

# Determinants of behavioral intentions towards a professional certification scheme at European level

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European Journal of Training and Development

ISSN: 2046-9012

## Abstract

### Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the effect of candidates' perceptions of the attributes of a professional certification scheme based on competences, as well as personal factors, that may influence in the behavioral intentions toward such certification program, i.e. intention to participate in the certification process and willingness to pay for the certificate.

### Design/methodology/approach

Based on a survey of 2,630 professionals about the "Certified Professional" program in eight European countries, the influence of the perceived attributes of the certification program and the personal characteristics of the potential candidates on their behavioral intentions are analyzed.

### Findings

Difficulty and fairness of the certification process, credibility, innovativeness, international recognition and future usefulness of the professional certificate influence positively on the candidate's likelihood of applying for being certified and the willingness to pay. Young professionals not holding a university diploma show high probability to participate in the certification process and intention to pay for the certificate.



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## Practical implications

Promotional efforts to launch a professional certification scheme should concentrate in creating strong associations of the certificate with the notions of international prestige, credibility and usefulness to enhance employability and professional growth. Segmentation criteria to increase communication effectiveness are defined.

## Originality/value

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of professional certification programs in competences, and literature has advocated the need to investigate the perceived value of such systems in terms of benefits and barriers perceived by potential applicants for accreditation. The present paper aims at addressing this research gap.

## Keywords

Behavioural intentions; Willingness to pay; Value perceptions; Professional certification; Transversal competences; Willingness to participate

## Acknowledgements

The authors are very grateful for the support of the project Certified Professional (Added value of professional education portfolio), reference: AREC0019\_2016-1.5.2-188 p165-10 financed by EIT Climate KIC.

## Citation

Ruiz-Molina, M., Gil-Saura, I., Berenguer-Contró, G. and Auch, C. (2019), "Determinants of behavioral intentions towards a professional certification scheme at European level", *European Journal of Training and Development*, Vol. 43 No. 7/8, pp. 719-735. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-01-2019-0001>

Publisher: Emerald Publishing Limited  
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