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A RESEARCH ON THE ATTITUDES OF UNDERGRADUATE TOURISM STUDENTS TOWARDS ANIMATOR PROFESSION

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EXTENSIVE SUMMARY

Tourism in Turkey has recently evolved into a structure based on sea, sand and sun and has become a structure preferred by tourists traveling to meet their leisure and entertainment needs. This structure has been obliged to go to differences in the qualities and diversity of the services that are provided by the accommodation enterprises in particular. Tourists who spend the vast majority of their stay in the hotel expect to make a difference with the different service elements they prefer than the food and drink and room facilities they prefer. This requires that increasing competition conditions are dragged to a more ruthless point and that businesses offer different service elements to provide competitive advantage. In this context, the importance of animation services that add variety, charm and usefulness to tourist products has become clearer in recent times.

The aim of this research is to determine the perspectives of the students who are interested in tourism education for the animation department which is one of the most important departments of the tourism sector and to examine the difference of the attitudes of the department according to the demographic variables. Starting from this aim, a questionnaire was applied to 846 students who were studying in different departments and classes of Gazi University Tourism Faculty. The obtained data were interpreted using descriptive analyzes, t test and ANOVA tests. As a result of these analyzes, it has been determined that the majority of the students who participated in the research have negative attitudes towards the animator's profession and that the attitude towards the animator profession differs according to age, departments, classes and internship status. An important finding is that the students studying in recreation management department are the most favored section of the animation profession. This can be interpreted as a result of the theoretical and practical lessons on animation in the curriculum of the Department of Recreation Management. In addition, it has been determined that the students who perform mandatory summer internship within the scope of the research have a more positive perceptions towards the animator career than the students who do not.

The dimensions reached in the tourism industry in the last century have led to great competition in the international arena and it has become compulsory to offer the services of the accommodation enterprises which are in the tourism destinations as well as the tourism destinations with better quality and diversity. At this point, animation services, which are one of the most important elements of tourism, must be done professionally enough by experts in the field in terms of expectations of tourism demand.

Despite the fact that studies on different areas in Turkey are carried out, the fact that there are few studies in which anger towards the animation profession is measured (Erdem, 2010) makes study findings more valuable. Similar work to be done by the students of animation departments for students with profession perceptions or tourism education at different universities is important in terms of meeting sector-student expectations.