RESEARCH ON EFL STUDENTS' AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE UTILIZATION OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN VIETNAM

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Abstract:

The adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) in higher education has been extensively studied worldwide, but there is a lack of research on OER awareness and usage among university students in Vietnam. This study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigate students' awareness of OER and their perceived benefits and challenges when using OER materials. Participants were students in the English Language Teaching Program at UD-UFLS, who were randomly selected to participate in semi-structured interviews through focus groups. The study collected data from 80 questionnaire responses and interview transcripts. Marcus's Theory of Technology Adoption provided a framework for the investigation of OER use. The study identified several benefits of OER utilization, including increased access to materials, cost-effectiveness, flexibility, and autonomy in learning. However, limited knowledge of OER and a lack of support from faculty were identified as barriers to the use of OER among students at UD-UFLS. The results of this study can inform stakeholders about the potential benefits of OER and encourage the promotion of OER in higher education institutions in Vietnam, including UD-UFLS.

Introduction

The past twenty years have seen a significant movement towards educational changes and the free dissemination of knowledge. Education becomes more accessible with the development of Open Education Resources (OER). OERs are digital content and resources historically pioneering with MIT's promotion of the Open Courseware initiative globally in 2001, subsequently were introduced at a forum on Open Courseware organized under the courtesy of UNESCO in 2002, and most recently crystallized as teaching, learning, and research materials in any medium, digital or otherwise, that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation, and redeployment by others with no or limited restrictions (UNESCO, 2021).

OERs are varied, ranging from textbooks, and course materials to images, videos, games, Audio/Video lectures, open software, simulations, research data, research papers, and research outputs, etc that are used to support access to knowledge. (Hart, Chetty, & Archer, 2021; UNESCO & Commonwealth of Learning, 2011). The purpose of OER is to remove unnecessary hindrances to accessing knowledge and provide equal access to education by making high-quality educational materials and opportunities more universally available. However, previous work has been limited to perceived benefits and obstacles in the OER adoption, mostly well-conducted in the developed countries while that of lecturers and undergraduates in the developing nations is relatively ill-defined. Therefore, it is of great importance to further investigate this field, particularly in the context of higher education in Vietnam (Hodgkinson-Wiliams, 2010).

More attention has been triggered in the context of COVID-19 in terms of a significant shift towards remote instruction, leading to remarkable and unprecedented changes in instructional materials and resources (Schaffhauser, 2020). The last two years have witnessed a greater emphasis on access to open educational resources as they are able to boost students' learning motivation, engagement, and sense of autonomy (Sulisworo, Sulistyo, & Akhsan, 2017). Despite insurmountable benefits and potentials in OER adoption to enhance the quality of higher education, it is observed that there is a low level of awareness of both instructors and students, which is one of the biggest challenges to maximizing the capacity of OER for teaching and learning. Regarding all relevant discussions about OERs, it is critical to examine students' awareness, the benefits, and the obstacles they perceive to be presented while using OERs during their learning journey at UD-UFLS. The following three questions guided this study:
1. To what extent are ELT aware of OER?
2. What are the perceptions of ELT students regarding the benefits of using OER?
3. What are the perceptions of ELT students regarding the obstacles of using OER?

Literature Review

Open Educational Resources (OER)

The open educational resources (OER) movement is an emerging trend in higher education settings, primarily due to the ubiquitous use of technology and access to the internet. Given the increasing development of OER, different definitions have been proposed by various educational organizations and experts, presenting their perspectives on OER and its influence. The term "Open Educational Resources" was first coined as a new worldwide phenomenon of openly sharing educational resources at a discussion forum in 2002 on the topic "Impacts of

Open Courseware for Higher Education in Developing Countries" under the auspices of UNESCO, defined as technology-enabled, open provision of educational resources for consultation, use, and adaptation by a community of users for non-commercial purposes" (UNESCO, 2002).

In other words, the availability of these content and resources allow users to utilize them as references for non-commercial purposes with the assistance of technology. However, the Hewlett Foundation introduced another definition of OER which clarifies that Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others (William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, n.d.)

Characteristics of OER

As stated previously, "open" in OER generally means that the resources are available online for users to legally and freely copy, use, adapt and re-share with no or limited restrictions. The distribution of OER is commonly created with Creative Common licenses (CC licenses), considered the most ubiquitous open licenses. Generally, CC licenses "allow the authors to retain copyright in their works while granting some rights to others, like the permission to modify or to use the work for commercial purposes" (Alecu, 2012). Having given a clear introduction to the notion of "open" in OER and the rights associated with CC licenses, Wiley (2014) suggested the 5R concept providing learning with free and long-lasting access to OER content, as shown in the figure below:
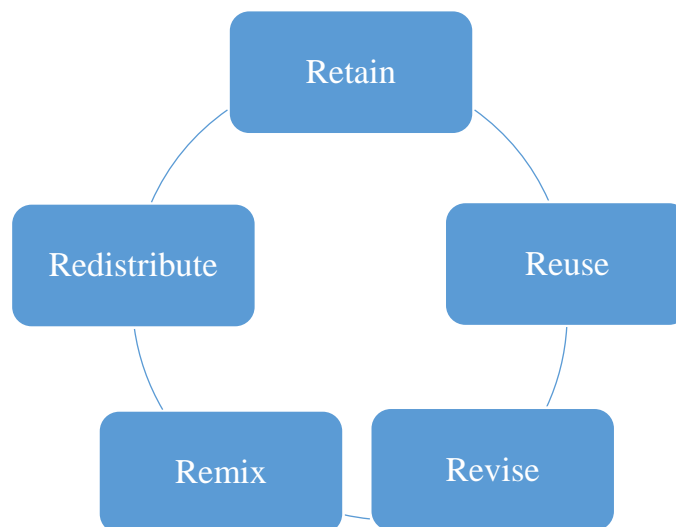
Figure 1: The 5Rs of OER (adapted from Wiley, 2014)

This 5R's framework (retain, reuse, revise, remix and redistribute) is viewed as the most common baseline for OER quality evaluation and to guarantee the OER author´s rights while allowing the OER sharing or editing. In summary, the OER concept as educational resources that are broadly available and free and open for users to access without any licensing fees. It also encompasses the licenses and permissions that enable and regulate the 5R's framework.

Previous Studies on Awareness and Knowledge of OER

Several studies have investigated the level of awareness and knowledge of OER among instructors and university students which helps to determine the weaknesses and strengths of the OER movement. Two notable studies by Allen & Seaman (2014) were conducted to examine 2,144 faculty in 2014 and 3,000 faculty in 2016 representing different institutions around the U.S. from all programs and found that only a small percentage of staff were aware of OER, and many lacked a clear understanding of what OER were and how they could be used for teaching but a majority express great interest in OER adoption in the next following years. In terms of investigation on students in higher education, another study by Appiah et al. (2020) at Kumasi Technical university - Ghana found that 85.5 percent of students were not aware of open educational resources. More than half of students expect OERs to exert an important contribution to their learning experience in the near future. Generally, some students considered OERs relatively as supplementary resources, beneficial for certain tasks and in certain circumstances. However, the finding extracted from the work of Shams et al. (2020) shows a significantly higher level of awareness and proficiency in using OER. This is specifically in line with this body of literature (Olufunke et al., 2014, Venegas Muggli & Westermann, 2019, Itasanmi, 2020). It could be concluded that students' awareness of OER was influenced by their level of exposure to OER in the classroom, with students who had used OER reporting higher levels of awareness and understanding.

Looking at the local context, OER usage in Vietnam is growing but it may not yet be considered widely used. The country has been making endeavours to integrate technology and digital resources into its education system, and OER has been viewed as a potential solution to achieving this goal. However, the implementation of OER in Vietnam still faces some obstacles, such as a lack of awareness and limited access to digital resources. Doan, Q. M., & Dao (2020) and Truong (2021) reported that though universities in Vietnam have been enthusiastic about the idea of incorporating OER programs in their teaching and learning practice, it is believed that maximizing OER potential is complicated and constrained by multifaceted difficulties. These indications are also similar to the study of Doan et al., (2020). As a result, this field has attracted little research effort and results.

The Perceived Value of OER

The perceived value of Open Educational Resources (OER) impacts its adoption and use by university students. OER allows students to learn at their own pace, enhancing their learning satisfaction and promoting personalized learning. Additionally, OER is cost-effective, which makes it a more attractive option for students who want to save money on expensive commercial textbooks. Furthermore, OER is easily accessible, current, and of trusted quality, making it superior to traditional textbooks and materials. In language teaching, OER has been adopted widely in recent years, leading to improved student learning outcomes, engagement, and motivation.

Cohen et al. (2015) found that the use of OER in learning allows students to construct, contribute, share, and present knowledge in a unique way that suits their learning needs, enhancing their learning satisfaction with the content. Wiley (2014) emphasized that students are in favour of OER adoption because it enables them to save a substantial amount of money related to the purchase of expensive commercial textbooks. Allen & Seaman (2014) further elaborated that OER is superior to traditional textbooks and materials in terms of its availability, which is current with trusted quality and easy to use. that the application of OER

in their learning allows students to construct, contribute, share, and present knowledge in a unique way that suits their learning needs, therefore enhancing their learning satisfaction with the content they used. In other words, the use of OER can profoundly support personalized learning, allowing students to take initiative over their own education.

OER in language teaching has also been widely adopted in recent years due to the heightened improvement regarding student learning outcomes, engagement, and motivation. Itasanmi (2020) assessed OER awareness level and usage among 1000 Open and Distance Learning (ODL) students in South-western Nigeria and found that more than 65% of students agreed that OER makes their learning more engaging and interactive as it assists them in updating their knowledge of the desired areas of study and preparing for classes as well as their assignment completion. Additionally, OER allows for collaborative creation and sharing of resources among teachers and learners, leading to an increase in teacher professional development and student autonomy. Horn et al. (2018) found that OER is a well-aided tool for self-directed and lifelong learners due to the convenience of resource access for instructors and learners.

In conclusion, the adoption and use of OER in education have been shown to have significant benefits, including personalized learning, cost-effectiveness, accessibility, and improved student learning outcomes, engagement, and motivation. However, it is crucial for students to have a clear understanding of the benefits of OER to promote their adoption and use.

Barriers to OER adoption
The adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) in language teaching and learning has been identified as having the potential to improve language education and overcome barriers related to cost and access. However, several challenges have been identified that hinder its wider adoption.

A lack of awareness and knowledge, limited access to technology, and limited availability of high-quality OER materials have been highlighted as obstacles to the adoption of OER by students. Itasanmi's (2020) study found that students who faced these challenges were less likely to adopt and use OER despite recognizing their potential benefits. Vincent & Arcebuche (2020) also found that poorly-built technology infrastructure is problematic for potential OER users. In a study conducted by Christoforidou & Georgiadou (2022) in Greece, major challenges hindering the wider use of OER were identified to include time constraints, a lack of incentives to integrate OER, and problems related to the location and repository of OER. Allen & Seaman (2014) reported that a majority of faculty in US higher education are unaware of the term "OER," but are interested in using them. Similarly, a study by Đỗ et al. (2019) in Vietnam found that roughly 75.5% of lecturers believe a lack of awareness of OER is a barrier to its creation and development.

Insufficient teacher training and support, as well as the difficulty of evaluating the impact of OER, are additional challenges that slow down their expansion. Yuan et al. (2008) suggested that the slow adaptability of institutional policies and incentives for educators to excel in OER hinders them from adopting OER in their pedagogical research and practices.

Effective implementation of OER in language teaching and learning requires addressing these challenges, particularly within the context of higher educational institutions in Vietnam such as UD-UFLS. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of the challenges and

opportunities for the implementation of OER in language teaching and learning by examining the perceptions and experiences of teachers and students at UD-UFLS.

**Theoretical Model of Adoption: Theoretical Framework to Investigate Students'
Perceptions of OER**

Although OER is common among faculty members of universities, the level of their willingness to accept and use other forms of information is not known. Rogers (2003) observed that members of all social systems do not readily accept innovation in the same order and at the same rate. Rogers' theory functions as a scientific framework to understand the knowledge and awareness level of students to gain deeper insights into the development and efficacy of OER content. First introduced in 1986 by Rogers, with the identification of some attributes of innovation, today, Diffusion of Innovation theory (DOI) explores how new ideas, products, and technologies are adopted and spread within a population. In the context of OER, this theory could be used to understand the awareness levels that influence the diffusion of OER among university students as well as the perceived benefits and challenges while adopting OER.

According to the DOI theory, the decision process for innovation adoption consists of the following five stages as shown in the figure:
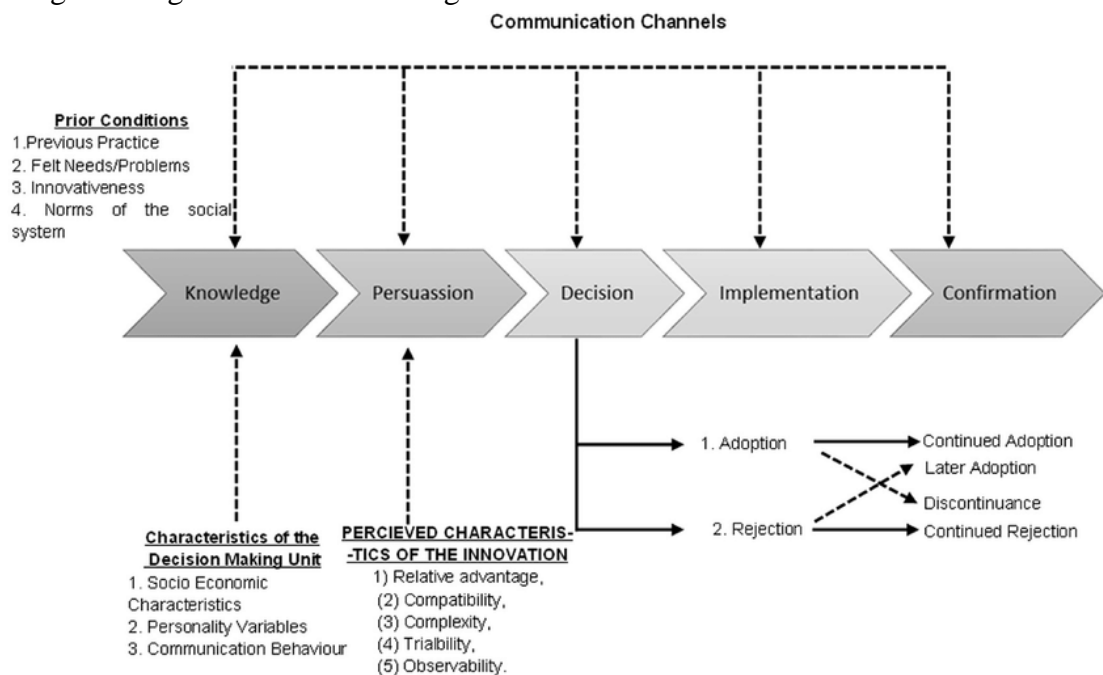
Source: Diffusion of Innovations, Fifth Edition by Everett M. Rogers. Copyright (c) 2003 by The Free Press. Reprinted with permission of the Free Press: A Division of Simon & Schuster.

According to Marcus's Theoretical Model of Adoption which was derived from the work of Roger, diffusion of innovation on the individual level is a "function of the availability of necessary resources, the value an individual attaches to the innovation attaches to the innovation, and the opportunity to learn about the innovation by observing others" (p.92). This model, which posits that an individual's decision to adopt an innovation is influenced by perceived usefulness, ease of use, and compatibility with existing values and practices, is particularly relevant in understanding the factors affecting students' adoption of OER. By applying this model, the researcher can gain valuable insights into the aspects of OER that students find appealing or challenging, and how these factors relate to their overall willingness to incorporate these resources into their learning process. Additionally, Marcus' model allows

for the consideration of contextual factors, such as institutional support and social influence, which may contribute to the adoption of OER. Although many studies applied Roger's theory as their theoretical framework, few studies have been carried out to examine the rate of students' awareness, and their perceptions of the benefits and obstacles during the process of utilizing OER. With a view to achieving the purpose of this research, applying Marcus's theory which postulates that adoption is a function of resources, value, and communication based on the innovation adoption process allows the researcher to develop a detailed method of research.

Methodology

To gain a deeper understanding of students' utilization and perspectives towards OER content, a mixed-method approach was utilized, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. This approach allows the researcher to gain insights into specific meanings and behaviors experienced in certain social phenomena through the subjective experiences of participants. This method is organized sufficiently to collect a larger range of data and answer specific interview questions while enabling participants to contribute additional meanings.For this study, a questionnaire was used for quantitative data collection, as the data gathered may generate findings that are more generalizable. The survey data was analyzed using SPSS, calculating means, standard deviations, and frequencies of responses. Additionally, focus group interviews were conducted using a qualitative analysis approach. This method involves group discussions among a small number of participants about a particular subject, aiming to identify and understand their views. Two key advantages of using focus group interviews include more repressed information emerging, enhancing the data collected, and richer discussions derived from group dynamics in a relatively shorter amount of time compared to individual interview. Items in the questionnaire and a set of semi-structured interview questions utilized in this research were mainly adapted from the work of Allen & Seaman (2014), based on Marcus's (1985) Theoretical Model of Adoption.

Participants

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Foreign Language Teacher Education (FLTE), University of Foreign Language Studies – the University of Danang (UD-UFLS) located in Central Vietnam. The participants are students in the third and final year of the ELT program including 100 students for the survey process and 30 recruited through the technique of convenience sampling for the semi-structured interviews, which includes readily available individuals who volunteer or can be quickly recruited (Johnson & Christensen, 2017). It is necessary to note that, some of the participants are majoring in ELT while others are specialized in the Primary English Language Teaching Program (PELT). The recruited participants have completed a better part of their program, experiencing different classes and practices in language skills and pedagogy methodologies, which are extensively incorporated with technology-based knowledge such as Research Methods, Project-based learning, Interpretation, Translation 1,2, and Technology for Language Teaching & Learning courses. It is ideal and reasonable to investigate these participants as they are more experienced and familiar with the application of technology and online sources, which are identified as OER content, to support their completion of the course requirement.

Research Instruments

The present study sought to address the research questions by employing both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. To this end, a questionnaire was adapted from the

work of Allen & Seaman (2014) based on the guideline of Marcus's Theoretical Model of Adoption and used as the primary data collection instrument. Participants were required to respond to the questionnaire items on a 5-point Likert scale, reflecting their level of agreement. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams with 30 students to augment the quantitative results and obtain in-depth information. Convenience sampling was used to select the participants, and the interviews were conducted in English. Since the study involved interviews, a claim for the exemptions was presented. Then, before carrying out the study, the research ethics, purpose, and how their rights would be protected were explained to the participants. The integration of these two data collection methods is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions at hand.

Data Analysis
In mixed methods research, the chosen research strategy influences the data analysis procedure (Creswell, 2009). In an explanatory sequential mixed method design, researchers have the ability to analyse quantitative and qualitative data separately before comparing them. This design allows for results to be strengthened and findings authenticated (Creswell, 2013).

In the present study, the researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. The quantitative data collected from the questionnaires (N=80) were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency were reported in tables.

To analyse the qualitative data gathered from the semi-structured interviews, the thematic content analysis method was utilized. The researcher carefully examined and transcribed all interview answers, then re-read the data and took detailed notes. Next, the researcher created a list of all topics, clustered together similar subjects, and turned them into codes. These codes were then grouped and eliminated based on their relevance to the topic, and the final list was compiled. The responses from each participant were combined, and example quotes were selected for each theme. Finally, the themes were compared with the quantitative analysis to triangulate and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the connection between the two stages of data.

Finding and discussion
The following section is organized based on the findings related to each research question. Regarding the questionnaire data collection, 100 survey forms were distributed, but only 80 were filled out correctly. As a result, 80 respondents were considered valid for use in the study.

Research Question 1: To What Extent are ELT Aware of OER?

Table 1: Level of The Familiarity with OER

Items (Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)	Mean	S.D
I am very familiar with OER and know how they can be used for teaching and learning.	1.50	0.65
I am familiar with OER and some of their use cases.	1.93	0.73
I am somewhat familiar with OER, but I am not sure how they can be used.	3.64	1.15

I have heard of OER, but don't know much about them.	4.38	0.93
I am not familiar with OER.	3.71	1.14

Table 1 presents the descriptive findings on the participants' familiarity with OER. The items are assessed using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with the mean scores and standard deviations provided for each statement. The data reveals that the majority of participants exhibit limited familiarity with OER. Specifically, the statements *"I am not familiar with OER"* and *"I have heard of OER, but don't know much about them"* have mean values notably exceeding 3.5. Conversely, the participants demonstrate minimal knowledge of OER and their applications in teaching and learning, as indicated by the relatively low mean scores for the statements *"I am very familiar with OER and know how they can be used for teaching and learning"* and *"I am familiar with OER and some of their use cases"*.

Table 2: Level of The Familiarity with OER Licensing Mechanisms

Items (Likert Scale: 1 = Very unaware to 5 = Very aware)	Mean	S.D
Creative Commons (CC)	1.93	1.14
Public Domain	2.5	1.02
Copyright	3.29	0.83

Given that licensing mechanism is a critical component of OER resources, examining the students' awareness regarding this matter provides the study a good indication with a more precise understanding of OER adoptions. It can be deduced from the table that students have limited knowledge of OER licenses. Among the three listed OER licenses, students were generally more aware of copyright licenses.

Table 3: Type of OER Resources Used

	Frequency	%
Interactive games/simulations	21	7%
Audio Podcasts	22	8%
Courseware from other universities	24	9%
Online tests and quizzes	27	10%
Slides and class presentations	27	10%
E-journals/databases/reports	33	12%
Images and Infographics	35	12%
E-textbooks	44	16%

Video lectures/tutorials	48	17%
Total	281	100

Participants were asked to choose the types of OER resources that they used. The top response is the utilization of video lectures/ tutorials which were chosen 48 times (17%). It is followed by E-textbooks and images, infographics which were selected 44 and 35 times (16% and 12% respectively). The least likely to be used were interactive games/ simulations (7%).

Table 4: Awareness of Students Regarding Different Aspects of OER

Items (Likert scale: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree)	Mean	S.D
OER is provided with a Creative Commons license.	2.09	1.28
I am aware that anyone can legally and freely copy, adapt and re-share OER.	2.26	1.25
I am aware that open educational resources are readily available for use, reuse and for research.	2.22	1.20
I know that it is very easy to find OER in my specific field.	3.00	1.31
I aware that OER provide high quality free materials for learning and teaching.	2.35	1.27
I am aware that open educational resources are in online/electronic format.	2.57	1.41
I know that OER do assist me in carrying out my academic activities.	2.91	1.50
I am aware that OER is more up to date than textbooks.	3.04	1.33

Data in Tables 1,2,3 and 4 shows that the respondents generally have a very low understanding of OER-associated licenses and the OER concept even though they reported a high level of different OER types' applications. This means that a high utilization level of OER does not necessarily associate with the awareness level toward OER and its characteristics.

More importantly, interview findings in relation to students' OER awareness further highlighted the lack of knowledge regarding the OER definition. This awareness limit is comprised of two issues. The first is familiarity with the term Open Educational Resources, or OER, while the second is the understanding of OER characteristics such as the 5R framework. Notably, only three students expressed that they were familiar with the term OER while the remaining interviewees reported that they have not heard of OER and its attributes, especially OER materials' licensing mechanism. The responses below succinctly reveal this notion:

"Well, this is the first time I have heard of Open Educational Resources. But after having your information about OER and different types of OER, I would say that I have used OER to support my learning, mostly for the required courses' assignments and research papers." (Respondent 1)

"I think I am somewhat familiar with OER, but I am not sure how they can be used. The only thing I know about OER is that it can be easily and freely accessible on the Internet." (Respondent 7)

In addition to being unfamiliar with the OER definition, interviewees also appeared to be limited in their knowledge of the properties of OER or licenses associated with OER materials.

"I am aware that open educational resources are in online/electronic format. Generally, I have tried to share some online learning materials without having any issue of permission or copyright but I do not know anything about Creative Common License until you break it down for me." (Respondent 18)

These responses somewhat are expected and in conformance with many previous studies mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter (Allen & Seaman, 2014; Appiah et al., 2020; Doan, Q. M., & Dao, 2020; Doan et al., 2020). Specifically, these responses indicated that despite the initial unawareness of the term Open Educational Resources or its acronym OER, participants, after having been provided with foundational information about OER, are relatively familiar with OER content and materials and have applied some types of OER for their varied learning purposes.

However, a high level of undergraduate students' recognition of OER was determined in some studies (Olufunke et al., 2014, Venegas Muggli & Westermann, 2019, Itasanmi, 2020) in which students expressed a positive attitude toward the utilization of OER in their studies as supplementary resources. It can be concluded that the more exposure students have to apply OER and the support from the faculty can positively influence a higher level of understanding and implementation of OER among students. In other words, users' awareness of OER can directly impact the level of utilization and dissemination, suggesting that educators and researchers conduct more research to support the promotion of OER within educational contexts. Also, given the limited knowledge of the OER concept and related attributes, students show great enthusiasm for employing and maximizing the potential of OER materials.

Research Question 2: What are The Perceptions of ELT Students Regarding the Benefits of Using OER?

Table 5: Perceived Benefits

Items (Likert scale: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree)	Mean	S.D
OER enables me to prepare for tests and exams.	3.57	1.20
OER allows me to gain current information in my area of study.	3.91	1.04
I can do my assignments more effectively with the use of OER	3.96	1.15
OER allows me to update my knowledge on a particular topic or area of research.	4.04	1.11
OER enables me to learn at my own pace.	4.22	0.74

I feel more engaged with learning using OER.	4.35	0.83
OER enhances my comprehension of what is taught in my formal classes.	4.39	0.84
My learning experience has been greatly improved upon using OER.	4.43	0.66

The benefits of OER are widely recognized in the literature, among which the most notable benefits include expanded access to dynamic and plentiful OER materials, cost-effectiveness, enhanced flexibility or mobility, and the development of students' engagement and learning autonomy. As shown in Table 5, the most agreed-upon benefit of OER among participants was the greater improvement of their learning experience (M=4.43) Deeper comprehension of formal-class lectures was reported as the second major benefit of integrating OER among students (M=4.39). The other leading advantage was a higher level of engagement in class (M=4.35).

Some key advantages of the OER application were also found in the interviews with students as OER provides learners with key solutions to increasing their access to an enormous reservoir of knowledge and materials, boosting students' satisfaction and learning autonomy. This response by Respondent 15 strongly echoes this aspect:

"Using OER allows me to access the needed materials and online sites at anytime, anywhere. Above all, what I like the most about it is that I can learn at my own pace in which I can go over the materials or instructional videos as many times as I wanted to robust my knowledge of a certain topic."

Respondent 20 agreed with this idea and further elaborated:

"I often struggle to keep up with the lectures in the conventional settings because of the big size of the class and sometimes the lecturer talked too fast and I could not take notes carefully for later revisions. With instant access to free and credible online courses from many prestigious educational institutions, such as Coursera, Udemy, or Khan Academy, I can learn what I desire to learn."

A personalized pace of learning is a significant benefit of using OER and this reflection is in line with the findings of Cohen et al. (2015) and Butcher (2015). Given unexpected and unprecedented events like the COVID-19 pandemic changing many aspects of education, online learning, and self-study practices have become more popular. In this case, OER exerts a crucial role in supporting the learning process in terms of flexibility and accessibility, offering a greater choice for students in any circumstance and enhancing students' self-directed skills. Students can gain deeper insights into the areas of interest and broaden them as well as be more aware of the areas of deficiency or improvement needed.

Other reflections regarding the supplementary role of OER in their exam revision is quoted below:

"Besides the notes and formal textbooks I used for the exam revisions, accessing a wider range of previous exam papers and mock tests for similar courses from other universities in Vietnam helped me gain higher scores in the exams." (Respondent 11)

"I often search for ideas and useful phrases to write essays or analysis of Shakespeare and it truly helps with expanding what I desire to learn." (Respondent 14)

Naturally, students will seek additional information via different sources to complete varied academic tasks when faced with upcoming exam seasons. With ease to access, OER is considered a beneficial channel of relevant and the most up-to-date information, engaging students in a more customized style of learning as well as supplementing their formal classes. A significant number of twelve students in the interviews also emphasized the importance of the use of OER to tailor the available learning resources to their own needs, which correlated with the study of Venegas Muggli & Westermann (2019).

Furthermore, the cost-effectiveness of OER materials and has been widely agreed upon by all participants. The response below succinctly captures this point:

"I read a lot for my study and instead of buying brand new textbooks for some courses, I can easily access online resources. I can also download e-books, articles, and research papers and add notes or highlight to these materials. It's very convenient and money-saving." (Respondent 5)

"Purchasing electronic versions of textbooks or required materials are much more economical, at the same time, it is so easy just to keep reading and accessing many files at the same time." (Respondent 16)

The increasing cost of higher education to which textbook cost contributes a great portion is a hindrance to the ubiquitous access to education for students. It is believed that reducing the cost is one of the major roles of OER in education according to Wright & Reju (2012). Overall, many interviewees consider the free cost of using OER to be beneficial, that using OER in their study was a lot cheaper than buying hardcopy versions of textbooks or relevant learning materials. Utilizing OER to minimize the cost is greatly important for students coming from less affluent families and backgrounds around the world, who are unable to afford quality education with access to educational resources that are of the same quality as the traditional ones.

Research Question 3: What are The Perceptions of ELT Students Regarding the Benefits of Using OER?

Table 6: Perceived Obstacles

	Frequency	%
Too difficult to use	4	1%
Not current, up-to-date	5	2%
Not enough resources for my study	11	4%
Lack of support from my institution/ lecturers to use OER	15	5%
Inadequate ICT skills to search for needed materials	17	6%

Insufficient ICT facilities to access OER materials at my institution	21	7%
Not knowing If I have permission to use or change	28	9%
Poor Internet connection	43	14%
Lack of time to look for suitable resources	49	16%
Lack of orientation on the availability and the use of OER to support learning	51	17%
Overload of information	59	19%
Total	303	100

In this section, participants were asked to choose some of the above-listed statements as their critical deterrents to their use of OER. Based on the frequency demonstrated in Table 6, one of the most challenging aspects of utilizing OER reported by students involves difficulty in choosing suitable materials or the problem of information and resource overloads which were agreed by roughly 19%, of 80 survey respondents. In this case, students' information-searching skills can directly impact the strategies for retrieving relevant OER content. The second challenge reported by students is that they found it difficult to navigate their use of OER due to the lack of orientation and support from the faculty for students' learning purposes (17%). Furthermore, time constraints while looking for suitable resources and an unstable Internet connection can result in the disruption of access to OER which was chosen 49 and 43 times accordingly by the participants.

As previously said, OER is flourishing in higher education settings all around the world. However, OER is still underutilized in terms of its potentials (Annand, and, & 2017, 2017). The interview sections elaborately consolidate the quantitative data, showing some major obstacles students encounter when using OER in higher education, consisting of (1) poor Internet connection, (2) ambiguity in the guidelines for using OER, and also (3) lack of quality assurance. One student indicated that:

"Many areas around the campus are not equipped with stable Internet connection which makes it hard to access our online learning system (LMS) when I need it." (Respondent 13)

Five students also emphasized their concerns over this issue:

"It is quite time-consuming and tiring when I try to connect to the Internet for our class' online discussion on the E-learning system." (Respondent 8)

That means although OER has great potential in widening users' access to different sources and materials, the irregularity of Internet connection is a key challenge for students to complete certain academic tasks. In other words, the accessibility to OER is disrupted when the Internet service is unavailable or relatively too slow, hindering students from having their online activities completed successfully. This finding bears a close resemblance to the study of Appiah et al. (2020) which highlighted weak Internet speed as a key factor impacting OER utilization among students at Kumasi Technical University in Ghana. Given the challenge of unreliable Internet connection in many universities, this aspect even made it more difficult for students from rural or economically depressed parts of the world where ICT infrastructure and

basic connectivity to the Internet, in general, are limited. Besides, there are six students who shared their difficulties while navigating relevant OER content for their study. Consider the obstacles students shared in the responses below:

"I feel overwhelmed when searching for research papers because I am not sure which is more credible and up-to-date among a great number of papers I can access and download for later use." (Respondent 28)

"...even though I try to narrow down the keywords I type in, it's still an overload of information for me. Eventually, I have to consult my supervisor for the best materials and sites I can use to support my learning." (Respondent 21)

"...It is actually difficult finding an eBook...It really takes time when you have to keep going from site to site to see where you can access and own a copy for free." (Respondent 6)

The availability or discoverability of OER is considered another significant access factor. Considering the ever-increasing quantity of OER, it can potentially bring frustration and difficult location of relevant/ or usable OER. More importantly, having to deal with time constraints while seeking the right resources for their learning needs may limit students from widespread adoption of OER. This is because a majority of interviewees are initially unaware of OER and its characteristics, they struggle to comprehensively and efficiently utilize the search engines to retrieve suitable information or materials. This is in line with many previous studies (Christoforidou & Georgiadou, 2022; Kumar, Fathurrochman, Prabu, Ramnath, & Kumar, 2021; Midha & Kumar, 2022). Therefore, a wider body of research is suggested conducting to further promote detailed guidance and support from the faculty and lecturers for the proper use of OER to its fullest capacity (Truong, 2021).

Conclusion
This study presents important insights into the field of OER awareness and adoption among students, contributing to the existing body of literature and informing educators and lecturers of the prevailing perceptions of students related to OER. In general, this study reveals that students have limited knowledge of OER and its attributes but reflect an increasing enthusiasm for adopting OER and tailoring it to their personalized learning experiences. Based on the data analysis from questionnaires and focus-group interviews, this research is considered a foundation to collect student voices to bring learners' narratives into dialogue with the movement of innovative pedagogical practices and methodologies. Further promotion and guidance are encouraged to stimulate the OER movement in different programs and courses, enhancing students' understanding of OER for broader application in the future. Upgrading ICT infrastructure at current educational institutions and frequent training programs for both lecturers and students to effectively implement OER can minimize some highlighted obstacles reported in this paper.

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