E-Resources In The Digital Age: Ethical Considerations For Research Scholars Of Karnatak University, Dharwad.

[1]Mr. Naveen Satappanavar, [2]Mr. Muktesha

[1]Library Trainee, Library, Chanakya University, Bangalore.

[2]Faculty, Dept. of Library and Information Science, Adikavi Sri Maharshi Valmiki University, Raichur.

ABSTRACT: Educational institutions plays a crucial role in providing electronic resources to research scholars, students, and professionals. To ensure the integrity of licensed information and prevent malpractices, these institutions must uphold ethical standards. Additionally, they should raise awareness among users about issues such as copyright, data duplication, plagiarism, and other related concerns. This study is on Karnatak University research scholars for consideration of the ethics. Most of the respondents i,e., 41(68.3%) are aware of the copyright laws related to e-resources, only 1(1.7%) respondent never used open access resources for reference purpose and mainly this study found that the respondents i.e., 23 (38.3%) are strongly agreed the statement that yes very clearly communicated about ethical guidelines in using e-resources.

Keywords - Digital Age, Electronic Resources, Ethical consideration, Plagiarism, Copyright.

1. INTRODUCTION:

In this digital age electronic resources plays a vital role in this world because they provide quick access to a lot of information to research scholars, professionals, information seekers, etc…it connects people worldwide, enabling collaboration and knowledge sharing. E-resources save the money and time by reducing the need of physical storage and printing cost. It is most convenient to access from anywhere and anytime on any device. E-resources no need of paper to store the information and it saves the environment. It includes interactive features which helps easier to understand and remember information, helps people grow personally or professionally.

E-Resources are online tools and materials that provide information in electronic form. Those are Electronic Books, research papers, websites, and audio files. We can use any devices to access information like computers, tablets, and smartphones. The electronic resources have made it easier and faster to search, identify, retrieve, and share information from anywhere to anytime, no matter the time and place

The evolution of E-resources in the digital age is has immensely transferred information. In earlier days digital resources were limited to some files like CD-ROMs and PDFs. After development of worldwide web, online databases, websites, and electronic journals lengthened access to huge collection of information.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

- **(Muktesha and Patted, 2025)[1]** "E-Resources: The Final Year MBBS Students of Raichur Institute of Medical Science, Raichur: A Study" With the rapid advancement of technology, educational practices have evolved, and e-resources have become crucial for the dissemination of knowledge and information. In the past, students, researchers, and professionals faced significant difficulties in accessing the latest information. However, the advent of e-resources has revolutionized this process. This study aims to evaluate the impact of accessing and using e-resources while exploring the

challenges encountered during their use. The research is based on primary data collected from students at the Raichur Institute of Medical Sciences, Raichur. The study concludes with insightful findings and practical suggestions for improvement.

- **(Okwu, 2024)[2]** "Digital Information Resources Collaboration in a digital age: a case of librarians in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria" The results indicated that e-databases, e-journals, and e-books were the most commonly utilized digital resources, while resources like online magazines were used less frequently. The study emphasized that collaboration significantly contributed to the preservation of digital materials and strengthened librarian-user interactions. However, it was noted that there should be more focus on developing subject-specific expertise. Additionally, a strong positive link was found between collaboration and improved librarian performance. Challenges to collaboration included budget limitations, insufficient ICT resources, and unstable power supply. The study concluded that promoting a culture of collaboration, alongside addressing financial and infrastructural challenges, is essential for better digital resource management and the professional development of librarians.

- **(Daramola, 2022)[3]** "Utilization of E-Resources for Learning among Undergraduates" examined how undergraduate students utilize e-resources for their studies. Data was collected through a survey administered to all students at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). A proportional sampling method was used to select respondents from each NOUN center according to their population size, and a questionnaire was employed to gather the data. The findings revealed that students were making positive use of e-resources for learning. There was no significant difference in usage based on gender or digital age. The study concluded that learning outcomes can be enhanced by providing the right resources and recommended that all students, regardless of gender, should be encouraged to use e-resources for learning.

- **(Gururaj Shivanand Hadagali, 2011)[4]** "Use of electronic resources in university libraries of Karnataka state" This research investigates how faculty members and research scholars in universities across Karnataka State, India, utilize electronic resources. The study aims to evaluate the extent of usage, the different purposes for which these resources are accessed, and their overall impact on the academic community. A total of 604 questionnaires were distributed, with 479 completed responses returned, resulting in a response rate of 79.63%. The collected data was coded and analyzed using Excel, while the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to create frequency tables and calculate the Mean, Standard Deviation, and Coefficient of Variation. The study emphasizes several important factors for the future of library and information services in academic institutions, such as ensuring sufficient staffing, continuous IT skill updates, and the allocation of adequate funds for the procurement, updating, and maintenance of IT infrastructure and electronic resources.

- **(Resnick, 2008)[5]** "Electronic Resources (ERs) are transforming access services in libraries, yet while libraries are investing heavily in these resources, they often lack sufficient staff to manage them. Assisting users in accessing ERs can be challenging due to the numerous factors that may cause a resource to be unavailable at any given time. This paper discusses the evolution of a library's ER problem-reporting help desk. By involving librarians with expertise in licensing and ER management, the library improved response times, problem resolution, information tracking, and service policies. Additionally, the creation of an ER Helpdesk database with enhanced features has enabled more effective management of these issues.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To explore the implications of copyright and intellectual property laws on e-resources usage at Karnatak University.
- To figure out the ethical guidelines in the responsible use of e-resources for academic research at Karnatak University.
- To explore the methods used by research scholars at Karnatak University to maintain academic integrity while using digital resources.
- To know the ethical challenges faced by research scholars at Karnatak University while using e-resources.

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

This study is based on the primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected from the research scholars of Karnatak University, Dharwad through structured questionnaire arranged into order of tabulation in number and percentage. The secondary data is collected from various databases, journals, articles, newspapers and other published information for literature review.
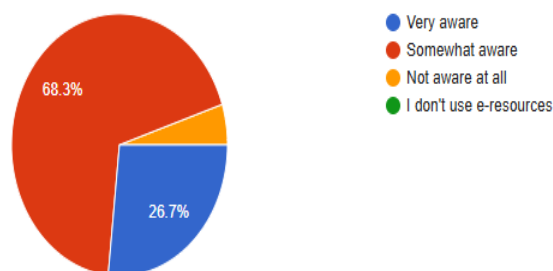
5. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

- This study is limited to only Karnatak University, Dharwad research scholars.
- This study restricted to only 60 respondents.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:

- **Aware of the copyright laws related to e-resource**

Aware of Copyright Law	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very aware	16	26.7
Somewhat aware	41	68.3
Not aware at all	3	5
I don't use e-resources	0	0

Above the reveals that the aware of copyright law related e-resources by the respondents of Karnatak University respondents. The majority i.e., 41 (68.3%) of the respondents aware 'somewhat' about copyright laws related to e resources, followed by 16 (25%) of them 'very aware'. The respondents i.e., 3 (5%) of them said they 'They were not aware at all. And lastly came to know that everyone knows copyright laws related e-resources because there are 0% of the respondents don't use e-resources.

- **Current Copyright Policies for protecting digital content**

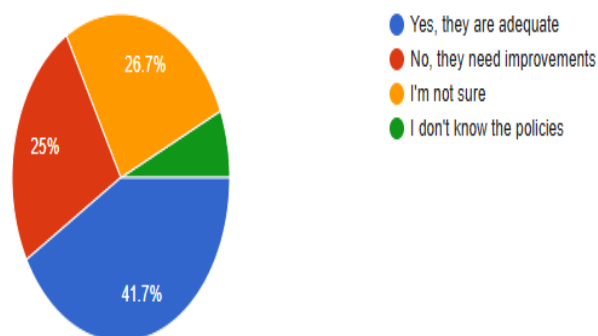| E	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes, they are adequate	25	41.7
No, they need improvements	15	25
I'm not sure	16	26.7
I don't know the policies	4	6.7

-

Table 2 reveals that the current copyright policies are sufficient for protecting digital content. The majority of the respondent's i.e., 25 (41.7%) said 'they are adequate' for current copyright policies, followed by 16 (26.7%) of them said 'not sure', 15 (25%) of them 'need improvements', and 4 (6.7%) respondents 'don't know' about current content policies are sufficient or not for protecting digital content.

- **Usage of Open Access Resource for Reference purpose**

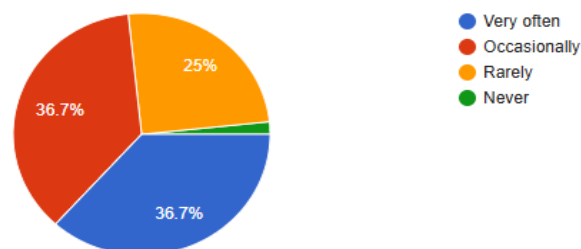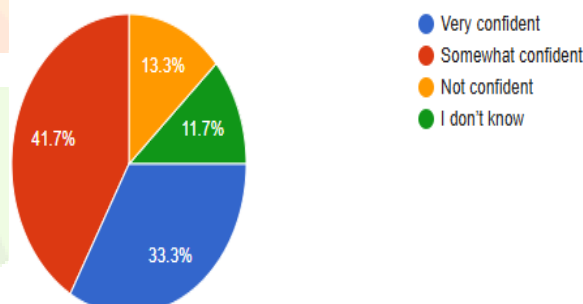| Open access resources	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very often	22	36.7
Occasionally	22	36.7
Rarely	15	25
Never	1	1.7

Chart 3 shows the respondents' Use the open access resource in their research for reference. The equal responses from the respondents i.e., 22 (36.7%) said they are use open access resources in their research 'Occasionally' and 'very often', followed by 15 (25%) of them use open access resources for reference in their research 'rarely'. Only 1 respondent never used open access resources for reference purpose.

- **Respondent's confidence level regarding the licensing of e-resources available at Karnatak University.**
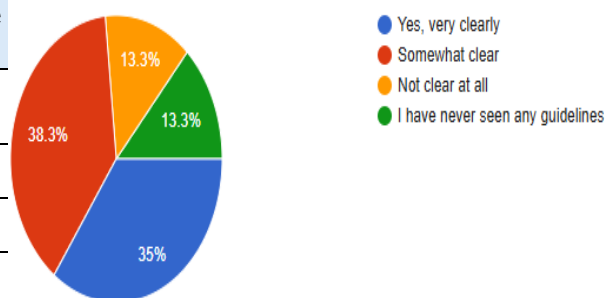
Level of Confident	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very Confident	20	33.3
Somewhat Confident	25	41.7
Not Confident	8	13.3
I don't know	7	11.7

The above table shows that the respondents' how much confident about the e - resources available at Karnatak university, are properly licenced or not. It is found that most of the respondents i.e., 25 (41.7%) said 'somewhat confident' about that the e-resources are properly licensed, followed by 20 (33%) said 'Very confident', 8 (13.3%) said 'Not confident' and 7 (11.7%) said they don't know about the e-resources are licensed or not at the Karnatak University.

- **Ethical Guidelines for Using e-Resources among Respondents**

Ethical Guidelines	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes, very clearly	21	35
Somewhat clear	23	38.3
Not clear at all	8	13.3
I have never seen any guidelines	8	13.3

Above table reveals that the ethical guidelines for using e-resources are clearly communicated or not. The study found that the respondents i.e., 23 (38.3%) are strongly agreed the statement that 'yes very clearly',

followed by 21 (35%) said 'somewhat aware', and equally respondents i, e.,8(13.3%) are not clear at all and never seen any guidelines at Karnatak University.

- **Responsibility in Preventing Misuse of Copyrighted Content**

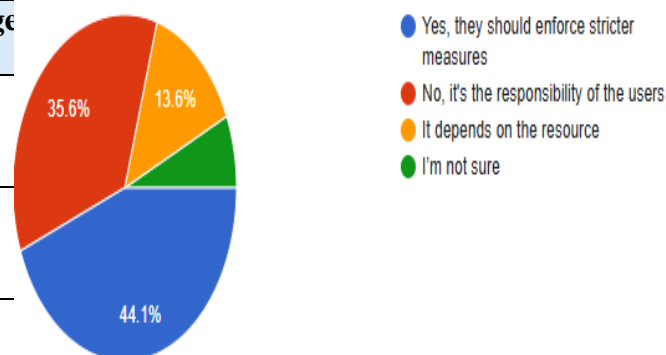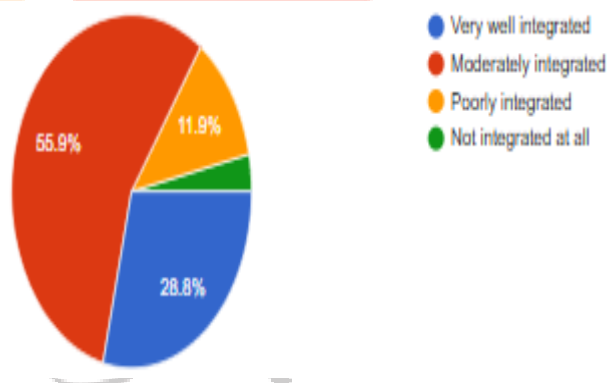| E Resources Providers	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes, they should enforce stricter measures	26	44.1
No, it's the responsibility of the users	21	35.6
It depends on the resource	8	13.6
I'm not sure	4	6.8

Table 6 reveals the responsibility of e-resource providers in preventing misuse of copyrighted content. This study found that the majority of the respondents i.e., 26 (44.1%) said 'they should enforce stricter measures', followed by 21 (35.6%) said 'it is the responsibility of the users', whereas 8 (13.6%) of them said 'it's depending on the resources', and 4 (6.8%) of the respondents are 'not sure' about the preventing misuse of copyrighted content.

- **Integration of ethical guidelines for e-resources use into academic training at Karnatak**

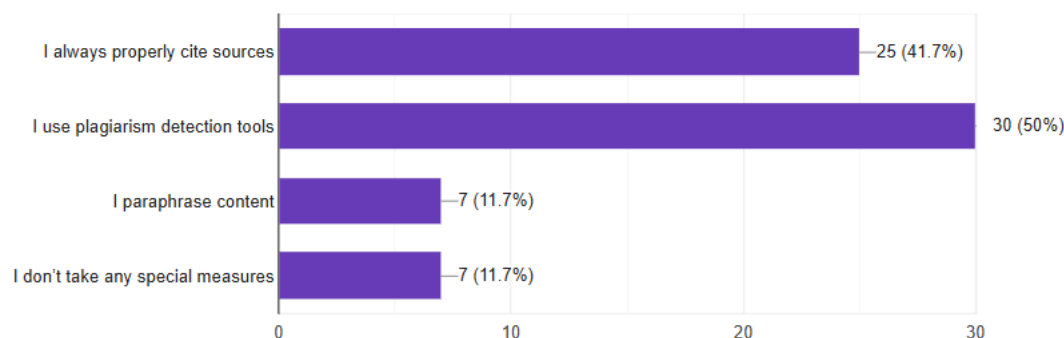| Academic Training	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very well integrated	17	25.8
Moderately integrated	33	55.9
Poorly Integrated	7	11.9
Not integrated at all	2	3.4

University.

Chart 7 depicts the respondents' awareness of ethical guidelines for e-resources use are integrated into academic training. A whooping majority i.e., 33 (55.9%) said 'moderately integrated', followed by 17 (25.8%) of them said 'very well integrated' ethical guidelines for e-resources in to academic training, 7 (11.9%) of them said 'poorly integrated', and a less number of respondents i.e., 2 (3.4%) said 'not integrated at all'.

- **Safety measures for avoiding plagiarism in research**

Awareness of Plagiarism	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
I always properly cite sources	25	41.7
I use plagiarism	30	50
I paraphrase content	7	11.7
I don't take any special measures	7	11.7

This table presents the respondents safety measures to take to avoid plagiarism when using e-resources for their research. The majority of the respondents preferred 'plagiarism detection tools' i.e., 30 (50%), while 25 (41.7%) them use 'always use properly cite', 7 (11.7%) of them use 'purchase content', and 7 (11.7%) said they 'don't take any special measures' to avoid plagiarism when using e-resources in their research.

- **Primary concerns of e-resources while using in research.**

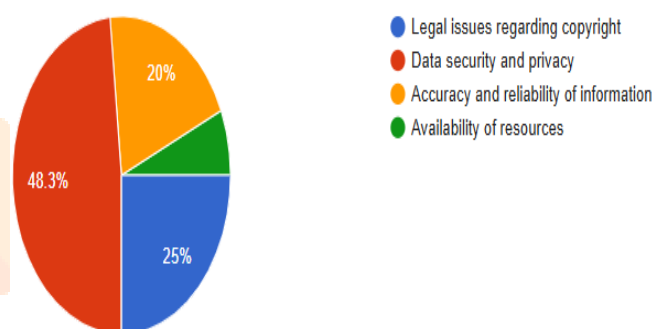| Primary Concern for research	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Legal issues regarding copyright	15	25
Data security and Privacy	29	48.3
Accuracy and reliability of information	12	20
Availability of resources	4	6.7

Table 9 determines the respondents' primary concern when using e-resources in their research. A whooping majority i.e., 29 (48.3%) said 'data security and privacy' is their primary concern when using e-resources in their research, followed by 15 (25%) of them said 'legal issues regarding copyright', 12 (20%) of them said 'accuracy and reliability of information', and a less number of respondents i.e., 4 (6.7%) said 'availability of resources'.

Ethical Issues	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes, frequently	21	35
Yes, occasionally	18	30
No, never	17	28.3
I haven't used e- resources much	4	6.7

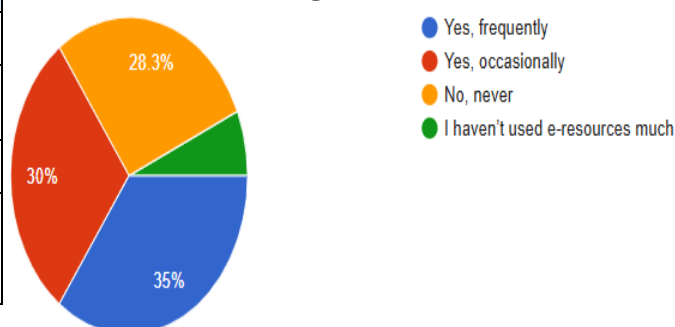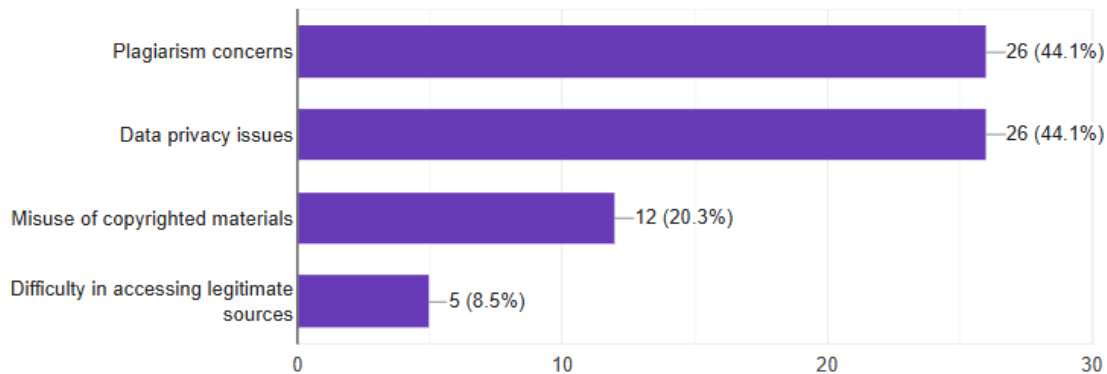- **Ethical Issues faced by the respondents in using E-Resources**

Chart 10 presents ethical issues faced while using e-resources for their research and the study found the majority of the respondents i.e., 21 (35%) faced ethical issues 'frequently', followed by 18 (30%) said 'occasionally', 17 (28.3%) said 'never', whereas 4 (6.7%) said they haven't used e-resources much'.

- **Ethical Challenges faced by the Respondents using E-Resources**

Ethical Challenges	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Plagiarism concern	26	44.1
Data privacy	26	44.1
Misuse of copyrighted materials	12	20.3
Difficulty in accessing legitimate sources	5	8.5

This graph shows Respondents are use e-resources for their research on that time they face some ethical challenges. The majority of the respondents i.e., 26 (44.1%) said 'plagiarism concerns', followed by 26 (44.1%) respondents said 'data privacy issues', 12 (20.3%) of them said 'misuse of copyrighted materials', and 5 (8.5%) of them face difficulty in 'accessing legitimate sources.

- **Difficulties in accessing e-resources due to copyright content.**

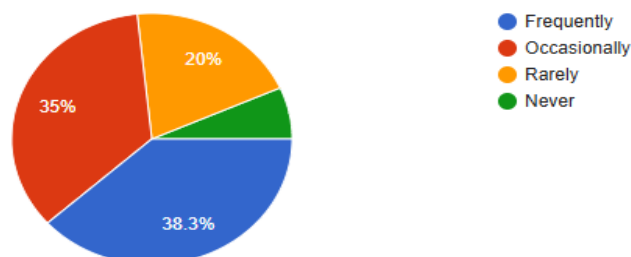| Awareness of Copyright restrictions	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Frequently	23	38.3
Occasionally	21	35
Rarely	12	20
Never	4	6.7

Chart 12 reveals the problems encountered by the respondents while accessing e-resources due to copyright content. It is observed from the table that the majority i.e., 23 (38.3%) of respondents said 'frequently', followed by 21 (35%) moderate number of the respondent stated that 'occasionally', 12 (20%)

of them faced difficulties in accessing e-resources 'Rarely', and 4 (6.7%) of them 'Never' faced any difficulties in accessing e-resources.

7. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS:

- The study found that 23 respondents (38.3%) strongly agreed that they are clearly communicated with by Karnatak University regarding ethical guidelines when accessing e-resources. This reflects the institution's effective communication in ensuring proper usage without any illegal practices.
- The majority of respondents, 25 (41.7%), stated that the current copyright policies are adequate for protecting digital content.
- An equal number of respondents, 22 (36.7%), indicated that they use open access resources in their research either occasionally or very often. Scholars would benefit from additional workshops and training sessions to access open e-resources more effectively and efficiently.
- The study revealed that 25 respondents (41.7%) were "somewhat confident" that the e-resources are properly licensed. The Karnatak University library should increase awareness about which resources are licensed and how to properly utilize them, presenting this information in a systematic manner.
- A significant majority, 33 respondents (55.9%), stated that ethical guidelines for e-resource use are moderately integrated into academic training.
- It was observed that 23 respondents (38.3%) frequently encounter problems while accessing e-resources due to copyright content restrictions. Many respondents face challenges because they are unaware of how to identify, locate, and retrieve copyrighted content. To address this issue, specialized lectures by experts should be organized to educate scholars on these challenges.
- The most critical issue identified is the ethical challenge in accessing information. Plagiarism detection tools are effective in identifying copyrighted sources, but to mitigate this issue, users must understand the proper methods for accessing and utilizing information.
- Research papers must appear in preprint servers before publishing

8. CONCLUSION:

In this digital age, accessing e-resources has become much easier and a time-saving process. However, with reduced effort, issues such as ethical concerns, copyright, plagiarism, and authentication can arise more quickly. The data above indicates that the library staff is well-informed about licensed and copyrighted sources and actively raises awareness about the availability of e-resources, ensuring they are used properly and in accordance with ethical guidelines. Users need to understand the correct methods for accessing and utilizing information. To address the challenges faced in accessing e-resources, specialized lectures by experts should be organized to educate scholars on these important issues.

9. REFERENCES:

1. Muktesha and Patted, Manjunath (2025) "E-resources: the final year mbbs students of raichur institute of medical science, Raichur: a study. (2025). *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, Vol. 7 No. 1. https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i01.35.

2. Okwu, E. &. (2024). Digital Information Resources Collaboration in a digital age: a case of librarians in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *KLISC Journal of Information Science & Knowledge Management.*

3. Daramola, F. O. (2022). Utilization of e-resources for learning among undergraduates. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 3(1), 35-44.

4. Gururaj Shivanand Hadagali, a. K. (2011). Use of electronic resources in university libraries of karnataka state. *Information Studies*, 211-224.

5. Resnick, T. U. (2008). "E-resources: transforming access services for the digital age" . *Library Hi Tech, Vol. 26 No. 1*, 141-154. . doi:https://doi.org/10.1108/07378830810857861.