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Ali Biranvand
Payame Noor University

Faramarz Soheili
Payame Noor University, fsoheili@gmail.com

Ali Akbar Khasseh
Payame Noor University, khasseh@gmail.com

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Creativity of Librarians in Public Libraries: Case Study of Public Libraries of Fars Province (Iran)

Ali Biranvand

Department of Knowledge and Information Science, Payame Noor University, Iran, E-mail: biranvand@pnu.ac.ir

Faramarz Soheili

Department of Knowledge and Information Science, Payame Noor University, Iran, E-mail: fsoheili@gmail.com

Ali Akbar Khasseh

Department of Knowledge and Information Science, Payame Noor University, Iran, E-mail: khasseh@gmail.com

Abstract

Purpose: This paper aims to investigate the contextual conditions of creativity based on Oldham Model among the librarians of public libraries of Fars province.

Design/methodology/approach: The research uses a survey method. The study population was librarians of public libraries in Fars province. The data collection instrument was questionnaire. For data analysis, univariate T test and covariance analysis and variance analysis were used to evaluate correlation between the contextual conditions of creativity and its components.

Findings: In public libraries of Fars province, the required conditions for creativity of librarians was above average. The personal differences of librarians in terms of job and mental condition are inspired by work context as above average. The positive mental condition of librarians is inspired by non-work contextual factors at lower than average and this shows the lack of satisfaction of life. The personal differences of librarians in terms of personality was above average. The personal differences of librarians

in terms of job were above average. The tendency of librarians to present and share their creative views were above average.

Originality/value: Based on the role and importance of public libraries in development of a society, their librarians should be creative and required conditions should be provided for their creativity. Therefore this study was necessary for the familiarity with the contextual conditions of creativity among librarians in public libraries.

Keywords: Public libraries, Creativity, Oldham model, Effectiveness.

1. Introduction

Creativity is necessary for the survival of any organization. There are various factors affecting creativity and innovation of people from inside and outside of organization (Stanley *et al.*, 2008). One of the important goals of all innovative activities is improving the performance and improving the effectiveness of organization. In the present complex world, the organizations are successful in competing with others that use the most out of the opportunities and this is not possible except with increase in creativity and innovation in organization. Innovation in each organization includes new products, methods and processes or these items are received from other organizations and innovative services are presented. Innovation in services is always emphasized. Howells and Tether (2004) classified innovative services within four groups:

- 1- Knowledge-based services: like the research activities in research organizations.
- 2- The services dealing with information: like information services in libraries and information centers which strive directly or indirectly to meet the information needs of their patrons.
- 3- The services dealing with people: like health care in therapy centers.
- 4- The services dealing with goods: like transport institutions dealing with goods transfer and its distribution in various locations.

Innovation in offering services is a continual process and includes a set of gradual changes in the methods. Thus, identification of innovation in services is difficult. Services offered in public

libraries are some items that due to having gradual changes in methods and processes have above four dimensions (NorooziChakoli, 2009).

Public libraries are one of the most important libraries that for increasing and improving performance and effectiveness of their services require creativity and innovation. It can be said that creativity in librarians is not occurred accidently and suitable contextual factors and good values are provided and the managers of public libraries do the required measurements for creating suitable conditions to show creativity among the librarians. Indeed, organizational atmosphere of the library should support creativity and innovation. NorooziChakoli (2009) believes that for creating innovation in public libraries services, there are many factors such as follows:

- Budget: One of the effective factors on performing innovative programs in public libraries is budget. Although this factor is not adequate alone, it is one of the important factors in this regard.
- Human resources: Having dynamic creative and specialized human resources in library affairs is one of the conditions for performing innovation in public libraries.
- Competitive morale: Using existing talent and ability in existing human resources and creating competition with other similar centers can act as a factor to increase innovation in public libraries.
- Education system: Education system plays an important role in educating people with creative and research morale and these people during entering the society are actual users of public libraries.
- Policy making: Public libraries as a part of organizational system regarding the created innovations should be dependent upon the macro policies of the society. Also, managers of public libraries should have internal plans and goals to cope up with other innovative changes of the society.
- Communicative infrastructures: One of the features of each innovative activity is its new nature. Thus, when an innovation is expected that it has the required conditions for using update technologies in library.

In order to apply creativity within organizations (including libraries), the organizational researchers should identify the variables creating encouragement of creativity that the managers

know how they can support creativity (Reiter and Jody, 2004). One of influencing models for developing creative views in organizations is Oldham Model. Based on this model, formation of creative views depends upon two items: 1. mental positive conditions of employee, and 2. personal differences. Effective work contextual factors on mental condition of employee include job complexities, work goals and supporting supervisors and co-workers, physical structure of work environment and effective non-work contextual factors on positive mental condition of employee include friends and family members support, structure of home environment, autonomy and freedom at home. Other effective factors on formation of creative views are personal differences. The main differences are associated with personality item. The people providing more creative views have more self-confidence and criticism toleration power and can investigate more views. These people can experience various and flexible feelings and views. Another case making people different from each other is the skills of job field (Jackson, Hitt, and Denisi, 2003).

Creativity in libraries can be investigated from internal and external aspects. The internal aspect supervises providing the conditions of showing creativity among the employees of the library and external aspect considers the conditions of creativity of users of library. This study deals with the internal aspect of creativity as until librarians are creative, they cannot create creativity among their users and improve it. The nature and quality of the services of library mainly depend upon the activities of library employees.

To improve the quality of services, librarians should be creative and provide the required conditions for their creativity. Librarians should have positive work attitude, good condition of service and positive mental condition to provide the best services that are timely at the lowest cost which are easily accessible. The creativity of librarians in public libraries, their work and environmental conditions and their mental condition are not investigated much. To do this, the researchers attempt to investigate the conditions of librarians of public libraries of Fars province in terms of creativity based on Oldham Model. In this study, work and non-work contextual factors effective on positive mental condition of librarians, personal differences of librarians in terms of job, personal differences of librarians in terms of personality and their intention to share creative views were investigated. The present study is required to analyze contextual conditions

to show creativity in specialized and non-specialized librarians of public libraries of Fars province based on Oldham Model.

Based on the role and importance of public libraries in development of a country and services expected of the public libraries, to improve the performance and effectiveness of services, the librarians should be creative and required conditions should be provided for their creativity. In this study, the researchers based on the model and contextual conditions of formation and sharing creative views of Oldham, investigated the conditions of librarians of public libraries of Fars province of these conditions to show creativity and presented some solutions to develop creativity among the librarians.

This study was conducted with the general goal of familiarizing with the good condition that librarians of public libraries in Fars province are faced to show creativity based on Oldham model with the following objectives; to

- 1- Determine the mental positive conditions of librarians of public libraries of Fars province inspired by the work contextual factors based on Oldham Model
- 2- Determine the mental positive conditions of librarians of public libraries of Fars province inspired by the non-work contextual factors based on Oldham Model
- 3- Ascertain the personal differences of librarians of public libraries of Fars province in terms of personality based on Oldham Model
- 4- Determining the personal differences of librarians of public libraries of Fars province in terms of job based on Oldham Model
- 5- Characterize the intention of librarians of public libraries of Fars province to present and share the creative views based on Oldham Model.

2. Literature Review

In recent years based on the role of creativity in promoting goals, performance, development and survival of organizations, various studies are done in this regard by researchers. About 60 years, research and development of the concepts of creativity and creative solution by researchers are raised (Qasemzadeh, 2009).

Castiglione (2008) investigation of the most important management concerns for library managers stated that internal motivation is the main stimulation of personal creativity and organizational learning stimulates change and innovation. The library managers directly create and keep an organizational culture facilitating the internal motivation of all members of library employees. Organizational democracy and employees participation increases international motivation and improve it, when management behaviors have obligatory tendency, the vital catalyst is reduced. Walton (2008) believed that creativity is a method of informing the libraries to develop the new services in the society. The library employees should be encouraged to bring the ideas and awareness of outside. The group should consist of people with different ideas and skills and they should be encouraged to be creative. The library manager should be responsible to improve creativity and innovation. This includes to accept the freedom of employee for decision making and be sure of the work place that is stimulating.

A study by Tabarsa et al; (2009) regarding the effect of organizational entrepreneurial culture on creativity and innovation in public libraries institution (Iran), it was found that among various dimensions of entrepreneurial culture, work value dimension and entertainment are in good condition and other organizational culture dimensions including courage, tolerating creativity deviation, effortless aggression, risk bearing, open communication, collaboration and participation, proactive innovation and entrepreneurial organizational culture are in unsuitable condition. The results of the studies of Qasemzadeh (2009) on creative management in public libraries showed that creativity and innovation are main outcomes in organizations' performance. The investigation of the extend of librarians of public libraries of required conditions to show creativity by Darabi et al. (2012) showed that creativity among librarians of public libraries was above average. The positive mental condition inspired by work contextual factors and intention to share creative views was average and there was no significant difference. But positive mental conditions inspired by non-work contextual factors, personal differences in terms of personality and personal differences in terms of job were above average and there was significant difference.

The results of the study of Kahzadi et al. (2013) showed that positive mental conditions of librarians were inspired by work and non-work contextual factors, personal differences of librarians in terms of personality, job and the intention of librarians to present and share creative view in public libraries of Kermanshah province was above average and required contextual

conditions to show creativity in librarians was above average. There was no significant difference between the librarians view in terms of gender, work experiences and employment regarding the components of contextual conditions to show creativity. But in terms of degree, there was significant difference. Their results showed that generally, public libraries of Kermanshah province was above average of required condition to show creativity of librarians, it means that in case of required conditions to show creativity, working employees and librarians in public libraries of Kermanshah province can show creativity above average.

In a recent study, Thomas and Leonard (2014) reported the results of a study on academic librarians' scholarship and creative work outside of library and information science in order to reveal some librarians' motivations to perform such work as well as their perceptions of administrators' attitudes towards it. The College Libraries section and the University Libraries section of ALA included the population of their study; and only academic librarians engaged in scholarship and creative work outside of library and information science were asked to participate. Results indicated that librarians produce such work for many reasons, including personal satisfaction, dynamic and successful liaison work, and ongoing commitment to scholarship and creative work. Academic librarians who produce non-LIS work do so with varying levels of support, and the recognition of such work is inconsistent among institutions.

The review of literature showed that organization culture and management have an important role in promoting creativity among employees of an organization. In most of the studies, only the role of managers, rewards, encouragement and organizational culture are mentioned to encourage the creativity and innovation of employees. The study of theoretical basics showed that the main pre-requirement of promoting creativity in any organization is the belief of organization management and its commitment to the creativity significance. To increase creativity in organization, managers should be familiar with creativity, its components and processes.

Participative management, happy management and ethical leadership improve empowerment and creativity of employees. Also, public library based on the major mission in changing the society and orientation of the society from development to progress is of great importance. Based on the items, considering the creativity in public libraries is important from various aspects and is taken into consideration by international communities of librarians. Based on the importance

of using creative management and its promotion among the employees and various sections of organization, managers should be familiar with the nature of creativity, components, elements and processes and combine them in their management system.

Creativity can be effective in solving the problems of libraries and its challenges. To show creativity in organization, besides the personal differences including proactive personality, mental health of a person and internal motivation, the organization conditions and environment are effective in terms of the relations between co-workers, accepting the freedom of employees for decision makings, the procedures taken in organization, explorative environment, organizational atmosphere, organizational participative culture, reward and encouragement, satisfaction and happiness of job, support of the supervisor or manager of the ability of a person, freedom in action, initial and professional training, facilities and the like on a person creativity.

If creativity and innovation are considered as completely in thinking and action, this develops the people talents, personal, job and social successes, increasing the quality and quantity in productions and services, reduction of costs and wastage of material and human resources, increasing the motivation of employees, improving the mental health and job satisfaction, improving productivity and growth, motivating the healthy competitions in production, distribution and services, reduction of administrative bureaucracy, reduction of administrative formalities and increasing practices and tens of benefits (Shademanfar and Omidekhoda, 2009). Also, creativity in human resources of public libraries can lead to the happiness and learning of thousands of people (Tallent, 2008).

3. Research Methodology

This research uses a survey method. The population of this survey includes librarians working in public libraries of Fars province. Data collection instrument is questionnaire that was applied already by Darabi (2012). The questions of the questionnaire were raised by the model of contextual conditions of formation and sharing creative views of Oldham. The validity of the instrument was determined by a panel consisting of several university professors in Library and Information Science. Consequently, a number of questions were deleted or modified, and finally 47 questions were included in the questionnaire. The instrument was tested for reliability and the

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the results was 0.93. This suggests that the instrument is stable enough to be used in the study.

The questionnaires were delivered or sent with the collaboration of public libraries institution of Fars province as face to face or by E-mail to 240 librarians working in public libraries of Fars province and a total of 150 (62.5 percent) were returned.

For data analysis, to achieve the study purposes and responding the main questions, inferential and descriptive statistics were applied. For results analysis, univariate t-test, covariance analysis and variance analysis were used to evaluate the correlation between contextual conditions of creativity and its components using SPSS statistical software, version 19. Based on the study results, some solutions were presented to create creativity among the librarians.

4. Research Findings

Demographic features are shown in Table 1. As the table shows, the majority of respondents (54 percent) were females, while the minority (46 percent) were males. On the other hand, the distribution of the respondents by level of education revealed that more than 67 percent of them have Bachelor of Art degree.

Table 1- Demographic features of respondents

Characteristic	No.	%
Gender		
Male	69	46
Female	81	54
Total	150	100
Level of Education		
Under B. A.	38	25.33

B. A.	97	64.67
M. A.	15	10.00
Total	150	100

To fulfill the study purposes, single sample t-test was used to examine the questions. In this test,

to investigate the equality of mean of a population with a value, $\begin{cases} H_0 = \mu = \mu_0 \\ H_1 = \mu \neq \mu_0 \end{cases}$ of statistics

$$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu_0}{\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

was applied.

In this section, the research questions are examined respectively.

First question: How is the positive mental condition of the librarians of public libraries of Fars Province inspired by work grounds based on Oldham Model?

By considering the sample size and the method of evaluation of the questions, to study this question, single-sample t-test was used and the mean was shown with 3 as average level of scale and in evaluation of the questions of this component was compared and the results of data analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2- Positive mental condition of librarians based on work grounds

Mean standard deviation	SD	Mean	F	Studied variable
0.037	0.451	2.64	150	The positive mental condition of librarians based on work grounds on Oldham Model
Difference of mean	Significance level	Degree of freedom	t-value	
-0.364	0.001	149	-9.89	

Based on the significance level of 0.001 in table 2 and its comparison with an allowable error of 0.05 with confidence interval of 95%, it can be said that positive mental condition of the librarians based on work grounds is lower than average. It means that the librarians in their job have freedom of action, adequate authorities, variety, leisure time and satisfaction of physical structure, environment, space and the like.

Second question: How is the positive mental condition of the librarians of public libraries of Fars Province inspired by non-work grounds based on Oldham Model?

Table 3- Positive mental condition of librarians based on non-work grounds

Mean standard deviation	SD	Mean	F	Studied variable
0.054	0.657	2.94	150	The positive mental condition of librarians based on non-work grounds on Oldham Model
Difference of mean	Significance level	Degree of freedom	t-value	
-0.063	0.24	149	-1.18	

Based on the significance level of 0.24 in table 3 and its comparison with an allowable error of 0.05 with confidence interval of 95%, it can be said that positive mental condition of the librarians based on non-work grounds is lower than average. It means that the librarians in their job have no total satisfaction of life, comfort, individual and family happiness, freedom of action in the family and childhood and supporting the family members and friends.

- Third question: How are the personal differences of librarians of public libraries of Fars province in terms of personality?

Table 4- Personal differences of librarians in terms of personality

Mean standard deviation	SD	Mean	F	Studied variable
0.039	0.48	3.82	150	personal differences of librarians in terms of personality
Difference of mean	Significance level	Degree of freedom	t-value	
0.822	0.001	149	20.96	

Based on the significance level of 0.001 and its comparison with an allowable error of 0.05 with confidence interval of 95%, it can be said that personal difference of librarians of public libraries of Fars province in terms of personality is above average. It means that the librarians had high self-confidence, flexibility, toleration ability, freedom of personality and using others view.

- Fourth question: How are the personal differences of librarians of public libraries of Fars province in terms of job?

Table 5- Personal differences of librarians in terms of job

Mean standard deviation	SD	Mean	F	Studied variable
0.042	0.532	3.42	150	personal differences of librarians in terms of job
Difference of mean	Significance level	Degree of freedom	t-value	
0.42	0.001	149	9.65	

Based on the significance level of 0.001 in table 5 and its comparison with an allowable error of 0.05 with confidence interval of 95%, it can be said that personal difference of librarians of public libraries of Fars province in terms of job is above average. It shows that high consistency between education degree and job, job ability, knowledge and skill and required training and resources among the librarians.

Fifth question: How is the intention of librarians of public libraries of Fars Province to present and share their creative views based on Oldham Model?

Table 6- Intention of librarians to present and share their creative views

Mean standard deviation	SD	Mean	F	Studied variable
0.032	0.401	2.93	150	intention of librarians to present and share their creative views
Difference of mean	Significance level	Degree of freedom	t-value	

-0.075	0.022	149	-2.31	
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Based on the significance level of 0.022 in table 6 and its comparison with an allowable error of 0.05 with confidence interval of 95%, it can be said that the intention of librarians to present and share their creative views is lower than average. It means that the librarians had adequacy feeling, intention to present creative views to managers, comfort to present the views and using them, consistency between new views, reward and encourage from the managers, co-workers and friends and family and commitment and intention to stay in their job and helping the organization.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

"Creativity is about openness and connection. It signals the chance to get ideas, share ideas, and try new things or put together old things in new ways. Libraries have always had the potential to source and support creative activities" (Techman, 2014). Modern libraries should be more creative and innovative in order to cope with the complexities of scholarly communication and handle information technologies successfully. To increase the quality and quantity of services, librarians should be creative and prepare the required conditions to show creativity for them. The librarians should have good work conditions and positive mental conditions that by creativity in work and mental progress and giving new views present the best services immediately and with the lowest cost and easily to the clients. In this study, to evaluate the conditions of librarians of creativity based on Oldham Model, at first components as effective work and non-work grounds on positive mental condition of the librarians, personal differences of librarians in terms of job, personal differences of librarians in terms of personality and their intention to share creative views were investigated. Since public libraries play a unique role in any society, the librarians working in these libraries need to be creative required conditions should be provided for promoting their creativity. Therefore this study was necessary for the familiarity with the contextual conditions of creativity among librarians in public libraries.

The results of the study showed that the required condition for creativity of librarians in public libraries of Fars province is in a level above average. It means that in case of providing contextual conditions to show creativity of employees and librarians working in public libraries of Fars province can be above average and achieve creativity and innovation. The result of the study is in line with the results of the study of Darabi (2012) and Kahzadi *et al.* (2013). They stated that creativity in librarians of public libraries of Kohkiluyeh Buyehmahad province and Kermanshah was above average.

The results of the study by Darabi (2012) and Kahzadi *et al.* (2013), who used Oldham Model to evaluate the creativity of librarians, were greatly in line with the present study. The results of the study of Darabi (2012) showed that positive mental condition was inspired by non-work grounds, personal differences in terms of personality and individual differences in terms of job were above average and they were in line with the results of the present study but were not in line in terms of positive mental condition inspired by work grounds and intention to present and share creative views.

Findings of current study in table 5 corroborates with the results of Khezri (2002). Khezri (2002) investigated the relationship between creativity of the employees with their role in organization, received rewards, taken procedures in the organization and their communication and all the hypotheses were supported. To create motivation among the librarians and creating the comfort and security at work place to show creativity, it is proposed that authorities give importance to the job conditions of librarians of public libraries including job security, wage and benefits and the like.

The results of the study of Castiglione (2008) showed that internal motivation was creativity stimulation among the employees in an organization and this is in line with the findings of the present study. Also, the results of this study in table 2 corroborates with the findings of Bayat (1996), Tuslek *et al.* (1997), and Izenberg (2003) who found out that positive mental condition inspired by work grounds.

- Recommendations

Based on the results, the following suggestions are proposed for growth and creativity among the librarians of public libraries of Fars province:

- Based on the role and importance of creativity in public libraries, it is proposed that wide training is given to the librarians regarding the creativity and development methods.
- As one of the contextual conditions of creativity is support and encouraging the supervisors, creating the fair system of reward, support and encouraging the creative people from the supervisors are proposed.
- As the physical structure and appearance of work place are the contextual conditions of creativity, it is proposed that the managers give importance to the beauty and physical structure of the work place of librarians.
- In order to improve the motivation for creativity among librarians, managers should encourage librarians to participate in the process of developing library's strategic and long-term planning.
- It is suggested that managers express their interest in the adoption of new ideas. On the other hand, they should appreciate creative librarians by both financial and nonfinancial incentives.

- Suggestions for Future Research

- Conducting a research to evaluate the impact of creativity and innovations on the performance and effectiveness of public library services.
- Conducting a research to examine factors influencing creativity and innovation from the perspective of librarians in public libraries.
- Conducting a research to investigate the relationship between the contextual conditions of creativity and job satisfaction among librarians of public librarians.

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