Needs of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs):

A Case of Business Japanese Students

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were: 1) to investigate the needs of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in business students; and 2) to study supplemental opinions and suggestions. Research samples were 60 Business Japanese students from the faculty of Business Administration, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand. The instrument used for data gathering was 10 ethnographic interview questions. The data was analyzed by frequency, percentage and content analysis.

The research findings were presented that teachers are required to adopt a traditional teaching system with the integration of modern teaching techniques for the students' highest achievement. However, poor Internet connectivity was the highest concern as impeded factor.

Keywords: Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), EFL Classroom

1. Introduction

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is a technology which provides educational courses via online to a massive crowd for free of charge or at an affordable cost. It is open to any interest student and commonly offered via a web based platform. There are two types of MOOCs – cMOOCs and xMOOCs. Commonly, xMOOC consist of short video lectures, quizzes, self-graded/ peer graded assignments and forum to facilitate the communications and collaborations. Typically this kind of a course expands 4-8 weeks and could be taken on scheduled dates or self-phased. In 2012, many MOOC platforms emerged and therefore it was stated the "Year of MOOC" by the New York Times (Pappano, 2012). It was emerged with a promising future for the higher education and some researchers even stated it will be the next disruption in the online education (Skiba, 2012).

In the meantime, real world situation which is moving from industrial sociality to information society demanding for the students to be equipped with the 21st century skills. The common skills identified by various states or non for profit organizations are creative thinking/ imagination skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills/ communication skills and collaboration skills with working in teams. Education institutions are attempting and even obligated by the state authorities to provide student the educational skills which meets the challenges in the 21st century. Among many organizations, the partnership for 21st century skills argues that the traditional high school curriculum does not include those aspects which are required for success in a career or postsecondary education in the 21st century, and that there has been little or no consideration of such aspects in measuring the results that are essential to graduate students today (Larson & Miller (2011). This might be implied that traditional metrics such as attendance, graduation, and college matriculation are no longer sufficient indicators of student achievement after graduation. Thus, higher education must be designed, organized, and managed with a relentless focus on the results that matter in the 21st century.

In recent years, MOOCs has been attracted millions of learners around the world, through various MOOC providers such as edX, Coursera, and Udacity. MOOC facilitates millions of learners to enroll courses form reputed universities around the world such as Harvard University, Stanford University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University California at Berkeley (UCB) etc. In this study, therefore, aimed on investigating the needs of MOOCs based on business students at TNI in order to generate the needs factors of MOOC courses to support teaching-learning approach in the future.

2. Method

Population and Samples

Population of this study were 593 Business Japanese students in the first semester of 2017 academic year at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology.

Samples in this study were 60 Business Japanese students in the first semester of 2017 academic year derived through simple random sampling technique.

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Instrumentation

This study employed ethnographic research. This method is defined by Moll & Greenberg (1990) as "funds of knowledge". This means to identify significant categories of human experience up close and personal. Ethnography enhances and widens top down views and enriches the inquiry process, taps both bottom-up insights and perspectives of powerful policy-makers "at the top," and generates new analytic insights by engaging in interactive, team exploration of often subtle arenas of human difference and similarity.

Data collection

The research design was categorized into three phases as follows.

Phase 1) Collection of site documents and associated materials

Phase 1) Ethnographic interview with 60 business students

Phase 3) Analysis and synthesis of data derived from the interview

Data Analysis

The statistics used for analysing the data were frequency, percentage and content analysis.

3. Results

Phase 1: The results of demographic data

The analysis of the data from the students' questionnaire was presented in the first section deals with the demographic variables from the students' responses to Part 1 of the questionnaire in the following table.

Table 1: Table of the results of demographic data of respondents

Demographic data of respondents	n=60	Percentage
Gender		
1.1 Male	19	31.70
1.2 Female	41	68.30
Total	**60**	**100**
Academic Year		
2.1 1st Year	10	16.70
2.2 2nd Year	13	21.70
2.3 3rd Year	13	21.70
2.4 4th Year	24	40.00
Total	**60**	**100**

Demographic data of respondents	n=60	Percentage
Level of GPAX		
3.1 1.01-2.00	8	13.30
3.2 2.01-3.00	27	45.00
3.3 3.01-4.00	25	41.70
Total	**60**	**100**

The table showed that percentages of Business Japanese students in gender ranged from 31.70% for male students and 68.30% for female students. For academic year, the highest number was from the 4th year students, followed by the 2nd year students, the 3rd year students and the 1st year students (40.00%, 21.70%, 21.70% and 16.70% respectively). For level of GPAX, the highest level was from 2.01-3.00, followed by 3.01-4.00, and 1.01-2.00 (45.00%, 41.70%, and 13.30% respectively).

Phase 2: Needs of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on Business Japanese Students

There were 10 questions constructed from the framework of Massive Open Online Courses. The findings were illustrated as follows:

Question 1 *What is your motivation to learn on MOOCs?*
The majority of the students stated that MOOCs were useful and helpful in a long term as the students were able to gain knowledge on their own. Some of the students believed that MOOCs enabled them to increase the knowledge that they could not learn in the class room. However, the minority of the students contended that to study with the teachers was the best way.

Question 2 *What are your current course needs?*
The students' answers were diverse. The majority of the participants requested on the courses of English and Japanese conversation as these courses enhanced them to achieve in learning at TNI. Some of the participants indicated that business knowledge were highly needs. Some required the courses on Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) Preparation and TOEIC Preparation because all third year TNI students have to take these kinds of tests before taking Cooperative Education. Some highlighted that History, Industrial sector and Translation Courses were significant. Few students mentioned that they needed knowledge of other languages such as German, Chinese and Spanish. Few students, however, believed that Singing, Fashion, Drawing and Comic/Illustration Design were interesting to learn.

Question 3 *What are your professional course needs?*
The highest number of the students on professional course answered that they needed Presentation skills and English and Japanese languages for career. Then, it was followed by Translation and Interpretation skills. Fewer students indicated they needed to learn business contexts such as Human Resource, Stock Exchange and Investment. The rests were Illustration Design and psychology.

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Question 4 *What kind of the MOOCs pattern that attracts you most?*

The majority of the students needed Talk Show because most of them thought that this style was not boring. Some students noted that Animation would support their interest. Role Play and Lecture gained the same amount of the students' answers. For the Role Play, the students were able to see the situations set from the real circumstances and language use. For Lecture, some students commented that they were familiar with this style of teaching. Few students needed the story telling, this style was less formal when comparing with other styles, so the students could get the knowledge paralleled with entertainment.

Question 5 *How can MOOCs apply with a traditional classroom?*

The majority of the students thought that MOOCs should be created as online lessons to support a normal classroom. Therefore, they were able to repeat the lessons by themselves anytime. This also could help them review the lessons to be more understanding. Some students requested online assignment to re-check the knowledge they gained from a normal classroom. However, few students contended that the content of MOOCs should not relate with the content in a normal classroom.

Question 6 *How can MOOCs facilitate on language learning?*

The majority of the students advocated that MOOCs should facilitate on their speaking skills when they learned languages. Also, MOOCs could uplift their understanding on how to use languages effectively. Some students believed that they could practice their language repeatedly through MOOCs. Few students noted that MOOCs could help them practice varieties of vocabulary.

Question 7 *According to the following lists, which do you prefer most? Why?*

The majority of the students preferred to pay for the courses and receive a certificate. They highlighted that this would be the best way to motivate the students to take to courses. Moreover, they were able to use this certificate when they applied for a job. Some students requested the free courses because they could took a wide range of lessons without payment. Some preferred to pay and get credits so they did not need to come for the class. The minority of the students stated as follows: free course plus certificate and discount for TNI students.

Question 8 *In the future, do you think MOOCs can replace a traditional classroom?*

The majority of the students could not replace a normal classroom as they required the interaction from teachers and friends. The students, moreover, was trained to be discipline, punctual and responsible. Half of the students answered that a normal classroom could be replaced by MOOCs because the students could learn by themselves anywhere and anytime. Few students, however, opposed that mixing between a normal classroom and MOOCs were the best way to get the knowledge.

Question 9 *What is the best way to evaluate your knowledge after learning on MOOCs?*

Although MOOCs were the online courses, the results of interview revealed that the paper test was the most suitable method to evaluate the students' knowledge. According to the students' point of view, the paper test was more reliable than the online test.

Question 10 *What are factors that impede you from learning on MOOCs?*

The speed of the internet was the highest concern factor from the students. The problem of internet accessibility would result on the stability of learning through MOOCs. Furthermore, the students' responsibility was one of the vital issues because they could distract from the courses easily by social networking or laziness.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Recently, Technological innovation is playing a significant role on human lives. The challenge for higher educational system, therefore, is to learn from these innovations and to incorporate what is new and helpful. This means the teachers are required to adopt a traditional teaching system with the integration of modern teaching techniques for the students' highest achievement. Massive Open Online Courses, hence, are a recent trend in education.

The findings of this study were foundation information for creating MOOCs for TNI students to suit with their needs and requirements. The ultimate goals of this research were to generate the knowledge both inside and outside classroom through a new type of learning platform.

Other related problems such as poor Internet connectivity, lack of knowledge about MOOCs, and level of learning potential are considered in this study. The role of MOOCs cannot be neglected in the future, especially their potential to reach millions of learners around the world. It is important to analyze the effectiveness from learners than providers' perspective. MOOCs must focus on attracting more students by providing better tools for learning rather than simply as repositories of high-quality multimedia materials online, then only the effort of MOOCs providers will be fruitful.

In Anderson et al. (2014), researchers identified five styles of engagement in MOOC: Viewers, Solvers, All-rounders, Collectors, and Bystanders. Irrespective of all these high-quality course materials available freely to students through MOOC, a number of negative trends are growing among learners.

1) Learners are increasingly focusing on collecting and storing materials as much they can without using it.

2) Learners are not guided properly to identify how many materials are needed, useful, and required at their level to complete the course successfully.

3) Learners are increasingly interested in audio, video, and Power-Point (PPT) materials than simply textbook (or text) materials.

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4) The face-to-face meeting with fellow-learners and problem solving chances along other peers are diminishing, as most of them depend on discussion forums for asking and answering questions.

5. Acknowledgements

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