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AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AMONG RESEARCH SCHOLARS

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ABSTRACT :

In the present study conducted on awareness and attitude towards OER among research scholars. The researcher has used simple random sampling techniques for collecting the data form the samples. Awareness and Attitude towards OER research tool was constructed and standardised by Namita Ojha and Ajay Surana (2023) and it is adopted to the present study. Then, researcher utilised descriptive, differential and correlation analysis for interpreting the data. In the present study found that There is no significant difference between arts stream and science stream research scholars' of OER awareness. There is no significant difference between full time and part time research scholars' of OER awareness. Therefore, there is significant relationship between OER awareness and Attitude towards OER of research scholars' at 0.05 level.

KEYWORDS: *Awareness, Attitude, Open Educational Resources, Research Scholars, Correlation.*

INTRODUCTION

In the present era of digital technology, education and research are increasingly dependent on the availability and accessibility of information and learning resources. Open Educational Resources (OER) have emerged as an important means of promoting inclusive, affordable, and quality education. Open Educational Resources refer to teaching, learning, and research materials that are available in the public domain or released under open licences, which permit users to access, use, adapt, and redistribute them with little or no cost.

Research scholars play a significant role in the development and advancement of knowledge through continuous learning, research activities, and scholarly publications. They require access to a wide range of academic resources, such as e-books, research articles, online courses, lecture materials, research databases, and educational videos. However, the high cost of academic resources, limited institutional subscriptions, and difficulties in accessing relevant research materials may create challenges for research scholars. In this context, Open Educational Resources can provide valuable opportunities to access quality educational and research materials without financial barriers.

The need for the present study arises from the growing importance of OER in higher education and research. Although several open educational platforms and resources are available, all research scholars may not be fully aware of their existence, features, benefits, and methods of utilisation. Lack of awareness, inadequate digital skills, limited knowledge of open licences, and uncertainty regarding the quality and credibility of OER may affect their effective utilisation. Therefore, it is essential to examine

the level of awareness among research scholars regarding the availability, accessibility, and application of Open Educational Resources.

Attitude is another important factor influencing the acceptance and utilisation of OER. Research scholars may have different perceptions regarding the usefulness, reliability, accessibility, relevance, and quality of open educational resources. While some scholars may consider OER as an effective and convenient source of academic information, others may hesitate to use them due to concerns about authenticity, academic quality, copyright issues, and recognition. Hence, understanding the attitude of research scholars towards OER is necessary to identify their willingness, interests, perceptions, and challenges in adopting these resources for academic and research purposes.

The present study is also important in identifying the relationship between awareness and attitude towards Open Educational Resources among research scholars. It may help determine whether greater awareness contributes to a more positive attitude towards the adoption and effective utilisation of OER. Furthermore, the study may identify the factors influencing awareness and attitude, including academic discipline, research experience, digital literacy, access to technology, and institutional support.

The findings of the study may be useful to universities, higher education institutions, research supervisors, librarians, and educational policymakers in developing appropriate strategies to promote the use of Open Educational Resources. It may also encourage institutions to organise awareness programmes, workshops, orientation sessions, and training programmes to improve the knowledge and digital competencies of research scholars. Academic libraries can use the findings to strengthen their OER support services and guide scholars towards suitable open educational platforms.

Moreover, the study may contribute to promoting the culture of open access, knowledge sharing, collaborative learning, and equitable access to educational resources. It may encourage research scholars to explore, utilise, and contribute to openly licensed educational materials while following appropriate copyright and licensing practices.

Therefore, the present study entitled "Awareness and Attitude towards Open Educational Resources among Research Scholars" is significant in understanding the existing level of awareness, perceptions, and attitudes of research scholars towards OER. It is expected to provide useful insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with OER utilisation and suggest measures for improving their awareness, acceptance, and effective integration into higher education and research.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Rogers (1995) defined diffusion as the steady dissemination of a new concept or technology through a predetermined set of intermediaries and channels. The study of diffusion focuses on the variables that determine the likelihood of cultural members adopting new ideas or habits (Halton, 2023). According to Roger's Theory of Innovation Decision Making, innovation is a process that takes place over some time and can be broken down into the following five stages: awareness, implementation, persuasion, decision, and confirmation. According to (Halton, 2023), the innovation-decision process is the progression of a person or other decision-making unit from the first time they hear about an invention to the time they decide whether or not to accept the innovation. This implies that awareness of a new technology will precede acceptance and, eventually, usage.(Al Abri & Dabbagh, 2018) assert that open educational resources (OER) are still seen as a relatively recent phenomenon, and hence, the majority of research mostly concentrates on increasing their level of recognition.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

a. To find out whether there is any significant difference between arts stream and science stream research scholars' of OER awareness.
b. To find out whether there is any significant difference between full time and part time research scholars' of OER awareness.
c. To find out whether there is any significant relationship between the OER awareness and Attitude towards OER of research scholars'.

Hypotheses of the Study

a) There is no significant difference between arts stream and science stream research scholars' of OER awareness.
b) There is no significant difference between full time and part time research scholars' of OER awareness.
c) There is no significant relationship between the OER awareness and Attitude towards OER of research scholars'.

Method of the Study

A quantitative research approach was adopted for the study, employing the normative survey method to collect data from the selected sample. Structured research questionnaires were used to measure the awareness and attitude of research scholars towards OER. The researcher constructed and standardised the OER Knowledge research questionnaire with guidance of the research supervisor.

Sample of the Study

For the present study, research scholars from arts and science disciplines were selected as the target population. From this population, a sample of 606 research scholars in Tamil Nadu was chosen. The appropriateness of the sample size was justified based on the criteria established by Krejcie and Morgan (1990), who published a widely accepted standard table for determining suitable sample sizes in research. According to their table, a sample size of 278 is recommended for a population of 1,000. The present study employs a quantitative research approach and utilizes simple random sampling techniques to collect data from the selected sample.

Tools used in the Study

The researcher, in consultation with the research supervisor, searched for a standardized instrument to measure awareness of open educational resources (oer). ultimately, a standardized tool developed and validated by **Namita Ojha and Ajay Surana (2023)** was selected for this purpose.

In the present study, a standardized research tool on the attitude of research scholars toward Open Educational Resources (OER), developed and standardized by **Ojha, Namita, and Surana, Ajay (2023)** was used. The final version of the OER Attitude Scale consists of 37 items, of which 30 are positive and 7 are negative, categorized into five dimensions.

Statistical Techniques used

Descriptive analysis, Differential analysis and Correlation analysis has used in the present study.

Data Interpretations and Discussions

a. There is no significant difference between arts stream and science stream research scholars' of OER awareness.

Table: 1
OER awareness - Education Stream – "t" Value

Demographic Variable	Sample	N	Mean	S. D	't' Value	Remarks
Education Stream	Arts	408	170.99	73.77	1.16	Not Significant at 0.05 level
	Science	198	178.42	73.36		

It is observed from the above table 1 that the calculated t-value 1.16 is less than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. There is no significant difference between arts stream and science stream research scholars' of OER awareness. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. The mean value shows that science stream research scholars' OER awareness is higher than arts stream research scholars' OER awareness. **Subhashree Das (2024)** study indicates the mean awareness about OER of

Science research scholars', Arts research scholars' and Commerce research scholar differ significantly. It was revealed that Science research scholars' are more awareness of OER than the Arts and Commerce research scholars'. It is differed from the present study results.

b. There is no significant difference between full time and part time research scholars' of OER awareness.

Table: 2
OER awareness – Mode of Studies – "t" Value

Demographic Variable	Sample	N	Mean	S.D	't' Value	Remarks
Mode of Studies	Full Time	196	177.33	75.87	0.90	Not Significant at 0.05 level
	Part Time	410	171.55	72.60		

It is observed from the above table 2 that the calculated t-value 0.90 is less than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. There is no significant difference between full time and part time research scholars' of OER awareness. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. The mean value shows that full time research scholars' OER awareness is higher than part time research scholars' OER awareness.

c. There is no significant relationship between the OER awareness and Attitude towards OER of research scholars'.

Table: 3
Correlation Coefficient between OER Awareness and Attitude towards OER of research scholars'

Variables	N	Mean	S. D	'r' value	Remarks
OER Awareness	606	173.42	73.66	0.09	Significant at 0.05 level
Attitude towards OER	606	131.08	30.59		

Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient between OER awareness and Attitude towards OER of research scholars' are 0.09. This indicates that there is significant relationship between OER awareness and Attitude towards OER of research scholars' at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The similar study **Danyaro, Abdu et al (2024)** found that there is no significant relationship between awareness and attitudes towards open educational resources (OER) among pre-service instructors.

CONCLUSION

Open educational resources have in a great measure contributed to the educational endeavours of research scholars, with particular reference to those studying in an post graduate and above programmes. By the nature of these resources, they foster educational inclusiveness, and their usage enhances academic progress for research scholars. The degree to which the students are aware of these resources will, however, determine how much they will use them. Such usage will also be predicted by the research scholars' attitude towards the resources, as a positive attitude will encourage use and vice versa. Also, the research scholars' ability to use these resources reflects their skills, which constitutes a remarkable factor that could also stimulate the use of these OER.

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