



REVIEW ARTICLE

FLYBRARY AS AN INNOVATIVE MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY MODEL: AN ANALYSIS OF SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY, COMMUNITY OUTREACH, AND LIBRARY ENGAGEMENT BEYOND CONVENTIONAL SPACES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Rather than being contained within the usual library space, public libraries are deploying services across a variety of sites. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the Flybrary project (developed by the Bakul Foundation and the Airports Authority of India), as a public space book-sharing project located in Bhubaneswar Airport, to gain insights about accessibility, outreach and engagement beyond library spaces. Since no respondent-level field dataset was provided, the quantitative component of this study will use only a clearly labeled sample dataset of 200 cases to illustrate an empirical framework. A thousand case dataset was created with eleven 3 item Likert constructs. These constructs then underwent descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, correlations, regression and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The simulation constructs had a reliability range between .726 and .835. The joint contribution of accessibility, community outreach, awareness, and ease of access accounted for 31.3 percent of the variation in library engagement. Engagement, satisfaction and perceived usefulness accounted for 29.2 percent of the variation in reuse intention. The author hypothesizes that Flybrary type models should support, rather than supplant, conventional public libraries. The author will construct a field validation agenda on the collections deployed in Flybrary and other similar sites, and will also study circulation, inclusion, collection relevance, stewardship and the deployment of Flybrary type models in other spaces across India.

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INTRODUCTION

Public-library theory is now focused on libraries as social infrastructure, civic platforms, and service networks, as opposed to libraries as storerooms. The IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto considers equitable access and participation, as well as locally relevant services, as the cornerstone of the public library mission (IFLA & UNESCO, 2022). Recently, library value has been attributed to community relationships, 'third-place' qualities, inclusive programming, and services that extend everyday life (Hapel, 2020; Wood, 2021; van Melik & Merry, 2023; White & Martel, 2022). Accessibility therefore implies more than just simply proximity to a library branch. It encompasses the opening hours, social comfort, visibility, and the ability to encounter reading resources while being mobile (Cheng *et al.*, 2021; Noh & Chang, 2020). These concepts are especially pertinent for India, where disparate stages of public-library development are found across various administrative divisions, and where digitalization and smart-city initiatives happen alongside community-centered services, but also massive and persistent infrastructure and service inequalities (Khanchandani, 2022; Chaurasia & Singh, 2024; Kulkarni *et al.*, 2024). Mobile-library research shows that taking services to the community can help to reduce both the geographical and social gaps, however, sustained use is dependent on the relevance, operational continuity, and outreach (Lo & Stark, 2021; Bell & Goulding, 2023; Arunkumar & Begum, 2024). This paper conceives 'mobile' in the thin sense: Flybrary is a mobile/public service that offers library access beyond the traditional library building, and thus differs from a traditional bookmobile. Bakul Foundation says the Flybrary at Bhubaneswar Airport is a project done in partnership with the Airports Authority of India. There are two book shelves. One is in the departure area and the other is in the arrival area. Passengers can either take the books to read or take the books and bring them back to the airport, or to

the Bakul Foundation. Bakul's Foundation reports that there is a collection of books that circulate. Books typically circulate out of the library. This prompted the question; can visibility in a high-mobility public space help support reading? This leads to the research question; how can a Flybrary be designed and tested, to understand the accessibility-outreach-engagement pathway of Flybrary, without overstating the evidence that already exists?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of new library services in the field of public librarianship through adaptive partnerships and community engagement has been well documented. Relationships and flexibility in service design are key signifiers of this integration. Such services and relationships have the potential to stimulate social engagement and help strengthen communities. Evidence from Kerala demonstrates the positive potential of adapted public-library systems in generating large-scale community participation. Beyond branches, outreach research supports the idea of using mobile libraries to meet users in hard to access areas as a way to promote social inclusion and digital participation (Lo & Stark, 2021; Bell & Goulding, 2023). Some outreach workers have described their role as transforming the library from a building to a service. Targeted outreach can bring library services to populations who are not engaged by the usual means (Mills *et al.*, 2023; Terrile, 2024; Lopez *et al.*, 2023).

Small and rural libraries will also show that innovation can be service-led over technology-led (Chase, 2021; Lenstra *et al.*, 2022). Other spaces can also change the context of reading and encounters with information. Libraries are offering access to nature, community spaces, and digitally mediated programs, and are demonstrating that the library service boundary is more permeable (Lenstra & Campana, 2021; Dalmer & Mitrovica, 2022). While public library interventions can promote digital inclusion and educational participation, it should be noted that participants can still remain excluded unless access is pointed to their needs (Kulikauskienė&Šaparnienė, 2020; Casselden, 2023; Bouaamri, 2024). The assessment of user needs and smart city research will also support the alignment of services to lived demands through community data, co-design and cross-sector engagement (Shin *et al.*, 2022; Gasco-Hernandez *et al.*, 2022). This literature suggests that for Flybrary, convenience of location and ease of access to books may increase first time awareness and outreach may increase participation. Once the Flybrary is set up, the collection's relevance and usefulness may sustain satisfaction. Engagement may result in reuse and recommendation. However, no user-level research on Flybrary participants was located in the reviewed sources, leaving a gap in the empirical evidence on this real public-space intervention. This gap requires measuring the mechanisms of Flybrary users systematically. This framework is designed to facilitate that measurement in order to make the evidence statistically testable.

Research Objectives, Questions and Hypotheses: The study has six objectives: (1) examine Flybrary as a mechanism for extending reading access beyond the conventional library buildings; (2) assess perceived accessibility and location convenience; (3) analyze the association between community outreach and library engagement; (4) estimate the effect of accessibility, awareness and ease of access on engagement; (5) evaluate satisfaction and intention to reuse or recommend the service; and (6) identify operational and policy conditions for scaling comparable models in India. The corresponding research questions ask how public-space access may improve reach, which factors predict engagement and reuse, and what sustainability constraints may limit expansion. Six directional hypotheses are illustrated in the following framework: H1, accessibility is positively related to engagement; H2, community outreach positively predicts engagement; H3, awareness positively predicts engagement; H4, ease of access positively predicts satisfaction; H5, engagement positively predicts reuse intention; and H6, perceived usefulness positively predicts satisfaction. Each was evaluated against a null hypothesis of no positive association at $p < .05$.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the prototype case methodology using verified descriptions of the actual Flybrary project. No primary data were collected. Consequently, the respondent level is an Illustrative/Simulated Dataset for Methodological Demonstration comprising 200 cases generated to illustrate how future Flybrary evaluations could be studied. Although the data is quantitative and illustrative/simulated in this paper, the numerical results must not be taken to mean genuine user data of Flybrary. The proposed framework consists of six service predictors (accessibility of service, outreach of service, awareness of service, book accessibility, book collection relevance and service convenience), perceived service usefulness, reading motivation, and three anticipated outcomes (service evaluation, user satisfaction, and user service recommendation). Each of the constructs is defined with three five-point Likert scale items wherein 1 represents the most strongly disagree and 5 the most strongly agree.

The proposed framework also includes demographic and behavioral components consisting of age, gender, education, reading frequency, and prior service use of the Flybrary and public libraries, Flybrary awareness, use, and travel frequency. The framework was not developed to support particular hypotheses. Reliability and associations were computed following generation. Analysis proceeded in the SPSS order of frequencies and percentages, construct means and standard deviations, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlations, multiple OLS regression, and a one-way ANOVA of engagement by the reading-frequency group. For this analysis, values of .70 and above were deemed acceptable. Regression diagnostics included residual normality, Durbin-Watson and variance-inflation checks. Since the dataset is simulated, all of the p-values generated are fictional, and serve merely to show the analytical process. Admittedly, the results from this analysis cannot be generalized to the population. A future study should seek appropriate ethical approvals, recruit active participants at specific time intervals, and preserve their anonymity while preregistering as whether the research is exploratory or confirmatory.

Data Analysis and Results

Sample/Profile Analysis: It was intentional to make the sample as diverse as possible. 37.0% of the sample was of the age group 25-34; 32.5% of the sample was of the age group 18-24; 72.0% of the sample had used the library before. Within the simulated Flybrary-status variable, 32.0% were coded as used/engaged, 24.5% as aware but not used, and 43.5% as not aware. Please note that the numbers are not real and are input scenarios. The profile is useful because it enables analysis of different levels of library experience and exposure to Flybrary.

Table 1. Profile of the Illustrative/Simulated Dataset (N = 200)

Variable	Category	n	%
Age group	18-24	65	32.5
	25-34	74	37.0
	35-44	39	19.5
	45+	22	11.0
Gender	Female	99	49.5
	Male	97	48.5
	Other/Prefer not to say	4	2.0
Education	Up to higher secondary	29	14.5
	Undergraduate	90	45.0
	Postgraduate	69	34.5
	Other	12	6.0
Reading frequency	Daily	36	18.0
	Several times/week	76	38.0
	Weekly	58	29.0
	Less often	30	15.0
Previous library use	Yes	144	72.0
	No	56	28.0
Flybrary awareness/use	Used/engaged	64	32.0
	Aware but not used	49	24.5
	Not aware	87	43.5
Travel frequency	Monthly or more	55	27.5
	Every 2-3 months	68	34.0
	1-2 times/year	58	29.0
	Rarely	19	9.5

Interpretive note. The simulated profile contains variation in age, education, prior library experience, reading frequency and Flybrary exposure, allowing the framework to demonstrate both service-perception and behavioural analyses without representing these proportions as real airport-user statistics.

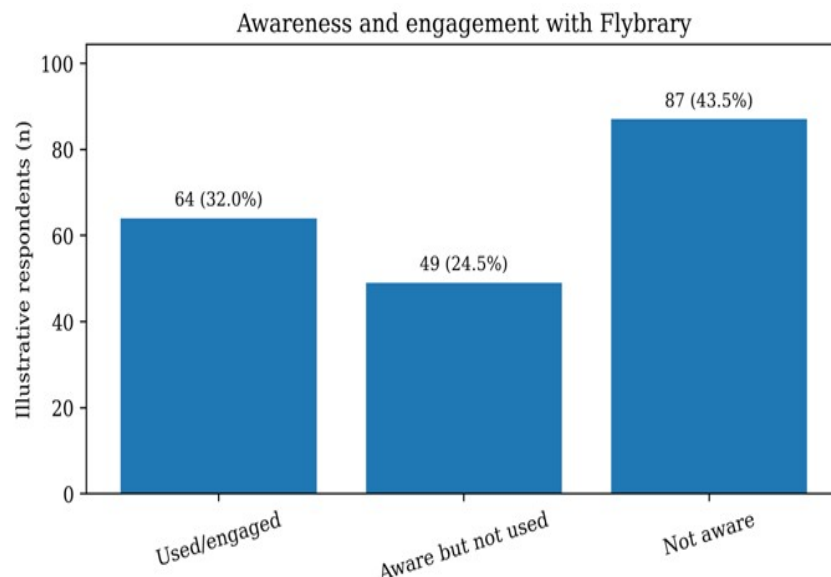


Figure 1. Awareness and engagement categories in the illustrative/simulated dataset

Interpretive note. In the demonstration, 56.5% are coded as aware of Flybrary and 32.0% as having used or engaged with it; these values are scenario inputs, not observed adoption rates.

Interpretive note. The simulated group whose members read least were least likely to read several times per week (38.0%) and therefore create a mixed reader profile, rather than a sample consisting exclusively of intensive readers. Interpretive note. Reliability exceeds the .70 benchmark for every simulated multi-item construct, supporting aggregation of the demonstration items into construct scores.

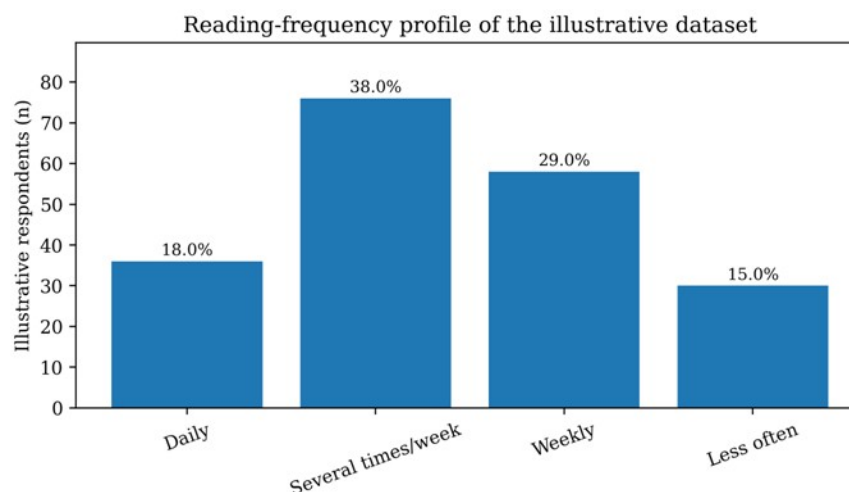


Figure 2. Reading-frequency profile of the illustrative/simulated dataset

Interpretive note. The simulated group whose members read least were least likely to read several times per week (38.0%) and therefore create a mixed reader profile, rather than a sample consisting exclusively of intensive readers.

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability: The construct means were in the moderately positive range between 3.377 for the construct of 'collection relevance' to 3.498 for the construct of 'reading motivation'. Meanwhile, 'accessibility' ($M = 3.477$, $SD = .661$), 'ease of access' ($M = 3.482$, $SD = .666$), 'community outreach' ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .683$) were all located above the neutral midpoint. This simulated pattern describes a possible but unverified service evaluation and therefore should be read as an example of how construct-level reporting would appear.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Major Constructs

Construct	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Accessibility	200	3.477	0.661	2.000	5.000
Community Outreach	200	3.440	0.683	1.667	5.000
Awareness	200	3.435	0.629	2.000	5.000
Ease of Access	200	3.482	0.666	2.000	5.000
Collection Relevance	200	3.377	0.603	1.333	5.000
Location Convenience	200	3.423	0.634	1.333	5.000
Perceived Usefulness	200	3.388	0.601	2.000	5.000
Reading Motivation	200	3.498	0.562	2.000	5.000
Library Engagement	200	3.428	0.571	2.000	5.000
User Satisfaction	200	3.435	0.646	1.667	5.000
Reuse Intention	200	3.408	0.566	1.667	5.000

Interpretive note. All construct means sit modestly above the scale midpoint, while standard deviations of about .56-.68 preserve enough dispersion for correlational modelling in the illustrative dataset.

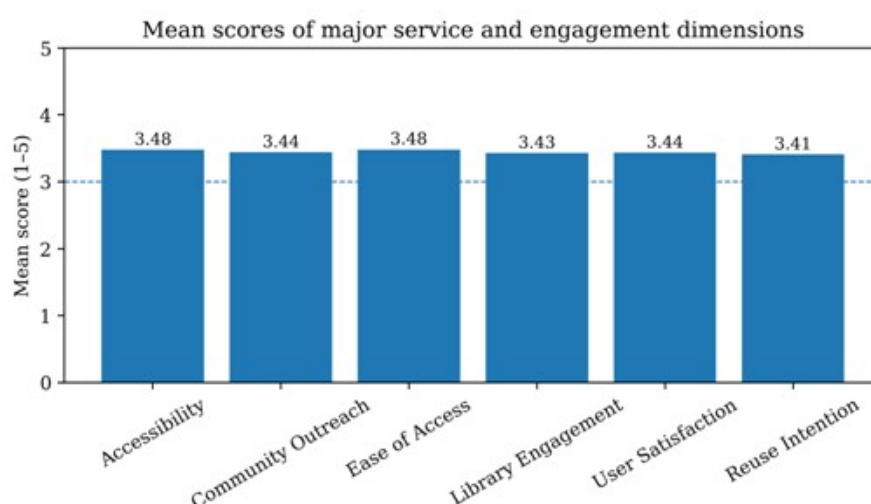


Figure 3. Mean scores of selected service and engagement dimensions (illustrative/simulated data)

Interpretive note. Accessibility, ease of access and accessibility are the highest dimensions of the wrapped services, with negligible differences; no mean should be interpreted as a measurement of the Bhubaneswar Flybrary in actuality.

Table 3. Reliability Analysis

Construct	Items	Cronbach alpha	Interpretation
Accessibility	3	0.835	Acceptable
Community Outreach	3	0.830	Acceptable
Awareness	3	0.788	Acceptable
Ease of Access	3	0.814	Acceptable
Collection Relevance	3	0.783	Acceptable
Location Convenience	3	0.788	Acceptable
Perceived Usefulness	3	0.782	Acceptable
Reading Motivation	3	0.726	Acceptable
Library Engagement	3	0.750	Acceptable
User Satisfaction	3	0.798	Acceptable
Reuse Intention	3	0.739	Acceptable

Interpretive note. Reliability exceeds the .70 benchmark for every simulated multi-item construct, supporting aggregation of the demonstration items into construct scores.

Correlation Analysis: There was good internal consistency for the eleven constructs. Cronbach's alpha values for the eleven constructs were between .726 (reading motivation) and .835 (accessibility). The correlation matrix showed positive correlations of accessibility with engagement ($r = .451$, $p < .001$), outreach with engagement ($r = .410$, $p < .001$), engagement with reuse intention ($r = .380$, $p < .001$). Awareness had a positive correlation with engagement ($r = .267$, $p < .001$) and was not related to reuse intention ($r = .117$, $p = .100$). Generally, the results showed that awareness was insufficient for ensuring intention to maintain the ongoing use of the demonstration.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Construct	Access	Outreach	Awareness	Engagement	Satisfaction	Reuse
Access	1.000	0.389***	0.212**	0.451***	0.455***	0.415***
Outreach	0.389***	1.000	0.140*	0.410***	0.405***	0.433***
Awareness	0.212**	0.140*	1.000	0.267***	0.156*	0.117
Engagement	0.451***	0.410***	0.267***	1.000	0.354***	0.380***
Satisfaction	0.455***	0.405***	0.156*	0.354***	1.000	0.395***
Reuse	0.415***	0.433***	0.117	0.380***	0.395***	1.000

Note. Illustrative/simulated data. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Interpretive note. Accessibility and outreach show moderate positive relationships with engagement and reuse intention. Awareness relates to engagement but not significantly to reuse, illustrating why exposure and sustained behavioural intention should be modelled separately.

Regression and Hypothesis Testing: The primary regression was significant, $F(4,195) = 22.19$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .313$, adjusted $R^2 = .299$. Each of the following factors were found to positively contribute to engagement: accessibility (beta = .218, $p = .005$), community outreach (beta = .250, $p < .001$), awareness (beta = .144, $p = .020$) and ease of access (beta = .174, $p = .022$). The validity of the regression was assessed by a number of tests and was found to be acceptable for this example (Durbin-Watson = 1.745; Jarque-Bera $p = .200$), and concerning multicollinearity was not found.

Thus, we conclude that H1-H3 were supported by the simulation. A second model predicting reuse intent from engagement, satisfaction, and perceived usefulness was also determined to be significant, $F(3,196) = 26.90$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .292$, adjusted $R^2 = .281$. The model also included engagement (beta = .215, $p = .001$), satisfaction (beta = .230, $p = .001$) and perceived usefulness (beta = .284, $p < .001$). From this, we can confirm H5. A separate satisfaction model showed significant effects for ease of access (beta = .339, $p < .001$) and perceived usefulness (beta = .189, $p = .006$). From this, we can conclude H4 and H6. Engagement did not significantly differ among the simulated reading-frequency groups, $F(3,196) = .92$, $p = .433$.

Table 5. Multiple Regression Models

Model / Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	p	Decision
A: Engagement - Accessibility	0.189	0.067	0.218	2.825	0.005	Supported
A: Engagement - Community Outreach	0.209	0.054	0.250	3.856	<.001	Supported
A: Engagement - Awareness	0.131	0.056	0.144	2.350	0.020	Supported
A: Engagement - Ease of Access	0.150	0.065	0.174	2.309	0.022	Supported
B: Reuse - Library Engagement	0.213	0.065	0.215	3.269	0.001	Significant
B: Reuse - User Satisfaction	0.202	0.058	0.230	3.481	<.001	Significant
B: Reuse - Perceived Usefulness	0.267	0.061	0.284	4.383	<.001	Significant

Note. Model A: $R^2 = 0.313$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.299$, $F(4,195) = 22.19$, $p < .001$. Model B: $R^2 = 0.292$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.281$, $F(3,196) = 26.90$, $p < .001$.

Interpretive note. In the simulated framework, all four Model A predictors make independent contributions to engagement; community outreach has the largest standardized coefficient. In Model B, perceived usefulness is the strongest predictor of reuse intention, followed by satisfaction and engagement.

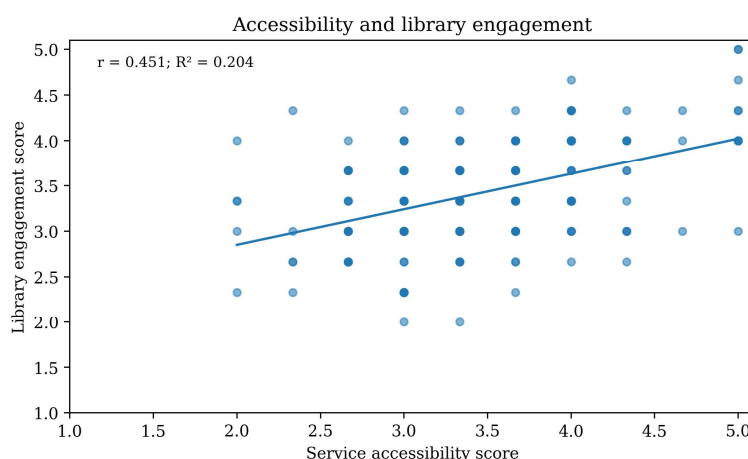


Figure 4. Relationship between service accessibility and library engagement (illustrative/simulated data).

Interpretive note. The scatter plot demonstrates a positive association of accessibility-engagement ($r = 0.451$; $R^2 = 0.204$) in the simulated data, and shows a good level of dispersion. This shows that accessibility is one of the many factors and is not the only factor for engagement.

DISCUSSION

The simulated results are in line with the current published literature which shows that without interaction, accessibility is meaningless. Proximity and visibility can help to reduce the overall costs of engagement. The first case study of library service shows us the outreach, coupled with the perceived relevance of the service, should determine whether a potential user will move to use the service having noticed the service. This is relevant to accessibility research (Cheng *et al.*, 2021), mobile-library inclusion research (Lo & Stark, 2021; Bell & Goulding 2023), and the research regarding outreach as a service, as opposed to an extension of the building (Mills *et al.*, 2023). The simulated outreach coefficient also endorses the research which focuses on the relationships and engagement of community members as the true patrons and clientele of libraries (Bhanu & Dhanyasree, 2025; Lee, 2024; Yesmin *et al.*, 2023). One thing that's unique about FlyBrary is that it gets people to utilize the library incidentally. This is the case of the third space and social infrastructure argument in the context of high transience and portability (Wood, 2021; van Melik & Merry, 2023). Because the site is so portable, there may be issues of stewardship, particularly in a library that is located in an airport. In addition to the constant circulation and replacement of books, the library needs to maintain a shelf and address the pertinence of the books in multiple languages (Singha, 2025). Finally, the number of empty shelves needs to be continually monitored in order to evaluate the availability and the level of volunteer support. The simulation depicts that awareness should not be conflated with loyalty. Awareness had a weaker pathway to engagement and no correlation with the intention to reuse. Therefore, the next assessment should evaluate the separation of exposure, trial, satisfaction, and repeated behavior. This is of importance in user-centered innovation research and is illustrated by the emphasis on co-design and assessment of needs and iterative changes as opposed to one-time exposure (Hernández-Pérez *et al.*, 2022; Shin *et al.*, 2022; Potnis *et al.*, 2021).

Practical and Policy Implications: For the Indian library policy, Flybrary-like access points would help to enhance staffed libraries. Compact book-sharing units can be piloted by state library systems, local governments, NGOs and transport authorities at airports, railway and bus stations, hospitals, parks and community centers that have reading opportunities and long waits. Each of these should have a designated sponsor and should provide collections in multiple languages, a QR-code based voluntary feedback, accessibility, circular economy design, and a dashboard. Risk reduction in cross-sector governance and the pursuit of public value, and not innovation, should be prioritized in such smart-city partnerships (Gasco-Hernandez *et al.*, 2022; Kulkarni *et al.*, 2024). Equity needs design. Literature Space Libraries need to incorporate design elements to address issues of children, elderly, and differently abled adults with different levels of digital and literacy, and also design to accommodate different languages. A comparison of interactions and user groups needs to be the primary focus when deciding on the next units to be installed (Casselden, 2023; Bouaamri, 2024; López *et al.*, 2023). The next sites should be selected based on field evidence. Comparing user groups with collection turnovers and replacement rates needs to determine the adequate cost of sets and the loss sustainability per meaningful interaction.

Limitations and Future Research: The major limitation among the other limitations is that the study uses simulations, and therefore, cannot prove how effective Flybrary is. The quantitative data contained in the paper are demonstrative/simulated, and are meant to represent what would be the proposed analytical framework. The numbers/data should not be perceived to be data collected from actual Flybrary users. Additionally, users of the airport cannot be generalized to represent the Indian population, and self reported Likert scale measures cannot be used to represent observed circulation or longitudinal reuse. Future research needs to use actual users and non-users, unobtrusive circulation counts, insert a variety of public space research sites, test measurement invariance over multiple languages, and measure repeated use over various time frames.

CONCLUSION

Flybrary shows how books can be incorporated in the movement of people by using Bhubaneswar Airport. Details of the Bhubaneswar Airport initiative provide evidence of partnerships and design of open take/read/return systems. The present study provides a good starting point to deal with the problems of accessibility and outreach, social infrastructures, and user-centered design. The model does not make any empirical statements. However, it does show a redeemable model in which accessibility and outreach, as well as awareness, are expected to affect engagement. For this model, engagement, satisfaction, and perceived usefulness can predict the intention to engage, which can predict repeated use. The model provides a basis to develop the idea of a framework that can be grounded in empirical evidence. In regard to the policy dilemma, the issue is not how many shelves each engagement site can consider, but rather can the site sustain ongoing, low-cost and intentional engagement with a collection of accessible resources? For the Bhubaneswar site and for the other proposed sites, the primary surveys can be coupled with circulation and replenishment data. This study can answer the question of the effectiveness of book-sharing at the national level. For the proposed sites and if book-sharing at the other sites provides evidence to the proposed mechanisms, Flybrary-type stations can be set up to strengthen India's public library and reading promotion systems.

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