Massive open online courses (MOOCs) have been proven a significant impact on learners and their achievements. In this paper, because there is a need for more investigation about MOOCs, the researcher introduced two themes, which are completion rate in MOOCs and learners in MOOCs. Completion rates in MOOCs are low comparing to the enrolment rates, and moreover, the learners have various characteristics that affect their interactions with MOOCs. Hopefully, this paper has served to enrich some aspects of MOOCs and discuss the increasing of MOOCs value.

Keywords: MOOCs, completion rate, learners' characteristics, enrolment rate, online courses.

1. INTRODUCTION
Online learning is trending toward open sources especially in higher education (Saadatmand & Kumpulainen, 2014). Massive open online courses (MOOCs) are an open source and is known as an innovation of online learning (Ebben & Murphy, 2014).

This paper attempts to explore the students’ perceptions toward MOOCs. The purpose of this study is to identify the perceptions of MOOC learners. Moreover, due to the importance of knowing learners’ perspectives (Saadatmand & Kumpulainen, 2014), the researcher’s goal is to identify the lineaments of MOOC learners’ perceptions towards MOOCs.

The researcher found empirical peer reviewed studies in order to enrich this paper. ERIC, ERIC ProQuest, and Google Scholar were used to find the articles. The researcher discusses two themes in this paper, which are completion rate in MOOCs and characteristics of learners in MOOCs. It is worth discussing that there are researches, who investigated MOOCs in different countries and fields such as: student-based learning (Kop & Fournier, 2011); serendipity in open network environments (Kop, 2012); obstacles facing learning through MOOCs and MOOC revolution (De Waard, Abajian, Gallagher, Hogue, Keskin, Koutropoulos, & Rodriguez, 2011; Kop & Fournier, 2011); and MOOC utilization for mobile learning (de Waard et al., 2011). However, the education leaders should consider the quality educational environments. According to Ibraheem and John (2012), we can argue that "Large student population often being taught in less than good educational environments" (p. 3).

This study attempts to identify the students’ perceptions toward MOOCs. It hopefully contributes to the education process; thus, it might strengthen the complementary relationship between education and technology. The findings would inform university leaders to make a decision toward MOOCs use. Hopefully, it is a positive contribution to the educational institutions.

2. COMPLETION RATE IN MOOCS
As the researcher was trying to find a relationship between course completion rate and design strategies, the information showed that it is possible that the students continue studying in MOOCs without being interested in the obtaining certificate (Jordan, 2014); thus, there may be many students seek for benefiting from courses weather they gain certificates or not. In other research attempts, researchers investigated enrollment and participation in MOOC as well as how learners’ behaviors have changed and affected completion and outcomes (Perna et al., 2014). However, the issue of finding a workable definition of completion might impact the results of research studies concerning MOOCs course completion (Jordan, 2014). According to Jordan (2014), the following definition of completion, which is “as the percentages of students who had satisfied the courses’ criteria in order to gain a certificate.” (p. 135), can limit the data to one measurement and be open to criticism.

A number of researchers (Jordan, 2014; Mackness, Waite, Roberts, & Lovegrove, 2013; Perna, Ruby, Boruch, Wang, Scull, Ahmad, & Evans, 2014) have done research investigations of how people learn in MOOCs and factors affecting completion of MOOCs. The findings showed a relationship between course completion and the factors of autonomy, outcomes, and accreditation (Jordan, 2014; Mackness et al., 2013; Perna et al., 2014).

Mackness et al. (2013) found that autonomy and learner involvement are directly responsible for completion of MOOCs.

Moreover, Perna et al. (2014) used descriptive analysis in their study to investigate MOOCs outcomes and completions. They found that the number of students who completed courses was low, which “may reflect curiosity, browsing, and lack of interest or motivation to complete, especially for these first-generation courses” (p. 428). In general, the findings indicated that although completion is dependent on many factors, the way learners behave when taking MOOCs is responsible for a substantial part of achievement and completion. Researchers recommend that future studies concentrate on students’ satisfaction with learning experiences, and employers’ satisfaction with students’ skill levels. Also,
significant of effective course design specifications in users’ outcomes, and establishing an understanding with specified learning goals (Jordan, 2014; Mackness et al., 2013; Pema et al., 2014).

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARNERS IN MOOCS

As Previous research reflected the significance and value of information about students’ activities, learning styles, and pedagogical contents in MOOCS. For example blogs, used by one study, included information about students who posted them and gave information about their participation experience in MOOCS. The sample of the study included 21 blog posts and the researchers were able to conclude that as availability of technology, accessibility, and connectivism increase the learners’ positive experiences also increase (Zutshi, O’Hare, & Rodafinos, 2013).

Some empirical research focused on learners in MOOCS in term of their characteristics, perceptions, and outcomes (e.g. Mackness, Waite, Roberts, & Lovegrove, 2013; Najafi, Evans, & Federico, 2014; Rodriguez, 2013; Zutshi et al., 2013). The findings of many studies proved that MOOCS as a type of educational channel required special kinds of learners who are different in many ways (Mackness et al., 2013; Rodriguez, 2013; Zutshi et al., 2013). The evidence supported the expectation that a MOOC learner was in possession of special characteristics such as being autonomous, involved in learning, and directly responsible for challenges from context and social backgrounds. The delivery of content through special course design impacted the learning styles of the participants and changed to their behaviors as distance learners and education recipients (Rodriguez, 2013). Social media and instructional technology in which MOOCS content and materials are delivered contained a successful and promising proposal for educators that MOOCS would help solve and clear many challenges (Rodriguez, 2013). The most interesting research innovation was that learners showed willingness and openness to provide support for others if they discovered their lack of experience in this type of education. This is a new dimension of MOOCS, which might not be known to researchers yet (Mackness et al., 2013; Rodriguez, 2013).

Thus, the learners’ involvement in learning is maintained through “autonomy, diversity, openness and interactivity” (Rodriguez, 2013, p.79). For example, learner activities such as self-regulation, involvement, and aggregation created autonomy and independence during the courses; whereas, interaction, communication and discussion gave way to supportive learning. The number of students in each course is not important; what is important is the accessibility of online media and instructional design goals (Rodriguez, 2013).

Zutshi, O’Hare, and Rodafinos (2013) investigated MOOC students’ perceptions after the researchers had collected data from public blogs to see whether the experience of students of online learning in general and of MOOCS in particular had any effects on the quality and type of blog interaction. They discovered a positive relationship between learning experience and students who could control their workloads. Also, it was clear that learners “reported feeling anonymous and missing personal contact” (Zutshi et al., 2013, p. 226).

They stated, “Student blogs are valuable sources of information for students, teachers, and MOOC providers in addition to official feedback surveys, in-depth qualitative interviews, and case studies and can offer rich insights into behavior and experiences” (Zutshi et al., 2013, p.227).

Also, Najafi, Evans, and Federico (2014) investigated high school learning where MOOCS were the medium of instruction. The two groups of participants in this study were: (1) MOOCS-only group of 14 students, and (2) blended-mode group of 15 students who took MOOCS and additionally met their teacher once a week.

They found that blended-mode scores were generally lower than MOOCS-only students, but blended-mode group was more persistence in retaking quizzes. Moreover Najafi et al. (2014) discussed that engagement may be positively affected due to the high level of achieving and motivation of learners.

4. CONCLUSION

This current literature review reflects the opinion that MOOCS can positively affect the education process. For instance, MOOCS provide some features that are advocated by some researchers such as Yuan and Powell (2013): “knowledge should be shared freely, and the desire to learn should be met without demographic, economic, and geographical constraints” (p. 6). MOOCS have been proven a significant impact on learners and their achievements. In this paper, the researcher introduced two themes, which are learners in MOOCS and completion in MOOCS.

Hopefully this paper has served to enrich some aspects of MOOCS and discuss the increasing of MOOCS value. However, there is a need for further researches about learners’ experiences, perceptions of MOOCS and the meaning of working in networks, and they should be proceeding from the learners’ viewing; therefore, still MOOCS need more studies to get a mature outcomes (Saadatmand & Kumpulainen, 2014).

REFERENCES


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