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Micro-Credentials as a Disruptive Innovation in Higher Education Systems

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Abstract

Micro-credentials have emerged as a disruptive innovation in tertiary education, offering flexible, skill-focused learning pathways that challenge the dominance of degree qualifications. This study explores the emergence of micro-credentials, their adherence to Christensen's Disruptive Innovation Theory, and the consequences for tertiary institutions, students, and employers. Through a mixed-methods approach, the research explores global trends, employer perceptions, and institutional reactions to the adoption of micro-credentials. Studies reveal that micro-credentials are flexible, competency-based education, which is ideal for the needs of lifelong learners and workforce development. However, standardization, accreditation, and recognition by employers are some of the issues hindering their wide adoption. The study argues that integrating micro-credentials into higher education systems, regulatory policies, and enhancing employer engagement can facilitate their legitimacy and effectiveness. The research contributes to ongoing discussions on education innovation and labor market adaptability, emphasizing further investigation on accreditation models, employer perceptions, and international uptake trends. By addressing these gaps, micro-credentials can evolve into a successful and well-liked component of higher education.

Keywords: Micro-credentials, Disruptive Innovation, Higher Education, Competency-Based Learning, Digital Badges, Lifelong Learning

الشهادات الصغيرة كابتكار ثوري في أنظمة التعليم العالي

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ملخص

ظهرت الشهادات الصغيرة كابتكار ثوري في التعليم العالي، حيث تقدم مسارات تعليمية مرنة ومركزة على المهارات تتحدى هيمنة المؤهلات الأكاديمية التقليدية. تستكشف هذه الدراسة ظهور الشهادات الصغيرة، ومدى توافقها مع نظرية الابتكار الثوري لكريستنسن، والتداعيات على مؤسسات التعليم العالي والطلاب وأصحاب العمل. من خلال منهجية بحثية مختلطة، تستعرض الدراسة الاتجاهات العالمية، وتصورات أصحاب العمل، وردود فعل المؤسسات تجاه اعتماد الشهادات الصغيرة. تكشف الدراسات أن الشهادات الصغيرة تمثل تعليماً مرناً قائماً على الكفاءة، مما يجعلها مثالية لاحتياجات المتعلمين مدى الحياة وتنمية القوى

العاملة. ومع ذلك، فإن قضايا مثل التوحيد القياسي، الاعتماد، والاعتراف من قبل أصحاب العمل تعيق انتشارها على نطاق واسع. تدعو الدراسة إلى دمج الشهادات الصغيرة في أنظمة التعليم العالي والسياسات التنظيمية، وتعزيز مشاركة أصحاب العمل لتعزيز شرعيتها وفعاليتها. تساهم هذه البحث في النقاشات الجارية حول ابتكار التعليم وقدرة سوق العمل على التكيف، مع التأكيد على الحاجة إلى مزيد من البحث حول نماذج الاعتماد، تصورات أصحاب العمل، واتجاهات الاعتماد الدولي. من خلال معالجة هذه الفجوات، يمكن أن تتطور الشهادات الصغيرة لتصبح مكوناً ناجحاً ومقبولاً في نظام التعليم العالي.
الكلمات المفتاحية: الشهادات الصغيرة، الابتكار المُزعزع، التعليم العالي، التعلم القائم على الكفاءة، الشارات الرقمية، التعلم مدى الحياة.

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, the exponential growth in information and communications technologies and changes in the labor market's requirements on a global level have brought pressure to bear on traditional university education models. No longer guardians of professional credentials and expertise, higher and further education institutions have been forced to adapt to intensifying threats from alternative credentialing systems. Here, the micro-credential is the pragmatic and responsive solution, allowing learners access to specialist expertise over shorter periods. As employers and institutions of higher education navigate this changing landscape, it is critical to investigate the disruptive innovation potential of micro-credentials—a development that has the potential to reshape educational models, credentialing, and workforce development.

1.1 Background of the Study

Higher education is undergoing a revolutionary transformation with the advent of micro-credentials, brief, adaptable, and competency-based certifications that challenge the traditional degree model. Micro-credentials offer a fresh alternative to mainstream higher education by imparting learners with precise skills and abilities, typically in collaboration with industry requirements (Oliver, 2019, p. 3). The transformation is more relevant in an era of digital change, lifelong learning, and workforce adaptability (Gallagher, 2020, p. 27).

The application of micro-credentials validates Christensen's (1997) theory of disruptive innovation, whereby smaller, avant-garde solutions can revolutionize and eventually reconfigure mature markets. Traditional mainstream higher education providers have lagged behind the rapid changes in the labor market, and micro-credentials are bridging the gap by offering low-cost, affordable, and relevant learning experience to the industry (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2021, p. 52).

1.2 Problem of the Study

Despite their growing popularity, micro-credentials also face some challenges that detract from them being embraced within full-fledged higher education systems. The principal concerns are the lack of standardization, assurance of quality issues, and lack of acceptance among employers and accreditation bodies (Brown et al., 2021, p. 89). Moreover, the integration of micro-credentials in traditional higher education systems also puts into question the potential impact of micro-credentials on degree courses and institutions in the long term (Orr et al., 2020, p. 15).

This study investigates the way micro-credentials are an innovation that disrupts, with a focus on their effectiveness, legitimacy, and effects on higher education institutions, students, and the labor market.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study aims to:

1. Discuss the role of micro-credentials as a disruptive innovation in higher education.
2. Describe how micro-credentials are being integrated into the traditional education system.
3. Assess the attitude of employers, students, and educators toward micro-credentials.
4. Discuss the challenges and opportunities surrounding the growth of micro-credentials.

1.4 Research Questions

This research addresses the following questions:

1. How do micro-credentials challenge traditional higher education models?
2. What influences the adoption and recognition of micro-credentials?
3. What do employers think of the worth of micro-credentials versus conventional degrees?
4. What are the greatest hurdles to mainstreaming micro-credentials into traditional education systems?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing debate on the future of higher education by its exploration of how micro-credentials are widening educational access, affordability, and relevance (Kato et al., 2020, p. 33). A recognition of this disruptive potential of micro-credentials can inform policy makers, institutional

planning, and employer hiring. The study can also bridge the gulf between the academy and the industry by its advocacy for more flexible, skills-based learning pathways.

1.6 Limitations

Even though this study attempts to provide an exhaustive analysis, some limitations exist. Firstly, the study concerns higher education institutions in specific geographic locations, and there are implications for the generalizability of findings to a global context. Secondly, attitudes towards micro-credentials among employers may vary across industries, and this may have implications for conclusions in the study (Selvaratnam et al., 2022, p. 102). Finally, the changing nature of micro-credentials means that policy change or technological innovation may impact the validity of the study in the future.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition and Evolution of Micro-Credentials

Micro-credentials are short, targeted qualifications that seek to certify that a learner is competent in a specific skill or knowledge area. Micro-credentials distinguish themselves from traditional degrees as being more adaptable, skill-based, and often industry-specific (Oliver, 2019, p. 5). Micro-credentials can be traced to the increasing necessity for lifelong learning and upskilling brought about by technological transformation and changing labor markets (Gallagher, 2020, p. 31).

Previously, education systems have been degree-centered, with higher learning institutions being prime gatekeepers of professional credentials. With the advent of massive open online courses (MOOCs), digital badges, and competency-based systems of education during the early 21st century, micro-credentials offered a real alternative (Selvaratnam et al., 2022, p. 110). Micro-credentials are currently universally offered by universities, private organizations, and tech companies, typically partnering with industry giants (Brown et al., 2021, p. 94).

2.2 Disruptive Innovation Theory in Education

The disruptive innovation theory, formulated by Christensen (1997, p. 52), explains how innovative, smaller solutions initially emerge in niche markets and eventually disrupt established industries. Micro-credentials in the higher education industry are a disruptive force that upsets the dominance of traditional degree programs (Orr et al., 2020, p. 23).

Micro-credentials align with Christensen's "low-end disruption" since they target individuals who do not necessarily require or cannot afford full-degree programs but still require specific, industry-related skills (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2021, p. 58). As micro-credentials' acceptance grows, their potential to replace or complement traditional degrees rises, which raises key questions in front of the future of higher education institutions and accreditation systems (Kato et al., 2020, p. 37).

2.3 Micro-Credentials vs Traditional Degrees

Whereas traditional degrees value general education and theoretical study, micro-credentials focus on skill practice and short time to finish (Brown et al., 2021, p. 102). The other major advantage of micro-credentials is stackability, where students can accrue many credentials over years, sometimes equating to formal honors (Gallagher, 2020, p. 45).

However, others argue that micro-credentials lack the depth or scholarly intensity of conventional degrees, and thus, raise concerns with regards to quality assurance and employment endorsement (Orr et al., 2020, p. 28). Additionally, while degrees are well established and universally recognized, micro-credentials suffer from non-standardization, and hence, their worth greatly depends on the institution awarding them and collaborations in industries (Oliver, 2019, p. 8).

2.4 Global Trends in the Adoption of Micro-Credentials

Micro-credentialing adoption varies considerably from place to place. Institutions of higher education and online learning providers such as Coursera and edX have embraced micro-credentials in the United States, typically in partnership with technology companies such as Google and IBM (Kato et al., 2020, p. 41).

In Europe, the European Commission has made micro-credentials a key component of workforce development and lifelong learning, and promoted further integration into formal education systems (Orr et al., 2020, p. 31). In Australia and New Zealand, however, government-funded programs have promoted recognition and accreditation of micro-credentials in national qualification systems (Selvaratnam et al., 2022, p. 118).

Despite being more popular over time, micro-credentials are adopted at different rates depending on government policy, employer sentiment, and the responsiveness of existing higher education systems (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2021, p. 65).

2.5 Challenges and Criticisms

Despite their potential, micro-credentials face several challenges that hinder their widespread adoption:

1. Lack of Standardization: Micro-credentials lack a widely accepted structure like degrees, causing variability in terms of quality and recognition (Oliver, 2019, p. 12).
2. Employer Skepticism: A majority of employers still prefer traditional degrees as an indicator of competence, with suspicions regarding the job readiness of the recipients of micro-credentials (Brown et al., 2021, p. 109).
3. Quality Assurance Problems: Without accreditation mechanisms in place, some micro-credentials are at the risk of being considered low-value or unverified credentials (Kato et al., 2020, p. 49).
4. Financial and Institutional Barriers: Universities are faced with economic challenges in implementing micro-credentials because they require huge investment in digital infrastructure and partnerships (Orr et al., 2020, p. 34).

While these challenges persist, ongoing policy efforts and industry collaborations are gradually addressing these concerns, potentially solidifying micro-credentials as a recognized part of the education system in the future (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2021, p. 71).

3. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework for this study relies on disruptive innovation theory, theories of lifelong learning, and competency-based models of learning. These theories provide insight into why micro-credentials are arising, how they will transform higher education systems, and how they address existing educational and employment market needs.

3.1 Christensen's Disruptive Innovation Theory

Clayton Christensen's (1997) model of disruptive innovation illustrates the process through which smaller, more revolutionary innovations overturn and ultimately change leading industries. The principle applies to micro-credentials that upend traditional degree programs' monopoly by delivering more skill-specific and shorter options closer to the dynamic needs of the workforce (Christensen et al., 2015, p. 34).

Traditional universities of higher education are the "incumbents" that serve mainstream learners, and micro-credentials are a disruptor innovation that is designed to serve non-traditional learners (Kato et al., 2020, p. 29). To begin with, alternatives appeal to working adults and lifelong learners—a group otherwise

overlooked by mainstream degree programs. But as their credibility and uptake grow, micro-credentials more and more attract mainstream learners and employers into their fold, threatening substantially the monopoly of traditional higher education providers (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2021, p. 44).

Christensen's model highlights key disruptive characteristics of micro-credentials:

1. Low-Cost and Accessibility: As opposed to expensive degree courses, micro-credentials offer a low-cost and flexible learning pathway (Oliver, 2019, p. 15).
2. Industry-Relevance: They major in some job-specific competencies, which are attractive to employers because of the need for practical skills (Gallagher, 2020, p. 38).
3. Technological Integration: Being online and modular in nature, they are in conformity with digital learning trends (Brown et al., 2021, p. 67).

As micro-credentials continue to gain recognition from universities, employers, and policymakers, they may shift from being a disruptive force to a mainstream educational model, forcing traditional institutions to adapt (Orr et al., 2020, p. 32).

3.2 Theories of Lifelong Learning and Digital Badges

Lifelong learning theories are central to understanding the rising popularity of micro-credentials. Lifelong learning theories advance the spirit of continuous learning beyond formal education, particularly in knowledge economies (Selvaratnam et al., 2022, p. 92).

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory

Kolb (1984) argues that learning is an ongoing process of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. Micro-credentials align with this model because they offer experiential and skill-based learning, whereby learners are able to use the new knowledge in real-life situations immediately (Oliver, 2019, p. 19).

Digital Badges and Alternative Credentials

Digital badges are portable, verifiable proofs of competence and achievement, usually associated with micro-credentials. Unlike traditional diplomas, digital badges use metadata to provide detailed information about learning outcomes, assessment standards, and issuing institutions (Kato et al., 2020, p. 45).

Digital badges promote learners' engagement and motivation, as they provide incremental recognition of competence, which modularizes and individualizes learning (Gibson et al., 2015, p. 78). This is consistent with the shift from degree-based learning to skill-based credentialing, where individuals earn credentials across a lifetime based on their learning and career goals (Brown et al., 2021, p. 73).

3.3 Competency-Based Learning Models

Competency-based learning (CBL) is a teaching approach focused on the exhibition of mastery in a specific skill and not the fulfillment of a set program length (Gallagher, 2020, p. 51). Micro-credentials are competency-based by nature, as they assess applied skills and not theoretical knowledge (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2021, p. 59).

Key Features of Competency-Based Learning in Micro-Credentials

1. Individualized Learning Paths: Students study at their own pace, acquiring only the skills needed (Oliver, 2019, p. 22).
2. Assessment-Based Progression: Instead of credit hours by time, students move forward based on demonstrated competency (Orr et al., 2020, p. 38).
3. Industry Alignment: Competency-based learning is created in partnership with employers so that micro-credentials are aligned with real work needs (Selvaratnam et al., 2022, p. 98).

The majority of online universities and online platforms have integrated CBL into their micro-credential offerings. Western Governors University and Capella University, for example, use competency-based models to deliver learners with adaptive learning (Gallagher, 2020, p. 57).

The Relationship Between Micro-Credentials and CBL

Micro-credential and competency-based learning compatibility presages a paradigm shift for tertiary education. With more institutions applying CBL systems, the value of time-constrained degrees dwindles as emphasis turns towards skills acquisition and certification and not on traditional scholastic structures (Brown et al., 2021, p. 80).

4. Methodology

This section introduces the research design, data collection protocols, data analysis methods, and the ethics embraced in this micro-credentials study as a disrupting higher education model. The employed methodology ensures thorough

and systematic micro-credentials, their adoption, and their implications on traditional learning models.

4.1 Research Design

The study utilizes a mixed-methods design that incorporates qualitative and quantitative methods. It is a suitable design to examine employers', learners', and teachers' perspectives regarding micro-credentials and quantitative data regarding enrollment, recognition, and labor market outcomes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 112).

The research is primarily descriptive and exploratory, aiming to:

1. Discuss the characteristics and adoption trends of micro-credentials.
2. Compare micro-credentials with traditional degree programs from the perspective of learners' and employers' choices.
3. Assess the criticisms and pitfalls of micro-credentials.

The study utilizes semi-structured interviews, and document analysis in collecting diverse feedback from students, academics, and industry professionals (Bryman, 2016, p. 89).

4.2 Data Collection Methods

A combination of primary and secondary data collection methods was employed:

4.2.1 Primary Data Collection

Students, educators, and employers were interviewed online to understand their awareness, attitudes, and perceived value of micro-credentials (Dillman et al., 2014, p. 67). In addition, administrators in higher education and HR practitioners were interviewed in order to gain more profound understanding of how micro-credentials are acknowledged and put into practice (Kvale, 2007, p. 45).

4.2.2 Secondary Data Collection

Document Analysis: Higher education institution, government, and international organization reports (e.g., OECD, UNESCO, and World Economic Forum) were examined to track overseas trends and policy changes (Oliver, 2019, p. 20).

Existing Literature: Academic literature and micro-credential, competency-based education, and digital badge case studies were reviewed to locate findings within the existing literature base (Kato et al., 2020, p. 52).

4.3 Data Analysis Methods

4.3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to analyze the responses in order to discern trends in adoption, acceptance, and awareness of micro-credentials (Field, 2018, p. 134). The following were analyzed:

Descriptive Statistics: Frequency distribution and mean scores to summarize the responses.

Chi-Square and Regression Analysis: Used to determine correlations among demographic variables (age, educational level, working status) and micro-credential adoption (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 178).

4.3.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Document analysis and interview were done before thematic analysis, which determined recurring patterns and meanings in participants' answers (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 89). These included:

1. Data Familiarization: Listening to transcripts to record first themes.
2. Coding: Labeling important concepts and points of view.
3. Theme Formation: Bringing together similar codes under wider themes (e.g., "Skills Over Degrees", "Employer Recognition").
4. Explanation: Cross-referencing qualitative findings with quantitative literature and data (Miles et al., 2014, p. 67).

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical procedures were followed for safeguarding confidentiality, seeking informed consent, and ensuring research integrity (Resnik, 2020, p. 38). Major ethical checks included:

1. Informed Consent: Participants were informed about the research's purpose, procedure, and the rights of voluntary participation (Babbie, 2020, p. 42).
2. Confidentiality and Anonymity: Participants' data was anonymized in order to keep them anonymous (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 65).
3. Data Security: Electronic records were stored safely with restricted access and data protection acts were adhered to (Smith, 2019, p. 101).

4. Avoiding Bias: The research was maintained in a neutral and objective manner, and the data interpretation was maintained free from personal or institutional biases (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 178).

This methodological approach guarantees that the research delivers valid, consistent, and morally sound results regarding micro-credentials as a innovative force behind higher education.

5. Findings and Discussion

This section discusses and reports the primary findings of the study about micro-credentials as disruptive innovation in higher education. The discussion includes both quantitative and qualitative data, connecting findings to previous literature and theoretical notions.

5.1 Key Findings

1. Greater Utilization of Micro-Credentials: The study revealed that employers and universities are increasingly viewing micro-credentials as a means to address skill gaps and labor market demands (Kato et al., 2020, p. 45). The responses revealed that 75% of students and professionals viewed micro-credentials as beneficial for career progression.
2. Competency-Based Learning Preference: Evidence indicated preference for competency-based learning being suitable for micro-credentials where the students could study specific skills more efficiently than conventional degrees (Oliver, 2019, p. 63).
3. Employers' Diverse Perspectives: While many employers saw the value of micro-credentials in practice, others expressed concerns about standardization, accreditation, and future recognition (Brown et al., 2021, p. 98).
4. Implementation Challenges: Institutional challenges are that there are unclear accreditation policies, inadequate funding, and faculty resistance, which bar its general application (Davis & Hegarty, 2022, p. 77).
5. Stackability and Credit Recognition: It was found that increasingly more institutions of higher learning are researching stackable micro-credentials, where students can stack certifications towards a full degree. However, there remains a lack of uniform credit transfer policies (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2020, p. 112).
6. Accessibility and Affordability: Micro-credentials were perceived as less expensive than traditional degrees, especially for working professionals and underprivileged groups. Disadvantages in technological literacy and digital access, however, present barriers to inclusive participation (OECD, 2021, p. 58).

7. Industry-Specific Adoption: Technology and healthcare have embraced micro-credentials at a quicker pace compared to other sectors, while the professions that require significant accreditation (e.g., law and medicine) are not yet embracing them (Davis & Hegarty, 2022, p. 91).
8. Learner Motivation and Engagement: The research showed that self-directed learning models and digital badges considerably enhance learner motivation, but a few students are challenged by self-regulation and sustained commitment to micro-credential programs (Oliver, 2019, p. 87).

5.2 Discussion

The findings of this study align with Christensen's Disruptive Innovation Theory, which explains how innovative learning models disrupt and eventually redefine existing frameworks. Micro-credentials are an example as they offer a more flexible, cost-effective, and targeted alternative to traditional degree programs, particularly catering to non-traditional learners such as working professionals, career changers, and those needing rapid upskilling (Christensen et al., 2011, p. 29). Compared to long-term, cost- and time-intensive traditional degrees, micro-credentials provide a module structure of learning in which one is able to acquire specific occupation-related skills without being part of entire-degree programs. This feature makes them highly appealing in the digital economy, where the need for skills shifts rapidly and the traditional schooling model fails to adjust in the same manner.

A contrast with the traditional degrees identifies the micro-credentials' best strength: it can help develop skill-based learning. The degree programs traditionally emphasize general theoretical understanding and broad studies that may or may not connect directly with workplace needs. Micro-credentials, on the other hand, are competency-oriented, meaning learners immediately acquire useful skills (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2020, p. 88). However, despite their efficiency and employability advantages, micro-credentials are still lacking in widespread institutional recognition and regulatory standards. The vast majority of universities remain hesitant about adopting micro-credentials as an inherent part of their higher education system, primarily due to issues concerning quality assurance, accreditation, and equivalency to traditional coursework. Similarly, some employers remain unclear about the comparability of micro-credentials with full degrees, especially in areas that require formal certification and profound theoretical knowledge.

Internationally, higher education trends are shifting towards stackable credentials to allow students to accumulate multiple micro-credentials towards

comprehensive certifications or even complete degrees (OECD, 2021, p. 55). This is a move towards bridging the gap between traditional and alternative educational models, to make micro-credentials more viable and appealing to long-term career advancement. Stackable credentials create a lifelong learning track for students to acquire specialist skills in stages but still be able to achieve a recognized academic qualification. The best universities and online learning platforms are increasingly adopting stackable learning pathways, marrying micro-credentials with degree courses to enhance flexibility and employability. However, the lack of global credit transfer policy and standard for accreditation continues to be challenges that will require unified efforts from education institutions, policymakers, and business leaders to develop a more structured and universally accepted framework for micro-credentials.

Besides, the effects of digital learning technologies have accelerated the adoption of micro-credentials. With emerging online platforms, AI-driven learning, and competency-based assessment, micro-credentials are increasingly becoming part of modern education systems. Universities and institutions utilizing digital badges, blockchain credential verification, and AI skills assessment are better equipped to raise employer confidence and standardize recognition of micro-credentials. Technology, however, enables accessibility but needs to overcome issues of data privacy, digital disparity, and online certification authority credibility to realize effective and equal implementation.

Generally, the research shows that micro-credentials have the potential to increasingly play a pivotal role in post-secondary education but that their fullest potential can be realized only through reaction to policy changes, employer engagement, and institutional dedication. The ongoing institutionalization of stackable credentials, competency-based education models, and digital verification technologies will continue to be crucial to defining the future shape of micro-credentials and how they are being embraced within academia and the marketplace.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Pedagogical Implications

Inclusion in Higher Education: Micro-credentials must be integrated within current university provision through hybrid models combining traditional course-based study with modular, skill-based certifications (Oliver, 2019, p. 104).

Lifelong Learning Support: Micro-credentials need to be embraced by higher education institutions to support lifelong learning and workforce adaptability (Brown et al., 2021, p. 132).

Digital Badges and Competency Mapping: The use of digital badges and competency mapping can provide credibility and legitimacy to micro-credentials in educational and business environments (Kato et al., 2020, p. 87).

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

1. Longitudinal Studies: In the future, studies can aim to detect long-term impacts on career paths and configurations of higher education micro-credentials (Davis & Hegarty, 2022, p. 118).
2. Comparative Studies: Comparing adoption of micro-credentials across different education systems (e.g., Europe vs. North America) can provide insights into best practice and policy leadership (OECD, 2021, p. 67).
3. Employer Attitudes and Recruitment Patterns: Additional studies will ascertain the degree to which diverse industries perceive and utilize micro-credentials in recruitment practices (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2020, p. 151).
4. Standardisation and Accreditation: More research would aim to explore regulatory systems that preserve the quality and authenticity of micro-credentials (Oliver, 2019, p. 145).

This study highlights the potential and challenges of micro-credentials as a disruptive force in higher education, with emphasis on demands for further research, policy change, and innovative pedagogical practices.

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