7P's of Marketing Mix in MOOCs Environment

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Abstract

Marketing mix techniques can apply on any product and discipline including Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and library and information science domain as well as these techniques are very useful to connect and promote a product to their large users. Thus, this study aims to apply 7P's of marketing mix in MOOCs and library and information science domain in order to create, disseminate and promote of a MOOC for their optimum numbers of targeted users.

Key Terms: Design, Creation, Marketing Mix, MOOCs, 7P's, Libraries, Library and Information Science, Library and Information Science Professionals.

Introduction

In the recent era, MOOCs emerged as one of the most prominent pedagogy in online learning. Resultant, learners who are residing in the different corners of world are fascinated greatly towards MOOCs pedagogy and participated in MOOCs in large numbers in order to fulfill the diverse requirements due to characteristics of the MOOCs such as not prerequisite of any education level, no age bar, no caste, anywhere anytime learning, participation of learners in any numbers etc. For that purpose, large numbers of MOOCs are being developed by the different MOOCs developers on the diverse topics including library and information science area at the worldwide level. Similarly, library and information science professionals are involved in MOOCs activities at worldwide level by participating, creating, solving and supporting MOOCs activities in various ways. But, developing a quality MOOC as well as reaching up to the objectives, goals and targeted learners for a MOOC is really a big task for any MOOCs developer in this online learning era. They have to put extra efforts in terms of apply emerging and tested tools and techniques towards achieving the set goals and reaching as well as marketing successfully a MOOC for their users. On the other hand, marketing mix which consists of 7p's are very popular and tested techniques in order to connect a product to the end users and to promote a product among users up to ultimate level. There are some evidences found through the scholar literature which claimed that MOOCs are being used as a product for different disciplines for fulfilling the needs of the users in this connection Bulfin et al. stated that MOOCs are considered as a product in science domain. Thus, while considered a MOOC as a product in library and information science domain, the 7 P's of marketing mix can be considered as most efficient mechanism in order to offer, disseminate and to promote the MOOCs to their targeted users because a product cannot be marketed itself until any marketing tool or technique is not applied on it. Therefore, in this study, an attempt is made to apply 7P's of marketing mix in MOOCs and library and information science domain.

What is MOOCs?

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) concept was emerged in the year 2008 when Stephen Downes and George Siemens offered “Connectivism and Connective Knowledge/2008 (CCK8)” for credit course offered at the University of Manitoba, Canada. This course reached the boundaries of connectivism. Siemens and Downes used a wide range of platforms such as blogs, forums, wikis, face book etc. and got the registration of over 2200 participants and allowed the users to participate at large level. Dave Cormier, University of Prince Edward Island and Bryan Alexander, National Institute of Technology in Liberal Education coined the term MOOC McAuley et al. added. But, the year 2012 was noted as a miracle year for MOOCs domain to which “New York Times” declared MOOC year Pappano stated and in the same year some
important MOOCs players namely Coursera, Udacity, Edx etc. emerged and some MOOCs were developed in different topics at worldwide level. The MOOCs stand for Massive Open Online Courses in which Massive shows massive participation of learners even any number of participants can participate in a MOOC. open denotes that a MOOC is open to all types of participants whether they are residing in any countries, any age group, any caste, any qualification, and no physical presence. Online indicates that these courses can execute only in online mode through internet and Courses demonstrates about structure, contents, topic, subject, pedagogy, MOOC platform etc. of a course.

Hence, MOOCs may be define an online course built on a topic through variety of resources made available in public domain with the aim to large number of the participants and having assessment and accreditation provision.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Diverse studies were conducted on the issues focused on MOOC concept, design, pedagogies, quality, model etc. in which Kaushik & Kumar provided the details regarding Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) concept and also presented the ways through which the libraries can actively participate in MOOCs activities and become a centre for MOOCs activities and also assist greatly in uplifting of MOOCs movement at worldwide level. Veletisano et al. study emphasised on to full understanding of MOOC in order to use this with amazing technology with full potential.

Saadatoost et al. provided a holistic definition of MOOCs and analyzed the literature in different perspectives by using thirty two articles, four search engines and key terms respectively. Kaushik & Kumar through a model discussed the how seven Cs viz., Conceptualise, Capture, Communicate, Collaborate, Consider, Combine and Consolidate of Learning Design framework can be used in creating the MOOCs in library and information science environment. Glance et al. observed that the main characteristics of the MOOCs and also the use of short videos and quizzes, openness, the online mode of delivery, online forums, and peer, self-assessment, making the student experience more collaborative, interactive, autonomous, diverse, open and connected/interactive. Kaushik & Kumar investigated the scholarly literature published on MOOCs and library and information science sphere in journals and magazines related library and information science field and discovered that maximum number of periodical literature published in 2013 year. Warburton & Mor examined twenty design patterns of the MOOCs and their different factors from three workshops. This study has further proposed a six steps design model for designing MOOCs namely structure, orientation, participation, learning, community and management. Alario-Hoyos urged to use My Learning Mentor (MLM) mobile application to encourage and support the learners to participate in MOOCs. Verma & Dominic emphasized to use marketing mix techniques particularly seven Ps for developing, offering and marketing the library and information services and products of the libraries. Mune emphasized that library and information science professionals especially librarians should use best practices and also develop new skills required to successful adoption and running MOOCs activities through their respective libraries. Yistated that marketing techniques are very much useful for promoting library services and products. Vassilakaki & Moniarou-Papaconstantinou through the literature review investigated the different roles of library and information professionals in fourteen years duration timeframe and found that the library and information science professionals especially librarians were play very important roles in learning and research process through the various ways.

**OBJECTIVES**

- To define Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) concept
- To examine whether marketing mix technique is fit in MOOCs setting
- To apply seven p’s of marketing mix in MOOCs and library and information science environment

Is Marketing Mix Really Fit in MOOCs Environment?

Like other domains, marketing mix has great significance in MOOCs environment because through the applying the marketing mix techniques and factors, we can promote our MOOCs to the end users in more meaningful ways. Owing to characteristics of the MOOCs, they have to publicize every corner of the world not only to the targeted audience but also to the other users such as up to common man. In this mission the marketing mix factors help greatly to the MOOCs developers to achieve their goals which set for a MOOC. Marketing mix techniques are not only assist the MOOCs developers to create a quality MOOCs to their users but also helpful in marketing of MOOCs to their ultimate users because a MOOC as a product itself cannot market unless any marketing technique is not applied on that product. The different factors of marketing mix express explicitly what have to do and how have to do and also become evidence for a MOOCs in terms of the marketing and development of a successful MOOC as a product. Thus, marketing mix fits in the MOOCs domain. But marketing of the MOOCs is so easy task, one has to carefully adopt marketing mix in MOOCs environment and think seriously how the marketing mix factors can add new dimensions which helpful in making MOOCs as reliable product among the users who residing in different corner of the world.

- **Seven P’s of Marketing Mix in Library and Information Science Domain**

The 7Ps of marketing mix may be applied in MOOCs and library and information science sphere in the following ways:

- **Product**

The product can be anything with the aim to satisfy the need of the users. In the MOOCs environment, a MOOC is considered as a product with aiming to meet the needs or requirement of the targeted users. Thus, as a product, a MOOC should be developed with international standards because owing to its massive nature any user who resides in any corner of the world can be a participant of this MOOC. Hence, MOOC should be built on the basis of international perspective, as per user’s demanding themes with good online pedagogies, design, use of an appropriate MOOCs platform, concrete resources, vast coverage of the information related to a MOOC topic, assessments tools and exercises, provision of certification etc. North et al. urged to adopt and use MOOCs as a product in distance education and learning and also emphasized to make the MOOCs as a trusted medium for distance learners. For developing users centric and quality MOOC, the library and information science professionals and MOOCs developers should make

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The design of a MOOC and use resources and other components to be used for MOOCs should be tested through some parameters and tested tools be made available for that purpose. Luan suggested that a library should develop at least a massive open online course on information literacy to their users for promotion of information literacy skills among the users. It is important to mention that the contents of a MOOC should able to meet the theme and aims of a MOOC and also consist of update, accurate, authentic with accuracy of the information on the topic of a MOOC as contents are considered as king of the any online course made available at worldwide level.

- **Price**

The price of a product can be measured through the cost of a Massive Open Online Courses ranging from manufacturing to utilization process. In MOOCs term, price will count on the basis of overall cost involve in development of a MOOC which includes cost of MOOC platform, resources, human resources, equipment, tools, certificate and so on. In the present time, many MOOCs are charging very minimal fee from the users for providing certificate after successful completion of a MOOC. Apart from this, some MOOCs platforms are taking some fee to use their MOOCs platforms to develop the MOOCs on different topics. More so, some business model were also evolved in MOOCs sphere which able to generate the revenue for conduction MOOCs activities like Bernhard described a business model in MOOCs setting. Similarly, After properly judging the different business model for MOOCs, the library and information science professionals should adopt the most tested and useful business model for generating revenue for MOOCs activities through their libraries and library and information science schools/ institutions as well as person ways. Besides this, in social price perspective, library and information science professionals may gain reputation worldwide by developing the quality and demanded MOOCs in library and information science domain. Akraini et al. examined the factors for MOOCs developers for continuing their engagement in the MOOCs environment and discovered that reputation and openness are the most important factor for retaining the MOOCs developers in the MOOCs sphere. The price of the MOOCs can be varied in the case of MOOC to MOOC due to their policies and provision to use, participate and getting certificate after successful completion of a MOOC.

- **Place**

The place factor is mainly focused on to define the channels of distribution for a MOOC and also used for conveying regarding availability of a MOOC to the targeted users. This factor is connected with accessibility, acceptability and convenience of a MOOC to the users. Place also includes what channels to be used to make informed to users regarding a MOOC as well as when a MOOCs open to the users, where a MOOC available to the users or on which MOOCs platforms and how a MOOC is use and useful to the users worldwide. Liprovided a motivational design model by two MOOCs in chemistry domain which able to motivate the learners in order to learn through MOOCs environment.

- **Promotion**

Promotion is most important factor among 7Ps of marketing mix because through this factor a MOOC as product is reached to the end user by using various means of promotion. The basic aim of this promotion factor is to engage enough and attract the targeted users in most impressive and personal ways which enable users towards understanding and participating in a MOOC. This factor plays an important role in reaching a MOOC till the end user and achieving the goals of MOOC for which a MOOC developed for. In the promotion of a MOOC, various marketing components can be used, name of the few important marketing components includes publicity, advertising, advocacy, public relation, e-marketing, internet marketing, word of mouth marketing etc. The promotion of a product can be done through diverse means or ways such as institutional websites, library websites, e-mails, LIS forums, list serves, what’s app, pamphlets, notice boards, social networking sites such as blogs, twitter, face book and other open services and tools made available on the internet in public domain. Liu et al. discovered that the social networking sites namely facebook and twitter are very much helpful to promote the MOOCs to large numbers of users. Further, it is suggested that library and information science professionals should use formal, informal, social media websites, tools and services as well as other means which are popular among users and are considered as important and trusted medium for making communication in the present era.

- **People**

This factor denotes the team of people so called MOOCs developers, subject experts, technicians, testers and other human resources engaged in MOOCs activities throughout entire process of a MOOC ranging from planning for creating a MOOC to offering a MOOC to the users as well as achieving the aims of a MOOC. A team of people who have keen interest in creation of MOOCs and other MOOCs activities should be created in order to create quality MOOCs on different topics. A team of people may include administrator, librarian, subject experts, technical savvy people, and well verse in communication and so on. Prior to create a MOOC, the roles of each person should be explicitly defined in written form so that one should have very clear about his or her works and know about what he or she has to do during the entire journey of a MOOC. Kasuhik through a survey revealed that the few library and information science professionals did not participated in MOOCs activities because they had not heard about MOOCs. It is however, suggested that the every library and information science professionals should keep abreast of emerging trends and technologies such as MOOCs and develop competency and skills towards MOOCs activities with international standards through various ways such as reading, participating and adopting best training programmes and best practices in MOOCs environment. Members of MOOCs team should work with good understanding and great cooperation. Sancassani et al. stressed on to create MOOCs on the basis of international collaboration within institutions, teachers, learning pedagogies, institutional design, strategies and so on.

- **Physical Evidence**

Physical evidence factor of 7Ps describes the environment, physical resources and documents in which a MOOC is to be developed and offered to the targeted audiences. Environment defines the institution name, MOOCs developer name, name of MOOC team, banner of institution, place in which a MOOC created. Physical resources denote that equipment, tools, techniques, and other types of physical resources used in creating a MOOC and documents include permission to create MOOCs, plan, flowchart agreements of resources and MOOCs platform, copyright related permission and so on. Gore suggested that librarians should take part at least in two types of the MOOCs. All the physical evidences should be filed properly and be should also preserved for future use.
CONCLUSION

This study provides a description about how seven p’s of marketing mix can be used in MOOCs and in library and information science area. It was found from the study that a massive open online course may be considered as a product not only for the users of the libraries but also for other users without any restrictions. The 7ps of marketing mix can be helpful in creating a quality massive open online course, promoting MOOCs, reaching the target users and achieving the set goals for which a MOOC developed for. Therefore, library and information science professionals should develop quality MOOCs and take care of all issues connected with quality MOOCs. The library and information science professionals should look for various techniques and tools that can be adopted and implemented in MOOCs environment in order to add new dimensions in MOOCs setting. More so, library and information science professional should work as one stop point to support MOOCs activities through their libraries and institutes and establish MOOCs as trusted medium to get education for various purposes. The following area may be considered for the future research:

- Sustainability of MOOCs in library and information science.
- Quality criteria for MOOCs in library and information science domain.
- Return on Investment (ROI) in MOOCs environment.
- Impact of marketing tools and techniques in MOOCs.
- User’s satisfaction in MOOCs and library and information science domain.

REFERENCES


