

Positive and negative impacts of MOOCs and Webinars in times of COVID-19 Ecuador

Impactos positivos y negativo de los MOOC y Webinars en tiempos de COVID-19 Ecuador

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Abstract

Given the current situation, the MOOCs courses and the web weekly webinars from March 2020, have become the main trend in virtual education as a phenomenon that has caused a very broad effect and a great impact for the training and cultural enrichment of the human beings and have opened the doors for new products and services for the use of society, and have witnessed how people have adapted to the quarantine caused by the epidemic of the coronavirus of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV), COVID -19. The search for the information was carried out through the official websites of the universities and metasearch engines, Google and Google academic, articles from scientific magazines, and reliable newspapers, to find out what is the fundamental role that MOOCs and weekly courses have had. Web Webinars in quarantine time, and the positive and negative impact they have caused in these times.

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Resumen

Ante la actual coyuntura los cursos MOOCs y los semanarios web Webinars a partir de marzo del 2020, se ha convertido en la principal tendencia en educación virtual como un fenómeno que ha causado un efecto muy amplio y de gran impacto para la formación y enriquecimiento cultural del ser humano y han abierto las puertas para nuevos productos y servicios para uso de la sociedad, y han sido testigos de cómo las personas nos hemos adaptado a la cuarentena causada por la epidemia del coronavirus del síndrome respiratorio agudo severo (SARS-CoV), COVID-19. La búsqueda de la información se las realizó a través de los sitios web oficiales de las universidades y metabuscadores, Google y Google académico, artículos de revistas científicas, y periódicos confiables, para conocer cuál es el rol fundamental que han tenido los cursos MOOCs y semanarios web Webinars en tiempo de cuarentena, y el impacto positivo y negativo que han ocasionado en estos tiempos.

Palabras clave: MOOCs, Webinars, semanarios web, Covid-19

Introduction

MOOCs courses appeared a decade ago and have spread throughout the planet and regions of each country as a phenomenon that has caused a very broad effect and great impact for training and cultural enrichment of human beings and have opened the doors for new products and services for the use of society, MOOCs courses belong to the evolution of open education on the internet for a new era of digital revolution, So important that the New York Times International Magazine in 2012, considered it as "The year of the MOOC", and in Ecuador according to Carrion (2016), MOOCs begin to take importance and connotation at the international level from 2015, being the Universidad Particular de Loja the pioneer in providing this type of education.

Webinars, also known as web weeklies, have appeared in recent years as a tool for remote promotion and communication, leaving aside the traditional way of organizing events such as conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings and live virtual classes.

Tajer (2009), referred to Webinars as a resource of growing use that allows the realization of events such as conferences, workshops, courses or seminars, which are transmitted over the Internet in a synchronous manner, that is, in real time, with a previously planned date and time.

The emergence of an epidemic is not something new in the history of mankind, in recent years, we are witnessing epidemiological outbreaks, many of them by viruses that cause social alarm, according to Wan, Shang, Graham, Baric and Li, (2020), a new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) emerged from Wuhan, China, causing symptoms in humans similar to those caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV). Since the SARS-CoV outbreak in 2002, COVID-19".

"The recent emergence of the Wuhan coronavirus (2019-nCoV), has recently caused according to CNN en Español, more than 4.7 million cases of covid-19 worldwide, including at least 318,000 deaths CNN Español (2020), and in Ecuador, Monday May 18: 33582 infected and 2799 dead, according to El Universo newspaper (2020).

The current scenario caused by the Coronavirus has forged important challenges for Ecuador and the planet, in our academic context many educational institutions have seen the need to create interactive platforms for knowledge transfer based on the web, offering massive free courses for other institutions of lower hierarchy for example Universities of category A and B, have offered a number of free courses for anyone and have made agreements with others for example the Catholic University has made an agreement with the Ministry of Education to train teachers of primary and secondary level through MOOCs and Webinars course.

The health crisis has also brought challenges for the whole of society, and many entities have had to undertake a process of virtualization in order to continue their ongoing activities. In order to collectively contribute and give support in this global fight against the virus, in 2019 it was predicted that online training would be a trend in 2020 and that it would take the lead over face-to-face training and today we can confirm it, with the arrival of the plague it has become a reality.

Rodrigo, Samaniego and Blacio (2027) "Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have become an important means of contribution of universities towards today's society and at the same time has allowed them to engage in the digital age, as an evolution of online learning are achieving increasingly better learning experiences." (p.2)

With the problematic situation, classroom training was momentarily paralyzed and the only solution to continue developing talent and continue training the new generations is thanks to the digital format. Companies and educational centers have adapted their way of educating and preparing their teachers and administrative staff with free massive courses called MOOCs offered by public and private institutions.

According to Carrión (2018), "Knowledge through the web provides the opportunity to receive or contribute to topics of common interest, taking into account that, being open offers, quality is a decisive element in the impact it can have on teaching and learning processes. Likewise, it enables the development of communities of inquiry to collaboratively build a specific topic or solve social problems" (p.1).

Countless people around the world have found it necessary to stay at home to avoid the spread of the new coronavirus. For some, isolation means working remotely in real time from their homes or perhaps in the office, as well as doing various tasks such as teaching and caring for their families, and continuing their studies through a virtual platform.

The positive impact of MOOC courses is that most of them are created by prestigious universities around the world, they are free with the option of paying a fee if you want to get the diploma or certification, although a good number of educational and non-educational institutions, MOOCs and Webinars are free including the certificate as is the case in Ecuador the Universidad Particular de Loja.

According to (Nicholls, 2020), a writer for Infobae Magazine, "The most prestigious universities in the world offer 1,686 free courses to cope with the quarantine, institutions such as Harvard, MIT or Stanford offer online training at no cost. Among them, there are classes in Spanish. Business, Big Data, science, marketing, human resources, communication, languages and even how to create your own app".

MOOC courses, on the other hand, allow us to study and learn at our own pace, and certain trainings can be started at any time, others do have a start date. The objective of this mode of education is that they are flexible to manage our time, we can study day or night or at any time, according to our needs. Given the health crisis that we are experiencing worldwide due to COVID-19, some online course platforms such as Miriada, Coursera, Udacity and edX, have expanded their offerings of free courses so that we can take advantage of this quarantine to train and continue learning.

Not all that glitters is gold, everything seemed a wonder until a reality presents itself, MOOCs courses, are a business for the institutions that sponsor them and have become a new way to make money for most of them, to cite a model of the UK scientist Marcus Hurst, has made several disputes making it clear that scientists do not charge a penny for all studies funded by the taxpayer to be accessible on the web for free, According to Hurst (2012). "A course at Stanford can cost in the neighborhood of \$40,000 not counting cost of living. If we put on average that that course consists of 200 students, in total, that's about \$8 million. If we transfer this figure to open education, if \$50 is charged as a kind of fee to each of the 200,000 students taking a hypothetical course, it would raise \$10 million. A fee that can be adjusted to the income of the students."

Table 1: *MOOC course income at prestigious universities*

edX	\$60 millones de Harvard y el MIT al fundarse, más 1 millón de la Fundación Bill y Melinda Gates.
Coursera	\$65 millones al fundarse
UDACITY	A partir de finales del año 2012, la empresa había elevado su capital a 21,1 millones dólares, incluyendo \$15 millones en octubre.

The pandemic changed the direction of all educational institutions and drove them towards greater openness in universities, colleges and schools, and the businesses that revolve around it can no longer evade the impact of the Internet, no matter how much they have managed to do so until now. The disruptive changes provided by the Net and the open culture it brings with it make this change unstoppable.

On the other hand, the negative side of the MOOC course and Webinars is that many people lack internet service because they live in remote places where there is no access to the service, there is also a group of people who do not handle technology tools such as computers and the internet, in teaching many professionals are resistant to change because of their advanced age have difficulty in manipulating the tics tools, there are 3% of teachers in Ecuador who have this problem.

The didactics of MOOC courses often do not meet the requirements of a virtual education, sometimes they are traditional and that is also another negative, it is basically expository and does not require much initiative on the part of the student. In this sense, MOOC courses do not take full advantage of the potential of ICTs and students drop out, withdraw and leave the course halfway through.

According to Moreno de Carlos (2014), editorialist of GlocalThinking magazine, "The main problem of these *e-learning* courses is the high dropout rate. According to a recent study conducted among millions of users of the Coursera platform, only 4% of students enrolled in a MOOC finish them. While 50% only take one lesson. This is due to the fact that it is not a standard course, so everyone takes the pace of their learning, which can cause them to drop out if they are not sufficiently motivated".

Carlos (2014) "Another difficulty presented by MOOCs is the evaluation method, which is not very precise, how can a course with

more than 120,000 students be evaluated? Each university or platform has different evaluation methods, but it is still not very clear which one is adequate. In addition, there is no personalized attention to the students".

Materials and methods

The research is based on the search of direct information, such as scientific articles, documentaries of digital newspaper articles and press about MOOC and Webinar in time of Covid-19. The exploration was done in Meta search engines such as Google and Google Scholar, books and thesis work in the bases of the universities. The most used words for the search were: MOOC AND Webinars AND COVID-19.

According to Sanca (2011), "Exploratory research is conducted with the purpose of highlighting one or more points of a given problem in addition to finding the best way of how to approach it" (p.622).

Covid-19 has caused a major health, social and financial crisis around the world and has prompted governments to take preventive security measures to save lives and put people in safety with measures such as partial isolation.

The confinement has made people of different ages increase the massive use of MOOCs and Webinars as technological tools to be informed, prepare themselves in a specific area, share content with their colleagues and followers, teach classes, communicate through video conferences, lectures, teleworking, etc. In any case, the quarantine and MOOCs courses and Webinars are witnessing many of these changes.

The Coronavirus is a pandemic that has taken over the world, the news and education, the closure of educational establishments by central governments, and social isolation has made authorities take preventive measures against the spread of Covid-19, moving pedagogical activities to their homes, establishments and teachers have been forced to train in massive MOOC courses and Webinars offered by institutions and universities for free, this has increased the

use of online courses and other information technology tools, to then teach virtual classes and to provide a solution to face-to-face education.

Authors such as Area, Sannicolás and Borrás (2014), determine that "A Webinar is a hybrid event that shares and mixes different characteristics of other academic activities that take place on the network, very similar to MOOCs in that a large number of users from different parts of the world can register and participate, often free of charge, and that such participation can be accredited and produce a lot of social interaction and debate among them, its duration is shorter than a MOOC".

Many people have taken advantage of the quarantine to train through Streaming to strengthen their skills in their jobs and in their personal preparation, they have started to take specific courses of their interest, for example, the management of technological tools in the cloud such as: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, YouTube, Streaming including Facebook and WhatsApp.

As specified in an article in the digital newspaper El Comercio, "As part of the covid-19 Educational Plan, the Ministry of Education coordinated with higher education institutions and private entities a training program for teachers to strengthen their skills in the digital field, through participation in courses. 102,000 registrations have been made in the continuous training programs. Among the institutions participating are Universidad Central del Ecuador, Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas (ESPE), Escuela Politécnica Nacional, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Universidad Indoamérica, Universidad Técnica del Norte, Microsoft Ecuador and Grupo Edutec" Trujillo (2020).

MOOC courses and Webinars from March 2020, have become a fundamental pillar and have become an effective tool for the preparation of people in the different areas of competence specific to each field or their interest and Webinars, have become an internal communication strategy in time of confinement making them an opportunity in time of crisis for teleworking and for virtual education that replaces face-to-face education in time of covid-19 and to deal with the significant impact of the epidemic, once published in the

calendar of events, a Webinar or a MOOC course on official websites of universities and companies become a trend and demand expands in this emerging context.

The social crisis of Covid-19 also affects the means and techniques of internal communication. The change of labor model, with the transition to telework modalities of functions that never considered an exclusive use of information technologies as a priority channel of communication between employers and employees. (Xifra, 2020, p.8)

Results

In Ecuador the prestigious universities that offered Webinars Webinars in forty time are: Universidad Espiritu Santo "49", Escuela Superior Politecnica del Litoral "11", Universidad de Azuay 10, Universidad Tecnica de Loja "9", Universidad Politecnica Salesiana "6", Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas- ESPE "3", the search for information directly in the Meta search engines and the official websites of each university in the events tab, to ascertain how many Webinars and MOOCs courses have offered, in isolation time:

According to the analysis of the statistical table, the aspects related to Webinars are shown, the University that leads the largest offer of webinars in epidemic time is the Espiritu Santo University, offering the largest number of Webinar courses according to the needs of the Ecuadorian society to be trained in difficult times in all areas, free courses for all its participants.

Until 2015 the Universidad Particular De Loja led the MOOCs course offering, providing better learning opportunities for their students and the general public, and in 2018 the Observatory Center MOOCS UC, performs a scan of new rankings detailing the following way the scale: The Ecuadorian National Research Network leads the massive online courses followed by the National Polytechnic School, The Senescyt and finally the International University of Ecuador, there is no updated statistical study dated May 2020, in this way the educational institutions have met the learning needs of the Ecuadorian community and the update of a new scan remains for a next investigative work.

The top most searched MOOCs and Webinars courses in isolation time are: Teaching and Virtualization, Teaching in times of pandemic, Socioemotional Learning in times of pandemic, Mental Health in times of pandemic, Teleworking, Health Crisis, who were trained more frequently were teachers of colleges and schools, since university students already have a great advance in this type of education, the offers were given by the following information channels, Social Networks, Meta search engines and official Websites of each institution.

Also, in Ecuador and the world have increased downloads and use of computer applications, based on different mixes of technology for different modalities of continuous learning platforms are: Zoom, YouTube, Facebook, and Microsoft Teams, for teleworking, meetings and trainings and virtual and live transmission during the months of March, April and May 2020.

According to Gamboa Romero, M. A., Barros Morales, R. L., & Barros Bastidas, C. (2016) and Chol and Yano (2020), global actions are converging in the face of the global pandemic. Beyond the actual health measures for education, countries have focused on ensuring the continuation of learning, avoiding interruption as much as possible. Measures have included introducing or expanding existing distance education modalities, providing online platforms, encouraging teachers and school administrators to use applications, generating and disseminating educational content through television and other media, using existing teacher-family-student communication applications, and awareness campaigns or communication strategies on distance education.

Discussion

MOOCs and Webinars are very important technological tools for continuous learning of people and society to improve specific skills in a disciplinary area for work and to change their lifestyles, currently this type of virtual training have witnessed how the pandemic Covid-19, has caused profound changes in human behavior and in the functioning of each of the households.

One negative aspect of MOOCs and Webinars is that they are offered in abundance either in social networks, or on official websites of universities or specific companies that are dedicated to train authorized, this causes despair and stress because of too much information on the network, many enroll and achieve their goal, but others soon abandon the course because some institutions offer training and charge you for the certificate and that causes annoyance because it would be a deception and a profit for those who offer them.

A positive aspect in time of confinement is the increase to 100% of MOOCs course and Webinars by people of different ages, also the universities have offered Massive Online course and Webinar according to the needs as shown in the statistical table Fig. 1, Espiritu Santo University has a record of 49 Webinars in these times of quarantine, also it was found that the most used software to meet this purpose, is the Zoom tools, Microsoft Teams, used for teleworking, continuing education and conference to be in contact with employees, sales, and meetings with loved ones as if it were physically.

As García and Beas (2020) consider, " Academic activities can continue using tools such as Google Meet, Zoom, Skype, among others, which have shown stability and confidence for multiple participants in the review of topics, master classes, journal club, faculty meetings, among other activities that were previously performed in person" (p.3).

MOOCs and Webinars courses arise from the need demanded by today's society and are based on the principle of continuing education through the World Wide Web as a right to education and not only because of the emergency but because it replaces face-to-face education, as a new approach to learning enhanced by technological tools, also this type of education should be reflected in the educational laws of Ecuadorian legislation, in higher education (The LOES) and in the education of the General High School BGU in (The LOEİ).

Authors such as Salinas and Luna (2016), state that "One of the challenges is that technology becomes a true facilitator, a tool that

helps teachers to provide meaningful teaching in order to obtain equally meaningful learning. In other words, teachers should apply ICTs in their daily lives" (p.11).

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