

# Appraising the Awareness, Attitude and Usage of Creative Commons Licence by Central University Faculty Members

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## Abstract

*Creative Commons is a global non-profit organization providing a set of standard and legal tools that enables sharing and use of original works. The present study aimed to investigate the awareness, attitude and usage of Creative Commons Licence among the faculty members of the department of education in the central universities of India. A descriptive survey design was adopted by the researchers. A self-prepared questionnaire on creative commons licences was developed by the researchers. A sample size of 78 faculty of the department of education based on the convenience sampling technique was selected as the primary source of data. The results of the study showed that the majority of the faculty have used creative commons licensed materials in their classroom teaching. While only a few of them have published their work under creative commons licences and have attended workshops or training programmes on creative commons licences. The study concluded that faculty were aware of the concept of creative commons licences; however, they possess a neutral attitude towards creative commons licences.*

**Keywords:** Awareness, Attitude, Usage, University Faculty Members, Creative Commons Licences

## Introduction

The new digital age has opened up a wide opportunity to access essential knowledge and information. With the emergence of the Internet, academic stakeholders can use, download and copy huge amounts of educational resources and also further disseminate them to a professional network. But the question arises, even though all the resources are freely available over the internet, are they free and open to use, adapt, modify, download or disseminate? Are the resources legally free and open for all? Many a time, we knowingly or unknowingly use, modify or share resources that are copyrighted or restricted in some terms. This may limit the academic and knowledge community to access some high-quality educational resources. To eliminate this challenge, a new form of licence called

'Creative commons Licences' came into being. Creative Commons (CC) Licences is a non-profit organization founded on the basis that 'many citizens of the Internet want to share their work and the power to reuse, modify and distribute their work - with others on generous terms' (Bissell, 2009). The main vision of Creative Commons is to realise the goal of universal access to education, knowledge and research by promoting a culture of development, growth and productivity. (Creative Commons, 2011). As viewed by Lessig (2004) copyright laws restrict people from accessing, remixing, and distributing copyrighted materials in a digital environment. It is noted that due to the rigidity and complexity of copyright laws, even those who wish to make their copyright material freely available to others are unable to do so without great effort or the services of a lawyer (McGeever, 2006).

Therefore, for this reason, the group of experts introduced a set of licences that creators and users could use to share their creative materials freely and use without giving up their rights (Awujoola & Phillips, 2020). According to Creative Commons Organisation (2020) "Creative Commons is a set of legal tools, a non-profit organization, a global network and a movement—all inspired by people's willingness to share their creativity and knowledge and enabled by a set of open copyright licences" (Creative Commons Organisation, 2020, p. 1). As Branco and Britto (2014) "Creative Commons licences act as a source of legal instruments for those who want to give up some of their rights in favour of the community and the dissemination of cultural works." Korn and Oppenheim (2008) defined "Creative Commons as a licensing system under which authors or producers of a work offer some of their rights to others to re-use their work under certain specified conditions". It is very important to keep in mind that this creative commons licence provides a pool of content that can be copied, downloaded, modified, combined and shared, within the framework of copyright laws. There is a great benefit in sharing our work with a creative commons licence. Creative commons licences enrich the culture of sharing creative and original works all over the world. The set of creative commons licence allows users to use, adapt, remix and share educational resources freely and openly as Open Educational Resources (OERs). It also enables creators the opportunity to share their resources and decide how their works would be used. Park (2016) considered CC licences as the infrastructure of roads underlying the ecosystem of OER to make reuse and sharing possible. And the emergence of creative commons licences has led to a culture of sharing and remixing knowledge and creativity. The success of creative commons licences in driving these goals will

depend on the awareness and attitude of the academic fraternity towards CC licensing.

## Literature Review

Williams & Werth (2021) evaluated a study on the preferences of students in the use of licences for projects based on OER-enabled pedagogy, factors affecting student selection of a licensing option and faculty experiences in facilitating licensing selection. The study remarked that the majority of the students preferred a CC-BY licence. However, students indicated that they were not familiar with creative commons licensing before, but were aware of copyright licences. Even faculty tend to be unfamiliar with the concept of creative commons licensing. Finally, the results of the study concluded that students are open to sharing their works with credit and that they value helping others. Awujoola & Phillips (2020) demonstrated a study to investigate awareness and perception of CC licences by lecturers in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The result showed that lecturers in the Faculty of Education were moderately aware of CC licences and held moderate negative perceptions about CC licences. The study found that there was a significant influence of CC licence awareness on its perception by lecturers. Nobes & Harris (2019) showed that 60 per cent of the participants were familiar with these licences, while only 20 per cent of them have published their papers using CC licences. The majority of the participants preferred the most restrictive CC-BY-NC-ND licence which shows that they were concerned about the commercial usage of their work. It also found a lack of understanding of the commercial clause in creative commons licences among the researchers. Krelja Kurelovic (2016) found out that the familiarity with creative commons licences among the

faculties is very low. The study revealed that only 12.5 per cent of the faculties published digitised teaching under creative commons licences. Liu, Tao, Chen, Chen and Liu (2013) conducted a study to evaluate the effects of the Creative Commons approach on the collaborative learning experience of students. Evidence showed that Creative Commons can significantly improve participants' attitude to the derivative works, the satisfaction level of remix outcomes, perception of the peer interaction and the sense of work ownership. It concluded that Creative Commons has the potential to increase individuals' responsibilities and motivate them to participate in collaborative learning activities. Reed (2012) observed that the majority of the teaching staff were positive about sharing their materials and even reused existing content in their face-to-face or online learning. However, the data gathered confirms that there was a lack of awareness among the teaching staff about the Creative Commons licences.

The above empirical literature shows the understanding, attitude and practice of creative commons licence. Studies by Fitzgerald (2007) and Kapitzke, Dezuanni and Iyer (2011) noted that creative commons provide the most effective coherent way of sharing and reusing digital content or inactive copyright materials. Creative Commons provides a vitally important facility for sharing knowledge in the name of culture and innovation. Creative Commons has significantly and positively affected education and the academic sector. Furthermore, the researchers found limited and scant studies on creative commons licences. It remains unclear whether the faculty members were aware of the creative commons licence and how they perceive and use this licence. The present study attempts to address this gap in the literature. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the faculty members' awareness, attitude and use of creative commons licence in

educational contexts.

## **Objectives of the study**

1. To investigate the awareness of creative commons licences among the faculty members of the department of education of the central universities.
2. To determine the attitude towards creative commons licences among the faculty members of the department of education of the central universities.
3. To find out the usage of creative commons licence among the faculty members of the department of education of the central universities.

## **Research Methodology**

The descriptive survey method was adopted to explore the awareness, attitude, and usage of Creative Commons Licences among the faculty members of the department of education of the central universities. The population of the study consists of all the faculty of the department of education of the central universities in India. Data were collected from a total sample of 76 respondents. The researchers adopted a convenience sampling technique due to time constraints, willingness, and easy availability of respondents. A self-prepared questionnaire was used by the researchers. The tool comprises 4 sections: the demographic profile, usage of creative commons licences (3 statements), awareness towards creative commons licences (7 statements), and attitude towards creative commons licences (13 statements). The degree of usage of creative commons licences was measured based on "Yes" and "No". The degree of awareness towards creative commons licences was measured on a 4-point Likert scale with 1 as "Yes", 2 as "To some extent", 3 as "No" and 4 as "Don't Know". The statements under the

dimensions of attitude towards creative commons licences were measured using a 5-point Likert scale consisting of 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. It was validated by five experts from the field of open educational resources and educational technology. The questionnaire was a try-out on 35 samples for establishing reliability. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was found to be 0.78 indicating a high-level of internal

consistency of the statements. However, its subsections which are dimension wise had Cronbach-alpha coefficients of 0.64, 0.84 and 0.98 for usage, awareness and attitude towards creative commons licence, respectively. The research was conducted using an online questionnaire created in Google Forms. Statistical analyses like percentages, mean and standard deviations were used by the researchers.

**Table-1: Demographic characteristics of the sample**

<b>Respondents' Demographic Information</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	41	53.95
Female	35	46.05
<b>Years of teaching experience</b>		
Less than 1 years	08	10.53
1-5 years	19	25.00
6-10 years	21	27.63
More than 10 years	28	36.84
<b>Designation</b>		
Professor	22	28.95
Associate Professor	20	26.31
Assistant Professor	27	35.53
Guest Faculty	07	9.21
<b>Usage of Computer</b>		
None	0	0
Daily	69	90.79
Weekly	07	9.21
Monthly	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

**Findings**

**Analysis of Objective 1-** To investigate the awareness of creative commons

licences among the faculty members of the department of education of the central universities.

**Table-2: Awareness towards Creative Common Licences**

Sl. N	Statements	Yes	%	To some extent	%	No	%	Don't Know	%
1.	Creative Commons is actually a non-profit organization.	36	47.37	20	26.31	08	10.53	12	15.79
2.	Creative Commons licences are "free, easy-to-use copyright licences".	35	46.05	17	22.37	15	19.74	09	11.84
3.	Creative Commons licences are an alternative to copyright.	22	28.95	14	18.42	24	31.58	16	21.05
4	The creative commons licences transform all rights reserved to some rights reserved.	28	36.84	19	25.00	15	19.74	14	18.42
5.	If the copyright licence of my creative work expires, the material will automatically come under creative commons licences.	25	32.89	09	11.84	13	17.10	29	38.16
6.	I can use others' original work and publish it under creative commons licences.	14	18.42	12	15.79	31	40.79	19	25.00
7.	I can apply a creative commons licence to a work that is under the public domain.	21	27.63	09	11.84	30	39.47	16	21.05

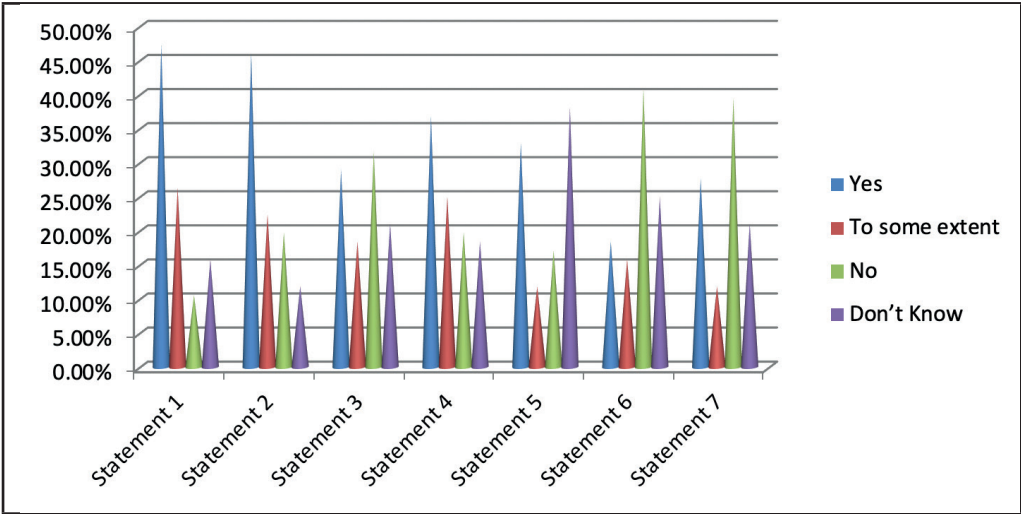
Table 2 and Fig. 1 reflect the awareness of faculty members toward creative commons licences. According to the table, 47.37 per cent of the samples were aware that creative commons is

a non-profit organization and not just a classification. 46.05 per cent accepted that creative commons licences are "free, easy-to-use copyright licences". 31.58 per cent were aware of the

fact that creative commons licences are not an alternative to a copyright licence. 36.84 per cent believed that the notion that creative commons licences transform 'all rights reserved' to 'some rights reserved'. However, 38.16 per cent of the respondents were not sure whether their original work comes under creative commons licence after

its copyright licence expired. Moreover, 40.79 per cent and 39.47 per cent of them were aware that they cannot use others' original work and publish it under creative commons licences nor can they apply creative commons licence to a work that is under the public domain.

**Fig-1: Graphical Representation of Awareness towards Creative Commons Licences**



**Analysis of Objective 2-** To determine the attitude towards creative commons licences among the faculty members

of the department of education of the central universities.

**Table-3: Attitude towards Creative Commons Licences**

Sl. No	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	M	SD
1	The use and conditions of creative commons licences are very much easy and clear to understand.	18	27	14	09	08	3.5	1.27
2	I know how to apply creative commons licences to my materials.	15	21	21	10	09	3.30	1.26
3	I can easily locate creative commons licence materials.	17	15	23	11	10	3.24	1.31

4	I think everyone should make their work free and open to use, share and modify and even use it commercially without permission as per their own choice rather than locking it behind the protection of copyright.	07	11	19	18	21	2.54	1.28
5	I do not want others to make money from my original works.	21	17	15	12	11	3.33	1.41
6	I prefer the use of a copyright licence rather than creative commons licence.	15	13	22	16	10	3.09	1.31
7	I think creative commons licences remove my creditability and acknowledgement.	13	16	17	11	19	2.91	1.43
8	I think creative commons licences will increase the rate of Plagiarism.	12	16	17	17	14	2.93	1.35
9	Creative Commons Licences might create problems as I can never know who and how someone is using my work.	16	13	20	15	12	3.08	1.36
10	These licences help in sharing and protecting my creative works, while still protecting them from being misused.	11	12	21	15	17	2.80	1.34
11	Creative Commons Licences help me in spreading my work and gaining global recognition for it.	18	19	17	11	11	3.29	1.36
12	Creative Commons Licences helps in creating an online community of sharing and reusing.	13	17	23	12	11	3.12	1.28
13	Compared to traditional copyright, Creative Commons Licences have made it easier to grant permission to all automatically rather than granting permission to each person individually.	19	21	20	09	07	3.47	1.25

Table 3 presents the attitude of central university faculty members towards creative commons licenses. The results indicated that faculty perceived: that creative commons licenses are easy to use and clear to understand its conditions and principles (M3.5, SD=1.27); they have an understanding

of how to apply creative commons licenses to their work (M=3.30, SD=1.26) and can easily locate creative commons materials (M=3.24, SD=1.31). However, the majority of them strongly disagreed with the fact that everyone should make their work free and open to use, share and modify and even use

it commercially without permission as per their own choice rather than locking it behind the protection of copyright (M=2.54, SD=1.28); also they don't want others to make money from their original works (M=3.33, SD=1.41); few of the faculty=preferred the use of copyright license rather than creative commons license (M=3.09, SD=1.31). The majority of the faculty believed that creative commons licenses remove their credibility and acknowledgement (M=2.91, SD=1.43); and disagreed that creative commons licenses will increase the rate of plagiarism (M=2.93, SD=1.35). Faculty viewed that creative commons licenses might create problems as they have no idea who and how someone is using their work (M=3.08, SD=1.36); they perceived that these licenses help them in sharing and protecting their

creative works (M=2.80, SD=1.34) and gaining global recognition for their work (M=3.29, SD=1.36) They agreed that creative commons licenses help in creating an online community of sharing and reusing (M=3.12, SD=1.28); along with that creative commons licenses makes it easy to grant permission to users compared to copyright license (M= 3.47, SD=1.25). Based on these findings, it can be inferred that the central university faculty members have a neutral attitude about creative commons licenses.

**Analysis of Objective 3-** To find out the usage of creative commons licence among the faculty members of the department of education of the central universities.

**Table-4: Usage of Creative Commons Licences**

Statements	Yes	Percentage (%)	No	Percentage (%)
Have you ever used any Creative Commons Licence materials/images/videos/ppts in your classroom teaching?	40	52.63	36	47.37
Have you ever published your work under Creative Commons Licences?	30	39.47	46	60.53
Have you ever attended any workshop or training programme on Creative Commons licences?	27	35.53	49	64.47

**Fig-2: Graphical representation of Usage of Creative Commons Licences**

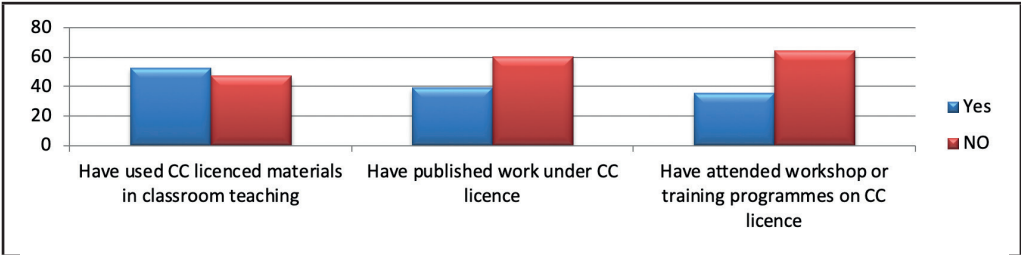




Table no. 4 and Fig. 2 delineate the usage pattern of creative common licence among the respondents. The stated table displayed that 52.63 per cent of the participants have used creative commons licensed materials in their classroom teaching. While only 39.47 per cent of them have published their work under creative commons licences and 35.53 per cent have attended workshops or training programmes on creative commons licences.

## Discussions

The study reveals that the majority of central university faculty were aware of creative commons licences. The result of this study is similar to the studies conducted by Awujoola, & Phillips (2020); Baas and Schuwer (2020); Jhangiani, et al., (2016); Nobes & Harris (2019). On the contrary; Baas, Admiraal, & Van Den Berg, (2019) concluded that teachers' awareness of Creative Commons licences is limited. Results of this present study also revealed that the faculty members have a neutral attitude about creative commons licences. This result is inconsistent with research conducted by Awujoola, & Phillips (2020). The study found that the perception of teachers towards creative commons licences is

moderately negative. However, in the studies conducted by Brent, Gibbs and Gruszczynska (2012) it was found that teachers were not willing to openly share their teaching resources under the creative commons licence.

## Conclusion

Creative Commons licences are the most comprehensible licences to release digital content for use by everyone. Kim (2007) also commented that creative commons can aid us in solving many problems and conflicts that arise due to copyright laws in this digital era. This has led the academic community to have access to licensed and free resources through fast, easy, and reliable creative commons; thereby enabling to encourage the culture of creative sharing and improving the academic and research environment. The present study found out that central university faculty have awareness and understanding regarding creative commons licences and a majority of them possess a neutral attitude towards creative commons licences. However, there is still a need to promote the use of creative commons licences in the educational community.

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