

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TOURISM IN
TURKEY : PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

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ABSTRACT

The international tourism industry in Turkey has established an impressive record of growth over the last decade. However, education and training systems in Turkey as a source of supply of skilled labour to the tourist industry over the years are causing some concern

The aims of this study are to examine the existing provision for tourism education and training in Turkey, to identify educational and training problems and to propose changes needed to overcome those problems. The study used both primary and secondary data.

Key Words: Education, Training, Turkey, Human Resources

**TÜRKİYE'DE TURİZM EĞİTİMİ:
SORUNLAR VE ÖNERİLER**

ÖZET

Türkiye'de son on yıldır uluslararası turizm büyük bir gelişme kaydetmiştir. Ancak, bu gelişmeye rağmen turizm alanında verilen eğitim sektöre kalifiye eleman yetiştirme hususunda yıllardır büyük bir sorun olmaya devam etmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'deki mevcut turizm eğitimini incelemek, eğitim açısından karşılaşılan sorunları tespit etmek ve bu sorunların üstesinden gelmek için gerekli değişiklikleri önermektir. Çalışmada hem birincil hem de ikincil veriler kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eğitim, Türkiye, İnsan Kaynakları

1. INTRODUCTION

Service industries in general and the tourist industry in particular make a significant contribution to the economies of many countries. In the last two decades, governments in both the developed and developing countries have realised the socio-

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economic benefits of tourism. With increasing importance given to tourism, education and training in tourism has gained more significance during the recent years. Any policies to promote the growth of the tourist industry must depend on adequate numbers of trained people being available at all levels within the industry. If the tourist industry is to be encouraged as a major growth area in Turkey as well, it is essential that there are sufficient numbers of qualified people. It is important for the professional work-force to be met head-on.

2. TOURISM IN TURKEY

Since the second World War there have been great changes in the scale of tourism development, and tourism has grown to become a major socio-economic activity in the world.

In view of the growing demand for tourism; its potential for improving foreign currency accounts of countries, and its income and employment generating effects many countries have recognised the need to place special emphasis on this service sector and have come to rely on the tourism sector as a major source of growth. As a consequence, great competition among the countries having things to offer to foreign visitors has been created. Among such countries, Turkey is uniquely endowed with natural, historical and cultural assets which make it an important target for tourist enterprises and a fashionable destination for visitors. However, despite its wide variety of attraction, the international tourist flows to Turkey were in gradual numbers in the 1970s. Turkey was not part of the boom in Mediterranean tourism which characterised the 1970s. This is because it was expensive to reach and poorly publicized (Boniface and Cooper, 1990).

Tourism was first recognised as a significant sector for the economy in the 1980s by the government which introduced a new economic policy in 1980, the main features of which were a strong outward orientation and liberalisation based on market. Furthermore, the continued devaluations of the Turkish Lira against major world currencies has meant that Turkey is a relatively cheap country to visit for

foreign tourists (Demirgil, 1987). By 1990 the public sector organisation of tourism was in place and Turkey was established as a recognized international tourism destination (Cooper and Ozdil, 1992).

Although tourism forms only a relatively small part of the Turkish economy, with income from tourism contributing only 4% of Gross National Product (GNP), it plays a very important role as a source of foreign currency. Tourism accounts for 6% of all foreign currency earnings. One study reports that tourism in Turkey accounts for some 15% of the total export value of goods and services and 50% of services export alone (Baum and Mudambi, 1996, p.139). Tourism supports around 1 million full and part-time jobs, both directly in the industry and in those companies and services which serve it. Employment in the tourism sector represents some 3.3% of all registered employees in Turkey but, because of the very large agricultural element, it forms a much greater part of service sector employment. In 1998, 9,7 million foreign tourists visited the country and tourism receipts reached US\$7,8 billion (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Foreign Arrivals and Receipts in Turkey
By Years (1963-1998)

Year	Total Foreigners	Tourism Receipts (million \$)
1963	198,841	7,6
1970	724,784	51,6
1980	1,288,060	326,7
1990	5,389,308	3,308,4
1991	5,517,897	2,654,0
1992	7,076,096	3,639,0
1993	6,500,638	3,959,0
1994	6,670,618	4,321,0
1995	7,726,886	4,957,0
1996	8,614,085	5,962,1
1997	9,689,004	8,088,5
1998	9,752,697	7,808,9

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Bulletin of Tourism Statistics, 1999

To accommodate the sudden increase in demand since 1980 the supply at registered accommodation increased more than four times itself from 60,000 beds in 1980 to 314,000 beds in 1998. With the addition of 249,125 beds to be made available by the facilities under construction, the capacity of licensed accommodation facilities is anticipated to rise 560,000 at the end of 2000.

3. EXISTING PROVISION FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN TOURISM

Since 1963 Turkey has been following a planned mixed economy where both public and private sectors assume certain responsibilities. The tourism development is viewed within a framework of a mixed organisation.

Dramatic changes in the character of the country as a tourist destination necessitated the provision of education and training.

Tourism education as part of the general education system in Turkey started in 1953 with short-term certificate courses offered by Ankara and Izmir Vocational High Schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Ministry of Education. In addition to these formal courses, there were training seminars for tour guides sponsored by certain tourism associations. All of these activities evolved through several different levels of education in the past forty years (Olalı, 1984).

Most educational facilities are still under the responsibility of the state. Entry to university in Turkey is based on an universal examination. The national educational system provides different levels of tourism training and education. Professional tourism education is conducted by the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Education. Tourism vocational training at university level is the responsibility of the Council of Higher Education. Since 1968, the Ministry of Tourism has carried on the activities concerning tourism education in accordance with regulations related to its establishment law through the "Office of the Education Department" within its organisation. As far as vocational courses for

hospitality and tourism training are concerned, the Ministry sponsors seven-month courses in Tourism Training Centres (TUREMs) in Istanbul, Izmir, Antalya, Ankara and Urgup and carries out six-month vocational training programs in the Hotel Training Centres (OTEM) through the Tourism Development Bank and Education Foundation (TUGEV).

Besides the formal education, informal education constitutes an important element of tourism education as well. This is mainly due to the fact that tourism education in Turkey has not been centrally organised or coordinated, provided by a wide variety of institutions, informal tourism education covers (Dallı, 1991, p.24):

- Training programmes through the communication media with a view to increasing awareness of the public opinion about tourism;
- Basic training programmes designed for tourism-related security forces;
- Short-term courses, seminars or conferences offered to those engaged in tourism-related services;
- On-the-job training programs of the Tourism Bank;
- Local tourism training programs organised by hotel claims or similar enterprises for their own personnel;
- On-the-job training programs organised by the Turkish Airlines for its own personnel.

The Tourism Courses offered by the Apprenticeship and Informal Training Department of the Ministry of Education at Public Training Centres and Apprenticeship Training Centres constitute yet another segment of informal training.

Towards the end of 1999 tourism and hotel management courses at university level are available in 90 schools, of which 75 offer a two-year program (Advanced Vocational Schools), and 15, a four-year program (Tourism Administration Advanced Vocational Schools). Vocational courses for hospitality and tourism at high school level (for assistant cooks, waiters, receptionists and room-maids) are provided through a three-year program (Junior high schools) in 57

state schools tuition free. In addition to these, there are 5 private high schools offering tourism and hotel administration courses. There are also 13 programs leading to the ward of M.Sc and Ph.D degrees in the field of tourism and hospitality management. **Table 2** provides the distribution of tourism education institutions in Turkey.

Table 2: Tourism Education in Turkey, 1999

Level of School	No of Schools	Relative Share
Ph.D Programs	5	3,1
M.Sc Programs	8	5,0
B.Sc Programs	15	9,4
Advanced Vocational Schools (2 years)	75	46,9
Anadolu Hotel and Tourism Vocational Schools (Junior high schools)*	57	35,6
Grand Total	160	100,0

Source: Higher Education Council

(* Ministry of Education

4. PROBLEMS WITH TOURISM EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The future success of tourism on the national level may depend largely on whether or not each country is 'prepared to educate not only tourism employees, but also tourists and the population of tourist receiving areas so as to impart an adequate level of general culture and etiquette which is essential for all concerned in this wide-ranging and rapidly growing sector' (Go, 1994, p.330).

The growing requirements for skilled staff in all the segments of the tourist industry at different levels demands creation of training facilities. Education and training are generally recognized as the responsibilities of the government and it follows, therefore that suitable training institutions under government control need to be set up (WTO, 1979, p.6).

A shortage of personnel acts as a brake on tourism expansion as does a poor quality of services rendered by inadequately trained staff. Specialized personnel are required in all sectors of the tourism industry, including accommodation and catering, transportation, tour operations and travel agencies, carriers, guides, etc.

Training has been widely acknowledged as a major factor which can assist in staff retention and increased productivity. The importance of human resources in the development of the tourism industry and the need for vocational training in information technology, interpersonal skills and customer relations more closely orientated towards the operational requirements of the service sector is widely acknowledged (Goodenough and Page, 1993, p.59).

The problems related to tourism education and training in Turkey are considerable. The comparative shortage of trained personnel at all levels has been mentioned as that factor which has been one of the most severe problems in tourism development of Turkey. The education and training problems have come first on the agenda of the tourist industry in Turkey. In broad terms, the problems of the tourism education may be grouped under four main headings:

- Tourism education policy and planning
- Integration and co-ordination in tourism education
- Collaboration of the tourism sector and the education institutions in tourism
- Recognition and protection of the tourism personnel as professionals

As the tourism industry grows in Turkey, there has been an increasing need for a sound policy and planning based on realistic estimate of the skilled and educated personnel. However, due to different organisations and institutions involved in tourism education there is no harmony and co-ordination among regular junior high schools, advanced tourism vocational schools, undergraduate and graduate tourism education.

The co-ordination between the educational institutions and the sector that exist on good will and personnel relations without any legal basis is also not sufficient in utilising the physical and human resources in the most rational manner in attaining the common objectives (Olalı, 1984). A small number of schools of tourism in Turkey have established a regular dialog with the industry. Another problem related to tourism education in Turkey is that the skilled trained tourism personnel is not under the protection of the legislative measures.

On the other hand, due to the national education system, many students accept a place on tourism schools because this is what they have been offered according to their grades although it could be the last preference on their list.

It is also observed that there is a general shortage of experienced and trained teachers of tourism in Turkey and this has prevented tourism teaching being more effectively developed in the further and higher education sector. Too few teaching staff have experience of working in the tourist industry and this is reflected in which tourism is taught. There is also lack of post experience courses to provide education and training for people already working in the tourist industry.

The seasonal nature of the tourist product of Turkey necessitates the employment of large numbers of temporary staff. Many workers are employed from the local population. The part-time nature of tourism also allows its active population to seek employment elsewhere. Moreover, the relatively low levels of pay and poor working conditions usually result in dissatisfaction of students graduating.

A report, "Manpower Analysis and the Hotel and Tourism Industry" prepared recently for the Ministry of Tourism with technical assistance from UNDP and ILO comprises of findings that define the structure and quality of manpower in the Turkish tourism industry. According to this report, in hotel sector in Turkey 0.35 persons for unit bed is employed. The sectoral workforce is younger in comparison to the national average and women represent 1/6 of it. Primary school graduates count for half the total, secondary school graduates 16% and high school graduates

for about a fourth. Only a tenth of this workforce has received any vocational training, at the managerial levels (Dallı, 1991).

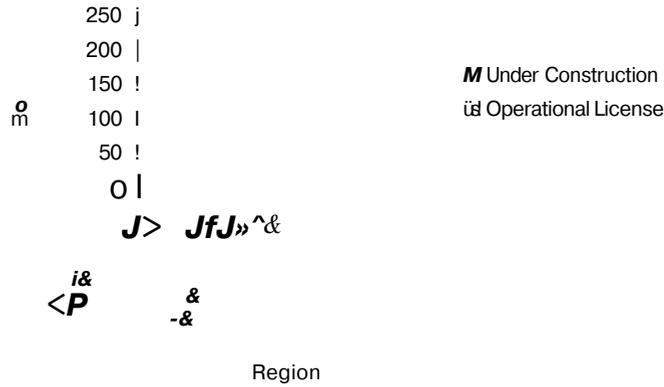
The low level of the education and training of the personnel negatively affects the profitability of touristic establishments. In most foreign managed establishments this problem usually has been solved through employment of the best trained personnel or importing their staff (up to 20%) with the permission of the Ministry. However, this solution creates leakages in the GNP to some extent as some of the earnings are transferred to foreign countries. International management chains (e.g., Hilton, Sheraton, Ramada) recruit the best hotel-school graduates and ensure their long-term loyalty through corporate training centers and have a history of promoting employees, supervisors, and line managers (Baki, 1990) but major international hotel chains having their own in-house training programs could also run the risk of losing trained personnel to new operations offering more attractive pay and conditions. As a result of this, the turnover of personnel is very high. Such competition for skills can drive up costs, reducing profitability and causing higher prices in a market which depends on its reputation for being inexpensive.

Mr. Hacıoğlu, a Professor of Tourism in Turkey, attributed the basic human resource problem to the education system existing in Turkey. According to the tourism education pyramid accepted by the ILO, the Turkish tourism education system contrasts with internationally accepted standards. In fact, it is the adverse in terms of the number of schools and students graduated. The present situation in Turkey shows 64% of the students are being educated to become middle and top managers while only 36% of them are educated for lower level jobs that require skilled personnel. In contrast to the Professional Education Pyramid defined by the ILO, the existing education in Turkey overprovides middle and upper personnel. Consequently, finding jobs in the sector is becoming difficult for graduates while there has been much more requirement for qualified personnel. This has caused low level job satisfaction, motivation and productivity in the industry. It is a fact that graduates for top and middle management are not sufficiently qualified to satisfy the

needs of the industry. Most of them have a lack of foreign language knowledge. Qualified managers are still inadequate in the Ministry of Tourism, Development Bank, transportation companies, regional, local and overseas tourism offices to attain market orientation of services, market research, promotion and advertising in the tourism industry.

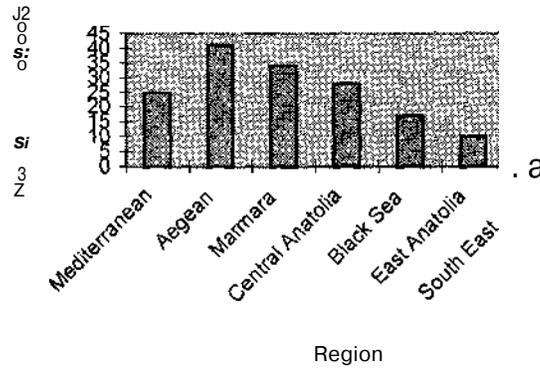
On the other hand, the distribution of some tourism and hotel management schools in Turkey is in contrast with the potential of regions in terms of bed supply and the number of tourists. It is usually accepted that tourism schools should be opened in regions where tourist flows and bed supply concentrate. The highest concentration of all licensed tourism accommodation facilities which already are in the operation stage is seen in Mediterranean (36%), Aegean (31%), Marmara (20%), Central Anatolia (7%), Black Sea (3%), East Anatolia (2%) and South East Anatolia (1%). (Figure 1)

Figure 1
Regional Distribution of Licensed Beds
Under Construction and Operational, 1998



In terms of the number of schools Aegean region is ranked first with 41 schools (25,7%) although it is ranked second in terms of bed capacity. Mediterranean region is ranked fourth in terms of the number of schools with 25 schools (15.6%). However, this region is ranked first with bed supply (Figure 2). These results indicate that the locations of the schools are not well determined appropriately. The geographic locations of the schools are very important because the students may not have opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge at work.

Figure 2
Regional Distribution of Tourism and Hotel
Management Schools and Programmes,
1998



5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recent research carried out by Schlager and et al (1999) suggests experiential education as an instructional methodology for travel and tourism classes. This method is different from the usual classroom based and frequently used case study method. The students learn by doing. This methodology is categorized in the group of experiential methodologies. The advantage of experiential education is that the students learn how to evaluate important tourism areas and to evaluate the quality of a tourist site or area. They will have a feeling, to ask questions and

incentive to learn the ways how to solve problems and be able to work in a team and develop strategic plans and subjects (Schlager and et al, 1999, p.482). Experiential education may be more effective in higher level courses especially graduate education in tourism in Turkey.

Tourism training and education problems need to be solved through greater cooperation between the educational providers and the industry, with the latter playing a greater role in identifying the curriculum content, standards of educational programs and in the assessment process. According to Messenger (1991, pp.260-261) there are a number of issues which tourism education and providers at all levels must address. They should:

- understand the nature of qualifications required;
- manage the learning process to enable learners to acquire all aspects of competence;
- develop and promote flexible delivery patterns, including modular provision, open learning and experiential learning;
- consider curriculum design and development;
- design a range of valid methods of assessment, including assessment in the workplace;
- establish the principles of assessment;
- establish procedures of assessment and recording with respect to specific qualifications;
- provide effective marketing qualifications;
- provide guidance, counselling and tutoring for trainees of all ages, especially adults.

Expanding tourism in Turkey, and thus being the country as one of the leading world tourist destinations, depends on a supply of quality products and services capable of meeting the increasing demands of consumers of tourist products. This in turn depends on the human resources available and on their level of training. However, education and training systems in Turkey as a source of supply of skilled labour to the tourism industry over the years are causing some concern. For the success of tourism education, tourism education programs at different levels should be integrated and co-ordinated as a whole. The education system revision is also necessary and the government should make some necessary technical and legal regulations in order to provide tourism education and training at European Union (EU) standards and integrate courses with those of EU.

Based upon the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. In order to be achieve a rapid development of tourism in Turkey the system of education should be restructured and the improvement of the infrastructure (accommodation, transport, services, marketing) completed.

2. The examination system to enter the university is not appropriate and a more suitable system must be adopted. This can be designed to eliminate disinterested candidates. The programme must be made up of different skills (not solely craft skills) addressing to the different competences of the applicants.

3. In order to improve the quality of tourism services through vocational training there should be a cooperation between tourism schools of universities and tourism schools and tourism professionals. Pilots applications are also needed to provide training in the fields of social, cultural and environmental awareness in tourism especially for the people living in rural areas.

4. There is a need to make tourism education in Turkey more responsive to the needs of the tourism industry and especially the courses offered by two-year vocational schools must meet the practical needs of local industry.

5. Academic staff recruited to the schools and centres should have sound industrial experience in the hospitality industry together with a good academic background. Therefore, a wide-ranging training model and an education of the Educator Programme, through the co-operation of the sector, academic bodies and the Ministry of Tourism should be adopted. On the other hand, incentives to teaching staff and increases in pay are urgently needed to attract the best available resources to teaching and research activities.

6. In terms of training requirements and human resource limitations, tourism facilities that remain off-season can be utilised with the purpose of training. For this purpose, the practical training programmes for potential students can be arranged in hotels that are not working in winter seasons. A hotel-school system should be introduced and teaching of a foreign language must be included. Modernising the present tourism training centres for professional tourism training is also required.

7. All types of education and training are essential for successful tourism, and must be carefully planned and programmed. The general public and people living in the tourism areas of Turkey must be educated about tourism as well.

8. The tourism education pyramid in Turkey needs revision to meet the need for skilled personnel. Therefore, more emphasis should be put on the tourism and hotel management schools of four years.

9. Apprenticeship in the schools offering tourism courses should be compulsory for every summer season and the Government should revise the tourism related legislation which will ensure the licensed establishments employ a certain number of students for training purposes.

10. Finally, further research into the exact requirements of the tourist industry and the motivations of new entrants to the industry is urgently needed for a better tourism education in Turkey.

6. FUTURE PROSPECTS

Turkey has demonstrated spectacular growth in tourism in the last few years, both in attracting visitors and providing the necessary facilities. The opportunities for tourism development are numerous.

An effective and well organised tourism education policy will further encourage tourism development. In recent years, there have been some good attempts to reorganise tourism education in Turkey. In order to ensue the training of the personnel to be employed in tourism sector in accordance with the international standards, in terms of quality and number, a certificate system is now on the agenda of the Grand National Assembly and is expected to be passed as a law in a short time period. There is also concensus between academicans and the governmental bodies that new tourism and hotel management schools, if required, will only be opened in tourist regions rather than non- tourist regions. Some research has been carried out recently by public and quasi public organisations in terms of reorganisation and reprogramming of tourism education. Some meetings and workshops at the univesity level are organised to discuss the tourism education and to propose a new model for a better tourism education.

The Tourism and Hotel Management School of Balıkesir University has courses that aim to educate students that will meet the demand of the tourism industry. Many other tourism schools in Turkey have started to follow this school's curriculum content. This school has a status of 4 years' bachelor degree university education. In this school, education was being given on tourism management and hospitality rather than specialising on a certain field of the industry. Recognising the importance of cooperation between educational providers and the industry, this school has reformed its curriculum content and started to offer three types of courses in response to the requirements of the tourism industry. These are:

Hotel Management Programme

Travel Management Programme

Tourism Guidance Programme

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