



Library Resource Utilization and Career Readiness: An Empirical Assessment of College Students in Mysuru District

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ABSTRACT

Academic libraries play a crucial role in enhancing students' career readiness by providing access to information resources, digital tools, and skill-development support. Amid growing employability challenges faced by college graduates, understanding the contribution of library resources to career preparedness has become increasingly important. This study empirically examines the relationship between library resource utilization and career readiness among college students in Mysuru. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design, using primary data collected from college students through a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, correlation, and regression were employed for data analysis. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between effective utilization of library resources and career readiness, particularly in the areas of information literacy, digital competence, and self-directed learning. The study emphasizes the evolving role of academic libraries as strategic partners in career development and highlights the need to integrate career-oriented resources and training programs. The results offer valuable implications for library policy, institutional planning, and initiatives aimed at enhancing student employability.



1. Introduction

In the contemporary knowledge-driven economy, higher education institutions are expected to produce graduates who are not only academically proficient but also equipped with competencies required for successful career transitions. Career readiness has emerged as a key outcome of higher education, encompassing critical thinking, digital literacy, communication skills, adaptability, and lifelong learning abilities. Within this context, academic libraries have evolved from traditional repositories of books into dynamic learning hubs that support students' academic, professional, and personal development.

Career readiness refers to the extent to which students possess the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional competencies needed to enter and adapt to the workforce. It includes cognitive abilities such as problem-solving and analytical thinking, non-cognitive attributes such as adaptability and self-efficacy, and practical skills such as information literacy and technological proficiency. Academic libraries play a crucial role in developing these skills through access to diverse resources, research support services, information literacy training, and digital and hybrid learning environments that enhance students' career preparedness.

2. Review of Literature

The role of academic libraries in higher education has been widely examined, particularly in relation to academic achievement, information literacy, and student learning outcomes. Recent research has expanded this focus to explore the contribution of library resources to employability and career readiness, reflecting the shift toward outcome-based education. Studies show that effective library utilization enhances learning efficiency, critical thinking, and research skills. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) emphasized that information literacy competencies are essential for lifelong learning and professional success.

Employability research highlights transferable skills such as information evaluation, digital literacy, communication, and self-directed learning. Yorke (2010) linked employability to effective information management, while Bridgstock (2009) emphasized digital competencies as integral to career readiness. In the Indian context, studies by Thanuskodi (2012) and Kumar and Ramesh (2018) confirmed the academic benefits of library use but paid limited attention to career outcomes. Bansal and Malhotra (2021) reported low awareness of digital resources for career preparation. Region-specific empirical studies, particularly in Mysuru, remain scarce, justifying the present study.



3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the premise that academic libraries serve as key enablers of skill development and employability in higher education. Library resources and services contribute to students' cognitive, digital, and information competencies, which collectively enhance their career readiness. The model proposes that access to library resources, effective usage of digital databases, and participation in information literacy training positively influence students' preparedness for the labour market. Career readiness is conceptualized as a multidimensional outcome encompassing employability skills, self-directed learning, digital competence, and professional awareness.

The key independent variables of the study include access to library resources, usage of digital databases, and information literacy training. Access to library resources refers to the availability and ease of use of print and electronic collections and support services. Usage of digital databases reflects the frequency and effectiveness of engaging with e-resources. Information literacy training includes structured library programmes aimed at developing information evaluation and ethical usage skills. The dependent variable, career readiness, represents students' overall employability-related competencies necessary for successful workforce entry.

3.3 Research Hypotheses / Propositions

Based on the conceptual framework and review of literature, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- **H1:** There is a significant relationship between access to library resources and career readiness of college students.
- **H2:** Usage of digital databases has a significant positive influence on students' career readiness.
- **H3:** Information literacy training significantly enhances the career readiness of college students.
- **H4:** Library resource utilization collectively has a significant impact on students' overall career readiness.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the extent of library resource usage among college students in Mysuru
- To assess the level of career readiness among students
- To analyze the relationship between library resources and career readiness



- To identify challenges in effective utilization of library services

5. Research Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine patterns of library resource utilization and their relationship with career readiness among college students. The descriptive approach facilitates understanding of usage patterns and readiness levels, while the analytical design enables empirical testing of relationships using statistical techniques.

The study was conducted in Mysuru, a major higher education hub in Karnataka. The population comprised undergraduate and postgraduate students from selected degree colleges representing diverse academic disciplines and socio-economic backgrounds. A stratified random sampling technique was employed, with colleges treated as strata to ensure representative participation. A sample of 132 students was selected based on feasibility and consistency with similar social science studies.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire covering demographic details, access to and use of library resources, participation in information literacy programs, and indicators of career readiness. Secondary data were sourced from academic journals, books, institutional reports, and policy documents related to academic libraries and employability.

Variables were measured using Likert-type scales. Independent variables included access to library resources, usage of digital databases, and information literacy training, while career readiness served as the dependent variable. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis. Ethical standards were maintained through informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

6. Data Analysis and Results

6.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study covered a sample of 132 college students drawn from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Mysuru. The demographic profile indicates adequate diversity across gender, academic level, discipline, and age. Female students constituted 60 per cent of the sample, while male students accounted for 40 per cent. With respect to academic level, 70 per cent were undergraduate students and 30 per cent were postgraduate students. Discipline-wise representation included Arts (35%), Commerce (30%), Science (25%), and Management (10%). A majority of respondents (68%) belonged to the 18–22 age group, while the remaining 32 per cent were aged between 23 and 28 years. This distribution reflects



a representative cross-section of college students suitable for examining library usage and career readiness.

6.2 Pattern of Library Resource Usage

Analysis of library engagement revealed moderate to high levels of resource utilization. About 75 per cent of students reported regular access to both print and electronic library resources, while 25 per cent indicated limited access due to time constraints or availability issues. Regarding digital resource usage, 65 per cent of respondents frequently used online databases such as e-journals and e-books, whereas 35 per cent accessed them occasionally. Participation in information literacy programmes showed comparatively lower engagement, with 58 per cent attending library orientations or workshops and 42 per cent reporting no formal training. These findings indicate reasonably strong access to resources but highlight gaps in structured digital and skill-based library usage.

6.3 Assessment of Career Readiness Levels

Career readiness was assessed across four dimensions: employability skills, digital competence, self-directed learning, and professional awareness. The overall mean score for career readiness was 3.75 on a five-point Likert scale, indicating a moderate-to-high level of preparedness among students. Dimension-wise analysis showed employability skills with a mean of 3.8, digital competence at 3.7, self-directed learning at 3.6, and professional awareness at 3.9. These results suggest that students demonstrate stronger professional awareness and employability-related skills, while self-directed learning shows relatively moderate levels.

6.4 Relationship Between Library Resources and Career Readiness

To examine the influence of library resource utilization on career readiness, correlation and regression analyses were conducted.

6.4.1 Correlation Analysis

The correlation results revealed a significant positive relationship between all library-related variables and career readiness. Access to library resources showed a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.62$ ($p < 0.01$), usage of digital databases recorded $r = 0.58$ ($p < 0.01$), and information literacy training demonstrated the strongest correlation with $r = 0.65$ ($p < 0.01$). These results indicate that higher engagement with library resources is associated with enhanced employability-related competencies.



6.4.2 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to assess the predictive effect of library resource utilization on career readiness. The regression model was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.53$, $F = 47.82$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that library-related variables collectively explain 53 per cent of the variance in career readiness. Among the predictors, information literacy training emerged as the strongest factor ($\beta = 0.31$, $t = 4.58$, $p < 0.01$), followed by access to library resources ($\beta = 0.28$, $t = 4.12$, $p < 0.01$) and usage of digital databases ($\beta = 0.24$, $t = 3.56$, $p < 0.01$). These findings confirm the substantial role of library services in shaping career readiness.

6.5 Hypotheses Testing

All hypotheses formulated for the study were accepted. Access to library resources, usage of digital databases, and participation in information literacy training each showed a significant positive influence on career readiness. Additionally, the collective impact of library resource utilization was confirmed through the regression model, reinforcing the integrated role of academic libraries in employability development.

6.6 Challenges in Effective Library Utilization

Despite positive engagement levels, respondents reported several challenges. Limited awareness of digital databases was reported by 42 per cent of students, insufficient time by 38 per cent, lack of structured information literacy programmes by 35 per cent, and inadequate digital infrastructure by 28 per cent. These constraints point to areas requiring institutional and policy-level intervention.

6.7 Hypotheses Testing and Interpretation

Hypothesis	Result	Interpretation
H1: Access to library resources positively influences career readiness	Accepted	Significant correlation ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) and regression ($\beta = 0.28$) confirm the relationship.
H2: Usage of digital databases positively influences career readiness	Accepted	Significant correlation ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$) and regression ($\beta = 0.24$).
H3: Information literacy training positively influences career readiness	Accepted	Strongest effect ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.31$) among independent variables.
H4: Library resource utilization	Accepted	Regression model $R^2 = 0.53$, $F = 47.82$, $p < 0.01$



Hypothesis	Result	Interpretation
collectively predicts career readiness		confirms collective predictive effect.

Overall Interpretation: The analysis confirms that **all dimensions of library resource utilization significantly contribute to enhancing career readiness** among college students in Mysuru. Information literacy training emerges as the most influential factor.

7. Discussion of Findings

- The study examined the relationship between library resource utilization and career readiness among college students in Mysuru, highlighting the strategic role of academic libraries in employability development.
- Students with higher access to library resources demonstrated greater career readiness, supported by a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.62, p < 0.01$) and regression result ($\beta = 0.28$), aligning with prior studies (Thanuskodi, 2012; Kumar & Ramesh, 2018).
- Use of digital databases, e-journals, and online research tools showed a strong positive influence on career readiness ($r = 0.58, \beta = 0.24$), reinforcing the importance of digital literacy for workplace success (Bridgstock, 2009; ACRL, 2015).
- Information literacy training emerged as the strongest predictor of career readiness ($r = 0.65, \beta = 0.31$), emphasizing the value of structured library instruction in developing transferable skills.
- The regression model explained 53% of the variance in career readiness ($R^2 = 0.53, F = 47.82, p < 0.01$), confirming the collective influence of library resources.
- Key challenges included limited awareness of digital resources, time constraints, and inadequate training, echoing findings by Bansal and Malhotra (2021).
- The study suggests strengthening information literacy programs, enhancing digital resource awareness, and improving institutional support to maximize career readiness outcomes.

8. Challenges and Limitations

Despite its significant findings, the study encountered certain challenges and limitations:

1. **Limited awareness of digital resources:** A considerable proportion of students reported insufficient familiarity with digital databases and e-resources, restricting effective utilization.



2. **Time constraints:** Many students cited academic workload and personal commitments as barriers to regular library engagement.
3. **Scope of sample:** The study focused only on selected colleges in Mysuru, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions or types of higher education institutions.
4. **Self-reported data:** The use of structured questionnaires relies on respondents' perceptions, which may introduce response bias.
5. **Cross-sectional design:** As the study captures a snapshot in time, it cannot fully account for longitudinal changes in library usage or career readiness.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable empirical insights into the relationship between academic library resources and career readiness in a localized context.

9. Recommendations and Policy Implications

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed for enhancing the role of academic libraries in career readiness:

1. **Strengthen Information Literacy Programs:** Colleges should implement regular workshops and orientation sessions focusing on research skills, digital literacy, and ethical use of information.
2. **Enhance Digital Resource Awareness:** Institutions should actively promote access to e-journals, online databases, and institutional repositories through campaigns and guidance sessions.
3. **Integrate Library Services with Career Development:** Libraries should collaborate with career guidance cells to align resource usage with employability skill development.
4. **Improve Infrastructure and Access:** Colleges should provide flexible library hours, online access, and user-friendly digital platforms to facilitate greater student engagement.
5. **Policy-Level Support:** Educational authorities should incentivize libraries to develop career-oriented services, allocate funding for digital resources, and incorporate library-based skill development into national higher education frameworks such as NEP 2020.

Implementing these recommendations can strengthen the strategic role of libraries in bridging academic learning and workforce preparedness.



10. Conclusion

The study empirically establishes that academic library resource utilization significantly enhances career readiness among college students in Mysuru. Access to library resources, effective use of digital databases, and participation in information literacy programs collectively strengthen employability skills, digital competence, and professional awareness, with information literacy emerging as the most influential factor. The findings highlight the evolving role of academic libraries as strategic enablers of career preparedness rather than mere information repositories. By addressing challenges such as limited digital awareness and time constraints through targeted institutional interventions, colleges can maximize the career-oriented impact of library services, thereby enhancing graduate employability within the Indian higher education context.

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