EXPECTATIONS AGAINST CONSIDERATIONS ON QUALITY OF URBAN LAND USE PLAN:
THE CASE OF AMHARA REGION- ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT
As the urban land use plan is an important tool for urban land governance, this paper explores customers’ expectations that the service providers have not considered as the quality during urban land use plan preparation in Amhara Region - Northern Ethiopia. The study was conducted on 90 urban areas of the Amhara regional state who made the formal complaint against the quality of their urban plan in the year of 2017/18 (2010 Ethiopian calendar). Data were collected by means of the survey using questionnaires and document review. Then focused group discussions were made on the identified quality issues on land use plan presented by customers. The study argues, with the support of empirical data, the standard for quality of land use plan should be meeting the served communities’ expectation rather than maintaining the already predefined technical criteria. Six major types of quality disapprovals on the urban land use plan are identified. Inappropriate strategies and difference in understanding of plan preparation concepts for quality land use are the two identified major causes or gaps, emanated from the service providers, for the customers’ dissatisfaction.

Keywords: customers’ expectation, quality, service providers’ consideration, urban land use plan
1. INTRODUCTION

Good urban land governance and sustainable use of the urban land resource will not be achievable without planning or thinking ahead (Division, 1995; Williamson, 2010). Because of its many related benefits, many cities and towns of the world are struggling to manage and use efficiently their core and scarce resource of urban land and to lead the developments of their urban area by a land use plan.

Similarly, in Ethiopia, out of 629 urban areas of Amhara National Reginald State-Northern Ethiopia, more than 445 (71%) of the urban areas have been trying to manage their land and to guide their developments by a land use plan. However, many pieces of evidence show that most of these urban land use plans do not have the quality to satisfy their customers (ANRS-BoUDHC, 2011-2016; ANRS-UPI, 2011-2016). When the level of customers’ satisfaction is decreased and complaints against quality of a land use plan are increased, proportionally the ability to be implemented is affected destructively (Mahdavinejad & Amini, 2011). Consequently, the urban plan will no more serve as a tool to manage the urban land and unable to guide the development as it is intended.

So far, the concerned federal and regional government bodies of Ethiopia have made a lot of effort on the urban planning system to improve the quality of the urban plan and to let the plan guide the development as it is intended. However, customers are still expressing their dissatisfaction in different ways against the quality of the land use plan of their urban areas (ANRS-BoUDHC, 2011-2016; ANRS-UPI, 2011-2016).

1.1. Research Objectives

The general objective of this paper is to investigate the gap in understanding of the quality of land use plan between the customers and service providers. The specific objectives are:

- To explore major urban communities’ expectations that force them to complain against the quality of the land use plan provided by serves providers in Amhara Region-Northern Ethiopia
- To analyze the major causes that constitute to the gap in understanding of the quality of land use plan between the customers and service providers

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. Quality

There are many definitions of quality used in relation to different spheres of activity (Garvin, 1984; Reeves & Bednar, 1995; Reeves & Bednar, 1995; Seawright & Young, 1996; Russell & Miles, 1998; Sebastianelli & Tamimi, 2002; Ojasalo, 2006). There is also a language of quality, with its own frequently used terms. For the purposes of this study, a working definition is needed to characterize quality in urban land use planning. Without such a working definition, the process of selecting new interventions and building strategies for quality improvement would be seriously impaired.

Deming identified three types of quality essential for the production of goods and delivery of services which meet the needs of customers and clients (Deming, 1982). These are quality of design or redesign, quality of conformance and quality of performance. According to Deming, Quality of design is the suitability of delivering products or services to
the needs of the market, at a given cost. Quality of conformance is the ability of an organization to deliver goods and services with the same predictable level of uniformity and dependability at a reasonable cost. Quality of performance emphasizes on the feedback of the customers on their level of satisfaction which is the focus of this study.

In discussing the evolution of the quality concept, Garvin identified five perspectives on quality - the transcendent view; the product based approach; the user based approach; the manufacturing based approach and the value-based definition of quality (Garvin, 1988). The transcendent view argues that people learn to recognize quality only through the experience gained through repeated exposure. The product-based approach holds the view that quality can be judged by the presence or absence of particular characteristics of the product or service itself. The manufacturing-based approach states that quality exists if the product meets original specifications. The user-based approach takes into consideration the customer’s wants, expectations, needs, and requirements and argues that they have to be met. Finally, the value-based perspective sees quality as a trade-off between value and price. In this regard, this study gives more emphasis for the quality perspective of the user-based approach (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004).

Commonly, service quality measurements can be seen from two perspectives - internal and external perspectives. The internal perspective is defined as a zero error rate, i.e. the ability to provide a perfect service (Parasuraman, et al., 1985). zero defect - doing it right the first time, or conformance to requirements (Garvin, 1988). The external perspective sees service quality in terms of customer perception, customer expectation, customer satisfaction, customer attitude and customer delight (Sachdev & Verma, 2004). As this study motivated by the customers’ dissatisfaction with qualities of urban land use plans, the study is also based on the external perspectives.

Therefore, the following definitions of quality are taken as working definition for the purpose of this study. Goetsch & Davis define quality as a dynamic condition related to products, services, people, processes and environments that meet or exceed expectations (Goetsch & Davis, 2013). According to Kotler quality is "all the attributes and characteristics of a product or service that affects the ability to satisfy stated or implied" (Kotler, 1997). Crosby defines quality as the service providers’ ability to meet customers’ expectations (Crosby, 1980).

These definitions of quality are also the core of the definition contained in the ISO 9000 standard. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and others also define the term "quality" as meeting customer expectations (Ryall & Kruithof, 2001; ISO-9000, 2005). In other words, one can say that a product or a service has good quality when it "complies with the requirements specified by the client or the customer". As far as the customer’s point of view is concerned, quality can be defined as the quality perceived upon the basis of the consumer’s decision on the overall excellence or superiority of the service (Zeithaml, et al., 1990). Frequently, quality is also defined as the extent to which a service meets customers’ expectations (Lewis & Mitchell, 1190; Dotchin & Oakland, 1994;
Asubonteng et al, 1996; Wisniewski & Donnelly, 1996). All definitions mentioned above is used to the quality of the service, which is consistent with the focus of the research into the quality of land use planning.

1.2.2. Standard for Quality

The ISO quality management standards are based on the seven quality management principles (QMPs) namely: Customer focus, Leadership, Engagement of people, Process approach, Improvement, Evidence-based decision making and Relationship management (ISO, 2015). These quality management principles are a set of fundamental beliefs, norms, rules, and values that are accepted as true and can be used as a basis for quality management.

The "customer focus" principle is the primary focus of quality management to meet customer requirements and to strive to exceed customer expectations. The rationale behind this principle is because of its importance for an organization that sustained success is achieved when an organization attracts and retains the confidence of customers and other interested parties. As every aspect of customer interaction provides an opportunity to create more value for the customer, understanding the current and future needs of customers and other interested parties contributes to the sustained success of the organization. Thus, this study considers the "customers’ satisfaction" as a standard for the quality of urban land use plan delivered by the service providers.

1.2.3. Quality in Land Use Planning Service

Land use is the most important component of an urban plan because it directly determines the amount of land used by a city and because the overall land use pattern influences what choices can be made about all the other plan components. Land use planning helps communities decide what mix of land uses will be needed by the community, where that land uses should be located, and when the land should be developed. Communities that lack a land use plan are more likely to experience uncoordinated and haphazard development patterns that promote urban sprawl and negatively impact the quality of life for residents (Yin, 2013). As urban areas belong to all the peoples dwelling there, urban planners cannot act and decide instead of them (Abdolhamid & Hamid, 2015). That is way public participatory land use planning has been becoming an internationally accepted tool for community satisfaction.

1.2.4. Public Participation for the Quality of Land Use Plan

One of the well-known tool used to meet customer requirements in urban land use planning is public participation. Participatory planning helps to harmonize views among stakeholders in planning processes, prevents conflicts between parties representing various interests and contributes to a long-term consensus. Implementation-oriented and sustainable land use planning processes need to be participatory and to involve the urban population which manages the land and natural resources (Dirk, 1999). According to CNPPAM Benchmarking and Best Practice Program, one of the benefits of public participation is to understand the customers’ expectations and needs. (Territory, 2018)

The Spectrum of Public Participation was developed by the International Association of
Public Participation (IAP2) to help clarify the role of the public (or community) in planning and decision-making, and how much influence the community has over planning or decision-making processes. As many practitioners and organizations find the Spectrum very helpful, the IAP2 claims that the Spectrum is “quickly becoming an international standard”. The Spectrum identifies five levels of public participation (or community engagement). they are described on the Spectrum ranging from no influence (Inform) to total influence (Empower) (IAP2, 2014).

1.2.5. Public Participation in Standardization

According to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), customers should also be involved even in technical standards development or improvement period. This is very fundamental to ensure that technical standards for the quality of service are as comprehensive as possible and correspond to real consumer needs. Basically, Public participation in standardization is not important only for standards development but also it can play a crucial role in raising general public awareness of the existence of agreed standards. thereby it helps the customer to demand the rendered service according to these standards. (ISO, 2003)

2. METHODS

The study area was conducted at 90 urban areas of the Amhara regional state- Northern Ethiopia- who presented a formal complaint against the quality of their urban plan in the year of 2017/18 (2010 E.C).

The selected study designs were both exploratory and descriptive. The explanatory method was used to explore those urban land use plan quality problems that cause customers to complain (customer expectation). The descriptive method was used to show the characteristics of these identified quality problems of urban land use plan presented by the customers and the service provider's consideration on these issues.

Principals and/ or professionals/ expertise of Amhara Urban Planning Institute (the service provider) and all zonal level concerned sectoral offices (representatives of the customer) were involved as participants in the research process. The forms of the participants were both as a respondent and as a participant according to the situation. As a respondent, he or she was responding to the researcher’s questions which were typically structured and closed-ended in format. As a participant, his or her role went, beyond simply replying to a series of questions, to elaborate on the interviewer's/moderator’s questions, changes the topic if need be to convey an idea, engages with other participants in a focus group discussion.

The study used non-probability sampling method i.e. all urban areas (14% of the total) that present formal complaint against their land use plan in the year of 2017/18 (2010 E.C). This is because of two major reasons: first to deal with the latest issues and to undertake the research with the limited resource.

Both primary data and secondary data were collected from the two parties (customers & service providers) for the study. The primary data were collected from principals and professionals/ expertise of all level concerned institution (service providers) through questionnaire and group discussion and all
zonal level concerned sectoral offices (representatives of the customer). Physical data like field observation were collected from selected sites to see the major identified quality problems on the ground. Secondary data also were collected mainly to explore expectations that force customers to complain against the quality of the land use plan, to understand the system established to maintain the quality of the urban land use plan. Documents of national policies, strategies, laws, regulations, manuals, norms and standards were reviewed. In addition to these, minutes, formal letters (for land use plan adjustment, letters of complaint against the quality of land use plan) and reports were examined the intentions of both the service providers and the customers. Land use plan documents of each urban area were also secondary data source.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. General

According to the collected data, most of quality disapprovals of the land use plans are occurred more frequently (88 %) in the first two higher levels of the four urban levels classification of the region (1st level -city administration level, 2nd level- municipality level, 3rd level- sub municipality level and 4th level- emerging town level). However, it does not mean that the last two lower urban level areas have a better quality of the urban plan. Rather, according to the informants (both the service providers and representatives of the customers, the reason why these quality problems are shown on the higher level urban areas are: because they have better capacity (in terms of economic and institutional structure & relevant professionals’ capacity) to implement the plan and the general communities of these urban areas have better experience and awareness of urban planning and its quality than the other two levels. Therefore, these urban areas able to start to implement the plan and get the chance to see the drawback of the land use plan. Thus, the respondents are agreed on the quality problems are still common in all levels of urban areas.

In general, the level of public participation that the service providers applied for all land use plan preparation projects were the “inform” and the “consult” levels. The only reasons to select these lower level of participation are their ability to accommodate many stakeholders with minimum time and cost. Thus, the services provider did not work with communities: - to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed, to provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision, to formulate solutions and incorporate their advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible and to implement what communities decide. In other words, the service providers give more attention to the cost minimization than meeting customers’ wants.

3.2. Major quality disapproval categories & customers’ perceptions

Totally 929 complaints (quality disapprovals) against the quality of the land use plans were presented by customers (urban areas) to the Amhara regional service providers in the recent year of 2017/18 (2010 E.C). All these presented quality issues of the land use plan are categorized into six themes as follow in descending order of their occurrence of frequency.
3.2.1. Related to the assigned land use types:
Once parcels are assigned through a land use plan for a certain urban function that does not match with the wants of the local administration or community, it became unlawful to use the parcel for any other desired purpose. Therefore, the customer considered that the parcel: would not be suitable for the assigned function; would be incompatible to the adjacent functions, would not match with the predetermined standards like parcel area and shape; would also able to affect negatively the adjacent property limits or boundaries. More than 46% of quality disapprovals of the land use plans are categorized under these conceptions of the customer.

3.2.2. Related to the proposed road & blocks alignments:
The newly proposed road and block alignments are considered as inappropriate and need to be adjusted, when the customers think as these may cause to lost someone’s’ property or piece of land, to create road access problem; to make one’s property size above or below the predetermined standard, to leads to burdensome tasks of plot size and shape rearrangements;

when the customers feel that there are still some properties lack road access and additional new road is required to be opened or wanted to be shown on the land use plan at required localities,

when the customers feel that the proposed roads or blocks are shifted from existed alignment, it may cause to be taken a piece of land from the road (public property) and given to private property owners or vice versa inappropriately; to create lack of road access; for additional cost for reconstruction;

when the customers feel that the shape or the size of blocks, on land use plan, are not suitable for plot subdivision of the intended use, the customers think that it may cause to make the existed one’s property size above or below the predetermined standard; to perform burdensome tasks for plot size and shape rearrangements;

when the customers feel that one’s property limit or boundary is affected without the consent of the local administration, it may cause to be taken a piece of land from the property owner and given to the other or vice versa inappropriately; to make the existed property size above or below the predetermined standard; to perform burdensome tasks for plot size and shape rearrangements. More than 27% of quality disapprovals are included under this category.

3.2.3. Related to the existed road:
when the existing road that is considered, by customers, as important was closed on the plan or assigned to another purpose or when it was widened or narrowed from its existed size "Unnecessarily", the customers think that the adjacent properties would be taken from the narrowed road (the public) and given to individual property owners without the consent of the local administration; or existed properties would be destroyed by the widened road. As most of the time, the compensation payoff for the lost property was above the paying capacity of the government and then become minimal compared to the lost property, customers do not want such changes. In addition, the existed properties might lack road access or would have
different plot size and shape form that of the predefined standards or it might lead to burdensome tasks of plot rearrangements and adjustments (which is done by the plan implementers). More than 13% of quality disapprovals are included under this category.

3.2.4. Related to information that should be contained by the map

When the major or marginal information (like XYZ readings of BMs, X-Y grid, land use codes, feature symbols etc.) of the base map or land use plan are inadequate or confusing to understand all required information; when the existed features on ground were missed or appeared wrongly on the map, when surveyed features are shifted from their real geographical position randomly or not uniformly i.e. the relationship (in terms of distance among features) between the map and ground changes (not the same scale), the customers think that it would be difficult to navigate, measurements and cross-refer features from the map to the ground or vice versa and/or difficult to understand the required info (as evidence for the existence of property) during plan implementation. More than 13% of quality disapprovals are included under this category.

3.2.5. Issue related to urban expansion area delineation:

When unwanted areas were included in or excluded from the proposed land use plan boundary, the customers think that either they lose their large amount of agricultural lands without the consent of the property owner or local administration (in case of inclusion) or they miss different municipality services, infrastructures, and utilities (in case of exclusion).

3.2.6. Mismatching of Socio-economic study with the land use plan:

When customers feel that the socio-economic study was inconsistent with the land use plan, they also think that their town’s problem may not have addressed appropriately and the sited objectives and goals may not be achieved as well.

Table 1: Major quality disapproval categories & their occurrence frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Major Quality Disapproval Categories</th>
<th>Occurrence Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Newly assigned land uses</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Newly proposed road &amp; blocks alignments</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Existed road</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Information that should be contained by the map</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Urban expansion area delineation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mismatching of Socio-economic study with the land use plan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>929</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3. Major Cause for the Quality Disapprovals

Based on the analysis of collected data the following aspects are major causes for the customers’ quality disapprovals

- A Difference in understanding of the quality of an urban plan
- Lack of adequate public participation at the required level in order to get the consent on every decision making stages.
- Property boundary data are not used as input for land use plan preparation
- Misconduct of experts, low professional capacity, and high turnover. (which can be a
cause for the poor quality of base map, unable to verify or update the base map before using as an impute)

- Poor quality assurance working and low accountability system at the service providers’ working environment
- Lack of clear working procedure, criteria, and standards that are agreeable to all experts who participate in plan preparation works
- Lack of considerations of cost implication of proposals versus economic capacity of the town or implementation strategies is not considered as a deliverable for urban plan preparation project
- Low public awareness of urban planning. (which can be a cause to ignore public interests but to give attention more on personal interests) however, as Experiences elsewhere have shown that the benefits gain from participation far outweighs the likely costs incurred.
- Insufficient time & financial budget for plan preparation project. which can be a cause to the following listed problems:
  - Lack of professional diversity/ composition- An urban plan has been normally preparing with only two professionals – a socioeconomic expert and an urban planner.
  - inadequate level of public participation, quality standardization, stakeholders identification & involvement (especially urban cadaster departments & public awareness), problem identification & prioritization, and decision making
  - The annual budget allocated for the service providers by the government to prepare land use plans for not less than 45 urban areas is not more than five million birr and for other related expenditures including base map preparation. The budget inadequacy has become the cause of many other problems. Some of them are a minimum wage of employees, understaffing & poor professional diversity, Low professional capacity, Inadequate capacity building, Inadequate working equipment, Inadequate level of public participation and the likes.
    - The minimum wage of employees by itself has become a cause for "high job turnover", this becomes a cause for "additional Costs of time & money" (which is an administrative cost for recruitment, selection and hiring process all over again, training for the new employees) >> Poor Performance (normally, employees with less knowledge and less experience could not produce as well as those who know more about what they are doing)
    - Understaffing & poor professional diversity>> Errors Increase (Workers are going to tire under the extra burdens put upon them, and fatigue causes errors)
    - Based on the performance standard set by Amhara urban planning Institute i.e. 20min/hectares, a plan for a town with its size, not more than 500 hectares has to be completed within a month. As the collected data revealed that this cost minimization strategy could not be successful

3.4. Identified gaps between consideration and expectation

After examining both quality considerations of the service provider during plan preparation and quality expectations of customers during
plan implementation the following major gaps are identified

- the service providers have not accepted as true that determining future land use has a direct impact on property boundaries. Therefore, urban land use plans are prepared without utilizing property boundary data which affects adversely customers' satisfaction.
- the service providers give more attention to maintain the predetermined standards than to the public consensus. Therefore, they have been trying to apply all predetermined technical standards that are developed without local public involvement. Even they are not willing to modify some technical standards according to the context.
- urban plans should be readable & understandable not only professionals but also by every citizen of the urban area. However, the service providers have hardly worked on it.
- the service providers have not accepted as true that the cost of urban plan preparation with high quality is much cheaper than correction cost for the problems created by the poor quality of the urban plan.

4. CONCLUSION
Urban Planning service providers are under increasing pressure to demonstrate that their services are customer - focused and that continuous performance improvement is being delivered. They need to understand that the standard for quality of land use plan is not maintaining already predefined technical standards but meeting the served communities’ expectation. This study identifies two major interrelated causes for misunderstanding of quality gap between the customers’ expectation and the service providers’ consideration.

1. The service providers have been applying inappropriate strategy to prepare urban plans at minimum cost with minimum duration at the expense of the quality of land use plan.
2. A difference in understanding of plan preparation concepts for quality land use.

It is believed that these findings may assist the service providers in providing cost-effective ways of closing the gaps and of prioritizing which gaps to focus on - a critical decision given scare resources.

The following figure summarizes the effects of these identified two cause and the ultimate result i.e. customers’ dissatisfaction.

41

Figure 1: Effects of the gaps and the ultimate result
The following figure also clearly shows how much the inappropriate strategy of the service providers that have been used to minimize the cost and time for urban plan preparation is not effective.
5. RECOMMENDATIONS

As improving the customers' satisfaction through meeting their expectation means improving the quality of land use plan and then consequently improving the land governance, adequate budget and time should be allocated for urban plan preparation projects. As the amount of the required budget may differ depending on projects, it should be determined based on studies.

The studies that related to land use plan issues should be conducted by the experts and practitioners themselves or at least they have to be encouraged to participate. Some of recommended study topics may be: cost-effective plan preparation strategies without compromising the quality of plans, improving and customizing the SERVQUAL model for urban planning service, appropriate budget for urban plan preparation projects including wage of employees & public participation, technical standard development & improvement (e.g. on working procedures and quality assurance mechanisms), public participation in technical standard development, topics on which difference in understandings specially by the customers versus the service providers etc. Conducting research should also be one of the performance evaluation criteria for every expert of organizations of the service providers. By doing such things every expert able to contribute to the quality improvement efforts and feels ownership. Credits should also be given to those experts for their valuable contributions and the study works may serve as a base for detail research.

6. REFERENCES


Behailu M. & Hailemariam B. / Expectations against considerations on quality of urban land use plan


7. APPENDIX

Table 2: Share of Quality problems of urban land use plan by the level of urban area in Amhara Region in 2017/18 (2010 E.C). (formally presented by customers to the regional service providers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Urban Area</th>
<th>Total no. of urban areas in the region</th>
<th>No. of complaints (quality disapprovals) in the year of 2010 E.C.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City administration</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead municipality</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub municipality</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging town</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Urban Areas</strong></td>
<td><strong>629</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>