

Examining the Status of Good Urban Governance Indicators in Arak City

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The increasing intensification of scale, expansion, and complexity of problems in cities as well as becoming aware of the incompetent conventional system and top-down decisions-making have led to a trend toward systems, in which small and large decisions are made through cooperation between urban beneficiaries. Today, the “good urban governance” approach has been introduced as the most influential and sustainable way of management with the lowest cost. Given the significance of this approach, its examination and analysis in the management of various cities is substantially beneficial. Consequently, the purpose is to examine good urban governance in Arak city as a case study.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study is based on good urban governance. A prominent feature of democratic governments is good governance which cannot be realized without democracy. Today, indicators such as responsiveness, efficiency, accountability, achieving public satisfaction, quality of life, and gaining information on good governance are emphasized. Good governance results in a growing trust between citizens and governments, and ultimately public satisfaction. The indicators of good urban governance include: effectiveness, participation, transparency, lawfulness, accountability, equity, strategic insight, agreed orientation, reception, responsiveness, access to information, etc. In this study, 6 indicators were confirmed, based on which the present study was conducted. These indicators include participation, effectiveness and efficiency, lawfulness, access to information, equity, and political stability and fight against corruption.

3. Methodology

The present inquiry is a descriptive-analytical study with an applied purpose. The total population of the study includes the residents of Arak city in its five urban

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regions who are more than 571068 people. Given the high volume of the population as well as numerous limitations such as time, location, and costs for questionnaire distribution and completion, a sample population was indicated using Cochran's formula; in this regard, the sample population was calculated as 384 people. The main instrument used in the study was self-constructed questionnaire; questioning was done across the citizens of Arak. Ultimately, the collected data were processed and analyzed using SPSS and AMOS softwares.

4. Results and Discussion

The results showed that the six indicators of good urban governance in Arak city are at unfavorable state. Among the indicators of Arak city governance, the ones including effectiveness and efficiency are of the best status with an average of 2.36, compared to other indicators. Furthermore, indicators including participation and access to information were different in various regions. Accordingly, the results of Tukey's test showed that region 1 with average ratings of 1.85 and 1.66 on the indicators of participation and access to information, respectively, is different from other regions; these ratings are very poor while the status of other regions are at a somewhat better state.

The extent of correlation among the six-fold indicators of good urban governance including participation, efficiency and effectiveness, political stability and fight against corruption, lawfulness, and social equity with ultimate satisfaction is 0.691, which is regarded as a direct and relatively intense correlation. Nevertheless, the six-fold indicators examined in Arak city overall are capable of explaining 47% of variance in the indicator of satisfaction toward good urban governance while almost 53% of changes in this indicator are explained through alternative factors.

Furthermore, the results of structural equations modeling based on factor loadings, regression weight, and different fitness indices demonstrated the fact that the indicators of good urban governance in Arak city are at unfavorable state which can be confirmed by the compiled model.

As a result, the indicators of governance are overlooked within the management of Arak city; while the six examined indicators are not even at an average state according to the residents' view, they are in fact below average and involve poor or very poor status. Moreover, an examination of the regions' situations in terms of having these indicators did not show a significant difference between regions except for participation and access to information; region 1 in Arak city is at a very weak state regarding said indicators, compared to the other four regions. However, this does not mean that other regions are of favorable status in this context, except that they are only insignificantly better compared to region 1. Considering the status quo, it appears that the lack of emphasis on applying these indicators could definitely bring about irreversible damages to Arak city management.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Given the findings of the study, Arak city is at an unfavorable state in terms of good urban governance indicators. Not only the continuation of this process could lead to various issues in the context of community participation and various interactions aimed at urban development, diverse urban plans are incapable of

offering a standard, sustainable situation. Subsequently, the application of governance indicators with significant emphasis should be included in Arak city planning by managers and administrators.

Keywords: Indicator, Good Urban Governance, City, Arak City.

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