

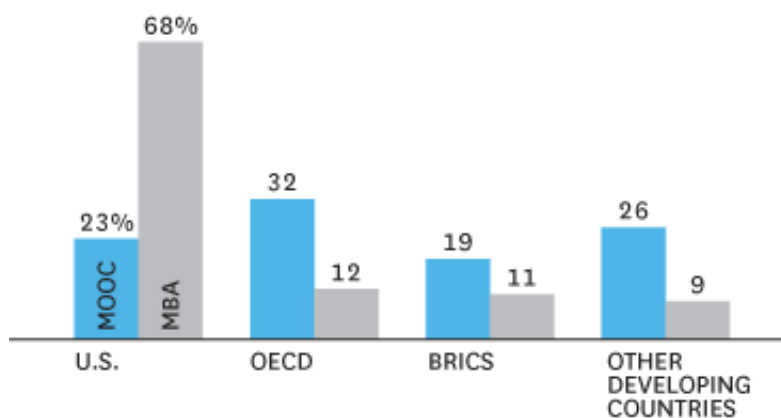
Massive Open Online Courses not a threat to traditional business schools, according to study

June 4 2014, by Amanda Mott

THE GEOGRAPHY OF WHARTON MBAs VS. MOOC ENROLLEES

MOOCs are reaching students in developing countries.

PERCENTAGE OF WHARTON STUDENTS



SOURCE DATA FROM WHARTON MOOC AND MBA ENROLLMENT

HBR.ORG

(Phys.org) —Data from a University of Pennsylvania study of massive open online courses offered by Penn's Wharton School suggest that MOOCs aren't a threat to traditional business programs, but rather an opportunity to expand to underserved markets. The findings were published today in the Harvard Business Review.

The study is the first of its kind to focus on MOOC participants taking [business](#) classes. The researchers were Ezekiel Emanuel, Penn's vice provost for global initiatives; Gayle Christensen, executive director of Penn Global; and Brandon Alcorn, Penn Global project manager. They surveyed more than 875,000 [students](#) enrolled in nine MOOCs offered by Wharton. They found that business MOOCs do not appear to be cannibalizing existing programs but are reaching at least three new student populations: those from outside the United States, especially those in developing countries; foreign-born Americans; and under-represented American minorities.

Seventy-eight percent of individuals who registered for the Wharton MOOCs came from outside the U.S., with about 45 percent hailing from developing countries. By comparison, 45 percent of two-year M.B.A. students and 14 percent of executive MBA students are foreign. Thirty-five percent of all U.S. individuals enrolled in the Wharton business MOOCs are foreign-born. By comparison, only 12.9 percent of the U.S. population is foreign-born. Nineteen percent of Wharton's American MOOC students are under-represented minorities compared to 11 percent of students enrolled in traditional M.B.A. programs at nine of the top U.S. business schools.

The study also found that, for the majority of the Wharton MOOCs students, completing an online course is not the most important outcome. Just 43 percent of respondents to a pre-course survey indicated that receiving a certificate of accomplishment was "extremely important" or "very important." The implication, researchers suggest, is that schools should move away from a business model of charging for certificates of completion.

More information: The complete study is available online: [blogs.hbr.org/2014/06/moocs-wo ...eyll-diversify-them/](https://blogs.hbr.org/2014/06/moocs-wo-...eyll-diversify-them/)

Provided by University of Pennsylvania

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