Chapter 3

MOOCs in TVET Sectors of Developing Countries: Benefits, Possibilities, and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses about the recent innovation in the area of educational technology, which is widely known as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Very few studies in the existing literature elaborated about the MOOCs in the developed countries, where the focus was on mainly asserting the nature of MOOCs platform and its possibilities. However, very less attention has been observed in relation to incorporate MOOCs in TVET sectors of developing countries. In order to fill this gap, this chapter has four main areas to discuss: provides general features of MOOCs platform; identifies benefits of incorporating MOOCs; presents emerging possibilities of using MOOCs; and identifies the challenges confronting TVET sectors for integrating MOOCs in any developing country. In order to improve the present constraints, this chapter further provides suggestions and recommendations that are useful for TVET stakeholders for formulating policies in relation to MOOCs.

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1. BACKGROUND

Technological advancements with the growing demands and its rapid adoption have delivered real benefits to all sectors of global economy. In relation to education sectors, these demands are continually increasing and therefore, a large number of developments and emerging technology are becoming available for integrating into education sectors. Specifically, learning technology in education context provides efficiency in delivery of educational services to students, institutions and teachers (van Uden, Ritzen, & Pieters, 2014). For instance, technology in education has broader purposes of: meeting the needs of students, teachers and institutions; solving educational problems; and offering diverse learning experiences, which are not possible offering other than using technology (Beldarrain, 2006; Laurillard, 2013). Very recently, one significant use of technology in education is Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), which is gradually becoming eminence in many developed countries.

Few recent studies have outlined detailed analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of the MOOCs in tertiary education (Attis, Koprofske, & Miller, 2012; Dalipi, Yayilgan, Imran, & Kastrati, 2016; Gaebel, 2014; Schuwer et al., 2015; Shrivastava & Guiney, 2014). The emergence and rapid growth of MOOCs has brought about various possibilities in the education sectors (Billington & Fronmueller, 2013; Yuan & Powell, 2013). Watson et al. (2016) states that MOOCs have gained increasing attention by making tertiary education more accessible to a global audience through a combination of online learning and open education resources (OER). The MOOCs provide a flexible pathway that is relatively very low cost and in most cases no cost at all. Through this a large number of population can access education from anywhere at any time. In this context, Kaplan and Haenlein (2016) and Lawton and Katsomitros (2012) inform that the integration of MOOCs in any education sector has the potential to improve collaboration and innovations through use of wide range of information that can easily be accessed by mass populations. Additionally, MOOCs provide easy and flexible access of OER, which consequently help to promote social inclusion. Besides, MOOCs platform using OER, provide lot of benefits for enhancing knowledge and skills for mass population. For instance, Ebner et al. (2017) point out benefits of using OER in education (P. 207):

• OER offers a wide range of subjects and topics to choose from and to allow for more flexibility in choosing material for teaching and learning.
• OER influences the educational value of resources by providing teachers personal feedback, lessons learned and suggestions for improvements.
• OER facilitates learning communities, such as groups of teachers and learners, with easy-to-use tools to set up collaborative learning environments.
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