

Strategies Boutique Hotels in and Around the City of Izmir in Gaining Competitive Superiority

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Abstract: With the fast globalization and integration encountered in the recent years, current markets, whether local or international, have faced a serious competition. In our day and age, the tourism industry also conducts activities in order to meet the current needs of tourists as well as possible future needs and demonstrates a cutting edge image. Advances in technological opportunities, the increasing awareness of customers, changes in the expectation and requests of the customers, increasing competition with new destinations added to the current ones within the market, increasing marketing costs and low profit margins are signs of increasing competition. In this competitive environment, it is of major importance to survive, be a step ahead of your competitors or obtaining a successful place in new markets by making use of the opportunities that are to arise. Changing tourism trends, changes in the tourist requests and competition conditions getting more difficult has caused enterprises to shift to different goods and service providing. Getting into the scene at this point, boutique hotel enterprises are trying to contribute to tourism by providing high quality and individual service. In the scope of this study, competitive strategies that can be applied to reach economical success have been attempted to be examined and the competitive strategies of boutique hotels operating around the city of Izmir have been emphasized in the application.

Key words: Hotel • Boutique Hotel • Competitive Strength • Marketing Strategies • Accommodation

INTRODUCTION

The concept of competition has been felt more whilst transferring to free market economies and has been mentioned more frequently day by day with the global integrity process. Competition which was more limited in the past has become more widespread in the markets that are growing. In an environment like this, in order for enterprises to continue their economic operations in a healthy way, they need to determine the objectives and ways to reach these objectives. The success of the enterprises depends on continuing their operations under the competition conditions and economically meeting the never ending requests of consumers by keeping the competitive advantage in hand.

Hospitality enterprises in the tourism sector which is one level below the service sector which has become the biggest sector of the economy have entered a thorough competitive environment in result of globalization. In order for enterprises to successfully continue their operations in an environment where competition is increasing, it is necessary to increase the

quality and the trustworthy of the product and services, increase variety, produce goods suitable to consumer requests, meet the needs and requests of customers, use high technology, protect and increase market shares, enter new markets.

Boutique hotels, which are increasing rapidly in Turkey in the recent years of increasing competition conditions, are emerging as small enterprises which meet the hospitality needs. Boutique hotels are small hospitality enterprises providing service to a small number of tourists with a small number of rooms and which step forward with the individual service they provide. The main objective of boutique hotel enterprises is to make the tourist feel at home by creating a warm and sincere atmosphere within the hotel. All sorts of customer needs are met with a high quality service in order to increase customer satisfaction.

In this study, the strategies used by boutique hotels to gain competitive superiority have been studied under an abstract infrastructure and it has been attempted to put forward the efficiency of it with a field research.

The Concept of Competition and its Importance:

Competition is the leading concept among the theory of economy. Since Adam Smith, economists have seen competition as the life organizer of economy and have made it the basis of their economical analysis. The importance of perfect competition in the theory of economics is a very lively example of this.

In a general definition, market economy, which refers to a economical system that runs according to especially supply and demand rules within its own dynamics without any interference of the state, is applied in an important number of national economies in its modern meaning and the concept of economics integration brought by globalization has forced political governments to adopt this economical system.

The concept of competition makes up the basis of market economy. The concept of competition is a concept frequently used and yet never agreed upon. Thus, there are various definitions of competition [1].

According to Stigler's definition; "competition is a race where two or more sides are trying to obtain something that can not be obtained by everyone at the same time". Under this general definition, competition consists of all sorts of race, tool and objectives [2]. Generally speaking, competition is defined as "a course of relation where race and opposition arouses between economical units who want to achieve the economical objective and interest within the economy [3].

According to the modern economy theory, competition is a market type in which information flow is full, the goods are homogenous, no buyer or seller has the power to influence the prices or the total aggregate supply amount on his own and where entrance and exit is free [1]. According to the decision of the German Federal Court dated 1968, competition is stated as the effort and struggle of an enterprise to produce higher quality and cheaper goods and services than the other enterprises in order to broaden its market power [4]. The concept of competition has been defined in the "Law on the Protection of Competition" dated December 13, 1994 with law number 4054. According to this, competition has been defined as "ensuring independent economic decisions between the enterprises within the good and service market" [5].

One of the important functions of competition is to provide the freedom of selection. Freedom of choice is the point in question for consumers, employees and owners of capital and natural resources. Consumers in a competitive environment have the freedom to obtain the goods and services they need from any seller they like.

One of the factors that increase the importance of competition is technological improvements. Competition forces all enterprises to apply the newest and most advanced technology. On the other side, competition also encourages new Technologies to emerge. One of the most important functions of competition is that it reconciles individual interests with communal interests. Competition forces enterprises to avoid wasting all sorts of resource, to adapt the prices to the market conditions, to present the desired goods at the desired time and place, to use the most suitable technology in order to act in the most advantageous way possible [6].

The Concept of Competitive Superiority and its Importance:

With markets and industries gaining global structures by the day, national competitive power has been perceived as a more important concept by all countries. The countries with the biggest economical power have understood the necessity to pay more attention to protecting or increasing their competitive powers in the face of this fast change. New competitors who are prepared and who have completed their substructures entering the market day by day, have forced developed countries who can act quite freely in oligopoly markets to continually check and develop their structures with various tools such as scientific researches in order to protect their competitive position [7].

A large number of definitions are made about the concept of competitive power. In the definitions made, two separate points of view have been used called micro and macro. In the micro approach which looks at the definition in terms of enterprise and industry, national competition and the national and international effects of this competition is emphasized whereas the macro approach which looks at the definition on a state scale emphasizes international competition.

Competitive superiority at an enterprise level is the ability of an enterprise to be able to make production at lower costs, compared to their competitors in the national or international markets as well as product quality, the attractiveness of the good and service provided and to make innovations and creations [8].

Competitiveness and competitive power is quite a dynamic concept. The changing nature of competitive power depending on the environment it is in makes it difficult to measure it. Apart from not having standard criteria, another criteria which makes it difficult to measure competitive power is the fact that there are a large number of criteria to use in the measurement and the fact that these criteria can effect competitive power at different situations [9].

Competitive power at an industrial level is the creation and innovations that enable an industry to produce suitable goods and services to the requirements of the international market as well being able to do this at lower costs [8].

National competitive power on the other hand is for a country to be able to produce goods and services suitable to international market conditions and standards under free and equal market conditions while the real income of people on the long run is increasing [10].

Competitive Marketing Strategies: After defining and evaluating the main competitors, the company not only has to design the competitive advantage it will provide with high customer value but also the achievable competitive strategies. However, the company has to consider which marketing strategy it will use, which is the most suitable for a specific enterprise or the departments of an enterprise. That's why it is impossible to talk about a single strategy which is valid for all enterprises.

Every enterprise has to determine the best strategy for itself in terms of its position in the sector, its structure, opportunity and resources. Strategies can even vary between the different goods of the same company. Enterprises applying a competitive strategy usually compete in the market effectively by producing similar goods of the market leaders with effective advertisement, campaigns and price advantage [11].

According to Michael Porter (2003), these are the three basic competition winning strategies [12]:

Detailed Expenditure Leadership
Differentiation,
Focusing.

Apart from the functional differences, three basic competition strategies show difference in terms of their size. As a result, in order to reach success, a continuous dependence on one of the strategies is necessary as a first objective.

The Tourism Industry and Tourism Enterprises: Economical activities meeting the goods and service requests of the local people and visiting tourists form the tourism industry. The tourist requests a large number of various goods and services during his trip. That is why it is impossible to talk about a single industry operating solely on meeting the needs of the tourist. Every business providing an economic activity is open to the use of the tourist. Thereby other enterprises receive a share of tourism [5].

The services in the tourism industry can be listed as; transportation, catering services, entertainment and recreation activities, excursions, financial services such as retail sale, banks, insurance and exchange offices [13].

Economic units handling the production and marketing of goods and services by meeting the travel and hospitality needs caused by a temporary change of location and other necessities related to this temporary change of location are tourism businesses [14].

Whilst some enterprises operating in the tourism industry make all of their income from tourists, some others serve both tourism and other markets. The survival of tourism enterprises depends on the liveliness of the sector. For example, hospitality and transportation businesses are units providing service only to tourists. Although restaurants, local transportation, resting and entertainment opportunities are mainly used by local people, the tourists coming to the region can also make use of these opportunities during their visit. Tourism income share of the total business income is the criteria used in order to understand just how much the business is within the tourism industry. If it is obtaining all of its income through tourism, the business in question is a tourism enterprise. Businesses benefiting indirectly from tourist requests and expenditures take place in the industry to the extent of the service they provide and the goods they sell being used in tourism [5].

Tourists benefit from the infrastructure and superstructure opportunities and services located at the region they visit. The local people benefiting from these opportunities are restricted during the times when there are a large number of tourists.

Boutique Hotels as SMEs: It can be observed that the interest in boutique hotels is continually increasing within the last years. Big hotel chains have started to invest in boutique hotels even in Turkey in order to be able to compete. The number of facilities throughout Turkey that we can define as a boutique hotel is about 500. If we actually look into the application, it is seen that the "boutique hotel" concept in our country and other countries is rather different. In Turkey, it reminds a cheap, small, non luxurious hotel type. On the other hand, the boutique hotel concept in the world is developing quite differently.

The Definition and Characteristics of Boutique Hotels: They are small hospitality enterprises providing service to a small number of tourists with a small number of rooms stepping forward with its kitchen and the individual service it provides. The main objective of boutique hotel

administrators is to help the tourist feel at home by creating a warm and friendly atmosphere. Effort is made to increase customer satisfaction by providing a high quality service to meet the requests of the tourists. Thus, the enterprise secures its position in the market with the customer addiction [15].

The chief characteristics of boutique hotels are as follows [15]:

They Are Enterprises where sincere relations are established between staff and customers, which has a distinctive authentic atmosphere, which possesses the characteristics of the neighborhood it is located in, which have been redounded to tourism through the restoration of historical mansions, which have been constructed suitable to the neighborhood architecture and which doesn't cause unguided urbanization, which establish their products according to the consumer tendency, which has successfully analyzed the intended population, knows their customers and are able to respond to their needs immediately, which has a kitchen where menus parallel to customer desire and contains local cuisine, which makes the tourist feel special by providing personal service and which takes customer satisfaction as priority.

The Place and Importance of Boutique Hotels in Tourism:

Being a sector meeting the payment balance deficit, the tourism industry holds a very important place in the Turkish economy. Despite having modern facilities, rich and authentic resources, Turkey can't demonstrate a serious development due to limited product variety and investments being locally focused. Small hospitality enterprises called boutique hotels emerging in our country is one of the components verifying tourism [16].

Although Turkey is a rich country with natural and historical beauties, its potential is not fully made use of and gets stuck at a certain point. However, boutique hotels which are starting to operate in various points throughout Turkey and whose investments are continuing support the verification of tourism. While tourists staying in these types of enterprises are hosted with a comfort not less than their homes, also have the chance to establish a close communication with staff and administrators. The tourist who leaves the enterprise happily not only advertises to his surrounding but also wants to stay in the same hotel every year. Moreover, the tourist is not dependant on a single point as it is in the case with all inclusive hospitality enterprises. By having the opportunity to do shopping they leave foreign currency to the country.

The basic factor in the development of boutique hotels is to differentiate tourism by providing 12 month service throughout the world. Thus, the country economy starts to get more share of tourism and contributes to overcoming the economical deficit.

Strategies Used in Establishing Competitive Superiority:

Globalization today is affecting competition conditions in a large number of sectors in various ways. In some sectors, it completely changes the conditions and in the others it creates significant differences. Some sectors are becoming relatively unimportant and even completely disappearing yet some other sectors are gaining importance and new sectors are being created. The differentiation of the consumer choices which has increased as a result of especially technological advances and globalization, has made it necessary for enterprises to apply quite different competition strategies. The changes caused by the developments in globalization and information Technologies affects the tourism industry. Tourism enterprises are forced to adapt to the changing environment conditions because of characteristics specific to the tourism industry such as requests in tourism being elastic, the production and sales of the goods being simultaneous, service not being possible to be stocked. That's why, the hospitality, travel, food and beverage enterprises which take place in the tourism industry need to take the necessary precautions in front of the changes and the developments where competition is increasing day by day, where globalization and technological advances are experienced very quickly, in order to make profit and not to lose their current market share. To what extent the factors affecting competition are used by hospitality enterprises is examined below.

Costs: One of the most important marketing factors in determining the competition power is costs. Enterprises need to apply the methods to decrease production costs to the fullest. Decreasing costs along with the price advantage of the enterprises make it possible for enterprises to keep the market position at a strong level [9].

Power to Be Able to Invest: The basis of most of the problems enterprises face in a competitive environment is financial. In order to overcome these sorts of problems faced especially by small and medium scaled enterprises (SME), there are various support and encouragement in

the world and in the EU countries. Similar support and encouragement activities are held in our country as well especially aimed at SMEs.

Order Delivery Period: The timing of the services provided in the tourism sector is of major importance. The reason for this is that a hotel customer requires a hotel room for a certain time limit and to be served the food he requested on time. Services that are not provided on time create dissatisfaction on the customer. Because services provided on time will increase customer satisfaction, it gives a competition advantage to the enterprises [11].

Capacity Elasticity: The biggest problem in terms of the enterprises is working with a low capacity usage rate and the demand being insufficient. Having capacity elasticity is seen as the best protection for enterprises in competition environments in case of demand fluctuation. The advantage an enterprise who can decrease and increase production capacity without causing too much increase on costs is clear [17].

Quality and Suitability to Standards: Enterprises which embrace a quality understanding and applications that can answer customer need and expectations can be able to protect their superiority against competitors. Especially enterprises providing goods and service suitable to international quality standards will have competitive advantage in the domestic market as well as the international market [9].

Credibility: Credibility is the assessment of whether a good is fully demonstrating all of the functions that are expected from it within the terms of usage [17]. In this case, an enterprise whose service credibility is high also has high competitive advantage against their competitors.

Technology and R and D: With the effects of globalization, technological developments get old very quickly or any development around the world can be copied very quickly. That's why, in order for enterprises to gain competitive superiority, one of the marketing strategies they need to follow is to introduce new goods and services to the market. For this, the share spared for Research and Development studies need to be increased or at least be at a sufficient level. Enterprises who want to ensure a competitive advantage in the market and make these advantages continuous need to choose the suitable technology which can produce the

quality product in a shorter period of time. The density of the Research and Development studies conducted is just as important as production technology which makes the competitive power efficient [17].

Qualified Work Force: Tourism enterprises are faced with many problems due to the insufficiency of staff possessing qualified knowledge and skills. Problems are encountered especially when providing to foreign tourists due to the foreign language problem. Apart from the foreign language problem, need for qualified and trained staff in every department of an enterprise from production to finance and marketing.

It is possible to see today that it's the investment in person which lies behind the success of a number of hotel enterprises.

Company Image and Brand: Before buying anything, the consumers in the tourism sector search for clues about the enterprises. The quality of the service provided to consumers and institutional image are among these clues. Institutional image and service quality, in other words, in order for the product image to be effective upon the target group, administrator and workers whose qualifications play an important role. Tourism enterprises need to trust the administrator and workers in the terminals continually communicating with the consumers and tries to meet the request and needs of the consumers [18].

Market Share: When an enterprise decides to enter either a domestic or a foreign market, it needs to determine the market share it is aiming to reach and ways to reach that aim. Market share has become an important component in competition. In most cases, enterprises who have owned an important share of the market they have aimed have a competitive advantage against their competitors.

After Sales Services: The sufficiency of the support services related to the after sales services is an important marketing strategy for the enterprise in terms of the competitive power of the enterprise. Speed, courtesy, sufficiency, finding quick and correct solutions to problems and the speed in handling these services need to be considered as the characteristics of these services. The competition power of an enterprise whose after sales services are at high points or in other words who has gained the quality aims will increase its competitive power [17].

In order to compensate the after sales dissatisfaction, enterprises can take some steps and help the consumer. After a meeting organized within the hotel, in order to have the meeting organizers to choose them once again for the next meeting, enterprises can send thank you letters to the organizers [11]. They can increase customer satisfaction by sending celebration messages to their steady customers on their special days.

Inventory Management Applications: Inventory management applications are very important for enterprises in terms of keeping especially production and stock expenses at the lowest level possible. Moreover, working with minimum stock is a relief in terms of the financial function of the enterprise. Thus, enterprises can both have a cost advantage in front of their competitors thus being able to compete and will increase their competitive power by gaining the authority to be administered flexibly from the limited finance sources [17].

Product: Just like other enterprises, hospitality enterprises operate in a competitive environment or atmosphere. These hotels can sometimes compete on the same street, same block and same city. In order to evaluate their position in the market, enterprises usually look at other hotel enterprises and evaluate competition in terms of obtaining consumer's money. However, there are many alternatives for the goods in other sectors for consumers to spend their money on.

Strategy: One of the most effective ways in gaining competitive advantage in our day and age is to establish a strategy. Competitive strategy is being able to see the changes in customer choices, monitor the changes in the working habits and providing the customers with different advantages that competitors can't. Permanence and continuity in competition is not based on doing things better than the competitors but on doing things differently. Permanent superiority in competition is only possibly through re-establishing enterprise strategy.

Just on Time Production: Just on time production is purchasing the required goods and meeting the requested services when a need for goods rises while there are customers in the hotel. In the just on time production method which can be applied in the food and beverage departments of hotel enterprises, administrators need to analyze the demand characteristics of the enterprises successfully. Just on time production

method can be used on goods which have short usage periods in the food and beverage production of large hotel enterprises [19].

Stability: Goods and service stability is one of the basic factors for the success of service enterprises. Stability or continuity is the customer getting the expected service without any surprises. In the hospitality industry, this is the customer being waken up every morning at 07:00 as planned or the coffee break given at the pre-planned time during a meeting. Stability in restaurants is the taste of a food eaten two weeks ago being the same after two weeks as well, the towels in the toilet always being ready and in place, a beverage which is present a week ago being present the next month as well [11].

The request and expectations of touristic consumers at the hotel enterprises they go to changes day by day. Boutique hotel enterprises need to adapt to these changes in the request and expectations of customers as fast as possible. If not, touristic consumers will prefer other hotel enterprises that provide a higher quality of service. That's why, the success of hospitality enterprises, different than other enterprise types, depends on the quality of the service provided to customers. In order to provide this service to the fullest, boutique hotels need to follow the developments in the market and their opponents closely, use marketing strategies in order to gain competitive superiority and develop the most suitable marketing strategies for their enterprises. Hospitality enterprises and related boutique hotels which don't give importance to competition and which don't use marketing strategies effectively will not be able to continue their existence for a very long time.

The Objective of the Research: Boutique hotels, which are kinds of hospitality enterprises, demonstrate different characteristics than other enterprises. In this study, the marketing strategies used by boutique hotels in order to gain competitive superiority are looked upon.

The objective of this research is to determine the marketing strategies used by boutique hotels operating around the city of Izmir in order to gain competitive superiority.

The Method of the Research: A literature search has been conducted as a starting point for the research. After the literature search, analysis of the secondary data has been conducted. The analysis of secondary data has been conducted through the information obtained from

libraries, institutes, research centers, universities, books, articles, internet etc. Based on the information obtained, the hypothetical structure of the study has been established. A field research has been conducted moving on from the hypothetical structure put forward later.

The method of the research has been determined as a field research and a survey technique has been used in accordance with the field research. Telephone, e-mail and face to face survey method have been used in the gathering of information related to the research. During the preparation of the survey form, making the questions comprehensible for the subjects and the answers not being open to debate has been of major importance. With this aim, a pilot application has been conducted and necessary modifications have been made accordingly. The questions in the survey consist of two parts. Demographic information of the consumers is in the first part. The second part is related to the variables which are to be used in the determination of competitive factors which are to be used in the survey. These variables have been estimated with a 5 point likert scale (1: I definitely don't agree, 5: I definitely agree).

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) computer program has been used in the evaluation of the analysis. The average value of the information obtained has been taken and a method called summary statistics (special statistics) has been applied.

The research at hand could be classified as a descriptive research because it reveals the level of importance of the variables which are effective on the problem and to determine the characteristics of the research problem and its frequency.

Descriptive research is to summarize and present the information within a data set by using graphical methods [20]. A hypothesis has not been found to be necessary due to its descriptive characteristic.

Population of the Research: Similar subject sampling which is also shortly referred to as "survey" has been used as the research method.

This method is not applied to the entire group that demonstrates the above stated characteristics but subjects who have been chosen according to similar characteristics [21]. This system, which is called sampling, is based on a whole being represented by a smaller part. That's the reason for selecting a part of the population in order to be used in the researches. It is the sub field of the population and consists of the elements selected from the whole population. This enables results which

can be generalized about the population to be elicited and the population contains the entire human group, events or area of interests the researcher wants to examine [22]. The study has been examined within the scope of field sampling based on probability. The reason for selecting area sampling is to reach data faster and easier. Determining the factors used by boutique hotels in order to gain competitive superiority and to what extent they give importance to these factors has been evaluated. Boutique hotels operating around the city of Izmir make up the study population.

According to the information obtained from Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the number of licensed boutique hotels operating around the city of Izmir is 8. All of these hotels been contacted. The number of surveys returned from these hotels is 11. Data has been evaluated from the 11 surveys obtained.

Constraints of the Research: The research has some important constraints. First of all, the area of research has been limited with the city of Izmir. The owners, managers or department managers of the boutique hotels operating within the city of Izmir has been tried to reach. However, the related people not wanting to fill out the survey have limited the number of those who have answered the survey. Participation in the survey has been conducted on a voluntary basis.

Administrators who believe in secrecy, who do not want to share any information even for a scientific research and who approach the subject in a suspicious manner have been encountered.

The trustworthiness of the study has been confirmed when all of the administrators of the 8 hotels operating within the city of Izmir have participated in the survey.

The Foundings of the Research: Within the scope of this research, 11 participants have evaluated the 20 factors for their own hotels and other competing hotels. The evaluations of the participants made on their own hotels and other hotels will not be the same. Thus, it is necessary to put these differences in a comprehensible way with a suitable statistical application. If it is accepted that, scientific studies is a modeling application from detail to general, it will become an objective in terms of methodology to minimize thousands of differences which are impossible for the mind to comprehend to a large number of dimensions and making the observation area more comprehensible and interpretable.

Table 1: The Demographic Characteristics of the Research Participants

		f	%
Gender	Male	3	27.3
	Female	8	72.7
Total	11	100.0	
Age	20-25	1	9.00
	26-30	4	36.4
	31-40	4	36.4
	41 and over	2	18.2
Total	11	100.0	
Education	Associate Degree	3	27.3
	Graduate	7	63.6
	Post Graduate	1	9.10
	Doctorate	0	0.00
Total	11	100.0	
Position in the Enterprise	Owner of the Enterprise	1	9.00
	General Manager	1	9.00
	Marketing Manager	2	18.2
	Department Manager	4	36.4
	Chief	4	36.4
	Other	0	0.00
Total	11	100.0	
Working Time in Enterprise	Less than 1 Year	4	36.4
	1-3 Years	6	54.5
	4-5 Years	0	0.00
	6-10 Years	0	0.00
	11 and over	1	9.10
Total	11	100.0	
Working Time in Sector	0-3 Years	1	9.00
	4-5 Years	2	18.2
	6-10 Years	5	45.5
	11 and over	3	27.3
Total	11	100.0	

Table 2: Findings related to the Evaluations of the Marketing Strategies Used by Boutique Hotels in Order to Gain Competitive Power Compared to Competitors

Faktors	N	Lining	Average Values
Costs	11	20	3.063
Investment Opportunities	11	14	4.063
Terms of Delivery	11	1	4.813
Capacity Elasticity	11	19	3.313
Goods And Service Quality	11	4	4.624
Suitability to Standards	11	6	4.438
Trustworthiness	11	2	4.688
Technology Transfer	11	16	3.938
Research and Development	11	13	4.186
Staff Qualifications	11	7	4.437
Brand and Company Image	11	3	4.625
Market Share	11	8	4.436
Post-Sales Services	11	9	4.435
Time of Production	11	15	4.000
Product and Stock Costs	11	18	3.813
Strategies	11	12	4.187
Demand Fluctuations	11	17	3.875
Stability and Continuity	11	5	4.623
Analyzing Competing Products	11	11	4.188
Product Variety	11	10	4.313

The Demographic Findings of the Research:

The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1 which has been prepared under the scope of the research.

If the distribution is examined in terms of education level, 27.3 % is associate degree, 63.6 % is graduate, 9.1% is post graduate. It is seen that doctorate graduates don't work in this sort of hotels.

When we look at the position of the participants; 9.0 % are owners, 9.0 % are general managers, 18.2 % are marketing managers, 36.4% are working as chiefs.

When the working time of the participants is examined, it is seen that 36.4% have been working in the same work site for less than 1 year, 54.5% between 1-3 years, 9.1 % 11 or over 11 years.

When the working time of the participants in the sector is examined, it is seen that 9.0% of the participants have been working in the sector between 0-3 years, 18.2% between 4-5 years, 45.5% between 6-10 years and 27.3 for 11 or over 11 years.

11.2. The Evaluations of the Marketing Strategies Used by Boutique Hotels in Order to Gain Competitive Power Compared to Competitors The Evaluations of the Marketing Strategies Used by Boutique Hotels in Order to Gain Competitive Power Compared to Competitors is presented in Table 2 and Fig. 1.

The Evaluations of the Marketing Strategies Used by Boutique Hotels in Order to Gain Competitive Power Compared to Competitors is shown in Table 2. In the evaluations of the boutique hotels compared with each other, terms of delivery has got the highest value (4.813). Eight boutique hotels operating in Izmir have stated terms of delivery as the most important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority. Trustworthiness has taken second place (4.688) in Table 2. Brand and company image (4.625) has taken third place. They believe that customers' remembering the brand of the boutique hotel in which they received service and the hotel leaving a positive image on the customer is an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority. That's why they see brand and company image as an important marketing strategy. Goods and service quality has taken fourth place (4.624) whereas stability and continuity (4.623) has taken fifth place in Table 2. Boutique hotels see stability and continuity as an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. The administrators of the eight boutique hotels operating in and around the city of Izmir have listed the marketing strategies they use in order to gain competitive superiority as suitability to standards (4.438),

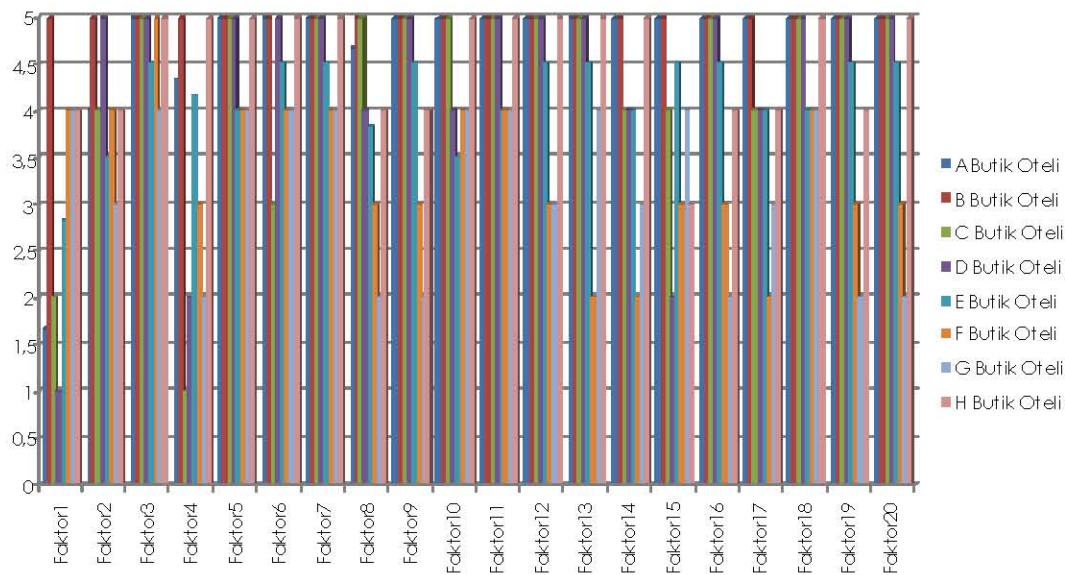


Fig. 1: Findings Related to the Situation of the Boutique Hotels In Terms of the Marketing Strategies They Use to Gain Competitive Superiority

staff qualifications (4.437), market share (4.436), post-sales services (4.435), product variety (4.313), analyzing competing goods (4.188), strategies (4.187), Research and Development (4.186), investment opportunities (4.063), time of production (4.000), technology transfer (3.938), demand fluctuations (3.875), production and stock expenses (3.813), capacity elasticity (3.313) and costs (3.063). As it can also be seen in Table 2, capacity elasticity and expenses have taken the lowest values. None of the eight boutique hotels operating in Izmir see capacity elasticity and expense as an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority.

Figure 1 illustrates the comparison of the marketing strategies used by boutique hotels operating in and around the city of Izmir in order to achieve competitive superiority against their competitors. According to Figure 1, each of the eight boutique hotels have been compared and evaluated. According to the evaluation results, boutique hotel B sees the factor of expense as a marketing strategy compared to their competitors. Boutique hotel B has received the highest value in terms of expense factor. The boutique hotels getting the highest values after boutique hotel B are hotels F, G and H. Hotels A, C and D see expense as a lower value marketing strategy compared to their competitors. The reason for this is that these hotels have achieved the lowest values. When boutique hotels are evaluated in terms of investment opportunities, the second factor, it is understood that boutique hotels B and D have received the highest values and that they see investment

opportunities as an important marketing strategy to gain competitive superiority against their competitors. Because boutique hotel G has received the lowest value in terms of investment opportunities, it is understood that, when compared with the other hotels, this hotel sees investment opportunities as a less important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority. Because boutique hotel G has received the lowest values in terms of investment opportunities, we can say that this hotel sees this marketing strategy as a less important marketing strategy in achieving competitive superiority against their competitors. When the eight boutique hotels operating in Izmir are compared in terms of terms of delivery, boutique hotels other than E and G have received the highest values. Thus, six boutique hotels consider terms of delivery as an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. It is understood from the graph that boutique hotels E and G have not received really low values and have received close values to the other hotels. In terms of capacity elasticity, which is the fifth factor, it is seen in the graph in Figure 1 that boutique hotels have stated different views. This could have different reasons. This can be because some of the boutique hotels don't experience a capacity problem. It is understood from the graph that boutique hotels B and H have received the highest values on this subject and these two hotels believe that capacity elasticity is an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. Boutique hotel C has received the lowest value in terms

of capacity elasticity and it doesn't see this as an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive power. The other boutique hotels have received average values on this subject. All of the boutique hotels see goods and service quality as an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority. Boutique hotels E, F and G have received slightly lower values than the other hotels in terms of goods and service quality. However, it is understood that these boutique hotels also see goods and service quality as an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. Boutique hotels A, B, D and H see suitability to standards, which is the sixth factor, as an important marketing strategy against their competitors in gaining competitive superiority. It can be seen in the graph that the other boutique hotels use it at higher levels. The security factor is seen as an important marketing strategy in achieving competitive superiority by the eight boutique hotels operating in the city of Izmir. It is understood from the graph in Figure 1 that all boutique hotels have received high and close values. The approach of the boutique hotels operating in Izmir towards technology transfer is seen to be very positive. Boutique hotels B and C demonstrate a serious approach to this and see it as an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. The hotel that doesn't see technology transfer as an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority against its competitors is boutique hotel G. The approach of the boutique hotels operating in Izmir to research and development is seen to be parallel to technology transfer. While boutique hotels A, B, C and D see research and development as an important marketing strategy that they can use against their competitors, boutique hotels E and G don't see this as an important marketing strategy that they can use against their competitors. It is seen that staff qualifications is used as a marketing strategy to gain competitive superiority against their competitors. Boutique hotels A, B, C and H think of this as a more important marketing strategy compared to boutique hotels D, E, F and G. In Figure 1, brand and company image is seen as an important marketing strategy by all eight boutique hotels operating in Izmir in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. Boutique hotels A, B, C, D and H see this as an important marketing strategy when compared to boutique hotels E, F and G. All boutique hotels other than boutique hotels E and F use market share factor as an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. The administrators

of boutique hotels E and F have given lower values on this subject when compared to the other boutique hotels. Boutique hotel has received the lowest values in terms of post sales services, which is the thirteenth factor. The other boutique hotels have high and close values. Thus, all boutique hotels apart from then boutique hotel F see post sales services as an important marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. The value of production time is seen to be like post sales services. All boutique hotels other than boutique hotel F use this marketing strategy against their competitors. Boutique hotels A, B and H have received the highest values in terms of production time. The approach of the boutique hotels operating in and around the city of Izmir towards production and stock expenses demonstrates differences. While boutique hotels A and B use production and stock expenses to great length, it is seen that boutique hotel C doesn't use this against their competitors. The other hotels have received close values to each other and use production and stock expenses in gaining competitive superiority. Boutique hotels A, B and C have received the highest values in terms of strategies. Boutique hotel G has received the lowest values. The other hotels have received average values. Thus, apart from boutique hotel G, all of the boutique hotels see strategies as an important marketing factor in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. The approach of the eight boutique hotels operating in Izmir to the factor of demand fluctuations demonstrates differences. While boutique hotel F ignores demand fluctuations, boutique hotels A and B see it as a marketing strategy used against competitors. The other hotels think similar to boutique hotels A and B. All of the boutique hotels stated that they use stability and continuity as a marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. All hotels have received high values on this topic. In terms of analyzing competing products, all boutique hotels other than boutique hotel G have received above average values. Boutique hotels A, B, C and D have stated that they analyze competing products and use this as a marketing strategy to gain competitive superiority against their competitors. Boutique hotels E, F and H have received similar values and use it as a marketing strategy against their competitors. All boutique hotels other than boutique hotel G see analyzing competitors to be important and use it as a marketing strategy in gaining competitive superiority against their competitors. The highest values on this topic belong to boutique hotels A, B, C, D and H. Receiving similar values, boutique hotels E and F believe that product variety should be used against competitors.

RESULT AND SUGGESTIONS

The success of hospitality enterprises in the competitive conditions of our day and age depends on the importance they give to competitive power factors and using these factors efficiently. Change for a hospitality enterprise today shape up according to the competitive environment it is in and the competitive strategies they have developed in order to survive in this environment. The most important characteristic that separates the tourism sector from the other sectors is tourism being a service sector and thus the invisible abstract characteristic of touristic products. Because of this characteristic of the tourism sector, competition becomes a more important factor for the hospitality enterprises and this makes it more and more difficult to use competitive power. Because of the fast development of boutique hotels, competition has stepped forward in these types of hotels. Boutique hotels need to develop marketing strategies in order to be able gain competitive superiority against their competitors. The enterprise needs to decrease costs, follow policies which will enable it to lead in the market and ensuring competitive power by making use of cost advantage. Enterprises need to attract the attention of customers with various products, image, technology, service and quality or production system. The enterprise needs to focus on a certain aim and shape all of its strategies accordingly, expertise in that field and to keep the advantage in the expertise field. However, the enterprise needs to be very careful when it is applying this strategy. The competitors can easily leave the enterprise out if they find a market outside of the enterprise's aim.

Choosing the determined marketing strategies is vital for boutique hotels. Enterprises that don't apply marketing strategies in order to gain competitive superiority will fall behind of their competitors. While it is very difficult for boutique hotels to make a selection between marketing factors, some of the factors that seem to be unimportant can be of importance to different enterprises in different markets. That's why it is important for boutique hotels to consider and use every single factor carefully for the future of the enterprise.

The marketing strategies that step forward in the research results are terms of delivery, brand and company image, trustworthiness, goods and service quality, post sales services and stability and continuity. Especially administrators pay attention to developing new strategies that will enable competitive advantage and establishing a feeling of trust in the consumer. Administrators also

pay attention to the goods and service being suitable to standards, increasing staff qualifications, product variety and market share. Apart from this, it has been seen that although boutique hotels are aware that factors such as costs, research and development, technology transfer, production and stock costs, capacity elasticity and demand fluctuations are important marketing strategies, they don't apply them accordingly.

As a result, it has been observed that the boutique hotels in the research area are aware of the importance of competition and that they use marketing strategies that will enable them to gain competitive advantage against their competitors. Moreover, boutique hotels don't pay equal attention to all marketing strategies.

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