GENERATION Z: EDUCATION IN THE WORLD OF DIGITIZATION FOR THE FUTURE OF ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

The gradual aging of the generation creates space for the emergence of a new generation. Today, Generation Z is a much-discussed topic. This generation has various attributes such as iGeneration, Gen Tech, Online Generation, Facebook Generation, and many other technology-related attributes. Currently, great emphasis is placed on this generation, as they will be part of organizations in the next few years. For the successful position of companies in the market, it is very important to research this generation and its preparation for the work environment. Companies should look at how this generation can be reached, motivated, educated and maintained in their organization. As this generation has grown with technology, there is a high presumption that their adaptation will be natural to the current era of digitization. In our research, we focused on Generation Z and its specifics in Slovakia. In 2018, we did a unique research on a sample of 875 people representing this generation. In the research, we addressed issues related to the self-assessment of this generation in the areas of: technological skills, skill level in applications / online services, the ability to learn new things, creativity in creating your own things, the ability to advise or explain technology to friends / family, the ability to find the right technology or application to address a current need, ability to communicate and make friends in the online space (games/applications/social networks), ability not to use technology and the Internet for more than a week. From the results, we found that young people rated very well, especially in their ability to learn new things, their creativity and their skill level in applications / online services. As these capabilities are important for the future success of businesses, companies should begin to create the right conditions for Generation Z to maintain them. However, we observed from the results that the level of technological skills of young people is not very high, according to them. This can be a problem in today's digital age. The problem may also be in the current setting of the education system, as education in the field of digitization is not part of the school curriculum. However, it is essential for the future of businesses that this young generation be fully adapted to the issue of digitization. It is also a challenge for companies to think about a suitable education system for this generation to survive and be competitive in the conditions of digitization.

Keywords: Generation Z, digitalization, education, technology.

1 INTRODUCTION

Campbell et al. [1] defines generations as groups of individuals born in the same period of time, have the same cultural relations and form a specific culture. The period in which the generation was born and the events that happened in period shape the culture and create a certain link between the members of the generation. ***Baby boomers*** (1946-1964) were born during the boom of babies born in Europe and America, they are more conservative, more stable and are not very compliant to take risks and make changes. Compared to subsequent generations, they had much less technology available. The Internet has not always been a part of their lives, but they slowly make familiar with it and it is becoming a natural tool for them to facilitate communication and information searching. The next generation is ***Generation X*** (Gen X) (1965-1977), also called the "Lost Generation." After their parents, they took on work habits and morals, focuses on work, likes to travel, uses social media, spends more time online than their parents. ***Generation Y*** (Gen Y) (1978-1994) is also referred to as the "Millennials". This generation is technologically savvy, has built real friendships, but is currently influenced by technology, enjoys shopping, traveling, following its role models through social media and blogs [2]. ***Generation Z*** (Gen Z) was already born with technology and are also known as digital natives. Constant network connection is natural for Gen Z carriers. They are quick in all the activities they perform, including decision making. Thanks to their technological connection, they are also known as iGeneration, Gen Tech, Online Generation, Facebook Generation, etc. [3] Gen Y and Generation of Baby Boomers are often referred to as lasting almost 20 years, Gen X only 14. The boundaries shift differently and are shaped by developments or events. Defining generation boundaries is different for authors. For example, Selingo [4] defines Gen Z, which is made up of

people born between 1995 and 2012. When it comes to interest in college, Gen Z focuses on the value and relevant education they can apply. Grešková [2] indicates the time period of Gen Z between 1995-2010. Members of this generation want to have everything individualized to bespoke, use the latest technologies, such as smartphones, tablets, game consoles, smart watches, pedometers, etc.

Table 1. Different generational characteristics [5]

	Baby boomers	***Gen X***	***Gen Y***	***Gen Z***
Relationship	First and fore-most personal	Personal and virtual networks	Principally virtual, network	Virtual and superficial
IT	It is based on self-instruction and incomplete	Uses with confidence	Part of its everyday life	Intuitive
Training, learning, development	Traditional education sys-tem, experi-ence, holistic	Flexible, shorter learning time, trainings, mim-icry, interactive, flexible, just in case	Rapid, individual, based on IT, alternative, just in time	Based on interest, informal learning

The Pew Research Center [6] assumes 1996 as separating Gen Z from Gen Y, as this year is crucial in terms of various factors, such as political, economic and social. For example, Gen Z was 5 to 20 years old when the terrorist attacks happened on September 11, they do not remember this event at all, or they were not born yet. Technology development is also a shaping factor for generations. Baby Boomers grew up with television, which changed their lifestyle and connection to the world. Gen X grew up alongside the computer revolution and Gen Y during the Internet boom. For Gen Z, all of these technological "conveniences" were a normal part of life. They grew up with web connectivity, mobile devices, WiFi and mobile broadband. They are expected to work automatically with social media and a constant connection. Growing up in constantly online technological environment creates dramatic changes in the behavior, attitudes, and lifestyles of young people. However, Pew Research Center's research does not yet define whether these are permanent "generational tracks" or only characteristics of adolescence that will be suppressed in adulthood.

For representatives of Gen Z it is natural to work with a quantity of information, they are mobile, rapidly adopting technological innovations. They are the most diverse generation of personalities and individuals, attracted by their creativity, new perceptions, new experiences [7]. They need to receive information quickly, can work on multiple tasks in parallel - so they dispose of multi-tasking skills, they prefer graphics over text, and they work best when they can be connected to a network [8]. Minevich & Sirrotin [9] say that Gen Z will be ready to adapt to new industries in the field of digitization, such as data processing, space technology, quantum technology, IOT, autonomous systems, etc. The combination of aspects available to Gen Z is essential to optimize the digital economy and accelerate digitization. According to the research of Gomez et al. [10], Gen Z is interested in working in the technology industry. As many as 51% rate technology as a top industry, but women are much less likely to work with technology than men. They are interested in work that promotes "greater good" than education and health care. Kapil & Roy [11], on the other hand, argue that Gen Z will not necessarily be technically professional. They say that this generation is particularly interested in technology that is easy to use and solves their problems, helps them coordinate activities and provides relevant people and information.

1.1 Gen Z and education

Gen Z needs to constantly communicate through any communication channel. Communication is the most important activity in their lives, whether it is online communication, meeting friends outside or at school. Although they are masters at using technology, they prefer face-to-face meetings. Gen Z students are autodidact - they are proactive and can use all available resources for education. They consider education as a lifelong activity. Rather, they focus on practical study methods with a link to real life. They dispose features such as: creativity, flexibility, independence and care for the environment. More and more young people are involved in environmental clean-up activities, they are interested in their own future and the future of future generations [12]. Today's students not just to learn through digital devices, they are comfortable with a combination of face-to-face and online learning. Gen Z needs teachers who act as instructors/guides to engage, understand and provide quick feedback to students. Students also prefer when they can choose the way of learning - if they want to work on the task individually or in groups. Some even report that they built friendship with

people through technology by learning together [4]. Moore et al. [13] states that Gen Z students prefer to learn independently, in collaboration with their classmates and at their own pace. They expect to be able to behave in the learning environment in the same way as in their virtual world. They desire to immediate information, visual forms of learning and prefer to replace term communication instead interaction [14]. The Pearson Educational Institution [15] conducted a survey of 2,558 Generation Y and Z respondents aged 14-40 in the United States examining attitudes, preferences, and behaviors with the use of technology in education. 59% of Gen Z anticipate that technology will change the way universities learn in the future, whereby 54% from them saying that technology will also improve education. 32% prefer online courses with video lectures. Still a high proportion - 78% think that teachers are important for the development of their education, while 39% prefer teaching with a teacher. 57% prefer personal activities with classmates and only 22% prefer self-study. The preferred educational platform for Gen Z is YouTube (59%), whereby 47% spending 3 hours a day here. 55% also say that YouTube has increased the value of their education, learning and personal development in the last year. 47% Gen Z use for learning educational applications or games.

1.2 Gen Z at workplace

Gen Z is made up of a workforce that is likely to disrupt current trends in the work environment. There is a need for companies to prepare to create the environment and appropriate models that will be needed for the success of the next generation. Gen Z is seen as the workforce of the future. Representatives are sociable, as they are used to communicating on social networks and it is expected that it is natural for them to work in a team. They also expect to be able to work from anywhere through technology. Last but not least, Gen Z prefers constant feedback, which we can also observe in social networks, where it is desirable for them to get "likes" [16]. Ozkan & Solmaz [17] state that Gen Z needs a suitable social environment based on teamwork for its work in the organization, therefore organizations should focus on forming a team spirit in the culture of the organization. This generation is self-confident and realizes that work is important to them in fulfilling their dreams.

If organizations want to get Gen Z, they must become good "global citizens." Not only the quality of goods and services is important for Gen Z, but especially the focus on current societal challenges, such as sustainability, climate change, hunger, etc. [10]. They also expect that the priority of the company in which they will be employed should be job creation, innovation, improvement of private and working life, but above all a positive impact on society and the environment [18]. First, managers should understand the factors (lack of work experience, use of smartphones, popularity of social media, growing up in a safety culture) that influence a generation and lead to a certain behavior. Understanding their behavior and expectations will help managers better integrate this generation into the work environment. Meeting the expectations of Gen Z can be achieved through a entrance interview, where managers present them a realistic view of the work in organization. Such a view helps interested persons to decide whether a job would be suitable for them and to be able to prepare in advance for the obstacles they will have to face. It is also appropriate to give this generation a degree of autonomy and, over time, to make certain decisions. The manager should also support on-the-job training and create a culture that supports feedback. A manager who acts as a coach and provides emotional support reduces employee stress and anxiety [19]. According to the daily HN online [20], organizations should provide the young generation: flexible working hours, a competitive salary and clearly defined work with instructions. These employees will perform if they have a clearly defined order of tasks in accordance with colleagues. If the work in the organization is not properly organized, they will cheat and will not deliver the required performance. Their work should be interesting, using technology - which allows to work with a lot of information. It is ideal for them if it will be possible to work outside the workplace, as they prefer flexible working hours. Bencsik et al. [5] emphasizes that it should also be a priority for managers to focus on new human resources tasks, to ensure knowledge sharing so that the new generation becomes active and productive members of the organization. Changes should occur especially in the areas of communication, motivation and corporate culture. It is also necessary for the new generation to create a suitable environment with a new organization and the creation of a technical background.

However, previous generations will still be present in the workplace environment, which can lead to intergenerational conflicts. It will be possible to observe differences in thinking, attitudes, behaviors, value settings, flexibility and technical knowledge [5]. The following research was conducted by Universum, INSEAD Emerging Markets Institute, The HEAD Foundation and MIT Leadership Center, which interviewed more than 18,000 respondents in 19 countries. The representation of respondents was: Generation Z - students, Generation Y - students, Generation Y and Generation X - working in the work environment. One of the research areas was which leadership styles they prefer / apply.

Based on Fig. 1 we can observe that leaders especially prefer open communication and feedback. Gen Z is described as the most important - a positive approach. The biggest differences can be observed in the method of leadership by the example of Generation X and what Gen Z expects from the leaders. 35% of Gen Z expect motivational behavior, but only 25% of Gen X apply this style. Also, 23% of Gen X leaders offer strong personal ethics, although only 12% of Gen Z expects it. Although the differences are not large, they create gaps that may disrupt relations between leaders and their employees in the future. These differences may involve a major problem later, as Gen Z will make up a large proportion of the workforce and Gen X will often be a leader [21].

Figure 1. Which Leadership Style Do The Generations have? [21]

KPMG [22] states that employers could motivate Gen Z through, for example, career growth, including a job-to-job rotation program, a stronger training program to speed up or retrain employees, map employee experiences and then integrate them into an appropriate program, implement innovative remuneration, performance management programs to motivate and retain employees, as well as leadership development programs for multi-generational management. Tulgan et al. [23] summarized several key strategies for getting the most out of Gen Z in the workplace. They recommends: ***a) promoting high-intensity relationships*** - small teams with a strong leader, tight and well-defined leading, teaching-style leadership; ***b) providing continuous training*** - young workers lack non-technical skills such as personal responsibility, problem solving, time management and interpersonal communication, employers should invest in the training process in these areas; ***c) clearly defined tasks*** - structured and defined roles and responsibilities.

2 METHODOLOGY

The main goal of the research was to analyze the level of digital skills and abilities in terms of self-assessment among Generation Z. Research data were obtained through a questionnaire research and interviews with young people in Slovakia aged 16-19 who were high school students and expressed interest in future tertiary education. The collection of research data was conducted in 2018 with the research sample consisting of 875 respondents, 555 women and 320 men. The purpose of the research was to analyze self-assessment in the field of digital technologies, given that the respondents will enter the labor market in the coming years and will be a part of the digital transformation processes in the economy.

The areas in which the respondents were evaluated were:

- Skill level in applications / online services
- Level of technological (device) skills
- Ability to learn new things (eg applications)
- Creativity in creating your own things (photos, videos, ..)
- Ability to advise or explain technology to friends / family
- Ability to find the right technology or application to address a current need
- Ability to communicate and make friends in the online space (games / applications / social networks)
- Ability not to use technology and the Internet for more than a week

In each of the areas, respondents were able to determine their self-assessment on a scale of 1-5, whether they perceived themselves as excellent (rating 1) or weak (rating 5). Part of the research was to examine the differences in self-assessment between young women and men. As digital technologies will be an essential part of future jobs and will also play an important role in education from primary education, we perceive it as important to know not only their level but also the impact of gender on this situation. We have analyzed significance of the differences between group of men and group of women in the sample using non-parametric Chi-square test, with significance level at p=0,05.

3 RESULTS

The research data presented in Fig. 2 show, that young people from Generation Z see their skills in applications and online services in average as very good, while skills in technologies like devices as mediocre. The best average assessment was in the ability to learn new things. These young people in our sample presented themselves as eager to learn and use technology, which can be seen as well in the ability NOT to use technology and Internet for more then a week, which had the worst assessment from all areas for evaluation. The ability to find the right technology or application to address current needs was assessed worse than the skill in application, while there has been found a larger difference between men and women. With the further assessment we have looked at the comparisons of men and women in Fig. 3.

	Skill level in applications / online services	Level of technological (device) skills	Ability to learn new things (eg applications)	Creativity in creating your own things (photos, videos, ..)	Ability to advise or explain technology to friends / family	Ability to find the right technology or application to address a current need	Ability to communicate and make friends in the online space (games / applications / social networks)	Ability not to use technology and the Internet for more than a week
ALL	2,21395881	2,706285714	2,001146789	2,222732	2,358945	2,4126437	2,332191781	3,1977143
women	2,34538879	2,906306306	2,030797101	2,157609	2,4213382	2,5597826	2,396396396	3,190991
men	1,990625	2,360501567	1,952978056	2,339623	2,254717	2,1608833	2,225	3,2037618
								

Figure 2. Comparison of average self-assessment in digital skills and abilities among sample group, men and women (N=875)

Fig. 3 presents average assessment of men and women in our sample of young people from Generation Z with standard deviations. The standard deviations in the case of men and women differ only slightly, while largest st.dev was found in the case of not using IT for more than a weak (1,31 for women and 1,44 for men). In general, within the group of women in our sample we have observed a slightly lower standard deviation than in a group of men.

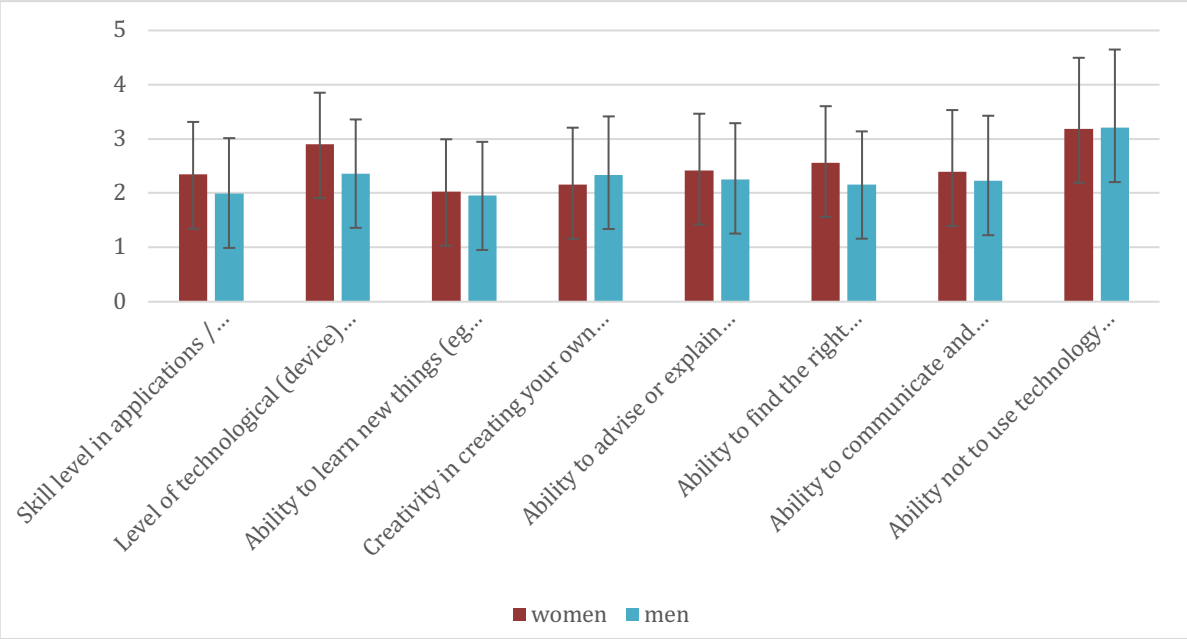

Figure 3. Comparison of average assessment of men and woman in the sample, presenting standard deviations

To identify the differences between men and women in our sample we have looked and the proportion of respondents with excellent or very high assessment (1 and 2 on scale), further "excellent". This was mainly due to identifying the percentage of individuals that feel very strong with technologies, as digital and new technologies are already an inevitable part of future and new forming and changing jobs. The analysis has shown several significant differences (Fig. 4) with Chi-square test results presented in Table 2. While applications and online services are familiar to young men and young women, still a significant difference was found in the comparison of percentage of excellent assessed respondents. 75% of men see themselves as excellent in applications and online services compared to 58% of women. The largest and significant difference was found in skills in technologies (devices), where 59% of men see themselves as excellent compared to 33% of women. We can observe better assessment in the group of men further in ability to advise or explain technology to friends / family, ability to find the right technology or application to address a current need and ability to communicate and make friends in the online space (games/ applications/ social networks). Women in our sample have assessed themselves as excellent in creativity significantly more then men.

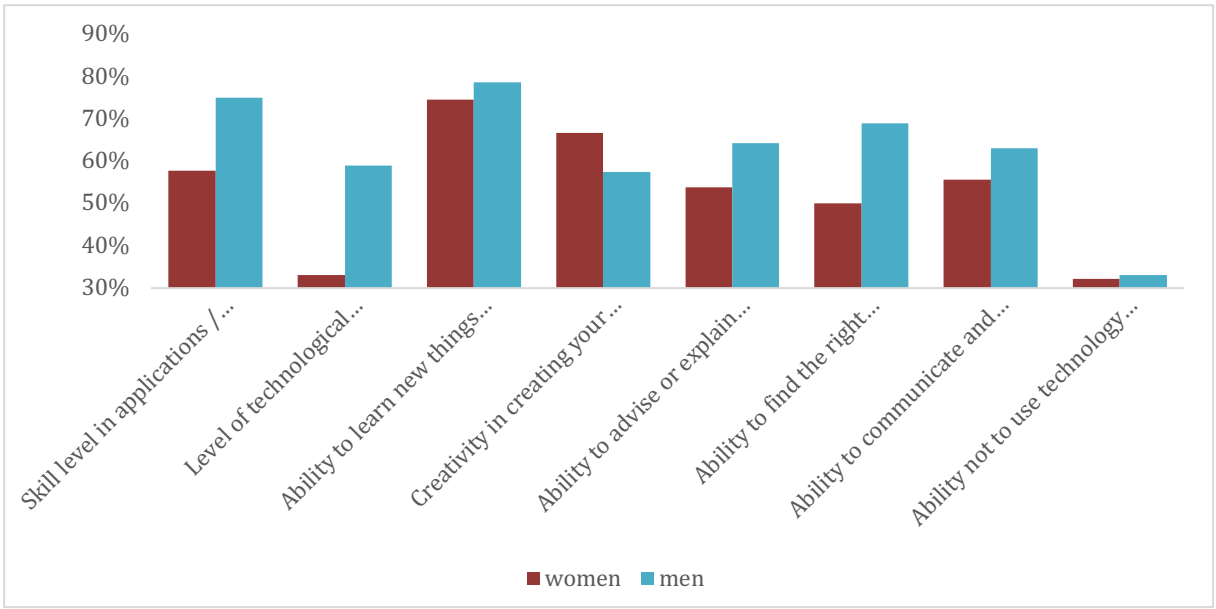

Figure 4. Percentage comparison of excellent self-assessment in skills/abilities among women and men

Table 2. Chi square test results for excellent self-assessment among women and men

	women	*men*	*Chi square*	*P-value*
Skill level in applications / online services	58%	75%	25.98	0,00**
Level of technological (device) skills	33%	59%	55.71	0,00**
Ability to learn new things (eg applications)	75%	79%	1,93	0,17
Creativity in creating your own things (photos, videos, ..)	67%	58%	7,34	0,01**
Ability to advise or explain technology to friends / family	54%	64%	9,17	0,00**
Ability to find the right technology or application to address a current need	50%	69%	29,80	0,00*
Ability to communicate and make friends in the online space (games / applications / social networks)	56%	63%	4,64	0,03*
Ability not to use technology and the Internet for more than a week	32%	33%	0,07	0,79

While many new jobs related to digital technology will need employees with critical and analytical thinking, we have looked at the relations and dependencies with the ability to find the right technology or application to address a current need. We have conducted a regression analysis (Tabi 3) with the dependent variable of Ability to find the right technology or application to address a current need and independent variables of:

- Skill level in applications / online services
- Level of technological (device) skills
- Ability to learn new things (eg applications)
- Creativity in creating your own things (photos, videos, ..)
- Ability to advise or explain technology to friends / family
- Ability to find the right technology or application to address a current need

We can see that again in this case all skills or abilities except creativity have a significant effect on the dependent variable. This shows that the better self-assessment that we can observe within the sample group of men in most skills/abilities can be also understood under the interdependence of these skills and abilities.

Table 3. Regression analysis results

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95,0%*	*Upper 95,0%*
Intercept	0,68	0,11	6,14	0,00	0,46	0,89	0,46	0,89
Skill level in applications / online services	0,21	0,04	5,44	0,00**	0,14	0,29	0,14	0,29
Level of technological (device) skills	0,13	0,04	3,61	0,00**	0,06	0,20	0,06	0,20
Ability to learn new things (eg applications)	0,13	0,04	3,35	0,00**	0,05	0,21	0,05	0,21
Creativity in creating your own things (photos, videos, ..)	0,04	0,03	1,41	0,16	-0,02	0,10	-0,02	0,10
Ability to advise or explain technology to friends / family	0,24	0,03	7,28	0,00**	0,18	0,31	0,18	0,31

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The importance of new technologies and digital skills is undeniable. They are becoming part of new and changed jobs and are important for people and machines to work together, but they must also be part of new education systems. Systems of schooling as well as self-education, and education through other organizations, entities or employers. The young Generation Z is currently becoming part of the labor market and will be important for the overall digital transformation. Employers should pay more attention to this generation, as they do not yet adapt to the new management trends that this

generation will require [24]. In a sample of 875 young men and women, we analyzed the current level of their skills in our research. They acquired these skills and abilities during their life naturally (at home, with friends, self-study) as well as in schools and hobby groups. Since they are not yet on the labor market, we decided to look at digital abilities and skills in terms of self-assessment in our research. Self-assessment can be skewed as it does not objectively compare individuals, but in a large sample also from the point of view of men and women researched it may point to fundamental differences or shortcomings that should be addressed from the point of view of future employers, but also represent a starting point for possible and important changes in education of next generation. In our sample, young people were evaluated best in terms of ability to learn (more than 75% were evaluated excellently in both groups), which is a very important starting point for future education. Despite the fact that their contact with applications and online services is large, only 58% of women rated themselves excellently. Women were significantly worse in several digital skills and abilities, especially in technical skills related to devices, where only 33% were perceived as excellent. Dell company [25] conducted a similar research in 2018 on 12,086 young people belonging to Gen Z, in 17 countries, to find out the attitudes, expectations and self-assessment of Gen Z in working conditions. To compare with our research, we have looked at the proportion of respondents with excellent or very high assessment, further “excellent”. Compared to our results, we can say that in foreign research in the field of technology literate 73% were rated as excellent, in our research young people were rated on average in this area, while men were rated excellent in 59% of cases and women in 33% of cases, while we focused mainly on technology literacy related to work with devices. In the field of installation and use of software and applications, 64% were rated as excellent in secondary research, in our research, Gen Z was rated quite well in the field of applications and online services, while 75% of men and 58% of women were rated excellent in this field. In the field of comfortable analysis of data and drawing valid conclusions, 61% of respondents from Dell research were rated as excellent, in our research we can compare this question with the ability to find the right technology or application to address and current need, where 69% of men and 50% of women rated as excellent. In the field of “easily learn new things and work with new tools”, 72% of respondents from Dell research said they were excellent, in our research young people were also rated very well in this area - 79% of men and 75% of women rated excellent, so both gender in. 66% from Dell research respondents rate themselves as creative, in our research 58% of men and 67% of women were rated as creative. While current research in this topic is focused focused mainly on the whole group of young people in Gen Z, we highlight the importance of gender specficis related to technology, as our findings show. The general avereage assessment that is often presented does not provide sufficient information, as we can see, because significant differences may occure between men and women.

Devices and new technologies will be an important part of human work, so we see the importance of them becoming a greater part of education and of women having more and more access to them. In case of women the new approach to technologies will require taking in account specifics of women, their interests, abilities, way of work etc. In this research, we do not focus only on IT mainly associated with programming, but we build on the opportunities and needs that arose with the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where technologies and new devices will become a common part of work in many jobs and have a complementary role to human work. These technologies may have a lot of forms and will be part of work of young men as well as women. Today, besides to technological skills, organizations require employees to have soft skills, flexibility, analytical thinking and creativity. These requirements will probably be requested in future employees who are currently in the educational stage [26]. New approach to education will need to address the needs of future jobs and prepare both women and man in the context of soft skills as well as digital capabilities, though not only in schooling but in other continuous education programs as well.

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