

# Pathology of Research Process Mechanisms in Tehran Municipality and Presenting the Executive Solution\*

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## ABSTRACT

Since research and study are necessary before doing any developmental action, the municipality that plays a vital role in urban management must have a desired and integrated research structure to improve and develop research infrastructures and potentials in various scopes by creating an optimal process. The extant study aims to evaluate the process of turning the subject into a researchable case by identifying general harms, problem-solving processes, and research processes in the municipality of 22 districts of Tehran. Moreover, this study presents some recommendations to be applied in the research to correct the problem-defining process and use the outcomes obtained from managerial procedures associated with urban studies focused on Tehran Municipality. This study used documentary and in-depth interviews to collect the required data and information. In this research, 25 in-depth interviews were done with three groups of experts, urban officials, executives, and supervisors based on the snowball technique. According to research findings, the conceptual model of the research process in the municipality of 22 districts of Tehran has been proposed and presented in six stages of project control system design, supervisor selection, RFP preparation and approval, recall and confirmation of executor, research, and application and mentoring system. The pathology was then analyzed by using the content analysis method. According to the results of interviews and content analysis, there are more harms and weaknesses in project control system design, system and supervisor selection, RFP preparation, and approval within the research process of Tehran Municipality. In the research process, the proposed research in Tehran Municipality has been presented by developing the supply-demand model and policy-making approach and providing some recommendations to make this process applicable.

**Keywords:** Pathology, Research Process, Tehran Municipality, Supply and Demand Model, Content Analysis.

\* This paper is derived from the research plan under the title of "Pathology of research cycle mechanisms in 22 districts of Tehran and providing executive solutions" The Study and Planning Center of Tehran is the employer of this plan, and was conducted by Iran University of Science and Technology and the first author of the paper in 2020.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The lack of a defined and clear framework for research is one of the challenges for this process in organizations. Tehran Municipality also deals with this challenge so that there is no unity and clear mechanism in the research process of municipalities of different districts of Tehran metropolis, which is the capital city. This process is full of dispersion, parallel work, and inefficiency in these municipalities. The Study and Planning Center of Tehran plays an important role in the research management of Tehran municipality conducting many research plans requested by the municipality of various districts and associated municipality organizations (The Collection of Research and Management Instructions of Study and Planning Center of Tehran, 2013). The Study and Planning Center of Tehran is one of the units of municipality management that is responsible for research and development (R&D) and works under the supervision of Tehran Municipality (Study Plan of Tehran Municipality, 2008). The establishment of the Study and Planning Center of Tehran weakened this case but the current research process in this center must be revised. Therefore, an efficient and problem-centered research structure must be created in urban management by using the available potentials and systems. The research process is a pervasive system shaped in the organizational structure of the municipality, which uses systematic methods to direct and manage the research plans based on the authorities and responsibilities of relevant organizations. Each organizational and mission department of the municipality can identify and define practical research plans to optimize and overcome the problems of the considered department playing an effective role in actualizing research plans' results within the implementation and planning process of the associated organization (The Collection of Research and Management Instructions of Study and Planning Center of Tehran 2013). According to Article 2 of the Research Plan of Tehran Municipality, the existence and outlook of the research plan are rooted in creating a coherent and purposeful management collection based on the strategies, policies, planning, guidance, support, evaluation, monitoring, and implementation of researches to improve effectiveness and efficiency of decisions made by policy-making, planning and executive board in urban management and civil engineering affairs, especially for Tehran City (Research Plan of Tehran Municipality 2008). On the other hand, the diverse knowledge and information in addition to increasing environmental changes caused by modern approaches adopted in urban management and novel world technologies prevent urban management to have an active and effective response to these changes. Urban management has always faced intellectual concerns in determining its objective, policies, plans, and designs (The

Collection of Research and Management Instructions of Study and Planning Center of Tehran 2013). The defective research cycle in Iran is another problem, which is more seen in the urban management system. Some of these problems include theoretical and professional weakness of applied research, lack of urban top managers' belief in the application of urban studies, lack of sufficient budget assigned to research in the public budget, weakness and lack of structural and institutional development of research, and nondevelopment of research potentials in urban planning and urban management faculties (Alvani, Akhavan Alavi, and Mahmeli Abyaneh 2018).

Some studies have been conducted on the necessary change in urban management and its challenges over recent years but the present paper tends to develop the model introduced by Alvani, Akhavan Alavi, and Mahmeli Abyaneh (2018). On the other hand, this study also aims to present a comprehensive, accurate, and detailed model with executive potential by doing in-depth interviews with relevant experts in different districts of Tehran municipality. In this regard, some recommendations will be presented to be used in these projects to revise the problem statement process and apply the obtained outputs in the correction of management procedures related to urban research for the case of Tehran Municipality. The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate the current status of the research mechanism in Tehran Municipality, consider the pathology of this process, and finally present a desired process by using a policy-making approach and supply-demand model. This study investigates the theoretical foundations, concepts, and research process in some foreign countries, and then examines the research method, findings, and conclusion. Finally, summarizations and recommendations are proposed.

## 2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This part of the study addresses some topics, including research, research process, research process in Malaysia, Finland, Australia, and Denmark, Research Plan in Tehran Municipality, different types of projects in the municipality, research process in the municipality, and supply-demand model in doing research in Tehran Municipality.

### 2.1. Research

Dehkhoda Dictionary defines research as seeking reason, looking for meaning, re-finding, discussion, and investigation. Moreover, Persian Moeen Dictionary means research as search, investigation, asking the reason, impeachment, and getting information. Persian Amid Dictionary has pointed to some definitions, such as obtaining information, seeking truth, wisdom, trustworthiness, and correctness.

Scientific research is the systematic, controlled,

empirical, and critical study of the hypothetical decisions made on the possible relationships between normal phenomena (Doaee 1994). Scientific research is defined as an exploratory effort with a specific systematic method that tends to discover an unknown case in the world to enhance the cognitive territory of mankind, identify the phenomena, and achieve outcomes; it means that one can find an output and external outcome for what is proposed as the results and knowledge by the research (Hafeznia 2014).

## 2.2. Research Process

Research must be done based on a scientific process to achieve reliable findings and results (Doaee 1994). The scientific research process comprises continuous

and systematic stages that are mentioned herein:

- The first stage includes selecting and explaining the research problem and designing hypotheses.
- The second stage consists of selecting suitable research methods and data analysis techniques.
- In the third stage, samples (subjects) are selected, and data are collected.
- In the fourth stage, the extracted data are analyzed, and the researcher tests the hypotheses.
- In the fifth stage, the researcher formulated the report based on the employer's standards and then edited and published it (Hafeznia 2014).

Figure 1 depicts the process of scientific research based on the five mentioned stages.



**Fig. 1. Scientific Research Process**  
(Hafeznia 2014)

This part of the study reviews the research process conducted in municipalities of different countries and Iran.

In the municipality of Sweden, well-being policies are not at the center of public attention. Responsibilities and formal independence of Swedish municipalities were increased in the 1980s and 1990s. Municipalities are responsible to provide local services but also have some political tasks. This issue has made the knowledge development strategy substantial for municipalities. An example is the creation of numerous regional and local departments in the social welfare sector under the initiative duties done by local and regional authorities in cooperation with universities. Second, competition has been amplified between municipalities encouraging them to unite with universities. The mentioned case is considered a driving force for regional growth or a source used to meet the needs of municipalities and districts. Third, although the national research policy was based on integrating municipalities' needs in initiative measures of central policy (through mission-centered agencies) until the 1980s, there was an increase in municipalities' expectations and support to accept more responsibility for knowledge creation and development. In general, it can be explained about Sweden that more research institutions and research-based universities have been established in this country over recent decades. Moreover, more attention has been paid to the relationship between municipalities and research centers to achieve economic local, and national development. Moreover, the competition between municipalities has encouraged them to employ students and researchers to increase the

quality of projects. The Research and Evaluation Unit of New Zealand, a part of the Auckland Plan of Auckland Council, is a department for strategy and research in the main planning center of Uche, which is the environmental, social, economic, and cultural research center of this council. This unit provides high-quality antecedent that contributes to the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and has allocated a wide range of research services to all parts of the council and organizations under its control generalizing the results of council studies and publication to a more extensive society. The research and evaluation unit presents a set of products and services, including qualified antecedents that contribute to developing strategies and policies, implementing and recommending some evaluations for research priorities/supervision, and designing research scenarios (e.g., a growth potential). This unit manages the tasks of collecting evidence, including research, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to ensure that the Council's decision is made based on the powerful evidence about growth and change. Moreover, this unit supports the main performance of the council, which is planning for growth and meeting legal requirements based on the Resource Management Law 1991 and measures adopted by local government for social, economic, land-use, and environmental issues. The Research and Evaluation Unit of New Zealand is a multidisciplinary unit that has skilled experts who meet these requirements. This unit has been established uniquely to nurture innovative and cooperative approaches considering the complex issues that Auckland faces in present and future times by linking the research, policy, and implementation

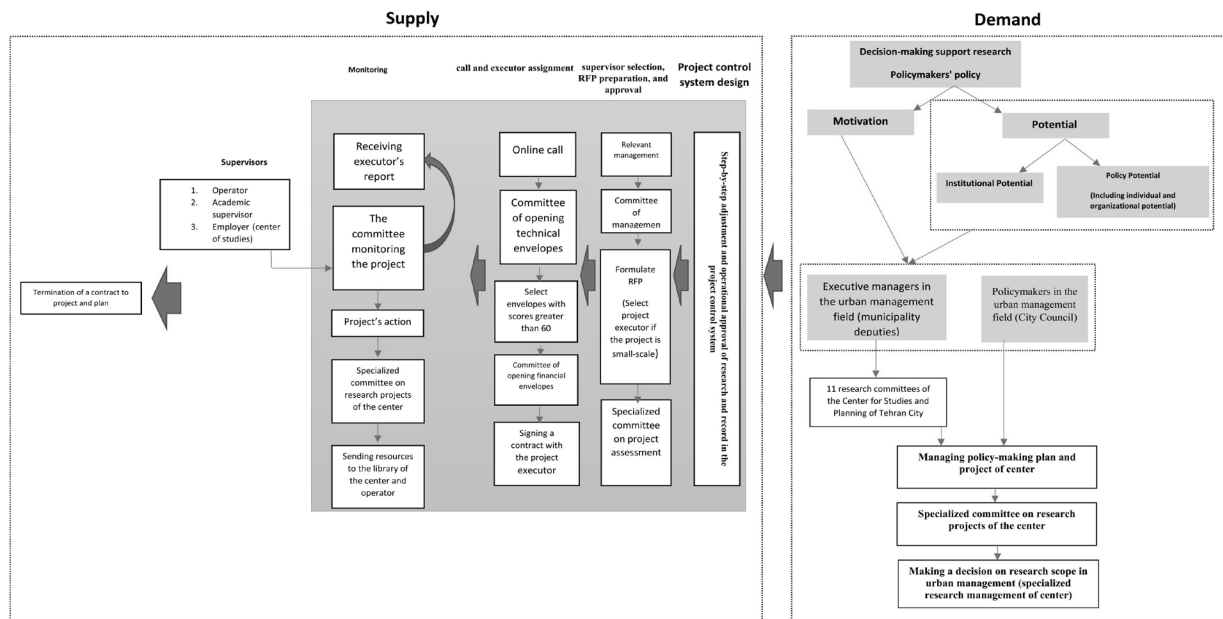
(Müller 2016). In Australia, the management of a research project can be used as an opportunity for developing research skills and providing a skill for low-skilled researchers. The research team must have the required skills, specialty, and experience to meet all needs of an available study. Moreover, research teams need to employ beginners who can start and guide research. Recruitment and maintenance programs require accurate planning, discussion, and evaluation to ensure optimal participation in the study. All collected data must be handled and examined precisely. Budget management requires informed and accurate estimation of possible costs, accurate recording, frequent assessment of real costs compared with budget anticipations, and effective relationships with team members. If the mentioned steps are taken accurately, a qualified research project is achieved before project implementation, which helps the organization to take a step in the right and reliable path. This case is also seen in the municipality of Australia. In Finland, municipalities implement the research plans designed by research centers and universities to achieve successful urban projects. More than 100 research projects (cooperated with the municipality) have been done until 2019. Urban management applies the research results to improve decision-making and strengthen the effect of its initial development measures. The research plan has considerably strengthened the cooperation between urban management and universities.

The Research Plan of Tehran Municipality was first prepared based on the Note of Article 19 of the budget approved in 2008 by the Islamic Council of Tehran that announced all departments of Tehran Municipality not to do incoherent urban research. According to this Plan, the research budget of Tehran Municipality is formulated in the framework of 11 specialized research committees that are guided and directed by the Study and Planning Center of Tehran (Research Plan of Tehran Municipality 2009). After this step, the formal mechanism is defined and urban research is done in the framework of the Research Plan of Tehran Municipality guided by the Study and Planning Center of Tehran. The Center for Strategic

Research and Studies of Karaj Metropolis Islamic Council was founded based on Articles 100 and 101 of the Constitution and paragraph 2 of Article 71 (duties and authorities of Islamic Councils) in August 2014 after approval in the fourth period of Islamic Council of Karaj to help Islamic councils of metropolises using their regulatory and legislative potentials effectively to find shortages and weaknesses of the urban management. In this way, these councils can then plan and provide practical solutions to overcome shortcomings and provide expert solutions and consultative theories for members of the Islamic council and specialized commission, and find new solutions and proper measures based on the missions to achieve urban management goals and missions. In Hamedan City, Islamic Council established the "Center for Studies and Researches" in November 2013 based on an accurate understanding of the necessity that decisions must be made on the research and study. This center has tried to adopt a new approach to detect problems and issues in the city and prioritize them based on the knowledge of experts to provide specialized solutions for these challenges helping the Islamic Council of Hamedan to achieve some goals, such as knowledge-based planning, scientific design of policies, accurate and timely adoption of decisions and effective supervision over the urban management. Generally, it can be stated that urban projects are defined as timely construction plans that aim to satisfy the public interests of citizens. These plans are done by the municipality and other relevant institutions (Mostafavi 2008). As the main trustee for urban management, the mentioned institutions are not responsible only for construction activities but this urban center must provide other services and do service activities. The planning process and urban projects must be implemented in the following steps:

- Step 1: define the project
- Step 2: plan and design
- Step 3: implement the project
- Step 4: evaluation and revision (Shokouhi Bidhendi 2012).

Figure 2 indicates the proposed process for the research project in Tehran Municipality.

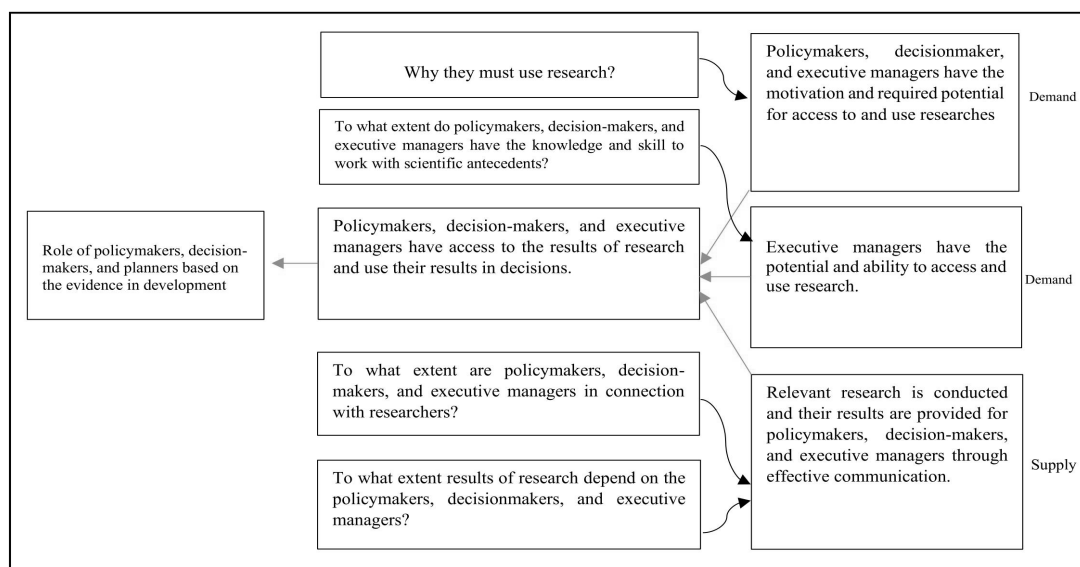


**Fig. 2. Research Project Process in Tehran Municipality**  
(Alvani, Akhavan Alavi, and Mahmeli Abyaneh 2018)

### 2.3. Supply-Demand Model in Doing Research in Tehran Municipality

Evidence-based policymaking approach has facilitated decision-makers access to antecedents and analyses in recent decades. Moreover, this approach has proposed an idea called the supply-demand model in which, "supply or ask" comprises the data obtained from research and provided for policymakers and

factors affecting them, and "demand or bid" includes the demand of decision-makers and policymakers and factors affecting it. On the other hand, the facilitating intervention has been mentioned in theoretical literature that aims to create an atmosphere for ease of access to studies, which ultimately helps to apply evidence-based methods (Alvani, Akhavan Alavi, and Mahmeli Abyaneh 2018). Figure 3 depicts the supply and demand model.



**Fig. 3. Supply and Demand Model**  
(Alvani, Akhavan Alavi, and Mahmeli Abyaneh 2018 adopted from Newman et al. 2013)

Evidence-based policymaking approaches can fill the gap between urban science researchers, managers,

and policymakers. This approach can increase the effectiveness of decisions made by managers and



policymakers so that their decisions are supported by the results of academic research (Alvani, Akhavan Alavi, and Mahmeli Abyaneh 2018).

### 3. METHOD

This is applied research in terms of objective, documentary, and field observation were used to collect data and information. Books, papers, dictionaries, and interviews are used as data-collecting instruments in the documentary method. This study used qualitative methods and applied interview techniques to collect data. In-depth interviews called free interviews are conducted to collect data in qualitative research (Hariri 2006). The sampling method of interviews was done based on the snowball technique, and theoretical saturation determined the number of interviews. In this research, in-depth interviews were done with three groups of experts, urban officials, executors, and supervisors. According to the place territory of research (22 districts of Tehran) and based on the spatial location of different municipalities, municipalities of districts 1, 4, 5, 12, 14, 20, and 22 were chosen as study samples of this research. Moreover, the authors interviewed some managers and experts of the Center of Studies and Planning of Tehran City. Some interviews were repeated to complete information. In total, 25 experts were

interviewed. The in-depth interview must be done by managers and executors of projects who are aware of problems of project implementation and issues that people face. These experts play an effective role in managing and adopting the policies of the projects.

After interviewing experts, a content analysis technique was used for data analysis. For this purpose, problems and defects in the research process are examined based on the conducted studies and interviews conducted by employees of the municipality in different districts of Tehran Municipality, as well as some deputies of the Center of Studies and Planning of Tehran City. Assessments suggest developing the research process proposed by Alvani et al. into six steps:

1. Project control system design
2. Supervisor selection, RFP<sup>1</sup> preparation, and approval
3. Recall and executor assignment
4. Research conduction
5. Using the application system
6. Monitoring

In this research, the mentioned steps were used as categories, the points mentioned in interviews were taken into subcategories, manuscript and content of interviews were used as contents as reported in Table 1.

**Table 1. Categorizing Problems of the Research Process in Tehran Municipality based on the Content of Interviews with Experts**

Category	Sub-Category	Content
Project Control System Design	The inefficiency of the project management process	Lack of proper leadership by the employer, prolonged project implementation, weak participation of operators and stakeholders, delayed unmanaged payment of the fee for executors, complexity in subjects, and difficulty of research area management.
	Lack of instant mechanisms to achieve the solution	The process of converting a problem to a project subject is very long.
	Lack of a process to change service description	The executor is responsible to follow the service description, so cannot add content to the proposal or remove it based on the requirements.
	Some defections and disorders in the formulation of rules	Parallel titles of some rules, lack of accurate date of announcement, approval, etc.
	Limited urban management duties in iran	In Iran, few tasks and duties have been considered for city management (particularly municipality).
	Non-development of research capacities in faculties of urban planning and urban management	Mistrust in researchers and lack of sufficient budget allocated to research weaken these institutions.
	Weakness and lack of structural-institutional development of research	Because many issues and challenges exist in the organizational structure of research in the municipality, the project process needs significant revisions.

Category	Sub-Category	Content
Project Control System Design	The excessive bureaucracy of the research process	The research process is considered a construction process, which leads to the complexity and time-consuming process of research.
	The challenging process of knowing criteria and indicators used to realize projects by planners	The application of criteria and indicators for the realization of projects is used by different planners based on their interests.
	Lack of a desired model or pattern for finding the problem	There is not any certain pattern or framework for finding the problem and converting it to a subject in the research process, so decision-makers perform based on their interests in this case.
	Research subjects do not follow a desired and integrated system	Research subjects rely on the judgment of executive managers and experts, the mismatch between results of studies and urban management needs, loss of resources, and non-realization of studies' application.
	Lack of comprehensive plans for innovation trend in Iran	No certain and comprehensive plan exists for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship processes in Iran.
	Low-quality investment projects	According to the insufficient budget assigned to researchers, this case decreases the quality of projects.
	Unclear budget assigned to investment projects	The funding process of investment projects is not clear and transparent
	Lack of project realization system	The lack of an integrated framework and system for the realization of projects and research leads to challenges in the implementation process.
	Weak financial transparency	Lack of financial transparency
	Employees' resistance to change	If an organization decides to create some changes, it will face some challenges such as employee resistance. The lack of a framework for the change and evolution process in an organization is one of the issues in this case.
	Problems related to the research process	Studies conducted in the district or center of studies do not have an executive guarantee and parallel works are done due to repetitive research topics. No separate budget is considered for research.
	Insufficient funds for research projects compared to the construction budget in the municipality of districts	A low research fund is considered in the districts' municipalities.
	Weakness of the research committee of districts in identifying creative and innovative projects and transferring them to the center of studies and planning for implementation	Creative and innovative projects are identified hardly.
	Lack of funds assigned to districts' municipalities for research projects in the center for studies due to lack of suitable management of research and innovation council	Sometimes, insufficient monitoring prevents using the research budget accurately for studies and research.
	Problems caused by the subject title and implementation method in the social scope	Proposed titles of research projects and their implementation have no certain framework.
	Lack of announcement of a comprehensive execution with implementation steps designed by the center for studies to reduce error possibility in districts	There is no certain upstream framework that describes the research steps and determines the duty of organizations and scopes.

Category	Sub-Category	Content
	Absence of eligible individuals in the Research and innovation council and the lack of seriousness of this council	Research and innovation council is not taken seriously and measures are not taken to improve and develop this institution.
	Lack of written and holistic tasks of the scopes in the agenda	The scopes and individuals do not have certain tasks due to shortcomings of the law or lack of accurate surveillance.
	The time-consuming process of project title approval	The process of confirmation and approval of the research title is very long and time-consuming.
	Projects precedence and delay in the social field	The longer time of projects before adopting a measure, which is actualized after implementation of projects, especially in social projects.
	Non-importance of organizational subjects, such as organization knowledge and so forth in the center for studies	Urban management subjects are examined in more cases.
Supervisor Selection, RFP Preparation, and Approval	Improper problem finding	Inappropriate definition of the problem (RFP quality, inattention to future, lack of study and sufficient assessment of research priorities, weakness in planning and program-centered process, poor relationship with citizens and urban activists), lack of accurate contemplation and disability of employees in designing problems, lack of accurate need assessment, and inability to respond to complex problems.
	The low managerial ability of research companies and institutions	Managerial shortcomings and low financial ability to employ inexperienced individuals in the project process.
	Short-term vision on the cooperation with the research center	The common culture of the academic society of Iran, short managerial periods, poor documentation of researchers' performance outcomes, and improper reward-punishment mechanism
	Approval of the project based on the political and economic criteria	Considerable effects of political, economic, and other incidents in the system of projects and researches definition
	Attitudes divergence and self-centeredness	Organizations associated with the municipality and different districts' municipalities discover the problems based on different attitudes.
	Selecting research interface for districts	Experts are selected without considering their experiences and backgrounds.
	Lack of cooperation between deputies of each district with the research interface of that district	Improper process of selecting the research interface
	Problems that occur on the Pajoooheshyar website	Lack of experts' mastery over the problems and sending titles just to shift the responsibility
	Parallel studies	Parallel studies in the research process despite the Pajoooheshyar website exist, because it is not a powerful system.
	The undesirability of regulated services	A long time is lost in the contract signing process. Moreover, no specialized field exists for this case, so services are not described properly.
	Lack of optimal impact of projects when the research project is approved	Some projects are not applied, or some projects remain incomplete without concluding.



Category	Sub-Category	Content
Supervisor Selection, RFP Preparation, and Approval	Dispersed system of organizations' activities in the administrative system of Iran	There are no coordination communications between organizations and executive bodies, there are no joint goals, and the required information is not easily provided for researchers.
	Lack of coordination in relationships between the municipality and the Islamic Council of Cities	Some tensions between organizations, such as municipalities and city councils make the project process time-consuming or cause the termination of projects.
	Lack of knowledge among executive agents and officials	Many officials do not have relevant education or sufficient information about the project.
	Non-focused researches	Non-focused researches on a specific organization or a certain subject and issue lead to parallel studies and subjects' dispersion. On the other hand, this issue prevents focused assessment causing superficiality.
	Theoretical and professional weaknesses of applied research	Lack of theoretical and practical studies in organization and key procedures of research centers.
Recall and Executor Assignment	Determining priorities based on the managerial discretions	One of the issues in municipality researches like other organizations is prioritizing projects based on the funds, attitudes, and discretions of some specific individuals.
	Limitations to Justification and feasibility studies	Lack of attention to this point that studies and evaluations must concentrate on the impacts and implications of different aspects of project implementation up to the last stage of the project.
	Few numbers of academic judges and supervisors	Few members directly cooperate with the Center for Studies.
	Shortsighted and biased approaches	The emphasis of some individuals on defining research and projects is due to bias on specific subjects.
	Lack of attention to participation and cooperation	Lack of attention to the participation of people and residents of neighborhoods
	Lack of ability to write a suitable RFP	No course has been considered to train how to write RFP, and experts usually write it based on personal experiences not based on an accurate and clear framework.
	Ignorance of details of projects and research via the Pajoooheshyar website and only considering their general information	Only general information on projects is registered on the Pajoooheshyar website.
	The irrelevant profession of experts for research subject	Experts are usually based on their background or the organizations that introduce them without considering their profession.
	Lack of scientific knowledge of supervision about all subjects and project aspects	Supervisors usually do not know the project subject.
Recall and Executor Assignment	Low academic ability of executors and researchers	Low academic capacity in the country, low motivation of powerful and professional consultants for participation, lack of proportion between knowledge and potential of researchers with organization's needs and expectations.
	Insufficiency of the selection process and signing a contract with the executor	Lack of sufficient notification in public recalls, administrative bureaucracy, violations, lack of transparency (collide on selecting research executor, vague processes and contract information), lack of pricing mechanism for projects, improper and restrictive criteria used to select an executor.

Category	Sub-Category	Content
Recall and Executor Assignment	Selecting executors based on their interests and tastes	Sometimes, scores are not given based on the specialty and efficacy disrupting the research.
	The severe shortcoming in problem discovery in districts	There is not any suitable process to detect critical issues and needs.
	Lack of support for students' dissertations in districts	Districts' municipalities consider no mechanism for supporting students' dissertations.
Research Conduction	Lack of interactions between executors and the study department	Executors have no interaction with the study department, and they executor is not good at that part of the research. Moreover, the expected results are not achieved.
	Problems related to proposed recommendations	Some recommendations uploaded on the Pajoooheshyar may have obtained a false score, while there is no requirement for this case, and practical research may not appear. There is no professional authority who can write the proposal, so accurate content is required.
	Lack of the desired model for doing studies and research in Tehran Municipality	There is no desired and fixed process in research processes.
	Lack of sufficient funds for research field anticipated in the public budget	A low budget is assigned to research in districts, so research with low quality will be conducted.
	Ack of attention to do procedural projects	The procedural aspect of research is not considered.
Using Application System	Weak access to and sharing of data and information	In the research process, individuals cannot have easy and fast access to required data and information.
	Not-application of research projects	Users do not have to implement the application; the Center for Studies and Planning must be responsible for the research that has not been implemented but remained in the library; however, the user must be responsible for the application. Research is based on the users' needs and has a short-term vision. The Center for Studies has been accused of publishing library studies; hence, this center has tended to make the users' short-term goals executive paying more attention to new needs.
	Contradiction between viewpoints	On the one hand, it is stated that the project must be practical, and on the other hand, the project must be academic since it is done by the Center for Studies. Sometimes, differences may exist; for instance, when a project is academic then the research background and theoretical foundations must be gathered. In a practical project, however, research background and experience are not required.
	The poor motivation of managers to correct affairs	Instant changes in managers, improper reward and punishment mechanisms
	Managers' inability to use research findings	The most sensitive and substantial issues are not considered in subjects selected for research, rapid changes of managers, and the short period of management courses.
	Lack of enforcement mechanisms	Most projects are usually pursued up to the application step but are not implemented and operated.

Category	Sub-Category	Content
Using Application System	Low quality of projects	Weak academic potential of executors and researchers, lack of access to required data and information, inefficient monitoring process.
	Poor synergy among different sectors and departments	The lack of a flexible structure in organizations, particularly in the municipality results in poor synergy and cooperation between different departments.
	Lack of relationship between conducted research	lack of effectiveness of research results in an integrated framework in the city.
	Non-application of projects	When projects remain unfinished without being operated, time and cost are lost without achieving any outcome.
	Negative legal effects of implementing municipality projects and rules	The multiplicity of urban rules, inconsistency between rules and private interests of individuals, lack of public law priority to ownership law, obsolescence of municipality rules and regulations, and mismatch between rules and needs of city and citizens.
	Diversity of trans-departmental studies and research that support urban management	The negative separation between different departments of the municipality leads to diversity and trans-departmental data.
	Multiple roles of actors and activists in the management of Tehran City	Multiple roles of actors cause many problems for city management.
	Lack of attention to projected priorities and necessities in upstream projects	Project definition is not program-based.
	Lack of integrity and desirability of the planning process, studies, and research	Lack of a coherent relationship with upstream documents' goals, mismatch with sustainable development of the city, inappropriate problem-finding and failure of projects' services, lack of consistency and transparency in expected costs of projects, lack of attention to priorities and background of c\previous studies, parallel studies conducted by municipality departments, lack of clarity in the implementation process of studies, irrational selection of executor, loss of financial sources, and lack of synergy in using financial sources and funds in different sectors of Tehran Municipality.
	Lack of sufficient trust among CEOs and policymakers in researchers	Top managers do not use the results of research in their decisions, lack sufficient funds assigned to research, lack the development of research infrastructures, and lack effective research in solving practical problems in the urban management system of the country.
	The wide gap between scientific findings and decision-making and executive systems	Studies and research are archived, and their results are not used in practice.
	Many academic units and researchers believe that study and research are not practical and beneficial in Iran	It is believed that research cannot affect the decision-making and management systems of the city.
	Inattention to research before taking any measure	Lack of practical support for researchers, non-practicality of research, and lack of attention to research in the decision-making process.
	Inattention to long-term and strategic planning and decision-making	Inattention to long-term approaches when defining the research framework
	Lack of knowledge about problem causes and how to deal with them	Lack of investigation of problems' causes and methods for dealing with them and solutions regarding the constraints and facilities, which prevent implementation of projects.

Category	Sub-Category	Content
	Lack of a feasibility report for social, economic, and environmental appendixes	Feasibility reports of appendixes do not receive great attention.
	The participation rate of citizens is lower than the notification level	The low participation of citizens is affected by some factors, such as providing services by urban managers and officials and satisfaction with the living place.
	Law inefficiency in solving some problems	Pathology is not done completely, and it is not considered that problems can be turned into projects.
	Lack of commitment to applications	Projects are not usually applied due to improper monitoring and or lack of application mechanisms and projects operation
Monitoring	Monitoring process inefficiency	Lack of accurate monitoring of supervisors (corruption in supervisor selection, low responsibility of supervisors for approval of results), the low commitment of operators in the accurate assessment of results, and lack of accurate surveillance of employer (weakness of managers and experts).
	Lack of project evaluation and monitoring in terms of their success or failure	Lack of attention to project evaluation issue
	Lack of evaluation and revision indicators	Lack of attention to projects' results due to lack of evaluation indicators
	Lack of an independent specialized monitoring system	Lack of an independent institution to monitor rules' implementation from project confirmation to implementation and operation stages.
	Delayed evaluation and time-consuming process of projects in the center for studies	The study process is very long due to the lack of evaluation criteria and indicators.

Adopted from interviews conducted by Abhari<sup>2</sup>, Alae Rad<sup>3</sup>, Anari<sup>4</sup>, Aram<sup>5</sup>, Bahadori<sup>6</sup>, Tajjodin<sup>7</sup>, Teimouri<sup>8</sup>, Haj Farajzadeh<sup>9</sup>, Haji Aghae<sup>10</sup>, Habibi<sup>11</sup>, Hosseini Komeleh<sup>12</sup>, Khaksar<sup>13</sup>, Khosh Solat<sup>14</sup>, Zareie<sup>15</sup>, Zhiani<sup>16</sup>, Zerafatikia<sup>17</sup>, Gholamloo<sup>18</sup>, Ghiaskhani<sup>19</sup>, Ghorbani<sup>20</sup>, Ghoreshi<sup>21</sup>, Mohafezatkar<sup>22</sup>, Mozaffari<sup>23</sup>, Mirabbasi<sup>24</sup>, Noroozi<sup>25</sup>, Niroo<sup>26</sup>.

#### 4. RESULTS

According to the points mentioned above, content analysis of the interviews with experts was classified into 6 categories and 93 subcategories. Frequency rates of subcategories were measured based on the

interview manuscript, and then their percentages were calculated to score categories and subcategories. Moreover, the repetition percent of subcategories was used to obtain the repetition percent of categories. Table 2 reports these scores.

**Table 2. The Score of Categories and Subcategories**

Category	Repetition Percent of Category	Subcategory	Repetition Frequency	Repetition Percent of Subcategory
Project Control System Design	30.71	The inefficiency of the project management process	13	4.3
		Lack of instant mechanisms to achieve the solution	1	0.33
		Lack of a process to change service description	2	0.66
		Some defections and disorders in the formulation of rules	7	2.31
		Limited urban management duties in Iran	1	0.33
		Non-development of research capacities in faculties of urban planning and urban management	1	0.33

Category	Repetition Percent of Category	Subcategory	Repetition Frequency	Repetition Percent of Subcategory
Project Control System Design	30.71	Weakness and lack of structural-institutional development of research	2	0.66
		The excessive bureaucracy of the research process	2	0.66
		The challenging process of knowing criteria and indicators used to realize projects by planners	1	0.33
		Lack of a desired model or pattern for finding the problem	12	3.97
		Research subjects do not follow a desired and integrated system	4	1.32
		Lack of comprehensive plans for innovation trend in Iran	1	0.33
		Low-quality investment projects	2	0.66
		Unclear budget assigned to investment projects	2	0.66
		Lack of project realization system	7	2.31
		Weak financial transparency	2	0.66
		Employees' resistance to change	1	0.33
		Problems related to the research process	1	0.33
		Insufficient funds for research projects compared to the construction budget in the municipality of districts	7	2.31
		Weakness of the research committee of districts in identifying creative and innovative projects and transferring them to the center of studies and planning for implementation	1	0.33
		Lack of funds assigned to districts' municipalities for research projects in the center for studies due to lack of suitable management of research and innovation council	1	0.33
		Problems caused by the subject title and implementation method in the social scope	6	1.98
		Lack of announcement of a comprehensive execution with implementation steps designed by the center for studies to reduce error possibility in districts	5	1.65
		Absence of eligible individuals in the Research and innovation council and the lack of seriousness of this council	1	0.33
		Lack of written and holistic tasks of the scopes in the agenda	1	0.33
		The time-consuming process of project title approval	7	2.31
Supervisor Selection, RFP Preparation, and Approval	22.45	Projects precedence and delay in the social field	1	0.33
		Non-importance of organizational subjects, such as organization knowledge and so forth in the center for studies	1	0.33
		Improper problem finding	12	3.97
		The low managerial ability of research companies and institutions	1	0.33
		Short-term vision on the cooperation with the research center	2	0.66
		Approval of the project based on the political and economic criteria	1	0.33
		Attitudes divergence and self-centeredness	3	0.99
		Selecting research interface for districts	2	0.66
		Lack of cooperation between deputies of each district with the research interface of that district	2	0.66



Category	Repetition Percent of Category	Subcategory	Repetition Frequency	Repetition Percent of Subcategory
Supervisor Selection, RFP Preparation, and Approval	22.45	Problems that occur on the Pajoooheshyar website	3	0.99
		Parallel studies	6	1.98
		The undesirability of regulated services	2	0.66
		Lack of optimal impact of projects when the research project is approved	1	0.33
		Dispersed system of organizations' activities in the administrative system of Iran	4	1.32
		Lack of coordination in relationships between the municipality and the Islamic Council of Cities	1	0.33
		Lack of knowledge among executive agents and officials	5	1.65
		Non-focused researches	1	0.33
		Theoretical and professional weaknesses of applied research	1	0.33
		Determining priorities based on the managerial discretions	3	0.99
		Limitations to Justification and feasibility studies	1	0.33
		Few numbers of academic judges and supervisors	1	0.33
		Shortsighted and biased approaches	3	0.99
		Lack of attention to participation and cooperation	5	1.65
		Lack of ability to write a suitable RFP	1	0.33
		Ignorance of details of projects and research via the Pajoooheshyar website and only considering their general information	1	0.33
		The irrelevant profession of experts for research subject	5	1.65
		Lack of scientific knowledge of supervision about all subjects and project aspects	1	0.33
		Low academic ability of executors and researchers	3	0.99
		Insufficiency of the selection process and signing a contract with an executor	5	1.65
Research Conduction	5.61	Selecting executors based on their interests and tastes	1	0.33
		The severe shortcoming in problem discovery in districts	11	3.64
		Lack of support for students' dissertations in districts	1	0.33
		Lack of interactions between executors and the study department	1	0.33
		Problems related to proposed recommendations	4	1.32
		Lack of the desired model for doing studies and research in Tehran Municipality	2	0.66
		Lack of sufficient funds for research field anticipated in the public budget	7	2.31
		Ack of attention to do procedural projects	2	0.66
		Weak access to and sharing of data and information	1	0.33

Category	Repetition Percent of Category	Subcategory	Repetition Frequency	Repetition Percent of Subcategory
Using Application System	29.05	Not-application of research projects	8	2.64
		Contradiction between viewpoints	2	0.66
		The poor motivation of managers to correct affairs	1	0.33
		Managers' inability to use research findings	1	0.33
		Lack of enforcement mechanisms	8	2.64
		Low quality of projects	2	0.66
		Poor synergy among different sectors and departments	4	1.32
		Lack of relationship between conducted research	1	0.33
		Non-application of projects	8	2.64
		Negative legal effects of implementing municipality projects and rules	7	2.31
		Diversity of trans-departmental studies and research that support urban management	1	0.33
		Multiple roles of actors and activists in the management of Tehran City	1	0.33
		Lack of attention to projected priorities and necessities in upstream projects	2	0.66
		Lack of integrity and desirability of the planning process, studies, and research	9	2.98
		Lack of sufficient trust among CEOs and policymakers in researchers	5	1.65
		The wide gap between scientific findings and decision-making and executive systems	2	0.66
		Many academic units and researchers believe that study and research are not practical and beneficial in Iran	1	0.33
		Inattention to research before taking any measure	3	0.99
		Inattention to long-term and strategic planning and decision-making	2	0.66
		Lack of knowledge about problem causes and how to deal with them	1	0.33
		Lack of a feasibility report for social, economic, and environmental appendixes	1	0.33
		The participation rate of citizens is lower than the notification level	3	0.99
		Law inefficiency in solving some problems	7	2.31
		Lack of commitment to applications	8	2.64
Monitoring	4.95	Monitoring process inefficiency	4	1.32
		Lack of project evaluation and monitoring in terms of their success or failure	1	0.33
		Lack of evaluation and revision indicators	1	0.33
		Lack of an independent specialized monitoring system	2	0.66
		Delayed evaluation and time-consuming process of projects in the center for studies	7	2.31

Among studied subcategories, the inefficiency of project management (4.3%), lack of a desired model for problem-finding (3.97%), inappropriate problem-finding (3.97%), severe weakness in problem-

finding in districts (3.64%), and lack of integrity and desirability of planning process and studies (2.98%) had the highest frequencies. Figure 4 indicates the contribution of the subcategories.

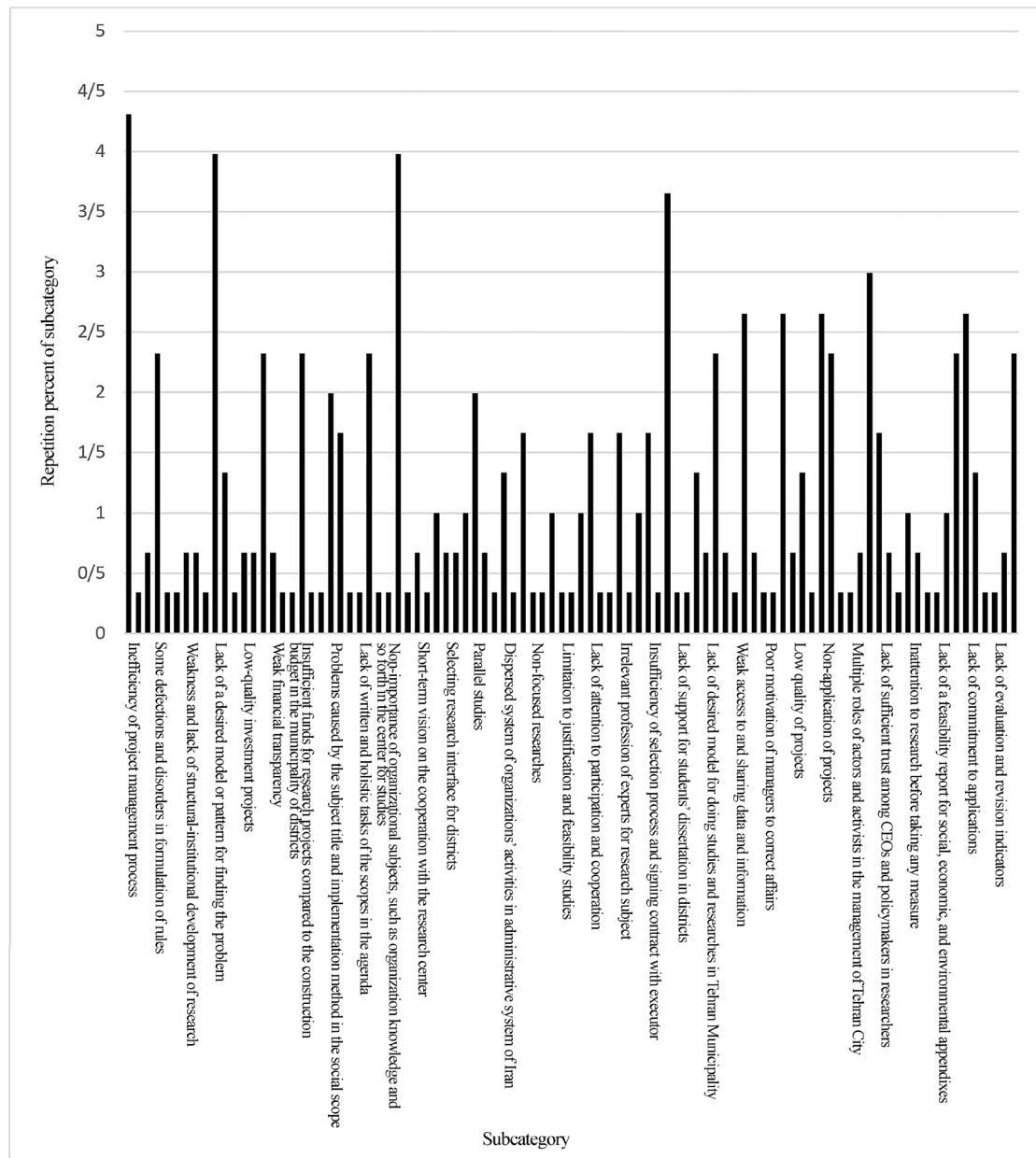


Fig. 4. Contribution of Subcategories in Interviews with Experts

Among the studied categories, project control system design (30.71%), using application system (29.05%), supervisor selection and RFP preparation and approval (22.45%), recall and executor assignment (6.94%), research conduction (5.61%), and monitoring (4.95%) had the highest percents in the comments of experts. Therefore, the research

process in Tehran Municipality requires more attention to project control system design, using application system, supervisor selection, and RFP preparation and approval, so most of the problems and shortcomings are seen in these areas. Figure 5 depicts the contribution of each category.

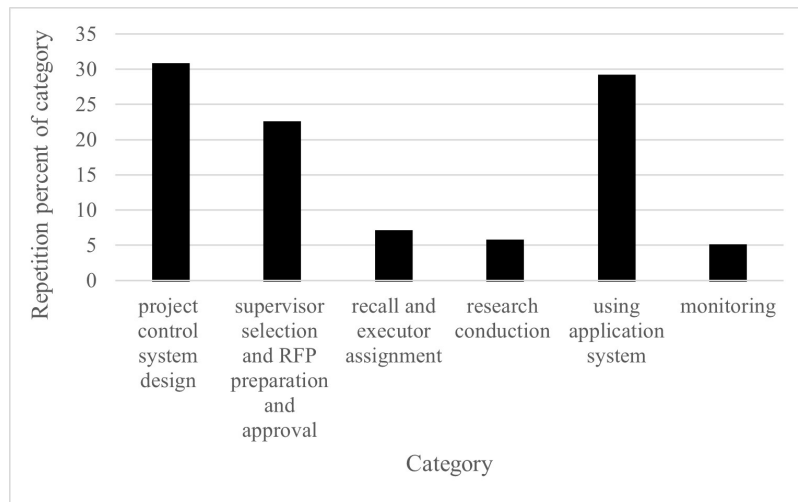


Fig. 5. Contribution of Categories in Interviews with Experts

## 5. SUMMARIZATION

The research project process in Tehran Municipality has been adopted from the supply-demand model, which is an evidence-based policymaking approach. The considerable challenges in research include a lack of knowledge and insufficient assessment of real needs and research gaps. In this process, the demand sector (demand of decision-makers and policymakers and what influences it) is considered to improve an important part of the research process. In this conceptual model, demand consists of the motivation and potential of decision-makers and policymakers.

City Council and Municipality Deputies have a significant role in this process. Ultimately, the specialized-research management of the Center for Studies is the final decision maker that determines the research need or subject. The supply sector is affected by the communications between researchers and policymakers, as well as communication between researchers and decision-makers and policymakers including the information obtained from the research. This part of the study has been classified into six separate steps to cover all aspects of the research process, so the final output can become an executive project with a desirable and feasible application.

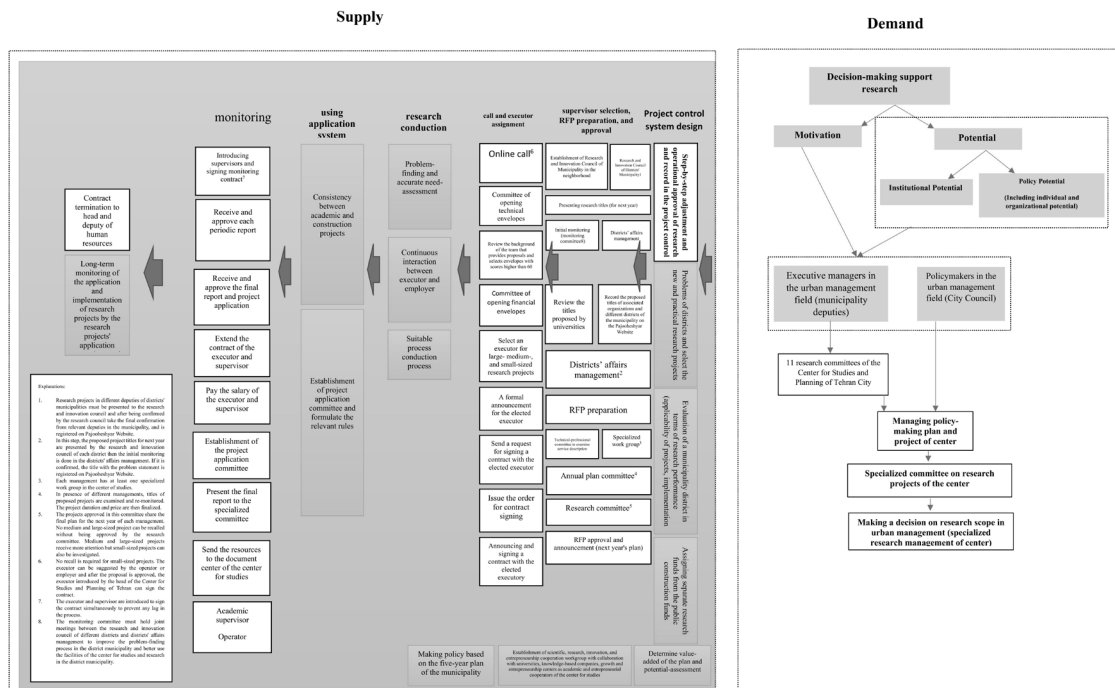


Fig. 6. The Final Process of the Research Project in Tehran Municipality

According to content analysis of categories, the most frequent categories in interviews with experts included project control system design, using application system, supervisor selection, and RFP preparation and approval. The most frequent subcategories included inefficiency of project management, lack of a desired model for problem-finding, inappropriate problem-finding, severe weakness in problem-finding in districts, and lack of integrity and desirability of planning process and studies. Therefore, the mentioned fields must be revised to improve the research process in Tehran Municipality.

According to the conducted studies and measures required for research process improvement, experts were surveyed to ask their opinions about the final model, and their recommendations were applied, and the final model was designed as shown in Figure 6.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The defective research process results in the non-development of research infrastructures, lack of effective research in solving practical issues, improper problem-finding, and lack of desired and optimal effectiveness in the urban management system. In this study, the research process in Tehran municipalities was first proposed based on the supply and demand model, and then the conceptual model of the study was examined within six steps (project control system design, supervisor selection, RFP preparation and approval, recall and executor assignment, research conduction, using application system, and monitoring) after interviewing with experts and professionals in the Center for Studies and Planning and different districts of Tehran Municipality and considering the pathology of the current status of the research process in the municipality. After interviews with experts, content analysis was used to evaluate the problems mentioned in interviews then the proposed process was developed and presented as the final research process.

The following suggestions are presented for the optimal application of the proposed research process in the municipality:

1. Create and keep coordination between projects activities and executive agents: following points must be considered to match project activities and its

executive agents:

- Design and announce a single checklist of research implementation steps and schedule for municipalities;
  - Establishment of an inter-organizational committee to promote the participation of organizations;
  - Establishment of quality control committees during the project implementation;
  - Establishment of various meetings with relevant organizations during the research implementation;
  - Attend various and frequent meetings during the project;
  - Create a team to study and implement the affairs coordinately;
  - Hold some courses to exchange information between organizations;
  - Create a joint intra-organizational committee;
  - Create some mechanisms to improve relationships between managers and executive agents of projects;
  - Create communication between the center of studies and municipalities in the early days of the year to plan required projects of the city;
  - Create research councils in relevant organizations;
  - Hold meetings in certain intervals and invite agents of neighborhoods' residents to talk about their problems and consider their comments;
  - Revise and rearrange the intra-organizational relationships of associated agents in urban policy-making and decision-making;
  - Plan, provide, and maintain the services and infrastructure of cities, create a coherent management strategy, and create a planning and design department;
  - Integrate and manage the operating teams;
  - Use a holistic approach in the design of urban rules;
  - Create coordination through command hierarchy and apply the formal principles of organization, pay attention to the surveillance system, and use experts' assistance;
  - Create coordination by standardizing organizational activities that facilitate coordination and implement it regarding the guidelines and regulations.
2. Examine and leave a comment about the implementation methods and suggest the best method to the employer: the comments about implementation methods and recommendations for an employer are classified based on the categories obtained from the research process as reported in Table 3.

**Table 3. Implementation Methods in each Step of the Research**

Step	Implementation
Project Control System Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- formulate and announce a single checklist of research implementation steps and schedule for municipalities;</li> <li>- design a comprehensive information site of research, including information about the executor, supervisor, and beginning and termination time of research;</li> <li>- hold a session for selecting eligible individuals required for the organization in presence of experts in the considered scope;</li> <li>- recalls for employing young staff to present academic documents and creating an educational environment;</li> <li>- prepare an accurate list of tasks for each organization and announcing to them;</li> </ul>



Step	Implementation
Project Control System Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hold some courses or information exchange between organizations;</li> <li>- create a joint inter-organizational committee;</li> <li>- enact relevant acts and guidelines, particularly for duties of committees' members;</li> <li>- announce certain guidelines of research to top managers;</li> <li>- survey and receive the managers' requests to be applied in the rules enacted by Supreme Council.</li> </ul>
Supervisor Selection, RFP Preparation, and Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- define some professional and efficacy criteria to select supervisors;</li> <li>- create communication between the Center for Studies and municipalities in the early days of each year to plan the projects required for the city;</li> <li>- examine the major concepts and details of each step of the research process in the service description.</li> </ul>
Recall and Executor Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hold in-service training courses and workshops;</li> <li>- define some professional and efficacy criteria to select supervisors.</li> </ul>
Research Conduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establish a committee to examine the presence or absence of previous studies on the research subject;</li> <li>- design the time and cost chart for each step of the research process;</li> <li>- hold meetings in certain intervals and invite agents of neighborhoods' residents to talk about their problems and consider their comments;</li> <li>- establish the committee on the sufficient and required funds for each department;</li> <li>- queuing faculty members of universities to employ all professional staff in the projects;</li> <li>- prioritizing research conduction based on the requirements.</li> </ul>
Using Application System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- giving a negative score to non-implemented projects in the intelligent website of executors of these projects;</li> <li>- enact a complete framework for an executive project.</li> </ul>
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establish quality control committees during the project conduction.</li> </ul>

## ENDNOTE

1. A document used to describe goals, expectations, and outputs that the employer wants to obtain from a project helps service providers to become aware of project necessities and assessment methods, prepare a project proposal, and respond to the problem (Request for Proposal).
2. Management of Studies and Planning for Districts' Affairs.
3. Head of Office for Methods Improvement in Municipality of District 12 of Tehran.
4. Deputy of Transportation and Traffic of Municipality of District 4 of Tehran.
5. Management of Plan, Program, and Policy for Research Affairs of the Center for Studies and Planning of Tehran City.
6. Head of Office for Methods Improvement in Municipality of District 4 of Tehran.
7. Expert of Office for Methods Improvement in Municipality of District 1 of Tehran.
8. Social Deputy of Municipality of District 4 of Tehran.
9. Head of Office for Methods Improvement in Municipality of District 5 of Tehran.
10. Expert in Management of Studies and Planning for Districts' Affairs.
11. Head of Office for Methods Improvement in Municipality of District 4 of Tehran.
12. Deputy of Planning and Development of District 12 of Tehran Municipality.
13. CEO of Rah Mad Designers Consulting Engineers Company, Traffic Company of District 7 Municipality of Tehran.
14. Head of Technical-Engineering Office of Deputy of Transportation and Traffic of Municipality of District 4 of Tehran.
15. Project Supervisor at the Center for Studies and Planning of Tehran.
16. R&D Expert in District 22 Municipality of Tehran.

17. Head of Office for Methods Improvement in Municipality of District 14 of Tehran.
18. R&D Expert in District 20 Municipality of Tehran.
19. Authority of Social Studies Office of District 4 Municipality of Tehran.
20. Deputy of Support and Human Resources of the Center for Studies and Planning of Tehran City.
21. Management of Studies and Planning for Social and Cultural Affairs of Center for Studies and Planning of Tehran City.
22. Deputy of Planning and Development of District 4 of Tehran Municipality.
23. Deputy of Studies and Planning of Management, Social and Economic Affairs of Center for Studies and Planning of Tehran City.
24. Former CEO of R&D of Districts Affairs of Tehran Municipality.
25. Manager of Studies and Planning for Transportation and Traffic Affairs of Center of Studies and Planning of Tehran City.
26. Retired Expert of Architecture and Urban Development Department of Technical and Engineering Organization of Tehran Municipality.

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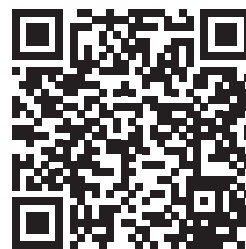
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