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Open Online Learning Assessment and Recognition: Practices and Requirements

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- Learners gain academic knowledge by attending a variety of different open courses that offer state of the art and edgy knowledge that is not offered by their universities.

- Besides, the achievements of these courses are willingly accepted and recognized by the employers. The employers increasingly tend to make no differentiation in recognizing the OOL or other forms of learning.

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The problem:

universities lack procedures or trust and face challenges to recognize the knowledge or skills acquired by various forms open learning.

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The aim

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- to identify the existing practices and requirements for universities to recognize OOL.

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Recognition

- The existing good practices of assessment and recognition of OOL are still rather scarce and unsystematic, not showing any consistent practices or systems that could be already functioning in the universities.

- The focus of this paper is not the assessment of OOL practices performed by the universities, but the requirements for recognition of OOL as such.

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The sample

- This study is focusing on the insights and experiences of experts who are knowledgeable and experienced in the field of OOL and/or recognition in higher education or at policy level.

- Interview participants represented 8 countries: Finland, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Russia, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Data collection

- Data was collected in January-February, 2019.

- Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect most relevant data.

- Interview questions were non-directive and open-ended, based on the topics, constructed from the theoretical analysis.

Research limitations

Interviews with policy advisers for OOL and researchers at higher education institutions, allowed to disclose research problem from two perspectives, while there are more stakeholders who could contribute to this discussion and disclose new perspectives about OOL recognition, like students or representatives of labour market.

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Results

It is considerably easier to get the recognition of OOL if aiming at free credits or to enter the programmes offered by HEI, than those which are a part of a minor or major programmes and lead to qualification.
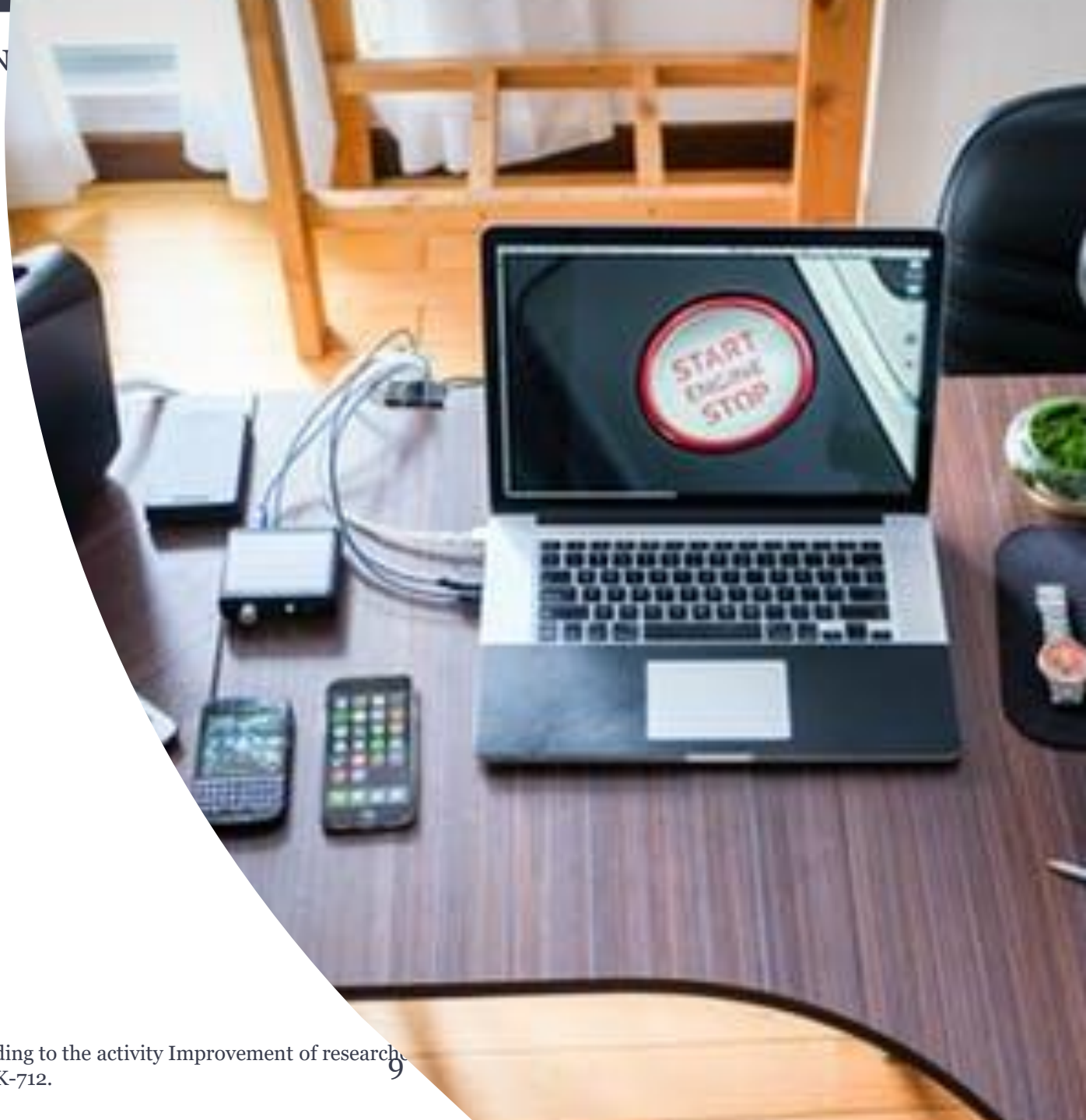
Results

OOL assessment and recognition in universities is still dependent on the individual institutional policies and practices and organized on individual basis that are not scalable.

Results

- Identity verification of the learner, suitable supervised assessment, informative credentials, quality assurance, award of credit points, and partnerships and collaboration with potentially recognizing institutions or bodies were identified as needed.

- HE institutions are adapting too slowly to the changes in the labor market and learner and employer needs, and do not have trained HR capacity or will to recognize OOL.

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To Conclude

- Research and practice of recognizing OOL in higher education are still emerging and are in a rather initial stage.

- Although OOL recognition procedures tend to be similar as in traditional recognition, the universities are too slow to adapt to the changes in the market.

Research findings suggest

- Be open, do research and try to keep up to industry demands;

- Participate in the projects that allow innovation testing and application in the HE systems;

- Analyse the existing systems and programmes and introduce data collection culture, issueing of digital badges or other digital credentials;

- Establish such systems for digital credentials that can be easily synchronized in the future;

- Think and work in collaboration and in networks.

/Pictures from www.pexels.com/