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Investigating the Effect of Capability and Functionality Indicators of the Municipality on the Presence and Participation of the Citizens (Case Study: Municipality of Mashhad)

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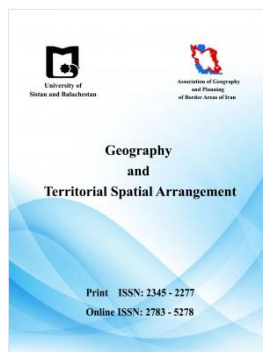
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ABSTRACT

There has been a lot of discussion on the municipality's financial bottlenecks, and many researchers suggest that it should have a stable income. However, the municipality is a service institution and has to pay for its services from the Citizens who benefit from these services. Therefore, if the municipality is unable or unwilling to receive these costs, there must be a flaw in the institution's policies or functions. Hence, this study examines the hypothesis of the existence of the policy and the functional status of the municipality. The study has used a descriptive and analytical method to collect the required data from 150 experts in the field of urban planning. The collected data were analyzed using a one-sample t-test, Friedman test, as well as confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equations based on variance using the ordinary least squares (PLS) method. The results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the function and quality of the developed policies, as well as the capability and performance indicators of Mashhad Municipality. But because the quality and functionality of the designed policies are not at the appropriate level, the capability and functionality indicators have a fundamental weakness. The same factor influences the municipality's failure to pay for the services provided to the Citizens. The Citizens consider this institution not a service but a governing organization.

Keywords:

Capability weakness, Functional indicators, Citizens participation, Municipality, Mashhad.



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Extended Abstract

Introduction

There has been a lot of discussion on the municipality's financial difficulties, and many researchers suggest that it should have a stable income. However, the municipality is a service institution and has to pay for its services from the Citizens who benefit from these services. Therefore, if the municipality is unable or unwilling to receive these costs, there must be a flaw in the institution's policies or functions. It is claimed that cities have become state-owned, Citizens consider themselves tenants, and in the meantime, an institutions (such as a municipality) that belong almost to none of these should pay the price for this recklessness. In the meantime, the municipality has taken destructive initiatives instead of solving its problems with these two sides. Some of these measures are the provision of services and facilities that are not the responsibility of the municipality or getting the cost of such services and the performance of the assigned duties using the most destructive methods, such as density sales, entrepreneurship, and so on. For this purpose, the present study examined the situation of Mashhad Municipality because this institution is facing many difficulties in this metropolis. In fact, the municipality now provides many regional and even trans-regional services but has received almost no government assistance and is even deprived of some of the support provided to other metropolitan areas. This is while this city receives 25 million pilgrims and travelers from Iran and other countries every year and has now become a health tourism hub in Iran in addition to providing services to the 3.5 million population of the city.

Study Area

The study area was the city of Mashhad, which is the second metropolitan and also the largest religious city of Iran with a history of 1200 years due to the presence of the shrine of the 8th Imam of Shia. The city covers an area of over 300 km² and had a population of over 3 million in 2017. Mashhad is expanded along the Kashf-Rud River basin, on the plain of Mashhad and between the two mountains of Hezar-Masjed and Binalud. This location had led to an altitude difference of the maximum of 1150 m and the minimum of 950 m from the sea level. The weather in Mashhad is moderate and variable, and winds are mainly in direction of south-east to north-west. The maximum summer temperature is 43 degrees above zero, and the lowest winter temperature is 23 degrees below zero.

Material and Methods

This study was descriptive and analytical research conducted with a practical purpose. The main question of the study was designed to examine whether the current capability and performance indicators of Mashhad Municipality were far from the desired conditions or not. In addition, the study sought to find out the quality of the policies and functions of this institution and the relationship between these factors. Therefore, it aimed to test the hypothesis of the existence of policy and the functional status of the municipality. The required data were collected from 150 experts in the field of urban planning. The collected data were analyzed using one-sample t-test, Friedman test, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equations based on variance using the partial least squares (PLS) method.

Result and Discussion

The results showed that the calculated t for the average components of the municipality capability indicator and the obtained t for each component separately were statistically significant. In addition, the calculated mean deviation sign was also negative. In general, since the number calculated in this section was less than the median, it can be said that the municipal capability indicator in the current situation was not favorable. In terms of the effect of each component, the chi-square coefficient in Friedman test showed that there was a difference between the mean rankings, which is statistically significant. The calculated coefficient for the average of the components of the performance indicator along with the T of each component is statistically significant. On the other hand, the sign of the mean deviation was negative and, therefore, the median calculated was less than the test number. Based on these results, it can be said that the performance indicator was not in good condition. The mean T-function of policies and the T-factor of each function were statistically significant. In addition, the deviation of the negative mean of this function and its value smaller than the theoretical median indicated that the city design policies for this public institution were not functionally suitable and could not provide the basis for proper performance. The calculated t was also statistically significant for the average quality of policies and each feature. As the set symbol was negative and the average deviation of the properties was less than the median, it can be said that the developed policies did not have the necessary conditions to achieve the goals of this public institution in terms of their power and ability. Concerning the Friedman test, the calculated chi

square was not significant, indicating no differences between the means. Evaluation of the relationship between competency and performance indicators showed that the relationship between the performance of policies and competency indicators was statistically positive and significant. The relationship between the quality of policies and performance indicators was also positive and significant. In addition, there was a positive and significant relationship between the quality of policies and capability indicators and between capability and performance indicators.

Conclusion

The results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the function and quality of the developed policies, as well as the capability and performance indicators of Mashhad Municipality. However, because the quality and functionality of the designed policies were not at an appropriate level, the capability and functionality indicators were fundamentally weak, and this factor contributed significantly to the municipality's failure to pay for the services provided to the Citizens, leading to consideration of this institution as a government organization rather than a service institution by Citizens. In fact, because the municipality has not found its true place, the government, institutions, and Citizens demand duties and responsibilities beyond the capacity of the municipality. Hence, the municipality has to provide revenue in the worst possible way and meet conflicting expectations of the elements. As a result, the inefficiencies envisioned by Parsons, Habermas, and Luhmann due to the interference of social, cultural, economic, and political subsystems create serious challenges that have overshadowed everything. For the same reason, the municipality loses itself, its identity, its capacity, and its function. Undoubtedly, the municipality will still have to make money in the worst way and use it in the most clumsy manner unless these conditions are addressed.

Key words: Capability weakness, Functional indicators, Citizens participation, Municipality, Mashhad.

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