

## **Credentials Stacking and Employability of Library Professionals in the University of Uyo**

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### **Abstract**

The emerging unpleasant trends have instigated most library and information professionals to seek multiple qualifications to enhance employability. Credentials stacking and employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo, describes the challenges embedded in the pursuit of additional training including Massive Open Online Courses, professional certifications and bachelor's degree. Three objectives were formulated to guide this study. The population comprised 36 librarians and para-professionals. Structured questionnaire designed was face-validated by experts and used for data collection. Descriptive statistical technique was employed for analysis. Findings of the study indicated that Massive Open Online Courses is a potent platform to publicise job vacancies, and that professional certification, along with a bachelor's degree, enhances the credibility of librarians, opening up good job opportunities and attainment of desired career path and advancement. It is concluded that Massive Open Online Courses influence employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo. Indeed, credentials stacking portrays variety of good opportunities for professional in field to be employed at completion of course of study. Therefore, motivation, setting of minimum standard, partnership and funding are recommended.

**Keywords:** credentials, stacking, employability, library professional

## Introduction

Credentials stacking are series of document collected and build up to project an individual toward career placement and keep track to get to the highest career in life (Bailey & Belfield, 2017, p. 8). A credentials stacking is the act of putting things in a well-arranged order to provide easy access which guards against space, maintain professionalism and promote ease of retrieval. Stacking credentials allows the employer to access those copies of documents received or retrieved for easy access. This may come as a short-form courses or certificate that can further lead to enrolment in a long-term or higher educational programmes, such as degree awarding programmes, Masters or even up to PhD level.

Etim, Akwaowo and Inyang (2025) define stacking of credentials as a model or sequence that provide more opportunities to library professional to acquire more credentials to stack them for job placement or professorial position that suit their academic qualification. Additionally, stacking is often done to save space, increase efficiency and facilitate storage for convenient access to information whenever opportunity strives. The application of this technology has reduced the work load of officials in offices by reducing papers movement and printing of documents. Jalilvand, (2023) opined that stackable credentials are succession of post-secondary credentials, which increases professional aid and builds on the existing knowledge and skills for career development. Furthermore, credential stacking and employability are practices of amassing multiple certificates, such as degrees, certificates, or diploma in order to enhance one's chance of being employed.

Employability refers to an individual's ability to obtain and maintain meaningful employment that aligns with skills, qualifications, and career aspiration (Williams et al., 2016). Additionally, employability is that state of being qualified for a particular job; for instance, most organisations or institutions of higher learning employ members of staff based on predetermined factors including psychological attributes. Also, professionals who are employed still enrol into other programmes in order to build their experience and learning of new things; for instance, participate in conference, workshops, internship programmes and online learning.

## Statement of the Problem

In recent years, there has been a growing trend among professionals in various fields including library and information science (LIS) to pursue multiple academic and professional qualifications as a strategy to remain competitive in the evolving labour market. Credentials stacking are processes of accumulating additional degrees, certification, diplomas as well as short term training course to one's initial qualification.

The underlying assumption is that each additional credential enhances an individual's employability. Therefore, the capacity to retain and progress in employment within academic environment depends largely on credentials.

Despite the increasing investments in credentials stacking among library professionals, it has shown no clear empirical evidence that such practices could translate into employability outcomes in university libraries in Nigeria. Edet, (2023) highlighted the importance of continuous learning and skills acquisition for libraries but considered factors like job acquisition, promotion, professional recognition and career satisfaction amongst community libraries in Nigeria. University of Uyo libraries have increased participation of staff through workshops, and seminars, yet the extent to which credentials contribute to tangible employability outcome, remains unclear. Lack of empirical assessment of this perception has created uncertainty around the value of credentials stacking.

This and many other challenges spur the researchers to seek to address uncertainty that influences credentials stacking and employability of library professionals in University of Uyo.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to examine credentials stacking and employability of library professional in the University of Uyo. The study specifically aims to:

- i. Assess the influence of Massive Open Online Courses (Moocs) on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo;
- ii. examine the extent of professional certification on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo; and
- iii. ascertain the effect of bachelor's degree on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is the influence of Massive Open Online Courses (Moocs) on employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo?
- ii. To what extent has the use of professional certification influence the employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo?
- iii. What is the effect of bachelor's degree on employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo?

**Research Hypotheses**

- i There is no significant influence of Massive Open Online Courses (Moocs) on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo
- ii There is no significant relationship between professional certification and employability of library professional in the University of Uyo
- iii Acquisition of a bachelor's degree does not affect employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo.

**Review of Related Literature**

Otitoju and Nwagwu (2023) conducted a study on the Use of Massive Open Online Course for digital skills development by undergraduates in selected universities in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study adopted four objectives and research questions and a descriptive survey design. The targeted population of 378 of the 21764 undergraduate students in private and public universities in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State was selected.

The findings of study indicated that a substantial portion of respondents (77.8%) utilised MOOC, with 72% enrolling and 60.8% completing their enrolled courses.

Additionally, most of the respondents agreed that MOOC surpasses traditional classrooms with the mean (3.24) and standard deviation of (0.728) in clarity, while other students reported receiving adequate support during challenges. Except for Learning Analytics IA/A, all the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) variables significantly predicted undergraduate use of MOOC in the universities. The findings of this study also suggested that MOOC is growing in acceptance and utilisation among students, thereby portraying integration of digital learning methods in education. Further exploration into factors that influence MOOC adoption, motivation was profound in enhancing course completion rates, just as lack of it could act as a barrier. It was recommended that MOOC should be adopted and utilised by among students, because it offers a holistic view of their experiences and perception on training.

Bakare's (2021) study on evaluation of students' internship experience in the Lifelong & Continuing Education Department of the University of Lagos sought answers to five research questions raised. The population consisted of 125 students. The study involved 300-Level students in the Department of Lifelong and Continuing Education of the University of Lagos, who registered for the course, Automated Distance Education (ADE 325) on Internship (for two consecutive sessions). The study embraced questionnaire and focus group discussion for data collection. Purposively sampling technique was adopted to select 123 students for

the two Sessions, while questionnaire was the tool for data collection. The instrument of data collection was administered and data collected immediately. The process yielded expected success with a retrieval rate of 100%. Data gathered were analysed through simple percentages and mean scores.

The study suggested that Internship were urgently reviewed in the department and explored as possibility of giving the students stipend to facilitate their experience. The study concluded that students who have experiences in the practical aspect of the profession are more confident, and contribute meaningfully to national development. It was recommended that the internship programmes should be extended to a minimum duration of 3 months within each academic year.

To Zhebago, et al, (2020), it was important to known the effect of certificate in knowledge and skills acquisition in Nigeria with a focus on selected tertiary institutions in Nasarawa State. The study adopted Human Capital Theory as its theoretical framework. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The analysis was done with simple percentage. The entire population comprised (3030) staff of Nasarawa State. The population was broken down as follows: Nasarawa State Polytechnic, Lafia was (545), College of Agriculture, Science and Technology Lafia stool at (498), Nasarawa State University, Keffi has population (1015) and Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa State population was (972).

The criterion means was adopted in answering the research questions, using the five-point Likert's scale format. The study concluded that certificate without corresponding knowledge is responsible for the collapse in the educational and societal value system in Nigeria. In view of this, it was recommended that there should be coordinated actions against promotion of mediocrity, low productivity or research, falling academic standard and value systems, self-deceit and incompetence in career development.

### **Methodology**

This study employed descriptive survey research design. Population of the study comprised 36 staff members, consisting of 24 academic and 12 heads of resource centres of libraries in the University of Uyo. The study adopted census sampling method. Self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. Copies of the instrument were administered on participants selected. Data collected were analysed through descriptive statistics where mean and standard deviation provided bases to answer research questions, and a dependent t-test was used to test the stated hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

## Results and Analysis

**Table 1**

*Mean and standard deviation of massive open online courses on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo*

| S/N               | ITEMS  | SA            | A             | D            | SD           | X        | ST.D | Remarks |
|-------------------|--|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------|------|---------|
| 1                 | I will employ someone with MOOCs experience  | 20<br>(55.3%) | 10<br>(27.8%) | 4<br>(11.1%) | 2<br>(5.5%)  | 3.3      | 2.04 | Agreed  |
| 2                 | I know MOOCs enable students to get more certificates.   | 18<br>(50%)   | 8<br>(22.2%)  | 7<br>(19.4%) | 3<br>(8.3%)  | 2.5      | 2.18 | Agreed  |
| 3                 | MOOC is a good way to get more training and professional knowledge                                   | 21<br>(58.3%) | 10<br>(27.8%) | 3<br>(8.3%)  | 2<br>(5.5%)  | 3.4      | 2.02 | Agreed  |
| 4                 | The MOOC training programs are up-to-date with the latest trends and technologies for organisations. | 17<br>(47.2%) | 9<br>(25%)    | 6<br>(16.7%) | 4<br>(11.1%) | 3.0      | 2.09 | Agreed  |
| 5                 | I know MOOC enable students to enrol in free online courses  | 19<br>(52.8%) | 8<br>(22.2%)  | 7<br>(11.9%) | 2<br>(5.5%)  | 3.2      | 2.06 | Agreed  |
| <b>Grand Mean</b> |  |               |               |              |              | 3.1=15.4 | 2.08 |         |

Table 1 indicates the summary of the items analysis influence of Massive Open Online Courses on employability of library professional in the University library. The results indicate that all the items have a positive mean response, which shows that respondents strongly agreed to five items. The (average weight of Mean is 3.20, standard deviation is 2.08), altogether items measured under Massive Open Online Courses on employability of library professional in the University library had mean scores that are above 2.5 but lower than 3.1, which implies that the scaled items appear within the range of high influence.

**Table 2**

*Mean and standard deviation of professional certification and employability of Library professional in the University of Uyo*

| S/N | ITEMS   | SA            | A             | D            | SD          | X   | ST.D | Remarks |
|-----|---|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----|------|---------|
| 1   | I will employ students with an extra professional certificate | 12<br>(33.3%) | 20<br>(55.6%) | 2<br>(5.6%)  | 2<br>(5.6%) | 3.2 | 2.05 | Agree   |
| 2   | Professional certificate gives students an                    | 9<br>(25%)    | 19<br>(52.8%) | 7<br>(19.4%) | 8<br>(8.3%) | 3.1 | 2.06 | Agree   |

|                   |   |               |               |              |              |          |      |       |
|-------------------|---|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------|------|-------|
| 3                 | opportunity to be gainfully employed<br>Professional certificate was awarded to students at the end of National Library Association (NLA) training. | 10<br>(2.8%)  | 21<br>(58.3%) | 4<br>(11.1%) | 1<br>(2.8%)  | 3.1      | 2.06 | Agree |
| 4                 | Professional training programs in library schools adequately prepare students for the demands of the modern library workplace.                      | 12<br>(33.3%) | 16<br>(44.4%) | 4<br>(11.1%) | 4<br>(11.1%) | 3.0      | 2.08 | Agree |
| 5                 | Professional certificate makes students qualified for the employment  | 11<br>(30.6%) | 19<br>(52.8%) | 3<br>(8.3%)  | 3<br>(8.3%)  | 3.1      | 2.08 | Agree |
| <b>Grand Mean</b> |   |               |               |              |              | 3.1=15.5 | 2.06 |       |

Table 2 indicates the summary of the items analysis influence of professional certification and employability of library professional in the University of Uyo. The results indicate that all the items had a positive mean response, which shows that respondents strongly agree to four items and one agree on the item. The (average weight of Mean is 3.10, Standard Deviation is 2.06), altogether, items measured under professional certification on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo have mean scores that are above 3.1, but lower than 2.01, which implies that the scaled items appear within the range of low influence.

**Table 3**

*Mean and standard deviation on bachelor's degree and employability of library professional in the University of Uyo*

| S/N | ITEMS   | SA            | A            | D            | SD           | X   | St.D | Remarks        |
|-----|---|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----|------|----------------|
| 1   | Bachelor's degree holders are employed to work in the library                   | 23<br>(63.9%) | 6<br>(16.7%) | 8<br>(8.3 %) | 4<br>(11.1%) | 3.3 | 2.19 | Strongly Agree |
| 2   | I will gainfully employ with Bachelor's degree in library science               | 20<br>(55.6%) | 5<br>(13.9%) | 6<br>(16.7%) | 5<br>(13.9%) | 3.1 | 2.20 | Strongly Agree |
| 3   | Having a degree in library science has given an opportunity to have a good work | 21<br>(58.3%) | 7<br>(19.4%) | 6<br>(16.7%) | 2<br>(5.6%)  | 3.2 | 2.21 | Strongly Agree |
| 4   | Having a Bachelor's degree gives me confidence of being employed.               | 22<br>(61.1%) | 7<br>(19.4%) | 4<br>(11.1%) | 8<br>(8.3 %) | 3.3 | 2.19 | Strongly Agree |
| 5   | Bachelor's degree in library science has  | 22<br>(61.1%) | 10<br>(25%)  | 8<br>(8.3 %) | 8<br>(8.3 %) | 3.4 | 2.18 | Strongly Agree |



|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| increased employment opportunity. |          |
| <b>Grand Mean</b>                 | 3.3=16.3 |

Table 3 indicates the summary of the items analysis influence of bachelor's degree and employability of library professional in the University of Uyo. The results indicate that all the items had a positive mean response, which shows that respondents strongly agree to four items and one agree on the item. Altogether, items measured under bachelor's degree on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo have mean scores that are above 2.5, but lower than 3.2. This implies that the scaled items appear within the range of high influence.

## Test of Hypotheses

### Hypothesis 1

*There is no significant influence of Massive Open Online Courses on employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo*

**Table 4**

*Influence of Massive Open Online Courses on employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo*

| Variables                   | N  | Mean (x̄) | St.D | d.f | P-value | t-cal | t-crit | Decision    |
|-----------------------------|----|-----------|------|-----|---------|-------|--------|-------------|
| Employability               | 36 | 16.4      | 3.10 | 1   | .05     | 1.74  | 2.38   | Ho accepted |
| Massive Open Online Courses |    | 10.4      | 2.08 | 35  |         |       |        |             |

Table 4 reveals that Massive Open Online Courses do have significant influence on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo. Since t-cal of 1.74 is less than t-crit of 2.38, while corresponding calculated level of significance is .05 alpha. With the result, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is significant influence of Massive Open Online Courses on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between professional certification and employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo

**Table 5**

*Relationship between professional certification and employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo*

| Variables                   | N  | Mean (x̄) | St.D | Df | P-value | t-cal | t-crit | Decision    |
|-----------------------------|----|-----------|------|----|---------|-------|--------|-------------|
| Employability               | 36 | 15.5      | 3.10 | 1  | .05     | 2.53  | 1.68   | Ho Rejected |
| Professionals Certification |    | 10.4      | 2.06 | 35 |         |       |        |             |



The result in Table 5 indicates that professional certification does not significantly influence employability of library professional in the University of Uyo. Since t-cal 8.40 is greater than the t-crit 1.68, while corresponding calculated level of significance is .05 alpha. With the result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between professional certification and employability of library professional in the University of Uyo

**Hypothesis 3:** The acquisition of a bachelor's degree does not affect employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo

**Table 6**

*The acquisition of a bachelor's degree and employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo*

| Variables         | N  | Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) | St.D | d.f | P-value | t-cal | t-crit | Decision |
|-------------------|----|--------------------|------|-----|---------|-------|--------|----------|
| Employability     | 36 | 16.3               | 3.30 | 70  | .05     | 3.41  | 2.66   | Sig.     |
| Bachelor's degree |    | 10.9               | 2.18 |     |         |       |        |          |

The result in Table 6 shows that bachelor's degree does not have a significant effect on employability of library professional in University of Uyo. Since the t-cal 3.41 is higher than t-crit 2.66, while corresponding calculated level of significance is .05 alpha. With the result, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is significant effect of bachelor's degree on the employability of library professional in University of Uyo.

### Discussion of Findings

**Research Questions 1: What is the influence of Massive Open Online Courses (Moocs) on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo?**

The results of the analysis in Table 1 indicates that massive open online courses have an influence on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo due to the fact that strongly agreed percentage is greater than agree, disagree and strongly disagree percentage of respondents. The result implies that Massive Open Online Courses facilitate and give library profession an opportunity to encourage in different courses that can end them employment.

The findings are in support of Kaushik's (2016) assertion that MOOCs has become a hot topic and spread over all subject domains. The researcher expresses that MOOCs explore the basic ideas features for online learning and endeavours to solve all the

educational related problems. MOOCs helps learners in various ways. It is like a discovery, which actually creates interests for specialising in their area of activity such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Coursera, edX (Extended Data), Udacity, SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) and NPTEL (National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning) are such major initiatives that provide different self-paced and self-regulated online courses.

**Research Questions 2: What is the influence of professional certification on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo?**

The results of the analysis in Table 2 indicates that professional certification have an influence on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo due to the fact that agreed percentage is greater than strongly agree, disagree and strongly disagree percentage of respondents. Professional certifications facilitate and give library profession an opportunity to acquire more professional certification that would end them employment. The findings are in line with Albert, (2017) who averred that certification represents competency-based skills and a capability to perform a specific Job. Cisco-certified network associate and National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), Certified Automotive Technicians (CAT) are examples of certifications. Furthermore, unlike a license, certification does not convey a legal authority to work in an occupation, but nonetheless, might be a requirement to work in an occupation, for example, automotive technician certification.

**Research Questions 3: What is the influence of bachelor's degree on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo?**

The results of the analysis in Table 3 indicates that bachelor's degree have an influence on employability of library professional in the University of Uyo due to the fact that the agreed percentage is greater than strongly agree, disagree and strongly disagree percentage of respondents. The result implies those bachelor's degree holders are qualified to be given an employment. The findings are in line with Bird, Chu and Oguz, (2015) through experiential learning, internships usher future LIS professionals into the field and allow them to engage with their future colleagues in the real world of professional work. Udochukwu, (2019) maintained that the role of earning a bachelor's degree may help one to pursue more opportunities in the career progression, even as bachelor's degree has become the minimum educational requirement listed by most hiring organisations in recent times.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that credentials stacking including Massive Open Online Courses, professional certification and bachelor's degree do influence employability of library professionals in the University of Uyo. Therefore, credentials stacking and employability of library professionals portrays a good variety of opportunities for those in the profession to be employed at completion of course of study.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Since MOOCs gives library professionals added qualifications, along with requisite experience, which are capable of enhancing availability for employment. Therefore, they must be motivated to pursue these lofty programmes.
- Professional certifications create marketable opportunities for library professionals over non-professionals. Consequently, there is an urgent demand for partnership with professional organisations, funding of library activities and sponsorship of library professionals to pursue higher qualifications for personal and organisational development.
- Bench mark such as a Bachelor's degree must be set as a minimum academic standard so as to protect the profession, professionals and professional prestige and employability.

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