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### **A RESEARCH ON INNOVATION MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS IN BOUTIQUE HOTELS**

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#### **EXTENSIVE SUMMARY**

##### **Introduction**

Tourism as a growing arm of the economy maintains its popularity as an economic mobility that will continue in the future. However, it requires professionalism to keep pace with the dynamism of the industry. Especially in the development of tourism products and the presentation with tourists, the need for professionalism is increasing day by day. With the feeling of globalization being felt more, positioning in the axis of fluctuation and innovation in the direction of environmental conditions is prerequisite for the desire putting more of the qualities of the businesses and sustainability. Innovation, as being a risky element, is shown as an important help for tourism companies to have competitive standards and to protect them (Yavuz, 2010, p.144, Tekin and Durna, 2012, p.93, Nicolau and Santa-Maria, 2013, p.71 ).

Innovation management is now becoming a necessity for businesses in our day to remain competition with similar businesses and to survive. (Durna and Babur, 2011, p. 74). Businesses that embrace the innovative culture and are succeed in establishing this structure have started to gain significant rewards about their surroundings and adaptation to developments. Innovation has also vital importance for the sustainability and success of businesses (Bülbül, 2017, p.43). In innovation management, which is regarded as the process of moving innovation ideas from the first stage of an organization to the final stage of successful applications (<http://searchcio.techtarget.com>), it is expected that certain management techniques will be developed in order to encourage employees for innovation.

Safranbolu, which has very different characteristics in terms of culture and historical texture, continues its transformation process as a destination that stands out in the country and abroad in recent years. In this transformation process, old houses and mansions in Safranbolu, which is on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Cities, are restored and serve as boutique hotel style accommodation. In this research, it is aimed to reveal the current situation of innovation management in hospitality enterprises that serve as a boutique hotel in Safranbolu. It is also expected that a general framework for innovation management will be established with the viewpoint of the managers of the boutique hotel businesses that are providing services in culture tourism in Safranbolu destination. In this context, the purpose of the research was determined as "determining the levels of boutique hotels in innovation management practices" and also the following research questions were sought between the levels of managers and their demographic characteristics.

- Is there a meaningful relationship between the gender of executive hotel managers and innovation management practices?
- Is there a meaningful relationship between the age of executives and the innovation management practices?
- Is there a meaningful relationship between the educational status of innovative hotel managers and innovation management practices?
- Is there a meaningful relationship between the managerial experience of executive hotel managers and innovation management practices?

### **Methodology**

This study is a quantitative and descriptive study in order to reveal the current situation of innovation management practices of boutique hotel managers in tourism and is based on a survey model that describes an existing situation as it exists. It is aimed to reveal the current situation in innovation management applications of businesses that serve as boutique hotels in Safranbolu destination in the research. In line with this goal, the research universe has become a boutique hotel in Safranbolu with its cultural architectural features. As a result of the restoration of the old mansions, it has become a boutique hotel and has been serving as a family business. By years of 2016, there were 84 municipal certificates and 21 tourism business certified hotels, which are included in the records of Safranbolu Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorate and Tourism Bureau. Sampling was not applied in the study. Survey data were obtained from 81 hotels operating in Safranbolu region between 05-30 May 2016 by survey technique. When the research questions were determined, it has also benefited from the research carried out by made Baş (2004).

The data collected during the research were firstly analyzed for reliability test after being recorded in the computer environment. As a result of the reliability analysis, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) was determined as 0.73. In the second part of study within the scope of normal distribution of data, t test was used for the two variable groups in the comparison and one way ANOVA test was used for the groups with more variable variables.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This research showed that the personnel sub-dimension is the first priority for innovation management level of hotels, which are representatives of the cultural architecture at Safranbolu destination. Expectations for the personnel sub-dimension are related to having professional experience, having been educated in tourism, and criteria related to foreign language. In the management sub-dimension of boutique hotel managers' innovation practices, controlling by senior management, powers and responsibilities are clearly defined, and communication is an open management approach has predicted. In innovation management thinking about marketing sub-dimension, focus on customer needs, promotion activities, and marketing research come to the forefront. Besides, unstable attitude was determined.

These results coincided with research made by Geyik (2010). In this research, it is revealed that boutique hotels did not use effectively their web sites in the process of marketing.

Moreover, focus on increasing customer satisfaction result which was found in the study of Karakaş et. al (2007) also found in this research.

Another important result of the research is that boutique hotel managers associate the high raw material and labor costs in innovation management with limited budget and see this situation as an obstacle.

Within the scope of meeting boutique hotels' innovation management expectations (employees who have professional experience, educated and know foreign language), encouraging employees to share their creative ideas, communicating effectively being flexible and forgiving, encouraging the implementation of ideas, and exhibiting behavior for following innovations should be suggested in this research results. Furthermore, associations, local administrations and Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorates, in particular the professional chambers in which these hotels are registered, can organize leadership trainings that will allow the dissemination and support of new ideas and the creation of entrepreneurial ideas.