



Social Responsibility of Hospitality Industry Enterprises

Nuray TÜRKER

Karabük University,
Faculty of Economics and Administrative
Sciences, 100.Yıl, 78050 Karabük, Turkey
nturker@karabuk.edu.tr

Mehmet UÇAR

Karabük University,
Institute of Social Sciences,
100.Yıl, 78050 Karabük, Turkey
mehmed_ucar47@hotmail.com

Extensive Summary

Enterprises have different purposes depending on the type of business, aims of the establishment, conditions of the economic system in which they operate, the style of the management and other similar factors. Although these purposes have a wide range of qualifications, the basic ones are making a profit, sustainability of the enterprise, and providing service for the community. In addition to this, technological advances, increased competition, globalization, changing needs and demands of consumers have changed not only the nature of trade but also the main aims, including making profit and sustainability of the enterprise which are dominant factors in traditional commerce. Nowadays enterprises have to fulfill a number of obligations and responsibilities in social life in addition to making profit and providing growth of the businesses in order to adapt to the globalized world, and to respond to changing social expectations.

Hospitality industry enterprises which are one of the most important assets of tourism industry inherently have sought to make profit in order to provide sustainability of the enterprise, to keep up with the change and to be able to compete. However, enterprises that solely aim to increase their profit disregarding the community services have low chance of success. Within this context, financial gain of the enterprises in today's changing business life does not value a stand-alone, and sustainability of the hospitality industry enterprises which do not use the revenues for the benefits of the society has been decreasing. Therefore it is mandatory for the hospitality industry enterprises to acquire complementary objectives and responsibilities beyond the traditional objectives parallel to the changes in the world. Hence, the hospitality industry enterprises which have witnessed rapid development and change within the economic, social and technological systems have acquired new dimensions on the objectives of establishment and development and have evolved according to the changing world. Within this context, hospitality industry enterprises have increased their social responsibility activities in parallel to changing tourist demands and they have begun to take part in environmental, social, and economic activities regarding the community.

The main aim of this study is to determine the views of hospitality industry employees and managers towards the social responsibility concept, social responsibility activities carried out by the hotel enterprises, and their views on the advantages and contributions of social responsibility projects to the hotel businesses. For this purpose Safranbolu which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and visited by 500 thousands of tourists annually, was selected as the study area and a survey was conducted at the hospitality industry enterprises in order to determine the views and perceptions of employees and managers towards social responsibility.

In the first part of the study, the term social responsibility is described and the social responsibility areas of tourism enterprises are explained. In the second part of the study, development of tourism industry in Safranbolu is examined and the results of the survey which was conducted to determine the hospitality industry employees' views on the extent the hospitality industry enterprises fulfill their social responsibilities towards shareholders, customers, employees, government, competitors, natural environment, and community are presented.

A structured survey was conducted on 152 respondents including employees, managers and owners of the hotel enterprises through face to face interviews in order to determine the views and perceptions of employees towards social responsibility. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement, using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1= 'totally disagree' to 5= 'totally agree'. SPSS 15 for Windows was used to analyze the data by applying descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean, and standard deviations. Independent sample t-tests and one-way ANOVA tests were conducted to identify the significant differences between two groups. Where significant differences in one-way ANOVA tests were found at $p < .05$, a Tukey test was used to determine the source of differences across the respondent subgroups.

The study was carried out between March and April 2013. The survey was personally administered. A random sampling was used to select the respondents.

The questionnaire developed for the study was based on the researchers' previous studies (Bakırtaş, 2005; Girgin, 2008; Korkmaz, 2009; Öztürk, 2010). However, a number of modifications had to be included, given the special characteristics of the World Heritage City of Safranbolu. A three-page questionnaire was designed. There were 38 social responsibility statements on the responsibilities of hospitality industry enterprises towards shareholders, customers, employees, government, competitors, natural environment, and community.

The demographic variables are as follows:

- The sample was composed of 152 participants, of which 31% were female and 69% were male.
- 55% of respondents were married while 45% were single.
- Regarding the age groups, 45% of participants were below 30 years old, followed by the 30-35 category (27%).
- 38% of participants had a high school degree and 40% of them were graduates of universities.

- 43% of the respondents have been working at the hotel for less than one year while 37% of them for 6-10 years.
- Most of the participants were qualified employees (53%) while 11% of them were supervisors, 3% were assistant managers, 10% were managers, and 24% were the owners or the partners of the hotels.
- 57% of participants have been working at the hotels which holds special certifications issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 24% were 3 stars hotels while 17% of them were certified by the Municipality.
- 63% have been working at family-owned hotels while 26% at private hotel enterprises.

The research has found that the employees working at hospitality industry in Safranbolu are sensitive to the social responsibilities and they act socially responsible in their activities. Additionally the results showed that the respondents behave socially more responsible towards guests, society, natural environment, but that they are less responsible towards the suppliers.

This study also attempted to analyze the relationship between social responsibility and demographic variables such as age, marital status, education, length of employment, position, and so on. In this study, some differences by demographic variables appeared in age, marital status, education, position of the employee and the class of the enterprise.

Age was a discriminator of perceptions toward social responsibility that respondents aged 41-50 showed more responsible social responsibility behavior towards customers, natural environment and community compared with respondents younger than 30.

Marital status was also found to be a discriminator that married respondents indicated somewhat greater agreement on the statements about social responsibility towards customers, the government, employees, suppliers and competitors, natural environment and the society. Results showed that married employees are more positive than singles on the fulfillment of their social responsibilities towards all stakeholders of the enterprise.

Level of education was found to be an antecedent of perceptions towards social responsibility in this study. Respondents who hold elementary and high school diploma are more sensitive to the issues of social responsibility compared to university graduates. This result contrasts with other studies that have been conducted in hospitality industry (Bakırtaş; 2005; Korkmaz, 2009).

It was also found that perceptions varied according to the positions of the employees. Qualified respondents indicated less agreement on the statements on social responsibility compared to the assistant managers, managers and the owners or the partners of the enterprise.

An interesting result is that the employees, working at the enterprises certified by the Municipality, showed more agreement on the statements of social responsibility towards customers, suppliers and competitors, and natural environment compared to employees who work at the hotels which hold special certification.