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The Future is Connection:

Collaboration, Creativity and Compassion in a Digital Society

Psychology student and staff views on a Research Resource Library

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While essential to students' academic and professional careers, many tertiary psychology students report feelings of anxiety about studying statistics and research methods (Lloyd-Lewis et al., 2024). These negative attitudes impact engagement and, subsequently, performance and attrition (Allen & Baughman, 2016). Students also ask for flexible and accessible digital tools to support learning research (Fielder et al., 2024; Keefe et al., 2025). To address these challenges, a Queensland university developed a peer-reviewed, open education resource (OER) library to support learning statistics and research methods. Created using Pressbooks (Book Oven Inc, n.d), an online software favoured by education institutions globally for publishing free and openly licensed materials, the library offers students lay explanations of key statistical analyses (e.g., *t*-Tests, Bivariate Correlation, Regression) that incorporate step-by-step instructions in SPSS and Jamovi. Additional resources cover key methodological concepts (e.g., measurement types and test selection) as well as dissemination topics (e.g., the APA Journal Article reporting Standards).

Using this resource library as a case study, we examined tertiary psychology student and staff perspectives about the design and functionality of a research-based OER. We used The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology's (UTAUT) four key determinants of user acceptance and behavioural intention to adopt technology: social influence, facilitating conditions, performance, and effort expectancy (Venkatesh et al., 2003) as a framework; and our research questions focused on asking in what ways do UTAUT determinants help explain the barriers that psychology students and staff face when navigating and learning from a digital research methods library.

Semi-structured "walk-through" interviews were conducted online, in which participants (n = 16 university students and n = 4 staff) navigated the OER in real time. A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), guided by an interpretivist paradigm, was used to analyse the data. Three themes emerged. Optimisation reflected the ease of using the OER and encompassed navigation, organisation and readability. Enhancing learning reinforced the importance of the OER's discourse, interactive components and visuals for user performance. Intent to use the OER reflected facilitating conditions including students' need to trust the authors and the value of being able to customise the OER to suit individual learning needs and preferences (e.g., captions for videos, audio options, minimizing information on screen).

Study findings offer guidance to OER designers, with particular insight into using multimedia tools to support understanding statistics and research methods. In today's technological context, participants wanted both the interactive, manipulatable content as well as the ability to access and download a static version. Inclusivity and accessibility transcended the technology to also include the fact that popular-cultural references, while relatable, can be dated and impact users' understanding. While the present study focused on use intentions, future research should evaluate resource use on academic engagement, anxiety, and academic performance. Its effectiveness compared to existing student support initiatives and emerging AI-based tools could also be considered.

Keywords: Open education resource (OER), statistics and research methods, UTAUT

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