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**The Role of Books and Libraries in Informal Education among the Youth.**

(A case study on high school libraries in Mazandaran province in Iran, 2004)

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**Abstract:**

*The study focuses on the role and effect of books and libraries in informal education among the youth as information centers for expanding information literacy to increase students' extracurricular information. In the study, a survey technique was applied along with a questionnaire given to 380 freshmen, sophomores and juniors (boys and girls) at high schools located in Mazandaran province in Iran in 2004 and then collected data based on the level of measurement variables were analyzed with Minitab statistical package. Depending on Kruskal Wallis test, the findings indicated that there is a significant differences between students' grades at high school and their use of libraries among comparative subgroups, that is, Means show that, the higher grade at high school, the more use of libraries. It was also observed that the use of libraries has no significant relation to students' means despite of the result of findings on the lack of any relationship between referring to libraries and education achievement, it seems that mere reference to libraries cannot be a reliable measurement for educational achievement. Therefore, it is necessary to create combined scales.*

**Keywords:** *Informal Education - Youth- Gender – Subgroups - Educational Achievement*

## **Introduction:**

In modern era to gain development without scientific approach is impossible; thus, we are to prepare lots of new techniques to encourage new generation to read and study more and more as a need to study.

People in a given society in order to develop should try to study and daily activities should be done by getting new information.

The officials should prepare some organizations like, cultural centers liberties, scientific cores, to plan free time for the youth. Society without some instruments like, studying, reading books, magazines could not be developed in social, political, cultural and economic grounds. (1)

New era considers new technologies and approaches, so young people should be guided to be familiar with IT, ICT, libraries for virtual and informal education.

## **The role of reading books in increasing informal education.**

The UNESCO announced the year 1972 as the world book year to consider the world attention to understand the role of book in the society.

It also suggested the following items, to encourage authors to compile and translate books in a copyright system. The solutions are as following:

- To prepare and publish books.
- To encourage people to study habitually.
- To introduce book as a significant instrument in education.

The UNESCO in its meetings and conferences defines development through publishing books, studying them, and programming education among the youth in a long-term period.(2)

Knowledge is acquired, so today's generation tries to increase its own knowledge to pass it to the future. It shows the important role of books and study. Some people consider book as a main spiritual source of nations and the best tool for communication among different civilizations. It fills the gap between time and place and make men come to an understanding. Reading book is much more important than having it. By looking through history it becomes known that great men were great readers than being a great writes or thinkers.

As gross national product along with other indices may reveal the economic condition of a country, the number of book-readers, number of libraries, the amount of book purchase, and the time spent on books can reveal the position of the country among other nations in development.

In fact, the growth of reading books results in library development, which leads to science advancement and innovation. It is clear that if there is no movement towards perfection, it will end up with thought depression and under-development (3)

## **Library and its role in informal education**

In modern era libraries have a crucial role in social, political, economical and cultural development and maintain the advancement of formal and informal education. They also help enrich leisure time.

Libraries deal with science and by accumulating knowledge they help science to be transferred. Information is regarded as a need in modern life, and all people, in urban or rural areas, need to achieve it.

As we already know illiteracy is a problem in many countries but libraries have a role in formal and informal education to fight against it.

In fact libraries are mainstream of culture and are places for generating common knowledge and enriching youth and adult leisure time. Any Society in which libraries are active, can be considered dynamic and successful.(4)

According to what was said we are not to neglect the role of libraries in promoting education. Therefore a research was done to indicate the impact of libraries on student's achievement at high schools in Mazandaran, Iran under the title of "the role of books and libraries in informal education among the youth". The study focuses on the role and effect of books and libraries in informal education among the youth as information centers for expanding information literacy to increase students' extracurricular information.

### **Data and Method:**

In the study, a survey technique was applied along with a questionnaire given to 380 freshmen, sophomores and juniors (boys and girls) at high schools located in Mazandaran province in Iran in 2004 and then collected data based on the level of measurement variables were analyzed with Minitab statistical package.

### **Finding:**

Depending on Kruskal Wallis test, the findings indicated that there was a significant differences between students' grades at high school and their use of libraries among comparative subgroups, that is, Means showed that, the higher grade at high school, the more use of libraries. It was also observed that the use of libraries had no significant relation to students' means

#### **1) Descriptive Statistics and Frequency distribution of variables :**

**Table 1. Gender**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	150	39.5	39.5	39.5
Female	230	60.5	60.5	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 2. Residence**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Urban	281	73.9	73.9	73.9
Village	99	26.1	26.1	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 3. Education Level**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Freshmen	116	30.5	30.5	30.5
Sophomore	154	40.5	40.5	71.1
Junior	110	28.9	28.9	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 4. Librery use / Not use**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Use	190	50.0	50.0	50.0
Not use	190	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5. No. of delivered books in a Term**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1-9	64	16.8	33.7	33.7
10-19	51	13.4	26.8	60.5
20-29	35	9.2	18.4	78.9
30-39	17	4.5	8.9	87.9
40-49	8	2.1	4.2	92.1
50-59	6	1.6	3.2	95.3
60-69	5	1.3	2.6	97.9
70-79	2	.5	1.1	98.9
80-89	2	.5	1.1	100.0
Total	190	50.0	100.0	
Missing System	190	50.0		
Total	380	100.0		

**2) Inferential Statistics and Variables Relation Analysis :**

**Kruskal-Wallis Test:**

**Kruskal-Wallis Test on C1**

<u>C2</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Median</u>	<u>Ave Rank</u>	<u>Z</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>190</u>	<u>2.000</u>	<u>206.1</u>	<u>2.76</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>190</u>	<u>2.000</u>	<u>174.9</u>	<u>-2.76</u>
<u>Overall</u>	<u>380</u>		<u>190.5</u>	

H = 7.62 DF = 1 P = 0.006

H = 8.65 DF = 1 P = 0.003 (adjusted for ties)

C1: Education Level

C2: library use /not use

Based on the above test, there is a significant relationship between education level and the use/ not use of library. that is, education level affects the use of libraries and the rate of using them varies according to education level.

### Group Statistics

Library use/ not use		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
mean	not use	190	15.9517	2.7352	.1984
freshman	use	190	16.4601	2.5949	.1883

### Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
mean	Equal variance assumed	.000	.989	-1.859	378	.064	-.5084	.2735	-1.0462	.947E-02
freshman	Equal variance not assumed			-1.859	376.957	.064	-.5084	.2735	-1.0462	.947E-02

According to test, there is no significant relationship between the use of libraries and the mean score of students. That is, the use of libraries has no significant effect on the mean score as the education development index.

### Conclusion:

Despite of result finding on the lack of any relationship between referring to libraries and education achievement, it seems that mere reference to libraries cannot be a reliable measurement for educational achievement. Therefore, it is necessary to create combined scales.

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