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Original Research

Analyzing the Relationship Between Good Governance, Social Order, Social Commitment, and Citizens' Belief in Social Values: A Case Study of Garmsar Citizens

Ahmad. Amiri[1]*, Nayer. Pirahari[2], Mojtaba. Sedaghati Fard[2]

1 PhD Student, Department of Sociology, Garmsar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran
2 Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Garmsar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: n_pirahari@yahoo.com

This study aims to investigate the relationship between good governance and its effects on social order, social commitment, and citizens' belief in social values in the city of Garmsar, Iran. Good governance is considered a key factor in fostering social cohesion and public trust, especially in diverse communities like Garmsar. By analyzing these relationships, the study seeks to highlight the impact of governance practices on social dynamics. The research employs a quantitative survey design, using a structured questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 384 citizens in Garmsar. Participants were selected using multi-stage cluster and quota sampling techniques to ensure demographic representation. The questionnaire assessed perceptions of good governance, social order, social commitment, and belief in social values using a Likert scale. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation tests was conducted to explore the relationships between the variables. The findings reveal significant positive correlations between good governance and all three dimensions studied. Good governance was moderately correlated with social commitment ($r = 0.366$, $p < 0.01$) and social order ($r = 0.321$, $p < 0.01$), while the relationship with belief in social values was weaker but still significant ($r = 0.181$, $p < 0.01$). These results suggest that effective governance contributes to stronger social cohesion and commitment, though its influence on citizens' belief in social values is less pronounced. The study concludes that good governance plays a critical role in enhancing social order and commitment among citizens. While governance positively influences belief in social values, other cultural and religious factors may also play a significant role. Strengthening transparency, accountability, and public participation is essential for fostering social cohesion in ethnically diverse communities like Garmsar.

Keywords: Good governance, social order, social commitment, belief in social values, Iran, Garmsar, public trust, social cohesion.

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1. Introduction

Good governance has been recognized as a fundamental framework for achieving sustainable development, social cohesion, and economic prosperity in modern societies. The concept of good governance refers to the process by which public institutions conduct public affairs and manage resources effectively to guarantee human rights and economic progress. Numerous scholars have explored how good governance influences various sectors, such as health outcomes, education, economic growth, and social order (Ismail Shafa et al., 2024). As governance structures evolve, particularly in developing countries like Iran, the need to understand and implement effective governance models becomes increasingly important (Abolfathi, 2019).

Good governance, as a broad and dynamic concept, is built upon several key principles, including transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation, and responsiveness. According to Eivazi et al. (2018), good governance serves as a cornerstone for sustainable development, where institutional frameworks are aligned with citizens' welfare and long-term societal goals (Eivazi et al., 2018). These principles ensure that governance processes are inclusive and equitable, allowing for the participation of various stakeholders in decision-making processes. The focus on inclusivity and equity aligns with the concept of "meso ethics," which addresses ethical considerations at the intermediate level of governance, particularly in integrating ethical principles into strategic governance frameworks (Appelbaum et al., 2009).

From a broader perspective, good governance also has significant implications for economic stability and social capital. Mustafa et al. (2019) emphasized the role of organizational investment in social capital and its interaction with good governance principles (Mustafa et al., 2019). Social capital, in the context of governance, refers to the networks, norms, and trust that enable collective action for mutual benefits. When public institutions adhere to good governance standards, they foster a sense of trust and cooperation among citizens, which, in turn, enhances social cohesion and commitment to societal values (Azadi & Shaikh Movahed, 2022).

One of the key dimensions of this study is to explore how good governance impacts social order. Social order, in this context, refers to the stability and harmonious functioning of society, where individuals and groups conform to established norms, rules, and laws. As Hopper (2017) notes, the absence of good governance often leads to corruption, neopatrimonialism, and social disorder, particularly in developing economies. In such cases, poor governance not only weakens institutional integrity but also erodes public trust, resulting in social unrest and fragmentation (Hopper, 2017).

The relationship between good governance and social order is well documented in studies focusing on different regions. For instance, Kaufmann and Lafarre (2021) demonstrated that good governance correlates with better social performance, highlighting the role of governance in maintaining social order through effective resource management and policy implementation (Kaufmann & Lafarre, 2021). In Iran, achieving social order has been a critical challenge due to the country's diverse social and ethnic makeup. Abolfathi (2019) argues that the lack of a cohesive good governance framework has hindered social integration, particularly at the macro level (Abolfathi, 2019). To address these issues, public institutions must adopt governance models that promote social inclusion and reduce disparities between different social groups. This aligns with Bagherzadeh et al. (2021), who designed a governance model for public libraries that emphasizes transparency and citizen engagement to foster social harmony (Bagherzadeh et al., 2021).

Social commitment refers to individuals' dedication to the well-being of society and their willingness to participate in collective actions that benefit the public. It is closely linked to the level of trust and confidence that citizens have in public institutions. When governance structures are perceived as transparent, accountable, and responsive, citizens are more likely to demonstrate commitment to societal goals (Mehrabi et al., 2018). Conversely, when governance is seen as corrupt or inefficient, social commitment tends to decline, leading to civic disengagement and apathy.

Mansoor (2021) highlights the importance of good governance in building citizens' trust, particularly during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that governments that provided timely and accurate information through social media platforms were able to maintain higher levels of public trust, which, in turn, strengthened social commitment. This relationship between governance and social commitment is crucial for fostering social resilience and collective action, especially in times of uncertainty (Mansoor, 2021).

In Iran, the concept of good governance has been linked to efforts aimed at empowering citizens and enhancing public trust. Azadi and Shaikh Movahed (2022) argue that strengthening public trust is a key tool for promoting the health of the administrative system, as it encourages citizens to actively engage in governance processes (Azadi & Shaikh Movahed, 2022). In a similar vein, Sadeghian Gharaghiea et al. (2020) proposed an empowerment model based on good governance principles, suggesting that when citizens are empowered through transparent and inclusive governance, their

commitment to societal development increases (Sadeghian gharaghiea et al., 2020).

Belief in social values refers to individuals' adherence to shared norms and principles that guide behavior within a society. These values include concepts such as justice, equality, and the rule of law, which are integral to the functioning of any democratic society. Good governance plays a crucial role in shaping and reinforcing these values by ensuring that public policies and decisions align with societal expectations and ethical standards (Rezaei Lori et al., 2022).

A study by Massey (2022) examined the relationship between good governance and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), concluding that governance structures that prioritize social equity and inclusivity contribute to the promotion of social values such as justice and environmental sustainability (Massey, 2022). This is particularly relevant in the context of Iran, where the country's governance model is deeply intertwined with Islamic values and principles (Zareei & Araei, 2021). According to Morshedzad (2017), the concept of "desired governance" within the framework of Islamic civilization emphasizes the importance of justice, accountability, and public welfare, which are fundamental to fostering citizens' belief in social values (Morshedzad, 2017).

Despite the recognized importance of good governance, achieving it remains a significant challenge in Iran. Abolfathi (2019) identified several barriers to good governance in the country, including political instability, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a lack of social capital at the macro level. These barriers have hindered efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and public participation, which are essential components of good governance (Abolfathi, 2019).

Furthermore, Sarafi and Nejati Allaf (2015) argue that the existing spatial development management system in Iran is not well-equipped to support the principles of good governance, particularly in terms of regional planning and resource distribution. This has led to disparities in governance quality across different regions of the country, with some areas experiencing higher levels of corruption and inefficiency (Sarafi & Nejati allaf, 2015). To overcome these challenges, Payste et al. (2020) emphasize the need for clear criteria and indicators for evaluating governance quality. Their study on natural resource governance in Iran highlights the importance of developing governance frameworks that are adaptable to local contexts and that prioritize citizen engagement and environmental sustainability (Payste et al., 2020).

In conclusion, good governance is a critical factor in promoting social order, social commitment, and citizens' belief in social values. As demonstrated by various studies, effective governance structures that prioritize transparency, accountability, and inclusivity contribute to social stability and cohesion. In the case of Iran, achieving good governance requires addressing the existing barriers and adopting governance models that foster public trust and participation. Thus, this study seeks to analyze the relationship between good governance, social order, social commitment, and citizens' belief in social values, with a specific focus on the city of Garmsar in Iran.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employs a quantitative survey research design, aimed at analyzing the relationship between good governance and various social factors, including social order, social commitment, and citizens' belief in social values, among the residents of Garmsar city. The population for this study consists of Garmsar citizens, encompassing individuals from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, a cluster sampling method was applied initially to divide the population into different regions of Garmsar. From there, quota sampling was employed to ensure representation across various demographics, such as age, gender, and education level. A total of 384 respondents were selected as the sample size, based on Cochran's formula for an adequate sample size with a confidence level of 95%.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed specifically for this study. The questionnaire was designed to measure variables related to good governance and its impact on social cohesion, social commitment, and the belief in social values. The questionnaire consisted of several sections. The first section gathered demographic data such as age, gender, marital status, and education level. The subsequent

sections included scales measuring social commitment, adherence to social order, and belief in societal values. These scales were adapted from validated instruments used in previous sociological studies and modified to suit the context of Garmsar. The items were rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), allowing for an in-depth assessment of respondents' perceptions.

2.3.   Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency distribution, and standard deviation were calculated to provide a general overview of the respondents' demographic characteristics and their perceptions of governance and social values. For inferential analysis, Pearson correlation tests were conducted to examine the

relationships between the variables of good governance, social order, social commitment, and belief in social values.

3.   Findings and Results

The demographic characteristics of the respondents reveal that the sample consists of a balanced representation of various segments of Garmsar's population. Of the 384 respondents, 51% were male and 49% were female, with an average age of 35 years. Approximately 60% of the respondents were married, and 40% were single. In terms of education level, 45% of the participants had a bachelor's degree or higher, 35% held a high school diploma, and the remaining 20% had education levels below high school. The respondents represented a diverse mix of ethnic backgrounds, including Fars, Turk, and Arab communities, which reflects the cultural diversity of Garmsar.

Table 1

Person Correlation Results

Variables	Social Commitment	Social Order	Belief in Social Values
Good Governance	0.366**	0.321**	0.181**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation results demonstrate a significant positive relationship between good governance and various social factors. The correlation between good governance and social commitment was found to be moderate and positive ($r = 0.366$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that better governance is associated with higher levels of social commitment. Similarly, a significant positive correlation was observed between good governance and social order ($r = 0.321$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that improved governance practices contribute to greater social order. Additionally, the correlation between good governance and belief in social values was weaker but still positive ($r = 0.181$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that governance plays a role, albeit a smaller one, in shaping citizens' belief in societal values.

4.   Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between good governance and its impact on social order, social commitment, and citizens' belief in social values in the city of Garmsar. The findings revealed significant

positive correlations between good governance and all three dimensions. Specifically, good governance was moderately correlated with social commitment ($r = 0.366$, $p < 0.01$) and social order ($r = 0.321$, $p < 0.01$), while the relationship with belief in social values, though weaker, was still significant ($r = 0.181$, $p < 0.01$). These results suggest that governance practices that prioritize transparency, accountability, and public participation positively influence how citizens perceive and engage with their community and social systems.

The positive correlation between good governance and social commitment aligns with the findings of Mansoor (2021), who argued that citizens' trust in government institutions is essential for fostering social commitment, particularly during times of crisis. In the context of this study, the moderate correlation indicates that when citizens perceive their governance structures as effective, accountable, and inclusive, they are more likely to feel committed to the collective welfare of their society. This supports the view of Mehrabi et al. (2018), who highlighted the importance of governance in

encouraging citizen participation in community affairs (Mehrabi et al., 2018).

Moreover, this relationship resonates with the theory of social capital, which emphasizes the role of trust and cooperation in building strong social networks (Mustafa et al., 2019). When good governance strengthens these networks, it increases citizens' willingness to engage in actions that benefit the broader community. In Garmsar, the presence of different ethnic groups necessitates governance practices that ensure inclusivity, as this fosters social cohesion and collective responsibility. Similar findings were reported by Appelbaum et al. (2009), who noted that ethical governance enhances social responsibility, both at the organizational and community levels (Appelbaum et al., 2009).

The significant relationship between good governance and social order in this study supports previous research by Hopper (2017), who found that poor governance is often linked to social disorder, particularly in contexts characterized by neopatrimonialism and corruption. In contrast, effective governance contributes to maintaining social stability by ensuring that institutions function transparently and fairly, thereby promoting public trust and adherence to societal norms (Hopper, 2017).

The results also align with the work of Bagherzadeh et al. (2021), who designed a governance model emphasizing the importance of transparency and citizen engagement in fostering social harmony. In Garmsar, a city with a diverse ethnic population, good governance practices are crucial for preventing social fragmentation and promoting order (Bagherzadeh et al., 2021). This reflects the broader theory of governance as a stabilizing force in society, as highlighted by Kaufmann and Lafarre (2021). Their comparative study of OECD countries demonstrated that governance practices emphasizing inclusivity and equity result in better social performance, including higher levels of social order (Kaufmann & Lafarre, 2021).

Additionally, the moderate correlation between good governance and social order in this study indicates that effective governance practices not only promote law and order but also reinforce citizens' adherence to social norms. In the Iranian context, Abolfathi (2019) similarly emphasized the need for governance reforms to promote social integration and prevent societal divisions (Abolfathi, 2019).

The weaker correlation between good governance and belief in social values (r = 0.181) suggests that while governance plays a role in shaping societal values, other factors may also significantly influence citizens' adherence to social norms and values. This finding is consistent with the study by Morshedzad (2017), who argued that in Islamic societies, governance is deeply intertwined with religious and cultural values, which may exert a stronger influence on citizens' beliefs than governance structures alone (Morshedzad, 2017).

Moreover, Massey (2022) demonstrated that governance practices aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contribute to promoting social values such as justice and equality (Massey, 2022). However, in some contexts, including Iran, where governance is influenced by Islamic principles (Zareei & Araei, 2021), citizens' belief in social values may be more strongly shaped by cultural and religious norms. This could explain the relatively weaker correlation observed in this study.

Nevertheless, the positive relationship between good governance and belief in social values highlights the importance of governance in reinforcing ethical standards and promoting public welfare. Rezaei Lori et al. (2022) emphasized the role of good governance in fostering social equity and inclusivity, both of which are essential for upholding shared societal values. In the case of Garmsar, where the population is ethnically diverse, governance practices that promote equality and inclusivity are likely to enhance citizens' belief in social values, even if the correlation is not as strong as with other dimensions (Rezaei Lori et al., 2022).

This study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design of the research limits the ability to infer causality between good governance and the studied variables. While the correlations observed suggest significant relationships, longitudinal studies are needed to determine whether changes in governance practices directly lead to improvements in social order, commitment, and belief in social values. Second, the study was conducted in a specific geographical context—Garmsar—which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions in Iran or other countries. The cultural and social characteristics of Garmsar, including its ethnic diversity, may have influenced the results. Thus, future research should consider replicating the study in different regions

to validate the findings. Finally, while this study focused on three specific dimensions—social order, social commitment, and belief in social values—there are other aspects of governance, such as economic stability, political participation, and legal accountability, which were not explored. Including these additional variables in future research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of good governance.

Future research should aim to address the limitations mentioned above. Longitudinal studies would be particularly valuable in examining the long-term effects of good governance on social order, social commitment, and belief in social values. This would help to clarify the causal relationships between these variables and provide more robust evidence for the impact of governance reforms. Additionally, future studies should consider exploring the role of other factors, such as economic stability, political participation, and legal accountability, in shaping citizens' perceptions of governance. By including these variables, researchers can develop a more holistic understanding of how governance influences different aspects of social life.

Moreover, expanding the geographical scope of future research is essential. Conducting similar studies in other regions of Iran or in different countries with varying governance systems and cultural contexts could help to identify whether the relationships observed in this study are consistent across different settings. Comparative studies between regions or countries could also shed light on the specific governance practices that are most effective in promoting social cohesion and stability.

To enhance social order, social commitment, and belief in social values, policymakers should prioritize the implementation of governance practices that emphasize transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. Specifically, government institutions in Garmsar and similar regions should engage with citizens more actively, ensuring that their voices are heard in the decision-making process. This could be achieved through public consultations, participatory governance models, and greater access to information about governmental actions.

Moreover, public institutions should focus on building trust with citizens by addressing corruption and inefficiencies within the administrative system. Strengthening accountability mechanisms, such as independent oversight bodies and anti-corruption agencies, can help to restore public confidence in governance. This, in turn, will encourage greater social commitment and adherence to social values.

Finally, efforts should be made to promote social inclusion, particularly in regions with ethnically diverse populations like Garmsar. By ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background, have equal access to opportunities and resources, governance institutions can foster a sense of belonging and commitment to societal norms. Such practices will not only enhance social order but also strengthen the social fabric of the community.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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