

CITIZENS' SATISFACTION LEVEL WITH LOCAL SERVICES: THE CASE OF KONYA-EREĞLI

NÍVEL DE SATISFAÇÃO DOS CIDADÃOS COM OS SERVIÇOS LOCAIS: O CASO DE KONYA-EREĞLI

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os métodos de prestação de serviços de instituições públicas e governos locais também mudaram. As instituições que não conseguem atender às expectativas e demandas de seus cidadãos e não conseguem prestar serviços efetivos para os mesmos são consideradas malsucedidas pela sociedade. Portanto, é quase uma necessidade para as instituições públicas e governos locais verificar se seus cidadãos estão satisfeitos com os serviços prestados e tomar medidas corretivas em serviços com baixa satisfação. O objetivo do estudo é determinar o nível de satisfação dos cidadãos com os serviços locais prestados no distrito de Ereğli, na província de Konya. A pesquisa foi realizada por meio de entrevistas face a face com 1.102 pessoas em 49 bairros entre 06.06.2022 e 04.07.2022 no centro do distrito de Ereğli. De acordo com os resultados, os três serviços locais com os quais os inquiridos estão mais satisfeitos são os serviços de “Saúde de Emergência/Ambulância, Bombeiros, Polícia/Segurança”. Verificou-se também que o nível de satisfação dos cidadãos foi afetado pelos “serviços locais, serviços de transportes públicos, serviços de limpeza e saúde ambiental, serviços de espaços verdes ajardinados, serviços de água e esgotos e serviços de iluminação elétrica”.

Palavras-chave: Serviços locais. Satisfação. Município. Satisfação do cidadão. Konya-Ereğli.

Abstract: The state-citizen relationship has changed with the rapid developments in information and communication technologies and the service delivery methods of public institutions and local governments have also changed. The institutions that cannot meet the expectations and demands of their citizens and cannot provide effective services for that are considered unsuccessful by the society. Therefore it is almost a necessity for public institutions and local governments to determine whether their citizens are satisfied with the services provided and to take corrective measures in services with low satisfaction. The aim of the study is to determine the level of citizens' satisfaction with local services provided in Ereğli District of Konya Province. The survey was conducted by face-to-face interviews with 1102 people in 49 neighborhoods between 06.06.2022 and 04.07.2022 in Ereğli district center. According to the findings, three local services that the respondents are most satisfied with are “Emergency Health/Ambulance Services, fire services, police/security” services. It was also found that the level of citizens' satisfaction was affected by “local services, public transportation services, cleaning and environmental health services, park garden green space services, water and sewerage services and electricity lighting services”.

Keywords: Local services. Satisfaction. Municipality. Citizen satisfaction. Konya-Ereğli.

Resumo: A relação estado-cidadão mudou com o rápido desenvolvimento das tecnologias de informação e comunicação e

1. Introduction

The rapid developments in information and communication technologies affect the method of service delivery of local governments and force public administrators, local administrators and mayors to be more effective in performing their duties (Bostancı and Erdem, 2020: 1).

Today, “quality of life, service quality and citizens’ satisfaction with services” have become very important for local governments and municipalities that provide local public services to their citizens. Whether they can meet the demands and expectations of the citizens they serve is one of the most important issues in the future planning of local governments and their evaluation by the society (Örselli and Bilici, 2018: 193-195).

Especially, the re-election of mayors is directly related to the quality of services and citizens’ satisfaction with the services provided (Bostancı and Erdem, 2020: 1). Local governments produce many different local services related to daily life. However, how and in which quality these services are provided is as important as the delivery of these services (Öztürk and Coşkun, 1998: 115). However, citizens’ demand for quality public services is increasing day by day, and improvements in public service delivery affect citizen satisfaction and loyalty (Romero-Subia et.al., 2022: 1). But the local governments are considered successful by the society as long as they can provide quality services (Örselli and Bilici, 2018: 195).

The success of public administrations in democratic countries is directly proportionate to the quality of public services provided to citizens. For this reason, administrators who want to be re-elected develop policies that will improve the quality of public services and increase the satisfaction of citizens. In this context, researching and measuring citizens’ perception of public service quality and satisfaction is important for both researchers and administrators (Kayaci, 2022: 353).

Citizen satisfaction surveys reveal satisfaction levels in different geographical areas or among citizens with different socio-demographic characteristics. Such information can help identify which aspects of service delivery increase satisfaction, understand users’ needs and expectations, control quality between the areas and services, compare satisfaction levels expressed by different groups of the population, and potentially reallocate public spending accordingly (Benmansour, 2019: 328). Measuring citizens’ satisfaction with local public services is central to a citizen-centered approach to service delivery and is an important indicator of local government performance. Because local governments can increase public satisfaction and reduce

costs when they provide services according to the needs of the people who use them (Benmansour, 2019: 326).

The aim of the study is to determine the satisfaction levels of citizens in Ereğli District of Konya province with the local public services provided by the municipality and to determine which factors are affected by them. In order to determine the satisfaction of citizens with local services, a survey was conducted by face-to-face interviews with 1102 people in 49 neighborhoods between 06.06.2022-04.07.2022 in Ereğli district center. In order to determine the satisfaction of the participants with local services, factor analysis was carried out and a total of 6 factors were determined as “local services, public transportation services, electricity and lighting services, water-sewerage services, cleaning and environmental health services, park, garden and green space services”. According to these factors, it has been analyzed citizens’ satisfaction levels with local services.

2. Literature Review

The concept of local service means non-national services about a place, locality, neighborhood or region and the citizens living there. Today, the majority of local services are provided to citizens by local governments. Municipalities have a special importance in meeting local common needs (Örselli, Bayrakçı and Bilici, 2019: 4086). Local common needs such as collection and evaluation of solid wastes, drinking water, transportation, access to park areas, cleaning, environment, roads are met by municipalities. One of the most basic duties of the municipality in meeting these local common needs is to produce solutions to the problems faced by the service beneficiaries (Yaman, İsbir and Tosun, 2022: 54-55) and to keep the satisfaction of citizens with these services high.

Especially, the quality of basic public services needed in daily life is an effective factor in citizens’ perceptions of the state, public institutions and local governments (Lim and Lee, 2021: 1). In addition, citizens’ expectations for public service quality have become a factor that forces public administrations to raise standards in public organizations (Kayaci, 2022: 353).

Therefore the local governments are recognized as successful, when they meet the needs of citizens in society and when they are able to satisfy citizens with the services they provide. In other words, the success or service performance of municipalities can be measured by the level of satisfaction of citizens with their services. Therefore, citizen satisfaction is of great importance for municipalities (Çakır, 2022: 301). Especially at the local level, mayors are subjected to strong

pressure to please the citizens. If they cannot meet the satisfaction of the citizens, it is very difficult to achieve success in the elections again. (Collins, Kim and Tao, 2019: 21).

Satisfaction is the feeling of pleasure when you get something you want. In terms of consumption, it is stated that satisfaction is the sum of psychological states that are the result of emotions that include expectations combined with previous consumer feelings about the experience (Romero-Subia et.al., 2022: 2). Customer satisfaction is the ability of a product to meet expected quality, the post-consumer evaluation of the quality of the product, or the overlap between perceived quality and perceived value (Romero-Subia et.al., 2022: 5).

Accordingly, citizen satisfaction can be defined as the happiness or pleasure derived from an experience or experience with services (or goods, processes or programs) provided by government and public institutions (Collins, Kim and Tao, 2019: 21).

Interest in satisfaction surveys is not new. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there has been an increase in satisfaction surveys, particularly in relation to local services. Citizen satisfaction surveys were used in the US to measure the quality of local services provided by local governments. Then many local initiatives were launched and implemented in the 1990s, such as the American Customer Satisfaction Index or the Canadian Common Measurement Tool (Benmansour, 2019: 327).

The basic assumption underlying satisfaction research is that there is a relationship between the quality of a service and the satisfaction level of its users. A change in service quality is assumed to create a change in the level of satisfaction (Benmansour, 2019: 327). The satisfaction of users of local public services is important for various stakeholders, such as mayors and political actors. Therefore, there is a comprehensive research on the factors affecting citizens' satisfaction with local public services provided by local governments.

Most of these studies discuss the factors that affect satisfaction and measure services accordingly (Gendel-Guterman and Billig, 2021: 171).

In order to provide better services and expand their opportunities, local governments have to know and determine to what extent citizens benefit from the public/local services they provide, to what extent the services meet the needs and their effect on the quality of life of citizens (Örselli and Bayrakçı, 2016: 41). In this context, it is very important that they provide effective, efficient and high quality services in order to continue their duties for local government bodies whose elections are renewed for certain periods of time (İzci, Göksoy-Sevinçli and Demirci, 2022: 2).

It is the citizens, who are the users of the services, who measure and evaluate the quality of the services provided by local governments and who are satisfied or dissatisfied with the services accordingly. In addition, it is also observed that citizens are not always objective when evaluating their satisfaction with the services provided. Some citizens pay attention to the way the service is provided, while others perceive satisfaction with the services according to their previous experiences and expectations (Örselli and Bayrakçı, 2016: 29-30).

Indeed, if local governments can access accurate information on citizens' satisfaction levels with the services, they can take effective steps to improve quality and performance. Various methods have been developed to measure the satisfaction of individuals benefiting from such services. In Turkey, various studies have been conducted to measure the quality of local government services and satisfaction with the services provided (Bostancı and Erdem, 2020: 1).

3. Methodology

The aim of the study is to determine the level of satisfaction of citizens in Ereğli District of Konya Province with local public services provided by local governments. The study seeks to answer the question "*How satisfied are the citizens with the local services provided in Konya-Ereğli district?*". Therefore a quantitative field research was planned to determine the satisfaction of citizens with local services. A fully structured questionnaire form was used as a data collection tool in the study. The questions in the questionnaire form were inspired by previous survey studies in the literature to measure citizens' satisfaction with local services (Örselli and Bayrakçı, 2016: 30-38). In the survey study, a total of 86 questions were included in the scale developed to determine and analyze the satisfaction levels of citizens with local services provided in Ereğli.

The study consists of citizens of the Republic of Turkey who are 18 years of age and over and who live in Ereğli district of Konya province. "Stratified sampling method" was used in the example selection in the research. The survey was conducted between 06.06.2022-04.07.2022 by face-to-face interviews with 1102 people in 49 neighborhoods. In order to research the reliability of the scale used in the survey, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated for similar questions and the reliability of the scale was determined as 0.91.

The number of people to be interviewed in the neighborhoods where the survey will be conducted was determined by stratifying the number of voters. The survey was not conducted in public places such as cafes, coffeehouses, shopping malls, bus stations, schools, etc., and was

conducted in housing estates by interviewing a maximum of two households and with only one participant from each household.

For the survey study, ethics committee permission numbered 2022/158 and dated 08.04.2022 was obtained from Scientific Research Ethics Committee of Social and Human Sciences at Necmettin Erbakan University.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

The demographical characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Gender	Number	%
Male	565	51,3
Female	537	48,7
Total	1102	100,0
Age Distribution	Number	%
18-24	270	24,5
25-34	265	24,0
35-44	266	24,1
45-54	164	14,9
55 and above	137	12,4
Total	1102	100,0
Education Status	Number	%
Primary School	157	14,2
Secondary School	171	15,5
High School	444	40,3
University	318	28,9
Postgraduate	12	1,1
Total	1102	100,0
Occupational Distribution	Number	%
Housewife	190	17,2
Small Tradesmen / Artisans	87	7,9
Worker	191	17,3
Student	125	11,3
Retired	87	7,9
Private sector employee	162	14,7
Civil Servant	101	9,2
Unemployed / Looking for a job	40	3,6
Farmer	80	7,3
Trader/Businessman/Industrialist	39	3,5
Total	1102	100,0

When the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are analyzed, it can be stated that the example shows a balanced distribution in terms of gender, age, education and

occupation. In this respect, it can be said that it reflects the Ereğli population with a very small difference.

4.2. Participants' Opinions on "Living in Ereğli"

In order to find out whether the participants were satisfied with living in Ereğli and their opinions about Ereğli, they were given many suggestions and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with these suggestions. The findings obtained are organized in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants' Perceptions of Living in Ereğli

Living in Ereğli ...	Average	Level of Participation
Ereğli is a livable place	3,58	71,6
I am pleased to live in Ereğli	3,43	68,6
I feel safe in Ereğli	3,12	62,4
Ereğli is a good place to spend old age	3,05	61,0
Ereğli is an ideal city to raise a child	3,02	60,4

Note: (i) According to the average calculation in the scale completely agree 5, agree 4, neither agree nor disagree 3, disagree 2 and strongly disagree 1. Those who said they had no opinion were not included in the average calculation.

When the findings obtained are analyzed, it was observed that the participants mostly agreed with the statement "Ereğli is a livable place" about living in Ereğli. Secondly, they agreed with the statement "I am satisfied with living in Ereğli" and thirdly with the statement "I feel safe in Ereğli". When the findings are evaluated in general, it is determined that the participants are generally satisfied with living in Ereğli.

4.3. Citizens' Satisfaction with Local Services

Table 3: Satisfaction with Local Services

Local Services	Average	Level of Satisfaction
Emergency Health and Ambulance Services	3,64	72,8
Fire services	3,60	72,0
Police/Security Services	3,55	71,0
Graveyard and funeral services	3,54	70,8
Natural gas service	3,41	68,2
KOMEK (Vocational Training) Courses	3,37	67,4
Population and citizenship services	3,25	65,0
Land Registry Services	3,19	63,8

Mukhtar services	3,10	62,0
Traffic regulation and control service	3,09	61,8
Police services	3,00	60,0
Zoning, settlement and license services	2,96	59,2
Museums	2,85	57,0
Services for children	2,77	55,4
Services for the elderly	2,76	55,2
Services for people with disabilities	2,69	53,8
Urban transformation works	2,68	53,6
Social assistance	2,66	53,2
Services for women	2,53	50,6
Services for young people	2,23	44,6
Artistic and cultural services (concerts and festivals)	2,12	42,4

Note: (i) According to the scale, “not at all satisfied” means 1; “not satisfied” means 2; “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” means 3; “satisfied” means 4; and “very satisfied” means 5.

When the findings are analyzed, the service that the participants are most satisfied with among the services provided at the local level is “Emergency Health/Ambulance Services”. “Fire services” ranked second and “police/security services” ranked third. The three least satisfied services are “*services for women, services for young people and artistic and cultural services*”.

4.4. Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is one of the multivariate statistical techniques and is widely used. The aim of factor analysis is to express a large number of items with fewer factors. As a result of factor analysis, the items measured come together and form various groups. Each factor group is labeled with a factor name according to the common characteristics of the items in it (Karasar, 2005:152). In this way, variables that measure the same feature are grouped together and it becomes possible to measure with fewer factors. Before conducting factor analysis, the level of mutual correlation between the variables and their suitability for factor analysis were evaluated with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test. While KMO values lower than 0.50 refer to “unacceptable level”, KMO values of 0.90 are considered “very good”.

The KMO value of the local satisfaction scale is greater than 0.50. The high level of this value reveals that the variables can be subjected to factor analysis. Barlett’s test also indicates that the relationship between the variables is suitable for analysis and the results are statistically significant. In this context, KMO and Barlett test results show that the scales used in the research are suitable for factor analysis and as a result, meaningful groups are possible. In

addition, as a result of the factor analysis, in order to find the most appropriate solution, the factors were required to have an eigenvalue greater than 1 and factor loadings greater than 0.45.

After these processes, explanatory factor analysis was firstly performed in order to determine the factor structure of the scale. In order to determine the factor structure of the scale, it was performed rotated (Component Matrix) and principal components analysis rotated according to the principal axes (Rotated Component Matrix - Varimax). As a result of the factor analysis applied for the scale used in the study, KMO coefficient (0.969) was above 0.50 and the Bartlett's significance coefficient was 0.00.

Factor analysis was performed on the scale included in the questionnaire study conducted to determine how satisfied the citizens are with the local services provided and some questions were removed from the factor analysis in order to increase the variance explanation rate. According to the results of the factor analysis, a total of 6 factors were formed and explained 64,171% of the total change in the data. Table 3 shows which services are included within the scope of the factor dimensions according to the factor analysis performed to determine the factors affecting the satisfaction levels of citizens with local services.

Table 3: Items Constituting Factors and Factor Loads

Factor Dimensions	Items	Faktor loads	Variance Explained %
1) Local Services	Emergency Health and Ambulance Services	,689	18,932
	Fire services	,678	
	Police/Security Services	,666	
	Graveyard and funeral services	,653	
	Natural gas service	,645	
	KOMEK (Vocational Training) Courses	,633	
	Population and citizenship services	,628	
	Land Registry Services	,588	
	Mukhtar services	,579	
	Traffic regulation and control service	,566	
	Police services	,561	
	Zoning, settlement and license services	,559	
	Museums	,555	
	Services for children	,553	
	Services for the elderly	,548	
	Services for people with disabilities	,542	
	Urban transformation works	,539	
	Social assistance	,537	
	Services for women	,533	
	Services for young people	,528	
Artistic and cultural services (concerts and	,521		

	festivals)		
2) Park Garden Green Space Services	There is not enough park and green space in our neighborhood	,844	10,844
	Game or sports vehicles in the park are not enough	,830	
	Parks are not clean and well maintained	,828	
	Parks are not safe	,820	
	Insufficient number of hobby gardens	,748	
3) Public Transport Services	I can't go where I want without making multiple transfers	,810	9,384
	Insufficient number of vehicle trips at night	,784	
	Vehicles are not clean and tidy	,779	
	I have to wait a long time to get on the bus	,773	
	Ticket prices are expensive	,735	
	Drivers are not respectful to the citizens	,722	
	I don't feel safe in vehicles	,692	
4) Electric Lighting Services	Inadequate lighting on my street	,724	9,060
	Electricity prices are expensive	,716	
	I can't be informed before power cuts	,713	
	Timely intervention to electricity failures	,702	
5) Water and Sewage Services	I drink tap water at home	,941	8,801
	Water prices are expensive	,941	
	I can't be informed before water cuts	,913	
	Timely intervention to water failures	,850	
6) Cleaning and Environmental Health Services	Garbage on my street is not collected regularly	,941	7,150
	No cleaning around the garbage after garbage collection	,779	
	Disturbing noise during garbage collection	,728	
	Our street is not cleaned regularly	,721	

Note: (i) Total explained variance: 64,171 (ii) Varimax rotation was applied.

Factors affecting the level of satisfaction with local services in general were researched by linear regression analysis using the results of factor analysis.

Table 4: Local Service Satisfaction: Dependent-Independent Variables

Dependent Variable	Factors
Satisfaction with Local Services	1) Local Services
	2) Park Garden Green Space Services
	3) Public Transport Services
	4) Electric Lighting Services
	5) Water and Sewage Services
	6) Cleaning and Environmental Health Services

Table 5: Results of Linear Regression Analysis

Regression				ANOVA	
R	R ²	Corrected R ²	Standard Error	F	Sig.
,417 ^a	,174	,172	,82456	96,631	,000**
	Katsayı			t	Sig.
Constant	2,139		,113	18,903	,000*
1) Local services	,271		,040	8,537	,000*
3) Public Transport Services	,244		,027	8,620	,000*
6) Cleaning and Environmental Health Services	,201		,024	4,652	,000*
2) Park Garden Green Space Services	,176		,043	4,329	,000*
5) Water and Sewage Services	,169		,047	4,419	,000*
4) Electric Lighting Services	,152		,033	4,786	,000*

It has been determined that the factors affecting satisfaction with local services provided in Ereğli are local services, public transportation services, cleaning and environmental health services, park garden and green space services, water and sewerage services and electricity and lighting services, respectively, although in different dimensions.

5. Conclusion

The studies measuring citizens' satisfaction with public services have become widely used by public administrators and local governments in recent years. Because the satisfaction surveys are one of the most effective tools of local governments to understand citizens' satisfaction levels, needs, concerns and priorities. They can also be used to help make strategic decisions on long-term planning, priority setting and budgeting as well as to identify the impact of reforms on citizens for organizational performance (Benmansour, 2019: 335).

This study aims to examine whether citizens are satisfied with the local public services provided in Ereğli district, Konya province and which factors affect their satisfaction. Firstly, the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants were examined and then their satisfaction levels with local services were determined. In addition, as a result of the factor analysis, it was determined that the factors affecting the participants' satisfaction with local services are local services, park, garden and green space services, public transportation services, electricity and lighting services, water and sewerage services and cleaning and environmental health services.

In general, the methodology and quality of local services affect citizens' satisfaction with these services. In order to increase the quality and satisfaction of local services with less

satisfaction, it is important to take the necessary measures by solving the issues perceived as problematic.

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