



The Sustainability of E-Participation in Local Governments: The Case of Municipalities in Ankara*

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Abstract

This study explains the importance of the institutionalization and sustainability of e-participation initiatives in municipalities. The literature mainly focuses on the e-participation success in a specific time period but not evaluates the sustainability of this achievement. The main contribution of this research is exploring the importance of the sustainability and institutionalization of e-participation initiatives rather the success of e-participation. This study evaluates the changes in the position of municipalities' e-participation initiatives over time in terms of sustainability and institutionalization comparing six local municipalities' situation between 2011 and 2016. These six municipalities had the best scores in terms of e-participation in 2011 among 25 municipalities in Ankara. This study analyzes the websites because they are simple technologies not requiring much investment by municipalities for sharing information and setting communication with citizens. Moreover, the websites are useful units of analysis to make temporal comparisons because of their consistent usage for a long time.

Keywords: E-Participation, E-governance, Municipalities, Institutionalization, Sustainability

Article Type: Research Article

Yerel Yönetimlerde E-Katılımın Sürdürülebilirliği: Ankara Belediyeleri Örneği

Öz

Bu çalışma belediyelerde e-katılım uygulamalarının kurumsallaşma ve sürdürülebilirliğinin önemini açıklamaktadır. Alan-yazın temel olarak belirli bir zaman diliminde belediyelerin e-katılım başarılarına odaklanırken bu başarı düzeylerinin sürdürülebilirliğini değerlendirmemektedir. Bu çalışmanın ana katkısı e-katılım uygulamalarının başarısından ziyade e-katılım uygulamalarının sürdürülebilirliğinin ve kurumsallaşmasının önemini ortaya koymasıdır. Çalışma belediyelerin e-katılım uygulamaları bakımından konularındaki zamansal değişimi sürdürülebilirlik ve kurumsallaşma bağlamında altı belediyenin 2011 ve 2016 yıllarındaki durumlarını karşılaştırarak değerlendirmektedir. Bu altı belediye 2011 yılında e-katılım bakımından Ankara'daki 25 belediye içerisinde en iyi başarı derecesine sahip olan belediyelerdir. Çalışma bilgi paylaşma ve iletişim kurma konusunda belediyeler için çok fazla yatırım gerektirmeyen basit bir teknoloji olması nedeniyle web-sitelerini analiz etmektedir. Ayrıca, uzun süredir kullanılmaları nedeniyle web-siteleri zamansal bir karşılaştırma için uygun analiz birimleridir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: E-katılım, E-yönetişim, Belediyeler, Kurumsallaşma, Sürdürülebilirlik

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study evaluates the local municipalities' success of e-participation initiatives over time in Ankara. In this study, e-participation is explained as a component of e-governance. The literature on e-participation at local level mainly explores the governments' e-participation initiatives in terms of case studies. In the literature, measuring the success of municipalities' e-participation initiatives via pre-determined indicators is a common attempt that enables the evaluation of differences between municipalities (Kaman, 2022; Gündoğdu, 2021; Gençkaya et al., 2021; Sayımer et al., 2019; Kaya and Över, 2019; Cvetanova et al., 2018; Fedotova et al., 2012; Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia, 2012; Karkin and Çalhan, 2011; Demirhan and Öktem, 2011; Yıldız, 1999). However, the researches do not make temporal analyses on the success of e-participation initiatives, and focus on a specific time period. A small number of study concerned with the change in the success of e-participation over time (Arslan, 2006). Researches observing e-participation initiatives or intention to e-participation over time (Zolotov et al., 2019) contribute to the investigation of change. This attempt can improve our understanding on the institutionalization and sustainability of e-participation.

The globalization process and the understanding of "sustainable development" emphasized in the Agenda 21 accepted at the United Nations Environment and Development Conference in Rio de Janeiro, 1992 had influence on the development of e-participation (United Nations, 2023). The importance of information and communication technologies has increased in the process of achieving sustainable development goals. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development insists the importance of e-participation for sustainable development to increase consciousness, inclusion, participation and representation in decision-making and to improve accountability and the quality of public services (United Nations, 2016b). The literature on the influence of e-participation in sustainability is extending (Palacin et al., 2021) but researches exploring the sustainability of e-participation are still limited. The researches mainly focus on the exploration of governments' adoption to e-participation (Steinbach et al., 2019: 79). The institutionalization of e-participation is related to sustainable governance. Governance includes executive and legislative activities of government, policy-making and policy implementation processes, institutional development, accountability, and interaction. Sustainable governance includes the use of governments' websites and initiatives improving e-participation that influences electoral processes, access to information, liberties and the rule of law (Schraad-Tischler and Seelkopf, 2015: 3). Furthermore, the sustainability of e-participation is a component of e-governance sustainability.

This study compares same units using same indicators to measure e-participation in different years. It evaluates local governments' success over time. It uses a schema including indicators designed by Demirhan and Öktem (2011; 2018) with reference to the categorization of Macintosh (2004: 3) and United Nations (UN, 2008) to measure the level of e-participation in municipalities. These indicators were used classifying the success of local governments in Ankara, and observing the websites of municipalities (Demirhan and Öktem, 2011; 2018). The analyses of this study consist of the comparison of the success of e-participation initiatives through years. This study, first, explains the concepts of e-governance, e-participation, the sustainability and institutionalization and of e-participation. Then, it explains the method, the way of measuring e-participation level, e-participation categories, and indicators used to analyze the websites. Finally, it presents findings on the comparison of the success of municipalities' e-participation initiatives between 2011 and 2016. It aims at filling out the gap in the literature and emphasizing the importance of temporal analyses to evaluate the success of local governments' e-participation initiatives.

2. E-GOVERNANCE, E-PARTICIPATION AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF E-PARTICIPATION

E-governance includes the thoughts and practices of using information and communication technologies (ICTs) for increasing quality, reducing costs in the public sector, enhancing citizens' participation in decision-making, promoting legitimacy, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the governing process (Larsson and Grönlund, 2014: 137; Moreno and Traverso, 2010: 40; Palvia and Sharma, 2007; Heeks, 2001). The presence of various actors in governing processes is crucial for e-governance (Larsson and Grönlund, 2014: 137). E-governance consists of a connected environment through networks among citizens, citizens' organizations, public and private organizations at local, national and global level. Information and communication technologies provide opportunities for building and maintaining networks. E-governance operates in planning, processing, decision-making and policy-making processes by the participation of stakeholders.

In this context, the term of e-participation gains importance. E-participation defined as a way of engaging citizens in policy-making process using ICTs seen as a catalyst for active citizenship and revitalizing democracy (Fedotova et al., 2012; UN, 2010: 83; Zizsis et al., 2009; Issa, 2009: 249; Sanford and Rose, 2007: 407). Sæbø et al. (2007) explain the e-participation as a part of transformation from government to e-government, and emphasize the deliberative character of e-participation and citizen's active role in decision-making. For the last two decades, e-participation has been taken a great attention related to e-government and e-governance. Although there are expectations for the vision of involving citizens in policy-making process via ICTs, the results present the disappointment of improving citizen's active participation (Le Blanc, 2020). The case studies on the e-participation initiatives of governments present that e-participation is limited to sharing online information. E-empowerment in the decision-making process is the last and the most important level of e-participation, but it stays under the expectations of e-governance and e-government (Fedotova, et al., 2012; Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia, 2012; Zolotov et al., 2019).

The success of e-participation initiatives is one of the related components in sustainability, and conceptualized under "the sustainability of e-participation". Sustainable development aims at improving people's life conditions, peace, human rights, gender equality regarding the future generations (UN, 2016a). E-participation is seen as a tool to realize these goals (Palacin et al., 2021) and evaluated as "an important factor" for sustainable development (Musial-Karg and Kapsa, 2019). The sustainability of e-participation is a component of sustainable development and can be categorized under a broader concept of sustainable e-governance. Sustainable e-governance insists on the importance of the constituency of policies and desired outcomes (Schraad-Tischler and Seelkopf, 2015: 2). The concept of sustainable e-governance signifies one of the character of e-governance like "good governance" including a normative claim. It synthesizes the principles of e-governance and the claims of sustainable development. Estevez and Janowski (2013: 96) explain the relationship between e-governance and sustainable development as "the use of ICTs to support public services, public administration, and interaction between government and the public while making possible the public participation in decision-making, promoting social equity and socio-economic development, and protecting natural resources for future generations". The sustainability of e-governance has projections beyond "the long-term success of e-government initiatives" (Klischewski and Lessa, 2013: 104) including accountability, transparency, participation, plurality, legitimacy, trust, efficiency, effectiveness, and equality (Larsson and Grönlund, 2014).

Sustainable e-participation is defined as "the ability of a participatory decision-making process to maintain juridical compliance, legitimacy, social value, efficiency and productivity over time" (Molinari, 2010: 134). This definition focuses on the term of e-participation in decision-making besides

the interaction between citizens and government. Technology infrastructure, techno-skills, e-participation policies, and the continuity of e-participation are also discussed as the components of sustainable e-participation (Islam, 2008). The sustainability of e-participation is related to the institutionalization of e-participation. It is a less discussed topic in the literature (Steinbach et al., 2019: 79) and explained as “the process through which e-participation becomes a recognized, routinized, and sustainable activity” (Randma-Liiv, 2022: 2). Institutionalization improves citizens’ participation and transparency in the process of interaction between citizens and government under the guarantee of procedures and standards declared by the government. An overview on the literature shows that any attempt evaluating the continuity of e-participation initiatives over time can improve analyses in this field besides the investigation of the e-participation level of municipalities on a specific time.

The context of this study is drawn on e-participation in terms of interaction between citizens and government on websites and continuity, and limited to the provision of e-participation initiatives (e-information, e-consultation, e-decision-making) by the local governments that means it does not discuss digital divide, technology infrastructure or the lack of literacy with ICT. It evaluates the e-participation in terms of the continuity of e-participation initiatives on municipalities’ websites. The study provides a temporal analysis and illustrates the scores presenting the change of e-participation initiatives over time. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of sustainability and the institutionalization of e-participation, these are less discussed topics in the literature.

3. METHOD

This study focuses originally on a sample of Ankara’s six-relatively more developed and better capacitated municipalities in 2011, and the scores consist of the level of e-participation determined using website analysis, and finds out the difference between the scores of municipalities over the time. Recently, new technologies are used by the local governments for e-participation. For example, the concept of smart cities focus on the use of smart technologies in local governments (Urhan and Güllü, 2023; Memiş, 2017; 2018). However, this study uses the websites as the units of analysis to evaluate sustainability and institutionalization because the websites can be considered as a minimum infrastructure for sharing information and setting communication with citizens for local municipalities. It means the construction of a website is not a costly investment and does not require many professionals to manage it. Also, another reason is the websites have been used for a long time. It is indicated in the literature that “web site progress has been seen as rapid in public sector” (D’Agostino et. al, 2011). And in this research, the website analysis provides observations on the change of e-participation initiatives through the years. The name of municipalities included in the research are Sincan (Si), Akyurt (Ak), Çankaya (Ça), Yenimahalle (Ye), Çubuk (Çu), Kızılcahamam (Kı). The research in 2011 had an extended sample including all the sub-province municipalities in Ankara. However, for comparison six municipalities were selected in 2016 which had the best scores of e-participation in 2011 among all 25 sub-province municipalities (Demirhan and Öktem, 2011). Studying relatively well-developed local organizations would bring better lessons to be drawn from better practice for local governance development and institutionalization of local units.

The concept of e-participation has been important for the last 20 years in parallel to the transformation of public administration. A various number of researches tried to measure the e-participation level of governments by schemas, and institutions provided e-participation indexes for this aim, such as “The United Nations E-participation Index”, used to measure the level of e-participation (Palacin et al., 2021). The most of the schemas and indexes refers to Macintosh (2004: 3) framing e-participation in terms of three levels of activity as e-information, e-engaging and e-empowering. The first, e-information means access to information, and associates with the quality of information. The

second, e-engaging means the top-down form of deliberation on policies. The third, e-empowering means the active participation of citizens in policy-making process (Macintosh, 2004: 3). United Nations (UN, 2008: 58-65; UN, 2010: 84) provides also a schema for e-participation around three steps as e-information, e-consultation and e-decision-making. This categorization complies with the most of studies analyzing government websites and focusing on the governments' initiatives of e-participation.

This study uses the indicators determined by Demirhan and Öktem (2011) to understand the temporal change of the initiatives of participation provided by municipalities. 21 indicators are illustrated in Table 1 with their short definitions. The indicators used to measure the level of municipalities' success in 2011 and in 2016, then the scores were compared to find the difference between years.

Table 1. Indicators for Measuring E-Participation

E-Information for Users	Policy, program and process about e-participation
	Structure of municipality, authorities, services and institutions
	Laws and regulations
	Financial information
	Agenda, annual reports and outcomes
	Announcements
	RSS
E-Consultation Mechanisms	Statistics
	Polls
	Surveys
	Claim, complaints and feedbacks
	Chat rooms or instant messaging
	Available e-mails of authorities or contact persons
	Web logs or blogs or links to blogs
E-Decision Making	e-Services
	Discussion forums
	Archive of past discussion forums
	Notice and/or publish citizen's inputs
	Notice results of inputs or citizens' opinions
	Petitions (or suggestions by citizens – bottom up way)
Voting	

Source: Demirhan and Öktem, 2011

E-information means information provided by the government on official web-sites for users providing "access to information without or upon demand" (UN, 2016a: 141). The public information is important to increase citizens' participation (UN, 2008: 62; 2010:86; 2016: 141). "Online official publications about the participation policy of government, calendar for online discussion forums, electronic notification system to inform citizens" (Demirhan and Öktem, 2011: 65) are considered as useful information for citizens in the process of e-participation (UN, 2008; 2010: 86). Available information about authorities, institutions, policies, outcomes, or data held by the governments is a component of this step. E-consultation indicates the means of interaction among stakeholders (citizens, civil society organizations, business organizations, universities and governments). In the consultation

process, citizens have the opportunity to transfer their opinions and demands in institutional decision-making process and deliberating policies using online channels such as “polls, bulletin boards, chat rooms/instant messaging, weblogs, blogs, feedback forms” (UN, 2008: 63; 2010:88; 2016a: 141). E-Consultation has top-down and bottom-up versions (Moreno and Traverso, 2010). The process of e-participation as top-down and bottom-up illustrated by the authors in Figure 1.

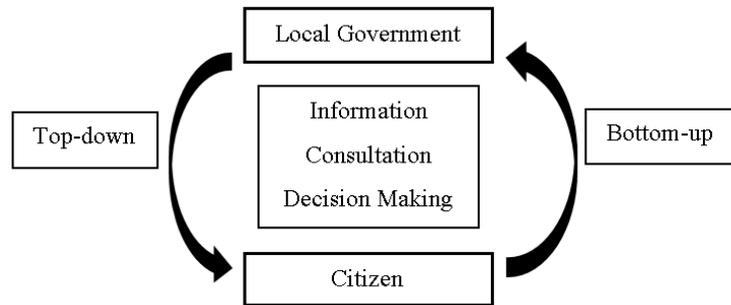


Figure 1. Top Down and Bottom up Processes of E-Participation

4. FINDINGS

This study presents the e-participation level of municipalities according to e-participation indicators in Table 1. It illustrates the six municipalities’ scores in 2011 and 2016. The comparison of scores between 2011 and 2016 clarifies the long term success of the e-participation initiatives in practice.

In terms of e-information, Demirhan and Öktem’s (2011: 68) study found out that “Sincan and Akyurt municipalities were on the first rank among municipalities by means of e-information level. Çankaya, Yenimahalle and Çubuk municipalities were on the second rank. E-Information levels of Çankaya and Yenimahalle municipalities were lower than Akyurt while they were equal to Çubuk.” In terms of e-consultation, Sincan shared the first rank with Kızılcabamam. Lastly, the level of e-decision-making was not measured in municipalities because they did not provide any one of the e-decision-making initiatives.

Table 2 presents the indicators and scores for municipalities in 2011 and in 2016.

Table 2. Indicators and Scores for Municipalities in 2011 and in 2016 (“1”=Presence, “-”=Absence)

		2011						2016					
		Si	Ak	Cn	Ye	Cu	K1	Si	Ak	Cn	Ye	Cu	K1
E-Information	Policy, program, process on e-participation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Structure of municipality, authorities, services	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Laws and regulations	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-
	Financial information	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	-
	Agenda, annual reports and outcomes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Announcements	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	RSS	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Statistics	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	-
	<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>4</i>
E-Consultation	Polls	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

	Surveys	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	-
	Claim, complaints and feedbacks	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-
	Chat rooms or instant messaging	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	1
	Available e-mails of authorities or contact persons	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	-
	Web logs or blogs or links to blogs	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	1
	e-Services	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1
	<i>Sub-Total</i>	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	6	6	3
E-Decision Making	Discussion forums	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Archive of past discussion forums	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Notice and/or publish citizen's inputs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Notice results of inputs or citizens' opinions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Petitions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
	Voting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	<i>Sub-Total</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total Scores For All Indicators		11	10	9	9	9	9	10	11	10	13	13	7

The e-participation level of municipalities was accounted as proportionally. The number of municipalities which own determined indicators divided into 21, the total number of indicators, then multiplied by 100.

In 2011, the municipality of Sincan had the best “e-participation level with the rate of 52.38%; e-participation levels of Çankaya, Yenimahalle, Çubuk and Kızılcahamam municipalities were in the second rank with the same rates, 42.85%” (Demirhan and Öktem, 2011:69). Table 3 shows the level of e-participation for municipalities having the best scores in 2011.

Table 3. The Level of E-Participation in 2011

Municipality	Si	Ak	Cn	Ye	Cu	K1
Score	11	10	9	9	9	9
Rates (%)	52.38	47.61	42.85	42.85	42.85	42.85

Anyone of these indicators were in e-decision-making process. It addresses that citizens did not have any participation opportunity in policy making process using ICTs in 2011. It seems that municipalities had a better e-information level than e-consultation. It presents that municipalities did not have sufficient opportunity to transform governing process in direction to the principles of e-governance.

The findings of Demirhan and Öktem's (2011) study present that there was not accessible information about the e-participation policy or processes of municipalities, so e-information was not considered as a part of citizens' active political participation by governments. There was a lack of statistical information about socio-economic and demographic situations of local areas. Accessible communication addressed usually to the email of mayors or institutions. E-decision-making applications were not provided by the local municipalities.

According to Table 2, the level of e-information on websites were more than the e-consultation level in 2016. And similarly, apart from one, there was not any e-decision-making application provided by municipalities to stakeholders. Akyurt (Ak) and Yenimahalle (Ye) municipalities were on the first rank together in terms of e-information. Yenimahalle (Ye) and Çubuk (Cu) were on the first rank in terms of e-consultation. Kızılcahamam was on the last rank in terms of both e-information and e-consultation. Only the municipality of Çubuk provided an application for e-decision-making. This application gives an option to citizens to propose a project that was an example of bottom-up

participation opportunity. In total, 13 indicators were observed on the websites of Yenimahalle and Çubuk municipalities. It can be said that with regard to the level of e-decision-making, Çubuk had the best score among all municipalities in 2016 (Demirhan and Öktem, 2018). Table 4 presents the level of municipalities' e-participation in 2016. The level of e-participation is 61.90% for Yenimahalle and Çubuk and 33.33% for Kızılcahamam.

Table 4. Municipalities' Scores for the Level of E-Participation in 2016

Municipality	Si	Ak	Cn	Ye	Cu	Kı
Score	10	11	10	13	13	7
Rates (%)	47.61	52.38	47.61	61.90	61.90	33.33

Table 5 presents the comparison of municipalities' e-participation scores in 2011 and 2016.

Table 5. Change in the Scores of E-Participation from 2011 to 2016

Municipality	Si		Ak		Cn		Ye		Cu		Kı	
	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016	2011	2016
Rates (%)	52.3	47.6	47.6	52.3	42.8	47.6	42.8	61.9	42.8	61.9	42.8	33.3

According to the Table 5, e-participation level has increased in the municipalities of Akyurt (Ak), Çankaya (Cn), Yenimahalle (Ye) and Çubuk (Cu) through years. The increase from 42.8% to 61.9% in the scores of Yenimahalle and Çubuk are higher than the increase in other municipalities. Sincan had the best e-participation level in 2011 but in 2016 its e-participation score has decreased like the score of Kızılcahamam (see in Figure 2).

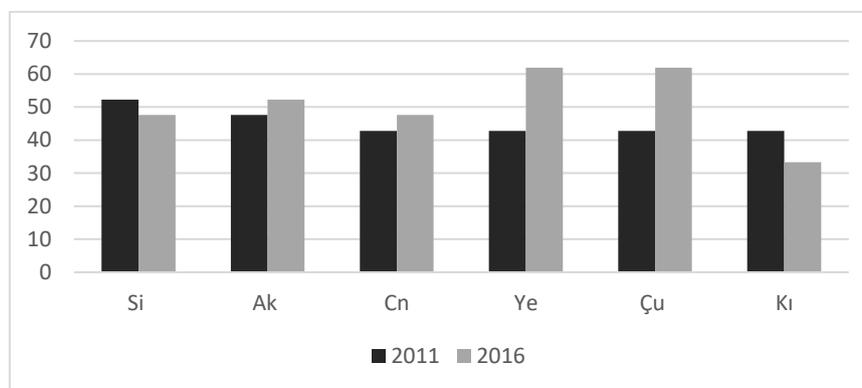


Figure 2. Change in the E-Participation Scores from 2011 to 2016

Findings present that Akyurt (Ak), Çankaya (Cn), Yenimahalle and Çubuk (Cu) have better scores in terms of the continuity of e-participation initiatives. Yenimahalle and Çubuk (Cu) are on the best rank with higher scores over the time. In this term, these municipalities are more successful in terms of the sustainability of e-participation and have a better position in terms of the institutionalization of e-participation.

5. CONCLUSION

This study presents a temporal analysis of municipalities' initiatives for e-participation in Ankara. It compares the scores of same municipalities' through years and provides an observation on the continuity of e-participation initiatives over time. This analysis aims at contributing the literature focusing on the sustainability of e-participation. Findings show that municipalities' e-participation initiatives are limited to the e-information. The initiatives for e-consultation and e-decision-making were

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insufficient. E-decision-making, the last and the most important step in e-participation, is at the lowest level for all municipalities in both of the years.

The results of temporal comparison on e-participation initiatives present that the scores of municipalities have changed over time and the evaluation of the long-term success of municipalities challenged the results of 2011. Although analyses are limited to the continuity of the web-services of municipalities, this study provides a wider aspect for the sustainability and institutionalization of e-participation by the comparison of scores in different years. It evaluates the success of municipalities from a more comprehensive perspective and contribute to the overviews of e-participation in sustainable development goals.

The context of this study is limited to the continuity of e-participation initiatives, it does not include the reasons of change at the scores of e-participation over time and the evaluations of policies, infrastructure and digital divide or the literacy of ICTs. These are related issues to the sustainability of e-participation besides the continuity. This study is also limited in terms of number of cases and time points. Researches questioning the impact of political changes or technological capacities on the local governments' e-participation initiatives can contribute to the knowledge on the sustainability and institutionalization of e-participation. And methodologically, it consists of website analyses, studies conducting primary data by interviews or survey can develop analyses in further researches.

Ethical Statement

We followed the Research and Publication Ethics rules during the writing and publication of this research titled “The Sustainability of E-Participation in Local Governments: The Case of Municipalities in Ankara.”

Contribution Rate Statement

Both of the authors in the study contributed to all processes from the writing of the study to the drafting and read and approved the final version.

Conflict Statement

This study did not lead to any individual or institutional/organizational conflict of interest.

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Appendix 1: The Table of Municipalities’ Web-Addresses and the Date of Data Collection

Municipality	Web-Address	Access Dates
Çankaya	http://www.cankaya.bel.tr/	24.02.11 - 26.08.16
Yenimahalle	http://www.yenimahalle.bel.tr/	24.02.11 - 26.08.16
Sincan	http://www.sincan.bel.tr/	24.02.11 - 26.08.16
Çubuk	http://www.cubuk.bel.tr/	24.02.11 - 26.08.16
Akyurt	http://www.akyurt.bel.tr/	24.02.11 - 26.08.16
Kızılcahamam	http://www.kizilcahamam.bel.tr/	26.02.11 - 26.08.16

Extended Abstract

The Sustainability of E-Participation in Local Governments: The Case of Municipalities in Ankara

This study explains the importance of the institutionalization and sustainability of e-participation initiatives. For this aim, the authors analyse the change of the municipalities’ e-participation initiatives through the years. The approach of e-participation focuses on the transformation of public administration as more participative, accountable, transparent and democratic embedded in the innovations in information and communication technologies. Recently, improving decision-making and policy-making processes using e-participation initiatives in public sector are getting more attention besides using information and communication technologies for improving efficiency and effectivity in public services.

The globalization process and the understanding of “sustainable development” emphasized in the Agenda 21 accepted at the United Nations Environment and Development Conference in Rio de Janeiro, 1992 had influence on the development of e-participation. The starting point of the sustainable development is determining problems at local level and solving using participative approach. The use of information and communication technologies widely diffused and the role of information on the transformation of societies became more appear in 90s. The importance of information and communication technologies has increased in the process of achieving sustainable development goals until today, and public administration integrated digital technologies in its paradigm by means of the approaches of e-government and e-governance. E-participation is an outcome of this transformation. It is included in the relevant policies as an essential matter of realizing sustainability towards “2030 Sustainable Development Goals”.

In terms of this background of e-participation, this study uses the indicators of e-participation to analyse the website initiatives of municipalities improving interaction between public institutions and citizens. E-participation is categorized as e-information, e-consultation and e-decision-making. This study consists of a temporal comparison. It is important to show the change of municipalities’ e-participation initiatives over time. This temporal change is conceptualized around the concepts of “sustainability” and “institutionalization” in the context of sustainable development.

Researches in the literature evaluate the e-participation initiatives of local governments but focus on the websites of municipalities in a specific time, and the findings limited to show the municipalities’ success of e-participation and their adoption to the process of e-participation. The lack of data continuity on the municipalities’ e-participation initiatives causes to problems explaining the change over time. Information on the change over time provides opportunity to evaluate the success of e-participation as a process. The concepts of sustainability and institutionalization are the conceptual means of interpreting this process.

The sample of this study is six-relatively more developed and better capacitated municipalities in Ankara among 25 municipalities in terms of e-participation according to analyses in 2011. These municipalities are Sincan, Akyurt, Çankaya, Yenimahalle, Çubuk and Kızılcahamam. The study determines difference over the time comparing the success of municipalities in 2011 and in 2016. The data collected from municipalities' websites categorized using the indicators of e-information, e-consultation and e-decision making which are the steps of e-participation. This study analyses the websites because they are simple technologies not requiring much investment by municipalities for sharing information and setting communication with citizens. Moreover, the websites are useful units of analysis to make temporal comparisons because of their consistent usage for a long time.

The findings present that the e-participation score of Sincan, had the best e-participation level in 2011, decreased in 2016 like the score of Kızılcahamam. On the other side, the e-participation scores of Akyurt, Çankaya, Yenimahalle, Çubuk increased in 2016. The findings show that these four municipalities have a better position in terms of the sustainability and institutionalization of e-participation. However, the evaluation of the sub-categories of e-participation presents that the provision of e-information initiatives is more than e-consultation in both of the years. A comparison of the analyses in 2016 realized using the same method in 2011 investigates the changes in the findings through the years.

The results emphasize the importance of temporal evaluations on the success of municipalities' e-participation initiatives. In this direction, the further researches focusing on the sustainability and institutionalization of e-participation can contribute to the literature. Although the analyses in this study are limited to the continuity of e-participation initiatives on the municipalities' web-sites, it provides a more comprehensive perspective for the sustainability and institutionalization of e-participation by the comparison of different scores through the years. This study does not analyze the reasons of change at the scores of e-participation over time and the evaluations of policies, infrastructure and digital divide or the literacy of ICTs. Researches questioning the impact of political changes or technological capacities on the municipalities' e-participation initiatives can contribute to the literature concerned with the sustainability and institutionalization of e-participation.

Genişletilmiş Öz

Yerel Yönetimlerde E-Katılımın Sürdürülebilirliği: Ankara Belediyeleri Örneği

Bu çalışma e-katılım uygulamalarının kurumsallaşma ve sürdürülebilirliğinin önemini açıklamaktadır. Bu amaçla yazarlar belediyelerde e-katılım uygulamalarının yıllar içerisindeki değişimini analiz etmektedir. E-katılım yaklaşımı kamu yönetiminin bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerindeki gelişmelerle iç içe daha katılımcı, hesap-verebilir, şeffaf, demokratik şekilde dönüşümüne odaklanmaktadır. Günümüzde, bilgi ve iletişim teknolojileri aracılığıyla kamu hizmetlerinde etkinlik ve verimliliği geliştirmenin yanı sıra e-katılım uygulamalarıyla karar alma ve politika üretme süreçlerinin de geliştirilmesi kamuda daha fazla önem kazanmaktadır.

E-katılımın gelişiminde, küreselleşme süreci ve 1992 yılında Rio de Janeiro'da gerçekleştirilen Birleşmiş Milletler Çevre ve Kalkınma Konferansı'nda kabul edilen Gündem 21'de vurgulanan "sürdürülebilir gelişme" anlayışı etkili olmuştur. Sürdürülebilir gelişmenin başlangıç noktası yerel düzeyde sorunların tespiti ve katılımcı bir şekilde çözümdür. 90'lardan sonra bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinin kullanımı yaygınlaşmış, toplumsal dönüşümde bilginin rolü daha fazla görünür hale gelmiştir. Sürdürülebilir kalkınma hedeflerine ulaşma sürecinde bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinin önemi günümüze kadar giderek artmış, kamu yönetimi dijital teknolojileri kendi paradigmasına e-devlet ve e-yönetişim gibi yaklaşımlarla entegre etmiştir. E-katılım bu dönüşümün bir ürünüdür. "2030 Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Hedefleri"ne doğru sürdürülebilirliğin sağlanmasında temel bir unsur olarak e-katılım ilgili politikalarda yer almaktadır.

E-katılımın bu arka planı içerisinde, bu çalışma belediyelerin web siteleri üzerinden sunulan, vatandaşlar ile kamu kurumları arasındaki etkileşimi arttırmayı amaçlayan uygulamaları analiz etmek için e-katılım göstergelerini kullanmaktadır. E-katılım, e-bilgi, e-danışma ve e-karar alma adımları şeklinde kategorize edilmektedir. Bu çalışma zamansal bir karşılaştırmaya dayanmaktadır. Bu karşılaştırma belediyelerdeki e-katılım uygulamalarının zaman içerisindeki değişimini göstermesi bakımından önemlidir. Bu zamansal değişim sürdürülebilir gelişmenin çerçevesi içerisinde "sürdürülebilirlik" ve "kurumsallaşma" kavramları bağlamında analiz edilmektedir.

Literatürdeki çalışmalar yerel yönetimlerin e-katılım uygulamalarını değerlendirmekte ancak belirli bir tarihte kurumların web sayfalarının incelenmesine odaklanmakta ve bulguları belediyelerin e-katılım başarısını ve e-katılım sürecine uyumunu göstermekle sınırlı kalmaktadır. Belediyelerin sağladıkları e-katılım uygulamalarına ilişkin veri devamlılığının olmaması zaman içerisindeki değişimi açıklamayla ilgili problemlere neden olmaktadır. Zaman içerisindeki değişime ilişkin bilgi e-katılım başarısını süreç olarak değerlendirme imkânı sağlamaktadır. Sürdürülebilirlik ve kurumsallaşma ise bu süreci anlamlandırmanın kavramsal araçlarıdır.

Çalışmanın örneklemini 2011 yılında yapılan analizlere göre Ankara'daki 25 belediye arasında e-katılım bakımından görece olarak diğerlerinden daha gelişmiş ve daha iyi kapasiteye sahip olan altı belediyeden

oluşmaktadır. Bu belediyeler Sincan, Akyurt, Çankaya, Yenimahalle, Çubuk ve Kızılcahamam'dır. Çalışma belediyelerin 2011 ve 2016'daki başarı düzeylerini karşılaştırarak aradaki farkı tespit etmektedir. Belediye web sayfalarından elde edilen veri e-katılımın aşamaları olan e-bilgi, e-danışma ve e-karar alma göstergelerinden yararlanılarak kategorize edilmiştir. Çalışma bilgi paylaşma ve iletişim kurma konusunda belediyeler için çok fazla yatırım gerektirmeyen basit bir teknoloji olması nedeniyle web-sitelerini analiz etmektedir. Ayrıca, uzun süredir kullanılmaları nedeniyle web-siteleri zamansal bir karşılaştırma için uygun analiz birimleridir.

Çalışmanın bulguları, 2011 yılında e-katılım derecesi yüksek olan Sincan'ın 2016 yılında Kızılcahamamla birlikte e-katılım başarı düzeyinin düştüğünü göstermektedir. Diğer taraftan Akyurt, Çankaya, Yenimahalle, Çubuk belediyelerinin e-katılım uygulamalarının başarı düzeylerinin 2016'da yükseldiği tespit edilmiştir. Bu bulgular dört belediyenin e-katılımın sürdürülebilirliği ve kurumsallaşması bakımından diğerlerine göre daha başarılı bir konumda olduğunu göstermektedir. Buna karşın, e-katılımın alt kategorilerinin değerlendirilmesi, her iki dönemde de belediyelerde e-bilgi paylaşımı uygulamalarının e-danışma uygulamalarına göre daha iyi olduğu bulgusunu vermektedir. Çalışmada, 2016 yılında 2011'de kullanılan yöntem ile yapılan analizlerin karşılaştırılması yıllar içerisinde bulguların değiştiğini göstermektedir.

Çalışmanın sonuçları belediyelerde e-katılım uygulamalarının başarısının zamansal olarak değerlendirilmesinin önemine işaret etmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, e-katılım uygulamalarının sürdürülebilirliği ve kurumsallaşmasına odaklanan çalışmalar alan-yazına katkı sağlayabilir. Bu çalışmanın analizleri web-sitelerinde sağlanan e-katılım uygulamalarının devamlılığı ile sınırlı olmakla birlikte, farklı yıllarda elde edilen sonuçların karşılaştırılması ile e-katılımın sürdürülebilirliği ve kurumsallaşması hakkında daha geniş bir perspektif sağlamaktadır. Bu çalışma e-katılım uygulamalarının zaman içerisindeki değişiminin nedenlerini ve politika, alt yapı, dijital uçurum, bilgi ve iletişim teknolojileri okur-yazarlığı gibi konuları analiz etmemektedir. Siyasal değişimlerin veya teknolojik kapasitelerinin belediyelerin e-katılım uygulamalarına etkilerini inceleyen çalışmalar e-katılımın sürdürülebilirliği ve kurumsallaşmasıyla ilgili alan yazına katkı sağlayabilir.
