

## **Importance of Data Analysis on Achieving the Organizational Goals during the Short Term Strategic Plan: Case of Service Quality and Students' Satisfaction Level at Ishik University**

Ahmet Demir<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Administrative Sciences and economics, Ishik University, Sulaimani, Iraq  
Correspondence: Ahmet Demir, Ishik University, Sulaimani, Iraq.  
Email: ahmet.demir@ishik.edu.iq

Received: January 11, 2017

Accepted: February 22, 2017

Online Published: March 1, 2017

doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v3i3p110

**Abstract:** Goal determination plays an important role at any organization in order to draw a route and follow. An organization can achieve the organizational objectives by that way. This empirical research was performed at the new Sulaimani campus of Ishik University. At Ishik University new campus in Sulaimani, the management determined the target satisfaction level of the students as 70% from different aspects such as student affairs, accounting, academic departments, dean of students, and cafeteria. The parameters of evaluation were based on the SERVPERF questionnaire of Parasaraman, et. al., 1985. Originality of this research, each unit and department that interacts with the students has been evaluated from the students' satisfaction point of view. Focusing and tracking the satisfaction based on these parameters, comparing the first and second semester results, the goals were achieved significantly.

**Keywords:** Data Analysis, Strategic Plan, Student Satisfaction, Education Management, Quality Management, Organizational Goals

### **1. Introduction**

Globalization and the wideness of competition among organizations, markets, regions...etc. has increased the importance of strategic planning and organizational objectives concept more at the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is known that large scaled organizations already have strategic plans on short term, medium term and long term but on the other hand, small enterprises generally don't. Strategic plan is a critically important to make decisions on a specific path and target. Moreover, strategic plan always gives either a route to an organization and minimize the future uncertainty (Bayraktar & Yildiz, 2007).

Every organization must get integrated into the macro environment and set a functional link between the organization and the macro environment. Only by this way the organizations keep existence in the long run. In order to do that, the institution must correctly foresee the environmental change and keep adaptation to it. Strategic planning from this point provides a basic principle to the organizations (Gurer, 2006; Kucuksuleymanoglu, 2008; Aktan, 2008).

Goals are the organizational objectives those are coming through the mission in order to fulfill a piece of it. As of the strategies are the path to reach some organizational objectives, the organization must have those goals do specifically determine those organizational objectives to achieve. Furthermore, the current situation shows the starting point of an organization and the goals show the target that the organization is willing to achieve at the end of a period (Kilic & Erkan, 2006).

Finally, an organization can more easily achieve the success and become a strong competitor by determining the organizational objectives, then states the strategy to achieve these objectives, and tracks periodically if the objectives were achieved or not.

### **1.1 Strategic Planning**

There are many definitions of strategic plan. One of those was made by Bayraktar and Yildiz, (2007) as sum of operations which take the organization from the current situation to the target position. By another definition it can be said that it is a process that planning of the future, development of the operations and procedures by top management in order achieve organizational success in a competitive market in the future (Goodstein, Nolan & Pfeiffer, 1992; Kevser, 2007)

Strategic planning shouldn't be considered as an optional operation at 21<sup>st</sup> century because it is an obligatory issue (Al Ghamdi, 2005). There are many different aspects of an organization such as management system, marketing, social responsibility...etc. to be developed and this can be done only by a systematical planning way which is called as strategic planning. However, it enlightens the future of an organization and becomes a navigation to take correct decision which directs organization to the target (Wilson, 1998).

It is known that there are three types of strategic planning terms;

- 1- Short Term (up to 1 year)
- 2- Medium Term (from 1 year up to 5 years)
- 3- Long Term (more than 5 years)

In this research, only the short term strategic plan was studied in order to show the impact of it on goal achievement from the students' satisfaction point of view.

#### **1.1.1 Short Term Strategic Plan**

Strategic planning means the plan of 1-5 year plans in most of the cases. In some corporations this term might be seen to cover longer time period. Depending on the vision, mission, and values of the organization, short term, medium term, and long term strategic plan might be needed (Gurel, 2008).

If an organization needs to plan goals to achieve within one year range, this kind of planning can be called as short term strategic plan. Furthermore, short term objective is a goal that should be achieved within three months up to one year. For example, sales of a department should be increased by 10%. This is a quantitative and specific goal that an employee knows what to achieve and consider the department as successful. These kinds of short term strategic planning are required for an organization to achieve long term strategic objectives (Wells, 1998).

### **1.1.2 Goals Determining**

Goals are the quantitatively measurable strategic targets to achieve at the end of a period. They show a threshold to exceed and consider the process as successful. Goals determine the direction of an organization (Kilic & Erkan, 2006).

The strategic goals of an organization show the end points, targets, and the reasons that the enterprises perform some operations. By another meaning, it can be considered as the result that an organization wills to have (Ulgen & Mirze, 2004). From this point, an organization must select its goals according to where it wills to go as route.

The strategic point to determine goals might be considered as profitability, enlargement, customer satisfaction, market share, financial incomes, technology, operational efficiency, and the consumption of resources (Kilic & Erkan, 2006).

One of the most critical point while determining a goal should have an answer to a question as “what part of the mission does this goal complete or supports for achievement directly or indirectly?” The goals can be determined when there is a specific answer.

### **1.1.3 Tracking of achievements**

Tracking operation is performed in order to see if a goal was achieved successfully or not. Furthermore, tracking helps to see if the operations performed to achieve this result(s) was efficient or not. In order to do all these institution needs to track the results periodically (Gozlukaya, 2007).

Tracking gives opportunity to top management to be aware of the current situation about the goals and if there is a need, to revise them or make any change (Acar, 2007). From this perspective, tracking is a critically important part of strategic planning. For this reason management evaluation meetings can be performed twice a year as one in the middle and the second one at the end of the year.

Tracking is a systematic approach to determine the achieved point of goals and reporting them. The strategic purpose of tracking is inspect any irregularity or feel confident with the point that you achieved so it needs to include the comments, reports and reasons of the unachieved goals. By this way an organization can take an early decision to achieve the concerning goal (Acar, 2007)

In an environment, that the things change fast, everything may not go as it was planned. Although how good a strategic plan was prepared, there might be some unexpected situations occurred. In this case also tracking plays an important role to make some reevaluation and revision on plans of goals (Oztop, 2007). Strategic planning process normally has been graphed by DPT. (2003) as;

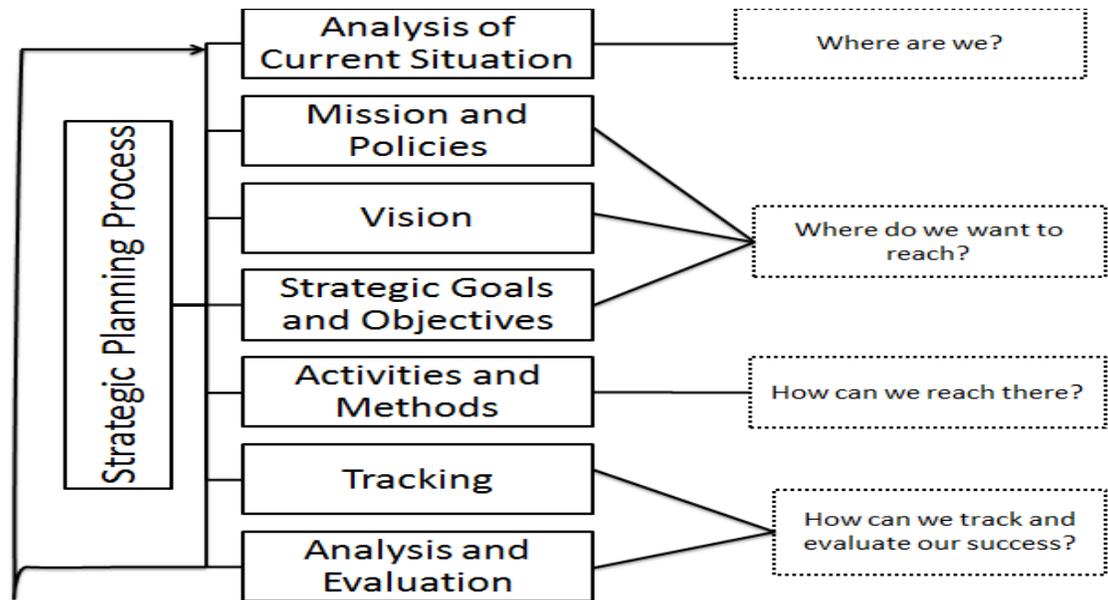


Figure 1: Flowchart of a strategic planning process

## 2. Case Study

Ishik University has its head quarter in Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq since 2008. The University has currently over 3000 thousands students. Furthermore, the University has 16 departments and 6 faculties. This study was performed at the new campus of the University which was opened in 2014 in Sulaimani, Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

At the end of each year, administrative board of Ishik University evaluates the outcomes of the goals and determines the goals of the next year. A new campus has been established in Sulaimani and the first educational year was 2015-2016 academic year. At the beginning of the year, administration has determined main points of the upcoming year. One of these goals was about satisfaction level of the students. Due to education is a kind of service, here also the satisfaction of the customers (students) can be considered to be important. For this reason, the administration has determined the initial satisfaction level for the first year to be minimum 70%. The satisfaction decided to be measured at students, affairs, cafeteria, lecturers, dean of students, and overall university separately. Those units are especially chosen because the students are always interacting with these units and departments. However, the administration would like to see if there is any service that the students are not satisfied with.

If satisfaction will be measured, there must be some determinants those are effecting the satisfaction of the students. In the literature, it was observed that Parasaraman, et. al., (1988) has determined empathy, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and tangibles as main determinants of service quality. Further, the administration has decided to use those parameters to be considered as determinants of the satisfaction of students. For this reason, in this study the scale of Parasaraman, et. al., has been used.

As strategic goals;

- Students should be 70% satisfied with department administration, accounting, student affairs, cafeteria, lecturers, dean of students, and overall university at the end of the educational year.

As of it is known that the service quality directly affect the satisfaction (Demir, Talaat, Aydinli, 2015), According to this goal and the decision about the determinants of the satisfaction, the model comes out as;

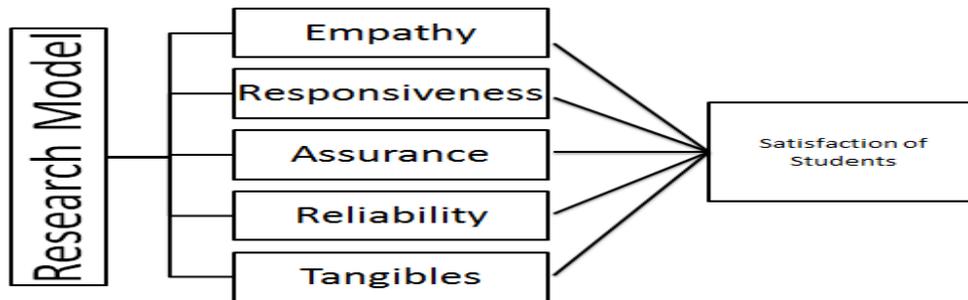


Figure 1: Model for determining the parameters of satisfaction

According to these strategic goals, special seminars were organized to the academic and administrative staff to explain about the concerning objectives of the university. How to increase the quality from the empathy, responsiveness, assurance, reliability, and tangibles points have been explained by experts of the field to the academic and administrative staff. Tracking times have been determined as 24 of April, 2016 and 25 of July, 2016 twice a year. At the first management evaluations meeting on 24 April, 2016, the results of the goals were;

a) Student Affairs

Table 1: Student Affairs

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
<i>Strong</i>	73.00%	66%	64%	65%	76%	73%
<i>Neutral</i>	22.00%	30%	30%	31%	21%	21%
<i>Weak</i>	4%	4%	6%	4%	3%	6%

b) Accounting

Table 2: Accounting

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
<i>Strong</i>	73%	62%	61%	71%	57%	60%
<i>Neutral</i>	19%	27%	30%	19%	29%	29%
<i>Weak</i>	8%	13%	9%	10%	14%	11%

c) Departments

Table 3: Departments

	Empathy		Responsiveness		Assurance		Reliability		Tangibles		Satisfaction	
	Mean of Weak	Mean of Strong	Mean of Weak	Mean of Strong	Mean of Weak	Mean of Strong	Mean of Weak	Mean of Strong	Mean of Weak	Mean of Strong	Mean of Weak	Mean of Strong
Business And Management Department	18,52%	59,26%	15%	63%	7%	63%	8%	71%	23%	62%	12%	65%
Civil Engineering Department	17,65%	52,94%	18%	53%	18%	53%	10%	69%	18%	59%	18%	65%
Architectural Engineering Department	9,09%	50,00%	5%	64%	5%	73%	5%	73%	5%	59%	18%	50%

d) Dean of Students

Table 4: Dean of Students

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
Strong	61%	56%	69%	60%	68%	68%
Neutral	29%	33%	27%	29%	21%	21%
Weak	10%	11%	4%	11%	11%	11%

e) Cafeteria

Table 5: Cafeteria

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
Strong	69%	55%	50%	51%	45%	61%
Neutral	23%	35%	35%	35%	35%	25%
Weak	8%	10%	16%	14%	20%	16%

f) Overall University

Table 6: Overall University

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
Strong	67%	60%	63%	61%	62%	65%
Neutral	25%	31%	23%	29%	25%	21%
Weak	8%	9%	14%	10%	13%	14%

All of the tables above show the results of satisfaction of the students from various departments and units. These results show that only students affairs has achieved the goal and the other units and departments not. Students are satisfied of students affairs as 73% but other units are less than 70%. In order to understand the reasons, the coefficient values and the significance of determinants have been analyzed. According to the report, the cafeteria was small and that is why the students complained about it several times. Moreover, the .values of independent variables of satisfaction about cafeteria were also low. Beside this, there was no significant problem on these units and departments. Furthermore, regression analyses were performed to see the main determinants of satisfaction for these units.

According to the results;

Table 7: Students Affairs

<i>Model</i>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<i>(Constant)</i>	,847	,488		1,736	,088
<i>Empathy</i>	,103	,121	,094	,848	,400
<i>Responsiveness</i>	,242	,086	,311	2,823	,006
<i>Assurance</i>	,085	,107	,091	,790	,433
<i>Reliability</i>	,511	,148	,480	3,454	,001
<i>Tangibles</i>	-,147	,149	-,122	-,986	,328

*Dependent Variable: Satisfaction*

Table 8: Accounting

<i>Model</i>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<i>(Constant)</i>	,686	,466		1,472	,146
<i>Empathy</i>	,093	,100	,107	,929	,356
<i>Responsiveness</i>	,176	,165	,148	1,065	,291
<i>Assurance</i>	,241	,148	,235	1,636	,107
<i>Reliability</i>	,303	,141	,281	2,153	,035
<i>Tangibles</i>	-,013	,013	-,093	-,979	,331

*a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction*

Table 9: Dean of Students

			Beta	t	Sig.
				-,419	,677
<i>Empathy</i>	,004	,068	,006	,065	,948
<i>Responsiveness</i>	,227	,128	,207	1,767	,082
<i>Assurance</i>	,111	,120	,107	,932	,355
<i>Reliability</i>	,356	,123	,323	2,901	,005
<i>Tangibles</i>	,343	,122	,332	2,820	,006

Table 10: Cafeteria

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<i>(Constant)</i>	,154	,361		,427	,671
<i>Empathy</i>	,114	,127	,108	,900	,373
<i>Responsiveness</i>	,288	,161	,292	1,990	,054
<i>Assurance</i>	,274	,111	,299	2,473	,017
<i>Reliability</i>	-,017	,142	-,018	-,122	,904
<i>Tangibles</i>	,314	,110	,323	2,840	,007

Table 11: Overall University

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<i>(Constant)</i>	-,410	,331		-1,239	,220
<i>Empathy</i>	,478	,132	,411	3,611	,001
<i>Responsiveness</i>	-,103	,127	-,086	-,809	,421
<i>Assurance</i>	,297	,092	,288	3,240	,002
<i>Reliability</i>	,287	,135	,245	2,115	,039
<i>Tangibles</i>	,134	,130	,121	1,031	,307

The results of regression analysis were evaluated and it was seen that the parameters of satisfaction change from a unit to another. According to these results, main determinants of satisfaction about student affairs are responsiveness and reliability. It means that the students are becoming happy when

staff of that unit behaves responsive to the students and enthusiastic to solve their problems. Moreover, students are satisfied when student affairs do their job on promised time and correctly without mistake.

Accounting unit makes students happy when the staff do their job on time and correctly. It means that only reliability parameter was significantly effective for the accounting staff.

Students' expectations from the cafeteria are responsive behaving staff, well knowledge of service and cooking, and the sufficient area of the cafeteria. It means that as much those expectations are actualized, the students are being satisfied with the cafeteria.

Overall university contributes to the satisfaction of the students when the staff makes empathy about the students, well informed on their jobs, and does their job on time and correctly each time.

According to these results, the information was delivered to each unit in order to increase the satisfaction of the students on those units. Furthermore, special seminars and workshops performed to revise the plan in order to increase the satisfaction of the students to the sufficient level. The heads of each departments and units discussed their cases with the administration and it was decided that these satisfaction levels can be reached if the staff work enthusiastically.

Finally, at the end of the second semester, new analyses were performed and the results were shared with the administration. According to the results, the levels of satisfaction and determinants of the satisfactions were such;

Table 12: Student Affairs

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
<i>Strong</i>	67.00%	73%	70%	70%	62%	70%
<i>Neutral</i>	33.00%	10%	13%	19%	20%	13%
<i>Weak</i>	16%	17%	17%	15%	18%	17%

Table 13: Accounting

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
<i>Strong</i>	66.00%	64%	67%	65%	64%	66%
<i>Neutral</i>	19.00%	19%	12%	19%	22%	18%
<i>Weak</i>	15%	17%	21%	16%	14%	16%

Table 14: Departments

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
<i>Business and Management</i>	Mean of Weak	Mean of Strong	Mean of Weak	Mean of Strong	Mean of Weak	Mean of Strong
	3%	69%	9%	69%	6%	72%

<i>Department</i>												
<i>Civil Engineering Department</i>	12%	71%	16%	47%	24%	41%	24%	53%	24%	59%	11%	71%
<i>Architectural Engineering Department</i>	11%	68%	11%	68%	16%	74%	11%	68%	16%	58%	5%	74%

Table 15: Dean of Students

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
<i>Strong</i>	62%	70%	66%	65%	70%	71%
<i>Neutral</i>	24%	13%	18%	17%	13%	15%
<i>Weak</i>	14%	17%	16%	18%	17%	14%

Table 16: Cafeteria

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
<i>Strong</i>	68%	74%	65%	63%	71%	70%
<i>Neutral</i>	19%	14%	17%	19%	5%	20%
<i>Weak</i>	13%	12%	18%	18%	24%	11%

Table 17: Overall University

	Empathy	Responsiveness	Assurance	Reliability	Tangibles	Satisfaction
<i>Strong</i>	70%	72%	65%	71%	47%	72%
<i>Neutral</i>	18%	14%	18%	18%	33%	12%
<i>Weak</i>	12%	14%	17%	11%	20%	16%

### 3. Findings and Conclusions

According to the results of survey at the end of the second semester, it was seen that most of the units reached the goals of satisfaction. On the other hand, it was seen that the accounting unit was below the objective. The reason was investigated but no significant problem was determined. It could be because of the nature of the unit that is related to money. Furthermore, although the university was unable to increase the seat capacity of the cafeteria, most probably because at the second semester the weather was good and the most of the students were eating, drinking and enjoying in the garden, there was no complaint about the seat capacity of the cafeteria. Beside this, it can be seen from the tables also that the

values of the determinants and the satisfaction levels in all departments except accounting was reached. The table below shows about more concrete results;

Table 18: Satisfaction Level

<i>Department/Unit</i>	<b>First Tracking</b>	<b>Second Tracking</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
<i>Students Affairs</i>	73%	70%	70%	YES
<i>Accounting</i>	60%	66%	70%	NO
<i>Business Management</i>	65%	72%	70%	YES
<i>Civil Engineering</i>	65%	71%	70%	YES
<i>Architectural Engineering</i>	50%	74%	70%	YES
<i>Dean of Students</i>	68%	71%	70%	YES
<i>Cafeteria</i>	61%	70%	70%	YES
<i>University</i>	65%	72%	70%	YES

It can be seen on the table 18 that at the first management evaluation meeting only student affairs unit has reached their goals but not others. As primary effect of data analysis and revising the strategy, it was seen at the second management evaluation meeting that at a short time almost all of the departments and units reached their goals.

This result can be because;

- 1- Tracking of the goals might have kept staff motivated to achieve them
- 2- The analysis results shown a better and more specific way to the staff to go on and achieve the goals.
- 3- Seminars and workshops helped them to understand the importance of reaching these goals for the sustainable development.

It was observed during this process that when the goals are determined quantitatively, achievable, and specifically, they become easier to track. Consequently when you track the goals correctly and timely, the staff seems more enthusiastic and motivated to achieve these goals.

As a conclusion, the recommendation to the University from these aspects can be sequenced as;

- The university should continue making management evaluation meeting twice a year
- In these meetings utmost importance must be given to data analysis results
- The academic and administrative staff also must be informed about the results and the decisions of these management evaluation meeting.
- For each goal, specific method of achieving method for the concerning goal should be investigated and transfer that information to the concerning staff

As a result of this study, it was observed that the goals could be achieved by a systematic and scientific way easier and under control. On the other hand, as a limitation of this research, only service quality and satisfaction of students cases have been taken into consideration in this study. For the further studies, the same model can be applied to all of the goals those targeted to be achieved.

## References

- Acar, E. (2007). Yarı Resmi Bir Örgütte Stratejik Planlama Uygulaması: Aydın Ticaret Odası Örneği. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Aydın
- Aktan, C. C. (2008). Stratejik yönetim ve stratejik planlama. *Çimento İşveren Dergisi*, 22(4), 4-21.
- Al Ghamdi, S. M. (2005). The use of strategic planning tools and techniques in Saudi Arabia: An empirical study. *International Journal of Management*, 22(3), 376.
- Bayraktar, B. B., & Yıldız, A. K. (2007). Kurumsal bilginin stratejik planlama sürecinde kullanılması: Bir ilçe belediyesi örneği. *Bilgi Dünyası*, 8(2), 280-296.
- Demir, A., Talaat, K., & Aydınli, C. (2015). The Relations among Dimensions of Service Quality, Satisfaction, Loyalty, and Willingness to pay more: Case of GSM Operators Service at Northern-Iraq. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences*, 5(4), 146-154.
- DPT, T. B. (2003). Kamu Kuruluşları İçin Stratejik Planlama Klavuzu.
- Goodstein, L. D., Nolan, T. M., & Pfeiffer, J. W. (1993). *Applied Strategic Planning: How to Develop a Plan That Really Works*. McGraw Hill Professional.
- Gözlükaya, T. (2007). Yerel Yönetimler ve Stratejik Planlama: Modeller ve Uygulama Örnekleri, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Denizli.
- Gurel, T. (2008) Kurumsal Stratejik Planlama, Bölgesel Çevre Merkezi – REC Türkiye, Ankara.
- Gürer, H. (2006). Stratejik Planlamanın Temelleri Ve Türk Kamu Yönetiminde Uygulanmasına Yönelik Öneriler. *125 Yüksek Denetim Dünyasından Haberler*, 91.
- Kevser, M. (2007). Stratejik Planlama ve KOBİ'lerdeki Uygulamalar Üzerine Bir Araştırma. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İzmir.
- Küçüksüleymanoğlu, R. (2008). Stratejik planlama süreci. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 16(2), 403-412.
- Kiliç, M., & Erkan, V. (2006). Stratejik Planlama ve Dengeli Performans Yönetimi Kriterleri Bir Arada Olabilir mi?. *Ticaret ve Turizm Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2.
- Öztop, S. (2007). Stratejik planlamanın belediyelerde uygulanması. *Kocaeli Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Anabilim Dalı, Yayımlanmış Yüksek Lisans Tezi*.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). Servqual: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perc. *Journal of retailing*, 64(1), 12.
- Ülgen, H. ve Mirza, S.K. (2004) İşletmelerde Stratejik Yönetim, Literatür Yayıncılık, İstanbul.
- Wells, D. L. (1998). *Strategic Management for Senior Leaders: A Handbook for Implementation*. Department of the Navy, Total Quality Leadership Office.
- Wilson, I. (1998). Strategic planning for the millennium: Resolving the dilemma. *Long Range Planning*, 31(4), 507-513.