Facilitating Competence-Oriented Qualification in New Work: Evaluation of a Platform Prototype

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Abstract: This article introduces and evaluates a platform prototype that facilitates competence-oriented qualification through micro modules in the context of New Work. A focus group interview with nine experts from the application domain was conducted. Requirements to ensure the practicality of the platform were identified, and concrete design measures for its further iterative development were derived. The platform facilitates competence-oriented qualification by reducing complexity for individuals and supporting the strategic management of competence development in organizations. Several requirements were identified to ensure the practicality of the platform in the context of New Work. These were used to derive design measures for the further iterative design of the platform prototype with its three components - self-evaluation tool, competence development guide and competence shop. The results enable further work on the transferability into different application domains and job profiles. The presented prototype facilitates worker-centered digital transformation initiatives regarding competence development.

1 INTRODUCTION

The rapid changes in the working world, driven by digital transformation, globalization and social trends, pose new challenges and opportunities for individuals and organizations (World Economic Forum, 2023). **New Work** describes these structural changes and focuses on the changing needs and expectations of workers (Bergmann, 2019). The New Work environment stands for autonomy, personal freedom and participation in decisions (Helmold, 2021). To cope with these changes, workers need to continuously update and develop their competences, while employers need to ensure that their workforce is qualified and adaptable. In this context, individual development through **competence-oriented learning and qualification** becomes a key factor for enhancing employability, productivity and innovation (Cheng, Adekola, Albia, & Cai, 2022).

This paper introduces and evaluates a platform prototype as design science research (DSR) artifact that facilitates competence development through micro qualification modules, using the example of **Corporate Community Managers** (CCMs) as target job profile. Micro qualification modules, which are used instead of comprehensive, classical trainings and rigid study modules, support specific personalized, flexible and competence-oriented qualifications, considering individual and organizational conditions (Tamoliune et al., 2023).

CCMs are responsible for the formal management of one or more intra-organizational online communities, where employees network, collaborate and share knowledge using digital communication (BVCM, 2016; Jahnke, 2010). **Digital communication** is the process of exchanging information, messages and ideas using digital technologies and platforms. Digital technologies enable CCMs to create value for their organizations by facilitating knowledge sharing and collaboration among employees and by fostering a sense of belonging and engagement (Chamakiotis, Petrakaki, & Panteli, 2021; Za, Pallud, Agrifoglio, & Metallo, 2020).

A wide range of competences is needed to manage these intra-organizational online communities using digital communication. However, few formal and standardized qualification opportunities exist for this profession (Clauss et al., 2019). Many CCMs are career changers who have

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diverse backgrounds and need to develop competences on-the-job (Clauss et al., 2019). Moreover, their work is often influenced by the organic growth of communities within organizations, which means that a small community is started and gradually more responsibility is needed as the community grows. These factors make CCM a well-suited profession example to illustrate the high agility and need for continuous qualification in the context of the complex application domain New Work.

Within prior research, which is described in the research background, a platform prototype focused on the job profile of CCM was designed. The platform prototype aims to facilitate worker-centered digital transformation initiatives regarding competence development. It is designed to meet the needs and preferences of the workers and to empower them to take charge of their own learning and development.

The purpose of this article is to evaluate requirements for the practicality of this platform prototype within the application domain New Work and to derive concrete design measures for its further iterative development. These requirements and design measures can also provide added value for the development of comparable solutions for further job profiles. Therefore, an evaluation with experts from the application domain and further insights are sought. The focus group interview was chosen as a suitable research method in this context. It allows to gain multiple insights into experts' perspectives, experiences and feedback. This concludes in the following research question:

RQ1: What are the requirements to ensure the practicality of the platform prototype for competence-oriented qualification in the context of New Work?

RQ2: How can the platform prototype for competence development be enhanced to ensure practicality in the context of New Work?

2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The platform prototype is the central artifact of a DSR project and comprehensively described in previous articles (Clauss, 2018; Clauss & Jautelat, 2022; Jautelat & Clauss, 2022; Leichsenring & Clauss, 2020, 2023; Reeb, Clauss, Lenk, & Altmann, 2021). Figure 1A gives an overview of the three elements of the platform prototype:

• First, a **self-evaluation tool** that helps to evaluate individual competences based on anchor examples (see Figure 1B). The anchor examples are specific descriptions of concrete activities and behaviors on different competence levels (novice,

intermediate, expert), which are based on a competence profile. The competence profile was derived from expert interviews and confirmed in a Delphi survey. It describes the domain, personal and social competences of CCMs (Clauss, 2018; Jautelat & Clauss, 2022; Leichsenring & Clauss, 2020).

• Second, a **competence development guide** that suggests pedagogical design principles for the development of competence-oriented qualifications (see Figure 1C): The design principles were developed from a systematic analysis of current competence models and problem-centered, in-depth interviews with pedagogy experts. The design principles focus on the consideration of organizational, social and individual conditions as well as relevant competence dimensions and levels. They recommend a constructivist and collectivist approach facilitating social learning processes. Problem and action-oriented simulation methods as digital formats combining formal and informal learning are identified as central methods (Leichsenring & Clauss, 2023).

• Third, a **competence shop** that offers qualification programs from external commercial providers, based on the design principles (see Figure 1D): The qualification providers can use the data from the self-evaluation tool to identify needs and use the design principles to develop qualifications. Users can choose between qualification offers and evaluate whether they were suitable to close their identified competence gaps after completion.

The platform prototype including the three elements was developed using a web-based survey environment for B and C and a mockup for D. The focus was to demonstrate the applicability of the abstract platform idea, focusing on the specific competence profile of CCMs.
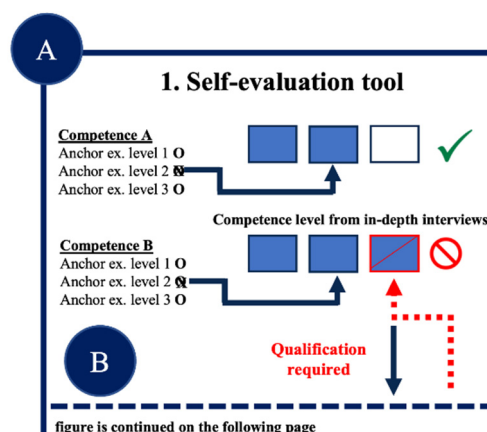

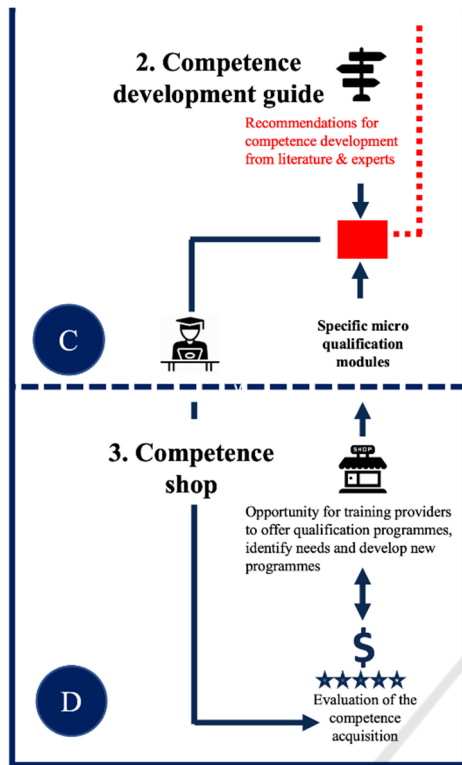Figure 1: Design Artifact – Platform Prototype.

Figure 1: Design Artifact – Platform Prototype (cont.).

3 METHODOLOGY

Winter (2008) states that DSR lacks commonly accepted, specific evaluation guidelines for the different artifact types. Sonnenberg & vom Brocke (2012) present patterns that can be used to articulate and justify artifact evaluation strategies within DSR projects; the evaluation followed the "prototyping pattern", which aims to demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of the artifact in a real-world setting. Focus group interviews are recommended as an established mechanism for data collection in the pattern. Following Tremblay et al. (2010) a confirmatory focus group was chosen, as it allows researchers to determine the practicality of the artifactin the application domain.

3.1 Focus Group Interview

The focus group interview evaluates the DSR artifact by gathering structured feedback and discussing the practicality (Tremblay et al., 2010). Focus groups can reveal the diversity or consensus of opinions among experts and the reasons behind them (Krueger, 2014), allowing an in-depth evaluation of an artifact, which is in focus of this research.

The focus group interview was conducted online as a workshop at the 25th Conference on "Communities in New Media" in Dresden on the 5th of October 2022. Experts were recruited following the guidelines of Hennink (2007), focusing on a wide range of perspectives, opinions, backgrounds and experiences to address multiple aspects of the topic. Selection criteria for perspectives were defined, then experts were prioritized and contacted. The experts were selected after an extensive screening, including authors of relevant publications, professors with a focus on the topic, research project leaders, former keynote speakers of the conference (which has a distinct focus on community management) and leading company representatives with relevant profiles. Table 1 summarizes the participants and their expertise.

Table 1: Focus Group Experts.

1	Corporate Digital Learning expert, Ph.D. thesis on strategic management of companies' dynamic capabilities, Research on competence engineering
2	Professor for Business Administration, Expertise in digital education design and management
3	Senior community management in IT consulting, management & service provider for agile software development company, Expertise in New Work and agile management, CCM
4	Head of Consulting in software strategy, conception, development, implementation and hosting company, Expertise in New Work and Digital Transformation
5	Research associate Professorship for Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Responsible for business plan seminar and start-up consulting
6	Community management expert, consultant and author, Expertise in building engaged online communities
7	Deputy director of a central research facility, Expertise in educational technologies, competence-oriented qualifications and certification
8	Business Development Manager at private university, Responsible for design of qualification programs, Expertise in qualification distribution
9	Professor for International and Digital Business, Ph.D. thesis on online communities as strategic assets, Research on communities and digital transformation

The number of nine experts was high, but still within the recommended range (Krueger & Casey, 2015). To ensure the quality and manageability of the discussion, the author was assisted by two colleagues who helped to structure the documentation. At the beginning of the focus group the experts introduced themselves and their expertise, received an impulse presentation of the artifact and were introduced to the procedure of documenting, clustering and discussing their ideas on a virtual whiteboard in Miro. The experts were expected to document their ideas on notes in Miro before discussing them. This ensured

that thoughts of the experts were documented even if they were not extensively discussed. The focus group discussion lasted for 150 minutes. It was recorded and completely transcribed for qualitative content analysis.

3.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

For the analysis of the interview transcript and Miro notes, an extended coding scheme based on Hevner et al.'s (2004) design science research evaluation framework was adopted. The evaluation focused on analyzing the practicality of the prototype in the application domain New Work. Acceptability, Accuracy, Consistency, Efficiency, Performance, Reliability, Usability and Utility were synthesized from the design science literature as deductive main categories for a differentiated view on the various facets of the complex construct practicality (Hevner et al., 2004; Prat, Comyn-Wattiau, & Akoka, 2014; Sonnenberg & Vom Brocke, 2012; Venable, Pries-Heje, & Baskerville, 2012). The categorization follows the procedure of "Structuring Deductive Category Assignment" by Mayring (2014) using MAXQDA. Definitions and coding rules were documented as memos within the software and are presented in line with the results.

Extensive categories were differentiated in a next step based on the methodological approach of Mayring's (2014) "Inductive Category Formation". For three main categories in total nine inductive subcategories were added. The category definitions were documented as memos. The complete material was analyzed with a fixed final set of coding rules, leading to the results presented in the next chapter.

4 RESULTS

The results describe requirements to ensure practicality of the platform prototype in the context of New Work. Before the discussion of the evaluation criteria for practicality, the development of a mutual understanding among the experts was crucial to clarify their interpretation of the relationship between the application domain and competence development processes.

The experts discussed the challenge of defining competences for New Work. It is difficult to determine which competences are really required as the concept is constantly evolving and very trend driven. Due to constant and disruptive change processes, organizations face challenges to identify which competences are important for the future.

Therefore, competence descriptions in this context need to be agile and adaptable to keep up with the changing environment. The experts defined New Work as the environment and context for the competence development. These basic characteristics are referred to with the abbreviation R1 to ease further orientation.

In the following the results R2 to R9 describe the deductive evaluation categories. The categories R8 and R9 are extended with inductively formed subcategories. The presented definitions for each category are summarized design science evaluation criteria (Hevner et al., 2004; Prat et al., 2014; Sonnenberg & Vom Brocke, 2012; Venable et al., 2012), which were also used in the coding process. The frequency of a category can be an indicator of the relevance or importance of a topic (Mayring, 2014). The following results are sorted after the number of mentions to give an impression of the distributions of topics within the focus group discussion. However, the frequency of a category does not necessarily reflect its relevance, as some topics may not require much discussion if the experts agree on their significance and importance (Tausch & Menold, 2015).

4.1 Consistency (R2)

Consistency is defined as the extent to which the artifact behaves in a predictable and coherent way in different situations or scenarios. The category was mentioned four times, which made it the least intensively discussed category.

To ensure consistency of the artifact, the experts recommended to define goals of competence development for specific target groups, which are not fixed and can be adjusted continuously based on changes in the workplace. The artifact needs to identify the current competences of the individual and match them with appropriate learning opportunities, therefore consistency of the used competence sets is necessary.

4.2 Efficiency (R3)

Efficiency is defined as the extent to which the artifact achieves its intended goals with minimal resources or effort. With five mentions, the discussion of this category was less intensive.

The experts stated clearly that the presented approach to identify competences and create competence sets as development goals ties extensive resources and needs high effort. Therefore, they reflected the efficiency of the artifact with a future-oriented perspective in the context of machine

learning and AI support for competence management. They envisioned these processes can automatically analyze which competences are necessary to reach defined organizational goals, without human intervention, through task analysis and prediction. This would enable constantly evolving goals of competence development in the future.

4.3 Acceptability (R4)

Acceptability is defined as the extent to which the artifact is perceived as desirable, appropriate, or beneficial by the intended users or stakeholders. With six mentions, the category was one of the least intensively discussed.

The experts explained that potential users accept qualifications better, which are tailored to their specific needs rather than general courses that may not meet their expectations.

To ensure acceptance of the learning transfer, the experts recommended a verification of competences in real-world situations as indicator of learning success. To increase acceptance by demonstrating the practicality of the competences, 360-degree feedback from different stakeholders and digital forms of assessment should be used.

4.4 Performance (R5)

Performance was defined as the extent to which the artifact meets or exceeds certain standards or benchmarks of quality or effectiveness. With 12 mentions the category is in the midfield of discussion intensity.

The experts emphasized the importance of a standardized quality of content providers and qualifications. Quality checks should be conducted by independent institutions. Providers must offer standardized and comparable assessments to measure both hard skills and especially soft skills, such as communication, collaboration and problem solving.

The experts asserted that the competence shop requires standardized, well-tested qualification offers as products, to ensure a scalable and effective performance. Collaborations between different providers enable comparability and alignment of qualifications, leading to product standardization in terms of consistent formats, contents and quality. Testing and implementing the concept small before scaling it up helps to ensure the expected performance.

4.5 Usability (R6)

Usability was defined as the extent to which the artifact is easy to learn, use and understand by the intended users or stakeholders. With 15 mentions, the category is in the midfield of discussion intensity.

The experts suggested applying agile methods and design thinking on usability testing cohorts. The experts highlighted the need for regular participants' feedback to enhance the usability of the artifact in a continuous iterative design process.

The usability for the self-evaluation depends on finding the optimal balance between specificity and generalization. Specific examples would provide relevant and concrete anchors for the users' job-related needs, while generalization would enable transfer to different contexts increasing its commercial viability. The experts recommended making the anchor examples adaptable to various media formats, to improve marketability.

To enhance the usability of the learning content, the experts proposed using selectable and interconnected "nuggets" of information that allow users to navigate through the content according to their preferences and goals. Content overlaps should be avoided.

4.6 Accuracy (R7)

Accuracy was defined as the extent to which the artifact produces correct or reliable results or outputs. With 20 mentions it was also in the midfield of discussions intensity.

The experts clearly state, that the artifact leads to correct and reliable outputs, which are transferable for platform business, but the challenge lies in identifying and defining relevant competences and breaking down large blocks into smaller saleable units. The experts emphasized the importance of constant adjustment for the accuracy of the artifact as the application domain New Work is influenced by trends and developments in various domains. Regular reviewing and updating processes of guidelines and standards are mandatory.

The experts explained the difficulty of accurately defining and standardizing soft skills, as they are more context-specific and may differ in meaning, interpretation, or application across different domains. The experts highlighted the importance of using standardized terminology and frameworks that describe competences precisely and selectively, whenever it is possible. Current developments from the research field should be included. Standardized models and frameworks, especially ESCO the

classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (European Commission & Directorate-General for Employment Social Affairs and Inclusion, 2019), were recommended. Continuously gathering structured feedback on the accuracy from different external experts especially from the fields of human resource management and pedagogy was described as crucial.

4.7 Reliability (R8)

Reliability was defined as the extent to which the artifact functions without errors or failures over time or under varying conditions. With 32 mentions it was one of the most intensively discussed categories. The results are summarized in two inductively formed subcategories.

Social Context of Self-Evaluation (R81)
The experts concurred that self-evaluation could foster users' awareness and empowerment. However, they also acknowledged the challenge of ensuring the reliability and validity of self-evaluation. The experts highlighted the role of social context claiming that self-evaluation is not a solitary process, but rather shaped by the expectations, feedback and norms of the social environment. Therefore, room for reflection and communication after self-evaluation is necessary to interpret the results and to plan further actions. Furthermore, a combination of self-evaluation and external evaluation is recommended to compare self-perception with external perception. Multiple methods of external evaluation and standardized tests should be used.

Theory and Practice Transfer (R82)
The experts argued that the artifact should not only provide theoretical knowledge, but also enable users to apply and transfer it to their own context and other domains. Collaborative learning, peer feedback, and mentoring are recommended to incorporate social context in qualifications.

The importance of understanding the transfer environment, such as the goals, expectations and norms of the target audience and matching it with the artifact's contents was emphasized. Contextual analysis, needs assessment and stakeholder involvement should be used to identify and understand the transfer environment. The experts recommend collecting user's feedback after completing the qualifications, if the developed competences are reliable under transfer conditions to optimize qualification offers constantly.

4.8 Utility (R9)

Utility was defined as the extent to which the artifact provides a solution to a relevant problem or fulfills a need in a given context. With 63 mentions it was the most intensively discussed category. The results are summarized in four inductive subcategories.

Problem Description (R91)
The key problems identified by the experts are described to enhance the understanding of the utility of practical solutions: The experts state that a crucial problem in defining and assessing competence in different organizational contexts is the lack of clear and consistent criteria and objectives. Competence is discussed as a multifaceted concept that encompasses both domain-specific and general competences. While some experts emphasize the need for specialized knowledge, others argue that organizational environments often pose novel and non-standardized problems that require general problem-solving. Therefore, competence should be understood as the ability to cope with various and changing situations.

Another challenge is the complexity and diversity of competence requirements for certain job profiles in the context of New Work. These profiles involve not only technical competences, but also intangible aspects, such as communication, collaboration and leadership, which are difficult to measure and evaluate. Their holistic nature cannot be fully captured by mere descriptions or indicators.

Structured Competence Development (R92)
The experts rated the utility of the artifact highly as it enables structured processes for independent and self-determined competence development. The artifact supports a first overview of a topic and a regular orientation of the current competences and potential for advancement. Individual and organizational development goals must be stated as relatively fixed, but the associated competence set should be developed agilely (see R1). This allows the dynamism of the individual development of employees in a strategically managed setting.

On the one hand, the artifact allows a structured self-reflection to identify knowledge gaps and potential for development. This process fosters self-awareness and self-regulation, essential for adapting to changing situations and challenges. On the other hand, the experts also see the potential for companies to evaluate their employees' competence level and derive strategic measures to fill potential gaps. The artifact enables the definition of competences that should be developed to achieve specific

organizational objectives. The artifact should structure competence development as a recommender system presenting qualifications necessary to fulfill specific individual or organizational profiles.

Agility (R93)

The context of New Work was described as one of the most challenging environments due to the high agility. The artifact in combination with micro-certificates and micro-courses enables special flexibility and a higher qualification speed than classic fixed models (e.g. a three-year apprenticeship). Fast feedback enables the adaptation of models to changes.

The experts point out that one of the biggest challenges in the qualification sector is to keep pace with the speed and complexity of the applications domain while considering individual development perspectives.

Potential for Transfer (R94)

The experts agreed that the artifact has high potential for transfer to other job profiles, but a comprehensive development process is an essential prerequisite for every transfer. Sufficient resources need to be planned and provided for the initial work of identifying relevant competences and defining qualification modules in new application fields. Continuous updates, which tie up more resources over a longer period, need to be ensured, to allow transferability.

The experts make clear that a platform business concept requires standardized processes and content modules to be scalable and commercially successful, but the artifact works the best for specific job profiles, such as CCM. The experts underline that transferability is easier in fields where competences are very distinct, separable and fixed for a long time, such as languages and math. A holistic approach to transfer descriptions of hard and soft skills is challenging.

5 DISCUSSION

In the following, the requirements identified as results are discussed in the context of the previous research (see Chapter 2) and concrete design measures for the further iterative development of the platform prototype are derived to ensure practicality in the application domain New Work.

Overall Platform

The artifact was considered as very appropriate for New Work as applications domain, as it fosters a new understanding of competences that considers individual experiences and change processes (R1) (Clauss & Jautelat, 2022). The experts confirmed that the artifact enables users to get an overview of a topic and their learning needs and to shape their competence development independently and self-determinedly (R93) (Leichsenring & Clauss, 2020). The focus group revealed that the artifact offers the possibility, not previously considered, for organizations to agilely align and adapt development goals by evaluating the competence level of their employees and deriving strategic measures (R93). The artifact's ability to reduce the complexity of competence development was confirmed (R93) (Leichsenring & Clauss, 2020). The artifact can be transferred to other job profiles and domains but requires a comprehensive development process for each case (R94). Sufficient resources for the identification and updating of relevant competences and qualification modules in new application fields are necessary (R94). In the following concrete design measures for the further development of the three elements of the platform prototype are discussed and their implementation time and effort are estimated.

Self-Evaluation Tool

The artifact supports adaptation to changing situations and challenges through self-reflection and self-regulation (R93). The artifact should use target group-specific competence sets that enable a consistent assignment (R2). In the specific application case, it is the competence set for CCM (Leichsenring & Clauss, 2020).

Check the usability of standardized competence descriptions: The competences should, if possible, use established models and frameworks for the description of competences (R7). Short-term implementation. Low effort.

Incorporate regular feedback from experts and users: Continuous feedback from experts and users needs to be collected for iterative revisions (R7). Short-term implementation. High effort.

Add external evaluation: It is conceivable that users can invite different peers to answer their evaluation questions, either topic-specific or comprehensive, to objectify their self-evaluation by adding an external perspective (R81). Short-term implementation. Medium effort.

Add query of competence development goals: To classify the results better, the individual users, peers and organization management should be asked about their goals of competence development, to improve the contextualization of evaluation results (R81). Short-term implementation. Medium effort.

Support identification and updating by AI: The development, regular check of up-to-dateness and revision of the competence sets is rated as very resource intensive. AI and automation should be used to increase efficiency in future applications (R3). Depending on the technology development, medium or long-term implementation. Medium effort.

Competence Development Guide
The social and collaborative aspects of competence development need to be considered, such as peer feedback, mentoring, or community building (R92). Social contexts need to be incorporated in competence development by using collaborative learning strategies (R82). Both aspects are integrated in the design principles (Leichsenring & Clauss, 2023). Aligning the artifact's contents with the target audience's context and goals as well as using different methods to analyze the effect in the transfer environment, are already addressed in the design principles as framework conditions (Leichsenring & Clauss, 2023). Additional principles need to be developed for the following aspects.

Design principles for assessments: The acquired competences need to be verified using competence-based tests in real-life situations. Although design principles for qualification of relevant competences exist, they are currently missing for the assessment (R4). Mid-term implementation. Medium effort.

Design principles for the qualification's granularity: The artifact needs a flexible and modular structure that can be customized and updated according to the user's needs and goals (R91). Agile development methods and design thinking should be used to create marketable modules (R6). Distinct and interconnected nuggets of information allow to make the content usable and clear (R6). Micro-qualification was confirmed as a suitable approach (Leichsenring & Clauss, 2020). Principles need to be developed for multi-perspective granularity determinants to guide the isolation of content regarding market specifications and scalability. This includes the intelligent pedagogical combination of qualification offers in terms of content, organization but also potential qualification providers. Mid-term implementation. Medium effort.

Competence Shop
Micro-certificates and micro-courses were confirmed as main components of the artifact, which can be combined and sequenced to create personalized learning paths (R92) (Leichsenring & Clauss, 2020). A clear structure and a good UX design are necessary (R4). All qualifications should follow consistent criteria and provide feedback to the user to evaluate

their competence level and progress (R92). The user should be able to adapt and revise their learning paths according to changing situations and challenges in the context of New Work (R92). The artifact can be designed as a platform business concept that uses standardized processes and content modules to be scalable and economically successful. This is the biggest challenge, as high specificity and continuous revision are necessary (R94). Alternatively, internal organizational use as a business model or non-commercial use of the platform, e.g. by professional associations, should be considered.

Consideration of criteria that foster recognition: Individual analysis of the potential transfer environment is necessary to identify criteria that foster recognition of the qualification within the branch but also cross-sectorally (R81). Different formats of micro-certification and verification must be made possible. Short term implementation. Medium effort.

Enable qualification provider collaboration: The competences require distinct types of qualifications. To serve this diversity, it should be made easier for providers to collaborate on the creation of qualification offers (R5). User data from self-evaluations can be made available to potential providers in anonymized form to facilitate needs-based collaborative content development (Leichsenring & Clauss, 2020). Short term implementation. Medium effort.

Creation of a quality assurance system: Clear criteria for the didactic design of qualifications and their assessment are necessary. Products must be regularly tested and reviewed (R5). The development of uniform quality assurance and binding criteria requires consistent testing and iterative improvement. There must be a clear added value for providers before they will make this effort. In the presented artifact quality assurance has only been provided through feedback from the users themselves (R6) (Leichsenring & Clauss, 2020), an expansion appears necessary. Mid-term implementation. Medium effort.

6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to evaluate requirements for the practicality of a platform prototype for competence-oriented qualification within the context of New Work and to derive concrete design measures for its further development. Therefore, a focus group interview with nine experts with complementary expertise in the application domain was conducted.

According to the experts the presented prototype facilitates competence-oriented qualification in New Work. The prototype reduces the complexity of identifying qualification needs and suitable offers. Furthermore, it also offers organizations the opportunity to strategically manage competence development goals for their employees and thus to react faster to structural changes. The following requirements ensure the practicality of the platform (RQ1).

Competence-oriented qualifications are highly context-specific. Self-evaluations need to be expanded by external perspectives and personal, team and organizational goals. A particularly challenging factor is the identification of relevant competences and the continuous updating of competence sets, which requires intensive efforts and constantly ties resources. The experts see clear potential, that this process will be supported by AI in the future. The verification of competences in the application domain is a further crucial factor. Suitable test methods need to be identified. Quality standards for qualification offers and related tests must be developed. Qualification offers should be collaboratively developed by professional providers in an agile procedure and be constantly iteratively tested and expanded. The focus group makes it clear that the chosen approach of a high specificity for a selected professional profile is a decisive criterion for the platform's practicality. At the same time, this high specificity is a burden for the commercial distribution of qualifications via a competence shop, as they require standardization and associated scaling. The determination of a suitable balance between specificity and generalizability is challenging. The experts agreed that the platform prototype has high potential for transfer to other job profiles and application domains, but a comprehensive development process of competence sets and goals is an essential prerequisite for every transfer.

The results revealed several requirements that allowed to derive design measures for the further iterative development of the platform and its three main components (RQ2):

The self-evaluation needs to be extended through external evaluation and should incorporate regular feedback from experts and users. The competence development guide should be extended with design principles for assessments and for the granularity of qualifications. The competence shop needs a quality assurance system. Criteria that foster recognition in the application domain and measures to ease qualification providers' collaboration should be established.

Although the focus group interview allowed to gain multiple insights into the practicality of the platform prototype, this research has several limitations: The experts focused on aspects related to the design and functionality of the presented platform prototype. The effectiveness of the derived design measures can only be evaluated after the further iterative implementations. To achieve a more holistic view of the platform in relation to the application domain, the prototype needs to be tested in a real environment in the next step. A technology acceptance model should be applied to capture and analyze the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of users. Whether the identified measures can be transferred to other domains should be investigated in the future by an intensified use of the prototype and an accompanying mixed-methods research approach.

The results provide starting points for further work on the transferability of the presented platform prototype into different application domains and job profiles. The presented prototype has clear potential to facilitate competence-oriented qualification in the agile context of New Work as worker-centered digital transformation initiatives. This research underlines the need of advanced competence-oriented qualification offers to enhance employability, productivity and innovativeness.

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