

A SWOT Analysis of the Effects of E-Municipality Services on Disabled Citizens

Sanem Berkün

*Department of Political Science and Administration, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences,
Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University, Bilecik, Turkey*

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Abstract:

With this study, the effects of the e-municipality services on the disabled are scrutinized. Urging upon the development process and the qualities of e-government and the e-municipality services as its extension, the necessity to provide e-municipality services compatible with the diverse characteristics of disabled individuals is emphasised. It aims to reach information related to the actions that can be taken to increase the availability of the e-municipality services by determining the factors providing convenience for the disabled or the obstacles they face. Within the context of the study, a literature review is made about the-services that local authorities provide for the disabled via e-government and e-municipality in Turkey and the problems the disabled face in accessing these-services. Subsequently, benefiting from the secondary data, the advantages and disadvantages of the effects of e-municipality services in Turkey are exhibited with the SWOT analysis technique. On the basis of the findings, suggestions to increase the functionality of the e-municipality services for the disabled are submitted. E-municipality applications provide time flexibility, the quality of the-services, and pace in procedures and eliminate spatial accessibility problems. However, experienced and qualified personnel in the accessibility of e-municipality activities are few. The necessary investment and infrastructure support for the local authorities required to meet the standards of e-municipality are not provided. Among the disabled, there are individuals who require financial support for internet services, computer hardware, and adapted technology. This study aims to determine the factors providing convenience for the disabled during access to the e-municipality services process and the obstacles they face. Turkey has started e-municipality applications in recent history. For this developing country, which is at the beginning of the process, it is of vital importance to determine the disadvantages and take necessary additional precautions. The ultimate aim of this study is to present a small contribution to this need. Information, interest, and awareness intended for the disabled in Turkey increase continuously, and solutions for the social, psychological, economic, and spatial problems are searched. However, information technologies and e-services are new and rapidly developing fields in Turkey. Following the international standards in this field will not only catch up with the developed countries but also provide the e-services to be available for the disabled. The study is drawn up to attract attention on the subject and to contribute to the gap in literature.

Keywords: e-municipality, e-government, the disabled, local government, Turkey.

电子市政服务对残疾公民影响的 SWOT 分析

摘要:

通过这项研究，电子市政服务对残疾人的影响得到了仔细研究。敦促以电子政务和电子市政服务为延伸的发展进程和质量，强调提供与残疾人多样化特征相适应的电子市政服务的必要性。它的目的是通过确定为残疾人提供便利的因素或他们面临的障碍，获取与可采取的行动相关的信息，以提高电子市政服务的可用性。在该研究的背景下，对土耳其地方当局通过电子政务和电子市政为残疾人提供的服务以及残疾人在获得这些服务时面临的问题进行了文献综述。随后，借助二手数据，通过 SWOT 分析技术展示了土耳其电子市政服务效果的优缺点。根据调查结果，提出了增强残疾人电子市政服务功能的建议。电子市政应用提供了时间灵活性、服务质量和程序节奏，并消除了空间可达性问题。然而，在电子市政活动的无障碍方面经验丰富且合格的人员却很少。没有为地方当局提供满足电子市政标准所需的必要投资和基础设施支持。在残疾人中，有些人需要互联网服务、计算机硬件和适应技术的经济支持。本研究旨在确定为残疾人获得电子市政服务过程提供便利的因素以及他们面临的障碍。土耳其近年来已启动电子市政应用。对于这个正处于这一进程开始的发展中国家来说，确定不利因素并采取必要的额外预防措施至关重要。这项研究的最终目的是为这一需求做出小小的贡献。针对土耳其残疾人的信息、兴趣和意识不断增加，并寻找社会、心理、经济和空间问题的解决方案。然而，信息技术和电子服务在土耳其是新兴且快速发展的领域。在这一领域遵循国际标准，不仅可以赶上发达国家，而且可以为残疾人提供电子服务。起草这项研究的目的是为了引起人们对这一主题的关注并弥补文献上的空白。

关键词: 犯罪、城市化、残障人士、预防、打击。

1. Introduction

The duties and responsibilities of local governments proceed in transferring digitization operations into local like they do in all areas. This is among the necessities of new public management understanding. Public institutes' providing services to the citizens in electronic environment provides the opportunity to reach many objectives such as efficiency, productivity, and quality. Countries with developed technological infrastructure are at a more advanced level in local digitization and e-municipality applications. Certain standards are developed for service delivery in these countries, and providing these-services has been made legally necessary. As for the developing countries, new public management understanding and e-government and the e-municipality practices as the extension of it are maintained with intensification and strived to reach the standards of developed countries.

'All' the citizens should be ensured to use the practices of e-municipality of the highest order like the e-government practices. This is possible with the easy and fast access of all citizens to e-services and their use. Additional measures are required for the e-service access of the disabled, elders, immigrants, and the poor, which are among the disadvantaged groups in the society. Financial support, technical support, education needs, and universal design principles are the prominent additional measures. Providing necessary measures brings equality of opportunity into access to e-services. Negligence of these measures, on the other hand, carries the risk of bringing these groups into a much more disadvantaged position in the near future.

The disabled have always been within disadvantaged

social groups in every period of history. However, the importance given to human rights today strengthened the understanding and awareness of being disabled. During this period, e-governments are continuing to develop policies and vary their applications to integrate the disabled into society. During the process of providing public services to citizens in the electronic environment, protecting the needs of the disabled is considered a right and obligation. With this study, the availability of e-government and e-municipality services as an extension is scrutinised from the perspective of the disabled. Within the scope of the study, the necessary theoretical framework is created considering the-services provided for the disabled by primarily the e-government, and e-municipality local authorities and the problems the disabled face in accessing these-services. Afterwards, a SWOT analysis is conducted to determine the effects of e-municipality services on the disabled. It is both a constitutional right and a necessity of being a contemporary state for the disabled to use e-services like every other citizen in the society. For a developing country like Turkey, which is also at the beginning of the process of this development, it is of more vital importance to take additional measures after the determination of the advantages and disadvantages brought by the e-municipality services.

The novelty and rapid development of information technologies in Turkey require the existing limited financial resources to be used more effectively and productively. Actualising the correct and inclusive standards for all walks of life at the beginning of the process is much easier than revising a working system with faults. The necessity was a determinant of

choosing the subject of the study. On the other hand, while disability and studies aimed at the problems of the disabled have gained importance, a contribution in web accessibility is required. This study, which starts from the basis of this thought, aims to assess the development of e-municipality services in Turkey and to draw attention to the importance of solving the problems of access to e-municipality services within the axis of the change in the perception toward the disabled. The most important constraint of the study compiled with the information gathered by the literature search is that it is prepared relatively deprived of the current database of the disabled. The lack of country-wide fieldwork is another deficiency.

2. Research Background

2.1. The Development of the E-Government Services, and Their Reflection on the Local Authorities and Turkey

Expectations from the state have risen versatile as humanity proceeded. As an extent of expectation, the responsibilities of institutions and organizations and public services have been widened qualitatively and quantitatively (Wallerstein, 2000: 41). The developments that occurred in globalization and information and communication technologies directed the states into new public operators or governance models to answer these expectations (Mecek, 2017: 1816). The usage of information and communication technologies in providing public services is generally expressed as 'electronic state' and it is found in the applications of many countries (Jaeger, 2006). With the electronic services (e-services), access to the documents, information, and programs that public institutions have and the-services they provide electronically become possible. (Parlak & Sobacı, 2012: 247). Thus, it is intended to actualize effective, transparent, uninterrupted, democratic, and more qualified and functional public bureaucratic systems (Cordella, 2007: 271). The e-service applications are expressed as the notions of e-municipality at the local level and as e-government at the national level.

The first examples regarding e-government studies were seen in the USA and UK after the 1950s; however, the interactive applications we have today are dated recently (Mecek, 2017: 1816). The e-government applications that have become prevalent all over the world have hastened the traditional state structurally and functionally (Delibaş & Akgül, 2010: 105-106). Within this transformation frame, the states extend the e-government application by promoting the usage of the Internet and focus on various projects and applications to increase computer literacy (Şahin, 2007: 162). This transformation process, in which both developed and developing countries participate, has an economic and social benefit increasing aim. The developing countries save up sources and the economic advantage accordingly with e-government applications. The developed countries, on the other hand, expand their e-

government facilities to create social advantages such as providing more qualified services for the citizens (Maralan, 2008: 3).

E-government studies generally follow a four-step process. First, information is provided to the citizens on the websites that are created. In the second step, some public services are provided online by the-government. The third step includes collecting and presenting all public services on a single state portal. New services are added to the state portal on the fourth and last step (Erdoğan, 2019: 553). Many developed countries are now in the fourth step. When considering their features, first of all, the e-government provides a secure environment through the internet for more effective and participatory interaction between public institutions and organizations by establishing a central database. The e-government uses electronic trade applications to activate public actions such as public procurements and public service contracts. Digital democracy is applied to a more transparent, accountable public organization (Güngör, 2007: 127).

Adaptation to European Union practices in Turkey caused the initiatives in e-government to hasten. Many projects are reflections of this. 'KAMUNET' and Turkey National Information Infrastructure (TUENA) Project, which was accomplished by the Prime Ministry in 1998 and 'e-Turkey initiative' that was accomplished in 2001, are among the specimen pioneering projects (Erdoğan, 2019: 554). Turkey began e-government practices with the 'E Transformation Turkey Project' in 2003 (eDTr). Substantial investments were made within this scope, and services were provided to be presented electronically. Data processing centers and internet sites were created in many public institutions. Besides, keeping information electronically began. With the same aim, the Right to Information Act (4982) came into force in 2004. As a result of these practices, the number of websites belonging to institutions and organizations that provide public services increased substantially (Turkish Court of Accounts, 2006: 4). Within the context of the E-Transformation Turkey Project, a data collection strategy including the 2006-2010 period was developed, and the completion rate of the 111 actions was calculated as 49.16% according to the end of the term evaluation report (Şaf, 2015:1-2). The E-Government Gateway Project came into service under the responsibility of DPT and in cooperation with TÜRSAT in 2008 (Metin, 2012:100). According to the Information Society Statistics Report 2010, Turkey approached to achieve its goal to present the applications with the EU 20 basic public service comparison completely in electronic environment substantially in 2010. According to the report, the satisfaction rate of beneficiaries using the public services offered in the electronic environment increased over the years (Çarıkcı, 2010: 105). Regarding the E-government Development Index 2022 data prepared by the UN, Turkey increased to 48th position among the 193 countries. There is also a study with the findings that e-government applications decrease the costs and

that the ones using the e-government applications closely follow the developments about e-government. Moreover, the same study includes negative information such as personnel being incompetent regarding experience and education about the e-government infrastructure deficiencies, central and local authorities do not make sufficient investments for the infrastructure, costliness of internet services, and security problems (Çarıkçı, 2010: 121).

E-government practices become prevalent on the local authorities' scale and are expressed with e-municipality concept. E-municipality can be defined as offering the-services to citizens in an environment close to them and participatory in a transparent, effective, and efficient way by using information and communication technologies. E-municipality works integrated with e-government practice. With the e-municipality practices, the-service capacity and speed of the-municipality increase and contribute to the creation of accountable management. This change comprises a much deeper transformation such as the development of a citizen-customer centered service understanding, the emergence of a new administrative structure and raising a human source that understands and uses these technologies (Çakır, 2015: 4; Acılar, 2012: 130-131). However, there are things to be done by the local authorities to actualize this transformation. First, local authority laws should be renewed consistent with technological advancements. Technical and monetary support related to the automatization of local authorities should be provided quickly. The software used as e-municipality automatization system should be standardized. Data processing infrastructure should be established in the municipalities and qualified specialists should be employed in this unit. The infrastructure of the national banks with which the local authorities are obliged to work should be renewed in accordance with information technologies (Geymen & Karaş, 2006). E-municipality practices in the world have become prevalent within the process that proceeds with one-way information flow, reciprocal communication, and the cycling online process (Tasam, 2006: 12).

The first examples of practices regarding e-municipalities in the world were in Duisburg, Germany; Tilburg, Netherlands; Farum, Denmark; Braintree, England; and Phoenix, USA. In Turkey, on the other hand, many e-municipality projects were actualized, particularly after 2001. A centralized and standard municipality practice was created for all municipalities with the e-Municipality System that was developed as a project by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2014 and started working after being approved by the ministry in 2017 (Erdoğan, 2019: 557). There are 20 metropolitan municipalities, 37 provincial municipalities, 662 district municipalities, 219 town municipalities, and 24 local government unions (TR Ministry of Internal Affairs e-Municipality Information System).

2.2. E-Services Offered for the Disabled Persons by

Local Governments and Turkey

Although it has been a phenomenon that existed since the first eras of history, with some common points emphasized on, there is not one unique disabled definition in the literature that has been agreed on (Hamilton, 1997: 223). This condition arises from the fact that disability is a multi-dimensional case, including environmental, social, and psychological reasons that can also have a role in determining individual features (Tate and Pledger, 2003: 290).

According to the current Turkish Language Association Dictionary, disability is described as 'the person who has lost his/her physical, mental, psychological, sensory or social abilities in various degrees from birth or because of any other reason and who is suffering from adapting in social life and meeting daily needs' (TDK Dictionary, 2023). According to the statements of the World Health Organization, it is assumed that there are more than 1 billion disabled people in the world, and this number coincides with 15% of the world population. On the other hand, in spite of the developments that occur in the health care field, the number of disabled people shows an increase throughout the world. This case is explained by demographic tendencies, aging of the society, and an increase in chronic health problems (Berkün, 2023: 84).

Today, although the perception of the disabled has changed, information and awareness about disability has increased, and social policies are varied, disabled individuals continue facing numerous problems during the process of integrating into society. There are also some new problems arising during this process with the effects of globalization and new public management understanding. In other respects, the increase of responsible actors in developing and applying policies regarding the disabled, like many other issues, increased the cooperation between centralized and local management. This process of postponing e-government in offering services gave local authorities – the closest management units to the public – essential duties and responsibilities (Aydm, 2008: 17-18). Both developed and developing countries gave local authorities more power, duties, and responsibilities regarding the disabled within their laws and policies. A similar process is being experienced in Turkey.

Generally, local authorities have basic social policies such as education, health, and housing that are undertaken by the centralized management and are responsible for executing many public services within their area of responsibility (Metin, 2017: 334). Developing local policies in many areas such as providing employment opportunities, providing health and education services, building social cohesion and rehabilitation, and meeting the requirements of those in need are within the local authorities' sphere of responsibility. In addition, within the context of Metropolitan Municipality Law no. 5216, Provincial Special Administration Law no. 5312, and Municipality Law no. 5393, there are significant ad judgments

regarding local social policies (Berkün, 2018: 840). The reflection of current democratic values on public management is felt as the increasing demands, suggestions, and expectations of the public. Likewise, developments in information and communication technologies require e-services to be offered quicker and provide opportunities to make it happen. On the contrary, the increasing population in the cities brings many new service areas along with it. This condition is felt in Turkey much more as it is developing but experiencing urbanization faster than industrialization. The problems faced require additional measures for the disabled that meet many obstacles in integrating with the city and benefiting from it.

According to the 2011 Census and Housing Survey in Turkey, the proportion of the population with at least one disabled citizen to the total population is 6,9% (Statistics of Disabled and Elderly Bulletin, 2023: 6). On the other hand, the disabled citizens' right to live an equal, independent, and honorable life is enshrined in the Constitution, in the first place, in various laws and international contracts. However, despite all the international contracts, laws, and regulations, sufficient and correct practices have not yet reached the desired levels (Berkün, 2016: 64-65). With a more general statement, Turkey is a state that has problems in harmonizing its domestic law and practices with contracts and performing its legal obligations (Çağlar, 2012: 558). At the outset of the problems waiting for a solution comes the organization of urban and social areas suitable for disabled individuals. Inaccessible areas hamper the disabled individuals' coming over the family, social and economic problems as well (Kesgin, 2014: 7). There are findings showing that some disabled individuals are not able to leave their houses (Bezmez ve Yardımcı, 2010: 176). The lack of information and awareness levels regarding the-services offered for the disabled by the local authorities is another substantial problem. However, special centers are established, care and support services are provided (home health care-services, meeting daily needs, evening care-services), vehicle support is provided to facilitate life, convenience in transportation is provided, urban organizations are established, technological support is provided, cultural organizations are established, and education seminars are given by the disabled service units established within the body of local authorities (Fırat, 2008: 91-94). The inadequacy of qualified personnel working within local authorities is reflected in the quality of the-services provided to the disabled. Fulfilling the expectations of individuals with different needs requires special knowledge. The inadequacy of the database to direct the-service delivery process is among the obstacles in meeting the needs correctly.

To begin with, for the disabled to integrate with society, an accessible environment should be provided and the quality of life of the disabled individuals should be heightened. Accessibility is the most important indicator of the quality of life in a contemporary city, and local authorities are the major responsible

institutions in making cities accessible. Local authorities should work on the accessibility of pedestrian crossings, public transportation, and roads to official buildings and make them suitable for the disadvantaged. The right to use urban areas, access to the city, transforming it according to personal requirements, and to re-construct are among the basic rights of the disabled, similar to every other citizen. Local authorities are substantial units in constituting these rights because they are the closest institutions to which the disabled convey their problems (Berkün, 2019: 235; Fırat, 2009: 68; Kesgin, 2014: 8-11). Local authorities can save the disabled from addictions by organizing education and vocational courses. Besides, the local authorities can motivate the communication channels both among the disabled and other individuals by undertaking the mission to increase awareness of disabled groups and to eradicate a positive image of them. In other words, the mission of the local authorities is not limited to physical spaces but also requires the support of a change in perception (Berkün, 2019: 235; Fırat, 2009: 68; Kesgin, 2014: 8-11; Bezmez & Yardımcı, 2010: 165). Benefiting from the opportunities provided by computer and communication technologies in this process offers important insights.

3. A SWOT Analysis of the Effects of E-Municipality Services on the Disabled Persons in Turkey

The survey conducted within the scope of the study aims to present the effects of the e-municipality services on the disabled and emphasize the contribution these effects can provide for the development of local policies for the disabled. In this context, the advantages and disadvantages of the effects of e-municipality services on the disabled in Turkey using secondary data are presented with the SWOT analysis technique. SWOT analysis is a technique applied with the aim of determining the existing situation by examining the inner and outer environment of organized structures, revealing advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and threats based on the findings, planning prospective targets and constituting the strategy to follow in order to succeed (Karadeniz et al., 2007: 197). In the realization of the analysis, the documents related to e-municipality, disabled people, and information technology are scanned through the web. Besides, a literature search is made. Based on the information gathered, evaluations and suggestions regarding the actions that should be taken regarding the access of the disabled to the e-municipality services are made. The process is shown in Figure 1.

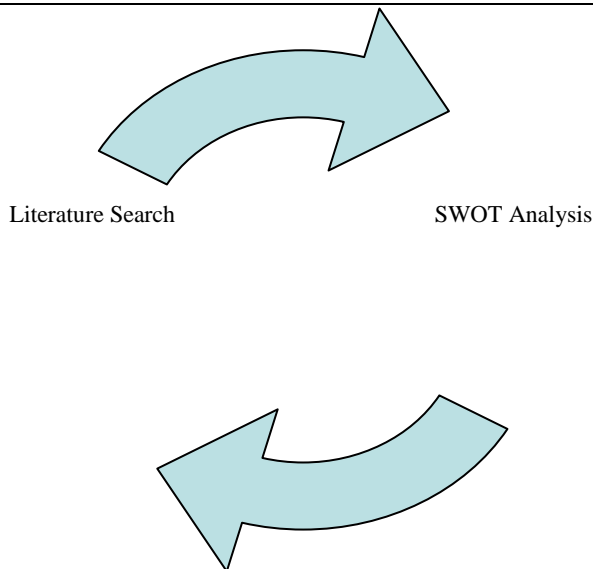


Figure 1. Research methodology flowchart

Disability expresses the condition that occurs from birth or later on because of any reason where physical, mental, sensory, or social abilities are lost at various levels and that causes difficulties in fitting in society and meeting daily needs (TDK Dictionary, 2023). There are several problems hindering the disabled from integrating into social life. Information technologies provide an insight into the accessibility problems that occur on top of these problems. Information technologies also transform the public service delivery process and prevail as three-government and e-municipality. The capacity and speed of the municipalities increase with the e-municipality practices, and it becomes easier to develop accountable management in municipalities. These developments affect the satisfaction of citizens positively. In addition, there are factors affecting the facilities of the municipalities in a negative way as well. Among these, the inadequacy of experienced and educated personnel and investment can be counted. Today's states, with a desire to have a happy society with a citizen-centered approach, shape their policies with the aim of a life that is qualified and proper to human dignity. As an extension of this, the scope of disabled policies expands, particularly in countries where social welfare policies are developed and the responsibilities of local authorities increase. In this context, technological advancements are closely followed and accessible e-government/e-municipality practices become prevalent. This study is prepared considering the thought of determining the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of e municipalities regarding the disabled can be beneficial in increasing the success of the disabled policies.

3.1. Strengths of E-Municipality Practices with Regard to the Disabled Persons in Turkey

Urban areas and public buildings still have not been made suitable for disabled individual. There are urban areas and public buildings that do not meet accessibility standards. According to the 2019 data from the TR

Ministry of Family and Social Services Directorate General of Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, the number of buildings that were given the certificate of accessibility is only 382 (Akbulut & Taşköprü, 2020: 99). Within this period, the disabled who cannot access local public services can benefit from e-municipality services.

During the transportation process to local authorities, disabled individuals face several problems. It is particularly difficult to say that public transportation are qualified for the access of the disabled. Likewise, universally designed public transportation are insufficient to number. Many transportation problems the disabled face direct them to use private vehicles, and this is costlier. With e-municipality services, the disabled can benefit from local services without experiencing difficulties in transportation.

The personnel working in many local administration units in Turkey do not have sufficient information about the features of the disabled and the needs related to these features. In particular, small-scale municipalities are understaffed. This condition affects service delivery to the disabled negatively. Despite this, since the standards set in the delivery of e-municipality services are set according to the needs and expectations of the disabled, e-municipality services affect the-service delivery quality of the disabled in a positive way.

The flextime delivery of the e-municipality services makes it possible to benefit from these-services at any time the disabled individuals need them.

With e-municipality services, the disabled who feel psychosocial limitations in social integration can convey their demands, recommendations, complaints, and expectations to the local authorities.

With e-municipality services, the process of following the information and developments related to the-services delivered by the local authorities becomes easier.

E-municipality practices make the-services aimed at the disabled easier to be carried out more efficiently, prolifically, transparently, and fast.

Turkey signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People in 2007, and this convention entered into force on October 28, 2009. With this convention, Turkey secured the accessibility rights of all its citizens. In this context, with the cooperation of TR Ministry of Development and TUBITAK BILGEM YTE (Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey Institute of Research for Advanced Technologies of Informatics and Information Security), it is aimed to make the web sites that belong to the public institutions suitable with the accessibility standards and the WCAG 2.1 Standards were considered. The year 2019 was declared as the 'Accessibility Year' and the Awards of Accessibility were initiated, and the award category, including web accessibility and mobile accessibility under the 'Accessible Digital Practices' category was added (Barutçu, 2022: 21-22). Moreover, 'Accessibility Workshops: Web Accessibility Standards Trainings'

have been given since 2020, and municipalities have also joined these trainings. Hence, the standards regarding this issue have been set, and interest in the issue has risen.

According to the survey results regarding household information technologies usage, 94.1% of households will access the internet at home in 2022 (TÜİK, 2022). This rate will continue to increase based on the prevalence of information technologies.

3.2. The Weaknesses of E-Municipality Practices with Regard to the Disabled Persons in Turkey

There are deficiencies in meeting the WCAG 2.1 accessibility standards even at the ministerial level. It requires a bigger effort for the local authorities with more limited material and humane opportunities to comply with the standards (Arslantürk, 2021: 85-88). Likewise, the results of the study analyzed in terms of web accessibility of 247 local authorities in 2019 detected many accessibility, availability, quality and legibility errors and this exhibited that this condition creates a problem not only with the disabled but also with the individuals without disabilities (Akgül, 2019: 70-76).

Compliance with accessibility standards in Turkey falls short.

The technology that creates accessibility problems also has the power to solve them. However, this technical infrastructure requires qualified personnel and investments. Particularly minor municipalities at the top, local authorities in Turkey suffer from a lack of pecuniary resources, qualified personnel, and technical infrastructure.

There is a lack of knowledge about the computer and communication technology use of the disabled in Turkey.

The disabled in Turkey have significant problems in accessing basic computer equipment and adaptive technologies (Subaşıoğlu, 2020: 210).

A substantial proportion of the disabled in Turkey have difficulties in meeting internet access expenses. This is because the problems faced in education and employment life and some additional costs that are brought by being disabled play a role in the impoverishment of the disabled individual. The database findings in Turkey also show that the education, employment, and income levels of the disabled remain behind compared with those of other walks of society.

There are deficiencies in the database of the disabled persons in Turkey.

3.3. Opportunities of E-Municipality Practices with Regard to the Disabled Persons

The e-municipality studies in Turkey are scarce. Therefore, it is easier to conduct these studies in accordance with the standards than changing a permanent settlement within the standards.

Computer and communication technologies have developed and become prevalent in Turkey. As a

reflection of this condition, the cost of basic computer equipment and the technology adapted decreases relatively.

As knowledge and awareness regarding accessibility and web accessibility increases, the number of qualified personnel interested in the subject increases.

With the effects of the disabled policies that have varied and gained prominence in Turkey, the education and computer literacy of the disabled have increased.

With the effects of the new public order approach and globalization local authorities tend to vary their social policies aimed at disadvantaged groups in terms of quality and quantity. This condition also reflects on the quality of e-municipality services.

3.4. Threats of E-Municipality Practices in Turkey with Regard to the Disabled Persons

The inadequacy of the compliance audit of accessibility standards in Turkey might put the disabled into a more disadvantaged position in benefiting from public services.

In case the cooperation and communication between the central administration and local authorities is not strengthened, quality, quantity, and legibility differences might occur in the delivery of e-municipality services.

Particularly minor municipalities being in the first place, the e-municipality practices can fail if pecuniary resources, qualified personnel, and technical infrastructure support are not provided for the local authorities.

There is a need for training programs in Turkey that will increase the computer literacy of the disabled across the country.

A vast number of the disabled in Turkey have computer software, adapted technology, and internet support needs. To provide equality of opportunities for the disabled, these needs must be met.

It is required to deliver the e-municipality and e-government services in accessible standards urgently. However, the same urgency is necessary for the environment, buildings, and public transportation. Other studies should not be neglected by focusing on only one issue. Universal design should be provided in both digital and physical environments.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Local authorities are units with increasing duty, power, and responsibilities due to the effects of globalization and the new public management order. Local authorities benefit from new technologies in meeting these expectations, just like central authorities. The prevalence of e-municipality practices is a concrete indicator of this tendency. E-municipality is the delivery of e-services to the citizen by using information and communication technologies transparently, effectively, and productively in a participatory environment close to the citizen. Benefiting from the-services delivered is not only a constitutional right but also an obligation. At this point,

the access of disadvantaged groups to the e-municipality services is only possible with additional measures. To provide accessibility at the international and national levels, various regulations and standards were put into practice and various policies were developed.

The disabled are on top of the fragile section of society who meet several obstacles in integrating with society. Besides the inadequacy of these sections, there are several obstacles brought by the social environment. These obstacles are seen more clearly in developing countries experiencing urbanization before industrialization, such as Turkey. To overcome these obstacles, studies are carried out in Turkey and technological developments are also benefited from.

It is urgently required to remove the obstacles in the structured environment in Turkey, just as it is worldwide, with a rights-based perspective. Accessibility in physical and digital environments should comply with these standards. On the other hand, the disabled should be able to benefit from e-municipality services like others in society. During this process, technical and pecuniary support should be provided to local authorities and the disabled to benefit from the initiatives presented by information and communication technologies. Public institutions should prepare the necessary infrastructure as pioneers and guides, and thus encouraging steps should be taken for the private sector. Thus, the digitization of various services presented by the private sector would be hastened. The effects of e-municipality services on the disabled are endeavored to be determined by the SWOT analysis method in this study that was performed with this aim.

This study aims to exhibit the factors providing convenience and the obstacles the disabled face during their access to the-municipality services. Turkey has started e-municipality applications in recent history. For a developing country and at the very beginning of the process, it is of vital importance to determine the advantages and disadvantages and to take the necessary extra precautions. This is because it is more affordable to proceed according to the standards at the beginning of the process rather than performing improvement works later. A system working in accordance with standards would affect satisfaction and functionality positively. The ultimate aim of the study is to present a small contribution to this need. On the other hand, the knowledge, interest, and awareness of the disabled in Turkey increases perpetually. In this respect, solutions for the social, psychological, economic, and spatial problems that the disabled experience are sought. However, information technologies and e-services are relatively new and fast-moving areas in Turkey. There is a lack of information and qualified personnel in this field. Following international standards on the one hand and making inspections compatible with the standards are possible with increased awareness. The use of e-services for the disabled can be provided only in this way. The study is drawn up to attract attention to the

subject and contribute to the gap in the literature.

With the e-municipality practices, the access of the disabled to the municipalities without time limits is made easier and physical obstacles are cleared. On the other hand, the-service receiving quality and speed also increase. E-municipality eases the development of transparent and accountable management. Besides, experienced and educated personnel in the accessibility of e-municipality facilities in Turkey are few. For the local authorities to provide accessibility standards of e-municipality, there is also a lack of investments and infrastructure deficiency. Moreover, a substantial number of the disabled persons require internet services, computer software, and financial support for the adapted technology costs.

Disability is a social reality to which anyone can be subjected at any time. Although the point that humanity has reached shows advancements in several fields, the world we live in comprises several risks that can cause disability. With a right-based approach that should be applied with regard to ethics and law, having a share from social wealth should be provided and the obstacles before social integrity should be cleared. Delivery of the e-municipality services with accessible standards should also be considered within this context.

Turkey is diversifying its policies aimed at the disabled with international agreements signed and legislative regulations actualized. In this context, practices in many fields such as education, health, accessibility, care, social aid, and employment continue. In addition, numerous problems of the disabled have not been solved yet. Following further expansions provided by the new technologies in the solution of the problems would contribute to success.

5. Limitations and Further Study

There are deficiencies in the database of the disabled in Turkey. This deficiency is the most important limitation of this study.

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