

# A Research On Top Managers' Leadership Styles' Effect On Applying Strategic Plans In Public Universities

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## A Research On Top Managers' Leadership Styles' Effect On Applying Strategic Plans In Public Universities

**Nilüfer Rüzgar<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

According to the Law no. 5018, all public sector organizations and municipalities have to prepare a strategic plan. However, in all plans and projects, success depends on the attitudes of the leader. This critical success factor constitutes greater importance in public universities. Although the strategic plan designed in the most effective frame; the role of the leader cannot be and should not be ignored. In this sense, the leadership style of the leader/manager has an important effect.

<sup>13</sup> The purpose of this study, is to measure the perception of both academic and administrative personnel, about the strategic planning in their institution and their perception about the role of the leader on the strategic planning. In the frame of the research, academic and administrative personnel of state universities in the city of Bursa, Turkey, are taken as population. A survey that consists of demographical questions and two scales, measuring Leadership Styles Perception and Strategic Planning Perception, are applied. The surveys are analysed by using SPSS 20.0 package programme.

**Keywords:** Strategic Planning, Leadership, Leadership Styles

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### **1. Introduction**

Strategic planning has become a necessity in the 1990's, in order to identify the factors, which affect assuring organizational survival and sustaining competitive advantage in a turbulent business environment. In terms of public/state sector, strategic planning has been adopted as an integrated part of reforms to provide more businesslike government actions (Wills, 1999). Today, almost all public sector organizations, use strategic planning as a tool for appraising performance of both the employees and overall organization; and tracking the improvement of the organization (Caymaz, Akyon and Erenel, 2013). The question is, to what extent the leadership styles of the top managers affect the process of strategic planning.

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15 Planning cannot be conducted as desired in an isolated environment; it needs to relate to  
 16 task fulfilment and staff activity is needed to be related within organization. It must also be  
 17 related to administrative systems such as management control systems, HRM and information  
 18 systems (Hax and Majluf, 1984). Strategic planners' and leaders'/managers' necessity is to design  
 19 an operational framework that includes a full range of complex interactions. Thus, time and  
 20 effort will not be wasted. Especially, of individual capital in the form of talent and ability should  
 21 be taken into consideration (Wills, 1999).

22 In this context, this study begins with a literature review of strategic planning, process of  
 23 strategic planning in public sector and the role of leaders/top managers in applying strategic  
 24 plans. Methodology and findings can be found at the following section. The results of the  
 25 analyses along with the recommendations for further researches are presented at the last section.

26

## 27 **2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

28

### 28 **2.1. The Notion of Strategic Planning and Its Process**

29

30 Strategic planning is an organizational management activity, that is used to determine  
 31 priorities, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders work together so  
 32 as to achieve common goals, and adjust the organization to the changing environment. In this  
 33 sense, it is an effort that puts forward fundamental decisions, which guide establishing the frame  
 34 of the organizational structure and who the organization serves with a focused perspective on the  
 34 future (Young, 2001).

35

36 There is quite a number of methodologies for strategic planning framework. Despite of  
 37 the fact that there are no absolute rules in terms of the right framework, most organizations have  
 37 common attributes (www.balancedscorecard.com, 2018):

38

- *Determining where the organization is:* This is about conducting external and  
 39 internal audits in order to get a clear understanding of the market, the rivalsthe  
 40 organization's current competencies.

41

- *Identifying what is important:* This attribute is about focusing on where the  
 42 management wants to take the organization in the future. Thus, the mission statement is  
 43 clearly defined.

44

- *Defining what must be achieved:* This is, defining the expected objectives that  
 45 state what the organization must achieve to reach and solve the priority issues.

46

- *Determining who is accountable:* This is drawing the frame for reaching the  
 47 desired point. The action plans and budgets are in this process and they effectively  
 48 communicate how the time, human capital, and money will be allocated to address the  
 49 priority issues and achieve the defined objectives.

50

- *Reviewing:* This is about making sure that the strategic plan works as wished  
 51 (Aileron, 2011).

52

53

### 53 **2.2. Strategic Planning in Public Sector and Law No.5018**

54

55 Strategic planning's origins in terms of its application in the public sector, can be traced to  
 56 the late 1950s and early 1960s. The U.S. Department of Defence began to look for more useful  
 57 ways to plan for its long-term needs along with the cost savings. The rise of the Planning-  
 58 Programming-Budgeting-System (PPBS), began in this mentioned dates. PPBS's contributions to  
 federal governmental operations were establishing long-term planning goals and objectives;

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59 defining the costs and benefits of the expected ends and comparing alternative activities to  
60 achieve agoals and objectives (Young, 2001).

61 As for Turkey, according to the law no.5018, which is accepted on 10/12/2003 and  
62 published in official gazette on 24/12/2003, the purpose is to arrange the public fiscal  
63 management, preparing, applying, reporting and controlling public budgets, in order to assure  
64 that public sources that take place in development plans, are obtained and used effectively. In this  
65 sense, this law embodies fiscal management and control of public administrations, which consist  
66 public agencies, social security institutions and local governments.

67 According to article "1" sub-clouse "n" of this law, strategic plan refers to the plan that  
68 consists of public administrations' mid and long term goals, basic policies, aims and priorities,  
69 performance criteria, source dispersion and the methods that will be followed in order to achieve  
70 these (Kamu Mali Yönetimi ve Kontrol Law 5018, 2003).

71

### 72 2.3. The Advantages of Applying Strategic Plan in Public Sector

73 <sup>7</sup> Most of the contributions to the literature that are made by researches conducted on  
74 public-sector strategic planning, focuses on p<sup>7</sup>formance outcomes such as target achievement.  
75 In this sense, strategic planning is considered to have a beneficial effect. Some researchers have  
76 <sup>9</sup>und that perceptions of improved performance are linked to strategic planning (Boyne and  
77 Gould-Williams, 2003; Poister and Streib, 2005; Ugboro, Obeng and Spann, 2011). On the other  
78 hand, other researchers relates secondary performance measures to data that is obtained by  
79 surveys (Andrews et al., 2009; Walker, Andrews, Boyne, Meier and O'Toole, 2010; Poister,  
80 Edwards and Pasha, 2013; Elbanna, Andrews and Pollanen, 2016). The findings generally support  
81 a positive strategic planning-performance link (Bryson and Hamilton-Edwards, 2017).

82 However, there are some consistent findings that the way an organization implements  
83 strategy has consequences for the performance outcomes o<sup>4</sup>rganizations. According to these  
84 studies, relating the strategic plan to the budget (Poister and Streib, 2005; Poister and Van Slyke,  
85 2002), and using performance measures to monitor the progress of strategic initiatives (Hendrick,  
86 2003; Poister and Streib, 2005) causes better and expected outcomes (Nartisa, Putans and  
87 Muravska, 2012).

88

### 89 2.4. The Problems Faced While Applying Strategic Plan in Public Sector

90 <sup>3</sup> According to Berry (2001), pu<sup>3</sup>lic sector constitutes some obstacles to strategic  
91 management because of goal ambiguity. It is also noted that public organizations have a wide  
92 range of stakeholders and their power in policy making can be crucial in internal organizational  
93 autonomy to develop policies (Sulle, 2009).

94 Moreover, as pointed out by Poister, Pitts, and Edwards (2010), <sup>2</sup>the relationship between  
95 strategic planning and organizations' overall performance in the frame of public/state sectors,  
96 needs to be researched thoroughly. Most of the findings are similar because of several factors.  
97 For instance, performance is hard to be measured. It can be even more difficult in municipal and  
98 state governments, because of the fact that they have different performance appraisal measures  
99 and criteria. Thus, every single type of performance should be taken into consideration apart  
100 from fiscal measures (Bryson and Hamilton-Edwards, 2017).

101 Furthermore, in public sector organizations (e.g. government departments and agencies)  
102 accountability is more complex. This is to say that, generally a political leadership is responsible  
103 for strategy formation and an executive leader/manager is responsible for managing  
104 implementation of these strategies. Therefore, accountability is prone to conflict. Thus, the

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105 strategic relationship between the political and executive leader/manager, needs to be managed  
106 with a more effective strategic management processes (Reddy, 2016).

107

## 108 **2.5 The Role of Top Manager in Applying Strategic Plan in Public Sector**

109 Strategic planning, as an effective tool of strategic management in public organizations,  
110 requires top managers' taking crucial roles in defining the strategic direction of the organization.  
111 It also requires positive relationships between the strategic planning staff (Nartisa, Putans and  
112 Muravska, 2012).

113 Public sector managers usually prepare strategic plans to define their organizational  
114 characters and primary aims in order to reach long-term objectives. In addition to this, strategic  
115 planning provides practices which are long-term, deal with different issues, offer greater  
116 employee involvement and have a political orientation with greater concentration on policies  
117 (Wills, 1999). Therefore, current managers in public sector, give more importance to using  
118 strategic planning in order to reach their long-term goals.

119 In the frame of the current literature, it is argued that leadership styles affect the strategic  
120 planning in public sector organizations. The hypotheses of this research are as follows:

121 *H1: Autocratic Leadership affects strategic planning in a negative way.*

122 *H2: Transformational Leadership affects strategic planning in a positive way.*

123 *H3: Democratic Leadership affects strategic planning in a positive way.*

124

## 124 **3. Research Method**

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### 125 **3.1. Sample and Data Collection**

126 This research is conducted on a total of 96 participants of academic and administrative  
127 personnel, working in state universities in the city of Bursa, Turkey. Data obtained from the  
128 survey were analyzed through the SPSS 20.0 package program and proposed hypothesis were  
129 tested via regression analyses.

130

### 130 **3.2. Analyses**

131 To measure Leadership Style perception, 59 item-scale that is developed by Taş, Çelik and  
132 Tomul (2007) is used. Strategic Planning Learning scale is developed by Baloğlu, Karadağ and  
133 Karaman (2008), and it uses 35 items. The Cronbach's Alpha values for both scales exceeds 0.60,  
134 proving the reliability of scales used in that survey.

135

136

## 136 **4. Findings**

137 According to the factor analysis of Leadership Styles Scale factor analysis, scale items are  
138 gathered under 3 dimensions (Table 1). In terms of items, these dimensions are labelled as  
139 Democratic Leadership, Autocratic Leadership and Transformational Leadership.

140

Table 1. Leadership styles scale factor analysis

Component	1			2			3		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	23,839	72,238	72,238	23,839	72,238	72,238	12,692	38,460	38,460
2	4,108	12,448	84,687	4,108	12,448	84,687	12,046	36,502	74,962
3	2,745	8,318	93,005	2,745	8,318	93,005	5,954	18,043	93,005
4	.939	2,846	95,851						
5	.726	2,200	98,052						
6	.401	1,216	99,267						
7	.242	.733	100,000						
8	1,322E-013	1,976E-013	100,000						
9	1,198E-013	1,599E-013	100,000						

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10	1,180E-013	1,544E-013	100,000						
11	1,109E-013	1,329E-013	100,000						
12	1,086E-013	1,262E-013	100,000						
13	1,066E-013	1,199E-013	100,000						
14	1,044E-013	1,132E-013	100,000						
15	1,026E-013	1,078E-013	100,000						
16	1,024E-013	1,072E-013	100,000						
17	1,015E-013	1,044E-013	100,000						
18	1,011E-013	1,032E-013	100,000						
19	1,004E-013	1,013E-013	100,000						
20	-1,000E-013	-1,001E-013	100,000						
21	-1,004E-013	-1,012E-013	100,000						
22	-1,014E-013	-1,044E-013	100,000						
23	-1,017E-013	-1,052E-013	100,000						
24	-1,023E-013	-1,070E-013	100,000						
25	-1,026E-013	-1,078E-013	100,000						
26	-1,032E-013	-1,097E-013	100,000						
27	-1,044E-013	-1,134E-013	100,000						
28	-1,051E-013	-1,153E-013	100,000						
29	-1,092E-013	-1,280E-013	100,000						
30	-1,122E-013	-1,371E-013	100,000						
31	-1,148E-013	-1,450E-013	100,000						
32	-1,230E-013	-1,696E-013	100,000						
33	-1,380E-013	-2,152E-013	100,000						

141

142 According to the factor analysis of Strategic Planning Scale factor analysis, scale items are  
 143 gathered under 4 dimensions (Table 2). In terms of items, these dimensions are labelled as  
 144 Strategic Distrust, Strategic Organizational Development, Strategic Effectiveness, Strategic  
 145 Productivity.

146

Table 2. Strategic planning scale factor analysis

Component	1			Rotation Sums					
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	10,958	49,808	49,808	10,958	49,808	49,808	7,978	36,262	36,262
2	5,500	25,000	74,808	5,500	25,000	74,808	5,721	26,004	62,266
3	3,250	14,772	89,580	3,250	14,772	89,580	5,271	23,960	86,226
4	1,699	7,724	97,304	1,699	7,724	97,304	2,437	11,078	97,304
5	,382	1,736	99,040						
6	,174	,792	99,833						
7	,037	,167	100,000						
8	1,105E-013	1,475E-013	100,000						
9	1,059E-013	1,270E-013	100,000						
10	1,013E-013	1,058E-013	100,000						
11	6,02E-013	6,08E-013	100,000						
12	1,000E-013	1,000E-013	100,000						
13	1,000E-013	1,000E-013	100,000						
14	1,000E-013	1,000E-013	100,000						
15	-1,000E-013	-1,000E-013	100,000						
16	-1,000E-013	-1,000E-013	100,000						
17	-1,000E-013	-1,001E-013	100,000						
18	-1,000E-013	-1,002E-013	100,000						
19	-1,031E-013	-1,140E-013	100,000						
20	-1,036E-013	-1,162E-013	100,000						
21	-1,047E-013	-1,215E-013	100,000						
22	-1,097E-013	-1,439E-013	100,000						

According to the regression analysis (Table 3), there is a statistically significant relationship between all three leadership styles and Strategic Productivity. While Democratic and Autocratic Styles causes a decrease in Strategic Productivity, Transformational Leadership Style has an increasing effect on Strategic Productivity. Thus, while H1 is rejected, H2 and H3 are accepted.

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5 Table 3. Regression analysis of dependent variable "strategic productivity"

Independent Variables				t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	8,535	,277		30,793	,000
Democratic	-,014	,004	-,292	-3,345	,001
Autocratic	-,033	,004	-,702	-7,627	,000
Transformational	,259	,017	1,023	15,039	,000

Dependent Variable: Strategic Productivity

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10 According to the regression analysis (Table 4), there is a statistically significant relationship between Autocratic and Transformational leadership styles and Strategic Effectiveness. On the other hand, there is not a statistically significant relationship between Democratic Leadership and Strategic Effectiveness. While Autocratic Style causes a decrease in Strategic Effectiveness, Transformational Leadership Style has an increasing effect on Strategic Effectiveness. Thus, H1 and H2 are accepted.

155

5 Table 4. Regression analysis of dependent variable "strategic effectiveness"

Independent Variables				t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	14,344	,929		15,437	,000
Democratic	,024	,014	,283	1,803	,075
Autocratic	-,055	,014	-,637	-3,842	,000
Transformational	,149	,058	,316	2,578	,012

a. Dependent Variable: Strategic Effectiveness

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10 According to the regression analysis (Table 5), there is a statistically significant relationship between Autocratic and Transformational leadership styles on Strategic Effectiveness. On the other hand, there is not a statistically significant relationship between Democratic Leadership and Strategic Effectiveness. Autocratic and Transformational Leadership Styles has an increasing effect on Strategic Organizational Development. Thus, while H1 is rejected H2 is accepted.

163

5 Table 5. Regression analysis of dependent variable "strategic organizational development"

Independent Variables				t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	9,185	,908		10,118	,000
Democratic	,002	,013	,007	,132	,895
Autocratic	,091	,014	,374	6,508	,000
Transformational	,885	,056	,667	15,715	,000

Dependent Variable: Strategic Organizational Development

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According to the regression analysis (Table 6), there is not a statistically significant relationship between Autocratic and Transformational Leadership Styles and Strategic Distrust. On the other hand, there is a statistically significant effect of Democratic Leadership Style on Strategic Distrust. When the adoption of Democratic Leadership Style increases, Strategic Mistrust increases in accordance. Thus, H3 is rejected.

170

5 Table 6. Regression analysis of dependent variable "strategic distrust"

Independent Variables				t	Sig.
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	17,312	2,909		5,952	,000
Democratic	,090	,042	,345	2,113	,037
Autocratic	,002	,045	,008	,046	,963
Transformational	-,315	,180	-,222	-1,744	,085

Dependent Variable: Strategic Distrust

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## 5. Conclusion and Discussions

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This research, which is conducted on a state university in the city of Bursa, Turkey highlights the relationship among the leadership styles and strategic planning process of the institution.

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According to the regression analysis, **there is a statistically significant effect of all three leadership styles on Strategic Productivity**, while **Transformational Leadership Style has an increasing effect on Strategic Productivity**. There is also a **statistically significant effect of Autocratic and Transformational leadership styles on Strategic Effectiveness**. On the other hand, **there is not a statistically significant relationship between Democratic Leadership and Strategic Effectiveness**. While **Autocratic Style causes a decrease in Strategic Effectiveness**, **Transformational Leadership Style has an increasing effect on Strategic Effectiveness**. In addition to this, **there is a statistically significant effect of Autocratic and Transformational leadership styles on Strategic Effectiveness**. On the other hand, **there is not a statistically significant relationship between Democratic Leadership and Strategic Effectiveness**. **Autocratic and Transformational Leadership Styles has an increasing effect on Strategic Organizational Development**. However, while **there is not a statistically significant relationship between Autocratic and Transformational Leadership Styles and Strategic Distrust**, there is a statistically significant effect of Democratic Leadership Style on Strategic Distrust. **When the adoption of Democratic Leadership Style increases, Strategic Mistrust increases in accordance**.

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**The most interesting result** that is obtained from data is that, democratic leadership has no or negative significant relationship on strategic planning's dimensions of strategic effectiveness, strategic productivity and strategic organizational development, while there is a statistically negative effect on strategic mistrust dimension. Therefore it can be concluded that employees in the state universities do not count on their managers/leaders and therefore they do not expect them to use democratic leadership style. In this sense, they feel sceptical towards them when they see that the leaders adopt democratic leadership style and fill themselves with a feeling of distrust. For future researches, more surveys should be conducted on both state and private universities in order to draw a frame of the country in terms of academic world. Furthermore, it would be really contributing for the literature if these kind of researches were conducted on state and private sector organizations in a comparative way.

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