



The Role of Governance on Trust in Public Administration on the 100th Anniversary of the Republic: A Local Governance Analysis

Cumhuriyetin 100. Yılında Kamu Yönetimine Duyulan Güven Üzerinde Yönetişimin Rolü: Bir Yerel Yönetim Analizi

Yurdanur URAL USLAN¹ , Şerafettin ERTEN² 

ABSTRACT

The Republic, at its core, is a political system based on sharing, participation, and trust. Therefore, the state of the relationship between the government and the citizens is of paramount importance for the health of the system. The aim of this study is to elucidate a small part of this relationship at the local level on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of our Republic. In this context, the study attempts to analyze the impact of good governance practices on trust in public administration. This is because the level of trust that citizens have in public administration is one of the key determinants of the distance in the state-citizen relationship. Additionally, it is acknowledged that well-functioning governance mechanisms also have an impact on trust in public administration.

The study, the impact of the governance practices of responsiveness, accountability, transparency, and participation on trust was analyzed. Data were collected from 367 citizens living in the Uşak province (Turkey) through face-to-face and online surveys. The Structural Equation Modeling analysis revealed that all four dimensions of governance had a statistically significant positive effect on citizens' trust in public administration. The lowest impact on trust was observed in the dimension of participation. As a result, it can be said that well-functioning governance mechanisms and processes are a necessity to enhance citizens' trust in public administration at the local level. Furthermore, the development of methods that encourage greater citizen participation in these mechanisms and processes will contribute to increasing trust.

Keywords: the republic, governance, trust, participation, local government.

Öz

Cumhuriyet özünde paylaşımın, katılımın ve güvenin bulunduğu bir siyasi sistemdir. Bu nedenle devletle vatandaş arasındaki ilişkinin durumu sistemin sağlığı açısından çok önemlidir. Çalışmanın amacı da Cumhuriyetimizin 100. Yılında bu ilişkinin küçük bir parçasını yerel düzeyde açıklamaktır. Bu bağlamda çalışmada iyi yönetim uygulamalarının kamu yönetimine olan güven üzerindeki etkisi analiz edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Çünkü vatandaşların kamu yönetimine olan güven düzeyi devlet-vatandaş ilişkisinin mesafesini belirleyen etkenlerin başında gelmektedir. Bunun yanında iyi işleyen yönetim mekanizmalarının da kamu yönetimine olan güven üzerinde etkisi olduğu kabul edilmektedir.

Çalışmada iyi yönetim boyutları olarak cevap verebilirlik, hesap verebilirlik, şeffaflık ve katılımın güven üzerindeki etkisi analiz edilmiştir. Veriler, Uşak ilinde yaşayan 367 vatandaştan yüz yüze ve online uygulanan anket formu aracılığı ile toplanmıştır. Yapılan Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi analizi sonucunda, yönetişimin dört boyutunun da vatandaşların kamu yönetimine güveni üzerinde istatistiksel olarak pozitif

¹ **Corresponding Author:** Uşak University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Public Administration, yurdanur.ural@usak.edu.tr, ORCID: [0000-0002-1721-0712](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1721-0712)

² Uşak University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Department of Health Management, serafettin.erten@usak.edu.tr, ORCID: [0000-0003-0297-0580](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0297-0580)



yönde anlamlı bir etkisi olduğunu bulgulanmıştır. Güven üzerinde en düşük etki ise katılım boyutunda görülmektedir. Sonuç olarak yerel düzeyde vatandaşların kamu yönetimine olan güvenin artırılması için iyi işleyen yönetim mekanizma ve süreçlerinin bir gereklilik olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Bununla birlikte vatandaşların bu mekanizma ve süreçlere daha fazla katılımını sağlayacak yöntemlerin geliştirilmesi güvenin artırılmasına katkıda bulunacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: cumhuriyet, yönetim, güven, katılım, yerel yönetim

INTRODUCTION:

“Who should govern and how?” For a protracted period, it has been conventionally acknowledged, spanning from the local to the national echelons, that the governance of public affairs is incumbent upon the state and its representative individuals and institutions. Nevertheless, the concept of governance often alludes to a multifaceted process in which multiple actors partake, rather than being confined to individual actions (Mayntz, 1993). Since the latter quarter of the 20th century, a discernible surge has been witnessed in the call for non-state entities to play a substantive role in the governance process (Bevir, 2011). This inclination has constituted a fundamental cornerstone of public administration reform, commonly denoted as 'governance,' in the aftermath of the 1980s (Peters, 2010). It is posited that governance is poised to ameliorate the shortcomings inherent in traditional managerial public administration approaches, thus fostering the emergence of a more democratic, effective, efficient, and egalitarian administration firmly grounded in the tenets of the rule of law and cooperative engagement (Bhargava, et al., 2011; UNESCAP, 2009).

Nonetheless, the inquiry into the prerequisites necessary for the effective operation of such a structural framework has perennially remained a focal point of consideration. Among the foremost responses to this query, trust stands prominently (Damgaard & Torfing, 2010; Meuleman & Niestroy, 2015). Although numerous diverse factors exert influence on trust, research endeavors conducted across various strata consistently illuminate a nexus between governance and trust. In essence, these studies demonstrate that the quality of governance exerts a more or less favorable impact on the level of trust that citizens repose in governmental entities and public administrations (Beshi & Kaur, 2020; Cooper, et al., 2008; Mishra & Attri, 2020; Salminen & Ikola-Norrbacka, 2010; Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2003).

Local governments are the places where citizens have direct contact with the state. At the local level, it is assumed that good governance contributes to increasing trust, the clear identification of local issues, the development of innovative policy solutions, the realization of common goals, and the ownership of implemented policies (Damgaard & Torfing, 2010).

This study aims to analyze whether there is a relationship between the implementation of good governance practices in local governments and the trust in public institutions. In this context, the research model concerning the dimensions of governance developed by Beshi and Kaur (2020) has been expanded by adding the dimension of participation (Aldemir & Şen, 2020), and the impact of governance dimensions on public trust is being investigated.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Governance assumes a pivotal role within the realm of public administration theory. Nevertheless, it remains a multifaceted, contentious, and continually evolving paradigm. The theoretical and practical landscape comprises a plethora of iterations, including public governance, good governance, international governance, market governance, and network governance (Bevir, 2011; Kooiman & Jentoft, 2009). Notably, it has emerged as a prevailing concept ubiquitously employed across various sectors and strata, transcending its traditional domain of public administration to permeate the private sector as well (Torfing et al., 2012).

The incapacity of conventional management paradigms to effectively address the challenges inherent in the welfare state and market failures came under intense scrutiny and critique during the 1970s. This critical examination, spearheaded by proponents of neoliberal ideology, marked the genesis of novel theoretical and practical approaches collectively termed as the "transition from government to governance" (Bell & Park, 2006; Sørensen, 2006). In the early 1980s, a reform wave emerged, prompted by the influence of neoliberal policies and the forces of globalization, thereby initiating a fundamental redefinition of the state's role. This reform wave yielded two pivotal and interconnected outcomes: the advent of New Public Management and the rise of governance (Hood, 1991; Peters, 2010).

In 1989, the World Bank introduced the concept of governance to the global discourse, under the rubric of "good governance." In accordance with this framework, good governance is defined as "a decision-making and implementation process shaped around the principles of participation, consensus orientation, accountability, transparency, sensitivity, effectiveness, efficiency, egalitarianism, and inclusivity, and the rule of law" (World Bank, 1994). Rhodes (2007, p. 1246) expounds upon this process through four dimensions: "(1) interdependence between organizations; (2) sustained interactions among network members, driven by the necessity to exchange resources and negotiate common objectives; (3) interactions resembling strategic games, underpinned by trust and regulated by mutually negotiated rules of engagement; and (4) a notable degree of autonomy from the state."

Governance constitutes a variant of social coordination. Consequently, it is plausible to delineate distinct governance styles, including hierarchy, market, network, and community/solidarity governance, each of which embodies particular shared values, belief systems, and interpersonal relationship paradigms (Jessop, 2011; Meuleman, 2010). Regardless of the specific typology under consideration, governance is universally acknowledged as a process characterized by multifocal negotiations involving pertinent stakeholders and affected actors. These interactions are predicated upon principles of interdependence, trust, and the collaborative development of norms, rules, and discourses (Enroth, 2011; Kenis, 2022).

Trust is the foremost unifying factor in an environment of mutual communication, interaction, and negotiation. Trust is accepted as a power of social integration (Lewis & Weigert, 2012, p. 29). Along with confidence, loyalty, and representation, trust is the principal social emotion necessary for cooperation and the social processes of organizations (Barbalet, 1996). Therefore, it is one of the primary indicators and measures of how efficient collaborations are (Höglund et al., 2019). In addition, it is accepted that trust fosters democratic values, plays an integral role in achieving macro-organizational effectiveness, and is a significant factor in social groups' and individuals' effectiveness and efficiency (Carnevale & Wechsler, 1992). According to Bourgon (2007, p. 23), maintaining public trust between governments and citizens is essential to democracy and a prerequisite for good government. Governments not only provide goods and services, but they must also abide by the values, principles, rules, and procedures surrounding themselves. Therefore, good governance significantly impacts trust in both public administration and politics (Van de Walle & Migchelbrink, 2022: 10).

Mayer et al., (1995, p. 712) have defined trust as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party." Trust is "the shared belief among actors that they will cooperate for the win-win outcomes when confronted with the choice between win-win and win-lose (or even lose-lose) results (Brown et al., 2007, p. 614)." Therefore, while trust can be characterized as "a positive force from which cooperation is

derived, insecurity is characterized as the unwillingness of individuals to take cooperative action that increases their vulnerability (Scott, 1980, p. 158).”

Trust in government and public administrations is universally regarded as an indispensable component within democratic political and social systems (Marozzi, 2014; Moon, 2003). Nevertheless, there is a prevailing consensus that citizens' trust in governmental bodies and public administrations has exhibited a protracted decline over the years (Heintzman & Marson, 2005; Van de Walle et al., 2008). This trend is notably observed in the Republic of Turkey, where trust in public institutions has shown a gradual erosion over time, as evidenced by the World Values Survey, WAVE 7 (2021).

Trust is one of the fundamental pillars of legitimacy (Moon, 2003). In this context, trust in public institutions is one of the determinants of political support (Hardin, 2000). Citizens' trust in public administration is also a crucial indicator in the evaluation of public services and government bureaucracies (Van de Walle & Migchelbrink, 2022). It is assumed that the more trust citizens have in public institutions and the governance process, the closer the relationship between the state and society will be (Askvik et. al., 2010, p. 417). According to Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval (2003, p. 503), contemporary governance understanding emphasizes the importance of more cooperation, partnerships, greater citizen participation, and public service processes between public administration and other actors. Therefore, trust in government and public institutions is the basis of governance.

Within the extensive body of literature, a diverse array of elements, characteristics, or dimensions associated with governance are identified. These include participation, consensus-building, accountability, responsiveness, transparency, sensitivity, effectiveness, efficiency, equality, inclusion, justice, sustainability, ethics, and adherence to the rule of law, among others (Cornwall, 2002; UNESCAP, 2009; Young & Tanner, 2022). For the purposes of this study, the sub-dimensions selected for investigation encompass responsiveness, accountability, transparency, and participation. The theoretical framework and hypotheses of the study are structured as follows.

2. THEORETICAL RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Responsiveness

One of the leading principles of contemporary public administration is responsiveness (Gargan, 2007). At its essence, responsiveness signifies "an understanding of how a manager should actively seek and safeguard the public interest" (Liao, 2018, p. 159). Public administration is widely acknowledged as a vehicle for articulating the values and preferences of citizens, communities, and society at large (Bourgon, 2007). In this context, governance and active citizenship occupy pivotal roles in fostering responsiveness (Frederickson, 1996; Liao, 2018; Nielsen, 2016). This is because responsiveness encompasses the state's receptivity to citizens, the shaping of the public interest through citizen participation, and the state's obligation to cultivate active citizenship (Yang, 2007). The efficacy of public policies and the delivery of effective, efficient, and satisfactory public services hinge upon an orientation toward responsiveness, which is addressed within the framework of governance (Bourgon, 2007; Frederickson, 1996).

Collaborative and integrative governance processes constitute indispensable components for fostering responsiveness (Nielsen, 2016). Within such cooperative endeavors, public institutions must navigate the diverse and multifaceted demands posed by various stakeholders. Consequently, their actions and outcomes hold the potential to yield either positive or negative consequences for citizens' trust in these institutions (Bryer, 2007). Furthermore, collaborative processes necessitate a sustained and robust commitment, along with a foundation of trust among stakeholders. In this regard, responsiveness takes on added significance (Kernaghan, 1993). Trust, interdependence, and

shared understanding among parties are widely recognized as pivotal catalysts for enhancing the responsiveness of governance (Nielsen, 2016). It is posited that as the governance process becomes more responsive and proficient, an environment conducive to heightened trust and more democratic governance will ensue (Kooiman, 2002). In this context, the first hypothesis of the study is formulated as follows:

H1: Responsiveness has a significant positive effect on trust.

2.2. Accountability

Accountability, which is an element of normative democratic theory, is handled within the framework of the concept of responsibility (Hale, 2008; Mulgan, 2000). It is also a political process that responds to notifications from citizens, and it is recognized that contemporary democracies have more accountability to their citizens than in the past (Vigoda, 2000). In this context, accountability includes “the power of one actor to request information or justification for his actions from another and the obligation of the actor subject to these requests to respond, therefore, the essence of accountability is being able to respond (Brinkerhoff, 2006, p. 282).” Traditional understanding generally considers accountability in a formal, administrative, hierarchical, financial, and procedural framework (Brinkerhoff, 2006; Bovens, 2005). Nevertheless, modern approaches to public administration have expanded the concept of accountability beyond its narrow confines (Mulgan, 2000). Accountability is now widely recognized as a hallmark feature of governance (Bovens, 2005).

Within the governance framework, accountability is intrinsically linked to the concept of responsiveness. Accountability pertains to the extent to which actors in public administration heed the demands of citizens (Verschuere et al., 2006). Notably, accountability encompasses the notion of public dialogue, signifying a dialectical engagement on matters of public significance wherein various stakeholders partake in inquiry, assessment, and critique. This process necessitates that authorities respond, elucidate, and substantiate their actions (Mulgan, 2000). Furthermore, this facet of accountability is closely intertwined with transparency. To facilitate such a dialogue, policies, services, standards, principles, and procedures must be made publicly accessible, and stakeholders must have the means to access them (Brinkerhoff, 2006).

The immediate impact of democratic accountability reverberates throughout the legitimacy of public administration (Cendón, 2000). Public administration represents the domain in which citizens interact with the state on a daily basis, and it serves as the crucible for the cultivation of trust (Peters & Pierre, 2018). When accountability is underpinned by transparency and responsiveness, it fulfills the dual functions of bridging the divide between citizens and public administration while engendering trust in government and public entities. As a mechanism, accountability wields significant influence as a potent instrument for fostering good governance by virtue of these contributions (Brinkerhoff, 2006; Bovens, 2005). In this context, the second hypothesis of the study is formulated as follows:

H2: Accountability has a significant positive effect on trust.

2.3. Transparency

Transparency stands as a cornerstone among the best practices elucidating governance (Biondi & Lapsley, 2014). It is recognized as a vital instrument capable of addressing the democracy deficit at levels ranging from local governance to the international arena (Hale, 2008). Transparency is fundamentally construed as "information accessible to relevant actors" (Mitchell, 2011, p. 1884), thereby emphasizing the core element of information accessibility (Kosack & Fung, 2014). The advent of the information age and society, in particular, has transformed transparency into a governance tool that enables stakeholders not only to access information but also to negotiate their preferences,

perspectives, and demands (Fung et al., 2007; Leitzel, 2000). Mitchell (2011) distinguishes between "transparency of governance" and "transparency for governance." The former pertains to the observation of actions undertaken by those wielding authority to govern society and the acquisition of information regarding these actions. The latter, "transparency for governance," signifies the procurement and dissemination of essential information intended to influence the behavior of specific actors.

Transparency is frequently intertwined with concepts of accountability and responsiveness (Finkelstein, 2000; Kosack & Fung, 2014). In this context, beyond merely justifying the activities of public administration, transparency encompasses the imperative of information dissemination. Transparency has the potential to activate individual choice, market dynamics, and participatory democracy. Consequently, it is posited that an enhanced comprehension of transparency will contribute to bolstering accountability, which in turn augments the governance process (Ciborra, 2005; Fung et al., 2007; Hale, 2008). In light of this perspective, the third hypothesis of the study is formulated as follows:

H3: Transparency has a significant positive effect on trust.

2.4. Participation

One of the concepts underscored persistently within public administration theory is participation. Participation is broadly defined as involving citizens in the decision-making and management processes of administration, particularly on matters of relevance to them (Gbikpi & Grote, 2002; Yang & Pandey, 2011). Burke (1968, p. 287) characterizes participation as affording citizens "the ultimate voice in community decision-making processes". Participation is considered a potential remedy for certain democratic quandaries faced by governments and public administrations (Fung, 2015). Moreover, it is contended that participation serves as a foundational pillar for contemporary democratic societies and sustainable communities (Cuthill & Fien, 2005).

Governance underscores both vertical hierarchical decision-making structures and the active participation of citizens within the context of their roles in advancing public objectives (Bingham et al., 2005; Young & Tanner, 2022). This approach to governance adopts a participatory perspective that spans a broad spectrum, encompassing direct involvement in priority setting and planning, as well as deliberative processes wherein citizens engage in discussions concerning various alternatives (Cornwall, 2002). The expectation placed upon citizens is that they relinquish their traditionally passive roles and assume a more active role within the public sphere (Aulich, 2009). It is posited that participation at the local level can foster the development of human and social capital, thereby fortifying local democracy (Cuthill & Fien, 2005; Ghose, 2005).

Indeed, debates surrounding participation abound; however, despite the challenges and criticisms, participation remains an indispensable component of governance (Young & Tanner, 2022). Above all, active citizenship assumes a pivotal role in the nexus between participation and trust (Fakhoury & Aubert, 2015). Citizen participation contributes significantly to cultivating trust in government and public administration, a cornerstone of democracy (Yang & Pandey, 2011). Collaborative mechanisms engendered through participation enable citizens to reconcile conflicting interests in areas of common concern, thereby reinforcing key principles and values such as accountability, sustainability, transparency, ethics, equality, and justice (Bingham et al., 2005; Cornwall, 2002; Young & Tanner, 2022). Consequently, ensuring citizen participation in decision-making processes and practices within governance is deemed imperative for all institutions seeking to foster trust (Dean, 2018). In this context, the fourth hypothesis of the study is articulated as follows:

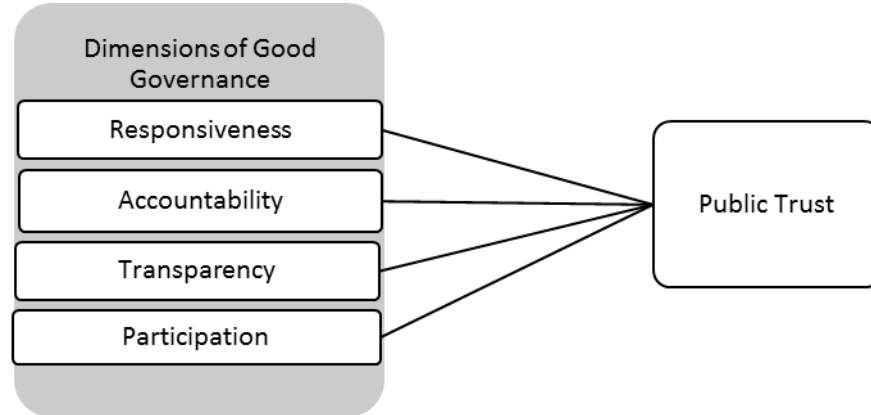
H4: Participation has a significant positive effect on trust.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research model

The study employs a descriptive modeling approach, beginning with the depiction of the current situation. Subsequently, an analysis is conducted to gauge the interrelationships among variables within this context. Furthermore, the study investigates the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. To accomplish these objectives, a quantitative methodology involving a survey of residents residing in the Uşak province has been undertaken. The study model is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Study model



3.2. Participants

The research population comprises the inhabitants of Uşak province, which has a total population of 339,019, consisting of 168,064 men and 169,955 women. Among these, 225,570 residents live in urban areas, while the remainder reside in rural areas. The study employed a convenience sampling method to select the sample population. A total of 440 surveys were distributed to participants. However, due to some missing data in the surveys, 367 of them were considered for evaluation. The characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Features of the participants

Measure	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	214	58.3
Male	153	41,7
<i>Schooling Level</i>		
Primary school	35	9.5
Middle school	19	5.2
High school	77	21.0
Associate degree/ bachelor's degree	193	52.6
Graduate	43	11,7
<i>Age</i>		
18-24	132	36.0
25-34	82	22.3
35-44	77	21.0
45-55	43	11.7
55 and above	33	9.0

Research permission was obtained from "Uşak University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee" for the study (Approval Number:2022- 148, date: 11/17/2022).

3.3. Data Collection Tools

The applied questionnaire consists of two distinct sections. The first section encompasses personal information, while the second section contains statements aimed at assessing perceptions of trust in the municipality, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and participation.

The study has incorporated trust, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness as key dimensions of good governance practices, as outlined and compiled by Beshi and Kaur (2020). The statements used in this regard have been validated through reference to prior studies by Said et al. (2015), Grimmelikhuijsen (2012), Park and Blenkinsopp (2011), and Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval (2003). Additionally, the questions and statements related to the dimension of participation have been adapted from the local participation scale developed by Aldemir and Şen (2020).

3.4. Data Analysis

Prior to assessing the relationships posited within the study model, the reliability and validity of the pertinent statements were evaluated using SPSS 21 and AMOS 24 software. Initially, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the five factors concurrently, and statements that loaded on more than one factor were excluded from their respective factors. Specifically, the first statement in the accountability factor, the first and fourth statements in the responsiveness factor, and the second statement in the trust factor were removed from the analysis.

Composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE) were used to test convergent validity. Convergent validity provides insight into the relationships among items within a measurement instrument and assesses whether these items adequately represent the intended construct. Typically, a cutoff value of 0.70 for CR and 0.50 for AVE is considered acceptable in this context (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

As indicated in Table 2, each variable's CR exceeds 0.8 (ranging from 0.923 to 0.846), and the AVE for each variable surpasses 0.50 (ranging from 0.611 to 0.743). These results affirm that convergent validity has been successfully established. Furthermore, the factor loading ratios in this study all surpass the recommended threshold of 0.70.

Table 2. Factor ratio, CR, and AVE values

Variable	Item	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Transparency	Transparency1	0,84	0,918	0,737
	Transparency2	0,91		
	Transparency3	0,83		
	Transparency4	0,84		
Responsiveness	Responsiveness2	0,79	0,846	0,648
	Responsiveness3	0,80		
	Responsiveness5	0,82		
Trust	Trust 1	0,72	0,862	0,611
	Trust 3	0,79		
	Trust 4	0,75		
	Trust 5	0,84		
Participation	Participation1	0,79	0,923	0,705
	Participation2	0,86		
	Participation3	0,88		
	Participation4	0,88		
	Participation5	0,75		

Accountability	Accountability2	0,84	0,896	0,743
	Accountability3	0,86		
	Accountability4	0,87		

Note: CR- Composite Reliability, AVE- Average Variance Extracted.

Discriminant validity analysis was also carried out, which assesses the degree to which a construct differs from other related constructs (Hair et al., 2010). The crucial criterion for discriminant validity is that the square root of the Average Variance Explained (AVE) should exceed the correlations between the constructs for each respective construct (Khine, 2013). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation matrix of key variables

	Transparency	Accountability	Participation	Trust	Responsiveness
Transparency	<i>0,859</i>				
Accountability	0,817	<i>0,862</i>			
Participation	0,804	0,813	<i>0,840</i>		
Trust	0,769	0,839	0,769	<i>0,789</i>	
Responsiveness	0,753	0,837	0,775	0,782	<i>0,805</i>

Note: Italicized elements are the square root of AVE for each variable.

The outcomes of the structural equation modeling are presented in Table 4 below. Four hypotheses have been deemed statistically significant. Firstly, H1, positing that responsiveness exerts a positive impact on trust, has been substantiated ($\beta=0.33$, $p < 0.001$). Secondly, H2, suggesting that accountability positively influences trust, has been validated ($\beta=0.24$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, transparency has been demonstrated to have a positive effect on trust ($\beta=0.19$, $p < 0.05$). Lastly, participation has been shown to exert a positive impact on trust ($\beta=0.17$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, the goodness-of-fit indices indicate that the model fits the data very well. Please refer to Table 4³ for details.

Table 4. Results of the structural equation model

	Relations	Std R.W.	C.R.	P Value
H ₁	Responsiveness → Trust	0,337	3,616	***
H ₂	Accountability → Trust	0,248	2,385	0,017
H ₃	Transparency → Trust	0,196	2,565	0,010
H ₄	Participation → Trust	0,175	2,216	0,027
Goodness-of-fit indices				
X ² /d.f				2,724
Goodness-of-fit-index (GFI)				0,903
Adjusted GFI (AGFI)				0,867
Comparative fit index (CFI)				0,958
RMSEA				0,069

Note: * $p < 0,05$, ** $p < 0,01$, *** $p < 0,001$.

Std R.W-Standardized Regression Weights, C.R-Critical Ratio.

4. DISCUSSION

Kozel and Dečman (2022) contend that citizens place more trust in local government than in the state level. Indeed, local governments are regarded as political and administrative entities where

³ The values of fit indices CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, CFI and RMSEA are discussed. In cases where the number of samples exceeds 250, the CMIN/DF ratio should be less than 5 (Byrne, 2011). GFI, AGFI and CFI values close to 1 indicate a good fit (Kline, 2005). For a good fit, RMSEA should take values between 0.05 and 0.08 (Weston and Gore, 2006).

more effective, efficient, and streamlined structures are often established, fostering a heightened awareness of shared responsibility and cooperation in economic, social, and political matters (Ghose, 2005). It is posited that enhancing citizens' trust in local governments is a potential solution to the challenges encountered in this sphere (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2013). Furthermore, it is argued that trust plays a pivotal role in amalgamating democracy and bureaucracy, thereby contributing to the development of a robust and healthy system of governance (Vigoda-Gadot & Yuval, 2003). In this context, our study scrutinized citizens' trust in local government within the framework of four governance dimensions, yielding the following results.

Transparency, defined as "the extent to which citizens can easily discern the behaviors and objectives of public institutions" (Hale, 2008, p. 75), has evolved over time as a means to bolster public trust (da Cruz et al., 2015). In this study, it is posited that transparent practices adopted by local governments exert a positive influence on public trust. The analysis results indicate a significant and positive path coefficient between transparency, as perceived by citizens, and public trust ($\beta = 0.196$, $p < 0.01$). This finding aligns with numerous other studies that have also demonstrated a positive impact of transparency on trust (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021; Beshi & Kaur, 2020; Porumbescu, 2015; Park & Blenkinsopp, 2011).

The responsiveness exhibited by government and public administration holds substantial sway over citizens' trust in local governments (Yousaf et al., 2016). Denhardt (2002) and Brillantes and Fernandez (2011) have asserted that responsiveness plays a pivotal role in the restoration of trust in the state. Notably, studies by Hartanto and Siregar (2021) and Beshi and Kaur (2020) have revealed a positive correlation between responsiveness and citizens' trust in local government. The findings in our study align with these perspectives, demonstrating that public trust in local government is significantly influenced by responsive practices ($\beta = 0.337$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, our results corroborate the findings of Yousaf et al. (2016) and Beshi and Kaur (2020).

Accountability is recognized as the hallmark of modern democratic governance and a complement to public administration (Bovens, 2005). Farwell et al. (2019), and Yang and Northcott (2019) state that the information shared with the public by the public administration is a necessary resource in ensuring citizens' trust in local governments at the point of accountability. Our results also show that public trust in local government is affected by accountability practices ($\beta = 0.248$, $p < 0.05$). This result is consistent with Beshi and Kaur's (2020), and Yousaf et al.'s (2016) works.

Public administration theory assigns significant importance and precedence to the citizen's role in achieving administrative goals (Young & Tanner, 2022). Participation is acknowledged as a crucial element in the realm of planning and policymaking, particularly at the local level (Ghose, 2005). Undemocratic participation processes can lead to a breakdown of trust, subsequently manifesting in avoidance of cooperation and civic disinterest (Kiss et al., 2022). Our study's findings indicate that public trust in local government is indeed influenced by participation practices ($\beta = 0.175$, $p < 0.05$). This outcome aligns with the results of studies conducted by Yang and Pandey (2011) and Wang and Wart (2007). However, it is worth noting that the path coefficient for the participation dimension is lower than that of the other dimensions.

As noted by Ghose (2005, p. 65), participation is an intricate and contentious process intertwined with the concept of citizenship. The extent of citizen participation is influenced by an array of political and socio-cultural factors, encompassing historical, religious, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and economic elements. Moreover, it is imperative to acknowledge that not all individuals possess equal access to the confined sphere of citizenship. Furthermore, the placement of the citizen within the governmental structure, the prevailing culture of participation, and the democratic capacity of a society are recognized as pivotal factors in determining the level of participation (Aulich, 2009; Cornwall, 2002; Ghose, 2005; Kiss et al., 2022; Yang & Pandey, 2011). Within the context of this study, it can be argued that the lack of a participation culture and democratic capacity constitutes the root cause of the participation challenge.

Certainly, our study is not without its limitations, and it is essential to interpret the results within the context of these constraints. The foremost limitation pertains to the fact that the research was conducted within a specific local government unit in Turkey, under the umbrella of Turkish culture. Consequently, it is not feasible to generalize the naturally occurring results to the entirety of the field of public administration. Therefore, there is a need for future qualitative and quantitative research on more extensive samples. The second limitation of the study relates to the governance dimensions. In this research, only four dimensions were selected to explore the impact of governance on trust. However, governance has a multifaceted structure, and future studies could delve into the effects of other dimensions of governance, such as effectiveness, efficiency, empowerment, and access to trust, to provide a more comprehensive perspective. Additionally, investigating the mediating effects of these dimensions in the relationship between governance and trust presents itself as a worthwhile area of exploration.

CONCLUSION:

Trust is widely recognized as a crucial element in the citizen-state relationship within democratic systems. However, studies indicate a global decline in trust in public administrations worldwide, a situation that is no different for our country. Therefore, a clear question arises concerning how trust in public institutions can be increased. Research has shown a relationship between governance and trust.

Our study demonstrates a significant positive impact of good governance practices on trust, a finding that aligns with the results of numerous studies in the literature. In the relevant studies, governance dimensions such as accountability, transparency, and responsiveness are often selected. However, in this study, participation has been considered as a distinct dimension of governance, and its positive and significant impact on trust has been established. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the degree of impact of the participation dimension in this study was found to be lower compared to the other dimensions.

In light of the results obtained, we believe that this study will primarily contribute to the growing literature on the relationship between governance and trust. Additionally, the inclusion of participation in the analysis can be considered another significant contribution.

Compliance with the Ethical Standard

Conflict of Interests: *There is no conflict of interest between the authors or any third party individuals or institutions.*

Ethics Committee Permission: *Ethics committee permission is required for this study.*

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