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EVALUATION OF OFFICER BEHAVIOUR BY CITIZENS IN THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Abstract:

With each passing day, the importance of citizen satisfaction with the public service is increasing. As a result, citizen-oriented management approach has emerged. In this respect, citizen satisfaction depends on the positive reviews of citizens about public services s/he benefit. Today's governments make some arrangements to increase the quality of public services. Thanks to these arrangements the satisfaction of citizens with the public services is trying to be provided. A remarkable situation in these arrangements is that, as well as service quality in the delivery of public service, relations arising between officers delivering public service and citizens also directly affect citizen satisfaction with public services. While positive behaviours of officers increase the satisfaction level of citizens with public services, negative behaviours can lead to negative evaluation of public services by citizens and thus considering them as of poor quality and dissatisfaction with public services.

In this study, it is tried to be analysed with a survey study how 848 citizens over the age of 18 living within the service limits of Nevşehir municipality evaluate the behaviours of officers delivering public services. Also in this study, whether there is a relationship between demographic features of citizens and their evaluation of the behaviours of officers is investigated, and responses to various hypotheses have been sought in this regard

Keywords:

Public Service, Citizen, Officer Behaviour

With each passing day, the importance of citizen satisfaction with the public service is increasing. As a result, citizen-oriented management approach has emerged. In this respect, citizen satisfaction depends on the positive reviews of citizens about public services s/he benefit. Today's governments make some arrangements to increase the quality of public services. Thanks to these arrangements the satisfaction of citizens with the public services is trying to be provided. A remarkable situation in these arrangements is that, as well as service quality in the delivery of public service, relations arising between officers delivering public service and citizens also directly affect citizen satisfaction with public services. While positive behaviours of officers increase the satisfaction level of citizens with public services, negative behaviours can lead to negative evaluation of public services by citizens and thus considering them as of poor quality and dissatisfaction with public services.

In this case, officer's willingness about helping citizens who have adequate knowledge about this service leads them to perceive the public service as qualified, undoubtedly. For this reason, officers should be motivated for their job and also they should use this motivation in an effective and efficient way. In a research conducted by Zeithaml and his friends, it came out that customers'/citizens' satisfaction with service quality depends on trustworthiness with 32%, physical facilities with 11 % and politeness, personal attention, helping citizens and voluntariness during service delivery with 59 % (Ay and Gülgün, 1998: 255). As seen in this study, behaviours of officer who is delivering the service affect satisfaction with public service to a large extent with 59 %.

Today, citizens have got an active position rather than a passive position vis-a-vis state. And this has led public administrations to locate citizens at the centre of their change and restructuring studies and give direction to these studies (Karataş, 2007:84). Thus, citizens, in their endeavour of making use of services, started to attract attention of public sector, as in the private sector (Çukurçayır, 2006:56)

Evaluation of officers' behaviours by citizens has gained importance with coming to the forefront of citizen-oriented administration approach. By means of coming to know what citizens think about officers or how they perceive officers, revealing incomplete or incorrect behaviours of officers and correcting these negative behaviours can be possible. Officers are somehow means in the public service delivery. And use of these means in an efficient and effective way will cause an increase in the quality of public service. In that vein, general perception in public

opinion is that there are some problems about officers' behaviours towards citizens, and these problems affect quality perception in a negative way in public service.

In addition, citizens' opinions about public services should be evaluated at regular intervals. This evaluation, actually, means measuring the quality of public service. Measuring service quality constitutes the first level of service quality improvement and development process. If one organization reach accurate information about public service quality it delivers, it can take more effective steps about what to do next (Usta ve Memiş, 2010:334).

The idea of 'achieving public service quality increase is possible with a quantitative and relative increase in personnel (human resources) and other resources' is not generally accepted anymore. In addition, it is argued that administration can be more efficient and effective in case of paying primary importance for needs and expectations of personnel –who is responsible for delivering public service- and community-who is getting that service- and in case of allocating adequate resources for this aim. In other words, public institutions' and organizations' being efficient and effective in public service depends on their taking advantage of human resources (Ekinçi, 2008:176).

Policies determined by medium and senior level managers are effective in making services delivered by public more qualified. However, officers who will implement these policies also must participate in this process. Because, officers who are in direct contact with citizens have more information about the problems which come out in practice and this will contribute to the formation of more effective policies.

In this study, we will try to reveal how citizens evaluate officers' behaviours while they are getting public service, because some positive or negative behaviour shown by officers affect citizen satisfaction with public services. In the meantime, whether respondents assess officers' behaviours in a different way depending on their education, age and income situations also will be tried to reveal.

THE AIM, LIMITATIONS AND METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

3.1. The aim of study

In this study, it is aimed to identify how citizens living within the municipal boundaries of Nevşehir province evaluate behaviours of officers while delivering public service.

Moreover, whether there is a relationship between this evaluation and citizens' demographic features is also analysed, answers for several hypothesis are sought for in this direction.

3.2 Hypotheses of Study

Hypothesis 1: As citizens' level of education differentiates, they assess officers' behaviours differently.

Hypothesis 2: As citizens' age groups differentiate, they assess officers' behaviours differently.

Hypothesis 3: As citizens' income level differentiates, they assess officers' behaviours differently.

3.3. Data Collection

The first part of our study consists of questions that will help to identify demographic features of respondents; and second part consists of questions that will help us to measure citizen satisfaction with officers' behaviours.

The research had started in July 2013. Before applying the research, pre-test studies were held on a sufficient number of respondents. With the help of this pre-test, comprehensibility of questions and statements were examined; necessary changes were made and deficiencies were completed in order to eliminate misunderstandings. The questionnaire was limited to the citizens who are dwelling within the municipal boundaries of Nevşehir province and who are at the age of 18 and above (which represent the electorate) and 900 questionnaires were distributed on the basis of random sample. When invalid questionnaire forms were excluded, 848 valid questionnaire forms were obtained. Data derived from these 848 surveys were analysed with statistical methods.

3.4. Universe and Sampling

The universe of the study is citizens living within the municipal boundaries of Nevşehir province at the age of 18 and above. According to the 'Address-based Population Registration System Database' report of Turkish Statistical Institute, central population of Nevşehir province is 88.170. Within this population, 43.369 of them are male and 44.801 of them are female citizens.¹ A universe of 100.000 units can be

¹ <http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/adnksdagitapp/adnks.zul> 19.10.2013 tarihli erişim

represented with a sample of 383 units on the basis on 5% sampling error.² Namely, a sample which has the power to represent the universe is used in this study.

3.5. Limitations of the Study

This study is limited with the municipal boundaries of the province of Nevşehir.

3.6. Data Analysis Method

Data of 848 citizens participated in the survey was analysed with statistical methods. For the classification and analysis of data SPSS for Windows 12.0 programme was utilised. Differences were detected with Anova test and frequency distributions, reliability and validity analysis were made with Scheffe test. Findings derived from surveys were tabulated and interpreted.

In order to evaluate behaviours of officers, the questions were prepared in 5-point Likert Scale, and respondents were asked to mark the most appropriate answer for them "1 Never", "2 Rarely", "3 Sometimes", "4 Often", "5 Always".

1. Findings of the Research

1.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Gender

	Frequency	Percentage
Female	332	39,2
Male	516	60,8
Total	848	100,0

39,2% of the participants are female, while 60.8% are male.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Age.

	Frequency	Percentage
18-24	169	19,9
25-30	210	24,8
30-40	240	28,3
40-50	156	18,4
50 and above	73	8,6
Total	848	100,0

² Baş, T. BAŞ, Türker (2003). Anket, 2. Edition, Seçkin Yayıncılık, Ankara.

19,9 % of the participants are in the 18-24 age range, 24,8 % of them are in the 25-30 age range, 28,3 % are in the 30-40 age range, 18,4 % are in the 40-50 age range and finally, 8,6 % of them are at the age of 50 and above.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents According to Occupation

	Frequency	Percentage
Officer	124	14,6
Student	132	15,6
Farmer	45	5,3
Self-Employed	94	11,1
Worker	72	8,5
Shopkeeper	154	18,2
Housewife	133	15,7
Unemployed	36	4,2
Other	58	6,8
Total	848	100,0

14,6 % of the respondents are officers, 15,6 % of them are students, 5,3 % of them are farmers, 11,1 % of them are self-employed, 8,5 % of them are workers, 18,2 % of them are shopkeepers, 15,7 % of them are housewives, 4 % of them are unemployed and 6,8 % of them are from the other occupations.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents According to Educational Status

	Frequency	Percentage
Primary School	215	25,4
High School	353	41,6
Associate Degree- Undergraduate Degree	280	33,0
Total	848	100,0

25,4 % of the respondents are graduate from primary school and 41,6 % of them are graduate from high school. 30,4 % of the respondents have a university degree(both associate and undergraduate degree) while 2,6 % of them have graduate degree.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents According to Income

	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 600	115	13,6
601-1000	217	25,6
1001-2000	217	25,6
2001-3000	95	11,2
More than 3000	50	5,9
No Income	154	18,2
Total	848	100,0

When all the participants are evaluated according to their income level, 18,2 % of them are found to have no income while 13,6 % of them live with an income of less than 600 TL, 25,6 % of them with 601-1000 TL, 25,6 % of them with 1001-2000 TL, 11,2 % of them with 2001-3000 TL and 5,9 % of them with an income of more than 3000 TL.

Table 6: Evaluation of the Behaviours of Officers in the Public Service

	N	Mini mum	Maxim um	Mean	Std. Deviation
Costume and clothing are smooth.	848	1	5	4,0142	1,00872
They are meticulous about complying with working hours.	848	1	5	3,4682	1,26582
They have the necessary information about the business.	848	1	5	3,4564	0,95741
They are reliable in their work.	848	1	5	3,2854	1,04273
They inform citizens in a way that they can understand.	848	1	5	3,2123	1,04095
They are courteous and respectful against citizens.	848	1	5	3,1132	1,05186

They do not give importance to the external appearance of the citizens	848	1	5	3,1108	1,23868
They are willing to help citizens.	848	1	5	3,0495	1,17124
They make transactions quickly without keeping citizens waiting.	848	1	5	2,8833	1,11945
They are willing to correct the mistakes they made.	848	1	5	2,8750	1,14413
They try to put themselves in citizens' place.	848	1	5	2,4700	1,25651
Valid N (listwise)	848				

1 Never, 2 Rarely, 3 Sometimes, 4 Often, 5 Always

As can be seen from the table, behaviours shown by officers during public service delivery are presented to respondents in the form of statements and they are asked to assess these statements. In these analyses, only one behaviour had a score above 4, which means satisfaction with this behaviour. This statement is "Costume and clothing are smooth". This situation can make contribution to the formation of a positive atmosphere between citizen and officer. However, this is not a situation which directly affects service quality and thus satisfaction. In this evaluation, if we don't accept 3 and 3,49 points as totally dissatisfied and see them as a sign of satisfaction, behaviours that can be seen as positive are as follows.

When we look at scoring of the following statements, we can see that citizens are not so much satisfied with these situations, but they also do not evaluate them very negatively "They are meticulous about complying with working hours", "They have the necessary information about the business", "They are reliable in their work", "They inform citizens in a way that they can understand", "They do not give importance to the external appearance of the citizens", "They are willing to help citizens".

One remarkable point in this table is the evaluation about officers' giving importance to external appearance of citizens. General attitude about this issue is that officers give importance to the external appearance of citizens. However, according to the ultimate evaluation, this statement is not supported completely.

The negative evaluation for the statement of “They make transactions quickly without keeping citizens waiting” can be interpreted with the continuation of the understanding of “go today and come back tomorrow”. Moreover, their negative evaluation of the statement of “They are willing to correct the mistakes they made” can be interpreted as officers don’t accept responsibility of misdoing, put the responsibility on citizens and don’t help citizens about this issue. Also, the statement of “They try to put themselves in citizens’ place”, which highlights the importance of empathy, is interpreted negatively by respondents. In fact, empathy can be seen as a way to overcome all problems. However, it is observed that citizens see officers as not so willing to make empathy with them. These negative considerations that come up during public service delivery between citizens and officers lead to increase of dissatisfaction with public services and thus assessment of services as unqualified. At this point one can say that although service delivered by the institution is qualified, the negative behaviours of officer may lead citizens to perceive this service as unqualified. At his perspective it can be alleged that negative behaviours of officer may lead citizens to perceive that service as unqualified, although the service is qualified.

After these general evaluations of respondents about officers’ behaviours, if we have a look at whether respondents make a different evaluation according to their education, income and age groups:

4. 2. Findings Related to Hypotheses of the Research

Hypothesis 1: As citizens’ level of education differentiates, they assess officers’ behaviours differently.

When we analyse whether there is a difference in evaluating officers’ behaviours according to education levels of respondents by using Anova test, the results obtained are as follows.

Table 7: Evaluation of Officers’ Behaviours According to Education Levels (Anova Test Summary)

		F	Sig.
They are reliable in their work.	Between Groups	15,903	,000
	Within Groups		
	Total		

They have the necessary information about the business	Between Groups	4,891	,008
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They are courteous and respectful against citizens.	Between Groups	8,119	,000
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They inform citizens in a way that they can understand.	Between Groups	10,808	,000
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They do not give importance to the external appearance of the citizens	Between Groups	10,278	,000
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They are willing to help citizens.	Between Groups	5,807	,003
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They are meticulous about complying with working hours.	Between Groups	8,336	,000
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They make transactions quickly without keeping citizens waiting.	Between Groups	5,133	,006
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They try to put themselves in citizens' place.	Between Groups	4,328	,013
	Within Groups		
	Total		

In terms of 95 % confidence interval and 5 % level of significance, whether citizens evaluate officers' behaviours differently according to education groups is tried to be measured with Anova Test. The findings are written up in table 7. According to this, because of the fact that p (sig) < 0.05 in the 95% confidence interval and 5% significance level, it seems that there is a statistically significant difference according to education groups. Evaluation and education groups that lead to this difference is identified in the Scheffe Test table. However, Scheffe Test table is not included in this study. Instead, we only state the groups in which there are significant differences. According to Scheffe Test, it is seen that difference is between the people who are graduate from university and who are graduate from primary school and high school regarding the statements of "They are reliable in their work.", "They have the necessary information about the business", "They are courteous and respectful against citizens", "They inform citizens in a way that they can understand", "They do not give importance to the external appearance of the citizens", "They are willing to help citizens", "They are meticulous about complying with working hours", "They make transactions quickly without keeping citizens waiting". Citizens who have a university degree are seen to evaluate above statements more positively than citizens who have primary school and high school degree.

In the statement of "The number of officers working in the institutions is too much", it is seen that the difference is between citizens who have university degree and high school degree. In this context, it is seen that university-graduates assess this officer behaviour more positively than high school graduates.

Regarding the statement of "They try to put themselves in citizens' place", the difference seems to be between university-graduates and primary school graduates; in this regard, it is observed that university-graduates evaluate this behaviour more positively than primary school-graduates.

According to education levels, it is seen that university-graduates have more positive assessments about officer behaviours than high school and primary school graduates.

This outcome verifies the hypothesis of "citizens evaluate officers' behaviours differently as their education levels differentiate".

Hypothesis 2: As citizens' age groups differentiate, they assess officers' behaviours differently.

Whether respondents assess differently officers' behaviours according to age groups is tried to be identified with Anova Test.

Table 8: Evaluation of Officers' Behaviours According to Age Groups (Anova Test Summary)

		F	Sig.
They inform citizens in a way that they can understand.	Between Groups	3,086	0,015
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They try to put themselves in citizens' place.	Between Groups	3,455	0,008
	Within Groups		
	Total		

Whether respondents assess officers' behaviours differently according to their age groups is analysed with Anova Test. When the resulting table is analysed, because of the fact that p (sig) < 0.05 in the 95% confidence interval and 5% significance level, it seems that there is a statistically significant difference according to age groups. The evaluation and education groups that lead to this difference are identified in the Scheffe Test table. However, Scheffe Test table is not included in this study. Instead, we only state the groups in which there are significant differences.

The first difference is the statement of "They inform citizens in a way that they can understand". According to this, the difference seems to be in the 50 and above and 25-30 age groups. Respondents who are in the 50 and above age group evaluated this behaviour more positively.

The second difference is the statement of "They try to put themselves in citizens' place " Here the difference is between 30-40 age group and 18-24 age group. The respondents who are in the 30-40 age group evaluated this behaviour more positively.

This outcome verifies the hypothesis of "citizens evaluate officers' behaviours differently as their age groups differentiate".

Hypothesis 3: As citizens' income level differentiates, they assess officers' behaviours differently.

Whether respondents evaluate officers' behaviours differently as their income levels change is summarised below in the table using Anova test.

Table 9: Officers' Behaviours According to Income Levels (Anova Test summary)

		F	Sig.
They are reliable in their work.	Between Groups	6,807	0
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They are courteous and respectful against citizens.	Between Groups	5,995	0
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They make transactions quickly without keeping citizens waiting.	Between Groups	3,817	0,002
	Within Groups		
	Total		
They try to put themselves in citizens' place.	Between Groups	6,184	0
	Within Groups		
	Total		

Whether respondents evaluate officer behaviours differently according to income levels is analysed with Anova Test. Findings are regulated in Table 9. When we analyse the table, it can be seen that there is a statistically significant difference according to income levels, because $p(\text{sig}) < 0.05$ in 95% confidence interval and 5% significance level. The evaluation and income levels that lead to this difference are identified in the Scheffe Test table. However, Scheffe Test table is not included in this study. Instead, we only state the groups in which there are significant differences.

One of these differences is the statement of "They are reliable in their work". According to this, it is observed that the difference is between 601-1000 income group and 1001-2000 income group. In this regard, respondents who are in the 1001-2000 income group evaluate this behaviour more positively than the other groups.

The second one of these differences is the statement of "They are courteous and respectful against citizens". According to this, the difference is between 1001-2000 TL income group and 600-1000 TL and less than 600 TL income groups. The

respondents who are in 1001-2000 TL income level evaluate this behaviour more positively than the others.

The third one of these differences is the statement of “They make transactions quickly without keeping citizens waiting”. According to this, it is observed that the difference is between 1001-2000 TL income group and 600 TL and less income group, and the respondents who are in 1001-2000 TL income group seem to evaluate this behaviour more positively.

The fourth one of these differences is the statement of “They try to put themselves in citizens’ place”. According to this, the difference is between respondents who are in 1001-2000 TL income group and who are in 601-1000 TL and less than 600 TL income groups. The respondents who have 1001-2000 TL level of income evaluate this behaviour more positively than the other groups.

This outcome verifies the hypothesis of “citizens evaluate officers’ behaviours differently as their income levels differentiate”.

Conclusion:

It is a generally accepted situation that some positive behaviours like courtesy, personal solicitude, helpfulness and voluntariness that officers show during public service delivery lead citizens to perceive public service as positive. For this reason, in order to achieve citizen satisfaction with public services, it is necessary that citizens evaluate these behaviours as positive. However, in our study, it became obvious that officers do not behave in a way to satisfy citizens. Beside this, it is considered that citizens evaluate officers’ behaviour differently according to different age, income and education groups.

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