RESEARCH PAPER

Utilisation of Open Educational Resources by Academics and Students among Nursing College in Siliguri Subdivision

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Abstract

This study investigates the perspectives and utilization of Open Educational Resources (OER) among faculty members and students in five nursing colleges located in Siliguri sub-division. With a total sample population of 250, the research delves into the factors influencing OER adoption at macro, meso, and micro levels. Institutional policies, quality measures, licensing issues, and micro-level factors such as perceived usefulness and ease of use are analyzed. Additionally, the benefits of OER for academics, challenges in student efficacy, and pedagogical integration are explored. Recommendations are provided to maximize OER utilization through awareness promotion, professional development, and addressing adoption challenges, ultimately enhancing the quality and accessibility of education.

Keywords: *Open Educational Resources, faculty perspectives, student efficacy, institutional policies*

Scan and access Online

Introduction

Open Educational Resources (OER) have emerged as a promising educational approach, offering free and accessible learning materials to educators and students worldwide. However, the adoption and integration of OER into teaching practices are influenced by various factors across different levels. This paper delves into the perspectives and utilization of OER among faculty members and students, analyzing macro-level institutional policies, meso-level quality measures and licensing issues, and micro-level factors such as perceived usefulness and ease of use. Additionally, the benefits of OER for academics, challenges in student efficacy, and pedagogical integration are examined to provide insights into maximizing OER utilization in educational settings. This study focuses on the adoption and utilization of OER among faculty members and students in five nursing colleges situated in Siliguri sub-division. With a total sample population of 250, the research examines the influence of institutional policies, quality measures, licensing issues, and micro-level factors on OER adoption. Additionally, the study explores the benefits of OER for academics and challenges in student efficacy, aiming to provide insights into enhancing nursing education through OER.

Background:

OER embody a wide variety of instructional resources, inclusive of textbooks, lecture notes, films, and interactive modules, made to be had underneath open licenses that allow their free use, model, and distribution. The adoption of OER aligns with the ideas of openness, equity, and accessibility in schooling, offering opportunities for educators to enhance teaching practices and increase student gaining knowledge of experiences. However, the powerful usage of OER requires addressing various factors, including institutional guidelines, high-quality issues, licensing issues, and pedagogical integration, to promote full-size adoption and sustainable effect in educational settings.

Literature Review

Use of OER

Open Educational Resources (OER) play a crucial role in facilitating the sharing and dissemination of knowledge and information within educational settings. Mishra (2017) highlights the significance of OER in enhancing educational equity, preserving cultural heritage, and establishing a platform for global knowledge exchange across various languages. A study conducted at the Open University of Tanzania by Samzugi and Mwinyimbegu (2013) found that OER enabled students and faculty to access study materials, course notes, and research information, thereby reducing the cost barriers associated with accessing learning materials and facilitating distance learning. However, a challenge persists regarding the suitability of OER for specific learning levels, as not all materials are tailored to meet the diverse needs of students (Mishra, 2017).

Awareness to use OER

Sandanayake (2019) conducted a study demonstrating that the adoption of OER-based online courses enhances the quality of learning by offering flexibility in resource utilization and enabling learners to apply information in various contexts. Additionally, learners can actively contribute to knowledge sharing through diverse means. In Nigeria, Oloidi (2021) observed moderate usage of OER for research among postgraduate history students, suggesting a potential lack of awareness among students due to the absence of capacity-building sessions on searching and ethically utilizing OER for learning purposes. Mwinyimbegu (2019) emphasizes the importance of higher education institutions developing policies to ensure the ethical use of OER among students and academics. These policies should clarify licensing agreements and guidelines for proper OER usage to prevent any form of misappropriation among stakeholders.

Challenges hindering access and utilisation of Open Educational Resources

Despite the significant benefits offered by Open Educational Resources (OER) in providing access to learning materials for academics and students in higher education institutions, several challenges hinder their effective utilization.

Samzugi and Mwinyimbegu's (2013) study in Tanzania highlighted that low internet connectivity negatively affected the usage of OER among Open University students and faculty. This underscores the importance of tertiary institutions ensuring reliable internet access to facilitate learning activities and minimize the financial burden on students accessing these resources. Similarly, Sandanayake (2019) found that undergraduate students faced challenges in determining the reliability of free and open content due to the information explosion, emphasizing the need for critical evaluation skills.

Oloidi et al. (2021) discovered low OER usage for research among postgraduate history students in Nigeria, attributed to inadequate awareness programs by the university. This suggests the importance of implementing awareness initiatives to promote effective OER utilization. Mwinyimbegu (2019) noted that despite the availability of OER in institutional repositories and websites, students exhibited low awareness, hindering their usage.

Upendo (2020) identified inconsistency and accuracy issues in online information, impacting postgraduate students' reliance on OER in Tanzanian higher education institutions. Additionally, D'Souza (2021) found that students encountered difficulties in finding relevant OER for learning purposes, further impeding their usage.

Quality assurance emerged as a significant concern among respondents in Hatzipanagos and Gregson's (2015) study, highlighting the need for clear licensing and awareness of OER. Overall, while OER offers substantial benefits, challenges

such as internet connectivity, information reliability, awareness, accessibility, and quality assurance persist, influencing their effective utilization in higher education learning environments.

Characteristics of OER

The adoption and integration of OER are encouraged by factors at exclusive stages, such as macro-degree institutional rules, meso-degree exceptional measures and licensing troubles, and micro-level factors consisting of perceived usefulness and simplicity of use. Institutional policies offer a framework for assisting OER adoption, at the same time as exceptional measures and licensing troubles ensure the credibility and legality of OER content material. At the micro-level, school individuals recall elements consisting of perceived usefulness, ease of use, and field-particular relevance while incorporating OER into their teaching practices.

Faculty and Student Perspectives and Use of OER:

Faculty Perspectives and Use of OER delve into different factors at one-of-a-kind degrees that have an impact on the adoption and integration of Open Educational Resources by educators.

The macro-degree Factors

At the macro-stage, Institutional Policies play a pivotal role as they provide a clean framework and guidelines that aid and inspire faculty individuals to include OER into their coaching practices. When establishments have strong policies in vicinity endorsing OER adoption, it creates a conducive environment for college engagement with those sources. Additionally, Financial Support via tasks like grants or institutional funding serves as a vast motivator for faculty to explore and utilize OER in their coaching. The availability of economic resources now not handiest eases the load on educators in search of to implement OER but additionally demonstrates institutional dedication to this instructional technique. Moreover, Collaboration amongst institutions, consortia, and authorities our bodies performs a critical role within the improvement and dissemination of OER. By fostering partnerships and collaborative efforts, the OER ecosystem can make bigger, main to the creation of extra various and remarkable resources for educators to leverage of their coaching practices.

The meso-stage elements

Moving on to the meso-degree elements, Quality Measures are paramount issues for school participants when deciding on OER for their guides. The nice, accuracy, and relevance of OER content appreciably impact educators' trust and willingness to combine these resources into their curriculum. Peer-reviewed OER in particular garner more credibility among school members because of the assurance of quality requirements. Furthermore, Licensing and Copyright issues are vital aspects that educators should hold close to navigate the landscape of OER adoption efficaciously. Understanding Creative Commons licenses and copyright implications guarantees that college members adhere to prison necessities and intellectual property rights whilst utilising OER. Additionally, Professional Development opportunities such as schooling periods, workshops, and webinars play a important role in empowering school contributors with the necessary skills and expertise to successfully include OER into their coaching practices.

The micro-level Factors

At the micro-degree, college contributors take into account elements which include Perceived Usefulness of OER in alignment with their coaching objectives and the enhancement of pupil gaining knowledge of consequences. Assessing the relevance and applicability of OER to their particular instructional contexts is vital for educators to make informed selections concerning their adoption. Moreover, the Ease of Use of OER structures, characterised by person-pleasant interfaces and intuitive navigation, substantially influences school individuals' willingness to embrace those sources in their coaching. Additionally, the Discipline-Specific Relevance of OER content material performs a vital position in determining its adoption costs among educators. The availability of OER tailor-made to particular disciplines complements its appeal and application for college individuals seeking problem-unique assets.

Benefits of OER

Transitioning to the Benefits of OER, one giant benefit is the possibility for Academics to provide Constructive Criticism on present OER content material, thereby contributing to the enhancement and refinement of tutorial sources. OER systems facilitate interactive discussions, remarks provision, and hints for development, fostering a collaborative surroundings amongst educators to continuously enhance the exceptional of instructional substances. Furthermore, OER's Wider User Base transcends geographical obstacles, facilitating worldwide collaboration amongst pupils and college students. By permitting get right of entry to to numerous views and assets beyond conventional textbooks, OER enriches the instructional enjoy for students and educators alike.

Student Efficacy and OER:

When thinking about Student Efficacy and OER, it is crucial to observe Student Perceptions regarding the adoption of OER in their gaining knowledge of experiences. Research suggests that scholars price unfastened get entry to to fine substances provided with the aid of OER; but, they will to start with face demanding situations in navigating and expertise these assets. Instructors who actively comprise OER into their guides play a essential role in shaping pupil perceptions undoubtedly. Effective conversation approximately the advantages of OER enhances pupil engagement and fosters a deeper appreciation for open educational practices. Despite the blessings, demanding situations which include Information Literacy pose barriers for college kids, necessitating steering on comparing the credibility and relevance of OER. Access and Equity concerns, consisting of ensuring all college students have equal get right of entry to to OER regardless of things like internet connectivity, are essential concerns for promoting inclusivity in education. Moreover, Pedagogical Integration of OER requires school members to adeptly combine those assets into their teaching techniques to maximise their impact on pupil getting to know consequences.

Objectives:

1. To explore the perspectives of faculty members and students regarding the adoption and utilization of OER.
2. To examine the influence of macro-level institutional policies, meso-level quality measures and licensing issues, and micro-level factors on OER adoption.
3. To assess the benefits of OER for academics and challenges in student efficacy.
4. To provide recommendations for maximizing OER utilization in educational settings.

Methodology:

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. A total of 250 participants, including faculty members and students from five nursing colleges in Siliguri sub-division, were selected through stratified random sampling. The quantitative survey collected data on OER usage patterns, perceived benefits, and challenges. Qualitative interviews were conducted to gain in-depth insights into participants' perspectives and experiences with OER. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1: Awareness of Open Educational Resources by Respondents

Response	Frequency (%) Students	Frequency (%) Teachers
Yes	208 (95.42%)	32 (100%)
No	10 (4.58%)	0 (0%)

This table presents the awareness of Open Educational Resources (OER) among students and teachers in the surveyed population.

- Among students, the overwhelming majority, comprising 95.42% (208 individuals), are aware of OER. This indicates a high level of familiarity with open educational resources among students in the sample population.

- Interestingly, none of the surveyed teachers reported being unaware of OER, indicating that all teachers are familiar with these educational resources. This suggests that OER awareness is nearly universal among teachers in the surveyed group.

A study carried out in Sri Lanka by Hettige, Dasanayaka, and Ediriweera (2022) yielded similar results, indicating that a majority of students utilized Open Educational Resources (OER) and social networking platforms for educational purposes. Among OER, Wiki sites emerged as the most favored choice, while Facebook stood out as the most widely used social media platform.

Table 2: Frequency of Using Open Educational Resources

Response	Frequency (%) Students	Frequency (%) Teachers
Very often	82 (37.61%)	13 (40.63%)
Often	91 (41.74%)	16 (50.00%)
Rarely	45 (20.65%)	3 (9.38%)

This table illustrates the frequency of using Open Educational Resources (OER) among students and teachers.
- For students, the data indicates that 37.61% (82 individuals) use OER very often, reflecting a significant portion of the student population. Additionally, 41.74% (91 individuals) reported using OER often, showing that a majority of students frequently engage with these resources.
- Among teachers, a similar trend is observed, with 40.63% (13 individuals) using OER very often and 50.00% (16 individuals) using them often. This suggests that a considerable proportion of teachers also incorporate OER into their teaching practices on a regular basis.

Another research conducted by D'Souza (2021) unveiled that academics and students predominantly engaged with OER twice per week. Infrequent utilization of OER stemmed from various factors, including a lack of awareness regarding the availability and significance of such resources for learning among both students and educators. Additionally, challenges related to searching for and accessing pertinent information from online learning materials also contributed to the sporadic use of OER. The attitudes and perceptions of academics and students towards OER can significantly impact the frequency of its adoption. Therefore, if OER are perceived as valuable and user-friendly by both academics and students, the likelihood of frequent incorporation in learning activities increases, as postulated by the revised model proposed by Chuttur (2009).

Table 3: Challenges Faced in Accessing and Utilizing Open Educational Resources

Response	Frequency (%) Students	Frequency (%) Teachers
Unreliable internet connectivity	20 (9.17%)	6 (18.75%)
Inadequate search skills	58 (26.61%)	2 (6.25%)
Restricted access to computers	15 (6.88%)	5 (15.63%)
Slow download speed	5 (2.29%)	12 (37.50%)
Lack of awareness	21 (9.63%)	2 (6.25%)
Too much information	86 (39.45%)	5 (15.63%)
Language barriers	13 (5.96%)	0 (0%)

This table outlines the challenges encountered by both students and teachers in accessing and utilizing Open Educational Resources (OER).
- Among students, the most prevalent challenge is dealing with too much information, reported by 39.45% (86 individuals) of the respondents. This suggests that students may feel overwhelmed by the abundance of resources available to them.

- In contrast, the top challenge reported by teachers is slow download speed, cited by 37.50% (12 individuals). This indicates that technical issues, such as internet speed, significantly impact teachers' ability to access and utilize OER effectively.
- Other notable challenges faced by both students and teachers include inadequate search skills, lack of awareness, and restricted access to computers.

Similarly, findings from a study conducted in Tanzania by Mwinyimbegu (2019) indicated that a lack of awareness regarding the existence of OER, despite their availability on various websites and repositories, posed a significant barrier to their effective utilization. These outcomes align with a study carried out in Nigeria by Olufunke and Adegun (2014), which highlighted that the primary obstacle to OER utilization was the unfamiliarity of undergraduate students with such educational materials. Moreover, research conducted in India by D'Souza (2021) identified key challenges faced by students and academics in utilizing OER, including limited comprehension of copyright laws and open licensing initiatives. Furthermore, the study revealed that the inability to access relevant OER materials was another critical factor impeding the efficient utilization of such resources.

Overall, these findings provide valuable insights into the awareness, usage patterns, and challenges associated with Open Educational Resources among both students and teachers. Addressing these challenges could contribute to maximizing the benefits of OER and enhancing their integration into educational practices.

Recommendations:

Some recommendations are as follows

Conducting Awareness and Training Programs:

Conduct campaigns and programs geared toward students to beautify their comprehension of Open Educational Resources (OER). These tasks might also contain workshops, seminars, and informative classes to educate students on the benefits and proper use of OER.

Teacher Training Strategies:

Deliver complete schooling periods for educators to enhance their talents in making use of OER successfully. These sessions can awareness on strategies for integrating OER into lesson plans, navigating online databases, and overcoming technical limitations like slow internet speeds.

Enhancing Resource Accessibility:

Tackle issues concerning net connectivity and computer availability via investing in infrastructure improvements inside educational institutions. This ought to entail upgrading internet ability, supplying extra pc centers, and ensuring dependable get entry to to virtual sources for each college students and instructors.

Improving Search Proficiency:

Provide specialised schooling programs to boost the hunt abilties of college students and educators, permitting them to effectively locate pertinent OER materials. These applications may also provide steerage on powerful seek approaches, utilizing advanced seek functions, and assessing the reliability of on-line resources.

Simplifying Information Overload:

Create curated lists or directories of top-pleasant OER substances tailor-made to specific academic fields. By organizing the sizable array of resources available, students and educators can greater easily identify relevant content with out being overwhelmed by way of excessive facts.

Collaborative Platforms and Support Systems:

Promote collaboration and know-how-sharing among college students and educators through dedicated online systems or support structures for OER. Encourage the formation of consumer groups where individuals can change thoughts, proportion fine practices, and collaborate on developing new instructional substances.

Addressing Language Barriers:

Provide multilingual assistance and translation offerings for OER content to triumph over language barriers encountered by students and educators. By offering sources in more than one languages, educational establishments can make sure inclusivity and accessibility for numerous learner agencies.

Continuous Assessment and Feedback:

Establish mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and comments to gauge the effectiveness of OER implementation endeavors. Regular surveys, cognizance businesses, and comments periods can offer precious insights into person stories and assist in identifying areas for enhancing accessibility and usage of OER.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the study sheds light on the adoption and utilization of OER in nursing education within Siliguri sub-division. By examining factors influencing OER adoption and identifying challenges and benefits, the research provides valuable insights for enhancing nursing education through OER. Recommendations include promoting awareness, providing professional development opportunities, and addressing challenges to maximize OER utilization in nursing colleges. Embracing OER has the potential to improve the quality and accessibility of nursing education, ultimately benefiting faculty members and students alike. Promoting awareness, providing ongoing professional development opportunities, and addressing challenges associated with OER adoption are essential steps to maximize its utilization by both academics and students. By fostering a culture of openness, collaboration, and innovation, institutions can harness the full potential of OER in enhancing the quality and accessibility of education for learners worldwide. Embracing OER as a transformative educational tool requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders to ensure its effective integration and sustainable impact on teaching and learning practices.

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