






Determining the Components of the Policy Evaluation Model for Recruiting and Utilizing Public Capacity in Iran's Administrative System

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to determine the components of the policy evaluation model for recruiting and utilizing public capacity in Iran's administrative system. This study is applied in terms of its objective and qualitative in terms of data type, employing a systematic literature review and thematic analysis. The study population consisted of general directors, deputies, and managers of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as academic experts in policymaking from the southern provinces of Iran (Khuzestan, Bushehr, and Hormozgan). The sample size for the thematic analysis included 16 interviewees, selected through purposive sampling based on the principle of saturation. Data collection tools included library documents and semi-structured interviews with experts. To ensure validity, expert opinions were utilized, and to assess reliability, inter-coder agreement was applied, indicating that the instruments were both valid and reliable. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis (basic, organizing, and overarching themes) with Maxqda2020 software. Findings revealed that the components constituting the policy evaluation model for recruiting and utilizing public capacity in Iran's administrative system include transparency and information dissemination (publication of information, free access to information, transparency in criteria and methods, and emphasis on transparency in policies), justice and equality (equal access to resources, creating equal opportunities for public participation in decision-making processes, and equality in advancement opportunities), skill identification and selection (identifying organizational needs, assessing individual skills, and recognizing future leaders), research and development (needs and problem analysis, research and development planning, basic and applied research, and collaboration with universities and research centers), participation and partnership (establishing a participatory culture, partnerships with local communities and the public, cooperation with organizations and institutions, and partnership opportunities in the evaluation process), economic justification evaluation (cost analysis, benefit analysis, risk and uncertainty analysis, and social justification analysis), compliance evaluation with laws (alignment with laws and regulations, ensuring rights protection and guarantees), and regulatory framework and innovation culture (values and beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, and enthusiasm for risk-taking and learning).

Keywords: Policy evaluation, public capacity, administrative system

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1. Introduction

In the administrative system of any country, policies for recruiting and utilizing public capacity play a crucial role. These policies are typically formulated to leverage the capabilities and talents present in society, thereby enhancing the efficiency and quality of administrative performance. Proper and effective evaluation of these policies is also essential to improve their impact and outcomes, ultimately leading to an efficient and effective public organization. Evaluating policies related to recruiting and utilizing public capacity is vital for identifying their shortcomings and advantages and for proposing improvements [1, 2]. Through accurate assessment, existing deficiencies and challenges can be identified and necessary reforms can be implemented. Moreover, by providing suitable recommendations, organizational performance can be enhanced, leading to improved policy outcomes. Ultimately, this process contributes to increased efficiency, improved administrative performance quality, and enhanced public satisfaction [3, 4].

In the digital age, the latest paradigm in governance revolves around the concept of “open government.” The emerging open government paradigm is not synonymous with “electronic government” [5]. Open government is described as a horizon of governmental transparency and citizen voice in public policymaking processes. According to the objectives set by the United Nations, by 2030, all member states should strive to achieve sustainable development goals and indicators through cooperation and interaction. The United Nations has defined 17 overarching goals for sustainable development. Goal 16 of this document includes peace, justice, transparency, corruption reduction, and the establishment of strong institutions [6]. This is due to the fact that the modern world differs significantly from the traditional past. Useful knowledge is now highly dispersed and no longer monopolized by large corporations. The vast volume of knowledge and creativity distributed across humanity has continually challenged our ability to fully harness it. This dispersed knowledge base worldwide has driven organizations and companies to seek ways to discover, identify, utilize, and collaborate with its creators. A means to leverage individuals’ fragmented knowledge, whose perspectives on the world are significantly diverse and who employ methods unfamiliar to traditional systems [7, 8].

In Section 6 of Iran’s Sixth Five-Year Development Plan (2017–2021), Articles 27, 28, and 29 address the administrative system, transparency, and anti-corruption

measures. The absence of a policy evaluation model for recruiting and utilizing public capacity in the administrative system can create various challenges, including:

- **Lack of Transparency:** Without an appropriate evaluation model, opportunities and risks associated with policies for recruiting and utilizing public capacity cannot be fully identified, potentially leading to a lack of transparency in the administrative system.
- **Inability to Measure Performance:** Evaluating policies and programs related to public capacity utilization requires accurate and scientific measurement of performance and effectiveness. The absence of a proper evaluation model may result in an inability to measure performance accurately.
- **Lack of Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** Without a systematic and continuous evaluation model, tracking performance and improving public capacity utilization programs becomes difficult, leading to insufficient monitoring and up-to-date assessments.
- **Increased Corruption:** The lack of a reasonable evaluation model may facilitate corruption in the implementation of programs and policies. Without proper evaluation, the potential for misuse of resources and public capacity opportunities increases.
- **Lack of Incentives for Improvement:** An appropriate evaluation model can provide motivation for managers and officials to enhance public capacity utilization programs. Without such a model, resources and existing capabilities may be wasted.
- **Absence of Knowledge and Experience Sharing:** Clearly defined evaluation criteria can facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience among various administrative units. Without a shared evaluation framework, this potential diminishes.
- **Lack of Public Participation:** A proper evaluation model can encourage public participation in the process of recruiting and utilizing public capacity. Without this framework, effective public engagement and interaction with administrative institutions may not occur [9].

Planning and decision-making are among the essential functions and tools of proper management, through which methods for achieving economic, social, and cultural

objectives are identified [10, 11]. To attain any goal and undertake any activity, suitable plans are required, formulated over short-term, medium-term, and long-term periods. Two paradigms exist for urban public administration planning. In the first paradigm, termed “government,” the municipality assumes full responsibility for all affairs, ensuring services for civil society or citizens. In the second paradigm, termed “governance,” public administration responsibilities are divided among three entities: government, civil society, and the private sector, all of which are essential elements of human development. These entities interact with each other, and by establishing necessary relationships, balancing responsibilities, and defining distinct roles for each sector, they enable a more desirable society [6].

One of the key questions in the legislative process concerns the manner in which stakeholders participate in lawmaking. This participation may involve contributing to the drafting process or influencing parliamentary approvals. Public involvement in legislation, given the prevalence of indirect or representative democracy in current legislative systems, may be contentious. However, extensive empirical evidence indicates that public satisfaction with democratic institutions and processes is declining. Therefore, efforts should be made to enable citizens to express their preferences directly in political decision-making. Participatory democracy theories assert that more direct forms of citizen engagement yield positive outcomes for democracy. It is claimed that citizen participation fosters public engagement, strengthens community bonds, promotes civic responsibility, and increases willingness to participate in public life [10-12].

The growing disconnect between citizens and policymakers has led to a legitimacy crisis, declining public trust, and political disenchantment, necessitating policy reforms to regain public confidence and enhance governmental performance. Research has shown that the public’s role in governmental decision-making remains limited, contributing to widespread dissatisfaction [13, 14]. Consequently, in recent years, the open policymaking model has been rapidly replacing traditional models, and understanding its dimensions can facilitate its adoption [11]. In Iran, the issue of direct public participation in policymaking has recently gained attention. For instance, if 500,000 eligible voters formally request legislative action on a matter, the Iranian Parliament is obligated to address it [7].

Nevertheless, at present, Iranian citizens play a minimal role in public policymaking. This deficiency has emerged as

a critical challenge, highlighting the necessity of integrating public policymaking with citizen engagement as an essential requirement for further research. Given these considerations, and in light of Clause 19 of the General Policies of the Administrative System issued by the Supreme Leader on April 20, 2010, this study seeks to identify the components constituting the policy evaluation model for recruiting and utilizing public capacity in Iran’s administrative system.

2. Methodology

The present study is applied in terms of its objective and qualitative in terms of data type, utilizing a systematic literature review and thematic analysis.

The study population consists of general directors, deputies, and managers of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as academic experts in policymaking from the southern provinces of Iran (Khuzestan, Bushehr, and Hormozgan). The sample size for thematic analysis includes 16 interviewees, selected through purposive sampling based on the principle of saturation.

Data collection tools include library documents and semi-structured interviews with experts. To ensure validity, expert opinions were employed, and for reliability assessment, inter-coder agreement was used. The results indicate that the instruments are both valid and reliable.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis (basic, organizing, and overarching themes) with Maxqda2020 software.

3. Findings and Results

In this section, the research data were analyzed and evaluated using scientific methods, beginning with data preprocessing. Data collection involved conducting interviews with 16 subject-matter experts who were knowledgeable and proficient in the research topic.

To determine the components of the policy evaluation model for recruiting and utilizing public capacity in Iran’s administrative system, a review of library studies, theoretical foundations, and prior research in domestic and international studies was conducted. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with 16 experts were performed, and the interview texts were transcribed. Subsequently, thematic analysis was used to categorize the codes derived from the literature and expert interviews. The tools employed in thematic analysis included coding, software applications, theme templates, and theme networks. Notably, all coding in the thematic analysis was performed using Maxqda2020

software. The coding process involved transforming basic themes into organizing themes, which were then converted into overarching themes.

A total of 103 basic themes were initially extracted from the systematic review, literature, and interview texts. After merging overlapping themes, 79 basic themes were identified. Figure 1 presents the word cloud generated from the final extracted basic themes derived from the literature and interview texts.

After coding the meaning units and reaching the saturation point (when no new categories or codes emerge from further text analysis or interviews), similar codes were grouped into categories, leading to the emergence of 27 qualitative data categories.

Related basic themes were identified, and after the final arrangement and clustering, labels for each organizing theme were assigned. In the final stage, each label was named based on the primary objective of the basic themes, utilizing theoretical foundations, prior research, and interview texts.

Thematic analysis of the interview texts began with extracting basic themes, eliminating irrelevant and repetitive themes, and categorizing them into basic themes, organizing themes, and ultimately, overarching themes. The table below presents the basic, organizing, and overarching themes, along with interviewee codes, frequencies, and corresponding sources.

Table 1. Categorization and Naming of Extracted Themes from the Systematic Literature Review and Expert Interviews

Overarching Themes (Dimension)	Organizing Themes (Component)	Basic Themes (Indicator)	Source	Interviewee Code
Transparency and Information Dissemination	Information Publication	Publication of job advertisements and information related to available positions in the administrative system	[15, 16]	I10, I6, I5, I1, I7
		Publication of the criteria and stages of the recruitment process for public capacities	[16, 17]	.....
		Publication of information regarding the benefits and available employment opportunities in administrative organizations	[15, 16]	.....
	Free Access to Information	Establishment of online information repositories that enable searching for job advertisements and employment opportunities	[18]	.....
		Establishment of electronic systems for sending and receiving information related to the recruitment and utilization process of public capacities	.....	I3, I8, I3
Justice and Equality	Equal Opportunities in Access to Resources	Creation of information centers within administrative organizations to provide information to the public and respond to their inquiries	[15, 16]	I4, I15, I6
		Creation of equal opportunities for accessing information and job advertisements	[16, 18, 19]	.....
	Improving access to training opportunities and professional development for all individuals	[17, 20, 21]	.....
Identification and Selection of Skills	Equal Opportunities for Public Participation in Decision-Making Processes	Creating equal opportunities for participation of individuals with cultural, ethnic, social, and gender diversity in decision-making processes	[18, 22]	I8, I15, I3, I2
	Identification of Organizational Needs	Analysis and assessment of the current and future skill needs of the organization	[19]	I8, I14, I3, I1
Research and Development	Analysis of Needs and Challenges	Identification of key and fundamental skills required for performing organizational tasks	[18, 23]	I6, I10, I5, I7
		Analysis of the general needs of society and administrative organizations	[5]	I8, I7, I11, I5
	Identification of existing problems and challenges in the administrative system	[22]	.....
Participation and Partnership	Planning for Research and Development	Determining the research and development goals and priorities in administrative organizations	[10]	.....
	Establishment of a Participatory Culture	Creating awareness and a culture of participation within administrative organizations	[22]	I6, I9, I3, I5
	Collaboration with Other Organizations and Institutions	Establishing communication and collaboration with other organizations at the domestic and international levels	[7, 8, 18]	I4, I2, I6
Economic Justification Evaluation	Cost Analysis	Direct costs associated with recruiting and utilizing public capacity, such as training and preparation costs for the required workforce	[13, 24]	I2, I1, I10

	Benefit Analysis	Financial and economic benefits resulting from recruiting and utilizing public capacity, such as increased production and national income	[7, 13, 24]	.....
Compliance Evaluation with Laws and Regulations	Compliance with Laws and Regulations	Examination of the alignment of policies with relevant laws and regulations, such as labor laws and legal statutes	[5]	.....
	Protection of Rights and Ensuring Support	Examination of the assurance and protection of workers' rights in the process of recruiting and utilizing public capacity, such as legal rights, social rights, and health and safety rights	[5]	.....
Innovation Culture	Values and Beliefs	Recognition and encouragement of creativity and innovation	[22]	I8, I15, I3, I2
		Attention to transparency values in innovation processes	.....	I4, I2, I6
		Valuation of new capabilities and ideas	[18]	I4, I2, I8, I15, I9
	Attitudes and Behaviors	Acceptance of mistakes as opportunities for learning and improvement	[17, 20]	I8, I2, I3, I1
		Encouraging collaboration, interaction, and knowledge sharing	[5, 18]	I3, I13
Enthusiasm for Mistakes and Learning	Creating a secure environment for trial and error	Support for the acceptance of change and flexibility	[5]	I3, I8, I3
		Encouraging learning from past experiences and sharing knowledge	[18]	I4, I7, I8, I15, I9
		Encouraging continuous evaluation and improvement of innovation processes	[17, 20, 21]	.....

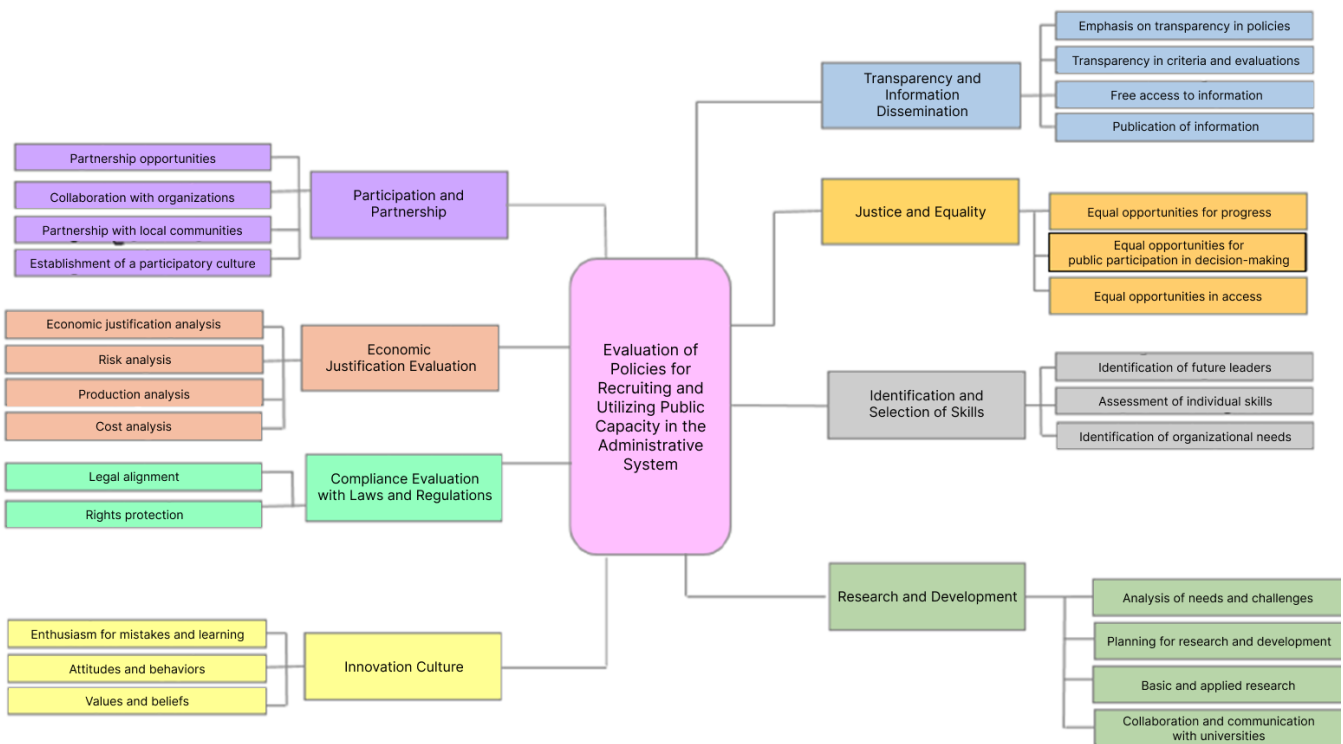


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Study

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the policy evaluation model for recruiting and utilizing public capacity in Iran's administrative system comprises eight dimensions: transparency and information dissemination, justice and

equality, identification and selection of skills, research and development, participation and partnership, economic justification evaluation, compliance evaluation with laws and regulations, and innovation culture. Each of these dimensions is further explained below.

The dimension of transparency and information dissemination highlights several critical aspects. One of the main issues is ensuring transparency in informing the public about calls for participation and opportunities for public engagement in administrative and executive affairs. This enhances public participation and accountability. Another important aspect is providing timely and comprehensive information regarding the processes, criteria, and regulations for recruiting and utilizing public capacities, which fosters trust and transparency. Additionally, offering feedback and performance reports to the public regarding the extent of recruitment and utilization of public capacities and their outcomes increases administrative accountability. Another key issue in this dimension is creating appropriate platforms for public oversight and inspection of processes and policy implementation, which strengthens transparency and accountability. Therefore, effective transparency and information dissemination at all stages of policy implementation play a crucial role in fostering public trust, increasing public participation, and enhancing the effectiveness of these policies [14].

The dimension of justice and equality is also significant in the evaluation model for policies on recruiting and utilizing public capacity. One crucial aspect of this dimension is implementing fair and impartial criteria and regulations in the selection process for public participation in administrative affairs, which enhances public trust and the perception of justice in society. Another important issue is ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens, regardless of individual, social, economic, or political factors, which leads to broader and more inclusive participation. Ensuring the fair allocation and distribution of resources and facilities across different regions to utilize public capacity is another essential factor in justice and equality, preventing regional inequalities. Additionally, prioritizing and including vulnerable and underprivileged groups in public participation processes fosters social justice among citizens. Thus, considering justice and equality in the implementation of these policies plays a critical role in strengthening public trust, increasing participation, and achieving a more equitable distribution of benefits [15].

Regarding the identification and selection of skills, several important aspects are highlighted in the evaluation model. For example, accurately identifying and assessing the necessary skills required for performing various administrative tasks and services necessitates a detailed analysis of job descriptions and essential competencies. Another key factor is designing transparent and well-

documented processes for assessing applicants' skills using tools such as interviews, specialized tests, and evaluation of past experiences. Employing experts from relevant fields for assessing specialized and technical skills is also vital, as it enhances the accuracy and credibility of the selection process. Additionally, developing a comprehensive database of citizens' skills and creating appropriate opportunities for utilizing them helps identify potential capacities within society. Moreover, focusing on skill development through training and empowerment programs for participation in administrative affairs can significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public participation. Therefore, addressing this dimension can lead to the optimal identification and utilization of public capacities and improve the quality of administrative services [5].

The research and development dimension in the evaluation model emphasizes several key aspects. Conducting applied research to identify and analyze existing needs and challenges related to recruiting and utilizing public capacity is essential for gaining a precise understanding of the current situation and formulating appropriate strategies. Another important issue is designing and implementing innovative pilot projects for public participation in administrative affairs, which enables testing and evaluating new approaches. Examining and utilizing the experiences of other countries in this field also contributes to refining and enhancing local strategies. Furthermore, collaboration with academic and research institutions for conducting studies and proposing practical solutions enhances the accuracy and quality of decision-making. Establishing a database to document both successful and failed experiences in this domain facilitates feedback and learning. Additionally, leveraging modern technologies and digital tools to enhance citizen participation and communication can significantly improve the quality and effectiveness of public engagement. Therefore, prioritizing this dimension can improve the effectiveness of policies related to recruiting and utilizing public capacity in Iran's administrative system [19].

The dimension of participation and partnership also encompasses critical elements. Creating diverse and extensive opportunities for citizen participation in decision-making processes and policy implementation enhances citizens' sense of belonging and responsibility. Encouraging and facilitating the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders in policy design and implementation increases the diversity and quality of participation. Establishing open and participatory

spaces for dialogue and exchange of opinions between citizens and officials enhances public trust and transparency in processes. Allocating budgets and resources to support public participation in administrative affairs strengthens motivation and engagement. Additionally, establishing dedicated units within administrative organizations to facilitate participation and respond to public needs and requests improves communication and participation quality. Developing supportive laws and enforcement mechanisms for public participation also enhances the security and sustainability of participatory initiatives. Therefore, addressing this dimension can lead to the expansion and improvement of citizen participation in the design and implementation of policies for recruiting and utilizing public capacity in Iran's administrative system [18].

In the dimension of economic justification evaluation, multiple critical issues arise in the evaluation model. The first key factor is conducting cost-benefit analyses to assess the economic feasibility of recruiting and utilizing public capacity, which helps determine potential government cost savings and improve program efficiency. Another important factor is evaluating the added value and economic benefits derived from public participation, demonstrating its economic advantages. Assessing investment costs and managing the risks of participatory projects is another essential factor, as it minimizes project costs and enhances feasibility. Additionally, calculating the return on investment (ROI) and profitability of public participation-based projects attracts investors and improves financial sustainability. Evaluating government cost savings through delegating certain tasks to the public also reduces the financial burden on the government. Developing financing mechanisms and designing efficient funding models for public participation further facilitates and enhances public engagement. Therefore, prioritizing this dimension can increase the economic justification and financial sustainability of public participation-based projects [21].

Regarding compliance evaluation with laws and regulations, an essential factor is examining the alignment of participatory projects with existing laws and regulations to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Another important aspect is identifying and addressing legal and regulatory gaps in public participation, facilitating and strengthening the legal framework. Developing and updating policies and executive guidelines for public participation is also critical, as it creates a transparent and accountable legal environment. Additionally, analyzing legal barriers and limitations hindering public participation and proposing

solutions can facilitate broader engagement. Another crucial aspect is designing appropriate monitoring and control mechanisms to ensure compliance with legal requirements in participatory projects. Examining the distribution of power and responsibilities between government and public sectors within the legal framework helps define legal relationships and accountability structures. Therefore, prioritizing this dimension ensures legality and minimizes execution risks in public participation-based projects [7, 8].

Finally, in the innovation culture dimension, several key factors are highlighted. Promoting a spirit of innovation and creativity among government employees and citizens fosters an environment for novel ideas and innovative public participation initiatives. Establishing supportive and incentivizing environments for creative and innovative ideas helps unlock public innovation potential. Another essential factor is developing technological infrastructure and digital platforms to facilitate idea-sharing and interaction in a digital setting. Organizing innovation events and competitions to recognize and reward innovative citizen proposals fosters a culture of creativity and innovation. Providing training and capacity-building programs for employees in innovation and creativity enhances their innovative capabilities. Additionally, establishing citizen suggestion and feedback mechanisms facilitates the presentation of innovative ideas. Thus, prioritizing this dimension promotes dynamism, flexibility, and innovation in public participation-based projects [5].

Based on the study's findings and identified dimensions, the following practical recommendations are proposed for each dimension.

- **Transparency and Information Dissemination:** Government agencies should leverage modern technologies to provide transparent and up-to-date information on public participation opportunities. Clear mechanisms should be established to respond to citizen inquiries regarding the recruitment and utilization of public capacities.
- **Justice and Equality:** Recruitment and utilization processes should be based on transparent and well-defined criteria to prevent discrimination. Special initiatives should be undertaken in underprivileged areas to enhance access and participation in public capacity programs.
- **Identification and Selection of Skills:** Skill identification and selection should be grounded in a thorough needs assessment and analysis of current administrative challenges. The

development of both individual and organizational capacities should be prioritized.

- **Research and Development:** Comparative studies on successful global experiences in recruiting and utilizing public capacity should be conducted. Practical research should focus on designing and implementing innovative policy models.
- **Participation and Partnership:** Incentives should be developed to encourage public participation in administrative decision-making and policy evaluation. Mechanisms should be established to collect and integrate public feedback.
- **Economic Justification Evaluation:** Cost-benefit analyses should be performed to assess the financial impact of public capacity utilization policies. Funding sources and economic sustainability strategies should be clearly outlined.
- **Compliance Evaluation with Laws and Regulations:** A transparent legal framework should be established to regulate public participation. Existing laws should be reviewed and updated to align with participation models.
- **Innovation Culture:** Training programs on creativity and innovation should be implemented. A structured reward system for innovative public initiatives should be developed.

Authors' Contributions

Authors equally contributed to this article.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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