

MOOCs at International Islamic University Malaysia

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Abstract: This paper looks at the perspective of developing an open learning website at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). As a university that values excellence in teaching and learning practices, IIUM has to embark on initiatives that make use of the e-learning platforms. With this intention, IIUM's MOOCs is to be a natural extension of its e-learning initiative, iTaleem. MOOCs at IIUM is designed to offer a taste of what learners may experience in a university's program and they are not recreations of IIUM's undergraduate courses. Islamic values are inculcated and embedded into all disciplines of knowledge.

Keywords: Massive Open Online Courses = MOOCs, online courses, Islamic values

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper intends to propose a conceptual solution that develops an open learning website or better known as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Based on the current needs today, education needs to be sought to sense and respond to rapidly changing customer demand, reduce inventories to the lowest possible levels and achieve higher levels of operational efficiency. Even businesses today have started to use social networking tools to connect with their employees, customers and managers worldwide (Laudon & Laudon, 2014). Thus, it is possible for education institutions to follow the same path, driven by the need to raise institutional profiles and improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. To support the fact, Malaysia is the first country in the world to implement the MOOCs initiative for public universities, said Second Education Minister, Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh [The Malay Mail Online, Friday September 19, 2014]. He said the initiative was meant to ensure online learning was implemented by institutions of higher learning (IPTAs) as well as reduce class time. "MOOC is a **learning-and-teaching method** which is **effective for IPTAs as participants can access the subjects anywhere and anytime** through the www.openlearning.com/Malaysianmoocs website."

The study also raises awareness of relevant collaboration initiatives that could be adopted and replicated to facilitate and support community interactions between participants, participants, teaching assistants, lecturers and professors. Based on the literature review, the opportunity of providing open-access features while maintaining free access for participants and at the same time generating sustainable revenue and profit utilizing technology-based solution is something that we can do through MOOCs. In his article, Mike writes about how MOOCs can be monetized in various ways (LaBossiere, 2014). In other articles by John Swope, MOOCs are expensive to produce in many cases but however, MOOCs can be free and profitable at the same time by using a freemium model (Swope, 2013).

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

This idea is based on the combination of three aspects, namely providing a massive sharing knowledge to all levels of participants, utilizing technology particularly ICT for development of an open learning website at IIUM and utilizing information technology in generating revenues by using a freemium model.

A study about the implementation of The Malaysia Massive Open Online Courses Initiative for Open Education Global Conference 2015 indicates that open learning is something that we can implement in our education system for a better cause (Nordin et al., 2015). The study investigates a recent national MOOC initiative via collaboration of the Malaysia

Ministry of Education with four public universities where the user acceptance of MOOCs in one of the public universities is studied. Data was collected via an online survey distributed to the users of the MOOC course consisting of over 1000 participants. Findings were obtained based on the aspects of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology model, which are: (i) performance expectancy; (ii) effort expectancy; (iii) attitude; (iv) social influence; (v) facilitating conditions; (vi) self-efficacy; (vii) behavioral intention; and (viii) anxiety.

Findings revealed that participants in South East Asian perceive that the learning using MOOCs have a positive effect on their performance, effort and attitude during learning. Interestingly, findings also indicated that participants faced anxiety and self-efficacy issues when learning with MOOCs. The findings of this study could be useful for understanding MOOCs from a South East Asian perspective as well as in development of MOOCs that are tailored to suit the requirements and needs for MOOCs users in this region (Nordin et al., 2015).

Hence, these findings are strong reasons why it is proposed for Malaysia country, through IIUM to start developing our very own open learning program that is tailored best to suit the requirements and needs for MOOCs users in our region. As the name suggests “Massive” and “Open”, this program targets for global audiences and open to all people over the globe despite our differences in terms of social status, skin colors etc. In the context of “Rahmatan li‘l-Alamin” or Mercy to all mankind, this program shall provide selected educational contents and exercises for free. The focus targets participants which are the participants, teaching assistants, lecturers, professors and as well as all professionals/non-professionals from all walks of life.

Generating revenues from online education comes from certain features such as further accreditation which is offered in affordable range of price for the participants. As what is written in John Swope’s article, “Two things help here. First, MOOCs are reusable. Whereas the cost of a professor, a lecture hall and other variable expenses must be incurred for each brick-and-mortar class, the cost of a MOOC is incurred one time, up front (with smaller, on-going maintenance costs), and that content is sold over a longer period of time. Second, MOOCs can utilize a freemium model to keep costs low for most participants and upsell participants and organizations that want premium features. Most MOOC providers now offer a certification track, which allows participants to pay for an official certificate upon successful completion of a course. They have also started to partner with organizations willing to pay for content as part of their training and development programs. Last month, edX partnered with Tenaris to deliver off-the-shelf and custom content for more than 27,000 employees. By using this freemium model and extending the sellable life of their content, universities can make these courses massive, open *and* profitable” (Swope, 2013).

It is catalytic as it impersonalized learning participation, free of charge, indicating that more learners would have access to high quality educational institutions that offer MOOC to the general masses. For this reason, “There are barriers that must be overcome for the MOOC concept to become self-sustaining? To me the most obvious barriers are (Hill, 2012):

1. Developing revenue models to make the concept self-sustaining;
2. Delivering valuable signifiers of completion such as credentials, badges or acceptance into accredited programs;
3. Providing an experience and perceived value that enables higher course completion rates (most today have less than 10% of registered participants actually completing the course); and
4. Authenticating participants in a manner to satisfy accrediting institutions or hiring companies that the participant identifies is actually known.”

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Based on the literature reviews, there are few matters that make a MOOC become a relevant solution to solve the flaws of traditional education and complement the system in its own means. In traditional education there is no such thing as understanding the learners’ retention and intention. It is all about running the system of education endlessly. “For educators used to thinking about participant attrition in a traditional university setting, the “retention funnel” in a MOOC can cause considerable alarm. To a university professor accustomed to the traditional audience of committed, paying participants in a brick-and-mortar classroom, the image of continuously-emptying lecture halls — where only one in every 20 participants remains to the end — is an understandably frightening prospect. The vast majority of participants

who enroll in traditional university classes enter with the explicit intent of earning a credential. When participants do not receive a credential, either the participants, the system, or some combination of both has failed“ (Koller et al., 2013).

Besides that, there are people that have the incapability to seek knowledge due to financial problems, hectic lifestyles that constraint them from taking one-to-one tuitions and etc. “There exists a generation of young community and they are bearing the brunt of decades of runaway college costs. Graduates are entering the workforce with staggering participants loans that are inhibiting their ability to buy homes, cars and start families“ (Douglas & Belkin, 2014).

4. OBJECTIVE

The main objective for this paper is:

- To propose a conceptual solution that develops an open learning website or Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) at International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) – blending education, ICT and entrepreneurship.
- To transform the manner in which the University imparts learning and knowledge to its participants through blended learning. Through the blended learning approach, all participants are able to utilize virtual learning material and collaborative learning tools, allowing them the opportunity to expand their learning experience beyond the classroom.
- To provide free and premium educational contents, notes and quizzes where targeted audiences can access anywhere, any time. At the same time, MOOCs at IIUM shall be able to generate sustainable revenue and profit from affordable participants.

From an Islamic perspective, this website can be one of the sources of “Rahmatan li’l-Alamin” or “Mercy to all the worlds” and making the world a better place by expanding the culture of virtues especially amongst all people from all walks of life in seeking knowledge.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

The emergence of Massive Open Online Courseware (MOOC) has garnered widespread attention for revolutionizing open access learning and it is considered as the main driver of education innovation. The acronym was coined by Dave Cormier and Bryan Alexander in 2008 when Stephen Downes and George Siemens incepted Connectivism and Connective Knowledge course that propagates the learning theory of Connectivism. It is proposed as a learning theory for the digital age. In the Malaysian context, MOOCs is steadily gaining traction amongst higher educational institutions where more universities are jumping into the bandwagon in creating their homegrown MOOCs (Nor Fadzlen, 2014)

Back in time, International Islamic University, Malaysia has been standing strong in the tertiary education for 32 years old since it has been established in 23 May 1983. IIUM was built around the concept of the "Garden of Knowledge and Virtue". The university's uniqueness lies in its philosophy and curricular, which combine rigorous academic programs with Islamic social and moral values. It has since become one of the prominent universities, not only in Malaysia, also internationally. Over the last 20 years, the university has been host to participants from more than 92 countries. IIUM became the first international university and the first university in Malaysia to use English as the medium of instruction and administration. Having an impressive background as recorded in its history, IIUM has a very strong core values to realizing its vision and mission globally by developing MOOCs to link the knowledge for the ummah.

Vision
To be a knowledge centre, enabling intense intellectual inquiry by providing a dynamic learning environment and proactively linking the ummah with knowledge
Mission
With knowledge we serve to provide quality and value to library customers in all our endeavours through multiple communication networks utilizing constantly updated infrastructure and needed resources

As what is reported in The Star Online, Sept 19 2014, Malaysians are exploring niche areas of study via online courses, and it's shifting the educational landscape. "Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are about widening my horizons and going out of my comfort zone to learn things I did not get to pursue in university," says computer science graduate and IT service provider Ricky Soo. Soo is among an increasing number of Malaysians actively pursuing Massive Open Online Courses and believe they are a valuable educational tool that expands one's knowledge and skills, at virtually no cost whatsoever.

Based on this interview, this is a good indicator that our nation is hungry for knowledge and IIUM should take further step in taking this chance to spread the knowledge via online courses, for the locals and also internationals. As said by Prof. Ray Schroeder, an associate vice chancellor of online learning at the University of Illinois Springfield, "I agree that MOOCs will not overtake traditional campus-based learning. Instead, they may reach the newly forming markets of just-in-time learners, job-credentialing and skills-updating. These are areas that have not been well-served by higher education in the past." (Douglas & Belkin, 2014)

From all over the world, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) established OpenCourseWare in 2002 and the OpenUniversity set up OpenLearn in 2006, representing an ongoing development of the open education movement. Influenced by the early development of MOOCs, various open learning platforms have been set up by elite institutions; examples from 2012 include MIT edX and OU's Futurelearn. Locally, there is nationwide MOOC's training for trainers' (TOT) workshops that have been conducted with Malaysian universities to incept MOOC as part as tertiary education offered in our country. Taylor's University is the 1st higher educational institution in Malaysia that conducted MOOC (Entrepreneurship) via OpenLearning. It was helmed by Professor Mushtak Al-Attabi and successfully gained 2581 participants. Universiti Putra Malaysia has launched PutraMOOC by using OpenLearning platform and Universiti Perguruan Sultan Idris has initiated Open4Learn. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia is also initiating MOOC, providing a flexible and lifelong education to the society. (Nor Fadzen, 2014)

Making sense of MOOCs, the current UK political administration has continued the course set by the government with an even more radical agenda to allow new, for-profit providers to enter the higher education market. These include, changes to funding whereby participants pay most of their tuition fees, through participants loans, and changes to national quality assurance measures so that new players can enter the market place and offer new, differentiated provision including more for-profit universities. There is also an opportunity here for open education where less traditional lecturing and more facilitative and guided approaches to education can find a place in this new landscape of online learning where increased fees for established models may act as a deterrent to participants. (Yuan et al., 2013)

Rani Wemel, a chief operating officer for MyMobileUniversity states that Malaysia has the infrastructure to implement this, and in fact, it has already been outlined in the National Education Blueprint. It's only a matter of setting an effective timeline and not delaying its implementation. Thereupon, it gives another better reason to start-up a global Malaysian MOOCs which focuses on providing education and learning environment that is advanced, up-to-date with the worldwide trending and mostly, enhancing people's achievement in their lives for the sake of better ummah in the future. Many countries from all over the world has started to implement the MOOCs aggressively. It is indeed a very welcoming for IIUM to develop MOOCs because our content and syllabus are different and special from the other MOOCs providers.

MOOCs in IIUM will be designed based on IIUM philosophy which the philosophy of the University was inspired by the recommendations of the first World Conference on Muslim Education held in Mecca in A.H. 1398/ A.D 1977. The spirit of this philosophy is based on the Holy Qur'an, in particular the five verses revealed to the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W., namely Al-Alaq, verses 1-5:

Read! In the name of the thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created

Created man, out of a leech-like clot :

Read! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful

He Who taught (the use of) the Pen

Taught man that which he knew not

According to this philosophy, knowledge shall be propagated in the spirit of Tawhid, leading towards the recognition of Allah as the Absolute Creator and Master of mankind. The spirit behind this recognition of Allah as the Lord of the World (Rabbal-Alamin) represents the apex in the hierarchy of knowledge. Thus, all disciplines of knowledge should lead towards subservience of this truth. This is because knowledge is a form of trust (amanah) from Allah to man, and hence man should utilize knowledge according to Allah's will in performing his role as the servant and vicegerent (khalifah) of Allah on earth. In this way, the seeking of knowledge is regarded as an act of worship. IIUM will offer courses that are from its strong cores which are Law courses, Islamic Revealed Knowledge courses and Human Science courses. Islamic values are inculcated into all disciplines.

6. CONCEPTUAL SOLUTION

BUSINESS MODELS

Initiatives	For profit	Free to access	Certification fee	Institutional credits
eDX	x	✓	✓	x
Coursera	✓	✓	✓	x ✓
Udacity	✓	✓	✓	x ✓
Udemy	✓	x ✓	✓	x ✓
P2PU	x	✓	x	x

Key

- x Not a feature
- ✓ Feature present
- x ✓ Features partially present

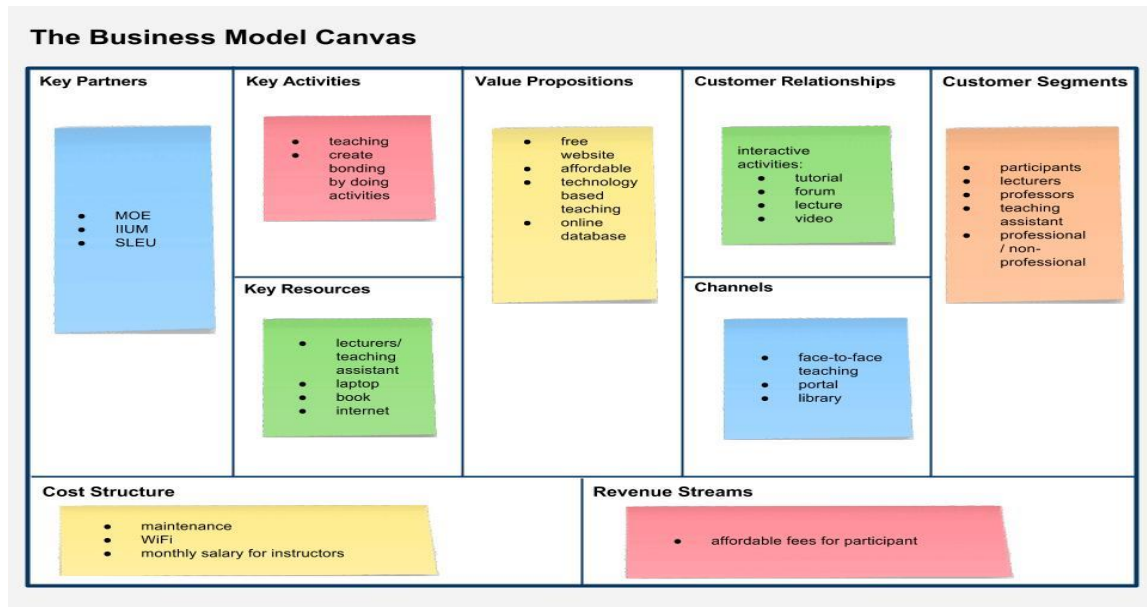
Table 1: Comparison of key aspects of MOOCs or Open Education initiatives

The most common revenue stream for the major new MOOC providers is to charge fees for certificates. Whilst edX is a not-for-profit MOOC platform with the goal of helping universities achieve shared educational missions, in the longer term it will also need to be self-sustaining. Coursera and UDACITY are examples of for-profit organizations, they are working on developing a variety of business models, and according to their published commercial strategies, these include: selling participants information to potential employers or advertisers; fee-based assignment grading; access to the social networks and discussions; advertising for sponsored courses; and tuition fees for credited courses (Educause, 2012).

Table 2 provides an overview of potential business models proposed by current MOOC providers.

edX	Coursera	UDACITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification • Secure assessments • Employee recruitment • Applicant screening • Human tutoring or assignment marking • Enterprises pay to run their own training courses • Sponsorships • Tuition fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification • Employers paying to recruit talented students • Students résumés and job match services • Sponsored high-tech skills courses

The following are the proposed 9 blocks of Business Model Canvas (BMC) for MOOCs IIUM:



• **Customer segments:**

The business proposed focus on participants from all levels because we need to provide good teaching and give additional learning support with online course materials and online resources. The targeted audiences are students, lecturers, professors, teaching assistants and all professionals/non-professionals that will be using our MOOCs.

• **Customer relationship:**

For the customer relationship, this business needs to sustain a good customer relationship with participants and lecturers. There will be interactive activities between lecturers, professors, and participants as well as other participants. What set IIUM's MOOCs apart from other courses in Malaysia would be the Islamic values inculcated in all disciplines of studies, dynamic and interactive delivery method to support a more meaningful learning experience.

• **Channels:**

There are a number of ways on how the teaching method will be delivered to the participants. A meet-up method of teaching is one of the best ways for participants to do discussion and improve their learning skills. There are many instances in which face-to-face instructor-led training is still the best solution for teach (Tobin, 2010). Besides, it provides interactive user forums to support community interactions between participants, lecturers, professors, and teaching assistants. Online learning as a subset of distance learning facilitates the learning process through the internet. As a special form of educational process or practice, Holistic Development of Human Talent... the uncertainties of online learning remain to be solved "regarding how, and in what ways, technology can enhance the teaching/learning process, particularly at a distance" (Phipps & Merisotis, 1999).

Through number of mosques we have in the country, IIUM's MOOCs shall be enabled to the public/Ummah especially the needy and the poor to benefit from IIUM MOOCs. As reviewed in an article, to utilize the potential strength of the Network-of Mosques (NoM) in helping the poor families in gaining easy and effective access to government "Poverty Eradication" programs such as eKasih or the database system which contains the information of the poor families in Malaysia.¹ The network of mosques acting as the "front desk" service delivery to the Poor. Thus, enhancing the roles of a Mosque – a place for Worship/"Ibadah" and as a community center for the local Muslims as well as for the Malaysian in general.² (MyMosqueNet2Cloud Collaborative System: A network of mosques towards eradicating poverty in Malaysia, Habiba Hamid, Nur Dini Khairuddin, Yousra Al-amodi, Abdul Rahman Ahmad Dahlan, Rahmah Ahmad H. Osman, 2014) According to (Ad-Darsh, 2009), he noted that the mosque was also a center for education during the time of the Prophet. Furthermore, Islam strongly believes that mosques are not just "places of prayers" rather, mosques are in modern parlance – community centers (Auda, 2011)³

- **Value Proposition:**

Definition of value proposition is (in marketing) an innovation, service, or feature intended to make a company or product attractive to customers. This statement should convince a potential consumer that one particular product or service will add more value or better solve a problem than other similar offerings. Thus, it is believed that the value proposition offered by the proposed open learning can attract many participants to use this open learning website because it helps us to increase access to important course information. Besides, it offers a free website and can be easily access by others. Affordable can be defined as being within the financial means of most people (MerriamWebster Dictionary). Technology can be defined as the branch of knowledge that deals with the creation and use of technical means and their interrelation with life, society, and the environment (Dictionary.com). Most of the education institutions nowadays teach in a traditional method, which is face-to face, ignoring the fast growing technology. Realizing this opportunity, it offers a technology-based teaching to engage participants. In addition, IIUM's MOOCs is an on-line platform where all contents, notes and quizzes can be easily stored, managed and retrieved online. Content can be used by IIUM students & stakeholders as well the public and also it should be made accessible through Network of Mosques.

- **Key Activities:**

The main reason on doing this project is mainly to contribute and to realize IIUM's mission to provide quality and value to library customers in all our endeavors through multiple communication networks utilizing constantly updated infrastructure and needed resources. Also, to transform the manner in which the University imparts learning and knowledge to its participants through blended learning as promoted by Second Education Minister, Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh. He said the initiative was meant to ensure online learning was implemented by institutions of higher learning (IPTAs) as well as reduce class time. "MOOCs is a learning and teaching method which is effective for IPTAs as participants can access the subjects anywhere and anytime through the www.openlearning.com/Malaysianmoocs website. Through the blended learning approach, IIUM's MOOCs participants are able to utilize virtual learning material and collaborative learning tools, allowing them the opportunity to expand their learning experience beyond the classroom.

In addition, it provides IIUM with a flexible foundation for continuous improvement and expansion, meaning that we can continue to shape it to suit our changing educational needs. This is also can be categorized as the alternative ways for participants to gain more knowledge and at the same time have an advance learning about the subject that they learnt from their past classes. Moreover, the open learning is providing physical activities during leisure time so that they can manage to relieve their stress and at the same time, gain more knowledge. The activities will be conducted by the instructors, and it also will be an interactive activity which means that the participants can communicate and interact with the community in the MOOCs for any enquiries.

- **Key Resources:**

Main duties and responsibilities of instructors are to engage with participants in teaching. The range of duties may vary from time to time but faculties are engaged primarily in lecturing. In most of the teaching and learning program that are going to serve, instructors are the crucial entity to make the service success. Lecturers will demonstrate communication and interpersonal skills as they relate to interaction with participants via video posts. Meanwhile, notes and laptops are tools to facilitate the learning and teaching process. The instructors will provide free notes for the participants in order to study. Besides using the traditional method of teaching, portal is also act as the platform for the teacher to gain profit. Portal is used by the teacher to enhance the participants' learning skill. The portal will provide extra learning material for participants to boost up their learning desire. For example, free notes of the topic will be given to the participants online. Then, after the participants have revised the notes, they will attempt to answer the quizzes questions free of charged. The portal also provides news updated in the portal such as the notes and quizzes.

- **Key Partners:**

It is expected that this conceptual paper shall adopt the Quadruple Helix Model (QHM) as indicated in figure 1 above. The collaboration is among four actors which include: Government, Academia, Industry and Citizen. These four (4) actors have very important roles to achieve the system objectives in the campaign to eradicate poverty from the Muslim Ummah. All the four (4) actors need to work together. The proposed owners of this system are IIUM, working in close collaboration based on WoG concept with Government through Ministry of Education, Academia, Industry and Citizen.

To ensure the success of IIUM's MOOCs, key partners and collaborators are needed that include the following government organizations:

i) Ministry of Education:

Ministry of Education (MOE) is a Government ministry responsible for Malaysian educational matters. The current minister is Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin who is also Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia and Idris bin Jusoh who served as Minister II.

ii) International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM):

The International Islamic University Malaysia also known as IIUM or UIAM, is one of the Public Institutions of Higher Education (PIHE) in Malaysia. Its main campus is located in Gombak, Selangor with its Centre for Foundation Studies situated in Petaling Jaya and Gambang, Pahang and its medical-centric branch in Kuantan, Pahang. Eight governments which are sponsoring IIUM from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). It is distinct from the International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan and International Islamic University in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Collaboration with these countries, IIUM could set its MOOCs apart by incorporating authentic Asian and Malaysian content with the aim of building of a learning community locally and internationally. The university can opt to use Asian speakers for its MOOCs and even incorporated the latest crowd funding concept for a real life learning experience in its MOOC courses.

iii) Participants Enhancement Learning Unit (SLEU):

In February 2004, SLEU was formally established with its own staff and premises on the Ground Floor of the Participants Centre Building. SLEU continues to implement the original objectives of enhancing participants learning and has organized additional programmes designed to achieve this, including revision of the camp structure, peer tutoring, various workshops and forums. Chosen services by SLEU will be done on the line through IIUM's MOOCs.

• **Cost structure**

To come up with this service, some preparations are needed in order to overcome the costs issues that are going to be faced. Maintenance of the laptops and websites, WiFi connection has to be upgrade, monthly salary for instructors and on-going updates on the content of learning materials has to be taken into account.

• **Revenue streams**

In order to gain revenue, affordable participants can pay for a certification track.

7. CONCLUSION

In many ways, IIUM is an impressive choice for lifelong learning. Not only do they provide niche specialties in terms of programs, they also maintain a consistent level of Islamic values imbued in their teachings to ensure their students graduate with a comprehensive education. While IIUM is recognized for its unique staff specializations, the institution also thrives on diversity. "We are an international university, and a good percentage of our students come from abroad," Professor Dr. Ahmad Faris Ismail, (Deputy Rector of Research and Innovation at IIUM) points out. The student population at IIUM is made up of more than 90 different nationalities, including those from non-Muslim majority countries like Australia and the Philippines. "One of our main draws both locally and internationally is the fact that we are a primarily English-medium institution with some courses being taught in Arabic

IIUM's diversity and specialized expertise work together to fill a chasm in the lifelong learning scene, offering a comprehensive education that covers both practical and ethical necessity. IIUM's MOOCs welcome the people both locals and internationals to join the courses offered, basically at no cost at all. The knowledge is there for everyone to seek, so the poor, the rich, the students, the lawyers and everyone can apply for MOOCs and improves one's self-content as well as increasing his investment in his self for the future lead.

The participants will review the lesson in the form of video, PDF or Powerpoint slides, and participate in the course activities such as forums, discussions, quizzes or practices, in order to receive a certificate of completion. All in all, it is a hope that through this IIUM's MOOCs, participants will be able to learn collaboratively at anytime, anywhere. All that's required of participants is an Internet connection, along with time to read, watch instructional videos, work on problems and discuss the material. No time-constraint, just a self-paced study to cope with the participants' schedules.

Through this effort, we hope to continue to raise the bar for higher education in Malaysia locally and globally, as well as producing participants that are balanced in their knowledge, removing the negativity thoughts about Islam in general and most probably, IIUM's MOOCs can be the first university to promote Islamic learning to the world so they will know the beauty of Islam in the perspectives of life and education.

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