

On the Continuing Education in Local Universities of Finance and Economics against the Background of “Internet Plus”

—Taking MOOCs Education as an Example

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Abstract—In the “Internet plus” wave, online education MOOCs has become an irresistible trend. This paper attempted to use SWOT analysis to explore the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and threats of MOOCs in the continuing education in local universities of economic and finance. It puts forward construct a MOOCs sharing platform among finance and economics colleges, strengthen the national capital and policy support, optimize the way of education and teaching resources allocation and other suggestions, in order to achieve the sustainable and sound development of the continuing education in local finance and economics colleges and universities.

Keywords—MOOCs; Internet plus; universities of economic and finance; continuing education

I. INTRODUCTION

“Internet plus” had become a buzzword no sooner than Premier Li Keqiang proposing the “Internet plus” active plan in 2015 government work report. In fact, this concept was first proposed by Ma Huateng, President of Tencent group, in an article published in People’s Daily in 2014. He pointed out that “Internet plus” is a trend, and “+” refers to traditional industries. In the nationwide, “Internet + Education” has become a hot topic for educators and IT engineers. In the autumn of 2011, MOOCs was born and grew rapidly in the United States, which had a huge impact on the traditional higher education. Zhang jie, President of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, agrees that the Massive Open Online Courses launched in the United States has fundamentally affected traditional higher education, which will cause a reshuffle of universities and eventually form a new

pattern of universities (Cao Jijun, 2013) [1]. MOOCs stand for Massive Open Online Courses which are low-cost, refined, generative and shareable courses. It holds the faith to deliver the world’s best teaching resources to the remotest corners of earth.

II. RESEARCH STATUS

Driven by innovative teaching concepts, advanced network technology and social needs, MOOCs have swiftly swept the world and have attracted widespread attention from scholars. Geoff Sharrock and others have made a comprehensive analysis on the connotation, characteristics and forms of MOOCs [2]. Jamie Murphy (2014) discussed the potential influence of MOOCs on learners, teachers, profit-driven schools, rating agencies and book publishers [3]. M. Liu and J. Kang (2015) made a systematic summary of various forms of MOOCs, and made a comparative analysis of them such as xMOOCs and cMOOCs [4]. Yeonjeong Park (2015) proposed the term “anti-mooc”, advocated that online courses could stimulate participants to communicate, interact and make comments, and launched a deeper teaching experiment to explore online teaching [5]. By literature analysis, participant observation and case analysis, Wang Yonggu and Zhang Qing (2014) interpreted the connotation of MOOCs from the perspectives of course form, education mode and knowledge innovation. Zhu Zhiting (2013) pointed out that with the arrival of the “post-MOOCs period”, new online learning styles such as “SPOC”, “Meta – MOOC” and “MOOR” emerge [6]. Li Qing et al. (2013), after investigating the learning platforms of 10 MOOC courses, believed that learning platforms should not force but encourage learners to use their familiar tools to obtain learning resources and participate in course activities. He Bin et al. (2014) conducted a comparative study on MOOCs platform and other typical online teaching platforms [7]. Yeonjeong Park (2015) made an empirical analysis of relevant factors affecting MOOCs teaching quality based on the data collected in the survey, and put forward suggestions on

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improving the Carroll model formed in school teaching [5]. With regard to MOOC platform construction, Stanford University and other universities in the US have established Coursera, Udacity and Edx, while a series of MOOC platforms such as Chinese MOOCs, imooc.com, XuetangX and MOOC in China have been set up in China [8].

To sum up, scholars at home and abroad have made explorations on the development and application of MOOCs, which is worthy of reference for the subsequent study. However, the majority of the researches are only focusing on concepts and current situation. The domestic scholars are even all in favor of the MOOCs. Without rational and dialectical analysis, they fail to realize the sublimation of localization and specialization of MOOCs in China. Meanwhile, under the MOOCs mode, the practical project-based course teaching resources are mainly concentrated in key universities such as Tsinghua University. Whereas, there are few practices in local universities during the construction of MOOCs

platform, and even no MOOCs teaching resources with the theme of continuing education. Therefore, the focus of this paper is on how to organically integrate MOOCs with the reform of continuing education, so as to create new prospects of continuing education in financial and economic colleges and train more innovative talents of public management.

III. THE BASIC TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MOOCs

According to different learning theoretical bases, MOOC is usually divided into three categories (as shown in the following table). Content-based MOOC (xMOOC) is based on behavioristic learning theories and emphasizes the dissemination and replication of knowledge. The social network-based MOOC (cMOOC), based on the connectivism learning theory, emphasizes the creation of knowledge connection and learning network. Task-based MOOC (tMOOC), based on constructivist learning theory, focuses the mastery of complex skills (Zhu Zhiting, 2013) [6].

TABLE I. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF cMOOC, xMOOC AND tMOOC

Category	cMOOC	xMOOC	tMOOC
Year	2008	2011	2012
Theoretical Basis	Connectivism Learning Theory	Behaviorist Learning Theory	Constructivist Learning Theory
Teaching Method	Connectivism, Social Constructivism, Genjing Style Study, Personal Learning Network	Schooling, Communicative Teaching	Constructivism (contains task-based learning, problem-based learning, Inquiring learning)
Curriculum Organization	Self-Organization	Hetero-Organization	Hetero-Organization
Form	based on knowledge network	based on content	based on task
Learning Orientation	Focus on knowledge construction and creation	Focus on knowledge dissemination and replication	Focus on complex skill acquisition
Learning style	Emphasis on creativity, autonomy and social network learning	Emphasis on video, homework and testing	Emphasis on learning communities, cases and supports
Typical Item	PLENK, CCK	edX, Coursera, Udacity	DS106, POT cert

xMOOC preserves the basic elements of traditional courses, such as course planning, knowledge instruction, chapter exercises, etc., which is in line with the teaching and learning mode that is acceptable to the public, thus making xMOOC the most popular “MOOCs” mode at present.

IV. THE DEVELOPMENT STATUS OF LOCAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES' CONTINUING EDUCATION

Continuing education is tailored for those who have entered the society after the full-time education. It is an important way for them to enrich vocational knowledge, enhance innovation and entrepreneurship ability and improve the quality. Local colleges and universities are an important part of China's education system. Therefore, their teaching quality has a direct influence on the level of China's higher education. Although the scale of continuing education in local financial and economic institutions has witnessed remarkable development since 2016, there are still many problems.

A. Declining students' quality and quantity

In recent years, the number of candidates for continuing education in many places has been decreasing year by year. According to the statistics of the ministry of education, in 2016, there are 969,400 students enrolled in continuing higher education, 45,200 less than the previous year. A total of 2.6866 million students were on campus, 106,700 less than the previous year. 5.041 million students registered for the national self-study higher education examination, a decrease of 199.27 million compared with 2014. Along with the number of candidates reduced the college entrance examination entry score continues to decline. Thus it can be seen that the quantity and quality of students in local financial and economic institutions are declining.

B. Single talents training mode

For a long time, local colleges and universities have given priority to general education and the record of education in the continuing education, while overlooking the professional capability and quality of students. The major setting of continuing education in most local financial and economic colleges and universities imitates the full-time undergraduate

education, and the curriculum system, teaching content and teacher staffing do not highlight the characteristics of their own education and lack of distinctive school-running characteristics. Moreover, not having been fully considering the objective of talent training for continuing education, universities fails to scientifically adjust the curriculum structure and content in curriculum setting. The teaching materials for academic qualifications are insufficient. In the teaching process, many colleges and universities still use classroom teaching to teach students in a centralized way, and do not adopt modern information technology to provide students with personalized and convenient learning environment.

C. Lack of resources for continuing education

Having been considered as “subsidiary education”, continuing education does not attract much of the attention of financial and economic colleges and universities who, in order to raise their reputation, have put much emphasis on general education while giving few resources to the continuing education. Therefore, there is a shortage of teaching equipment, teaching staff and teaching venues.

V. SWOT ANALYSIS ON THE PROMOTION OF MOOCs IN LOCAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

A. Strength

MOOCs presents as a network-based, large-scale, exploitable and interactive learning channel, which can satisfy the personalized needs of students in financial and economic colleges and universities, breaking the time and place restrictions.

- It is a good way to ease the contradiction between work and study by increasing MOOCs class hour while reducing the frequency of giving lessons in centralized time. MOOCs usually take micro-teaching video as main carrier which can be downloaded to mobile devices. In this way, students can leverage fragmented time to study at any time. What’s more, they can also play back, pause, replay and so on according to the learning situation, to ensure the effectiveness and integrity of learning. MOOCs provide students with a relaxed environment where students won’t be afraid of the trouble. It is also in such environment; students are motivated and thirst for knowledge.
- MOOCs promote the diversification of traditional continuing education and also enhance practical teaching. Financial and economic discipline, due to class hour, funds and other limitations, is delivered most frequently in the form of theory, with few practices. However, both theory and practice are critical part in this curriculum. Therefore, to address this issue, MOOCs is introduced to cultivate students’ practical ability and encourage them to learn targeted in an active manner.

B. Weakness

- In most local universities of finance and economics, teachers imbue knowledge to students in the class

without knowing how or what they have mastered. Whereas, with the introduction of MOOCs, teacher has transformed from dominant to the instructor and students can active participate in learning rather than passive acceptance what the teacher delivered. This transformation requires both sides to adapt, maybe, for a long time.

- With MOOCs, learners are learning by their interests or demands. But the all-embracing course platform cannot provide rigid credit system or the complete knowledge system, which may take a toll on students’ learning interest. What’s worse, students may give up halfway. In addition, when learning online, it is hard to make sure that every student can manage themselves, and prohibit surrogate learner or exam-taker.

C. Opportunities

- There is a great market demand for continuing education as those who haven’t received the higher education account for a large part of the labor force population. Traditional education fails to cover people’s needs in the modern days. Additionally, with the development of society, the progress of science and technology and the popularity of the concept of lifelong learning, more and more people are willing to invest in education. With the potential advantages like high demand and low threshold, MOOCs may enter the field of continuing education at ease.
- The state policy supports together with the activities like micro course competition held by the education sector have fueled the development of MOOCs in local universities of economics and finance. In March, 2013, the ministry of education has released the Ten-year Development Plan for Educational Informatization which emphasizes that in the following ten years, China needs to develop education by taking the innovation of educational concepts as the guidance, the high-quality educational resources and information-based learning environment building as the foundation, and the innovation of learning methods and education modes as the core. Under the circumstances of globalization and “Internet plus”, “MOOCs”, as a new course development model, enters the economic and finance class system. It can make educational resources shareable and also provides a historic opportunity for local universities of economics and finance to reform on education management system and teaching methods.

D. Threats

- MOOCs requires a lot of financial support to develop itself, especially in the promotion and application, which is evident in the growth of MOOCs[9]. Some international venture capital companies have casted a large amount of funds, and several famous MOOCs providers have raised tens of millions of dollars. However, China’s financial and economic colleges and universities have not joined MOOCs for a long time. Although there is a preliminary foundation of resources

related to national high-quality courses, it will be cost to develop MOOCs. If financial support isn't sufficient, the risks are obvious.

- The construction of MOOCs talent team falls behind. In fact, MOOCs are the fruits of the coordination of those who are behind the scene such as tutors, instructional design experts and courseware design experts, without whom the teaching effect cannot be guaranteed. It cannot be denied that MOOCs cannot be developed without the cooperation of excellent professional teachers and information technology experts [10]. Capital and talent are both critical for the development of MOOCs. However, it is more urgent to establish the personnel team as the resources introduced overseas is obviously more than the courses independently developed by us. MOOCs haven't been around for a long time. It will take time for foreign courses to take root in China, and it is not easy to develop local MOOCs independently.

VI. REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION IN LOCAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE ERA OF MOOCs

A. *Build a MOOCs sharing alliance for financial and economic institutions*

The integration and collision of Chinese and western MOOCs have not only strengthened the exchanges and cooperation among institutions of higher learning around the world, but also realized the balanced development of education. Leafing from the exploration stage, MOOCs have realized a MOOCs alliance among universities of finance and economics, which, on the one hand, can promote the reform of professional teaching methods, and on the other hand, can give full play to the initiative of students to study independently. Through the communication and interaction between teachers and students both inside and outside the classroom, online and offline, the teaching effect will be improved.

B. *Strengthen national policy support and deepen university-industry and overseas exchanges*

To develop MOOCs, our country should increase policy support and the capital investment. Schools should focus on recording and rolling out the courses, and contribute more on video recording equipment, software and teaching aids. Considering that the construction and operation of the platform and the production of courses need a lot of technical support, we can promote school-enterprise cooperation through policy guidance. We can encourage enterprises to invest, and help colleges and universities produce talents, and provide training and other services for enterprises.

C. *Optimize the teaching methods and treat the MOOCs rationally*

Local financial and economic institutions should take the initiative to conduct educational reform and change the educational philosophy. Fully understand the needs of learners, dare to break the shackles of traditional teaching mode, create bottom-up education situation and technology platform, seek cooperation with online education, and commit to the development and construction of high-quality courses. College teachers should have an open mind, conform to the trend, face up to the shortcomings, learn the new network technology, and actively reform the teaching content, means and models. At the same time, students should be guided to adapt to the changing times, master the network technology and improve the ability to learn independently.

VII. CONCLUSION

In the context of Internet plus, MOOCs has been widely applied in the continuing education of colleges and universities. This paper adopts the SWOT method to analyze this education mode, and puts forward to constructing a class sharing platform for financial institutions, strengthening national fund and policy support, optimizing the education way and so on. It provides the valuable perspective for local financial institutions to address the declining of quantity and quality of students, enrich personnel training mode and education resources in continuing education.

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