

The Library Advocacy Gap: Increasing Librarians' Political Self-Efficacy

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ABSTRACT

Libraries play a critical role in American communities; they promote formal and informal learning, provide social infrastructure, equitable access to information, access to technology, workforce development, and community engagement. Yet library budgets and relevance are continually questioned. Libraries need strong library advocates to raise awareness of the important role libraries play in communities and to advocate for policies that advance the mission of libraries. There is concern in the field that advocacy, public policy, and information policy are not adequately covered in the Library and Information Science (LIS) graduate programs. Currently, there is a gap in LIS literature. Research is needed to drive decision making, to better educate, and prepare librarians to engage in library advocacy and public policy.

Through the lens of social cognitive theory using a phenomenological design, this study compares professional librarians' involvement in library advocacy activities to their belief that these same activities are the librarian's responsibility. Further, this study seeks relationships between professional librarians' political self-efficacy and advocacy participation. The study also explores librarians' LIS education and professional development experience regarding advocacy and information policy. An explanatory sequential mixed method design is being used: first an online survey, followed by in-depth interviews to add context to the survey results. Do librarians' have the political-efficacy needed to advocate? Are they advocating?

The result will be a descriptive portrait of librarians' advocacy engagement, political self-efficacy, and factors that influence librarians' political self-efficacy (LPSE). Recommendations will be made to strengthen advocacy skills and participation.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Information policy; Education; Curriculum; Community engagement

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Information policy; Education; Curriculum; Political Self-Efficacy; Library Advocacy; Public Policy; Professional Development; Leadership