



DATASET DESCRIPTION

Research into the social and cultural acceptability of Open Educational Resources in South Africa

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Overview

This project aims to describe and explain the barriers and enablers of Open Educational Resources (OER) contribution at institutions in South Africa. The key objective of the research was to understand why scholars contribute or refuse to contribute their teaching materials as OER.

The project utilised a mixed methods approach. Surveys and interviews with academics at three South African institutions were conducted to understand the conditions under which the contribution and/or use of OER would be considered socially and culturally acceptable.

Focusing on academics' teaching practices at the University of Cape Town (UCT) (urban, contact), the University of South Africa (UNISA) (distance, online/correspondence), and University of Fort Hare University (rural, contact), this dataset includes the interview and survey data gathered during OER workshops conducted by the authors at these universities in March 2015. The interviews – comprising 50–56 questions depending on the answers given – lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Of the 18 people that interviewed (6 per university), 11 (61%) were female and 7 (39%) were male. Of the 37 respondents to the “Attitudes Towards OER” survey, 27 (75%) were female and 9 (25%) were male.

This dataset makes a unique contribution to establishing empirical evidence about the value systems of academics at South African universities as relates to sharing open educational content. It surfaces both country-specific and international dynamics, and will be of use to researchers and practitioners working in the areas of OER, open education, open access and higher education studies.

De-Identification and Data Intervention Methods

The authors have administered a de-identification process in which any information which was deemed to have the potential to identify research subjects, whether in isolation or combination with other data, has been either omitted or reworded. In all cases, the authors have attempted to preserve as much of the original data as possible; and have tried to ensure that the integrity of original response was maintained.

The de-identification process utilised two techniques:

Omission: Whenever disclosive information was included in a response, certain elements of that response (such as a word or phrase) have been omitted so as to obscure identity, while preserving as much of the intended meaning and salience of the response as possible. To make the data seamless and interpretable, we have not provided indications within the data as signalling where the omissions have taken place.

Revision: In cases where disclosive information was given but could not be omitted without jeopardising the integrity of the response data, the authors have revised words or phrases to ensure anonymity, while retaining the essential meaning. In most cases, these instances entail changing specific information to something less particular (such as replacing a departmental with a faculty-level identifier). (See the “Text revised” section below for an example.)

Throughout the data, the authors used [brackets] to indicate intervention mechanisms for de-identification:

- **Text revised []:** Brackets indicate that a word or series of words have been altered in a way that preserves original meaning as far as possible. For example, if the original response was: “I work in the sociology department”; this was altered to: “I work in the [Faculty of Humanities].”
- **Withheld [withheld for de-identification]:** In cases where answers to certain questions were judged to be too disclosive (particularly when combined with ancillary responses), the authors have withheld certain key responses.

The authors also used [brackets] to indicate intervention mechanisms for clarification:

- **Note to reader [*]:** Skip-logic was employed in the interview schedule; meaning that there were instances where follow-up questions were contingent upon the original response. This is indicated in the text as: “[* Skipped. See interview skip logic.]”. In cases where no answer was provided, the authors provide an explanation, clearly marked with the “[* ...]” prompt.
- **Interviewer intervention [Int:...]:** Occasionally impromptu follow-up questions not on the interview schedule were asked, creating additional points of dialogue within the context of a particular question response. In order to distinguish the responses of respondents from the interviewers’ verbal contributions, interviewers’ contributions have been placed in brackets, and on a separate line within the same text block.
- **Unclear to transcriber [unclear]:** In cases where the transcriber was unable to interpret components of a response, “[unclear]” was inserted as an indicator in the text.

Interview Key

R01: Interview Respondent 1

SR01: Survey Respondent 1

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CET: Centre for Educational Technology

CILT: Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching

DALRO: Dramatic, Artistic and Literary Rights Organisation

KPA: Key Performance Area

KPI: Key Performance Indicator

LTHE: Learning & Teaching in Higher Education

IEB: Independent Examinations Board

NRF: National Research Foundation

SADC: Southern African Development Community

UCT: University of Cape Town

UKZN: University of KwaZulu-Natal

UFH: University of Fort Hare

UNISA: University of South Africa

Vula: isiXhosa word meaning “open”; the title of the University of Cape Town’s learning management system

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