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A STUDY ON THE AWARENESS OF MOOCS AMONG STUDENTS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN PASCHIM BARDHAMAN DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL

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Abstract

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) provide ample opportunities for free ,open ,online courses for learners.The introduction of MOOCs in 2008 has transformed education globally.MOOC provides digital platform which increases learners' access to and equity in lifelong learning. It is a recent development in distance education.As MOOCs are built on the characteristics of massiveness, openness, and connectivity philosophy therefore in the presnt research paper the researcher collected the details about the awareness of MOOCs among the Students of higher learning ie.of M.A in Education & M.SC Physics of Kazi Nazrul University ,Asansol,West Bengal to know how far they are aware about this new tool in this global era.

Key Words:Awareness,MOOCS,Higher Learning etc

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Introduction

The advent of Technology have resulted a paradigm shift in the field of Education. Education has grown from traditional, regular classroom teaching to distance and online mode. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have improved the qualities of Learning, accessibility and efficiency in the Higher Education sector. The word "E" has transformed every aspect including Education. Electronic Learning (E-Learning) covers both online and offline courses instead of conventional classroom teaching and learning.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is an online learning content available through the Internet. It is an open access by the learners from anywhere with the help of Web. In Wikipedia, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is defined as A massive open online course (MOOC) is an online course aimed at large-scale interactive participation and open access via the web. In addition to traditional course materials such as videos, readings, and problem sets, MOOCs provide interactive user forums that help build a community for the Students, Professors, and Teaching Assistants (TAs). It is called **Massive** because it allows access to a large number of students than a traditional or face to face mode course. MOOC can reach to unlimited learners worldwide creating a community of lifelong learners. It is called **Open** because the course can be accessed by anyone from any place with the help of internet. The courses are open to all without any entry qualifications. Contents of the course can also be used by others. As the course can be done with the help of internet without physical appearance and can be completed from any corner of the World, it is called **Online. Course** involves educational content which involves interaction among the peers with specific objectives. It also covers assignment, test, quizzes, exams for assessing the knowledge acquired as well as certification on competition.

There are various Online Courses available for the Students but they do not enroll satisfactorily. They require proper information and motivation to get into the emerging Learning avenues. The Open and Online Courses provide ample avenues which can be explored. MOOCs provide free access to students of Higher Learning in the University system. Premier Educational Institutions worldwide have put their Courses Online with the facility of open learning platforms.

Need & Significance of the study

This study will make a small but important contribution by discerning the experiences & awareness among the learners through the FutureLearn MOOCs and shed light on how relevant they are in HE context.It will be helpful to understand how students use a MOOC platform for learning and what factors promote and hinder student engagement for collaborative learning. Students' experiences of learning through the MOOC can have significant implications in the MOOC learning context regarding how to design a student centered learning platform to promote a collaborative and creative learning. This research can shed some light on this crucial issue too.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of conducting this study is to understand and examine the level of awareness on MOOCs among University students who are pursuing Regular Post Graduate Courses. The prime Objectives were ,

- To find out the usage of Computer and Internet facilities.
- To find out the basic outlook of Students towards MOOCs.
- To find out the perception levels on main aspect of MOOCs.

Research Questions: The Research work was carried out with the following –

a) What is the familiarity and usability of Computers, Smart Phones, Internet and Internet facilities by the students of Higher Learning?

b) What is the level of awareness of students of Higher Learning towards basic information about MOOC?

c) What is the perception of students of Higher Learning about various aspects of MOOCs (Access, Usability, Cost, Student Role, Teacher's Role, Quality of Learning, Validity of Course, Reliability of Course, Interaction and Resources).

Hypothesis of the Study:

The following hypothesis are framed for the study.

Hypothesis 1(H0) : There is insignificant difference in awareness of MOOCs among the Students of MA in Education and M.Sc in Physics

Hypothesis 2(H1) : There is insignificant difference in awareness of MOOCs among Boys

and Girls.

Hypothesis 3(H2) : There is insignificant difference in awareness of MOOCs among Boys Of MA in Education and M.Sc in Physics.

Hypothesis 4(H3) : There is insignificant difference in awareness of MOOCs among Girls Of MA in Education and M.Sc in Physics.

Delimitation of the Study:

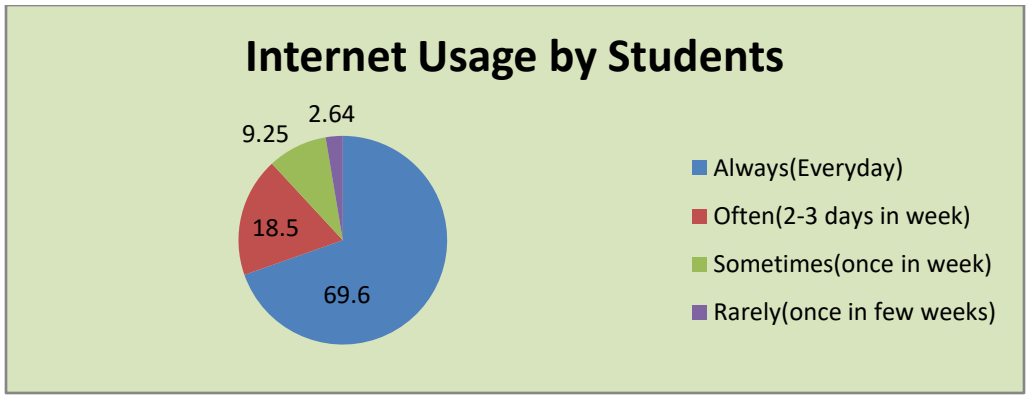
The study has been conducted by selecting sixty (60) students randomly from Kazi Nazrul University of Paschim Bardhaman District. Thirty (30)students of M.A in Education and thirty(30) students of M.Sc Physics were selected for the study.

Major Findings of the Study:

The major findings of the Research Work entitled " A Study on Awareness of MOOCs Among Students of Higher Learning in Paschim Bardhaman District" can be summed up in the following manner.

Familiarity and Use of Computers, Smart Phones, Internet and Internet Facilities) -

The data collected on the familiarity, usage of Computers, Smart Phones and Internet accessibility are one of the pre-requisite for MOOC. Learning to use Computers show that 85% students use Computers from 1to 3Years. However 15% students have learnt to use Computers since 3to 6 Years. Again 95% of the students do not have access to Computers daily whereas 5% of the students can use Computers daily. Regarding the use of Smart Phones, 92% of the students have access to Internet based Smart Phones and 8% have simple mobiles.In the usage of Internet,93% students have access to Internet directly.Among them 65% use Internet for more than 40 Hours in a week. 25% students use Internet for less than 30 Hours a week and the remaining 10% students do not use Internet on regular basis. On an average 35% of the time is being spent by the students for the Educational usage.



On the use of Internet facilities , 95% of the students use E-mails, 64% use the Educational and discussion Blogs, 7% participate in the discussion forums.98% students prefer to use Whatsapp group for communicating with others. Only 8% of students use Internet few times in a week. 82% students use theInternet facilities regularly. 100% students use the Google and other Internet Search Engines, Wikipedia to learn and explore new topics, You tube videos to clarify and learn concepts. 80% of students prefer slide share and powerpoint videos to clarify doubts. All these reflect that the students of Higher Learning are very much familiar with the use of Internet and its various facilities in the Educational field.

Awareness of Students on Basic Information About MOOCs –

This part covered about the awareness of Students on basic information of MOOCs. 93% of the students knew the full form of MOOC. But they could not give names of any specificCourse on MOOC platform. Merely 3% of the students enrolled in MOOC but did not complete it. 84% of the students say that Fees to be charged for MOOC based Courses.Most of the students quit from the MOOC Course because of lack of awareness and least motivational levels.

Awareness towards different Aspects of MOOCs–

This part covered the awareness of students towards the ten major aspects of MOOC on the Access, Usability, Cost, Role of Student, role of Teacher, Quality of Learning, Validity of Course, Reliability of Course, Interaction and Resources.

Access : Almost 100% of the students consider the enrolment process in MOOC as critical. They think that the access to MOOC Courses are based on strong Internet

Connectivity which is not possible always. Availability of Computers for the Enrolment in MOOCs are the sole factor.

Usability : Only 3% of the students feel that MOOC as a learning tool can help them in their courses of study. But 97% of the students feel that MOOC is totally a different course which requires additional time and money and is of least use to their current study.

Cost : Most of the students consider that MOOC Courses are expensive which is difficult to afford by them. In addition to that high speed Internet connectivity also escalates the cost factor.

Students Role : Majority of the students feel that the responsibility of learning lies with the student themselves. They consider active learning as key component.

Teachers Role : Almost all the students consider that there is no requirement of Teacher in MOOC.They consider that Teacher guidance is not required in MOOC related courses.

Quality of Learning : 77% of students think that the quality of learning shall be good in the traditional learning environment rather than in a MOOC platform.

Validity of Course : 85% of the students consider that courses of MOOC have no proper recognition from appropriate Authorities.

Reliability: 85% of the students feel that the information available from MOOC platform do not have any quality in comparison to the traditional and formal courses.

Interaction: 90% of the students feel that the interaction available on MOOC is very limited in comparison to the face to face regular courses.

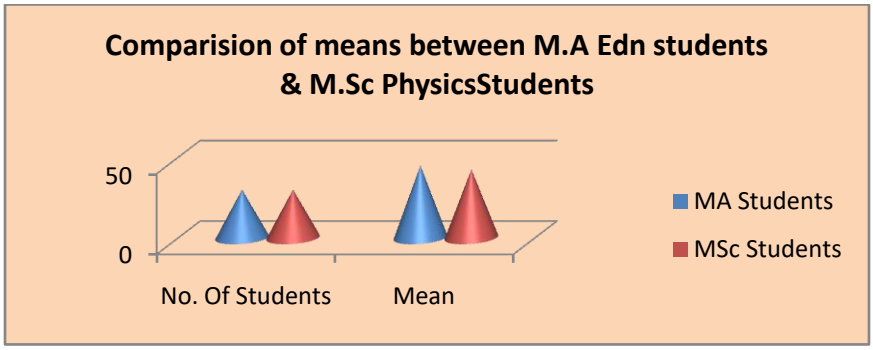
Resources: Majority of the students consider that the MOOC courses comprised of videos, Power point presentations,etc. All these resources are also available

The Hypotheses testing pertaining to the key Research Questions can be interpreted in the following manner.

Hypotheses 1(H0) : There is no significant difference in awareness of MOOCs among the Students of MA in Education and M.Sc in Physics.

TABLE NO-1 Comparison of Students of MA in Education and M.Sc in Physics with regard to awareness of MOOCs

VARIABLE	ATTRIBUTE	N	MEAN	SD	t-VALUE
Familiarity with MOOCs	MA Students	30	45	3.79	0.817
	MSc Students	30	42.59	1.98	

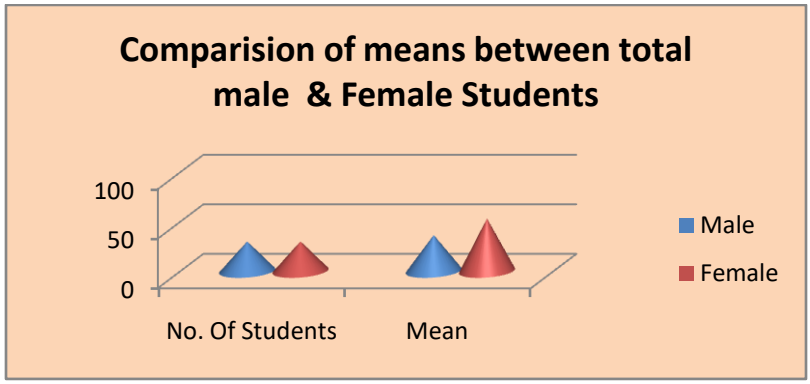


The above Hypotheses(H0) is rejected as it is insignificant at 0.05 level.It means that their is a significant difference between the Students of MA in Education and M.Sc in Physics regarding their awarenes about MOOC.

Hypotheses 2(H1) : There is no significant difference in awareness of MOOCs among The Male and Female students

TABLE NO-2Comparison of Total male & Female Students of MA in Education and M.Sc in Physics with regard to awareness of MOOCs

VARIABLE	ATTRIBUTE	N	MEAN	SD	t-VALUE
Awareness of MOOCs	Male	30	36.41	2.41	1.53
	Female	30	53.16	14.08	

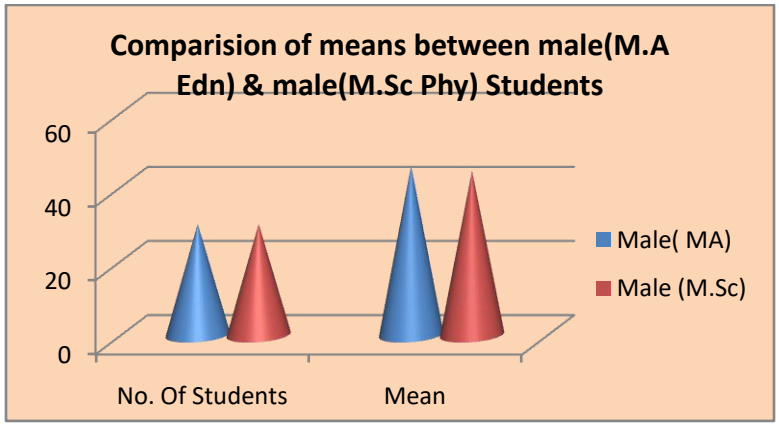


The above Hypotheses(H1) is rejected as it is insignificant at 0.05 level.The mean difference between Male and Female students regarding their awareness of MOOCs clearly showed that female students are more aware with the use & applicationof MOOCs than male students.

Hypotheses 3(H2) : There is no significant difference in awareness of MOOCs among The Male students of MA in Education and M.Sc Physics.

TABLE NO-3 Comparison of Total male Students of MA in Education and M.Sc in Physics with regard to awareness of MOOCs

VARIABLE	ATTRIBUTE	N	MEAN	SD	t-VALUE
Awareness of MOOCs	Male(MA)	30	45.71	2.798	0.158
	Male (M.Sc)	30	44.38	2.237	

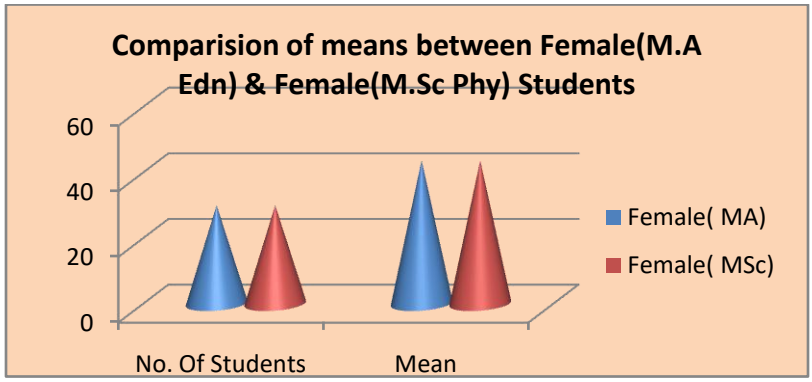


The above Hypotheses(H2) is rejected as it is insignificant at 0.05 level. Therefore the Null Hypotheses that there is no significant difference in awareness of MOOC among the male students of Higher Learning are rejected.Their is a significant difference between the mean values ie. Male M.A Education students have more awareness towarda MOOCs than male M.Sc Physics students.

Hypotheses 4(H3) : There is no significant difference in awareness of MOOCs among The Female students of MA in Education and M.Sc Physics.

TABLE NO-4 Comparison of total Female Students of MA in Education and M.Sc in Physics with regard to awareness of MOOCs

VARIABLE	ATTRIBUTE	N	MEAN	SD	t-VALUE
Awareness of MOOCs	Female(MA)	30	43.75	2.852	0.148
	Female(MSc)	30	43.70	2.113	



The t scores on Hypotheses 3 (H2) is 0.158 and for Hypotheses 4(H3) is 0.148. The computed t value is insignificant at 0.05 level. Therefore the Null Hypotheses that there is no significant difference in awareness of MOOC among the students of Higher Learning are rejected.Their is a slight difference between the mean values regarding the awareness of female students of M.A Educaion & M.Sc Physics students.

CONCLUSION :

The awareness level of students of Higher Learning in MOOCs are at low level. Male students are significantly less aware than Female students. M.Sc students not showed better awareness in contrast to the students of MA in Education. However MOOCs have the potential to increase the thinking ability and motivation level of learners by providing opportunity to interact and connect with diversified groups. Both the positive and negative perception on MOOCs can be addressed with educational implications and proper awareness drive among the students. Through the findings from the present research it is suggested that MOOCs could be permanent change agents that boost innovation in higher education learning arenas.MOOCs represent the incredible tool for skill development and acquiring of knowledge. It has received attention from the media, entrepreneurial vendors, educational professionals and technically

competent persons. Premier Universities worldwide are providing courses on Online Platforms. Even commercial start ups like Coursera and Udacity have collaborated with esteemed Universities for Joint Certification. This is really a boost up in the Higher Education arena.

A sustainable approach is desirable for long term success in MOOCs in terms of quality, scalability, teaching and learning practices ,engagement with the stakeholders. MOOCs shall not only transform but modernise Higher education with a complement to the current practices. Countries where major part of the population are in rural area and cannot afford qualitative education, MOOCs can be a game changer. Learning shall happen on a click and empower the common people to enhance the socio-economic status. Technology driven Educational system with online platform shall foster balanced growth and development with value driven competent Human Resources.

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