# Public Perception of Disaster governance in Türkiye and Trusted Institutions in Disaster Response

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**Abstract**: Disaster governance is an indispensable approach for reducing the destructive effects of natural and human-induced disasters and for ensuring that societies become more resilient to disasters. A comprehensive disaster governance approach, encompassing the phases of risk reduction, preparedness, response, and recovery, minimizes loss of life and property, maintains economic stability, and ensures social justice. Furthermore, in the event of a disaster, the state acting in coordination with all societal stakeholders provides significant benefits in minimizing damages. Türkiye is a country frequently exposed to a wide range of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, and droughts due to its geographical location, physical features, and climate characteristics. This study provides important insights into how disaster response policies are perceived in Türkiye by examining citizens' perceptions of disaster governance and their levels of trust in the institutions involved in disaster response. In particular, the field study conducted in the case of Konya offers a valuable dataset for understanding how Türkiye's disaster governance policies are implemented and how citizens perceive these practices. The findings of the research make it possible to draw conclusions regarding how disaster governance policies should be supported not only by the central government but also by stakeholders such as local governments and non-governmental organizations. The study was conducted using a quantitative method..
**Keywords:** Disaster, disaster governance, trust, citizen perception, Türkiye.

## Introduction

Disasters are extraordinary events that humanity has faced for centuries, leaving profound impacts not only in terms of physical destruction but also in social, economic, and psychological domains. Earthquakes, floods, fires, landslides, and other natural or human-induced disasters can abruptly disrupt the order of social life and lead to significant losses. Therefore, disaster governance requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses not only emergency response processes but also pre-disaster preparedness, risk reduction, coordination during disasters, and post-disaster recovery efforts. In particular, the concept of disaster governance necessitates the mutual interaction and cooperation of local governments, the central administration, non-governmental organizations (NGOs),

and citizens throughout this process. Citizen perception and awareness are among the fundamental elements of success in disaster response, as individuals who possess accurate information prior to disasters understand risks, and take necessary precautions contribute significantly to enhancing societal resilience. In this context, the effectiveness of disaster.

governance depends not only on the capacity of official institutions but also on the level of public awareness, perception, and active participation.

Türkiye is a country frequently exposed to a wide range of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, and droughts due to its geographical location, physical structure, and climatic characteristics. These disasters not only cause physical destruction but also generate wide-ranging impacts such as social trauma, economic losses, and governance deficiencies. In this context, developing an effective disaster governance system is possible not only by increasing infrastructure investments but also by strengthening social awareness and citizen participation. The subject and significance of this study lie in its potential to shed light on the development of more effective and inclusive policies by evaluating citizens' levels of disaster preparedness, their participation in disaster governance processes, and their trust in institutions.

In Türkiye, vast forest areas are destroyed each year due to wildfires, floods and inundations occurring in different regions cause serious damage, and earthquakes result in loss of life and property. In addition, drought -whose effects are likely to emerge in the long term-poses a threat to many regions, particularly the Konya Plain. Furthermore, mining accidents, fires, and other human-induced disasters also lead to significant losses. Therefore, the effectiveness of disaster response policies, the successful implementation of disaster governance, and the importance of studies conducted in this field are increasing steadily. Placing greater emphasis on disaster governance, strengthening cooperation among stakeholders, and developing comprehensive policies addressing pre-disaster, during-disaster, and post-disaster phases within the framework of an integrated disaster governance approach have become critical necessities.

When the development of disaster response policies in Türkiye is evaluated, it is observed that legislation similar to that in modern countries exists in Türkiye and that public policies in this field have been implemented. Nevertheless, it can be argued that there are still certain shortcomings in terms of disaster governance. Disaster governance refers to a multidimensional and holistic approach that involves societal stakeholders in the process, encompassing the prevention of disasters, the mitigation of their impacts, response to occurring disasters, and recovery processes.

In order to effectively combat disasters, it is essential not only to be prepared at all times as if a disaster could occur at any moment, but also to clearly determine who will do what before, during, and after a disaster. In this process, alongside the state and public institutions, the awareness of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and citizens regarding disasters is a key factor for success in disaster response. In particular, increasing citizens' societal awareness regarding disasters and disaster response is of great importance for the effective management of the process.

## Theoretical Framework

**The Concept of Disaster and The Disaster Governance Cycle**

A disaster is defined as the consequences arising from natural, technological, or human-induced events that disrupt everyday life, routine activities, or the normal flow of life, and that individuals are unable to cope with using their own means and capacities (Toker, 2016: 250).

A disaster is not the event itself, but rather a phenomenon that may occur either as expected or unexpectedly. The magnitude of a disaster depends on the "hazard" and the vulnerability of society. Indeed, there are two key factors in the occurrence of disasters. The first factor is the hazard, and the second is the presence of valuable assets and a living community that may be exposed to risk from this hazard (Kadıoğlu, 2008: 3). If one of these two factors is absent, it is not possible to speak of disaster risk.

In another definition, a disaster is described as "an event of natural, technological, or human origin that causes physical, economic, and social losses for the whole or certain segments of society, disrupts or interrupts normal life and human activities, and exceeds the coping capacity of the affected community" (https://www.afad.gov.tr/, 2024).

According to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), an event must meet certain criteria to be classified as a disaster, and it is considered within the scope of a disaster if at least one of these criteria is fulfilled. According to these criteria, for an event to be regarded as a disaster, the following conditions are required:

At least 10 or more people must have lost their lives,

At least 100 or more people must have been affected by the event (e.g., injury, loss of shelter),

A state of emergency must have been declared,

International assistance must have been requested.

In this context, for an event to be considered a disaster, it is sufficient for any one of the criteria listed above to be met (Dölek, 2021: 7).

Due to the frequent occurrence of both natural and human-induced disasters in different regions of the world, disaster governance has gained significant importance. In this regard, a set of principles and guidelines has been adopted in disaster governance to prevent and reduce risks, and subsequently to manage the impact and recovery after disasters. Disaster governance involves efforts to reduce and manage the effects of disasters, including "preparedness, response, and recovery," and can also be divided into two phases: "pre-disaster preparedness" and "post-disaster relief, rehabilitation, and recovery." In this sense, the approaches of "sustainable recovery" and "sustainable development" have been integrated with the concept of disaster governance, emphasizing that the redevelopment and reconstruction process should be appropriately designed to mitigate the impacts of disasters. It has been observed that any development can only be made sustainable through disaster risk reduction (Tandon & Kumar, 2020: 13).

Participation and cooperation are crucial at every stage of disaster governance. In this context, participation refers to the individual involvement of citizens in the disaster governance process, while cooperation refers to the collaboration of governments, local administrations, international organizations, NGOs, the private sector, and the scientific community across the various phases of disaster governance (Genç, 2022: 304).

The traditional disaster governance system consisted of decision-making processes based on forecasts or historical data prior to a disaster. In contrast, modern disaster governance systems have begun to utilize information technology infrastructures, with a primary focus on Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Information systems are now effectively employed in contemporary disaster governance. Data are transmitted to disaster centers through IT infrastructures and processed according to information processing methods. In integrated disaster governance, all data used in modern disaster governance are utilized, and, in addition, real-time information on risk factors affecting disasters is also processed. Real-time, up-to-date data collected from the disaster area via mobile devices are evaluated at disaster coordination centers, and needs are attempted to be met from the nearest regions based on inventory information in logistics support centers (Macit, 2018: 25).

Modern disaster governance consists of two phases: "risk management" and "crisis management." Crisis management involves response and recovery stages after a disaster and is crucial for addressing the damages caused by the disaster and restoring social order. However, preparation for disasters and efforts to prevent potential crises are even more valuable. Risk management refers to the implementation of necessary actions by all segments of society before a disaster occurs, and this approach has become increasingly widespread in developed countries. In risk management, plans are made detailing what almost every individual—from the government governing the country to each citizen—needs to do. The most critical component of risk management is undoubtedly educational activities. In this context, the most effective measure to address the problems caused by the increasing number of natural disasters in recent years, both in Türkiye and worldwide, is the development and

dissemination of natural disaster education (Sözcü, 2019: 81).

The stages following a disaster and continuing until the next disaster, although sometimes referred to by different names, are generally known as the "Disaster governance Cycle." Since the activities carried out in each cycle significantly influence the success of the subsequent stage, this process is often represented as a chain of links or a circle (https://www.afad.gov.tr/, 2024). There are four main components in the disaster governance cycle.

**Mitigation**: The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) defines mitigation in disasters as "the reduction or minimization of the adverse effects of a hazardous event." In general, the negative impacts of disasters, especially natural disasters, may not be completely eliminated, but their scale and consequences can be significantly reduced through various strategies and action plans (Kahraman, Polar & Korkmazyürek, 2021: 10). Activities aimed at reducing the long-term risks of natural and human-induced hazards to human life and property fall within this component. Examples include building regulations, disaster insurance, land-use planning, risk mapping, safety regulations, and fiscal measures such as tax incentives or tax increases (Mcloughlin, 1985: 166).

**Preparedness**: This component includes activities that develop operational capacities to respond to emergencies. Examples include emergency operation plans, early warning systems, emergency operations centers, emergency communication, public emergency information, mutual aid agreements, resource management plans, training, and drills (Mcloughlin, 1985: 166). The pre-disaster phase is extremely important in disaster governance. It involves calculating potential risks in the event of a disaster and preparing simulations and action plans to anticipate possible damages.

**Response**: Individuals' capacities to cope with hazards and risks vary during disasters. This situation becomes more challenging for individuals with age, gender, physical, or mental disabilities. In this context, vulnerable groups have been divided into five categories: "infants and children, chronically ill individuals, persons with disabilities, women, and the elderly," considered high-risk groups (Çağdaş, 2020: 3). These groups are prioritized in initial interventions during and immediately after disasters. Activities that save lives and minimize loss of life and property, prioritizing at-risk groups before, during, and immediately after a disaster, constitute this component (Mcloughlin, 1985: 166).

**Recovery**: UNDRR defines the recovery and reconstruction component as "the restoration or improvement of the livelihoods and health of a disaster-affected community or society, as well as its economic, physical, social, cultural, and environmental assets, systems, and activities" (Kahraman, Polar & Korkmazyürek, 2021: 10). This phase determines the decisions and actions necessary to return life to normal following the critical post-disaster period. Activities include effective interventions in affected areas, preventing further loss of life and property, regulating living standards, and conducting damage assessments (Tuncer, 2022: 166). Main objectives of reconstruction and recovery activities also include taking precautions against ongoing hazards and risks, meeting urgent needs such as communication, transportation, food, shelter, water, electricity, and sanitation, and rapidly restoring educational, social, and economic activities (Şengün, 2007: 64).

## Disaster Governance

Today, the traditional top-down, command-and-control approach of central authorities in disaster situations is increasingly being abandoned. Instead, models that involve all relevant actors in the process, are flexible, quickly adapt to change, decentralized, and shaped from the bottom up - allowing direct citizen participation- are gaining prominence. These models aim to build and enhance societal resilience (Genç, 2022: 315).

Experience has shown that without societal support, it is not possible to effectively respond to large-scale disasters. Even in highly developed countries economically, socially, politically, and militarily, a state alone cannot immediately and fully deploy its operational capacity in the face of major disasters. Although this may vary depending on the type of disaster, the first 24 hours are generally critical. During this period, the societal response can only be provided by a resilient community. Loss of life and property, as well as the damages caused by the disaster, can be minimized only in this way

(Özler, 2019: 142).

Disaster governance is a concept closely related to risk governance and environmental governance and has emerged in the disaster research literature (Tierney, 2012: 341). It is vital for the sustainability, survival, and well-being of societies. An effective governance system helps communities recover quickly by reducing casualties, injuries, and material damage, while also minimizing the economic and social costs of disasters. For example, in the aftermath of natural disasters such as earthquakes, state intervention alone may be insufficient. Rapid and effective interventions involving actors beyond the state can significantly prevent loss of life and property and assist in the swift recovery of the economy.

Disaster governance also strengthens social solidarity and cooperation. Bringing together different segments of society within administrative decision-making mechanisms to work toward a common goal not only reinforces social bonds but also enhances social cohesion. This, in turn, increases the community's resilience to future disasters. Disaster governance encompasses organizational and institutional actors ranging from governments, private companies, and non-governmental organizations to informal institutions. The relationships among rules, actors, and organizations can be structured within horizontal and vertical governance arrangements (Sandoval & Voss, 2016: 108).

Community-based disaster risk management emerged as a response to criticisms of centralized state-led relief operations. In particular, in communities where state services are limited, individuals are often accustomed to coping with disasters on their own. Historically, before the presence of the state, people or communities formed the first lines of defense in disaster preparedness and response, protecting themselves through collective efforts. Although these local coping mechanisms have existed throughout human history, the term "community-based disaster governance" was first used in the mid-1990s in the Asia region and has, over the past 20 years, been widely recognized and applied by various community groups at national and international levels (Oral, 2021: 8). Community-based disaster governance, as described here, represents a strategy focused on local communities protecting their own safety and well-being. This approach goes beyond centralized state assistance, aiming to strengthen the resilience and preparedness of individuals and communities against disasters.

Government-led efforts supported by other actors are considered domestic interventions. International interventions, on the other hand, are carried out by non-governmental organizations, international agencies, and, in some cases, private citizens, with at least the approval of the political authority, often with active participation, and sometimes with the direct support of other governments (usually through the military or other specialized groups). Interventions conducted with the support of multiple actors are relatively recent phenomena, both of which have developed significantly over the past century. The different methods employed reveal the strengths and weaknesses of these interventions (Older, 2019: 286).

Within this shift in perspective, disaster governance -along with approaches recently referred to by different names, such as integrated disaster governance- advocates for the involvement of communities likely to be affected by disasters, as well as all relevant public, private, and non-governmental organizations, in the disaster governance process. These approaches emphasize the development of community-based strategies through participation and collaboration. Integrated disaster governance is defined as a comprehensive disaster governance approach that considers all hazards, relies on all resources within the social structure, and aims to enhance societal resilience through social capacity, encompassing pre-disaster, during-disaster, and post-disaster phases. The disaster governance approach entails the active participation of all stakeholders -including the public, experts, and disaster governance professionals- in planning and implementation processes. This approach is expected to foster resilient social structures in the face of disasters (Genç, 2021).

Disaster governance aims to increase societal resilience, facilitate coping with disasters, and enable communities to recover quickly afterward. In this context, the effective implementation of disaster governance processes largely depends on coordination, planning, and the active participation of all layers of society.

Purpose, Methodology, and Sample Selection of the Study

In Türkiye, a country with high disaster risk, disaster governance, citizens' awareness of this issue, and their level of trust in institutions involved in disaster response are critically important for minimizing potential damages. In particular, to respond effectively to disasters, it is essential to determine citizens' awareness levels regarding disaster governance. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify and analyze citizens' perceptions of disaster governance in Türkiye and the degree of trust they place in institutions involved in disaster response. Accordingly, the primary objective of the study is to determine how citizens perceive disaster governance in Türkiye and which institutions they trust in disaster response.

The study was conducted using a quantitative research method. Since the study aims to understand citizens' thoughts and perceptions about disaster governance, a survey technique was employed as the quantitative research method. The field research is based on data collected from citizens living in the Meram, Selçuklu and Karatay districts of Konya. The data obtained from participants were meticulously analyzed to determine levels of disaster awareness and governance perception, as well as the institutions they trust.

The geographical scope of the survey covers citizens aged 18 and over residing within the borders of Konya province. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling technique, a subtype of simple random sampling, and surveys were administered face-to-face. A fully structured questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. The survey questions were prepared based on relevant literature. The questionnaire consists of two main sections: the first section includes questions to determine participants' socio-demographic characteristics, and the second section includes questions to measure participants' perceptions and opinions regarding disaster governance in Türkiye. All questions in the questionnaire were closed-ended.

Ethical approval for the survey was obtained from the Scientific Research Ethics Board of the Social and Human Sciences at Necmettin Erbakan University under protocol number 2024/727 dated 20.09.2024. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS 27 software package.

The sample of the study was drawn from citizens residing in the Selçuklu, Meram and Karatay districts of Konya. The number of surveys to be conducted in each district within the sample was determined based on the population density of the districts. To achieve the objectives of the study, data were collected through face-to-face interviews with a total of 568 participants. The fieldwork was carried out between September 23, 2024, and October 18, 2024.

**Table 1**

**Distribution of Participants by District**

| *District* | *Number* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| **Selçuklu** | 282 | 49,7 |
| **Karatay** | 146 | 25,7 |
| **Meram** | 140 | 24,6 |
| **Total** | 568 | 100,0 |

The distribution of the sample by district reflects the population of Konya with only a slight difference. Nearly half of the participants are from the Selçuklu district, which can be attributed to the fact that Selçuklu is the most densely populated district in Konya.

# RESULTS

**Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

The socio-demographic characteristics of the sample, including age, gender, and occupation, are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

**Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

| **Responses** | | **Number** | **%** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 279 | 49,1 |
| | Female | 289 | 50,9 |
| **Age** | 18-24 | 272 | 47,9 |
| | 25-34 | 107 | 18,8 |
| | 35-44 | 87 | 15,3 |
| | 45-54 | 73 | 12,9 |
| | 55-64 | 19 | 3,3 |
| | 65 and over | 10 | 1,8 |
| **Marital status** | Married | 216 | 38,0 |
| | Single | 331 | 58,3 |
| | Separated from spouse | 21 | 3,7 |
| **Education** | Primary school | 42 | 7,4 |
| | Middle school | 37 | 6,5 |
| | High school or equivalent | 282 | 49,6 |
| | University | 176 | 31,0 |
| | Postgraduate | 31 | 5,5 |
| **Profession** | Student | 236 | 41,5 |
| | Civil servant | 69 | 12,1 |
| | Worker/Laborer | 45 | 7,9 |
| | Farmer/Agricultural worker | 3 | 0,5 |
| | Housewife | 56 | 9,9 |
| | Unemployed/Seeking work | 8 | 1,4 |
| | Private sector employee | 84 | 14,8 |
| | Shopkeeper/Tradesperson | 29 | 5,1 |
| | Self-employed/Professional | 19 | 3,3 |
| | No occupation | 3 | 0,5 |
| | Retired | 16 | 2,8 |
| **Income** | Have no regular income | 243 | 42,8 |
| | 0–20,000 TL | 123 | 21,7 |
| | 20,001–50,000 TL | 135 | 23,8 |
| | 50,001–100,000 TL | 60 | 10,6 |
| | 100,001 TL and above | 7 | 1,2 |
| | **Total** | **568** | **100** |

When examining the gender distribution of participants, the proportion of women is slightly higher than that of men. This indicates that the gender distribution within the group is balanced, although female participants slightly outnumber male participants. Regarding age distribution, younger participants constitute the majority. In terms of educational background, the largest group consists of high school or equivalent graduates. The majority of participants in the study are students. The occupational distribution of the sample is also balanced, with almost all societal stakeholders represented in the study. In this context, it can be stated that the study reflects the population of Türkiye.

**Participants' Disaster Awareness**

To determine participants' awareness of disasters, they were asked the question, "Which comes to mind when you hear the term 'disaster'?" Participants were allowed to select up to three options. The findings are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3 Disaster Types That Come to Mind When "Disaster" Is Mentioned**

| Responses | Number | Percentage (%) of Responses | Percentage (%) of Participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Earthquake** | 541 | 37,6 | 95,3 |
| **Flood** | 313 | 21,8 | 55,1 |
| **Forest Fire** | 279 | 19,4 | 49,1 |
| **Drought** | 115 | 8,0 | 20,3 |
| **Landslide** | 92 | 6,4 | 16,2 |
| **Storm** | 44 | 3,1 | 7,8 |
| **Avalanche** | 43 | 3,0 | 7,6 |
| **Rockfall** | 7 | 0,5 | 1,2 |
| **Other** | 4 | 0,3 | 0,7 |
| **Total** | 1.438 | 100,0 | |

**Note: (i)** Participants were allowed to select more than one option.

According to the findings, 95.3% of participants indicated that the first disaster that comes to mind is an earthquake. Even in Konya, where earthquake risk is relatively low, earthquakes were identified as the first disaster type that comes to mind. Floods (55.1%) and forest fires (49.1%) followed closely, making them the next most commonly mentioned disaster types. These results indicate a growing awareness of these disaster types across Türkiye in recent years. The increased awareness may be associated with the country's experiences with these disasters over the past few years. In Konya, a city where water resources are highly significant, the disaster with the highest risk is drought (20.3%); however, its percentage in the responses is relatively low. Less frequently mentioned disasters such as landslides, storms, avalanches, and rockfalls were among the disasters least likely to be mentioned, consistent with the region's geographic and climatic characteristics.

The second question aimed at measuring participants' disaster awareness was, "Which type of disaster do you fear the most?" The findings are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

**Disaster Types That Participants Fear or Worry About the Most**

| Responses | Number | Percentage (%) of Responses | Percentage (%) of Participants |
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Earthquake** | 519 | 39,0 | 91,4 |
| **Fire** | 362 | 27,2 | 63,7 |
| **Flood** | 166 | 12,5 | 29,2 |
| **Drought** | 162 | 12,2 | 28,6 |
| **Storm** | 47 | 3,5 | 8,3 |
| **Landslide** | 39 | 2,9 | 6,9 |
| **Avalanche** | 22 | 1,7 | 3,9 |
| **Other** | 12 | 0,9 | 2,1 |
| **Total** | 1.438 | 100,0 | |

**Note: (i)** Participants were allowed to select more than one option.

Of the participants, 91.4% indicated that earthquakes are the disaster they fear the most, while 63.7% reported fear of fires. Although the risk of earthquakes is low in Konya, the recent destructive earthquakes in Türkiye and worldwide appear to have contributed to the high levels of fear among participants. The proportion of participants who fear floods is 29.2%, and for drought, this proportion is 28.6%. In a region like Konya, which is at risk of drought, it can be inferred that the decreasing availability of water resources has influenced people's awareness and concern.

**Effectiveness of Institutions in Disaster Response and Trust in Institutions**

To identify which institutions participants perceive as effective in disaster response and which institutions they trust the most, several questions were asked. First, participants were asked whether they had ever been exposed to a disaster, and the findings are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5**

**Previous Exposure to a Disaster**

| **Responses** | **Number** | **%** |
|---|---|---|
| **Yes, I experienced it myself** | 103 | 18,1 |
| **Yes, a relative experienced it** | 135 | 23,8 |
| **No** | 330 | 58,1 |
| **Total** | **568** | **100,0** |

As shown in Table 5, 58.1% of participants reported that they had never been exposed to a disaster. The large proportion of people in Konya without prior disaster experience highlights the importance of preventive and informative initiatives and underscores the need for such programs. Meanwhile, 23.8% of participants stated that a relative had been exposed to a disaster, indicating that the indirect effects of disasters impact a broad segment of society. Additionally, 18.1% of participants reported having personally experienced a disaster. It is likely that this group's disaster awareness is significantly higher compared to the other two groups.

To determine which institutions were perceived as effective in providing services during or after a disaster by participants who themselves or whose relatives had experienced a disaster, the question, "Which institutions provided effective services to you or your relative?" was asked. The findings are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**

**Institutions Perceived as Providing Effective Services by Those Exposed to a Disaster**

| Responses | Number | Percentage (%) of Responses | Percentage (%) of Participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| **DEMP** | 125 | 32,3 | 52,5 |
| **Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay)** | 55 | 14,2 | 23,1 |
| **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** | 44 | 11,4 | 18,4 |
| **Municipalities** | 42 | 10,8 | 17,6 |
| **Social Media** | 34 | 8,9 | 14,2 |
| **Governor's Office/District Governorship** | 27 | 7,0 | 11,3 |
| **Other** | 22 | 5,6 | 9,2 |
| **Print and Broadcast Media (TV, Radio, Newspaper)** | 15 | 3,8 | 6,3 |
| **Presidency** | 9 | 2,3 | 3,7 |
| **International Aid Organizations** | 7 | 1,9 | 2,9 |
| **Mobile Network Operators (GSM Companies)** | 7 | 1,8 | 2,9 |
| **Total** | 387 | 100,0 | |

**Note: (i)** Participants were allowed to select more than one option. (ii) Only participants who themselves or whose relatives had been exposed to a disaster responded to this question.

According to the findings, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (DEMP/AFAD) was perceived as the most effective service provider by a wide margin (52.5%) compared to other options. This indicates that DEMP (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency), which plays a central role in disaster governance, is regarded as a reliable institution by the public and is highly recognized among those who have personally experienced a disaster or whose relatives have. 23.1% of the sample selected the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay). Kızılay's long-standing work in both disaster response and humanitarian aid likely contributes to this perception. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) ranked third at 18.4%, followed closely by municipalities at 17.6%. These percentages reflect the potential of municipalities and NGOs to provide rapid access and support in disaster-affected areas. Social media (14.2%) and print and broadcast media (6.3%) were perceived as less influential, though they play important roles in information dissemination and coordination. Governor's offices and district governorships were cited by 11.3% of participants. Mobile network operators (GSM companies) ranked last at 2.9%, likely reflecting the public perception shaped by service disruptions and mass complaints during disaster situations.

The level of trust participants have in institutions that will operate during or after a disaster is critical for effective disaster governance. Therefore, participants were asked to indicate which institutions they trust in disaster response and rate them on a scale from 0 to 10. The findings are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7**

**Institutions Trusted in Disaster Situations**

| Responses | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Average | Standard |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turkish Armed Forces | N | 7 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 5 | 40 | 27 | 57 | 68 | 93 | 214 | 8,2 | 2,25 |
| | % | 1,2 | ,9 | 1,1 | 1,8 | ,9 | 7,0 | 4,8 | 10,0 | 12,0 | 16,4 | 37,7 | | |
| Police / Law Enforcement Agencies | N | 6 | 5 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 36 | 38 | 57 | 84 | 87 | 195 | 8,1 | 2,22 |
| | % | 1,1 | ,9 | ,9 | 2,1 | 1,1 | 6,3 | 6,7 | 10,0 | 14,8 | 15,3 | 34,3 | | |
| DEMP | N | 25 | | 7 | 29 | 18 | 53 | 62 | 54 | 74 | 92 | 130 | 7,2 | 2,68 |
| | % | 4,4 | | 1,2 | 5,1 | 3,2 | 9,3 | 10,9 | 9,5 | 13,0 | 16,2 | 22,9 | | |
| NGOs | N | 17 | 8 | 19 | 42 | 32 | 112 | 85 | 73 | 54 | 40 | 50 | 6,0 | 2,45 |
| | % | 3,0 | 1,4 | 3,3 | 7,4 | 5,6 | 19,7 | 15,0 | 12,9 | 9,5 | 7,0 | 8,8 | | |
| Ministry of Health | N | 30 | 14 | 21 | 34 | 24 | 90 | 76 | 65 | 78 | 37 | 57 | 6,0 | 2,72 |
| | % | 5,3 | 2,5 | 3,7 | 6,0 | 4,2 | 15,8 | 13,4 | 11,4 | 13,7 | 6,5 | 10,0 | | |
| Municipalities | N | 35 | 20 | 18 | 35 | 35 | 112 | 65 | 64 | 59 | 35 | 45 | 5,6 | 2,72 |
| | % | 6,2 | 3,5 | 3,2 | 6,2 | 6,2 | 19,7 | 11,4 | 11,3 | 10,4 | 6,2 | 7,9 | | |
| Governor's Office / District Governorship | N | 40 | 14 | 31 | 41 | 37 | 104 | 67 | 65 | 57 | 36 | 32 | 5,4 | 2,71 |
| | % | 7,0 | 2,5 | 5,5 | 7,2 | 6,5 | 18,3 | 11,8 | 11,4 | 10,0 | 6,3 | 5,6 | | |
| Social Media | N | 51 | 29 | 34 | 38 | 36 | 95 | 42 | 41 | 46 | 46 | 65 | 5,4 | 3,14 |
| | % | 9,0 | 5,1 | 6,0 | 6,7 | 6,3 | 16,7 | 7,4 | 7,2 | 8,1 | 8,1 | 11,4 | | |
| Presidency | N | 66 | 23 | 23 | 37 | 25 | 99 | 51 | 48 | 38 | 57 | 59 | 5,4 | 3,18 |
| | % | 11,6 | 4,0 | 4,0 | 6,5 | 4,4 | 17,4 | 9,0 | 8,5 | 6,7 | 10,0 | 10,4 | | |
| International Aid Organizations | N | 45 | 19 | 27 | 41 | 41 | 103 | 81 | 60 | 42 | 28 | 36 | 5,2 | 2,73 |
| | % | 7,9 | 3,3 | 4,8 | 7,2 | 7,2 | 18,1 | 14,3 | 10,6 | 7,4 | 4,9 | 6,3 | | |
| Kızılay | N | 93 | 14 | 23 | 40 | 34 | 79 | 49 | 48 | 58 | 38 | 65 | **5,2** | 3,31 |
| | % | 16,4 | 2,5 | 4,0 | 7,0 | 6,0 | 13,9 | 8,6 | 8,5 | 10,2 | 6,7 | 11,4 | | |
| Print and Broadc | N | 45 | 26 | 36 | 41 | 41 | 101 | 57 | 47 | 51 | 41 | 33 | **5,1** | 2,86 |
| | % | 7,9 | 4,6 | 6,3 | 7,2 | 7,2 | 17,8 | 10,0 | 8,3 | 9,0 | 7,2 | 5,8 | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ast Media (News paper/ TV) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| GSM Companies | N | 103 | 29 | 38 | 58 | 45 | 113 | 41 | 45 | 21 | 19 | 13 | **3, 9** | 2,79 |
| | % | 18,1 | 5,1 | 6,7 | 10,2 | 7,9 | 19,9 | 7,2 | 7,9 | 3,7 | 3,3 | 2,3 | | |

**Note: (i)** A score of 0 indicates the least trusted, while a score of 10 indicates the most trusted.

When Table 7 is examined, the institution that participants trust the most is the Turkish Armed Forces. Considering the institutional structure and capacity of the Turkish Armed Forces within the country, it is not surprising that it ranks first. In fact, in trust surveys conducted in Turkey, the Turkish Armed Forces generally occupy one of the top two positions (Örselli, 2016: 89). The second most trusted institution is the Police/Security Forces, and the third is the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (DEMP). The reliability attributed to DEMP (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) aligns with the findings presented in Table 6. GSM companies, on the other hand, are perceived as the least trusted institutions by the participants. In any disaster, communication continuity is critical, and GSM companies play a significant role in ensuring uninterrupted communication. However, in recent disasters—especially following the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes on February 6, 2023—GSM companies faced significant criticism due to inadequacies in their communication infrastructure, which caused widespread connectivity problems. Therefore, GSM companies are regarded as the least trusted institutions in terms of disaster governance.

# CONCLUSION

Due to its geological and climatic characteristics, Turkey is a country frequently exposed to many natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, and forest fires. Its location on active fault lines places Turkey at high risk for large-scale earthquakes. Additionally, the increase in heavy rainfall due to global climate change has heightened both the frequency and severity of disasters such as floods and inundations. This situation underscores the necessity of a strong disaster governance mechanism. Although existing institutions carry out significant work in disaster governance, these efforts need to be implemented in a more systematic, coordinated, and comprehensive structure.

This study emphasizes the importance of citizen perception in disaster governance and highlights the need to increase social awareness and participation. Measuring the level of preparedness of citizens for disasters, evaluating their trust in disaster governance, and collecting feedback on the effectiveness of responsible institutions play a critical role not only in understanding the current situation but also in guiding future policies.

In the study, participants were asked about their perceptions of disasters, and the first disaster that came to their minds was an earthquake. This can be attributed to the February 6, 2023 Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes in Turkey, which affected a very large area. Floods follow with a rate of 21.8%. Although the survey was conducted with residents of central Konya, drought came after forest fires. Since Konya is one of Turkey's regions with limited water resources and an important center for agricultural production, raising awareness about drought is a vital issue. The fact that only 8% of participants mentioned drought in their disaster perceptions indicates insufficient awareness on this issue. When asked about the most feared type of disaster, earthquakes again ranked first, while fires came in second. Floods were identified as the third most feared disaster.

Participants were asked whether they had previously been exposed to any disaster, and 58.1% indicated that they had not experienced a disaster before. The fact that the majority in Konya have no prior disaster experience highlights the importance of disaster education. 23.8% of participants reported that a relative had been affected by a disaster, demonstrating that the indirect effects of disasters impact

a broad segment of society. Meanwhile, 18.1% stated that they themselves had been directly affected by a disaster.

When those who had experienced a disaster themselves or through a relative were asked which institutions provided effective services during disasters, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (DEMP) ranked first. The Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay) came second at 14.2%. Similarly, DEMP was considered the institution most likely to provide effective services in disasters, with 53.7% of participants indicating this. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) ranked second at 10.4%. However, the visibility of DEMP's activities in Konya is limited. While search and rescue operations, drills, and education-awareness activities are somewhat known, post-disaster operations have very low recognition.

Participants were also asked which institutions they trust during disasters. The highest level of trust was placed in the Turkish Armed Forces. Following closely was the Police Organization (8.1). Institutions with moderate trust included DEMP (7.2), Ministry of Health (6.0), NGOs (6.0), municipalities (5.6), the Presidency (5.4), governorships and district governorships (5.4), social media (5.4), Kızılay (5.2), international aid organizations (5.2), and print and broadcast media (5.1). The institution with the lowest trust score was GSM companies at 3.9. GSM companies ranked last across all survey questions concerning satisfaction, expectations, and trust. This can be attributed to complaints regarding insufficient communication infrastructure during emergencies, which prevented people from contacting their relatives, as well as the inability of service quality to meet expectations despite relatively high pricing in the context of Turkey.

The data reveal that DEMP and Kızılay are strong brands in disaster governance in Turkey and enjoy a high level of public trust. However, regarding the February 6, 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquakes, it was reported that Kızılay delayed providing adequate aid in the affected areas and faced shortages in some supplies. These issues have been significant factors negatively affecting trust in Kızılay. Organizations with a mission to assist earthquake victims and the public lose credibility when they fail to perform as expected during crises. Criticisms circulating on social media and news platforms have further led the public to question their trust. While this has generally resulted in a loss of confidence, Kızılay's roles and important services in disaster relief have prevented its reputation from being completely diminished. Nonetheless, regaining full public trust will require greater effort and transparency.

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