

Municipal Modernization and the Quality of Local Public Administration: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the degree of citizen satisfaction in the decision-making process at the local authority level and the analysis of the functionality of municipalities to safeguard the policy of decision-making and the integration of citizens. It investigates the participation and involvement of citizens in Local Governance as well as assessing the Image and Quality of Local Public Administration as perceived by the citizens. The study focuses two municipalities of Portugal. A total of 278 citizens participated in the study. A questionnaire survey was conducted, comprised of questions that reflected the key variables of this study, namely, satisfaction, development, participation, and overall perceived quality, image, and accountability of public administration. To explore and the perceived overall quality and image of Public Administration, the decision was made to use a statistical technique called linear regression analysis. From analysis of the data collected, it is clear that the vast majority of citizens of the research/studied municipalities do not participate in decision-making by the public administration. The quality of local public administration is influenced by the satisfaction of individuals with regard to the efficiency of services and influenced by individual satisfaction in terms of quality, concern and needs. Citizen satisfaction with local public administration depends primarily on specific areas in particular: Education, housing, infrastructures, culture and recreation, and health and safety, and their specific attributes: Facilities, friendliness and speed.

Keywords: *Public Administration, Governance, Local Government, Public Sector Management, Citizenship.*

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, new challenges for public administration have appeared, which affect a government, which is more regulatory and less of a service provider. This new role for the “State / Government / Public Administration” is due to new socio-economic and governance realities, particularly those that are bound to globalization and the redefinition of the interaction between the political system, the economic system, and the cultural-ethical system [1].

A culture that cannot fear assessments and believes that external control exists cannot thereby harm those responsible for public funds, but rather help them to manage as efficiently and fairly as possible. However, public managers that have emerged from the model of New Public Management [2] have not always been able to manage public money efficiently, because their goals were oriented toward the results of their actions in a simple, but perceptive, manner. The dilemma of the government versus the market has a dimension that is not considered as

interventionism, as both the market and the government act imperfectly [3] implying a regulatory role that allows for qualifying relationships and increases social welfare.

Given the above, this study examines the central integration of citizens and their participation in decision-making to ensure that the model of local governance contributes to public modernization and is closer to the citizen. As a specific goal, the study measures the degree of citizen satisfaction in the decision-making process at a local authorities' level and an analysis of the municipalities' functionality, thus safeguarding the policy decisions and integration of citizens. The aim is thus to investigate the participation and involvement of citizens in decision-making by the Local Administration, as well as assessing the Image and Quality of Local Public Administration as perceived by the citizens.

The study focuses on the municipalities of Oliveira de Azeméis and Figueira de Castelo

Rodrigo situated in the Centre of Portugal and analyzes the administrative modernization in these municipalities, measuring the degree of citizen satisfaction with their procedures and investigate the decision-making process at the level of local governance.

The paper is divided into five parts. After the Introduction, in Section Two, there is a brief literature review on the concepts and practices of governance at the local administration level. In Section Three, we describe the methodology used, and in Section Four, the processing and analysis of the gathered data is presented to establish the statistical validity to promote the establishment of sustained findings on the perception of citizens

and how decision -making can be supported in better governance that promotes citizen participation at the local level.

Literature Review and Research Hypotheses

The Concepts and Practices of Governance

The concept of governance is clearly different from the concept of traditional local government, revealing differences in terms of institutions, bureaucratic structure, horizontal and international networks, democratic relations, policies, central government and leadership [4] as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Local Government and Governance Perspective

	Government	Governance
1 Number of institutions	Few	Many
2 Bureaucratic structure	Hierarchical Consolidated	Decentred Fragmented
3 Horizontal networks	Closed	Extensive
4 International networks	Minimal	Extensive
5 Democratic linkage	Representative	Representative + new experiments
6 Policies	Routinized	Innovative Learning
7 Central government	Direct control	Decentralizes + micro intervention
8 Leadership	Collegial/clientelist	Mayoral/charismatic

Source: John (2001:17)

The term “governance” suggests a differentiation between the model of traditional centralized government and a more open model where both authority and power are more distributed but without marginalizing the responsibility of all participating members. Local Governance is the division of decision-making and service provision authority between public government and a range of non-elected organizations [5].

At the heart of the concept of local governance is the replacement process for the vertical decisions made by a horizontal relationship of interdependence in the exercise of power. Whether we emphasize the definition of a system of interactions between public and private players [6], whether we understand local governance as a process of coordination of players [7], or as a new formula to manage public policies through multiple networks [8,9], all these design elements underscore the idea of contemplation of social reality as a compound of social subsystems that are interrelated, which is decisive when one has to act over several of them [10].

Paradoxically, at a time when some argue the superiority of private management, with regard to public management, today governance is assumed to have an element of appreciation regarding the actions of the public sector and the distinction

between that sector and the private sector [11]. Bearing in mind the characteristics of the current paradigm of local public administration, the same author summarizes the various elements of municipal modernization and governance in terms of autonomy, inframunicipal decentralization, intermunicipal cooperation, personnel policy, participation, partnership with private entities, cooperation with the government, and presidentialism.

According to Carrapeto and Fonseca [12] participation is a major component of the quality of governance and has a bidirectional relationship with social capital. That participation can be seen as a high level of trust and reciprocity that reinforces the capacity to act collectively and leads to better government to the extent that the most demanding citizens exercise more effective control over the elected ones and enhance the credibility of the institutions and the quality of democracy.

This bidirectional relationship means, first of all, that participation is an important source of social capital by its fostering of social bonds in communities and, secondly, that social capital facilitates participation, because it encourages involvement in the decision-making processes that concern a community.

The site becomes thus an important sphere for the power of citizens wherein there are new and more intense ways of having public dialogue, given the greater proximity between the institutional unit and the population.

Also according to Carrapeto and Fonseca [13] in public politics, participation in the broad sense, encompassing mechanisms for information, consultation and active participation, begins to be included in governance as an institutional approach, for example:

- The other players in governance, especially the public ones, recognize the role of citizens, for example, through formal or informal agreements before or during the outset and implementation of political measures.
- The organizations of citizens take part in at least one phase of the cycle of public politics (scheduling, designing, implementation or evaluation).
- Citizens' organizations play a role that is both autonomous and coordinated with other players, introducing their own inputs, but having them integrated into the collective need.
- The role of organizations of citizens implies, in turn, the strengthening and improving of the respective exercise of power and responsibilities.
- Citizen participation adds value to policy-making, i.e., allowing the achievement of goals that otherwise would be much harder to achieve.

However, it is noticeable that the weight of a closed bureaucratic culture acknowledges the opening of mechanisms for citizens, but in a limited way. This situation occurs because the increase in the mechanisms for citizen involvement is not uniform since that increase more obvious in terms of information and, increasingly, consultation, than it is for active participation. This concern of public administration with information and consultation appears to reflect a concern of the public authorities, especially with the acceptance of measures and implementing these mechanisms to ensure acceptance by the people, there creating an informed and solution-oriented public [14].

Thus, the various elements of modernization and local governance are thus autonomy, inframunicipal decentralization, intermunicipal cooperation, personnel policy, participation, partnerships with private entities, cooperation with the State, and presidentialism (mayoral).

That is, we move from a state designated as a tutor to one seen as a partner state [15].

In this context, the keyword becomes change, especially when "change" refers to the Public Administration sector. Change is due to pressure from citizens and businesses; decisions by trusteeship, for economic and financial reasons and through the initiative of leaders, at various levels. Thus, whatever and whenever it may be, administrative reform is essential to lead to conclusive ideas, the changes that are needed to be made and its operating mode, so as to improve the performance of public administration.

When it comes to modernization or reform of Public Administration, the managerial administration [16] contrasts with the various processes and management models for effective and efficient responses to the needs of society and public policies, including those related to the management of resources and the methods of management [17]. Related to this issue, quite often is the issue of quality. In fact, the triggered processes of change and innovation are inseparable from the quality international movement and its respective integration into the models of global management [18].

Thus, it is essential that a more modern administration that is closer to its citizens, more aligned with knowledge and a citizenship society, another factor of development and social cohesion, is better able to effectively put into practice defined public policies [9].

In this context, Local Administration is encouraged by the progress already made in political science, namely, the new challenges of participatory citizenship, new public management models, agency theories, transaction costs, and networks will be vital witnesses to the need for the further implementation of innovation [19].

Definition of the Hypotheses

Given the context in which administrative management and objectives are set, to analyze the integration process of citizens in decision-making and ensure that the model of local governance contributes to public modernization and moves closer to the citizen, the following assumptions can be made:

- H1 - The experience of citizen participation in public administration influences the good governance of the municipality.

- H2 - The satisfaction in different areas influences the Image and Global Quality of Local Public Administration.
- H3 - The Image and Global Quality perceived by citizens affect the good governance of the municipality.
- H4 - The citizens' satisfaction with the Local Public Administration depends on their actions / attributes.
- H5 - The Image and Global Quality perceived by citizens influence the modernization of local public administration.
- H6 - The socioeconomic characteristics of the individual affects the valuation of the attributes of local administrative modernization.

Methodology

This empirical study focuses on the municipalities, Oliveira de Azeméis and Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, localized in the centre of Portugal and identifies how the process of decision-making and the forms of citizen participation are developed, evaluating how the model of local governance can contribute to public modernization, bringing the citizen and the process leading to the solution of their problems much closer.

Considering the objectives proposed in this research, the data needed to characterize the participation of citizens in decision-making process, i.e., listing and understanding the procedures and the influence of the participation of the citizens in the municipalities of Oliveira de Azeméis and Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, a survey was chosen, through the use of a questionnaire, to obtain the as up-to-date data as possible.

The constitution of the sample was established by the need to compare with an equal proportion of a municipality coast (Oliveira de Azeméis- nineteen wards) with a municipally of the interior of Portugal with a number of wards closest in number to the coastal municipality (Figueira Castelo Rodrigo- seventeen wards).

An important step before starting the calculation of sample size was to define the sample error for the study to be performed. Therefore, we defined a confidence level of 95% for a margin of error of 5% which resulted in 139 individuals for each municipality. Thus, we proceeded to compare / framework for municipalities by the sample

number of inhabitants on the weight of their NUT for a confidence level of 95%.

The group of people chosen for analysis in this study, in accordance with the objectives of this effort, are citizens over the age of 18 living in the cities of Oliveira de Azeméis and Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo. For this purpose, a sample of non-probability and accidental type was made, since they were individuals who agreed to take the survey based on their presence at the concerted place at the time of the surveys and contemplating the requirement of being residents of that specific municipality. Survey respondents were explained the purpose of the questionnaire, stressing the importance of the truthfulness of all responses and the assurance of anonymity.

The questionnaire was prepared and delivered personally to the residents of the named cities. The questionnaires were completed by the interviewer, who recorded the information provided as answers. A questionnaire survey was conducted, comprised of questions that reflected the key variables of this study, namely, satisfaction, development, participation, and overall perceived quality, image, and accountability of public administration, based on the literature review conducted. This process allowed retrospectively an assessing of the objectives of the research and testing of the hypotheses set.

The sample obtained consisted of 278 individuals (139 individuals from each municipality) of both sexes. The data collection took place during the second quarter of 2011.

The survey was divided into six logical segments:

- Socio-demographic Characterization.
- Satisfaction with the action areas of Public Administration.
- Overall assessment of the evolution of Public Administration.
- The experience of participation in Public Administration.
- Global perceived image and quality.
- Responsibility for the operation of Public Administration.

The result analysis is supported by descriptive statistics in the form of frequency distributions for some variables by calculating percentages. To assess the global goodness of fit of the model, we used the chi-square test to compare the change in the value of likelihood, which has a value of proof set below the level of significance of 0.05. Next, we used the binomial test to assess the occurrence of one of the outputs of a dichotomous variable, i.e., to test the proportion of this occurrence in the overall occurrences recorded. This type of test is used for issues that contain only the two options "yes" or "no."

As it becomes necessary to explore the relationships between these factors and the perceived overall quality and image of Public Administration, the decision was made to use a statistical technique, both descriptive and inferential, called linear regression analysis. As we intended to study the statistical relationship of a dependent variable in relation to more than one explanatory variable, this study is defined as a multiple *linear regression analysis* [20]. The results were subjected to a quantitative analysis of the character descriptive items. The level of significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Data Processing and Results

To understand the profile of the respondents, here is the demographic data for the sample. The sample consisted of 278 individuals (139 individuals from each municipality), and in terms of gender, 51.1% of respondents were male, and 48.9% were female.

In terms of the level of qualification of the individuals surveyed, 32.4% had higher education, 32.0% had secondary education, 15.5% had the first cycle of basic education, 11.2% had basic education (9th grade) and 9.0% of respondents completed a professional-technical course.

In terms of age of the respondents, 10.4% of the individuals surveyed were 18 to 25, 34.5% were between 26 and 35, 28.1% were between 36 and 45 and 27.0% are more than 45 years old.

A -Citizen Participation in Decision -making in Public Administration

To evaluate the perception of the respondents regarding participation in decision- making in Public Administration (H1), the issues listed in Tables 2-5 were analyzed. These results (Table 2) shows that 36.0% make written complaints, 82.7% of respondents are not involved in building the city as individuals, 28.8% offer written

suggestions and, finally, the vast majority of individuals are not involved in the valuation of their municipality whether individually or in a group / association (75.2% and 72.7%, respectively).

Table 2: Actions of participation in public administration

	YES	NO
Participated in (general) meetings	28.4	71.6
Made written complaints	36.0	64.0
Gave written suggestions	28.8	71.2
Is involved in the construction of their municipality individually	17.3	82.7
Is involved in the construction of their municipality in a group / associations	22.3	77.7
Is involved in the valuation of their municipality individually	24.8	75.2
Is involved in the valuation of their municipality in a group / association	27.3	72.7

Table 3:Responsibility for the operation of the public administration

	Oliveira de Azeméis (average)	Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo (average)
Government	3.14	2.44
Top Leaders of Public Administration	3.12	2.40
Intermediate Managers of Public Administration	3.14	2.53
Public Employees	3.16	2.70
Citizens	3.04	3.01

An analysis of Table 3 verifies that respondents in the municipality of Oliveira de Azeméis assign greater responsibility to public employees for the functioning of public administration, while respondents in the city of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo attribute more responsibility to their citizens for the functioning of public administration.

The aim hereinafter is to test whether the incidence of individuals who offer written complaints is independent of gender, that is, if the number of written complaints is different by gender, assuming a needed level of significance of 5%, using the chi-square test for this purpose.

An analysis of Table 4 shows that the value of the chi-square observed is equal to 2.310 and the *p-value* equals 0.129. Since the *p-value* is greater than the significance level of 5%, the null hypothesis for the incidence of written complaints is identical in both sexes is not rejected, that is, taking into account the test used (chi-square) the written complaints do not depend on gender.

The chi-square test was also used, considering a significance level of 5%, to test the hypothesis that individual participation in general meetings and the municipality can be independent from the actual municipality.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test

	Chi-Square	df	Asymp.Sig.
Written complaints / gender	2.310	1	.129
Participation in (general) meetings	9.354	1	.002
Satisfaction with education versus municipalities	5.127	4	0.274
Satisfaction with services available online versus municipalities	39.060	4	0.000

An analysis of Table 4 indicates that the *p-value* is less than the level of significance. Thus, it can be concluded that the participation of individuals in general meetings or other meetings depends on the municipality in question. It is also noticed that in Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo only 20% of subjects reported that they participate in general meetings or other meetings, while in Oliveira de Azeméis about 37% of the subjects reported that they participate in general meetings or other meetings.

Finally, we tested whether satisfaction in the areas of education and available online services was independent from the given municipality (H2). As shown in Table 5, education shows a *p-value* greater than the level of significance at 5%. Therefore, we do not reject the null hypothesis that the incidence of satisfaction with education is identical in the two municipalities. However, the observed chi-square for the services available does equal 39.060, the *p-value* equals 0.000 and the significance level of 5%. As the *p-value* is less than the significance level of 5%, we reject the null hypothesis for the incidence in education not being identical in the two municipalities. On average, individuals living in the municipality of Oliveira de Azeméis are more satisfied with education and available online services there (3.55), while those living in the city of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo are less satisfied (2.88).

The intention at this time is to test the hypothesis suggesting that 40% of individuals are involved or not involved in the construction of their municipality in a group or associations. For this purpose, we use the binomial test, which from the analysis of Table 5, indicates that the percentage of individuals who are involved in the

construction of their municipality in a group / association is 20% ($n_s=62$), and the percentage of individuals not involved in the construction of their municipality in a group / associations is 80% ($n_n=216$).

Table 5: Test Binomial -being involved in the construction of their municipality

	Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
Being involved in the construction of their municipality in a group / associations	No	216	.80	.4	.000
	Yes	62	.20		
	Total	278	1.0		

Therefore, it was concluded that the vast majority of respondents are not involved in the construction of their municipality via a group / associations.

B- Perceived Global Image and Quality of Local Public Administration

To analyze the perceived overall image and quality of local public administration (H3), the differences of means test was used, cross checking these variables with gender, educational level, and age.

An analysis Table 6, shows there are differences in perception. In terms of gender, the feminine respondents characterized Public Administration, less critically on all issues except for quality, clarity / transparency of tasks, needs of the population, evaluation, flexibility and expectations, whereas the male gender appeared to be more satisfied. It was also found that older respondents were always the most satisfied with the performance of Local Public Administration in its various areas of service.

In terms of the areas of functioning of Public Administration, individuals with a graduate degree evaluated the attributes of public administration in a less demanding way, compared with individuals holding other degrees.

C- Areas of Action / Attributes of Public Administration

By analyzing the level of satisfaction with different areas of action of public administration, it appears there were no significant differences at this level. Individuals were least satisfied with

Table 6: Differences of means test

Variables	Gender		Educational Level							Age			
	Feminine	Masculine	First cycle of basic education	basic education	secondary education	professional-technical course	Bachelor's degree	Graduate degree	Master's degree	under 25	26-35	36-45	over 45
Education	3.57	3.37	3.63	3.39	3.42	3.20	3.30	3.64	2.60	3.31	3.49	3.44	3.53
Health	3.18	3.15	3.35	3.03	3.18	2.80	3.10	3.31	2.00	3.24	3.13	2.97	3.39
Social Services	3.15	3.02	3.35	2.94	3.16	2.76	3.20	3.00	3.00	2.97	2.93	3.06	3.35
Economy and Finances	2.98	2.75	3.02	2.71	2.97	2.68	2.60	2.80	2.80	2.76	2.72	2.95	2.99
Housing and infrastructures	3.35	3.26	3.35	3.13	3.36	2.92	3.10	3.47	2.80	3.34	3.24	3.29	3.37
Culture and Leisure	3.52	3.32	3.37	3.35	3.43	3.04	3.30	3.63	3.20	3.24	3.32	3.54	3.49
Organizational	3.30	3.06	3.26	2.97	3.28	2.96	3.10	3.27	2.00	3.03	3.07	3.22	3.33
Hygiene and Safety	3.32	3.16	3.28	2.81	3.36	2.88	3.40	3.39	2.8	3.38	3.2	3.29	3.19
facilities	3.52	3.46	3.58	3.29	3.4	3.16	3.80	3.73	3.00	3.45	3.44	3.64	3.43
Friendliness	3.46	3.41	3.49	3.06	3.4	3.16	3.50	3.71	3.00	3.21	3.4	3.58	3.43
Speed	3.21	2.78	3.12	2.35	2.99	2.88	3.00	3.23	3.00	2.69	2.76	3.35	3.04
Competence and professionalism	3.38	3.20	3.37	2.90	3.34	3.12	3.40	3.44	2.40	3.24	3.23	3.33	3.33
Clarity / transparency of information	3.26	3.11	3.33	3.00	3.18	3.08	3.10	3.28	2.40	3.00	3.14	3.21	3.29
Simplification of the process	3.13	2.89	3.21	2.58	3.06	2.79	3.00	3.12	2.40	2.83	2.83	3.13	3.17
Timetable	3.46	3.33	3.60	3.19	3.40	2.80	3.90	3.53	2.60	3.28	3.16	3.53	3.61
Available online Services	3.24	3.16	2.33	3.16	3.35	2.92	3.90	3.55	3.20	3.52	3.16	3.47	2.85
Efficiency	2.97	2.91	2.72	3.00	2.94	2.76	2.89	3.18	1.80	2.69	3.00	2.86	3.04
Quality	3.10	3.11	2.84	2.90	3.12	2.80	3.40	3.43	2.40	2.93	3.10	3.21	3.07
Concern	3.10	3.01	2.86	2.84	3.04	2.84	3.20	3.36	2.60	2.76	3.02	3.18	3.09
Operation	3.06	2.83	2.74	2.74	2.98	2.60	2.80	3.27	2.40	2.93	2.92	3.06	2.85
Clarity / transparency of tasks	2.76	2.85	2.84	2.68	2.80	2.52	2.70	3.04	1.60	2.79	2.65	2.91	2.91
Harmonization between citizens and local government	2.96	2.82	2.81	2.65	2.82	2.68	2.60	3.25	2.20	2.76	2.92	3.01	2.76
Language	2.90	2.85	2.74	2.58	2.93	2.68	3.10	3.08	2.20	3.07	2.74	2.97	2.87
Effectiveness of policies	2.78	2.75	2.72	2.71	2.84	2.68	2.60	2.84	1.80	3.00	2.79	2.65	2.76
Needs of the population	2.82	2.83	2.65	2.84	2.82	2.60	2.90	3.00	2.80	2.86	2.91	2.77	2.77
Evaluation	2.71	2.78	2.65	2.71	2.80	2.48	3.00	2.80	1.60	2.90	2.76	2.71	2.72
Flexibility	2.72	2.77	2.60	2.55	2.87	2.60	2.80	2.88	0.16	2.76	2.73	2.74	2.76
Expectations	2.76	2.79	2.67	2.87	2.82	2.44	2.80	2.91	2.00	2.97	2.76	2.78	2.72
Anticipation of problems	2.64	2.54	2.58	2.42	2.58	2.40	2.70	2.83	1.00	2.59	2.54	2.63	2.61
Polymaking	2.80	2.77	2.67	3.00	2.78	2.48	2.60	2.93	2.20	2.96	2.78	2.78	2.72

the following areas: Health (42.4%), social security (45.7%), economics and finance (37.4%) and organizational level (45.0%). However, 57.6% of the respondents were more satisfied with education, 42.8% with housing and infrastructure, 50.7% with culture and leisure, and 40.3% with hygiene and safety. Thus, it is noted that on a scale of 1 to 5 points, most respondents evaluated these action areas between 3 and 4, again demonstrating that they are quite satisfied.

Regarding the attributes of public administration, Table 7 indicates that speed, process simplification and clarity / transparency of information are areas where there are less satisfied individuals, a finding that may indicate the need for action and implementation of performance measures for any of these attributes that may constrain other aspects.

Table 7: Attributes of public administration

Attributes	%	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
Facilities	%	3.2	8.6	25.9	60.1	2.2
Friendliness	%	2.5	9.0	35.3	48.9	4.3
Speed	%	9.0	15.8	43.5	30.2	1.4
Competence and professionalism	%	4.0	11.5	38.1	44.6	1.8
Clarity / transparency of information	%	5.0	11.9	44.6	36.7	1.8
Simplification of the process	%	7.2	21.6	35.6	33.8	1.4
Timetable	%	5.0	12.2	28.8	46.0	7.9
Available online Services	%	10.4	10.1	34.5	38.8	6.1

In terms of efficiency, quality, concern, functioning, clarity / transparency of tasks, rapprochement between citizens and local government, language, policy effectiveness, population needs, evaluation, flexibility, expectations, anticipation of problems and policy development, Table 8 illustrates the recorded frequencies (H4). The surveyed sample (Table 8) indicated that the image and quality of public administration was indifferent to most

respondents in the following aspects: Efficiency of services, quality of local public administration, concern with customers / citizens, functioning of Information and Support for Consumers Centres, clarity / transparency of tasks, harmonization between citizen and local government, answer to needs, evaluating policies in Local Public Administration, flexibility in answers, citizens' expectations, Anticipation of problems, and policymaking.

Table 8: Image and quality of public administration

Attributes		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Efficiency of services	%	4.7	29.1	34.9	30.2	1.1
Quality of Local Public Administration	%	4.7	21.6	36.0	34.2	3.6
Concern with clients/ citizens	%	5.8	20.9	39.2	30.2	4.00
Operation	%	3.6	26.6	4.7	28.1	
Clarity / transparency of tasks	%	6.8	31.7	37.1	23.00	1.4
Harmonization between citizens and local government	%	9.00	25.5	36.7	25.5	3.2
Language by Support Centres for Consumers	%	7.2	28.8	34.5	28.4	1.1
Effectiveness of policies	%	5.4	37.4	33.8	21.9	1.4
Answer to the needs	%	6.5	32.0	35.6	24.1	1.8
Evaluation policies in the Local Public Administration	%	6.8	34.5	38.1	18.3	2.2
Flexibility in Answers	%	6.8	33.8	38.5	19.1	1.1
Citizens' Expectations	%	6.8	32.7	38.8	19.1	2.5
Anticipation of problems	%	12.2	35.6	34.5	16.2	1.4
Policymaking	%	6.8	32.4	38.8	19.8	2.2

Only 37.4% of the respondents disagreed with that the policy aspect of Local Public Administration being effective and timely, and 35.6% of respondents disagreed with the issue that local governments establish policies' taking into account demographic, economic and environmental evolution. It appears that there is no uniformity regarding all the aspects; however, for most respondents the image and quality of public administration was one of indifference.

D-Modernization of Public Administration: Regression Analysis

The subjects were asked whether the Local Public Administration shows signs of modernization. It was understood that the evaluation of this issue depends on the appreciation of it, as it relates to the perceived global image and quality of public administration in terms of both quality and efficiency (H5).

A simple linear regression was applied to test the hypothesis that the modernization of local public administration is related to the perceived global image and quality. A simple linear regression related the dependent variable of quality of local public administration to the other independent or explanatory variables that contribute to the assessment of perceived global image and quality based on the quality of the Local Public Administration: Efficiency of services; concern with customers / citizens; , functioning of Information and Support for Consumers Centers; clarity / transparency of tasks; harmonization between citizens and local government; language

used in documents of Local Government; policy effectiveness; needs response; assessing policies in Local Public Administration; flexibility in response; citizen expectations, anticipating problems and definition of policies.

It was also important to relate the dependent variable of efficiency of services provided by the Local Public Administration to the other independent variables that contribute to the assessment of quality depending on the efficiency of the Local Public Administration: Quality of local public administration.

According to the data obtained and listed in Table 9, it was possible to verify that the correlation coefficient $R=0.8181$ shows that it is evident that there is a linear relationship between the variables. With a coefficient of determination $R^2=0.669$, it should be noted that 66.9% of the variability found in the quality of local public administration is explained by the independent variables; only the remaining 33.1% are due to other factors.

A good fit of model should reflect in a R^2 value close to 1 [21]. As in this case, the coefficient of determination was high, we conclude that the linear relationship between the variables is strong and the model has a good fit [21]. It also appears through use of the linear regression equation that the quality of local public administration depends significantly on the independent variables ($Sig=0.000 < p=0.05$).

Table 9: Assessment of modernization according to the global image and quality of local public administration

Variables	B	Sig
(Constant)	.233	.127
Efficiency of services	.195	0.00
Concern with clients/ citizens	.538	0.00
Functioning of information and support for consumers centers	.030	.578
Clarity / transparency of tasks	-.056	.365
Harmonization between citizens and local government	-.032	.534
Language used in documents of local government bodies	.145	0.03
Policy effectiveness	.010	.879
Needs response	.019	.776
Assessing policies in local public administration	.053	.407
Flexibility in response	.091	.198
Citizens' expectations	-.090	-.144
Anticipation of problems	-.018	.771
Definition of policies	.078	.166
R	.818	
R ²	.669	
R Adjusted	.652	
N	272	

Thus, it is possible to check (see Table 9) that the quality of local public administration is influenced

by the presumed satisfaction of individuals with regard to the efficiency of services, concern with

customers / citizens and language used in the documents of Local Government. There is no evidence when analyzing the results that the global valuation of quality depends on satisfaction related to areas such as the functioning of Information and Support for Consumers Centers, clarity / transparency of tasks, harmonization between citizens and local government, policy effectiveness, needs response, assessing policies in Local Public Administration, flexibility in response, citizens' expectations, anticipating problems and definition of policies.

Regarding the assessment of quality depending on the efficiency of services provided by the Local Public Administration, based on the data included

in Table 10, and correlation coefficient of $R=0.7091$, it is evident that there is the existence of a linear relationship between the assessment of quality and the Public Administration Efficiency.

The coefficient of determination was $R^2= 0.502$ which means that 50.2% of the efficiency of services provided by the Local Public Administration can be explained by the independent variables present in the adjusted model. It was also verified in the linear regression equation that the efficiency of the services provided by the Local Public Administration depends significantly on the independent variables ($Sig = 0.000 < p=0.05$).

Table 10: Assessment of quality according to the public administration efficiency

Variables	B	Sig
(Constant)	.429	.029
Quality of local Public Administration	.323	0.00
Concern with clients/ citizens	.240	0.03
Functioning of information and support for consumers centers	-.044	.524
Clarity / transparency of tasks	.060	.450
Harmonization between citizens and local government	-.031	.649
Language used in documents of local government bodies	.072	0.262
Policy effectiveness	.058	.468
Needs response	.248	.004
Assessing policies in local public administration	.047	.567
Flexibility in response	.054	.554
Citizens' expectations	-.059	.462
Anticipation of problems	-.032	.684
Definition of policies	-.091	.209
R	.709	
R 2	.502	
R Adjusted	.477	
N	272	

Given the results presented in Table 10, it can be seen that, with regard to the effect of quality depending on the efficiency of public administration, this aspect is influenced by individuals' satisfaction with quality, concern, and needs response. The valuation of attributes, such as the functioning of Support for Consumers Centres, clarity/ transparency of tasks, harmonization between citizens and local government, language used in documents of Local Government Bodies, policy effectiveness, assessing policies in Local Public Administration, flexibility in response, citizens' expectations, anticipation of problems and definition of policies does not exert a statistically significant effect.

E- Valuation of Attributes of Public Administration and Individual Socio-demographic Characteristics

Based on previous results, there is heterogeneity in individuals in terms of valuation, on average, of

certain attributes of the Local Public Administration. A major limitation of that analysis is that while analyzing for the effect of a particular variable, one does not control the effect of other variables, a choice that may lead to erroneous conclusions.

One way to control for this problem is to use multiple regression analysis. At this point, the valuation of certain attributes corresponds to the dependent variable and can then be explained in terms of the socio-demographic characteristics of the individual. That is, we intend to study whether the satisfaction of individuals with regard to facilities, friendliness, speed, competence and professionalism, clarity / transparency of information, process simplification, schedules and online available services, depends on the characteristics of the individuals asked or the municipality to which these individuals belong (Table 11).

From the analysis offered in Table 11, it can be concluded individuals from an older age group, i.e., 38 to 45, and residents in the municipality of Oliveira de Azeméis have a greater possibility of being satisfied with facilities, competence and professionalism, clarity / transparency of information, process simplification, and schedules.

In terms of friendliness, older respondents and those who belong to the municipality of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo are more satisfied.

In terms of speed, it appears that individuals who are in the older age group (38 to 45), female, and have completed a degree (additional education) are more satisfied.

With regard to online available services, the fact that someone resided in the municipality of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo and had less high qualifications (those who completed primary education) increased the possibility of being dissatisfied with this attribute.

Table 11: Assessment of upgrading to socio-demographic characteristics of the individual

Variables	Facilities			Friendliness			Speed			Competence and Professionalism						
	B		Sig	B		Sig	B		Sig	B		Sig				
(Constant)		3.501		0.353		3.115		0.000		2.564		0.000		3.485		0.000
Age		0.008		0.052		0.015		0.001		0.22		0.000		0.011		0.006
Gender		-0.032		0.733		-0.03		0.745		-0.34		0.001		-0.175		0.071
Municipality		-0.293		0.004		0.069		0.002		-0.168		0.133		-0.291		0.006
Level of education		0.04		0.192		0.90		0.22		0.094		0.005		0.018		0.561
R 2		0.053				0.76				0.136				0.064		
Adjusted R		0.039								0.123				0.050		

Variables	Clarity / transparency of information			Process simplification			Schedules			Online available services						
	B		Sig	B		Sig	B		Sig	B		Sig				
(Constant)		3.311		0.000		2.893		0.000		3.088		0.000		4.002		0.000
Age		0.014		0.002		0.018		0.002		0.023		0.000		-0.006		0.245
Gender		-0.317		0.161		-0.168		0.061		-0.077		0.481		-0.073		0.522
Municipality		-0.001		0.003		-0.286		0.003		-0.370		0.002		-0.558		0.000
Level of education		0.074		0.974		0.021		0.974		0.022		0.528		0.108		0.004
R 2		0.060				0.078				0.089				0.147		
Adjusted R						0.065										

Discussion and Conclusions

The production of public goods and services has proven to be a fruitful field of possible alternative solutions for coordination and control. Sometimes government assumes the provision of services to a population, sometimes it decides to hire a private entity or lease an activity, sometimes it creates commercial companies (with public, subsidiary or mixed capital), and sometimes it promotes partnerships with nongovernmental nonprofit organizations or promotes an association between public bodies.

The existence of these new actors implies a change in public management. This change, based on what is known as governance, means, above all, that the binomial, somewhat simplistic, nationalization versus privatization theory has been exceeded, thus redefining the boundaries and relationships between state and society, and also giving new opportunities to the government to reinvent itself pluralism and adapt to each particular context [22]. The decentralization of competencies given local administration (and local

communities), the transfer of public service tasks to non-public communities, and the simplification of bureaucracy and streamlining of the management of major public services, are clear examples of this reinvention of the state and are trademarks of a new emerging paradigm called governance.

This study sought to assess how citizen participation in the municipalities of Oliveira de Azeméis and Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo influence decisions during the process of decision-making. From analysis of the data collected, it is clear that the vast majority of citizens of the research/studied municipalities do not participate in decision-making by the public administration. In addition, other key findings resulted which need to be understood in this research and eventually in future investigations.

In terms of participation in Public Administration, Hypothesis 1 was confirmed with respect to:

- The citizens of the municipality of Oliveira de Azeméis assign greater responsibility to government employees for the state of functioning of public administration, while respondents in the municipality of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo attribute more responsibility to citizens.
- The means of participation in public administration through written complaints does not depend on the municipality.
- The participation of individuals in (general) meetings depends on the municipality under review, registering greater participation by individuals from Azeméis de Oliveira.
- Individuals are not involved in the construction of their municipality in groups / associations.

In terms of citizen satisfaction with education and online available services the municipalities do not differ in their satisfaction with education, but do differ in their satisfaction with online services. Please note that the municipality of Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo presented a lower satisfaction for this item.

In terms of Global Image and Quality of Local Public Administration, the study verified that:

- Female respondents characterize public administration in a less critical way for all issues except the quality, clarity / transparency

of tasks, the needs of the population, evaluation, flexibility and expectations where male respondents are also less critical.

- Older respondents are always the most satisfied with the performance of local public administration in numerous areas.
- By analyzing the level of satisfaction with the performance areas of public administration, it appears that the majority of respondents are minimally satisfied (confirming Hypothesis 2) and the residents of Oliveira de Azeméis are more satisfied with local governance than those from Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo (confirming Hypothesis 3).

Citizen satisfaction with local public administration depends primarily on specific areas in particular: Education, housing, infrastructures, culture and recreation, and health and safety, and their specific attributes: Facilities, friendliness and speed (confirming Hypothesis 4).

The quality of local public administration is influenced by the satisfaction of individuals with regard to the efficiency of services and influenced by individual satisfaction in terms of quality, concern and needs (confirming Hypothesis 5).

The evaluation of attributes depends on the characteristics of individuals. Older individuals and residents in the municipality of Oliveira de Azeméis are more satisfied with the facilities, expertise, professionalism and clarity / transparency of tasks, process simplification and schedules (confirming Hypothesis 6).

The valuation of attributes of the Local Public Administration does not depend on gender. The qualifications of individuals only influence the valuation of attributes in terms of speed and online available services. Individuals from Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo are more satisfied than those from Oliveira de Azeméis, but only in terms of friendliness [23-28].

Thus, the municipalities of Oliveira de Azeméis and Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo need, from this first review, to enhance citizen participation in decision-making by their local governments. It is essential to develop new procedures where citizens can participate more active and critically, thus disseminating their views. It is also necessary to increase the satisfaction of the youngest citizens and implement a "new" perceived global image and quality image of local

public administration, since the young people are the most dissatisfied. For this change, it is necessary to take measures that encourage the process of decision-making by citizens at the local

level in order to contribute to effective public modernization that is closer to the citizen and reacts well to their problems.

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