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# Survey of Bibliotherapy in Hospital Libraries of Iran Based on SWOT Model

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The present study was performed with aim to survey bibliotherapy in hospital libraries of Iran based on SWOT model.

**Methods / Approach:** The current applied research has been conducted through a survey method. The statistical population of the study consisted of 30 librarians and managers of 14 hospital libraries in Iran. The research tool was a researcher-made questionnaire consisting of 7 dimensions and 80 questions. Its validity was confirmed by experts and its reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

**Results:** Hospital libraries of Mashhad had strength in 19 components and had basic weakness in 31 components. Also, the most important opportunities for hospital libraries were: the presence of new advances in the field of information technology, the impact of increased number of educated people and the level of community literacy on bibliotherapy, the presence of young and specialized staff in the country; and the most important threats were: an increase in the inflation rate of the community, no attention of the Ministry of Health officials to book and bibliotherapy.

**Conclusion:** Although the value and position of bibliotherapy are obvious to librarians, but the existing problems have caused that bibliotherapy was not be able to get the required place in the planning of libraries.

**Keywords:** bibliotherapy, Swat Model (SWOT), Hospital Libraries, Librarians, Iran, Mashhad.

## **Introduction**

Bibliotherapy is used as a complementary method in treatment, along with medicine and clinical psychiatry, to help people with mental problems or illness, and to solve personal problems through directed study (1). The scope of bibliotherapy is very extensive and can virtually cover millions of people, even including healthy people who have problems or need to know themselves and their surroundings for their growth and prosperity (2). Researches such as Ugah (3), Al Hijji (4), Kumar (5) Hazidah (6), and Mapulanga (7) also showed that bibliotherapy has a direct impact on the improvement of mental and psychological illness in different groups of patients. However, bibliotherapy has not yet been taken into consideration in hospital libraries of Iran.

Over the past few years, hospital libraries in Iran have become increasingly important, and hospitals have sought to advance their validity through education and research, and in this regard, they need dynamic libraries in order to provide services beyond traditional services by the faculty members and students. However, hospital libraries still have not been able to fully utilize their potential and capacity for services which can go along with new developments.

However, hospital libraries, especially in educational hospitals, are of particular importance to professors and students, and even patients, for the accreditation and scientific promotion of hospitals, but there is little planning and evolution in the services of these libraries compared to the past (8), and the only evolution is in how to provide services which has been changed from manually to electronic, and innovation and creativity for the newer and most up-to-date services of library use in hospital libraries are not visible. Hospital libraries in Iran have scientific and medical resources, so have a high capacity for bibliotherapy, but due to lack of utilization of these resources for patients, they have practically not been able to use this capacity.

On the other hand, Mashhad, the main hub of providing all kinds of superior medical services, has a special place at the national and international levels (9); due to the presence of the holy shrine of the 8th Imam of Shia (Imam Reza) and having natural attractions and tourism, and medical and therapeutic capabilities has provided a good basis for designing and creating a large medical and health tourism site in the country and also has provided a sustainable development based on health tourism (10). Mashhad is the second largest metropolis in Iran which has medical capabilities, the history of the medical sciences university, as well as the existence of three general hospitals; these are the infrastructure for attracting health tourism in the city. In addition, the existence of advanced pediatric and ophthalmic hospitals has added to the medical abilities of the city (11).

What has been collected and analyzed in a decentralized way by Mashhad University of Medical Sciences from 2011 so far shows about 10% growth in the section of hospitalized patients. So that in

2013, about 4000 health tourism patients were hospitalized and about 10,000 patients received services as outpatient, which also dramatically increased in 2014 (12). All these indicate the status and importance of hospitals in the city of Mashhad. The full realization of health tourism requires attention to all the services and therapeutic methods that are used in the world of medicine, bibliotherapy is also one of these therapeutic methods which should be noticed in planning and services of health tourism.

Although it seems that in the hospital libraries services in the country as well as in Mashhad, changes have been performed in the use of advanced and new software and their equipment to new and upgraded hardware, but except this, no innovation in providing new services and increasing new knowledge for services, which is inconsistent with today scientific principles and the spirit of today's hospital libraries globally.

According to the above, it is possible to understand the importance of practical planning for services of hospital bibliotherapy, because if this service is not programmed, it can not lead to the correct result, or even it can be destructive. One of the most widely used models for planning in organizations is the SWOT model, which is the basis for planning and targeting in many issues. This technique is an important tool in decision-making and is generally used to systematically analyze the strategic conditions and identifying the internal and external factors of the organization. Through SWOT analysis, the organization can identify its positive and negative factors, and then develop and adapt its strategies to suit these factors (13). In the framework of this analysis, the organization uses the internal strengths in order to exploit the external opportunities and maximize the opportunities by exploiting the strengths (14).

In Iran and in the world, SWOT planning model has been used in various libraries' research. For example, in Iran, Parirokh, Akhshik, Fathiyan and Naderi, the activities of libraries of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad with environmental changes affecting the prospects and missions of the university (15); Soheyl, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the libraries of Razi University and providing appropriate strategies for these libraries (16); Asadaniya and Jalilpour, the feasibility of privatizing the general libraries (17); Pashootani Zadeh and Faraj Pahloo, evaluation and comparison of central and faculty libraries of Shahid Chamran universities (18); Zaker Shahrak and Abazari, evaluation of the performance of the libraries of Iranian Children and Adolescents Intellectual Development Center (19); Pakdaman Naeni, Ziaee and Asnafi, developing strategic planning as an application to the library of the International Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering (20); Fattahi, Parirokh, Salari, Zerehsaz, Rajabali Bagloo and Pazouki, development of research at the organization of Libraries, Museums and Documents Center of Astan Quds Razavi (21); Mohammad Esmail and Ghorbani, strategic assessment of the general directorate for processing and organization of National Documentation and National Library of Iran (22); Esmaili

Givi, Naghshineh and Soheili, strategic analysis of the current situation of the national library of Iran in the form of "product marketing" (23); Oreie, Cheshmeh Sohrabi and Sanayeie, the establishment of e-commerce in the libraries of Isfahan University (24); and Shayan Majd and Asadi, creating scientometric units in university libraries (25); therefore, this model can be used in the field of bibliotherapy, the issue which has not been taken into account so far. So, according to the above mentioned and also lack of specific research in this regard, this research was performed to determine that what is the viewpoint of librarians and managers of the hospitals libraries of Mashhad about bibliotherapy using SWOT analysis model? Also, by addressing this issue, it is attempted to identify the most important strengths and weaknesses, as well as the most important opportunities and threats outside the hospital libraries of Iran in relation to bibliotherapy.

## **Methods and Materials**

The present study is considered as an applied research because it has practical aspects and has been carried out to investigate and solve a problem. Also, in terms of methodology, it is a descriptive research which has been carried out using a survey method. The statistical population of the study consists of 30 managers and librarians of 14 hospital libraries in Mashhad. Since the research community was limited, the sampling method was not used and all the managers and librarians of hospital libraries were considered as the research community.

Data gathering tool was a researcher-made questionnaire which is provided based on previous researches (Ugah (3), Parirokh et al. (15), Soheyli (16), Pashtooni (18), Asadaniya (17), Zaker (19); Mohammad Esmail and Ghorbani (22), Pakdaman Naeini, Ziaee (20), Shayan Majed (25); Esmaili Givi, Naghshineh and Soheily (23), Oreie (24), Shekari and Karimian (26)). This questionnaire containing demographic information consists of two parts: internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunity and threat), which in total consists of 7 dimensions and 80 questions. The dimensions studied in the internal factors included: manpower, collection, space and equipment, structure and system, financial status and budget with 50 questions, and the external factors included the macro environment (general) and the micro-environment (specialized) with 30 questions.

In order to determine the content validity of the questionnaire, after extracting of the questionnaire's items from previous studies, a questionnaire was developed and then distributed to 5 faculty members and experts in the field of knowledge and information science and management. After receiving their comments, some items were modified and revised in order to the questionnaire was appropriate to assess the research objectives. The reliability of the questionnaire was also evaluated by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient; the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire is 0.75 for the whole questionnaire, which indicates the reliability of the research tool.

It should be noted that the questionnaire had a Likert spectrum, and respondents identified the importance of each item in each component on this scale (very important (5) to a low important (1)).

In order to perform the present study, after the completion of the questionnaire by the managers and librarians of the studied libraries, the following measures were taken:

-The mean score of the respondents' views was determined and the number of 3 was considered as the average of the strength and opportunity point, and less than 3 was considered as weaknesses and threat pint.

Since the prescribed items did not have the same weight, the weight of each one should be determined. The given weight as a number was involved in the assessment, which indicates the relative importance of that criterion over other criteria. There are different methods for weighing. In this research, the ranking method was used. In this method, the experts' opinions are used to rank the items. So that, several experts are asked to re-rank their criteria in accordance with their knowledge. Then, by summing up the opinion of all the experts, a matrix is formed, in which  $a_{ij}$  represents the percentage of experts who gave the  $j$  rank to  $i$  parameter (27).

In this research, the ranking method was used and 5 specialists and managers of the hospital library were asked to determine the importance of each criteria, and then the weight of each item was considered from 0 to 1 based on the specialists' views.

- Then the mean score of each criterion was multiplied by its weight and the final score of each item was determined and, accordingly, the rank of each item was determined among the similar items.

- Finally, the appropriate strategies were developed according to the rank of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

## **Results**

As detailed in the methodology, the final score of each criterion has been calculated based on "the score resulted from the multiplication of the maen score of society views and the weight assigned by the specialists" and the final score determines the rank of that criterion among the other examined criteria; of course, due to the limited volume of content, in each question of research, only the information and findings of the first 10 criteria are provided.

### **First question: What are the strengths of hospital libraries in temrs of bibliotherapy?**

The purpose of this question is to identify the strengths of hospitals in Mashhad. In order to answer this question, at first, the results related to the strengths of the hospital libraries of Mashhad in four components of "manpower", "collection of resources" "space and equipment" and "library structure and system" were determined separately, and then the total strengths of the hospital libraries of Mashhad was determined regardless of the relevant component and only based on the final score of

the criteria. Regarding to the limited space in answering this question, the strengths of hospital libraries of Mashhad are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Total strengths of hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy

Rank	Final score	Weighing importance	Mean	Criteria	Component
1	2/53	0/5	3/37	Existence of the morale of providing service to patients among library staff	Manpower
2	1/84	0/5	3/67	Content retrieval of collection of resource	collection of resources
3	1/80	0/5	3/59	The proper quality of library different resources	collection of resources
4	1/75	0/5	3/5	The complete belief of library staff on the importance and impact of bibliotherapy	Manpower
4	1/75	0/5	3/5	The existence of appropriate and written policies and strategies for choosing and expanding resources	collection of resources
5	1/7	0/5	3/4	Determining the position of library and organizational post of librarians in the organizational structure of the hospital	structure and system
5	1/7	0/5	3/4	The appropriate quantity of library resources	collection of resources
6	1/69	0/5	3/37	Interaction and co-operation between librarians and library manager	Manpower
6	1/69	0/5	3/37	The suitability of the library's location and its accessibility to everyone	space and equipment
7	1/66	0/5	3/31	Desirability of cooling and heating of the library	space and equipment

Based on the findings of Table 1, it can be stated that among the 19 strengths, the component of resources set with 7 strength points and manpower with 6 strength points have the highest strength points. Also, three main strength points of the hospitals libraries of Mashhad in the field of bibliotherapy are: "The existence of the morale of serving the patients among the library staff", "Content updating of library resources set", and "The appropriate quality of different resources of library". Also, although the criteria including "the appropriate growth and expansion of library collections in recent years" and "the young and interested librarians of the library to work" are the strength of hospital libraries in Mashhad, but are in the last place. Before addressing the weaknesses of Mashhad's hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy, it should also be noted that in the component of "budget", the studied libraries did not have a strength point, and all the criteria for this component obtained the score <3 obtained which will be mentioned in the section of weakness points.

**Second question: What are the weaknesses points of hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy?**

In order to answer this question, similar to the first question, at first, the results related to the weakness of the hospital libraries of Mashhad in five components of "manpower", "collection of resources" "space and equipment", "library structure and system" and "budget" were extracted separately, and then the weakness points of the hospital libraries of Mashhad was determined regardless of the relevant component and only based on the final score of the criteria that is presented in Table 2. It should be noted that a total of 28 weakness points were identified in the field of bibliotherapy (manpower 8; collection 3; space and equipment 6; library structure and system 7; and budget 7). It should also be noted that the mean of some criteria of weakness points higher than 3 (moderate) does not indicate strength, but because of the negative aspect of the question, indicates the degree of weakness in that criterion.

Table 2. Total weakness points of hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy

rank	Total score	Weighing importance	mean	criteria	component
1	2/82	0/75	1/24	Not having a specific section of bibliotherapy	structure and system
2	2/79	0/75	1/28	Not considering the human resources for services of bibliotherapy in the organizational structure of the library	structure and system
3	2/60	0/75	1/53	Lack of suitable criteria for assessing bibliotherapy policies	structure and system
4	2/50	0/75	1/67	Lack of a guideline or policy to provide the services of bibliotherapy	structure and system
5	2/43	0/75	1/76	Lack of providing special collection for services of bibliotherapy	Collection of resources
6	2/36	0/75	1/86	Lack of extracurricular classes and in-service classes to get acquainted with new services, especially bibliotherapy in the hospital	manpower
7	1/95	0/75	2/40	library lack of sufficient equipment to provide services of bibliotherapy	Space and equipment
8	1/78	0/75	2/63	Lack of emphasis by the library director on the use of bibliotherapy in the hospital	manpower
9	1/73	0/75	2/70	Lack of library staff of specialty in the field of bibliotherapy	manpower
10	1/72	0/5	1/57	Not having a specific budget for providing bibliotherapy services	budget

Based on the findings of Table 2, the criteria including "lack of a specific section of bibliotherapy ", "not considering human resources for bibliotherapy services in the organizational structure of the library", and "lack of appropriate criteria for evaluating bibliotherapy policies" are three major weakness points of the hospital libraries in Mashhad in the field of bibliotherapy; and the criterion of "managers not welcoming the new ideas and opinions of staff, especially in the field of bibliotherapy " is their last weakness point. Another problem about the weakness points of hospital libraries compared to their strengths points is that the number of weaknesses (28) is greater than the number of strengths (19), which can be a sign of weakness of the hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy.

### **Third Question: What are the opportunities of hospital library in the field of bibliotherapy?**

The purpose of this question is to identify the opportunities for hospital libraries of Mashhad in the field of bibliotherapy in micro and macro environments. The method of calculating the items in this section is similar to the sections of strengths and weakness points, and a total of 15 opportunities (4 opportunities in the micro environment and 11 opportunities in the macro environment) were identified. 10 more important opportunities of the libraries in two micro and macro environments were presented.

Table 3. Opportunities of hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy in micro and macro environments

rank	Final score	Weighing importance	mean	criteria	environment
1	3/10	0/75	4/13	The existence of new advances in the field of information technology in the country	macro
2	3	0/75	4/00	The effect of an increased rate of educated people and the level of community literacy on bibliotherapy	macro
3	2/98	0/75	3/97	The presence of young manpower with required expertise in the country	macro
4	2/07	0/5	4/13	The effectiveness of improving the managers' attitude towards the role of the library in the development of the country	micro
5	2/02	0/5	4/03	Influence of library existence in the ranking of medical universities	micro
6	1/89	0/5	3/77	Effect of development and equipping of the country hospitals by the Ministry of Health and Medicine on bibliotherapy	macro
7	1/88	0/5	3/76	Effect of the dependence of modern technologies on hardware and software on bibliotherapy	macro

8	1/83	0/5	3/66	The effect of development of health tourism in Iran on bibliotherapy	macro
9	1/80	0/5	3/59	The effect of the government's positive look at the health sector in the current government on bibliotherapy	macro
10	1/79	0/5	3/59	The possibility of expanding new medical institutions in Mashhad	macro

As the results of Table 3 show, the criterion of "the existence of new developments in information technology in the country" is the most valuable opportunity for the hospital libraries in Mashhad in the field of bibliotherapy, and "the competing of media New eBook for library services and bibliotherapy " has obtained the lowest score among other criteria for opportunities.

Question 4: What are the threats of hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy?

A total of 15 threats were identified in micro and macro environments (micro-environment 12 and macro- environment 3), that the major threats (10 cases) of the studied libraries in two micro and macro environments are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Threats of hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy in two micro and macro environments

rank	Final score	Weighing importance	mean	criteria	environments
1	3/05	0/25	0/93	Increasing inflation rate in the society	macro
2	2/57	0/75	1/57	Lack of adequate knowledge of patients from hospital libraries services, especially bibliotherapy services	micro
3	2/12	0/75	2/17	No prevalence of study culture among all people in the community, including patients	macro
4	2/09	0/5	0/82	The economic problem of medical universities in the provision of hospitals' costs	micro
5	1/91	0/5	1/18	The hospitals facing with economic problems and budget deficits	micro
6	1/67	0/5	1/66	Lack of service to all patient groups in libraries	micro
7	1/59	0/5	1/83	The lack of charity people to help (financially) the library	micro
8	1/38	0/5	2/24	The impossibility of assigning certain services to the private section	micro
8	1/38	0/5	2/24	The inability to use cooperative methods to provide library resources	micro
9	1/31	0/5	2/38	Lack of volunteers in the hospital to participate and collaborate in library activities	micro

The results of Table 4 indicate that the criteria related to economic problems is the most serious threats for the hospital libraries of Mashhad in the field of bibliotherapy.

Fifth question: What are the strategies of hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy?

The organizations after identifying their strengths and weakness points, can inform SWAT matrix and determine four types of strategies (aggressive strategies (SO), conservative strategies (WO), competitive strategies (ST), defensive strategies (WT)) and help to long-term development of the organization. Hence, in Table 5, the matrix is presented for its four strategies. It should be noted that due to the limitations in the expression of the content, only 10 strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are presented in the matrix.

Table 5. Matrix of four strategies of hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy

threats	opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing inflation rate in the society</li> <li>- Lack of adequate knowledge of patients from hospital libraries services, especially bibliotherapy services</li> <li>- No prevalence of study culture among all people in the community, including patients</li> <li>- The economic problem of medical universities in the provision of hospitals' costs</li> <li>- The hospitals facing with economic problems and budget deficits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The existance of new advances in the field of information technology in the country</li> <li>- The effect of an increased rate of educated people and the level of community literacy on bibliotherapy</li> <li>- The presence of young manpower with required expertise in the country</li> <li>- The effectiveness of improving the managers' attitude towards the role of the library in the development of the</li> </ul>	<div style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"> <p>External factors</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"/> <p>Internal factors</p> </div>

	<p>country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Influence of library existence in the ranking of medical universities</li> </ul>		
<b>competitive strategies (ST)</b>	<b>aggressive strategies (SO)</b>		<b>Strength points(S)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using librarians' service morale to enhance patients' recognition of library services;</li> <li>- Providing high quality resources to promote the study culture among patients;</li> <li>- More use of the librarians' capacity to overcome the economic problems of medical universities;</li> <li>- The adoption of more economical methods for providing library resources, such as electronic resources or interlibrary lending, to reduce budget deficit problems of the hospitals;</li> <li>- Attention to electronic resources to keep the library up-to-date and to overcome inflation and its problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The use of new technologies by librarians to serve patients more;</li> <li>- Supplying updated resources in line with the level of education of individuals;</li> <li>- Increasing the quality of library collections by employing young and specialized people in various library committees;</li> <li>- Inclusion of bibliotherapy in the ranking system of Iranian medical universities;</li> <li>- Strengthening library-collection policies based on the positive view of managers to the library.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existence of the morale of providing service to patients among library staff</li> <li>- Content retrieval of collection of resource</li> <li>- The proper quality of library different resources</li> <li>- The complete belief of library staff on the importance and impact of bibliotherapy</li> <li>- The existence of appropriate and written policies and strategies for choosing and expanding resources</li> </ul>	
<b>defensive strategies (WT)</b>	<b>conservative strategies (WO)</b>		<b>Weakness(W)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formulation of service regulations of bibliotherapy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The use of new capabilities of IT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not having a specific section of bibliotherapy</li> <li>- Not considering the human resources for</li> </ul>	

<p>to make patients aware of existing services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using existing resources and their separation for use in the field of bibliotherapy in order to overcome the economic problem of hospitals and medical universities;</li> <li>- Presenting the benefits of bibliotherapy to the patients in order to promote the study and bibliotherapy services among them;</li> <li>- Using volunteers or better management of existing human resources to overcome economic problems and not imposing more financial burden on the hospital;</li> <li>- More attention to reducing costs in the formulation of bibliotherapy policies to reduce the effects of inflation in the society.</li> </ul>	<p>resources to provide specific resources for bibliotherapy and providing new services in this field;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of the positive view of managers about libraries to create specific sections of bibliotherapy;</li> <li>- The use of young and interested and specialized people as volunteers to overcome the required manpower;</li> <li>- Considering the positive impact of the library on the university's rank, bibliotherapy policies should be considered and reviewed;</li> <li>- Given the rising level of community literacy and patients, librarians should develop policy guidelines in the field bibliotherapy.</li> </ul>	<p>services bibliotherapy in the organizational structure of the library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lack of suitable criteria for assessing bibliotherapy policies</li> <li>– Lack of a guideline or policy to provide the services of bibliotherapy</li> </ul> <p>Lack of providing special collection for services of bibliotherapy</p>	
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In Table 5, the most important four strategies of hospital libraries in the field of bibliotherapy were presented. Of course, due to the number of strengths (19), weaknesses (31), opportunities (15), and threats (15), it should be noted that most of the policies of bibliotherapy in Iranian hospitals libraries are considered as defensive strategies (WT) and conservative strategies (WO), which in some way represents the low level of bibliotherapy in these libraries.

## Discussion

The research's results showed that these libraries are weak in terms of internal factors. The main weaknesses of Iranian hospitals' libraries are in terms of funding and budget. The lack of funding and financial problems is evident in these libraries. In analyzing this finding of the research, it should be noted that lack of the budget and no specific budget rows in medical science libraries has caused some problems in budget targeting that bibliotherapy is not an exception (15, 16, 87, 28), some researchers in their studies reported the lack of funds in libraries, which is similar to the current research. This is a problem that other libraries in the country face with it. In addition, libraries are seriously weak in relation to the welcome of managers from new ideas and opinions of staff, especially in the field of bibliotherapy.

Regarding the economic problem of medical universities for providing the hospitals' costs, it can be argued that since libraries are nonprofit organizations and, generally, their funding is provided by the government, they have a strong dependence on supply sources and any change in the economy of financing source of libraries which may even be due to political changes, could be an obstacle to the library programs to achieve its goals. Soheyli (16) also referred to the financial problems of libraries, and also reported that the lack of using consortium method and lack of funds are considered as the threats of libraries. Contrary to the present study, Kumar (5) and Esmaili Givi, Naghshineh and Soheyli (23) have reported that collaboration and consortium are considered as the opportunities of the libraries, of course, using consortium method reflects the financial problem of the library.

Another finding of the study in the section of threats of macro environment in Mashhad hospitals showed that "increasing inflation in society" is the most important threat to hospital libraries in this area. Libraries and information centers have also faced inflation in recent years, especially in terms of providing non-persian resources, due to increased inflation, the purchasing power of libraries has decreased, and this problem is more severe in the case of libraries which provide medical resources, because these sources are more expensive and need more updates.

In general, it seems that in all aspects examined, a lot of threats has surrounded library. The components of finance, the increased rate of inflation in society, the economic problem of medical universities in providing the hospitals' costs, the hospital's exposure to economic problems and budget deficits are respectively the most serious environmental threats. Hospitals libraries of Mashhad are very weak in having written policies for the implementation of the bibliotherapy plan, while the results showed that these libraries had strengths in the field of appropriate policies and guidelines and selecting and expanding of sources, and the libraries' managers can try to remove this weakness by strengthening and adding policies and regulations.

According to the findings of the present research, some suggestions are presented for improving the status of bibliotherapy services in hospitals libraries as follows:

- The most important weakness point of hospital libraries is in the financial and budget section that it seems necessary to pay more attention to these services in hospital libraries, and managers of these libraries will consider a separate budget for these services.
- According to the results of this study on the existence and increase of young and educated librarians, it is suggested that managers focus their efforts on providing facilities and equipment for the implementation of the bibliotherapy plan and using this opportunity.
- Since many studies have been done to prove the impact of bibliotherapy on the health and improvement of patients, hospital managers in their big planning and decision-making, ignore their traditional view toward libraries and consider the new expectations on libraries and use the librarians of hospital libraries as an assistant in treatment department. In this regard, it is suggested that attention be paid to bibliotherapy in packages of health system evolution, especially in the medical education section.
- In the organizational structure of the posts of hospital librarians, it seems that revisions and changes are needed and the occupational classification of librarians be performed based on the expertise of librarians; for example, medical librarian, clinical librarian and etc.
- Hospital libraries in order to implement and develop useful projects such as bibliotherapy need to expand their service circle and take them to the healthcare departments from back of lending table.

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