

ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Analysis of the challenge of urban management from the viewpoint of experts and executive managers

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: The importance of integrated urban management has become increasingly evident in today's world, particularly for large cities facing physical, spatial, and demographic growth and complexity. In Iran, the lack of effective citizen participation and integrated management has posed a significant challenge to the urban management system. To address this issue, this research focuses on the role of citizens and urban activists in various levels of Tehran metropolis management, including policy making, planning, supervision, and control. It also evaluates the legislative and executive layers to emphasize their importance in achieving effective urban management.

METHODS: The present study adopts a qualitative research design, with a practical orientation in terms of its objectives, and an analytical-exploratory approach for data collection. The study focuses on experts and city managers as the statistical population of interest. To gather data, a questionnaire was developed and distributed among the target community. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a high value of 0.97. Data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics, including frequency, frequency percentage, mean, and standard deviation, as well as inferential statistics, specifically the one-sample t-test. The statistical analysis was conducted using the SPSS software package.

FINDINGS: According to the findings, 31.4% of the responses identified the citizens and 25.7% of the responses identified the municipality as the owner of the city. 68.6% of the answers have identified the municipality as the manager of Tehran city. Also, 80% of the respondents said that management fragmentation is the biggest challenge of urban development in Iran. The most influential institutions in the process of urban management are Tehran Municipality at the policy-making level, self-governing experts and researchers at the planning level, the Tehran Islamic Council at the monitoring and control level, the Islamic Council at the legislative level and Tehran Municipality at the executive level, while the citizens are the last.

CONCLUSION: The present urban management approach faces significant obstacles in the form of fragmentation and inadequate coordination among decision-making entities. These challenges result in disarray, duplication of efforts, and squandering of resources. Consequently, the absence of transparency and lucidity in the roles of city proprietors and managers, coupled with the lack of precise delineations for the engagement of organizations, individuals, and institutions in the urban management process, could impede the attainment of sustainable development objectives and curtail the capacity of civil society to comprehend and partake in effective urban governance.

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INTRODUCTION

Separation of citizens, who are the owners and users of the urban environment and space, from the process of preparing and implementing urban projects and plans, is one of the critical issues in the current urban development of Iran (Tanku and Woldetensae, 2023). Governments cannot do everything, so they give tasks to local organizations (Ebdali et al., 2018). This helps to solve problems and meet citizens' needs (Soroushan et al., 2021). Modern approaches to city management, such as involving citizens in decision-making, implementing effective city governance, and prioritizing long-term planning, differ from the traditional centralized control method (Alavian et al., 2022). These concepts become meaningful when used in conjunction with other concepts, such as social and sustainable development, civilized society, citizen participation, and human rights (Beidaghi et al., 2023). Thus, it is necessary to determine the levels of application and the practitioners responsible for implementing these concepts and understanding their significance. In this case, determining the roles of the main agents in urban management makes it possible to identify a suitable framework for developing infrastructure for urban management and reaping the benefits of good urban governance (Ziari et al., 2020; Rasaizadi and Askari, 2020). Thus, it is essential to determine who should be involved in decision making and the capacity to implement the desired urban management approaches (Eftekhari et al., 2018). The government of Iran has a significant influence on the management of cities. This is because of several reasons, such as the centralization of authority, the influence of external factors on plans and designs, and the economy's dependence on oil. Urban management in Iran is not organized or integrated because of these factors. It focuses too narrowly on specific areas and fails to address the issues arising from urban development. It is also controlled by a top-down approach, meaning that decisions are made by the government and not by the people who live in the cities (Hekmatnia et al., 2017; Boochani et al., 2020). In Iran, urban management does not have an integrated and single management system; therefore, many institutes and municipalities influence urban administration (Ebdali et al., 2018). Such a lack of integrated urban management would result in parallel work, friction, conflicts between departments, a lack of coordination in duties, and

failure to take responsibility (Haji and Hayati, 2022). Tehran is an important metropolitan area in Iran. This is the administrative and political capital. However, this city faces many problems and challenges in managing its affairs at national, regional, and local levels (Hajilo et al., 2019). The reason is that Tehran Municipality has limited control over urban management, and the lack of integrated urban management hinders the provision of urban services in an organized and efficient manner. This leads to wastage of city resources and disrupts the delivery of urban services (Vahidnia, 2022). This study examines the influence of urban owners and managers in Tehran, and specifically how they impact urban management. This research looks at many aspects of urban management and shows why mayors need more power to run cities, even big cities. It also analyzes the current governance system. In addition, it offers a unique perspective on urban management and emphasizes collaboration, transparency and accountability with practical solutions. To achieve these objectives, the research was conducted in Tehran, Iran in 2023.

Theoretical Foundations

City is the biggest community in the world. Efficient processes and informed decisions by city management aid development. Public interest in sustainable development can improve a city's life (Ebdali et al., 2018). Urban management in developing countries requires a consistent and integrated approach to urban issues (Shojarazavi et al., 2023). Understanding integrated urban management requires an understanding of the relationship between three key aspects: the various actors involved in urban management (such as decision makers, urban planners, policymakers, city executives, and urban stakeholders such as citizens and the private sector); the different layers of urban management (including policy-making, organizing and planning, and the executive layer); and the various instruments used in urban management (such as human resources, organizations, financial resources, and rules and regulations) (Talebpoor and MojahidDini, 2018). Experts believe that integrity is crucial to urban management. This includes integrating management tasks, integrating various contexts of urban planning and geography, and integrating relationships between influential institutions such as the city council,

central government, and the local state (Sarvar *et al.*, 2019; Mousavi and Ziyari, 2017). Therefore, the concept of integrity opposes that of multiplicity and fragmentation. Multiplicity and fragmentation may occur in politics, planning, and other issues (Hajilo *et al.*, 2019). Hence, coordination is required to prevent the adverse effects of multiplicity and fragmentation (Shahidasht *et al.*, 2022). Commentators categorized urban management into three groups: Model (A) provides a solution for managing cities and regions by integrating planning and governance. This sentence is about fragmentation in planning policy and includes two types of fragmentation in function and territory (Rivolin and Faludi, 2005; Barakpour and Asadi, 2009; Rahmani, 2012). The divisions in model (B) include functional, political-programmatic, territorial and political-government divisions. Fragmentation occurs due to the presence of multiple stakeholders. To solve these problems, there is a need to change and control the decision-making process in the management of cities; in this regard, it is necessary to focus on supporting local organizations (Kazemian and Mirabedini, 2011; Karami, 2019; Hajilo *et al.*, 2019). Model (C) is divided into physical, social, functional, visual, spatial-ecological, theoretical, planning policy, political government analysis, and benefit sharing. There are also divisions based on the ecology. To deal with these challenges is the use of strategic spatial planning (Barakpour and Asadi, 2009; Nadin, 2006; Rivolin and Faludi, 2005; Ghalibaf *et al.*, 2012).

Urban Management System in Iran

The first experience of urban management in Iran dates back to the constitutional era when urban associations emerged. One of the most significant achievements of the First Constitution Era was the evolution of the structure of social institutions, which faced crises for various reasons, such as the mistrust of citizens in all governmental entities (Abadian and Bitarafan, 2012). Overall, urban management levels are classified into three categories: excellent (central government), average (provincial government), and operating (local government) (Moghimi, 2019). In Iran, these levels include national, provincial, and local (city) (Ebdali *et al.*, 2018). Fig. 1 presents the primary institutes and organizations involved in establishing interorganizational relationships in urban complex management. This describes their tasks and authority. In the categorization, urban

management is considered at three levels: mayors with limited authority, mayors with moderate authority, and mayors with extensive authority. Iran is a regional power with limited authority. In this category, the mayor has limited authority, and the central government typically plays a significant role in urban management, which leads to minimal citizen participation. In this method, the mayor must have a wide range of authorities to administer to cities, especially megacities (Arzani-Birgani and Kohzadi-Seifabadi, 2021).

Urban Management System in Tehran Metropolis

As a strategically located and densely populated city, the Tehran Metropolis holds a significant position (Taghvaei *et al.*, 2021). Tehran Metropolis, which has many activists and actors at various management levels, faces numerous conflicting barriers, such as the degradation of environmental resources and the unplanned increase in activity and residential development in metropolitan and peri-metropolitan areas (Soroushan *et al.*, 2021). There is currently no established system or protocol in place for facilitating coordination between the various organizations involved in managing Tehran, as depicted in Fig. 2. Several institutions have a significant influence on the administration of the city, including the Islamic Council Assembly, Government Board, Ministry of the Interior, and Governorate. Furthermore, public institutions such as the Tehran Municipality and Governorates, as well as private companies and organizations, also play a role. The involvement of foreign embassies, representative offices, and international organizations further complicates the system (Khandan and Sobhani, 2021; Boochani *et al.*, 2020; Ashtianiaraghi *et al.*, 2020; Hajilo *et al.*, 2019, Karami, 2019).

Literature review

Experts and researchers have conducted studies on urban development issues in Iran from various perspectives. These studies have examined the challenges faced by urban development organizations in Iran, considering factors from outside, inside, and within a group. According to the current study's focus, various sources have been investigated, including Yadgarzadeha and Noorian (2022), who highlighted that urban development groups in Iran face external, internal, and intra-group factors that

Urban management challenges from the viewpoint of executives

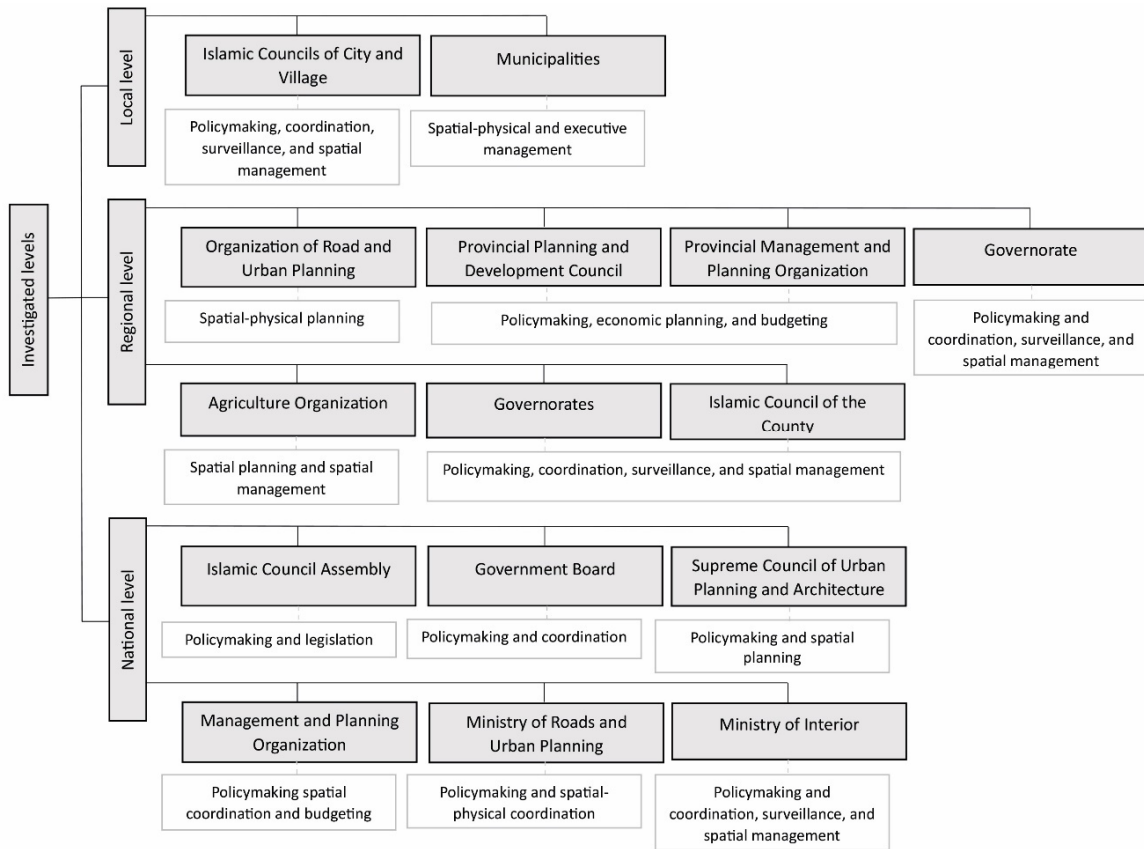


Fig. 1: Main institutes and organizations in the field of urban complex management (Asgari and Kazemian, 2006)

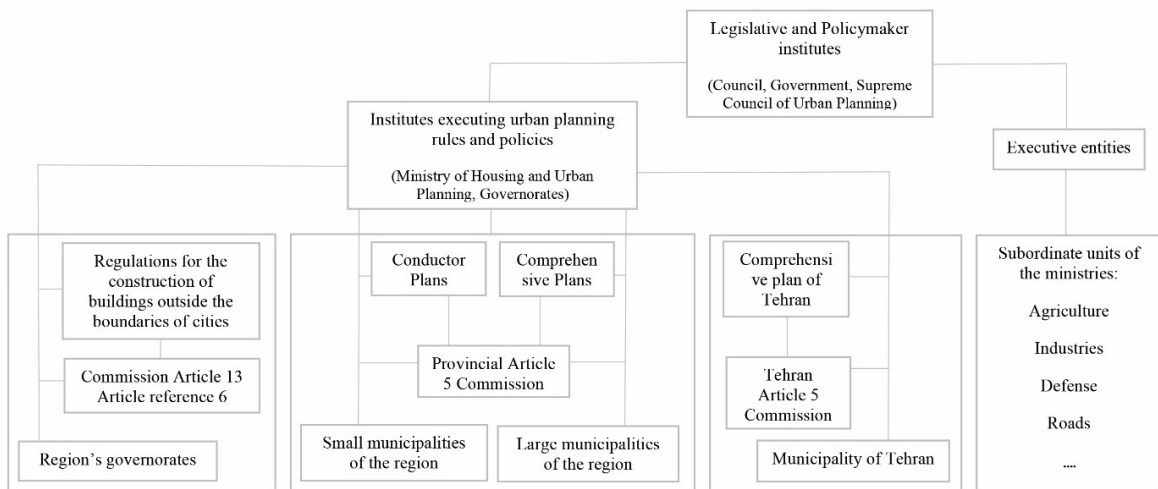


Fig. 2: The model of communication between different institutes in urban management of Tehran (Faraji Rad, 2017)

impede effective organizational functioning. This article does not address the challenges faced by urban development groups, but rather focuses on the construction engineering organization. It also does not discuss the impact of various factors on urban development, nor does it include the views of experts from different urban development organizations. Akhondi *et al.* (2006), focused on the challenges of political and functional fragmentation in the metropolitan area of Tehran and the centralized planning system, emphasizing the necessity of a new method for urban management and suggesting the use of a good system to address the challenges of the Tehran Metropolitan Region (TMR). This article does not discuss the limitations of the study on TMR governance, but suggests that more institutional and functional studies be conducted on TMR organizations to improve governance in the Tehran Metropolitan Region (TMR) through laws, money, and politics. Tabari and Mousavi (2019) described how rentier networks dominate urban management in Tehran. This leads to conflicts and elites who do not use the proposed solutions. However, it does not explain how rentier networks affect the progress and growth of the city, does not point to the limitations of the grounded theory method, and does not analyze how to disrupt rentier networks in Tehran. It also failed to guide the creation of a fair and transparent urban management system. Maghsoodi Tilaki *et al.*, (2014) have identified five significant obstacles, including the lack of proper plans and regulations, inadequate public participation, and limited financing, that impede urban planning in Iranian cities. The authors recommend that the urban planning system in Iran be compared with contemporary planning ideas, such as the City Development Strategy (CDS), and that greater cooperation be established among city stakeholders and more authority be granted to local authorities to promote effective urban planning. This study focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of comprehensive planning but does not address the challenges faced by Iranian cities in urban planning, the impact of urban development programs on Iranian cities, or the perspectives of urban planners, managers, and experts. To address these gaps, this research examines the role of the city owner, city manager, and other institutions and organizations in the management process of the city of Tehran. The study also draws on the experiences of executive

managers and urban planning specialists to present practical strategies for effective urban planning. The research was conducted in Tehran, Iran in 2023.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research underscores the imperative for transparency and clarity in delineating the roles of various organizations, individuals, and institutions involved in Tehran's urban management due to the significance of effective urban governance and decision-making. The research is a qualitative and analytical-exploratory study that employs library research and field techniques to gather data. Researchers have utilized the views of experts, managers, and professors who have shaped Tehran's plans and programs. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation, as well as inferential statistics from a single-sample t-test with SPSS software. The one-sample t-test is a parametric method and one of the types of community average tests. The researchers used this test to study ideas and answer related questions using a Likert scale, and a five-point Likert scale was employed to measure attitude. The study aims to understand whether experts and managers in the field of urban planning perceive the division in urban management as a challenge for urban planning in Iran. To this end, a questionnaire was devised and distributed to the target community. Thirty-five questionnaires were completed and received. The research implementation stages were designed using two models (Fig. 3). Urban development experts evaluated and confirmed the validity of the questionnaire's form and content. The questions were divided into two parts, with Section A asking about personal characteristics and Section B discussing work-related topics. Part B consists of three parts, with the questions in Section B.1 being open-ended to allow for diverse responses, and Section B.2 offering multiple choices to obtain accurate information. Finally, Section B.3 utilizes a five-point scale to measure the influence of urban activists on Tehran's management levels. Unfavorable components have a mean value that is lower than the average Likert scale rating of 3. Components with a rating higher than the average represent the optimal scenario. If the significance level is below 0.05, the mean value can be applied to the entire population (Samimi, 2024). The t-test was compared to the

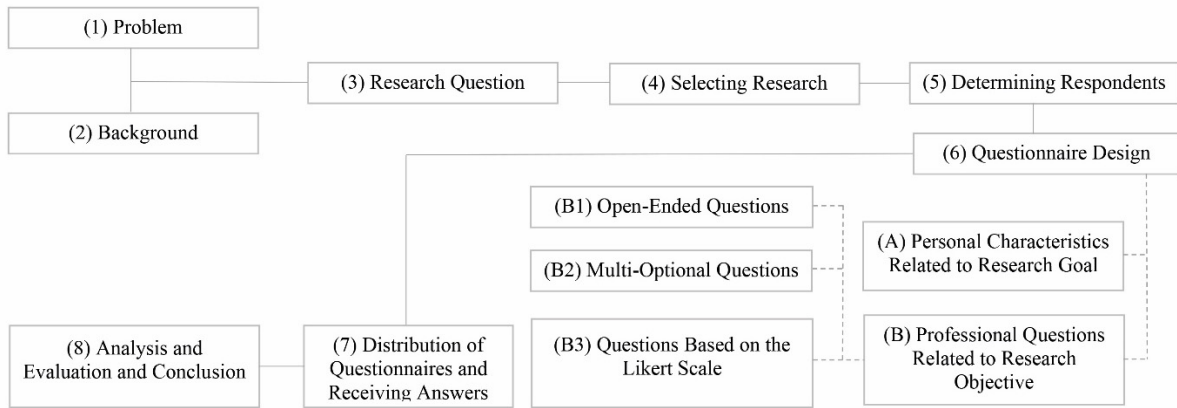


Fig. 3: Research implementation steps

critical value of 1.96. If the test value is greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96, the null hypothesis is rejected and the opposite hypothesis is accepted. However, if the test value falls within the range of [-1.96, +1.96], no conclusion can be drawn regarding the mean value. If the upper and lower limits are positive, the component's status is above the average, indicating favorability. Negative constraints, on the other hand, indicate that the component's state is unfavorable. This study aims to investigate the degree of influence of urban activists in different layers of policy, planning, supervision and control, legislation, and executive policies. The questionnaire consists of 80 questions, with 16 related to the policy layer, questions 17-32 related to the planning layer, questions 33-48 related to the monitoring and control layer, questions 49-64 related to the legislative layer, and questions 65-80 related to the executive layer. Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate and analyze the questionnaire's reliability, yielding a result of 0.97, which is higher than 0.7. Therefore, the questionnaire showed good internal consistency and reliability. This study will determine the penetration rates of different organizations and which organizations have the highest and lowest penetration rates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the respondents, 17.1% were female and 82.9% were male. Among the participants, 37.1% selected urban development, planning, and design as their major field of study. The remaining participants studied various subjects such as construction, architecture, geography, economics, sociology,

law, management, environment, engineering, and plant physiology. Among the respondents studied, 71.4% held a Ph.D. or higher degree or were Ph.D. researchers. Additionally, 62.8% of the respondents were employed by the municipality. Regarding the question of who owns Tehran, the responses indicated that a variety of entities are considered to be the owner, including citizens, municipalities, city councils, governments, and ministries. Of the respondents, 31.4% identified citizens as the owners and 21.6% identified the municipality as the owner of the city. The majority of the participants in the survey believed that citizens play an important role in urban planning and that the Tehran Municipality, as the owner of the city, has a significant role in city management. However, there were differing opinions regarding the ownership of Tehran. Some experts have introduced citizens as the owners of the city, while others have named other institutions or organizations. In terms of the management of Tehran, the survey results showed that the majority of experts identified the municipality as the manager of the city, with 68.6% of respondents selecting this option. Only 2.9% of respondents identified the leader as the city manager, while 5.7% each identified the city council and the government as the managers. Two respondents (5.7%) named the governorate as the manager, and one respondent (2.9%) named the president as the manager of Tehran. The majority of respondents emphasized the municipality as the primary city manager of Tehran, with only a small number of individuals suggesting other organizations and institutions. This information can be utilized by

Table 1. The answer to the question of management fragmentation as a challenge of urban development in Iran

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	28	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	7	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Answer to the question of urban development in Iran

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Renter oil-dependence political economy	10	28.6	28.6	28.6
	The low level of public participation in the administration	7	20.0	20.0	48.6
	Multiplicity in legislation and surveillance	8	22.9	22.9	71.4
	Managerial fragmentation	10	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	35	100.0	100.0	

policymakers and urban managers to understand the perspectives of experts on the responsibilities of urban institutions. As shown in [Table 1](#), 80% of respondents agreed that management dispersion is the primary challenge in the urban management process in Iran, with 20% disagreeing. Most participants in the survey believed that managing Iranian cities is a complex process.

This survey underscores the need for collaborative efforts among decision-makers in urban management in Iran. The current fragmented management structure is hindering sustainable development, and the dependence on oil rents in the political economy is also a significant challenge. The participants in the survey were asked to identify the primary challenges facing urban development in Iran, and the options included managerial fragmentation, low public participation, a political economy dependent on oil rents, and excessive regulation and oversight. The most frequently chosen options were managerial fragmentation and dependence on oil rents. In Tehran, the low level of public participation in city management was cited as a significant issue by 20% of respondents, while multiplicity in legislation and supervision was identified as a challenge by 22.9% of respondents ([Table 2](#)). Respondents believed that the lack of collaboration among managers and the reliance on oil are major impediments to urban growth in Iran. Only 20% of respondents considered low public participation to be a significant problem, and a significant number of respondents (22.9%) identified excessive regulation and oversight as a challenge. This survey highlights the need to address

the issue of fragmented management and reduce dependence on oil rents in the Iranian economy. The lack of public participation in urban management is also a challenge that needs to be addressed, and citizens should be encouraged to participate in urban development. To ensure the successful development of cities in Iran, the issues must be addressed through effective laws and supervision. Additionally, the impact of different institutions and organizations was evaluated across various layers of policymaking, planning, supervision, and control, legislation, and implementation.

[Table 3](#) indicates the organizations that influence policy making. The results show that governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, public sector institutions, and international institutions are the influential institutions. The findings of this study can assist policymakers in understanding how to incorporate these organizations into monitoring and management. In the planning layer, non-governmental organizations, public governance organizations, governmental institutes, citizens, private sector institutes, and international institutes are the influential institutions. The research also found that independent experts and researchers from non-governmental organizations, the Tehran municipality from the group of governance-public institutes, and the Supreme Council of Urban Planning and Architecture from the governmental group had the highest effectiveness. In the surveillance and control layer, the Islamic Council of Tehran, along with the Ministry of Interior and the governorate, has the highest effectiveness among the governance-

Table 3. One-sample t-test results of the influence of the mentioned organizations on the desired layers

Organizations	The Policymaking Layer	The Planning Layer	The Surveillance and Control Layer	The Legislation Layer	The Execution Layer
Islamic Council Assembly	6	6	6	1	12
Ministry of Interior and Governorate	4	4	3	4	3
Ministry of Road and Urban Planning	5	5	5	5	4
Supreme Council of Urban Planning and Architecture	3	3	4	3	6
National Land and Housing Organization	7	8	10	7	8
Urban Development and Improvement Organization	8	7	8	8	5
The General Inspection Organization of the Country	10	13	7	10	10
Policymaking Council of Joma Imams	11	15	12	12	15
Tehran Municipality	1	1	2	6	1
Islamic Council of Tehran City	2	2	1	2	2
Organization of endowments and charity affairs	14	14	14	13	14
Association of Consultant Engineers	9	9	11	9	9
Independent Experts and Researchers	16	12	12	14	13
Service Organizations in the Private Sector	13	11	15	15	7
International Institutes such as the UN	15	16	16	16	16
Citizens	12	10	9	11	11

public institutes. The research also found that the Islamic Council and the Supreme Council of Urban Planning and Architecture have more influence. The Ministry of Roads and Urban Development has less supervision over this layer. The Islamic Council Assembly and the Islamic Council of Tehran have the highest average values. The Islamic Council, the Ministry of Interior, and the Governorate have the most influence, and independent experts and researchers have the least influence in the legislative layer. At the executive level, public governance institutions, state governance institutions, private sector institutions, citizens, non-governmental organizations, and international institutions are the influential institutions. The Tehran Municipality, which is in the group of governmental institutions, the Ministry of Interior, and the Governorate in the subgroup of governmental institutions and consulting engineers, which is in the group of non-governmental organizations, have the most influence in this layer.

According to the findings of this research, the level of citizens' participation in the administration of city affairs remains low and their influence in the urban management layers is minimal. This indicates a multiplicity of institutions and organizations involved in the urban management process, with

no similar or constant influence rates across different layers. [Yadgarzadeh and Noorian \(2022\)](#) confirm these findings, identifying three groups of challenges including external factors, internal factors, and intergroup factors. Organizations contribute the most, followed by a wider variety of in-group agents, reflecting urban developers' critique of their professional community. Internal factors, including interorganizational relationships, pose a challenge due to the lack of coordination and clear definition of the roles of organizations in the urban management process. [Ahmad Akhoundi et al. \(2006\)](#) discussed in a scholarly article the significant challenge that integrated policymaking faces in the metropolis of Tehran. The authors noted the presence of numerous government and administrative territories, leading to fragmentation, alongside a centralized planning system that promotes sectionalism. Given the unique circumstances of Tehran, it becomes crucial to reassess its governance structure. The research findings also indicated a lack of cooperation and participation among key stakeholders involved in the administration of Tehran metropolis. Furthermore, the study highlighted the insufficiency of public participation mechanisms in the decision-making and implementation processes. According to the study

conducted by [Tabari and Mousavi \(2019\)](#), closed rentier networks possess significant economic and political influence that impacts macro policies and decision-making within the city. These networks prioritize projects for maximum profit, regardless of the detrimental effects on the city. The political economy of basic rent continues to be a challenge in urban management. Iranian urban experts consider the management of urban buildings in Tehran as a form of institutional capital in the urban space, involving multiple stakeholders in the management of urban spaces, whose actions can be evaluated to ensure the interests of the public are met. [Maghsoodi Tilaki et al. \(2014\)](#) identified five major obstacles to the feasibility of the urban planning process, including contextual factors, the structure of urban planning, relevant laws and regulations, public participation, and financial resources, and the fragmentation of urban management layers. In the current research, the study aims to examine the extent of influence exerted by different organizations in achieving development by analyzing various layers of urban management. The control of urban management units in Iranian cities is not centralized, with multiple offices, departments, and agencies involved in decision-making for urban development. The lack of integrity in urban management is also evident in the current research.

CONCLUSION

The investigation focused on the impact of urban owners and managers in Tehran on urban management. Research findings indicate a lack of transparency in determining the ownership and management of Tehran, with various organizations, individuals, and institutions failing to define their roles in urban management. A minority of respondents acknowledged that citizens possess ownership of Tehran, yet their influence on urban management remains limited. Experts highlight the absence of coordination among managers as the primary obstacle to city development in Iran. The dispersion of urban planning in Iran poses a significant challenge, impeding the formulation of effective solutions. The management process of Tehran City is primarily overseen by Tehran Municipality and the Supreme Council of Urban Planning and Architecture. Collaboration among experts, researchers, municipalities, and the

Supreme Council occurs at the planning level. The Tehran Islamic Council, Tehran Municipality, and the Ministry of Interior are responsible for supervision and handling of affairs, while the Islamic Council and the Tehran Islamic Council enact relevant legislation. The management of cities involves numerous institutions and organizations, including the executive layer consisting of Tehran Municipality, Tehran Islamic Council, Ministry of Interior, and Governor's Office, which hold significant sway over urban management. However, this fragmentation poses a major challenge to achieving sustainable development and a civil society. To address this issue, local organizations must be empowered with greater decision-making power, which can be achieved through citizen participation. These organizations should also establish horizontal relationships and coordinate with one another to create an integrated urban management system. Unfortunately, there is a lack of transparency in the introduction of the owner and city manager, and citizens are not sufficiently involved in city management. To overcome these challenges, good governance practices can be implemented, and strategies can be developed to encourage citizen participation in urban governance. By doing so, an integrated urban management system can be established, which will benefit all stakeholders involved.

Suggestions

- Strategies for citizen participation
 - Using participatory budgeting methods
 - Moving towards participatory planning at the neighborhood level
 - Raising awareness of citizens' ability to choose suitable individuals for city council
 - Facilitating the involvement of city stakeholders in planning and executing urban projects
 - Encouraging engagement with communities and promoting good citizenship
 - Improving services for citizens, with a focus on poor areas and the provision of necessary infrastructure
 - Attending meetings with city officials by sharing information and helping people to build trust
- Strategies for integrated urban management system
 - Encouraging collaboration between different levels of government

- Increasing transparency and accountability
- Promoting public-private partnerships
- Fostering innovation and creativity in urban planning and management.
- Establishing a council to supervise organizations led by the mayor
- Integrating local organizations and increasing their authority
- Transferring urban management to the municipality

AUTHOR COUNTERBUTIONS

S. Mahdinezhad conducted the research, which involved gathering materials, developing the methodology, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting the findings, and drafting and finalizing the article. M.H. Boochani was responsible for conceptualizing, supervising, orienting, collecting data, and revising the article. A.A. Malekafzali contributed to the research methodology, techniques, and modeling, as well as project management.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work. In addition, the ethical issues including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and, or falsification, double publication and, or submission, and redundancy have been completely witnessed by the authors.

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ABBREVIATIONS (NOMENCLATURE)

<i>CDS</i>	City Development Strategy
<i>df</i>	Degrees of Freedom
<i>Fig</i>	Figure
<i>Ph.D.</i>	Doctor of Philosophy
<i>SD</i>	Standard Deviation
<i>t</i>	Test Statistics
<i>TMR</i>	Tehran Metropolitan Region

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