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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33095/xwgj8y59>

## A Diagnosis of the Local Administration Performance According to Satisfaction of the Local Citizens: A Case Study in Diyala Province – Iraq

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Received: 29/10/2023

Accepted: 3/12/2023

Published Online First: 30 /4/ 2024



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### Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to diagnose the reality of the provided local performance by the local government and its impact on the local citizens' satisfaction in one of the Iraqi provinces (Diyala Province). The problem of this research was most local citizens that were not satisfied with the local performance of local governments in providing public services in most Iraqi provinces. The research methodology was the descriptive analytical approach by knowing the views and opinions of a sample of the local citizens that contained 1200 participants, where the research conducted the questionnaire as the main instrument. The data were analyzed by using appropriate statistical methods such as frequencies, percentages, and simple regression coefficients through the statistical program (SPSS. V.26). Several significant results address the gap between the local performance and citizens' satisfaction, where the critical result was the level of public satisfaction with the local performance of the local government is extremely weak, and most of the citizens are unsatisfied. The practical and social implications of the research may improve and develop the skills and abilities of the members of local governments by enrolling them in programs and workshops, particularly in public relations, public administration, non-profit, strategic planning, and local administration to build stronger communication and interaction between members of the government and the local community with specialist universities and institutes could lead to raising the level of the local performance and public satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Local performance for local government, the satisfaction of local citizens, the relation between local performance and satisfaction

**Paper type:** Research paper

## **1.Introduction:**

Local performance is one of the main subjects in administration studies because it is very important for most organizations. As Bennett et al. (2017) considered local performance as an ongoing administrative process that diagnoses the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of the work for the central and local governments (Al Shobaki et al 2020); (Liang and Langbein, 2019); and (Reiter and Klenk, 2019). This means that local performance contributes to meeting the needs of citizens and meeting with their satisfaction. Thus, local government is an organizational approach to providing public services, which is known as administrative decentralization, that relies on the participation of the local community through their elected representatives in managing and making decisions.

The Iraqi experiment in the field of local government is an old experiment (Fleet, 2019) and (Znel and Hammadi, 2020). However, it is not able to satisfy the needs of the local community which reflects negatively on the achievement of the satisfaction (Jongerden, 2019). Therefore, the research provides a cognitive contribution (theoretical and practical) to determine the extent of the capacity of local governments in one of Iraq's provinces (Diyala province) to achieve satisfaction with the local community, according to the level of local performance of local government.

Therefore, the research requests to improve the provided local performance by local governments and satisfy the needs and requirements of local citizens. Hence, that may lead to achieving social and economic welfare, also the research provides new knowledge because it is the first experiment in Iraq, in the field of the local government through the application in Diyala province.

### **1.1. Literature reviews:**

Some previous studies discussed local performance:

Schechner (2017) defined local performance as the degree that demonstrates the organization's ability to achieve its goals, which includes the obtained results by the employees of that organization. Also, DeNisi and Murphy (2017) pointed out that local performance means maximizing the productivity of the individual or the machine. In particular, Ogunsiji and Ladanu (2017) demonstrated that local performance measurement is a strategic approach that aims to increase the efficiency of the organization's local performance by developing the abilities and skills of employees (heads and members of the local government). In addition, Pollanen (2017) illustrated that local performance measurement is very important for most organizations because it embodies the final results of the organization's activities which reflect its capabilities and levels of motivation for subordinates, leaders, and directors as well (head and members of the local government). Wilson et al (2018) considered that local performance is not just productivity; however, it relates to the behavior of members of the organization. Moreover, Metcalfe et al (2018) exhibited that local performance can be described as a process or method which can achieve interesting results and behaviour. However, Ahenkan et al (2018), Lanin and Hermanto (2018), and Masanja (2018) illustrated that local performance measurement of the local governments most frequently shapes real challenges because of the nature of government services. For example, the governmental services are non-measurable, the lack of clear local performance targets, a lack of empirical experience, weakness of measurement link and evaluation with continuous improvements, and no one wants to use local performance programs and mechanisms by the scientific controls, and the absence of the qualitative and quantitative standard for outcomes. As Hodge (2019) discussed it permanently records the achieved results, which measure the degree of the organization efficiently and effectively, through quality and quantity outputs. Also, according to Rivenbark et al (2019) the local performance links with the life cycle of the organization (the electoral cycle of the local government) in all the stages. This illustrates that if the local government's local performance is positive according to public satisfaction, as a result, that can enable members of the local government to renew their election again. Additionally, Suhartono et al (2023) confirmed that local performance increases abilities

through the diagnosis and evaluation of employees' local performance. Thus, local performance can be defined as the achieved results and behavior by the head and members of the local government during the election cycle, through providing local services and their interaction with the local population to achieve satisfaction.

There are previous studies that discussed the satisfaction of local citizens:

Some researchers like Mok and Van (2017), Van (2018), and Lanin (2018) considered public satisfaction as a great feeling of citizens' happiness through achieving their needs in a short time that can navigate their expectations, and how much they get. Also, other researchers like Beerli and Vigoda (2019), Huang and Fu (2019), and Guha and Chakrabarti (2019) confirmed that the level of satisfaction is the sense of the individual that results from the comparison between the perceived and expected local performance of the customer according to their demands. In addition, both Chan et al (2021) and Thau et al (2021) defined satisfaction as the feeling of having been rewarded—or not—for the sacrifices that customers make when utilizing a good or service. Put differently, public satisfaction refers to the opinions expressed by the community about the organization. (local government) about services that are provided to the public, as a result, they can push the organizations to improve or develop their service. As Wu et al (2021) pointed out achieving local citizens' satisfaction is a hard number in the work of local governments, which need to understand what the public wants. This means that the needs and requests of local people are major sources of existence and continuation of work of the local government according to the standards of democracy. According to Zhang et al (2022), this objective has to put in its priorities, two main factors. First, access to the real needs of the local population, which may contribute to the re-election for another cycle. Second, the local government can measure the results of its operations through several satisfied people about the quantity and quality of the provided services to them. This shows that the local society's satisfaction is a very important indicator of the existence of local governments, and it is a crucial means of improving local performance. Accordingly, Growthink (2022) illustrated that public satisfaction can be defined as a goal that seeks the local government to fulfill and achieve the requirements and expectations of the local community by improving the level of provided local performance to meet their needs.

Acharya and Scott (2022) mentioned that many local governments have difficulties in the satisfaction measuring of their local citizens. Where successful local governments encourage their communities in the design of their operations and services that will be provided. Hence, this can lead to a concrete relationship between both. This means that the feedback about local satisfaction will lead to dropping the difficulties in the work of the local government. According to Zailani et al (2023), Peter Drucker said, "if you can't measure it, you can't improve it". This shows that the inability to measure the results will lead to a lack of determining success from failure, and the local government cannot learn from its mistakes and treat them, or it cannot reward successful local performance (Krick et al., 2019). As a result, it will not be able to achieve local satisfaction. In addition, achieving public satisfaction by the local public should require good local leaders to determine the needs of the beneficiaries and with insurance continuous improvements in the local services. Therefore, the measurement and diagnosis of public satisfaction depend on scientific standards such as questionnaires, checklists, surveys, or public interviews; also, some local governments rely on indicators of behavioral and social such as participation in decision-making, elections, writings in public newspapers, complaints and legal problems, protests, and objections.

Also, there are previous studies that discussed the relationship between local performance and public satisfaction:

The relationship and impact between local performance and public satisfaction are positive (Wu and Jung, 2016). This means that public satisfaction may lead to achieving quality of service. As Mafini and Pooe (2013) previously pointed out public satisfaction became a key target that aims to raise and improve the level of local performance in an organization. Indeed, this applies to local performance that calls the citizen's charters or services provision charters, which are designed initiatives to improve the quality of public services according to the needs of users of public services. As a result, this may commit the service providers to set clear standards and inform the public on how to meet those standards for their needs which might lead to excellent local performance (Tomkinson, 2017). The step has achieved notable successes in the provision of local services in some countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and some developed countries, which have a direct relationship between the local performance of the service provider and the public with focusing on the concept the public satisfaction. Therefore, this shows that the quality of local performance is one of the extremely important matters that relates to local performance, according to practical and behavioral standards to achieve that local performance. Hence, diagnosis and evaluation of the citizen's satisfaction with provided services by the local government is very important to improve the quality of the local performance.

Generally, the researchers adopted the local community satisfaction model as an appropriate approach to measuring local performance according to the research objectives and orientations. Also, the model depends on measuring objectivity and subjectivity aspects for the local performance of the local government according to beneficiaries' views, so, it is a more realistic indication in the statement of the capacity of the local government. Furthermore, it determines the efficiency and effectiveness of the local government in the implementation of the functional activities and then shows the contribution of each division (committee) in this implementation, on the one hand, it facilitates the comparison of the local performance of local governments together on the other hand. Therefore, the research can be an empirical framework for evaluating the local performance of other local governments. Finally, it presents universal comprehensive, and tested standards adopted by some international organizations such as civil society organizations and UNDP, which can be easily applied in the current research.

Therefore, the research problem can be represented in the following questions: What is the perception of local governments to the level of presented local performance according to the views and opinions of the local community? What nature and satisfaction level of the citizens about the provided services by the local government? What is the evaluation level of the local performance in Diyala province according to the criterion of public satisfaction? How can invest knowledge in improving and developing the local performance level and public satisfaction together?

The main aim of this research, it seeks to achieve several objectives. The first is to evaluate the reality of the level of the provided local performance by the local government. The second is to stand at the level of public satisfaction with the nature and content of the provided services. Thirdly, is to increase awareness of the local government members under the study about local performance level depending on analysis and evaluation of the research sample answers. Finally, is to achieve citizens' satisfaction with the local government's local performance which may reflect in achieving social development.

## 2. Materials and methods:

The research adopted the quantitative approach, which is one of the most scientific research methods that relies on depth and detailed analysis of the phenomenon or a specific problem in a wide community (Connelly and Lambert, 2016). Moreover, it is the most appropriate approach for this research because it has some features that allow combining more than a research tool and style at the same time (Haller et al, 2009). For this reason, the research depended on the ideas and surveys of each study (Stoop et al, 2012) and based on checklists and surveys (survey checklist) to develop a checklist for measuring multi-dimensional to discover public satisfaction (Bruning and Ledingham, 2017).

### 2.1. Sample of the research:

The research sample and population: The researchers adopted Diyala province to apply this research. The research has chosen the style of the equal random sample that divided the research's population into categories (the districts of Diyala province) that its number is 6 districts (Baquba, Kales, Muqdadiah, Balad Ruz, Khanaqin, and Kifri), and then selected a sample from every district evenly by 200 participants from each district. The duration of distribution and retrieval of the questionnaire continued for three months with big assistance provided through Al Noor Universal Foundation which is one of the non-government organizations (NGOs) to distribute and retrieve the questionnaire from local citizens from 1/2 to 1/5/ 2023. As in the Table 1.

**Table 1:** Features of the research sample (gender, age, place, and academic level).

Details	Kind	Number	Percentage	Details	Kind	Number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	403	34%	<b>Place</b>	Urban	630	53%
	Female	797	66%		Rural	570	47%
	Total	1200	100%		Total	1200	100%
<b>Age</b>	Less than 25	250	21%	<b>Academic level</b>	Primary	238	20%
	25-35	340	28%		Inter Mediate M	140	12%
	36-45	247	20%		Secondary	260	22%
	46-55	210	18%		Diploma	230	20%
	More56	153	13%		Graduate	250	21%
	Total	1200	100%		Postgraduate	82	6%
				<b>Total</b>	1200	100%	

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the research sample about gender, age, place, and academic level. Firstly, regarding to the age, Table 1 reported the percentage of females was higher than males (females 66% and males 34%). Regarding the ages of the sample was the highest percentage between 25-35 years (28%) and the lowest percentage was more than 56 years (13%). Similarly, percentages of the research sample about the place were higher in urban areas than in rural areas (53%; 47%). Finally, the academic levels (secondary, school, graduate, primary, and diploma) contained close percentages that ranged between 20% and 21%. However, the lowest percentage was in level of postgraduate 6%.

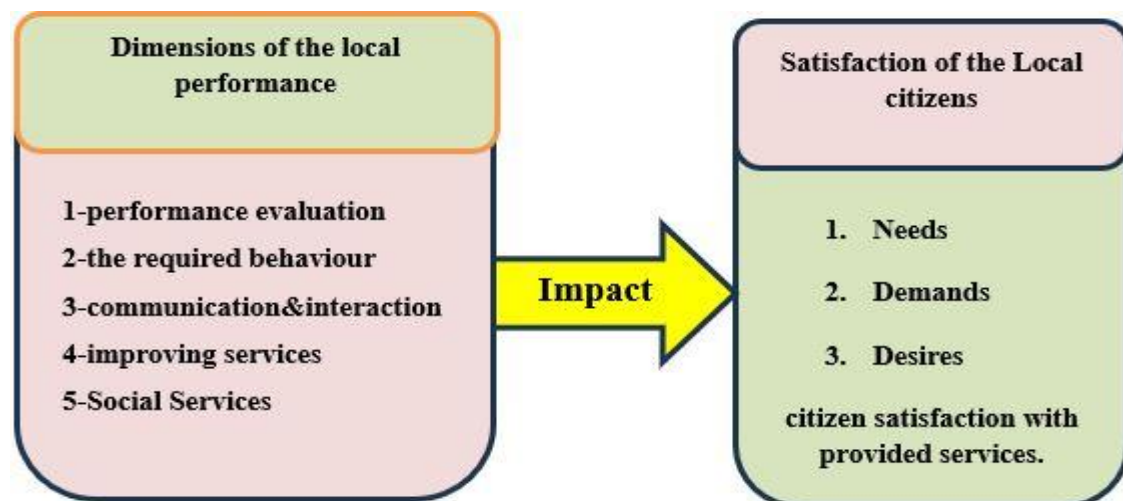


## 2.2. Statistical methods for research

The researchers used a set of descriptive statistical methods to reach the most accurate scientific results, which are the frequencies, percentages, and simple regression coefficients through the programs (SPSS. V.26). These results can help to achieve the research objectives.

## 2.3. Hypothetical outline of the research

The nature of the effect between the research variables is explained by the research's hypothetical outline. Furthermore, as illustrated in Figure 1, it illustrates the influence of the independent variable (local performance of the local government) on the dependent variable (citizens' satisfaction) aspects.



**Figure 1:** Hypothetic framework of the research

**Source:** Prepared by the researchers based on previous literature and scientific efforts.

## 2.4. Hypothesis of the research:

This research has depended on the Null hypothesis because this guarantees neutrality and objectivity (Reiter, 2017). Thus, the main hypothesis of this research will be: There is no significant impact from the local performance of the local government and its dimensions (local performance evaluation, the required behavior, communication and interaction, improving services and social services) on the satisfaction of local citizens and its dimensions (needs, requests, and wishes the local citizens).

## 2.5. Dimensions of the local performance:

The researcher has adopted five major dimensions of the local government's local performance which are the evaluation of the local performance, members behavior of the local government, communication and interaction mechanisms between citizens and members of local government, improving local services, and providing of social services for specific categories.

In regarding to the local performance evaluation process of local government is considered a means through which the level of efficiency of the government unit and the efficiency of the administration responsible for its work can be judged (McDavid et al, 2018). Furthermore, the local performance evaluation process enables identifying areas of weakness and strength and then making appropriate decisions to develop the unit or correct its course if unsatisfactory local performance results appear (Maestrini et al, 2017). Although there are standards for evaluating and monitoring government local performance and measuring its efficiency and effectiveness, these standards lack the fulfillment of the purposes for which they were established (Wang et al, 2018). Therefore, this research deals with the development of local performance evaluation systems in local administration units.

In regarding to members' behavior, the local government should have a balanced affiliation between public interest and party loyalty (Park, 2018). The influence of party loyalty in most developing countries goes beyond economic development and project implementation, extending to education and health, as they have become factional rather than national areas (Einstein et al, 2019). Therefore, they have to believe that the alternative to factionalism, sectarianism, and sectarianism is to build a strong and just state that is based on national leaders and senior statesmen who work efficiently and impartially to develop the nation and raise good citizens (Abbass et al, 2017).

In regarding to communication and interaction mechanisms between citizens and members of local government should look for tools that can contribute to improving the openness of local government members to their citizens (Del et al, 2018). This is done by developing cooperation horizons between citizens and members of local government in order to achieve citizens' satisfaction with the services provided by their real needs (Gao, 2020). This assumes that if openness increases in the relationship between citizens and members of local government, the ability of citizens to participate positively will increase, and in return, the ability of local bodies to respond to citizens' needs will increase, and thus the level of citizens' satisfaction with the local performance of those bodies will increase.

In regarding to improving services will be difficult if many officials in local governments do not realize it (Gao and Lee, 2017). The local community or parts of it may not see this need, or they may have reasons that prompt them to oppose the change. Improving services needs to involve the people who will have to make it successful. This may require more time than expected (Ndebele and Lavhelani, 2017). Thus, improving services will require time to determine whether the changes you made the service better (i.e. you need to evaluate your work) and to make adjustments (De Walle, 2018).

In regarding to providing social services for specific categories mean providing physical access to services for people with disabilities (wheelchair access, accessible bathrooms, special phones for people with hearing difficulties, etc.) (Narbón and De Witte, 2018). Also, transportation can be a big issue. In addition, the location of services may exclude a group that does not feel comfortable in that area or neighbourhood or does not feel safe there (Grimmelikhuijsen and Feeney, 2017). The timing of providing services may create difficulties for a large number of people. All of these things can be factors in trying to increase services.

#### **2.5. Dimensions of satisfaction of the local citizens:**

People's satisfaction with the local performance of local governments relates to their ability to meet the needs, demands, and desires of the local community by benefiting from the services they need for a decent life.

There are three crucial types of services in most local communities, although there is some overlap among them.

**Needs:** they are services that people consider essential to the life of a community. This means these needs make it possible for a community to exist, such as fire services, police, schools, public works, and local government (Almihat et al, 2022). The existence of these services may be considered a given, and they are essential to the well-being of the community (Mohammadi et al, 2018).

**Demands:** They are the services that exist to prevent problems and maintain the quality of life in the local community (Chamchong, 2023). These services usually address those issues that, if neglected, could lead to difficulties or shortcomings in the future (Zanbar and Ellison, 2019). These issues include health, adult illiteracy, vocational rehabilitation, housing, and youth development.

**Desires:** they are services specifically to solve current problems and correct shortcomings. They are often short-term and highly focused (Tobbala, 2019). It may treat symptoms of societal problems, and often includes services related to the quality of life, such as recreation programs, arts support, etc (Wang, 2010).

## 2.6. The statistical analysis of the research:

This section seeks to analyze and interpret research sample answers according to questions and inquiries of the checklist that was distributed for them, concerning all percentages close to the nearest decimal, as follows:

### 2.6.1. The analysis of the evaluation of the local performance:

This section displays the results of the evaluation of the local performance, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** The answers about the evaluation of the local performance

N	Item	Yes		No		Neutral	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1Q	Are you satisfied with the local government performance that provided for the local community?	300	25%	753	63%	147	12%
2Q	Please, indicate how confident the current local government is in providing services in the near term.	Trust		Don't trust		Neutral	
		155	13%	900	75%	145	12%

Q1: Table 2 reports on the research sample answers about the evaluation of the local performance. Where most of the respondents were extremely dissatisfied (753, 63%) with the total sample responses. In contrast, here some respondents were satisfied (300, 25%). Similarly, a few of the respondents were neutral (147, 12%). This illustrates that a quarter of the sample only was satisfied with the current local performance of the local government in providing local services.

Q2: Moreover, Table 2 shows participants' views about the confidence of the local community in the local performance of the current local government. This table confirms most participants do not trust the local performance of local government which was mostly the highest answer (900, 75%). However, a few respondents trust provided services by local government (155, 13%). Similarly, a few respondents were neutral (145, 12%). Accordingly, this explains there dropping the of overall satisfaction with the local performance of the current local government and maybe in the future as well according to views of the research.

### 2.6.2. The analysis of citizen satisfaction answers about the behavior of the local government

This section reports the results of citizen satisfaction regarding to the behaviour of the local government, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Citizen satisfaction with the behavior of the local government

N	Question	Yes		No		Not sure	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Did the members of a local government visit your area to know what problems are?	256	21%	874	73%	70	6%
2	Can you deliver your voice easily to the local government in your area?	177	15%	823	68%	200	17%
3	Do you know the budget amount allocated to your city?	256	21%	776	65%	168	14%
4	Do you have information about public budget distribution mechanism in your province?	90	7%	998	84%	112	9%
5	Have you the right to attend the local council meeting?	250	21%	761	63%	189	16%



Q1: Table 3 displays the participants' views in relation to the analysis of citizen satisfaction with the behaviour of the local government members. Where most of the respondents were extremely dissatisfied (874, 73%) with the total sample responses. In contrast, some respondents were satisfied (256, 21%). Similarly, a few of the respondents were neutral (147, 12%). Thus, this notes that only less than a quarter of the respondents indicated that members of the local government visited their areas. Hence, most members of the local government do not care about visiting their local areas in order to meet the needs of local people.

Q2: Likewise, Table 3 exhibits the participants' responses in relation to delivering their needs easily to the local government. This table shows that most answers of the participants were no (823, 68%). However, some respondents were satisfied with members of the local government in receiving their demands (177, 15%). Similarly, some respondents were not sure (168, 14%). Based on that, only a few numbers from respondents can contact the local government in their areas.

Q3: In addition, Table 3 demonstrates the participants' answers in relation to the budget amount allocated to the local unit. This table supports most responses of the participants who said no (776, 65%). In contrast, some respondents were a known budget amount allocated for the local government (256, 21%). Similarly, some respondents were neutral (200, 17%). This illustrates that more than 80% of local citizens are not aware of the allocated budget amount to their city.

Q4: Moreover, Table 3 reports the participants' answers about attending the local council meeting. This table confirms most responses of the participants said no (998, 84%). In contrast, a few respondents were known about that (90, 7%). Similarly, some respondents do not know about it (112, 9%). This illustrates that most of the research sample does not contain information about the public budget distribution in their province.

Q5: Finally, table 3 displays the participants' answers about the public budget distribution mechanism in the province. This table supports most responses of the participants were no (761, 63%). In contrast, a few respondents were known that (250, 21%). Correspondingly, some respondents do not know about it (189, 16%). Based on that, the researcher can say that only 80% of the research sample does not have the right to attend local council meetings. Overall, the dissatisfaction of local citizens about the local government's performance may force the local to focus on the principles of transparency, participation, and accountability, as one of the determinants and mechanisms of good governance.

### 2.6.3. The analysis of communication and interaction mechanisms between citizens and local government

This section displays the results of communication and interaction mechanisms between local government and citizens, as shown in Figure 2.

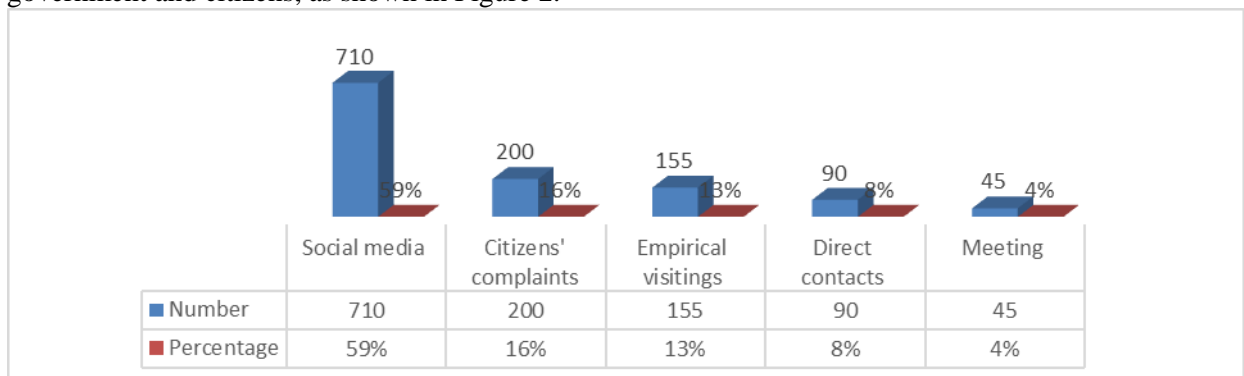


Figure 2: Communication and interaction mechanisms

Figure 2 displays the percentage of communication and interaction mechanisms between local government and citizens per category. The graph shows that social media had the highest percentage of the research sample (710, 59%). In contrast, citizens' complaints had the second class (200, 16%). Similarly, the percentage of empirical visits by members of the local government was 155, 13%. About meeting mechanism between local government and citizens was the lowest percentage (45, 4%). This illustrates the best mechanism between local government and its citizens is social media because more than half of the sample preferred this method in identifying the needs, desires, and problems of the local citizens. Moreover, there is a general decrease in the ability of the local government and its members to build confidence bridges and communication with its citizens through effective methods.

**2.6.4. The analysis of improving local services:**

This section discusses the results analysis of the development of service, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4:** The analysis of improving service.

N	Item	Yes		No		Not sure	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Q1	The implemented projects by the local government are suitable for the basic needs of your region	91	7%	862	72%	247	21%
Q2	What is your evaluation of the provided services for your area now	Good		Poor		Neutral	
		60	5%	891	74%	249	21%
Q3	How would you describe the level of services in your area compared before year?	Better		Same		Bad	
		0	0%	289	24%	911	76%

Table 4 above, reports the participants' views about the improvement of local services. In relation to Q1, most of the respondents were extremely dissatisfied because most of the local projects do not fit with citizens' needs (862, 72%). Similarly, regarding Q2, around 75% of participants were dissatisfied with the provided services by the local government. In regard to Q3, more than three-quarters of the sample mentioned that level of services is bad (911,76%). This means that there are no improvements in provided services by local government to citizens according to the respondents, hence most services are not meet with needs of the local society at all, and at the same time the local government does care about their needs.

**2.6.5. The analysis of causes of deterioration for the service level:**

This section displays the results analysis of causes of deterioration of the service level, as shown in Table 5 and Figure 3.

**Table 5:** Causes of deterioration for the service level

N	Question	Yes		No		Not sure	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	High conflict between political parties and militia	999	83%	84	7%	117	10%
2	People care about services being improved	996	83%	128	10	84	7%
3	The financial and administrative corruption	994	83%	96	8%	110	9%
4	Careless local officials	876	73%	184	14%	35	3%
5	Weak law of local government	800	66%	296	25%	104	9%
6	Lack of professional employees	775	64%	236	20%	189	16%
7	Lack of coordination between the federal and the local government	755	64%	349	30%	70	6%
8	The absence of the role of monitoring agencies	727	61%	212	17%	21	2%
9	The security situations	725	60%	300	25%	175	15%
10	Little budget funds	606	51%	384	32%	210	17%

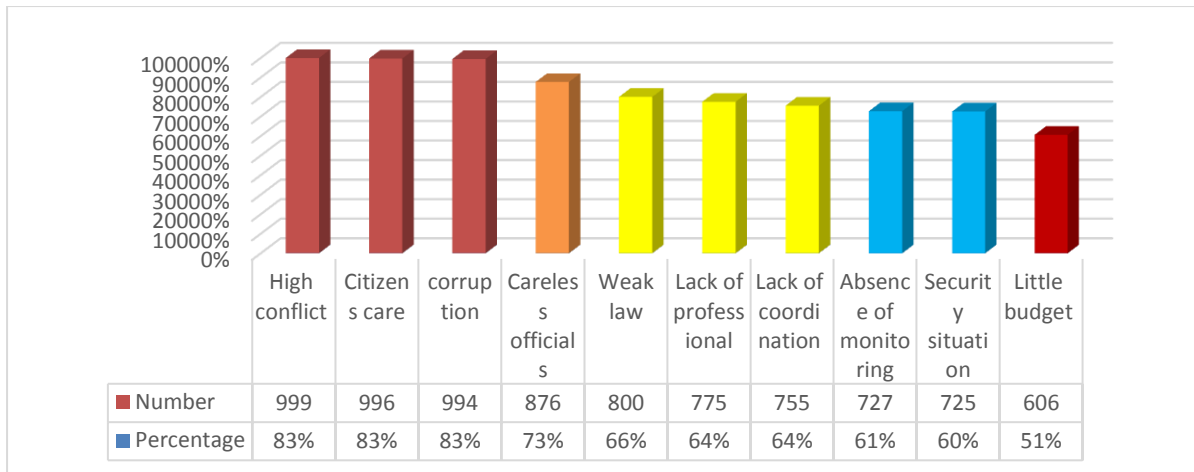


Figure 3: Causes deterioration of the local service level

Table 5 and Figure 3 above, display the percentage of participants responses per category in relation to causes of deterioration of the local service level. The graph and table demonstrate that high conflict among political parties and militia, financial and administrative corruption, and people care about services being improved were the highest percentage among the research sample answers (83%). Similarly, the percentage of careless local officials in the local government was extremely high at 73%. In contrast, the percentages of the responses in relation to weak law of local government, lack of professional employees, and lack of coordination between the federal and the local government were closed (64%, 66%). Similarly, responses percentages of the absence of the role of monitoring agencies and security situations were closed as well (60%, 61%). Finally, in relation to participants' answers about little budget funds were the lowest percentage 51%. Here, this illustrates many challenges that face local government and at the same time all these challenges can lead to dropping the local services level for local community.

### 2.6.6. The analysis of sample answers about providing the social services for specific categories

This section discusses the results analysis of providing social services for specific categories, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: The analysis of providing of social services for specific categories

N	Question	Yes		No		Not sure	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
Q1	Local government in your province provides social services for women such as forums, social clubs, and sports activities.	94	8%	991	83%	115	9%
Q2	Local government in your province provides social services for men such as forums, social clubs, and sport activities.	252	21%	864	72%	84	7%
Q3	Local government in your province provides social services for disabled people such as forums, social clubs, and sport activities.	248	21%	860	72%	92	7%

Table 6 above, reports the percentages of participants' answers in relation to providing social services for specific categories by the local government. The table demonstrates that Q1 (local government in your province provides social services for women) contained the highest percentage of the research sample answers (83%). Similarly, the percentage of Q2 (local government in your province provides social services for men) and Q3 (Local government in your province provides social services for disabled people) were also extremely high at 73% for both items. This explains that local government mostly ignores creating facilities for sports and entertainment places in the local community. Hence that will negatively reflect on the health and psychological aspects of citizens.

### 2.6.7. The analysis of citizen satisfaction with provided services

This section displays the results analysis of the research sample about citizen satisfaction with provided services by local government, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7:** The analysis of citizen satisfaction with provided services

N	Services	Satisfied		Dissatisfied		Neutral	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Electricity	0	0%	1200	100%	0	0%
2	Housing	0	0%	1200	100%	0	0%
3	Environment maintenance	0	0%	1120	100%	0	0%
4	Transportation	0	0%	1200	100%	0	0%
5	Road conditions	0	0%	1200	100%	0	0%
6	Traffic & vehicle management	0	0%	1157	96%	43	4%
7	Primary health care	179	15%	941	78%	80	7%
8	Water	180	15%	921	77%	99	8%
9	Education	173	14%	981	82%	46	4%
10	Trade and the provision of food	152	13%	1048	87%	0	0%
11	Sewage	199	16%	881	74%	120	10%
12	Security	443	37%	581	48%	176	15%
13	Mobile phone	509	42%	593	49%	98	9%
14	Distribution of oil derivatives	483	40%	574	48%	143	12%
15	Rubbish collection	409	34%	791	66%	0	0%

Table 7 above, exhibits the participants' views in relation to citizen satisfaction with provided services by the local governments. This table shows all the respondents were totally dissatisfied with some provided basic services such as electricity, housing, environment maintenance, transportation, road conditions, and traffic and vehicle management services (1200, 100%). Similarly, other basic services such as primary health care, water, education, trade, and the provision of food, and sewage were extremely dissatisfied by the local people with a total average percentage (955, 80%). In contrast, a few basic services such as security, mobile phones, distribution of oil derivatives, and rubbish collection services were dissatisfied as well. But in a percentage that is a little more than half of the citizens with a total average percentage (682, 52%). However, the researchers provided an opportunity for the respondents to mention or add any other services to measure the citizens' satisfaction. Nevertheless, not one person in the research sample added any other services. This means that the research is comprehensive and covers most of the services that were related to local citizens. Generally, the sample answers describe the absence of dissatisfaction the citizens about most of basic services which provided through. Overall, it is particularly clear that the local government local performance is extremely bad.

2.6.7. Testing hypothesis of the research by using simple regression coefficients:

The main hypothesis of this research was the effect between the research variables (the local performance of the local government and satisfaction of local citizens). To achieve that, the researcher used the simple regression coefficients because it is a statistical method to survey the effects between two variables, one independent and one dependent. This method has three key indicators: (R2), F-value, and T-value. R2-value ranges between 0-1(Finch et al, 2019) and (Jain, 2017).

The main hypothesis was *H10*: There is no significant impact from the local performance of the local government and its dimensions (local performance evaluation, the required behavior, communication, and interaction, improving services and social services) on the satisfaction of local citizens and its dimensions (needs, requests, and wishes the local citizens). Therefore, Table 8 reports a strong effect of the local performance of the local government on the satisfaction of local citizens according to the results of F-value 105.36, t-value 3.88, (P< 0.05), and strong R2-value (0.49), which are significant. Hence, that allowed for the rejection of null hypothesis *H10* in favor of the alternative hypothesis *H11*.

**Table 8:** The results of the research hypothesis (effect) by using the simple regression coefficients (n=95)

Hypothesis	The path	Regression Weights using SPSS					Results
		R2	(β)	S.E	F-value	T-value	
H10 or H11	Local performance of the local government on satisfaction of local citizens	0.49	0.61	0.697	105.36	3.88	Rejected null hypothesis in favor of alternative hypothesis H11

**3. Discussion of results:**

Results of this research indicated that kinds and specifications of the research sample were identical to the general characteristics of the community that depends on the diversity of views about the type and level of the provided services by the local government and then achieving public satisfaction around those services. As a result, the sample answers were accurate and reliable. Where research results displayed that the level of public satisfaction with the local performance of the local government is particularly weak, and most of the citizens are unsatisfied, at the same time, the local government does not have any sufficient ability to provide local services now and in the future. Thus, less than a quarter of respondents are satisfied with the level of local performance of the local government; however, more than three-quarters of the research sample were dissatisfied. Also, the research results demonstrated that the reality of physical attendance by members of the local government is very few. Hence the citizens struggled to speak up for themselves and complain about their problems that they are experiencing in their everyday lives to those officials. In addition, the absence of the principle of financial and administrative transparency, which is one of the most important standards and principles of good governance, particularly in the budgets of local governments. Moreover, the research results found a gap between citizens' satisfaction and the procedures of local government in their areas, for example, there are no right for local citizens to attend local council meetings to contribute according to the principle of participation and accountability, which could lead to the improvement of the local performance of the local government. Generally, there is a weakness in the communication between the citizen and the local official. Therefore, it led to a lack of interaction between citizens and members of the local government through public conferences, studies, and research. Hence, it negatively reflected on the quality of the local services and projects. Likewise, citizens believed that high conflict between political parties and militia, financial and administrative corruption, careless local officials, weak law of local government, lack of professional employees, lack of coordination between the federal and



the local government, security situations, and little budget funds were the main reasons that led to dropping down the local performance of local government. Hence, it negatively affected the provided services for the local community. For example, electricity, housing, environment maintenance, transportation, road conditions, traffic and vehicle management, health care, water, education, trade, and the provision of food, etc. Finally, the local government does not care about the specific categories in the local society, especially disability, women, and youth.

#### **4. Conclusions :**

According to the research findings, the researcher would like to provide a set of crucial conclusions, as follows:

- 1.**The local government did not conduct more surveys and research in order to build a real scientific conception to recognize the reality of the local performance of the local government. Also, diagnose the level of citizen satisfaction with this local performance.
- 2.**It did not seek somewhat to achieve the satisfaction of citizens through meeting their demands and interests that can be achieved through the improvement and development of the local government's work.
- 3.**It has ignored focussing on the practices and principles of good governance, such as the principles of transparency, participation, and accountability, which can improve the local performance of local government.
- 4.**It did not improve communication and interaction mechanisms that have a positive impact on citizens' satisfaction such as public conferences, physical attendance, social media, and so on to attract the local community to provide new ideas and modern strategies in improving the local performance.
- 5.**It could not prevent the political parties and other actors from intervening in the work of local government and hence that will increase the coordination between the local government and the central administration as well.
- 6.**It could not care enough for special groups such as the disabled, women, and youth through building libraries, social clubs, and sports activities to support and enhance their presence and role.
- 7.**There was not enough improvement for major services of the local community through cooperation with the civil society organisations such as electricity, road conditions, traffic and vehicle management, housing, trade, and the provision of food, environment, and security services to achieve the desired satisfaction of the local citizens.
- 8.**There was not a comprehensive local strategy for the development of local governments in Iraq through cooperation between local government and universities.
- 9.**There was not enough focussing on improving the skills and abilities of the members of local governments by enrolling them in programs and workshops, particularly in public relations, public administration, non-profit, strategic planning, local administration, teamwork, and so on.
- 10.** It tried to fight all of the main reasons that led to poor local services, such as avoiding high conflict between political parties and militia and fighting financial and administrative corruption but it was slow and weak.

#### **Authors Declaration:**

Conflicts of Interest: None

-We Hereby Confirm That All The Figures and Tables In The Manuscript Are Mine and Ours. Besides, The Figures and Images, Which are Not Mine, Have Been Permitted Republication and Attached to The Manuscript.

- Ethical Clearance: The Research Was Approved By The Local Ethical Committee in The University.

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## تشخيص أداء الحكومة المحلية وفق رضا المواطنين المحليين: دراسة حالة في محافظة ديالى – العراق

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Received: 29/10/2023 Accepted: 3/12/2023 Published Online First: 30 /4/ 2024

هذا العمل مرخص تحت اتفاقية المشاع الإبداعي نُسب المُصنّف - غير تجاري - الترخيص العمومي الدولي 4.0  
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### مستخلص البحث:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تشخيص واقع الأداء المحلي المقدم من قبل الحكومة المحلية وأثره على رضا المواطنين المحليين في إحدى المحافظات العراقية (محافظة ديالى). مشكلة البحث هي أن معظم المواطنين المحليين غير راضين عن أداء الحكومات المحلية في تقديم الخدمات العامة في معظم المحافظات العراقية. اعتمد هذا البحث على المنهج الوصفي التحليلي من خلال معرفة آراء ووجهات نظر عينة من المواطنين المحليين التي بلغت عددهم 1200 مشارك. تبنى الباحث على الاستبانة كأداة رئيسية لجمع البيانات. تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام بعض الأساليب الإحصائية المناسبة مثل التكرارات والنسب المئوية ومعامل الانحدار الخطي وذلك من خلال البرنامج الإحصائي (SPSS.V.26). توصل البحث الى عدة نتائج هامة لمعالجة الفجوة بين الأداء المحلي ورضا المواطنين، حيث كانت النتيجة الحاسمة أن مستوى الرضا العام عن أداء الحكومة المحلية ضعيف للغاية، وأن معظم المواطنين غير راضين. كذلك إن الانعكاسات العملية والاجتماعية للبحث ستؤدي إلى تحسين وتطوير مهارات وقدرات أعضاء الحكومات المحلية من خلال إلحاقهم بالبرامج وورش العمل خاصة في العلاقات العامة والإدارة العامة والمنظمات غير الربحية والتخطيط الاستراتيجي والإدارة المحلية من أجل بناء تواصل وتفاعل أقوى بين أعضاء الحكومة والمجتمع المحلي من خلال التعاون مع الجامعات ذات الاختصاص.

المصطلحات الرئيسية للبحث: أداء الحكومة المحلية، رضا المواطنين المحلي، والعلاقة بين الاداء والرضا