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# AWARENESS AND ACCESSIBILITY OF E-RESOURCES AMONG THE EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

The study examines the awareness and accessibility levels of electronic resources (E-Resources) among employees and students within academic and institutional environments. In the digital era, E-Resources have become central to research, learning, and professional growth. Yet, differences in awareness and use continue to exist among user groups. This study seeks to compare the availability, usage frequency, problems, and E-Resource preferences among employees and students. A quantitative research design was used, where structured questionnaires were administered to a sample of 200 participants from both groups. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The conclusions indicate wide gaps in levels of awareness, access platforms, and usage frequency between the two groups, necessitating specific digital literacy interventions. The article concludes with suggestions to improve E-Resource utilization and accessibility among all groups.

**Keywords**

E-Resources, Digital Accessibility, Students, Employees, Information Literacy, Digital Divide, Academic Libraries, Online Databases, ICT, User Awareness.

## INTRODUCTION

In the present digital era, the incorporation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) within school and organizational settings has transformed the process of accessing and sharing knowledge. Electronic resources (E-Resources) including e-journals, e-books, online databases, digital repositories, and web-based learning platforms have become essential tools for scholarly and professional development. These resources facilitate not just learning and research but also evidence-based decision-making and lifelong learning by users.

With the rapid exponential growth of online content, organizations are heavily investing in creating digital libraries and pay-per-view E-Resource platforms. These resources aim to be accessible and universally open. Yet disparities in access and awareness persist, especially when looking at different demographics of users such as students and employees.

Students, who are the principal consumers of study material, must be familiar with using online mediums for learning, assignments, and research. The employees, on the other hand, use E-Resources for their professional work, skill development, and personal development. The degree of awareness, accessibility, and usage can widely differ between them based on the factors of age, training, motivation, and institutional support.

The aim of this study is to investigate and contrast awareness and accessibility of E-Resources between students and workers. The research is based on the assumption that bringing about digital divide closing and optimization of E-Resource usage can make a huge

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difference in improving the quality of learning and job outcomes. It attempts to address the following main questions:

1. What is the awareness level of E-Resources among students and workers?
2. How open are the E-Resources to these two user groups?
3. What are the impediments to effective use?
4. Do there exist major differences in usage patterns and preferences?

This paper is designed to offer a systemic perspective on these questions through analysis and interpretation of empirical data. It seeks to provide insights into how E-Resource strategies can be made more inclusive and effective across diverse user bases.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The development of electronic resources has profoundly revolutionized the academic and professional environment. Researchers and professionals have examined different aspects of use of E-Resources, such as user awareness, accessibility, challenges, and impact. The literature review presented below integrates relevant studies that provide background to the current study.

### 1. Understanding E-Resources and Their Role

Tenopir and King (2000) acknowledged that the shift towards digital has made information more accessible by an exponential factor. They also noted, however, the problems associated with navigation and assessment of digital information, especially among less digitally literate individuals.

Haridasan and Khan (2009) state that E-Resources not only improve access to information but also encourage independent learning. In their research, they discovered a positive relationship between access to digital libraries and students' academic achievement.

Madhusudhan (2012) emphasizes that E-Resources, such as e-journals, e-books, and online databases, are of vital importance to the academic curriculum and research work. The author stresses that university libraries are increasingly using digital platforms to support conventional resources and meet the changing demands of users.

### 2. Awareness of E-Resources

Awareness is a necessary condition for successful utilization of E-Resources. Users first need to be aware of what resources are available and how to access them.

Tripathi and Jeevan (2009) discovered that most users, especially administrative personnel, are not aware of subscription-based E-Resources provided by their institutions. This indicates that lack of awareness is a hindrance not only for students but also for employees who may gain from such access for professional growth.

Thanuskodi (2011) examined levels of awareness among university students and determined that while they were well aware of the internet, their level of awareness regarding institutional E-Resources such as digital libraries and online databases was fairly low. The research indicated a requirement for orientation and training programs for users.

Tella et al. (2017) carried out a comparative survey of students and faculty members across Nigerian universities and found that their awareness levels were higher among the faculty, attributing this most probably to more active participation from the faculty side in research

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operations. Students exhibited greater adaptability to digitalized formats once shown to them, though.

### 3. Accessibility of E-Resources

Accessibility refers to the ease with which users are able to access and utilize E-Resources. These factors that affect accessibility are internet infrastructure, institutional subscriptions, design of user interface, and digital literacy.

Baro, Onyenania, and Osaheni (2010) commented that open access repositories and library portals have enhanced E-Resource accessibility in African universities, yet technical issues and insufficiency of training hinder optimal use.

Kumar and Singh (2011) indicated that accessibility in semi-urban and rural schools was a significant problem where internet connectivity and technical support were unreliable. Their research highlighted the importance of even infrastructure development.

Sharma (2014) underscored the necessity of mobile-compatible platforms. Given the prevalence of smartphone and tablet usage, particularly among students, non-mobile-friendly platforms unnecessarily constrain accessibility.

### 4. Usage Patterns and User Preferences

Various groups of users engage with E-Resources in various manners. It is necessary to comprehend these patterns for designing resource services optimally.

Asemi (2005) recorded a case study at Isfahan University, in which postgraduate students exhibited high usage of e-journals and open-access resources. It concluded that the frequency of use by users and their satisfaction increase significantly once users are trained.

Thanuskodi (2012) pointed out that users preferred easily searchable resources such as Google Scholar and Wikipedia over academic databases because of ease of use and familiarity.

Iqbal and Warraich (2016) conducted research on the usage patterns among students and noticed that students mainly utilized E-Resources for assignments and study for examinations, whereas research scholars and teachers utilized journal databases and citation tools more.

### 5. Barriers to Effective Utilization

A number of challenges still hamper the effective utilization of E-Resources by students and staff.

Sadia and Mahmood (2009) in their investigation into Pakistani universities, established that organizational constraints, for instance, limited access periods and a dearth of guidance to users, significantly influenced use of E-Resources by staff and students.

Technical problems, proper training, and minimal internet connectivity have been identified by Madhusudhan (2010) as leading obstacles. Many users were also found in the study to have difficulty handling information overload and not being able to discern between credible and non-credible sources.

Gakibayo, Ikoja-Odongo, and Okello-Obura (2013) reinforced that language disparity, inefficient user interface design, and the lack of individualized recommendations hinder users' engagement with E-Resources.

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## SYNTHESIS AND RESEARCH GAP

As deduced from the literature studied:

- Students and staff both increasingly depend on E-Resources.
- Levels of awareness differ greatly based on user training and outreach by institutions.
- Accessibility is frequently hindered by infrastructure and interface constraints.
- Distinct differences exist in the use of E-Resources by students and staff.

While a number of studies discuss awareness and use of E-Resources, few have presented a straightforward comparative examination of students and staff in the same institutional contexts. This study seeks to bridge this gap by conducting an inclusive comparative investigation into awareness as well as accessibility among these user groups.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1. Research Design

The research used a descriptive and comparative survey research design, appropriate for ascertaining the levels of awareness and accessibility of E-Resources between two different populations: employees and students. The design allowed for the collection and comparison of both qualitative and quantitative data, making it possible to gain an in-depth understanding of usage patterns, challenges, and user perceptions.

The descriptive function was intended to gauge levels of awareness, frequency of use, and barriers to accessibility, whereas the comparative aspect probed employee and student populations' differences.

### 2. Objectives of the Study

→ To determine the degree of awareness among students and employees towards E-Resources.

→ To test the accessibility and use patterns of E-Resources between the two populations.

→ To reveal challenges users, have in using E-Resources effectively.

→ To recommend interventions to improve awareness and accessibility.

### 3. Hypotheses

**$H_0$ (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant difference in the level of awareness and accessibility of E-Resources between students and employees.

**$H_1$ (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant difference in the level of awareness and accessibility of E-Resources between students and employees.

#### 4. Population and Sample

**The population of the study consisted of:**

- Students (Undergraduate and Postgraduate)
- Employees (Academic staff, administrative staff, and technical personnel)

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**Sampling Method:**

A stratified random sampling method was adopted for securing proportional representation of both the groups. Two strata for the sample included students and employees.

**Sample Size:**

A total of 200 participants were enrolled in the study, which consisted of:

- 120 students across different faculties
- 80 employees

The sample was selected from three educational institutes, one in both urban and semi-urban locations, in order to factor in infrastructural variations.

## 5. Research Instruments

The main data gathering instrument was a questionnaire that was structured to capture responses in relation to:

- Awareness of E-Resources (type, platforms, sources)
- Accessibility (devices, internet connection, institutional support)
- Frequency and purpose of usage
- Challenges encountered in accessing or using E-Resources
- The questionnaire used both closed-ended (Likert scale and multiple-choice) and open-ended questions to provide quantitative data and qualitative information.
- 20 pilot respondents were given a pilot test to confirm that the instrument had clarity, consistency, and reliability. The internal consistency was proven to be very high at a coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha = 0.84.

## 6. Data Collection Procedure

Data gathering was done via online and offline procedures:

- Online questionnaires were distributed through the institutional email as well as through learning management systems.
- Paper-based questionnaires were given to the respondents with negligible internet access.
- The data collection process was continued for three weeks, during which continuous follow-up and clarification were given to achieve correct responses.
- Voluntary participation was ensured, and informed consent was taken from all the respondents. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly adhered to.

## 7. Data Analysis Techniques

- The data collected was tabulated and analyzed through descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test and chi-square test) through SPSS software (version 25).
- Descriptive statistics were employed to gain insight into the distribution and central tendencies of awareness and accessibility levels.

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- Inferential statistics were employed to establish the significance of the differences between the two groups.
- Graphical presentation (bar charts, pie charts, and tables) was employed to represent important findings.

## 8. Limitations of the Study

- The study is confined to chosen institutions and cannot be generalized to all learning environments.
- Self-reported information can be subject to personal bias or misinterpretation of questions.
- Time constraints restricted in-depth qualitative investigation like interviews or focus group discussions.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

This part provides a thorough analysis of data gathered from 200 respondents — 120 students and 80 employees — on their awareness and accessibility of E-Resources. The analysis has been given in tabular and graphical form with descriptive and inferential interpretation.

### 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

| Category | Students (n=120) | Employees (n=80) | Total (N=200) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 65 | 47 | 112 |
| Female | 55 | 33 | 88 |
| Age (18–25) | 100 | 10 | 110 |
| Age (26–40) | 20 | 50 | 70 |
| Age (41–60) | 0 | 20 | 20 |

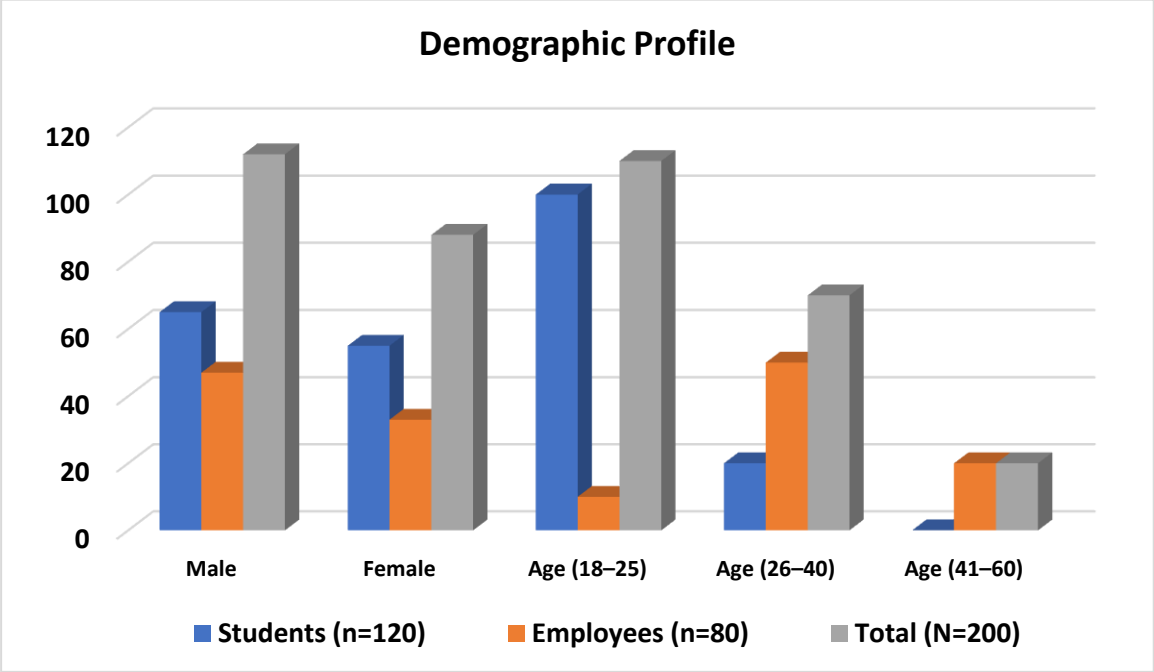


**Figure1:** Demographic Profile of Respondents

**Interpretation:** Most students were in the 18–25 age group, while most employees were between 26–60 years old. This can influence digital literacy rates and usage of E-Resources.

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### 2. Awareness of E-Resources

| Awareness Level | Students (%) | Employees (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Highly aware | 32% | 40% |
| Moderately aware | 45% | 35% |
| Minimally aware | 20% | 18% |
| Not aware | 3% | 7% |

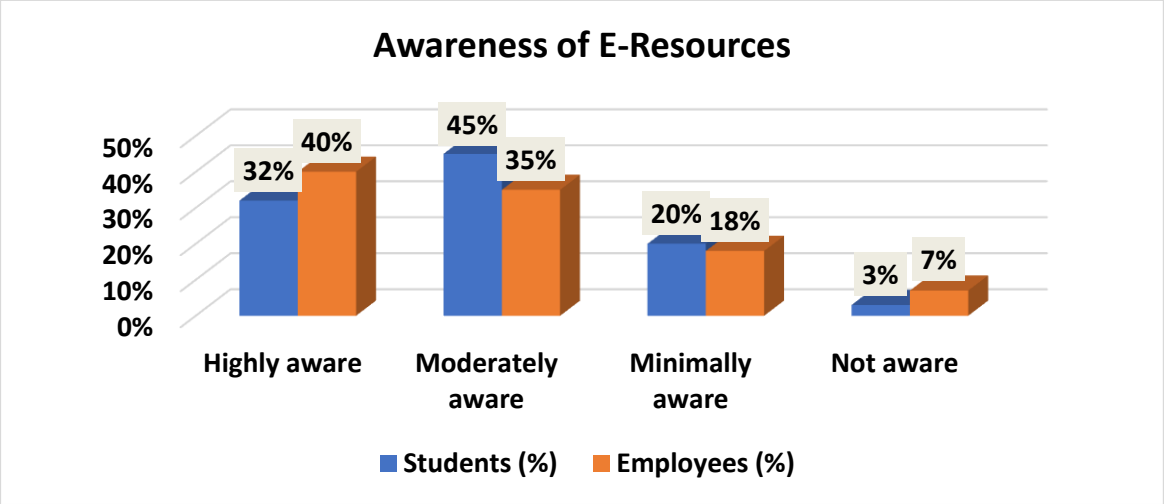


**Figure 2:** Bar chart comparing awareness levels of E-Resources.

**Interpretation:** A larger proportion of employees reported being "highly aware" of E-Resources compared to students. Nonetheless, a significant percentage of students (45%) are "moderately aware," leaving room for awareness improvement programs.

### 3. Sources of Awareness

| Source of Awareness | Students (%) | Employees (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Library Orientation | 20% | 40% |
| Peer Sharing | 35% | 15% |
| Internet/Search Engines | 30% | 20% |
| Institutional Workshops | 15% | 25% |

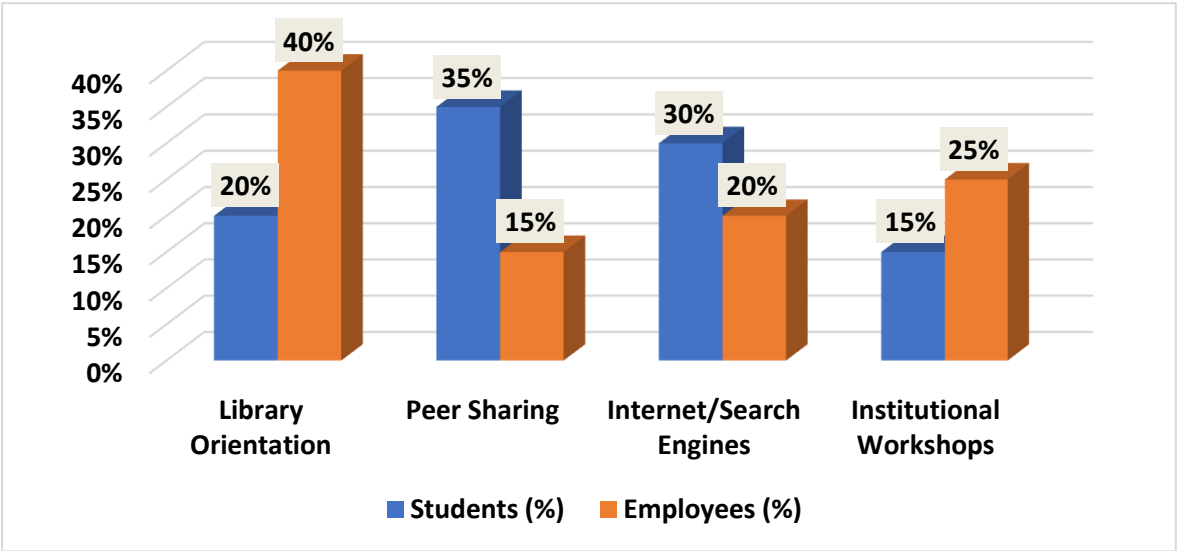


**Figure 3:** Sources of Awareness.

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**Interpretation:** Although students majorly depend on fellow students and web search engines to acquire information about E-Resources, employees become informed mainly through official institutional means such as orientation in the library and workshops.

### 4. Accessibility to E-Resources

| Accessibility Factors | Students (%) | Employees (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Available via Institution | 65% | 80% |
| Personal Device Compatibility | 75% | 60% |
| Internet Reliability | 60% | 70% |
| 24/7 Access Availability | 55% | 50% |

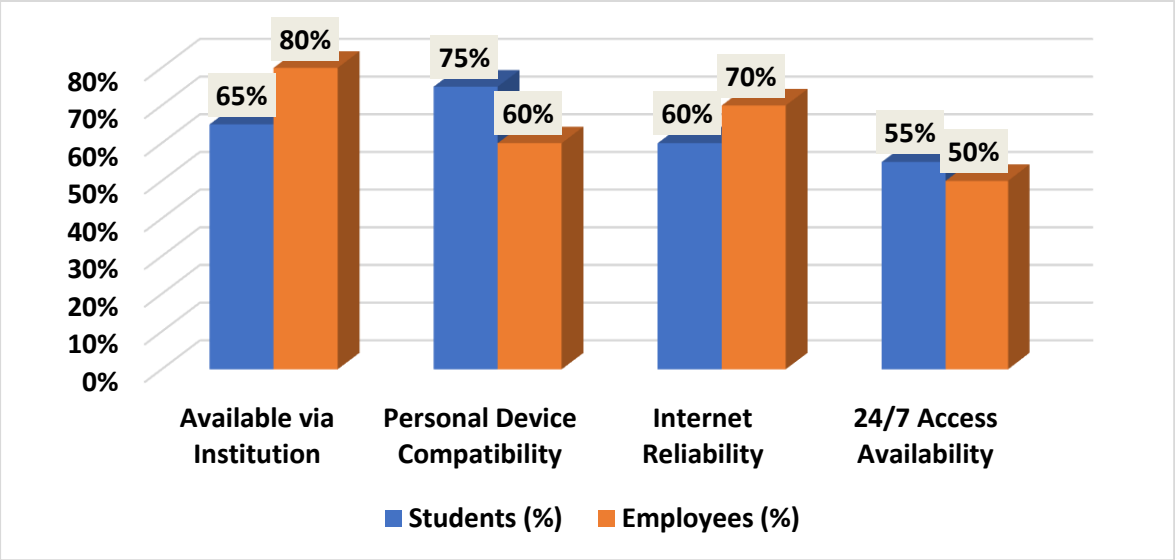


**Figure 4:** Accessibility of E-Resources.

**Interpretation:** Employees indicate better institutional connectivity but reduced personal device compatibility. Students access with greater frequency through smartphones and personal laptops, though their institutional reliance is lower by a small percentage.

### 5. Frequency of Use

| Frequency of Use | Students (%) | Employees (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Daily | 28% | 20% |
| Weekly | 40% | 35% |
| Occasionally | 25% | 30% |
| Rarely | 7% | 15% |

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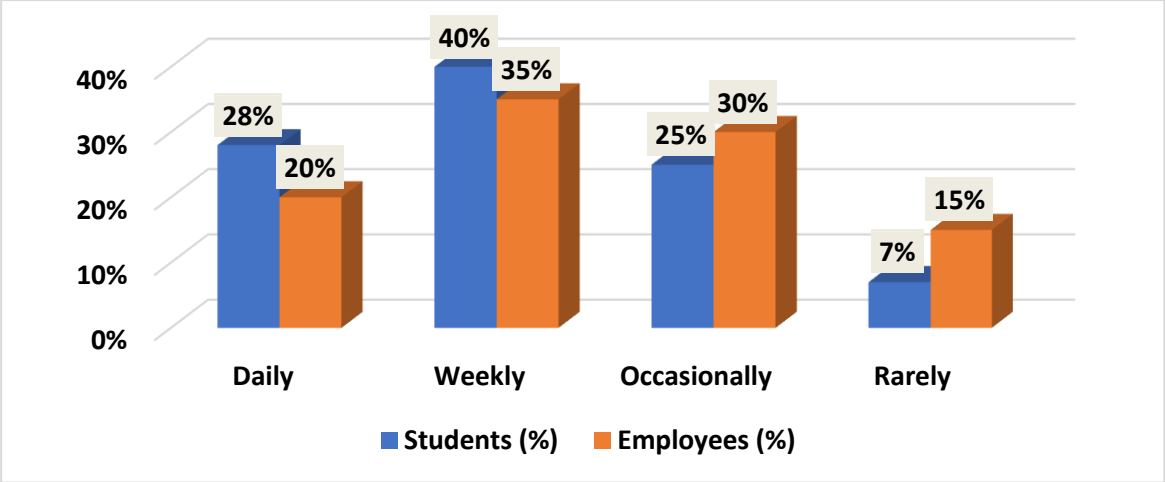


**Figure 6:** Frequence of Use of E-Resources

**Interpretation:** The students access E-Resources more than employees. This may be because of academic tasks like assignments, projects, and online courses.

### 6. Purpose of Using E-Resources

| Purpose | Students (%) | Employees (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Academic Assignments | 55% | 10% |
| Research and Publication | 30% | 35% |
| Professional Development | 10% | 30% |
| General Knowledge/Skill Update | 5% | 25% |

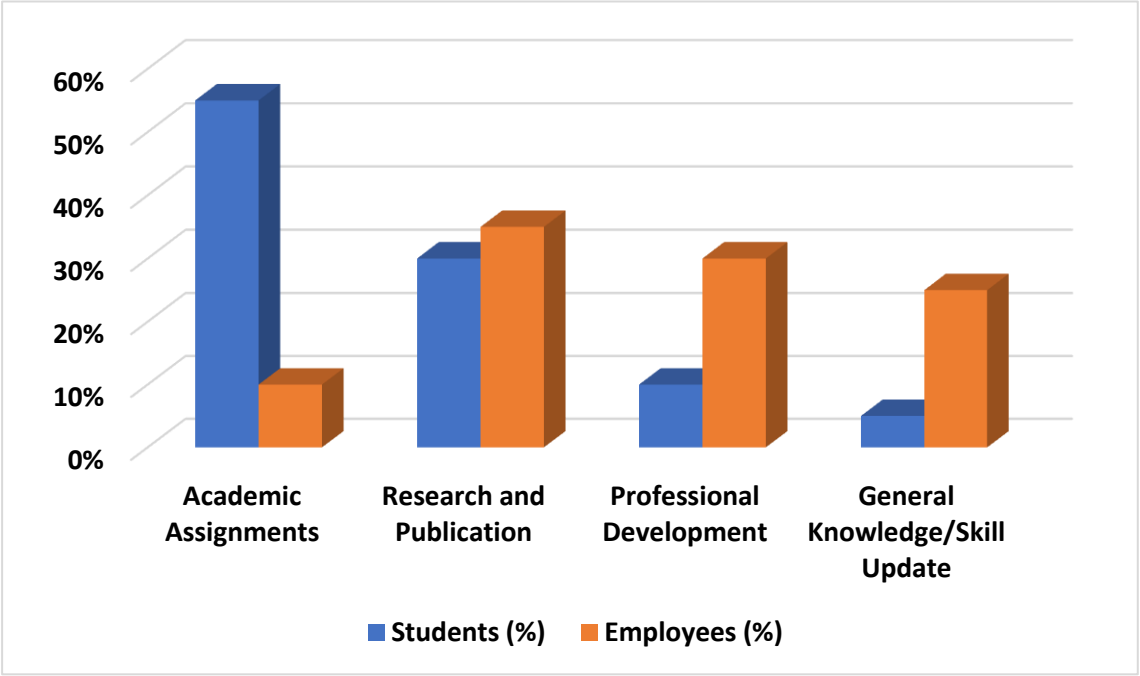


**Figure 6:** Purpose of Using E-Resources

**Interpretation:** Usage intent varies significantly between groups. Students utilize E-Resources mainly for coursework, whereas employees emphasize professional and research-oriented uses.

### 7. Barriers to Access

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| Barriers Identified | Students (%) | Employees (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of Training | 30% | 40% |
| Poor User Interface | 20% | 25% |
| Internet/Data Issues | 25% | 20% |
| Unfamiliarity with Resources | 25% | 15% |

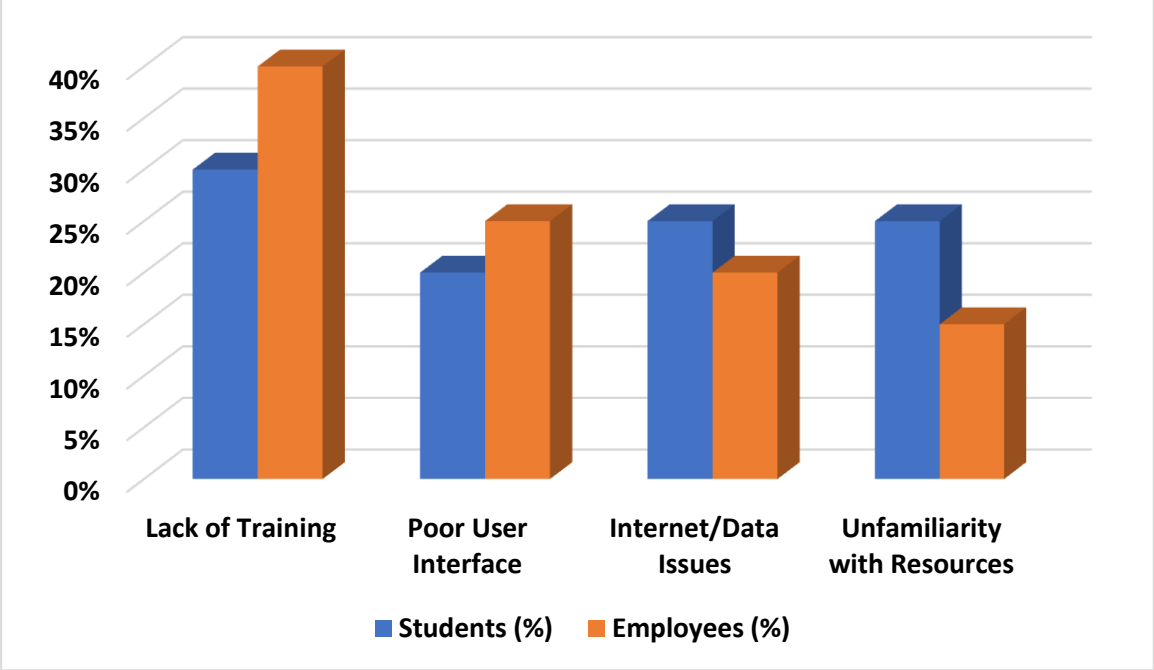


**Figure 7:** Barrier to Access E-Resources

**Interpretation:** Training deficiencies and interface complexity are the chief concerns for employees, whereas students have more difficulty with internet/data issues and initial unfamiliarity with resources.

### 8. Inferential Analysis: Independent Sample T-Test

To investigate if there is a statistical difference in awareness levels of E-Resources among students and employees:

**Mean Awareness Score (on 5-point scale):**

→ Students: 3.12

→ Employees: 3.48

→ T-Test Result:

→ $t = 2.67$, $p = 0.009$ ($< 0.05$)

Interpretation: Because $p < 0.05$, there exists a statistically significant difference in awareness levels between students and employees with the employees having higher awareness.

### 9. Inferential Analysis: Chi-Square Test of Accessibility

To determine the relationship between user group (student/employee) and perceived accessibility:

⇒ Chi-square value: $\chi^2 = 9.34$

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⇒ Degrees of freedom: 2

⇒ p-value: 0.014 (< 0.05)

**Interpretation:** The high chi-square value confirms that there exists a significant relationship between the user group and the degree to which they find E-Resources accessible to be.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The investigation aimed at assessing the awareness and accessibility of E-Resources among workers and students within educational institutions. According to statistical analysis and survey data interpretation, there were quite a number of interesting findings conforming to or deviating from the current literature.

### 1. Awareness Levels: Employees vs. Students

The research revealed that employees, particularly academic staff, have relatively higher levels of awareness regarding E-Resources compared to students. This supports the findings of Tella et al. (2017), who observed that faculty members tend to have higher digital resource awareness due to their research responsibilities and institutional involvement. Employees reported attending workshops and orientations more frequently, leading to better awareness and familiarity with institutional digital platforms.

But a significant percentage of students (45%) were "moderately aware," which means that awareness is present but perhaps not deep or thorough. This corroborates the contention put forward by Thanuskodi (2011), who emphasized the necessity for focused awareness programs at the student level.

### 2. Accessibility of E-Resources

On accessibility, both the groups indicated good to moderate access but through dissimilar channels. The employees largely accessed institutional networks and computers, while students drew most heavily upon home internet connection and personal mobile phones. The duplicity between the two sets points to the digital divide existing between infrastructural accessibility and personal digital resourcefulness.

Improved device compatibility was reported by students, while institutional subscriptions yielded the greatest benefits to employees. Kumar and Singh (2011) are in agreement with these results, given that technical assistance and institutional subscriptions played a significant role in affecting employees' accessibility, while device availability and connectivity have a greater impact on students.

### 3. Usage Frequency and Purpose

Students indicated more frequent use of E-Resources, frequently for assignment work, exam preparation, and academic presentations. Employees indicated less frequent use of E-Resources, but for more specialized uses like research publications, professional development, and syllabus planning.

This deviation in purpose of use justifies the findings of Iqbal and Warraich (2016), wherein students utilized E-Resources for immediate academic purposes while employees and researchers utilized them for long-term, in-depth analysis of scholarly sources.

Surprisingly, a proportion of employees also reported usage for general knowledge update and skills acquisition, implying that there is wider recognition of the value of E-Resources beyond educational or research-based work.

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## 4. Principal Identified Barriers

Barriers to the effective use of E-Resources varied across groups. Lack of training and user interface issues were cited by employees, pointing towards the need for improved user education and easy-to-use platforms. Students mentioned internet/data constraints and initial unfamiliarity, pointing towards infrastructural and orientation-based interventions.

This trend found echo with Madhusudhan (2010), who supported the requirement for technical training along with infrastructure upgrading. Further, both groups did accept that as much as E-Resources are resourceful in nature, they remain cumbersome to exploit in the absence of proper assistance or previous information.

## 5. Influence of Institutional Support

One of the key findings of this study is the pivotal role of institutional initiatives like library orientations, digital literacy training, and computer support desks in facilitating awareness and accessibility. Staff who attended these events demonstrated increased understanding and smoother access. This confirms the need for ongoing institutional investment in digital awareness schemes across all user groups.

## 6. Statistical Validation of Differences

The t-test results supported a statistically significant difference in awareness levels between employees and students. Likewise, the chi-square test supported a significant relationship between user type and perceptions of accessibility. These statistical affirmations highlight that specific strategies should be utilized for each group instead of one-size-fits-all.

## 7. Integration with Literature

These results agree with a great deal of current literature but also provide some nuances. For instance, where previous studies accepted that there had been a general increase in the use of E-Resources, this work distinguishes how use is not only different in frequency but also in motivation, purpose, and barriers between the two groups.

In addition, unlike some earlier research that targeted merely the behavior of students, the current research draws attention to the relatively unexplored field of employee usage of E-Resources, particularly in the case of non-teaching staff.

## 8. Implications for Policy and Practice

For Academic Institutions: The implications are that there should be targeted strategies in awareness campaigns — hands-on tutorials and phone-friendly interfaces for students, and systematic workshops and one-to-one access support for staff.

For Librarians and ICT Units: Regular training sessions, help desks with access, and better user interfaces can contribute significantly to overall user satisfaction and productivity in the use of E-Resources.

For Policymakers and Administrators: Budget planning must factor in the upgrade of digital infrastructure and increasing institutional subscriptions to keep pace with rising demand and diversity of user groups.

## 9. Conclusion and Future Scope

### Conclusion

The study titled *"Awareness and Accessibility of E-Resources Across the Employees and Students"* has systematically explored how different user groups in academic institutions

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perceive, access, and utilize electronic resources. Drawing from a diverse dataset involving 200 participants, including 120 students and 80 employees, the study presents a comparative and comprehensive picture of the digital information landscape within educational settings.

Key findings indicate that while both groups demonstrate moderate to high awareness of E-Resources, employees generally exhibit slightly higher awareness levels, attributable to structured institutional training and job responsibilities related to research and professional development. Students, conversely, are more frequent users, leveraging E-Resources primarily for academic assignments, exam preparation, and class-related learning.

Accessibility is broadly available to both groups, though the form and consistency vary. Students rely more on personal devices and mobile internet, which can sometimes limit their experience due to data restrictions and device limitations. Employees benefit from institutional infrastructure but face challenges in navigating complex digital platforms without adequate training.

The research also brought to light several barriers that hinder optimal utilization of E-Resources — most notably, the lack of structured training, unfamiliarity with digital tools, inadequate user support, and occasionally, poor internet connectivity. Institutional initiatives such as library orientations, tech support systems, and departmental collaborations were found to significantly improve both awareness and ease of access.

Furthermore, inferential statistics confirmed that the differences in awareness and accessibility between students and employees are significant, emphasizing the need for distinct, targeted strategies for each user group.

In conclusion, this study reinforces the growing importance of E-Resources in academic and professional environments. It calls for an integrated approach that combines technological infrastructure, user training, regular evaluation, and proactive institutional support to bridge existing gaps and promote a culture of digital literacy and lifelong learning.

## FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

While this research has provided valuable insights, there remains ample scope for further exploration and improvement in the domain of E-Resources. Some of the future avenues for research include:

### 1. Broader Sample and Diverse Institutions

This study was limited to a specific number of participants from select institutions. Future studies can include a **larger and more diverse sample size** across multiple geographical regions and academic disciplines to improve generalizability.

### 2. Longitudinal Studies

A **long-term study** can help track changes in awareness, usage patterns, and accessibility over time, especially with the rapid evolution of digital technologies and changing educational paradigms post-pandemic.

### 3. Focus on Non-Academic Staff and Researchers

While employees were part of the current study, a more focused analysis on **non-teaching staff**, **technical staff**, or **early-career researchers** can yield nuanced insights into their specific challenges and needs.

### 4. Integration of Qualitative Data

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Incorporating **interviews, focus groups, and case studies** could provide deeper qualitative insights into user behavior, motivations, and expectations from E-Resources that are not captured by quantitative methods alone.

### 5. Impact Analysis on Academic Performance

Future studies can also examine the **direct correlation between E-Resource usage and academic or professional performance**, which could strengthen the argument for increased investment in digital infrastructure.

### 6. Emerging Technologies and AI Tools

With the increasing role of AI in education, further research could assess how **AI-based educational tools**, **chatbots**, and **digital assistants** influence the accessibility and personalization of E-Resource platforms.

### 7. Evaluation of Specific Platforms

A comparative study of **different digital libraries, databases, and e-learning portals** (e.g., JSTOR, ScienceDirect, NPTEL, Shodhganga) can help institutions make better-informed decisions regarding subscriptions and training.

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