

**An Investigation of Critical Success Factors on E-Resource
Based Learning: a case study based on the electronic
information resources available at the University of Colombo.**

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Dedicated to my late father

"You are with me in all my endeavours"

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Abstract

E-Resources, one of the tools emerged from the development of ICT, have helped users in retrieving accurate, relevant and timely information as and when required for their learning, teaching and research needs. Therefore, University Libraries are in the process of acquiring, renewing, promoting and giving access to e-resources since the mission of the university library is to meet the information needs of their faculties, students and affiliated effectively and efficiently. However, according to previous studies and observations, the utilization of e-resources available in the University of Colombo library is not in a satisfactory level. To verify this observation and to find out factors affecting e-resource usage, it was decided to carry out an empirical study on the Critical Success Factors on e-resource based learning. The main objective of the study was to investigate the CSFs affecting e-resource based learning on user and manager perceptions. Further the study attempted to explore the usage of e-resource categories by different user groups, methods used to learn about e-resources, places of access and difficulties in using e-resources. The three major user categories; undergraduates, postgraduates and academic staff, of the library of University of Colombo were selected as the user population while professional library staff was included as the e-resource managers. The research sample consisted of 367 undergraduates, 302 postgraduates, 205 academic staff, representing user population and the Librarian of the University of Colombo and two Assistant Librarians, representing e-resource managers. Stratified Random Sampling Method was utilized to determine the sample size of the user population and Purposive Sampling Method was used to select the sample from e-resource managers. Questionnaires and interviews were the main research tools for the study. Questionnaires were used to gather data from users while interviews were used to collect information from librarians. An intensive literature survey and a focus group discussion were conducted in prior to questionnaire development. The response rate of the user survey was 78% and 100% of the interviews. The results emphasised that more than 90% of respondents used e-resources for academic and research purposes. All three user categories identified Usefulness, Computer competency, Information literacy, User attitudes and Technology as CSFs on e-resource based learning. Apart from the above five CSFs, undergraduates perceived that Lecturer characteristics was also a CSF for them to use e-resources where

as postgraduates and academic staff identified Library support. Results also revealed that Internet was the most frequently used e-resource type by all users. Majority of users were self learners of e-resources by reading manuals and help options and more than 50% accessed e-resources within the University premises. Lack of computers, low internet connection speed, less reliable network and lack of training and awareness were among common problems in e-resource usage. Further, e-resource managers identified six CSFs on e-resource based learning which includes, Funds, Staff development, User training, Promotion, Technical issues and Faculty-Library collaboration. Therefore, the university administration and the Library should play a proactive role in maintaining and improving CSFs on e-resource based learning and should take the advantage of e-resources in university education by overcoming the problems in its usage. The study made recommendations to improve e-resource based learning by providing more facilities through developing IT infrastructure, organizing more training and awareness programs, enhancing Faculty-Library collaboration to strengthen e-resources usage and exploring new funding sources to acquire more e-resources.

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