

Does project focus influence challenges and opportunities of Open Online Education?

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Does project focus influence challenges and opportunities of **Open Online Education**? A sub-group analysis of group-concept mapping data.

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BACKGROUND

Openness in education is not a consistent term since it is used to describe various things and means different things to different people. However, there are two broad subcategories in use: Open Online Education (OOE) & Open Educational Resources (OER).

	<u>OER</u>		<u>OOE</u>
	Open licensing	Access	Open access to learning
	Creation of content	Creation	Creation of teaching practices
	Use and reuse	Enabling	Pedagogies and didactics
	Sharing content	Sharing	Sharing education
	Scaling up content and reuse	Scaling	Scaling up educational practices

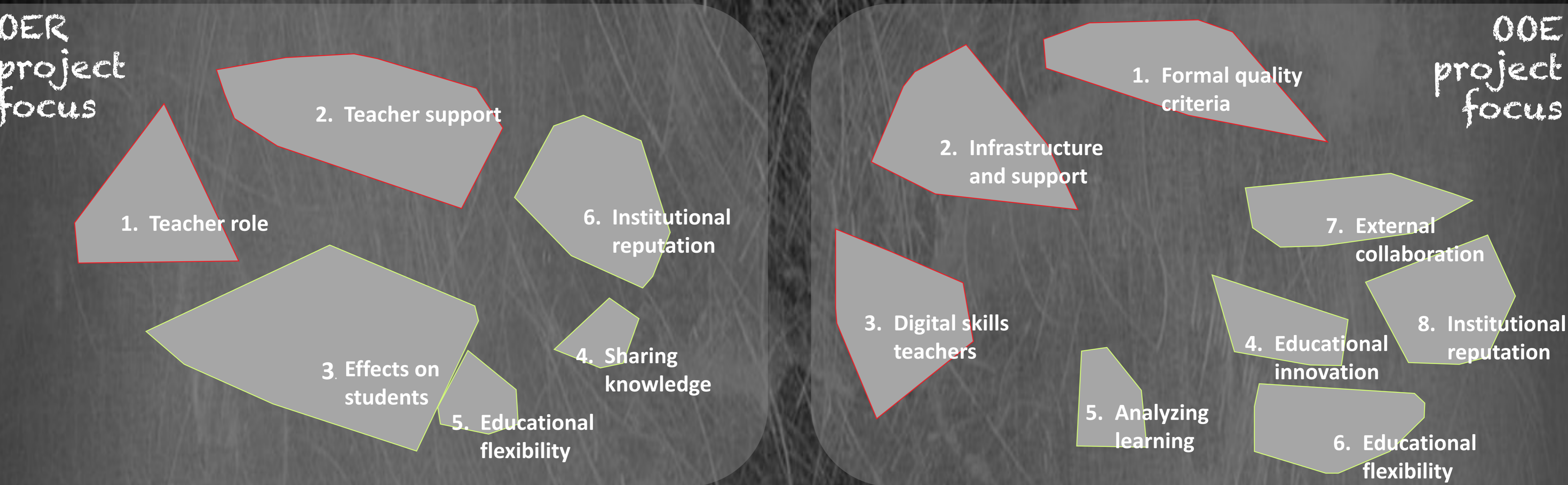
In a research context, it is important to identify the interpretations of openness, especially since the underlying ideas behind these different interpretations can yield different results. Not much empirical research on the implementation aspects of open education exists, especially comparing OER and OOE. This study addresses this gap, exploring identification and prioritization of organizational challenges and opportunities of two subgroups of projects within higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Netherlands. Our research question is:

Does the project character (OER focus vs. OOE focus) of educational innovation projects lead to perceived differences by actors involved in their implementation?

METHODS

We used Group Concept Mapping (GCM) to uncover a shared understanding of project leaders of OER and OOE innovation projects (n=31) about the organizational challenges and opportunities that they encounter. The method is a structured procedure, incorporating quantitative and qualitative variables to create a visual depiction (i.e. concept map) that is completely based on the input of participants.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION



Findings show that there are differences in conceptual and practical representation between the two groups:

OOE is more multifaceted → OOE has more impact on core processes of HEIs.

Education, pedagogy and other student-related themes are less prominent for OER.

For OER there is more focus on teachers → they are central to creation and lifecycle of OER.

CONCLUSION

HEIs need to internally adapt to the needs of various manifestations of “openness” to fully benefit from opportunities and overcome challenges. With this study shed light on the differences, not by means of theory, but with empirical evidence.

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