

24 - 26 July 2026

Dublin , Ireland

Bridging The Generational Divide: A Cross-National Analysis of Digital Well-Being and Joint Learning Frameworks in European Education

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Abstract

In the wake of rapid post-pandemic technological transformation, cultivating digital health and fostering demographic equity have become central mandates for European educational policy. Despite their importance, regional initiatives and institutional mechanisms remain heavily fragmented across the European Union. This study examines the comparative outcomes of a multi-country literature evaluation conducted through the European Digital Harmony initiative (Erasmus+), mapping conceptual frameworks and practical operations across eight member states: the Czech Republic, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Ireland, Greece, Germany, and Cyprus. Relying on a structured synthesis of state-level data and regulatory frameworks alongside overarching EU strategies, this paper demonstrates that young learners, despite being digital natives, lack corresponding digital resilience. Across all examined regions, problematic behavioral trends are widely apparent, characterized by screen overexposure, virtual harassment, mental exhaustion, and related psychological distress. Simultaneously, this study investigates Intergenerational Learning (IGL) as a dual-purpose intervention designed to counter these vulnerabilities—boosting foundational technical capabilities and social connectedness among senior citizens while nurturing emotional regulation, community awareness, and mutual empathy among youth. Although distinct regional success stories exist, this cross-national analysis highlights six key institutional vulnerabilities: conceptual fragmentation, minimal integration into core curricula, underprepared teaching staff, a highly episodic (project-based) approach to mixed-age initiatives, regional socioeconomic tech divides, and a significant deficit in longitudinal impact tracking. To counter these systemic barriers, this paper details the pedagogical architecture of the instructional modules engineered by the Digital Harmony project, concluding with specific, actionable policy directions to help stakeholders harmonize regulatory frameworks and establish enduring funding networks across the

continent.

Keywords: Digital well-being, Intergenerational learning, Social inclusion, Digital resilience, Educational policy