

# Comparative Analysis of Satisfaction with Basic Public Services in Urban and Rural Areas

## -- Analysis based on a Survey of 841 Urban and Rural Residents

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### Abstract

In order to improve the quality and level of government basic public service supply and promote the equalization of urban and rural basic public services, this paper firstly adopts a questionnaire survey to understand the current situation of satisfaction with urban and rural basic public services; secondly, it constructs a three-level index for satisfaction measurement and conducts descriptive statistics of mean values, and adopts a non-parametric Mann- .The analysis concluded that: 1. overall satisfaction with basic public services in urban and rural areas is high and the differences between them are not significant; 2. satisfaction with different types of public services are different; 3. overall satisfaction with basic public services between urban and rural residents does not reach a statistically significant level of difference.

### Keywords

Urban-rural Differences; Basic Public Services; Satisfaction.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the state has continuously increased its support for rural areas, especially poor areas, and the coordinated development of urban and rural areas has progressed significantly. However, there is still a large gap in the level of basic public services between urban and rural areas, and the problem of unfair allocation of public service resources between urban and rural areas has come to the fore, which has put forward a realistic and urgent requirement to study the satisfaction of basic public services in urban and rural areas and to explore the differences between urban and rural areas. The study of public satisfaction with basic public services and the comparative analysis of urban-rural differences can not only reflect the degree of satisfaction of urban-rural population needs and differences in social welfare levels, but also provide strong support for accelerating the development of urban-rural integration and promoting rural revitalization. The author first uses descriptive statistics to describe and analyze the satisfaction status of basic public services of urban and rural residents, and then compares urban and rural differences through nonparametric tests, in order to explore policy suggestions to promote the effectiveness of urban and rural basic public service supply.

## 2. Literature Review

Satisfaction, as a psychological concept, is gradually incorporated into the system of public sector performance assessment. Public satisfaction with basic public services is not only an important indicator of the quality of basic public service provision, but also an important factor affecting the harmonious development of society.

In recent years, Western scholars have applied various theories such as expectancy theory, gap theory and hierarchy of needs theory to make various explanations for satisfaction. Since the

gap between urban and rural areas and urban-rural boundaries in foreign countries are different from those in China, most of the studies are based on the commonality of public services. The domestic research results on public service satisfaction mainly focus on two aspects, one is the design of urban-rural satisfaction index system and the model construction of influencing factors. Chen Qihong (2019) analyzed farmers' needs in terms of satisfaction level and importance evaluation and reflected the latest demand for rural basic public services based on the reality of beautiful countryside construction; Huang Xianggeng (2020) conducted an empirical analysis of rural residents' satisfaction with public services based on CGSS2015 and explored the role of influencing factors using OLS regression analysis, so as to Huang (2020) conducted an empirical analysis based on CGSS2015 and used OLS regression analysis to explore the role of influencing factors, thus suggesting countermeasures to improve the satisfaction of rural basic public services.

In summary, most scholars at home and abroad have focused on the public service satisfaction status of rural residents, while comparative analysis between urban and rural areas has been less studied. In view of this, based on the analysis of national data, this paper analyzes the current situation of satisfaction with basic public services among rural and urban residents in a comparative analysis of urban-rural differences in the form of mathematical statistics and theory, and provides useful policy suggestions to promote the equalization of basic public services between urban and rural areas.

### **3. Research Design**

#### **3.1. Research Scope**

Basic public services are government-led public services that guarantee the basic needs of survival and development of all citizens and are in line with the level of economic and social development. Based on the eight areas of basic public services in China and combined with the actual urban and rural research work, the basic public services analyzed in this study include four aspects of compulsory education services, medical and health services, social security status, and public cultural services. [1]

#### **3.2. Data Sources**

The data of this study were obtained from a nationwide questionnaire survey conducted by the Public Service Management Group of Dalian University of Technology on middle-aged and elderly people, and a total of 1464 valid resident samples were obtained. By cleaning the data and eliminating the invalid questionnaires that were not filled in, a total of 441 valid urban residents' questionnaires and 400 valid rural residents' questionnaires were obtained. [2] The 841 data were used as the research sample to compare and analyze the satisfaction of basic public services of urban and rural residents.

#### **3.3. Selection of Measurement Variables**

The measurement variables took the overall satisfaction of basic public services as a primary indicator, four aspects of basic public services, namely, compulsory education services, medical and health services, social security status, and public cultural services, were selected as secondary indicators, and the specific survey contents of their aspects were used as tertiary indicators.[3]

In the process of questionnaire design, this study used the Likert scale method for satisfaction measurement, which was divided into five choice answers: very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, average, satisfied, and very satisfied. This study involved four aspects of compulsory education services, medical and health services, social security status, and public cultural services, and the scale to measure each aspect was set according to the degree of satisfaction of the specific

content. The five levels of very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, average, satisfied, and very satisfied are assigned 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively, to facilitate further descriptive analysis.

## 4. Results of Empirical Analysis

### 4.1. Satisfaction with Various Basic Public Services

**Table 1.** Overall satisfaction with basic public services

Average value		
Items in Indicator 2	Rural	City
Compulsory Education Services	3.9	3.85
Medical and Health Services	3.68	3.64
Social Security Situation	3.64	3.66
Public Cultural Services	3.64	3.59

**Table 1** shows that the average satisfaction level of urban and rural residents with various basic public services is above 3.5, indicating that the overall satisfaction level is between "average" and "satisfactory", and the overall satisfaction level of public services in urban and rural areas is relatively consistent. In terms of sub-categories, the mean value of overall satisfaction with compulsory education services is the highest, while public cultural services are the lowest, indicating that citizens as a whole have the highest evaluation of compulsory education services; while the evaluation of public cultural services is low, and there is a need to strengthen public cultural services. The average satisfaction level of rural residents in all three aspects of compulsory education services, medical and health services and public cultural services is greater than that of urban residents, indicating that the overall satisfaction of rural residents with public cultural services is better than that of urban residents; while in terms of social security situation, the satisfaction level of rural residents is lower than that of urban residents, indicating that social security services in rural areas need further improvement.

As can be seen from **Table 2** in terms of compulsory education services, the median satisfaction level of both urban and rural residents is 4, and the mean difference is not large, and both are at the level of "satisfaction", indicating that China's compulsory education services are doing a good job in guaranteeing the right to education of school-age children, guaranteeing the financial investment in compulsory education, and improving the convenience and teaching quality of compulsory education. The satisfaction level of urban and rural residents is high.

In terms of medical and health services, the median satisfaction level of urban residents is 3 for the indicators of "high level of treatment" and "reasonable medical costs", indicating that the overall satisfaction level of urban residents is low. In terms of the mean value, the satisfaction level of both urban and rural residents is higher in "convenient to register and make appointments" and "good service attitude of medical staff", which indicates that the recognition of urban and rural residents is higher, the difference between urban and rural areas is not significant, and the relationship between the service personnel of primary health care and urban and rural residents is more harmonious; while in In the three aspects of "high level of treatment", "complete medical equipment" and "reasonable medical costs", the average satisfaction level of urban residents is significantly lower than that of rural residents, and in On the indicators of "convenience of going to the nearest public hospital (including community medical and health center and village health office)" and "convenience of medical insurance reimbursement", the satisfaction level of rural residents is significantly lower than that of urban residents, which indicates that the allocation of medical resources between urban and rural areas is unevenly distributed and the medical services are not as efficient as they could be. This

indicates that the distribution of medical resources between urban and rural areas is uneven, and the overall level of medical services needs to be further improved.

**Table 2.** Satisfaction level of all aspects of basic public services

Items in Indicator 3	Median		Average	
	Rural	City	Rural	City
<b>Compulsory Education Services</b>				
Number of existing local kindergartens	4.00	4.00	3.91	3.84
Ensure that elementary school are located close to schools	4.00	4.00	3.95	4.00
Ensure junior high school enrollment in close proximity	4.00	4.00	3.93	3.95
Overall condition of primary school hardware and facilities	4.00	4.00	3.87	3.87
Overall condition of junior high school hardware, facilities and equipment	4.00	4.00	3.88	3.83
Teaching quality of primary schools	4.00	4.00	3.88	3.89
Teaching quality of junior high schools	4.00	4.00	3.91	3.86
<b>Medical and Health Services</b>				
Convenient registration and appointment	4.00	4.00	3.87	3.85
Good service attitude of medical staff	4.00	4.00	3.80	3.76
High level of treatment	4.00	3.00	3.72	3.60
Complete medical equipment	4.00	4.00	3.77	3.70
Reasonable medical costs	4.00	3.00	3.67	3.48
Convenience of going to the nearest public hospital (including community health centers and village health clinics)	4.00	4.00	3.74	3.83
Convenience of medical insurance reimbursement	4.00	4.00	3.79	3.93
<b>Social Security Situation</b>				
Old-age security level	4.00	4.00	3.62	3.61
Medical protection level	4.00	4.00	3.61	3.63
Urban and rural minimum living security (low security)	3.00	4.00	3.58	3.66
Basic housing security provided by the government	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.51
Labor employment and entrepreneurship services provided by the government	3.00	4.00	3.56	3.56
<b>Public Cultural Services</b>				
The government's organization of mass cultural and sports activities	3.00	4.00	3.55	3.56
Government construction of radio and television stations, cable and digitalization of TV signals	4.00	4.00	3.68	3.71
Construction of libraries	4.00	4.00	3.57	3.57
Construction of public sports facilities	4.00	4.00	3.63	3.62
Construction of cultural facilities such as cultural stations and cultural activity rooms	4.00	4.00	3.59	3.55
Surrounding public cultural and sports venues or facilities	3.00	4.00	3.29	3.37

In terms of social security, the overall satisfaction level of urban and rural residents has declined. From the median, the satisfaction level of rural residents with "urban and rural minimum living security" and "labor, employment and entrepreneurship services" as well as the satisfaction level of urban and rural residents with basic housing security are all concentrated at 3, and combined with the average, the satisfaction level of urban and rural residents with each indicator also stays at a low level. This indicates that China needs to further optimize services in the areas of pension, medical care, housing, employment and minimum living security, and the integration of urban and rural social security needs to be further strengthened.

In terms of public cultural services, the overall satisfaction level of urban and rural residents is relatively consistent. The median is basically "satisfied", and only in two indicators, "the government's organization of mass cultural and sports activities" and "the surrounding public cultural and sports venues or facilities", do rural residents say "average". Rural residents said "average". In terms of the average, the highest average satisfaction rate is for "the government's construction of radio and television stations, and the cable and digitalization of television signals," indicating that China's cable television network infrastructure is relatively well constructed and can basically meet the cultural needs of urban and rural residents. In terms of "surrounding public cultural and sports venues or facilities", the average satisfaction value is the lowest, indicating that the coverage rate of cultural and sports venues in China is far from sufficient to meet the people's daily needs, and the residents' sense of access and satisfaction is low.

#### **4.2. Non-parametric Test of Satisfaction with Basic Public Services in Urban and Rural Areas**

Through the descriptive statistics of the median and mean values of satisfaction with each indicator of basic public services between urban and rural areas, the preliminary analysis and discussion have been done above. In order to further verify whether there is a statistically significant difference in satisfaction with basic public services between urban and rural areas, this study used the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test and the SPSS22.0 software analysis tool to conduct a comparative analysis of the overall mean values of satisfaction with basic public services between urban and rural areas. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 3.

From the statistical results of the u-test, there is no statistically significant difference in the overall satisfaction of basic public services between urban and rural areas, indicating that the satisfaction of basic public services in urban and rural areas is relatively consistent and the differences are small; however, there is no significant difference in the satisfaction of "reasonable medical costs", "going to the nearest public hospital (including community medical and health centers and village health clinics)", and "convenience of medical insurance reimbursement", and urban residents are less satisfied with medical costs than rural residents, indicating that the problem of high medical costs needs to be improved. The satisfaction of rural residents with the convenience of medical treatment and medical insurance reimbursement is lower than that of urban residents, which indicates that the construction quantity and quality of rural central health centers in China do not fully meet the demand of rural residents for local medical treatment, and the convenience of rural medical insurance reimbursement is not high.

**Table 3.** Results of Mann-Whitney U test for satisfaction with basic public services in urban and rural areas

Items in Indicator 3	Results of the Mann-Whitney U test				
	Rank Mean		Mann test value	z	sig
	Rural	City			
<b>Compulsory Education Services</b>					
Overall satisfaction with compulsory education	425.17	417.21	86530.500	-0.506	0.613
<b>Medical and Health Services</b>					
Reasonable medical costs	443.81	400.31	79076.500	-2.732	0.006
Convenience of access to the nearest public hospital (including community medical and health centers and village health clinics)	404.30	436.15	81518.500	-2.036	0.042
Convenience of medical insurance reimbursement	398.28	441.61	79111.000	-2.784	0.005
Overall satisfaction with health care	424.28	418.02	86886.500	-0.403	0.687
<b>Social Security Situation</b>					
Overall satisfaction with social security	416.77	424.84	86507.000	-0.512	0.609
<b>Public Cultural Services</b>					
Overall satisfaction with public culture	424.67	417.67	86733.000	-0.441	0.168
Overall feeling of basic public services	423.86	418.41	87058.000	-0.351	0.726

## 5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusion

1.The satisfaction of urban and rural residents with various basic public services is basically the same, and all of them are concentrated in the satisfaction level between "average" and "satisfied", and the overall satisfaction is high, with little difference between urban and rural areas. [4]

2.In terms of social security, the overall satisfaction level of urban and rural residents is not high, the level of treatment of existing security programs is low, the protection effect is limited, and the overall social welfare level is not high; in terms of public cultural services, the average satisfaction level of urban and rural residents is the lowest, the construction of public cultural service facilities is relatively backward, the supply of cultural services is poor, and the security is insufficient.

3. Although the satisfaction of urban and rural residents with basic public services differs, it does not reach a statistically significant level of difference in general.

### 5.2. Policy Suggestions

1.Establish a "people-oriented" view of performance, and include residents' satisfaction with public services in the index system of government performance appraisal.

2.Increase investment in the supply of social public services, and build a public service supply network with balanced development, efficient operation and sound services.

3.The state should further promote the construction of equalization of basic public services and push the process of urban-rural integration to a deeper level.

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