

OER Adoption in Saudi Higher Education: Differences Between Users and Non-Users

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Abstract

Knowledge is undoubtedly the most valuable asset one can have. Even when shared, its value does not get any less. In most cases, when you share your knowledge with someone, you do not risk losing anything, unlike when you share materialistic objects, such as money, food, property, and so forth. Sharing knowledge is a win-win situation for both the sharer and the receiver. For the former, sharing knowledge with others is an opportunity to engage in discussions that may broaden their already existing knowledge. For the latter, the newly gained knowledge is precious and can be a tool to accomplish many things.

As an academic, and after using Open Educational Resources (OER) in teaching materials, it has been realised that by using OER, it is possible to make education more effective by providing every student with a personal, free softcopy of the textbook for the subjects they study. However, in the Arab context, academics struggle to find appropriate resources for many reasons, the most significant ones being language and different contexts.

As part of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has launched the National Transformation Program, which aims to improve all life aspects, including those related to educational technology. The program led to the establishment of the National Centre for eLearning, which plays the role of a supporter of e-learning for the public and Higher Education. In 2018, this centre launched "SHMS" as an OERs platform for educational institutions. The platform is dedicated to connecting people and ideas to enrich all communities and improve educational outcomes through sharing and collaboration. As adopting this platform is new in Saudi, it is vital to study OER implementation in higher education. Thus, this study aims to understand the academics' perceptions of using OER. To achieve this, a mixed-method approach for data collection was adopted through two stages: distributing questionnaires to university academics and conducting semi-structured interviews with the academics and eLearning assistants.

This presentation will report the findings of the first phase, in which the questionnaire method was adopted to evaluate the developed Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model, in addition to other valuable factors, which are Information Quality, Culture, and Sharing. The combination of UTAUT model and these factors produced CUTAUTS model. This model has been tested using Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) which has the ability to estimate and present the model.

The survey results offered partial confirmation of CUTAUTS model as several significant relationships were identified between its core constructs and the adoption of OER by academics' users, supporting the direct effects proposed in some of the hypotheses. However, there was no support for the effect of effort expectancy and facilitating conditions on behavioural intentions to use OER. As for non-users, information quality and performance expectancy were only confirmed predictors of behavioural intentions to use OER. After participating in this session, attendees will be able to identify the factors that influence OER adoption by university academics in the Saudi higher education sector.

Keywords: CUTAUTS, Information quality, OER, Sharing, SHMS