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## **A STUDY ON THE AWARENESS AND USE OF ELECTRONIC BOOKS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES, FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA**

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This study investigates the awareness and use of electronic books among undergraduates of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna. The specific objectives included identifying the students' awareness of e-books, determining their usage patterns, exploring the relationship between e-book usage and gender, understanding the reasons for using or not using e-books, and examining the purpose of e-book use among students. The survey research method was adopted, and the data was collected through a structured online questionnaire. There are 196 undergraduates as the study sample representing the final-year undergraduates of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Ruhuna. A simple random sampling technique was employed for sample selection. Descriptive statistics and the chi-square test were used to analyze the collected data. According to the findings, the majority of undergraduates use e-books. Results suggest no significant association between gender and the usage of e-books. The findings also indicated that most students were partially aware of the availability of e-books in their specialization area, open-access sites, and the ability to download e-books to mobile devices and laptops. It also reveals that they need to be aware of how to access e-books on the library webpage and are not reading downloaded e-books in the library. Most respondents used their own devices to read e-books for educational purposes, and they downloaded them for later use. The main reasons for using e-books were the unavailability of printed books for students' intended purposes and the simplicity of using digital books compared to printed ones. Otherwise, the reasons for not preferring e-books were the preference to use only printed books and the difficulties for users to read. The study recommends the importance of university libraries to enhance facilities and increase awareness and motivation among students regarding e-book usage through libraries and other sources.

**Keywords:** *Chi-square test, E-books, Undergraduates, Digital library, E-learning*