A social work study on public attitudes toward the role of arts and cultural institutions in the cultural development of the country

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C H R O N I C L E	**A B S T R A C T**
	This paper presents an empirical investigation on the effect of public attitudes toward the role of arts and cultural institutions for the cultural development of the country. The study performs the study among urban and rural families in city of Esfahan, Iran and all questions are designed in Likert scale of 1-5. Using a sample of 700 people, the study finds that people generally have negative impression toward the role of arts and cultural institutions for the cultural development of the country. In their opinions, the nature and quality of the effects play the most important role, which must be improved. The study also finds the people's style of living and place of residency are also important issues on the perception toward cultural development.

1. Introduction

Culture is the specifications of some group of people, characterized by everything in terms of language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. Today, in many developing countries, different groups of people in terms of language, nations, etc. contribute to culture. The countries of the Middle East often have some but not all common specifications, including a strong belief in Islam and religion plays essential role of this society. The Persian language is also common throughout the region especially in Iran; however, the wide variety of dialect may sometimes make communication difficult.

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Culture is associated with the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, values, beliefs, attitudes, hierarchies, meanings, religion, notions of time, regulations, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions needed by a group of people. It is also the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people. Therefore, it is necessary to keep culture in any society and to care about familiarizing people with their culture (Landry, 2008; Shiner, 2003). Cities and their cultural components play important roles on shaping people' custom (Hall, 1998).

There is an ongoing concern on the relations between culture and institutional structure but there are also some limitations on having such investigations, which influences the ability to address a basic question on why societies often fail to adopt the institutional structure of more economically successful ones (Portugali, 2000; Towse, 2011; Redaelli, 2011).

Pratt (2011) investigated on what creative cities are imagined to be, as well as what they actually are, which is a challenge for policy makers. The author paper argued for the need for more nuanced methods, and for more attention to the lack of redistributive outcomes in existing creative city debates.

The complexity of cities must be integrated with cultural characteristics of the city and people must be able to become familiar with different aspects of their culture through cultural organizations (Hannerz, 1992; Hood, 2000). Greif investigated cultural factors leading to two pre-modern societies, one from the Muslim world and the other from the Latin world, to evolve along distinct trajectories of institutional structure. The study reported on the theoretical importance of culture in determining institutional structures, in leading to their path dependence, and in forestalling successful intersociety adoption of institutions and recommended the historical importance of distinct cultures in economic development.

2. The proposed study

This paper presents an empirical investigation on the effect of public attitudes toward the role of arts and cultural institutions for the cultural development of the country. The study performs the study among urban and rural families in city of Esfahan, Iran. There were 45 questions in our survey and all of them were designed in 5-item Likert scale from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (5). The questions were designed in three groups: 1. Need for arts and cultural institutions, 2. The necessity to reconsider their responsibilities and 3. The outlook of such organizations. Table 1 shows basic statistics on responses.

Table 1
Statistical observations

Factor	Statistics	Responce					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Female	Mean	0.32	4.62	0.58	-4.5	-1.48	-8.20
	Standard deviation	4.21	3.87	2.25	3.62	2.99	22.51
Male	Mean	0.42	-3.41	-1.83	3.34	1.76	-10.32
	Standard deviation	2.76	3.57	2.61	3.02	2.78	18.87
Urban	Mean	0.51	-2.89	-0.56	-2.25	-1.03	-5.60
	Standard deviation	2.17	3.21	2.95	3.07	3.34	14.10
Rural	Mean	0.35	-3.01	-0.76	-3.54	-1.33	-12.17
	Standard deviation	3.29	3.62	2.76	2.15	2.11	20.14

As we can observe from the results of Table 1, people have negative attitude toward cultural organizations. However, when we look at details of their feedback we undestrand that men have more

negative feedback towards cultural issues than women do. In addition, married people have more posotive attitude toward art and cultural circumstances than single people. Table 2 shows details of their feedback on the necessity of having such organizations.

Table 2
Statistical obsevrations on necessity of having cultural organizations

Response	Marital status	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	t-student	P-value
1	Single	510	0.35	2.15	-1.46	-0.455
	Married	190	0.81	3.10		
2	Single	510	-2.2	3.74	-0.91	0.125
	Married	190	-2.8	2.42		
3	Single	510	-0.85	2.46	-1.02	0.182
	Married	190	-0.61	1.96		
4	Single	510	-2.27	3.02	-1.24	0.068
	Married	190	-2.01	2.33		
5	Single	510	-9.12	16.82	-1.85	0.821
	Married	190	-4.19	13.37		

Based on the results of Table 2 we can conclude that there was a big difference between what married and single people think about the necessity of having cultural organizations. In fact, singles were more negative attitude on having such organizations than married. The next question of our survey was whether people were interested in having change on these organizations and Table 3 shows details of our findings.

Table 3
The summary of t-student test on change request on organizations

Response	Response	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	t-student	P-value
1	Yes	175	-0.36	2.32	-2.52	-0.0001
	No	525	1.17	2.12		
2	Yes	175	-2.26	3.09	-2.91	0.004
	No	525	-1.94	3.22		
3	Yes	175	-1.47	2.66	-2.64	0.0001
	No	525	-0.72	2.15		
4	Yes	175	-3.61	3.06	-3.82	0.078
	No	525	-2.09	3.14		
5	Yes	175	-2.14	2.65	-4.01	0.821
	No	525	-1.66	3.32		

According to the results of Table 3, 175 people believed that there should be some changes on these organizations but with various levels.

3. Conclusion

Since culture can form invisible bonds among members in any community, this could hold people with the same cultural background together, passing on the values. This propagation of values not only transmits cultural based knowledge and retains the relationship among people; it also builds up a long-term tradition over the long time. Culture can provide background and reference to its later generations of its ability of keeping the long-term tradition, gaining the sense of belonging of people to the country of that culture. Cultural organizations in any country could contribute to enrich necessary infrastructures for keeping people's heritage.

In this paper, we have performed an empirical investigation to find out more about the status of cultural organizations in one of Iranian cities. The survey has concluded that people believe were unhappy about the present status of cultural organizations and look for changes. The study concludes that culture is important in Iranian society especially in city of Esfahan because it represents the history of the whole country. Therefore, it is recommended that Iranian officials pay more attention on making the necessary changes.

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