Reviewing the Viewpoint of Managers and Librarians of Public Libraries in Kerman Province towards Teleworking: Identifying the Benefits, Obstacles and Ways of Expansion

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Abstract

Purpose: Due to the rapid changes in work environments and fast advancements in the information and communication technologies , the need for staff's physical presence in work environment has been decreased. As a result, teleworking has been considered by organizations. This study investigates the views of library managers and librarians of Kerman province public libraries on teleworking and its strengths and weaknesses.

Methodology: It adopted a survey method. Research population consisted of all librarians working in Kerman province public libraries. Based on an analysis of the literature on the theoretical foundations and related internal and external studies on teleworking a questionnaire was made by the researchers which was used for data gathering,. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by several librarians and library management specialists. Based on the Cronbach's alpha, the reliability, rate of the questionnaire was identified as 0.83. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and analytical statistical methods in SPSS.

Findings: Results showed that the managers and librarians of Kerman province were highly familiar with teleworking. There was no significant difference in their familiarity with teleworking considering their academic degrees and gender. From their views, the appropriate units of the libraries for teleworking were collection development department, cataloging, circulation, information units and circulation desk, respectively. Based on their viewpoints, the facilities needed for teleworking were computer, modem, fax, telephone and printer, respectively. The libraries could moderately provide facilities for Teleworking. They also highlighted reducing the time and cost of transportation and commuting as the most important factors for accepting telework, and reducing work stress due to low control as the least important factor in accepting teleworking. From their views, training managers and decision-makers can be the most important contributors in expanding telework.

Most librarians and library managers agreed with the use of telework, but these have not been considered in the libraries. Kerman Public libraries should provide the necessary infrastructure considering new technologies to be able to move towards teleworking.

Originality/value: There are few studies on the use of teleworking in public libraries. This study provides a framework for discussion on the benefits, obstacles and ways to expand teleworking in public libraries.

Keywords: Teleworking, Work from home, Public libraries, Kerman Province.