

Transcript for Group A: Participant 5

Interviewer: Good evening, as we start, I'll give a brief explanation on what my research is about. I'm researching on what are called micro credentials, which are basically like, you know, short courses that are done online or in-person and then you get like an online certificate upon completion.

Interviewee: Yeah, I know, I know.

Interviewer: Those kinds of things, so the research is basically trying to prove that entrepreneurs can use those short courses right to improve their skills, their entrepreneurial skills.

Yeah, you get some like in business management and stuff for the entrepreneurs, I mean it would be easier for them to improve their skills if they could do like a short course on finance, course on business marketing, depending on whatever your business is like for you. I think I'm going to take your photography thing as an example. you can do a course in photography.

You can do like example. I'm just going to make up something. You can do a course on how to take pictures and then you can do a course on how to take videos. You know, like you can do that and then at the end of the day you can say I have like 5-6 courses so I have enough skills to be a good photographer. So basically just trying to prove that those courses can help entrepreneurs to improve their skills. All right. So this is a few questions. You can say anything you want to say. There's no right or wrong answer. Basically, we're just going to have a conversation. So the first question that I have is like in your thoughts, right. What do you think are the technological skills that an entrepreneur needs to acquire this short course or this macro credential. What technological skills?

Interviewee: What? What do you mean by technology?

Interviewer: So for example, most of the micro credentials are probably done online. I think especially post COVID most things are online, probably very few people opt for in person things. So obviously if you're doing something online, technology is going to be involved, right? You need some sort of technological skills.

Interviewee: Say that all technological skills that you need especially when it comes to this online thing. It's probably just how to manoeuvre around on a computer and like how to deal with like probably when the computer freezes or certain things happen because you know laptops or any device nowadays can become faulty. And if you don't know your way around you might get stuck with that problem, which can be so easy to fix, you know just by the click on a button or just restarting the laptop. So like you need to know how to react to a certain thing that might happen on the laptop and how to deal

with those problems and basic computer skills. That's what I would say it's like technological thing that you would need to know.

Interviewer: OK, good point. Then how much effort do you think it takes actually to get your micro credential like how much effort do you think it?

Interviewee: It depends on where you go because you can do this short courses that they tell you 4 to 8 weeks, you can jump on Coursera they can tell you the course is probably like. 48 hours long. If you sit down, you can probably finish in 24 hours. You go to Allison, they tell you probably this course is 2 weeks long, but you can't finish it in one day. So I'd say with these other ones like Coursera and Allison if you are determined, you can finish within the set time or in a much shorter time than the one where they tell you it's eight weeks and you can only graduate after eight weeks. So effort wise just depends on how much you really want the certificate. You know, and are you willing to put in the extra-long hours to finish it quicker than the set time?

Interviewee: OK, good point. So it basically depends on you well, how much effort you're willing to invest and the set period of the course itself.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Makes sense. Then what are the facilitating conditions that you would need to acquire micro credential and just to simplify that a bit by facilitating conditions, I mean like what sort of things would you need to complete a short course? For example, you obviously need time to complete these things and like you mentioned earlier, when we were talking about the technological skills, you'll be doing this on a some sort of gadget, right? You obviously need that, what else?

Interviewee: Probably just say stable network. You know, if you're going to get stable network you can work on any device. So probably if you can just manage to get stable network or Wi-Fi or data. But of course, you're going to need a lot of that data in order for you to be able to, but if you have good, proper Wi-Fi that can, that's probably like 6 megabytes per second to 10. You can do your work peacefully. The other thing that you need in order to do this work peacefully is books to write down or it just depends on the kind of person you are when you're studying. If you're a person who writes things, or a person who just reads slides and comes and write exams. So those are the other things.

Interviewer: Good point. Then how easy do you think it is to access like a micro credential course, these short courses? And how easy is it to find it? You know,

Interviewee: It's actually easy because everything is online. You just have to know probably just to search and nowadays even TikTok, Instagram, YouTube where people are talking about these short courses and you tend to see nowadays that these companies that offer short online courses are starting to advertise and market their selves more after this whole COVID pandemic that happened. So I feel like them

advertising has made a lot of people aware of their existence. And then from there on once you find something, it's like it opens doors to others. For these short courses I feel like it's very it's very easy and then just have to know where to click and know what to do and then everything is OK.

Interviewer: Very good point. And then how do you think acquiring your micro credential or completing these courses, how do you think that contributes to an entrepreneur skills?

Interviewee: What I can say is that I feel like the advantage of doing these short courses is that you are not forced to stick to one thing like a degree like you already know from first year. I'm going to be doing this. I'm only going to be focusing on it. The thing is that with these short courses I can decide, to start one on sales, marketing, finance, IT, HR. So it helps you gain a much broader spectrum of things, so that probably when you start your own company on the side, you might employ people in HR, people that have specialised more in HR but at least we have the overview of what HR is all about. So it tends to give you advantage of like. We have a better overview of like everything that's happening within the company. You're not only focused on one thing. You know something in sales, something in IT, something in marketing, something in HR, something in everything that you need in a company to keep running and then later on choose people, employ people that are specifically focused on certain skills, but at least you know that I have that advantage of I know what each department is all about and have an overview of everything. So that's what I feel like the short courses can help you with.

Interviewer: That is a very good point. I'm just thinking, I feel like these short courses are good for entrepreneurs and then degrees are for people looking for jobs like what you just say. You just get a general overview and then you employ someone with a degree in HR.

Interviewee: Yes, yeah.

Interviewer: Then the other question I have, how is training currently being done in your organization? Is it done in person or online? Oh. I mean, how have you been improving your skills personally?

Interviewee: I've been like learning some things there on YouTube. I'm usually trained online. It's once in a while that I manage to get a chance to get trained in person, but most of the time it's usually online and I also feel like my training online is also beneficial, since you can always come back to your content and always come back for future references. But if you can't really remember something which was taught in person and that person also forgot what they said, then that becomes difficult.

Interviewer: Good point, then if you wish to do like a micro credential course for this, which skills do you aim to improve? Just thinking in the line of your current business?

Interviewee: My first one. I'll probably say sales. Because the photography is more of like the sales job you doing the service and all that, I would probably say the number one on my list is sales and then the second one probably marketing cause in order for you to be able to bring in those sales you have to do a lot of marketing that's going to attract the customer to come towards you. So I would say one for me will be sales and anything to do with finance and sales. And then second one will be digital marketing and any kind of marketing.

Interviewer: Alright then this one. I think it kind of ties back to the other question we already spoke about, about how much effort does it take? The question is, how long does it usually take to complete a micro credential?

Interviewee: That depends on the cost. Also depends on the institution you are going to use.

Interviewer: Alright then, as an entrepreneur, do you find value in acquiring micro credentials and completing these short courses instead of your traditional university degree? Thinking in the lines of in an entrepreneur? Do you find value? If yes, why? If not, why? So you can answer either way.

Interviewee: I honestly feel like it's 50/50. Because when you go to university, you go and study and when you get assignments, you're forced to go do research on that certain topic that you're given and by doing that, you tend to understand more of what you want to do, but it's more theoretical than practical, and with university it's like a tunnel vision so to say. But then with short courses, it's to some extent, it's more engaging and practical or some organizations force you to have like group discussions and that's how you know you're being practical and sharing information with others.

Well as you can do a lot of a lot of things, so it depends which one you really want to do, it just depends on the person as well. But on the other hand, short courses forces you to implement whatever you've done, because I feel like once you get the degree you already have everything planned like, OK, I have to get a job and everything, but with the short courses before I have the job. I also have the skills to begin my own thing and start implementing. For me personally, I say it just depends on the person and what the person wants to make out of the whole thing.

Interviewer: Good point then how do you decide which micro credential to go for? I mean, people look at different things, right? I mean, obviously you need to look for something that's relevant to you.

Interviewee: For me personally, I would probably say before I select I choose at what area needs to be strengthened and improved and what I like is before I choose cause I

might decide to go choose for example a course in human interaction, while I already know how to interact with people. So it's sort of like a waste of time. But probably if I look at OK, I don't have this strength. I don't really have the strength for sales or marketing. I would rather take a course in marketing or sales. Take a course in something that I'm not really strong at and look to improve. And once I'm done with that, I'll probably look at another area which I also need to improve for my business as well to become better. That's how I will the short course.

Interviewer: OK, so based on the skills that you need to improve. Then how do you measure your skills levels? You know, people measure skills in different ways. If you're looking for a job, they tell you they want two years of experience or, you know, as an entrepreneur. How can you say? Yeah, I have, you know, marketing skills. I have financial skills. Is it through, for example, years of experience, is it through the amount of education? How do you measure your skills?

Interviewee: I'll probably say I'll measure my skills by looking at if I'm struggling to do something that I need for my business. Personally, I feel like that's, you know, I tend to look at the area if I see I'm really struggling in marketing. You know, I can mark it myself. Probably I can market myself in person more than I can on online. So then I have to focus more on the digital market. So I tend to look at which areas do I feel like I am struggling and it's not like second nature where it usually just comes quickly. Then I can really do it perfect. That's how I measure my skills and check which area I need to improve on.

Interviewer: So you're saying you get results then? Is that how you measure your skills? If you see you're not delivering something to your expectation, then you know I probably need to improve here, improve there.

Interviewee: Yeah, this is how I'll critique my skills.

Interviewer: Alright. Then what do you wish to gain from micro credentials? If you were to get one?

Interviewee: More knowledge than a normal degree would have given me.

Interviewer: Then how much flexibility do you think micro credentials allow a person, comparing to traditional degrees or college diplomas or. How much flexibility do you think a person has when they're doing these short courses?

Interviewee: Honestly, I can't really give an answer for that one. But because we tend to see that most companies nowadays, they seem to prefer people with degrees. So like I've said, it also depends on what you want to do.

Interviewer: Do you think micro credentials are credible? You know, compared to university degrees or college degrees, and by that I mean, you know, some people question the credibility of these short courses. I feel like traditionally people accept it

like they easily accept a degree compared to a credential. What are your thoughts on this?

Interviewee: The thing is that regarding credibility, it just depends on how credible the organization you're going to use is, you know. If you use a dodgy short course, place that nobody really knows about, it won't be credible. If you probably use one of the credible ones, you're going fine. I think short courses are just best for entrepreneurs

Interviewer: I think as an entrepreneur. It's not a very bad thing to do. I think short courses are actually kind of helpful for entrepreneurs. The next one. Do you think micro credentials accurately depict a person's skills?

Interviewee: You know what I can say is that you can decide to have a short course certificate, just something that's sitting around. If I don't practice and try to implement it, it's basically valueless if I just have it hanging, hanging around and not exercising and implementing it, I'll probably just say it's like a muscle. We have to exercise in order for you to grow in in order for you to be more knowledgeable about the short course you have done.

Interviewer: Makes sense then. Which method of learning would you prefer? So if you are doing these short courses as an entrepreneur, which method of learning would you prefer between game based learning or the traditional learning traditional setting where you sit in a classroom?

Interviewee: I'll probably prefer the first one, the game based learning. It depends on the kind of person you are as well because if you're in a classroom, it's basically a one way communication, but if it's the other one you're at home probably online and you have group chats as classmates and then you start asking each other questions and everyone's bringing an input. So there's not one way. Direction of answers or like the lectures telling you, but it's like a broad variety of answers that you have cause everyone's going to come up with different points and you'll tend to see how the people give an answer depending on their gender depending on their culture they believe. So that's how I feel like. This is the thing. If you're doing it online, you learn a lot more from your peers. While the traditional one is not like that.

Interviewer: Alright, what are some of your business goals? So this question is like 2 fold. The first part is what are some of your business goals right? Then the next, to achieve those goals, do you think you will need to improve your entrepreneurial skills?

Interviewee: Alright, so my first part is what my business goals are, I would like to have a much more bigger photography business. Employ other people you know so that I'm not just the only person that's in the business, like employ other people and be able to work on other stuff. While I know there are other people working on the photographs of the business. Then the second part of the question, most definitely, because my belief

is that the bigger your organization becomes the more skills you will need because now you're no longer managing a two or four person business. You're probably going to employ 50 people and then end up opening other branches all over the world. So the bigger the organization and the business becomes, the more skills you need to have. In order to be able to manage all the different businesses you have and branches you have. Since it's not in a one man shop, it's gotten bigger so you need to elevate your skills and upgrade your skills to in order for you to be up to par, to be the best version of yourself for all those businesses as a whole.

Interviewer: Good point then leading up to the next question, so you've mentioned you want to grow your business and you do acknowledge that you're going to need to improve your skills because the bigger your business grows, the more skills you're going to need. Now do you think that micro credentials can help you to achieve some of your business goals?

Interviewee: I definitely think that they can help to some extent. For example, in order to reach a bigger audience, I have to learn to master my marketing skills and my marketing might be able to reach out to bigger brands and all this stuff cause I've already seen. And it's the short course that will help to reach that certain level of marketing that will make me attract bigger clients or bigger businesses that's going to help my business grow. So yeah, yeah, the short courses will really, really help do something to some extent, but probably say it is 70/30. I mean anyone can get the skill but it's the person that's going to implement and exercise that skill that's going to succeed.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your inputs. Would you like to add anything else?

Interviewee: All good, thank you.