



Original Article (Qualitative)

Proposing a template for selecting the coordinates of laboratory standards for executive management of the country.

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to present a model for optimal selecting the characteristics of policy laboratories in the country's executive management. The research method is applicable in terms of its purpose; qualitative in terms of implementation, of content analysis type; and descriptive-exploratory research in terms of nature; and its main strategy is a comparative study of various policy laboratories suitable for the executive management of the country of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The research elite community included 16 managers, policymakers, and researchers in the field of policymaking and policy with expertise related to the policy laboratory, researchers/faculty members active in the field of management and policymaking, leaders, theorists, and policy laboratory practitioners/activists in the field of public policy. They were referred to purposefully, using the snowball method; and the interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. To collect data, semi-structured interviews were conducted using thematic analysis method, and MAXqda 2020 software was used to carry out the analysis process after open and axial coding. The results indicated that a total of 95 basic codes, 15 organizing themes, and 5 overarching themes were identified and extracted. In addition to identifying four basic approaches of the living laboratory, the results of the present study, consider data-based policymaking, behavioral insights and the serious game approach, the structure of the policy laboratory for executive management in a decentralized (divergent) manner and with active participation in various fields, considering the diversity of topics.

Keywords:

Knowledge-based leadership, Illusion of control, Innovation, Rationality

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Extended abstract

Introduction

In today's world, the speed of developments is increasing at a stunning rate, so the traditional policymaking mechanism of the past does not respond to today's conditions, and any mistake or delay in decision-making will cause irreparable damage to society. This has prompted policymakers in developed countries to take advantage of new possibilities. A policy refers to decisions and resolutions that determine the course of government action and include the stages of formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Kern & Rogge, 2018). These policies can have many positive and negative effects at the organizational and societal levels, the dimensions of which far exceed initial expectations and predictions, and may last for years and even generations (Jordan & Huitema, 2014). Policymaking is a complex and challenging process that deals with a variety of problems, issues, challenges, and target communities (Momen Kashani et al, 2020). The areas of expertise to be tested are also numerous and diverse, and different expert groups are needed for each. The point is that policymaking should be free from trial and error and focused on confronting issues wisely. Therefore, an experimental approach to policy-making is essential. Policy labs can be categorized according to the strategy of the lab, the organization of the lab, and the scientific discipline of the experts working in it (Haelg et al, 2019). The design logic of the lab is defined by necessity. Sometimes a large, comprehensive, and multidisciplinary lab is used, and sometimes temporary groups of experimenters can be used. On the other hand, policy labs can be divided into several types (McGann et al, 2017), labs with different capacities to address public problems and issues in different areas of society (Svensson, 2020).

Today, with the rapid and extensive progress of science and technology, it is essential that all processes are re-examined and, while anticipating, before any action, or simultaneously with them, plans or resolutions are allowed to be tested. In order to implement the review, re-engineering issues and drawing them in a laboratory manner seems important in the current situation (Mankongsujarit, 2019). Given the failure of many policies that have been adopted, implemented and experienced in the past; avoiding the trial and error method emphasizes the necessity of establishing a policy laboratory in the government, which is essential to prevent inappropriate output and implementation, and conversely, its correct and effective implementation. In order to become familiar with the characteristics of the policy laboratory and benefit from the privilege of its existence, this research has attempted to achieve a balanced model for creating a suitable policy laboratory for the executive branch, while conducting a comparative study of policy laboratories in other countries. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer this question: What is the optimal selected model of the policy laboratory coordinates suitable for the country's executive management?

Theoretical Framework

Policy Lab

A policy is a set of purposeful actions taken by an actor or set of actors to address a problem or issue of interest (Gofen & Golan, 2020). Policy labs are established with the aim of diagnosing and improving governance to identify why, where, and how each specific policy case occurred (Pourreezzat, 2021).

Policy labs employ a wide range of tools, including stakeholder and policymaker meetings, research and data collection, workshops, and other innovative methods and tools, to generate the best ideas for desirable policy. The entry of policy laboratories into the design and policy-making process is not limited to a specific stage and can be entered at any stage of the policy-making process. In the research and problem identification stage, options are tested and reviewed, such as creating and visualizing policies and public programs.



Borhani et al, (2022) examined the use of a qualitative meta-synthesis approach to present a policy laboratory design model. The results showed that the policy laboratory design model was presented in the form of 8 main categories including policy problem identification, policy laboratory staff, policy laboratory stakeholders, the role of the policy laboratory in government, policy laboratory programs, policy laboratory location, policy laboratory physical space, and expected policy laboratory output. Therefore, in order to identify the problems of society, policy laboratories should be established with the presence of policy experts as well as stakeholders in different areas of the country with appropriate facilities and physical space, which can identify the problems of society with proper planning, find solutions to these problems in cooperation with different research groups, and implement the explained policies in cooperation with the government and the sovereignty.

"Policy Laboratories: Concepts, Tools, and Applications" is the title of a book about the policy laboratory written by Ghazi Nuri et al, (2021). This book emphasizes small-scale experiments conducted to collect feedback and reduce the costs of failure, and compares the similarities and differences of these laboratories globally with the aim of designing methods to inform policymakers.

Research Methodology

The research method is applicable in terms of its purpose; qualitative in terms of implementation, of content analysis type; and descriptive-exploratory research in terms of nature; and its main strategy is a comparative study of various policy laboratories suitable for the executive management of the country of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The research elite community included 16 managers, policymakers, and researchers in the field of policymaking and policy with expertise related to the policy laboratory, researchers/faculty members active in the field of management and policymaking, leaders, theorists, and policy laboratory practitioners/activists in the field of public policy. They were referred to purposefully, using the snowball method; and the interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data.

Research findings

Thematic analysis method was used to analyze the findings and MAXqda 2020 software was used to implement the analysis process after open and axial coding. The results indicated that a total of 95 basic codes, 15 organizing themes, and 5 overarching themes were identified and extracted. In addition to identifying four basic approaches of the living laboratory, the results of the present study, consider data-based policymaking, behavioral insights and the serious game approach, the structure of the policy laboratory for executive management in a decentralized (divergent) manner and with active participation in various fields, considering the diversity of topics.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of providing a model for optimal selecting the coordinates of the policy laboratory in the country's executive management. The results of this study are consistent with the results of Borhani et al, (2022), Pourezzat (2021), Etebariyan & Keshvariyan Azad (2019), Gheysari et al, (2019), and Mohammadi Fateh et al, (2017). Borhani et al, (2022) showed that the policy laboratory design model is presented in the form of 8 main categories including policy problem identification, policy laboratory staff, policy laboratory stakeholders, policy laboratory role in government, policy laboratory programs, policy laboratory location, policy laboratory physical space, and expected policy laboratory output. Therefore, in order to identify the problems of society, policy laboratories should be



established with the presence of policy experts and stakeholders in different areas of the country with appropriate facilities and physical space, which can identify the problems of society with proper planning, find solutions to these problems in cooperation with different research groups, and implement the explained policies in cooperation with the government.

According to the results of the research, the following suggestions were made:

In the first step, the selection of policy areas depends on the prioritization of government organizations and consideration of the issues of the target community and the way of enacting laws. Therefore, various agencies should activate the policy sub-laboratory appropriate for themselves, under a central laboratory, with different scientific and practical expertise.