

# Chapter 14

## Digital Competencies in Disaster and Emergency Management: The Case of Yozgat Provincial Disaster and Emergency Directorate

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the role of digital transformation in disaster and emergency management, focusing on the digital competencies of public officials. The research, conducted in the Yozgat Provincial Disaster and Emergency Directorate, qualitatively analyzes the use of digital tools and technologies through semi-structured interviews with public officials. The interviews explored participants' daily work processes, the digital skills they required, their adaptation to digital transformation, and the challenges they faced. The findings reveal the digital skill levels of employees, their frequency and methods of using digital tools, and obstacles encountered during the transition to digital practices. By evaluating the digital skill levels and challenges faced by public officials, actionable strategies were proposed to support the effective implementation of digital transformation, contributing to more efficient disaster management practices.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The importance of digital capabilities in disaster and emergency management is increasing. Digital technologies play a critical role at every stage of disaster management (preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction). These technologies offer significant advantages in many areas, such as rapid access to information, effective communication and coordination, data analytics, and forecasting (Özbay and Ulupinar, 2023). Disaster and emergency management is vital to ensure the safety of societies and ensure effective responses in times of crises. In the era of digital transformation, the digital skills of public officials play a critical role in the effectiveness of disaster and emergency management. This study addresses the contributions of digital transformation to disaster and emergency management and how the digital skills of public officials working in this field can be improved.

The digital competencies of public officials in Yozgat Provincial Disaster and Emergency Directorate were interviewed to evaluate the effects of digital technologies in disaster and emergency management. In this context, the digital tools and technologies were qualitatively analyzed. The analysis was carried out through semi-structured interviews with public officials working in Yozgat Provincial Disaster and Emergency Directorate. The semi-structured interviews focused on the desired skills of the participants in their daily work processes. In addition, the adaptation of employees to the digital transformation process and the challenges they face in this process were also evaluated.

This research aims to determine the digital skill levels of employees and to make strategic recommendations for the development of these skills. Thus, recommendations were made for public officials to work more effectively and efficiently in the digital transformation process. This research was limited to public officials working in the Yozgat Provincial Disaster and Emergency Directorate. In this context, how digital technologies are used in disaster and emergency management, and the adaptation of employees to these technologies were examined. This study, conducted in Yozgat, can serve as a guide for similar directorates in other provinces. Moreover, the research findings have the potential to provide useful information on disaster and emergency management practices in Turkey. The limitations of this study include the fact that it is limited to public officials working in the Yozgat Provincial Disaster and Emergency Directorate, and the findings may not be generalizable to all disaster and emergency directorates. The effect of subjective evaluations should be considered in the process of measuring and evaluating employees' digital competencies. Factors such as the voluntary nature of the interviews and non-participation of some employees also limited the results of the research.

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