Challenges related to MOOCs

MOOC stands for massive open online courses which represent a new paradigm in online education. MOOC relies on open educational resources to deliver educational content to the users online. It's a tool primarily adapted to learners' requirements so that they can learn at their own pace, place, and time. Many educational institutions and universities have started offering online courses in the form of MOOC through which they can not only reach out to their distance students but the rest of the audience from across the globe as well. This makes MOOC an ideal choice for many students around the world to benefit from the courses offered by the top universities. Many universities provide MOOCs via their websites.

There are also numerous eLearning platforms which provide MOOCs from different universities and companies. These includes Coursera[1], edx[2], Khan Academy[3], Udacity[4], FutureLearn[5], Udemy[6], etc., to name a few. They cover courses from various subjects and disciplines.

Even though MOOCs are becoming an integral part of the educational institutions and are widely adopted by many higher education settings, they still face challenges when it comes to retaining students as compared to onsite students. Many factors contribute to it but they can broadly be categorized into two: (a) student-related factors and (b) MOOC-related factors. Student-related factors include lack of student's motivation [Yuan & Bowel, 2013], lack of time [Belanger & Thornton, 2013], insufficient background knowledge and skills etc. On the other hand, the MOOC-related factors include course design including course content [Hone & Said, 2016], feeling of isolation and lack of interactivity within MOOC, hidden costs [Khalil & Ebner, 2014] etc. A lot of research is therefore going into how to address these issues.

Fisnik et al. evaluated learner experience with MOOCs in mobile and desktop learning environment. Their findings showed that most students were comfortable using MOOCs on desktop rather than handheld devices [Dalipi et al., 2017]. They further provided valuable insight into why there is a huge number of dropouts in MOOCs and what are the major research challenges when it comes to retaining the students [Dalipi et al., 2018]

Reference:

[1] Yuan, L., Powell, S., & CETIS, J. (2013). MOOCs and open education: Implications for higher education.

[2] Belanger, Y., & Thornton, J. (2013). Bioelectricity: A quantitative approach Duke University's first MOOC.

[1] https://www.coursera.org
[2] https://www.edx.org
[3] https://www.khanacademy.org
[4] https://www.udacity.com
[5] http://futurelearn.com
[6] https://www.udemy.com

[3] Hone, K. S., & El Said, G. R. (2016). Exploring the factors affecting MOOC retention: A survey study. Computers & Education, 98, 157-168.

[4] Khalil, H. and Ebner, H. (2014). MOOCs Completion Rates and Possible Methods to Improve Retention - A Literature Review. In Proceedings of World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications, pp. 1236-1244.

[5] Dalipi, F., Imran, A. S., Idrizi, F., & Aliu, H. (2017). An analysis of learner experience with MOOCs in mobile and desktop learning environment. In Advances in human factors, business management, training and education (pp. 393-402). Springer, Cham.

[6] Dalipi, F., Imran, A. S., & Kastrati, Z. (2018, April). MOOC dropout prediction using machine learning techniques: Review and research challenges. In 2018 IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference (EDUCON) (pp. 1007-1014). IEEE.