



## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL IMPACT: THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ON THE FUTURE OF EMPLOYMENT WITHIN COMPANIES, AND THE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND/OR TECHNOLOGY?

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### ABSTRACT

Companies currently operate in a VUCA environment (Kaufman and Srića, 2020), characterized by rapid changes in competition, demand, technology, and regulations, creating additional pressure on management to align their business processes and models with the adoption of disruptive technologies, for competitiveness and value creation (Savastano et al., 2019; Teichert, 2019). However, according to (Schneider et al., 2021), it is important not to forget that technology-oriented companies fail to recognize the procedural nature of digital transformation unless they encompass sociological, cultural, and economic factors such as vision, strategy, culture, HR skills, resources, and infrastructure (Leao et al., 2021; Kraus et al., 2022).

Due to global crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the current war in Ukraine, digital transformation significantly develops and innovates the conditions in the labor market. There is an increase in the number of digital jobs, non-standard forms of employment, changes in the requirements of labor market actors, innovative employment practices, greater mobility, flexibility, and much more detailed demands for education and job enhancement (DigitalCxo, 2023). On the other hand, the negative effects of digital business transformation and its consequences on the labor market relate to problems of imbalance between national and international labor markets, then between regulatory frameworks and the need for education, as well as insufficient social element and investment in human capital, but also procedures in the digital labor market, and security level (Zub, 2023).

In the global labor market, competitiveness over many job positions now involves "Chat GPT," an open AI technology based on advanced machine learning algorithms, which allows for simulating human interaction with users and thus enables sophisticated responses and reactions to clients based on training with large amounts of data (Božić, 2023).

**Key words:** digital anthropology, transformation, employees, human, technology, HR disruption



## I INTRODUCTION

The need for business transformation demands disruptions in operations. There are multiple dimensions, with a focus on **innovating business processes** to enhance competitiveness (Gokalp and Martinez, 2021; Barbosa et al., 2019), and **digital business strategy** to boost productivity and create new value for customers (Hanelt et al., 2021). An ongoing trend is the digital business transformation, where additional value is created through the integration of social and economic dimensions of operations (Attaran, 2020). Regarding the use of digital technologies, an IBM study shows that 42% of companies are considering the use of artificial intelligence, while 35% are already implementing it in their operations (ECM, 2023). Although digital technologies bring numerous benefits, they also pose challenges for companies, employees, and individuals. The contribution of artificial intelligence (AI) in business is reflected in customer communication services and problem-solving. However, challenges arise from the application of AI in business, particularly in the labor market, where, according to Forbes estimates, the use of AI solutions may eliminate nearly a billion jobs over the next 10 years, resulting in the loss of up to 375 million jobs (Zub, 2023).

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a key accelerator for the adoption of digital technologies in business, leading to the introduction of digital capabilities and, in some cases, comprehensive digital business transformation. These changes have resulted in an extreme growth in the global digital transformation market. According to current studies, the size of the digital transformation market in the US alone was \$594.5 billion in 2022. Estimates suggest that this figure will grow annually by 21% until 2027, reaching \$1,548.9 billion in 2027, with the USA, Europe, and China being the largest investment areas in the coming years (Zub, 2023). Simultaneously, one of the key drivers of instability in the labor market will be the digital transformation market and the aforementioned parameters. Disruptive changes in the labor market have partly surfaced due to the emergence of the digital labor market, as a part of the global labor market where supply and demand are formed digitally within the digital ecosystem, resulting in labor market outcomes due to the application of digital technologies (Azmuk, 2020).

The dominance of the digital labor market has followed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has strengthened remote business processes, new investments in IT infrastructure, employee education, and more flexible work relationships. This has led to a transition to remote-flexible business models globally, prompting companies to consider the need for reorganizing offices, introducing hybrid business models with lower costs, fewer new investments, and higher employee satisfaction. The impact on the digital business transformation of companies and the labor market in Europe has been significantly influenced by the war in Ukraine, leading to, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 7.8 million refugees in Europe in 2022, significantly affecting migration development in the global labor



market (Zub, 2023). Specifically, the war has caused problems in the global market due to the reduction in the working population, decreasing labor productivity, real wages, while increasing professional gap among employees, migration at local and state levels, informal employment, discrepancies in labor supply, and demand in regional labor markets.

In a digital environment, work positions have significantly improved through agile working methods, the use of cloud computing, virtual reality, and IoT solutions (Cotrino et al., 2020). On the other hand, new work models bring both positive and negative circumstances, opportunities, and challenges for both employers and employees (McFadden et al., 2021; Chang et al., 2021). The positive circumstances include greater satisfaction, flexibility, process control, and organization of working hours, offering employees the opportunity to work where, when, and how they want to achieve their goals. Additionally, digital workplaces bring greater autonomy and control, directly enhancing employees' personal characteristics and abilities, such as goal-setting, self-monitoring of efficiency levels, anticipation of challenges, autonomous decision-making, and other factors (Wang et al., 2020; Miron et al., 2021). However, flexibility in the digital environment can sometimes bring a certain degree of pressure and invasion into employees' private lives, leaving individuals with little personal space and interests. This concept, known as "technostress," highlights the dark and negative aspects of digital technology use, as well as the inability to keep pace with the dynamics of computer power and needs.

According to (Galanti et al., 2023; Scheid et al., 2020), in Italy alone, the number of remote business positions has jumped from 8% to nearly a third, thus creating a much more flexible, automated, and interconnected working environment (Molino et al., 2020). Trends in digital and energy transformation in the global labor market are leading to the loss of certain professions, especially those characterized by predefined, simple, manual, and repetitive skills, which will ultimately be replaced by entirely new professions. One of the key problems and challenges in the labor market is the lack of qualified personnel, mainly due to much faster changes in labor demand compared to the adaptation speed of labor supply.

Current research shows that business digital transformation, to a greater or lesser extent, involves the use of digital technologies in business and the automation of numerous business procedures and activities within the company, with the direct effect on the position of employees who have traditionally carried out these processes. While the emergence and development of the digital labor market bring a large number of new job positions and opportunities for employees, automation of business procedures leads to the closure of many job positions and the need for employees to change their habits and acquire new knowledge and skills. Therefore, when creating and implementing a business digital transformation plan, it is important to define the relationship between technology and employees and based on that, define an education and adaptation plan for them to effectively manage new work models.

In this regard, the initial research question is as follows:



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***RQ: Does digital transformation require the education and adaptation of employees to the digital labor market, as well as collaboration with digital technologies to enhance the competitiveness of individuals within the company?***

- *RQ I: Does digital transformation require educating and raising awareness among employees about the importance of implementing digital technologies and tools: digital represents an opportunity for improvement and creating competitiveness?*
- *RQ II: Digital anthropology – can the application of technologies result in strategic business development, but not in replacing humans, in order to achieve performance and better business outcomes?*

### III RESULTS

#### **3.1. Impact of implementing digital technologies on employee performance and productivity**

Manifestos of digital transformation and the application of Industry 4.0, related to the impact of technology on the labor market, the development, and the future of employees in the company, can be observed at both **macro and micro levels**. At the macro level, the effects of digital transformation on future employment can be tracked, with positive effects where digital innovations lead to the expansion of new jobs and successful collaboration between humans and machines (Evangelista et al., 2014). On the contrary, negative risks in the digital environment are most pronounced due to the automation of business processes and the complete replacement of people with technology in the workplace (Dachs, 2018; Osborne and Hammoud, 2017). Considering both positive and negative circumstances, companies must be aware of the need for radical transformation of the HR sector, which will be accompanied by extreme changes, uncertainties, the development of technical and soft skills, and the need for a business model that will regulate and balance the relationships between employees, smart machines, and technologies in company processes and sectors (Cortini and Fantinelli, 2018).

Does the implementation of ICT (artificial intelligence and robotics) reduce or increase the level of employment by introducing many new jobs in distribution, services, and production activities? There are three possible scenarios for the reaction of employees: 1) a major social uprising due to the fact that technological development (robotics and AI) directly causes mass unemployment ("end of work"), 2) a scenario where business positions are directly replaced by robots ("structurally lower"), and 3) a scenario in which, after a state of shock and structural changes during transformation, employment returns to regular levels ("rebound"). As can be concluded, in all three scenarios, the key outcomes are dictated by education and the willingness of employees to change their habits and improve their business skills (Pyka, 2019).

Depending on the specific difficulties and challenges faced by employees, there are five different dimensions: **overload** (demands on employees to work faster and more productively), **techno-invasion** (invasion of employees' private lives), **techno-complexity** (creating a sense of



non-competitiveness), **techno-insecurity** (rapid development and changes due to the use of ICT), and **techno-uncertainty** (unpredictable changes and challenges in work) (Tarafdar et al., 2010). What are the real possibilities and business scenarios that HR management can offer to employees? One downside of the usage is the dedication to digital technology that requires the use of human performance, abilities, and characteristics at a very low level, while on the other hand, it requires knowledge of new skills and knowledge that employees still do not know enough about. If the highlighted advantages are not balanced adequately, most employees will quickly return to old working methods, which have traditional values opposed to "remote working," which suppresses humans (Toscano et al., 2022).

Considering the drastic decline in employability in traditional industries due to cost rationalization and automation of business processes through robotics and artificial intelligence, it can be expected that the overall trend of employment is positive in the long term. However, for employees to be able to perform new job positions, education is needed to yield concrete results in the form of contemporary knowledge and skills that will make them competitive to perform certain tasks as well as, or perhaps even better than, robots and AI solutions.

The use of digital technologies, in addition to social challenges, also poses obstacles for the mental development of employees, such as the need for transitions from physical to mental work efforts, and from “*work control to work liberalization*” (Loang, 2022). Therefore, HR departments and management face an increasingly greater challenge to adapt working methods to young professionals who will further develop skills in data analytics, artificial intelligence, and online learning to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their positions, without being compromised by cyber attacks and many other risks to the security and quality of business operations (YuLing et al., 2023).

Digital workforce increasingly demand autonomy, purpose, control, and flexibility in their workplaces. Therefore, the entire ecosystem needs to build a flexible work environment that provides ICT and digital experts with enough “*freedom accompanied by control*” because only through flexibility can they motivate and retain talents, as material conditions are becoming less crucial in the decision-making and choice of employers (Alam and Joshi, 2021). Hence, companies should establish centers of excellence or high-performance teams where employees can learn from each other, compete, and empower themselves to solve problems and develop new solutions (Jacobs et al., 2020), as “*Great people want to solve really hard problems; if not, they get bored and leave*” (Fernandez-Vidal et al., 2022).

One of the key barriers to successful digital transformation of the workforce is also the principle of inertia (Vial, 2019), which is used to indicate the unwillingness of employees, based on previous experiences and behaviors (Vial, 2019; Haskamp et al., 2021). Therefore, companies undergoing digital transformation must overcome challenges such as different inertia variables and deeply rooted work habits that prevent employees from embracing true changes (Forth et al.,





2020). According to (Laumer et al., 2016), work routines can directly influence the implementation and application of digital technologies through the acquisition of digital skills, since some business routines serve as a source of greater speed, control, and safety, less anxiety, and greater business stability (Cohen et al., 1994; Giddens, 1984).

The need to introduce new routines should also be viewed from the perspective of employee responsibility and their need to innovate, change themselves, and acquire new habits to enhance better performance, following the causal model: "*new routines are created from old routines in business*" (Becker et al., 2005). Changes that digital technologies can affect higher information intensity, adaptability to customers, electronic delivery speed, search costs, network effects, standardization benefits, aggregation effects, and solutions to skill gaps.

In contrast, business digital transformation involves reengineering, reinvention, and in some cases, complete destruction of existing organizational work segments (Mendling et al., 2020). When it comes to the negative impacts of digital transformation on the development and transition of job positions (Feliciano-Cestero et al., 2023), challenges and threats to cybersecurity, compliance with international standards and laws, and negative effects on communication channels (Ameen et al., 2021; Hannibal and Knight, 2018) are included. In addition, insufficiently developed ICT infrastructure, employee knowledge, cultural factors, and problems that limit professional and social development, even with optimal use of ICT tools, stand out (Nambisan et al., 2019; Biggiero, 2006).

### **3.2. The impact of digital transformation on organizational/management strategy in business**

Within the framework of digital transformation, alongside fostering a culture of creativity and innovation where employees think outside the box and create innovative problem-solving solutions in the workplace, it is important for companies to work on introducing and implementing a digital culture in business, aimed at transforming business operations and adopting a new way of collaboration with employees and customers (Goran et al., 2017; Slack, 2022). The level of development of digital culture in business will also determine how digital tools and technologies shape the company's vision and amount of focus on innovation, collaboration, continuous learning, data analytics, and optimization, effective communication, and many other factors of creating new value and achieving competitiveness (Slack, 2022; Tulip, 2023).

In addition to developing digital culture, it is also important, according to (Dieffenbacher, 2022), to develop a digital strategy that defines the organizational structure and the way different sectors in the company organize and collaborate, decision-making processes, roles, and responsibilities of employees. Specifically, according to (Fernandez-Vidal et al., 2022), it is necessary to establish mobile and agile teams of employees who can be redirected and engaged in different business positions, depending on the company's business needs. This is a business model that brings benefits not only to the company but also to employees who seek experience beyond



their specialization domain, aiming for new skills, knowledge, and new business positions that will further lead them to advancements in their business careers (Ferraris et al., 2021; Manlio et al., 2021; Shams et al., 2021).

In the HR sector, it is important to consider and organize the mentioned development directions independently within the company. According to (Mao et al., 2019), the development of the ICT/digital sector in the company leads in two separate directions, one dealing with improving the existing ICT infrastructure and the other, agile and experimental, which levels the use of digital technologies towards creating new business models and meeting consumer needs (Su et al., 2016; Haffke et al., 2017). In the field of ICT infrastructure, the necessary skills are already known in advance, while in digital professions, new positions necessary for various stages of digital transformation in the company are continuously developing, namely: *chief technology officer, chief digital officer, chief transformation officer, digital innovation officer, and head of digital strategy* (Mansfeld et al., 2010; Singh and Hess, 2017; Singh et al., 2020).

From the perspective of HR management decisions, one of the key persons for implementing changes and applying digital in business is the CDO - Chief Digital Officer (Buchwald and Lorenz, 2020; Tumbas et al., 2017), who together with the CIO - Chief Information Officer, must have clearly separated relationships with responsibilities and roles. More precisely, while the CIO in the company is responsible for managing the technological infrastructure, on the other hand, the CDO is tasked with regulating the model and level of use of digital technologies that will bring growth, competitiveness, and innovation to the company (Haffke et al., 2016). Regardless of the clear differences in responsibilities and roles, it is very important for companies, due to digital transformation, to have at their disposal the knowledge and capabilities of both experts - the CIO who optimizes the technological structure based on which the CDO is further responsible for creating new digital products and services, quality use and analysis of data for better understanding and meeting needs "in time" and with innovative offerings (Huseynli, 2022).

### **3.3. ChatGPT as a new revolution in education and HR business - technology and/or employees?**

When it comes to the application of artificial intelligence in the workplace, solutions like OpenAI's **ChatGPT** provide the possibility of simulating human interaction with users through technology, thereby questioning a large number of customer-facing positions and understanding their needs without additional development of the capabilities of all employees (Božić, 2023). Therefore, companies approach testing the efficiency of these solutions in their business, which often causes significant pressure and stress among employees due to the fear of losing their positions. However, technology can hardly replace the efficiency, productivity, and quality of products and services of a company, but it can certainly improve the quality of communication with customers, delivery of products or services, as well as understanding customer needs and predictive abilities regarding



new strategic decisions. What can be the relationship, between digital technologies and employees?

It is important to consider customer satisfaction as the ultimate goal of business, which can most effectively be achieved through the collaboration of employee efficiency and performance on one side, and ChatGPT and digital solutions on the other (Acemoglu and Johnson, 2023). The competitiveness of the workforce versus the efficiency of technological solutions can always be strengthened by national or international regulations. On the other hand, this cannot prevent companies from developing digital solutions that will replace a large number of business positions in order to increase their profits. That is why the solution can be a combination: 1) predictive power of artificial intelligence and digital solutions to understand customer needs and propose innovative solutions, and 2) performance and capabilities of employees to utilize the given recommendations in order to create concrete value for the company, through innovation of offerings, market acquisition, or some other strategic decision in the company's business (Mamoon, 2023).

Regardless of the industry a company operates in, customers expectance is a sense of brand and exclusivity in collaboration, which can best be offered by a combination of digital solutions that search basic customer preferences, create recommendations, and then give employees the opportunity to make decisions with emotions, and satisfying customer needs (Acemoglu and Johnson, 2023). In this way, the application of digital technologies directly increases productivity, performance, knowledge, and benefits of employees, thanks to the increased quality of the company's products and services. In the same time, it meets the needs of an increasing number of customers from the economic class, with whom employees previously collaborated as a group, but now through technology, employees can establish a sophisticated, 1:1 relationship.

In order to utilize the advantages of techno-socialization in business, it is necessary for company management to develop creative and critical thinking, while employees need to strengthen their reputation, soft skills, and technical knowledge about offerings, so that their competitiveness is not solely tied to communicativeness or some mechanical operations they previously performed (Mamoon, 2023). If companies invest resources and efforts in acquiring skills and competitiveness of their employees, the use of ChatGPT and other digital solutions would give the HR sector an opportunity to increase the number of employees and conquer new markets continuously, instead of downsizing. As long as ChatGPT brings a sense of human intelligence through written text or recorded sound, employees have the opportunity to use the results achieved by technology as the foundation of their decisions and innovations.

## IV DISCUSSION

### **4.1. The impact of digital transformation on work: can techno-socialization have a future?**

Digital anthropology is a science used to create normative and ethical arguments, not just to





analyze the consequences of technological changes. Digital technologies are beginning to occupy a place within the broad cultural and social context of anthropology as a very old scientific discipline. Learning about the digital world must not be viewed solely from the perspective of technology; rather, it must involve an analysis that includes the people who enabled the creation of that technology, as well as reflection on what the technology has made of humans and how it shapes their work, labor, and life in general.

The internet and digital media give the impression of proximity and digital presence that surpasses the physical sphere because digital connectivity is characterized by "ambient co-presence" - a clear, peripheral awareness of the presence and proximity of other people. Therefore, any attempt to separate the physical from the digital is actually a "false dichotomy," with the belief that the physical and mental are inseparable from each other, and that real life is immersed in cognitive activity, thus digital experiences can be as emotional as face-to-face ones (Čejko, 2019). On the other hand, José Ortega uses the term "substantiation of youth," based on the belief that there are no longer commands, but only rights without obligations and responsibilities, which will quickly turn into coercion. Today, people witness a global "wave of indulgence due to the use of digital technologies," and Ortega (2013) points out that this wave naturally leads to a wave of mass rebellion - people who act and speak boldly and authoritatively about everything they do not know. Does this "far-reachingness of acquired ignorance" (Vukotić, 2020) exist?

Digital culture has enabled the creation of many cultural forms supported by numerous software and platforms, due to the increasing demands of humanity for greater access freedom and convenience, which are of course approved by bureaucratic and political systems. There is a direct relationship between technology and liberalism, while open platforms and free access to software have led to the creation of a "recursive audience" - a dedicated population that prepares and implements a modern approach to digital life. The focus is now on simulating human reasoning and experience, incorporating the design of digital solutions paying attention to "heuristic problem-solving techniques," with different roads to solution that are not guided by the relationship itself: through acquired knowledge, intuition, or common sense (Vasić, 2010).

The modern human operates in a society with a high degree of social stratification, partly due to the relationship with and access to digital technology and the manner of its use, which is explained by the concept of the digital divide (Čejko, 2019). The rate and level of a society's digital divide are influenced by the standard of living, economy, education, and culture of the people, making it logical that some communities better respond to the digital challenges, specifically having a less pronounced digital divide. How people accept digital technologies and what they can "extract" from them depend on the cultural elevation of society because culture consists of the products of a group that can be physical and mental.

Furthermore, one should not forget that people become infected with a dangerous and easily transmissible virus known as digital technologies and social networks. It is difficult for



individuals to fight this virus as members of a certain mass - political or capitalist - because the mass itself created the virus. In this mass, independent and free individuals find it difficult to change their attitudes and beliefs, especially because it takes a lot of time for certain ideas to penetrate the mass unconsciousness and become its sentiment. Therefore, masses with deeply ingrained and impoverished ideas always lag behind learned individuals and philosophers for generations (Le Bon, 2006). Moreover, the sources of today's domination of digital technologies over humans can be recognized decades behind us, as Ortega (2013) points out the time of the "crisis of norms and morals" that led to the collapse of Europe and a large number of social divisions, further followed by social stratification accompanied by "mental eclipse and lack of imagination."

Technology today offers solutions to all problems and sends a message that all humans need is a bit more technology. In his work "Against Technology," Zerzan (2004) emphasizes that "we live in a diminished, mediatory world in which technology is considered an extension of the senses, yet it seems that this extension causes dullness and atrophy of the senses themselves." This view contrasts with the perspective of Boellstorff (2008), who claims that the digital world is characterized by creativity becoming a form of value exchange, not just value consumption. According to this logic, work begins to be viewed from the perspective of exchange and use value, blurring the clear boundary between work and play, slowly turning production into a game. People are increasingly involved in immersive marketing, based on the idea of "don't sell me, play with me."

What characterizes society today is the responsibility that people take for choosing the technologies they will use. The internet and digital market are characterized by "ambivalence" - an internal struggle that takes place within humans and society, between open and closed access. In an era of openness and free access, restrictions arise before freedom. This is discussed by cultural anthropologist Bart Barendregt, who argues that digital technologies can produce inequalities on a global scale, leading to exploitation. These inequalities include drastic differences in digital access, as well as knowledge required for technology use (Horst and Miller, 2012).

The new digital space enables the creation of new cultures. Action in the digital world increasingly resembles the real world - by entering any of the virtual worlds, each user refines it according to their experience, knowledge, and needs, intersecting it with their own interests and everyday life. Also, in the real world, robots that resemble humans, perform human tasks, or are intelligent in a way that approaches human intelligence, are increasingly used. By giving emotions to robots, they become beings that have a soul; now the question arises: "How does this robot differ and what does it want from humans?" (Gavrilović, 2011).

#### **4.2. Digital anthropology: the impact of digital transformation on human history - future?**

Will further technological development lead towards a focus on humans or unfortunately towards



machines? Once, the connection between digital technologies and humans as users was envisioned quite differently. British mathematician Turing claimed as far back as the 1940s that technological advancements would significantly increase the interdependence of technology and humans. However, significant distortions occur, and people begin to envision the life of every computer. Does the relationship between technology and humans require analysis on philosophical and sociological grounds, as J.C.R. Licklider demonstrated in 1968, asserting that in the future, our communication with machines will be more effective than with other humans, meaning we would, for the first time, put ourselves in the background (Zerzan, 2004)? Is this evidence of machine dominance?

Modern humans live in a state of "universal anxiety," according to Freud. Currently, there is a crisis of human nature on the global market, which arises with the crisis of external nature, climate change, and ecological catastrophe. In such a real world, it is evident that much is not ideal, hence the emergence of virtual reality toward which humans, employees, and society are rushing to escape the increasingly unattractive objective existential conditions. Hans Moravec, a member of Carnegie Mellon, argues that humans will replace some of the most important mental processes with programs taken from artificial intelligence, and over time, "our thought processes may become completely free of any trace of our original body, or even more any body at all" (Zerzan, 2004).

On the other hand, Jacques Ellul (1954) in his work "The Technological Society" believes that the working individual is not happy in his job, especially when "continuous practice of impersonal work leads to complete impersonalization of the worker." The greatest danger arises if a person allows himself to perform only mechanical operations because then there is a psychological separation of intelligence and action. Ellul argues that an individual cannot be "absent" at work because work is an expression of life. New digital trends, production models, and the digital labor market are characterized by innovative "creative business where money is not decisive, but self-fulfillment and social efficiency."

Jacques Ellul (1954) believes that "separating mental activities from the physical movements of man at work leads to a reduction in fatigue since, unfortunately, man no longer needs to participate or make any decisions." This further leads to the weakening of human personality, which cannot be fragmented without weakening it, with the note that the loss of creative power can have catastrophic psychological consequences. When a person is no longer responsible for his job and does not play a role in it, he feels spiritual violence is being exerted upon him, which is why, according to Ellul, escape becomes a logical choice: "Modern man suppresses his fear of the technical world and intoxicates himself with action, or, more precisely, the illusion of action. When there is no escape, illusion follows!" The unthinkable will happen, or is already happening, and the guiding question posed many years ago by J.M. Lai, which is still relevant, is: "Is man becoming increasingly less aware of his own - living presence?"



Can a modern man divide the activities he performs daily into physical and digital, as if he simultaneously lives two independent lives - digital dualism? If a person believes that technology negatively affects his development, he must not forget that technological development is desired by a capitalist, someone who, as Karl Marx argues, "will always have more economic power than followers and employees until the people resist" (Čejko, 2019). Is the man of the digital age the man of the ideological mass led by leaders and capitalists? One of the novelties brought about by digital technologies is the "attention economy," which is not based solely on money but where "attention is the true currency" (Čejko, 2019).

Considering the trends in which digital technologies are rapidly developing, it is necessary to think about the scope of digitization, especially from the perspective of the relationship between technology and humans. In the book "Superconnected," Mary Čejko argues that not everything can be digitized, especially "tangible and intangible subtle nuances of interpersonal relationships that cannot be encoded and numerically transmitted." It is important to analyze social constructivism – the study of technology from the perspective of the connection between its origin and use, with forces like political power and the social class differences (Čejko, 2019).

Erich Fromm suggests that the unlimited satisfaction of all of man's needs does not lead to well-being, nor is it the path to happiness, not even maximum satisfaction: "The dream that we are independent masters of our lives ends the moment we realize that we have all become cogs in bureaucracy or some other system - machinery." (Fromm, 2015). Man has become a superman, but has the superman with superhuman power risen to levels of superhuman reasoning?

## V CONCLUSION

Every crisis is a natural catalyst for increased innovation, and thus the COVID-19 crisis significantly boosted the use of digital technologies. Although according to the OECD (2021), over 70% of companies increased their use of technology due to the crisis, a large number of companies express but not sufficient readiness to face changes such as remote work, cyber threats, the use of AI solutions in process automation, and many other drastic changes in business operations (Berry, 2021; Jigjiddorj et al., 2021). Therefore, companies must carefully analyze the need for digital transformation of their business and, depending on whether investments in employees, software solutions, or restructuring are required, allocate financial resources and properly prepare staff for the changes ahead (Harel et al., 2020).

Considering human capital as a crucial factor for the implementation of digital transformation (Al-Alawi et al., 2023; Benevene and Cortini, 2010), companies need to assess the skills and knowledge that need to be improved among employees (Blanka et al., 2022). Also, in addition to skills such as data analytics and programming (Demir; Kutnjak et al., 2019), the need



to consider improving employees' communication and creativity skills, together with the use of problem-solving, and agility techniques is necessary (Sousa and Rocha, 2019). Creativity is a key element in business transformation (Botella Carrubi and Torras, 2019; Guerra et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2022), while on the contrary, (Jiang et al., 2022) believe that knowledge and human factor are much more important resources than skills.

Organizational routines and habits when performing tasks can create significant and substantial changes, especially due to employees' fear and their need for skills development due to the application of technologies. On the other hand, managers also feel fear due to the implementation of digital transformation, specifically because of the potential loss of authority over employees in new work routines and procedures. Organizational routines that can empower but also sabotage the processes of digital transformation, are directly influenced by digital technologies, creating attention among employees, and warning management that old habits need to be changed (Almatrodi and Skoumpopoulou, 2023).

The fact is that we are now entering a very complex business and life environment, characterized by increasingly unclear relationships and a greater degree of generalization. This is directly opposed to the traditional system of functioning, where the level of success depended on the degree of specialization and narrow expertise in a field. Specialization once brought a set of unique skills, expertise, and professionalism, and therefore business results. However, it seems that the new era belongs to generalists and creatives. The current digital age requires reconsidering the logic and scope of deeper, professional questioning, all with the aim of finding answers in favor of generalization: "To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail" (Mansharamani, 2020).

For smart generalists and creatives rather than specialists, the ability to adapt to market conditions with a wider range of knowledge and skills needs to be developed, instead of a guarantee that a person will learn and work exclusively in a specialized field throughout their life. Therefore, today's giant companies seek to employ multifunctional employees who are agile and ready to function from team to team, adapt, and learn in a given environment. Creatives also possess general cognitive abilities that make them aware of how quickly a company needs to evolve and explore new jobs in the digital age. They are smart generalists (Lisa Stern Hayes, Google).

After two decades of steady development, the question of digital consumerism has gone into hyperproduction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which began to change the reality around it. Globally, digital consumers, who are not only focused on digital collaboration but also on emotional fulfillment and depletion, fear of consequences such as pandemics, anxiety, and concern dominate (Solis, 2020). All business and life activities are directed towards digital platforms, creating new digital habits that do not necessarily motivate consumers, as they only partially aim to replace traditional habits with digital ones. Therefore, the success of employees and the company, as well as the ability to navigate the waves of disruption and uncertainty, will depend





on companies' ability to recognize the impact of the digital on consumers and adapt their offerings (Vukotić, 2020).

Instead of skills that once created value, skills that lead us to attention and success are now crucial. Integrating digital technologies, along with operational agility, culture, and digital leadership, leads to fundamental transformation, as opposed to the usage of only ICT technologies. It is necessary to adapt to the digital mindset, develop an innovative approach and philosophy of thinking that will help employees establish a culture of continuous learning and utilize skills to create value and opportunities (Lukito et al., 2022). The only certainty for the future is that uncertainty is guaranteed. Therefore, the survival depends on the strength of individuals to awaken their spirits.

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