



A Study on Local Governance Tools Used in Turkey: The Case of Uşak Province

ABSTRACT

Governance, a management model introduced in discussions of Turkish public administration since the 1990s, emphasizes the participation of all actors in decision-making processes and envisions shared administration. A review of recent literature indicates that local governance has not been sufficiently realized in many municipalities, as participation in decision-making processes remains limited. In this context, the presence, active use, and effectiveness of local governance tools are critical. This study aims to investigate local governance tools in general and specifically to analyze the governance tools utilized by municipalities in Uşak Province, Turkey. It seeks to understand participants' perceptions, knowledge, experiences regarding these governance tools as well as the challenges they face. The research employs a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews as the primary method. A total of 18 municipal employees from nine municipalities within Uşak have been interviewed. The interviews explored which governance tools municipalities use in decision-making processes and participants' perceptions of these tools. Data from the interviews have been analyzed using the MAXQDA 2020 software. The analysis has revealed that the variety of governance tools employed differs according to municipality types. Participants reported that the most frequently used governance tools are petitions, personal applications, neighborhood representative meetings, and e-municipality services. Furthermore, they emphasized that personal applications and e-municipality services are the most effective governance tools.

Keywords: Governance, Local Governance, Local Governance Tools, Uşak Province.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional public administration embraced a centralized and hierarchical structure, adopting top-down decision-making mechanisms to maintain social order. However, technological advancements, globalization, and democratic processes that emerged at the end of the 20th century prompted a transformation in governance paradigms. The rigid, closed, and hierarchical model of traditional governance gave way to the new public administration approach, characterized by a flexible, market-oriented, open, and transparent structure. Yet, the new public administration approach also fell short of fully meeting expectations and revealed certain inadequacies, leading to the emergence of governance multi-actor framework.

Governance is defined as a model used at global, national, and local levels in which not only the state but also multiple actors (civil society, the private sector, and other social actors) play an active role in public decision-making and implementation (DPT, 2007: s.48). Governance at the local level, in particular, focuses on the capacity of local administrative units to operate with more independence from central government. The proximity of local governments to the public and their ability to directly address public needs place local governments in a critical position within governance processes.

Within the governance framework, the role of local governments, especially municipalities, extends beyond the delivery of public services to actively ensuring that local communities participate in decision-making processes. Governance, by increasing participatory practices, contributes to the democratization of decision-making processes and enables effective and sustainable service delivery by incorporating the public, civil society organizations, and other local actors into these processes.

This study investigates the governance tools used by municipalities—one of the local government units—to facilitate public participation at the local level. The sample area is designated as the municipalities within the boundaries of Uşak province. Through conducted interviews, the study seeks to answer questions regarding participants' perceptions of governance, the governance tools used by municipalities, and the effectiveness of these tools.

Governance and Local Governance

The concept of governance was first introduced by the World Bank in its 1989 report titled Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, where it was defined as “the use of political power in managing

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How to Cite This Article

Yurtçu, E. & Ural Uslan, Y. (2025). “A Study on Local Governance Tools Used in Turkey: The Case of Uşak Province”, International Social Mentality and Researcher Thinkers Journal, (Issn:2630-631X) 11(1): 14-25. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14751474>

Arrival: 19 October 2024
Published: 30 January 2025

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national problems.” This concept proposed the need to restructure relationships between the state and society, advocating for a transformation from opposition to unity. Thus, in a sense, governance proposed a model for the reorganization of state and society relations, and this model advocated co-management beyond participation in management. The appealing propositions of this model quickly resonated (Bayramoğlu, 2002: s.87).

Governance soon gained acceptance across disciplines, such as public administration and political science, and, from the early 1990s, was supported by studies from international organizations like the World Bank, the United Nations, and the OECD, becoming prominent in literature. As a term, governance initially spread across Northern Europe before gaining traction globally (Özer, 2006: ss.60-62).

Due to its wide application across fields like economics, public administration, and politics, governance lacks a sole definition (Güzelsarı, 2003: s.18). Generally, governance can be described as a structure or system created through the collective efforts of all actors within a socio-political system (Özer, 2006: s.60). Unlike the unilateral relations characteristic of traditional governance, governance emphasizes multi-actor, interactive relationships, with the process centered on co-regulation and co-management involving partnerships among the state, private sector, civil society organizations, and citizens (Sobacı, 2007: s.222).

The concept of governance began to find a place in economic literature with neoliberal views and the importance given to this concept by international organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF. The World Bank's statement that the fundamental problem in underdeveloped African countries is the governance crisis made the concept of governance a part of development policies, especially in underdeveloped countries (Aysan, 2006: s.2).

Various adjectives have been appended to the term "governance" to clarify its intended meaning. As a result, governance is often used with qualifiers, such as global governance, good governance, public governance, and local governance (Yıldırım, 2014: s.93). Local governance, a type of governance, means that the management process is carried out by local governments together with stakeholders (civil society organizations, public institutions, private sector and citizens) in mutual interaction in management and decisions taken. Local governance stands out as a democratic, participatory model that gives stakeholders a say in governance (Palabıyık, 2004:78-82; Atak, 2017: 23).

In local governance, citizens transition from the role of being governed to being active participants. The public assumes the role of both oversight and engagement in decisions, with rights distributed equitably, and governance no longer monopolized. This model involves collective decision-making, implementation, and shared responsibility for outcomes (Gazıoğlu, 2023: s.15).

LOCAL GOVERNANCE TOOLS USED IN TURKEY

Each country utilizes governance tools tailored to its principles, administrative structure, societal composition, and related factors. In Turkey, local governance tools began gaining prominence after 1990s (Özden, 2024: s.181). Tools that enable public participation in municipal governance include petitions, personal applications, meetings with local neighborhood representatives, e-municipality services, public forums, project-based democracy, public opinion surveys, city councils, neighborhood consultation centers, referendums, and citizen assemblies (DPT, 2001: ss.117-120; Ergül, 2019: ss.46-48; Hancıoğlu, 2008: ss.27-31; Kocaoğlu and Fural, 2018: ss.155-158).

Petition

The petition, seen as a crucial tool in individual applications, is one of the communication channels between the public and local governments. The fact that the right to petition is constitutionally protected enhances public trust in this method (Çukurçayır, 2003: s.197; Kocaoğlu and Fural, 2018: s.158). Through petitions, citizens can clearly express their needs and requests. In turn, local governments become aware of public demands and issue directives to address these needs (Tufan-Emini and Sancak, 2018: s.84).

Personal Application

Personal application is a governance tool that facilitates the flow of information from the governed community to the administration, allowing local citizens to convey their opinions, requests, and complaints about municipal and local services. Instead of opting for bureaucratic communication methods, citizens often choose to meet directly with officials, enabling them to express their grievances and requests openly and thus play an active role in governance (Yıldırım, 2014: s.83).

A significant issue is the public's hesitation to engage with government institutions due to past experiences with impersonal or top-down attitudes. In personal applications, it is of great importance to address public

demands and expectations effectively or, if not possible, to provide a satisfactory explanation. Continuous in-service training for staff is therefore essential to cultivate positive interactions with citizens (Çukurçayır, 2003: ss.92-93).

Meetings with Local Neighborhood Representatives (Mukhtars)

Elected by the local community, neighborhood representatives (mukhtars) maintain close ties with residents, making them well-informed about public views and opinions on local participation. Through regular meetings with municipal authorities, mukhtars serve as a conduit for conveying community perspectives to the administration. Acting as intermediaries between the public and institutions, mukhtars play a crucial role in guiding and supporting the community socio-culturally, thereby facilitating local governance (Doğan, 2021: s.59; Gazioğlu, 2023: s.23). Their involvement in municipal governance practices is significant for promoting participatory democracy (Fural and Kocaoğlu, 2018: s.158).

E-Municipality Services

The rapid change and transformation of the digital information age have inevitably influenced public administration. As a result, the provision of services by public institutions in electronic formats has shifted their static structures into more dynamic ones. Electronic apps have become essential tools for local government units to serve the public effectively (Akyol, 2017: s.59). Within the scope of e-municipality, municipal websites provide access to services, project updates, consumer complaint centers, and more. Through e-municipality, citizens can complete municipal transactions without visiting offices in person, make payments, submit statements, and participate in municipal surveys, thus contributing to governance decisions (Yıldırım, 2014: s.84). As a governance tool, e-municipality enhances the speed and efficiency of services and serves as a modern, effective method to meet contemporary needs by informing the public via the internet. Integrating this approach with social media further facilitates reaching all segments of society.

Within the scope of e-municipality, citizens can make all kinds of payments through fast access to municipal services, debt inquiry and online payment systems.

Public Forums

Public forums, organized by mayors in municipalities, serve as an essential platform for citizens to communicate their problems, requests, and demands directly with local leaders and administrators (Yıldırım, 2014: s.82). These forums provide the public with an opportunity to articulate their concerns comfortably and directly, ensuring that the services rendered by the municipality are effectively and efficiently reflected in community needs. Additionally, public forums help dismantle bureaucratic barriers between the municipality and citizens, thereby strengthening democratic values and pluralistic governance (Ergül, 2019: s.46).

Project-Based Democracy

Project democracy is defined as the active participation of all individuals who may be affected by a project at every stage of its development, not just those who express a demand (Göymen, 1997: s.73; Sobacı, 2007: s.234). The primary objective of project democracy is to inform residents of the city about significant projects, particularly large-scale initiatives, to initially capture their interest and subsequently ensure their active involvement throughout all phases of the projects (Göymen, 2000: s.10).

Public Opinion Surveys

Public opinion surveys serve as a crucial method for gauging community sentiment before making decisions regarding services that concern the public interest and possess local significance. These surveys typically involve conducting interviews with a selected sample group that represents the public or distributing questionnaires to determine trends, opinions, attitudes, and behaviors related to the issue at hand (Öner, 2001: s.108). Furthermore, the projects that local governments implement, the management approaches they adopt, and the potential voter support in future elections are shaped by the data obtained from these public opinion surveys (Kocaoğlu and Fural, 2018: s.158). Kocaoğlu and Fural (2018: s. 162) state in their study that the opinions of the public were taken on the transformation of the places determined in Serik district center into paid parking lots.

City Councils

The establishment of city councils is rooted in the "Agenda 21" Action Program signed during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (Kara and Şimşek, 2016: s.245). The legal status of city councils is regulated under Article 76 of Law No. 5393 on

Municipalities. Subsequently, the regulation for city councils was published in the Official Gazette No. 26313 on October 8, 2006, and came into force (Çelik, 2013: s.225).

The primary function of city councils is to bring together stakeholders such as central government, local government, and civil society to discuss the city's development priorities and address urgent issues collaboratively. City councils are composed of working groups, women's and youth assemblies, and special interest groups, including platforms for children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities (Bulut, 2013: s.64; Varki, 2008: s.92).

Çukurçayır, Eroğlu and Sağır (2015: s.19) conducted a study on 68 city councils and found that the necessity and legal status of city councils is insufficient; information confusion and uncertainty about city councils is very high; and insufficient support is received from central, local and academic institutions and organizations.

Neighborhood Consultation Centers

Neighborhood Consultation Centers are among the most significant tools for ensuring democratic participation in local governance. Established by many municipalities, these centers are crucial for facilitating citizen engagement in the decision-making process. They play a vital role in conveying the requests and needs of the local population to the municipality. Operating primarily at the neighborhood level, these centers actively engage in various cultural activities, such as health initiatives and household economics, thereby fostering community involvement and enhancing the quality of local governance (Yalçındağ, 1996: s.144).

Referendum

Referendums are a crucial instrument that significantly enhances opportunities for public participation in local governance. Beyond granting citizens the right to vote in general elections, referendums create a new arena for making preferences known (Tufan-Emini and Sancak, 2018: s.84). Moreover, referendums represent one of the most effective practices of direct democracy as they allow the will of the people to be directly and unmediated expressed to the authorities (Doğan, 2021: s.64). This method, which is relatively easy to implement at the local level, serves as an effective governance tool for achieving societal consensus on issues that are important to the public.

Citizen Assemblies

Public assemblies, organized by local governments, serve to inform and raise awareness among the local population regarding local services. During these meetings, discussions are held about administrative activities involving managers, citizens, and other stakeholders (DPT, 2001: s.117). Public assemblies aim to facilitate participation from all social groups, providing an opportunity for the community to express their needs and demands openly to the administration (İnan, 1998: s.129). In Turkey, public assemblies are typically organized by the local administrative authorities. Although the number of public meetings is steadily increasing, it remains insufficient to fully meet the community's engagement needs (Yaman and Küçükşen, 2018: s.252).

METHODOLOGY

In this study, semi-structured interview methodology, one of the qualitative research data collection tools, has been used.³ Sali defines the semi-structured interview technique as follows: "A form is prepared before the interview containing questions or topics that will guide the interviewer. This form consists of a broad list that includes all the topics to be addressed. The interviewer can pose the questions listed in the form and can also develop additional questions to gather detailed information" (Sali, 2012: s.4). Through this method, detailed insights into the views and experiences of participants from municipalities within the boundaries of Uşak province have been obtained. Due to reasons such as time, cost, and effort, researchers often cannot observe everything, thus employing an appropriate sampling technique that represents the universe (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2017: s.124).

The study sample consists of the Uşak Municipality, which is the provincial municipality, as well as district municipalities including Banaz, Eşme, Karahallı, Ulubey, and Sivaslı, and town municipalities such as Tatar, Selçikler, and Kızılcaşöyüt. A total of 18 participants from these 9 municipalities have been interviewed face-to-face, using audio recording and note-taking methods. These participants were reached according to the snowball sampling method.

Before the interviews, each participant has briefly been informed regarding the research, and the principles of voluntariness and confidentiality have been highlighted. The audio recordings and notes obtained from the

³ For the study, ethics committee permission document dated February 8, 2024 and numbered 2024-35 was obtained from Uşak University Social and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee.

interviews have been transcribed and transferred to a computer environment. The collected data have been analyzed using MAXQDA 2020 software, employing descriptive analysis and content analysis methods. Descriptive analysis seeks to answer the “what” question. The data collected in the research are summarized and interpreted according to pre-defined themes (Türkdoğan and Gökçe, 2015: s.345). Content analysis aims to explain the collected data. The summarized and interpreted data from descriptive analysis undergo a more detailed process in content analysis, allowing concepts and themes that were not recognized through descriptive analysis to be elucidated (Şimşek and Yıldırım, 2011: s.227).

The interviews were conducted in February and March 2024. The participants from the municipalities ranged in age from 25 to 60, with 13 males and 5 females. Among the participants, 4 have a high school education, 13 hold a bachelor's degree, and 1 has a master's degree.

FINDINGS

In this section, themes have been established based on the data obtained, including governance perception, the use of governance tools, the most effective governance tool, the units concerned with governance tools, the democratic participation dimension of governance tools, the budgetary allocation for governance tools within the municipality, and the efficiency of the governance tools employed by the municipality. The themes and subcodes are presented in Table 1 below.

Table1: Themes and Subcodes

Themes	Subcodes
Governance Perception	-I have no idea -Form of Governance -Public Participation -Collaboration -Coordinating Work and Processes in a Fair System
Use of Governance Tools	-Petition -Personal Application -Meetings with Local Neighborhood representatives -E-municipality Services -Public Forums -Project-based Democracy -Public Opinion Surveys -City Councils -Neighborhood Consultation Centers -Referendums -Citizen Assemblies
The Most Efficient Governance Tool	-Personal Application -E- municipality -Public Forums -Petition
Unit Concerned with Governance Tools	-I have no idea -Private Secretary -Dep.of Correspondence -Secretariat -Public Relations -Human Resources
Democratic Participation Dimension of Governance Tools	-Democratic Participation is ensured - Democratic Participation is not ensured
Budget Allocation for Governance Tools by the Municipality	-No specific budget is allocated -I have no idea
Efficiency of Governance Tools Used in the Municipality	-I believe it is efficient -I do not believe it is efficient

The themes have been analyzed using a hierarchical coding subcode model and a code matrix scanner. The names of the participants working in the municipalities in the sample were kept confidential so that the interviews could be effective and efficient. Therefore, the initials of the municipalities where the participants worked were used in naming the participants in the study.⁴

⁴ The abbreviations used were UM1, UM2 for Uşak Municipality participants, BM1, BM2 for Banaz Municipality participants, EM1, EM2 for Eşme Municipality participants, KM1, KM2 for Karahallı Municipality participants, SM1, SM2 for Sivasslı Municipality participants, UBM1, UBM2 for Ulubey Municipality participants, KSM for Kızılcaşöyüt Municipality participants, SLM1, SLM2 for Selçikler Municipality participants, and TM for Tatar Municipality participants.

Perception of Governance

To gather the participants' opinions on governance, the question "What do you think about governance and how would you define it?" has been asked. Using the data obtained from 18 participants, subcoding has been performed using a hierarchical coding subcode model, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

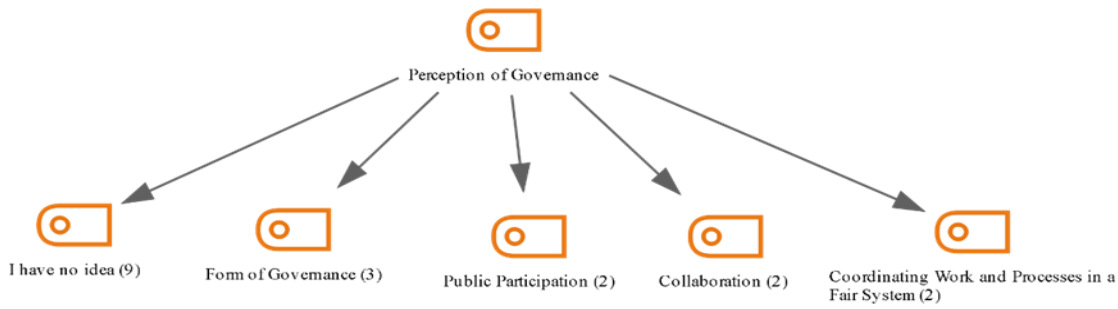
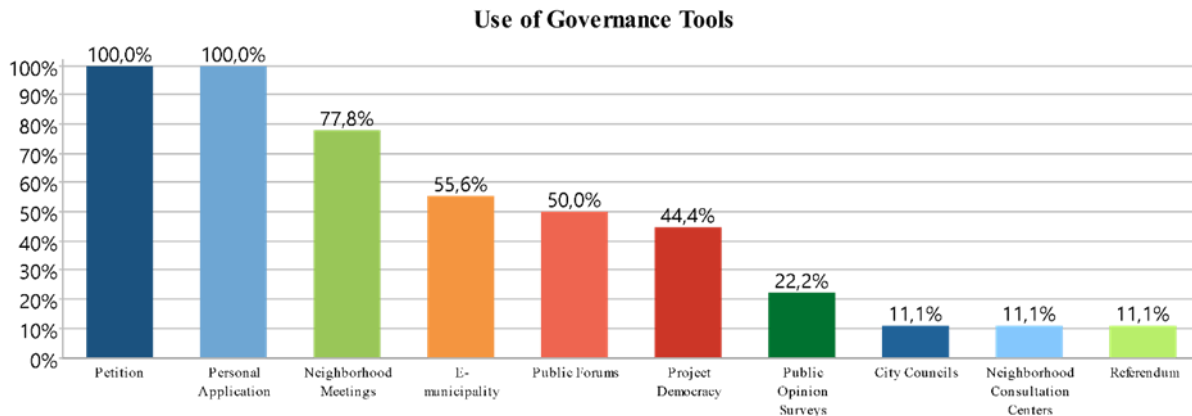


Figure 1: Governance: MAXQDA2020 - Hierarchical Code - Subcode Model

Out of 18 participants, 9 expressed no opinion regarding governance. Three participants associated their perception of governance with management style, while two identified it with public participation, two with collaboration, and two with the coordination of business processes in a fair manner. In doing so, they elucidated the concept of governance by relating it to terms that resonated with them.

Use of Governance Tools

To ascertain which governance tools are utilized by the municipality, the question, "What governance tools do you employ as a municipality?" has been posed. Based on the responses received, Graph 1 has been prepared to illustrate the use of governance tools without considering the types of municipalities. All participants in the interview have indicated that personal applications and petition tools are used actively by 100%. The usage rates of other governance tools mentioned by the participants are as follows: 77.8% for neighborhood meetings, 55.6% for e-municipality services, 50% for public forums, 44.4% for project-based democracy, and 22.2% for public opinion surveys. The tools with the lowest usage rates, each at 11.1%, are the city council, neighborhood consultation centers, and referendums.



Graph 1: Use of Governance Tools

In order to gather information on the use of governance tools based on municipal types, responses have been analyzed using a code matrix browser model, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Use of Governance Tools

Kod Sistemi	Uşak ...	Banaz...	Eşme...	Karahall...	Sivaslı ...	Ulubey...	Kızılcaşöyüt...	Selçikler...	Tatar ...	TOP...
Use of Governance Tools										0
Petition										0
in use	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	9
Personal Application										0
in use	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	9
Neighborhood Meetings										0
in use	■	■	■		■	■		■		6
E-municipality										0
in use	■		■		■	■			■	5
Public Forums										0
in use	■		■	■	■					4
Project Democracy										0
in use	■	■	■			■				4
Public Opinion Surveys										0
in use	■		■							2
City Councils										0
in use	■									1
Neighborhood Consultation Center										0
in use	■									1
Referendum										0
in use	■									1
Σ TOPLAM	10	4	7	3	5	5	2	3	3	42

According to the statements of the participants in the interview, it has been determined that Uşak Municipality, as a provincial municipality, utilizes all available governance tools. The governance tools employed by both district and town municipalities include petitions, personal applications, neighborhood meetings, and e-municipality services. In addition to the governance tools used in district and town municipalities, public days, project democracy, and public opinion surveys have also been found to be utilized in district municipalities. It has been noted that governance tools such as city councils, neighborhood advisory centers, and referendums are not used in district municipalities. Furthermore, in town municipalities, in addition to the governance tools not used in district municipalities, it has been identified that public days, project democracy, and public opinion surveys are also not employed.

The Most Efficient Governance Tool

In order to determine which governance tool is perceived as the most effective by the participants, the question, “What do you consider to be the most effective tool for reaching the public's opinions and participation?” has been posed. Utilizing the hierarchical code subcode model, subcoding has been conducted based on data obtained from 18 participants, as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

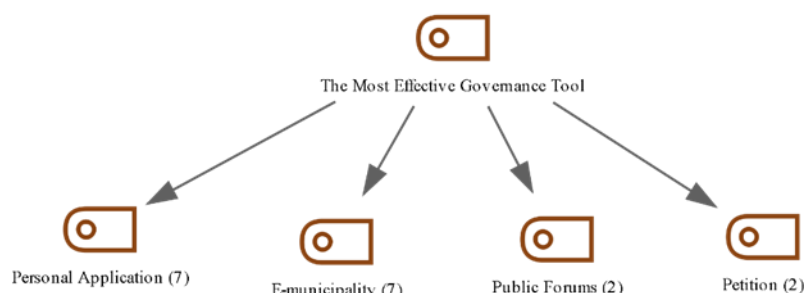


Figure 2: Most Effective Governance Tool, MAXQDA2020- Hierarchical Code - Subcode Model

Out of 18 participants, 7 identified personal applications, 7 identified e-municipality services, 2 identified public days, and 2 identified petitions as the most effective governance tools.

Through the personal application tool, the public typically opts for direct, one-on-one meetings with authorized individuals, allowing them to communicate their problems and requests clearly and openly, rather than relying on bureaucratic communication methods. KSM expressed this sentiment as follows: “When a citizen has an issue, they come to the municipality. They have the opportunity to directly and openly convey their problems by meeting face-to-face with authorized personnel.”

With e-municipality services, it is possible to find a wide range of services on municipal websites, including information on services provided by the municipality, the current status of projects, and consumer complaint centers. E-municipality allows the public to conduct all their transactions without needing to visit the municipality and to make various payments.

EM2 stated: “Thanks to e-municipality, citizens can find services such as those related to ongoing projects, consumer complaint centers, etc., on the municipality's website. Additionally, citizens can perform all their transactions without having to go to the municipality.”

Participants have been asked, “What is the reason for not selecting other governance tools?” In response, KM2 noted: “There is no longer as much need for neighborhood heads (mukhtars), because when citizens need a document under e-municipality, they can resolve it directly from there.”

KSM expressed: “Referendums, city councils, neighborhood advisory centers, public opinion surveys, and project democracy are not utilized. The reason is that the populations of districts and towns are small. Therefore, there is not much need for these governance tools.”

Unit Concerned with Governance Tools

In order to determine which unit is responsible for the implementation of governance tools, the question, “Who decides on the implementation of governance tools?” has been posed. Utilizing the hierarchical code subcode model, subcoding has been conducted based on data obtained from 18 participants, as illustrated in Figure 3 below.

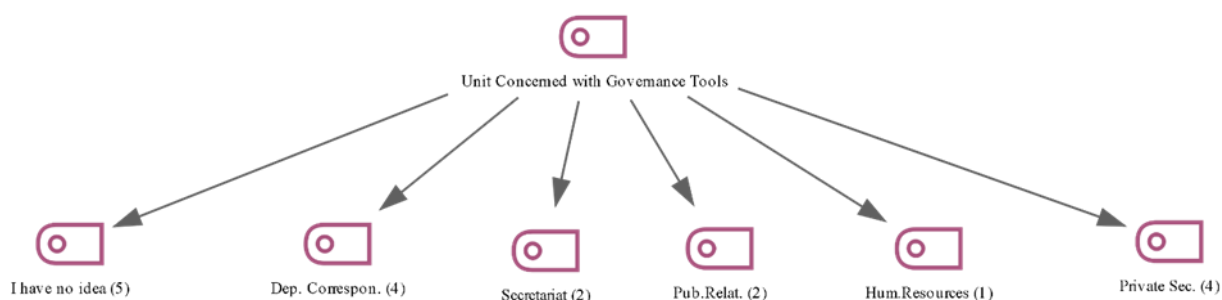


Figure 3: Unit Concerned with Governance Tools, MAXQDA2020 - Hierarchical Code - Subcode Model

Out of 18 participants, 5 indicated that they had no opinion regarding which unit is responsible for governance tools. Four participants identified the department of correspondence, four identified the private secretariat, two identified the secretariat, two identified public relations, and one identified human resources. The majority of participants provided statements regarding the unit responsible for the implementation of governance tools within their municipalities. They also noted that these units may vary across different municipalities. EM1 expressed this as follows: “In our municipality, the department of correspondence is responsible.” UM1 stated: “In our municipality, the private secretariat handles these matters. Other municipalities may have different units involved.”

Democratic Participation Dimension of Governance Tools

Local governments are among the foremost democratic institutions. They are the primary area where participation mechanisms can be effectively implemented. Through governance tools, the public can find opportunities for participation in decision-making processes within municipalities, which are local government units. To ascertain whether the governance tools provide democratic participation, the question, “Do the governance tools used promote democratic participation?” has been posed. Utilizing the hierarchical code subcode model, subcoding has been conducted based on data obtained from 18 participants, as illustrated in Figure 4 below.

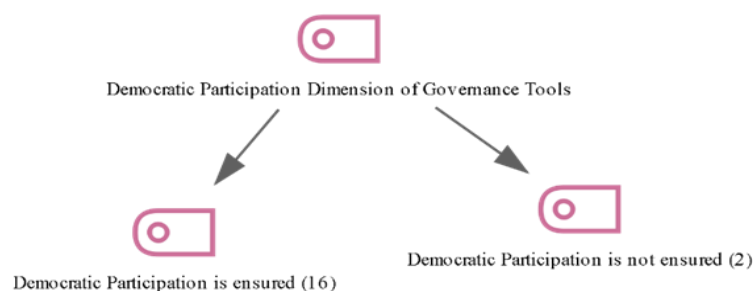


Figure 4: Democratic Participation Dimension of Governance Tools, MAXQDA2020 - Hierarchical Code - Subcode Model

Out of 18 participants, 16 indicated that governance tools facilitate democratic participation for the public, while 2 stated that they do not. The majority of participants emphasized their close engagement with the public, thereby asserting that governance tools promote democratic participation. Conversely, the minority

expressed concerns that the public does not sufficiently engage with governance tools, resulting in a lack of democratic participation. In this context, BM1 stated: “It provides democratic participation. We come together in accordance with the public's demands and address their concerns through collaborative efforts.” On the other hand, KSM remarked: “It does not provide democratic participation. This is because the public does not participate adequately in governance tools.”

Budget Allocation for Governance Tools by the Municipality

Within local government units, municipalities possess separate legal personality and administrative autonomy in conjunction with administrative decentralization. Most municipalities in our country generate revenue from appropriations received from the central government and regional taxes. With these revenues, municipalities are tasked with facilitating effective communication and actively engaging the local populace, as well as civil society organizations, in realizing their ideas and opinions (Varcan, 2013: s.12). Through governance tools, the participation of these stakeholders in decision-making processes within municipalities becomes more accessible.

To determine whether there is a budget allocation for governance tools, the question, “Does your municipality have a budget allocation for governance tools?” has been posed. Utilizing the hierarchical code subcode model, subcoding has been conducted based on data obtained from 18 participants, as illustrated in Figure 5 below.

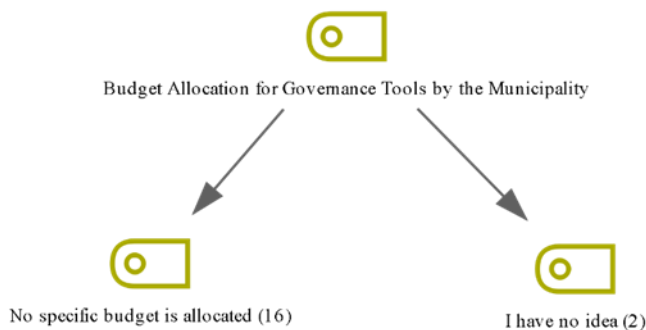


Figure 5: Budget Allocation for Governance Tools by the Municipality, MAXQDA2020 Hierarchical Code - Subcode Model

Out of 18 participants, 16 indicated that there is no specific budget allocation for governance tools, meaning that these tools are funded directly from the municipality's budget. Meanwhile, 2 participants stated that they had no opinion on the matter.

The Efficiency of Governance Tools used in the Municipality

The concept of efficiency is fundamentally understood as the effective utilization of available resources. In the municipality, efficiency is the use of resources without wasting them, providing service to a large number of people with a single budget. (Arslan, 2002: ss.3-11). In this regard, the use of governance tools facilitates the more efficient delivery of municipal services.

To determine whether the participants perceive governance tools as efficient, the question, “Do you think that governance tools are efficient?” has been posed. Utilizing the hierarchical code subcode model, subcoding has been conducted based on data obtained from 18 participants, as illustrated in Figure 6 below.

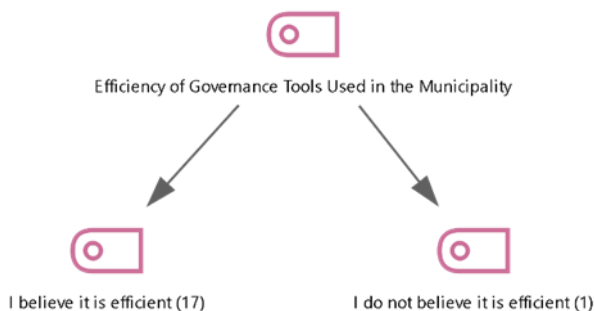


Figure 6: Efficiency of Governance Tools Used in Municipalities, MAXQDA2020 Hierarchical Code - Subcode Model

Out of 18 participants, 17 indicated that governance tools are efficient, while 1 stated that they are not. The majority of participants noted that the governance tools employed in their municipalities are efficient and that they receive positive feedback from the public. However, one participant mentioned that with the advancement of technology, the public has shown less interest in governance tools. In this context, KM2 expressed: “With

the advancement of technology, everyone can resolve their issues under e-municipality services. Even though other applications may be implemented, I do not think they are sufficiently efficient because there is a lack of public interest.”

BM1 stated: “We try to meet the public's demands. I also believe it is efficient.” TM added: “I think it is quite efficient. Our citizens leave here very satisfied.”

CONCLUSION

In addition to identifying the governance tools used by municipalities, the study also examines respondents' perception of governance and their knowledge, experience and opinions on local governance tools. The hierarchical code-subcode analysis conducted to measure perceptions of governance has revealed that while the majority of participants did not express an opinion on this concept, some defined it as a method of management, while others attempted to characterize it as public participation, collaboration, and the coordination of operations in a fair manner. This finding aligns with Sancak's (2021: s.124) research, where it was noted that most participants did not provide opinions on the concept of governance, while the remainder defined it in terms of collaboration, collective intelligence, and participatory approaches, also mentioning governance actors in their definitions.

The study has found that the governance tools used by provincial, district, and town municipalities vary quantitatively. In this regard, provincial municipalities utilize a greater variety of governance tools than district municipalities, which, in turn, use more than town municipalities. It is plausible that the smaller populations of district and town municipalities result in less reliance on governance tools due to the close-knit nature of their communities. Furthermore, although the number of governance tools may vary, participants indicated that the effective governance tools for municipalities include petitions, personal applications, neighborhood meetings, and e-municipality services.

Participants identified personal applications and e-municipality as the most effective governance tools for facilitating public participation. They explained that through personal applications, citizens can directly address their issues by visiting the municipality and discussing their problems face-to-face with authorized personnel. Additionally, e-municipality allows citizens to access information about services provided, project updates, consumer complaint centers, etc., through the municipality's website and complete their transactions without having to physically visit the municipality.

Regarding the reasons for not selecting other governance tools, participants indicated that, for example, there is no longer as much need for neighborhood meetings because citizens can resolve their issues through e-municipality services when they require a document. They also noted that due to the small populations in district and town municipalities, tools such as referendums, city councils, neighborhood consultation centers, public opinion surveys, and project democracy are not utilized. From the participants' statements, it can be concluded that when citizens encounter an issue, the face-to-face interaction with authorized personnel is more effective, making personal applications a widely used governance tool across all municipalities. In order to adapt to the digital age, the provision of almost all services required by citizens through e-municipality not only captures the public's interest but also simplifies their tasks. It is plausible that the lack of use of referendums, city councils, neighborhood advisory centers, public opinion surveys, and project democracy in district and town municipalities is due to the small populations and the close interaction among community members.

With regard to which unit is responsible for the implementation of governance tools, some participants did not express an opinion, while others remained undecided between the writing department and the special office. Participants shared their views based on which unit in their municipalities was involved with governance tools. They also noted that these units may differ in other municipalities.

Participants indicated that they work collaboratively based on public demands and opinions, which, in turn, enhances citizens' trust in the government, thereby facilitating democratic participation through governance tools. In their research, Kocaoğlu and Fural (2018: s.163) found that the administration of Serik Municipality values participatory democracy and is not hesitant to engage directly with the public in all environments.

Participants stated that while the municipality has its own budget, there is no specific budget line allocated for governance tools. It is well known that most municipalities in our country face difficulties in sourcing funds beyond the allocations received from the central government and regional taxes. However, there are projects through which municipalities can improve their financial structure. Within the scope of these projects, a project desk could be established in each municipality. This project desk could take on responsibilities related to managing the municipality's budget and facilitating local public participation.

Efficiency in municipalities means using resources without waste and providing services to a large number of people. In this regard, the use of governance tools enables the more efficient delivery of municipal services. The majority of participants expressed their commitment to meeting public demands and asserted that governance tools are efficient, stating that without them, they would not be able to perform their tasks effectively.

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