

Comparing Institutional MOOC strategies

2015 Country report - Israel

Status report based on a mapping survey conducted in October - December 2015

Yoram M Kalman

Department of Management & Economics
The Open University of Israel

Darco Jansen

Programme manager EADTU

Miriam Goes-Daniels

Researcher EADTU

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Acknowledgement / about HOME project

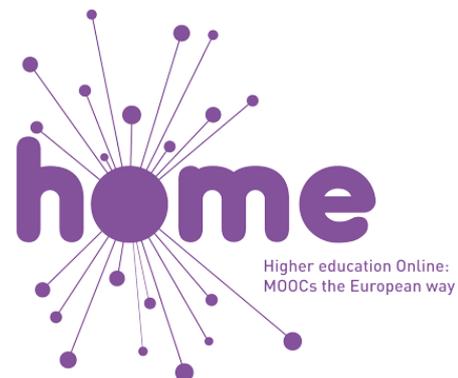
This report is published as part of the project HOME - Higher education Online: MOOCs the European way. HOME is partly funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme. HOME started in January 2014 and is funded to June 2016. The aim of the project is to develop and strengthen an open network for European cooperation on open education, in general, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), in particular. The partners will build an open institutional network on MOOCs based on European values like openness, equity, quality and diversity.

The HOME partners saw the need to develop a survey to benchmark the strategy of higher education institutions to MOOCs. Not only benchmarking amongst European institutions but also to other surveys in, for example, the United States. This 2015 survey is largely a repetition of the survey of 2014. Next to the comparison between Europe and the U.S., country reports are produced as well.

The coming years the partners will continue this survey, supporting an independent study, offering full privacy for all respondents, and providing free distribution of all report publications.

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Executive Summary

This report details the responses of seven Israeli higher education institutions (HEIs) to survey questions about their MOOC offerings, and compares them to other European HEIs. The surveys show that the two main target groups of the Israeli MOOCs were either full time students enrolled at the institution, or "everybody". The impact of the MOOCs was strongest for online and distant students, and lowest on the HEI's management and administration.

The Israeli respondents did not feel that MOOCs are likely to cause confusion about higher education degrees in Israel, thought that MOOCs are important for institutions to learn about online pedagogy, and agreed with the statement that MOOCs are a sustainable method for offering courses. They reported that the two primary institutional objectives for MOOCs were flexible learning opportunities, and increasing the institution's visibility. Most institutions reported that it is still too early to tell whether MOOCs are helping institutions to reach their goals.

The Israeli HEIs were positive towards collaborating with other institutions on topics such as the use of MOOC platforms, learning analytics and networks/communities on MOOCs, and towards outsourcing services such as the development and use of MOOC platforms.

This is the first year that Israeli HEIs are participating in the survey. Overall, the picture revealed is quite similar to the overall picture of European HEIs. Nevertheless, an important caveat is that only a small number of institutions responded to the survey questions, and in some of the sections the respondents reported uncertainty about their answers. Future surveys should cover a larger number of institutions, and aim to reach a wider set of experts and decision makers in the institutions.

Introduction¹

Israel's higher education system is an active participant in the international MOOC movement almost from its inception. Leading Israeli research universities developed MOOCs for the top international MOOC providers, and other institutions were involved in local and international MOOC initiatives. Furthermore, various institutions were involved in attempts to utilize MOOCs for lifelong learning, K-12 education, and professional training. All of these activities were carried out without specific national level guidance or funding, and led to highly diverse MOOCs in assorted disciplines, and targeting various audiences. This bottom-up process is typical for Israel's "Start-up Nation" entrepreneurial culture. In 2015-16, we see evidence for increased efforts to guide the process at the national level, with the national "Learning in a Digital Age" initiative launched in March 2016 jointly by Israel's higher education Planning and Budgeting Committee / Council for Higher Education, and by the "Digital Israel" directorate at the Ministry for Social Equality.

This survey was carried out before the launch of the "Learning in a Digital Age" initiative. The survey was distributed to Israeli institutions by the Meital Unit, which is part of the Israeli Inter-University Computation Center (IUCC), located at Tel-Aviv University.

¹ This Introduction is based on the brief report " MOOCs and Educational Technologies Policy in Israeli Higher Education" which was presented during the HOME Policy Forum in Brussels, June 2016:
http://eadtu.eu/images/publicaties/European_Policy_response_on_MOOC_opportunities_June_2016.pdf

Methodology

This study was conducted during the fourth quarter of 2015. The survey was largely a repetition of the survey from 2014 (Jansen & Schuwer, 2015). Most questions were kept identical. Some additional questions were developed during the summer of 2014 and tested among HOME partners. A Google form was open from 15th October to 4th January 2016. Higher education institutions were in general approached by personal contact and by the use of newsletters and social media to complete the questionnaire. In Israel, the questionnaire was distributed to Israeli institutions by the Meital Unit, which is part of the Israeli Inter-University Computation Center (IUCC), located at Tel-Aviv University.

The survey consists of the following 9 sections (annex I includes the complete survey):

1. Profile Information
(8 open question)
2. Status of MOOC offering, main target group and impact on institution
(5 questions with various answer categories, 3 identical questions as used in the US surveys)
3. Do you agree with the following statements?
(4 identical questions as used in the US surveys and an optional open question)
4. Primary objective for your institution's MOOCs
(1 question with 9 options identical to US survey)
5. Relative importance of the following objectives for your institution's MOOCs
(4 closed question on 5 point Likert scale plus an open question)
6. What are the primary reasons for your institution to collaborate with others on MOOCs?
(a list with 24 possibilities and 1 open question)
7. What are the primary reasons for your institution to outsource services to other (public and/or private) providers on MOOCs?
(a list with 24 possibilities and 1 open question)
8. How important are the following macro drivers for your institutional MOOC offering?
(10 closed question on 5 point Likert scale)
9. How important are the following dimensions of a MOOCs?
(15 closed question on 5 point Likert scale)

Most closed questions could be scored on a 5-point scale ranging from *Not at all relevant for my institution* to *Highly relevant for my institution*. Exceptions are those closed questions that were included from the US survey (Allen & Seaman 2014, 2015, 2016). These questions were kept identical with those in their survey so comparisons could be made. These surveys will be referenced to as US2013, US2014 and US2015 respectively. The results of the overall survey will be referred to as S2015 (Jansen and Goes-Daniels, 2016) and the survey of 2014 by EU2014 (Jansen & Schuwer, 2015a/b).

Response and Institutional profiles

The following seven institutions from Israel responded to the survey, out of about 65 Israeli HEI

1. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem Israel
2. Kibbutzim College of Education
3. The Open University of Israel
4. Bezalel academy of arts and design
5. ORT Braude College
6. Oranim Academic College
7. Sapir Academic College

Status of MOOC offering

From the seven participating institutions three are offering at least one MOOC (range 1-5). In total we can estimate that about ten to fifteen of the institutions in Israel have a MOOC, and this number is likely to increase now that the government funding is allocated to promote the development of academic MOOCs by Israeli HEIs (see also Figure 1). These numbers are similar to the overall picture in the EU.

In Figure 1 the institutional profile in MOOC offering in this survey is compared to the overall study (S 2015), the European study (EU 2014) and that of the US survey the last three years (US 2013, US 2014 and US 2015).

It is confirmed from the European study (2014) that European institutions are more involved in MOOCs compared to the US. And that this counts for Israel as well.

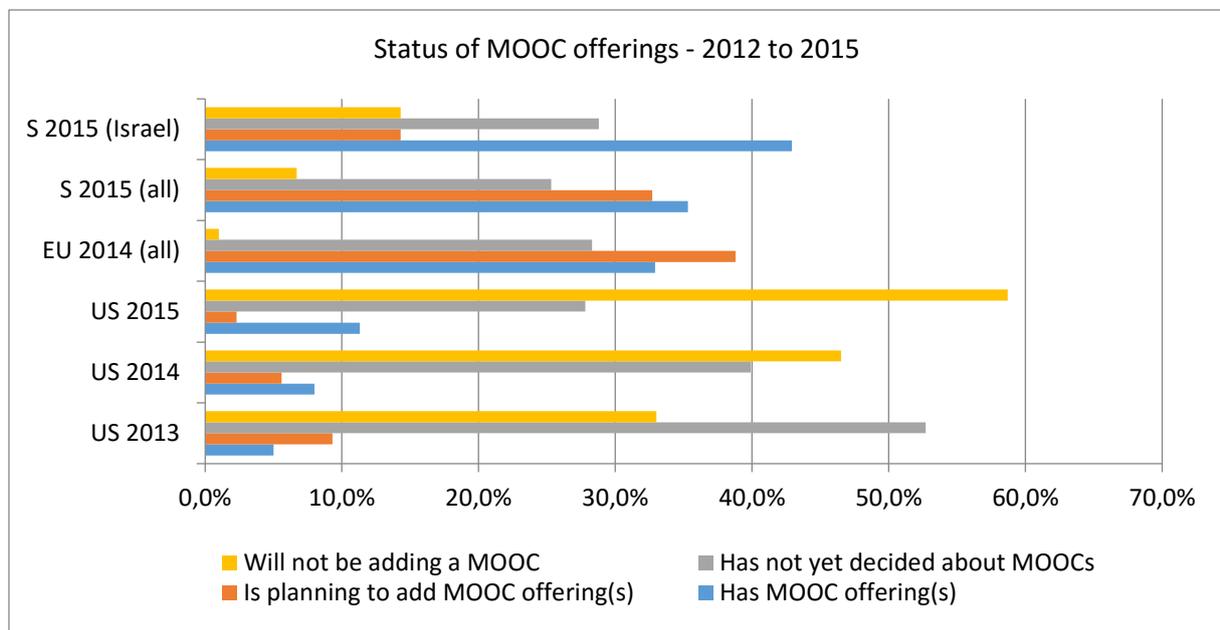


Figure 1: Institutional profile in their MOOC offering compared between that of US survey (US 2013, US 2014 and US 2015), the EU survey (EU 2014) the overall survey (S2015) and this selection of institutions in Israel

Target groups and impact of MOOC offering

The impact of MOOCs (Figure 2) is strongest at the level of online and distant students. Impact on most other functions in the university is about equal, except for management and administration, where the impact is relatively lower.

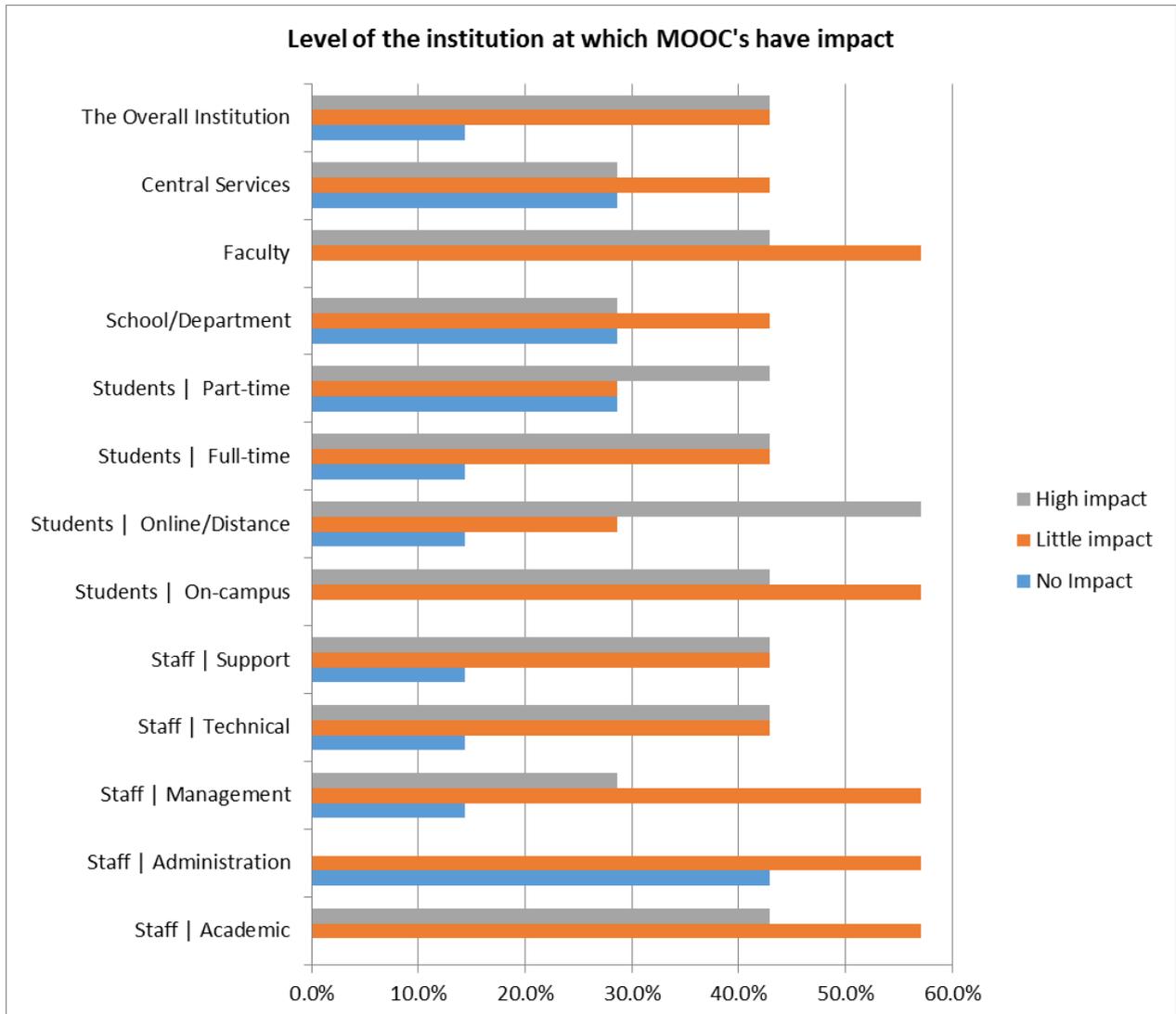


Figure 2: Impact that MOOC offering has at levels of the institution (Israel)

The Israeli respondents' main target groups (Figure 3) were either full time students enrolled at their institution (43%) or "everybody" (43%). Other target groups were part-time students at the institution (29%) and lifelong learners (29%), students from other universities (14%) and people without access to the traditional educational system (14%). On average, other respondents to the survey gave about equal weight to each of these six categories, and about 10% were "other".

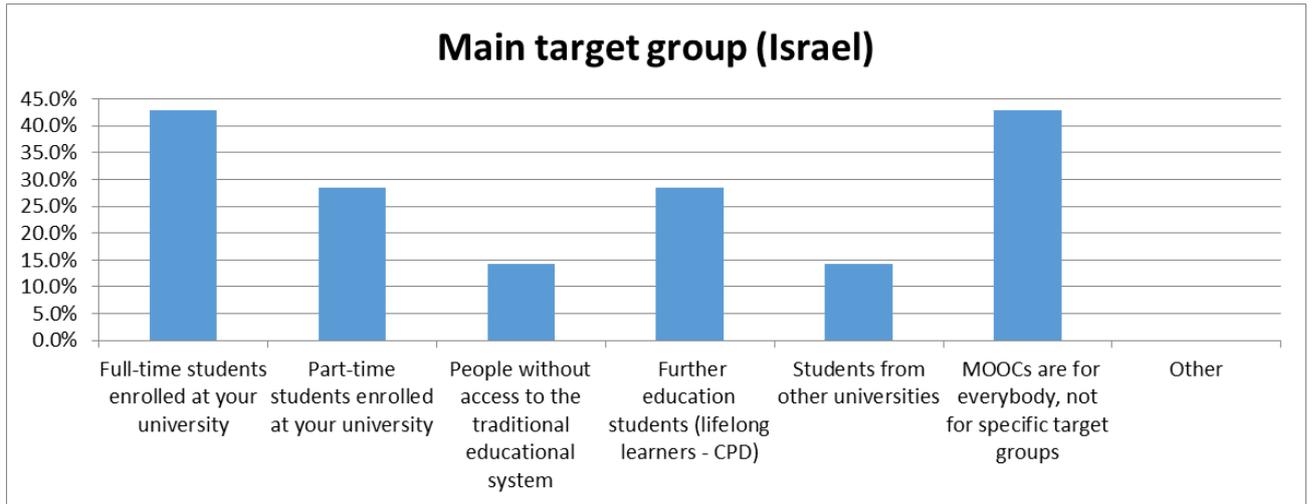


Figure 3: Main target groups for MOOC offering

Role of MOOCs compared to US and EU

Here we discuss the results of section 3 of the survey that encompasses four identical questions as used in the US 2013 survey (Allen & Seaman, 2014). Only two of those four questions were repeated in their US 2014 survey (Allen & Seaman, 2015).

Figure 4 lists the results of the question if *credentials for MOOC completion will cause confusion about higher education degrees*. Note that this question is not repeated in the 2014 US survey (Allen & Seaman, 2015). Clearly, the participants from Israel did not think this was a significant risk: None agreed with the statement, 57% were neutral, and 43% disagreed. This represents a lower level of concern about this issue than the average concern amongst the other participants in the survey, as well as a significantly lower level of concern than that reflected in the US 2013 survey.

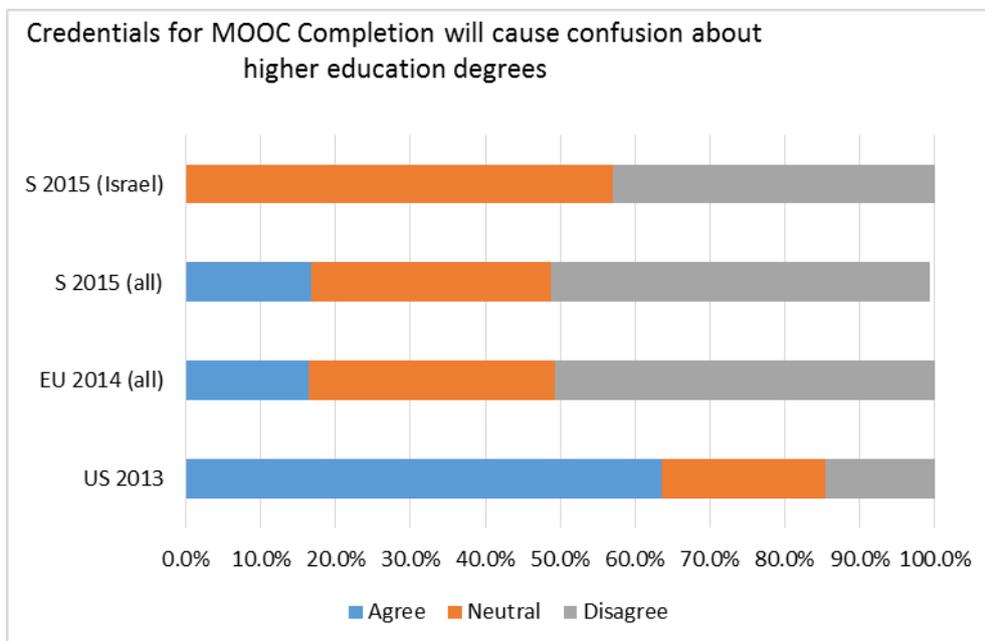


Figure 4 Replies to the question “Credentials for MOOC completion will cause confusion about higher education degrees?” compared between that of US survey (US 2013), the EU survey (EU 2014 all), the overall survey (S2015) and this selection of institutions in Israel.

Figure 5 shows the responses to the statement "MOOCs are important for institutions to learn about online pedagogy". The vast majority (86%) of Israeli participants agreed with this statement, and the rest were neutral. This response is similar to the typical response in this survey, and significantly higher than the responses in the US surveys.

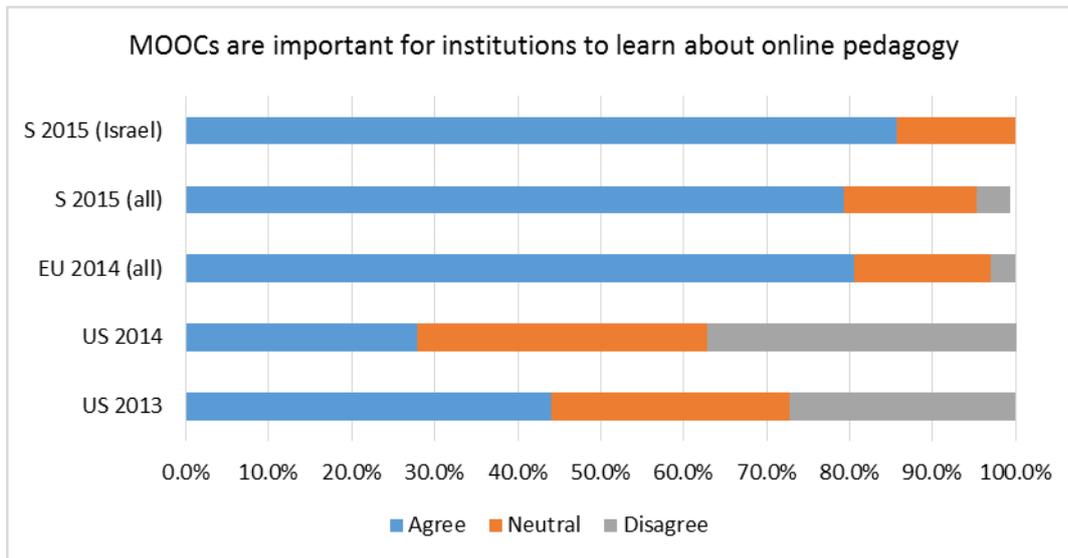


Figure 5: Replies to the question "MOOCs are important for institutions to learn about online pedagogy?" compared between that of US surveys (US 2013, US 2014), the EU survey (EU 2014) the overall survey (S2015) and this selection of institutions in Israel

Figure 6 lists the results of the question whether MOOCs are a sustainable method for offering courses. While in the US the opinion is mostly neutral or disagree, half or more than half of the institutions in the EU surveys agree with that statement, as well as 100% of those surveyed in Israel.

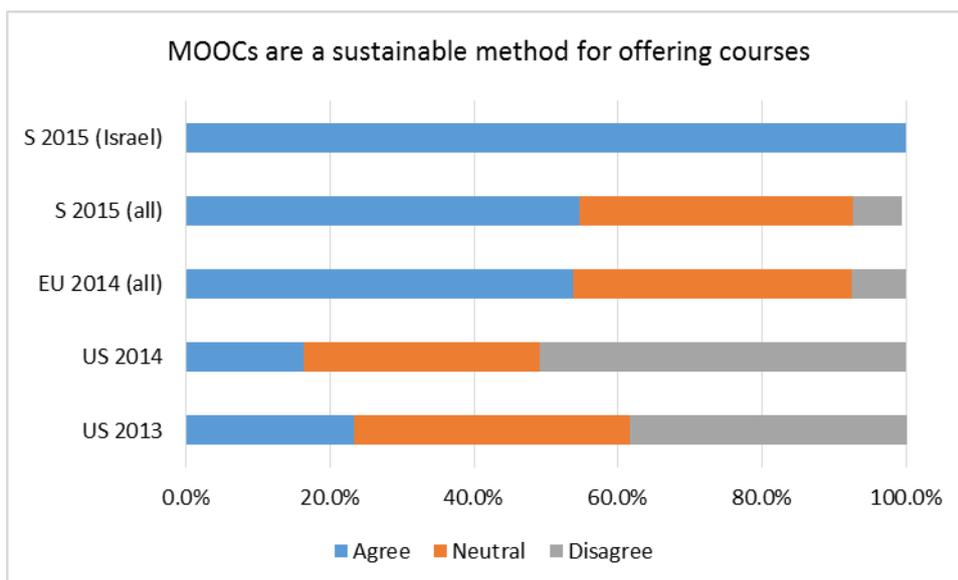


Figure 6: Replies to the question "MOOCs are a sustainable method for offering courses?" compared with that of US surveys (US 2013, US 2014), the EU survey (EU 2014) the overall survey (S2015) and this selection of institutions in Israel

Figure 7 shows that the institutions in Israel are split about the most sustainable method for delivering MOOCs. About half believe it is student centred, while the other half believes it is more teacher centred.

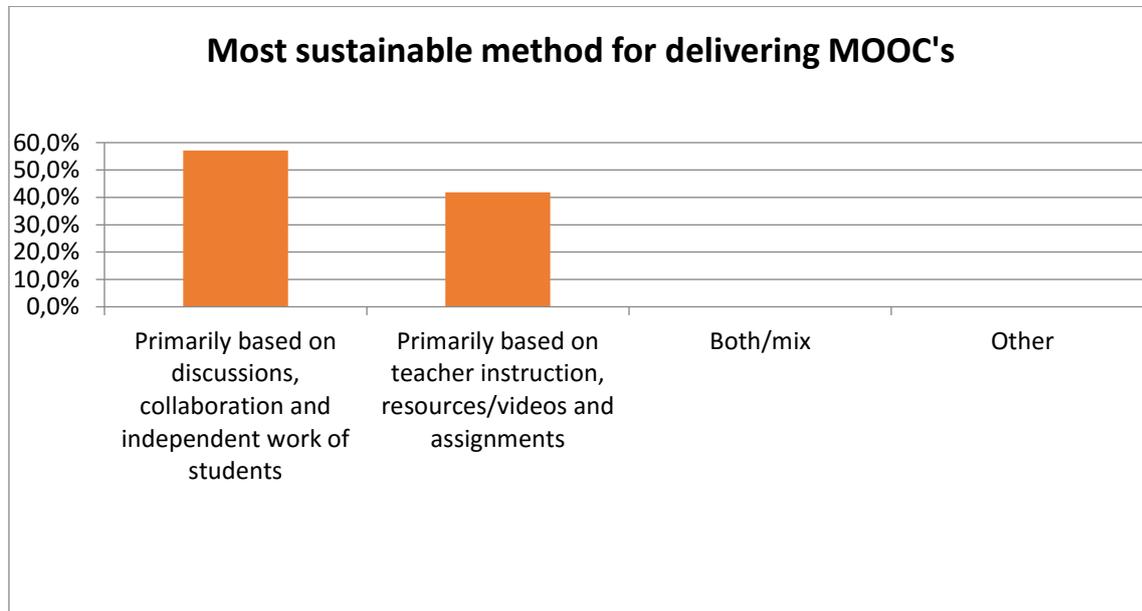


Figure 7: Most sustainable method for delivering MOOCs

Institutional objectives for MOOCs

Figure 8 shows the results to the question "How well are MOOCs meeting institution's objectives". Again, this question is not repeated in the latest US surveys (Allen & Seaman, 2015&2016). Results show that in the US people think it is too early to tell whether MOOCs are meeting institutional objectives. The institutions in Israel too are still unsure, with 57% responding that it is too early to tell, and the rest (43%) responding that they are meeting some of the objectives.

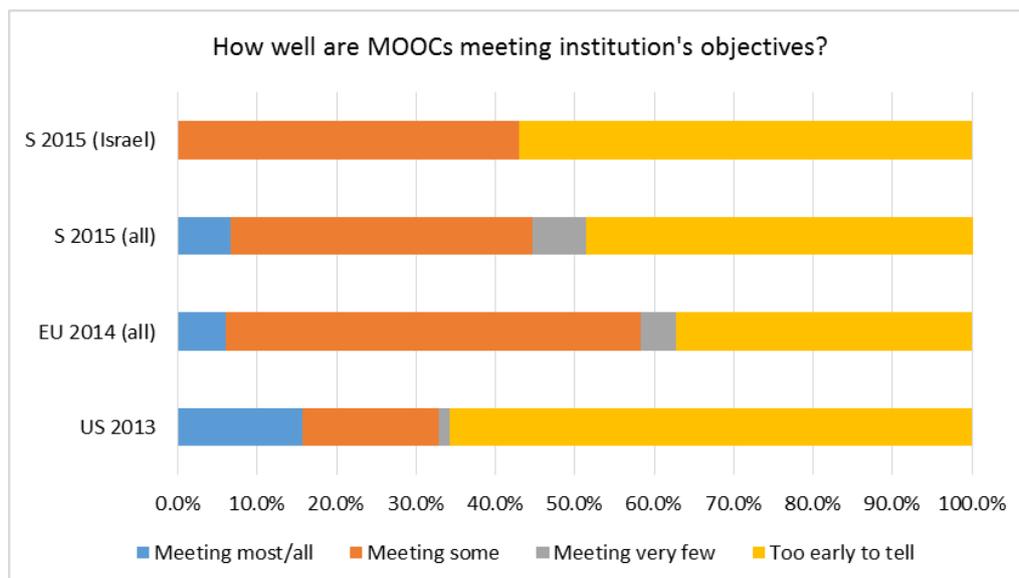


Figure 8: Replies to the question "How well are MOOCs meeting institution's objectives?" compared between that of US survey (US 2013), the EU survey (EU 2014) the overall survey (S2015) and this selection of institutions in Israel (2015)

An important context to understanding these responses is presented in Figure 9 which lists the primary objectives to offering MOOCs. Unlike the high variability that the US and EU surveys show, the Israeli respondents focused on only two primary objectives: Flexible learning opportunities (71%) and increasing the institution's visibility (29%).

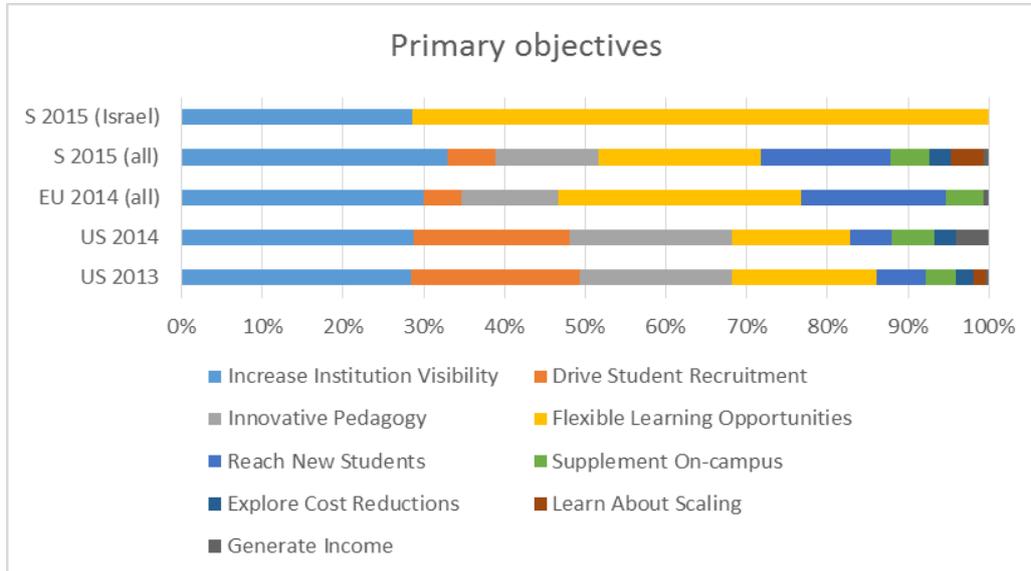


Figure 9: Primary objectives to offer a MOOC compared between that of the US surveys (US 2013 and US 2014), the EU survey (EU 2014) the overall survey (S2015) and this selection of institutions in Israel

Figure 10 shows the relevance of four different clusters of objectives for institutions with comparison between the overall European survey response and of the seven institutions in Israel.

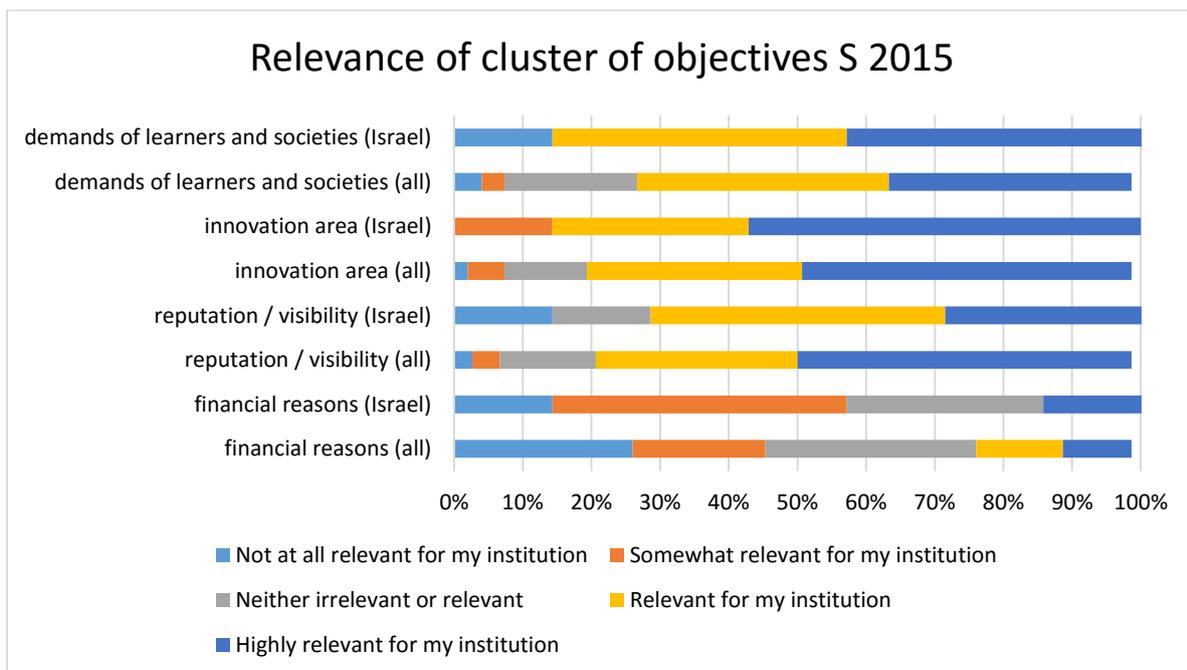


Figure10: Relevance of four different clusters of objectives for overall and for Israel.

In this figure we see only minor differences between the Israeli institutions and the overall survey. The relevance of the innovation cluster is the highest. The two clusters which are of average

relevance are reputation/visibility, and demands of learners and society, and the cluster with the lowest level of relevance is the financial one, which is consistent with other studies both in US and Europe.

Macro drivers behind MOOC offering

The European report “ Institutional MOOC strategies in Europe, Status report based on a mapping survey conducted in October - December 2014” (Jansen & Schuwer, 2015) extensively discusses the macro drivers behind the MOOC movement.

The importance of different macro drivers for institutional MOOC offering

Figure 11 shows the response from the seven institutions in Israel compared to the overall response of the overall survey 2015 (150 HEIs). A large majority (between 65% and 80%) indicates that many macro drivers are relevant or highly relevant for their institution. The following three drivers are not seen as that important.

1. New method in big business: 41,4% consider this (highly) relevant. Apparently European institutions are not in the market with MOOCs to generate big business. This probably relates to the strong social dimension of higher education where many universities in Europe are funded by governments.
2. Reduce the costs of HE: only 30% consider this (highly) relevant. This result is consistent with previous results (see Jansen and Goes-Daniels, 2016)

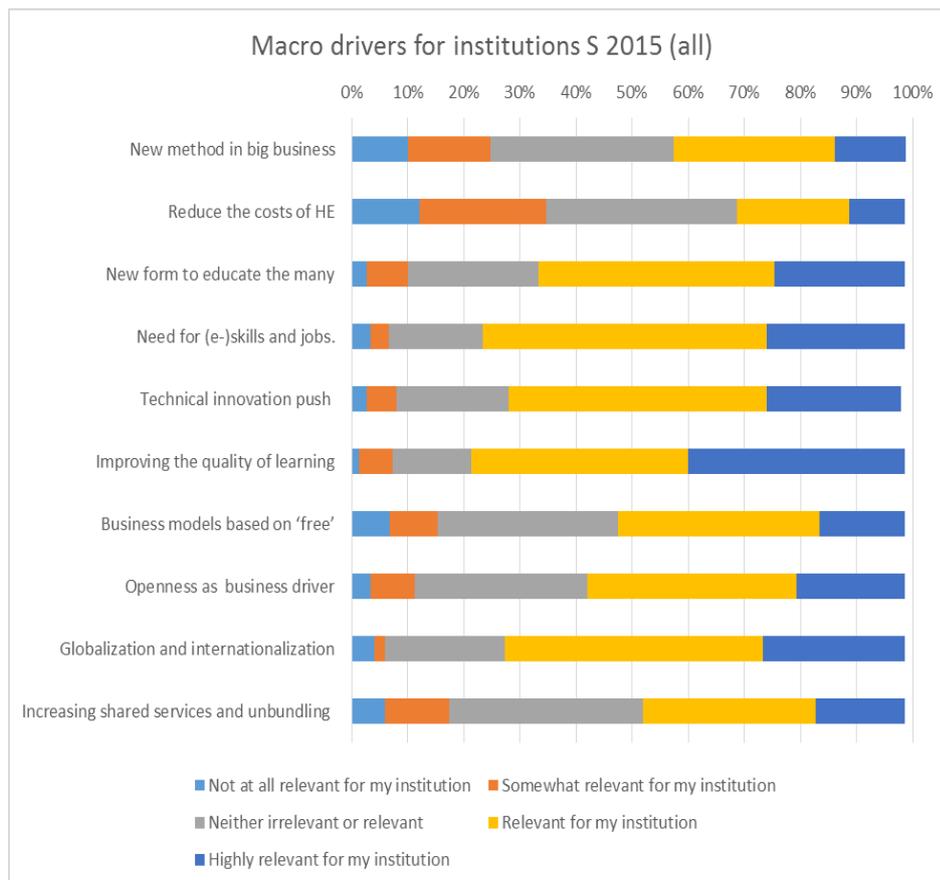


Figure 11a: Relevance of ten different macro drivers for overall 2015 survey

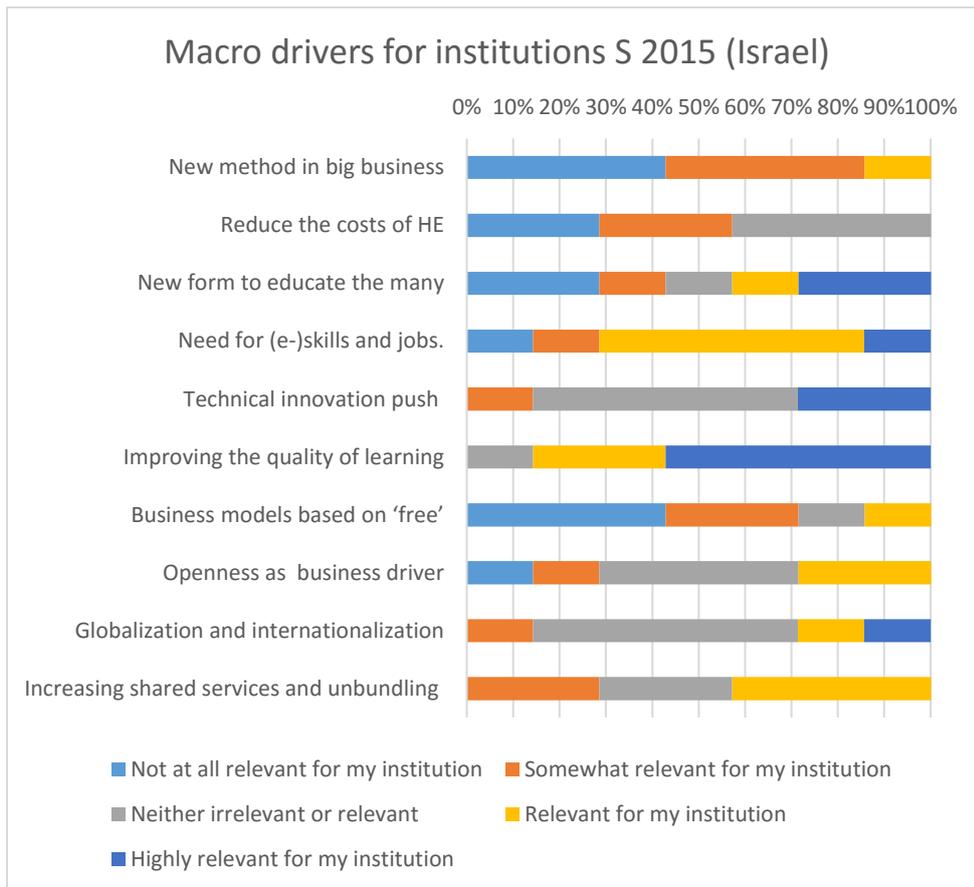


Figure 11b: *Relevance of ten different macro drivers for institutions in Israel (2015)*

When we compare Figures 11a and 11b we see many differences, especially that a ‘business models based on free’ is not the main driver for institutions in Israel to offer MOOCs directly as well as ‘reduce the costs of HE’, and the relatively higher importance of the ‘need for (e)-skills and jobs’ and ‘improve the quality of learning’ drivers.

Collaboration or Outsourcing of services in MOOC offerings

In this section we asked about the primary reasons for institutions to collaborate on MOOCs with others. In the next section we asked what kind of services institutions would be willing to outsource to external (public and/or private) providers.

Both questions are supported by a common list of 24 areas:

1. Use of MOOC platform
2. Development of MOOC platform
3. Certification services
4. Authentication services
5. New educational services (scalable)
6. Using MOOCs as crowdsourcing to answer research questions
7. Tailored (paid for) follow-up courses
8. Follow-up materials to be paid for (e-documents, software, e-books)
9. Translation services
10. Evaluation (pre-/posts surveys)
11. Design of MOOCs
12. Development of MOOC (materials)
13. Re-using elements (for instance OER, tests) from MOOCs
14. Licencing – copyright - copyleft
15. Assessment – tests – quizzes
16. Learning Analytics
17. Support services for participants
18. Using MOOCs from other institutions in your own institution
19. Co-creating MOOCs with other institutions
20. Co-creating cross-national educational programmes based on MOOCs with other institutions
21. Networks/communities on MOOCs
22. Branding of a collective (best research universities, etc.)
23. Marketing MOOC offer
24. Selling MOOC-data (e.g., for recruitment, advertisements)

Figures 12a and 12b indicate likeliness of areas of collaboration on which institutions would like to collaborate with other HE institutions for respectively the HEIs in Israel and all 150 HEIs in the overall survey. It is general observed that overall, European HEIs are much more likely to collaborate on services like co-creating MOOCs with other institutions, re-using elements from MOOCs, development of MOOC (materials) and in the design of MOOCs next to the use of MOOC platforms. The joint development of a European MOOC platform is not very likely as well as services on selling data, translation services and follow-up materials. Translations and licencing are among the less likely areas of collaboration.

It seems that the HEIs in Israel are less likely to collaborate compared to the overall study, although most likely collaboration is on the topics: networks/communities on MOOCs, learning analytics, using MOOCs as crowdsourcing to answer research questions, new educational services, and use of MOOC platform. This final one is interesting in light of the fact that the Israeli government's digital learning initiative is based on a shared MOOC platform: Open edX. Note that a very high percentage of the respondents indicated that they are not qualified to answer, so these responses are only an indication about reasons for institutions to collaborate.

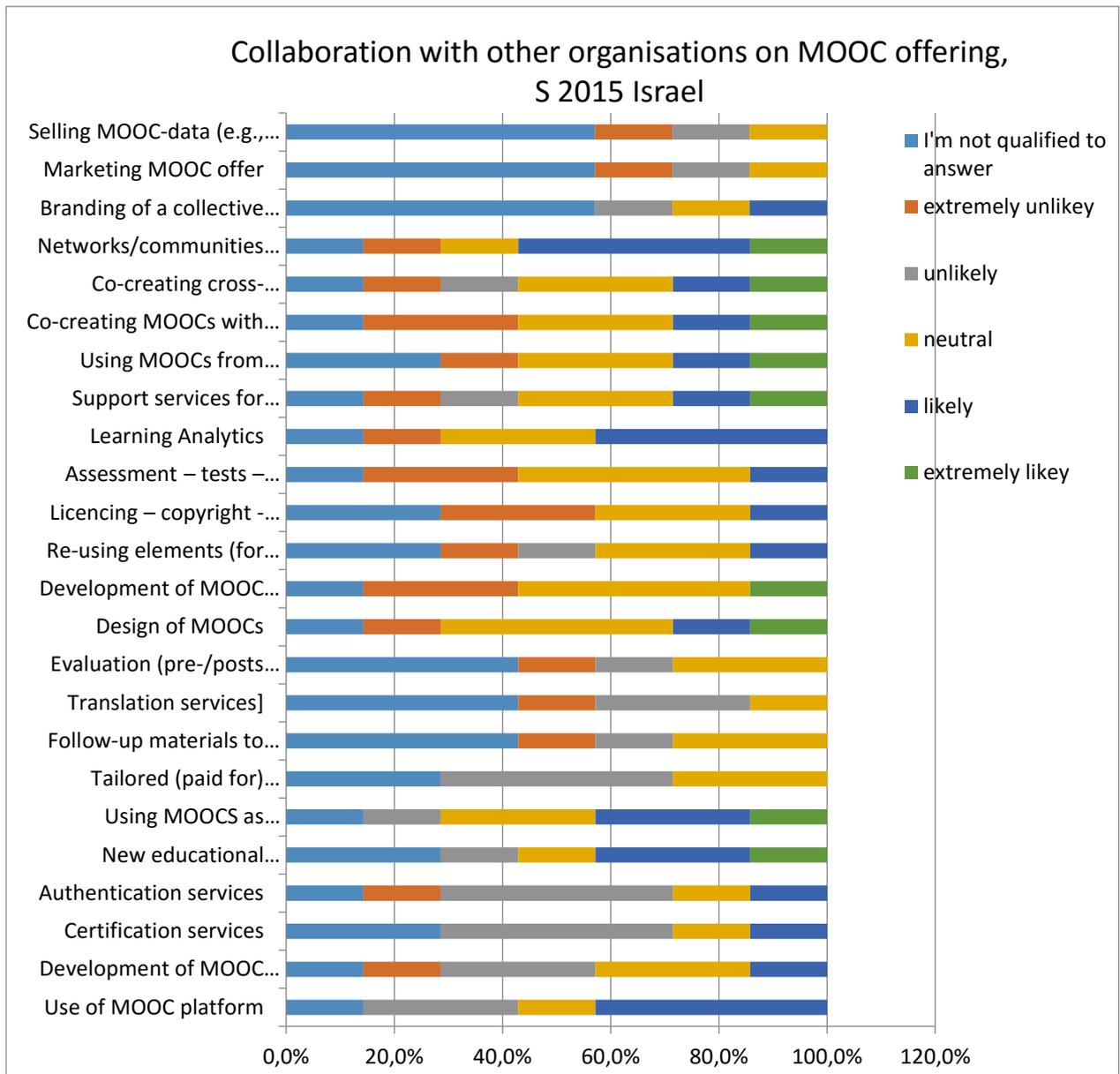


Figure 12a: Likeliness of areas on which institutions in Israel (2015) would like to collaborate with other HE institutions. See page 14 for the full name of each of the 24 areas.

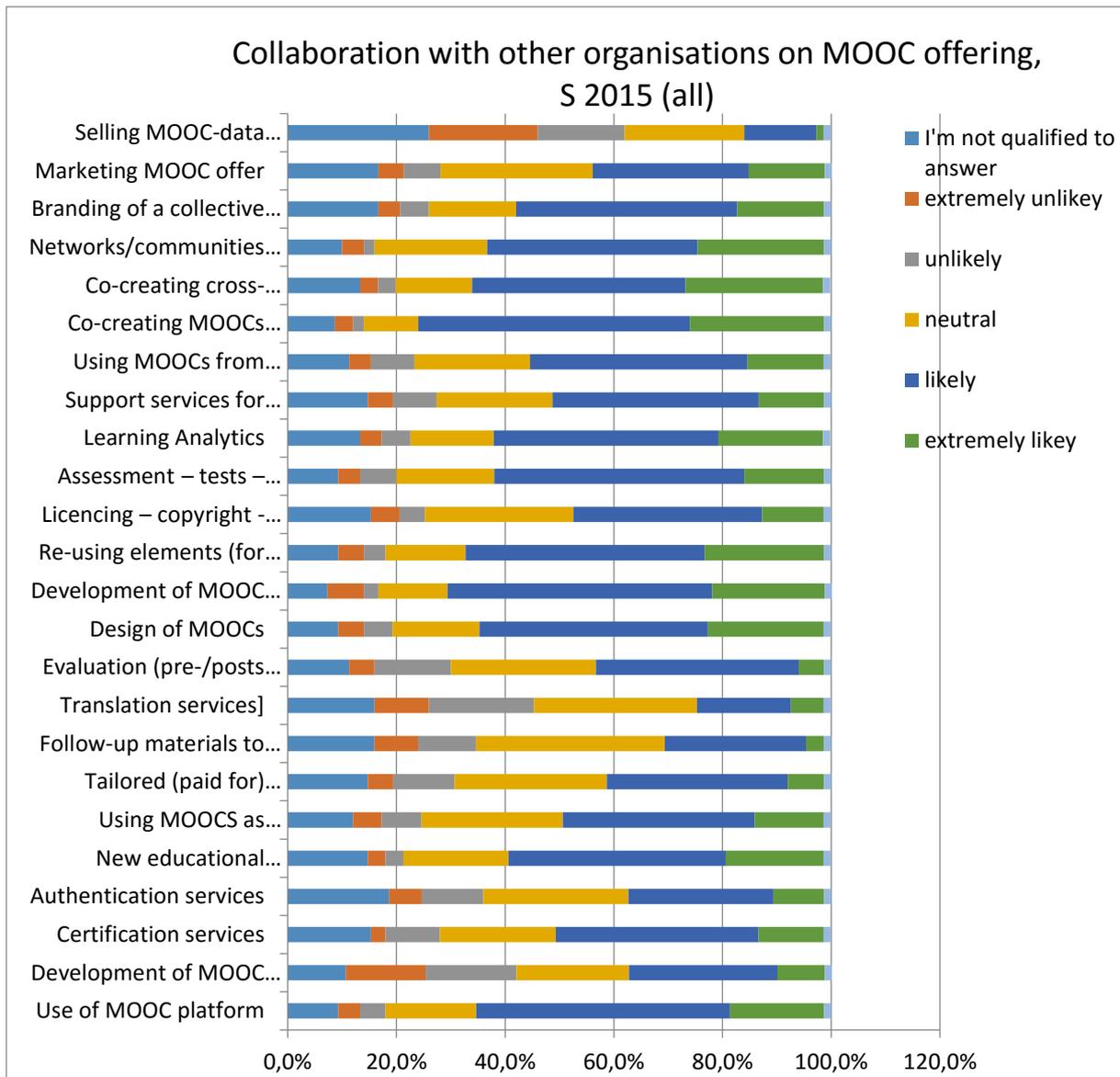


Figure 12b: Likelihood of areas on which institutions in overall survey (150 HEIs) (S2015) would like to collaborate with other HE institutions. See page 14 for the full name of each of the 24 areas.

Figures 13a and 13b detail the responses to a question about the likeliness of services that institutions would like to outsource to other providers. The possible responses are the same 24 possible responses as for Figures 12a and b. We see that although in the overall European survey the likeliness to outsource these services is quite low, we see that Israeli institutions are more positive to outsourcing activities which are not considered as core to the academic activity: development and use of the MOOC platform, and translation services. Interestingly, they are also positive towards using MOOCs from other institutions in their own institution. Note that here too a very high percentage of the respondents indicated that they are not qualified to answer.

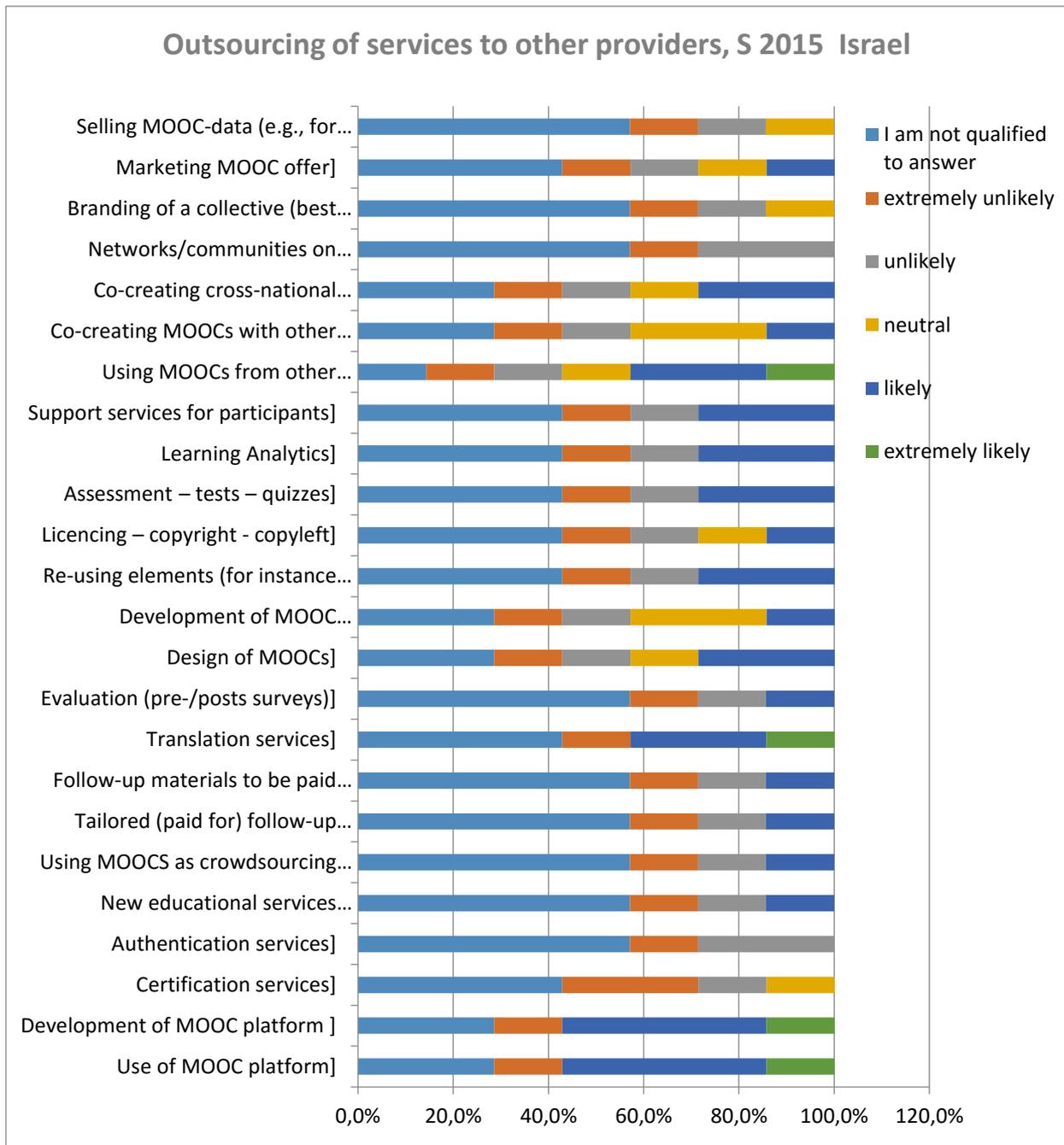


Figure 13a: Likeliness of services that institutions in Israel (2015) would like to outsource to other providers. See page 14 for the full name of each of the 24 areas.

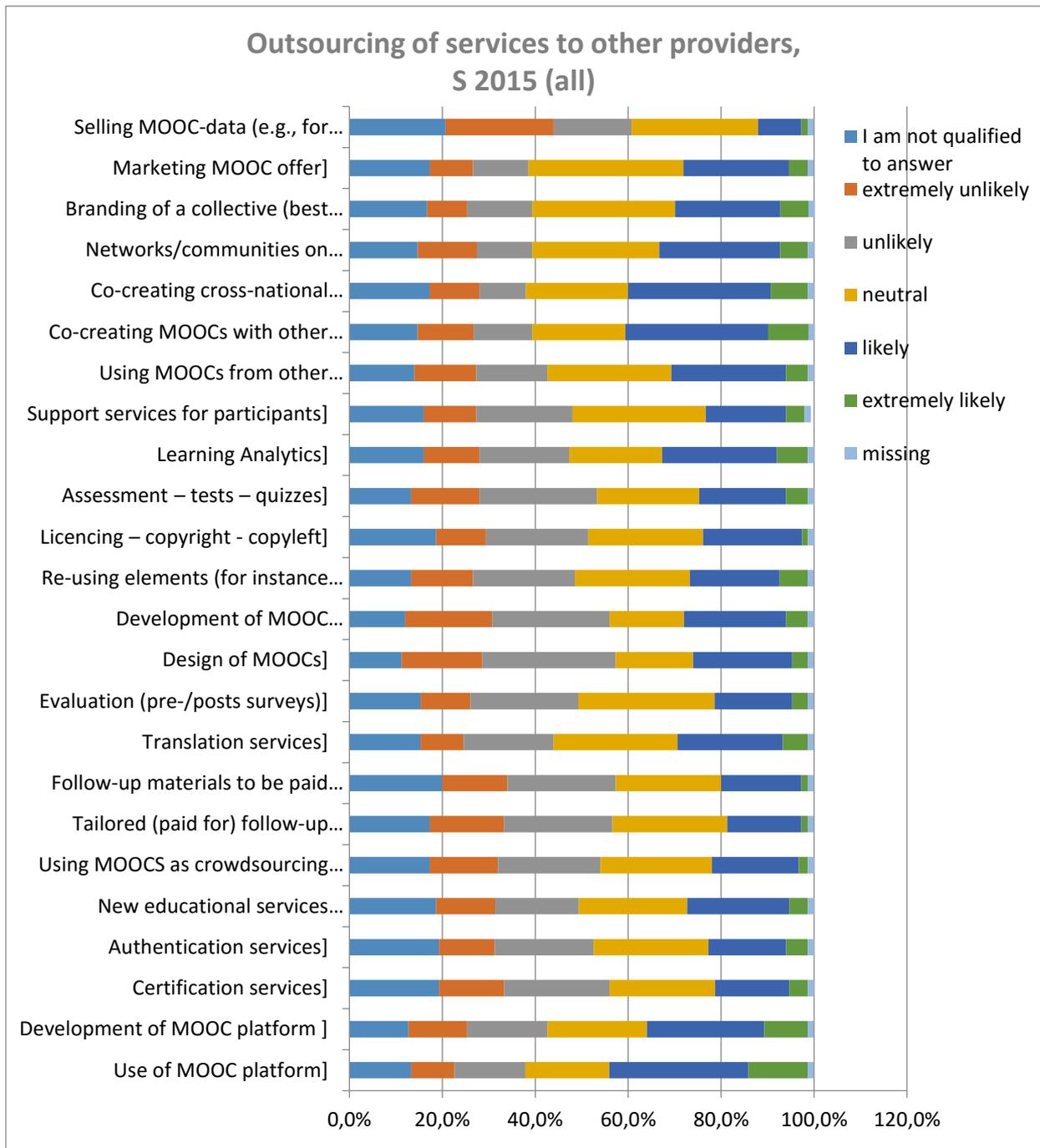
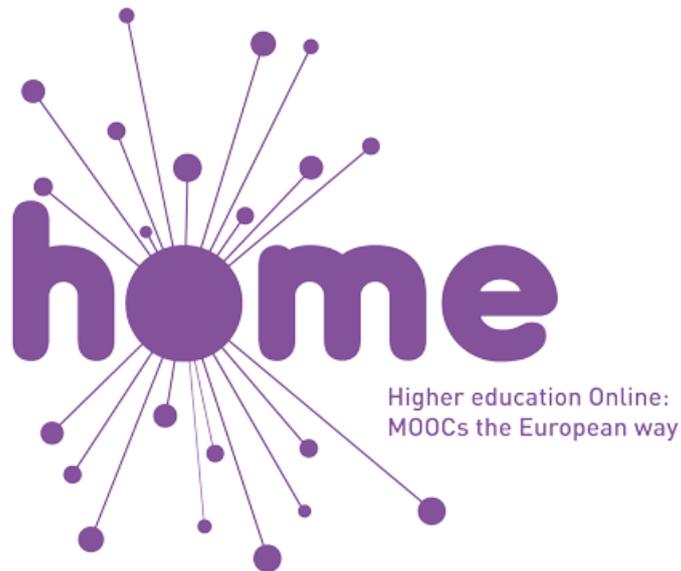


Figure 13b: Likeliness of services that institutions in overall survey (150 HEIs) (S2015) would like to outsource to other providers. See page 14 for the full name of each of the 24 areas.

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EADTU
P.O. Box 2960
6401 DL Heerlen
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 45 576 22 14
E-mail: secretariat@eadtu.eu

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