

Comparative Study of Safety Conditions in the Public Libraries of Municipality Organization for Culture & Arts and of Iran Public Libraries Foundation in Tehran

Zohreh Mirhoseini

Assistant professor, Department of LIS,
Islamic Azad University, Tehran North branch
z_mirhoseini@iau-tnb.ac.ir

Mahshid Taghi-Chizari (Corresponding author)

M.A. student of LIS, Islamic Azad University, Tehran North branch
mahshid_chizari@yahoo.com

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Abstract

Purpose: This study was performed to determine and compare safety conditions of public libraries affiliated with Iran Public Libraries Foundation (IPLF) as well as Municipality Organization for Culture and Arts (MOCA) for the purpose of identification and comparison of their strengths, weaknesses, common points, and differences regarding safety indices.

Methodology: This is of survey type. The population under study consisted of 37 public libraries of IPLF and 72 public libraries affiliated with MOCA, which were in total 109 libraries. A researcher-made questionnaire as a checklist was used to collect necessary data and included questions in terms of 8 indices of library safety, which were filled by the responders.

Findings: As the results show, there is significant difference between public libraries of the IPLF and those affiliated with MOCA for the first index (quality of library building) in two criteria and for the fourth index (safety of library against fire) in one criterion, such that these criteria are observed more in public libraries of IPLF, and these public libraries were evaluated to be better concerning the quality of library building. Regarding safety against fire, no significant difference was observed except one case which was observed in public libraries affiliated with IPLF. Considering the second index (library's safety against earthquake), the third index (library's safety against storm and flood), and the eighth index (library's safety against damages caused by biological factors), the two groups were similar to a high extent and no significant difference existed between them. There were significant differences for the fifth index (library's safety against theft and harming the resources) in four criteria, for the sixth index (employees' safety) in two criteria, and for the seventh index (safety against damages caused by physical and chemical factors) in seven criteria, such that libraries affiliated with MOCA were evaluated to be better concerning their safety against theft and harm, employees' safety, and resource' safety against damages caused by heat, moisture and light. For the seventh index, there was significant difference in one criterion which was observed in public libraries supervised by IPLF. In total, libraries of the both groups had no appropriate status with regard to observing safety indices.

Originality/Value: The new comparative approach made for safety issues of public libraries makes this paper valuable as it exhibits the weaknesses and strengths to inform programmers and officials, and provides some strategies to improve safety conditions of libraries.

Keywords: Safety; Public library; Protection; Iran Public Libraries Foundation (IPLF); Municipality Organization for Culture and Arts (MOCA); Comparative study