

Role of Public Libraries in Increasing Social Assets: A Case Study of Tehran City

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Received: 6th November, 2011; Accepted: 14th December, 2011

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to study the role of public libraries in increasing social assets and the essential components for creation and development of those assets.

Method: In this research, a qualitative approach and an underlying theory method have been used. Of all the public libraries in Tehran, four of the best ranks were selected. By a theoretical sampling method, selection was also made of 41 library members, 16 librarian, and 53 citizens from the potential population of library users. The required data were collected through observation and semi-structured interviews. The collected data were analyzed using a theoretical coding method.

Findings: The findings show that public libraries have failed to play a key role in the development of social assets for citizens. The results suggest that the factors which cause a shortage of social assets in public libraries include the low quantity and quality of library services, low social interaction in public libraries, citizens' unequal access to information and people's distrust in the organizations that manage public libraries.

Originality/value: This research is the first one which has dealt with the role of public libraries in social assets. With regard to the use of an underlying theory strategy, it is an attempt to work out a theory and to suggest the necessary components to be used by public libraries for creating social assets.

Keywords: Social assets, Public libraries, Social reliance, Social interaction, Underlying theory.