RESEARCH ON WEBSITES OF 43 PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCY MEMBERS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF TURKEY (TÜHİD) IN ASPECT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT
Nowadays public relations studies have entered a more effective process via recent media tools. In this study, the websites of 43 public relations agency members of Public Relations Society of Turkey (TÜHİD) are being evaluated in aspect of public relations. When considered from this point of view, the websites of the agencies in question have been analyzed in terms of company information, communication attempts, media relations, corporate identity, corporate publications and interaction. The study has been designed using content analysis method of qualitative research methodology to research the websites of aforesaid 43 public relations agencies. Since the websites of 12 agencies are under construction, the rest 31 websites have been taken under review. The data obtained from this study has revealed to what extent the websites of public relations agencies are being appropriately and effectively used in terms of public relations techniques.

Keywords: Websites, Public Relations Agency, TÜHİD, Public Relations Techniques

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent communication technologies and the transformation of these technologies on communication models provide public relations discipline feeding on communication field with new opportunities. Public relations specialists need to track the revolving and advancing technologies closely (Pohl&Vandeventer, 2001, p.367). Within this period, especially the websites are the key points of corporations in that they express themselves to the target audience. Because any sort of information can be instantly gained with an independency of time and space through websites. According to Auger, the increase in the number of websites makes it difficult for corporates to drive the traffic to their websites. Next aim following the attention to website is how to present an attractive and rich in content website to the audience (Haas, 2002, p.637). Piccoli and others state that the websites of companies are gradually becoming a component of consumer services. It is important to be decisive in design and functionality of the websites, since they have a direct influence on consumer's decision. E-consumers want instant, user-friendly and high quality of supplier websites (Zhao & Gutierrez, 2001, p.18). Therefore, public relations specialists shoulder a great responsibility of conducting the design and functionality of the websites. The websites used for information multiplying and teleconference system by public relations specialists are important. Websites save the public relations specialists from such former expenses as post, photocopy etc. while spreading the knowledge. These pages can also be accessed at any time all the year round. The e-mail access on these pages enables to detect the impression of visitors on corporation, brand or services. While designing the websites, the public relations specialist must answer all the questions regarding which receptors can have an access to websites, whether the websites can be used to enable the increasing interaction, who will be the webmaster responsible for maintaining and updating the website, how the website will be integrated with the message distribution system (Lordan, 2001, p.587). This is because all the information about the corporation can be obtained via these pages. A public relations specialist must manage his/her website accordingly. He/she must run the website accomplishedly in flow of information, crisis management and company profile. The information must be up-to-date and active.

2. LITERATURE

Public Relations Agencies in Turkey
Public relations activities feeding on different branches of science are as old as the human history itself is. When the Turkish history is reviewed, the very first examples of these studies in field go back to Orkhon Inscriptions of Gokturks. Later in the Seljuk Empire period, Nizam-ül Mülk mentioned the necessity of informing the reign about the opinion, thought, estimation and wishes of the public in his work called ''Siyasetname''. The emperors of the Anatolian Seljuk Empire spared some to time to listen to the problems of public (Onal, 1997, p.6). As a result, it is clearly seen that public relations activities were gropely proceeded, which is different from today's. In a modern sense, public relations activities began with the establishment of Anadolu Agency and releasing the reforms to the public by Atatürk in Turkey. Such departments as publicity office, public information agency, information office and media advisory which are responsible for public relations in public enterprises were subsequently established. The literal practice of public relations dates back to late 1960s. General Directorate of Press and Information of Foreign Ministry and Directorate of Press and Information of Ministry of Defense are the examples relevant to public relations (Geçikli, 2008, p.12). Afterwards agencies were established to realize all the activities of public relations.

A&B Public Relations Company was founded by Alaeddin Asna in 1974 as the first PR company in Turkey (Geçikli, 2008, p.14). A&B Public Relations Company rendered a service during 10 years as the only communication consultancy company in the sector (Peltekoğlu, 2004, p.101). During the foundation of A&B, Alaeddin Asna stated that he worked as a "missionary" for this business and regarded Turkey as equal to other countries worldwide. Asna also stated that he felt intensely frightened whether the company would succeed or not in the very early years following the foundation, but in the course of time, he conqured all his fear after conducting successful business (Peltekoğlu&Saydam, 2008, p.11-12). The very aim of the foundation of PR agencies is to render consultancy services to the companies. Since the agencies give outside support to the corporations, their supervision skills developed. The agencies can easily distinguish the pluses and minuses of corporations. The agencies are rich in educated and well-equipped people. They also have more financial and technical opportunities than the intra-agency PR unit has. Being a close follower of the sector, they are always in a pursuit of innovations. The biggest disadvantage of the agencies is that they have inadequate knowledge on intra-agency. They might be late and limited in the event of a crisis in the field of communication. Sometimes they might have problems while getting paid by corporations. They might not be well-equipped and well-informed on the field that the corporation works. Ceyda Aydede, being the former president of IPRA and the founder of Global Tanıtım Halkla İlişkiler, proposes that the agencies in Turkey can succeed through sustainability, and this can only realize through institutionalization of the agencies (Peltekoğlu & Saydam, 2008, p.67-68). When compared to PR activities across the world, it can be said that PR consultancy agencies working universally and contemporaneously in Turkey become gradually successful. As a reason, the international awards received and world presidencies can be good examples. The emergence of new agencies is a progress. Foreign capital is also invested in the agencies in Turkey. Trade bodies in the field gain strength. Educated and specialized individuals have started working in the agencies. The main problems which can be encountered in the agencies as follows: Consultancy fees do not reach the foreign level. There can be occasional problems about investment and adequate employment. There can be some trouble on convincing the clients about research and measurement. There can be difficulty arising from the different interpretation of code of ethics between agencies. The leading motivation of the foundation of Public Relations Society of Turkey (TÜHİD) in 1972 is to bring the PR specialists together and the code of ethics to be adopted. The corporation having connections with IPRA or other international corporations has witnessed a gradual increase in the number of its members. "TÜHİD Young Communicator Support Grant" is prominent for the students who consider working in this field.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Method

The research method is the content analysis being one of the qualitative research methods. Content analysis is a method which can be adopted for different objectives in the fields of political sciences, journalism, PR, psychology, sociology, history, literature, etc.. Symbolic conduct or communication materials are tried to be explained and solved. According to Janis, under the conditions of relying on the judgement of the analyst who is a scientist and depending on the judgement which presents clearly formulized codes of the analyst or analyst group, content analysis is the classification of the communication tools and their adoption to solve problems (Janis In: Holsti, 1968). The study has been conducted by a proper screening model in accord with the purposes. Screening model aims to describe the preexisting condition without changing it (Karasar, 1998, p.77). In this sense, 43 PR agency members of TÜHİD were chosen. However, since their websites are under construction, only 31 websites are reviewed according to the scale consisting of 34 criterion prepared by Öztürk and Ayman in 2007.

Table 1: The Criterion of Websites in Aspect of Public Relations

	Category	Operational Definition
1	Corporate information	General knowledge on corporate (products, services, capacity)
2	Resume of the corporate's executives	Name, education, former workplaces and position
3	Corporate history	Story of foundation
4	Corporate field	Products and services
5	Organization chart	A Chart indicating the operation of organization
6	Vision	Corporate's point of view
7	Mission	Corporate's fundamental reason for being
8	Emblem	A special design or visual object reflecting the features of corporate
9	Logo	A unique character set or graphic design reflecting the name of corporate
10	Music	Other than commercial song, a song or corporate march playing on an introductory basis on website
11	Announcements	The links put by corporate on Announcement
12	On-line magazine or journal	The links put by corporate on Magazine or Journal
13	Brochures	The links put by corporate on Brochures
14	Reports	The links put by corporate on Reports
15	Corporate presentation video	Movies or animations about corporate
16	E-book	E-books relevant to corporate (stories of foundation, biographies, tales of success)
17	Press Issues	Press Issues published by corporate
18	Press Archive	A unit where the news or other issues about corporate and employees are kept
19	Picture and Photos	Picture and Photos of corporate on a similar title
20	Activity Calendar	An Activity Calendar indicating the corporate activities
21	Contact Address	Contact Address of corporate (e-mail address, phone, fax number)
22	Printed Advertisement	Advertisement images or folds that can be unfolded or loaded
23	Outdoor Ads.	Outdoor Ads. images or folds that can be unfolded or loaded
24	Radio Ads.	Radio Ads. folds that can be unfolded and loaded
25	Television Ads.	Television Ads. folds that can be unfolded and loaded
26	Activities	The links put by corporate on Activities
27	Seminars and Conferences	The links put by corporate on Seminar ve Conferences
28	Exhibitions, Fair and Competitions	The links put by corporate on Exhibitions, Fair and Competitions

29	Celebrations	The links put by corporate on Celebrations
30	Sponsor	The links put by corporate on Sponsor
31	Social Responsibility	The links put by corporate on Social Responsibility
32	E-mail	The presence of e-mail address of corporate or a specific person
33	Forum	The presence of a segment on website where the visitors are able to write their opinions, wishes and complaints
34	News & Forum	The presence of relevant links

The Criterion of Websites in Aspect of Public Relations (Öztürk and Ayman)

Table 2: The Member Agencies of TÜHİD and Their Websites

THE MEMBER AGENCIES OF TÜHİD	THEIR WEBSITES
1 **Image Halkla İlişkiler**	http://www.image-pr.net
2 **A&B İletişim A.Ş.**	http://www.ab-pr.com/
3 **Arya Sponsorluk**	http://www.aryasponsorluk.com.tr/
4 **Bernaylafem**	http://www.bernaylafem.com/
5 **Bersay Stratejik İletişim Danışmanlığı**	http://www.bersay.com.tr/
6 **Beyaz Sosyal Sorumluluk ve Danışmanlık**	http://www.beyazsosyalsorumluluk.com/
7 **BG İletişim ve Halkla İlişkiler**	http://www.bgiletisim.com/
8 **Bizce Tanıtım Organizasyon**	http://www.bizcetanitim.com/
9 **Communication Partner İletişim Danışmanlığı**	http://www.cpartner.com.tr/
10 **Denove Halkla İlişkiler**	http://www.denovepr.com/
11 **Departman Medya İletişim Hizmetleri**	http://www.departmanmedya.com/
12 **Effect Halkla İlişkiler**	http://www.effect-pr.com/channels/1.asp?id=45
13 **EnPR İletişim**	http://www.enpr.com.tr/
14 **Excel İletişim Danışmanlığı**	http://www.excel.com.tr
15 **Grup7 İletişim Hizmetleri**	http://www.grup7.com.tr/
16 **Hisdaş Medyapol**	http://www.hisdasmedyapol.com/
17 **İDEA Halkla İlişkiler ve Tanıtım**	http://www.idea-pr.com/
18 **Keçi Organizasyon**	http://www.kecievents.com/
19 **Leo PR**	http://www.leopr-tr.com
20 **MESE İletişim Danışmanlığı**	http://www.mese.com.tr/
21 **MPR Halkla İlişkiler**	http://www.mpr.com.tr
22 **Plan PR**	http://www.plan-pr.com/
23 **POZİTİF PR**	http://www.pozitifpr.com/
24 **PR Aktif İletişim Hizmetleri**	http://www.praktif.com.tr
25 **PRO İletişim Danışmanlığı**	http://www.proiletisim.com/
26 **Promedia Halkla İlişkiler Ltd. Şti.**	http://www.promedia.com.tr/
27 **Rekta Reklam Ve Tanıtım Hizmetleri**	http://www.rekta.com.tr/main.html
28 **Seçil Şendağ Stratejik İletişim Danışmanlığı**	http://www.secilsendag.com.tr/
29 **Stage İletişim Danışmanlığı**	http://www.stagepr.com/
30 **Toksü ve Chase Halkla İlişkiler**	http://www.toksuvechase.com/
31 **Zarakol İletişim Hizmetleri**	http://www.zarakol.com.tr/
32 **Assist İletişim Danışmanlığı**	Under Construction
33 **Beze Group**	Under Construction
34 **BPR Halkla İlişkiler**	Under Construction
35 **Cohn&Wolfe Türkiye**	Under Construction
36 **Depar Tanıtım**	Under Construction
37 **Global Tanıtım Halkla İlişkiler**	Under Construction
38 **İMAGO Reklam Ajans Organizasyon Hizmetleri A.Ş.**	Under Construction
39 **M3 Halkla İlişkiler**	Under Construction
40 **Medialand Halkla İlişkiler**	Under Construction
41 **Ogilvy&Mather Türkiye**	Under Construction
42 **On İletişim**	Under Construction
43 **MS REKLAM HİZMETLERİ A.Ş.**	Under Construction

3.1. Research Objectives
The survey research objective is to detect how the PR agencies use PR techniques on their websites. How the agencies supporting various corporations in terms of PR on their websites use these techniques on their own websites will be disclosed. And thus suggestions are expected to be offered regarding the possible shortages.

3.2. Importance of the Research
PR agencies have to use internet efficiently, especially their own website in order to carry on the activities. Websites provide people instantly and easily with any sort of information and image about the corporations. Therefore, the agencies rendering PR services need to design their own PR on their websites. This study is important to see if member agencies of TÜHİD design the PR on their websites appropriately or not.

3.3. Scopes and Limitations of Research
The scope of the research is formed by the member agencies of Public Relations Society of Turkey (TÜHİD). The limit of the research is the time period when the websites are analyzed (15 November – 15 December 2011). Since the study reveals the activities of a specific period, there might have been changes on the websites following the assessments. Due to the dynamic mechanism of websites, possible changes of data obtained from the studies conducted at different times may be tracked down.

3.4. Universe and Sample
The universe of the study is all the agencies working on PR in Turkey. However, due to the lack of knowledge on the number of PR agencies, only 43 member agencies being on the TÜHİD's offical website were not taken into consideration. On the date of the study (15 November – 15 December 2011), the websites under construction or ghost sites (12) were exluded from the study. It was confirmed by phone calls with the authorized person that their websites were under construction or no longer in service. The rest 31 websites in service were analyzed by online visiting.

3.5. Data Collection
PR agencies applied to the screening model of qualitative research methods during data collection. A different assessment form was used for each visited website, the websites were individually analyzed according to the 34 criterion, and each one was visited only once due to their dynamic construction. Following the visits, the data was saved in the assessment form. The assessment of criterion under each category in the assessment forms was marked as present (1) and absent (0). The data, along with the researcher, was gathered with the help of an instructor knowledgeable with content analysis. Two researchers coded in this study. In order to provide the security during coding, Krippendorff's approach (1980) which seeks the way of connecting two or more coders on the codes was adopted. The consistency between the codes was recorded as 96 %.

3.6. Analysis of Data
The websites of 31 PR agencies in the scope of sampling were aimed to be analyzed according to the 34 criterion. The points of each criteria was added and the overall tendency of each criteria was estimated. While the criterion are listed at the vertical zone on chart, total points of criterion are listed at the horizontal zone. Moreover, since the agencies were analyzed in terms of using of PR techniques on their websites, the websites of these agencies in question were analyzed with regards to the corporate information, communication studies, media affairs, corporate identity, corporate publications and interaction.

4. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

In the scope of this study, the potential of the websites on PR was primarily discussed. Ignoring the web design features, only a public relations-featured analysis was applied. The
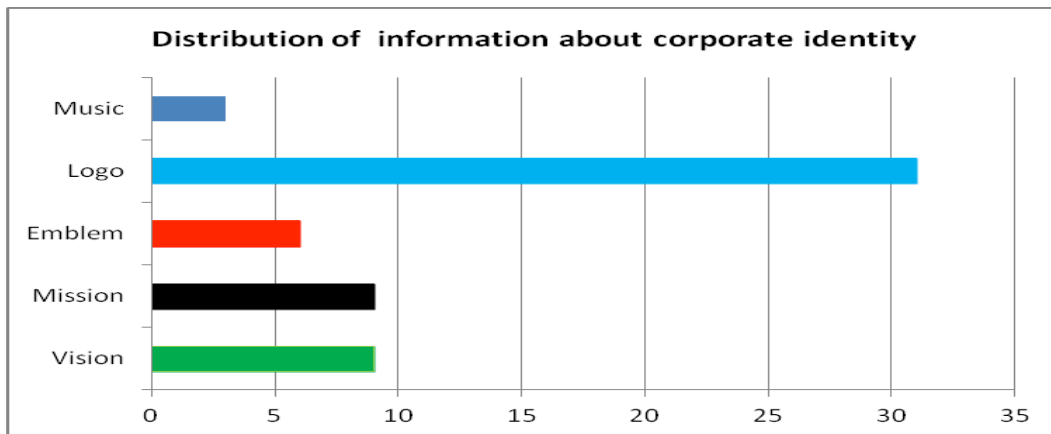
websites of the agencies were analyzed in terms of corporate information, communication attempts, media affairs, corporate identity, corporate publications and interaction. Only 31 agencies out of 43 are in service. Since 12 websites were under construction, they were not taken into consideration.

**Table 3:** Distribution of Corporate Information
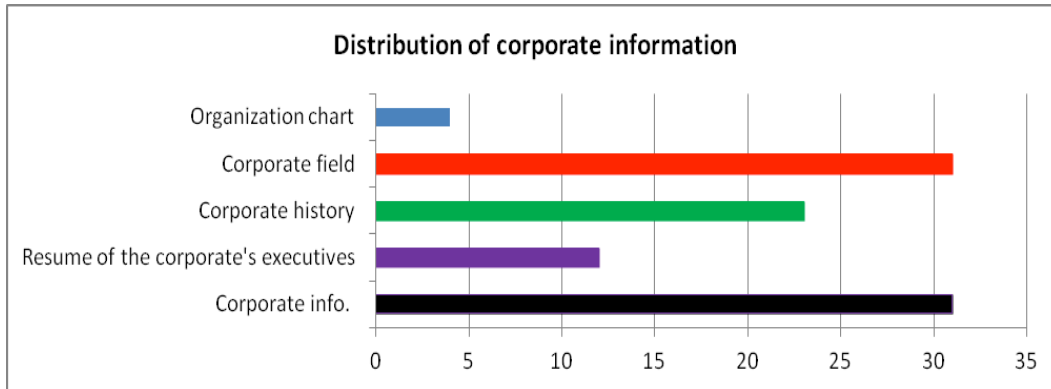
It is seen that the agencies include corporate information on their websites. Five variables aimingly organized to see how the corporate information is supplied to the websites were analyzed. Especially the segments of corporate information and corporate field are located in all 31 agencies. Corporate history is located in 23 agencies. Resume of the corporate's executives is rarely common among the agencies. It is located only in 12 agencies. Organization chart is located in only 4 agencies out of 31 (Table 3).

**Table 4:** Distribution of Information about Corporate Identity

Corporate identity is of importance among the PR applications. The following data obtained when the websites are analyzed in terms of constituent features reflecting the corporate identity: All 31 agencies used a logo on their websites. While mission and vision are located on the websites of 9 agencies, the rest 22 agencies do not have. The emblem and music applications used to introduce the corporate identity are relatively low level (Table 4).

**Table 5:** Distribution of Corporate Publications
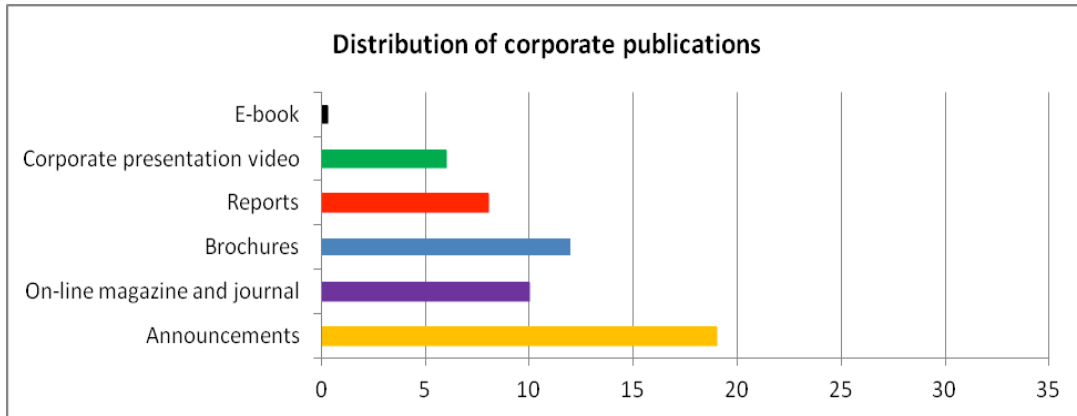
The publications aiming to inform and impress the target audience through the websites of analyzed corporations were encountered. 19 agencies include announcements. 12 agencies include on-line brochures, 10 agencies include on-line magazine and journal and 8 agencies include reports on their websites. 25 agencies do not include corporate presentation video on their websites and almost none of these agencies have e-book application (Table 5).

Table 6: Distribution of Media Relationships
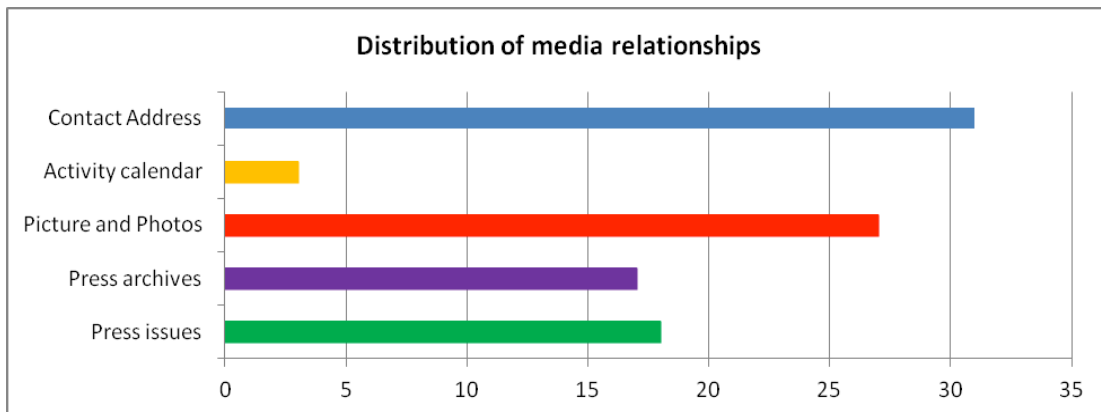
When we analyzed the studies by corporations conducted to make media employee's work easier, these results are obtained: Contact Address of corporate (e-mail address, phone, fax number) is located on the websites of all 31 agencies. 18 agencies include press archive, 17 agencies include press issues. Picture and photos usage are fairly common on websites in PR techniques. 27 agencies have picture and photos application. Only 3 agencies out of 31 have activity calendar (Table 6).

**Table 7:** Distribution of Communication Attempts
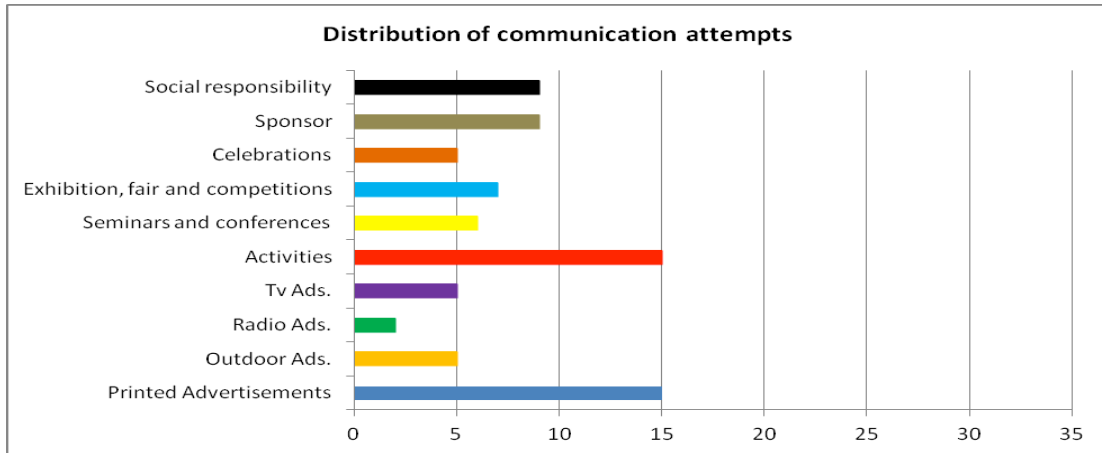
When the agencies were analyzed in to what extent they keep the ads or communication attempts they used on other communication tools, these results are obtained: 15 agencies out of 31 have printed ads. and activities. 9 agencies have sponsor and social responsibility on their websites. 6 agencies have seminar and conferences, 7 agencies have exhibitions, fair and competitions on their websites. Only 5 agencies have outdoor ads., television ads. and celebrations. Almost none of the agencies include radio ads. in PR. Only 2 agencies have radio ads on their websites.

Table 8: Distribution of Communication Attempts through Internet
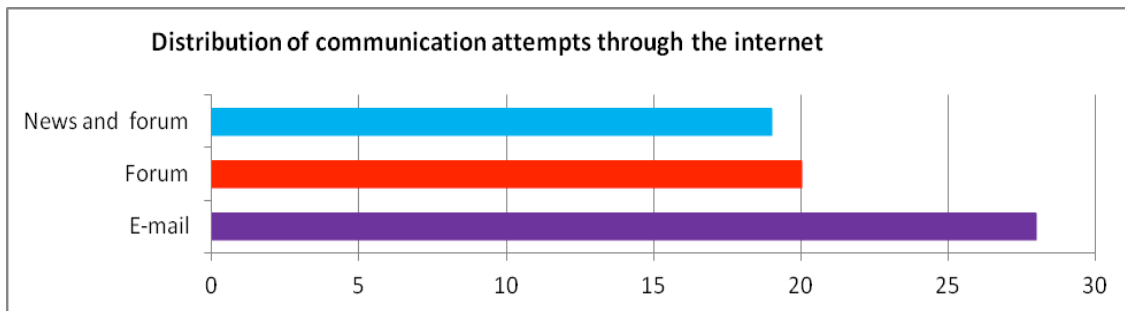
E-mail, forum and news are of importance in the PR activities taking place on websites. 28 agencies out of 31 have e-mail address, but 3 agencies do not have any information about e-mail address. While 19 agencies have news and forum on their websites, 20 agencies do not include forum (Table 8).

Table 9: Usage Rate of PR Techniques on Websites of Member Agencies of TÜHİD
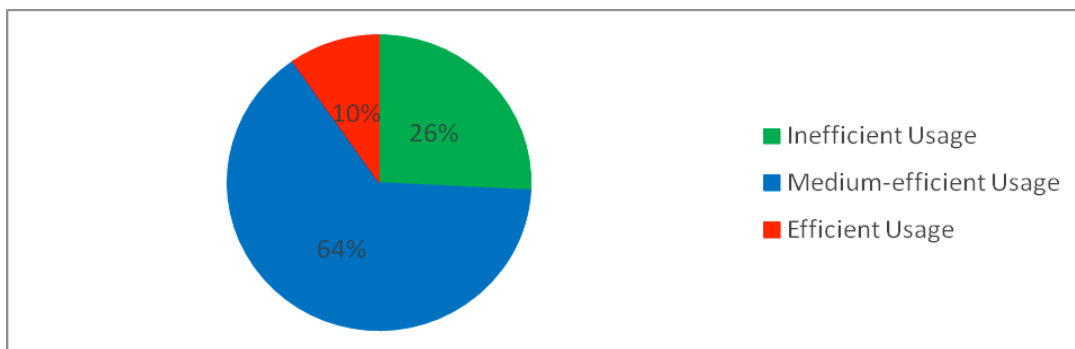
Usage rate of PR techniques on websites of member agencies of TÜHİD has unrevealed suprising results. While 10 % of 31 agencies use efficiently, 26 % uses inefficiently. 64 % of agencies use medium-efficiently (Table 9).

5. RESULT AND SUGGESTIONS

It stimulates interest that how these agencies that support the corporates in PR, and design their PR websites could be inefficient in designing their own websites. Because only 10 % of 31 agencies used the websites efficiently in terms of corporate information, communication attempts, media affairs, corporate identity, corporate publications and interaction. The fact that 12 agencies were not even taken into consideration makes one think. Because during the dates of study, 12 agencies could not succeed completing an up-date website to the clients. The agency owners claiming that their websites were under construction did not use their websites. The fact that 64 % of 31 agencies use medium-efficiently is a matter of debate. The reason for that the PR agencies whose job definition is to sustain PR do not work insufficiently enough on their corporate websites. It is essential for PR agencies to include knowledge on their corporates. Thus becomes the target audience knowledgeable with the corporate. It is a positive approach for all the agencies to render information about "corporate" and "corporate fields" at the end of the analysis. However, the agencies need to share "resume of the corporate's executives" and "organization chart" in a more active way. It is emerged that 31 agencies have the awareness on "corporate identity". All the agencies had at least their corporate "logo" on their websites. However, it is fairly weird that the agencies helping the corporates on "mission" and "vision" do not have these values on their websites. Because the results of such criterion as "mission" and "vision" are below the average. Introductive "signature tune" or "emblem" is hardly used. This uncovers the fact that the agencies have to give more importance reflecting their corporate identity on their websites. It is understood that the agencies use intensely their websites to share "announcements" about the corporate, but other broadcast media tools are not often applied. "On-line magazines, journals and brochures" are relatively high in number, while number of "reports" and "corporate presentation video" are notably rare. This result indicates that the agencies were not able to move the traditional studies such as the publication of journals, magazines and books to an on-line level yet. The relationship between PR agencies and media is valuable. In an internet age, the agencies need to move this relationship to their websites. It is clearly seen that the member agencies of TÜHİD have tried to put "contact address", "picture and photos", "press archive" and "press releases" information on their websites. However, it is doubtful that they have not shared their "activity calendar" on-line. The agencies can easily put and keep the elements of other communication tools on their websites. They can use the communication tools free on their websites. By this means, they can sustain a close and long-term relationship with public. The agencies use "printed ads." and "activities" on their websites. It is also analyzed that they have "sponsor" and "social responsibility projects" on their websites. But the number of "outdoor ads.", "radio ads.", "television ads.", "exhibitions, fair, competitions" and "celebrations" are relatively rare, which needs attention. This only indicates that the agencies do not value the communication attempts. The agencies had a high level of performance on communication attempts via internet. They try to use their websites interactively. In the lights of these results, for a better and efficient usage, these can be suggested to the PR agencies:

- It would be of great help for all the agencies to add their resume of corporate executive's and organization chart information to their websites to introduce their corporates to the target audience.
- The PR agencies can share the corporate identity they possess more efficiently on their websites. They can compose their signature tune and introduce it to the target audience.

- It would be better to increase the number of on-line "magazine, journal and brochures" on their websites.
- The agencies should try harder to render the activity reports to the target audience and put their link of "corporate presentation video" on the website.
- The books telling the stories of foundation and tales of success should be transferred into "e-book" application so that many people can reach them on the website.
- The agencies can actively move the ads. they used for their own sake on various channels to their websites.
- The number of the seminars, conferences, exhibitions, fairs, competitions, celebrations and activity calendar can be increased on the website.

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