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The MOOCs and Instructors vs Learners - A Perception Comparative Study in Indian Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The paper will compare the perceptions of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) across Indian higher education pupils and instructors. We examine convergence and divergence in MOOC effectiveness, benefits, and obstacles using survey results from 413 MOOC learners and 44 instructors. Quantitative data and thematic analysis show that learners and instructors like MOOCs for their flexibility and ability to develop skills, while instructors like them for their ability to reach more people and grow professionally. Both groups emphasise the importance of involvement and interactivity to a favourable MOOC experience and support inclusive and accessible course design. However, teachers are more aware of MOOCs' drawbacks—high dropout rates, little hands-on instruction, and low awareness among certain student groups—which our sample of active MOOC users did not prioritise. Despite these small differences, statistical tests confirmed that the general attitude towards MOOC efficacy does not vary much on the group of learners and instructors. Instead, a complimentary picture was established, and teachers' critical comments about areas for improvement matched learners' worries and expectations. The article situates the findings within teacher and student attitudes towards online learning literature. It concludes with suggestions to capitalise on teacher-learner convergence by reacting to instructor difficulties (such as increasing engagement and awareness) to improve learners' satisfaction and MOOC performance. The overall notion is that educators and students in India's shifting MOOC ecosystem believe in MOOCs' promise, which provides a favourable platform for future engagement and improves online education.

Keywords: MOOCs; Instructor Perceptions; Learner Perceptions; Online Learning; Higher Education; Engagement; India.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, massive open online courses (MOOCs) have become a major part of higher education, sparking discussion about their purpose and usefulness. Since MOOCs are now a regular part of education, students' and instructors' perspectives are important. Students, or learners, who attend MOOCs will evaluate their progress through their experiences and results. MOOC teacher designers and instructors create those experiences through pedagogical and technological choices. In conventional learning, the mismatch (or congruence) between student and teacher perceptions may affect learning. This phenomenon is also true for MOOCs: when lecturers and students have different expectations or assessments, course success suffers. However, mutual understanding and feedback loops between the 2 groups would improve MOOC design and acceptance. This paper compares MOOC learners' and instructors' perceptions in Indian higher education to uncover their similarities and differences.

The Indian setting is intriguing. One of the largest higher education systems in the world with a diversified and digitally growing population, India uses MOOCs to expand education reach and quality. Government programmes like SWAYAM have inspired university faculty to create MOOCs and students to use them (NEP, 2020). By the mid-2020s, thousands of Indian students and instructors had taken MOOCs. Prior to this study, anecdotal data suggested that students were generally happy about access to courses outside their universities and that MOOCs helped teachers expand their teaching reach. There has been little systematic comparison of their opinions. Kundu and Bej (2020) were among the few to poll Indian students and teachers about MOOCs and discovered that interest was high but completion rates and direct involvement were low. They advised studying how teacher and student views affect MOOC acceptance and efficacy. This research will address that need by providing a new, post-pandemic perspective with a large sample and discussing the key perceptions of MOOCs: their value, how they engage and learn, and what issues each group raised.

Research is guided by this question: Did Indian MOOC instructors and students agree or disagree on MOOC pros and cons? Answering the question above has major practical implications. Instructors may think MOOCs are fantastic for outreach and professional prominence, while students may wish to develop personal skills, requiring course design compromise. MOOCs can be innovative if instructors worry about the lack of handson aspects but learners find them engaging. Perception gaps may disclose communication or redesign changes, whereas concordant perception may boost MOOC acceptability and satisfaction. So, the paper compares numeric ratings and views and their MOOC development consequences.

Popular trends will be briefly described below. Studies show that students like MOOCs for their flexibility and course options and are satisfied when they achieve their career or academic goals (Ngo et al., 2023). However, students worry about MOOCs' instructor absence and alienation (Hew and Cheung, 2014). Students think MOOCs would help them innovate and reach more students, but they worry about scalability, engagement, and formalisation. Minosky et al. (2022) found that COVID-19 encouraged professors and students to use MOOCs more, which improved their views and appreciation. However, faculty prioritised quality and student credits. Given such deep insights, This study article will provide a timely, evidence-based review of instructors' and learners' opinions and analyse their implications for MOOC practice in India and other countries.

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This article compares how higher education MOOC learners and instructors see MOOC effectiveness and purpose. Researchers hope to contribute to a more collaborative understanding that will affect MOOC design, training, and policy, allowing these critical stakeholders to work together instead of against each other. The second section details This survey-based study's literature and methodology. The researcher next presents comparative data, implications for MOOC alignment with stakeholder expectations, and a conclusion with recommendations to maximise learner-instructor synergy in online education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

With the rise of MOOCs, scholars have examined student and educator perceptions, usually independently. The comparison will be done directly using the literature synthesis for both categories.

Learner MOOC opinions: Learners were excited about free courses at respectable schools in the first MOOC research, from 2013 to 2015. Finer viewpoints emerged with time. Several studies indicate that MOOCs provide students with the flexibility and autonomy they desire. Ngo et al. (2023) found that students liked studying at their own speed and having access to a wide range of topics not available in their local universities. MOOCs help students improve their resumes and skills, which is practical (Chatterjee and Nath, 2020). Meet et al. (2022) found that Indian students liked MOOCs and thought they helped them learn skills and improve employability.

However, student feedback is not blind. One concern is the lack of engagement and personal direction. MOOCs differ from traditional classes because they might lack a visible lecturer. Hew and Cheung (2014) found that MOOC students stressed isolation and a lack of real-time feedback. Students like the material but can't ask questions or obtain answers quickly (Hew, 2016). Motivation and discipline are recurring themes. Kizilcec and Halawa (2015) noted that most students fail because they lack motivation; occasionally they say they cannot finish without grades or a teacher watching. Some courses have had high dropout rates (95%), because students did not receive enough help and interaction.

Lambert (2020), who explored whether MOOCs are equitable to disadvantaged learners, is relevant. It found that persistent learners are effective, but early problems (language, computer access) dissuade most prospective learners. However, researchers want participants. MOOC content was scored higher than traditional courses for knowledge acquisition by most study participants, according to Margaryan et al. (2015). They also suggested more active learning and better debate facilitation. The content and flexibility of MOOCs are well-received, but learners always want to be more engaged, have feedback, and be connected (such as with credit recognition) to their formal education.

Teachers and faculty have different perspectives on MOOCs. MOOC views Faculty and instructors view MOOCs differently. MOOCs are a new course delivery and outreach method for them. Many teachers were professionally satisfied with the possibility to teach thousands of individuals worldwide, which early adopters preached about (Bonk et al., 2015). In a qualitative study, Zheng et al. (2016) revealed that MOOC teachers were motivated by personal challenge, audience expansion,

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and institutional support. A recent journal study by Purkayastha and Sinha (2023) examined Indian faculty opinions on MOOC development. They found that instructors were motivated by improving their teaching and the institution's reputation. Many loved experimenting with new pedagogies and thought MOOCs gave them opportunities to grow professionally (producing learning films, exploring digital pedagogy) that traditional teaching couldn't.

However, teachers raise several concerns. An example is effort vs. return. Making videos, quizzes, edits, and other content for a high-quality MOOC takes time, which some academics believe does not benefit academic career progress (Jaworski et al., 2019). Fear also promotes academic rigour and scales participation. Live courses allow teachers to make immediate changes to questions and improvise, but MOOCs risk losing the human touch as thousands of students receive the same materials asynchronously (Evans and Myrick, 2015). Low completion rates have frustrated many MOOC instructors, who regard them as a sign of demotivated, uncommitted pupils (Hollands & Tirthali, 2014). Studies also indicate that MOOCs provide enormous datasets and feedback that teachers value, helping them improve their profession (Zheng et al., 2016).

Note that professors consider MOOCs important for education. They consider whether MOOCs will replace or enhance classroom learning, how to incorporate MOOCs for credit, and the legitimacy of MOOC diplomas. Minosky et al. (2022) discovered that while professors were becoming more open to MOOCs during the pandemic, they remained cautious about substituting face-to-face courses. Quality assurance is a theme. Jansen et al. (2017) wrote on MOOC quality frameworks, and faculty members agree that qualitative differences can affect student trust and learning. Most teachers, especially in Indian universities (Purkayastha and Sinha, 2023), see MOOCs as a way to reach more students and meet government requirements, but they want more engagement and clarification on how MOOCs will count towards their workload and how to keep students engaged.

Compare knowledge: Most studies do not explicitly compare student-instructor opinions. The fascinating Kundu and Bej (2020) study questioned Indian university students and teachers and found that both groups were pleased about MOOCs but had different key concerns. The majority of students expressed time management and material difficulty, while teachers reported policy lack of assistance and no credit transfer. Nath et al. (2020) found that faculty and students had modest awareness of MOOCs but were motivated by various factors: students by career ambitions and flexible learning, and faculty by professional progress and institutional pressure. Interestingly, both groups in that study acknowledged that MOOCs cannot completely replace traditional education, but they could potentially enhance it. This suggests that MOOCs are a useful supplement.

Another literature study: COVID-19 impacts. Perceptions shifted as the pandemic forced online life. Mishra and Singh (2020) report that teachers and students have become more receptive of online modes owing to necessity, which may indirectly improve their MOOC views. Minosky et al. (2022) compared student and instructor perceptions during COVID; specifically, both groups found MOOCs valuable for continuing education during closures, but faculty were more concerned with academic integrity and student self-learning. Students focused on platform usability and learning effectiveness, while teachers addressed long-term viability and integration.

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Engagement is a sign of shared feelings. Most studies emphasise learner and instructor engagement/interaction. Students want engaging information; teachers try to make it entertaining and think it's challenging. They acknowledge its importance. For instance, Ossiannilsson et al. (2017) employ quality culture as a MOOC learner viewpoint metric, suggesting that the better the quality and interaction, the more satisfied a student is. Teachers know that non-interactive MOOCs will lose pupils.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

This study used a cross-sectional survey to collect data from MOOC learners and instructors. The instructor target group included those who created or taught a MOOC in the past two years (2019–2021). The learner target population included Indians who have finished at least one MOOC in the past two years.

The researcher received 413 MOOC student and 44 instructor responses. The subjects were obtained using snowball and purposive sampling. The researcher emailed students at a few prominent universities that have pushed MOOCs and posted the survey link on MOOC-related platforms like Reddit and local Facebook study groups. The researcher wanted to include undergraduates, postgraduates, and working professionals attending MOOCs to update their skills from throughout India and their fields of study. The sample was 25 years old,

71% female, 29% male, and from 22 Indian states (mostly urban but 33% semi-urban/rural). The researcher contacted MOOC teachers who taught SWAYAM and other systems and had recommendations (snowball) to find more. The sample population included computer science, management, engineering, science, and humanities professors and lecturers. The sample population consisted of high-ranking IITs, central universities, and a tiny college. Since MOOC teachers are much fewer than learners, the sample of 44 professors is appropriate.

Google Forms were used for surveys, featuring student and instructor forms. Data was obtained throughout three months. The respondent offered electronic informed permission because it was voluntary and anonymous. The researcher told participants that it was a scientific project with no commercial interest and that individual responses would remain secret (only aggregate findings would be released) to improve answer accuracy.

Survey Instrument Design

The researcher created two surveys, one for learners and one for instructors, with parallel and group-specific items for direct comparison. Two education scholars reviewed and piloted the two instruments with 20 students and 4 instructors to clarify questions.

Learner Survey: This poll collected data on several factors: age, gender, education, major/occupation, and MOOC attendance. To get an environment/infrastructure response, the researcher asked where people find MOOCs most (home, college, etc.). General MOOC perception: a Likert-scale inquiry "MOOCs are a valuable learning experience, rated on a Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly

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disagree." Benefits and Motivation: multiple-choice questions regarding why they joined MOOCs (I required skills, it enhanced employment opportunities, I was interested, it was free, I wanted a credit, etc.). Researchers left options for various reasons. Perceived Effectiveness and Quality: a 5-point agreement scale with statements like, the quality of education in MOOCs is as good as that of my standard college courses, MOOCs are useful in learning practical skills, and I am satisfied with the overall quality of MOOC courses I have taken. Engagement and Interaction: "How interactive was the MOOC environment?" with alternatives of "very interactive," "moderate," "not very," and "not at all." The researcher asked if they lurked or participated in forums. Challenges and Concerns: whether MOOCs presented time, content, support, technical, or other issues. A yes/no question asked, "Have you ever abandoned a MOOC? Yes, a follow-up was conducted to determine the most significant reason for abandonment. - Comparison to Traditional Courses: to determine how people rank MOOCs in their learning, ask if they prefer MOOCs, classroom courses, or both. Open-ended: requests for MOOC experience and recommendation comments.

Instructor Survey: This was aimed to reflect most learner topics through the instructor's lens: The background information includes the instructor's discipline, their experience teaching MOOCs, the number of MOOCs they have produced or taught, and any online teaching training they have received. A general question about the effectiveness of MOOCs as learning platforms, measured by Likert agreement, can influence participants' mood. Participants can select multiple reasons for teaching MOOCs, including reaching more students, experimenting with online teaching, responding to institutional needs or urging, having individual interest in technology, and seeking professional recognition. This indicator shows instructor motivation. Perceived Effectiveness and Quality: MOOCs can meet traditional course learning outcomes, my MOOC has high quality content, and students can learn well using MOOCs. They were also rated based on MOOC teaching satisfaction. Engagement and Interaction: whether they used forums, live sessions, and assignments to engage students and whether they felt engaged. How challenging is it to keep students engaged in a MOOC versus a classroom? Challenges and Concerns: a list of probable challenges was given (they could choose all and indicate the greatest ones). These were content creation workload, absence of face-to-face interaction, inability to easily give feedback/assessment, technical problems (platform problems or student technological problems), poor completion rates, lack of student awareness concerning MOOCs and that MOOC teaching is not rewarded by institutions. The researcher additionally questioned whether they would repeat teaching a MOOC (yes/no) to explore the issue of how the obstacles to such a decision would influence their decision making. Student views: enquiries about student experiences, such as, 'My MOOC students seemed to love the course; however, some had self-discipline issues.' What additional factors should be taken into account or suggested for future MOOCs?

The two surveys were consequently overlapping in terms of the themes, which included value of MOOCs, engagement, quality, and obstacles; however, each question depended on the role of the responder. Such a design enables us to compare responses to similar items. For instance, both asked about MOOC efficacy (learners: valuable learning experience; instructors: effective learning platforms) and engagement (learners: interactivity felt; instructors: interactivity realised).

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Data Analysis

The researcher analysed data quantitatively and qualitatively. The researcher quantitatively calculated learners' and instructors' descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations of scale responses, frequencies and percentages of categorical replies). Comparisons of key items followed. Independent-samples t-tests were run on Likert-scale statements, which were similar, to evaluate if learners and instructors had significant differences in mean agreement. Students agree that MOOCs are beneficial learning experiences, while teachers agree that they may be successful platforms. The tiny sample of teachers makes us wary of the variances in language, yet they are mostly positive. Some categorical comparisons were cross-tabulated. One can compare the most prevalent motivators or challenges among groups. - The researcher set $p = 0.05$. The researcher used the Welch t-test just in case due to uneven variances and varied sample sizes. Differences were measured by effect sizes (Cohen's d in t-tests).

The researcher also evaluated background correlations within each group. To determine internal consistency, ask learners how their overall happiness with MOOCs related to the number of MOOCs they took or dropped out of. Researchers compared instructors' MOOC effectiveness perceptions to their readiness to teach again. These do not compare, but they can be interpreted (as when teachers with lower course completion felt less positive).

Qualitative thematic coding was used on open-ended replies. Many made brief remarks. Researchers found themes including adaptability, interaction, instructor assessment concerns, and more. They contextualised and illustrated the quantitative findings. After identifying a substantial difference, qualitative quotes could clarify why teachers were more motivated by that item compared to an engagement item.

Researchers would combine these methods for a complete picture. The quantitative method shows alignment or large variance in some perceptions. These numbers can be explained qualitatively. There may not be a significant difference in the positive attitudes of both groups, as both exhibit high levels. However, instructions may indicate a significant difference in engagement difficulty. Both instructors' qualitative comments, such as 'It is difficult to know whether pupils are listening online' and 'learners may not be saying so', support that. Our introductory hypothesis was also tested: H0: Learners and instructors view MOOC efficacy similarly. The test was conducted using the previously mentioned generic attitude elements. The literature suggested that the perceptions might be genuine, indicating no difference or possibly more positive views from instructors. The results will show the test's result.

The researcher analysed directly similar perceptions, identified areas of congruence (where the groups agree or have comparable statistics), and discussed areas of incongruence (where the groups disagree or have statistically or meaningfully different responses) in relation to the aggregate evidence. Scales were reliable (Cronbach's alpha of perceptual claims was 0.82 with learners and 0.79 with instructors, indicating high internal consistency). All data were analysed with SPSS Version 26.

After describing each group's responses, researchers openly compare them to answer our primary study objectives.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General MOOC Attitude

This research survey indicated that students and teachers appreciated MOOCs. Both groups rated MOOCs highly for value/effective learning. Learners and instructors agreed that MOOCs are excellent learning platforms (4.36) and beneficial (4.23, mean between agree and strongly agree). A t-test ($t(70) \approx -1.02$, $p = .31$, n.s.) did not disprove our hypothesis that students and instructors appreciate MOOCs equally. In practice, 73% of students and 87% of teachers agree or strongly agree, indicating that most campers are positive. Other research, like Kundu and Bej (2020), revealed students and teachers like MOOCs.

It's interesting that professors were slightly more enthused about MOOC efficacy. We found no professors who agreed with the efficacy statement, several who were neutral, and six sceptical or ambivalent students. Due to self-selection bias, some learners may despise MOOCs, but others may find them valuable. The main point is that both groups view MOOCs as educational breakthroughs. Open-ended participant responses emphasised this positivity.

Some students said MOOCs transformed their lives or taught them a lot. Teachers said MOOCs are the future and allow them to reach more students than traditional courses. Qualitative feelings lead to quantitative perception matches. This data is positive for MOOC implementation because both key groups support popularising MOOCs. Different perspectives on value: The two groups value MOOCs, although their views vary by role. Personal education is MOOCs' main benefit. Our poll indicated that learners were most motivated by learning new skills (68), job progression or CV improvement (54), and personal interest or curiosity (23). These choices demonstrate that students value MOOCs for job advancement and skill development. According to Ngo et al. (2023), students valued MOOCs for skill development and flexibility. Teachers emphasise creativity and professional development. The top three reasons instructors designed MOOCs were professional development/enhancement of teaching skills (68%), worldwide or greater learner access (52%), and institutional reputation/requirement (18%). MOOCs' #1 ranking suggests teachers use them to innovate their teaching methods. Furthermore, 27% said developing a MOOC increased their recognition or collaboration opportunities. Purkayastha and Sinha (2023) found that Indian professors took MOOCs for career and humanitarian reasons.

Students see value in MOOCs as teaching them X, whereas teachers see it as expanding my teaching and reaching Y. These perspectives complement each other. One student said, "Using MOOCs, I have acquired data science skills, which have made me more employable." One instructor said her MOOC allowed her to explore new teaching resources, and she believed she became a better teacher.

The general attitude is consistent, but there are slight emphasis differences. This establishes a collaborative level: both sets of groups will be open to MOOCs, so efforts to refine or integrate them will be well-received by both parties. The rest of the findings will explore engagement, quality, and challenges to understand where perceptions align or differ.

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A Shared Value: Interaction

Learner attitude towards engagement: Engagement is an important aspect of MOOCs for learners. Researchers also questioned the learners about the level of interactivity in their MOOCs in our survey, in which 37.8% of them referred to their MOOC courses as very interactive, 47.4% described them as somewhat interactive, and the rest (approximately 15 percent) as not very and not at all interactive. Most of them were therefore more or less interactive, although it was evident that interactivity could be enhanced (one out of every six believed there was low interactivity). Furthermore, students were vocal regarding its meaning to them: most of them desired active discussion forums, prompt responses from the instructor, and active content. The most interesting findings were revealed by 78 percent of learners in our sample who reported discussion forums (or peer interactions) to be an extremely engaging aspect of MOOCs. Individuals who rated their course more interactive tended to respond with well-moderated forums, live question and answer, or interactive assignments as the cause. On the other end, students who alleged a lack of engagement tended to refer to unidirectional (only videos and quizzes, no community experience) delivery. These results are in line with the literature: Hew (2016) and other researchers have reported perceived interaction to be related to student satisfaction and persistence in MOOCs.

Efforts towards engagement by the instructors: Engagement is a challenge and priority on the part of the instructor. Another important result of our study was the finding that 61% of instructors found their top priority in designing the MOOC was to engage learners. They introduced several measures: 100% of instructors offered discussion forums, 45 percent of them offered the use of periodic live webinars or office hours, and approximately 30 percent of them offered gamified activities (badges, progress tracking) to motivate the learners. It is interesting to note that teachers appeared to be particularly conscious of the fact that interactivity is the key to success. One of the instructors remarked that she invested much effort into ensuring that her MOOC was interactive – polls, quizzes, forum prompts, etc. – because she was aware that such interaction is what prevents student dropout. This corresponds to the practices suggested in MOOC pedagogy studies (Zhu et al., 2020 recommend interactive activities and community formation to minimise losses).

There was a surprising pattern in the comparison of the groups on engagement: both groups considered engagement critical, and there was a high level of consensus. For instance, 89% of learners said MOOCs should be interactive to work, and 93% of instructors said the same, which is more or less absolute congruence. They also both noted inclusivity as an element of engagement.

The only slight distinction, however, was on the perception of the extent to which MOOCs succeed in attaining engagement presently. Teachers were more disposed to criticise the reality of interaction. As an illustration, in our findings, although the majority of learners believed that their MOOC was in some way interactive, many instructors believed that MOOCs in themselves still do not quite have the immediate feedback loops that a classroom provides. Approximately 56 per cent of teachers concurred with the assertion that providing practical or hands-on sessions in MOOCs is a significant challenge, which only a limited number of learners spontaneously stated (probably due to the fact that learners do not think about what could have been, but rather what has been given). Limits such as the researcher not being able to see the faces of students or getting confused in a MOOC and it being hard to make changes because of it were also mentioned by instructors as a demonstration of a conservative opinion that the amount of interactivity nowadays is not as rich as it should be.

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Quantitative dissimilarity on engagement difficulty: The researcher had a direct comparative item: teachers graded the challenge of keeping learners engaged in MOOCs compared to traditional classes, and learners graded the engagement of MOOCs compared to traditional classes. Ease In a massively overwhelming fashion (approximately 75 per cent), instructors experienced it more difficult to remain engaged during MOOCs than during in-person courses. Students provided a mixed reaction in terms of engagement: around 40% of them reported MOOCs to be less interesting than face-to-face learning, 30% of them reported them to be equally engaging, and 30% of them reported having a stronger engagement with them (frequently referring to the engagement with topic or multimedia as an advantage). This inconsistency speaks volumes – teachers are more negative with regard to levels of engagement than learners themselves. One reason could be that the instructors look at the large numbers of passive learners who do not speak up or even drop out (they see aggregate engagement numbers), but those who did respond are the active and potentially engaged learners. The silent majority who do not engage may not be reflected in the responses among learners, but a teacher knows them by completion statistics. In fact, one of them commented that only one out of every 10 was attending actively; that is disheartening in comparison to a course where I can have most of them engaged. At the same time, an active learner can say, 'I felt involved; I was in forums and had to do everything. I am not aware that many students did not do that.' This brings out a slight distinction, as teachers, with a macro perspective, are more mindful of non-engagement, whilst engaged students are judged by their engagement. It's clear that both parties value participation as the core of successful MOOCs, even though instructors may be more aware of existing levels. This has a positive effect: learners will value and support learning attempts to make the process more engaging through improved interactivity.

In conclusion, educators and students emphasise the importance of engagement and try to achieve it through engagement and interaction. The difference has to do with attitude to sufficiency: teachers are still somewhat unhappy with the interactivity of interactive MOOCs (with their inherent limitations), but students who persist are more or less content.

Benefits and Inspiration: Merging Goals

Reports on the benefits of learners: The benefits that learners get out of MOOCs in our sample are mainly about the acquisition of skills and the academic/career development. As stated, a big part of the learners (around 80 per cent) claimed that they acquired new skills or knowledge with the help of the MOOCs they have attended. The researcher also asked the learners to self-report on whether they had received any tangible outcome: 32% claimed to have achieved a certificate, which was useful in their CV; 15% stated having been offered a job interview or job opportunity at least partially as a result of MOOC learning; and numerous students said that their MOOC learning was helpful in their normal studies (such as better understanding of a subject or project). They are high recommendations of utility. Likewise, Sen and Kumar (2023) report the same results when Indian MOOC learners recounted how MOOCs enhanced their formal learning and self growth. In our research, 72 percent of the participants believed that the quality of education in MOOCs is high, and approximately the same number of participants thought MOOCs are a worthy addition to formal courses. This is against the perception that learners may view MOOCs as something insignificant or just a waste of curiosity, but instead, they tend to take them seriously as an educational process.

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Instructors' perceived benefits: Instructors perceive benefits on a slightly different plane with some overlap. They realise that learners are acquiring skills—100% of the instructors surveyed by us answered yes when asked if they thought their MOOC students were learning anything useful. Instructors have a wider professional network and sometimes a better reputation. Teachers also remarked that MOOCs allowed them to try new learning tools and methods; 25% said that teaching a MOOC made them a better teacher since it made them use student-focused and technology-focused strategies. This advantage may not directly benefit learners, but it will likely improve course design and maybe return to conventional courses, creating a virtuous cycle.

Mutual understanding in MOOCs purpose: Both parties seem to agree that MOOCs will be a substantial supplement to traditional education, not a wholesale substitute (at least in the medium term). In our research, 64% of learners said MOOCs should be part of university courses (e.g., as a credit or supplemental course), and approximately 18% had taken one. MOOCs can be given academic credit, but quality monitoring is needed, according to 82% of teachers. Patra et al. (2024) highlight a pattern of Indian universities gradually integrating MOOCs, which our responders capture. Our study's students and professors hoped MOOCs would enter higher education. For instance, 74% of students and 79% of instructors agreed that MOOCs will shape higher education. This near-unanimity suggests that both groups see MOOCs as a permanent tool to promote learning.

System perspective motivation alignment is another area of alignment. Learners want flexible, affordable, quality education, while educators want flexible, broad-based, quality instruction. MOOCs converge then. Motivation congruence produces synergy. One such correlation is learners' and teachers' interest in MOOCs. Students love being able to study with IIT, MIT, etc., teachers they would never have otherwise (one student commented, 'I took a course at MIT on edX, and my school would never have provided it'). Teachers love that they can teach students across India and the world (one stated it was fulfilling to teach 10,000 students in a MOOC—I felt like I contributed to society). MOOCs' worldwide (or national) reach is a shared value proposition. 23% of instructors named direct access to a worldwide audience as a privilege they love, while learners indirectly noted it when talking about learning with the greatest lecturers or a diverse class. According to Kizilcec et al. (2017), global MOOCs bring students from diverse backgrounds together, improving the experience. Our students stated discussing with international students was enriching.

Career and academic progress: Learners may be short-term (job, exam preparation, skills), but instructors should have a systemic perspective (innovation in education, culture of lifelong learning). However, these two saw MOOCs as a solution to the traditional system's unmet needs. Students find niche or high-level classes in MOOCs that their university does not have, and faculty members use MOOCs to teach a wider range of subjects in India (one professor said she created a MOOC to teach a subject not taught in Indian colleges). Learners want special opportunities, and teachers provide them.

Approximately 5% of our learner respondents completed a MOOC due to its credit requirement in their programme (still a small percentage, but a pattern) and 18%. of instructors said MOOCs support institutional goals like curricular integration. Though little, both signal integration's beginning steps, and both sides seem open to it. Students in open remarks often wanted their colleges to give MOOC courses more credit or recognition. Teachers also reported a decline in student or teacher recognition.

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Thus, one goal could be to promote a more integrated and credit-giving MOOC learning policy to benefit students academically and teachers financially.

As for rewards and motives, learners and instructors have different perspectives. Students want to learn, and professors want to share their knowledge and improve their teaching. MOOCs combine motives. Success helps each other (a successful MOOC and pleased students boost teacher happiness and reputation). Not all educational changes are teacher vs. student, but MOOCs (at least in perception) have a win-win situation. Our data show this synergy and suggest that MOOCs will improve when used cooperatively in higher education.

Problems: Subtle Differences

The general outlook and most priorities are similar, yet the concerns and problems each group highlights provide some of our most interesting comparisons.

The most prevalent hurdles stated by learners are time management/motivation and external help, which are MOOC issues. When posed the primary cause of leaving a MOOC (out of those who had dropped one), the number one answer was lack of time to continue with the course, which 33 per cent of those who dropped out indicated. This supports studies indicating most MOOC students enrol but don't finish due to other obligations or procrastination. The course was too hard or not what I expected (21%), there was a lack of engagement or feedback (12%), and there were technical challenges (12%). These data match Lambert (2020) and others: many dropouts cite time/motivation, then course design issues such as limited interaction. Not all dropouts are disappointed; some learners actively surf MOOCs. There were only 8-10% who withdrew because they got what they needed without completing it. However, the lack of extrinsic enforcement or time—essential to self-paced or voluntary MOOCs—is a problem for learners.

In our sample, learners face modest structural or resource constraints, while those who are completely hampered may not respond. Technical issues like internet connectivity were cited by 11% as a major obstacle, and English language or accent issues came up in some international MOOCs (a challenge but not a top ranking issue for most people). Some students complained about not being able to acquire simple solutions to queries, which left them stuck on difficult topics.

Instructors cited high dropout/low completion rates as their biggest challenge. Three-quarters of instructors said retaining students is difficult, and most said there is a huge drop-off after two weeks. Their concern: Do students not learn? Does it mention their course? It is discouraging that it is barely 5-10% complete; I worry if I am doing enough or if MOOCs are like that. Faculty agree that MOOC dropout rates are discouraging (Hollands & Tirthali, 2014). Another was the lack of face-to-face feedback. Instructors (56%) indicated the inability to provide immediate feedback or conduct practical sessions is a problem. They miss something in the teaching process when you cannot directly assist a student through a difficulty or tune in to his/her signs of bewilderment (Rodriguez, 2012). Technical and infrastructure issues: Surprisingly, half of instructors said digital literacy and connectivity gaps were MOOC difficulties. Instructors acknowledged that many students struggle with technology (platform or internet access). Teachers aren't just thinking about their instruction but also whether their pupils can access it. an issue that students notice when it affects them but

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instructors notice at the population level (i.e., some students dropping out due to technology incompetence). Awareness and adoption: 78% of instructors and potential learners cited a lack of awareness as a major MOOC operation difficulty. It concerns the MOOC movement, not individual courses. Instructors say many students are unaware of MOOCs or don't take them seriously. Nath et al. (2020) observed low knowledge in particular areas, which is similar to this teacher's concern. Students that responded knew they enrolled in MOOCs; therefore, they didn't mention awareness, but teachers worry about the untapped population that didn't show up. Recognition and policy concerns: About 30% of open-ended replies mentioned that MOOCs are not institutionally recognised or supported, which challenges some teachers. The effect is weakened when their university does not include MOOC teaching in performance appraisals or when students cannot use MOOC completion for academic credit. Teacher tutors are alert to system-wide challenges that are not classroom specific. Learners expressed anger at working hard on a MOOC but not receiving university credit unless they take a separate exam. Both acknowledge this problem, but policy-conscious educators may recognise it more. Different perspectives on obstacles: The biggest difference may be in personal and strategic views. Students describe how they can't complete because they're too busy or stuck and no one can help. Instructors mention how many students don't finish MOOCs due to lack of motivation and can't intervene, or how outsiders aren't starting because they're not informed or don't believe it. Since teachers analyse hundreds of people's data, their lens is more pattern-orientated. Some learners express frustration or disappointment (I wish the professor was more present in the forum, or it was hard to stay motivated alone), while instructors express concern or problem-solving challenges.

Difference data point: The researcher asked both groups about dropout perception. Although the researcher used it differently, 76% of learners reported dropping a MOOC, and instructors estimated 10% completion based on their classes. Both recognise dropout as widespread, but instructors were more likely to call it a major issue. The majority of instructors (60%) said that dropout is a major issue, but just 30% of students said it was a major issue for them (the remaining 40% ignored the topic). This suggests that teachers may worry more about learning rate than students. Many learners view MOOCs as à la carte and sample freely. Teachers used to classroom completion are frustrated by low rates. This mismatch may lead to different stories: teachers may view dropout as failure to attract students, while some students may view limited involvement as success. This helps professors see dropout less negatively and students realise that instructors are working to reduce dropout. Adversity management: What do they advise? Some MOOC students organise themselves by creating WhatsApp study groups to hold each other accountable, a grassroots incentive option. Some instructors alter courses to keep students' attention by shortening videos or adding quizzes. Both suggested mentors or small group conversations to promote personal touch. 35% of students stated they wanted a mentor or small group discussions, and a few teachers said they would too, given the resources. The convergence to a solution is impressive. It also follows Zhang et al. (2016), who say human facilitation improves MOOC results. Thus, learner and teacher ideas can be coordinated with available resources to overcome obstacles.

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In conclusion, both parties acknowledge the difficulties but have different views. This lack of time, feedback, and technology/language barrier affects learners personally. Teachers recognise both aggregate concerns, which indicate that many students are facing problems, and macro concerns related to awareness and credit. Positively, teachers and students are aware of each other's issues, such as students' lack of time/motivation and teachers' inability to reply to everyone. This knowledge will help us solve these issues together. Minor variances in focus (e.g., instructor awareness, learner personal motivation) may require institutions or platforms to intervene since they can only be handled by one instructor or student.

Aligned and Conflicting Views

Comparison results suggest that learners and instructors regard MOOCs similarly, with some minor differences related to lack of challenge and focus. Researchers found that both groups believe MOOCs are valuable and belong in education. Importantly, they shared a positive outlook. Our academics and students agree on MOOCs' potential, dispelling the myth that faculty are sceptical and students are excited. In an effective MOOC, students and instructors emphasise engagement (interactivity, inclusivity, etc.). It's fun and hard work—students participating and teachers creating opportunities. This reciprocal approach shows these reforms will benefit both sides. For instance, when an instructor adds more interactive aspects, students notice and enjoy them, creating a virtuous feedback cycle. MOOCs are seen as complements to formal education and tools for reach and equity. They talk about integrating and adding to traditional courses, not opposing them. This mutualistic (improves learning in everyone, accesses those outside the classroom) alignment of objectives generates a cooperative MOOC atmosphere. Instructors have a bird's-eye view of MOOCs and identify patterns (dropouts, usage metrics, student preparation) but also consider systemic issues (awareness, credit, institutional support). Personal experience—was I engaged? Did I learn? Could I manage my time? —is what learners observe. This implies that people convey challenges differently, which is not contradictory. As an example, teachers indicated that lack of awareness is a macro barrier and that informed learners will not discuss it. A handful did say that their friends had not heard of MOOCs, which supports the instructor perspective. No significant attitude differences: Notably, learners and instructors did not differ much. It does not mean that learners think MOOCs are good and professors think they're bad. Both have excellent quality potential, but educators dread variability. Perhaps students did not want additional MOOCs, and teachers did not think they were worth it. Each wants MOOCs preserved and improved. Statistically, the variations in engagement difficulty and dropout severity were level, not orientation.

What does MOOC success mean to you? Students mostly said learning something valuable or passing the course is a success for me. When instructors said it was going well, it was because many students finished the work and gave favourable comments. A learner cares about themselves, but an instructor cares about results and happiness. They are like two sides of a coin, not fighting. Teachers who boost enrolment and achievement will help more students succeed. If students are diligent and engaged (and succeed), instructors will see it in their metrics. In practice, both groups' success criteria are similar.

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Alignment implications: High perception alignment rates suggest broad support for MOOC enhancement projects. When a platform uses a mentorship system to increase participation, instructors benefit (less dropout, better results) and students benefit (more support, motivation). Both groups are likely to accept reform that tackles acknowledged difficulties, such as enhancing interactivity or rewarding MOOC completion.

The compensating perspective benefit: Our findings support the idea that teachers' cautious and planned approach enhances students' experience. Instructors provide critical discernment by being more outspoken about constraints and macro problems that, if resolved, would benefit learners. Teachers can also discover what works and what students value from positive and personal feedback (e.g., learners say discussion forums are so engaging that they're worth investing in).

To conclude the comparison, MOOC learners and instructors are perceived similarly. Instead, it is a strongly positive review with complementary viewpoints that paint a fuller picture of MOOCs' strengths and flaws. This overlap is good because it shows stakeholders are aligned on goals, which helps MOOCs succeed and improve. This harmony can be utilised, and actions taken to keep MOOCs in accordance with learners' expectations and teachers' abilities, but this time improve the MOOC experience in higher education.

CONCLUSION

The comparative study of Indian higher education MOOC learners and instructors found positive results: they usually agree on MOOCs. Both target groups see MOOCs as a helpful innovation that can augment traditional education by extending access to quality education. Both learners and instructors were motivated by MOOCs' flexibility and ability to study new material. Instructors liked the chance to reach a wide audience and be innovative in their teaching. Interestingly, both stakeholders were favourable about MOOCs' role and effectiveness. This hope underpins MOOC collaboration.

The proof also demonstrated that learners and instructors interpret MOOCs differently, resulting in moderate attention discrepancies. Staying motivated, gaining feedback, and overcoming technical or linguistic barriers are short-term, self-centred student fears. Instructors have higher systematic issues (how to entertain large audiences, deal with high attrition, and scale quality and credibility). These differences complement each other. Instructors' worries regarding MOOC constraints, such as the inability to deliver practical experiences or the potential of student disinterest, suggest improvements. Feedback on learners' interests and challenges will help them understand these concerns. These opinions agree that MOOCs are promising, but they need more effort to be effective. Interactivity and involvement came together. Instructors and students valued MOOC forums, quizzes, multimedia, and inclusivity. They desire more active help, communication, and connection. Both parties seem interested in enhancing involvement (live Q&A, mentorship, or better discussion facilitation). Instructors believe more involvement will improve retention and performance.

Students acknowledge that active learning is more fun and productive. This approach is known as win-win engagement management. Our results suggest that giving teachers technological or personnel resources to make courses more interactive and teaching them to use online pedagogies to engage students may boost student satisfaction and achievement, which the two groups want.

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Another crucial takeaway is that the two groups see MOOCs as a supplement to formal education. They see integration: many students want MOOCs to count towards degrees or professions, and educators and institutions are slowly recognising that. Instructors often use MOOCs as a complement to campus courses or for out-of-class students. In this scenario, the congruence suggests that key stakeholders would support policy measures like MOOC credit transfers or faculty MOOC teaching. According to our study, pupils will learn more from their efforts, and teachers will recognise that their work is having an official impact.

Differences in problems suggest where targeted action can bridge gaps. For instance, educators worry about MOOC legitimacy and student awareness. Universities and education authorities might raise awareness of MOOCs, especially in underprivileged areas, and explain how they can be used (to gain credit, acquire skills, etc.). Similarly, MOOC quality standards or support systems can be encouraged to reassure instructors and learners they are valid. Learners struggle with time management and self-motivation. Some alternatives include adding scaffolded timelines to MOOCs for pace or creating learner communities for peer support. Teachers may recognise such issues in students and be open to treatments like splitting courses into smaller portions or adding encouraging messages. Both groups are aware of the struggles of the other: learners know instructors have a lot of students, and instructors know learners have other issues, so any intervention that addresses these pain points should be supported.

Indian MOOC learners and instructors are partners in the move to use online education. They mainly agree on being optimistic and having goals, although they may imply different MOOC experiences. This correlation suggests that joint MOOC design and delivery can improve results. Most critically, both parties want MOOCs to succeed and improve, and they don't disagree on what's best. It involves content, free access, robust infrastructure, and meaningful results, as stated by learners and educators.

Stakeholders and policymakers should capitalise on this synergy. Online instructors can be professionally developed, MOOC platforms can be improved to facilitate interaction and accessibility, and institutional policies can include MOOCs with the understanding that the main users and creators are open and even enthusiastic about such improvements. Engaging learners and instructors in MOOC quality assurance (e.g., feedback surveys, co-designing activities, etc.) may be helpful because their collectivism provides a comprehensive perspective of the learning process.

This study disproves the faculty-student MOOC gap in the analysed environment and instead builds a picture of common ground and mutual support. Other MOOC issues will depend on using this beneficial alignment. Based on instructors' strategic concerns and learners' real-world input, MOOC providers and institutions can improve both parties' experiences to increase effectiveness and satisfaction. As students and instructors are now on board and in sync, MOOCs in higher education have a bright future as they work to make quality higher education accessible to all.

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