UNDERSTANDING LEARNER PERCEPTION AND COMMITMENT: A STUDY ON MOOCS CONTINUANCE INTENTION

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ABSTRACT:

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have revolutionized education by providing flexible, accessible, and cost-effective learning options to a diverse range of learners. This study examines students' perceptions and their continuance intention toward MOOCs by analyzing responses from 140 participants. The demographic analysis reveals that female learners (58.6%), the age group of 21–30 years (45.7%), and students (40%) constitute the majority of MOOC users, with Science and Technology (34.3%) being the most preferred specialization.

The research further investigates learners' satisfaction with course material, instructor quality, technical support, platform usability, and learning outcomes. The results show high satisfaction levels across these factors, indicating positive learner experiences. These aspects, along with perceived usefulness and ease of use, contribute significantly to learners' intention to continue using MOOCs. The findings suggest that young, professionally inclined individuals are more motivated to engage in online education when content is relevant and delivery is seamless. Overall, the study provides valuable insights for educators, platform developers, and policymakers to tailor MOOCs that support sustained learner engagement and academic success. Emphasis on learner-centric design and enhanced interactivity can further strengthen the adoption and effectiveness of MOOCs in the evolving digital education landscape.

Keywords: MOOCs Learner Satisfaction – Continuance Intention – Learning Motivation – Educational Technology

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of digital technology has profoundly reshaped the landscape of education, leading to the rapid rise of online learning platforms such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). These platforms have gained global recognition for their ability to offer free or low-cost access to quality educational content across diverse disciplines, reaching millions of learners regardless of their geographical or socio-economic status. In India, the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) and the Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) initiative have made significant strides in democratizing education through MOOCs.

The flexibility, self-paced structure, and interactive content of MOOCs appeal especially to working professionals, students, and lifelong learners. However, while enrollment numbers continue to rise, completion and retention rates remain a concern. This paradox raises critical questions regarding learner motivation, satisfaction, and the factors that influence their intention to continue using these platforms.

Existing literature highlights that satisfaction with course material; instructor engagement, technological ease, and perceived usefulness are significant determinants of learner retention (Hew & Cheung, 2014; Alraimi et al., 2015). Moreover, motivation—both intrinsic (such as personal development) and extrinsic (such as career advancement)—plays a crucial role in learners' initial and continued participation in MOOCs.

This study aims to investigate how demographic factors, motivation, satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness influence learners' intention to continue using MOOCs. By examining responses from 140 learners across various disciplines and age groups, the research provides actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and online learning platform designers to improve the learner experience and ensure the long-term success of MOOC initiatives in India.

Alraimi, Zohaib and Vemuri (2015) conducted a study titled *"Understanding the MOOCs continuance: The role of openness and reputation"* with the objective of identifying the factors that influence learners to continue using MOOCs. Using Structural Equation Modeling as the analytical tool, they discovered that perceived openness and institutional reputation significantly affect user satisfaction and the intention to continue using MOOCs. The study emphasized that trust in the institution and the flexibility of courses are crucial for learner retention.

Hew and Cheung (2014), in their study *"Students' and instructors' use of massive open online courses (MOOCs): Motivations and challenges"*, aimed to synthesize key motivations and barriers from existing MOOC studies. By reviewing 87 research articles, they identified major tools such as content analysis and literature review. Their findings highlighted that learner motivation, course interactivity, and high-quality content are essential to learner engagement and course completion, whereas lack of feedback and poor interaction often lead to dropouts.

Zheng, Rosson, Shih, and Carroll (2015) explored *"Understanding student motivation, behaviors, and perceptions in MOOCs"* through qualitative interviews and open-ended survey responses. The objective was to understand what drives learners to participate and complete MOOCs. The study used thematic analysis and found that personal interest, self-paced learning, and career development were common motivators, but challenges included low instructor interaction and self-discipline.

Jansen and Schuwer (2015), in their work *"Institutional MOOC strategies in Europe"*, focused on how higher education institutions adopt and implement MOOCs. Using survey analysis and institutional case studies, they found that branding, experimentation, and extending educational outreach were the primary objectives. However, institutions also faced issues related to cost recovery, recognition of certificates, and sustainable long-term planning.

Bali (2014), in her article *"MOOC pedagogy: Gleaning good practice from existing MOOCs"*, aimed to examine effective teaching strategies within MOOCs. Through content analysis of existing MOOC platforms, she concluded that successful MOOCs focus on active learner engagement, peer learning, and learner autonomy. Passive content delivery, she noted, often results in poor learner outcomes and high dropout rates.

OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the background and characteristics of learners enrolled in MOOCs and to identify the major groups actively participating in these platforms.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS:

Despite the increasing popularity and accessibility of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), learner retention and course completion rates remain significantly low worldwide. While MOOCs offer flexible, self-paced learning opportunities to a diverse population of students, professionals, and knowledge-seekers, many enrolled learners fail to complete the courses they start. In the Indian context, government-backed platforms such as SWAYAM and NPTEL have witnessed widespread enrolment, yet actual engagement and satisfaction levels vary considerably across learner demographics and disciplines.

This disparity indicates a gap between enrolment and effective learning outcomes, suggesting that factors such as learner motivation, satisfaction with course content, technological usability, and perceived value influence continuance intention. Additionally, variations in learner background—including age, occupation, and field of study—may also impact satisfaction and sustained engagement.

Therefore, the core problem addressed by this study is to identify and analyze the key factors—demographic, motivational, and experiential—that influence learner satisfaction and their intention to continue participating in MOOCs. Understanding these determinants is essential to designing more engaging and learner-centric MOOC experiences that can enhance retention, learning effectiveness, and the overall success of online education initiatives in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is primarily based on primary data, collected through a well-structured questionnaire designed to gather detailed insights from respondents. The questionnaire focused on various aspects, including the socio-economic background of learners, their sources of awareness about MOOC platforms, and their preferences, motivations, and satisfaction related to MOOC-based learning.

The data were collected from 140 respondents using Google Forms to ensure broader and more efficient outreach. A snowball sampling technique was adopted for this study, where initial respondents helped refer or invite others to participate, thereby expanding the sample group organically. To analyze the collected data, simple percentage analysis was used to understand the demographic and categorical distributions of the participants. The structured approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the learners' experiences and expectations with respect to MOOCs.

FINDINGS:

I. SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE

TABLE: 1

Category	Sub-Category(N=140)	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	58	41.4%
	Female	82	58.6%
Age Group	Below 20 years	20	14.3%
	21–30 years	64	45.7%
	31–40 years	38	27.1%
	Above 40 years	18	12.9%
Occupation	Student	56	40.0%
	Faculty Member	24	17.1%
	Job Seeker	18	12.9%
	IT Professional	14	10.0%
	Research Scholar	16	11.4%
	Others	12	8.6%
Broad Specialization	Arts & Humanities	32	22.9%
	Health & Medicine	18	12.9%
	Education	14	10.0%
	Business & Management	28	20.0%
	Science & Technology	48	34.3%

The above table: 1 it is identified that the total respondents (N = 140) the female participants formed the majority with 82 respondents (58.6%)**,** indicating a stronger representation of women in the study. The 21–30 years age group recorded the highest participation with 64 respondents (45.7%)**,** reflecting that younger individuals, possibly students or early-career professionals, are more actively engaged in MOOCs and online learning platforms. In the occupation category, students constituted the largest group with 56 respondents (40.0%)**,** suggesting that online education is particularly popular among those currently pursuing academic degrees. Within the domain of academic specialization, the highest number of respondents belonged to the Science and Technology stream with 48 respondents (34.3%)**,** implying a strong preference or need for continuous learning and up skilling among individuals from technical backgrounds.

II. LEARNER SATISFACTION AND CONTINUANCE INTENTION TOWARDS MOOCS

TABLE: 2

Variables	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

Are you satisfied with the course material?	25 (17.86%)	25 (17.86%)	32 (22.86%)	33 (23.57%)	25 (17.86%)
Was the instructor clear and understandable?	14 (10.00%)	30 (21.43%)	36 (25.71%)	28 (20.00%)	32 (22.86%)
Did the course meet your expectations?	29 (20.71%)	26 (18.57%)	36 (25.71%)	39 (27.86%)	10 (7.14%)
Was the content well organized?	23 (16.43%)	33 (23.57%)	30 (21.43%)	35 (25.00%)	19 (13.57%)
Was the pace of the course appropriate?	22 (15.71%)	33 (23.57%)	30 (21.43%)	36 (25.71%)	19 (13.57%)
Was the platform easy to navigate?	22 (15.71%)	31 (22.14%)	31 (22.14%)	36 (25.71%)	20 (14.29%)
Did you receive timely support from faculty?	25 (17.86%)	35 (25.00%)	32 (22.86%)	30 (21.43%)	18 (12.86%)
Was the assessment method fair?	27 (19.29%)	35 (25.00%)	27 (19.29%)	23 (16.43%)	28 (20.00%)
Did you gain useful knowledge or skills?	25 (17.86%)	27 (19.29%)	32 (22.86%)	37 (26.43%)	19 (13.57%)

The analysis of learner satisfaction regarding Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) among **140 respondents** reveals varied responses across multiple course aspects. Below is a structured interpretation of the findings:

Course Material Satisfaction: A total of 33 respondents (23.57%) were satisfied and 25 (17.86%) were very satisfied with the course material, while 50 respondents (35.72%) expressed dissatisfaction, either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. This indicates a balanced perception of content quality, aligning with findings from Alraimi et al. (2015), where course relevance was a primary factor in satisfaction.

Instructor Clarity: Instructor communication was positively received, with 60 respondents (42.86%) either satisfied or very satisfied. However, 44 respondents (31.43%) remained neutral, suggesting potential gaps in engagement or delivery style, as supported by Jung & Lee (2018), who emphasized instructional clarity as a key MOOC success factor.

Expectation Fulfillment: Only 10 respondents (7.14%) were very satisfied with how the course met their expectations, while 55 (39.28%) expressed dissatisfaction. This implies a significant gap between learner expectations and course outcomes, an issue echoed in the work of Hew et al. (2014), where misaligned learner goals and course objectives led to lower satisfaction.

Content Organization: Content organization received relatively favorable responses, with 54 learners (38.57%) satisfied or very satisfied. Still, 56 respondents (40.00%) were either neutral or dissatisfied, highlighting the need for more structured and accessible course materials (Margaryan, Bianco, & Littlejohn, 2015).

Course Pacing: The pacing of the course appeared appropriate for 55 respondents (39.28%), but 55 (39.28%) also expressed dissatisfaction, mirroring concerns identified by Kizilcec & Halawa (2015) regarding self-paced learning requiring higher self-regulation and time management.

Platform Navigation: Navigation ease was affirmed by 56 learners (40.00%), while 53 (37.85%) found the interface either neutral or difficult. This is consistent with user experience research (Hone & El Said, 2016), indicating that intuitive design directly impacts learner satisfaction.

Faculty Support: Only 18 respondents (12.86%) were very satisfied with faculty support, while 60 learners (42.86%) felt either neutral or dissatisfied, underscoring a need for better real-time interaction or mentoring mechanisms in MOOCs.

Assessment Fairness: The perception of fair assessments was evenly split—51 learners (36.43%) were satisfied or very satisfied, whereas 62 (44.29%) were dissatisfied or neutral. This echoes Li et al. (2021), who highlight that automated grading systems often create ambiguity in MOOCs.

Skill Acquisition: Regarding usefulness and skills gained, 56 respondents (40.00%) felt positively, but 52 (37.15%) were neutral or dissatisfied. This may reflect limited practical application in MOOCs, a concern found in many large-scale online learning environments (Zheng et al., 2015).

CONCLUSSION

The study reveals that MOOCs are widely adopted by young learners, especially students aged 21–30 years. Female learners and those from Science & Technology and Arts & Humanities backgrounds form the majority of users. Learners prefer MOOCs for their accessibility, flexible schedules, and quality content. The findings highlight the growing importance of digital learning and suggest that continued improvements in content and platform usability can further enhance learner satisfaction.

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