

INTRODUCTION

Book review is a type of academic writing which deals with concise, brief and intensive critical evaluation of strengths, weaknesses and merits of the book.^[1] Some connoisseurs believe that the main goal of a book review is to inform the readers of new, quality books and guiding those towards reading these books. It should be kept in mind that this goal is achieved on one hand through the reading the reviews of the book by the readers and on the other hand by preparation of an encouraging review, providing new information and presenting a balanced assessment of the book.^[2]

Although book reviews, publication advertisements and publishing announcements are all part of the media keeping librarians and researchers up-to-date on new publications on any given subject, but usually book reviews written by specialists of each field of interest play a more prominent role compared to other forms of media; the reason being that a book review is more focused, and is written in an evaluating and critical manner.^[3]

The main purpose of book review is introducing valuable scientific works to readers and researchers and guiding authors in fixing the problems and mistakes of the publication and just thinking and correct writing; because the development of a society is possible when the society is not only informed about published scientific works but also is able to distinguish between original and unoriginal works. An investigation of the published books in recent years suggests a lack of attention to the needs of the audience, lack of the coordination and synchronization of their content with new scientific findings, lack of integrity in presenting concepts, lack of educational value and unattractive content.^[4-6] These problems clearly show the need of book reviews for scientific communities.

Barker in a research titled “Book reviews online” outlines the design and development of an automated system for handling book reviews. He believes that with the annual increase of academic publications, it’s very difficult to be informed about all the new and valuable published information; therefore having a positive attitude toward the subject of book reviews is important in writing and reading literature reviews;^[7] because attitudes define actions which suggests that by changing a person’s attitude, one can change their actions.^[8]

In addition to knowing the importance of reviews on scientific communities and having a positive attitude toward book reviews, one needs to keep in mind that the review of a work, whether scientific, technical or artistic, is a scientific work. A scientific work is based on scientific method and solid and unwavering foundations which have been deduced from undeniable facts and truths.^[9] Neglect and lack of proper application of criteria and principles in review works can cause negative consequences for the authors. In recognition of this fact, some scholars have acknowledged that since reviews of scientific books serve many purposes and are also capable of a working as a literary form, the process of publishing a

successful review of an academic and scientific book requires the author to be familiar with the process of reviewing a book and the aptitude and strategies needed to write a constructive and useful criticism.^[10]

Thus, learning how to write a review is one of the first steps in the process of writing a book review. Many people such as Hartley and Asefzadeh have emphasized the importance of teaching in the field of book review of their papers. Hartley, in a study based on criticism and review of books in British Journal of Educational Technology, stated that although reading and writing review plays an important role in academic community, the reviewers have access to very little information on how to write a proper review.^[11] Asefzadeh, on his study on critical analysis of research studies in medical science, pointed out that on a wise criticism, different aspects of the subject is carefully studied and analyzed, a guideline that is gaining increased importance in today’s scientific community. He stated that more attention needs to be paid to the importance of the subject of reviewing and criticism in academic courses especially in postgraduate courses; and that the editors of scientific journals should devote some pages to the criticism and reviewing of the published articles.^[12]

Despite the importance of reviews and criticism on academic communities, investigation of the Journals of Isfahan University of Medical Science showed little interest in writing review articles on part of the authors. Also in the cases when a critical article was published, the critics mostly had an unscientific, unorganized approach in criticizing articles. On the other hand, the criticized authors viewed the criticisms not as an opportunity to improve their work but as a negative work and have showed negative attitude toward the critic and the review article; this is despite the fact that investigation, review, and criticism of the publications is listed among the criteria needed for promotion on faculty status promotion regulations.^[13]

The facts mentioned above showed that in addition to the need to follow certain principles and guidelines in criticizing and reviewing an article, the authors also need to have a date positive attitude toward constructive and principled criticism. Therefore, among the steps that need to be taken to increase the popularity of criticism and reviews is changing the attitude of the authors and researchers toward criticism and teaching them the principles and guidelines of writing a review; because the usefulness and effectiveness of a criticism increases with the awareness the critic has on the principles of writing a review.

Despite the importance of book review on dynamic of academic community and the development of society, to this date, no study was conducted on investigating the attitude and awareness of faculty members toward book review and the effect of holding training courses in this subject in national or international levels. However, in studies such as “Rafii and others” (2008) titled “Workshop on Evidence Based Medicine on Critical Appraisal Skills in Tehran University of Medical

Sciences' Students" evaluate the impact of critical appraisal of evidence-based medicine on students' ability on criticize articles.^[14]

Therefore, in order to achieve the main goal of the current study, the hypothesized include the mean score of faculty's Awareness about book reviews before the workshop is the same in both groups (case and control); The mean score of faculty's Awareness about book reviews after the workshop differs in case and control groups; The mean score of faculty's Awareness about book reviews before and after the workshop is different in both groups (case and control); The mean score of faculty's attitude toward book reviews before the workshop is the same in both groups (case and control); The mean score of faculty's attitude toward book reviews after the workshop is different in both groups (case and control); The mean score of faculty's attitude toward book reviews is different before and after the workshop in both groups (case and control); The mean of faculty's book review aptitude score before the workshop is similar in both groups (case and control); The mean of faculty's book review aptitude score after the workshop is different in both groups (case and control); The mean of faculty's book review aptitude score is different before and after the workshop in both groups (case and control) are made.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study method is experimental with two group design (with pre-test and post-test) and applied. Statistical population is of all faculty members of the faculty of management and medical information of Isfahan University of Medical Science, including both hired and contracted employees, which, according to faculty's department of Education, consists of 86 people. The sampling method used in this study is random. Number of samples in case and control groups was calculated using the following equation of $n = \frac{(z_1 + z_2)^2 (2s^2)}{d^2}$ and is 15 people. The data gathering tools used in this study are a Researcher made checklist and two Researchers made questionnaires. Aptitude Checklist is composed of four evaluation parts including the content, writing, appearance, and other indicators of a correct book review. The content evaluation part contains 21 questions related to the content of book such as freshness and comprehensiveness of content, use the footnotes and appendices, having a detailed index, the accuracy of documentation, stating the objectives of the book and provide a conclusion. The writing assessment part includes eight questions related to the grammatical structure of the text, respecting scientific language, following writing rules and appropriateness of style and diction of the book. In appearance evaluation, the appropriateness of the appearance is measured by nine questions concerning the said attribute such as size, volume, mute, binding, paper, artwork, and images. Other features of a correct Book review such as title, key words, introduction, providing comprehensive information about Author (s) and comparing the book with similar works is measured by 19 questions. Attitude Questionnaire include demographic questions and

36 questions related to the concept and nature of criticism and Book Review such as, mission and necessity of Book Review, the university's position in book review propagation, oral criticism, written criticism, and importance of following instructions in a book review. Awareness Questionnaire include 23 questions related to the concept and nature of Book Review, mission, and necessity of Book Review, the various forms of criticism, immoral mechanisms to deal with Criticism, characteristics, and aptitude needed for Reviewer and Book Review procedures.

Data gathering tools were created based on studies conducted by Ashrafi-rizi and Kazempour,^[15] Homayoon pour,^[16] Hekmat,^[17] Fadayi,^[18] Zakeri,^[5] Rafiei,^[9] Doroudy,^[19] Shayanfar,^[20] Parsayi,^[10] Jahanbakhsh,^[21] Zakyani,^[22] Fooladi,^[23] CompaniZare,^[24] MohamadZadeh,^[25] Khoramshahi^[26] and Eslami.^[27] The investigation checklist and both questionnaires were verified by experts in book review and library and information science fields Cronbach's alpha was used for calculating the reliability of Attitude 36 questions and of Awareness 23 questions 15 collected questionnaires were used in the test and the questionnaires' Cronbach's Alpha were calculated to be 78% and 79.5%, respectively. As a pre-test and to investigate the awareness, attitude and book reviewing aptitude of statistical society, the questionnaires were passed on along with a book related to book reviewing method. The training course was 5 hours and used direct teaching methods (speech along with multimedia equipments) along with a persuasive argument to change the attitude of the participants. The topics addressed at the workshop were the meaning of review, review history, the necessity and mission of book review, types of review, a critic's necessary qualifications and aptitude, method and steps of writing a book review, survey reading, critical reading, note taking, studying reviews of others, book review report, and indicators of an academic review. After presenting the aforementioned topics, group and persuasive arguments were conducted and then a book review was conducted individually. After the workshop, the questionnaires were again answered by the participants. The participants also wrote a review on selected books and the results from before and after the workshop (in the fields of awareness, attitude, and aptitude) were compared.

Considering the experimental research methodology of this study, the first phase consists of completing the questionnaire and writing a book review as a form of pre-test. The workshop was conducted in the second phase as an intervention. Training courses lasted for 5 hours and used direct instruction (lecture with audio-visual equipment) and persuasive arguments to change the attitudes held by the participants. Workshop topics included the concept and nature of criticism and Book Review, mission and necessity of Book Review, the reasons for the Book reviews in the academic community, tips on book review, the various forms of criticism, immoral mechanisms to deal with criticism, characteristics, aptitude needed for Reviewers Book Review procedures and indexes for writing exact book review. After the presentation regarding the

intended issues, persuasive discussion took place on the issues presented. On the third phase, questionnaires were completed again by faculty members and each participant wrote a book review. On the fourth phase, the results from before and after the workshop were compared. To control nuisance variables workshop participants were reminded to complete the questionnaire individually and without consultation with each other.

In order to analyze the data in this study, descriptive statistics (frequency distribution tables, percents, average, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics were used. Paired *t* test was used to compare the mean of the scores obtained by the participants in fields of awareness, attitude, and book reviewing aptitude before and after the workshop, while in order to compare the mean scores of the participants in the said fields before or after the workshop, independent *t* test was used. SPSS 18.0 software was used for data analysis.

RESULTS

The statistical population of this study was 30 faculty members in two case and control groups selected from 86 faculty members of Management and Medical information faculty of Isfahan University of Medical Science. Each group consisted of 15 members, eight of which (53.8%) were male and seven (46.7%) were female ($P = 0.64$). Both case and control groups were similar in their field of study. Members of library and information science field had the highest number of people in both groups with 6 representatives (40%) in case and eight representatives (53.3%) in control group; after that fields of health care management, medical records, computer, linguistics, and psychology had the highest number of representatives.

According to the reported results in Table 1, The mean score for attitude toward book review remained mostly the same before and after intervention in both case group (71.4 before intervention and 74.4 after intervention, $P = 0.11$) and control group (70.9 before intervention and 74.4 after intervention, $P = 0.91$).

According to the reported results in Table 2, the mean score of awareness of book review in case group increased meaningfully after intervention (55.7 after intervention compared to 33.1 before intervention, $P < 0.001$), but the mean score of awareness of book review in control group showed no meaningful increase before (31.6) and after intervention (35.1), $P = 0.35$.

According to the reported results in Table 3, The mean score of book reviewing aptitude in case group increased significantly from 10.2 ± 6.7 before intervention to 53.6 ± 26.3 , showing a 43.4 increase ($P < 0.001$), while the same mean for control group showed no significant difference (8.5 before intervention and 8.6 after intervention, $P = 0.996$).

DISCUSSION

Review and critical evaluation of information sources is among effective strategies to increase the effectiveness of information. With increase and development of academic publications, assessment of scientific accuracy and credibility of information sources gains increased importance.^[19] Academic book, which are treasure troves of knowledge in every society, are no exception from this rule. The current study investigated the effectiveness of book reviewing workshop on awareness of reviews, attitude toward book reviews and book reviewing aptitude of faculty members of faculty of Management and medical information of Isfahan University of Medical Science in year 2012. Results showed that the workshop had a positive effect on awareness of reviews and book reviewing aptitude of participants. The attitude of faculty members toward reviews was positive even before the workshop and showed no significant change before and after training course.

As mentioned in the findings, the training course was effective in increasing the awareness of participants, thus the research hypothesis that training course will increase the awareness of faculty members was confirmed. The results showed that a short-term workshop of evidence-based medicine, can effectively enhance students' ability to

Table 1: Mean scores of attitude (from 100 points) in case and control group before and after workshop

Paired <i>t</i> test (<i>P</i>)	Attitude Training (mean and SD)		Number of participants	Groups
	After	Before		
	0.91	8.4±72		
0.11	7.4±74.4	7±71.4	15	Case
0.25	0.83	0.78	Independent <i>t</i> test (<i>P</i>)	

SD = Standard deviation

Table 2: Mean scores of awareness (from 100 points) in case and control group before and after workshop

Paired <i>t</i> test (<i>P</i>)	Awareness Training (mean and SD)		Number of participants	Groups
	After	Before		
	0.35	35.1±21.9		
<0.001	55.7±19.9	33.1±8.2	15	Case
-	0.01	0.78	Independent <i>t</i> test (<i>P</i>)	

SD = Standard deviation

Table 3: Mean scores of aptitude (from 100 points) in case and control group before and after workshop

Paired <i>t</i> test (<i>P</i>)	Aptitude Training (mean and SD)		Number of participants	Groups
	After	Before		
	0.996	5.3±8.6		
<0.001	26.3±53.6	6.8±10.2	15	Case
-	<0.001	0.45	Independent <i>t</i> test (<i>P</i>)	

SD = Standard deviation

critically evaluate.^[14] It is necessary to note that in the current study, the initial awareness were not at a suitable level.

The study results showed that the mean attitude score of participants toward reviews had no significant statistical difference before and after the workshop. In general, the attitude of faculty members toward reviews had a desirable level from the start. Another reason for this lack of change in mean attitude score could be that in learning new attitudes, three important changes to Attention, Perception, and Acceptance need to be made;^[28] and a person's attitude changes only if all these three change. Therefore, workshops in which the conditions to change all three aspects are met, is required to change the attitude of people toward reviews. Also, since normally people resist a change in their attitude, in order to improve the attitude toward writing book reviews, long training courses are necessary.^[29] Due to varying characteristics of attitude, it is necessary to note that the change observed in this study was not similar to that of the other two studied variables (awareness and aptitude); the reason being that attitude is more personal and changes over time. Findings in this part were not in agreement with findings of Matlabi,^[30] and also with study of Mohamadi, Valizade, and Lakdizgi.^[31] Matlabi, in a study on the effects of mental health education program on awareness, attitude, and education performance of health workers in city of Gaz found out that the attitude of participants showed significant improvement before and after the training course.^[30] Also findings of Mohamadi, Valizade, and Lakdizgi in a study on the effect of training workshop on the performance of nursing instructors suggested apposite impact on the attitude of participants in the workshop.^[31] The results about changes in book review aptitude showed that the mean score of book reviewing aptitude of the participants in case group showed significant difference before and after the workshop but no significant changes were observed in control group. These results are in agreement with a study conducted by SoltaniArabshahi, Ajami, and Siabani.^[33] Their research on the effects of workshop of teaching aptitude on the teaching quality of faculty members in University of Kermanshah showed that the teaching quality had improved in five components of teaching aptitude but remained mostly unchanged in the components of providing feedback and professional characteristics.^[32] A question that comes to mind is that the goal for studying attitudes is affecting a person's behavior; because different attitudes are known as indicator so predictors of behavior. This study, however, shows that the mean score of attitude toward book review was high but this score was not reflected in the behavior of the faculty members before the workshop (book reviewing aptitude). To explain this difference, one must keep in mind that based on studies conducted on social psychology, there is no direct and strong link between a person's attitudes and his behaviors, in other words one cannot claim to be able to predict people's behaviors simply by knowing their attitudes.^[8] This fact is clearly shown in the current study.

CONCLUSIONS

Book review plays an important part in growth, development and flourishing of any scientific field and its smallest benefit is helping the reader and author (or scientists in general); helping the continuous advancement of human knowledge. The current study showed the positive effect of book review workshops on increasing the awareness of reviews and improving book reviewing aptitude. Based on the results of this study, holding frequent training courses and workshops on book reviewing in universities helps improve the aptitude of faculty members in writing reviews. In order to change the attitude of faculty members toward reviews and criticism, long training courses that meet certain conditions are needed. Also a study to investigate the reason behind the low number of critical review papers (despite their score being similar to descriptive or research papers for faculty promotion) needs to be conducted. With the increase of critical review papers, one can hope for academics books to be filtered in a desirable way, preventing non-science from entering science communities.

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