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Research Article

POTENTIALITY OF MOOCS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO A FEW COLLEGES IN PURBA BARDHAMAN DISTRICT IN WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

India is an over populated country and it is the second populous country in the world. Everyone does not get the chance of higher education through formal education system. So the present paper attempted to examine the emergence and potentiality of MOOCs in higher education with special reference to few colleges in Purba Bardhaman distrct in West Bengal, India. This study is primarily analytical in nature. A structured questionnaire has been used to collect primary data encompassing 100 teachers and 200 students in few colleges of Purba Bardhaman district in West Bengal. Chi-square test was used to examine the association between MOOCs and access in alternative form of higher education among the students. Moreover, student's t-test was used to examine the significant differences in opinion among the respondents towards the potentiality of MOOCs in higher education with respect to economic status (APL/BPL), locality (rural/urban), gender (male/female) and social groups (reserved/unreserved). There existed a significant association between MOOCs and scope of new path of alternative form of higher education among the students. Significant attitudinal differences occurred among the students belonging in different economic status, locality, gender and social groups towards the potentiality of MOOCs in access of higher education in India. MOOCs have the potentiality of maintaining the access of alternative form of higher education and more interactive online degrees by integrating modern technology in near future.

INTRODUCTION

Twenty-first-century learners have expectations that are not met within the traditional model of mainstream higher education. Further, as cutbacks to educational budgets continue, and centralized professional development opportunities decrease along with them, it will be difficult for universities to keep up with expectations and demands of students. Within this context, the massive open online course (MOOC) has been introduced as a movement that threatens to fragment higher education. A massive open online course (MOOC) is a model for delivering learning content online to any person who wants to take a course, with no limit on attendance. A massive open online course (MOOC) is an online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as filmed lectures, readings, and problem sets, many MOOCs provide interactive user forums to support community interactions among students, professors, and teaching assistants . MOOCs are a recent and widely researched development in distance education which were first introduced in 2006 and emerged as a popular mode of learning in 2012. Early MOOCs often emphasized open-access features, such as open licensing of content, structure and learning goals, to promote the reuse and remixing of resources. Some later MOOCs use closed licenses for their course materials while maintaining free access for students.

Several studies are conducted to assess the role of MOOCs in higher education. But most of the studies are narrower one i.e., cover any specific aspect. So the present study tries to fill in the gap by examining the potentiality of MOOCs in higher education covering the broad categories among the guardians, teachers and students of few colleges at **Purba Bardhaman** district of West Bengal.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are the following:

1. To examine the awareness of the students about the potentiality of MOOCs in higher education.
2. To acquire knowledge and understanding about the MOOCs and its associated learning strategies of the students.

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3. To encourage participation of students of MOOCs related programs.
4. To identify the factors which are helpful to ensure potentiality of MOOCs in higher education?
5. To examine the difference in opinions among the students about the potentialities of MOOCs according to economic status (APL and BPL), locality (Rural and Urban), gender (Male and Female) and social groups (Unreserved and Reserved) of higher education in colleges.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were framed to verify the objectives of the study:

Ho_1: There is no doubt about significant association between MOOCs and higher education.

Ho_2: There is no significant variation of attitude about MOOCs among the students comprising in APL and BPL categories.

Ho_3: There is no significant variation of attitude about MOOCs among the students comprising in Rural and Urban categories.

Ho_4: There is no significant variation of attitude about MOOCs among the students comprising in Male and Female groups.

Ho_5: There is no significant variation of attitude about MOOCs among the students belonging to Unreserved and Reserved categories engaged for higher education in colleges.

Tools used in the study:

A self made questionnaire has been used for the collection of primary data during 2015-2016 from 100 teachers and 200 students of few colleges comprising different economic status(APL and BPL), residing different locality (Urban and Rural), different gender (Male and Female) and belonging different social groups (Unreserved and Reserved) of few colleges in **Purba Bardhaman** district in West Bengal.

Methodologies used in the study:

The following methodologies have been used for analysis of the present study:

Chi-square test: to examine the nature of association between MOOCs and higher education

Students't-test: to investigate the difference in opinion among the students of few colleges comprising different economic status (APL and BPL), residing different locality (Urban and Rural), different gender (Male and Female) and belonging different social groups (Unreserved and Reserved) of few colleges in **Purba Bardhaman** district in West Bengal.

Analysis pertaining to MOOCs and higher education: A Chi-square analysis

The present study has attempted to make an assessment of perceptions of the teachers and students about the role of MOOCs on up gradation of higher education in terms of non-parametric 'Chi-square' analysis. The opinions of the respondents collected from the field survey has been expressed in the following table (vide table- 1).

Table 1: Opinions of the respondents about MOOCs and higher education

Respondents	Yes	Uncertain	No	Total	Value of χ^2	Level of significance
Teachers	80	15	5	100	4.19	0.05 (NS)
Guardians	150	35	15	200		
Total	230	50	20	300		

It is clear from above table (vide **table-1**) that the calculated value of chi-square is less than the tabulated value at 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted implying that there exists no doubt about the significant association between MOOCs and adoption of higher education in colleges.

Table 2: Attitude of students comprising different economic status (APL and BPL categories) about adoption of MOOCs in colleges

Economic Status	N	Mean	S.D.	t value	Level of significance
APL	100	26.53	5.15	2.8	0.01
BPL	100	24.57	4.95		

It appears from table 2 that the calculated value of t is greater than the tabulated value at 1 % level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. So it can be concluded that there exists difference in opinion about the attitude of students comprising in APL and BPL categories about adoption of MOOCs in colleges. It appears from the field study that BPL students are not too much conscious about adoption of MOOCs in teaching-learning activities.

Table 3: Attitude of students residing at different locality (Urban and Rural) about adoption of MOOCs in colleges for higher education

Locality	N	Mean	S.D.	t value	Level of significance
Urban	100	28.21	8.33	2.13	0.01
Rural	100	25.9	7.07		

Table 3 indicates that the calculated value of t is greater than the critical values at 1 % level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted indicating that there exists significant variation of attitude of students residing at different locality (Urban and Rural) about adoption of MOOCs in colleges. The Urban students are more efficient than the Rural students about the adoption of MOOCs in colleges for higher education.

Table 4: Attitude of students comprising different gender (Male and Female) about adoption of MOOCs in colleges for higher education

Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t value	Level of significance
Male	100	27.81	7.69	1.93	
Female	100	26.09	4.66		0.01

It is evident from table 4 that the calculated value of t is greater than the critical values at 1 % level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected indicating that there exists significant variation of attitude of students comprising different gender (Male and Female) about adoption of MOOCs in colleges for higher education. This means that the male students would have more modern attitude than female students about the adoption of MOOCs in higher education.

Table 5: Attitude of students belonging different social groups (Unreserved and Reserved categories) about adoption MOOCs in colleges for higher education

Social Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	t value	Level of significance
Unreserved	100	29.74	7.48	2.00	0.01
Reserved	100	27.74	6.76		

Table 5 shows that the calculated value of t is greater than the critical values at 1 % level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected indicating that there exists significant variation of attitude of students belonging different social groups (Unreserved and Reserved categories) about adoption MOOCs in colleges for higher education. It is due to unawareness of reserved students about adoption MOOCs in higher education.

CONCLUSION

The present paper explains the potentialities of MOOCs in higher education with special reference to few colleges in **Purba Bardhaman** district in West Bengal. The result exposed a significant relationship between MOOCs and higher education. There has been occurred significant positive influence on higher education by taking into consideration the factors like attitude of teachers and guardians, opinions of students belonging to different economic status (APL/BPL), residential areas (rural/urban), gender (male/female) and social groups (reserved/unreserved). It is interesting to note that there exists significant variation in attitude about adoption of MOOCs in the surveyed colleges according to economic status, locality areas, gender and social groups. The present study also suggests some policy prescriptions for smooth adoption of MOOCs in colleges for higher education.

Policy Prescriptions

Certain factors are necessary for the successful adoption of MOOCs in colleges for higher education:

- Govt. awareness programme
- Govt. publicity/promotion
- Teachers' positive attitude
- Guardian's positive attitude
- Student's positive attitude
- Congenial college's infrastructure
- Easy accessible for higher education

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