

3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Tourism Management and Tourism Related Issues  
“Special Track on eLearning applications”

## eLearning on tourism destinations The case of *Ticino Switzerland Travel Specialist* course

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# DMO eLearning courses

- Provide travel agents with the needed knowledge and skills, to better sell travel destinations and their attractions (UNWTO, 2008)
- There are 75 online training courses offered by DMOs at the national level ([www.elearning4tourism.com/elearning-programs](http://www.elearning4tourism.com/elearning-programs))
- Extensive research at the national level of the offered courses, little on regional scale

## Ticino Switzerland Travel Specialist (TSTS)

[www.ticino.ch/e-learning](http://www.ticino.ch/e-learning)

- Ticino canton, Switzerland
  - Population 350'000
  - 2.5 million overnight stays per year (58% domestic travel, average length of stay 3 days)
- TSTS Design
  - Five modules
  - English, around 1.30 h of studying time
  - Final exam consists of 10 multiple-choice questions
  - 3 chances to pass the exam and get certificate
- By end of September 2013 - 576 travel professionals subscribed (254 certified users)

- Modules overview
- Discover Ticino
  - Selling tips
  - Intermediate test
  - Culture and events
  - Excursions and nature
  - Rivers and lakes
  - Final test



**Discover Ticino.  
Switzerland's sunny south.**

Ticino is where Swiss quality and Italian lifestyle meet in a diverse and stunning setting. Here you will find general and practical information about Ticino, like location, main cities, how to get to Ticino, etc.



**Ticino.  
Selling tips and testimonials.**

How to sell Ticino? In this module you will get helpful selling tips from tour operators and Switzerland Tourism's representatives.



**Intermediate test**



**Ticino.  
Culture and Events.**

Find out about Ticino's rich cultural heritage, the local gastronomy and the top events.



**Ticino.  
Excursions and Nature.**

Ticino is home to an exceptionally wide variety of landscapes and offers a great selection of outdoor activities, from hiking and biking to extreme sports.



**Ticino.  
Rivers and Lakes.**

From crystal clear rivers, waterfalls and alpine lakes, to beaches and swimming pools, visitors will find great amusement in Ticino as it has something for every taste and budget.



**Final test**



**Download your certificate**



# Development of Ticino Switzerland Travel Specialist (TSTS) course

- ADDIE model (AskERIC, 1999)
  - *Analyze* – stakeholders' needs and goals, benchmarking study of similar courses provided by different DMOs worldwide;
  - *Design* – information architecture and instructional design;
  - *Develop* – Alpha and Beta versions of the platform;
  - *Implement* – delivery of the course to travel agents;
  - *Evaluate* – usability testing, usages analysis and users' surveys

# Evaluation (1)

## Usability testing before launching “Beta version”

- User testing of 8 travel agents
    - Thinking aloud simultaneous protocol
- release of “Beta version” <http://www.ticino.ch/e-learning>

## Evaluation (2)

### Survey with course attendees after one year of course operation

- D. Kirkpatrick (1994) evaluation model of a learning activity, measuring reaction, knowledge, transfer and impact
- Two groups of survey participants (72 travel agents out of 298)
  - those who passed the final exam and acquired the certificate (39)
  - those who subscribed, but didn't complete (33)

extremely positive	21 participants (53.3%)
positive	16 (42.1%)
negative	1 (2,6%)

Learn more about Ticino	32 participants (86.5%)
Serve the clients	28 (75.7%)
Sell more and earn more	17 (45.9%)
Enrich my curriculum	16 (43.2%)
Win a competition	9 (24.3%)
Display the TSTS certificate in my office	4 (10.8%)
Other	2 (5.4%)

Too long	8 participants (29.6%)
I needed more assistance from Ticino Tourism	4 (14.8%)
I already knew everything about Ticino	3 (11.1%)
Too much textual information	3 (11.1%)
Information was not useful to me	0 (0.0%)
Too boring	0 (0.0%)
I faced technical problems (please specify)	11 (40.7%)



# Evaluation (3)

## Follow up survey after two years of course operation

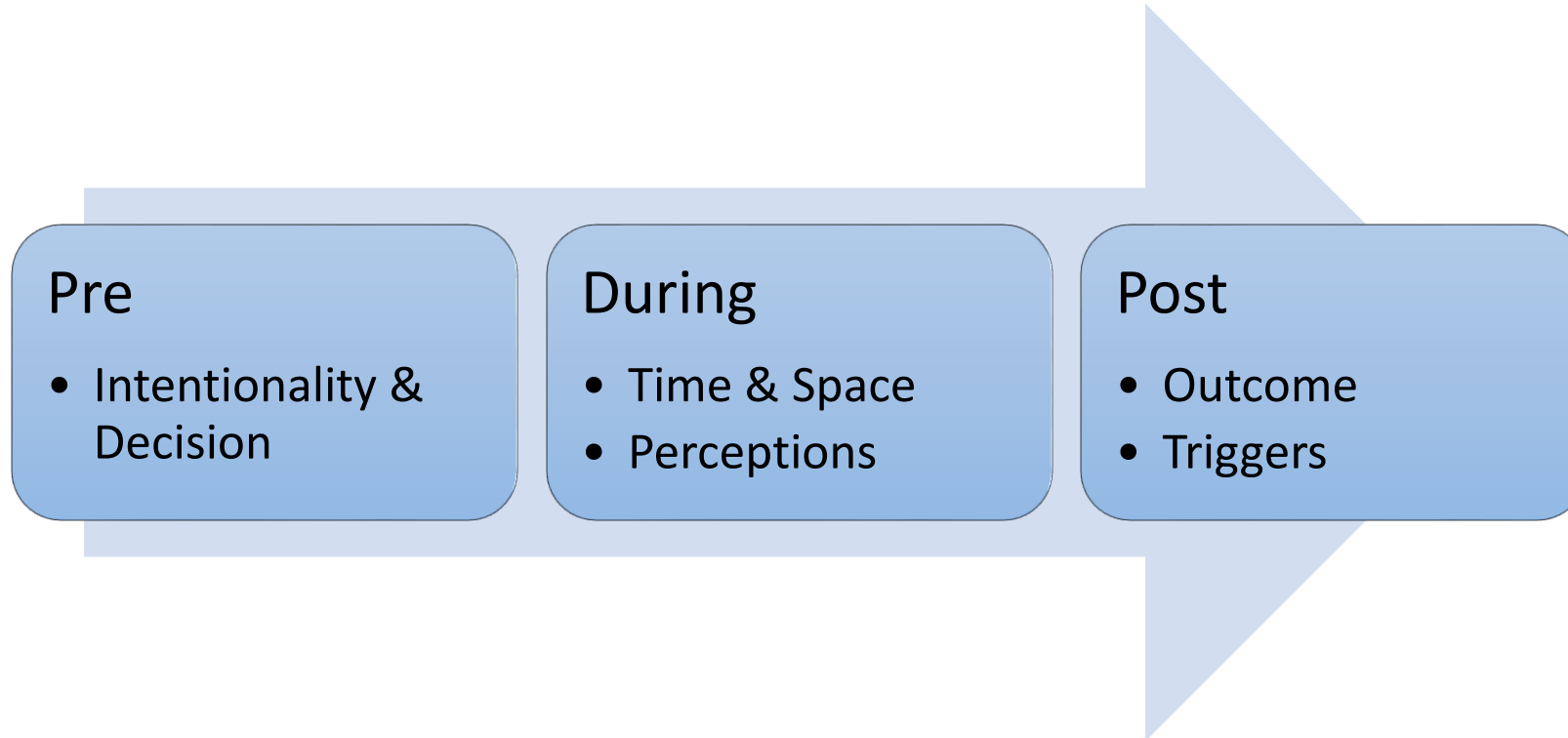
- **Goals:**

- To identify the importance of certain elements of the learning experience e.g. decision to take the course, location and timing of attending the course, importance of the certification etc.;
- To understand if Ticino eLearning experience has triggered any further informal learning actions;
- Position Ticino eLearning course in the landscape of channels and strategies used by travel agents to acquire competences about tourism destinations

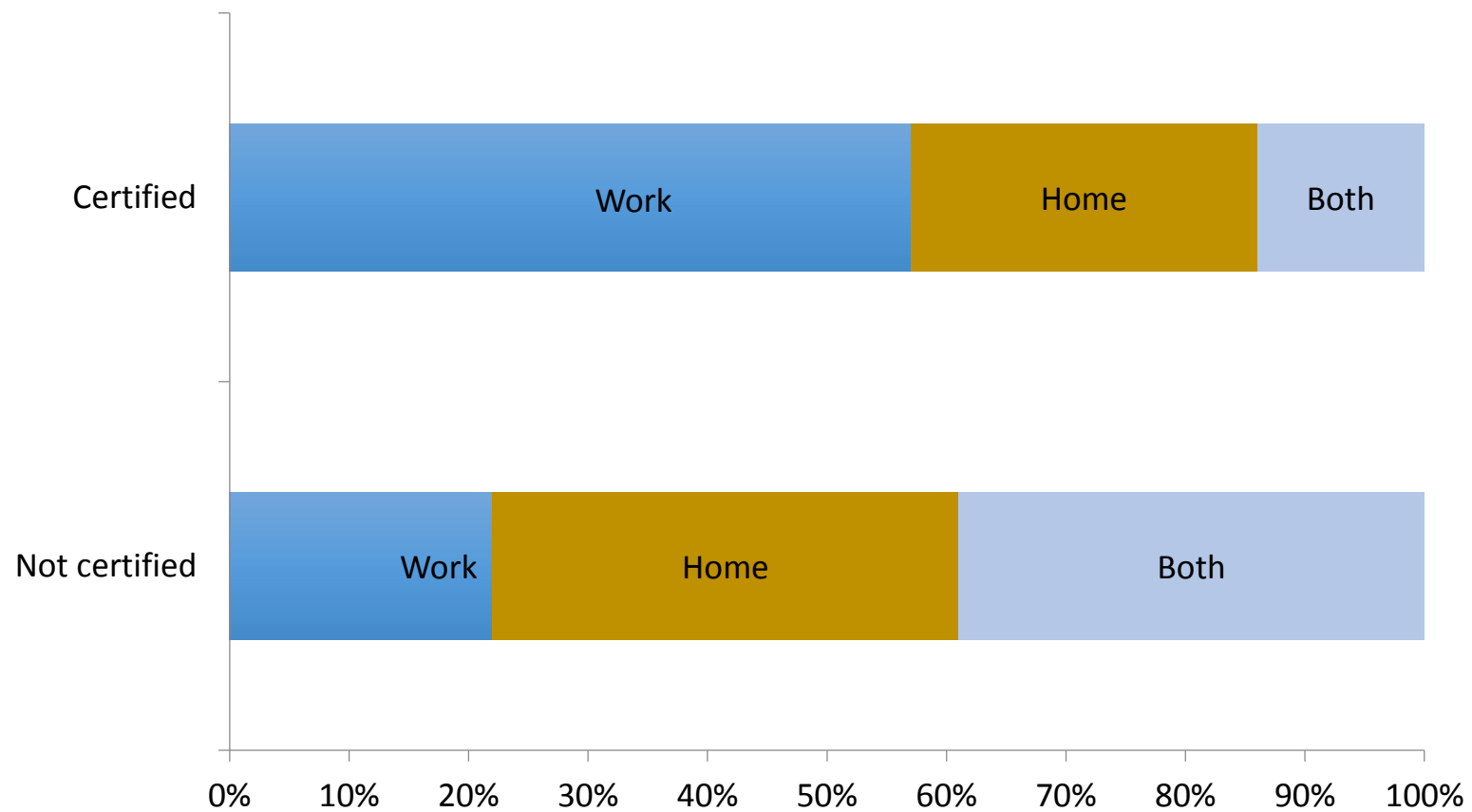
	Certified	Not-certified	Total
Emails sent	214	279	493
Completed	58 (27%)	41 (15%)	99 (20%)

32 countries

## Travel Agents' eLearning process about the destination case of Ticino Switzerland Travel Specialist



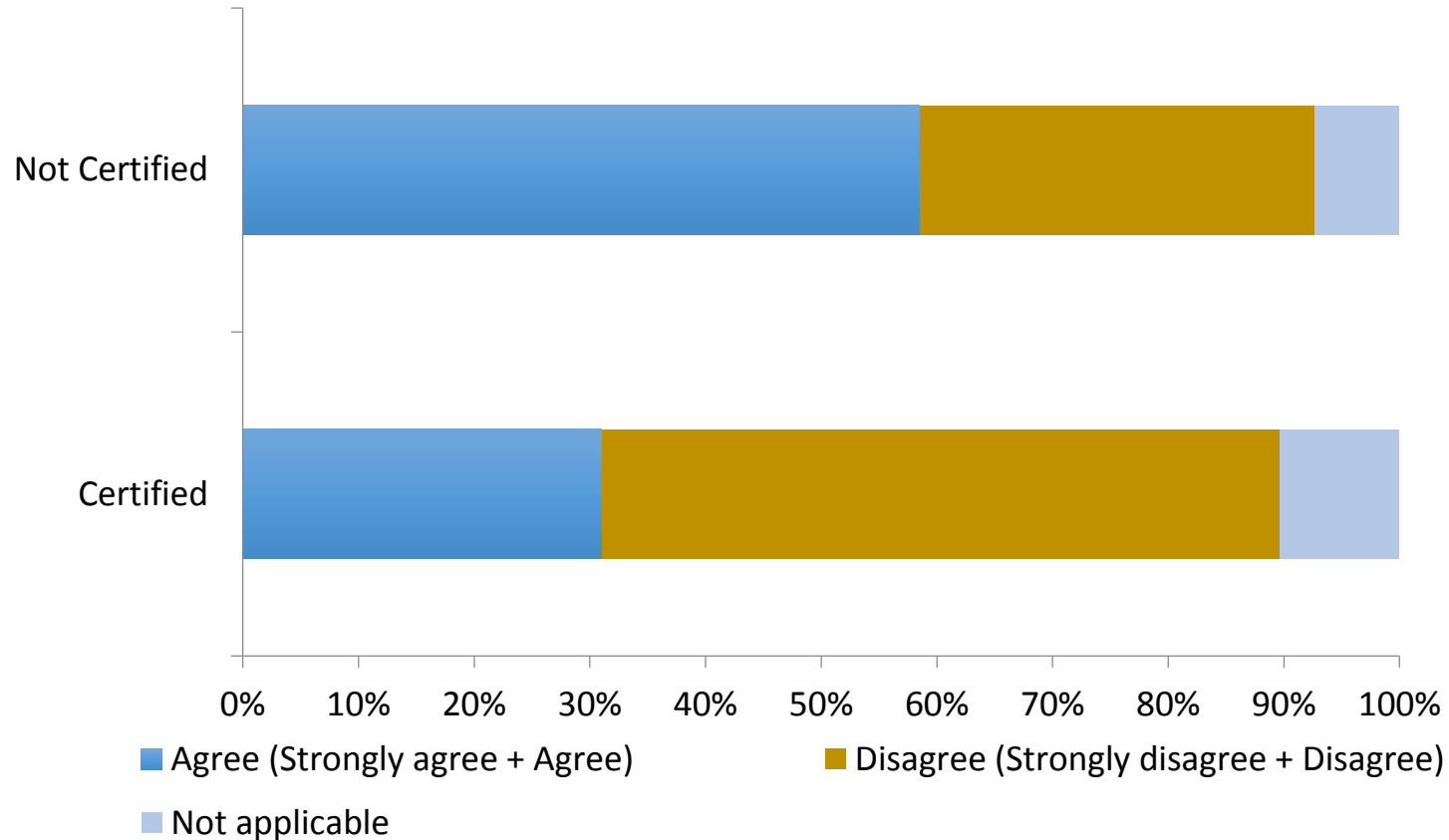
# Feature: LOCATION



# Feature: PROVIDER



**This type of courses should be designed by an educational institution and not by a Destination Management Organization**



# Feature: CERTIFICATION



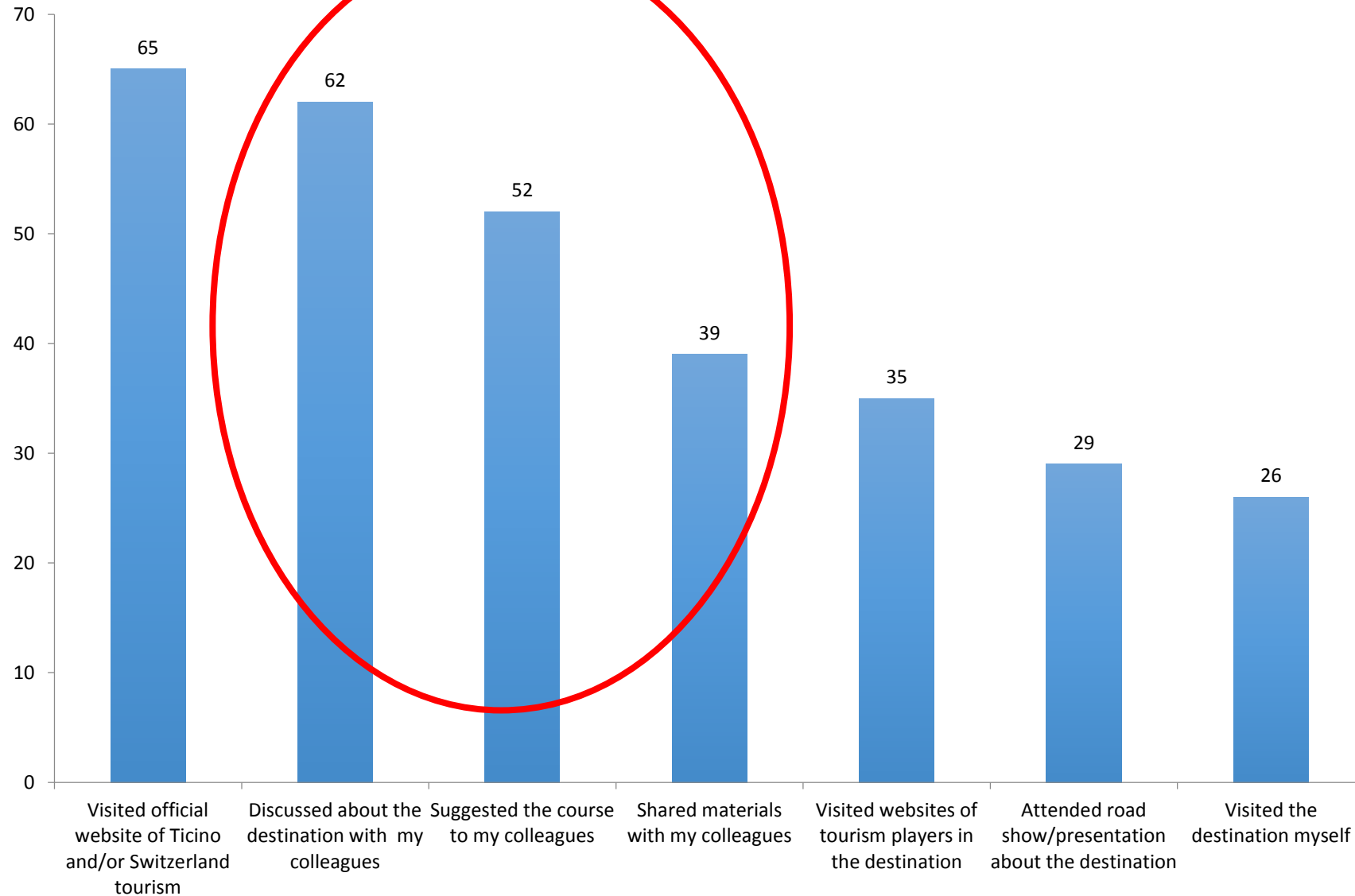
89% of both groups would recommend to subscribe to the course even if a person wouldn't have time to pass the final test

# Outcomes & Triggers

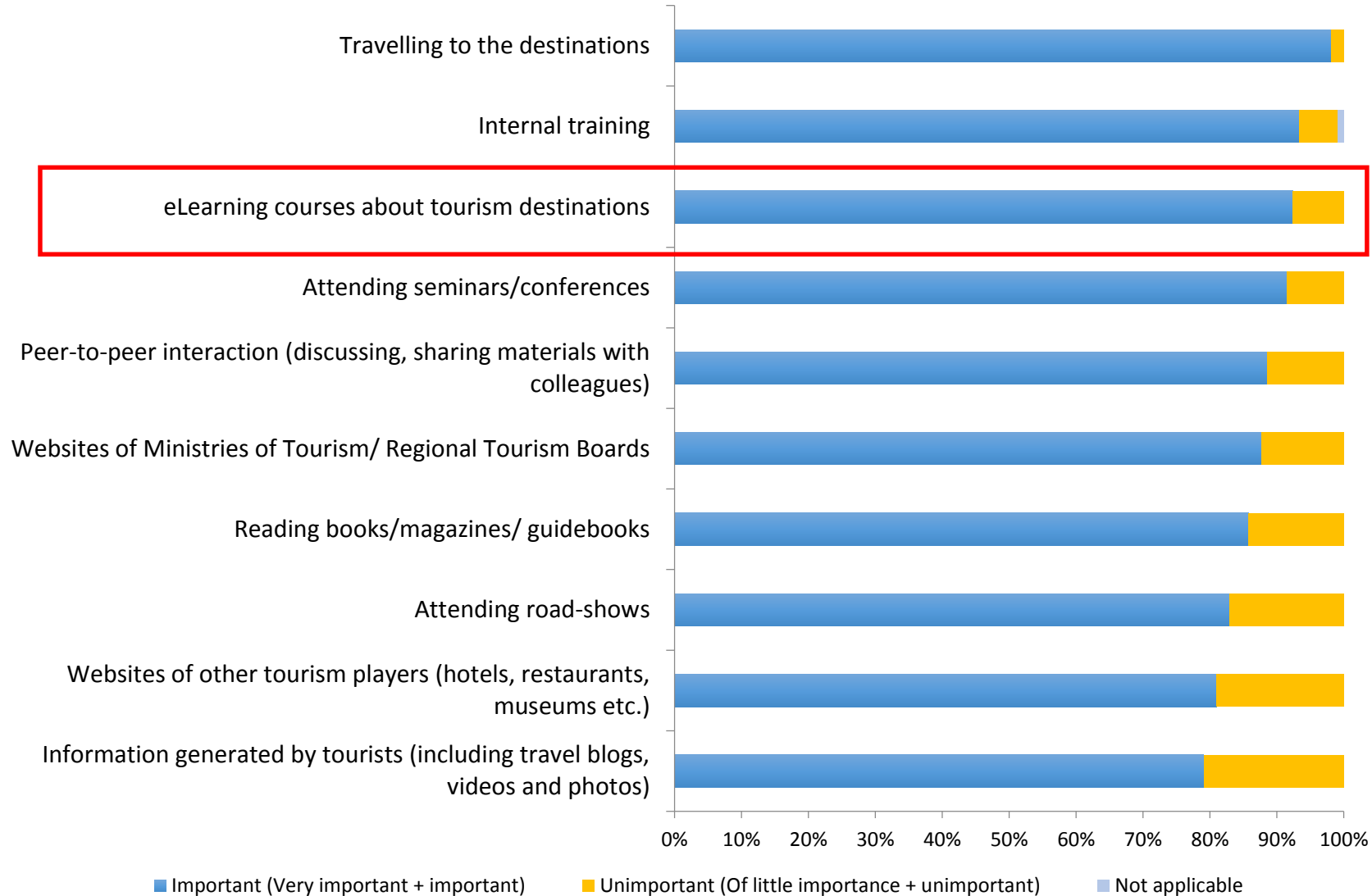


- 65% of the respondents sold more trips to Ticino destination
  - 69% certified
  - 61% not certified

# Triggers



# Positioning eLearning courses in the landscape of different learning experiences





# Conclusion

- Case study on regional level
  - Encouraging results from evaluation studies
- Complete process of course design and evaluation
- Insights to design more suitable learning activities by integrating more informal learning – related features

THANK YOU

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