Quality Growth and Evaluation of Local Public Services Performance

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Abstract
Public sector reform aims to increase performance by improving its efficiency and effectiveness by improving the quality of services provided by public service in order to maximize individual welfare of citizens. The purpose of reform is to improve public services because they have to deal with uncertainties and rapid changes that take place in the internal environmental and external pressures.
Public administration, in quality of service provider must make a series of efforts to ensure that citizens know their rights and public services on which they can benefit taking into account the simplification of service delivery, a high quality of its, new administrative procedures for allocating resources in a transparent way and informing the citizens of standards of services and of the methods of compensation in case if the provided quality is different from that promised. Most important is the fact that the local government must realize that effectiveness involves defining objectives that must be achieved simultaneously with the estimation of the results obtained.

Keywords: quality, performance, public service, local government

1. Introduction
Improving the quality and performance evaluation of public services at the local level is a field of activity widely debated in the political, economic and social environment, trying to finalize the legal framework in this regard. Only using such an evaluation can see if public service answers to the demands of beneficiaries.
The theme itself, on improving the quality and the access to public services, and the evaluation of their performance is a matter of business along with increasing the autonomy of local collectivities, through the transfer of new decision responsibilities and financial and property resources and restructuring the local public government by increasing institutional efficiency, administrative simplification, reducing expenses and increasing transparency in relation to citizens. Measuring the quality of public services has as purpose reducing the difference between the level of offered service and the one expected by the users, respectively beneficiaries.
In this regard the measurement of user satisfaction level is achieved by the degree of anticipating needs, meaning the percentage of services that are not granted because they were not taken into account by the service provider even if this expected to be given the degree of satisfaction of service demand which is calculated as a percentage of all the demands of service users that can be not satisfied due to lack of qualified personnel or materials necessary, the degree of promptness with which it responds to emergency institutions, evaluated through the average time from the demand receive until the service has been provided and the efficiency degree in solving problems, calculated as a percentage of all

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problems for which the promised service cannot be provided within the time originally set.

2. Local Public Services Performance

Approaching the civil service from economic point of view it is realized the fact that satisfying the public interest is the fundamental function of public organizations which is reflected through providing public services to citizens, the state being obliged to protect the public interest through laws and regulations.

Legally speaking, public service conceptualized in law no. 178/2010 has as purpose to meet the needs of utility and public interest, and the term satisfying community needs is taken into account the social needs which require improvements of the system of public services at the communities’ level.

The need to improve public services has led to the outline of a distinct approaches, namely managerial approach appeared on the background of diversification of the activities involving public authorities. The principle of "better service to the public" is insufficient to guarantee that they will use public institutions to support the development of a strong company culture.

In the XXI century, the growing expectations of citizens from the public sector, the emergence of new technologies, individualization, delegation and decentralization, financial pressures and trends of internationalization, demographic trends have become important determinant factors of change.

Improving the quality of local public services can be achieved through the following main levers:

- Changing the report between public government and citizen
- Strengthening the role of the user in the service of public interest and its satisfaction mission through specific tools
- Quality of community public services and applying them to the highest standards
- Careful analysis and raising quality standards of public utilities services.

It appears that there is a gap between government and society, despite a well-defined legislative framework in the field (Law no. 544/2001). Therefore it is necessary to be taken the following measures:

- Simplify citizens’ access to public services and provide those where it is possible on electronic path and generalization of offices or public counters.
- Increasing rigor in reasoning and formulating responsibilities and shortening the terms in which the authorities and public services have the obligation to respond to the requests from citizens.
- Eliminate bureaucracy of central and local government on witch is facing the citizens and economic agents businesses.
- Strengthening and enlarging the participation of civil society in decision-making.
- Ensuring transparency of administrative acts.
- Operative communication with citizens.

Although citizens want to participate in public decision-making at the local level it is observed in the present an inability of the public administration to be available to them as it shown in numerous surveys and alerts both in written press and audiovisual.

Citizens can not directly influence the development of a project or a decision of the municipality and the local council from the community where they live, and some of them do not know they have the right to participate in such meetings.

A public service is of quality only when its characteristics and performance are able to meet the expectations, the needs of the beneficiary. Unfortunately, the supplier and the beneficiary does not see the same the quality of service, while public utility service provider takes into account the specifications of the service documentation, such as standards, the provisions from the specification, the user appreciates the quality of service according to its requirements.

Knowing people and their problems lead to the creation of a strong link between the community and local authority, the officials began to identify them with the people they serve.

The active participation of local communities in decision-making on public services is a basic necessity. The offer of public utilities services should be based on community needs and expectations, in this regard the local government authorities should first take into account those who are to use the service when they establish the best way to provide them.

So, the principle of quantification is complementary to the principle of efficiency, this principle sustaining the development of a culture
of public service oriented through the user/beneficiary. Fairness, equality, neutrality and confidentiality are basic principles that ensure the quality of public services. Performance evaluation of local public services can be analyzed through citizen satisfaction degree, analyzing issues such as: [1] - The image of the public local authority regarding issues such as: performance, fairness, courtesy, speed of response, flexibility and adaptability in solving problems, openness to change, assessing citizens - Degree of involvement of the local authority in engaging citizens, in issuing the proposals necessary to decision-making. - Availability of public services. Own internal indicators which can be provided by the public authorities may be: - The number of complaints - The number of complaints resolved - The average time to resolve a complaint - The receptivity of public officials to citizens’ requests - Implementation of new ways of relating to people - Time for issuing opinions, agreements, etc. - Coverage of the public service. The services provided by local citizens, should be based on principles of equality, fairness and transparency in consultation. To ensure efficient public services, local governments must identify the mechanisms by which public services operate on the basis of optimum use of human and material resources compared to expected results. Performance evaluation of local public services is a key element in promoting efficient public services. Typically, the evaluation regards one or more of the following dimensions of a policy: [2] - The need for the implementation of the policy - Policy formulation - Policy implementation and measurement in offering goods or services offered - The impact of policy or the results - Efficiency of the policy. The evaluation contributes to a better understanding of the problem and through the search for other alternative policies, in case that the policy should be addressed and replaced by another. The evaluation exercise includes four principles, necessarily needed to inspire the confidence in the evaluation process and to ensure its credibility. The principles underlying the evaluation are: [3] - Impartiality and independence which involves a complete separation between the evaluation function and the functions of programming and implementation, in the simplest form the people and units responsible for developing and implementing programs should not be the ones to evaluate. - Credibility. In developing the evaluation process must be used competent and independent experts. The credibility of an evaluation can be affected if the recommendations appear to be politically or ideologically motivated, or if do not flow directly from the main body of the report. - Participation of interested factors. The involvement of interested factors in evaluation is crucial to ensure the fact that different perspectives are taken into consideration and reflected in the evaluation results. - Utility. The conclusions and recommendations of an evaluation report must be useful and feasible. The performance of public administration can be determined by a subjective manner, establishing a relationship between expenditure which it has and subjective quality. Subjective quality of public activities is an index that consists of scores recorded in terms of bureaucracy, transparency, effectiveness and corruption. [4]

Performance evaluation of public services involves three types of evaluations: [5]

1. Administrative Reviews, most popular and most discussed. There are four kinds of administrative evaluation, namely: performance, impact and efficiency of the process. Performance evaluation concerns the amount or level of activity that have generated the efforts made. Impact evaluation is the degree in which the performance achieved encounters the need of that good or service, meaning the degree to which the performance achieved has the intended effects. The evaluation of the efficiency follows the alternative methods to achieve a particular result. So this evaluation is reflected on the relationship between the efforts made and the impact achieved. The evaluation of the process allows the analysis of subjects for which a public policy was
successful or failed instead, and makes it possible the change of the policy, so that it will be continued rather than being abandoned. In this framework are examined organizational models, rules and procedures used to implement a policy and to provide goods or services.

2. **Legal evaluations** apply to the legal issues involved in the implementation of that policy by the government. These evaluations are made by legal bodies. Public debates in which are involved the interested actors’ represents highly significant moments in these evaluations.

3. **Political evaluation** characterized by considerations, more or less systematically on a public policy that are made by the representatives of government agencies involved and by any agent interested in that policy. Unlike administrative and legal evaluations, the political ones usually have not a systematic character and not appeal to the sophisticated technical tools. This fact don’t decrease them their significance. The main role is not to improve the way the policy is implemented, but rather to support its application or contrary to raise objections against it.

3. **Conclusions**

Measuring the quality of public services has as purpose reducing the difference between the level of offered service and those expected by the users. Responding to public interest is the fundamental function of public organizations which is reflected through the provision of quality public services to the citizens. Although citizens want to participate in public decision-making at the local level, there is currently an incapability of public administration to be available to them. A public service is on quality only when its characteristics are able to meet the expectations or needs of the beneficiary. Performance evaluation of local public services can be used through the satisfaction degree of the citizen. The services provided by local activities to citizens, must be based on principles of equality, impartiality, transparency and consultation.

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