Full Length Research Paper

The most important problems that mayors experience and the basic fields were they need information and experience support most

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This study aims to identify the most important problems of mayors who are elected into office, for two tenures or more and to describe the most important needs regarding information and experience for the mayors elected for a second tenure or more in 2009 with regards to type of municipalities and educational variables. For data collection, 2 questions were posed to 1927 mayors and 1341 of mayors replied to the questions. Correspondence analysis was done to reveal the findings. According to the results from this study, some of the information and experience needs constitute problems in the following terms of election and the most frequently experienced problem by municipalities in Turkey is the “lack of information about laws and regulations”.

Key words: Problems of mayors, local governments, problems of municipalities, union of municipalities.

INTRODUCTION

This study includes the results of one of six independent research modules belonging to the project named "determining the expectations of our Mayors" supported by the “Union of Municipalities of Turkey”. This is the first and only scientific research that has been carried out in this context and in such quality in terms of both totality and independence of each module. The research which serves as an important resource will be of immense benefit to those who are interested in this topic in theory and application both at national and international levels. Apart from it is function relating to functions of the “Union of Municipalities of Turkey” it is also concerned about what other municipalities are doing in Turkey. Thanks to volunteer project team for their contribution to fulfill each independent research module and reporting process and many other different dimensions; thanks to the President of the “Union of Municipalities of Turkey” and also President of the “Union of Municipalities of the World” Mr. Kadir TOPBAŞ for his support and contribution for fulfilling this project and making it completely successful; thanks to the General Secretary of the “Union of Municipalities of Turkey” Hayrettin GÜNGÖR, thanks to all experts and staff who work in the union and finally thanks to all mayors who participated in the study and shared their ideas.

Problem statement

“Globalization” is a condition that affects nations with its positive and negative results both at personal and organizational levels with multi dimensions (Erçetin, 2007; Erçetin and Hamedoğlu, 2007). As a result of these effects, there is the need for supplying efficient services that would make the citizens live in tranquility, that is in harmony with the necessities of the era for municipalities. Due to this, competition and cooperation with other institutions at national and international levels becomes essential. For municipalities, solving problems quickly will...
help them to compete with other municipalities in the quest for excellence. Also in this era differences in administrative policies are common with mayors, with increased responsibilities and difficulties in administration. In this sense, for mayors to carry out their roles and responsibilities more effectively, knowing their needs about information and experience becomes an important issue.

According to the numbered 5393 Law of Municipalities “municipality” means “the public legal entity that has administrative and financial autonomy that was founded for supplying the common and local needs of district residents”. When this definition is investigated, one can say that; municipalities are organizations which have their own decision-making bodies and budgets, possess legal entity and aim to supply all that local people need. Local governments are established unions for management with lower costs, overcoming the tasks that they cannot do by themselves and supplying all the instruments they need (Şat, 2000). In addition to this, it can be said that for multi-dimensional cooperation among municipalities and solving the problems they experience, unions of municipalities are established. In Turkey, “Union of Municipalities of Turkey” is established for representation of all the municipalities.

“Union of Municipalities of Turkey” is the only local administration union at national level which possesses public legal entity and all the municipalities are the national members of it. Its roots are traced to 1945. Some the functions of “Union of Municipalities of Turkey” are; “saving the benefits of municipalities, helping them for improvement, supplying education for the chosen managers and staff, supporting the municipalities at national and international levels, encouraging them to share information at all levels, helping to generalize the good applications about municipalities” both in the world and in Turkey and generating ideas for law preparation in municipalities. In this context, “Union of Municipalities of Turkey” declares the ideas during the preparation of regulations that affect and interest the municipalities based on the “Circumstance of European Local Government” and it experiences effective lobbying activities under the supervision of parliament and central management institutions. Also the “Union of Municipalities of Turkey” arranges seminars, panels, conferences, workshops and technical voyages both at national and international levels; publishes a monthly journal and various publications about municipal services; provides support for the municipalities in law related issues; makes common projects with national and international local management unions and institutions; coordinates the relationship with partner cities and prepares the municipalities for European Union membership processes.

The problems experienced by each municipality are meant to be solved by the unions. The problems experienced by municipalities have been discussed in several studies. According to Yağışındağ (1995), the problems of local governance are “not to serve public in a waited quality, powerful and democratic way and lack of ‘autonomous’ powerful and democratic organizational structure”. According to Cömert et al. (2003) municipalities have problems about “auto-control, speed of operations, and quality of service, high costs, and economic loss”. Bilgin (2006) evaluates the problems of municipalities from the perspective of human resources and emphasis on crowded and unnecessary staff. In another study done by Alkaya and Alkaya (2008) the problems of municipalities are categorized under three titles as “the confusion stem from the types of municipalities and the laws they are dependent on, re-examining the criterion required for municipality membership, problems of municipalities about financial sources”. Güngör (2009) handled the topic of borrowing by municipalities and explained that: loans are the financial sources, but when they are used permanently they could create big problems. According to the study done by Steinberg and Miranda (2005) the problems of municipalities are generalized as: “limited budgets that do not allow the implementation of existing investment proposals, inadequate human resources to execute its functions and to fulfill its competences, irrational usage of available resources, lack of municipal autonomy and undefined role of the community, accumulated deficits in urban infrastructure services and serious environmental problems”.

As can be seen from the studies done, many classifications are made about the problems that the municipalities experiences. In this study a different classification is done about the problems of municipalities consisting of “lack of income to supply the compulsory municipality services, inability to employ the needed staff, proficiency level of staff, lack of information about laws and regulations, social behavior and protocol”. These five titles are assessed as information and experience needs for the mayors that are elected for the first time, because they have experienced nothing before.

**Aims of the study**

1) Describing the most important problems in the basis of five main fields that the mayors experience generally who are elected mayors for the second tenure or more in 2009, in terms of types of municipalities and education variables.

2) Describing the most important needs about information and experience according to type of municipalities and education variables for the mayors elected for the first time in 2009.

**METHODS**

In social science studies, results are generally summarized as a simple frequency count of a set of response options or categories.
Another common result for social sciences is a two-way cross-tabulation, usually referred to as contingency table. This table also includes frequency counts but is one level of complexity greater, in that it breaks down the counts of a set of responses according to another set of categories. Correspondence analysis, however, approaches the display of such tables in a different and unique way (Greenacre and Blasius, 1994: 3).

The basic aim of correspondence analysis is to reveal the structure of a complex data matrix by replacing the raw data with a more simple data matrix without losing essential information. Correspondence analysis is a method especially applicable for analyses of large contingency tables. The technique is a tool to analyze the association between two or more categorical variables by representing the categories of the variables as points in a low-dimensional space (Clausen, 1998).

With contingency tables like RxC the investigations about simple correspondence analysis can be done. Multiple correspondence analyses the way of revealing the relation and the togetherness of the sub-categories of variables that take place in related different crossed contingency tables like RxCxK (Özdamar, 2004).

Population and sample

The population for this study is the 2948 mayors who work in the Turkish Republic. Data collection was done for two groups of mayors who were invited to a “Disclosure and Consultation Meeting of Mayors” that was organized with the cooperation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Union of Municipalities of Turkey in 20 to 27 June 2009 at Antalya. 1927 (65%) of 2948 mayors participated in the meeting, 1341 of the mayors replied the questionnaire as volunteers (70% of participants). It is known that, with simple random sampling method the sample width that is used for ratio estimation of population can be at most 500. In this sense it is assumed; that the results obtained from the analysis of 1341 mayors will be used for representing the whole population (all mayors in Turkish Republic) of mayors.

According to the data collected, 98.6% of participants are “men” and 1.4% of them are “women”. 913 of mayors from 1341 disclosed their ages. From these 913 people 3.9% are in the [26 to 34] age group; 67.2% are in the [35 to 52] age group; 28.7% are in the [53 to 70] age group and 0.2% of them are in the [71 to 79] age group. The ones in 35 to 61 age ranges are representing almost 92% of all age groups. 1333 of 1341 mayors disclosed their educational level. 16% of the participants graduated from primary school, 13% of them graduated from secondary school, 21.67% of them graduated from high school, 10.61% of them graduated from a two-year degree school, 13.33% of them are undergraduate from graduate school. 0.98% of them are at the postgraduate education level school. According to these information, the highest number from the group have graduated from high school, second is the ones, who graduated from primary school, while the percentage of the ones who graduated from secondary school, two-year degree and undergraduate school are close to each other. 1324 of 1341 mayors described their municipality. 75.5% of them are the mayors of waists, 21.2% of them are the mayors of districts, 1.8% of them are the mayors of metropolitan districts, 1.3% of them are the mayors of cities and 0.2% of them are the mayors of metropolitans. 1323 of 1341 mayors revealed how many times they have been elected. The ones elected for the first time are the highest with 60%; the ones elected for a second term are with average 27% and are at the second order while the ones who have been elected for mayor more than two tenures are at the last order with 13%.

Collection of data

In accordance with the aims of the study this research is designed as a survey and data collection method of survey “feedback form” was used. Two events occur in it. In these two processes five basic fields are involved that are based on the interviews done previously. These five basic fields are as follows:

1) Lack of income to supply the compulsory municipality services
2) Inability to employ required staff
3) Proficiency level of staff
4) Lack of information about laws and regulations
5) Social behavior and protocol.

Mayors who have been elected two or more tenures had different important problems they experienced based on these five basic fields while the mayors elected for the first time wanted to identify the required information and experience by using the same fields. The first item concerned only the mayors who were elected for the first time in 2009. The aim is define the fields that the first time elected mayors require information and experience about. In the questions, these five basic fields are presented as the choices and in the event they would want to write something more, a 6th open-ended choice with “other topic or topics you think are important” was added. Each choices are ranked from 5 (the most important) to 1 (the least important) and mayors where expected to sign the most appropriate choice related to them.

FINDINGS

According to Figure 1, the mayors who are graduates from primary and secondary school did not provide the type of municipality they represent and the things they require to get education and experience. The ones who are graduates from high school said that they need experience and information about “supplying compulsory municipality services.” The mayors of districts with two-year degree and undergraduate education declared that they require information and experience about “employing the required staff” and “lack of information about laws and regulation”. The city mayors declared that they need information and experience about “proficiency level of staff.”

According to Table 1, the dimensions are explained as 48.251% by “types of municipality, education of mayors and information and experience needs” variables.

When Figure 2 was evaluated, the ones who graduated from primary and secondary schools did not respond to the question. The waist mayors, who graduated from high school and two-year degree school, were more concerned about the problem of “supplying compulsory municipality services” and “lack of information about laws and regulations”. Here the reason of waist mayors to live such problems can be the financial sources lack. The district mayors with undergraduate school education level said that they had problems about “proficiency level of staff”. This makes us understand that the ones with high education want their staff to be more professional. The mayors who participated in the research work in metropolitan districts and metropolitans are graduates from postgraduate school.

According to Table 2, the dimensions are explained as 52.786% by “education, types of municipality and problems” variables.
According to Figure 3, the mayors of metropolitan districts and districts who are elected for the 2nd and 4th time are having problems about "proficiency level of staff" and "social behavior and protocol". This may be the result of the search for better service with increased experience. The waist mayors are experiencing problems...
Joint plot of category point

Figure 2. The problems that mayors live who are elected second or more times in terms of “education and types of municipality” variables.

Table 2. Model summary of the problems that mayors live who are elected second or more times in terms of “education and types of municipality” variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
<th>Variance accounted for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total (Eigenvalue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.579</td>
<td>1.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.525</td>
<td>1.538</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0.553(^a)</td>
<td>1.584</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Mean Cronbach’s alpha is based on the mean eigenvalue.

According to Table 3, the dimensions are explained 44.114% by “terms of election, types of municipality and problems” variables.

According to Figure 4, the mayors who are elected for the 5th time said that they experience problems related to “lack of information about laws and regulations” more. This situation might stem from the presence of a large number of legal and administrative regulations and the difficulty of being dominated by legislation. The ones that graduated from high schools and undergraduate schools 2nd and 3rd term said that they experience problems related to “supplying compulsory municipality services” and other aspects more. Mayors who are elected 4th time

about “supplying compulsory municipality services.” The ones elected for the 5th time experience problems related to “lack of information about laws and regulations” more.
Table 3. Model summary of the problems that mayors live who are elected second or more times in terms of “terms of election and types of municipality” variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
<th>Variance accounted for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total (Eigenvalue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.432</td>
<td>1.405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>1.242</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0.367a</td>
<td>1.323</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Mean Cronbach’s alpha is based on the mean eigenvalue.

and those who have postgraduate degrees experience problems related to “social behavior and protocol”. In the educational level, perceiving “social behavior and protocol” as a problem makes us believe that necessary education cannot be supplied. The ones graduated from undergraduate school declared that they have problems about “proficiency level of staff”.

According to Table 4, the dimensions are explained as 4.450% by “terms of election, education and problems” variables.
DISCUSSION

According to the findings of the study following can stated as the results; 1925 (65% of all) mayors have participated in the research and 1341 (70% of participants) of them have answered the questions. When the highest percentages are investigated it can be understood that, most of the mayors that participated in the research are men (98.6%), at the 35 to 52 (67.2%) age group, graduated from high school (21.67%), they are the mayors of waists (75.5 %) and they are elected for first time (60%).

Table 4. Model summary of the problems that mayors live who are elected second or more times in terms of “terms of election and education” variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
<th>Variance accounted for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total (Eigenvalue)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0.468&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.453</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Mean Cronbach’s alpha is based on the mean eigenvalue.
Mayors with low education level (primary and secondary education), are prone to not responding to the questions. Another thing that attracts attention about the educational level is that: the mayors who possess the highest levels of education (postgraduate school) are working in the biggest types of municipalities (metropolitan and metropolitan districts).

Some of the information and experience needs become problems in the following terms of election. For example the mayors who are graduated from high school need information and experience about “supplying compulsory municipality services” and same issue occurs as a problem for the waist mayors in the following years. Also the mayors of districts with two year degree education need information and experience about “lack of information about laws and regulations” and they declared that they have problems about same issue in the following terms of office. This is quite normal because during the process of assimilating European Union laws of municipalities changes occur with the laws of the Union of Municipalities of Turkey.

According to the findings of this research, it can be said; the problems that mayors experience are shaped by the features of their type of municipality. For example the mayors of metropolitan districts and districts are saying that they have problems related to “proficiency level of staff and social behavior and protocol” because the services of these municipality types are varied and require different skills and too many activities occur that require the usage of social behavior and protocol rules. “Union of Municipalities of Turkey” has lots of educational programs related to these fields and each municipality can seek education or attend these programs.

One of a striking result of the study is about permanent problems of municipalities. The mayors who are elected for the 5th time are still having problems related to “lack of information about laws and regulations” and it is the most frequently experienced problems for the municipalities. Also mayors serving for the 4th term with postgraduate qualifications are experiencing problems related to “social behavior and protocol”.

According to the findings of this study the suggestions to those who are aspiring to be informed and to the researchers that are interested in this topic are as follows:

For those who are aspiring to be informed “Union of Municipalities of Turkey” might introduce the education studies that are required, especially the ones about “information about laws and regulations” and “social behavior and protocol” to all mayors by advertisements, TV programmes, internet… etc. to enable this information to reach a wide group of people where education can be used.

This study can be repeated with the mayors from different places in the world. The sub-dimensions of the questions can be changed according to the special features of the local governments.

REFERENCES


