, in order to have meaningful and cordial conversations ● Acquisition skills based on Self-determination theory ● Acquisition of skills to motivate anyone, including yourself ● Acquisition of the five major motivations (Achievement, Power, Affiliation, Security and Adventure) ● Acquisition of influencing skills, in order to persuade someone with greater effect
Attitudes and Values	● Will make someone improve his/her self-confidence ● Will make someone boost the confidence of others ● Employers will have a more focused, joyful working force ● Will give someone better reputation, especially employers ● Will give someone the permanent ability of negotiating

Competence Area	4) Entrepreneurial Competence –Development of creative ideas
Competence Statement	A creative entrepreneur is someone who uses their creative or intellectual knowledge and skills to earn a living. (LESLIE TRUEX. 2019. Basic Principles of Creative Entrepreneurs): https://www.thebalancesmb.com/basic-principals-of-creative-entrepreneurs-4582514

Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge	- How to be creative in every aspect - How to be innovative
Skills	- Acquisition of innovative skills, developing new ideas and products - Being able to improve an already existing product - Increased workplace problem solving and productivity - Acquisition of skills, in order to be commercially creative and innovative
Attitudes and Values	- Will boost creativity - Will boost employability rate - Will boost increased corporate morale, fun and happiness

Competence Area	5) Digital Competence. Organize and store digital data and information
Competence Statement	Data management skills are the abilities you use to effectively manage and use information. Data management skills involve looking for patterns, understanding database design concepts and being able to participate in short and long-term planning about database projects. (Indeed. 2020) : https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/resumes-cover-letters/data-management-skills)

Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge	To be able to: ● analyze digital data ● organize and store digital data ● collect data and information from various sources ● develop realistic and achievable business plans, according to the data collected
Skills	● Acquisition of data analysis skills, for important decisions ● Acquisition of data integrity skills. Being able to recognize potential weaknesses ● Being able to communicate through data
Attitudes and Values	● Someone will have a plethora and far more better opportunities, especially in data analytics ● Clarification of how the world of information actually works and operates

Competence Area	6) Digital Competence. Ability of sharing digital content
Competence Statement	Content sharing is the distribution of web/blog content across social media networks. Content sharing puts the content from a website or blog onto social media, allowing users to click a link, photo, or video to increase web visits. (Market Ready Index : https://marketreadyindex.io/content-sharing-social-media/)
Learning Outcomes	

Knowledge	To be able to:
	● share personal and professional content
	● have an effective online presence
	● increase credibility
	● share digital content and information with security processes

Skills	● Acquisition of the ability of staying digitally relevant
	● Acquisition of the ability of showing work in digital media
	● Acquisition of digital utilizing sharing skills

Attitudes and Values	● Will build strong connections with various parts of the community
	● Will decrease the overall cost of advertisement
	● Will save precious time, regarding the sharing of information

Competence Area	**7) Digital Competence – Participation through the usage of digital services in daily life**
Competence Statement	The "Digital services" is not only about "technologies". It's about new ways of solving problems, creating unique experiences and accelerating growth. (PwC Greece): https://www.pwc.com/gr/en/advisory/digital-services.html
Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge	To be able to:
	● use private and public digital services
	● import services into personal or working environment
	● promote brand more easily
	● general digital upgrade

Skills	● Organize personal digital portfolio ● Perform online purchases (e-commerce) ● Perform digital banking transactions ● Ability to use the digital provisions of public services
Attitudes and Values	● Time efficient ● More employability chances and opportunities

Competence Area	**8) Digital Competences. Fully mastering the interacting abilities with smartphones, online digital platforms, emails and Social Media**
Competence Statement	The competence of interacting with others via a plethora of digital devices, services or platforms.
Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge	Be able to: ● communicate through digital services ● guide through digital platforms ● communicate, inform or promoting through Social Networks ● communicate faster

Skills	• Acquisition of skills, in order to use different and various forms of email (Like Gmail and the services that it provides) • Acquisition of skills of the communicational usage that the new smartphones provide • Easier and effective communication through Social Media (Like Facebook or Instagram) • Effective promote through digital platforms and Social Media
Attitudes and Values	• Having more ways to communicate • More ways of effective advertising

Competence Area	9) Entrepreneurial Competence - Learning through experience – experiential learning/ learn by doing
Competence Statement	The competence of learning and upgrading yourself through past incidents and experiences.
Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge	• Practical implications of learning by doing • Fully grasp the knowledge by experiencing something • Learn in non-traditional, non-typical ways of learning, non-formal education.
Skills	• Acquisition of effective solving skills, when a potential same difficulty may appear • Acquisition of new skills, such as analytical and decision-making skills • Competences of acting accordingly when similar circumstances appear • Acquisition of awareness skills

Attitudes and Values	● Being calmer when a difficulty may arose ● It is a free and continuous learning procedure

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