

OPINION OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS OF MALDA DISTRICT ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF MOOCS

Bappa Das ¹, Dr. Bapi Mishra ²

¹ Research Scholar, ² Professor

^{1,2} Department of Education,

University of Gour Banga, Malda, West Bengal – India

¹ ORCID ID: 0009-0003-6817-3338

ABSTRACT: Education has evolved significantly from traditional classroom-based teaching to technology-driven learning models. Structured Conventional education often led to learner's fatigue, disengagement, and limited accessibility. With the emergence of digital technologies, learning has become more flexible, learner-centered, and globally accessible. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), originating from the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement and gaining prominence in 2012, have emerged as a revolutionary model of e-learning. MOOCs provide open, affordable, and lifelong learning opportunities without the constraints of age, eligibility, or geography. They emphasize skill development, self-directed learning, and digital collaboration, enabling learners to access quality education at scale. The two major forms—cMOOCs, which focus on connectivism and interaction, and xMOOCs, which emphasize structured content delivery—cater to diverse learner needs. This study, entitled “Opinion of Higher Education Students of Malda District about the Prospects of MOOCs”, investigates learners' awareness, perceptions, and attitudes towards MOOCs in the higher education sector. The findings aim to highlight the opportunities and challenges of adopting MOOCs as a complementary model to traditional learning.

KEYWORDS: MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), E-learning, Higher Education, Distance Learning, Lifelong Learning, Student Perception

1. INTRODUCTION

The word MOOC was created in 2008 by a well-known course called Connectivism and Connective knowledge through Professor Dave Cornier of 'Prince Edward Island University'.

A Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is a recent and widely researched development in Distance Education, which provide a web-based platform in the form of e-learning with a huge number of students and also give opportunity in distance education all over the world. It was established in 2006 and developed through as per the modern changes in online education, distance education and e-learning but in the case of learning it got popular in 2012.

In 2001, MOOCs was first derived from the Open Educational Resources (OER) movement generally created by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Open Courseware (MIT OCW) project. It

disclosed all the educational materials with highly standard quality by the highly educated teachers from different largest universities at a certain period of time.

1.1. Concept of MOOCS

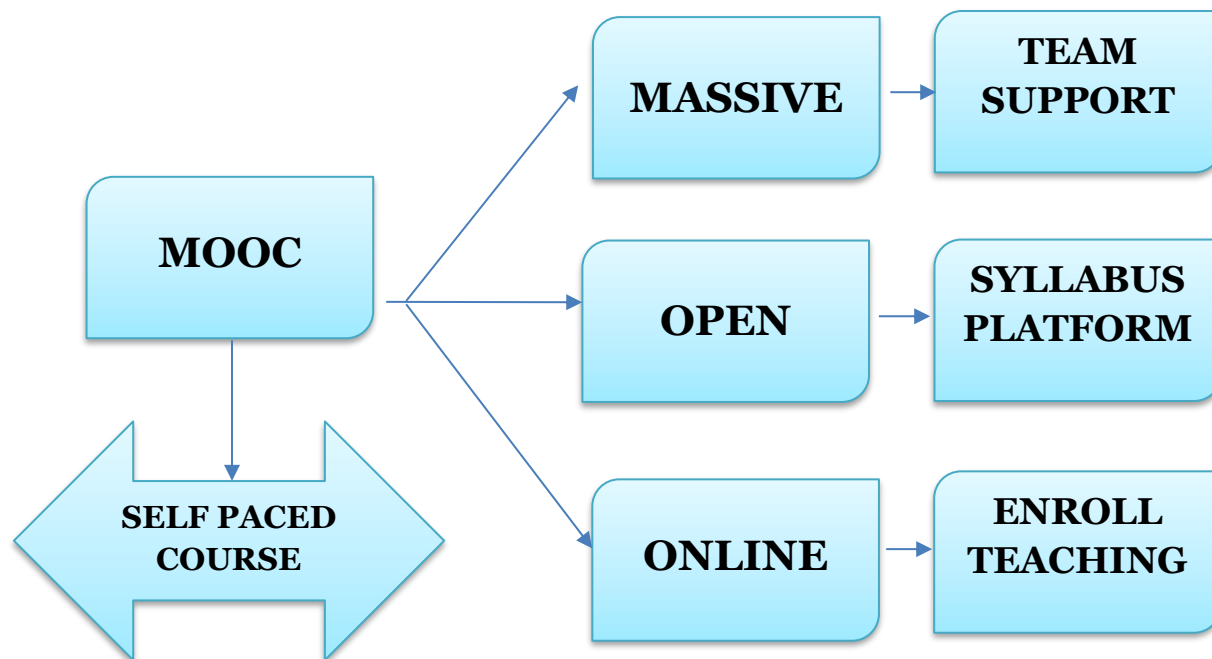


Figure 1: Concept of MOOCs

MOOC is a knowledge-based Web, which emphasizes on transmission of practical knowledge rather than traditional memorization or rote learning among students, means it focuses to create expertise on a particular subject without any eligibility criteria. MOOCs are a modern kind of web based educational agent that created for the purpose to teach and educate a large number of students together. It provides an advanced learning environment by implementing interaction online through a large scale of participants via the web. It is a lifelong educational approach with the option of free of cost, open registration, an open accessible curriculum which anyone can access in anytime and open-ended outcomes which helps to integrate the whole educational system within one forum.

At first, there was all information's related to the course open access to MOOC and the researchers, specialists as well as learners could correction, add and improve it according to recent development. But present developed MOOC create some strict regulations and prescribe that the materials and information is free or open accessible for all but it can't use anywhere else.

1.2. The purposes of MOOCS

- To make a course easily accessible for human being without any gender biases.
- To create a course as per participant interest without expects any eligibility criteria.
- To provide knowledge for the purpose to make more experienced person via web.
- To generate e-learning motive among the learner.
- To impart teaching in an open environment without any barrier of bounded classroom.
- To develop the traditional distance learning style.
- To implement lifelong learning process.

1.3. Who are participators in these MOOCs?

MOOCs has been try to spread the work into different sector of our education. Although its importance is immensive in different cases yet it is discussed for those who have opened than.

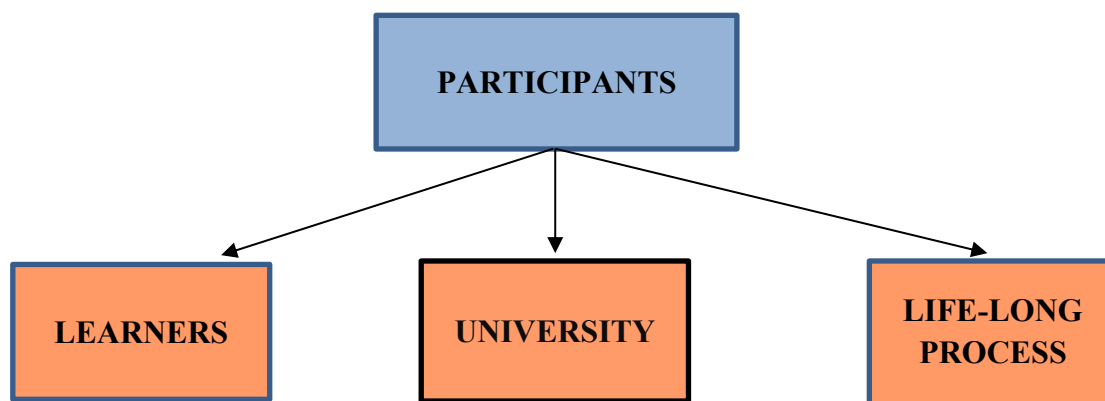


Figure 2: MOOCs Participants

1.4. Characteristics of MOOCs

- **MOOCs is a massive course**, means large number of students involve here without any prerequisite of number, eligibility, gender, age, time, classroom criteria for fulfilment of this course. The participants are independently work as per their own pace of learning. The most interesting thing about MOOC is a greater part of people can participate in it by following system approach (**Input – Process – Output – Feedback**) and take free education according to their own current need as well as desires.
- **MOOCs is also called open course**, means there are no restriction of any rules, regulation as bounded classroom. Here open refers to only free accessible without any paying, means anyone and any time access the material but cannot copy, use and publish the course material online or any other site. It is a openly distributed knowledge base an event including authentic networking and also the remembering part of this sector is, it is largernon-profitable organisation.
- **MOOCs is an online course**, means deliver the materials or information through the internet. It also refers to “content distribution course” cause the contents of these course is open ended. That’s why nowadays we can say that we have a personalized online course as per desired of the learner. In other side we can’t called this course as only online course it is a highly connective and collaborative learning process.

1.5. Types of MOOCs

Generally, two types of MOOCs based on their divergent pedagogies -

- ❖ **First one is cMOOCs**, which refers to connectivism and connective knowledge, means it emphasizes on interaction among large group of participants and executes proper connectivity among them. The main objectives of cMOOCs, is to provide and enhance learning environment by implementing mutual interaction among a large number of participants through online tools. Generally, cMOOCs also popular as CCK08 because it’s establishment in 2008 by *Dave Cormier*. CCK08 focus on education and effective learning, and serve learning ingredients by following digital storytelling method.
- ❖ **Second one is xMOOCs**, which refers to “artificial intelligence” (AI) through which a number of innovative courses are flourished. It created in 2011 by *Peter Norvig* and *Sebastien Thruen*. It is composed for the purpose to provide the opportunity to reach MOOCs among the larger population groups. According to *Stephen Downes* the ‘x’ refers to the ‘eXtension to traditional teaching.’ in xMOOCs the motive of learning and acquisition is predetermined by MOOCs creators.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To gather the opinion of higher education students about prospects of MOOCs.
- To explore strata wise deference opinion of higher education students in Malda districts.

- To find it any significant deference between rural and urban groups.

3. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Ho.1: There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the male students and the female students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs

Ho.2: There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the rural students and the urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

Ho.3: There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the college students and the university students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

4.1. Population of the study:

The researcher selected high students of Malda district as his research population and in this district; he selected both college in University students for his sample.

4.2. Sample of the study:

The researcher has selected a special sampling technique for carrying out the study. In this study the researcher applied judgmental or purposive sampling technique as a non-probability sampling technique. The data investigation at first selected one area for applying the test for pilot testing, secondly, he selected one rural area and one urban area. Finally, data were collected from the selected students. After that pilot testing and standardization of the final and data were collected. Total sample is 200 students.

4.3. Variable of the study:

The variables have included in the study –

- i. Opinion about prospects of MOOCs

4.5. Method of the study: - As per the above discussion, the present research type is descriptive; because in this research survey method was used for data collection and this research method followed the steps of descriptive research.

4.6. Construction of tool: - For measuring the Opinion about prospects of MOOCs of higher-level students, the researcher developed an opinionnaire.

4.7. Dimensions: - In this study, the researcher selected four dimensions to constructing the research tool. These dimensions are Massive, Open, Online, Self-oriented course.

4.8. Drafting of items:-The researcher prepared 30 items for this study which are 27 positive items and 3 negative items. The scale consists of 30 questions under the above 4 dimensions. There are 27 positive items and 3 negative items. Each item in the Opinion about prospects of MOOCs measure scale is provided two possible alternative responses such as ‘agree’, and ‘disagree’.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The researcher computed different types of descriptive statistics for conclusion about the nature of the distribution. Mean, Median, Mode, and Standard Deviation were computed for the present study. The computed values were presented below in the following table –

Table-1: Category & Score Category

Category	Score Category	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Male Students	Opinion about MOOCs	52.05	53	54.2	3.78
Female Students	Opinion about MOOCs	52.88	53.5	54.74	3.46

University Students	Opinion about MOOCs	52.44	53.2	54.72	3.59
College Students	Opinion about MOOCs	55.25	55.4	55.7	1.91
Urban Students	Opinion about MOOCs	53.85	55	57.5	3.37
Rural Students	Opinion about MOOCs	52.48	52	51.04	3.11

5.1. Testing of hypotheses

▪ Null Hypotheses1

There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the male students and the female students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

Table-2: The means scores of the male students and the female students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs

Sample group	Mean	SD	Number	Mean difference	SED	t	df	Level of significance		Result
Male students	52.05	3.78	90	0.78	0.51	0.10	198	0.01	0.5	Insignificant
Female Students	52.88	3.46	110					1.97	2.59	

Here the computed “t” is 0.10 and the df is 198. The table value at 0.05 is 1.91 and 0.01 level is 2.59. The computed value is smaller than the table value. It is insignificant in both levels. So, the null hypothesis is accepted.

▪ Null Hypotheses 2

There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the rural students and the urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

Table-3: The means scores of the rural students and the urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

Sample group	Mean	SD	Number	Mean difference	SED	t	df	Level of significance		Result
Urban students	53.85	3.37	41	1.37	0.73	1.88	81	0.01	0.05	Insignificant
Rural Students	52.48	3.11	42					2.63	1.99	

Here the computed ‘t’ is 1.88 and the df is 81. The table value at 0.05 is 1.99 and 0.01 level are 2.63. The computed value is smaller than the table value. It is insignificant in both levels. So, the null hypotheses are accepted.

▪ Null Hypotheses 3

There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the Rural students and the Urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs

Table-4: The means scores of the Rural students and the Urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs

Sample group	Mean	SD	Number	Mean difference	SED	t	df	Level of significance		Result
University students	52.44	3.59	188	2.81	0.6	4.68	198	0.01	0.5	Significant
College Students	55.25	1.91	12					2.60	1.97	

Here the computed 't' is 4.68 and the df is 198. The table value at 0.05 is 1.97 and 0.01 level are 2.60. The computed value is greater than the table value. It is Significant in both levels. So, the null hypotheses are **Rejected**.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the Table mentioned above, the researcher discussed, analysed, interprets and explained the collected data. After completing this process, the researcher concluded a conclusion and discussed the main findings of the study, limitation of the study, educational implications of the study, future needed of the study and at last he gave overall summary of the whole research study.

6.1. Main findings of the study:

- ❖ There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the male students and the female students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.
- ❖ There exists no significant difference between the means scores of the rural students and the urban students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.
- ❖ There exists significant difference between the means scores of the college students and the university students obtained in their test of opinion about MOOCs.

6.2. Educational implications of the study:

Basically, the researcher whole research work and selected topic related to the higher education studies and e-learning. Nevertheless, there are some important aspect as well as educational implications of this research work, which are highlighted below –

- This study will help to spread the awareness about MOOCs.
- This investigation helps to find out current position of higher education in MOOCs and encourage students to attract in this educational course.
- This study helps to gather information in regard to present status of students' outlook concerning MOOCs.
- This study will help learners to identify as well as collect the available and free educational resources.
- This research work is also helpful for those people who are wanted to afresh start and connect with higher education sector as per their choice, need and time.

7. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

Through this study we understand about MOOCs and their different kinds of prospects. In MOOCs, there are three prospects such as massive, open and online as well as which also helps to know about how to learn in an e-learning or web base technique. Generally, MOOCs refers to modern technology innovative course that designed for large number of participants that can be accessed by anyone anywhere as long as they have internet connection, are open to everyone without entry qualification, and offer a complete course experience online for free.

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