The Structural Characteristics of New Concept Boutique Hotels in the Hospitality Services in Turkey: The City of Izmir and its Surrounding Example

Aykut Ekiyor

Department of Strategic Development, Gazi University, Beşevler, 06500, Ankara, Turkey

Abstract: Travel has increased upon highways becoming more operable everywhere in the world causing hotel and motels to be established. These small hotels meeting the need for overnight stay has left its place to multi star hotels and holiday camps who strive to fulfill all sorts of requests of the tourist. Changing tourism tendencies, differentiation of tourist requests, heavier competition circumstances has necessitated businesses to head towards different goods and service. Stepping in at this point, boutique hotel businesses are trying to add a difference to tourism with tailor made and high quality service. The objective of this research is to examine the structural characteristics of boutique type hospitality enterprises operating in the city of Izmir and its surroundings.

Key words: Hospitality · Boutique Hotel · Structural Characteristic · Marketing · Izmir

INTRODUCTION

Boutique hotels which are demonstrating an upsurge in Turkey in the recent years step forward as small enterprises meeting the needs of accommodation. Boutique hotels which are small hospitality enterprises providing service to a small number of tourists with a small number of rooms, stand out with its cuisine and the individual service it provides. The main objective of boutique hotel administrators is to have tourists feel themselves at home by creating a warm and cordial environment. Efforts are made to increase customer satisfaction by meeting all sorts of customer needs with a high quality service.

Although our country possesses modern facilities, rich and unique resources, it is unable to demonstrate a large diversification due to scarce product variety and investments being largely regional. Small hospitality enterprises called boutique hotels that have started to show existence in our country in the recent years, form one of the aspects diversifying tourism. Turkey is unable to make the best of the potential it possesses and is stuck in the beach-sand-sun triangle. However, boutique hotels operating with and without a theme at various locations in Turkey support the diversification of tourism. While tourists staying at these sorts of places are hosted with a comfort equal to their homes, they also have the opportunity to establish a close communication with staff and managers. Moreover, tourists don’t close themselves in the hotel as they do in all inclusive hospitality enterprises and leave the hotel premises bringing foreign currency to the country with the shopping they do.

In this study, the structural characteristics of boutique hotels are approached under a theoretical frame and its efficiency is tried to be put forward with a field research.

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 [1].

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 [2].

Corresponding Author: Aykut Ekiyor, Department of Strategic Development, Gazi University, Beşevler, 06500, Ankara, Turkey, Cell: +90-533-352-7445.
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 [3].

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 [1].

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.

**Hospitality Enterprises:** Most people spend most of their time in the region where their house and job is located. Even if he visits friends and participated in social and leisure time activities, he normally returns home and stays in his home. On the other hand, a large number of people stay away from their homes due to business, holiday and other reasons. People who are staying away from their homes make use of various hospitality enterprises in order to accommodate their housing needs. Although the service provided by these enterprises varies, the most common today is hotel enterprises [4].

The actual function of hotel enterprises is to meet the housing needs of its customers. They also provide services such as providing food and beverages to their guests. Although the basic functions of hotel enterprises are the same, they have been defined in different ways by different experts. [5]'s define it as “businesses that have been formed under an economic, social and legal discipline which meets the temporary housing and partial feeding needs at a quality desired by a civilized person in return of a certain fee with moral elements such as their structure, technical equipment, comfort and maintenance conditions”. It is defined as: “Hotels are facilities with at least 10 bed rooms which contain supplementary and supplementary units for food, beverage and entertainment needs of their customers as well as meeting the housing needs of their customers which is of actual function” in the 67th article of Qualifications of Tourism Investment and Businesses Regulation based on Tourism Encouragement Law numbered 2634 [6].

Setting off from these explanations, hotels enterprises can be defined as; “businesses whose staff, architecture, applications and customer relations are bonded to certain rules and standards structured in order to meet especially the housing needs as well as the food, beverage and entertainment needs of people who are travelling” [7].

Hotel enterprises ensure that guests leave the business satisfied with the various services they provide. In this respect, they carry the following characteristics which discriminate them from other industrial and business corporations [7]:

- Hotel enterprises are responsive to time.
- Hotel enterprises are labor focused businesses.
- Hotel management is dynamic.
- Hotel enterprises operate 24 hours a day.

The services provided in the hotel enterprises require close collaboration and mutual cooperation between the departments and staff.

Most of the capital in the hotel enterprises depends on fixed assets.

The customers in hotel enterprises pay for the service they receive along with the service fee.

Sales in hotel enterprises are generally made in advance and commonly by credit card.

**The Characteristics of Hospitality Enterprises Which Are Within the Scope of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises**

**Being Independent:** Hospitality enterprises within the scope of SME are operated by their owners. In other words, it is impossible to talk about a pressure on an administrator who is also the owner of the business. An entrepreneur who can act the way he wants to can put his new ideas into practice and ensure the development of the business in a short time. Because quick decision making is possible in case of unexpected situations, problems can be solved in a short period of time [8].
Personal Relations: The entrepreneur and the administrator in small sized hospitality enterprises is usually the same person. There is one to one communication between the administrator and the limited number of low level staff. Thereby, the administrator can successfully assess the staff efficiency and working performance while also being able to easily follow the life of the staff outside the work place.

Finance: Small and medium sized hospitality enterprises encounter the biggest finance problem while taking a loan. Even if a loan is given to these enterprises, for which it is very difficult to take a loan because they can’t establish a political constraint, the personal guarantee requested in return startle entrepreneurs.

Marketing: There usually isn’t a separate marketing department in small sized hospitality enterprises; hence it is rather difficult to speak of a developed marketing understanding. The business owner runs the business in line with their own experiences. The staff tries to create a customer loyalty by establishing a communication with the guests coming to the enterprise. Thus, a tourist leaving the enterprise happily turns into a good means of advertisement.

Boutique Hotels as an Sme Enterprise: It is observed that the interest towards boutique hotel management is increasing day by day. Large hotel chains even in our country have started to invest in this field in order to compete with the world. The number of facilities which can be defined as boutique hotels in Turkey is around 500. If we actually look at the application, it is seen that the “boutique hotel” concept we have and the “boutique hotel” concept in other countries are very different. In Turkey, when talking about a boutique hotel, immediately a cheap, small hotel type that is not luxurious comes into mind. However, the boutique hotel concept in the rest of the world is developing very differently.

The Definition and Characteristics of Boutique Hotels: They are hospitality enterprises coming to the forefront as enterprises providing service to a small number of tourists with a small number of rooms and with its cuisine and the personal service they provide. The main objective of boutique hotel administrators is to make the tourist feel at home by creating a warm and sincere environment. Customer satisfaction is tried to be increased by meeting every need of the consumer with a high quality service understanding. Hence, the enterprise secures its place in the market with the customer loyalty to be ensured [9].

The chief characteristics of boutique hotels are as follows [9]:

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 market closing deficit in the balance of payments, the tourism industry holds an important place for the Turkish economy. Despite possessing modern facilities, rich and authentic resources, Turkey can’t demonstrate a big progress due to little product variety and investments largely being regional. Small hospitality enterprises called boutique hotels starting to emerge in Turkey in recent years make up one of the components verifying tourism [10].

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 fundamental factor in the improvement of boutique hotels is tourism providing service 12 months of the year by verifying tourism. Hence it will contribute to eliminating the instability of the balance of payment since the country economy will start getting more share of tourism.
The Objective of the Research: Boutique hotels which are one of hospitality enterprises demonstrate different characteristics compared to other enterprises. In this study, putting forward the structural characteristics of boutique hotels is emphasized.

The objective of this research is to determine the structural characteristics of the boutique hotels operating around the city of Izmir.

Method of the Research: A literature survey has been conducted in the research as a first step. After the conduction of the literature survey, the analysis of the secondary data has been conducted. The analysis of secondary data has been conducted based on the information and data gathered from libraries, institutes, research centers, universities, professional organizations, books, articles and internet etc. The theoretical frame of the research has been established based on the obtained information and findings. A field research has been planned taking the theoretical frame as a starting point.

The method of the research has been determined as a field research and survey technique has been used parallel to the field research. Telephone, e-mail and face to face survey methods have been used in the gathering of the data related to the research. An extra attention has been paid for the questions to be understandable by the readers and for the results not to be open to discussion during the preparation of the survey form. A pilot scheme has been conducted with this aim and the necessary alterations have been made in the survey form. The questions taking place in the survey used in the research consists of two parts. The first part contains the demographic information and the second part consists of questions prepared to reveal the structural characteristics of boutique hotels.

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) computer program has been used in the evaluation of the analysis.

The Target Population of the Research: Similar subject sampling defined shortly as “survey” have been used as the research method.

This method is not applied to all of the population carrying the stated characteristics but to subjects selected according to the similar characteristics [11]. This system called sampling is based on a whole being represented with a smaller part. This is the reason for choosing a part of the target population to be used in research. It is a subset of the target population and contains the elements chosen from the whole target population. Thereby, it is possible to elicit generalisable results about the target population and the target population contains the entire human group the researcher wants to study as well as the events and the area of interest [12].

The study has been approached under the area sampling in terms of probability based on sampling. The reason for choosing the area sampling is to reach data faster and easier. On the chosen sampling, marketing strategies boutique hotels use to gain competition superiority is determined; moreover to what extent they give importance to these strategies, how they evaluate what kind of marketing strategies and to what extent they try to determine the position of their own enterprise in front of their competitors is evaluated.

In this sense, boutique hotels operating around the city of Izmir make up the target population in consideration.

According to the information obtained from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the number of certified boutique hotels operating around the city of Izmir is 8. All of these hotels have been contacted. The returning number of surveys from these hotels is 11. The data obtained from the 11 survey have been evaluated.

The Constraints of the Research: The research has some significant constraints. First of all, the research area has been limited with the city of Izmir. It is attempted to reach all of the owners, administrators or department managers of all boutique hotels operating in the city of Izmir. However, the related people not being interested in sparing any time for the survey has limited the number of those who have answered the survey. A principle of voluntary participation in the research has been selected as baseline.

Administrators who believe in confidentiality, who don’t want to share any information even for a scientific research and who approach the subject with doubt have been encountered.

It is revealed that research is dependable when the fact that all of the administrators of the 8 boutique hotels operating in the city of Izmir have participated in the survey.

The Findings of the Research: 11 participants have evaluated the structural characteristics of boutique hotels within the research. The evaluations of those who participate in the survey will differ from another. Thus, it is necessary to contextualize these differences with a suitable statistical procedure. In this research, in order to serve the above stated objective; The evaluations of the participants have been contextualized in terms of statistics.
The Demographic Findings: The demographic characteristics of those who have participated in the research are shown in Table 1 which has been prepared within the research.

It has determined that %27.3 of the participants are male and %72.7 are female.

When the participants are considered in terms of age, it attracts attention that with %36.4, the majority falls in between the ages of 26-30 and 31-40. This is followed by the 41 ageing group with %18.2 and 20-25 aged with %9.0.

If the distribution is observed in terms of education situation, %27.3 has an associate degree, %63.6 has a graduate degree and %9.1 has a post graduate degree (M.A. degree). It is seen that doctorate graduates don’t work in these types of hotels.

Table 2: The Findings Related to the Ownership of Boutique Hotels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership Type</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family business</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual possession</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International chain</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Chain</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Findings Related to the Location of Boutique Hotels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resort hotel</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City hotel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain hotel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Findings Related to the Operating Periods of Boutique Hotels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Periods</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 Years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 and above</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When we look at the position of the participants within the enterprise, %9.0 are business owners, %9.0 are general managers, %18.2 are marketing managers, %36.4 are department managers and %36.4 are employed as chiefs.

When the employment periods of those who have participated in the research are examined, it attracts attention that %36.4 have been working less than 1 year, %54.5 have been working between 1-3 years, %9.1 have been working at the same enterprise for 11 years or more.

When the periods the participants have been working in the sector are examined, it is seen that %69.0 have been working between 0-3 years, %18.2 have been working between 4-5 years, %45.5 have been working between 6-10 years and %27.3 have been working in this sector for 11 years or more.

The Findings Related to the Structural Characteristics of Boutique Hotels: The structural characteristics of the boutique hotels operating in and around the city of Izmir are shown in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, Table 6 and Table 7.
The frequency values related to the operation seasons of boutique hotels operating in the city of Izmir can be seen in Table 5. According to Table 5, it is understood that these types of hotels generally (90.9%) operate throughout the whole year and a very small part of it (9.1%) operate on a seasonal basis. Most of the hotels located here being city hotels requires them to operate throughout the year. It is seen that the hotels operating on a seasonal basis are generally those located in the coastline.

The frequency values of boutique hotels in terms of the number of rooms can be seen in Table 6. According to this table, the number of rooms boutique hotels operating in the city of Izmir possess has been determined as generally being 26 and more (63.6%). This shows that these types of hotels carry the characteristics of SME. The rate of boutique hotels with a room number of 11-15 is 27.3 whereas the rate of boutique hotels with 21-25 rooms is 9.1.

The findings related to the facilities of boutique hotels operating in the city of Izmir have been demonstrated in Table 7. According to the results revealed, out of the hotels operating here, 87.5% have a restaurant, 37.5% have a sports center, 37.5 have a conference room, 50% have a swimming pool, 37.5% have a spa and 37.5% have other facilities. As it can be seen, most of these types of hotels have a restaurant and a conference room. It can be understood that these types of hotels also provide education based services such as symposiums and conferences. This of course comes forth as a factor in competing with large hotels.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Efforts have been made to meet the temporary housing needs emanating from people changing locations together with the emerging of tourism. Inns and caravansaries which are seen as the first hospitality services have demonstrated change and improvement over the years. Travel has increased with highways being more efficient all over the world and thus caused hotels and motels to be constructed. These boutique hotels established in order to meet only the housing needs have left their place to multi star hotels and holiday resorts that try and meet all sorts of requests of the tourists as we approach the present day.

Changing tourism tendencies, differentiation in the tourist requests and competition conditions getting more and more difficult, has necessitated enterprises to turn to providing different products and services.
Stepping in at this point, boutique hotels try to contribute a difference to tourism with personally tailored high quality service.

Boutique hotel enterprises operating for years throughout the world have demonstrated a fast increase in Turkey in the last years and are trying to meet these sorts of needs of tourists.

Those who stay in these sorts of hotels, feeling at home, have a more comfortable holiday. They finalize their holidays in a friendly atmosphere distant from the unattractive rules of big enterprises and resting to a greater extent.

When the structural characteristics of boutique hotels operating within and around the city of Izmir are examined, it has been revealed that most of them are established as individual ownership, operate in the city centers, are generally established in the last 1-3 years thus not having a very long history, operate throughout all of the season, have 26 or more rooms and have conference rooms, restaurants and swimming pools in terms of facilities.

With the results obtained from the study, it has been understood that certain standards have not yet been formed. Very luxurious enterprises with all sorts of facilities as well as enterprises with a limited number of rooms with only a different decoration have entered the market under the name “boutique”. This situation being improved in a very short time is to the favor of the tourism industry. Consumer tendencies demonstrating constant change, expectancies increasing necessitate enterprises to recondition themselves quickly. Boutique hospitality enterprises need to adapt to this situation quickly in order for it to be able to attract higher quality tourists with a high income who can spend money easier in the country and contribute to the progress of the state economy by ensuring foreign currency to enter the country.

As a result, if certain standards are introduced the contributions of hotels providing service in a boutique manner to the Turkish tourism industry will be at high levels. These sorts of investments should be increased with the help of state support.

REFERENCES