Legitimacy in the Eyes of the Beholders: Public Expectations from Aviation Organizations During Earthquakes

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Abstract: This study examines public legitimacy judgments toward airlines and aviation authorities during the most severe earthquakes in Türkiye by analyzing social media posts. The research explores public expectations and reactions during disasters using content analysis of posts tagging these organizations. The study shows that the public expects aviation organizations to go beyond their traditional air transportation services, highlighting a heightened demand for their role in corporate social responsibility. The study contributes to the legitimacy literature by demonstrating that legitimacy is divided into two judgments -perceived appropriate or inappropriate- and that this situation changes rapidly as expectations beyond traditional service are formed during disasters. By analyzing real-time data shared during the disaster, this research provides critical insights for aviation organizations to address societal needs in future crises proactively. Moreover, it highlights the essential role of transportation in ensuring public welfare and calls on scholars to further explore this critical intersection of corporate social responsibility, legitimacy, and disaster response, urging more proactive engagement with these urgent societal challenges.

Keywords: Aviation, Legitimacy, Social Media, Earthquake, Türkiye

Öz: Bu çalışma, sosyal medya paylaşımlarını analiz ederek, Türkiye'deki en şiddetli depremler esnasında havayolları ve havacılık otoritelerine yönelik meşruiyeti yargılarını incelemektedir. Araştırma, söz konusu havacılık organizasyonlarını etiketleyen paylaşımların içerik analizini yaparak, afetler sırasında halkın beklentilerini ve tepkilerini araştırmaktadır. Çalışma, kamuoyunun havacılık organizasyonlarından geleneksel hava taşımacılığı hizmetlerinin ötesine geçmelerini beklediğini göstermekte ve kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk rollerine yönelik artan talebi vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma, meşruiyetin uygun ve uygunsuz olarak algılanan iki yargıya ayrılabildiğini ve afetler sırasında geleneksel hizmetin ötesindeki beklentiler oluştukça bu durumun hızla değiştiğini göstererek meşruiyet literatürüne katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırma, afet sırasında paylaşılan gerçek zamanlı verileri analiz ederek, havacılık organizasyonlarının gelecekteki krizlerde toplumsal ihtiyaçları proaktif bir şekilde ele almaları için kritik içgörüler sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, ulaşımın kamu refahını sağlamadaki temel rolünü vurgulamakta ve araştırmacıları kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk, meşruiyet ve afet müdahalesi kesişiminde daha fazla araştırmaya çağırarak, acil toplumsal zorluklarla daha proaktif bir şekilde ilgilenmeye teşvik etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Havacılık, Meşruiyet, Sosyal Medya, Deprem, Türkiye

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Introduction

In recent years, new institutional theory has been one of the most widely used theoretical perspectives for examining corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Risi, Vigneau, Bohn, & Wickert, 2023). Discussions on CSR, which extend to the 1950s (De Bakker, Groenewegen, & Den Hond, 2005; Jamali, Lund-Thomsen, & Khara, 2017), highlight organizations' awareness of their responsibilities and their efforts to address their societal impact (Wang et al., 2016). Organizations also communicate their CSR practices through various forms, including corporate social responsibility reports (Kuo et al., 2016) and sustainability reports (Kılıç, Uyar, & Karaman, 2019). Major international organizations, such as the United Nations, World Bank, Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, and International Labor Organization, have promoted and supported organizations in implementing corporate social responsibility practices (Lee, 2008). The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and the International Organization for Standardization provide worldwide guidance and standards for reporting activities (Mayer, 2018). Also, GRI, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), and the International Airlines Group published the "Airline Sustainability Reporting Handbook," related to field-specific reporting connected to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (IATA, 2020; Perryman et al., 2022).

However, reporting the activities by the organizations themselves has also been criticized by scholars due to the efforts of the organizations to show only the good sides of the actions and not report other details or use the reports as tools for marketing (Zieba & Johansson, 2022). It is essential to understand how organizations assume greater responsibility during the crisis (De Bakker, Groenewegen, & Den Hond, 2005). Considering that legitimacy "lies in the eyes of the beholder" (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990) and social media has the potential to extend the understanding of legitimacy based on the point of view of various evaluators (Etter et al., 2018), this study aims to explore society's legitimacy judgments regarding airlines' corporate responsibility practices for their communities during the earthquakes, using posts extracted from a well-known social media platform.

The crisis was triggered by two major earthquakes, measuring magnitudes (Mw) 7.8 and 7.5 that occurred in the southern region of Türkiye on February 6, 2023, causing widespread damage in 11 provinces (Gunasekera et al., 2023). These provinces were Adana, Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye and Şanlıurfa (SBB, 2023). As a result of these earthquakes, approximately 50.000 people died, and 108,068 were seriously injured (Gunasekera

et al., 2023; Samson, 2023). These earthquakes were the worst in Türkiye since 1939 (England, Smith, Parrish, & Bernard, 2023). It was noted that the extent of the affected area was twelve times the size of Belgium, and in terms of magnitude, it was recorded to be the largest in the region this century (England et al., 2023).

In this context, this paper explores legitimacy judgments regarding airlines and authorities during Türkiye's worst earthquakes and provides insights into the boundaries of corporate social responsibility while maintaining legitimacy. The research question of the study is: *"How have legitimacy judgments toward aviation organizations been produced by society during the disaster?"*

This study contributes to the literature by analyzing public comments to enhance our understanding of society's legitimacy judgments, highlighting what is considered 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' under conditions of uncertainty. It also offers insights into future disaster responses by identifying people's needs during earthquakes and the challenges faced by organizations. The following section briefly presents the literature on legitimacy, followed by the results of the analysis and discussion.

Theoretical Background

Legitimacy, a core concept in organizational institutionalism (Deephouse et al., 2017), is defined as "the extent to which an entity is appropriate for its social context" (Bitektine, 2011). Similarly, Suchman (1995) defines legitimacy as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions." Scott (2008) elaborates on legitimacy by emphasizing its key dimensions: compliance with relevant rules, laws, normative pressures, and cultural-cognitive frameworks."

In recent years, scholars have explored the process of legitimation across various research domains, particularly the role of communication in shaping legitimacy (Vaara, Aranda, & Etchanchu, 2024). Vaara et al. (2024) note that legitimacy has been a central term in the social sciences since Weber's works and highlight the importance of discursive legitimacy by showing how it relates to the communication of what is seen as legitimate or by discussing studies in this direction.

New institutional theory—which is increasingly used as a theoretical lens to understand corporate social responsibility practices (Risi et al., 2023)—generally argues that organizations need to gain acceptance in the field in which they oper-

ate, as achieving legitimacy increases their chances of sustainability (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Scholars suggest that CSR practices and corporate communication are strategic tools for organizations to establish and maintain legitimacy (Beddewela & Fairbrass, 2016; Du & Vieira, 2012; Vaara et al., 2024). Over time, CSR practices have expanded and become institutionalized across various industries (Alakavuklar, Kılıçaslan, & Öztürk, 2009; Risi et al., 2023). Researchers have analyzed the efforts of organizations and their interactions with society through their reports. Therefore, the analysis has been done from the organizations' point of view (Kuo, Chen, & Meng, 2021; Lee, Seo, & Sharma, 2013; Lee & Park, 2016; Li et al., 2023; Tsai & Hsu, 2008; Yang & Baasandorj, 2017). However, while organizations often engage in CSR reporting to enhance their legitimacy, studies suggest that such reports may not always reflect actual performance, potentially undermining legitimacy (Velte, 2003).

Since legitimacy is socially constructed (Suchman, 1995), it is essential to examine legitimacy from the perspectives of various stakeholders (Etter et al., 2018; Haack, Schilke, & Zucker, 2021). Over the past decade, social media has enabled ordinary citizens to publicly express their judgments, offering a valuable source for assessing organizational legitimacy (Etter et al., 2018). Consequently, scholars use social media to explore organizational legitimacy judgments (Castelló, Etter, & Årup Nielsen, 2016; Colleoni, 2013). For example, Etter et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of analyzing society's judgments through social media to compare them with other sources of judgments and to deeply analyze affect-based responses to the actions of the organizations by citizens. However, although legitimacy has been a significant research area in organization studies, detailed legitimation assessments are still rare (Kassem, Salama, & Ganepola, 2022; Lee, Yoon, & O'Donnell, 2018; Vaara, Tienari, & Laurila, 2006).

To this end, this paper aims to explore society's comments regarding airlines' responses during the worst earthquakes through the content analysis of real-time data.

Methodology

This study explores the legitimacy judgments of society regarding airlines' operations under the uncertainty that occurred due to the worst earthquakes in Türkiye in 2023. The research question of this study is: *"How have legitimacy judgments toward aviation organizations been produced by society during the disaster?"*

Considering that social media platforms may play an essential role in legitimation (Glozer, Caruana, & Hibbert, 2019) and might be used as a tool during natural disasters (Reynard & Shirgaokar, 2019), the data were gathered via a well-known social media platform. In addition, the scholars mentioned that social media platform might create a platform for better understanding judgments about organizations during sudden changes, and it is visible to explore legitimacy judgments (Etter et al., 2018; Haack, Schilke, & Zucker, 2021) due to the opportunity for ordinary citizens to make their judgments public (Etter et al., 2018).

Posts tagged with the social media platform accounts of Turkish Airlines, Sun Express Airlines, Pegasus Airlines, MNG Airlines, Anadolujet, Corendon Airlines, ULS Airlines Cargo, Air Anka, Mavi Gök Airlines, Southwind Airlines, Directorate General of Civil Aviation, General Directorate of State Airports Authority were included in the dataset. These airlines, authorized by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) (DGCA, 2023), are based in Türkiye. Furthermore, the General Directorate of State Airports Authority and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation posts were added to the dataset to follow society's requests. The posts were automatically imported from a social media platform tool of the MAXQDA software (Woolf & Silver, 2017). The word 'MAXQDA' begins with a reference to the German sociologist Max Weber and ends with the abbreviation 'QDA,' which stands for 'Qualitative Data Analysis' (MAXQDA, 2025). This software supports researchers throughout the research process, from data preparation to representation. It enables users to import various data types, including videos, posts, and documents. It helps to code the data, review them, and organize and compare patterns. Additionally, MAXQDA supports data representation through various visualizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019, 2022).

In this study, I used MAXQDA to export posts from a social media platform. I exported 4,597 posts that mentioned airlines and were shared between February 6, 2023, and February 24, 2023, by using this MAXQDA' social media tool. All the posts were analyzed based on the content analysis method (Yin, 2016), a frequently preferred technique in legitimacy studies (Suddaby, Bitektine, & Haack, 2017). It should be noted that 3646 posts were in Turkish, and 490 posts were in English, read by the author(s) individually. The posts written in other languages could not be added to the dataset and they were excluded due to the language barrier.

After importing all the posts, I conducted a comprehensive review and coded them based on their underlying meaning, expressed emotions, requests, or criticisms. In the initial phase of coding, I assigned codes according to the content of

the messages, such as 'flights' and 'baggage.' I tried to explore how legitimacy judgments were developed during the earthquake. I followed an inductive process to identify the discourses reflecting the legitimacy perceptions of the post-holders and then derived categories. However, upon further analysis, I identified distinct expectations within the data, such as requests for ticket changes or comments regarding fixed and free tickets. Consequently, I refined the coding to capture these nuanced distinctions, resulting in codes such as 'Comments on extra flights' and 'Comments on minimum/fixed price.' Subsequently, by examining emerging patterns within the statements and following an iterative process, I grouped the codes into broader categories such as 'Passenger transportation' and 'Catering.' Furthermore, statements expressing approval of the organization's actions and decisions were classified under the 'Appropriate' theme, whereas critical remarks were categorized under the 'Inappropriate' theme." Transitions from the quotations to the categories and themes are presented in the appendices.

To ensure trustworthiness, I followed some of the strategies proposed by Creswell and Poth (2018), such as prolonged engagement, peer review, external audits, and consultation and discussions with academics during the research process. I received peer feedback on the emerging codes, categories, and themes throughout the data analysis. I remained engaged for an extended period, revising and merging similar codes until the final decision. Additionally, I discussed the results with instructors and incorporated their feedback into the study. The findings with representative quotations are presented below, but the post owner was written as 'Follower' to protect people's personal data.

Findings

This section of the study presents the research results in three main categories. The statements are sometimes supportive of the aviation organizations and sometimes very critical. The research findings based on real data are presented below with representative quotations. More detailed examples are given in Appendix-I and Appendix-II.

Transportation-Related Requests

Unsurprisingly, content analysis of the posts revealed that most people wanted to transport from the earthquake zone to other locations due to fear of earthquakes. Subsequently, people who wanted to fly to the earthquake zone started to write to airlines. The first interaction with an airline via social media platform was a post posted two hours after the earthquake, tagging Turkish Airlines:

"I'm in the earthquake zone; please reach me"

—Follower, 06/02/2023, 06:27

Most posts were written to organize extra flights to transfer relatives or friends from the affected provinces to safe places. Given that air transportation in this area is lower than airports in Western cities, this meant increasing the number of flights to these areas and operating under bad weather. On the other hand, for the airport operator(s), it means increased airport demand and the need to be ready for safe flights. The first post for calling airlines to organize extra flights was posted as follows:

"…organize extra flights to Şanlıurfa" —Follower, 06/02/2023, 07:11

As the devastating effect of the earthquake became apparent, findings revealed that people started to warn airlines about the need for rescue teams to be transported from other cities to the earthquake zone. One example is:

"You should fly from West to East to transport professionals there! People are going by their cars!" — Follower, 06/02/2023, 07:24

It is important to note that Kilis and Osmaniye lack airports, obligating residents to travel to other cities for air transportation. Additionally, the earthquakes damaged the airports in Hatay, Gaziantep, and Kahramanmaraş, preventing flights to these airports in the early days of the disaster (DailySabah, 2023). This was a critique regarding the first aid response. Furthermore, earthquake victims needed to fly from one city to another multiple times due to various reasons, including the search for accommodation or efforts to cope with ongoing uncertainty about their situation. This posed an additional challenge for airlines, but people continued posting such requests:

"Thank you for the free flight from Elazığ to İstanbul. Could you please transfer me from Istanbul to Trabzon?" —Follower, 12/02/2023 00:23

Although the number of flights increased, ticket prices frustrated people, leading to criticisms and suggestions for airlines. One common request was for fixed pricing:

"Could you please set a fixed price for the flights from the earthquake zone to other places? Do not expect the people who lost everything to buy the ticket for 2,000tl."

—Follower, 06/02/2023 22:26

However, offering fixed prices for specific routes was also criticized by some people, with most asking for free evacuations. Additionally, people who had tickets

wanted to cancel or change the dates. Although airlines announced opportunities for changing tickets, the requests by society were variable and limitless. Many harshly criticized the airlines for deductions and demanded refunds. Initially, people wanted to cancel flights to/from the earthquake zone, then those upset by these situations wanted to change their tickets. On the other hand, students whose education calendars were revised also wanted to change their tickets. Apart from these requests, data showed that airlines received requests for changes unrelated to earthquakes. One example of the variety of requests is:

"Are you planning to do something about the tickets of civil servants whose holidays have been canceled and who were called to duty due to the extraordinary situation?

—Follower, 06/02/2023 19:24

Passengers expressed frustration over the lack of timely updates on flights through websites and other communication channels. Even call centers could not answer all questions or were not reachable. Therefore, passengers waited a long time for information about flights or ticket changes. Another important finding is the need for inclusivity. During the disaster, airlines shared information about their decisions with images and videos, but some content was criticized by disabled people, highlighting an essential topic of inclusivity. For instance:

"Could you please write explanations readable for visual impairments, please."

—Follower, 07/02/2023 19:01

Similarly, passengers criticized staff for not paying attention to disabled people, older people, or kids during evacuations. Although this issue is related to society's awareness, it addresses the need to prioritize people for evacuation during the disaster. Airlines should evaluate expectations and feedback for future disasters. The boundaries for corporate social responsibilities should be determined, and information flow between departments and between organizations and society should be clarified.

Airport-Related Comments

The analysis of people's comments shows contradictions among demands. Society shared the need for evacuation and the demand for extra flights. However, some people criticized airlines for long waiting times at the airport or lack of food. One passenger even asked to cancel evacuations due to the intensity at the airport:

"Please stop evacuations; people with flight tickets cannot fly."

—Follower, 11/02/2023 19:57

The postponement or cancellation of flights led to long waits at airports. Given that airports in the region are smaller and less equipped than those in Western countries, food and beverage services were limited. As a result, many people complained about the lack of food and drinks, as well as the overcrowding. One Follower expressed their frustration:

"You announced that you will transport people for free; we are waiting for six or seven hours without food or water…how will you explain this inhuman treatment #earthquake."

—Follower, 08/02/2023 23:32

This sentiment reflects the broader dissatisfaction with the lack of adequate resources and the prolonged delays at airports during this critical time. This also underscores the importance of coordination between airlines and airport authorities. Undoubtedly, airport operators should be prepared for safe operations and catering during disasters. However, the Airport Authority announced that their employees also died due to the earthquakes (AirportHaber, 2023). However, despite these difficulties, such as increased operations and a limited number of employees, the efforts of Airport Authority staff were noticed by society, and many expressed their gratitude on social media. One Follower shared:

"You should change your name to 'Disaster and Emergency Management Authority' because your employees work perfectly. God bless you."

—Follower, 08/02/2023 23:32

Other Requests

In addition to expressing reactions, people utilized social media platforms to tag airlines, requesting assistance with transporting aid from various locations around the world and volunteering in the earthquake-affected regions. One such example was a request made from the USA:

"Is there a way to send winter supplies to earthquake locations from the USA."

—Follower, 07/02/2023 04:18

Moreover, the findings reveal that airlines were asked for donations, support, or organizing campaigns. For instance, a post to SunExpress Airlines:

"You transported millions of passengers., you earned money. No donation?"

—Follower, 09/02/2023 18:04

These social media interactions underline a widespread societal demand to support the earthquake victims. To better address such needs in future disasters, it

would be beneficial to establish formal agreements between social welfare organizations and aviation companies. While some positive steps were taken during this particular crisis, such as the collaboration between SunExpress Airlines, Lufthansa Cargo, DPD, FIEGE, time:matters, and CB Customs Broker GmbH to deliver relief supplies, it is important that such partnerships be sustained for future emergencies (Sunnexpress, 2023).

Discussion

Taken together, the findings described above reinforce propositions by scholars that corporate social responsibility actions may transcend the traditional scope of the approach that fits into a regular reality during disasters (Albers & Rundshagen, 2020; Forcadell & Aracil, 2021).

As highlighted by scholars, the legitimacy judgments of evaluators depend on the view of appropriateness of the practices (Suddaby, Bitektine, & Haack, 2017). If evaluators believe in the appropriateness of practice, they judge it as legitimate; if they doubt the appropriateness of practice, they do not judge it as legitimate (Hoefer & Green Jr, 2016).

In this context, the paper contributes to the literature by explaining what is appropriate for society, especially under uncertainty (see Appendix-I and Appendix-II). To this end, based on the data, Figure 1 shows what is appropriate for society and what is not. As shown in Figure 1, expectations can be seen as appropriate and inappropriate for the same decisions and actions at the same time. Reactions to business actions can change instantaneously, and what is seen as legitimate in one's own experience may be seen as illegitimate by others. Some decisions, such as the decision to set a single price, may be considered appropriate by some but unacceptable to others in a catastrophic situation.

This study contributes to the legitimacy literature by highlighting society's perception of corporate social responsibility (CSR) during times of crisis. It reveals that societal expectations toward CSR actions transcend conventional norms during emergencies, aligning with and extending prior research on legitimacy and stakeholder expectations in unexpected contexts (Etter et al., 2018; Palazzo & Scherer, 2006). Specifically, it demonstrates that society expects airlines to go beyond their core function of air transportation and take on broader social responsibilities in times of need.
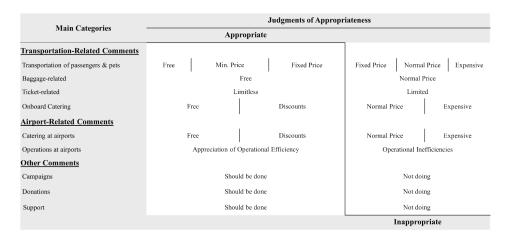
Main Categories	Judgments of Appropriateness					
	Appropriate					
Transportation-Related Comments						
Transportation of passengers & pets	Free	Min. Price	Fixed Price	Fixed Price	Normal Price	Expensive
Baggage-related	Free			Normal Price		
Ticket-related	Limitless			Limited		
Onboard Catering	Free		Discounts	Normal Price		Expensive
Airport-Related Comments						
Catering at airports	Free		Discounts	Normal Price		Expensive
Operations at airports	Appreciation of Operational Efficiency			Operational Inefficiencies		
Other Comments						
Campaigns	Should be done			Not doing		
Donations	Should be done			Not doing		
Support	Should be done			Not doing		
	Inappropriate					

Figure 1: Legitimacy judgments of society during the disaster derived from the data

Building on previous work that identifies CSR as a strategic tool for organizations to gain or maintain legitimacy (Beddewela & Fairbrass, 2016; Du & Vieira, 2012), this study advances theoretical understanding by showing that public expectations in crisis contexts are highly dynamic and virtually limitless. This insight underscores the importance of proactive CSR strategies tailored for disaster scenarios. Moreover, the study points to the critical role of inter-organizational collaboration—between airlines, governments, ground service providers, airport operators, and social welfare agencies—in shaping effective risk mitigation and disaster response frameworks. By suggesting that the boundaries of CSR practices must be strategically defined to balance social demands and financial sustainability, this research offers both theoretical and practical implications for the CSR and legitimacy literature. It calls for a re-evaluation of organizational responsibilities in light of society's evolving expectations, especially during large-scale crises.

Conclusion

This study aims to explore the legitimacy judgments of people regarding the airlines' operations during the disaster. The disaster resulted from the worst earthquakes in Türkiye in 2023. A close look at the literature shows that responses of organizations are generally analyzed from the organizations' point of view (Albers & Rundshagen, 2020; Scheiwiller & Zizka, 2021; Skouloudis, Evangelinos, & Moraitis, 2012). This study explores legitimacy from the beholders' perspectives regarding aviation organizations' operations during sudden, short-lived but devastating

earthquakes, in line with the idea that "legitimation of organizations is based on civil society discourses" (Etter et al., 2018; Palazzo & Scherer, 2006).

This study contributes to the literature by examining perceptions of legitimacy regarding aviation organizations' actions and decisions during unexpected events. The results indicate that society expects aviation organizations to provide more services and flexibility beyond their standard operations during crises. These expectations include increasing the number of flights, offering free and unlimited ticket changes, additional baggage allowances, aid transfers, and organizing campaigns and donations. Citizens use the social media accounts of the studied organizations both to express support and to voice criticism. These findings help us understand how societal expectations and perceptions of legitimacy evolve rapidly during crises and provide insights for organizations and governments to take a more proactive approach to future disasters.

The high number of posts shared in a short period indicates the necessity of developing in this direction. Enhancing the technical infrastructure of social media platforms may help prioritize emergency posts from earthquake zones and filter out non-emergency posts (such as messages of good wishes), and enable organizations to respond to urgent needs more quickly. However, this also highlights the need for public awareness. People should refrain from sharing unnecessary posts during crises.

We complement the literature on airline responses to crises (Albers & Rundshagen, 2020; Amankwah-Amoah, 2020; Kassem, Salama, & Ganepola, 2022) and the corporate social responsibility approach (Karaman & Akman, 2018) by sharing society's views instead of the organizations' explanations. This study extends the theoretical discussion about legitimacy judgment (Colleoni, 2013; Etter et al., 2018; Lee, Yoon, & O'Donnell, 2018) by showing more details about the society's approach and expectations during the crises. As a result, we present the common perspective that society constructs socially by using social media in a disaster situation by bringing together people's comments. Importantly, this study explores people's needs, providing clues for the future. This study highlights the critical role of transportation—particularly air travel—in supporting societal well-being.

Future research could examine aviation managers' perspectives on their societal responsibilities. Lastly, as mentioned before, the data were inductively coded; it represents the claims of the people who posted between February 6, 2023, and February 24, 2023. Researchers could conduct face-to-face interviews with people who experienced this disaster to explore legitimacy judgments. This would be another interesting path for future research.

Limitations

It should be noted that although the accounts of MNG Cargo, ULS Cargo, ACT Airlines, and Corendon Airlines were added to the dataset, the findings reveal that people mainly wrote to THY, Pegasus, SunExpress, Anadolujet. This does not mean that these airlines did not play a role in supporting society. This issue addresses the first limitation of this study. In addition, due to the lack of a list of international airlines, the dataset covers only posts with hashtags for national airlines and civil aviation authorities. However, as reported by some national newspapers, 690 foreign aircraft flew to these areas for humanitarian aid purposes (AirportHaber, 2023b). This issue points to the second limitation of this study. Finally, the third limitation of the study is that it analyzes only Turkish and English posts and excludes posts in other languages.

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Appendix-I: Transitions from the quotations to first theme

Theme: Appropriate		
Representative quotations	**Codes**	**Categories**
"@TK_TR organize extra flights to Şanlıurfa." [Follower, 06/02/2023, 07:11] *"@ucurbenipegasus @anadolujet @TK_TR please organize extra flights for Urfa Siirt Diyarbakır Malatya Adana to make our loved ones come."* [Follower, 06/02/2023 22:10]	Transportation of passengers & pets *-Comments on extra flights*	**Transportation-related comments**
"@ucurbenipegasus people are struggling for their lives… Offer the flights for 50-100tl!" [Follower, 07/02/2023 01:21]	Transportation of passengers & pets *-Comments on min.|fixed price*	
"@ucurbenipegasus You are a king; I flew from the earthquake zone to İzmir, I paid nothing… You are the number one in Türkiye #earthquake #Türkiye." [Follower, 11/02/2023 22:46]	Transportation of passengers & pets *-Comments on free flights*	
"@SunExpress… The tent and other essentials are heavy. Our tickets allow us to take only 20 kg; please let us take what we can." [Follower, 11/02/2023 16:10] *"@ucurbenipegasus @pegasusdestek Will the Trabzon-Gaziantep flight take place today, or has it been canceled? If it is not canceled, we kindly request your help with extra luggage allowance for our relatives. #earthquake."* [Follower, 13/02/2023 16:05]	Baggage-related	**Transportation-related comments**

"@ucurbenipegasus @pegasusdestek I would like to cancel the trip from Istanbul to Barcelona due to the earthquake." [Follower, 13/02/2023 13:58] *"Thank you for the free flight from Elazığ to İstanbul. Could you please transfer me from Istanbul to Trabzon?"* [Follower, 12/02/2023 00:23]	Ticket-related *-Comments on limitless changes*	**Transportation-related comments**
" @ucurbenipegasus…Thank you for free hot meal and drinks." [Follower, 11/02/2023 01:01] *" @ucurbenipegasus…You didn't charge for my mother's meal, thank you."* [Follower, 09/02/2023 20:02]	On-board catering *-Comments on onboard catering*	**Transportation-related comments**
"@ucurbenipegasus This nation owes you a debt of gratitude for the attitude you have shown as your company… I am at Sabiha Gökçen airport right now, may God give patience to your employees, instead of thanking them, they are being attacked and insulted." [Follower, 13/02/2023 16:05] *"@dhmikurumsal, you should change your name to 'Disaster and Emergency Management Authority' because your employees work perfectly. God bless you."*[Follower, 08/02/2023 23:32]	Operations at airports *-Appreciation of Operational Efficiency*	**Airport-related comments**
"TK_TR if it is necessary for this nation, you will not earn money for six months, you will heal the wounds of these difficult days because you owe it to this nation." [Follower, 11/02/2023 12:20]	Comments on support	**Other comments**
"@TK_TR Chairman of the Board Ahmet Bolat announced that they will construct of 1,000 homes in the earthquake-affected, thanks God" [Follower, 11/02/2023 20:03]		

Appendix-II: Transitions from the quotations to second theme

Theme: Inappropriate		
Representative quotations	**Codes**	**Categories**
"@TK_TR, you set 100tl for the tickets! You are the biggest company in the world; are you kidding?" [Follower, 07/02/2023 01:02]	Transportation of passengers & pets -Criticizing the fixed prices	**Transportation-related comments**
"@ucurbenipegasus I'm trying to go to my family in Kahramanmaraş and you increased the ticket prices. We need solidarity" [Follower, 06/02/2023 11:37] "@ucurbenipegasus Extra flights with these prices? You must fear from the God! vultures!" [Follower, 07/02/2023 01:21] "@ucurbenipegasus and @TK_TR could you please set a fixed price for the flights from the earthquake zone to other places? Do not expect the people who lost everything to buy the ticket for 2.000tl." [Follower, 06/02/2023 22:26]	Transportation of passengers & pets -Criticizing normal/expensive prices	
"@SunExpress On our Nurnberg-İzmir flight on 19.02.2023, we had to pay extra baggage fees for 3 suitcases with 20 sleeping bags to help earthquake victims. Helping people shouldn't be this hard #Türkiyeearthquake2023" [Follower, 24/02/2023 12:57] "@TK_TR Dear Turkish Airlines, today I traveled to Adana with four suitcases of supplies to support about 100 people. However, your team told me they couldn't accept four suitcases due to a lack of capacity. Yet, somehow, the capacity increased when I paid the extra fee!" [Follower, 13/02/2023 16:05]	Baggage-related	**Transportation-related comments**

"@ucurbenipegasus I had a flight from Bingöl to Istanbul. I got a refund of only 62 TL Shame on you" [Follower, 06/02/2023 22:49] "@SunExpress Your current refund policy only allows receiving only 120 TL for 3 tickets. This puts our earthquake-affected guests in a difficult situation." [Follower, 23/02/2023 20:07]	Ticket-related -Criticizing for refunds	**Transportation-related comments**
"@TK_TR You announced that you will transport people for free; we are waiting for six or seven hours without food or water…How will you explain this inhuman treatment #earthquake." [Follower, 08/02/2023 23:32] "@dhmikurumsal won't you stop the robbery at this airport, we can't drink a cup of tea, isn't it a sin in our own country, we go hungry and come back hungry?" [Follower, 24/02/2023 12:57]	Catering at airports -Criticizing catering at airports	**Airport-related Comments**
"@dhmikurumsal Adıyaman Airport is being flooded with people." [Follower, 13/02/2023 16:05] @SunExpress Instead of doing this, wouldn't it be nice to get your plane on time and not embarrass your passengers at the airport at a time like this? [Follower, 13/02/2023 16:05]	Operations at airports -Criticizing operational inefficiencies	
"@SunExpress, You transported millions of passengers, you earned money. No donation?" [Follower, 09/02/2023 18:04] "@ucurbenipegasus No donation Ali Sabancı?" [Follower, 15/02/2023 21:58]	Comments on donation	**Other comments**