**Research Article**

# The Effect of Informal Training in Cultural Clubs on Social Growth and Progress and Citizenship Culture of Citizens in Shiraz, Iran

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**Abstract**

**Background:** Cultural clubs involve a variety of programs and classes that seek to enhance the culture and identity of the citizens. The present study determined the effect of informal education by cultural centers on Shiraz citizens' development, social excellence, and citizenship culture.

**Methods:** The study was a descriptive and applied research. The population included citizens, who attended cultural center classes (N = 230). Overall, 145 participants were selected based on the Morgan Table (132 females and 11 males) and through simple random sampling. Two questionnaires, including social identity and citizenship culture, were used. The reliability and validity (0.81) of both were confirmed and determined. The data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially (Pearson test and regression model) by the SPSS version 22 software.

**Results:** The results of the social identity questionnaire was average, according to the median of 56, and that of the citizenship culture questionnaire was good, according to the median of 90. The analysis showed that informal education by cultural centers affected social identity (P = 0.002 < 0.01); rule conformity affected social identity (P = 0.001 < 0.01); rule conformity predicted social identity with a proper coefficient; responsibility affected social identity (P = 0.00), this was a good predictor of social identity; and finally, participation affected social identity (P = 0.00).

**Conclusions:** Given the role of informal education provided by cultural centers in citizens' development and social excellence and culture, using this educational method would be of great help for the society.

*Keywords:* Informal Education, Culture, Social Identification, Culture Techniques, Growth

## 1. Background

The current age is the age of technology and information outburst. Therefore, the access to information is far faster and more than the past. Due to urban people living as individuals, in a family or in a group, at public, private and state places, citizens perform some economic, culture, political, service, productive and trade-off activities to meet their needs. Leisure time may involve a productive activity yet it does not comprise social responsibilities with other social roles of a person (1). Following the increasing development of communities, people need to learn activities more and more to adapt and accommodate with more alterations. In addition to formal education, the effects of informal education, including electronic education, shouldn't be ignored. With the spread of information technology and the entrance of distant-communication means into the depth of the society, educational means and methods have also undergone changes. The transfor-

mation of means and methods allows any individual with his/her own facilities and time interval to become involved in learning at any time and any place. In this regard, the Internet is at the center of the transformation that has created e-learning. E-learning is an open system. Internet capabilities have exposed teaching and learning contexts to a great deal of information. E-learning refers to the type of learning, which occurs through the internet and network and in a formal context. A set of multi-media technologies are used in e-learning. E-learning cannot be considered only as a new technology or a supplementary tool, which may be totally accepted or rejected. As communication is at the center of all teaching interactions, it is likely to have a great influence on education systems, teachers, and learners (2).

However, cultural centers in most parts of the country have made little progress towards electronic education as a result of their specific nature, therefore research is more concerned with implicit education. Informal education

is a process in which learners and educators participate unknowingly and unwittingly in the educational process. That is, the trainer does not know he/she is teaching; also the trainee does not understand he/she is learning. Therefore, both are not autonomous in training and learning and each one plays their role involuntary. Jarvis believed that informal training includes professional and expert education that has a specific purpose and reaches efficiency in an almost short time (3).

Currently, according to rapid changes, in order to adapt and to update the social, cultural and political evolution in a community, everyone should be trained in this regard; if people are trained, they should identify themselves and their self-identity or the trainings effective. Since humans are social with a social identity, their social life is unimaginable without a way for knowing themselves and others. In the absence of a framework for identifying social identity and individual identities, I am coexisting with you. None of us could make a significant relationship with the other. Actually, without social identity, "there is no community or society" (4). Based on Henri and Tajfel, social identity involves that part of a person's competence that originates from their knowledge over being a member in a social group with a valuable importance of that membership (5). Ritzier concentrated on the way a person socializes and develops a sense of "self" (6); also he emphasized on the role of mental and symbolic factors involving collective identity (7). Then, through the discussion of social identity and its relationship with culture, it could be said that today, culture has an important role in the society. In the modern age, it is a main tool for collective communication and is considered as an important way for development, an issue that implies the necessity of study in this scope. According to Hermet, citizenship culture has some specifications; first, it is that citizenship should be based on history and environment recognition. Second, it is about acquiring democratic conduct rules. In terms of behavior and moral values, citizens should know their rights as well as tasks, such as challenging for being respected by their rights (8). In Popper's opinion, since education, family and rituals have to be considered as general, there should be established organizations or institutions, where modern social relations of citizenship are mentioned as their main function and meet the new needs of citizens; thus neighborhood cultures, city cultural locations and culture clubs are replaced by family, education and culture in the city. Cultural centers in a city are the most appropriate institutes for practicing the acceptance of citizenship culture, development of identity and civil honesty. Because the membership of citizens is voluntary, there is no internal or external compulsion. Things, which make people move towards these centers are their individual interests

and benefits from completing their citizenship culture. In fact, these centers, in the field of citizenship culture, prepare the citizenship life. Also, their places are found as gender functions and make citizens aggregately participate in the society with certain and specific attitudes and activities, and it has been found that it is an effective step in the development of sensitivity to urban and social problems, presenting a new pattern to solve conflicts and make citizens act based on pluralized properties in terms of civil community, which significantly helps some government. Therefore, recovery and reinforcement of urban identity is an introduction on recovery and reinforcement of civil identity, which should be considered in citizenship culture (9). In the modern ages, cultural uniformity views progress of development as an important task of culture clubs. Generally, most activities of culture clubs are divided to two parts, including public and regional activities, such as different artistic-cultural-education courses.

In the second part, culture clubs' activities include ultra-regional activity satisfying the citizens' needs about legal issues, holding up citizenship training workshops, executing expertise meeting, congress, professional, and expertise competition. Culture clubs train by holding up various classes and programs, and have tried to improve and develop social identity of citizens. Therefore, the main issue in this study was to determine the impact of informal training (legitimation responsibilities of citizens and their participation) in culture clubs on social identity.

Sadeqi Manesh in his study, showed that training and informing citizens, has no impact on development and advancement of citizenship culture in Shiraz and they have a positive relationship with three variables adopted for citizenship culture development and advancement (10). Haji Mohammad Hossein et al., in his study, showed that there was a poor relationship and less positive impact from Tehran municipality artistic-cultural organization on development of safety and medium impact on cultural-social-political participation and there was a positive and significant impact on behavioral-moral-mental-physical health of Tehran citizens (11). Geboers et al., in their study, showed that schools could play a significant role in citizenship development. In most current modern societies, schools are responsible for presenting citizenship training; however its different forms have not been specified (12). In summary, the study of empirical and theoretical researches shows that during the last decade, social authors have significantly become interested in citizenship issue and its literature has been introduced in academic discussion and state diplomacy. Urban management and above it municipalities have to provide an evolution process not only in view of economy but also along with rapid changes and evolutions of social and cultural issues and

urban population for satisfying increasing social and cultural demands.

## 2. Methods

The present study was a descriptive, functional, and applied research. The statistical population of the study was 230 citizens of Shiraz, who participated in certain culture clubs. It was tried to use different generations in various ages in order to complete the questionnaire for obtaining desirable results. In this study, sample size was calculated for 145 people through the Morgan Table due to statistical population size (n = 230). Based on this, a case study was done on 10 culture clubs, selected with simple random sampling, and tools were distributed and returned after completion.

After permitting some necessary letters from sportive-social-cultural organization of Shiraz municipality and coordinating with Shiraz municipality to collect data, questionnaires were distributed among samples. In the present study, social identity questionnaire based on a Likert Scale and Tavassoli 3-dimensional citizenship culture questionnaire were used to collect data. 1, Social identity single-dimension questionnaire: This questionnaire was provided to measure people's attitude towards their social identity and composed of 20 items. For each item, there is a 5-point Likert Scale (completely disagree (score 1) to completely agree (score 5)). Questions include "I have the right view of my own role and presence being a value of an individual balanced life. 2, Citizenship culture 3-dimension questionnaire: this was provided to measure citizenship culture in three dimensions (responsibilities, legality and participation) including 30 items. Citizenship culture responsibility, citizenship legality and participation were respectively measured through questions 1 to 14, 15 to 21 and 22 to 30. There are 5 points for each item, which are scored from very little (point 1) to very much (point 5).

Question of responsibility is "Citizens claim that they are themselves responsible for solving problems and they are interested in and concerned about their own and others' wellbeing and convenience". The research question about legality includes "Citizens are functionally responsible for following driving and transportation system rules and respect precedency in driving". Research question about citizens' participation involved "Citizens perform the project of aesthetic and improvement of a neighborhood with each other's cooperation".

In the present study, to determine the validity and reliability of the Social Identity questionnaire, despite the validity of the above tools, based on the research of Safarinia and Roshan (13), Cronbach Alpha and factor analysis were used. The reliability of the mentioned questionnaire was measured as 0.747, which confirmed its internal consistency. Also, factor analysis showed that the questionnaire has only one scale, which explains 45.93% of the variance. Also, reliability of this instrument by Cronbach in another article titled "the relationship between social procrastination and social identity and Students' academic performance" was reported as 0.74 (14).

In order to prove the validity of the citizenship culture questionnaire, 7 experts were interviewed, and the face validity was determined based on previous inferences. To confirm the reliability of the questionnaire, 30 questionnaires were distributed and then, with the help of Cronbach's alpha, a reliability of 0.81 was confirmed.

Data analysis was done in two parts: 1, studying descriptive specifications of the sample as well as central indices and dispersion of studied variables. According to the sample size and central limit theorem (CLT), it could be supposed that data distribution was normal (normal distribution of data was evaluated using Kolmogorov - Smirnov test). At last, parametric methods were used to test the hypothesis; in this regard, correlation coefficient was the most significant applied statistics.

Method of measuring cutting edge was by the numbers of items of each questionnaire multiplied by Likert score and though this, higher and lower levels of the cutting edge was measured (Tables 1 and 2).

**Table 1.** Calculation of the Cut-Off Line of Social Identity

| Subscale | Cut off Line |
|---|---|
| Very low (< 20) | $1 \times 20 = 20$ |
| Low (20 - 40) | $1 \times 20 = 20, 2 \times 20 = 40$ |
| Medium (40 - 60) | $2 \times 20 = 40, 3 \times 20 = 60$ |
| High (60 - 80) | $3 \times 20 = 60, 4 \times 20 = 80$ |
| Very high (80 - 100) | $4 \times 20 = 80, 5 \times 20 = 100$ |

**Table 2.** Calculation of the Cut-Off Line of the Citizenship Culture

| Subscale | Cut off Line |
|---|---|
| Very low (< 30) | $1 \times 30 = 30$ |
| Low (30 - 60) | $1 \times 30 = 30, 2 \times 30 = 60$ |
| Medium (60 - 90) | $2 \times 30 = 60, 3 \times 30 = 90$ |
| High (90 - 120) | $3 \times 30 = 90, 4 \times 30 = 120$ |
| Very high (120 - 150) | $4 \times 30 = 120, 5 \times 30 = 150$ |

Social identity score obtained from the social identity questionnaire analyzed by social identity level of Shiraz citizen, Iran, at five levels (Table 1).

Citizenship culture score obtained from citizenship culture questionnaire investigates the level of citizenship culture of Shiraz citizens at five levels (Table 2).

## 3. Results

Based on the demographic data from subjects, there were 91% females with 41% having an education level of diploma, 62% being housewives and 70% being aged 30 to 40.

According to Table 3, Mod (the most frequency) was 56 (M = 56) for social identity. Therefore, social identity level of citizens participation in classes of culture clubs was average. Due to Table 3, Mod was evaluated 90 (M = 90) for citizenship culture. Therefore, citizenship culture of citizens in Shiraz as well as all three dimensions was at a high level.

The main hypothesis: informal training (responsibility, rule conformity, and participation) in culture clubs influences social identity.

According to Table 4 (citizenship culture and social identity) there is a linear regression equation (F = 10.18; P value = 0.02). There was a significant relationship between social identity and citizenship culture (Sig = 0.002; P < 0.01). Therefore, based on the conducted tests (Pearson and Linear Regression test), it could be concluded that informal training by culture clubs influences social identity of citizens, who participated in the classes.

The first hypothesis: informal training in culture clubs (rule conformity) influences social identity.

According to Table 4 (rule conformity and social identity), there was a linear regression equation (F = 11.21; P value = 0.001). There is a significant relationship between social identity and citizenship culture (Sig = 0.001; P < 0.01), which is clearly less than basic significance level.

The second hypothesis: Informal training in culture clubs (responsibility) influences social identity.

According to Table 4 (responsibility and social identity), there was a linear regression equation (F = 23.01; P value = 0.0001). There was a significant relationship between social identity and citizenship culture (Sig = 0.001; P < 0.01). It has been shown that it is less than the basic significance level.

The third hypothesis: informal training in culture clubs (participation) influences social identity.

According to Table 4 (partnership and social identity), there was a linear regression equation (F = 18.88; P value = 0.0001). There was a significant relationship between social identity and citizenship culture (Sig = 0.001; P < 0.01).

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Given the confirmation of the above hypothesis: informal education by cultural centers (responsibility, law conformity, and participation) affects social identity; it could be inferred from the results that some social institutions and organizations, like cultural centers, can be so effective in the development of citizenship culture and social identity. It could be stated that informal education by such institutions, in addition to the growth of citizens' culture, would result in their social identity development. Therefore, being aware of the ability of the cultural centers and the education provided by them in realizing a major part of the governmental goals for cultural, social, scientific, and educational achievement, governments try to invest more in such institutions. The above results are in line with the findings of the study titled "determining the effectiveness of programs and activities by the cultural and social organization of Shiraz municipality on citizenship culture development" (case study of Shiraz municipality). The results also showed that training and informing citizens affected citizenship culture development indirectly in Shiraz. However, their assumed relationship with citizenship culture development has been accepted and the relationship direction was positive (10). Also, given the confirmation of the above hypothesis, informal education by cultural centers (law conformity) affects social identity, and it could be inferred from the results that the higher the individuals' social identity (self-efficacy and self-confidence), the better their performance in conforming to rules. However, various causes may contribute to the lack of conformity to rules among citizens. As some researchers have shown, ambiguity of the rules and the possibility of different interpretations, and different bureaucratic debacles are among the reasons for the lack of conformity (15). Institutions, such as cultural centers, play a significant role in citizens' positive attitude (social identity). The results of the study showed that law conformity was a good predictor for social identity. This is in line with the results of the study titled "an analysis of the citizenship culture in Isfahan". Also it was found that rules disobedience and lack of participation in culture in Isfahan were among the main obstacles of citizenship culture development in this city, which imperils social identity (15). Given the confirmation of the above hypothesis informal education by cultural centers (responsibility) affects social identity; it can be inferred from the results that the more the individuals' self-efficacy and commitment, the more they feel themselves responsible for their citizenship rights and duties. The study also showed that responsibility training by cultural centers affected citizens' social identity, and responsibility dimension was a good predictor for social identity.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics of Citizenship Culture and Social Identity

| Citizenship Culture Dimension | Social Identity | Citizenship Culture | Responsibility | Legality | Participation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average | 55.8414 | 71.2759 | 34.1389 | 13.9241 | 21.3931 |
| SD | 9.71302 | 23.32336 | 11.04828 | 6.39127 | 8.57831 |
| Mod | 56.00 | 90.00 | 42.00 | 18.00 | 21.00 |

**Table 4.** Inferential Statistics Related to the Variables of Social Identity and Citizenship Culture

| Regression Model | Standard Regression Coefficient $\beta$ | Standard Error | t Statistics | F Statistics | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Social identity** | | | | | |
| Citizenship culture | 0.248 | 0.062 | 3.19 | 10.183 | 0.002 |
| Legality | 0.257 | 0.067 | 3.34 | 11.210 | < 0.001 |
| Responsibility | 0.357 | 0.042 | 4.79 | 23.018 | < 0.001 |
| Participation | 0.327 | 0.068 | 4.34 | 18.889 | < 0.001 |

Lower levels of citizens' responsibility were explained by previous researchers due to a lack of precise social control systems and lack of reward and punishment systems (15). The findings are in line with the study titled "the role of citizen-help model in citizenship culture promotion". The study also showed that there was a positive and direct relationship between individual and social responsibility and participation in culture. The more responsible participants tend to solve social and personal problems. In addition, they collect comprehensive information before making decisions and do not give in difficulties, immediately. They have a special view to their sociological problems (16). Finally, given the confirmation of the above hypothesis that informal education by cultural centers (participation) affects social identity, it could be inferred from the results that the more the individuals feel belonging (social identity), the more would be their participation in all social and political areas of citizenship. The researcher found that by participation training, it is possible to produce feelings of belonging and trust in citizens. In general, participation training by cultural centers affects social identity and this could predict social identity well. Some researchers attribute lack of citizens' participation in various social and political activities to their lack of trust, indifference, or lack of participation in culture (15). The results are in line with the study titled "an analysis of the citizenship culture in Isfahan". Educating and informing citizens is the key to increased participation by them (15).

As a general conclusion, it could be said that building and developing citizenship culture in Iran could be achieved through the recognition of existing potentials, such as religion, tradition, and linguistic diversity or through educational approaches with different methods

(17). Therefore, citizenship culture training needs to be incorporated in learning environments, including objective courses, textbooks, and educational institutions, both in traditional and virtual forms. Such education must adapt the citizens to the life needs of the future. Therefore, it is suggested that: 1, Besides cultural centers, sustained training of citizenship culture must also be provided by mass media for social groups since the media provides an objective base for thinking and concept creation, attracts the learners' attention and interest, accelerates learning and makes it endurable and effective, provides concrete and actual experiences for learners, and creates situations, which are not attainable otherwise. 2, Library of culture clubs should be equipped with scientific, educational, social and psychological resources in order to be used by clients. 3, Due to the significant role of culture clubs in training and education for the next generation, such as state and public institution, the main decision makers of sportive-social-cultural organization of municipalities should consider the present research results and invest in these complexes, and citizens should apply essential efforts to reach the ideal condition. 4, According to adequate distrust of citizens relative to government plans, some plans and workshops are presented to make clear and explain citizenship rules and regulations in culture clubs in order to develop trust and sense of more responsibility for citizens.

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**Footnote**

**Conflict of Interest:** None declared.

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