

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND BEHAVIOUR RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Traffic management measures are used in order to solve traffic and associated environmental problems in urban areas. Planners and engineers work together with the local authorities, so that effective measures can be designed and implemented having a short-term horizon, and usually a relatively low budget.

A successful implementation of these measures strongly depends - among other parameters - on their acceptance by the public. Therefore, one of the main tasks within the framework of the design of such measures is the two-way communication process between planners and engineers on one hand and the public on the other hand. This can be achieved using various methodological approaches including the organisation of meetings with representatives of different population groups and also the performance of questionnaire based surveys in order to obtain the opinions and preferences of residents, visitors and employees.

From the examination of several case studies in the Thessaloniki Greater Area (TGA) it has been possible to critical review the methods employed to raise public awareness and knowledge towards the environmental threats brought about by the traffic. Two methods have been used so far, namely questionnaire surveys and submission of proposals-requests by interest groups and individuals. The analysis of some indicative questionnaire results reveals the prevailing differences of opinions and attitudes among different user groups. It also confirms the existence of differences among different age groups.

Within the framework of this paper, the results of such approaches tested in TGA are presented and discussed. The survey sample is approximately 1200 individuals from the central, western and eastern part of Thessaloniki.

Among the findings, people's ranking of environmental problems due to traffic together with their priorities put on the respective solutions is included. These findings provide the team of planners and engineers with useful information on what people really think as problems, to what extent, and on the possible solutions. It is worth mentioning that these approaches are not a standard part of traffic management studies but they had been exceptionally applied.

Key words: Environment, Traffic, Public Awareness, Public Behaviour.