

Talents in the Digital Age: Socioeconomic Perceptions of Technology in the European Union

Tünde Zita Kovács , Gréta Gulyás , Johanna Tripo , Ákos Botos

Department Of Economics, Faculty Of Economics And Social Sciences, Partium Christian University, Romania

Abstract

The relationship of European Union citizens to digital technologies varies significantly depending on the social context. Drawing a parallel with the parable of the talents in the Gospel of Matthew, the present study examines how different societies manage their digital resources and opportunities. The research is based on the Eurobarometer SP551 (2024) survey, examining EU citizen attitudes toward digitalisation across four domains: healthcare, communication, commerce, and government services. The study also explored opinions on digital rights enforcement. Attitudes were analysed based on national economic conditions, EU accession dates, and individual socioeconomic characteristics. Analytical methods included descriptive statistics, Kruskal–Wallis tests, Dunn post-hoc tests, and multivariate linear regression. Results revealed several unexpected trends regarding digital technology. Citizens of economically prosperous member states expressed confidence in digital health initiatives and e-government services. In contrast, residents of states joining after 2000 showed greater openness to e-commerce digital opportunities. Individual-level findings often contradicted expectations. A positive attitude towards digital infrastructure and skills development reinforced the importance of technology across all examined areas. Among socio-professional categories, retirees, manual workers, and rural respondents perceived greater potential in the future application of digital technologies than highly educated respondents, whose attitudes are more reserved. This contradicts assumptions linking digital optimism directly to educational attainment or economic power. For European policymakers implementing the 2030 digital decade policy agenda, these conclusions highlight that the availability of technological developments does not necessarily translate into active social use or higher expectations. Varied citizen expectations necessitate flexible policy frameworks.

Keywords: Attitudes, Digitalization, E-Commerce, Health Care, Public Services