BİLGİ DÜNYASI
INFORMATION WORLD

Information World • 2026 • Volume 27 • Article 902 • 1-29
DOI: 10.15612/BD.2026.902

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Public and mobile libraries in the aftermath of the earthquake

Depremin ardından halk kütüphaneleri ve mobil kütüphaneler

Güler Demir[1]

[1]Kastamonu University, Kastamonu, Türkiye

Abstract

This qualitative study examines the roles and experiences of public and mobile libraries in the aftermath of the February 6, 2023, earthquake in Türkiye. Employing a phenomenological design, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 librarians and 2 administrators involved in disaster response efforts in affected provinces. The research aims to explore the services provided, challenges faced, and cooperation mechanisms in the disaster context, as well as to identify recommendations for future preparedness. Findings reveal that while Turkish public libraries lack formal disaster preparedness plans, mobile libraries played a critical role in delivering psychosocial support, logistical aid, and educational resources in the aftermath of the earthquake. Spontaneous collaboration with various organisations, such as the Ministry of Social Services and NGOs, has enabled effective service delivery despite logistical challenges and insufficient prior training. This study emphasizes the importance of strengthening communication networks, developing comprehensive disaster response strategies, and enhancing the capacity of mobile libraries by upgrading equipment and providing personnel training. It highlights the necessity of systematic preparedness, which involves disaster education, planning, and simulation exercises, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children and individuals with disabilities. The findings demonstrate that mobile libraries significantly contribute to community resilience and recovery, underscoring their vital role in emergency situations. This research offers valuable insights for policymakers, library administrators, and stakeholders aiming to improve disaster management and library services in the context of Türkiye's seismic risks. The study advocates for proactive, coordinated, and well-resourced disaster preparedness frameworks.

Keywords: Earthquake, libraries, mobile libraries, disaster management, Türkiye, crisis and disaster response, psychosocial support.

Öz

Bu nitel çalışma, 6 Şubat 2023 Türkiye depremi sonrasında halk kütüphanelerinin ve gezici kütüphanelerin rollerini ve deneyimlerini incelemektedir. Fenomenolojik bir tasarım kullanılarak, etkilenen illerde afet müdahale çalışmalarına katılan 12 kütüphaneci ve 2 yöneticiyle derinlemesine görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma, afet bağlamında sağlanan hizmetleri, karşılaşılan zorlukları ve iş birliği mekanizmalarını incelemeyi ve ayrıca gelecekteki hazırlıklar için öneriler belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bulgular, Türkiye'deki halk kütüphanelerinin resmi afet hazırlık planlarından yoksun olmasına karşın gezici kütüphanelerin deprem sonrasında psikososyal destek, lojistik yardım ve eğitim kaynakları sağlamada kritik bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır. Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı ve STK'lar gibi çeşitli kuruluşlarla kendiliğinden kurulan iş birliği, lojistik engellere ve yetersiz ön eğitime karşın etkili hizmet sunumunu mümkün kılmıştır. Çalışma, iletişim ağlarının güçlendirilmesinin, kapsamlı afet müdahale stratejilerinin geliştirilmesinin ve ekipman ve personel eğitimi de dâhil olmak üzere gezici kütüphane kapasitelerinin artırılmasının önemini vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma, özellikle

Cite as: Demir, G. (2026). Public and mobile libraries in the aftermath of the earthquake. *Information World*, *27*, Makale 902. https://doi.org/10.15612/BD.2026.902

Corresponding author: Güler Demir • **Email:** gulerdemir2009@gmail.com

Received: December 13, 2025 **Accepted:** June 27, 2026 **Published:** October 13, 2026

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çocuklar ve engelliler gibi savunmasız gruplar için afet eğitimi, planlama ve simülasyon çalışmalarını da içerecek biçimde sistematik bir hazırlığa duyulan gereksinimin altını çizmektedir. Sonuçlar, mobil kütüphanelerin toplum dayanıklılığına ve toparlanmasına önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunduğunu ve acil durum senaryolarındaki yaşamsal rollerini vurguladığını göstermektedir. Bu araştırma, Türkiye'nin sismik riski bağlamında afet yönetimini ve kütüphane hizmetlerini geliştirmek isteyen politika yapıcılar, kütüphane yöneticileri ve paydaşlar için değerli bilgiler sunarak, proaktif, koordineli ve iyi kaynaklara sahip afet hazırlık çerçevelerini savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Deprem, kütüphaneler, mobil kütüphaneler, afet yönetimi, Türkiye, kriz ve afet müdahalesi, psikososyal destek.

Introduction

Libraries must protect their staff, users, and resources from disasters, which can severely disrupt operations (Rattan, 2013, p. 1). Disasters, both natural and human-induced, pose significant risks to library collections, infrastructure, and service continuity worldwide. Major examples include the 1986 Los Angeles Public Library fire that destroyed 400,000 volumes; the 1994 Oviatt Library earthquake damage with a six-and-a-half-year reconstruction; an eight-foot flood at the University of Hawaii library in 2004; and a 2003 arson at the University of Georgia library annex, causing $1.5 million in losses (Jones, 2006, p. 223-224). These examples demonstrate that libraries are highly vulnerable to disasters and highlight the need for systematic disaster preparedness and management. Effective disaster management requires precaution and planning (Rattan, 2013, p. 1).

Beyond physical damage, disasters also have significant social and psychological impacts on affected communities. Natural disasters can cause mental health issues, making support services essential (El-Barazi, 2023). In this context, libraries play a critical role not only as information centers but also as community support spaces. Mobile libraries and temporary solutions, such as roving librarians and book exchanges, are vital in emergencies, as demonstrated after the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. These initiatives provided access to books, information, and social contact, reducing isolation. The reopening of libraries was highly valued, with increased online engagement underscoring their role in mental health and community resilience (Gallagher et al., 2013).

Within this global framework, Türkiye represents a critical case due to its high earthquake risk. Türkiye is highly vulnerable to earthquakes because it is situated on active fault lines. These natural disasters threaten not only residential areas but also cultural and information centers. During earthquakes, libraries and information centers can suffer significant damage; shelves may collapse, books may be ruined, and the infrastructure may be severely impacted. Such disruptions hinder access to information and complicate the preservation of cultural memory. Following recent earthquakes in Türkiye, many information centers were damaged, with some requiring reconstruction. According to Kaya (2022, pp. 2, 87), although studies on natural disasters in Türkiye began after the 1939 Erzincan Earthquake, the turning point was the 1999 Marmara Earthquake and its subsequent destruction. Changes were made to disaster policies after the 1999 Marmara (Kocaeli) Earthquakes.

Despite these developments, challenges remain regarding disaster preparedness, coordination, and service continuity in libraries. The damage to buildings and collections in public libraries resulting from disasters such as fire, earthquakes, and conflict is noteworthy. Responsibility for library protection and the initial response lies with the relevant Ministry and personnel, and disaster risks should be identified and precautions should be taken. In this process, experts and institutions should collaborate to carry out standardized and coordinated work supported by appropriate training. The 2011 Van earthquake caused significant damage to the Public Library and the Ferit Melen Library of Van Yüzüncü Yıl University, rendering both institutions unsable. In Türkiye, while many libraries are housed in modern buildings, others are situated in historical structures. Using basements in these historical buildings for storage poses a risk, especially given their vulnerability to damage during disasters. Common issues in such buildings include the collapse of unsecured shelves holding books, falling ceiling materials, fires caused by faulty electrical cables or installations, broken windows, and damage to materials from earthquakes and fires (Kuzucuoğlu, 2014b, p. 27).

The earthquakes that occurred on February 6, 2023, represent one of the most significant recent disasters affecting library services in Türkiye. These earthquakes had profound effects not only on physical infrastructure but also on the delivery of library services and community support mechanisms. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) advises libraries to prepare for disasters by assessing their resources. An effective disaster plan must minimize risks and maximize response efficiency (McIlwaine & Marie-Thérèse, 2006, p. 6), which requires hazard assessment, understanding existing resources, and a commitment to the plan.

In this context, the present study focuses specifically on the roles of public and mobile libraries in the aftermath of the February 6, 2023, earthquakes in Türkiye. It aims to examine how library services were organized, what types of services were provided, the challenges encountered, and how these experiences can inform future disaster preparedness and response strategies. This study emphasizes the public library's role in providing educational, social, and spiritual support before and after earthquakes. It examines services following the February 6, 2023, earthquake in Türkiye, focusing on the General Directorate of Libraries' response, the use of mobile libraries, challenges faced, and future disaster measures. A brief overview of mobile libraries and Türkiye's disaster legislation provides the necessary context.

Mobile libraries in Türkiye

A mobile library is a kind of vehicle or service designed to transport books and related materials to the public. Its main purpose is not only to deliver books, but also to provide lending services, access to information, internet use, educational materials, and social support for individuals and communities who cannot easily benefit from fixed libraries because of geographical, social, economic, or temporary access barriers (Bikos & Papadimitriou, 2018, p. 36). In this respect, mobile libraries extend the scope of public library services to rural areas, schools, disadvantaged groups, and settlements where permanent library infrastructure is limited or absent.

Mobile library services date back to the 1850s, when books were transported by horse-drawn carriages. These services began using motorized vehicles by the early twentieth century. Different countries employ various terms: In the United Kingdom and the United States, the term "bookmobile" is commonly used to describe motorized vehicles that carry library materials and provide services to underserved communities, especially in rural areas. The term "mobile library" is primarily used by British and Australian librarians to describe a motorized vehicle that carries library materials. In other countries, similar services are referred to as Bookmobiles, Bibliobuses, Bucherbus, or other terms. In Australia, the term "libraries on wheels" is also used. In Argentina, there is a unique concept called "Weapon of Mass Instruction," which is represented by a transformed tank. In Brazil, bicycle-based libraries, known as Bicicloteca, are popular. Meanwhile, in Israel, seasonal beach libraries are favored. The terminology and specific forms of mobile libraries vary based on local culture, geography, and available resources. The terminology and specific forms depend on local culture, geography, and available resources. However, all serve the common purpose of bringing library services to people who cannot easily access stationary libraries. The defining characteristics of these libraries, regardless of terminology such as "bookmobile," "bibliobus," "bucherbus," or "libraries on wheels," are their mobility and their role in providing library services beyond fixed locations. Both formal (institution-based) and informal (private or community-led) mobile libraries fulfill these criteria, adapting their forms to meet local needs (Bikos & Papadimitriou, 2018, p. 35-39; IFLA, 2010, p. 5). These examples are provided to illustrate the concept, but the term "mobile library" is used broadly to encompass any library service that does not remain in one fixed location. Any mobile library service, regardless of terminology or specific implementation, falls under this broad definition.

Modern mobile libraries can carry diverse materials and equipment, such as DVDs and computers, and use various modes of transport, such as boats (IFLA, 2010, p. 5). These services are vital for promoting equitable access, especially for those with geographical barriers to traditional libraries (Keseroğlu, 2022, p. 24). When equipped with advanced technologies such as wireless internet access, they are particularly effective at increasing accessibility for underserved communities during emergencies (Bargahi et al., 2024, p. 10). During disasters, their importance increases further because they can provide continued access to information, reading materials, communication opportunities, and supportive social spaces in places where fixed library services are interrupted. In this sense, mobile libraries function not only as service-delivery units but also as flexible community support mechanisms that can help reduce isolation and contribute to recovery. The vehicles used as

mobile libraries vary by region; both basic and advanced models are used worldwide, including in Türkiye (Ersoy, 1962, p. 115).

In Türkiye, Mustafa Güzelgöz pioneered the service in 1957 using donkeys, later expanding the service to include more animals (Öksüzoğlu, 2016, p. 263) to transport books, an effort publicized by local authorities (Güzelgöz, 1959, p. 14-15). After receiving an award in 1963, he acquired a jeep and later a Ford to enhance delivery (Keseroğlu, 1991, p. 6), leading to the effective implementation of services using various vehicles (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2024a). Modern mobile libraries in Türkiye evolved from republican-era public house libraries. Early models included a 1929 service for teachers, a 1947 British Cultural Delegation library, and services from the Kayseri and Ankara Public House Libraries, which later expanded nationally (Polat & Bıçakçı, 2023, p. 32).

As of 2023, the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications oversees 1,295 public libraries and 66 mobile libraries. As of 2024, the number of public libraries has risen to 1,301 (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2024; Polat & Bıçakçı, 2023, p. 31). In Türkiye, mobile libraries are used primarily to serve rural areas and other locations where users have limited access to fixed library services; they operate on routes and service points determined by provincial public libraries. Efforts continue to extend mobile services to all 81 provinces, with locations set by provincial libraries (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018). A central unit coordinates these operations, collaborating with NGOs and municipalities to enhance services (Polat & Bıçakçı, 2023, p. 32). Regulations require mobile libraries to be updated annually, hold at least 2,000 items, and be staffed by a librarian and driver (Halk Kütüphaneleri Yönetmeliği, 2012). Although mobile libraries are intended to visit each location every 15 days, this schedule is not implemented consistently. Foundational planning is the central government's role, while local authorities must create effective service strategies (Polat & Bıçakçı, 2023, p. 32). Overall, mobile libraries represent a flexible and responsive public library model in Türkiye, and this flexibility makes them especially significant in disaster periods when access needs increase and fixed cultural infrastructure may be disrupted.

Legislation concerning disaster management in Türkiye

Systematic disaster management in Türkiye began with Law No. 7269, mandating post-disaster actions and assigning governors to organize tasks and assembly points (Umumi Hayata Müessir… Kanun, 1959). Subsequently, various emergency regulations were established (1963, 1968, 1988, 2014, 2022), based upon lessons learned from past disasters and research (Özmen, 2023, pp. 167-168). The "Integrated Disaster Management System" was later established via Law No. 5902, creating the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD). This system shifts from "crisis management" to "risk management," aiming to mitigate disaster impacts through pre-disaster preparedness, planning, and training (AFAD, n.d., p. 3). In 2014, Türkiye introduced the Türkiye Disaster Response Plan (TAMP) to enhance response coordination; it was subsequently revised in 2022 (T. C. İçişleri Bakanlığı…, 2024). TAMP involves government, NGOs, and the private sector, with coordination occurring at the Provincial Disaster Emergency Center during emergencies without prior directives (AFAD, n.d.). AFAD has outlined libraries' responsibilities for providing disaster-related publications and services (AFAD, 2015, p. 14). While the General Directorate of Libraries collaborates with AFAD, no senior manager oversees these efforts, and inter-library cooperation is not legally established. Libraries, managed centrally, lack autonomy to support disaster areas with equipment or personnel, and constraints on decision-making speed delay local responses (Kaya, 2022, p. 220).

Related Works

Türkiye's earthquake vulnerability remains insufficiently addressed in the information and library science literature, which has largely been theoretical (Kaya & Yılmaz, 2023; Kuzucuoğlu, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b; Kuzucuoğlu & Şeşen, 2020; Küçükcan, 2008; Yücel, 2015). The destructive February 6, 2023 earthquakes (magnitudes 7.7 and 7.6) caused significant loss of life and financial damage estimated at 9% of Türkiye's 2023 GNP (Kaya & Yılmaz, 2023, p. 1132; Koç, 2023, p. 168). The disaster revealed critical needs for improved aid coordination and planning (Öztürk & Kırca, 2023). The 2023 Library Week, themed "Libraries Heal" in response to the February 6 earthquakes, featured extensive media coverage. The General Directorate of Libraries and Publications deployed 38 mobile libraries to affected areas, staffed by volunteers, and collaborated with ministries and NGOs to provide trauma support (Karaaslan, 2023; Karadeniz, 2014, p. 228-229). The Minister of Culture and

Tourism announced that the Ministry organized more than 45,000 events for 700,000 citizens and also provided psychological support (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2024b). Two edited volumes address post-earthquake needs (Çakmak & Zencir, 2023; Öztürk & Kırca, 2023). Çakmak and Zencir (2023, p. 7) stress that libraries, as crucial public spaces, should be equipped with comprehensive disaster management plans. Both sources address post-earthquake needs (Çakmak & Zencir, 2023; Öztürk & Kırca, 2023). Contributors from various disciplines outline the necessary actions for all phases of a disaster. Noting that children are the most affected, Temiz (2023, p. 9, 24) finds libraries unprepared due to insufficient political support and advocates for interdisciplinary, disaster-oriented psychosocial programs. Baysen (2023, p. 31, 34, 37) clarifies that disasters are common, not rare, and reducing mortality depends on building stability and proper human behavior, necessitating educational programs beginning at the primary school level. Alikılıç (2023, pp. 39, 43, 49), examining Ottoman records, notes improved accuracy from the early 19th century and identifies Istanbul as the most quake-prone province, emphasizing Türkiye's need for ongoing seismic awareness. Zengin and Güneş (2023, pp. 52, 56, 67) surveyed 43 information center staff members and found that many of them were inadequately prepared, lacked awareness, and lacked practical knowledge of disaster plans. The study highlights the need for human-centered disaster plans and adequate staff training. Yayla (2023, pp. 82, 94-95) recommends Business Continuity Management (BCM) principles for Turkish libraries, using the University of Canterbury Library's example to advise normalising services post-disaster, updating plans, and involving all staff. Kuzucuoğlu (2023, p. 142) stresses the need for preemptive risk analysis in memory institutions for rapid feedback. The edited volume by Öztürk and Kırca (2023, pp. 1-2) contains proceedings from a post-earthquake symposium, covering earthquake awareness, crisis management, environmental effects, and psycho-social impacts.

Aldemir's (2023, pp. 70-72, 75-77) study of the February 6, 2023, Kahramanmaraş earthquake details the maintenance of services. The study emphasizes coordination and psychosocial support for children. A Disaster Crisis Team was established to assess damage, leading to closures. To ensure continuity, 38 of Türkiye's 66 mobile libraries were deployed, later increasing to 48. As part of this effort, 250 personnel organized literature and personal-development workshops to help children overcome trauma. By June 30, 2023, 36,681 activities involved 104,138 participants. In addition, Street Games Kits were distributed to 30 mobile library vehicles in the region. These kits included materials for various street games, such as ropes, hopscotch mats, handkerchiefs, marbles, tags, and balls. As part of the initiative, street games activities were organized, with a total of 997 events conducted, primarily targeting children. In these events, 32,623 children and 10,977 adults took part. Additionally, 6,340 books were loaned, and 20,223 books were distributed. Ministries provided cultural, social, and psychosocial services in tent cities, while the Adıyaman Provincial Public Library offered similar support and remained open daily. Mobile libraries served safe settlements and tent cities with books and toys, and a National Library coordination center prepared aid kits for the region. In his 2024 study, Polat (p. 119, 142) examined the experiences of 9 volunteer librarians following the February 6, 2023, Kahramanmaraş disaster. Librarians reported children tended to prefer games, while adults mainly sought companionship. The study concluded librarians need psychological first-aid training and a dedicated course in their education. Akkaya and Polat (2024, p. 16, 26-27) found a high level of earthquake anxiety among 107 public library employees in Hatay, with common symptoms being withdrawal and biological effects, especially in younger and city-center workers. They conclude that employees must first achieve personal normalisation to support social normalisation. According to Froeschl and others (2025), libraries were vital in the 2023 Hatay earthquake by providing (1) safe spaces and critical information, (2) health education and psychosocial programs, (3) digital resources for communication, and (4) educational continuity, supporting both immediate relief and long-term community resilience.

As Türkiye is in an earthquake zone, public awareness and education are essential. The solidarity after the Kahramanmaraş earthquakes reflects a collective acceptance of this need (Akkaş, 2023, p. 24). Effective crisis intervention is based on conscious earthquake scenarios and risk management research (Kocalar, 2023, p. 4). Disaster studies and risk mitigation must be done preemptively. Risk management involves creating disaster plans, organizing resources, developing skills, and preparing earthquake scenarios to perform tasks efficiently (Tüfekci, 2023, p. 39-40).

Methodology and data collection techniques

This study employed a phenomenological design, a qualitative research methodology that focuses on individual experiences (Neubauer et al., 2019, p. 90). Its primary aim was to uncover truths within participants' narratives about a specific phenomenon, drawing from their experiences and emotions (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015, p. 1). The study received ethical approval from the Kastamonu University Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee on November 6, 2024 (Decision/Protocol No. 11-5). Based on the six themes identified in the content analysis, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How are the provinces affected by the earthquake? Which earthquake-affected provinces did the volunteers travel to?
2. What services were provided and what activities were carried out in the earthquake zone?
3. Which institutions and organisations cooperated in the process, and what was the nature of this cooperation?
4. What challenges were encountered during the process?
5. How did the planning and coordination process operate in the disaster area?
6. What are the participants' opinions and suggestions regarding possible earthquake preparedness?

Based on these questions, the primary objective of the study was to identify and analyze the activities of volunteers and relevant institutions in the earthquake zone following the February 6, 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye, with a particular focus on the types of services provided, the structure of cooperation, the challenges encountered, the planning and coordination processes, and the suggestions offered for future preparedness. The secondary objectives were to determine the provinces reached by volunteers and the areas in which they served; to classify the types of services and activities provided in the earthquake zone; to identify the institutions and organisations that contributed to the process; to describe the difficulties encountered during implementation; to explain the planning and coordination processes in the disaster area; and to evaluate participants' recommendations for earthquake preparedness.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with two administrators and twelve librarians from the Directorate of Public Librarianship to examine their experiences in earthquake-affected regions after February 6, 2023. A total of 14 questions were asked during the interviews to gather their individual experiences, observations, and suggestions systematically. Interview questions are included in Appendices 1. Public librarians who voluntarily deployed to these areas were studied, with participants recruited via snowball sampling (Kılıç, 2013, p. 44-45). The first participant, a librarian, provided contact information for other individuals who had experience in earthquake zones. The interviews were conducted between 1 and 31 December 2024, by phone or via online communication tools, depending on participants' availability and conditions in the earthquake-affected regions. Additional communication took place via email and WhatsApp as needed to ensure thorough discussions. Thus, each interview with one of the 14 participants lasted approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. Two participants held senior positions in the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications, while the other 12 were volunteers from various public libraries. Each interview used specially prepared forms appropriate to the research objectives.

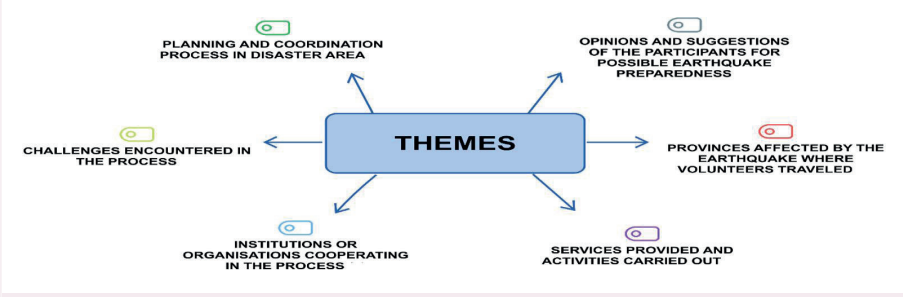


Figure 1. Themes demonstration

Data analysis was conducted using MAXQDA 2024, software for managing and analyzing qualitative research. All ethical approvals were obtained from the researcher's affiliated university, and formal consent was obtained from all participants. The theoretical section of the study reviews the current status of mobile library services in Türkiye and the legislative framework for disaster management. It also provides a historical overview, introducing relevant research that connects libraries and disasters within the domestic libraries and information science literature.

Findings

This section presents the findings derived from the qualitative interviews conducted to address the research problem. Each of the 14 participants in the study has been assigned a code ranging from P1 to P14.

Provinces affected by the earthquake where volunteers traveled

The research identified seven codes under the theme "Provinces Affected by the Earthquake Where Volunteers Traveled": "Kahramanmaraş (7)", "Hatay (6)", "Adıyaman (5)", "Osmaniye (2)", "Gaziantep (1)", "Malatya (1)", and "Remote Support (1)".

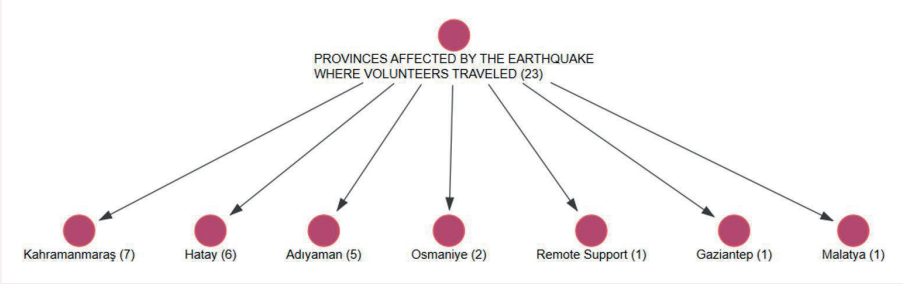


Figure 2. Hierarchical code-subcode representation for the theme of provinces affected by the earthquake where volunteers traveled

As shown in Figure 3, these codes systematically represent the geographical distribution of participant field experiences. Locations were included in the coding system based on explicit participant references and frequency of field reports.

Kahramanmaraş (7): Kahramanmaraş emerged as the most frequently visited province. Participant P4 worked throughout the province and its villages, while participant P9 was stationed at the Kahramanmaraş Municipality Fair Centre (KAFUM) before serving in tent cities.

Hatay (6): Hatay ranked as the second most significant province for field activities. Participant P5 worked from the Hatay Animal Market while coordinating mobile library services, and participant P7 served at both the Hatay Animal Market and Antakya's Narlıca neighborhood.

Adıyaman (5): Adıyaman was another primary area of operation. Participants P1 and P3 both worked at the Adıyaman Provincial Public Library, which continued services despite surrounding village devastation that made the province a priority for mobile library deployment.

Osmaniye (2): Osmaniye was coded based on its identification as one of the six provinces receiving initial mobile response units, ensuring comprehensive representation of coordinated deployment areas (P1, P11).

Gaziantep (1): Participant P4 conducted field activities in Gaziantep's Nurdağı and Islahiye districts.

Malatya (1): Participant P4 also served in Malatya as part of targeted field operations.

Remote Support (1): Participant P2 described maintaining communication networks and mobile vehicles ready for rapid deployment, representing preparedness activities without direct field presence.

This coding structure provides a systematic explanation of Figure 3, with Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, and Adıyaman as primary activity centers and other locations reflecting complementary operational roles. Figure 3 shows the earthquake-affected provinces where volunteers went. The P4 participant, however, mentioned "Kahramanmaraş" in three different ways in their response regarding the impact on Kahramanmaraş. Therefore, the frequency in P4's response is 3, which differs from the others. This frequency indicates the extent to which Kahramanmaraş was affected.

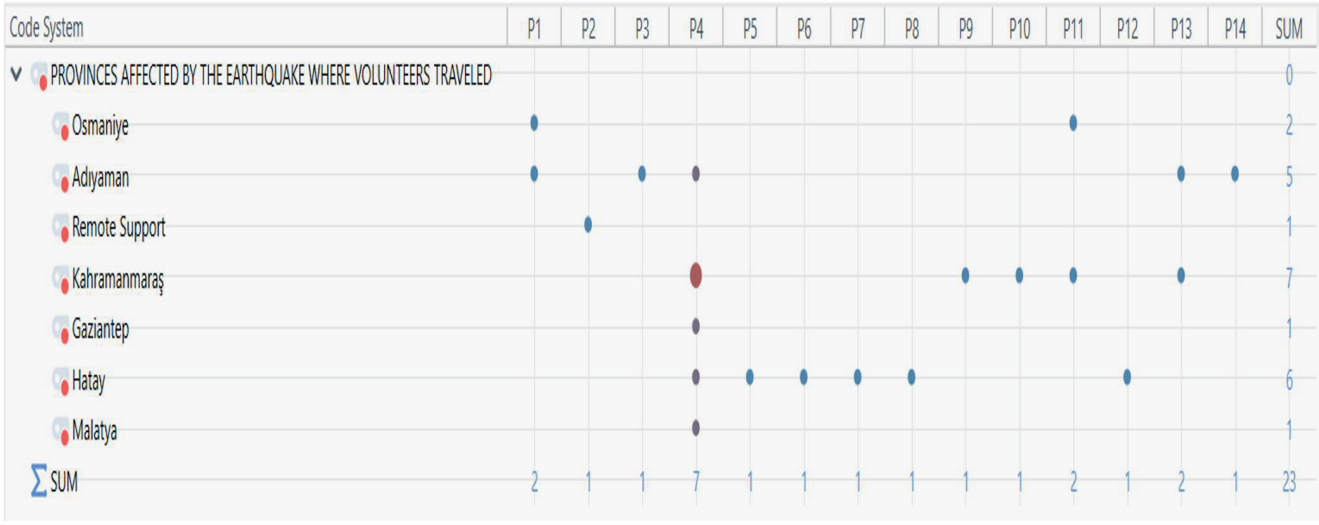


Figure 3. The regions of the provinces affected by the earthquake with the highest number of missions

Services provided and activities carried out

In the research, two categories related to the theme 'services provided and activities carried out' were identified: "services provided for earthquake victims" and "services offered for access to information in the earthquake zone". This structure shows that the responses were not isolated activities, but part of a broader service model that combined immediate relief, psychosocial recovery, child-focused support, and information access. The numbers in parentheses indicate how frequently each code appeared in the interviews, and therefore show which services were emphasized most strongly by the participants.

Figure 4 presents codes and subcodes for the themes of "services provided for earthquake victims" and "services offered for access to information in the earthquake zone".

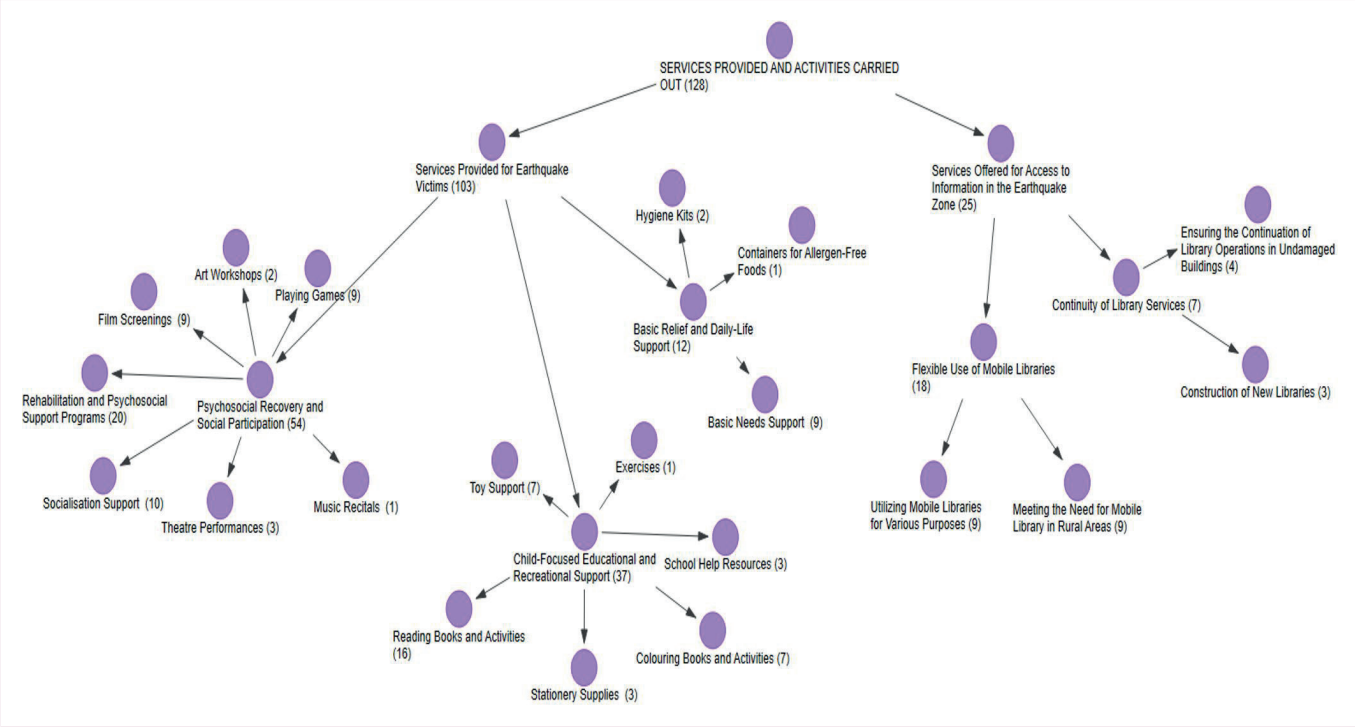


Figure 4. Hierarchical presentation of codes and subcodes for the themes of "services provided for earthquake victims" and "services offered for access to information in the earthquake zone"

Services provided for earthquake victims

Psychosocial recovery and social participation: The most frequently mentioned service in this subtheme was Rehabilitation and Psychosocial Support Programs (20). This code was associated with several participants who described support for children, families, and young people in different locations. For example, P3 noted educational rehabilitation activities supported by the Young Life Foundation, while P8 referred to privacy training for children and parents, and P12 emphasized psychological support for families. Socialisation Support (10) was also widely reported and included activities that helped victims regain social interaction in field settings. P5 described a Book Fashion Show with children, officials, and book gifts, while P9 stressed the importance of regular conversations, especially with adults. In addition, Film Screenings (9) and Playing Games (9) were used as social and emotional recovery tools. P11 mentioned the distribution of traditional game sacks in earthquake zones, and P12 referred to a wide variety of games. Lower-frequency but related activities included Theatre Performances (3), Art Workshops (2), and Music Recitals (1), which were used to create cultural and emotional relief in the affected areas.

Child-Focused educational and recreational support: Another important subtheme was Reading Books and Activities (16), which reflects the strong link between library services and child-centered recovery. P5 described activities in which children completed stories and drew pictures, while P10 referred more generally to reading and related activities. Colouring Books and Activities (7) and Toy Support (7) also show that services were designed to provide children with both educational and emotional stimulation. P3 and P9 reported drawing and colouring activities, while P7 and P14 mentioned toy donations, including balloons. In this same subtheme, School Help Resources (3) and Stationery Supplies (3) were offered to support educational continuity. P1 and P5 referred to exam books and school materials, and P6 described a social media campaign that collected books and stationery for distribution. Exercises (1) also appeared as part of child-focused recreational support, especially in outdoor activities.

Basic Relief and Daily-Life Support: The third subtheme consisted of Basic Needs Support (9), Hygiene Kits (2), and Containers for Allergen-Free Foods (1). These services show that library-based recovery work extended beyond cultural and educational support to include practical assistance. P4 reported the delivery of essential supplies such as food, shelter, and hygiene materials, while also noting the provision of additional items such as coffee. Hygiene support was specifically mentioned by P4, and P4 also reported specialized support for victims with food allergies through allergen-free lunch boxes obtained from the Association for Life with Allergy. This pattern shows that services were shaped by both general needs and highly specific situational needs in the earthquake zone.

Services offered for access to information in the earthquake zone

Under the category of Services Offered for Access to Information in the Earthquake Zone, two main themes and four codes were identified: Flexible Use of Mobile Libraries, which includes "Utilizing Mobile Libraries for Various Purposes (9)" and "Meeting the Need for Mobile Library in Rural Areas (9)", and "Continuity of Library Services", which includes "Ensuring the Continuation of Library Operations in Undamaged Buildings (4)" and "Construction of New Libraries (3)". It should also be noted that not all participants expressed opinions on every topic within this category. Instead, the themes were distributed across different participants according to their direct experiences and observations in the field. This suggests that the findings represent a varied pattern of emphasis across participants, with each respondent addressing only the issues most closely related to their own experience and observations rather than responding uniformly to all topics.

Flexible Use of Mobile Libraries: Within the code of Utilizing Mobile Libraries for Various Purposes (9), participants emphasized the multifunctional and flexible use of mobile libraries in the earthquake zone, as reflected in the following statements:

> "Reports were requested from all provinces to assess damage. Mobile vehicle status was analyzed, and efforts were made to increase mobile library capacity" (P1).
>
> "We provided library services, created safe spaces, offered logistical support, and used mobile libraries for aid distribution" (P5).
>
> "The mobile library offered more than books—activities, games, cold chain storage, charging, Wi-Fi, and printing, mainly for children" (P13).

Within the code of Meeting the Need for Mobile Library in Rural Areas (9), participants highlighted the importance of extending services to rural and hard-to-reach areas, as expressed in the following statements:

> "The Adıyaman Public Library was affected. Mobile response vehicles were sent to Adıyaman, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Malatya, Gaziantep, and Osmaniye. While Besni in Adıyaman had minor damage, nearby villages faced severe destruction, and access was difficult" (P1).
>
> "We supported villages with our mobile library" (P3).
>
> "The greatest damage was in the Kahramanmaraş-Hatay-Adıyaman triangle, then support expanded to Malatya, Gaziantep, and Osmaniye. We provided logistical aid, buying supplies in Urfa and distributing them in Kahramanmaraş, then continued support from there" (P11).

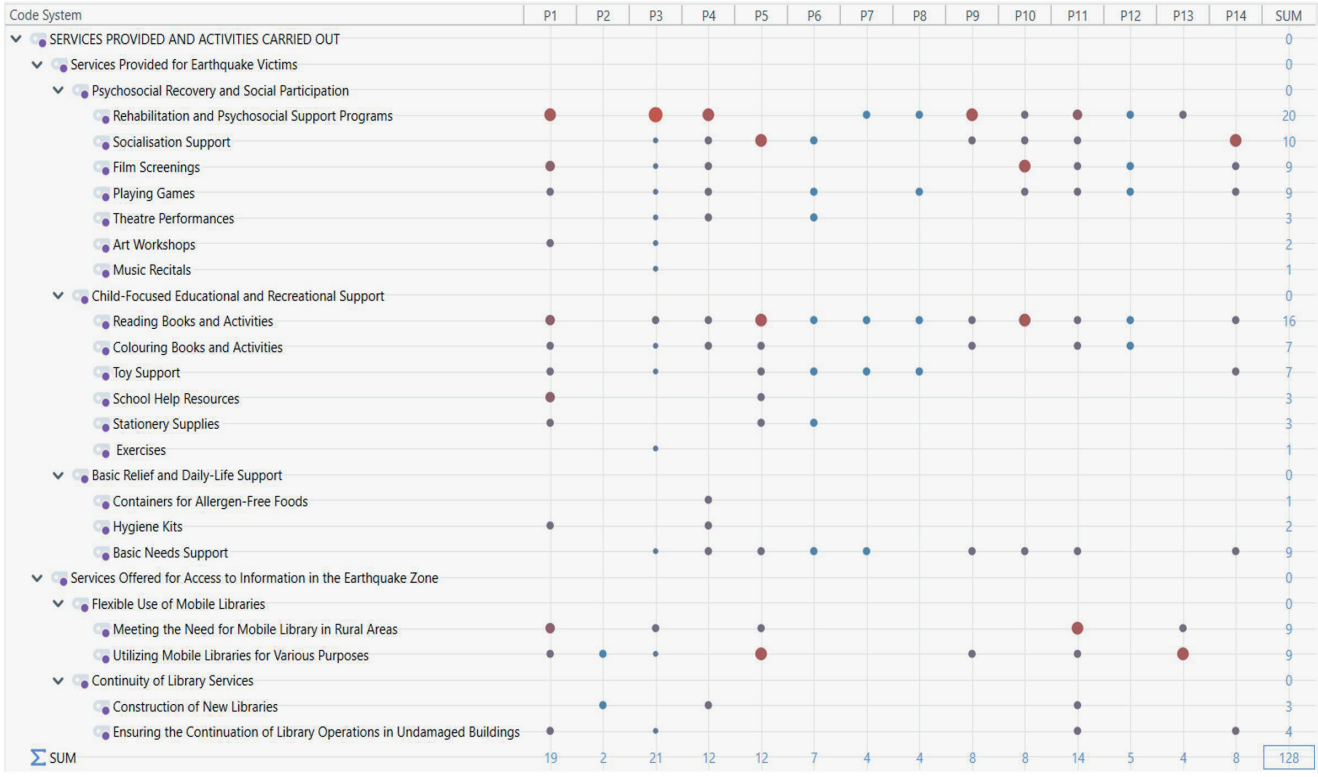
Continuity of Library Services: Within the code of Ensuring the Continuation of Library Operations in Undamaged Buildings (4), participants emphasized maintaining services in structurally safe libraries, as reflected in the following statements:

> "We maintained activities in libraries that were intact or lightly damaged" (P1).
>
> "Over 10 mobile libraries from different cities, including Urfa and Diyarbakır, traveled to Kahramanmaraş. We were traveling from Yozgat. The traveling libraries did not go to places where the library buildings were safe and sound; librarians provided services in their buildings" (P11).

Within the code of Construction of New Libraries (3), participants noted reconstruction efforts to improve infrastructure, with one stating:

> "New libraries are being built to replace demolished ones with modern, contemporary structures" (P2).

Furthermore, the distribution of the services and activities the participants concentrated on was analyzed in this category. According to this, the respondents reported that rehabilitation and psychosocial support programs were the most common services and activities. Details are displayed in the Figure 5 below.



Code System	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	SUM
SERVICES PROVIDED AND ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT															0
Services Provided for Earthquake Victims															0
Psychosocial Recovery and Social Participation															0
Rehabilitation and Psychosocial Support Programs	●		●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●		20
Socialisation Support			●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	10
Film Screenings	●		●	●						●	●	●		●	9
Playing Games	●		●	●		●		●		●	●	●		●	9
Theatre Performances			●	●		●									3
Art Workshops	●		●												2
Music Recitals			●												1
Child-Focused Educational and Recreational Support															0
Reading Books and Activities	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	16
Colouring Books and Activities	●		●	●	●				●		●	●			7
Toy Support	●		●		●	●	●	●						●	7
School Help Resources	●				●										3
Stationery Supplies	●				●	●									3
Exercises			●												1
Basic Relief and Daily-Life Support															0
Containers for Allergen-Free Foods				●											1
Hygiene Kits	●			●											2
Basic Needs Support			●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●	9
Services Offered for Access to Information in the Earthquake Zone															0
Flexible Use of Mobile Libraries															0
Meeting the Need for Mobile Library in Rural Areas	●		●		●						●		●		9
Utilizing Mobile Libraries for Various Purposes	●	●	●		●				●		●		●		9
Continuity of Library Services															0
Construction of New Libraries		●		●							●				3
Ensuring the Continuation of Library Operations in Undamaged Buildings	●		●								●			●	4
SUM	19	2	21	12	12	7	4	4	8	8	14	5	4	8	128

Figure 5. Distribution of activities and services on which participants concentrate

Institutions or organisations cooperating in the process

Within the scope of the research, 26 codes belonging to the third theme 'Institutions or Organisations Cooperating in the Process' were created. The institutions and organisations cooperating in the post-earthquake recovery process are categorized based on their primary operational roles. The first category, Governmental and Public Authorities, includes entities responsible for administration, disaster coordination, infrastructure, and social services. This group features the Ministry of Family and Social Services (18), the Provincial Directorate of Disaster and Emergency (14), the Ministry of National Education (9), the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications (7), the Ministry of Health, General Directorate of Public Health (3), the Presidency of Religious Affairs (3), the Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism (2), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (1). The second category, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Associations, focuses on specialized community support, social cohesion, and activity-based recovery. This group includes NGO Representatives (9), the Turkish Red Crescent (3), the Street Game Federation (4), the Contemporary Drama Association (2), the International Puppet Union (UNIMA) (2), the Archery Association (2), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2), Social Service Professionals (2), Professional Unions/Publishing Houses (2), the Chess Association (1), the Young Lives Foundation (1), and Theatre Players (1). Finally, the third category, Academic and Specialized Professional Support, contributes scientific

expertise, pedagogical content, and professional knowledge. This category consists of Psychologists and Pedagogues (5), Universities (3), the Middle East Technical University (2), the Child Development and Educators Association (2), and Authors (3) who provided direct literary content for recovery programs.

Within the framework of the "Institutions or organisations cooperating in the process" theme, the statistical distribution of these codes is presented in Figure 6 below, and the hierarchical code-subcode statistics are presented in Figure 7.

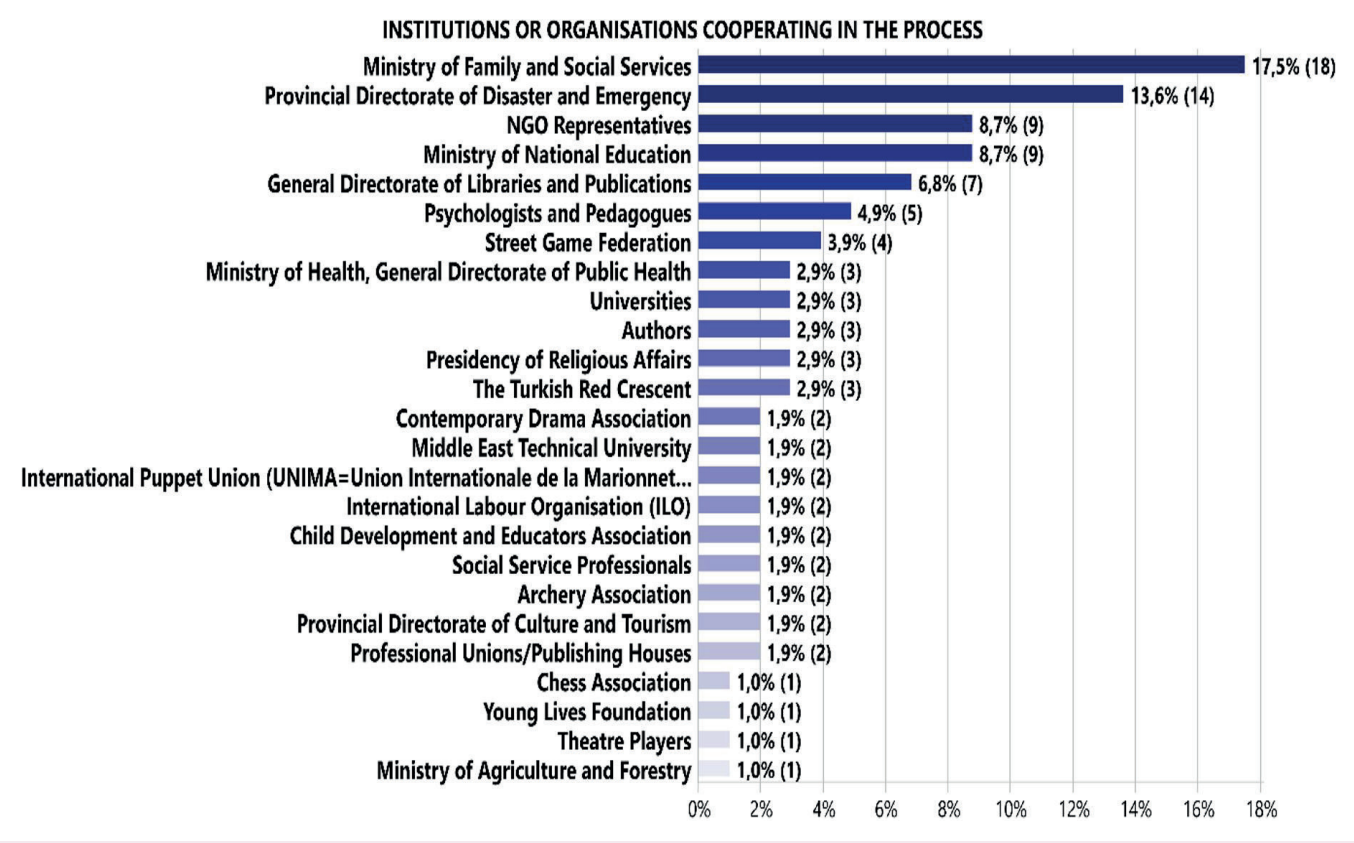


Figure 6. Statistical distribution of the sub-codes belonging to the theme institutions or organisations cooperating in the process

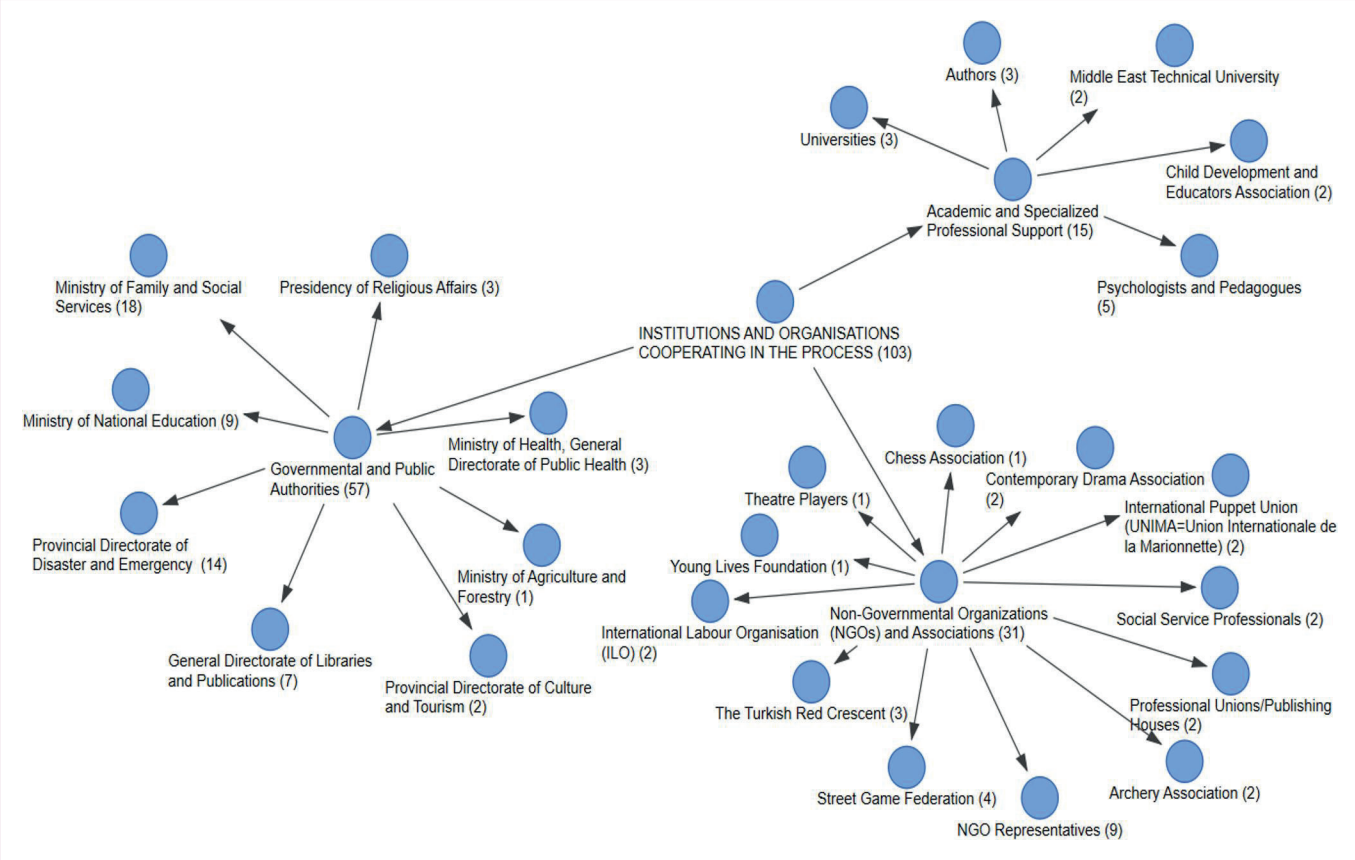


Figure 7. Hierarchical code-subcode statistics belonging to the theme institutions or organisations cooperating in the process

The institutions and organisations cooperating in the post-earthquake recovery process can be grouped according to their primary roles. Governmental and public authorities were the most visible actors in this process, particularly in relation to coordination, psychosocial support, and service delivery. Participants emphasized the active role of the Ministry of Family and Social Services (18), the Provincial Directorate of Disaster and Emergency (14), the Ministry of National Education (9), the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications (7), the Ministry of Health, General Directorate of Public Health (3), the Presidency of Religious Affairs (3), the Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism (2), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (1). As one participant noted

> "In addition to Kahramanmaraş and Hatay, it was observed that Adıyaman Provincial Public Library, in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services, tried to provide psychosocial support through cinema, painting, colouring activities, and sports exercises" (P3).

Another participant stated

> "The Ministry of Family and Social Services and the Ministry of National Education supported us greatly. Children learned responsibility, shared, and socialized. We instilled hope. Initially, I thought earthquake survivors wouldn't focus on books or libraries, but that changed—people need books and libraries in such times" (P5).

Coordination processes were also described in detail:

> "Along with mobile libraries, officials from disaster management, social services, and other institutions participated. The Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism provided strong support for coordination, and field orientation training was held" (P7).

> "The General Directorate of Libraries and Publications quickly organized and managed coordination successfully" (P9).

Participants also noted

> "Co-operation was established with the General Directorate of Public Health" (P1).
>
> "Psychologists from the Ministry of Family and Social Services and Qur'an instructors from the Directorate of Religious Affairs provided daily conversations and counseling for adults" (P14).
>
> "In the initial days, search and rescue were prioritized. Coordination was quickly established, and exploratory trips were made with the Provincial Director of Culture and Tourism" (P6).
>
> "We coordinated with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and many other institutions" (P12).

Academic and specialized contributors supported the process through expertise, educational content, and communication channels. Participants reported that

> "Students from Hatay Mustafa Kemal University Faculty of Fine Arts also supported the process. Social media and WhatsApp were used to communicate with librarians, other staff, volunteer institutions, and organisations" (P6).

They also stated that

> "Children's literature authors highly supported the process" (P11). "Co-operation was made with the Association of Child Development and Educators" (P1).
>
> "Co-operation was made with social service experts" (P2), and "Co-operation was made with the General Directorate of Public Health of the Ministry of Health" (P1).

Considered together, these statements show that the post-earthquake mobile library process was sustained through a broad collaborative network involving public institutions, civil society actors, professional groups, and academic contributors. This structure indicates that library services functioned not only as cultural and educational services, but also as coordinated spaces for psychosocial support, communication, and social recovery.

The theme of institutions or organisations cooperating in the process was analyzed according to the participants' statements. Accordingly, the participants concentrated on the Ministry of Family and Social Services code as shown in Figure 8 below.

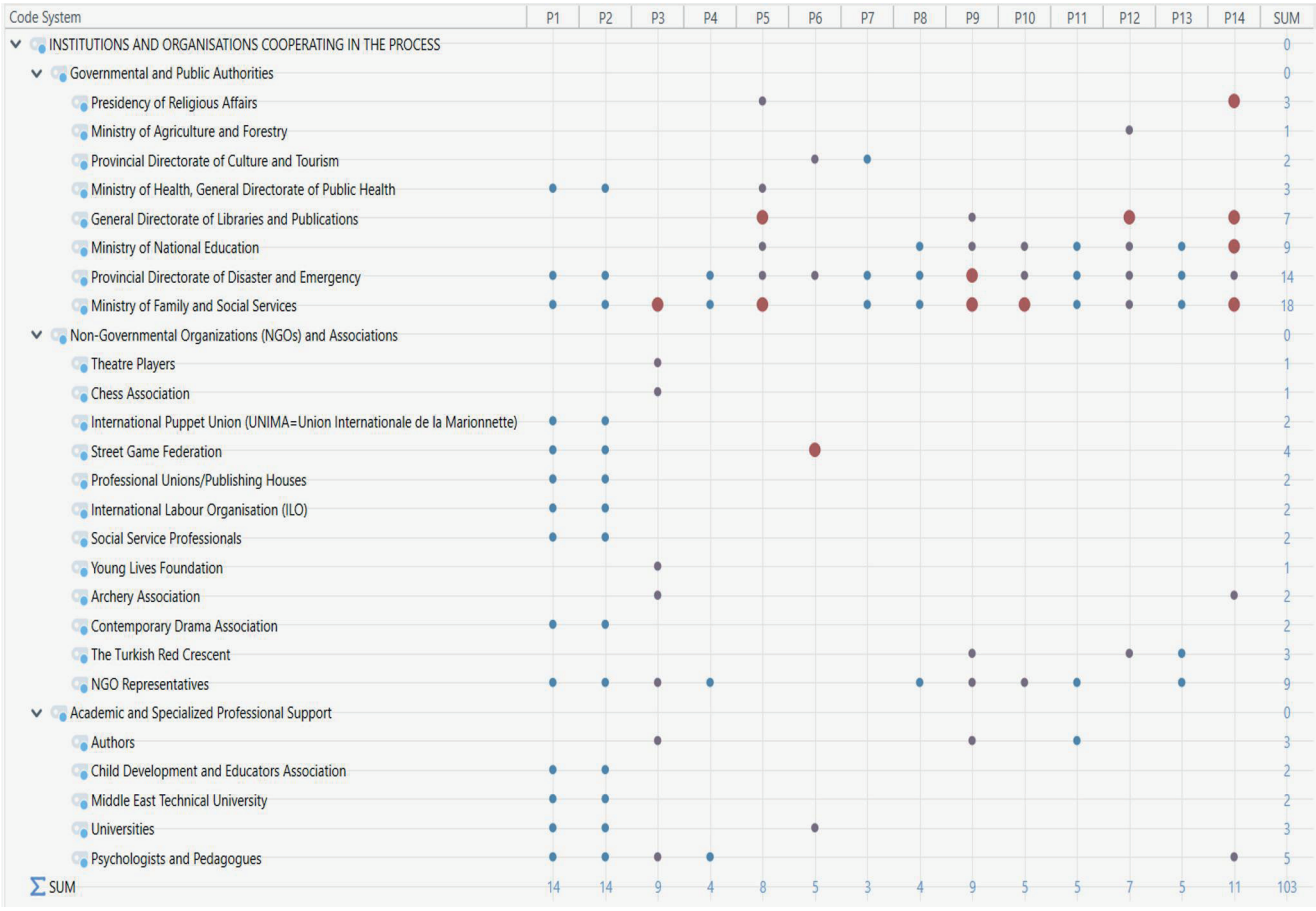


Figure 8. Institutions or organizations that cooperated during the process according to the participants

Challenges encountered in the process

Under the theme of Challenges Encountered in the Process, 12 codes were identified: "Lack of Orientation (6)", "Logistics and Traffic Barriers (6)", "Severe Effects of Earthquake (5)", "Basic Needs Deficiency (4)", "Changes in Personnel Causing Anxiety in Children (3)", "Lack of Privacy Concept (2)", "Culture and Language Issues (2)", "Lack of Earthquake Awareness (2)", "Inadequacy of Mobile Libraries at the Beginning (2)", "Looting and Security Vulnerability (1)", "Loss of Personnel in Earthquake (1)", and "Volunteer Staff Shortage (1)". It should also be noted that not all participants expressed opinions on every topic within this theme; rather, participants addressed issues based on their direct field experiences, indicating a varied pattern of emphasis across responses.

Figure 9 below shows the hierarchical code-subcode representation of challenges encountered in the process theme.

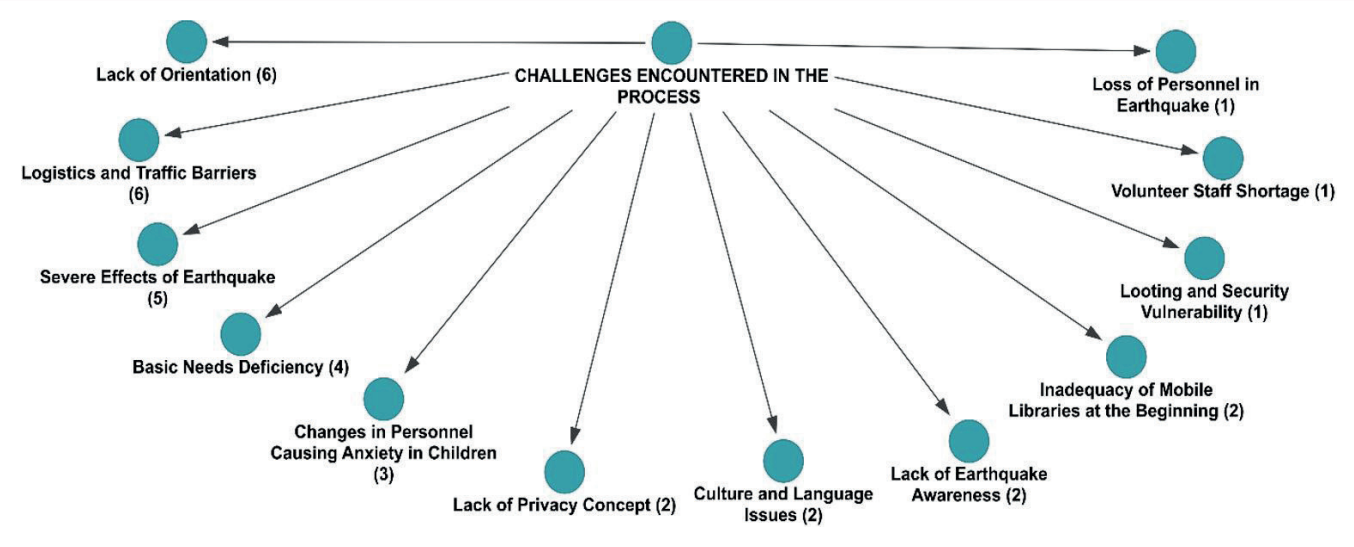


Figure 9. Hierarchical code-subcode representation of challenges encountered in the process theme

Logistics and Traffic Barriers (6): Participants most frequently emphasized logistical and transportation-related challenges, as reflected in the following statements:

> "The earthquakes affected a large area with unpredictable magnitude. Central areas had less destruction but villages were heavily impacted. Transport was difficult, and mobile library placement was hindered by vehicle blockages. Despite coordination challenges, a flexible communication network ensured effective coordination" (P1).
>
> "Initially, coordination was difficult; we could not exit vehicles, and libraries were less active" (P3).
>
> "Traveling to the zones was challenging due to rubble and poor roads. After consulting the Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, we decided to go to Antakya. Infrastructure was lacking, with no lighting or heating. We stayed at the Antakya Mosaic Museum, conducted reconnaissance, and supported intense search and rescue efforts. We set up near the Disaster and Emergency Management tent. People were in psychological distress, and we appealed for support via social media. The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency was insufficient" (P6).

Lack of Orientation (6): Another frequently mentioned issue was the lack of orientation and insufficient disaster preparedness, as participants stated:

> "There was no orientation, so we went to the site immediately. Better prior training on earthquake safety would have helped" (P5).
>
> "I was in Hatay. The first two days were difficult; our disaster training was incomplete, and mobile libraries were slow to become active" (P7).
>
> "Volunteer staff lacked sufficient training and experience, and unqualified personnel sometimes caused problems" (P8).

Severe Effects of Earthquake (5): Participants also emphasized the intensity and impact of the earthquake, noting that

> "The earthquake's effects were severe, making management difficult, but we still succeeded" (P2).
>
> "It was a tough process. Librarians with no accommodation stayed in mobile libraries or tents. We had relatives in Kahramanmaraş, there were so no housing issues. Volunteer librarians usually stayed 14 days and rotated, but

we worked continuously in the field for 3 months. Remaining long in the field increased risks like water scarcity, contamination, and hygiene problems, which could cause illness" (P11).

Basic Needs Deficiency (4): The inadequacy of basic needs emerged as another significant challenge, as reflected in the following statements:

"The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency worked diligently during search and rescue operations. At first, we faced challenges in locating and settling in. We prioritized essential needs such as medicines, diapers, clothing, shoes, and blankets." (P7).

"When we first arrived in Adıyaman, the librarians and staff were exhausted and demoralized, having lost loved ones. The journey showed us painful ruins. Organizing accommodation was difficult; we stayed in the Adıyaman Provincial Public Library for fifteen days with about 20 people. Infrastructure issues made finding food and other essentials challenging; everyone shared what they brought. Money and credit cards were unusable since shops and buildings were demolished or inaccessible. Lack of bathing and changing clothes was hard for us and victims. The library building was reliable and became a shelter. All organisations mobilized to improve conditions, bringing relief and normalisation. Coordinated efforts by librarians, psychologists, religious figures, and teachers helped both children and adults. There was no hierarchy among staff; everyone did everything. We, staff and earthquake survivors, became like a family" (P14).

Changes in Personnel Causing Anxiety in Children (3): Participants also pointed out that frequent staff turnover negatively affected children, as reflected in the following statements:

"The mobile libraries had frequent staff turnover, which unsettled children who grew attached to one person only to have them leave. Although turnover was high at first, staff began to stay longer. Children reacted differently in these unusual environments, so understanding was crucial. Meeting the needs of disabled children was also important. This experience was one of the most meaningful of my life; I used all my knowledge and skills there, and learned new ones as well" (P5).

"We provided privacy training for children and parents with psychologists. In the emergency, children's sense of privacy disappeared; they sought physical closeness due to anxiety and fear. This raised concerns about potential abuse, so protecting children was crucial. Volunteers took turns working in the zones, but children formed strong bonds quickly, and when volunteers left, it caused issues. Many Syrian children were involved, leading to occasional communication challenges" (P8).

Lack of Privacy Concept (2): Participants emphasized that children's understanding of privacy weakened during the process, as reflected in the following statements:

"Reading books, playing games, and other activities kept the earthquake victims occupied. One of the main problems was that the children had no concept of privacy. So, we gave them privacy training" (P8).

"We used social media and WhatsApp groups extensively. The children had developed a lack of privacy. We provided training to eliminate this risky situation and I think it worked" (P12).

Culture and Language Issues (2): Cultural diversity and language barriers were also identified as challenges, as seen in the following:

"Some excluded Syrians. Attitudes and behaviors are crucial in multicultural environments" (P5).

"There were a lot of Syrian children in İskenderun. As a result, language and communication problems arose from time to time" (P12).

Lack of Earthquake Awareness (2): Participants also highlighted the lack of public awareness, as reflected in the following statements:

> "The lack of public awareness of the earthquake caused some chaos. For example, some people took more tents than they needed, but this chaos diminished over time" (P4).
>
> "One effect of the earthquake on the children was that they developed closer relationships with each other.They reached out to each other very easily and quickly. In this context, awareness was created among both children and families. Psychologically, it was a difficult process for us and the earthquake victims. Of course, it was even more difficult for the earthquake victims" (P8).

Inadequacy of Mobile Libraries at the Beginning (2): Some participants emphasized that mobile libraries were initially insufficient, as reflected in the following:

> "Initially, almost half of the mobile vehicles were too small and lacked equipment. However, these issues were later addressed, and significant improvements were made" (P1).
>
> "The libraries were not able to operate immediately. However, the crisis was well-managed and swift action was taken" (P3).

Looting and Security Vulnerability (1): Security-related concerns were also mentioned, as one participant stated:

> "There were also problems of insecurity and looting. Law-enforcement officers were deployed in the area" (P6).

Loss of Personnel in Earthquake (1): The loss of personnel had emotional impacts on the teams, as reflected in the following statement:

> "One of our employees died under the rubble. This situation had a very negative impact on us emotionally. However, we continued to try, and help the earthquake victims" (P4).

Volunteer Staff Shortage (1): Finally, the need for volunteer personnel was emphasized, as one participant noted:

> "Voluntary staff support was needed. A pool of volunteers was created through the efforts of the Directorate-General for Libraries and Publications" (P3).

As shown below in Figure 10, the challenges encountered in the process theme is analyzed according to the participants' statements. Accordingly, the participants concentrated on the codes of lack of orientation, logistics, and traffic barriers.

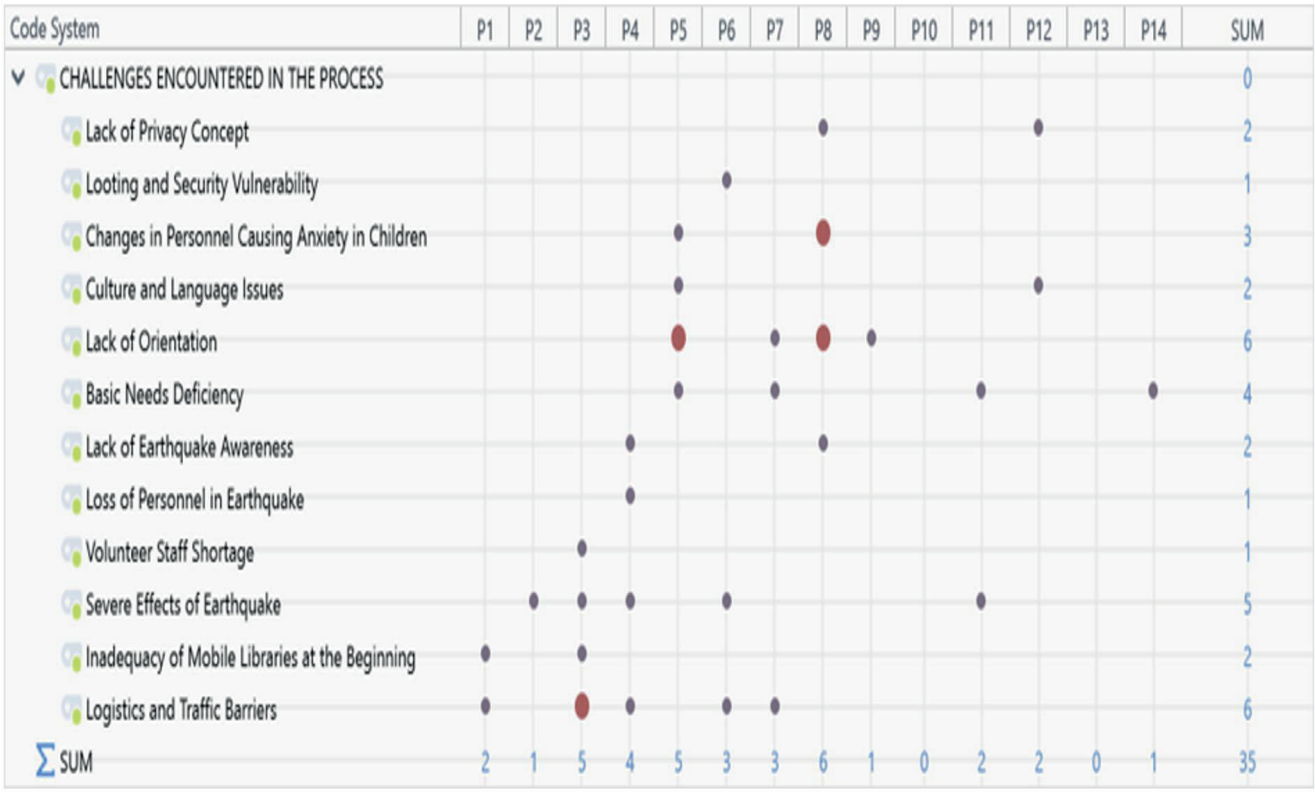


Figure 10. Challenges encountered in the process according to the participants' statements

Planning and coordination process in the disaster area

Under the theme of Planning and Coordination Process in the Disaster Area, six codes were identified: "Cooperation with Organisations and Volunteers (6)", "Commissioning of Larger and Comprehensive Buses (5)", "Providing Coordination with Flexible Communication Network (3)", "Receiving Disaster Orientated Trainings (3)", "Planning Activities to Normalise Children's Lives (3)", and "Relaxation of Rules for Earthquake Victims (2)". The hierarchical code-subcode representation of the planning and coordination process in the disaster area theme is shown in Figure 11 below.

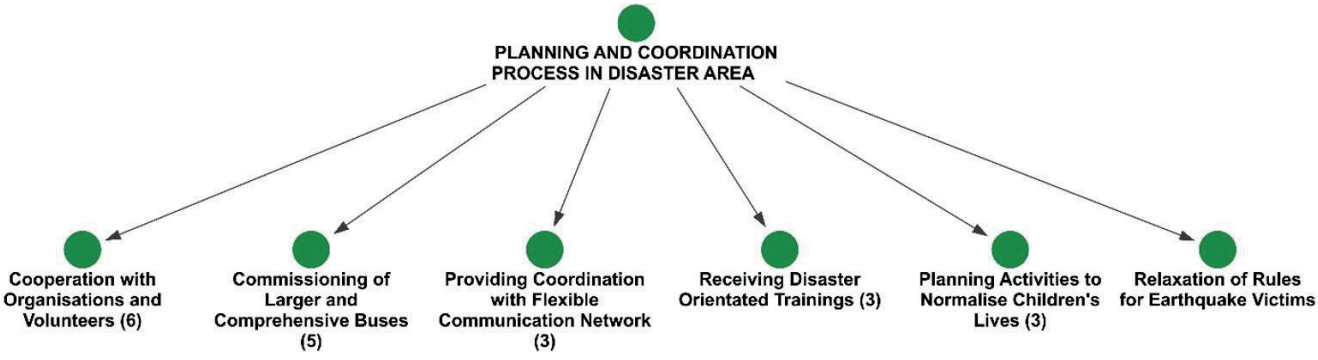


Figure 11. Hierarchical code-subcode representation of the planning and coordination process in disaster areas topic

Cooperation with Organisations and Volunteers (6): Participants most frequently emphasized cooperation and solidarity among institutions and volunteers, as reflected in the following statements:

> "Many organisations and volunteers worked with the mobile libraries, creating earthquake awareness and culture" (P1).
>
> "We became like a family, with no hierarchy, and improved the environment for future efforts. For example, we asked the Directorate-General for yellow vests, which we realized were needed" (P4).
>
> "Coordinated activities by librarians, psychologists, religious officials, and teachers were ideal for children and adults. Everyone worked together without hierarchy, and staff, children, and victims felt like family" (P14).

Commissioning of Larger and Comprehensive Buses (5): Another prominent issue was the improvement and expansion of mobile library vehicles, as reflected in the following statements:

> "We improved the mobile libraries by fixing hardware, upgrading the heating, and enhancing internet and Wi-Fi. We are updating disaster plans with the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency and have established a communications network for urgent instructions nationwide. The mobile libraries are ready with officers and drivers" (P2).
>
> "People rotated frequently, and orientation was provided in the field. Air conditioning and equipment in the mobile libraries improved over time. The libraries operated without overtime, remaining open and active. Despite tough conditions, many activities were organized, helping earthquake victims recover and feel better" (P7).

Providing Coordination with Flexible Communication Network (3): Participants also highlighted the importance of flexible and effective communication for coordination, as reflected in the following statements:

> "The earthquakes were strong and widespread, with greater destruction in villages finding locations for mobile libraries was challenging due to traffic from support and rescue vehicles, but we maintained coordination through a flexible communication network" (P1).
>
> "We coordinated with provincial directorates. Initially, response was slow, but as victims concentrated in specific areas, communication and coordination became easier" (P5).

Receiving Disaster Orientated Trainings (3): Another issue emphasized by participants was the importance of disaster-oriented training, as reflected in the following statements:

> "On 19-20 June 2023, in Istanbul, 31 librarians attended a training with the Goethe Institute, the General Directorate of Libraries, and the Turkish Librarians' Association. The training focused on attitudes toward traumatized children in mobile libraries and potential cultural activities" (P8).
>
> "On 19-20 June 2023, 31 librarians in Istanbul received training with the Goethe Institute, the General Directorate of Libraries, and the Turkish Librarians' Association, focusing on trauma, communication with children, and cultural activities. We realized earlier training would have been helpful. Despite being a small group, we learned about solidarity and safety measures like fixing furniture. The Ministry's awareness and activities increased post-earthquake, including building assessments and updated safety procedures. Our understanding of disaster preparedness and emergency management has improved, leading to practical changes from previously only procedural plans (P13).

Planning Activities to Normalise Children's Lives (3): Participants also emphasized activities aimed at supporting children's psychosocial well-being, as reflected in the following statements:

> "We tried to normalise the children's lives along with activities such as reading books, games, film shows, author interviews, painting, and cooking local dishes. 'Firig', a local food (it turns into tarhana which means sundried food

made of curd, tomato, and flour when it hardens) made the children very happy. This dish is significant for the children in this region" (P11).

"When communicating with children and organizing artistic and cultural activities for them, it is important to consider certain factors. Prior to the earthquake, we did not receive adequate training in this area; however, having that training beforehand would have been much more beneficial" (P13).

Relaxation of Rules for Earthquake Victims (2): Finally, participants noted that certain institutional rules were relaxed to better respond to urgent needs, as reflected in the following statement:

"Most importantly, there was a significant increase in awareness of the role and importance of libraries and mobile libraries during disasters. There were more requests for mobile library services, not only from children but also from parents. Rules were eased, e.g. book lending was sometimes unregistered, to gain speed and to please the earthquake victims. The earthquake's impact on children was an important issue to be addressed. With this in mind, the Directorate-General for Libraries and Publications produced a guide after the earthquake entitled 'What to look out for when communicating with children affected by the earthquake'" (P1).

As shown in Figure 12 below, planning and coordination process theme in the disaster area was analyzed in line with the respondents' statements. Accordingly, the participants focused on the code of cooperation with organisations and volunteers.

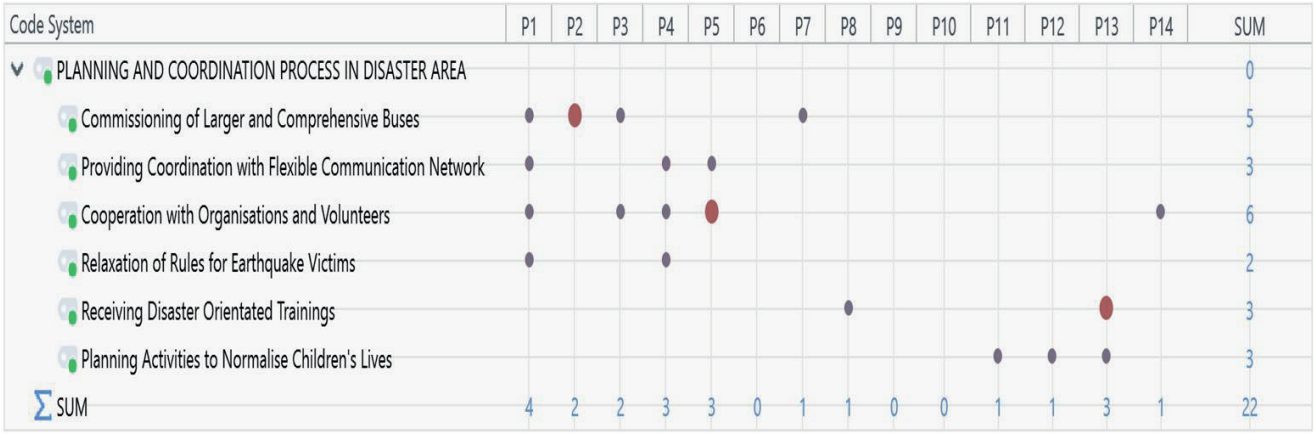


Figure 12. Planning and coordination process in disaster area according to the participants

Opinions and suggestions of the participants for possible earthquake preparedness

Under the theme of Opinions and Suggestions of the Participants for Possible Earthquake Preparedness, five codes were identified: "Training and Awareness Raising (13)", "Developing Disaster Plans and Strategies (8)", "Expanding and Improving the Scope of Mobile Library Services (6)", "The Significance of Education in Child Psychology (5)", and "Strengthening Communication and Coordination Networks (2)".

Figure 13 below shows the hierarchical code-subcode representation of the opinions and suggestions of the participants for possible earthquake preparedness theme:

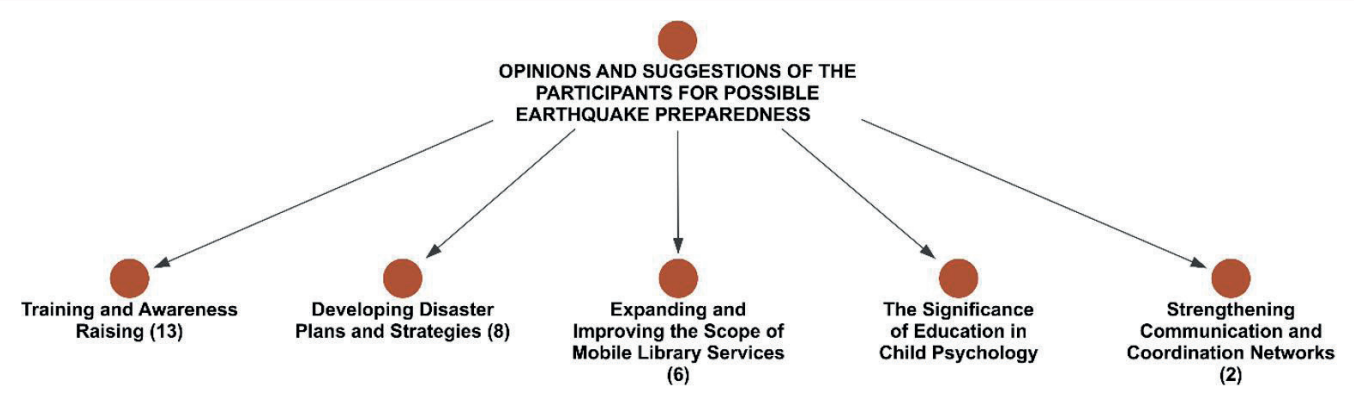


Figure 13. Hierarchical code-subcode representation of the theme of opinions and suggestions of the participants for possible earthquake preparedness

Training and Awareness Raising (13): Participants most frequently emphasized the importance of education and awareness in disaster preparedness, as reflected in the following statements:

> "Lack of public awareness and knowledge about earthquakes and disasters is a major problem. This should be overcome through education. Training is already a must within the professional framework. After my return, I received orientation training on earthquakes. Adequate training should have been provided beforehand. It is crucial to prioritize issues such as disaster plans and earthquake drills" (P6).
>
> "Disaster plans should be reviewed and updated. There is a need for better, planned, and sustained training in disaster and trauma management. Such training should be more frequent. Disaster response should not be based on volunteerism. Finding volunteers is difficult. The most important thing is to assign experienced people who have been trained in this sense" (P8).
>
> "As staff, we receive disaster preparedness training from time to time. This training should be more frequent. Disaster awareness is significant" (P14).

Developing Disaster Plans and Strategies (8): Another key issue emphasized by participants was the development and sustainability of disaster plans and strategies, as reflected in the following statements:

> "Emergency plans should be developed. It is important to ensure the sustainability of training on disaster procedures, crisis, and risk management, and to conduct earthquake scenarios and exercises" (P1).
>
> "When planning psychosocial support practices in libraries, it is necessary to go through stages such as identifying target groups and establishing a theoretical basis, determining program contents, determining program materials, and academic preparation of practitioners (in-service training, treatment of practitioners before implementing the program), interpreting the results of implementation (determining existing and possible effects)" (P3).

Expanding and Improving the Scope of Mobile Library Services (6): Participants also emphasized the need to further develop mobile library services, as reflected in the following statements:

> "The mobile libraries are now in better condition than before (e.g. heating, equipment). They should be improved further. For example, it would be better if the mobile libraries were equipped with solar energy. At the moment they use batteries or generators" (P7).
>
> "The Directorate-General for Libraries and Publications has already increased its stock of materials as a precautionary measure. New lorries, vehicles, and tents have been purchased. These activities should be continued and improved. People should be made to feel that libraries are safe places" (P9).

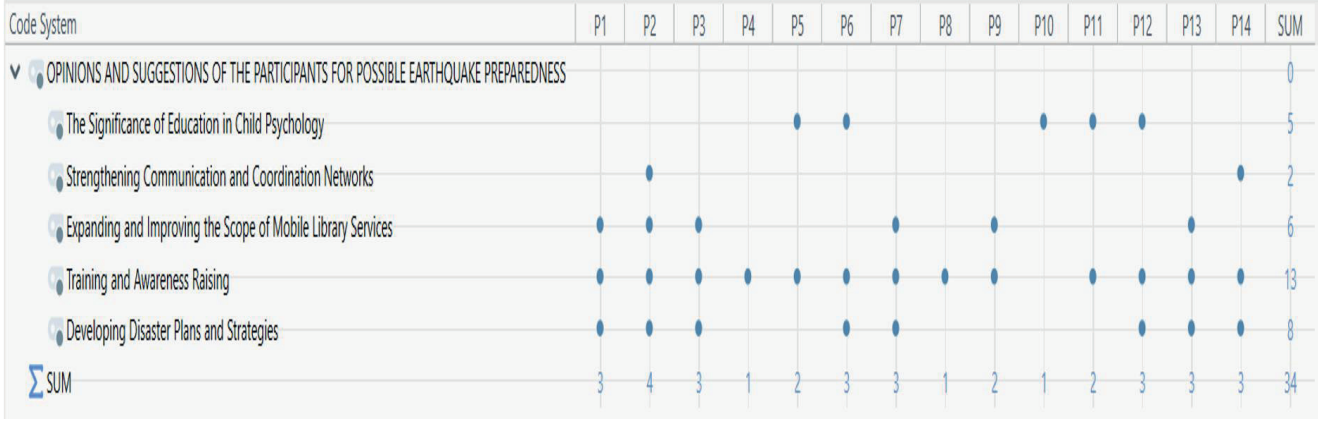
The Significance of Education in Child Psychology (5): Another important issue highlighted by participants was the need for specialized training in child psychology, as reflected in the following statements:

> "Earthquakes traumatize children in particular. In the earthquake zones, you need to be very sensitive when communicating with children who have lost their parents and/or relatives. For this reason, it is important to receive training in child development, child psychology, and trauma management. It may be better for those working in the field to be people who have experienced the earthquake themselves" (P10).
>
> "The most vulnerable groups are children and people with disabilities. Special attention should be paid to their situation, psychology, and education. For example, children need to develop a sense of privacy. This is essential to protect them from abuse and other negative things. We have tried to provide this training. Such training should be more planned and programmed" (P12).

Strengthening Communication and Coordination Networks (2): Finally, participants emphasized the importance of strengthening communication and coordination mechanisms, as reflected in the following statement:

> "Communication and coordination networks should be strengthened to act immediately when a disaster occurs" (P2).

Figure 14 below points out the topics that the participants focused on within the scope of the theme opinions and suggestions of the participants for possible earthquake preparedness. Accordingly, participants' opinions focused on the training and awareness-raising code.



Code System	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	SUM
OPINIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS FOR POSSIBLE EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS															0
The Significance of Education in Child Psychology					●	●				●	●	●			5
Strengthening Communication and Coordination Networks		●												●	2
Expanding and Improving the Scope of Mobile Library Services	●	●	●				●		●				●		6
Training and Awareness Raising	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	13
Developing Disaster Plans and Strategies	●	●	●			●	●					●	●	●	8
∑ SUM	3	4	3	1	2	3	3	1	2	1	2	3	3	3	34

Figure 14. The topics participants focused on within the theme of opinions and suggestions of the participants for possible earthquake preparedness

The codes that the participants agreed on and mentioned frequently are shown in Figure 15 below. The more the codes co-occur, the closer they are placed together on the map. The lines are shown wider to reflect the relationship between the codes emphasized more frequently and in common. Accordingly, the participants who mentioned the training and awareness-raising code also mentioned the codes of strengthening communication and coordination networks, the significance of education in child psychology, receiving disaster-oriented trainings, and developing disaster plans and strategies.

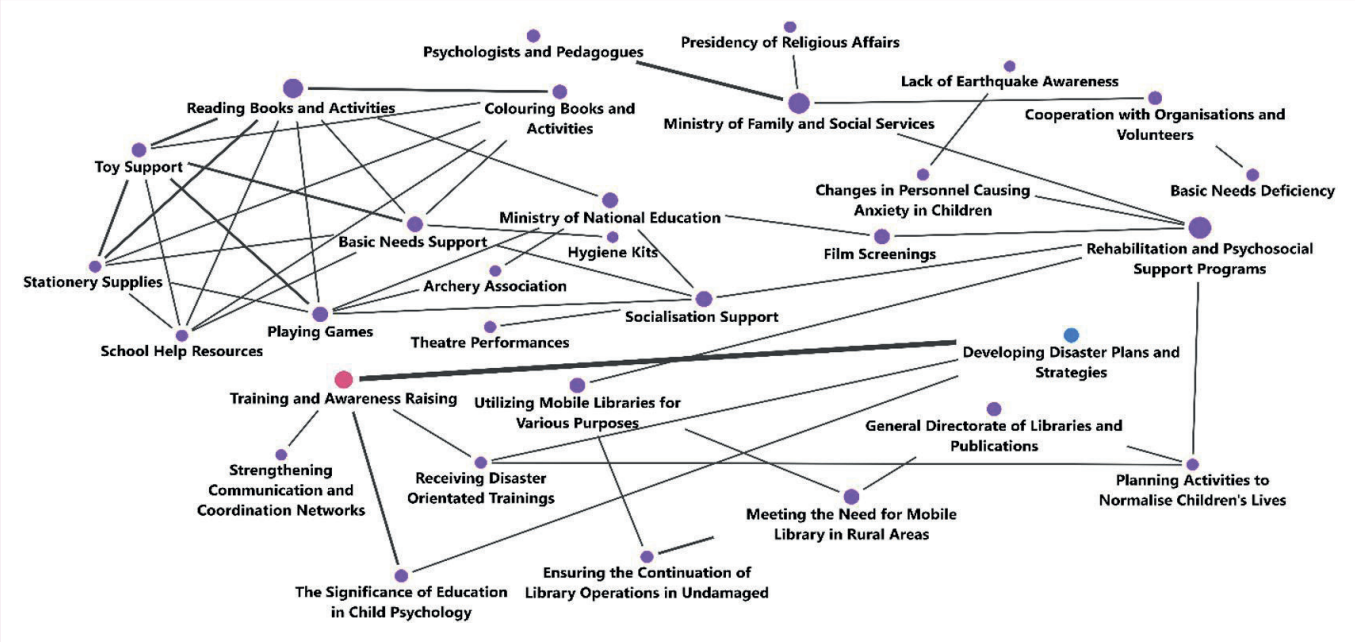


Figure 15. Code map

Figure 16 illustrates the code cloud generated from the study data. Codes shown in larger font sizes appear more frequently, highlighting the primary areas of concern for administrators and librarians during the February 6, 2023, earthquakes. 'Rehabilitation and Psychosocial Support Programs' and 'Reading Books and Activities' emerge as the most dominant codes. These findings indicate that post-earthquake library services shifted beyond traditional lending functions. Instead, they took on active roles in community recovery and psychological normalisation. The frequent mention of entities such as the 'Ministry of Family and Social Services' and the 'Provincial Directorate of Disaster and Emergency' reflects the need for inter-institutional coordination. Codes like 'Training and Awareness Raising' also support this observation. Collectively, these findings suggest that participants viewed mobile libraries as essential centers for psychosocial intervention and social resilience in the disaster-affected regions of Türkiye.

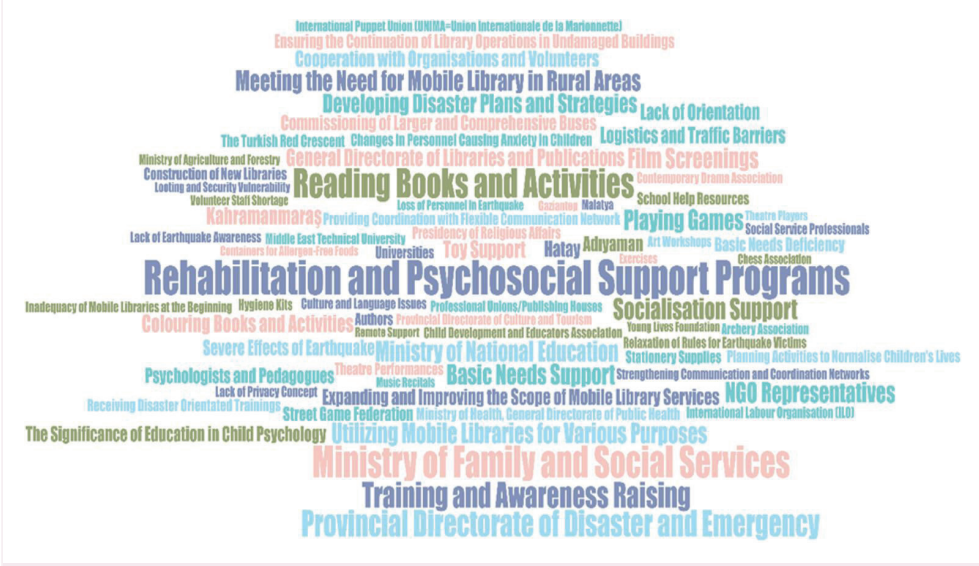


Figure 16. Code cloud (frequencies of codes)

Conclusion

This study examined the roles of public and mobile libraries after the February 6, 2023, earthquake in Türkiye. It found that public libraries lacked disaster preparedness, while mobile libraries played a vital role in providing accessible services, resources, and psychosocial support. The phenomenological analysis of volunteer librarians' and managers' experiences highlighted strengths, challenges, and lessons learned to improve future disaster response efforts.

In response to the research questions, the findings indicate that mobile libraries became especially important during the disaster period because they provided access to information, basic services, psychosocial support, and practical assistance in the affected provinces, particularly in Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, and Adıyaman. They acted spontaneously and effectively partnered with various organisations to provide critical services, functioning as platforms for resource distribution and hubs for psychosocial support and community engagement during recovery.

Addressing the other research questions, the study reveals that the main challenges were logistical barriers, insufficient practical training, the psychological burden on victims and responders, and a lack of systematic preparedness. These findings suggest that disaster response in library settings should not rely only on volunteer-based initiatives but should be supported by structured planning, trained personnel, and coordinated institutional mechanisms. A prominent focus was placed on mobile libraries' services, including psychosocial support, logistical assistance, and the fulfillment of basic needs. Participants underscored several challenges, including logistical barriers, the need for practical training, and the psychological impact on both victims and responders.

The volunteers' experiences also showed the importance of cooperation, teamwork, disaster awareness, and education. Children, particularly vulnerable groups, were at the center of the discussions, and educational and rehabilitation initiatives for children were commonly mentioned. Moreover, the findings indicate that disaster studies should go beyond the volunteering framework and move toward a more systematic and proactive approach to disaster preparedness.

When compared with the related literature, the findings of this study are consistent with those of Aldemir (2023) and Zengin and Güneş (2023) in emphasizing the importance of libraries, mobile services, psychosocial support, coordination, and disaster preparedness after the February 6, 2023, earthquake. Although the studies differ in methodology, population, and focus, they converge on the conclusion that libraries are indispensable in post-disaster recovery and that strengthened planning, infrastructure, and inter-institutional collaboration are necessary. All three emphasize the critical role of libraries in post-disaster situations, particularly in providing psychosocial support and ensuring continuity of services. Common themes highlighted in these studies include collaboration, coordination, the importance of mobile libraries, service diversity, and responsiveness to regional needs. Observations regarding destroyed or damaged buildings, infrastructure deficiencies, personnel and volunteer shortages, the psychosocial effects of the disaster, and potential measures to address these issues reveal similar findings across the studies.

In particular, this study and Aldemir (2023) share a focus on the post-disaster condition of libraries and the need for reconstruction, service continuity, and institutional cooperation. Similarly, the findings are aligned with Zengin and Güneş (2023) in showing that disaster plans in Türkiye are often inadequate, that training and drills are insufficient, and that staff awareness needs to be improved. These overlaps demonstrate that the conclusions of the present study are reinforced by earlier research, while also highlighting the specific contribution of mobile libraries and field-based services in the earthquake zone. Although this study emphasizes practical field operations, psychosocial interventions, and service diversity, Aldemir (2023) highlights the importance of strengthening structures and infrastructure, as well as regional planning and construction processes. Both studies underscore the significance of libraries' post-disaster conditions, the continuity and enhancement of services, inter-institutional cooperation and coordination, and psychosocial support during disasters. They also indicate that public institutions, local governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders play supportive roles for libraries during and after such events. Both studies stress the crucial role of psychosocial support, particularly for children and families, concluding that libraries serve as spaces that assist in the healing of individuals who have experienced trauma. They share a common focus on post-disaster library buildings, the extent of the damage, and the necessity for new structures. Key themes include

damage assessment and reconstruction processes, strengthening libraries' capacity to provide services after disasters, and the importance of new projects and infrastructure development.

This research primarily examines the services and capacity-building efforts of mobile libraries in earthquake-affected regions during crises. In contrast, Zengin and Güneş (2023) emphasize the human-centered and psychosocial aspects of disaster management, including the perceptions of library employees about disasters, their psychological states, and the practical implementation of disaster plans. While this study centers on public libraries and mobile services, Zengin and Güneş (2023) examine the disaster-related experiences and perceptions of employees, primarily from public university libraries, in earthquake-affected regions. Notably, this study's findings show significant similarity with those of Zengin and Güneş (2023). Their research investigates the role and status of libraries and information centers in disaster management following the Kahramanmaraş earthquake on February 6, 2023. They analyzed survey responses from 43 participants, mostly public university library employees and managers. Consistent with the findings of this study, one of the key conclusions of prior research is that disaster and emergency plans in Türkiye are inadequate and face significant implementation challenges. This study also highlights that disaster plans are often outdated, drills are infrequently conducted, and employees' knowledge and awareness of disaster management are generally low. Both studies underscore the vital role that mobile and public libraries play during and after disasters. They provide essential services, particularly psychosocial support and access to information. Both studies highlight the need to enhance disaster preparedness and training, as well as improve communication and coordination among organisations. They concur on the importance of developing systematic, sustainable, and proactive disaster management policies. Furthermore, the studies emphasize staff's psychological well-being and emotional needs, highlighting the importance of psychosocial support and training for them. In conclusion, the findings shared by both studies indicate that post-disaster libraries and mobile services, along with improved psychosocial support and coordination, are critical tools that greatly aid community recovery and resilience.

Accordingly, the findings of this study suggest the need to strengthen communication and coordination networks, improve mobile library capacity, provide ongoing disaster management training, and develop comprehensive, sustainable disaster response plans. Improving the capacity of the mobile library requires increasing the number of vehicles and service points, as well as ensuring that mobile libraries are equipped with adequate materials, communication tools, and trained personnel who can respond effectively in crisis conditions. Providing continuous disaster-management training means offering regular, practice-based training for librarians and managers in disaster preparedness, emergency response, crisis communication, and community support. Developing comprehensive and sustainable disaster response plans means preparing library-specific plans that are realistic, regularly updated, and adaptable to different types of disasters. These plans clearly define roles, duties, coordination procedures, resource allocation, and recovery steps. These recommendations are derived directly from the findings and are intended to improve preparedness for future disasters. Taken together, they aim to make public and mobile library services more resilient, better coordinated, and more responsive to the needs of affected communities in future emergencies.

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the General Directorate of Library and Publications within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye for providing their insights and experiences pertinent to the process addressed in this study. Their substantial contributions have been greatly valued. I would also like to thank all participants, including senior managers and librarians from the General Directorate of Library and Publications, for their involvement.

Author contributions

Conception: G.D.; Design: G.D.; Data acquisition: G.D.; Data analysis: G.D.; Data interpretation: G.D.; Drafting of the manuscript: G.D.; Critical revision of the manuscript: G.D. The author reviewed the results, approved the final version of the manuscript, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of this study.

Ethical approval

This study was approved by the Kastamonu University Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Date: November 06, 2024, Decision/Protocol No: 11-5).

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflict of interest

The author declares that this study was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Funding

The author declares that this study received no funding.

Generative AI statement

The author declares that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used in the writing or preparation of this study.

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