



MOOCs in China: A Review of Literature, 2012–2016

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Introduction

- The development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) is “an innovation with great potential to widen participation and promote lifelong learning”, and “an opportunity to promote higher education opportunities more generally” (QAA, 2014).
- Being a heated topic, MOOC brings an explosive increase in quantity of papers related to this topic. However, comprehensive and systematic reviews on MOOC studies are rare and not up-to-date (see Liyanagunawardena et al., 2013; Kennedy, 2014).
- By the means of literature analysis, this paper attempts to depict a picture of current situation of MOOC in China and present a systematic analysis of the situation and trend of Chinese MOOC studies.

Background

- 2012: Stanford, Harvard and MIT - Coursera, edX and Udacity
- 2016: *Coursera* 1,814 courses and 1,312, 000 subscribers,
edX 1,053 courses and 254, 000 subscribers,
Udacity 20 courses and 5, 000 subscribers
- In China, Peking University, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Fudan University etc. affiliated with Coursera;
- Tsinghua University, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology etc. cooperated with edX.
- Tsinghua University even set up the first Chinese MOOC platform named XuetangX, which has 313 courses and 208, 000 subscribers(2016).
- *Setting "MOOC" as keyword and searching in CNKI.net, it can be found that related studies emerged in 2012 (3 articles). In the following three years, the number of papers are respectively 125, 826 and 1,786.*

Methods

- Sampling criteria:
 - CSSCI journals;
 - keywords “MOOC” + “Open education” + “Distance education”
- First round: quality academic journals about education, such as Distance Education in China, Modern Educational Technology, Open Education Research and etc.
 - 42 papers yielded in Aug. 2016
- Second round of search was extended to two databases using the same keyword – National Social Science Database and Wanfang Data besides education journals.
 - 10 records in quality journals ,included 5 articles in communication education

52 papers to form the data base

Results I - Characteristic of studies

- Settings-categories
 - Most of the paper include “Introductory”- NO this category in analysis
 - Our research focused on the other characteristics of study, such as the perspectives of the users and/ or providers and technology
 - “Case studies” (n =14).
 - Of users, i.e., “learning experience”, (n = 14)
 - Of the providers side, i.e., “course building” (n= 9), and
 - Technology, the automatic evaluation of online learning (n = 2)
 - Some of the articles were assigned to more than one categories

Results I - Characteristic of studies

- Case studies
 - Coursera – to explore the blended learning mode based on MOOC
 - BOOC
 - Tsinghua University –the behavior of students and teachers from Tsinghua University
 - ...

Results I - Characteristic of studies

- Research and data type
 - 12: the quantitative method, 28 the qualitative and 4 involved with both of them.
 - No certain type of research method applied in the rest of 16 papers

Results II - Educational practices

- Participants
 - Learners:
 - High-educated but diversified in background;
 - Self-motivated and deep engagement;
 - Other reasons of dropout: difficulties in access of the web; culture and language gap; and etc.
 - Teachers and providers:
 - The development is rapid, but history is short and limited teachers comparative to the the large-scale enrollment expansion in recent years
 - Problems embedded in assessment system of the universities in China

Results II - Educational practices

- Interaction and communication:
 - Limited and at low level, without emotional communication
 - Lacks an effective mechanism to test the learning effects of the participants

Results II - Educational practices

- Course building:
 - The analysis reveals that a successful MOOC platform should incorporate the following elements: a complete course structure, high-caliber teaching providers, timely feedbacks, mature guiding theories, correct assessment of learning results.
 - The core learning mechanisms that MOOC possesses include effectiveness of online learning, fine learning, interaction and cooperation between learners, and complex system of self-organization

Discussions and Conclusion

- This study was conducted four years after MOOC swept over in China.
- The volume of research is limited, restricting our understanding of MOOC.
- Most of the researches focus on the learner perspective and case studies for limited empirical evidence
- Possible cultural tension embedded in MOOC, language gaps and limited teaching resources
- With MOOC, users can study online and get access to top universities in the world whenever and wherever they can. This has made it ideal for open education without national boundaries and skin color.



The End

Thanks for your attention!