

Citizen satisfaction with public services

Measuring users' satisfaction with public goods and services is at the heart of a citizen-centric approach to service delivery and an important component of organisational performance strategies for continual improvement. Perception data are commonly used to evaluate citizens' experiences with government organisations and obtain their views on the outputs received. Such information can help public managers identify which elements of service delivery drive satisfaction, as well as monitor the impact of reforms on end-users. Measuring citizen satisfaction is also a means of allowing policy makers and managers to better understand their customer base, helping to identify sub-groups of users and needs or gaps in accessibility. Moreover, citizen satisfaction can be an important outcome indicator of overall government performance.

In efforts to improve the responsiveness and quality of public services, more and more government organisations are proactively seeking and acting on feedback from citizens about their experiences. Canada's "common measurement tool" and Italy and France's "quality barometers", for example, are designed to allow different government organisations to measure and track service quality over time, and incorporate perception data from citizens. The French government has in place a panel of respondents providing continuous feedback on services delivered, particularly those corresponding to major life events.

In general across OECD member countries, public services are highly valued by the majority of citizens. In 2012, for instance, 72% of citizens on average across OECD member countries reported having confidence in their local police force. Almost the same percentage considered themselves satisfied with the availability of quality health care, and 66% were satisfied with the education system and schools in their city or area.

On average, levels of satisfaction remained fairly consistent during and immediately following the economic and social crisis. Between 2007 and 2012, levels of citizen satisfaction increased only marginally, by less than 2 percentage points, in all three service areas analysed here. There are, however, large differences between countries. Fewer OECD countries experienced an increase in confidence in local police (15 countries) than a rise in satisfaction with education (19 countries) and health care (19 countries). Confidence in local police increased the most in Estonia (by 14 percentage points) and the Slovak Republic (13 p.p.), whereas it considerably declined in Mexico (15 p.p.) and Hungary (7 p.p.). Satisfaction with the education system increased the most in Israel and the United Kingdom (both by 9 p.p.) and decreased the most in Chile (17 p.p.) and Mexico (11 p.p.). All except nine countries saw their level of satisfaction with health care change within the 5 percentage point range, the strongest increases occurring in Hungary (10 p.p.) and the United Kingdom (8 p.p.), and the most significant drops in Greece (23 p.p.) and Japan (10 p.p.).

Overall, satisfaction with services is higher than confidence in national government. On average in 2012 across OECD member countries, confidence in local police and

satisfaction with health care are both 30 percentage points higher than confidence in government, and satisfaction with the education system is 26 percentage points higher.

Methodology and definitions

Data are drawn from the Gallup World Poll which is conducted in approximately 140 countries around the world based on a common questionnaire, translated into the predominant languages of each country. With few exceptions, all samples are probability-based and nationally representative of the resident population aged 15 and over in the entire country (including rural areas). However, results may be affected by sampling and non-sampling errors. Sample sizes are a minimum 1 000 persons in each country. See Chapter 1 for a broader discussion on the measurement of trust in government.

Data for confidence in local police refer to the percentage of "yes" answers to the question: "In the city or area where you live, do you have confidence in the local police force?"

Data for satisfaction with the education system and schools refer to the percentage of "satisfied" answers to the question: "In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the educational system or the schools?"

Data for satisfaction with the availability of quality health care: refer to the percentage of "satisfied" answers to the question: "In the city or area where you live, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the availability of quality health care?"

Figure 9.14, "Levels of satisfaction and confidence across selected public services compared to confidence in national government (2012)" can be found on line at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932943153>.

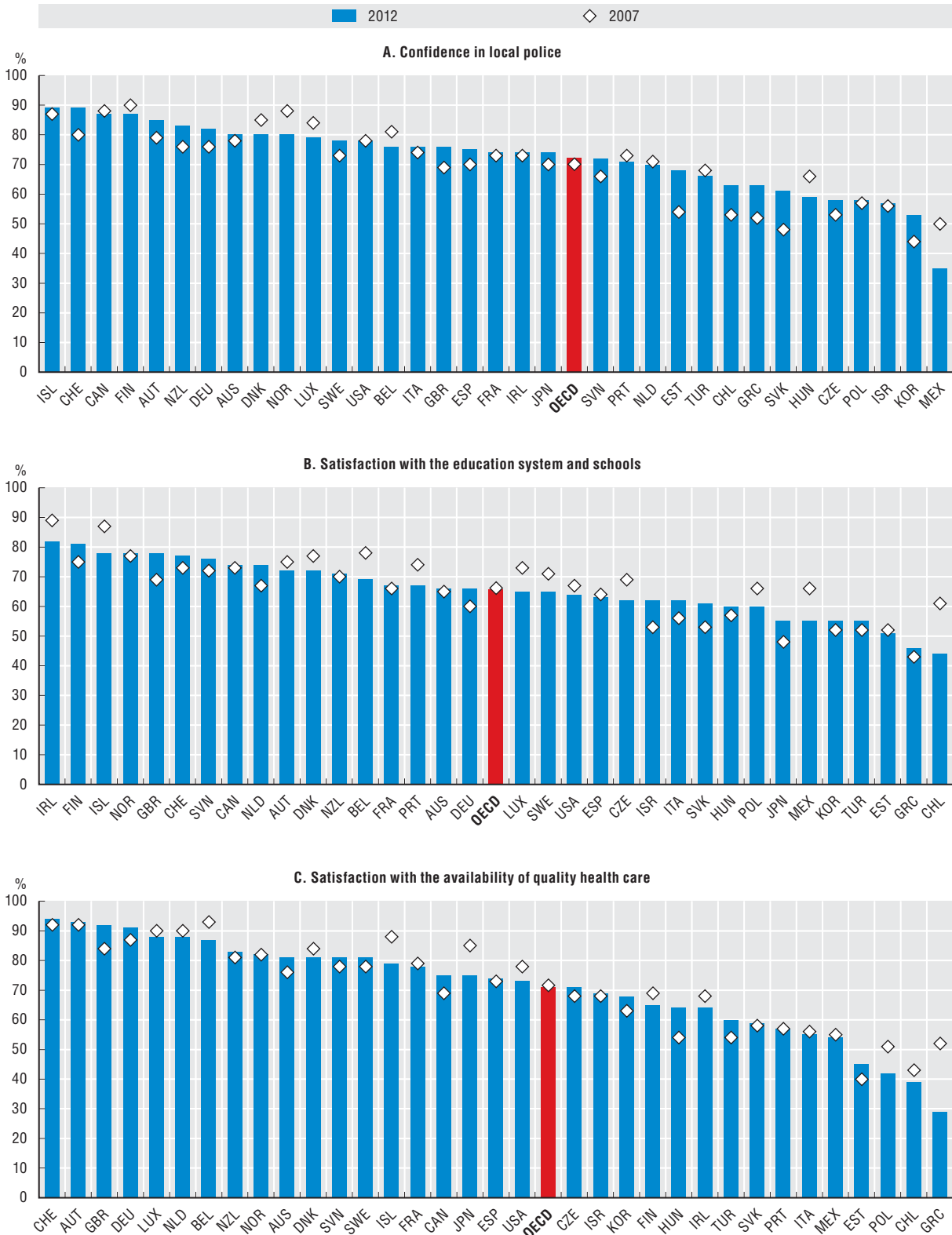
Further reading

OECD (2012), *Measuring Regulatory Performance: A Practitioner's Guide to Perception Surveys*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264167179-en>.

Figure notes

Data for Austria, Finland, France, Ireland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland are for 2006 rather than 2007. Data for Chile, Germany and the United Kingdom are for 2011 rather than 2012. For confidence in local police and satisfaction with health care, data for Japan, Korea and Mexico are for 2011 rather than 2012. Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

9.13. Levels of satisfaction and confidence across a selection of public services (2007 and 2012)



Source: World Gallup Poll.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932943134>



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