

# **MOOC Camp: Building Community and Continuing Professional Development**

**Rina A. Angeles<sup>\*1</sup>, Mark Airon P. Creus<sup>2</sup>, and Wilfredo G. Antonio<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>First Eduspec Inc, Philippines

<sup>2</sup>Luis Y. Ferrer Jr. Senior High School, Philippines

<sup>3</sup>Cavite National High School, Philippines

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## **Abstract**

This study aimed to determine the efficacy of Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) camp in the Philippines for building community and continuing professional development. The researchers employed the descriptive method of research. The main data-gathering tool used in the study was a validated self-made survey questionnaire. The participants in this study were 50 experienced MOOCers who attended MOOC camp in Mandaluyong City, Philippines. The data gathered were treated statistically using mean and Pearson R to determine the relationship between the demographic profile and the benefits of MOOC camp. Interviews were also conducted to gather more in-depth information to validate the quantitative data gathered from the survey questionnaire. Findings of the study revealed that many young professionals in their twenties were more concentrated and focused in their career; a majority of them were women. The study also presented that MOOC camp was significant for community building, professional growth and career development; therefore MOOC is impactful if there is an MOOC camp. It also showed that learners were satisfied in the activities MOOC camp provided and it was beneficial for them. Aside from getting the higher chance in completing the online course through MOOC camp, the participants also are highly motivated to help the community and themselves. MOOC camp can be a very good tool for promoting Massive Open Online Courses.

**Keywords:** Massive Open Online Course, MOOC Camp, building community, professional development

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\* Corresponding Author  
e-mail: rina.angeles1989@gmail.com

## Introduction

The continuous demand of the 21st-century learners opens the door for Massive Open Online Course(s) in different universities abroad. The University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Education (MGSE) has launched a Massive Open Online Course – or MOOC – on how to give school children the skills to survive in a world of ever-changing technology ("Massive Classroom Opens Door," 2014). In Dublin, the Minister of Education and Skills launched a new Massive Open Online Course called "21st Century Learning Design" which will be used by teachers across the globe to help support the objective of bringing more technological skills into the classroom (Microsoft Europe, 2016). It became one of the newest ideas of education designed for extended learning and career development. MOOC is an interactive step-by-step course aimed at reaching an unlimited number of participants worldwide to create a community of lifelong learners (What is MOOC?). It allows people from different regions to access and study courses at their preferred universities. It is also a means of empowering the learning community and exchanging culture because the learners are capable of interacting with other people using different platforms like coursera, edX, canvas and etc.

The popularity of MOOC worldwide has reached the Philippines. In 2013, the first MOOC in the country was offered by University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) in cooperation with wireless leader Smart Communication, Inc. ("Phl 1st massive open," 2013). This became the latest trend of education in continuing professional development. The Philippines, among ASEAN countries, has been very active in studying MOOC programs. Despite many challenges, they were able to produce the most number of participants successful in MOOC. Shaping the Way We Teach 1 and 2 were some of the courses that became eminent, especially to teachers participating MOOC. These courses are hosted by the U.S. Department of State's Office of English Language Programs in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (Education and Exchanges program, US Embassy Manila Philippines). Through MOOC camp and offline meet-ups, thousands of participants around the Philippines have successfully completed the course. As stated by the U.S Department of States Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, MOOC Camps are most successful with weekly meetings. The increasing demand of learning through Massive Open Online Course would be more effective when there is camp (Fournier et. al., 2014). In an open learning environment, the control of learning no longer rests with an educational institution but with the learners themselves. In this case, the success of a learner through MOOCs relies mainly on his own motivation; therefore this style of learning is Self-Directed Learning. However, MOOC camp helps the learner motivate himself to finish the course because people with a shared vision surround them (Milligan et. al., 2013). When people learn through social knowledge, they collaboratively develop new knowledge artifacts and products. People learn

by both drawing on and, at the same time, contributing to collective knowledge. So, 'connecting' is only one of the series of actions learners have to take to learn in open, unstructured networks.

Researchers have already experienced to become the student of MOOC and Facilitator of MOOC camp. They believed that by being part of this program, the individual can automatically take part in building a community and continuing professional development. However, the researchers believe that the individual is well positioned to help himself to be a better person with the skills needed. This motivated the authors to conduct this study which focused on the efficacy of MOOC Camp in the Philippines. The research discusses how it builds community and how it helps individual with their professional development.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was to determine how Massive Open Online Courses relate to the professional growth, community development and career achievement of the participants of MOOC. Specifically, this study addressed the following questions:

- 1) What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - a) Age
  - b) Gender
  - c) Educational Attainment
- 2) What are the MOOC's Camp benefits in terms of:
  - a) Professional growth
  - b) Community development
  - c) Career achievement
- 3) Is there a significant relationship between the MOOC's benefits such as professional growth, community development and career achievement to the demographic profile of the participants?
- 4) Based on the findings, what program can be proposed to enhance the awareness of the people about MOOC?

## Paradigm of the Study

The input includes the demographic profile of the respondents such as: age, sex and educational attainment and MOOC variables such as: professional growth, community development and career achievement. The process was to test the relationship between MOOC and its variables such as: professional growth, community development and career achievement. The output was an enhanced MOOC Camp Curriculum.



**Figure 1** Paradigm of the Study

## Methodology

This study utilized the descriptive method of research to determine how Massive Open Online Course Camp related to the professional growth, community development and career achievement of the participants of MOOC. The respondents of this study were the 50 participants of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) campers of Mandaluyong City. The survey dealt with the benefits of MOOC camp to their professional growth, community development and career achievement in order to have an enhanced program for people's awareness about MOOC.

A survey questionnaire was the main data gathering instrument. The research questionnaire was composed of two sets. The first set was the Participants Information Sheet. It covered the demographic information of the respondents such as age, gender and educational attainment. The second set dealt with the level of benefits of MOOC Camp for their professional growth, community development and career achievement.

For items on the level of benefits of MOOC Camp for their professional growth, community development and career achievement, the weighted points, score range and interpretation are as follows:

**Table 1** Scale Used in the Study (Likert Scale)

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 to 5.00	Always or almost always true
4	3.41 to 4.20	Generally true
3	2.61 to 3.40	Somewhat true
2	1.81 to 2.60	Generally not true
1	1.00 to 1.80	Never or almost never true

## Results

**Problem 1:** What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and educational attainment?

**Table 2** Demographic Profile of MOOCers in Mandaluyong City According to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16 - 20	4	8.00
21 - 25	12	24.00
26 - 30	10	20.00
31 - 35	10	20.00
36 - 40	6	12.00
41 and above	8	16.00

Table 2 shows the age of the participants attending MOOC camp. The result shows that 12 (24%) of the participants were between 21-25 years old; 10 participants were 26-30 and another 10 were 31-35 years old. However, there were 8 participants (16%) who were 41 years and above. This indicates that most of the participants attending MOOC camp were within the range of 16 to 35 years of age.

**Table 3** Demographic Profile of MOOCers in Mandaluyong City According to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	16	32.00
Female	34	68.00

Table 3 shows the demographic profile of MOOCers in Mandaluyong City according to gender. The findings show that among 50 respondents of MOOC camp, 34 (68 %) of them were female and only 16 (32%) were male. This shows that there were more women who engaged in MOOC camp for their career development and community development.

**Table 4** Demographic Profile of MOOCers in Mandaluyong City According to Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
College Level / Graduate	19	38.00
MA Units / Graduate	22	44.00
Doctoral Units / Graduate	9	18.00

Table 4 presents the educational attainment of MOOCers whereas 22 (44%) of the MOOCers gained a Master's Unit or Degree, 19 (38%) of the course takers were under college level and 9 (18%) of them had doctorate units or degrees. It points out that professionals are seeking a new way of helping themselves develop professionally and helping the community through MOOC camp. In addition, even if a person attains the highest degree of education they urge for more to fully develop themselves as an individual and as a professional.

**Problem 2:** What is the MOOC Camp benefit in terms of professional growth, community development and career achievement?

**Table 5** Benefits of MOOC Camp in Terms of Professional Growth

A. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. MOOC camp is dedicated to my career development.	4.50	Always or almost always true
2. The camp workshops are well planned, effective and interactive which allow learning and practicing new concepts.	4.52	Always or almost always true
3. MOOC content and strategies are very useful in my work.	4.36	Generally, true
4. MOOC helps me learn new information and skills which gain opportunities for professional growth.	4.58	Always or almost always true
5. I am satisfied with the activities MOOC offered in training and education.	4.50	Always or almost always true
6. I am satisfied that I have the opportunities to apply my talents and expertise.	4.40	Generally true
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>Always or almost always true</b>

Table 5 shows the benefits of MOOC's in terms of professional growth. Findings show that the participants believed that MOOC has benefits for their professional growth, having an overall mean of 4.48 corresponding to an interpretation of Always or Almost Always True. Among the items, participants said that MOOC helps them learn new information and skills which gain opportunities for professional growth, with a mean of 4.58, followed by MOOC workshops are well planned, effective and interactive which allow learning and practicing new concepts, having a mean of 4.52. This expresses that a majority of them agree that MOOC camp is designed to help them build their career. Parallel to the studies of Bowon et. al. (2015), MOOC and MOOC camp promote a framework of lifelong learning.

**Table 6** Benefits of MOOC's in Terms of Community Development

B. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. MOOC camp gives me an idea on how to help my community as an individual.	4.20	Generally true
2. MOOC camp allows me to gain new friends and collaborate with others.	4.50	Always or almost always true
3. Many of my friends are encouraged to join MOOC camp since they find it very useful.	4.30	Generally true
4. MOOC camp gives me an opportunity to access practical resources that can help me to improve my community.	4.42	Generally true
5. MOOC camp gives me the opportunity to network with other similar groups.	4.44	Generally true
6. Through MOOC camp, I can involve myself to community engagement by training and serving others.	4.32	Generally true
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.36</b>	<b>Generally true</b>

Table 6 shows the benefits of MOOC's in terms of community development. Finding shows that the participants believed that MOOC is beneficial for community development, having an overall mean of 4.36 with an interpretation of Generally True. Among the items, participants said that MOOC camp allows them to gain new friends and collaborate with others, with a mean of 4.50, followed by MOOC gives them the opportunity to network with other similar groups, having a mean of 4.44. Results also show that most of the participants were encouraged to join because of the usefulness of the program to their lives.

This result coincides with the presentation of Mrs. Rebecca Sagot during the TESOL 2016 at Baltimore Maryland. According to her, “to be successful in MOOC, we must conduct MOOC camps, identify the allies, leaders and resources, conduct meet-ups, form learning actions, cultivate mentors, keep the graduates engage, celebrate learning and pass it on.” In Davao Del Norte, Philippines, English teachers took Shaping the Way We Teach English 1 and 2 offered by the University of Oregon, wherein there were three batches of MOOC camps. During the first camp, there was a 75% completion rate for the first course and 100% completion rate for the second course. Moreover, 98% and 97% were the completion rates for the second batch of Shaping the Way We Teach English 1 and 2. In addition, during the third batch of MOOC camp, there were 99% and 98.56% completion rates for the two courses. This clearly shows that the teachers are motivated and interested to study and finish the course when they are involved in a group activity.

**Table 7** Benefits of MOOC camp in Terms of Career Achievement

C. CAREER ACHIEVEMENT	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. MOOC's certification helps me advanced my career application.	4.50	Always or almost always true
2. MOOC helps me better understand the nature of my work.	4.52	Always or almost always true
3. MOOC gives me the confidence in and outside my workplace.	4.36	Generally true
4. MOOC allows me to become an immediate asset to my workplace.	4.58	Always or almost always true
5. MOOC helps me develop my skills and advance my knowledge towards my career.	4.50	Always or almost always true
6. MOOC gives me the capability to inspire others by recognizing, developing, and applying their talents to reach their goal.	4.40	Generally true
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.36</b>	<b>Generally true</b>

Table 7 shows the benefits of MOOC's in terms of career achievement. Finding shows that the participants believed that MOOC is beneficial in their career achievement, having an overall mean of 4.36 and an interpretation of Generally True. Among the items, participants said that MOOC allows them to become an immediate asset to my workplace, with a mean of 4.58, followed by MOOC helps them better understand the nature of my work, with a mean of 4.52. According to the unstructured interviews conducted by the researchers, many of the participants used the certification in their application process and they found it very helpful since it gave them an advantage over other applicants.

**Problem 3:** Is there a significant relationship of the MOOC's benefits which are Professional Growth, Community Development and Career Achievement to their Demographic Profile in terms of age, gender and educational attainment?

**Table 8** Pearson R Test on MOOC's Benefits in Terms of their Demographic Profile.

MOOC Camp Benefits	Pearson R		
	Age	Gender	Educational Attainment
Professional Growth	0.02718	1	-0.52745
Community Development	0.68135	-1	-0.78343
Career Achievement	-0.07292	-1	-0.05396

Table 8 shows the Pearson R Test on MOOC's benefits for Professional Growth, Community Development and Career Achievement in terms of their Age, Gender and Educational Attainment. Results show that there is a weak and moderate positive significant relationship of the MOOC benefits for Professional Growth and Community Development, with values of 0.02718 and 0.68135 respectively, to their Age. However, there is a weak negative significant relationship of MOOC benefit in Career Achievement with a value of -0.07292 to their Age. With regard to Gender, there is a perfect positive relationship of MOOC benefit for professional growth to their gender while there is a perfect negative relationship of MOOC benefit for community development and career achievement to their gender. Lastly, all the MOOC benefits have a negative significant relationship to their educational attainment.

**Problem 4:** What program can be proposed to enhance the awareness of the people about MOOC?

The results of the study revealed that MOOC camp is essential for an individual's professional growth, community development and career achievement. The researchers proposed the following to enhance the awareness of the people about MOOC and MOOC camp.

**A. Collaboration of Organizations:** Different organizations such as RELO (Regional English Language Office in Manila) and British Council support and promote MOOC and MOOC camps; the Department of Education can work together with these organizations to raise awareness among interested students in taking courses that are suitable for their needs. The efficacy of MOOC camp was seen in Davao Region, led by Ms. Rebecca Sagot who was working under the Department of Education in Davao wherein part of

teacher's curricular activities includes participation in MOOC and join MOOC camp. If MOOC and MOOC camp will be part of Department of Education in the Philippines nationwide, it could produce more successful graduates in open education.

**B. Celebration of Learning:** It is a must have after finishing the course as a reward for those students who completed the program. A simple graduation or recognition program will boost students' interest in taking MOOC and attending MOOC camp.

**C. Social Media Campaign:** Group page and other forms of social media greatly help the promotion of MOOC and MOOC camp. With the help of MOOC facilitators posting about MOOC and MOOC camp, many have been encouraged to take MOOC courses.

## Conclusion and Discussion

Based on the result of the study, it showed that many professionals are eager and motivated to learn new ways of developing themselves. Most of these professionals are characterized by women in our society. MOOC as a new tool of learning must be supported by MOOC camp; this camp is highly significant in developing one's professional growth, community and career.

## Suggestions

The study recommends that the Department of Education must work with different organizations to raise more awareness of MOOC and MOOC camp. Celebration of learning as a reward is also commendable, as it increases student's eagerness in joining the program. Further and more in-depth studies on MOOC camp can be done to support the effectiveness of MOOC camp in the Philippines.

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## Authors

### Rina A. Angeles

First Eduspec Inc.  
Unit 32 Legaspi Suits, 178 Salcedo St.,  
Legaspi Village, Makati City, Philippines  
Email: [rina.angeles1989@gmail.com](mailto:rina.angeles1989@gmail.com)

### Mark Airon P. Creus

Luis Y. Ferrer Jr. Senior High School  
Marycris Complex, Pasong Camachile II, General Trias Cavite, Philippines  
Emil: [markairon@yahoo.com](mailto:markairon@yahoo.com)

### Wilfredo G. Antonio

Cavite National High School  
Marin St. Caridad, Cavite City, Cavite, Philippines