



PUBLIC RELATIONS IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITIES IN TURKEY*

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ABSTRACT

Public relations is an application field providing management of all communication processes in institutional field. It forms management of strategic communication and a part of strategic management. In this regard, it is an important part of strategic planning process.

In the study, the place of public relations in strategic management of municipality is handled in terms of strategic plans prepared by metropolitan municipalities. Strategic plans of sixteen metropolitan municipalities were analyzed by content analysis method in terms of public relations approach.

The study revealed that public relations is an accepted fact in strategic planning process but it did not turn into an efficient application. Especially the following points can be mentioned as the significant ones; there is no sufficient coordination between public relations and other departments, there is no culture of working in coordination with public relations in terms of efficiency in services and increasing quality and there is no duty and responsibility given to public relations in aims and targets of strategic management.

The study analyzes strategic plans of metropolitan municipalities to understand role and impact of public relations in Turkey. For this reason, the research contributes to understanding the role and significance of public relations in strategic planning processes. Because this paper is one of the initial studies done concerning strategic planning focused on public relations in Turkey. Its findings show the place of public relations in strategic management of metropolitan municipalities in Turkey.

Key Words: Strategic management, Strategic planning, Public relations, Municipality, Local government.

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STRATEJİK YÖNETİMDE HALKLA İLİŞKİLER: TÜRKİYE BÜYÜKŞEHİR BELEDİYELERİ ARAŞTIRMASI

ÖZET

Halkla ilişkiler kurumsal alanda bütün iletişim süreçlerinin yönetimini sağlayan bir uygulama alanıdır. Hem stratejik bir iletişim yönetimi hem de stratejik yönetimin bir unsurudur. Bu nedenle stratejik planlama sürecinin önemli bir parçasıdır.

Çalışmada belediyelerin stratejik yönetiminde halkla ilişkilerin yeri, büyükşehir belediyeleri tarafından hazırlanan stratejik planlar bağlamında ele alınmıştır. Onaltı büyükşehir belediyesinin stratejik planları halkla ilişkiler yaklaşımı bakımından içerik analize yöntemi ile incelenmiştir.

Çalışma stratejik planlama sürecinde halkla ilişkilerin kabul edilen bir gerçek olduğunu ancak bunun etkin bir uygulamaya dönüşmediğini ortaya koymuştur. Halkla ilişkiler birimi ve diğer departmanlar arasında yeterli bir koordinasyonun olmaması, kalitenin yükseltilmesi ve hizmetlerde etkililik bakımından halkla ilişkiler birimiyle koordineli bir çalışma kültürünün bulunmaması ve stratejik yönetimin amaç ve hedeflerinde halkla ilişkiler birimine görev ve sorumluluklar verilmemesi uygulamada ortaya çıkan önemli eksiklikler olarak düşünülebilir.

Çalışmada Türkiye'deki halkla ilişkilerin önemini ve rolünü anlamak için büyükşehir belediyelerinin stratejik planları analiz edilmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu araştırma stratejik planlama sürecinde halkla ilişkilerin önemini ve rolünün anlaşılmasına katkı sağlamaktadır. Çünkü bu çalışma, halkla ilişkilere odaklanarak stratejik planlama ile ilgili Türkiye'de yapılan ilk çalışmalardan biridir. Araştırma bulguları Türkiye'deki büyükşehir belediyelerinin stratejik planlama sürecinde halkla ilişkilerin yerini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Stratejik Yönetim, Stratejik Planlama, Halkla İlişkiler, Belediye, Yerel Yönetim

Introduction

By a legal regulation realized in Turkey in 2004, preparation of strategic plans became obligatory in dwelling units having population more than 50.000. Thus, a strategic planning giving importance to making a participatory decision and application was adopted. In this period, these were intended that raising competitive performance of city, providing collaboration among city management and different corporations, raising corporate capacity, handling planning not only as a physical fact but also a process paying attention to economic and social aspects (Tekel 2009, 15).

The reality built in theory cannot have sufficient efficiency in developing strategic plans and their realization. Since, experiences in field of municipal services cause a perception which has physical applications. Physical municipal work is an approach in which social and economic elements are ignored and stylistic features come to the forefront and it emerged at the beginning of twentieth century (Tekel 2009, 5). In this respect, society was excluded from these applications in general terms. Sufficient citizen participation was not provided. The most important sign of this is

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that no sufficient appreciation was given to public relations in planning and application process. Public relations can give a chance to form strategic planning with a wider vision.

There are many signs that show several corporations do not give enough appreciation to public relations. Professionalists point out that public relation is a part of making strategic decisions (Bronn and Elson 1999, 351), because it is a subsystem helping management to plan and to evaluate general communication (Grunig 1984, 9). In other words, a public relations is an efficient management process in terms of achieving institutional aims, defining institutional philosophy and institutional change (Gordon 1997, 59).

In city's strategic management, social sphere should be planned in social, economic, and physical way. A high level of conscious is needed for this, because planning is a multi-dimensional and dynamic process advancing with political and economic power (Tekel 2009, 14). This multi-dimensional and dynamic structure can be defined better by means of public relations. Therefore, things to be done today can be planned and accomplished in a better way.

In this study, metropolitan municipalities who have to do strategic planning were analyzed. The place of public relations in strategic management of municipality was handled in terms of strategic plans prepared by metropolitan municipalities. The study is composed of public relations in strategic management, strategic planning focused on public relations, survey method, analysis and comments.

1. Strategic Management and Public Relations

Decisions affecting each other are named as strategic and action plans suitable for these decisions (Mütercimler 2006, 50) or regulating sources in a rational way are named as strategy (Polat 2010, 33). In other words, plans which are formed to reach aims and targets are named as strategy (Taşkın and Akat 2008, 47). Strategy can be defined as a comprehensive and holistic plan combined with strategic advantages of corporation. It is a process designed to succeed corporation's basic aims by means of a active management (Rao 2010, 21).

Strategic management is a process not defining what to do in the future, but it is a process defining what to do in the time period that we are now living to achieve corporation's aims and targets (Göksel 2010, 44).

Strategic management has a holistic approach. Especially, components such as service division in public institute, interinstitutional relations, administrative operations, organizational structure, programme and project management are handled with a strategic tendency. These components are improved with data coming from corporation's internal and external environment (Durna and Eren 2002, 74), because environment of the corporation is constantly changing. Therefore, corporations have to foresee that how this change is going to happen and what kind of opportunities and threats it can cause. In this respect, the obligation of providing communication between corporation and its environment forms the basis of public relations (Biber 2004, 78).

Corporations have environment stable and dynamic. When dynamic environment is compared with stable environment, it is more complicated. Cities constantly developing and whose population is rapidly increasing have a dynamic environment. Many differences are together in these cities. In this dynamic structure public relations can be an important way to provide communication (Güllüpunar 2009, 78). In other words, the changes in technology, economy, and society raise the importance of local administration in realizing public services. Therefore, in the new concept of administration, administration-people relation and correspondingly, public relations are important components (Taşcioğlu 2011, 7).

Grunig and Rapper put emphasis on strategic importance of public relations on account of forming long term relations with target group. According to them, keeping continuity in relations is

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a strategic duty. However, Moss and Warnaby do not treat public relations as a strategic management theory. In their opinion, public relations is a functional action to form an efficient corporate image in terms of management perspective. They see public relations as a job of communication. This technician job includes actions having strategic importance such as management consultancy, scanning and analyzing environment (Moss and Warnaby 1999, 67-69). Therefore, even though public relations is not accepted as a strategic management model, it functions as a part of strategic management in terms of the responsibilities that it has.

Public relations strategy reacts as a mechanism providing coordination between the corporation and its environment. It balances society's welfare and corporation's targets. It determines institutional boundaries, collects data by means of scanning the environment and provides input during the process of forming strategy. Reflective strategist lightens management about values, norms and expectations of society for social and environmental behaviors. At the same time, reflective public relations strategy influences management on account of defining corporation's position and mutual communication and forming honest relationship with partners (Steyn 2009, 528).

Public relations make applicable contributions to strategic management as a part of mixed motive model. Public relations' mixed motive model has functions such as contention, avoidance, compromise, accommodation, cooperation, being unconditionally constructive, win/win or no deal, being principled, mediated (Prowman 2005, 35). For this reason, while defining and transferring the message which is wanted to be given to the target group, public relations must be benefited (Paksoy 1999, 25).

Public relations should not be thought only as an exterior corporation. In terms of strategic management, it has in-house functions. An efficient in-house communication can make important contributions to development of institutional strategies, because public relations is an important management tool in terms of adopting institutional values, policy, and strategies by employees and receiving their support (Aydede 2009, 37).

Some of the principles that public relations has in terms of strategic management can be stated as below (Steyn 2009, 528):

- Forms an open system with strategic partners/shareholder
- Combines corporation's aims, targets and missions.
- Takes long term effects of institutional behaviors into account in terms of solving both external and internal problems.
- Accepts concerns of the counter side
- Encourages collecting collective information
- Uses mixed motive model of public relations in terms of forming strong judgment
- Undertakes to reduce negative effects to a minimum level for the counter side
- Always reacts in an honest way.

Public relations is important with regards to strategic management. However, public relations should also be planned and applied in a strategic way. Works thought to be done should be realized in a strategic plan. While forming the messages to communicate internal and external target group of the corporation, strategies of the corporation should be benefited from. Strategic management and public relations both affect each other and are affected from each other (Göksel

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2010, 53-55). Public relations which is an important data source in determining the aim, vision and mission of the corporation is at the same time affected from these.

Public relations strategy cannot be thought apart from institutional and competition strategy (Moss and Warnaby 1999, 77). Therefore, public relations rising organizational fertility in terms of management will be completed when target groups rising or limiting institutional talents are defined (Vercic and Grunig 1999, 39).

Grunig (1992) divides strategic importance of public relations into 7 steps (Vercic and Grunig 1999, 41):

1. *Stakeholder stage:* When a corporation's or its partners/shareholder's behaviors cause effects on the other, there is a relationship between the corporation and its partners/shareholders. Public relations makes a research to define these effects for the aim of analyzing behaviors of corporation and environment. Constant communication with partners/shareholders helps building long term relations. This situation provides controlling of conflicts that can occur in relations.

2. *Public stage:* Communities come into existence when they see one of the partners/shareholders as a problem. Public relations makes researches to define these communities and divide them into groups. In this situation, focus groups are beneficial. A communication providing people with participation in organization's making decisions process prevents conflicts.

3. *Issue stage:* People create problems and become organized. Public relations should foresee problems and manage the answer the corporation gives. Media has an important role in problem's being formed and getting bigger. Especially, the news in media can cause publics to get bigger which is composed of activist people or groups. Communication programs generally use media. However, interpersonal communication can also be used to make communication with activist groups and to solve problems by means of negotiation.

4. Public relations should define suitable aims for communication programs such as communication, accuracy, understanding, agreement, holistic behaviors.

5. Public relations should plan programs and campaigns to reach aims.

6. Public relations should apply programs and campaigns.

7. Public relations should evaluate the efficiency of programs in terms of reaching aims.

2. Strategic Planning Focused on Public Relations

Strategic plan makes strategies written by making them gain identity (Polat 2010, 34). It is dealing with the basic problem in an open and systematic way. It covers selecting of organizational aims, determining of strategic programs to reach private aims and constructing necessary methods for strategic programs and policies to reach success (Rao 2010, 77). Strategic planning specifies activities realized by human, physical, and financial sources and what is going to happen as a result of output that is obtained (Songür 2008, 63). It guides a corporation to make a decision on its mission and its sensibility to environment and to use sources to reach success (Allison and Kaye 2005, 1).

According to common approach, the basic features of strategic planning are the followings (Polat 2010, 34):

- Decisions made now affect future,
- It requires continuity,

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- It is a way of management,
- It is a form having set of plans affecting each other.

To understand strategic plan better and to understand what it means and what it does not mean, some definitions can be made as below (Allison and Kaye, 2005, 1-4):

- In strategic planning, processes are strategic, because it is a selection of how to react in a best way to environmental conditions which are dynamic and sometimes dangerous.
- Strategic planning is systematic both in terms of following structural and database process.
- Strategic planning includes selection of priorities.
- Strategic planning is to form an agreement focused on partners, customers and society.
- Strategic plan is a guide for source's distribution and gaining.

On the other hand,

- Strategic plan is not a prediction of future.
- Strategic plan is not a leadership judgment.
- Strategic plan is not generally easy, predictable and linear process. It includes more complicated processes.

Since the concept of urban has a very wide meaning, it brings about complication and ambiguity. Therefore, there is a need to widen the field for information. Each urban place has many differences together such as different regulations, ideologies, cultures, visions etc. This situation makes the concept of urban information circle be composed of differences and complications. Consequently, even though urban planning has a quite wide field in institutional and philosophical terms, it also has a loose base. Therefore, there is a wide distribution to modern, positivist, technocratic, legal, hierarchical, synoptic, traditional, communicative or communicative return inspired by conscious planning theory (Polat 2010, 36).

One of the planning traditions defined according to technocratic, democratic, socialist and liberalist approach after the 1960s is democratic planning whose aim is community's participation to planning (Polat 2010, 37). In the 1980s short term project based approaches harmonizing with market and politic pressure form basis of city planning. In the 1990s, the understanding that strategic planning is action focused and it acts in a certain vision became dominant (Tekel 2009, 2).

The understanding was continued to be supported in the 1990s. Profit and market are used as bases in the west, and the rationale of management and domination is dominant in the east. On the other hand, the new understanding of participation and searching for compromise has been developed. According to this approach, plans should have a certain substructure of communication. Information substructure and information flow are important (Tekel 2009, 7-8).

Strategic planning's having participatory approach especially after the 1960s makes the importance of public relations rise in this process. After having several experiences about planning, it is seen that participation becomes more important, because planning's gaining communicative feature by visionary standpoint in 1990s presents that planning process means wider field. Therefore, it can be said that public relations having communication facts can undertake strategic functions in this process.

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Public relations can be used as a beneficial method in terms of creating and announcing managerial policies (Biber 2004, 78). While the information gained by channels of public relations is guiding to create institutional policies, it makes the announcement of these policies both inside and outside of the corporation.

Basic criteria in planning municipal services should meet people's expectations and desires in high level. Performance criteria should be defined about services (Güllüpunar 2009, 69). These criteria should be defined by an approach focused on public relations. These criteria which can be used as measurement scale are measurement showing to which extent targets are realized in municipalities as non-profit corporations, because this measurement is related with satisfaction of people (Güllüpunar 2009, 79). In other words, quality in community service is in accordance with people's expectations (Özkara 1999, 102). Consequently, public relations can be used as a measurement scale in determining of people's expectations in the preparation step of strategic planning and in comparing people's satisfaction with the expectations in the evaluation step.

Various researches were done about municipality strategic planning. When these studies are handled, it is possible to say that they give importance to participation fact, but it is more in shape. For instance, in a study which handles municipality's opinions about strategic planning, it is concluded that 98 % of (106) municipalities participated in the study believe that strategic planning is an important tool providing transparency and giving account. However, in the same study, the rate of municipalities saying "we prepared strategic plans because of legal obligation, we did not use it anywhere else" is 55 % (Songür 2009, 44).

In Turkey, strategic plans must be prepared by public administration or its employees according to regulations of procedure and principles about strategic planning. However, in Songür's study (2009) 52 municipalities answered the question about who prepared their strategic plans. It is noticed that more than 1/3 of municipalities (19) had their strategic plans prepared by advisory companies. This situation can be commented as that municipalities are preparing these strategic plans just to realize a legal obligation. It can be said that they do not give necessary importance to strategic plans (Songür 2009, 43).

In another research conducted on 106 municipalities having population more than 50.000, 67 % of them said that they provided participation of employees to planning, about 85 % them said that they got the opinions of every group affected by municipality's services and about 83 % of them said that they got the opinions of citizens (Songür 2008, 76). In the same study, about 91 % of municipalities giving information about how they provide interior and exterior participation stated that they got the opinions of every group while they were making their plans. On the contrary, about 69 % of municipalities not giving information about how they provide interior and exterior participation stated that that they got the opinions of every group (Songür 2008, 71). It is noticed that municipalities giving information about how they provide participation do give much importance to participation.

3. Method

This study handles the importance of public relations and analyzes strategic plans of metropolitan municipalities in Turkey in terms of importance given to public relations. The position of public relations is analyzed in strategic targets of metropolitan municipalities. Thus, the institutional position of public relations is emphasized in terms of strategic management.

Strategic planning became obligatory with public finance management and control law (2003) numbered 5018 for public establishments in Turkey. Municipalities having population more than 50.000 have to prepare strategic plans according to Metropolitan Municipalities Law numbered 5216 and Municipality Law numbered 5393 (Songür 2009, 28). There are 250

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municipalities having population more than 50.000 according to the registration based on addresses of 2011 (<http://www.migm.gov.tr>).

Sixteen metropolitan municipalities are defined in the study as sample. These metropolitan municipalities are İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Bursa, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Samsun, Konya, Kayseri, Eskişehir, Erzurum, Gaziantep, Diyarbakır, Antalya, Adana and Mersin. Thus, strategic plans of all the metropolitan municipalities in Turkey were analyzed in terms of public relations approach. Metropolitan municipalities have a more professional team and have more resources when compared to other municipalities. It can be said that the potential of metropolitan municipalities is more in terms of strategic planning. Therefore, analysis of strategic plans of metropolitan municipalities can provide more concrete data. Within this framework, the questions of research were defined as follows:

- What is the value given to public relations in producing services?
- What is the function of public relations in institutional decisions?
- What is the place of public relations in organization in terms of management?
- Is there an emphasis of public relations in strategic targets?
- What is the role of public relations in physical services?
- What is the role of public relations in terms of social and cultural services?
- What does building feedback system and applying it in an efficient way mean in terms of strategic targets?

Content analysis method was used in the research. Since, there is no study like that done before, content analysis codes were formed according to approaches mentioned in theory part. Main parts in municipality's strategic plans are handled in accordance with public relations principles. Within this framework, these analysis codes are used:

1st step: situation analysis

Feedback

Inside of corporation	Existent / Nonexistent
Outside of corporation	Existent / Nonexistent
Feedback from municipality to public	Existent / Nonexistent
Informing	Existent / Nonexistent
Publicity	Existent / Nonexistent
e-municipality	Existent / Nonexistent
Participation of corporate stakeholder	Existent / Nonexistent
Employee participation	Existent / Nonexistent
Public participation Research (expectation, satisfaction, performance and so on)	Existent / Nonexistent
Communication tool and environment	Existent / Nonexistent
Social responsibility	Existent / Nonexistent
Transparency and accountability	Existent / Nonexistent

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Trueness and honesty	Existent / Nonexistent
Developing long term relationship	Existent / Nonexistent
Forming mutual benefit	Existent / Nonexistent
Senior management consulting	Existent / Nonexistent
Organization of public relations	Existent / Nonexistent
Representation of public relations in team of strategic planning	Existent / Nonexistent
Public relations in SWOT analysis	Existent / Nonexistent
2nd step: vision, mission, principle and values	
Emphasis of public relations in vision	Existent / Nonexistent
Emphasis of public relations in mission	Existent / Nonexistent
Emphasis of public relations in principle and values	Existent / Nonexistent
3rd step: Strategic aims and targets	
Number of total strategic aim	
Number of strategic aim related to public relations	
Number of strategic aim including targets related to public relations	
Number of strategic aim identified for public relations department	
Duties of public relations department related to other department	
Public relations in strategic aims identified concerning strategic management	
Feedback	
Inside of corporation	Existent / Nonexistent
Outside of corporation	Existent / Nonexistent
Feedback from municipality to public	Existent / Nonexistent
Informing	Existent / Nonexistent
Publicity	Existent / Nonexistent
Volunteer participation	Existent / Nonexistent
Media relations	Existent / Nonexistent
Corporate stakeholder relations	Existent / Nonexistent
Training of public about using of municipal services	Existent / Nonexistent
Social responsibility	Existent / Nonexistent
In house education	Existent / Nonexistent
In house organization of communication	Existent / Nonexistent
Developing long term relationship	Existent / Nonexistent

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Transparency and accountability	Existent / Nonexistent
Organization of public relations	Existent / Nonexistent
Senior management consulting	Existent / Nonexistent
Forming mutual benefit	Existent / Nonexistent
4th step: Monitoring and Evaluation	
Feedback	
Inside of corporation	Existent / Nonexistent
Outside of corporation	Existent / Nonexistent
Feedback from municipality to public	Existent / Nonexistent
Research of satisfaction	Existent / Nonexistent
Inside of corporation	Existent / Nonexistent
Outside of corporation	Existent / Nonexistent
Media research	Existent / Nonexistent
Rate of people's participation in activities	Existent / Nonexistent

In the study, public relation's effect on preparation process of strategic plan, defining vision, mission and values, defining strategic aims and targets and evaluation process was handled. This analysis was done within the frame of analysis items mentioned above. These items were defined as a result of prereading done on strategic plans in terms of public relation's approach.

Contents analysis items were formed generally within the frame of public relation's institutional duties. Some of these items were defined based on approaches handled in theory part of the study. Establishing long terms relationship with target groups, creating mutual benefits, senior management counseling of public relations, public relation's duties in strategic aims and targets set as other department's duties, public relation's role in strategic aims and targets about strategic management are among these items. Additionally, strategic aims were evaluated in terms of public relations and public relations department. In this section, the total number of strategic aims in plans, presentation of public relations in strategic aims, the emphasis of public relations in strategic targets defined according to the aims and strategic aims defined as public relations department's duty were evaluated.

Opinions of the instructors of Communication Faculty in University of Gumushane were taken in defining analysis codes mentioned above. Within these codes, strategic plans of municipalities were reached and analyzed on March 25, 2012.

4. Finding and Comments

There are strategic aims that are related to different service fields in sixteen metropolitan municipalities' plans. Some of these aims and some of strategic targets in these aims can be evaluated within the frame of public relations approach. However, in important part of this, there is no data that can be handled in terms of public relations. Therefore, evaluation in the study includes data about public relations.

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Table 1. Total values related to strategic aim and target in strategic planning

Analysis codes	N	Percent
Number of total strategic aim	332	% 100
Number of strategic aim related to public relations	37	% 11
Number of strategic aim including targets related to public relations	187	% 56
Number of strategic aim identified for public relations department	11	% 3

In strategic plans of sixteen metropolitan municipalities, it is seen that there are total 332 strategic aims related to the different service fields were defined. 11 % of these include subjects directly related to public relations. Strategic aims including sub targets about public relations were realized 56 %. In addition, strategic aims related to the assigned position of public relations are 3 % (Table 1). In this respect, it can be said that public relations do not have enough efficiency in terms of strategic aims and targets. Municipalities should develop relationship close to people for their positions assigned. Public relations has an important place in strategic management of municipalities in terms of social, physical and cultural services. However, it was concluded in the analysis that the aim or target about public relations is much fewer in total strategic aims.

In defining strategic aims, generally, there is a classification according to the assigned position of municipalities' departments. However, the number of strategic aims defined within the frame of public relations department's duties and responsibilities is very few. This situation shows us that public relations which can take charge in area of activity is not used efficiently.

Public relations is not only a study conducted to inform people. It is a strategic communication method (Peltekoğlu 2012, 6) and it is an interplay based on communication aimed at enhancing management-people relationship (Kazancı 1997, 59). It provides communication with target groups related to the management directly or indirectly. In this regard, public relations department realizing institutional communication can be used efficiently.

In the study it is seen that public relations has not got an efficient function in strategic planning process in terms of situation analysis (Table 2). It is observed that communication flow between municipality and people and data obtained were not used sufficiently in situation analysis part of strategic plans. In addition, it was concluded that in house communication data has less importance. In situation analysis step, 19 % of municipalities gave place to in house communication in strategic planning. However, 50 % of municipalities emphasized feedback from people to municipality, 56 % emphasized feedback from municipality to people and informing community and 50 % emphasized publicity functions.

Table 2. Public relations in preparation phase of strategic Planning

Analysis codes	Existent		Nonexistent		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Feedback						
Inside the corporation	3	%19	13	%81	16	%100
Outside the corporation	8	%50	8	%50	16	%100
Feedback from the municipality to public	9	%56	7	%44	16	%100
Informing	8	%50	8	%50	16	%100
Publicity	9	%56	7	%44	16	%100
e-municipality	5	%31	11	%69	16	%100

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Participation of corporate stakeholder	15	%93	1	%7	16	%100
Employee participation	14	%87	2	%13	16	%100
Public participation	14	%87	2	%13	16	%100
Research (expectation, satisfaction, performance and so on)	11	%69	5	%31	16	%100
Communication tool and environment	12	%75	4	%25	16	%100
Social responsibility	14	%87	2	%13	16	%100
Transparency and accountability	6	%37	10	%63	16	%100
Trueness and honesty	3	%19	13	%81	16	%100
Developing long term relationship	1	%7	15	%93	16	%100
Forming mutual benefit	1	%7	15	%93	16	%100
Senior management consulting	0	%0	16	%100	16	%100
Organization of public relations	3	%19	13	%81	16	%100
Representation of public relations in team of strategic planning	7	%47	9	%56	16	%100
Public relations in SWOT analysis	6	%37	10	%63	16	%100

It can be said that municipalities used research methods to enable people, employees and institutional sharers to participate in planning process. According to the analysis, 93 % of municipalities made research to provide institutional sharers' participation and 87 % of them made research to provide people's and employees' participation. It can be said that this rate is high in terms of participation in planning.

It can be remarked that public relations department was not represented in preparation stage of strategic plans. 47 % of the municipalities analyzed made people responsible for public relations present in planning team. However, it can be said that efficient representation of public relations is below this rate. Since, municipalities take employees from each department to team; public relations department participated in the team. Nonetheless, it is seen that the number of municipalities put emphasis on organization of public relations in situation analysis process is quite low (19 %).

In situation analysis process, it is observed that municipalities give importance to social responsibility. (Table 2). However, it can be said that it is more realized as an analysis of legal responsibilities. In Carroll's 4 stage social responsibility model, social responsibilities were emphasized in the second stage (Carroll 1991, 41).

Transparency and giving account, honesty and trueness, creating long term relationships, counseling of senior management of public relations items that can be accounted as efficient functions in terms of strategic management were handled by a few of municipalities in strategic planning preparation process (Table 2).

Table 3. Public relations in vision, mission, principle and values

Analysis codes	Existent		Nonexistent		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Emphasis of public relations in vision	3	%19	13	%81	16	%100
Emphasis of public relations in mission	7	%44	9	%66	16	%100
Emphasis of public relations in principles and values	15	%93	1	%7	16	%100

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Vision is envisagement of targets wanted to be reached in a long period of time in the future and it is a first step for this. Mission shows the way how to succeed vision (Göksel 2010, 3-5). Therefore, vision, mission, principle and values have an important effect on strategic planning in terms of looking at the future. In this process, the value given to public relations forms the base of point of view focused on public relations. In the research, it is seen that while, sixteen metropolitan municipalities gave importance to public relations (93 %) in strategic planning principle and value; in terms of mission 44 %, and vision 19 % importance were given (Table 3).

All in all, in strategic aims and targets about other service fields, it is remarked that no duty was given to public relations department (Table 4). Public relations can be used efficiently in municipality strategic management in terms of physical, social and cultural services. When it is thought that the basic duty of public relations is providing institutional communication, it can be treated as an area of activity that can be benefited by all service fields. In the study, 25 % of sixteen municipalities gave duties about other departments' duties and responsibilities. A few municipalities (7 %) can be said to give responsibility to public relations in strategic aims and targets about strategic management field defined in strategic plans.

In terms of institutional communication, it is seen that municipalities gave importance to feedback both from people to municipality (87 %) and from municipality to people (87 %) in strategic planning (Table 4). However, it can be told that not enough importance was given to feedback in terms of employees' participation (25 %). Nonetheless, majority of municipalities (75 %) has strategic aims and targets about informing and all of them (100 %) has strategic aims and targets about publicity.

All of the municipalities (100 %) handled in the study for strategic aims and targets have a sense of social responsibility. Social responsibility principle in terms of legal obligation defined during situation analysis step in planning has changed in the process of determining strategic aims and targets. Generally, duties such as health, education, environment, old people, disabled people, children, creating urban awareness are among municipalities social responsibility activities. While some of these activities stem from legal obligation, majority of them are realized by institutional resources' being spent in social fields on corporation's self decision.

50 % of municipalities intend to encourage volunteer participation in program and service period for strategic aims and targets. However, these targets are limited by social and cultural activities. Especially in services going to be done in physical field, it can be said that there is insufficient people participation. 56 % of municipalities gave place to relations with media, 75 % of them to relations with institutional sharers, 93 % of them to in house education, 87 % of them to subjects about in house communication system, 81 % of them to e-municipality subject, 81 % of them to education of people about the usage of urban services in their strategic aims and targets (Table 4). These data show us that municipalities give value to public relations in strategic planning. Especially educating people about usage of urban services can be considered as a requirement of efficient and beneficial management sensibility.

Table 4. Public relations in strategic aims and targets

Analysis codes	Existent		Nonexistent		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Duties of public relations department related to other department	4	%25	12	%75	16	%100
Public relations in strategic aims identified concerning strategic management	1	%7	15	%93	16	%100
Feedback						
Inside of corporation	4	%25	12	%75	16	%100
Outside of corporation	14	%87	2	%13	16	%100

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Feedback from municipality to public	14	%87	2	%13	16	%100
Information	12	%75	4	%25	16	%100
Publicity	16	%100	0	%0	16	%100
Volunteer Participation	8	%50	8	%50	16	%100
Media relations	9	%56	7	%44	16	%100
Corporate stakeholder relations	12	%75	4	%25	16	%100
Training of public about using of municipal services	13	%81	3	%19	16	%100
Social responsibility	16	%100	0	%0	16	%100
In house education	15	%93	1	%7	16	%100
In house organization of communication	14	%87	2	%13	16	%100
Developing long term relationship	4	%25	12	%75	16	%100
e-municipality	13	%81	3	%19	16	%100
Transparency and accountability	7	%44	9	%66	16	%100
Organization of public relations	4	%25	12	%75	16	%100
Senior management consulting	0	%0	16	%100	16	%100
Forming mutual benefit	4	%25	12	%75	16	%100

In the study, it is seen that there is some missing points in defining strategic aims and targets in some subjects in terms of public relations approach. 25 % of municipalities gave place to the principles in their strategic aims and targets about developing long terms relationship with people, 44 % of them about transparency and giving account, and 25 % of them creating mutual benefits. On the other hand, none of the municipalities defined a strategic aim and target in terms of senior management counseling of public relations. The rate of municipalities having strategic aims and targets in terms of organization of public relations is 25 %.

Table 5. Public Relations in monitoring and evaluating phase

Monitoring and Evaluating/Performance Indicators	Existent		Nonexistent		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Feedback						
Inside of corporation	2	%25	14	%75	16	%100
Outside of corporation	8	%50	8	%50	16	%100
Feedback from municipality to public	6	%37	12	%63	16	%100
Research of satisfaction						
Inside of corporation	8	%50	8	%50	16	%100
Outside of corporation	13	%81	3	%19	16	%100
Media researches	6	%37	10	%63	16	%100
Rate of people's participation in activities	9	%56	7	%44	16	%100

It can be said that applications about area of activity of public relations is insufficient for the process of strategic planning's evaluation (Table 5). Generally, evaluation criteria of strategic aims and targets is associated with whether the activity is done or not. There are also evaluation criteria within the frame of public relation applications. 25 % of sixteen municipalities used feedback from employees, 50 % from people to municipality and 37 % from municipality to people in evaluation process of strategic plan. When it is evaluated in general, it is seen that this is not enough. Forming constant dialog between municipality and its people can be associated with the rates of feedback from municipality to people and from people to municipality.

Satisfaction researches done to evaluate strategic aims and targets can be thought as an important result of the public relations approach. Doing various satisfaction researches by municipalities is important for strategic management. In the study, it is obtained that 81 % of

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municipalities conducted researches to measure people's satisfaction. On the other hand, 50 % of them did researches to measure their employees' satisfaction.

Media's power should not be ignored as it transfers institutional messages and information to target groups and affecting them. However, it can be said that sixteen metropolitan municipalities did not elaborate on this subject adequately. Since, in the study it is concluded that 37 % of them used media research in strategic plan evaluation. In addition, 56 % of municipalities measured the rate of people's participation in activities and programs in evaluation process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Public relations department should have an organizational hierarchy close to senior management (Gecikli 2010, 67; Peltekoğlu 2012, 157 and Güllüpunar 2009, 73). It is seen that public relations is not represented as senior management level when organizational structure of these sixteen municipalities were analyzed. It becomes more difficult for public relations to do self-control which is at the same level as the other departments. It can be said that public relations do not have an efficient function in strategic planning period. This study shows us that strategic aims and targets defined by municipalities are far from public relation's point of view.

The rate of definition of aims and targets, which were formed by public relations perspective, in responsibility of public relations department is quite low. Additionally, coordination duty of public relations in house and taking responsibility in other departments' application field is quite weak.

In strategic planning, generally public relations was applied in the field of social and cultural municipal work. Reliability of public relations in terms of physical municipal work is quite low. People's participation for physical municipal works can be thought as a basic feature of efficient and beneficial applications. For example, to create a constant dialog between municipality and its people, mutual communication process working from municipality to people and from people to municipalities was handled at an adequate level. However, in some municipalities, departments other than public relations are responsible for this or there is no clear definition of operation of systems and this emerges as an unpleasant situation.

Public relation's not being in an efficient hierarchical position and having little representation in strategic planning team or this representation's stemming from a general application that belongs to all departments make public relations efficiency lower in terms of strategic management. Therefore, principles such as feedback, mutual effect, participatory management, counseling of senior management, developing long term relationship, creating mutual benefits, honesty, trueness, giving account, transparency were not applied in an efficient way. However, despite all these deficiencies, public relations was accepted in majority of municipalities analyzed. This situation is an important experience for future applications since, municipalities in Turkey can be said to have positive attitude to strategic planning approach. Applications done show us that strategic planning is done as a result of legal obligation. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that strategic planning is a long term approach and there is a need to do a mental change in institutional dimension and this cannot be realized in a short time (Songür 2009, 50). Therefore, both the understanding of strategic planning and public relations approach in this process will be more efficient. Academic studies done from now on will define public relation's duties and functions more explicitly and enable this application to become more widespread.

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