

Democratizing Education or Failed Innovation: The Current and Future State of MOOCs (Poster)

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חינוך דמוקרטי או חדשנות כושלת? המצב הנוכחי והעתידי של קורסי MOOC (פוסטר)

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Abstract

Technological change in the higher education and distance learning market is clearly a complex issue facing multiple constituencies. Spanning the last decade, Internet technologies have amplified the options for distance education and online learning, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) emerged as a disruptive, yet potential alternative to traditional educational offerings. Key impact groups consist of students, instructors, learning-resource publishers, universities, employers, and workforce recruiters, among others. Each stakeholder group either has been, or will be, impacted from the growing trend of open educational learning media, such as MOOCs. Thus, this research aims to provide a succinct analysis of empirical research supporting hiring managers' preference for traditionally-educated job candidates as compared to other forms of learning, and a discussion and proposal for a new role for MOOCs in response to the growing skills and labor gap reported throughout the western world. Quantitative data were gathered from a representative sample of over 200 American hiring managers through an externally-validated online survey. Statistical analysis found significance for both of the primary research questions indicating 1: that, while employers prefer traditionally-educated applicants for new jobs, there are fewer educational drawbacks for current employees using MOOCs and non-traditional education attainment for promotion or career advancement; and 2: employers' exposure to online education was also significant in their perceptions of MOOC-educated job applicants, while all other mediating demographic variables were not statistically significant. Central to this paper's importance is the influence that MOOCs will have on future generations of learners, job-seekers, and employers in the workforce. While losing momentum in the traditional higher education marketplace, MOOCs repositioning as a viable alternative to organizational training and development needs may be the best path forward. Findings from this research, along with extant literature, points to MOOCs as lacking when compared to traditional education attainment for new job-seekers yet having the educational potential to increase skilled labor in many workforce sectors while filling the short-term,

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technology-specific training gap faced by employers with respect to their current workforce.

Keywords: Online education, MOOCs, Communication, Training.

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