

Public Relations in Public Sector

Kamu Sektöründe Halkla İlişkiler

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Abstract

It is possible to talk about public relations in the classical sense wherever there is a relation between those ruling and those ruled. Public relations activities came to fore with the development of government and administration. The emergence of public relations activities within the context of public sector date back to the first half of the 20th century. Public relations, an advanced discipline in the United States, started to be considered as a conscious effort in the public sector as a result of the pressures of the private sector in the public sector in the 1930s. The fact that modern public relations activities in the public sector in Turkey date back to the 1960s is a widely accepted fact. Although the public relations activities in the public sector are currently rather common, it is hard to say that those activities are at the desired level. This study presents an overall assessment of the public relations activities in public sector.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

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Öz

Yöneten ile yönetilen ilişkisinin olduğu her yerde klasik anlamda halkla ilişkilerden söz etmek mümkündür. Kamu sektöründe halkla ilişkiler faaliyeti, devletin ve yönetimin gelişmesiyle birlikte gündeme gelmiştir. Halkla ilişkiler faaliyetlerinin kamu sektörü bağlamında gündeme gelmesi 20. yüzyılın ilk yarısına denk gelmektedir. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde gelişmiş bir disiplin olan halkla ilişkiler, 1930'lu yıllarda özel kesimin kamu sektörüne getirdiği baskılar sonucu kamu kesiminde bilinçli bir çaba olarak ele alınmaya başlanmıştır. Türkiye'de kamu sektöründe modern halkla ilişkiler faaliyetlerinin 1960'lı yıllara dayandığı genel olarak kabul edilen bir gerçektir. Günümüzde kamu sektöründe halkla ilişkiler faaliyetleri oldukça yaygın olmasına rağmen henüz istenilen seviyeye ulaştığı söylenemez. Bu çalışma, kamu sektöründe halkla ilişkiler faaliyetlerinin genel bir değerlendirmesini ortaya koymaktadır.

Introduction

Public relations activities in the public sector emerged with the development of the state and the administration. The state, which emerged when people started to live in a collective way, developed the public sector to meet the basic needs of the people with the services it would provide. Based on the type of public service to be offered, various units of public institutions have been established. These are that communicate with the public on behalf of the public sector. Therefore, it can be said that public sector and the public relations activities have been developing simultaneously.

The function of public relations activity in the traditional public understanding as simple information desk and providing guidance to people continued for a long time. However, public relations activity in the modern era has become more important for both the public and private sectors. Public relations activity in the public sector is more multi-faceted than public relations activity in the private sector and at the same time have broader objectives. In fact, the concept of public interest is two-fold and aims at improving both the efficiency of the institutions and the satisfaction of the public. The search for a two-way benefit and satisfaction has transformed public relations activity in the public sector into a unique structure.

Nowadays, countries are taking the issues of public relations activity and their derivatives seriously, as well as technology investments and practices. Propaganda, advertising, perception management, the determination of people's orientations, developing practices according to the needs of the people, identifying the problems of the public and producing solutions to them, informing the people directly and accurately, ensuring the participation and support of the public in these practices and the determination of public values can be given as examples of the topics and sub-topics of public relations activities and practices. On the other hand, beyond the corporate image and perception, the strategic dimension of public relations activity includes public support and participation, international politics and economic aspects of the people to determine a direction, foreseeing public orientations and developing appropriate policies and practices. With this reality, public relations has taken its place among the most important fields of activity for all countries of the world.

Public Relations

Although the use of the term "public relations" is new, the practice in this discipline is very old. Even though we have seen different practices in our culture and history, the concept of public relations, which emerged in modern times and which is guiding the prevailing paradigm today, has been translated into Turkish as the equivalent of "Relations Publiques" in French and "Public Relations" in English. The 'PR' is an abbreviation used by public relations practitioners for this concept (L'etang, 2008: 2). There are many definitions regarding the term public relations and the number of definitions determined by the American Public Relations Association is about 200. According to an evaluation conducted recently, the number of definitions is around 500 (Yıldız, 2003: 38). Some of these definitions can be listed as follows:

Gilbert, who views the efforts of statesmen to make the public admit their administration as a public relations activity, puts forward that where there is public sector there is public relations activity. According to him, this situation is as old as the history of mankind and goes as far back as the time when the first states were established (Gilbert, 1973: 5). The public relations includes function as such that ensuring the policy pursued by the administration is adopted to the public, the works are announced fully and continuously to the public, a positive administration atmosphere is created, knowing what the public thinks about the administration, knowing what it demands from the administration and providing cooperation with the public (Bilgin, 1994: 43). The main purpose of public relations activity and the reason for its existence is the public. The manager can be successful to the extent that s/he identifies the people's weaknesses, virtues, abilities and behavior properly. Making the public embrace the policy of the government, announcing the activities accurately on a continuous basis, creating a positive atmosphere towards the administration and knowing what the public expects from the administration are all within the scope of public relations activity.

In every organization, public relations has a central position in the administration of the organization, which is as important as evaluating and taking measures against the changes in the environment, as well as its being informed and adopting the aims, policies and activities of the organization by the administration. Because of this position, public relations is a concept that describes the relations of the organization with its environment, its effects on the establishment goals, functions and organizational behavior of the environment and the ways and methods of the impact of the organization on the environment. For this reason, due to this dual nature of public relations, it should be viewed as a managerial function in relations of the organization with the environment (Uysal, 1998: 1). According to Pohl, public relations is a managerial function that establishes, maintains and defines the relations between organizations and various institutions, and determines the success or failure of the organization (Pohl, 1995: 1). Public relations is an administrative function that aims to establish and maintain ties regarding communication, understanding, cooperation and acceptance among an organization and the target audience addressed by this organization. It also deals with administrative problems. It ensures that the administration of the organization is informed about the views and opinions of the people and gives appropriate responses. It emphasizes the need for the organization administration to act to the benefit of the public. It helps the organization to keep up with the changes by predicting trends. It uses research and moral communication techniques as basic tools (Wilcox et al., 2003: 7). When public relations is applied as a social science, communication is considered as a meaning exchange between various institutions, institutions and individuals, individuals and individuals in various sectors.

The diversity and multiplicity of the definition of public relations leads to uncertainty rather than providing clarity. For this reason, a minimalist approach emerged, and the concept of public relations came to be viewed as referring to a sub-dimension(s) of public relations such as advertising and propaganda instead of the whole concept (Aydın & Taş, 2016: 39). Nevertheless, there are obvious efforts to determine a framework. A new definition that views public relations as a strategic communication method which is adopted by people institutions in interacting with diverse interlocutors and target

groups of different characteristics (Boztepe, 2014: 5). In another definition, according to Özer (2015: 1), public relations is a privileged administration function which provides the mutual communication of a target audience with the organization, constitutes the understanding, acceptance and cooperation of the target group, includes the administration of the problems, provides the information to the public, takes care of the public interest, and predicts the trends in advance. In a broader sense, according to Sabuncuoğlu (2016: 4), another definition states that public relations is a recognition and promotion process. From this point of view, public relations is the implementation of communication techniques in a planned and organized manner based on the administration philosophy in order to recognize the environment in which organizations are sensitive and introduce themselves to this environment.

Owing to the lack of consensus on a common definition of the term public relations, a comprehensive study was undertaken by 65 experts by taking the environmental factors into account between 1906 and 1976 and because of this study 472 different public relations definitions were determined (Hutton, 1999: 200). The following definition emerged as a result of the study (Gordon, 1997: 59): Public relations is a unique administrative function that helps to establish and maintain mutual communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and the public, involves the administration of problems and difficulties, helps the administration to inform and respond to the public, defines and emphasizes the responsibilities of administration in the sense of public interest, acts as a service of an early warning system to help predict orientations, helps administration effectively to take advantage of the changes, and uses moral communication techniques and research as its main tools.

Public Relations in Public Sector

Public relations activity in the public sector emerged because of the development of state and administration. The phenomenon of state, which emerged because of communal life, developed the public sector to meet the basic needs of the public by providing services. Various units with public institution have been founded depending on the type of public service to be provided. Indeed, they are the public institution that communicate with the public on behalf of the public sector (Aydın & Taş, 2016: 115). The fact that the public sector wants to reach the public through institutions shows that public sector and public relations activities are developing simultaneously. According to Dolea (2012: 354-356), the public relations attempts in the public sector are made by public institutions based on improving institutional missions and achieving its aims.

The public relations activities within the public sector are vital tools enabling communication between public institutions and the public. Public relations practitioners in the public connect public institutions with target audiences. They represent both their institution and target audience. The public relations practitioners offer consultation service about demands and expectations of the target audience to the administration in institutional decision-making process and conducting activities in favor of the public process in the institutions where they carry out activities. This role fulfilled by the public

relations practitioners in public sector contributes to the achievement of objects of public relations attempts in the public sector (Boztepe, 2014: 57-58). Another definition views it as an art of administration offering positive belief and activities to the target audiences of natural people and legal entities by establishing trust and strong relations with them and directing their attitudes by evaluating their reactions and thus covering planned attempts maintaining mutual benefit (Asna, 2006: 23).

The public relations in public sector are defined as systematic, continuous, mutual attempts a public institution undertakes to ensure trust and support of the relevant community and make the necessary modifications for providing the most sensitive balance between the institution and the public comes to the fore (Yalçındağ, 1987: 57). Public relations, including management of issues and problems, replying to the public, informing it, expressing and revealing responsibility of the administration for public interest, making it possible to provide an opportunity to detect and foresee tendencies and developments previously (Okay & Okay, 2005: 2). Nowadays, the public relations activities in public sector are important and obligatory to achieve aims such as providing communication between those ruling and those ruled, introducing services realized by public institutions, being supported by public opinion through assessing those services and collecting demands, creating awareness about issues, creating a positive image by public institutions and establishing relations based on trust with target audiences.

Characteristics of Public Relations in Public Sector

The public institutions which provide public service can be defined of the public sector. The strategic communication management of these institutions with their target audiences is the main object of public relations discipline. This objective is important in terms of providing public interest (Boztepe, 2014: 44). The some of main characteristic of public relations practices in the public sector includes establishing communication between management and public, identifying needs and expectations of target audiences and being supported by the public opinion according to those needs identified, and the realization of the public interest in this context.

Public institutions have been founded to work in favor of the public and render service to it. The task of the public is not limited to selecting authorized organs in democratic countries. The public has tasks during certain processes including decision making, implementing them and supervising. They are essential for an efficient administration to get aid, support and contribution of the public in these various processes. The success of the administration increases as the public provides its aid and contribution (Tortop & Özer, 2013: 1). Hence, public institutions should closely cooperate with the public in all fields so that the administration can be successful. Close cooperation with the public is a process which is only possible with the public relations activities. Nowadays, public relations specialists are employed in various public institutions and a more planned structure is created for the relations between those ruling and those ruled by creating new offices in these institutions (Fidan, 2008: 71). Structures for the development of public relations in the public sector reveal that these activities are becoming more and more noticeable as a necessary and compulsory activity.

The public relations activity in the public sector is not only a task of one person or a unit but of all staff. If the public relations are considered in this way it can provide various benefits (Aydın & Taş, 2016: 137). If the public relations activities in the public sector are good, then, it provides the following benefits for the sector, staff and the public (Tunçağıl, 2005 as cited in Aydın & Taş, 2016: 137-138):

Benefits of the public relations activities for the public sector are as follows: providing more dignity in the eyes of the public, being more successful in activities and undertakings, gaining more income, rendering better service, and achieving its object faster. Benefits of the public relations activities for the civil servants are as follows: the public feeling more peaceful, earning more respect, improving the abilities of the staff and get their promotion, bringing the ability of getting along with people, and raising the ability of remaining calm. The benefits of the public relations activities for the public are as follows: being more satisfied with the industry, taking advantage of more qualified and better service, and services provided for the public.

The main goal of the public relations activities in the public relations is to enlighten the public and make them embrace the efforts undertaken and provide participation. In addition, ensuring the trust of the public to the administration and regulating information flow among the public are also among the goals of public relations (Okay & Okay, 2005: 397). Thus, it aims to establish a relation with the public opinion, to develop this relation and to maintain it. It is now a universally accepted idea that efforts which are not supported and approved by the public and institutions with poor social relations will not be successful (Günlemeç, 2002: 24-25). At that point, the activity of public relations seems like a factor that directly affects the success or failure of the administration. According to Sjöberg (1998: 22), the broadest aim of public relations in public sector is to establish appropriate relations where possible. Similarly, Çamdereli (2000: 19) thinks that the basic purpose of the public relations is to make institutions and organizations to establish positive relations with the relevant environment and to create an efficient and effective communication.

The public relations activities in the public sector assume that the public institutions establish positive relations with their communities, and that they will contribute to the desired efficiency and activity so that the public can adopt the goal, policy and activities. They set providing this as an objective (Uysal, 1998: 25). In the classical distinction between public and private sections in terms of the aim, it is stated that the public sector is based on public interest and the private sector is based on profitability and in public providing services for public is prioritized over profitability (Metin & Altunok, 2002: 86). This difference in objectives generally manifests itself in activities of the public relations. Public interest covers both the interest of public and institution. However, considering the benefit of institution is still in favor of the public, an understanding in favor of merely public and society emerges. In this respect, the goals of public relations activities in the public institutions can be listed as follows (Bensghir, 2000: 112-113): To create and adopt institutional identity; to measure trends of the public institutions related to the public opinion and to make necessary modifications; to develop positive attitudes towards the administration in the public; to enlighten the public opinion and to facilitate the public's work with the public institutions; to inform the public about service policy;

to give an opportunity to the public to present their opinion before the institutions take exact decisions about the vital projects; to obtain information from the public; which will provide the decisions to be well-directed; to inform legal regulations to citizens and to provide citizens to follow the laws; to provide cooperation between the institution and the public; to benefit from the opinions about the defects about laws and practices in order to detect and eliminate them.

Problems of Public Relations in Public Sector

The area of public relations is becoming increasingly important day by day in both the public and private sectors. There are considerable discussions related to this field in the world and in Turkey.

Discussion and problem related to the public relations in the public sector are also associated with determining dignity of the public relations. While the expansion and growth of the public sector have solved many problems in recent years, they have also caused certain new and serious problems. The role of the public relations for solutions of a part of these new problems reveals the importance of the public relations. On the one hand, the public relations activities in the public sector aim to gain the emotional trust in public by increasing efficiency of the administration. They contribute sustainability of system by preventing certain problems and becoming a big crisis (Uysal, 1998: 20-21).

However, nowadays it is not possible to say that the public sector has always favorable relations with the public. As Tortop (2009: 99) states, it is known that people complain that most of their operations conducted by the public institutions are delayed and the operations which can be completed in a short time are pending for days. The public considers the administration as an organ operating slowly, carrying out a few operations despite the increasing number of staffs, causing trouble and not providing high-quality service. The public sector in Turkey faces many problems in meeting the demands and expectations of the citizens. The satisfaction level of those ruled with the administration is quite low. Turkish public sector cannot properly respond to the demands and expectations of the citizens (Arslan & Mahmutoglu, 2005: 84). The main factors causing these negative cases can be examined as follows.

The organizational structure of Turkish public sector is one of the fundamental reasons why the public relations are not effective. One of the main features of the public sector in Turkey is that it is organized on a confidentiality basis. Although this situation has started to be reduced to a certain extent with the Right to Information Act, it cannot be said that transparency prevails in the public sector at the desired level. It is hard to carry out the public relations activities in a healthy way where transparency does not exist.

Transparency is defined as providing the enough flow of information to whole public or specific shareholder groups. In this sense, the term “transparency” denotes a case whereby achieving the goal of increasing communication, shareholder participation, accountability and quality of state administration aimed. In other words, the transparency refers to an understanding that the public is informed about the work or operation

conducted by the administration, can access necessary information and documents, supervise conducted operations or pay the administration the account. Transparency is not only having access information and documents but also it covers the right to participate the meetings of units forming public policy as a listener and getting opinions of the public about significant project and decisions. The term “transparency” implies that a state presents necessary information in an organized, comprehensible, consistent and reliable way to achieve its aims, policies and observe the results of these policies. Transparency is possible when public opinions know what public authorities have done and what they are keen on doing and how information and documents are organized in a reliable and comprehensible way so that citizens access and use them efficiently (Atiyas & Sayın, 2000: 28). Transparency is not only a matter of informing the public about the activities of the administration, it also refers to announcing the activities intended for the future and providing access to the public as to these activities.

Some issues on the public relations is to do with lack of accountability. The accountability of the public sector refers to the administration’s being responsible towards the related units in terms of activities in progress and activities intended and having the courage to bear the potential consequences (Aydın & Taş, 2016: 202). Accountability is mainly related to accounting and is a concept taken from accountancy (Bovens, 2007: 448). Accountability is seen as a distinguishing feature of modern democratic administration and a complementary element of the public sector. If those in power cannot account for their decisions, their policies and expenditures, it is thought that democracy is just a procedure on paper (Dubnick & Justice, 2004: 1). Accounting is especially vital to gaining the trust of the public opinion because one of the required conditions to provide responsibility to render an account to the public is that transparency principle should be valid in each step and unit of the administration. If the transparency is not present, it is hard to account to the public since citizens do not know in what aspects the administration should account (Aydın & Taş, 2016: 202-203). In this context, it can be said that the accountability is between citizens and institutional officials, between hierarchical steps in public organizations and between politicians and bureaucrats (Mulgan, 2000: 2). As a result, accountability is seen obligatory during democratic processes in terms of offering a fair, effective and efficient evaluation for voters and legal representatives (Bovens, 2005: 193-194).

Another important issue influencing the public relations in the Turkish public sector has to do with the working conditions of the staff. If the working conditions and personal rights of the public staff are not good enough, this negatively influences their ability to perform their duties adequately. Under these conditions, one cannot feel psychologically comfortable in terms of spiritually. In this way, it is not easy for personnel with material and spiritual problems to behave positively and communicate with others in a healthy way.

The most important main problem of the public relations in the Turkish public sector may be that the administration is not known enough by the public and cannot introduce themselves to the public. Indeed, many complaints of the public on this matter originate from a lack of recognition between the public sector and the public. This may

be since the public does not know about works and activities of the administration and the administration does not reply to demands and expectations of the public (Aydın and Taş, 2016: 197-198). While enlightening those rules, narrating or explaining operations and activities of the administration is defined as “introducing”, learning their complaints are defined as “recognition” (Kazancı, 2016: 85).

The administration must recognize the public and know their needs. The public sector must open doors to the public, listen to their voice and find solutions to their problems. The public relations specialist tries to be approved by the citizens on programs of the public institutions, understand what citizens demand from public institutions, enable public institutions to reply to their demands and find out the public opinion (Baskin et al., 1997: 392). The recognition also includes being affected by the administration environment. However, this must be equally affected by various sections of society. In other words, the administration should be at an equal distance to all sections of the society (Aydın & Taş, 2016: 132-133). If an administration is more open to a certain section of society, it will have serious problems in the recognition of the society to which it serves. Such recognition will not allow the public relations to be based on a healthy ground since these relations will be deficient.

Problems are inevitable when extensive public sector activities are being carried out. According to Özer (2015: 177), the public mostly does not know what the public officials are doing in their closed rooms and what kinds of beneficial project they are preparing. The reason for this is that the public is not informed of the work done in public institutions and they are not being informed. A good administration should inform the public about their works and projects by means of possible ways. According to Tarhan (2007: 81), introducing the administration to the target public includes enlightening them, telling intended decisions or applications to them, informing those who will be influenced from the decisions and activities and providing a good image in their minds. Thus, introducing the administration concerning the structure, operation and explaining its decisions to the public can be defined in a general sense as enlightening the public in the public administration and explaining decisions taken or applications to be conducted to the target audience.

Introducing activities are not limited to informing those who will be affected by the application in question or decisions. At the same time, it establishes sympathy for the relevant organization or the object and accordingly creates a positive image in the minds of the target section (Göksel & Yurdakul, 2004: 181). While the administration conveys the information expected by the public to them, it will enable the public to agree with them and seek ways to do it. The introduction work aims the majority. For this purpose, a constant information flow should be achieved from the administration to the environment and information should be provided immediately and accurately. In addition to this, the aim of receiving the support of those who are not directly affected by the decisions occupies a significant place for the recognition function (Kazancı, 2016: 89-90). In addition, the aim of acquiring the support of the communities that are not directly affected by the decisions should also play an important role in the promotion function. Another important reason why the Turkish public sector cannot introduce itself to the public is that many

public institutions still do not have a periodic publication or newsletter. Moreover, the public sector in Turkey is not able to benefit from other mass communication and public relations tools, especially newspapers and television. The lack of a publication organ of the public sector and its inability to benefit from the media negatively affects the publicity of the institution to the outside world.

One of the most important problems in the field of public relations in Turkey is that the public relations units fail to fulfill the responsibility of improving relations between the administration and the public. These units were established to develop effective relations with the public to enlighten the public in administration services. However, it is doubtful whether these units function as public relations in the real sense. The reason for this is that the personnel employed in these units are usually assigned by the manager and are mostly not trained in the public relations or are not experts. There are many public institutions and organizations that do not employ specialized personnel and therefore do not function as public relations units (Aydın & Taş, 2016: 200-201). This case clearly indicates that public relations receive very little attention and the fact that the public relations activities are not given necessary importance underlines the fact that the duty is not conceptualized as required, the thought that these units are unnecessary for the administrations is present and these units are unimportant among intense functions of the public administration and luxury. The limited budget for the public relations units and relevant activities since public budgets are limited, and accordingly savings measures to which people are subject and the reasons mentioned above considerably limit the undertakings of the public relations.

Public Relations in the Public Sector and Social Media

Nowadays, the most remarkable development in public relations practices is the use of the internet as a medium for public relations. The use of internet in public relations practices in the public sector has shown a great improvement in 2004 when the Law on the Right to Information Law No. 4982 came into force. It is said that the internet is a very important medium to fulfill the function of public relations recognition and promotion. The recognition and promotion function add feedback to communication activity and communication becomes bidirectional. The balanced use of these two functions is a function of enhancing mutual communication in organizations (Berkowitz, 2007: 128). However, when corporate websites are examined, it is seen that the applications that improve communication are very inadequate (McAllister - Spooner, 2009: 321). In researches conducted on various websites in Turkey, it has also introduced a similar trend (Akıncı - Vural & Coşkun, 2006; Özdemir & Ymanoğlu, 2010; Özüpek, 2010; Yağmurlu, 2010). It is said that a similar situation is seen in social media use.

So, what is social media? Let's try to understand a few social media concepts and features: Social media is a common term for online tools and websites that create mutual interaction by providing information, thoughts, interests, and information to users (Sayımer, 2008: 123). Social media is an internet-based communication environment that enables the user to create and share content through Web 2.0 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61; Bozarth, 2010: 12; Gunelius, 2011: 10). Social media is an area of application that

allows the sharing of information, different thoughts and experiences on the websites and places the internet world in our lives rapidly (Weinberg, 2009: 1) and is an environment that allows interpersonal communication by using the internet (Breakenridge, 2008: 15). Social media allows users to share content such as text, audio, video, and images in a versatile interaction between users (Scott, 2010: 38; Komito & Bates, 2009: 233). With this feature, viewers or readers can also become actors that provide direct information. Thus, people can share their thoughts and experiences worldwide (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009: xvii; Zafarmand, 2010: 42).

In addition to the opportunity to realize the public relations objectives of the organizations, social media is seen as an effective tool for public relations as a tool that can be used to develop and improve the corporate image (Öztürk, 2013: 107). The recognition of the ability to benefit both customers and organizations and brands in a short period of time causes social media tools to be used effectively in public relations activities (İşler et al., 2013: 175). Many theorists emphasize that the use of public relations based on two-way communication on the internet is a great potential that provides a real relationship with the public (McAllister - Spooner & Kent, 2009: 220). Can public relations, which is evolving towards the goal of an interactive relationship based on two-way communication, benefit sufficiently from the social media and the bi-directional interactive feature of social media, which make it possible to reach those goals?

According to many public relations practitioners, social media is a revolutionary force that changes the ways of thinking and redefines public relations practices. Public relations practitioners see social media as a new form of public relations at the center of public relations and quickly adopt it (Grunig, 2009: 1). Considering the practices in Turkey, social media has just come into practices and these practices are seen to take part in the promotional activities of public relations. However, the fact that the social media cannot be given a definite answer to the question “how to be controlled” leads to the public sector’s being distracted by many practices. It is seen that if social media is not used properly regarding the cases or if it goes beyond certain limitations, the benefits can cause great losses in a moment. In addition to their significant advantages of social media such as the speed, cost, etc., it also has disadvantages that may cause major crises. In case of lack of strategy, the use of social media may cause irreparable crises in the name of the organization and damage the reputation and image of the organization. However, many studies suggest that despite all the risks the importance of social media applications will increase in the future. In this context, it is unthinkable for the public sector to remain outside social media practices.

Conclusion

The public relations in the public sector are activities shaped in the framework of the aims such as to ensure the public support and cooperation, to learn expectations and demands of the public, to inform the public about a specific problem or issues, to tell service quality and efficiency of the institution to relevant environment, to facilitate decision adoption of the public as a result of a constant communication with the public, to

develop institutional cooperation, to increase efficient working and institutional belonging and to create a positive image in the mind of the public and other interaction groups.

In this sense, it is necessary to understand that the public relations activities are indeed an administration activity and a part of an administrative communication. Therefore, the due attention to public relations activities must be paid and the respectability of this activity should be maintained. Furthermore, it is essential to establish public relations units in institutions, to employ personnel who are public relations experts in these units and to allocate a special budget to these units.

The public officials, primarily the public relations staff who are in touch with the public, should be trained in the public relations. The public service is carried out by the personnel working in the public sector. The public personnel, especially clerks, are in direct contact with the public. While each public servant performs his duties, he also supports the public relations activities. However, the meaning of bureaucracy in Turkey is paperwork, queues and formalities. The negative attitude of the bureaucracy in the form of slowing down works has a shocking effect on the public. Thus, no matter what the position, all the public officials should be aware of the operations that they conduct in person are included in the public relations activities.

When a public employee considers reputation of his institution as he does for his own reputation, he will overcome a huge hurdle in the sense of harmony with the public and their expectation. There is no doubt that the main problem here is a matter of education. In this context, the public relations education is becoming important for all public personnel who are face to face with public relations practitioners.

Because of the increasing importance of public relations, it is an area where institutions attach importance to exist in the sector, creating a difference, adapting to their target groups to gain their support. To be successful in this area, effective and healthy communication between the environment is a must. For this reason, not ordinary people but those who are trained in the public relations and are experienced should carry out the public relations operations in the institutions. At that point, the necessity of public relations education arises, and the subject of the best realization of the education in this field comes to the fore. Effective education is a must for educating well-equipped personnel for the sector. While an effective education makes the occupation of the public relations successful, it will also contribute to the development of the public relations field. The public relations education acts as a key instrument for acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of any public relations activity as a key force in reaching the professional standard of the public relations profession. Not only those who are in the fields of public relations but also those in psychology, sociology and organizational behavior, all disciplines required by public relations studies, which extend to media and cultural studies, should be included.

It is necessary to regulate structural problems of the public sector in a way which will provide a rapid working of organizational structure and make the system transparent. In this context, it is vital to eliminate negative perceptions of citizens such as “the public sector does not pay attention to demands and expectations of the citizens” or “the public

sector works slowly” to give an opportunity to citizens so that they can observe what has been done, to inform them, and to increase the satisfaction of the public to the top level. It is also necessary to increase employee satisfaction by adding to the improvement of personnel working conditions related to structural problems.

The public sector needs to recognize the public and introduce itself to the public. The administration must recognize the people by treating all sections of the people equally, to listen to the voice of the people and to know the needs of the people. Similarly, the administration itself should introduce its works in the institutions, future projects and its decisions to the people who will be affected by these decisions and it is obliged to ensure public participation and provide the public with information.

New technologies have provided new opportunities for the public to easily access public institutions. With these opportunities, the masses of the people also gained the ability to follow the services and policies of the administration. The public institutions and organizations should also renew their paradigms regarding public relations activities in the context of developing new technologies and social media. Any communication on behalf of public relations activities should be planned to use social media applications. Recently, it has become more important for organizations to conduct public relations activities through these mass media by creating web pages and social media accounts.

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