

Future Competences in Digital Society: Between Automation and Humanism

ABSTRACT

This article examines future competences in the context of accelerated technological transformation, automation, and the development of artificial intelligence. It argues that in digital societies competences can no longer be understood solely as economic or functional constructs, but must also be conceptualized as ethical and cultural categories that shape individuals' capacity for responsible participation in complex socio-technical systems.

The study adopts a theoretical and conceptual approach based on critical analysis and synthesis of interdisciplinary literature drawn from psychology, sociology, philosophy, and management studies. It proposes an original framework of four interrelated competence domains: cognitive (critical thinking and reading comprehension), emotional (emotional intelligence, empathy, and active listening), existential (self-management and psychological resilience), and socio-cognitive (lifelong learning and reflexivity).

The analysis demonstrates that these domains are mutually interconnected and collectively constitute the foundations of human agency in digitally mediated environments. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of ethics and the humanities as normative frameworks that shape both the direction and the meaning of competence development in the age of automation. The article

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also highlights the structural tension between instrumental, market-oriented approaches to competences and their broader humanistic, societal, and governance-related functions.

The main contribution of the article lies in the development of an integrated interdisciplinary model that links competence development with ethical responsibility, governance, and social participation. It is argued that the integration of technical knowledge with humanistic reflection constitutes a necessary condition for maintaining a sustainable balance between technological innovation and human values.

KEYWORDS: future competences; artificial intelligence; emotional intelligence; lifelong learning; reflexivity; digital humanism; ethics; ESG

INTRODUCTION: COMPETENCES AS A NEW LANGUAGE OF THE FUTURE

Contemporary societies are entering a phase of accelerated technological transformation in which automation, digitalization, and artificial intelligence fundamentally redefine the meaning of work, education, and human agency. The scale and intensity of these changes challenge not only prevailing economic models, but also the ethical and cultural foundations of social life. In this context, competence can no longer be understood solely as a functional or instrumental category; it increasingly emerges as a moral and anthropological construct reflecting the capacity for responsible participation in complex socio-technical systems. International policy frameworks consistently emphasize that transformations of labour markets are accompanied by a redefinition of key competences. Reports such as *Skills Outlook 2021* (OECD, 2021), *Reimagining Our Futures Together* (UNESCO, 2021), and *The Future of Jobs Report* (World Economic Forum, 2025) indicate that cognitive, social, and emotional competences – such as analytical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, and adaptability – are becoming central to both employability and social participation.

At the same time, these approaches remain largely dominated by a functional perspective, focusing primarily on economic efficiency and labour market demands.

This article argues that such a perspective is insufficient. The growing complexity of digital environments requires a broader conceptualization of competence—one that integrates technical capabilities with ethical reflection and humanistic understanding. As Artur Lis (2024) observes, competence management should be interpreted not merely as a tool of organizational efficiency, but as a practice that shapes cultures grounded in trust, dignity, and shared responsibility. From this perspective, competences are inseparable from questions of values, responsibility, and the conditions of human agency in technologically mediated environments.

The main research problem addressed in this article concerns the conditions under which the development of competences can support a sustainable balance between automation and humanism. While the existing literature provides extensive descriptions of skills required in the digital age, it rarely offers an integrated normative framework capable of explaining how these competences relate to ethical responsibility, governance, and social order. This gap justifies the need for a more comprehensive and explicitly interdisciplinary approach.

The aim of this article is therefore to propose a conceptual model of future competences that integrates analytical, psychological, and philosophical perspectives. The analysis is structured around four interrelated competence domains: cognitive, emotional, existential, and socio-cognitive. Their common denominator is reflexivity, responsibility, and lifelong learning, understood as key conditions for preserving human autonomy and agency in the digital age.

Methodologically, the article adopts a theoretical and conceptual approach based on critical analysis and synthesis of

interdisciplinary literature, including contributions from psychology, sociology, philosophy, and management studies. The argument is developed within a normative framework that emphasizes the role of ethics and humanistic reflection in shaping both the meaning and the direction of competence development in contemporary societies.

COGNITIVE COMPETENCES: CRITICAL THINKING AND READING COMPREHENSION

Critical thinking constitutes one of the most fundamental cognitive competences in contemporary knowledge societies. In environments increasingly shaped by rapid information flows, algorithmic filtering, and digital media ecosystems, the ability to critically select, analyze, and interpret information determines not only the quality of individual decision-making but also the capacity for responsible participation in social and professional life. As Peter A. Facione (2015) emphasizes, critical thinking involves purposeful, self-regulatory judgment grounded in evidence and rational evaluation.

Richard Paul and Linda Elder (2019) conceptualize critical thinking as a disciplined and reflective process of analyzing and evaluating information in light of context and evidence. This understanding highlights that critical thinking is not merely a technical skill, but a structured intellectual practice requiring consistency, self-awareness, and methodological rigor. In contemporary digital environments, however, this competence faces new challenges. Algorithmic personalization, information overload, and the spread of misinformation increasingly limit individuals' exposure to diverse perspectives, reinforcing cognitive biases rather than reflective judgment.

Critical thinking remains inseparable from reading comprehension, which constitutes its practical foundation. As Richard

I. Arends (2012) argues, reflective learning depends on the ability to interpret not only the explicit content of texts, but also their underlying assumptions, intentions, and ideological contexts. Empirical evidence from OECD PISA studies (OECD, 2023) confirms that advanced reading comprehension correlates strongly with logical reasoning and resistance to manipulation, making it a key competence for maintaining cognitive autonomy in digital societies.

Contemporary education systems therefore face a fundamental paradox. As Zygmunt Bauman (2011) observed, the abundance of information does not necessarily translate into deeper understanding. On the contrary, excessive exposure to fragmented data may weaken individuals' capacity for coherent interpretation and independent judgment. Stephen D. Brookfield (2012) accordingly emphasizes that one of the central tasks of education is to cultivate the ability to "read between the lines," enabling learners to recognize hidden assumptions, power relations, and ethical implications embedded in discourse.

From this perspective, critical thinking cannot be reduced to an instrumental competence. It constitutes an ethical stance toward knowledge, requiring individuals to assume responsibility for the consequences of their judgments and decisions. This argument is further supported in management and educational theory, where scholars such as Mariusz Filipowicz (2016) and Andrzej Koźmiński (2008) underline that analytical competences must be integrated with axiological reflection. In complex socio-economic environments, the ability to interpret reality critically becomes more important than the mere processing of data.

The relevance of critical thinking is further reinforced by challenges emerging within the contemporary digital public sphere. The proliferation of misinformation, deepfakes, and algorithmically curated content transforms information into a potential instrument of power. In this context, the absence of critical competences leads not only to epistemic passivity, but also to

increased vulnerability to manipulation. As Gordon Pennycook and David G. Rand (2021) demonstrate, individuals with lower levels of analytical thinking are significantly more likely to accept false information as credible.

Theories of transformative learning developed by Jack Mezirow (2009) and Knud Illeris (2018) provide an important framework for understanding how critical thinking can be cultivated. Learning occurs when individuals critically reassess their assumptions and engage in reflective dialogue. Educational practices such as inquiry-based learning, debates, case studies, and project-based learning (Arends, 2012) create conditions for developing these competences in both formal and informal contexts.

Ultimately, critical thinking and reading comprehension must be understood as foundational competences of intellectual autonomy in the digital age. They enable individuals not only to process information, but also to question it, reinterpret it, and situate it within broader ethical, social, and political contexts. Without these competences, participation in contemporary society risks becoming passive and externally conditioned; with them, it becomes reflective, responsible, and genuinely human.

EMOTIONAL COMPETENCES: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, EMPATHY, AND ACTIVE LISTENING

Emotional competences have become a crucial dimension of human functioning in digitally mediated environments, where communication is increasingly shaped by technological infrastructures and organizational complexity. In contrast to cognitive competences, which primarily concern information processing, emotional competences shape the quality of interpersonal relations, the capacity for cooperation, and the ethical dimension of social interaction. Their significance grows alongside the expansion of automation, which tends to reduce direct human contact

while simultaneously increasing the need for meaningful, responsible, and trust-based communication.

The concept of emotional intelligence, popularized by Daniel Goleman (1995), refers to the ability to recognize and regulate one's own emotions, as well as to understand and appropriately respond to the emotional states of others. This perspective was further developed by John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey (1997), who conceptualized emotional intelligence as a set of interrelated processes, including emotional perception, understanding, and regulation. These frameworks emphasize that emotional competences are not merely innate traits, but capacities that can be systematically developed and applied in social and professional contexts.

Empirical research confirms that emotional competences significantly influence both individual well-being and organizational effectiveness. Studies by Konstantinos V. Petrides (2011) and Richard E. Boyatzis (1982) demonstrate that individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence exhibit greater resilience to stress, stronger motivation, and more effective teamwork. In organizational settings, these competences contribute to leadership effectiveness and the development of trust-based cultures, which are essential in environments characterized by uncertainty and rapid change.

At the same time, the growing dominance of digital communication introduces new challenges. Interactions mediated by digital platforms often lack non-verbal cues, emotional nuance, and contextual depth, which may lead to misunderstandings, reduced empathy, and the depersonalization of social relations. Under such conditions, emotional competences acquire a compensatory function: they enable individuals to reconstruct meaning, maintain relational sensitivity, and prevent communication from becoming purely instrumental.

Empathy constitutes a central component of emotional competence. It involves the ability to adopt another person's perspective

and respond appropriately to their emotional state. As Bogdan Wojciszke (2019) argues, empathy plays a key role in shaping prosocial behavior and moral sensitivity. Similarly, Keith Oatley et al. (2006) describe emotions as a system of social communication that conveys information about intentions and needs, making empathy a foundational element of ethical interaction.

Another essential emotional competence is active listening, conceptualized by Carl Rogers (1957) as a form of empathic engagement oriented toward understanding the speaker's perspective rather than merely receiving information. Research indicates that active listening reduces conflict, enhances mutual understanding, and strengthens cooperation (Brownell, 2012). In educational and organizational contexts, it supports inclusive communication and fosters environments based on trust and respect.

From the perspective of positive psychology, emotional competences are closely linked to psychological resilience and well-being. Martin E. P. Seligman (2011) demonstrated that positive emotions broaden cognitive flexibility and reinforce personal resources, enabling individuals to cope more effectively with adversity. This insight highlights the interdependence of emotional and existential competences, particularly in conditions of uncertainty and instability.

The relevance of emotional competences is further emphasized in management theory. Scholars such as Andrzej Koźmiński (2008) underline that contemporary leadership requires not only analytical capacity, but also emotional awareness and relational sensitivity. Similarly, Artur Lis (2024) interprets emotional competences within the framework of dignity-based management, arguing that organizations should be understood as moral communities rather than purely instrumental systems of efficiency.

At the same time, emotional competences alone do not automatically guarantee ethical outcomes. In technologically mediated environments, they may also be instrumentalized—for example,

in persuasive communication, marketing practices, or algorithmically optimized user engagement. This ambivalence highlights the need to integrate emotional competences with broader ethical and normative frameworks.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence, empathy, and active listening constitute indispensable components of future competences. In a world increasingly shaped by automation and digital mediation, they preserve the human dimension of communication and social interaction. Their development, however, must be accompanied by ethical reflection to ensure that emotional competences serve not only efficiency, but also responsibility and human dignity.

EXISTENTIAL COMPETENCES: SELF-MANAGEMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

Existential competences refer to the inner dimension of human adaptability under conditions of accelerated technological change, structural uncertainty, and increasing complexity of social and professional life. In contrast to cognitive and emotional competences, which primarily concern information processing and interpersonal relations, existential competences address the individual's capacity to maintain coherence, meaning, and agency in situations of instability. In this sense, they constitute a foundational dimension of human functioning in the digital age.

Self-management, understood not merely as time organization but as value-oriented regulation of action, becomes a central competence in contemporary societies. Viktor E. Frankl (2009) argued that individuals who are able to identify meaning in their lives demonstrate a greater capacity to endure adversity and maintain psychological integrity. From this perspective, self-management is not a technical skill, but an existential practice grounded in purpose, responsibility, and self-reflection.

Similarly, Stephen R. Covey (1989) emphasized that personal effectiveness begins with clarity of values and priorities. Aligning daily actions with long-term goals enables individuals to achieve coherence between professional responsibilities and personal development. Empirical studies by Roy F. Baumeister and Kathleen D. Vohs (2002) confirm that individuals with clearly defined goals exhibit higher levels of self-control, resilience, and emotional stability.

Psychological resilience is commonly defined as the capacity to adapt successfully to adversity, stress, and uncertainty. According to the American Psychological Association (2020), resilience is not a fixed trait, but a dynamic process involving flexibility, self-regulation, and meaning-making. This perspective is reinforced by Martin E. P. Seligman (2011), who demonstrated that resilience can be developed through cognitive reframing, optimism, and emotional awareness. The World Health Organization (2021) similarly identifies resilience as a key determinant of mental health in societies affected by economic and social instability.

At the same time, the growing emphasis on resilience in contemporary discourse has generated critical debate. Some scholars argue that framing resilience primarily as an individual competence may lead to the depoliticization of structural problems, shifting responsibility from institutions to individuals. In this view, the expectation that individuals should continuously adapt to unstable conditions risks normalizing precariousness rather than addressing its systemic causes. This critique highlights the need to understand existential competences not only as personal resources, but also as phenomena embedded in broader social, economic, and organizational contexts.

In management and organizational studies, existential competences are closely linked to leadership and decision-making under conditions of uncertainty. Scholars such as Andrzej Koźmiński (2008) emphasize that effective leadership requires the integration of self-discipline with reflective awareness. Leaders who are

capable of maintaining inner coherence are better prepared to guide organizations through processes of digital transformation and systemic change. The concept of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) captures the unstable nature of contemporary environments (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). In response, Bob Johansen (2017) proposed the VUCA Prime framework, highlighting vision, understanding, clarity, and agility as key adaptive competences grounded in psychological resilience.

The existential dimension of competence is also reflected in contemporary management theory. Artur Lis (2024) interprets self-management as an ethical competence rooted in dignity-based leadership. According to this approach, the ability to manage oneself precedes the ability to manage others, transforming leadership from a technical function into a reflective practice oriented toward responsibility and human development.

At the same time, existential competences serve an important preventive function. Research conducted by international institutions indicates that individuals with higher levels of self-regulation and resilience are less susceptible to burnout, anxiety, and depression. Practices such as mindfulness, developed in the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn (2016), as well as reflective techniques, support the development of self-awareness and emotional balance.

Ultimately, existential competences highlight a fundamental paradox of the digital age. While technological systems increasingly automate external processes, the internal capacity for meaning-making, reflection, and self-regulation becomes more—not less—important. As Frankl (2009) famously observed, the ability to find meaning remains a decisive factor in human resilience. In this sense, mastering oneself becomes a prerequisite for navigating a world increasingly shaped by automated systems.

SOCIO-COGNITIVE COMPETENCES: LIFELONG LEARNING AND REFLEXIVITY

Socio-cognitive competences constitute a crucial link between individual development and collective functioning in contemporary knowledge societies. Under conditions of rapid technological change and structural uncertainty, the ability to learn, reinterpret experience, and participate in shared processes of meaning-making becomes a defining feature of both employability and democratic life. Lifelong learning, understood not as a finite educational stage but as a continuous and dynamic process, reflects this transformation.

As Peter F. Drucker (1999) observed, the central challenge of the knowledge economy lies not in the acquisition of information, but in the capacity to transform it into meaningful action. This shift implies that learning is no longer confined to institutional settings, but becomes embedded in everyday practice, organizational life, and social interaction.

Theoretical approaches to adult learning reinforce this perspective. Peter Jarvis (2009) emphasizes that learning is grounded in the reflective interpretation of experience, while Jack Mezirow (2009) conceptualizes transformative learning as a process of critically reassessing the assumptions that shape perception and action. Reflexivity, understood as the capacity to question one's own beliefs and adapt them in response to new conditions, thus emerges as a central competence for navigating complex and uncertain environments.

At the same time, international policy frameworks highlight the systemic importance of lifelong learning. Reports such as OECD *Skills Outlook 2021* (OECD, 2021) and UNESCO's *Reimagining Our Futures Together* (UNESCO, 2021) emphasize that continuous learning supports not only employability, but also social inclusion, civic engagement, and democratic resilience. This perspective, however, is not without ambiguity. The growing

emphasis on lifelong learning may also reflect shifting labour market expectations, placing responsibility for adaptation primarily on individuals rather than on institutions.

This tension reveals an important normative dimension of socio-cognitive competences. On the one hand, they enable individuals to actively participate in knowledge creation, communication, and social cooperation. On the other hand, they may function as mechanisms of adaptation to unstable economic conditions, reinforcing expectations of constant flexibility and self-improvement. In this sense, lifelong learning can be interpreted both as a form of empowerment and as a structural requirement imposed by contemporary socio-economic systems.

Educational theory further develops this dual perspective. Michael Fullan (2018) argues that deep learning integrates knowledge, creativity, and character, while Gert Biesta (2014) emphasizes that authentic education involves risk – the willingness to question one’s assumptions and to take responsibility for one’s actions. Learning, therefore, cannot be reduced to skill acquisition; it becomes an ethical practice grounded in openness, responsibility, and engagement with others.

In management theory, socio-cognitive competences are closely linked to organizational learning and responsible leadership. Andrzej Koźmiński (2008) highlights that contemporary organizations require individuals capable of interpreting complex realities and learning from both success and failure. Similarly, Artur Lis (2024) emphasizes that competence-based management depends on continuous reflection and the ability to integrate individual and collective experience.

A broader normative framework for understanding socio-cognitive competences is provided by Jürgen Habermas (1984) in his theory of communicative action. He argues that communication oriented toward mutual understanding constitutes the foundation of rational social order. In contemporary digital societies, however, this ideal is increasingly challenged by mediated

communication, algorithmic filtering, and the fragmentation of the public sphere. As a result, reflexivity becomes not only a personal competence, but also a condition for maintaining democratic dialogue, institutional accountability, and responsibility within complex decision-making systems.

In this context, socio-cognitive competences extend beyond functional skills. They enable individuals to participate in public discourse, critically evaluate information, and assume responsibility for collective outcomes. They also play a crucial role in counteracting the effects of complex governance structures, in which responsibility is often diffused across institutions and technological systems.

Ultimately, lifelong learning and reflexivity affirm that knowledge is relational, dynamic, and ethically embedded. As Gert Biesta (2014, p. 3) states, “education is an act of responsibility for the future of the other.” This insight captures the essence of socio-cognitive competences in the digital age: they are not merely tools of adaptation, but conditions of responsible participation in an increasingly complex and interdependent world.

ETHICS AND HUMANISM AS FRAMEWORKS OF FUTURE COMPETENCES

The accelerating development of automation and artificial intelligence has fundamentally reshaped the conditions under which human action, responsibility, and decision-making take place. In this context, ethics and the humanities are no longer peripheral to technological progress; rather, they constitute its necessary normative framework. Without ethical reflection, technological development risks becoming detached from human values, reducing social processes to questions of efficiency and control.

Martha C. Nussbaum (2010) warns that an education system oriented exclusively toward economic utility may lead to what she

describes as “moral illiteracy”, depriving societies of citizens capable of empathy, critical judgment, and democratic participation. This critique highlights a broader tension between instrumental rationality and humanistic reflection, which lies at the core of contemporary debates on competence development.

Philosophical traditions provide important foundations for addressing this tension. Hannah Arendt (1958) distinguished between praxis, understood as action grounded in reflection and dialogue, and poiesis, associated with production and instrumental activity. When automation dominates without ethical oversight, human agency risks being reduced to procedural execution. Similarly, Paul Ricoeur (1992) developed the concept of narrative identity, emphasizing that individuals understand themselves through interpretative processes that give meaning to their actions. Competence development, therefore, cannot be limited to technical training; it must involve processes of ethical self-interpretation.

The philosophy of dialogue further reinforces this perspective. Emmanuel Levinas (1998) identified responsibility toward the Other as the foundation of ethics, highlighting vulnerability, openness, and relational sensitivity. In digitally mediated environments—characterized by anonymity, abstraction, and algorithmic filtering—these ethical demands become particularly urgent. As Luciano Floridi (2013) argues, the transformation of the information environment requires a redefinition of ethical responsibility that accounts for both human and technological agents.

Contemporary theories of digital humanism extend these insights. Luciano Floridi (2020) emphasizes that technologies should be designed and governed in ways that promote human flourishing rather than mere efficiency. Similarly, Rosi Braidotti (2019) calls for a renewed humanism capable of integrating technological interconnectedness with ethical responsibility and respect for human dignity. These perspectives converge in the view that

technological systems must remain embedded within normative frameworks that prioritize human well-being.

At the same time, modern societies face increasing ethical fragility. Zygmunt Bauman (2007) described contemporary conditions as characterized by fluid norms and unstable moral reference points, while Erich Fromm (2005) framed the central challenge as a transition from a culture of “having” to one of “being”, grounded in responsibility and relationality. Jeremy Rifkin and Richard Sennett further emphasized empathy, cooperation, and social trust as essential conditions for sustainable social development.

These philosophical insights acquire particular relevance in the context of contemporary economic and regulatory frameworks. The growing importance of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria reflects an institutional attempt to integrate ethical responsibility into economic decision-making. ESG frameworks emphasize that organizations must consider not only financial performance but also social impact, environmental sustainability, and governance structures. In this sense, competences related to ethical judgment, responsibility, and reflexivity become essential for functioning in modern organizations.

Moreover, recent regulatory developments in the field of artificial intelligence underscore the normative dimension of competence. European legal frameworks—such as the Artificial Intelligence Act—highlight the need for human oversight, accountability, and the protection of fundamental rights in automated decision-making systems. These developments demonstrate that competence is not only an individual attribute but also a legal and institutional requirement embedded in broader systems of governance.

Within the Polish intellectual tradition, humanistic approaches to ethics further support this perspective. Karol Wojtyła emphasized that moral action transforms the individual into a subject capable of responsibility, while Józef Tischner interpreted work

and social relations as spaces of ethical encounter grounded in solidarity and dialogue. These approaches underscore that competence development is inseparable from moral agency and the recognition of human dignity (Wojtyła, 1969; Tischner, 1981).

Contemporary management theory reflects these humanistic foundations. Artur Lis conceptualizes competence-based management as a framework that integrates functional effectiveness with ethical responsibility, emphasizing dignity-based leadership. In this model, organizations are understood not merely as systems of efficiency but as moral communities in which responsibility, trust, and human development play a central role.

Ultimately, ethics and humanism define the horizon within which future competences acquire meaning. Without them, technological progress risks becoming ethically neutral and socially disembedded. With them, however, automation can be oriented toward human development, responsibility, and the preservation of dignity. The central challenge of the digital age is therefore not only to develop new technologies, but to ensure that they remain aligned with the values that define human society.

CONCLUSION: BALANCING AUTOMATION AND HUMANISM

The rapid development of automation, digitalization, and artificial intelligence presents contemporary societies with both unprecedented opportunities and profound ethical challenges. The central question addressed in this article concerns the conditions under which technological progress can coexist with human dignity, responsibility, and social cohesion. The analysis has demonstrated that the foundation of future competences lies in four interconnected dimensions: cognitive, emotional, existential, and socio-cognitive. Together, they form an integrated framework that enables individuals to adapt to change without losing ethical orientation.

Cognitive competences safeguard intellectual autonomy in environments increasingly shaped by information overload and algorithmic influence. Emotional competences preserve the relational and communicative dimensions of human interaction. Existential competences enable individuals to maintain meaning, coherence, and resilience under conditions of uncertainty. Socio-cognitive competences support lifelong learning, dialogue, and responsible participation in democratic processes. These dimensions should not be understood as isolated skill sets, but as interdependent expressions of human agency and moral development.

The normative relevance of this framework is reinforced by contemporary regulatory developments. European approaches to artificial intelligence governance—such as the European Union Artificial Intelligence Act and the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence—emphasize human oversight, accountability, and the protection of fundamental rights as essential conditions for the legitimate use of automated systems. These frameworks confirm that competence is not only an individual attribute, but also a requirement embedded in legal and institutional structures.

At the conceptual level, the findings of this article support the argument that competence development cannot be reduced to technical efficiency. As Artur Lis (2024) observes, competence management reflects not only organizational effectiveness, but also responsibility for individuals and communities (p. 54). This perspective reframes education and management as ethical practices grounded in dignity and social responsibility.

The broader implication of this analysis is that the development of competences must be understood as part of a wider transformation of social systems. In education, this requires integrating digital literacy with ethical reflection and critical thinking. In organizations, it calls for leadership models based on trust, responsibility, and relational awareness. In public policy,

it necessitates regulatory approaches that balance innovation with the protection of human agency.

At the same time, the proposed framework has several limitations. First, the article adopts a theoretical and conceptual approach and does not include empirical validation of the proposed competence model. Second, the analysis focuses primarily on European and Western intellectual traditions, which may limit its applicability in other cultural contexts. Third, the model has not been operationalized in the form of measurable indicators, which would be necessary for its practical implementation in educational or organizational settings.

These limitations indicate directions for further research. Future studies should aim to empirically test the relationships between the four competence domains and specific social or organizational outcomes. Comparative research across different cultural and institutional contexts would also provide a more comprehensive understanding of how competences are shaped by social environments. Additionally, the development of operational tools – such as assessment frameworks or competence indices – could enhance the practical applicability of the proposed model.

Ultimately, the relationship between automation and humanism should not be understood as a dichotomy, but as a dynamic interaction requiring continuous reflection and adjustment. Technological development does not determine social outcomes in itself; rather, these outcomes depend on the values, competences, and institutional frameworks that guide its application. In this sense, the future of competences remains inseparable from the broader question of how societies define, protect, and sustain their humanistic foundations.

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