Evaluation of urban management performance based on citizen satisfaction with municipal services in city of Tehran

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Abstract— **Performance improvement to increase efficiency and effectiveness is considered as a main goal in different management levels. Performance improvement causes massive force and support for development programs and services. One of the most important performance evaluation criteria, especially in the scale of neighborhood units, is citizen satisfaction with municipal services. Urban management in broad sense contains a wide range of activities and the most important component is provision of urban public services. So, citizen satisfaction with public services is an important factor attracting people to participate in improving the quality of urban environment. The main purpose of this study is assessing the citizen satisfaction with municipal services and also evaluating factors affecting it in two districts of Tehran (one in high level income area and other in low level income area). In order to achieve this goal, a model for measuring citizen satisfaction with municipal services has been designed and implemented, based on literature review and examination of other countries' experiences. The results indicate that citizen satisfaction level in both areas (north and south of Tehran) is close to average (in south is lower), But the reality is that the level of public satisfaction, can relatively, not absolutely, represent the overall quality of living environment. In fact, in a country like Iran, several indicators such as cultural factors and beliefs can affect citizen satisfaction with living environment. So, results obtained from citizen satisfaction reports in some countries and considered in concepts such as happy living or quality of life can't be generalized everywhere.**

Keywords- performane evaluation; municipality; satisfaction; city; citizens

I. INTRODUCTION

Citizen satisfaction with the city environment and municipal services is an important factor to motivate people to participate in urban development and improving their living environment quality. While dissatisfaction with the performance of public institutions and feel discrimination in municipal services in different areas, caused despair, frustration and lack of responsibility of citizens.

Municipality performance measurement and evaluation for services delivery can be done in two ways, based on objective and subjective perspective. In objective view, quality of services measured according to the certain standards and criteria. While in subjective view, citizen satisfaction and their feelings are important. Despite the importance of measuring citizen satisfaction, unfortunately, there is little attention to this issue in Tehran and there is not enough studies carried out in this field. Evaluation of citizen satisfaction in Tehran has been done, by comparing two districts, one from north of Tehran (with high income people), and another from south (with low level income residents). In this study, the impact of various factors on citizen satisfaction, such as age, gender and education level has been considered. This paper, at first, introduces the research method, approaches and methods of measuring citizen satisfaction with municipal services. Also some examples of practical experiences in other countries have been investigated. Thereafter, the process of operational research based on theoretical findings and review of municipal tasks in Iran and their classification is introduced. Finally, the analysis of research findings and final conclusions will be presented.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

As noted, this study aimed to measure citizen satisfaction with municipal performance at neighborhood scale and also factors which affect it. In this research, satisfaction will be examined as a dependent variable. Urban public services and their quality are considered as independent variables in this research which have direct impact on overall living environment quality.

III. NECESSITY OF "MUNICIPAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CITIZENS"

Miller and Miller describe six "good reasons" communities uses citizen satisfaction surveys: to assess community needs (resource allocation), to guide long-range planning, to guide short-term planning, to assess communication with citizens, to evaluate community services, and to determine policy support. If a community chooses to conduct a citizen satisfaction survey for one or more of these six good reasons, and the community is able to take action based on the citizen satisfaction survey data, then that community has achieved a desired outcome from the survey. But, how do communities use the citizen satisfaction survey data? Miller and Miller also provide guidance on what to do with citizen satisfaction survey data once it is collected. They suggest using data in one or more of the following ways: analyzing

disaggregated data, reporting survey findings to the public, reporting survey findings to staff, incorporating survey findings into the performance measurement system, and benchmarking data against past data and other communities. Next, some ideas and activities taking place in some countries expressed (Bo Gattis, 2010: page2).

IV.   .OPINIONS

The main purpose of reviewing experiences in other countries is to find out transferable lessons for Iranian cities, and the question is whether the results from these surveys in different parts of the world can be generalized to Iran conditions or not?

Gregg Van Ryzin: An important question in the study of local government performance concerns how citizens respond to good or bad government performance. At first glance, this may seem to be a simple question. Citizens are satisfied, we might assume, when government performs well, and are dissatisfied when government performs poorly. But, the question of how citizens respond to government performance is more complicated than this assumption of a simple correspondence. He outlines a conceptual framework for investigating the relationships between government performance, citizen satisfaction, and trust.
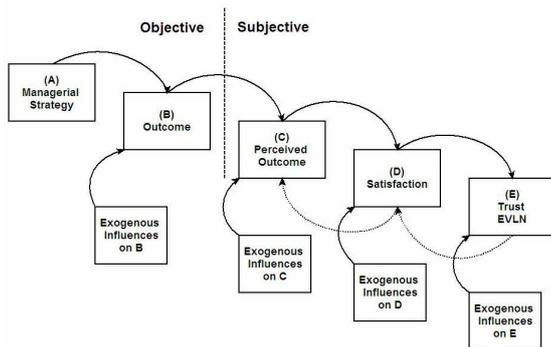

Figure1. Conceptual framework: Government performance, citizen satisfaction, and trust (Van Ryzin , 2006)

A ⟶ B: Managerial Strategy and Objective Outcomes
This link represents the traditional concern of public sector performance measurement–managing for results. For example, Police departments engage in strategies to reduce crime. Of course, public managers cannot entirely direct or control these outcomes. Crime may surge, or recede, for reasons that lie beyond the immediate control of the police.

B ⟶ C: Objective Outcomes and Perceived Outcomes
Outputs are not always what people receive. In fact, all people do not receive all services (or do not need to receive)

C ⟶ D: Perceived Outcomes and Satisfaction
Walter Lippmann (1922) long ago recognized that it was not "the world outside" but "the pictures in our heads" that determine citizens' responses to government and public affairs. He wrote that, in responding to public affairs, "what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge,

put on pictures made by him or given to him" Thus, the question becomes: How do citizens combine their various perceptions of government performance, into an overall satisfaction judgment? One possible answer to this question can be found in the *expectancy-disconfirmation model*. The expectancy-disconfirmation model suggests that citizens form their overall satisfaction judgments by comparing their perceptions of performance to their prior expectations.

D ⟶ E: Satisfaction, Trust, and EVLN
Finally, there is also the political question of what actions citizens take, both individually and collectively, when dissatisfied with local government performance. Layons, Lowery, and DeHoog (1992) in what they term the EVLN model: *exit* (leaving a jurisdiction), *voice* (complaining), *loyalty* (trust), and *neglect* (apathy or alienation). (Van Ryzin, 2006)

When government managers compare statistics on the importance of various government services to statistics on service satisfaction, they can create a powerful tool for making resource allocation decisions. They can use the resulting satisfaction/importance matrices as a basis for reallocating resources from services that citizens rank low in importance to those they rank higher (Walker, 1996:2).
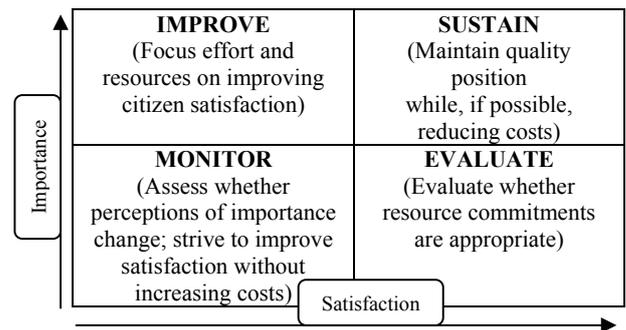

Figure2. Satisfaction/Importance Matrices (Walker, 1996)

V.   SOME EXPERIENCES

A.   Columbus (United States)
For the past two decades, citizens across the US have increasingly demanded better quality public services for their tax dollars. Continued pressure to improve and document government performance lead the City of Columbus to become one of the first metropolitan Midwestern cities to implement a citizen satisfaction survey in 1994. They consider several factors, such as gender, age, residence, employment status and etc. Citizen score to criteria and average rating determines overall satisfaction (Janke, Hadley, Trechter, 2009).

Table1. Quality of Columbus City Services, 2002 (Janke, Hadley, Trechter,

Fire Services	8.6
Emergency Medical Services	8.5
Weekly Garbage Collection	8.1
City Parks in General	7.6
City's Recreational Programs	7.5
Police Services	7.4

Bulk Trash Collection	7.4
Parks in Your Neighborhood	7.3
Yard Waste Collection	7.2
Drinking Water	6.8
Sewers & Drainage	6.8
Cleanliness of Roads & Streets	6.6
Snow Removal	6.4
Condition of Columbus Streets	6.3
Condition of Neighborhood Streets	6.3
Collection of Recyclables	6.2
Average Service Rating	**7.2**

B. Cities In Germany

City rankings are quite popular in Germany. At least once a month a new list for "the greenest German city", "the best places to live at", or "the top ten cities for future economic development" occurs in the newspapers. Just a few of them follow a scientific approach, and thus it is not astonishing that different cities are almost always among the top ten. To resolve this, they choose ordinal multidimensional scaling analysis (MDS) as methodological approach. MDS differs from factor analysis in its ability to explore underlying dimensions and expose overlaps between objects, cities in this case, by accounting for their mutual similarities. They used four distinct dimensions of Citizen Satisfaction: *urbanity & diversity*, *nature & recreation*, *job chances* and *cost efficiency.* These four dimensions build a conceptual framework of relevant factors, which they suggest to be useful in comparative research on citizen satisfaction (Zenker, Petersen, Aholt, 2009:9).
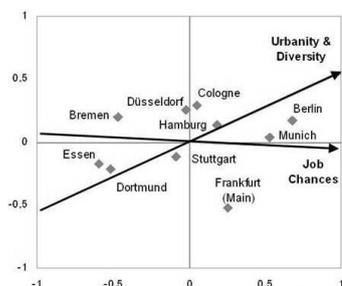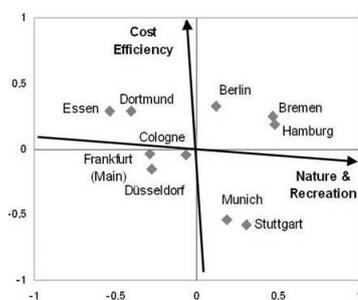

Figure 3, 4: The Four Basic Factors within the Four Dimensions of the City Perception (Zenker, Petersen, Aholt, 2009)

VI. CITIZEN SATISFACTION IN TEHRAN

In present survey for measuring and evaluating citizen satisfaction in Tehran, one area from the north (Bagh-

Ferdous) and the other from the south (Moniriyeh) of the city of Tehran were selected. Residents of the north are almost the richest residents in Tehran, while the south, where residents in which are low income, including the city sport goods stock, is one of the crowded districts in Tehran. Sample of this study includes 134 residents in different socio-economic groups. Population of each neighborhood is close to 24000.

Figure 5: location of neighborhoods in city of Tehran

According to Iran Municipal Act was passed in 1955, municipalities were responsible for numerous tasks. But gradually in later years and by establishing new governmental agencies and ministries due to centralism, some municipality duties were transferred to governmental agencies. According to the objective of this study which evaluate citizen satisfaction with municipal performance in urban neighborhoods, tasks which impact directly on the quality of urban environment and look more important from the perspective of people in the neighborhood, tried to be considered. In general, three groups of selected tasks, "technical and construction ", "cultural" and "civil services" were classified. According to this, 17 indicators as tasks of urban management were provided to respondents and they were asked to determine their satisfaction with each of these indicators in Likert scale and score to all of them and state their priorities. In selected sample, factors such as gender, age and education considered according to latest statistical information to analyze their influence on citizen satisfaction. Data collecting through questionnaires took over two months.
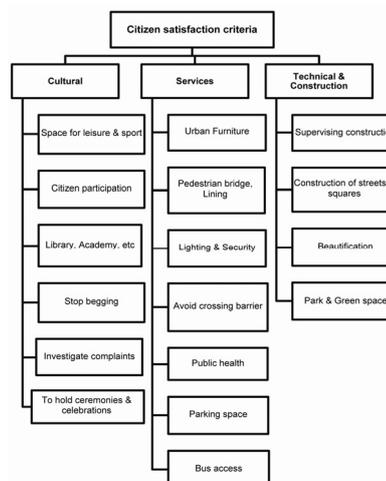

Figure 6: Citizen's satisfaction criteria

Table 2: Resident's comments about selected tasks

Criteria	North	South
Public health	3.39	2.70
Park & Green space	3.21	2.53
Lighting & Security	3.06	2.56
Avoid crossing barrier	2.76	3.14
Parking space	1.92	2.39
Bus access	3.27	3.45
Pedestrian bridge, Lining	3.07	2.95
Urban Furniture	2.98	2.59
Beautification	3.12	2.50
Construction of streets& squares	2.86	2.74
Supervising construction	2.66	2.57
Space for leisure & sport	2.43	1.95
Stop begging	2.26	2.62
Library, Academy, etc	2.46	2.29
To hold ceremonies& celebrations	2.55	2.70
Citizen participation	1.82	1.83
Investigate complaints	2.13	2.04

To measure overall satisfaction, in the first method, after making citizens aware of the responsibilities of urban management, they were asked to specify their overall satisfaction in Likert scale. In fact we asked people to say a score as overall satisfaction regardless of 17 indicators. Table below shows their overall satisfaction:

Table 3: overall satisfaction in the first method

	Very dissatisfied	dissatisfied	Fair	satisfied	Very satisfied	Overall
North	5	10	29	12	3	2.96
South	9	15	32	5	0	2.54

In the second method, citizen overall satisfaction was measured as in most cities in the world is measured. As shown in Columbus example, in many cities average satisfaction of any services is considered as citizen overall satisfaction. According to this, table below shows citizen overall satisfaction:

Table 4: overall satisfaction in the second method

	Overall Satisfaction
North	2.70
South	2.56

As the experiences of various countries shows, citizen satisfaction assessment models have many similarities and major difference mainly is in satisfaction criteria and indicators which depends on the range of municipal functions in each country. Moreover, in many of these experiences, each of the tasks and people's needs considered equally importance. In fact, after a score is assigned to each of the criteria, according to citizen satisfaction, the final score (average) indicates citizen satisfaction, regardless of the fact that the importance of each indicator is different. Certainly, for example, access to safe drinking water is

much more important than children's park in each of the neighborhood units; while in the final assessment the importance of these two are considered equal. In this study we tried to evaluate citizen satisfaction, according to residents priorities and they were asked to specify their priorities. For example results show that for residents in the south, Green space is more important than lighting while in north is contrary.

Table 5: the importance of each of the services to other services according to resident's comments

Criteria	North	South
Public health	8	14
Park & Green space	4	11
Lighting & Security	7	6
Avoid crossing barrier	2	3
Parking space	5	6
Bus access	2	1
Pedestrian bridge, Lining	4	1
Urban Furniture	2	5
Beautification	4	5
Construction of streets& squares	2	1
Supervising construction	3	1
Space for leisure & sport	7	13
Stop begging	5	1
Library, Academy, etc	5	5
To hold ceremonies& celebrations	1	4
Citizen participation	4	2
Investigate complaints	11	8

According to resident's priorities, each of the indicators was assigned a weight and overall satisfaction was determined.

Table 6: overall satisfaction in the second method

	Overall Satisfaction
North	2.64
South	2.41

VII. IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES

Following figures show the impact of social variables such as age, education and gender on citizen satisfaction:

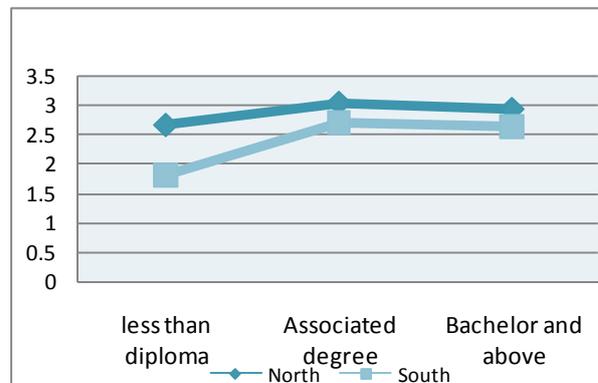Figure7. Relationship of education level and satisfaction

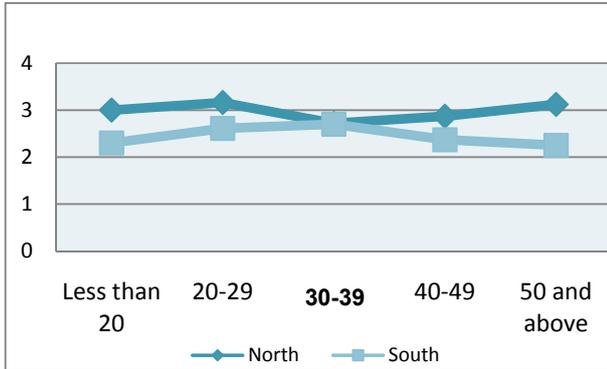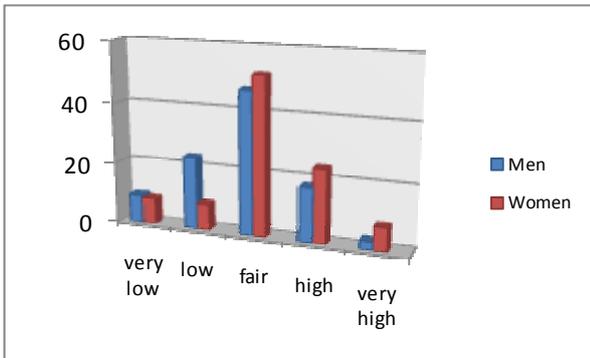Figure8. Relationship of age and satisfaction

Figure9. Relationship of gender and satisfaction

VIII. CONCLUSION

Final results show that overall satisfaction in north is higher than southern residents. But what does this mean? In many cities, the results of these reports are published as "the quality of life" or "happy living". Can we apply these interpretations from other cities in Tehran? Can services which provided by urban management, even if efficiently be offered to citizens, guarantee access to good quality of life? In many countries like Iran, there is no integrated urban management. Many services such as post, police, electricity and water management, etc, are provided by central government not municipalities. Therefore, the city administration responsibility can't be attributed to a single organization. Moreover, in Iran, many factors influence citizen satisfaction, because of religious beliefs and Cultural values. For example, a shrine may cause many people live in a particular neighborhood. The results of this study also show many citizens, despite the low satisfaction, are interested to live in their neighborhood. They mention several reasons such as being old neighborhood, unbreakable neighbor's connections, etc. In fact, even if the level of citizen satisfaction with urban management services be very high, we can't ensure full satisfaction with the quality of life or happy living; as the dissatisfaction of the people with provided services can't be a reason to convince them to leave their neighborhood.

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