Use of Open Textbook by the Students of Faculty of Arts of Jadavpur University

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out how students at Jadavpur University's Faculty of Arts feel about using open textbooks. A structured questionnaire was issued randomly to 100 students from the Arts Faculty for this purpose. There were 60 responses to the survey. The majority of students (33.33%) use Open Textbook to complete their assignments, according to the findings. Students learned about open textbooks from their peers (32%). The majority of students considered Open Textbooks as simple to use and read. Only a few students opined that Open Textbooks are not very useful and credible. Not only thenon-availability, non-standardization of metadata of the Open Textbooks may be a major constraint to using them. Teachers and librarians should take a greater role in promoting Open Textbooks.

Keywords: Open Educational Resources, Open Textbooks, Jadavpur University

1. Introduction

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), any sort of educational content that is released under an open license or in the public domain is referred to as an open educational resource. (Open Educational Resources (OER), n.d.). The nature of OER lies in its name, which is utilized for study, teaching, and learning – implies that it is openly available for use and redistribution in the public domain. (The Open Education Resources Ecosystem An Evaluation of the OER Movement's Current State and Its Progress toward Mainstream Adoption, 2013; Wickline, n.d.). In contrast to other conventional materials, they can be freely copied, modified, shared, used, and redistributed by anybody. OER comes in a variety of formats, among which Open Textbooks have recently gained a lot of popularity. Here, the standard textbook format is utilised, which enables unrestricted digital and print distribution without paying licensing costs or requesting author consent. Open textbook usage is commonplace in both schools and higher educational institutions.

Jadavpur University is one of the pioneer higher educational institutes in India. It subscribed to thousands of electronic books from different publishers. The terms of usage and the licensing policy for the subscription of ebooks vary because they are bought from various publishers. Under the Digital Right Management (DRM) policy, many ebook providers impose restrictions on downloading and printing. Due to the restrictions on paid ebooks, students are encouraged to use the free textbook instead. The current study focuses on how Jadavpur University's Faculty of Arts students use open textbooks. Why are students becoming more interested in utilising open textbooks, and how satisfied are they with various features of open textbooks?

2. Review of Literature

Research says that many persuasive factors encourage the adaptation of open textbooks within the students and are the most significant factor in student savings. To monitor the savings, a comparison between the price of the traditional textbooks and the recently adopted open textbooks was made in Georgia, and the results suggest that students have saved more than $31 million between 2014–2015 (ALG Statistics, Research, and Reports - About / Affordable Learning Georgia, n.d.). In his article, Christina Hendrick concluded that students who switched to free textbooks may eventually save hundreds of thousands to thousands of dollars on any course (View of The Adoption of an Open Textbook in a Large Physics Course: An Analysis of Cost, Outcomes, Use, and Perceptions | The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, n.d.).

Open textbook research focuses mostly on a student's academic performance. In his research, Hilton performed a meta-analysis on 22 studies about the adoption of open textbooks and found that 95% of the studies noted better results for students who used open textbooks rather than commercial textbooks (Allen et al., 2015). When open educational resources (OER) are used, the results of several research suggest that students can save a large amount of money while still achieving the same level of learning as they would with traditional methods (Hilton, 2016).

To gauge the genuine efficiency of adapted open educational resources, numerous complex elements should be taken into account. The most significant of these is the instructor effect. When two sections of a course are being studied and the same instructor isn't teaching them, this influences the performance of the students (Teachers Matter | RAND, n.d.). Faculty members not only need to be aware of open educational resources (OER), but they also want to know that OER have proven efficacy and trusted quality in order for them to consider replacing commercial textbooks with OER (Allen & Seaman, 2014). The instructor-course and student factors should be controlled first to measure the effects of open resources on students more precisely.

In the last study, which looked at how open educational resources are used, a significant knowledge gap was found. This inspired the authors to research how students use free textbooks.

3. Research Question

The focal research question of the present study is *"Analysis of the Perception of Using Open Textbook by the Students of Faculty of Arts of Jadavpur University"*.

The investigation will answer the above-mentioned issue as well as some important and pertinent research inquiries. These are: What are the objectives of adaptation of open textbook by students at the Jadavpur University'sFaculty of Arts? How did students know about the open textbook? What is the students' perception regarding the use of Open Textbook? And what are the problems in using the Open Textbook for the students?

4. Objectives

The objectives of the study are furnished below:

  i. To find out the purposes of using Open Textbook by the Students of Faculty of Arts of Jadavpur University.
  ii. To identify their perception ofthe use of Open Textbook by the Students.
 iii. To find out the problems in using the Open Textbook by the Arts students of Jadavpur University.

5. Methodology

Survey methodology was used to accomplish the goal and analyze the topic of the planned research. To gather the necessary data, a systematic questionnaire was created. The questionnaire had been used to gather information from the chosen sample. 100 students each received a questionnaire, which they were instructed to complete with the necessary information. 60 students out of 100 gave their responses. To prevent bias in the study, coverage came from all of the Arts faculty's departments. Following collection, the data was examined and tabulated with the study's goal in mind. In addition to the aforementioned, data will be gathered from the various documentary, institutional, and human sources.

6. Analysis and Findings

The findings obtained from the analysis of collected data are as follows:

6.1. Purpose of Using Open Textbooks

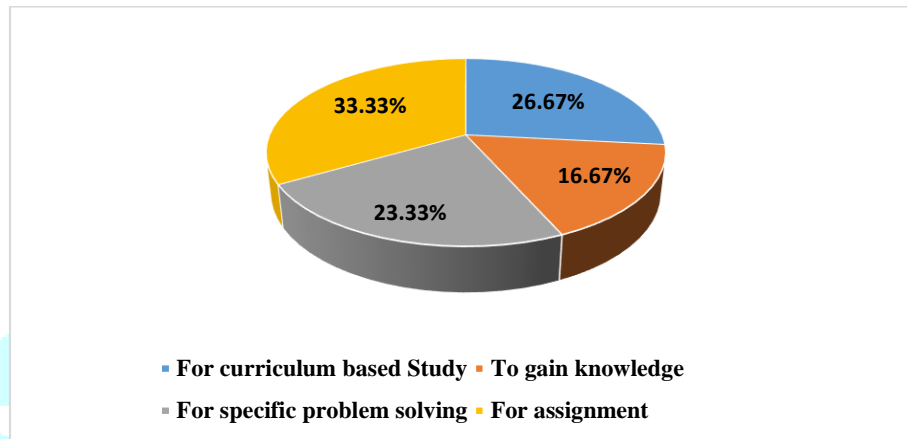The goal of using free textbooks by students is depicted inFigure – 1.

Figure – 1: Purpose of using open textbooks by students

Figure-1 shows that the majority of students (33.33%) use Open Textbooks to complete their assignments. Nearly 26.67% utilize open textbooks for curriculum-based learning, and 23.33 % use them to solve particular problems. Only a small percentage of students (16.67%) use open textbooks to expand their knowledge in their specialized fields.

6.2. Student'sFirst Source ofKnowledge about Open Textbooks

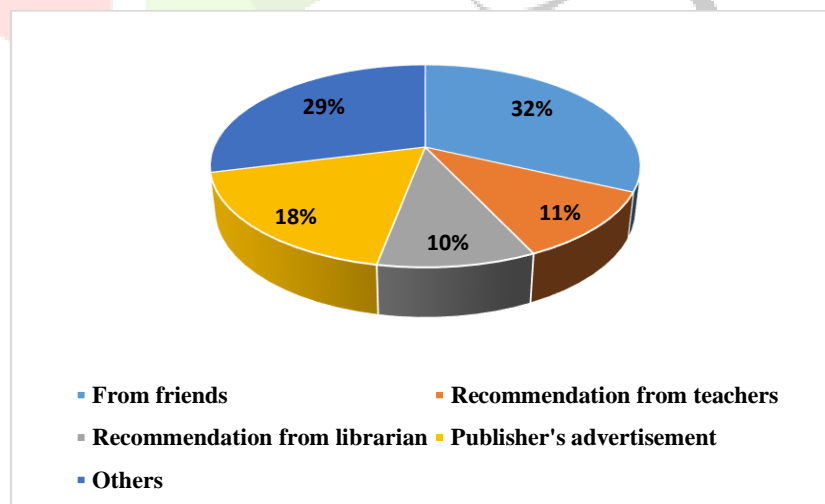Figure -2 demonstrates how students first become aware of open textbooks.

Figure -2: Students first know about Open Textbooks

The pie- graph (Figure -2) illustrates the many sources from which students learned about open textbooks. It is quite evident that the majority of students (32%) heard about open textbooks from their friends first. From the advertisement of various publishers, almost 18% of students learned about Open Textbook. Quite a few students receive information about it through their teachers and librarians (10% and 11% respectively). The remaining 29% of the pupils became aware of open textbooks from various sources.

6.3. Usage of Open Textbooks

Figure -3intended to give attention to the usage of open textbooks by students.
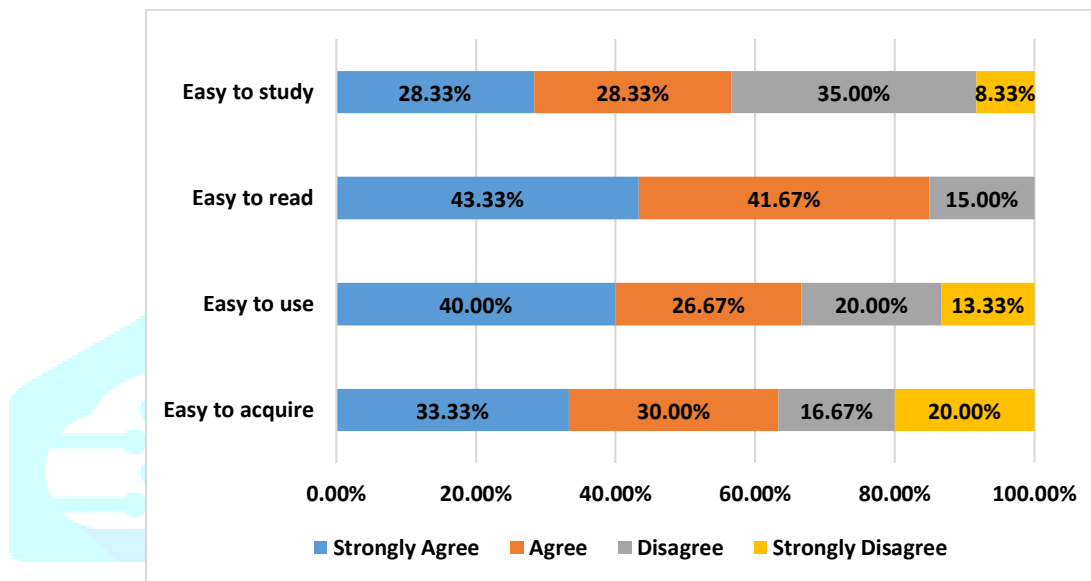

Figure – 3: Usage of open textbooks by students

Figure - 3 shows that 35% of students disagreed that open textbooks are easy to study from, while 28.33% strongly agreed and the same number of students agreed with the statement. This was revealed in a survey in which students were asked to rate how easy the open textbook was to use, read, acquire, and study from. Open textbooks aren't easy to study, according to a relatively small percentage of pupils. It was discovered that 41.67% agreed that they could comfortably read open textbooks, and 43.33% strongly agreed that they felt at ease doing so. While 15% of students disagreed that open textbooks were easy to read. Additionally, it was found that 40% and 33.3% of students believed that Open Textbooks are simple to use and acquire. While 20% of students disagreed that open textbooks are simple to use, 20% of them also strongly disagreed that they are simple to acquire.

6.4. Perception Regarding Open Textbooks

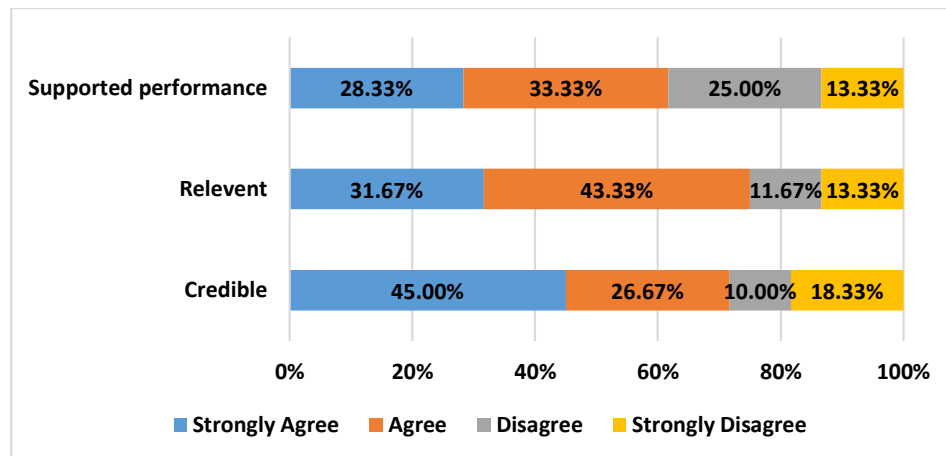Figure – 4 tries to find out the perception of the students regarding open textbooks.

Figure –4: Perception regarding open textbooks

It was found that 43.33% and 33.33%, respectively, agreed that open textbooks are relevant to their studies and helped academic success. The open textbooks are relevant and enhance academic performance, but 13.33% strongly disagree. The graph (Figure - 4) also shows that, while just 10% of students disagreed with the authenticity of the open textbooks, 45% of students strongly agreed that these resources are credible.

6.5 Problems in Using Open Textbooks

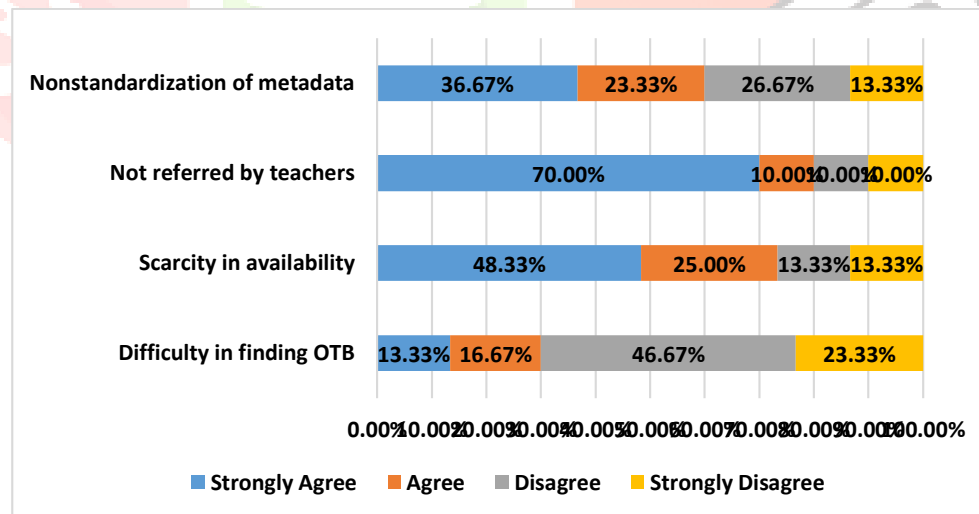Figure - 5 aims to demonstrate various problems with students using Open Textbooks.

Figure – 5: Problems faced by students while using open textbooks

Students were asked about the quality of standardization of metadata used in Open Textbook and 36.67% of students strongly agreed with the statement whereas 13.33% of students strongly disagreed with it. The majority of the students (70%) strongly agreed that the teachers did not refer to the Open textbooks. Almost half of the sample size, i.e., 48.33% of students strongly agreed that Open textbooks are not sufficiently available. A very few students (13.33%) strongly agreed that finding Open textbooks is very difficult. The majority (46.67%) disagreed with the statement that there is any difficulty in finding Open textbooks have no issues.

7. Conclusion

Unceasing increases in the price of textbooks have spurred the development and adoption of Open Textbooks, educational resources that are openly licensed and being provided to students without any cost.The educational choices and outcomes of students are significantly and negatively impacted by the high expense of textbooks. Students who are required to use Open textbooks believe that these materials are generally of a good calibre and appreciate the financial savings, easy accessibility, mobility, and other advantages they provide.

According to the study, most students use Open textbooks to complete their assignments and engage doing curriculum-based learning. Students adopt Open Textbooks out of their own choice, despite the unsatisfactory recommendations from teachers and librarians. The majority of the time, students learned about Open textbooks through recommendations from peers. In this situation, teachers and librarians must play a crucial role in motivating students to use Open textbooks. This will encourage more student use of Open textbooks. It is also noteworthy that the majority of pupils concur that Open textbooks are simple to study, read, use, and obtain. There is still a scarcity in availability in Open Textbook. The majority of students also claim that Open Textbook is pertinent and reliable for improving their academic achievement.

Future studies should keep examining how students from other faculties view, use, and impact Open textbooks and other OER.

Open textbooks are a crucial tool for creating a more equitable distribution if the ability to access information is a prerequisite for future success.

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