

Comparing Bestseller Books in Japanese Public Libraries Managed by Outsourcing and by Local Governments

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Abstract : In Japan, local governments have long managed public libraries; however, organizations including private enterprises took over their management with the introduction of an outsourcing system in 2003. Now, whether local governments should apply this system to public libraries is under discussion, and many argue that it is inappropriate for public libraries. In this study, to provide basic data for such discussions, the differences between public libraries managed by outsourcing (henceforth, 'outsourcing libraries') and those managed directly by local governments (henceforth 'direct management libraries') were examined, focusing on bestsellers. We chose the 435 books on the top-20 bestseller lists published from 1996 to 2015 inclusive, as our sample bestseller books; and 413 outsourcing libraries' and 2,619 direct management libraries' holdings of them were investigated using the Calil API (a free Web service that can perform cross-library searches on libraries in Japan). Results show that outsourcing libraries tend to hold fewer bestsellers than direct management libraries. It was also found that direct management libraries tend to hold many duplicates of bestsellers, and that, in many cases, many of those were not being borrowed in direct management libraries.

Keywords : bestseller books, book collection, Japanese public libraries, outsourcing

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