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Globally transforming researcher development through micro-credentials

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Title: Globally transforming researcher development through micro-credentials

Abstract (max 400 words):

This project explores the potential of a micro-credential in fostering researcher skill development amongst university research students and Early Career Researchers (ECRs). Researcher development requires behavioural, attitudinal and intellectual development and is often critically reliant on supervisors, mentors and institutional professional development initiatives. Enhancing researcher skill development is a necessity throughout the world and has led to the development of a global market for high-quality support resources that foster research training and capacity building. Given the recent massive disruption in higher education, coupled with technological advancements, this is the right time to reimagine researcher development through the provision of micro-credentials and global networks.

The “Pitching Research Matters” micro-credential (PRMMC), launched in early May 2022 by Bond University, is an innovative approach to global researcher development and has attracted learners from around the world. It provides a framework for effectively communicating research ideas in a clear and succinct manner and consists of three online modules which take approximately 10 hours to complete. The target market is university research students and ECRs. Within three weeks of its release, there were over 815 enrolments from 37 countries and 115 certificates of completion issued.

This mixed methods research explores how completion of the PRMMC impacts on researcher skill development, the effectiveness of the PRMMC in engaging various learning styles and the outcomes associated with completion of the PRMMC. Learners were invited to respond to a brief online questionnaire before and after completing the micro-credential ($n=80$) and participate in a virtual focus group ($n=30$).

Preliminary findings indicate that the micro-credential fostered researcher skill development regardless of whether learners were novice or more advanced in their research abilities. Although the outcomes that emerged from completing the PRMMC varied depending on the learning style of participants, particular elements of the PRMMC were found to improve comprehension and build self-confidence.

This project makes a theoretical contribution by extending the Researcher Skill Development Framework in the context of a micro-credential, while strengthening the evidence base within the limited and emerging micro-credential literature. Practically, the findings inform future strategy around the effective design and implementation of micro-credentials for researcher development worldwide. Within educational research and development, this project exemplifies the nexus between innovative educational offerings and research-based practice to transform researcher development globally.