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A Systematic Review on Engagement, Motivation, and Performance in MOOCs During the Post-Pandemic Time

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ABSTRACT

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2019, pandemic prevention and control has gradually become normal, and internet-based massive open online courses (MOOCs) have become widely available. Aiming to give an insight into learner engagement, motivation, and learning performance in MOOCs in the post-pandemic time, this study reviewed 52 articles through VOSviewer clustering and preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. It is concluded that learners' engagement in MOOCs is restricted by their own management strategy and psychological factors; in addition, learners in MOOCs are motivated by internal or external factors, thus making different responses; lastly, the study finds that in addition to engagement and motivation, the technical conditions of online learning can also affect learning performance to a large or small extent. It is expected that this study can provide reference for the future study into these aspects in MOOCs, especially in the post-pandemic time.

KEYWORDS

Engagement, MOOCs, Motivation, Performance

INTRODUCTION

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, global higher education has undergone significant changes since its outbreak in 2019. In turn, various sectors have responded to the virus prevention policy of staying at home, which has resulted in most educational institutions worldwide shutting down since March 2020 (Jiang et al., 2021). Recognizing this, the local Ministry of Education has prioritized the enhancement of online education resources and the widespread utilization of various online education platforms (Iosif et al., 2021). As a result, numerous universities have turned to massive open

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online courses (MOOCs) to aid in ensuring the timely completion of teaching tasks. Consequently, technology-oriented online learning platforms have amassed immense popularity and continue to experience significant growth even in the post-epidemic era.

MOOCs were first introduced by a distinguished university in the United States. These courses are rooted in the traditional approach of developing and publishing educational materials, implementing learning management systems, and integrating those systems with more open online resources. The emergence of MOOCs has made high-quality educational materials accessible to everyone who seeks self-improvement, enabling them to benefit from renowned courses taught by distinguished professors at reputable universities (Jordan, 2015). Consequently, MOOCs have the potential to reduce the existing gap in educational resources in colleges and promote educational equity. Currently, as the global pandemic persists, the use of MOOCs is on the rise, with more people and institutions making full use of them to strengthen and improve online courses (Chiu & Hew, 2018).

The present study follows a structured research design that entails thirteen distinct steps. Drawing upon the theoretical framework pertaining to the intricate relationship between engagement, motivation, and learning performance, the research proceeds with a series of meticulously executed procedures. These include formulating research questions, conducting a preliminary search, establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, designing a comprehensive search strategy, exploring relevant search databases, evaluating title and abstract screening, scrutinizing full-text documents, conducting a manual search, extracting and assessing data quality, performing literature analysis, conducting double data checking, and drafting the manuscript. The research team employed VOSviewer clustering to facilitate identification of research foci. To ensure the rigor of the literature review, the researchers drew upon the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines and conducted in-depth analysis of the selected articles.

With the increasing number of learners transitioning to MOOCs during and after the global pandemic, several researchers have investigated the implications of MOOCs in the field of education. In line with this trend, the present study aims to identify the key factors affecting learner achievement in MOOCs. Specifically, we seek to investigate the impact of various factors on learner engagement, motivation, and learning performance in MOOCs during the post-epidemic period.

Scholars contend that a positive correlation exists between motivation, engagement, and learning performance. As reported by de Barba, Kennedy, and Ainley (2016), students' motivation and participation regarding learning can significantly forecast their academic performance. Notably, the enhancement of student engagement and motivation can result in a considerable improvement in learning performance, as illustrated in Figure 1 (Brooker et al., 2018). Given that students in MOOCs-based learning lack supervision, they often discontinue their learning and fail to complete assigned tasks within the stipulated time frame. This diminished engagement can trigger lower motivation, and consequently, lower learning performance. Consequently, the exploration of these three variables is crucial in MOOCs-based learning.

Given the complex interplay among the three aforementioned variables, investigating them in greater detail is imperative. Motivated students are more likely to engage actively in MOOCs-based learning, adequately complete tasks sans the guidance of teachers or peers, and ultimately achieve success in their educational pursuits. Conversely, high-performing learners may become more motivated to participate in the learning experience unfettered from any constraints. With unfettered access to educational resources, learners can undertake self-regulated learning, a crucial factor for success in MOOCs-based learning settings. As such, it is paramount to address the intricate relationships between motivation, performance, and engagement to enhance MOOC-based learning outcomes (Yu et al., 2022). The research questions will focus on the factors that may influence learners' engagement, motivation, and performance in MOOCs in the post-epidemic time.

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