



Foreign Workers Employment in the Hotel Industry: Evidence from Five-Star Hotels in Antalya

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to reveal the reasons that prompt hotel managers to employ foreign workers. In this study which used qualitative research method, the managers of 18 five-star hotels operating in Antalya were selected as the sample. Opinions of the managers were collected through semi-structured interview forms via making face-to-face interviews and e-mails. According to prominent findings of the research; it was determined that the most employed foreign workers in hotels within the scope of the sample consisted of "Kyrgyz", "Ukrainian" and "Russians", and that the majority of foreign workers served at the "food and beverage department" in the hotels and were employed as "seasonal". On the other hand, it was determined that the most important reason for the hotel managers to employ foreign workers was that they know "foreign languages". However; hotel managers indicated "long bureaucratic procedures in the process of obtaining a work permit" as the main problem they face during the process of employing foreign workers.

Keywords

Tourism, Employment, Foreign worker employment, Hotel enterprises, Qualitative research method

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Introduction

In addition to the foreign currency inflow that tourism provides to the economies of the country, the most important real effect it creates on the economy is employment (Yıldız, 2011). According to 2020 report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), approximately 330 million jobs were direct, indirect and stimulated employed in the tourism sector worldwide in 2019 (WTTC, 2020). It is estimated that approximately 413 million 556 thousand people will be employed in jobs related to travel and tourism in 2028, and this number will constitute 11.6% of the total employment in the world (WTTC World, 2018). Despite these positive predictions, it is asserted that employment in the tourism sector has a bad image when compared to other sectors resulting from the lack of clear career plans, and as a result, that the decrease in the access of young employees into the labor market causes problems in the tourism sector (Prasirtsuk, 1993). Tourism jobs require irregular working hours, limited number of countries actively encourage a career in the tourism sector, and the tourism profession is not considered a prestigious employment option. In this context, it is stated that as the demand for labor continues to increase in the tourism sector, it will be increasingly difficult for employers to find a sufficient workforce. As a result of all this, it is expressed that employers in the tourism sector are mostly relying on marginal employees, particularly women, young people, students, ethnic minorities and foreign workers as the solution of this workforce problem that they have experienced in recent years (Joppe, 2012). The unique characteristics of the tourism sector, such as, the labor-intensive structure and seasonality (Hacıoğlu, 2008), can affect the career planning of employees. As a result of these effects, high employee turnover rate can be seen in tourism enterprises (Atef & Al Balushi, 2017). This problem deeply affects the tourism sector, especially in terms of a qualified workforce. Due to the expectations regarding the mentioned issues (salary, prestige, working conditions, concern for the future, etc.) (Erdem & Tokmak, 2015), it is thought that local and qualified employees may not prefer the tourism sector or leave the sector completely after a while. On the other hand, it is thought that foreign employees living in underdeveloped or developing countries also seek job and career opportunities in different countries with similar concerns and expectations may cause a global dynamism in the labor market.

The borders between businesses disappear with globalization which is one of the developments having an important effect on employment in tourism (Baum, 2006). Particularly in recent years, it is thought that tourism enterprises were able to decide on employing foreign workers to eliminate qualified labor shortages, and that the globalization has deeply affected today's tourism businesses at this point. According to the report of the International Labor Office, the integration and interaction between states, societies, economies and cultures in different regions continue to increase as

the world goes through the globalization process. The development of technology allows for faster transport of capital, goods, services, information and ideas from one country or continent to the other (International Labor Office, 2010). In addition to the rapid growth of international tourism, this increases the foreign workers' mobility at global level (Joppe, 2012), and makes the employment of foreign workers in the tourism field an interesting topic.

Especially in the service sector, while a wide range of job opportunities emerge that do not require special education or qualifications, the social status and salaries associated with these jobs do not quite appeal to the local workforce in the same way. Local workforce have little or no motivation to accept low wages, unstable working conditions and a few career prospects these jobs can offer. Therefore, employers turn to foreign workers in order to overcome the shortcomings in this part of the labor market (Jandl et al., 2009, p. 25). As a matter of fact, Ravichandran et al. (2017) found in their study which they conducted in the United States that one of the reasons for using foreign workers, especially in food services and accommodation businesses, was to employ foreign workers in low-skilled and unqualified positions since there were not a sufficient number of local workers applying for such jobs. Similarly, it is stated that the rate of foreign workers increases rapidly in the total employment created by the tourism industry, especially in hotels and restaurants worldwide. Among the most important reasons for the increase of this rate, is shown that the foreign workforce is willing to work in mediocre and low-paying jobs in poor working conditions that local workers do not prefer to (Jandl et al., 2009; Janta et al., 2011a; Joppe, 2012; Zopiatis et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2016; Choi et al., 2017). Contrary to all of this, it is also stated that foreign workers have the knowledge and skills required by the job in many cases, contribute to improvement of business processes with the innovative ideas they bring to the organization, make their colleagues competent in the business, and help to expand the business by sharing their connections in supplier and customer relations during the process of getting into new international markets (Department for Business Innovation & Skills, 2015). It is even asserted that foreign workers are generally preferred by the employers for some reasons such as being distinguished individuals and assuming physically challenging works in the business (Sadi & Henderson, 2005).

When we consider the subject from Turkey's perspective, it is witnessed that the number of foreign worker employed in the tourism sector has gradually increased in recent years. According to 2018 report of WTTC, for the year 2017, it is stated that the total employment in tourism of Turkey is approximately 2.093.500, and that this number constitutes 7.4% of the total employment in Turkey (WTTC Turkey, 2018). In 2019, the total employment in the travel and tourism sector was 2.643.800, and this constitutes 9.4% of the total employment (WTTC Turkey, 2020).

On the other hand, no comprehensive research and tangible data could be found regarding the proportion of foreign worker employment among the total employment in the tourism sector in Turkey. However, we attempted to form an opinion based on the data included in the report prepared by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services (2018), which is generally related to foreign worker employment in Turkey. According to this report, a total of 24.416 foreign workers were granted a work permit in 2018 in the sectors associated with tourism (accommodation, food and beverage service activity, travel agency, tour operator, and other reservation services, sport, entertainment and recreation activities) in Turkey.

Despite the fact that foreign workers have an important place in the labor market for the tourism sector (Duncan et al., 2013); the reasons for employing foreign workers in the sector, the areas of tourism sector in which they are mostly needed, and the problems arising from foreign labor employment in tourism enterprises have been relatively less addressed. Extensive studies related to workforce and employment studies are often found in reports published by international organizations, such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). It is witnessed that academic studies are generally prepared based on the data presented in the reports published by these mentioned international organizations, that these studies are limited to an assessment created by utilizing secondary sources, and that studies conducted by qualitative methods through the evaluation of primary data are rare.

For Turkey in particular, a quite limited number of studies have been available on foreign worker employment in the relevant literature. Although Turkey has a large number of tourism education institutions at high school, vocational school and bachelor's levels along with a young population, the research for reasons that prompt hotel managers in Turkey to employ foreign workers in recent years is considered to be a topic worth checking out. In this context, the reasons that prompt hotel managers in Turkey to employ foreign workers are focused on in this study, and solutions are the aim to be developed based on the findings obtained.

Literature Review

By reviewing the literature, it is observed that some researchers, although limited, have conducted studies on the employment of foreign workers in tourism in recent years (Ergün, 2012; Joppe, 2012; Janta et al., 2012; Eranza & Razli, 2013; Zopiatis et al., 2014; Markova et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2016; Vettori, 2017; Ravichandran et al., 2017; Choi et al., 2017; Ekiz-Gökmen, 2018; Yılmaz & Arı, 2018; Benli et al., 2019).

Despite its complexity and challenges, there is little doubt that tourism employment is an important component and driver of human mobility (Janta et al., 2011a, p. 1007).

The main reason behind the individual decisions of migrants on migration is the lack of good job opportunities in their own countries. In developing countries, sufficient employment can not be provided to meet the business needs of people who are ready to join the workforce each year. Therefore, migration can be seen as a tool to provide economic security (International Labor Office, 2010). There are several reasons why individuals migrate in order to have a better life and new opportunities. Zopiatis et al. (2014, p. 112) group in their research these reasons under push and pull factors related to migrant labor in Cyprus. Push factors are the reasons that make individuals abandon their origin to live a better life. These factors are divided into three groups as economic (such as lack of employment), social (such as lack of religious tolerance) and political (such as war and terrorism). In pull factors, the attitudes that individuals perceive as their existence guide them to migrate to a specific goal. The pull factors are also divided into three as economic (such as enhanced employment opportunities), social (such as educational opportunities and religious tolerance) and political (such as freedom).

The factors affecting the decision to migrate include high unemployment rates, distance, age, education, income and presence of relatives and acquaintances in the places to migrate. High unemployment rates in the place of residence force the person to migrate. With the increase of distance, the cost of migration increases both in monetary and psychological (such as moving away from the circle of friends and relatives) aspects. Immigrants are mostly young. A young person will have the possibility to experience the benefits of migration for a longer period than an older person. In addition, the psychological cost of migration for the elderly is higher than for young people. Migrants are mostly more educated than other groups. Migrants must have income that can afford the monetary cost of the migration. The presence of relatives and acquaintances is also an important factor in the decision to migrate (Tansel, 2012). Immigrants, women, ethnicity, race, youth, social class and other marginalized social groups often accept to work in precarious working conditions and low wages. High proportions of skilled and educated women and migrants are under-employed, relevant to their qualifications, and worldwide educational levels of the labour force are improving, un/under employment is a higher risk to the uneducated than the educated migrant (Robinson et al., 2019).

Foreign worker employment has emerged in recent years as a cost-reducing human resources strategy in different sectors such as agriculture, hospitality and food (Ravichandran et al. 2017). Besides, foreign workers in the hospitality industry are potentially considered important in the employment and recruitment process of businesses for reasons such as foreign language skills, contributing to increasing intercultural knowledge and being an important source of social support. It is also stated that foreign workers can be a source of innovation in terms of business by

bringing new ideas from outside to organizations, and that organizations can benefit from this cultural diversity if properly managed (Janta et al., 2011b; Markova et al., 2016). As a matter of fact, Ravichandran et al. (2017) found in their study they conducted in the United States that one of the reasons for using foreign workers, especially in food services and accommodation businesses, was to employ foreign workers in low-skilled and unqualified positions since there were no sufficient number of local workers applying for such jobs.

In addition to the advantages of foreign worker employment for the host country and businesses in the tourism sector, foreign workers can also provide some benefits from the sector. The work of foreign workers in positions requiring intensive contact with customers plays an important role in the development of linguistic and cultural competence. This is important in terms of facilitating adaptation to the host country that provides employment and the integration of foreign workers into a new society. Moreover, tourism employment differs from low-wage working environments in the other sectors. As the social, personal and professional lives and working environments of foreign workers are connected to each other, foreign workers get the chance to integrate into a wider society thanks to tourism (Janta et al., 2011b).

Besides all these advantages, there are some social, cultural and economic disadvantages of foreign employment in the tourism sector. Foreign workers may experience dissatisfaction and thus cause high labour turnover due to problems in adapting to the host country or business. From the perspective of human resources departments of businesses, training and new recruitment costs show up to minimize incompatibility and the problems arising from that. At this point, the problem of reduced savings is faced which arises from employing foreign workers with low wages. For this reason, human resources managers should pay attention to the socio-cultural harmony of foreign workers in order to reduce the labour turnover rate (Kim et al., 2016). Moreover, foreign workers can also be seen as the source of some problems particularly because they are perceived as a burden for sharing the resources of the host society, creating competition for the job or are not integrating into the host society (Janta et al., 2011b). At the same time, it is also suggested that the employment of foreign workers may affect the quality of services provided as well as the problems created in managing different groups of individuals (Zopiatis et al., 2014).

The research questions were formed in line with the reasons for the temporary or permanent migration of foreign employees to work, the advantages and disadvantages of the employment of foreign employees to businesses, the difficulties experienced by foreign employees in this process, the advantages and expectations they will provide. Also in the report “Work Permits of Foreigners” prepared by the Republic

of Turkey Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services and published in 2018, it is seen that the largest number of foreign workers are employed in the *accommodation sector* among the 99 sectors in Turkey. Between 2014-2017, the accommodation sector in Turkey was the second sector in which the foreign workers were employed consistently. Sports, entertainment and recreation activities” between 2014-2015, ranked ninth in 2014 and eighth in 2015 among all the sectors in Turkey. Food and beverage services ranked eleventh in 2016, ninth in 2017 and eighth in 2018 among all the sectors in Turkey (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Labor and Social Security 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017; Republic of Turkey Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services 2018). Based on this data, it is possible to say that tourism related sectors, particularly the accommodation sector, have a significant place in foreign worker employment in Turkey. This makes the subject of ‘foreign worker employment in the tourism sector in Turkey’ meaningful to be addressed academically. The purpose of this study carried out in this sense was determined as “To reveal the reasons that prompt the managers of five-star hotel businesses operating in Antalya to employ foreign workers”. In this context, the research questions (RQ) are as follows.

Research Questions

RQ 1: What is the profile of foreign workers employed in hotel enterprises?

RQ 2: What are the criteria taken into consideration in the selection of foreign workers in hotel enterprises?

RQ 3: Why is it necessary to employ foreign workers in hotel enterprises?

RQ 4: What are the problems arising from the employment of foreign workers in hotel enterprises?

RQ 5: Is there any problem of finding employees in tourism? If so, where this problem arises from?

RQ 6: What are the prominent features of foreign workers employed in hotel businesses compared to local workers?

Method

In the qualitative research method, it is possible to explain the problem investigated in its natural environment without much interruption and to get richer and descriptive results. It is very important to get the perceptions, thoughts and their own expressions of the participants (Bayyurt & Seggie, 2017). Qualitative research dealing with the social aspect of the World and it is a method that examines individuals’ lifestyles, behaviors, stories, organizational structures, social change, perceptions and events in

a realistic and holistic manner in the natural environment (Karagöz, 2017). Besides, in qualitative research, in addition to non-verbal communication, the researcher has the opportunity to expand his understanding through verbal communication, to process information immediately, to clarify and summarize data, to check the accuracy of the respondents' interpretation, and to search for unusual or unexpected answers (Merriam, 2009). For these reason, qualitative research method was used in this study and the research focuses on the reasons that lead hotel managers to employ foreign workers.

Study Sample

The population of this research consists of hotel managers in Turkey. As for the sample, managers of five-star hotel businesses operating in Antalya province were selected. Five-star hotels were chosen as the sample for reasons such as employing relatively more employees compared to small and medium-sized hotel enterprises, having the majority of total accommodation bed capacity in Antalya and assuming that they operate with a professional management structure.

The sampling method used in this research is snowball sampling and criterion sampling, which are among the most purposeful sampling methods. The criteria used in the determination of the sample were that a foreign worker being employed in the hotel business; that the participant being in a managerial position and the person that the information is taken from is the general manager of the hotel or working as a human resource manager or in a similar position due to being directly responsible for staff recruitment in the hotel business. Furthermore, snowball sampling method was used in order to reach the participant group that meets the specified criteria and support was received from the hotel managers interviewed to reach new participants.

Data Collection Process and Tool

In the research, the data were collected by interview technique. In order to obtain the data, a semi-structured interview guide created by the researchers was used. In the interview guide, there are four demographic and eleven open-ended questions related to the researched subject in order to obtain descriptive information about the participants. The research data were collected between July and September 2018. In this process, the data were collected by interviewing the participants face-to-face and receiving their thoughts on the subject, and by sending the interview forms to the participants via e-mail to have them filled in. Totally, 18 managers were interviewed and data collection was finished after reaching sufficient number of data and achieving data satisfaction.

Validity and Reliability

While validity in qualitative research includes the researcher's control for the accuracy of findings through certain processes, qualitative reliability refers to consistency of the researcher's approach in terms of different projects and different researchers (Creswell, 2017). In order to ensure the internal validity of the study, the researchers summarized the data they collected immediately after the data collection process and received the participants' confirmation about the suitability of statements and whether there were any other items they wanted to add. Within the scope of external validity, criterion sampling and snowball sampling methods, which are among the purposeful sampling methods, were used. In order to ensure reliability of the study; all processes related to creation of data collection tool, collection and analysis of data, reporting of the findings and results were confirmed by the researchers, and specialist opinions were asked apart from the researchers.

The way to obtain the measure of reliability in qualitative research is to create an audit trail (decision trail). Audit trail allows other researchers to follow the same process, helps readers understand your decisions, provides a way to create and specify the nature of the study, and provides a tool to evaluate the entire study (Yağar & Dökme, 2018). Therefore, it is possible to state that the processes used in the current research are in accordance with the audit trail.

Analysis of Data

Content analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the analysis of data obtained within the scope of the research. In content analysis, the aim is to reach concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). At this stage, firstly, the data obtained from the participants are written in computer environment and organized for analysis. Later, these data are subjected to content analysis and the findings obtained are included. At this stage, coding was carried out based on the responses of participants regarding each research question. After this coding process, certain categories were created and themes that were compatible with the research questions were attained. In order to hide the participants' identity, each participant was coded with the letter "P" and they were assigned a number between 1-18.

Findings

In the findings of the research, the information describing the participants was included first (Table 1).

Table 1
Descriptive Features of the Participants

Participant's Code	Gender	Age	Educational Status	Position	Working Time in the Sector (Year)	Working Time in the Same Hotel Business (Year)
P1	Female	39	Vocational School	Human Resources Manager	12	12
P2	Female	30	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	6	3
P3	Female	28	Vocational School	Human Resources Manager	Unnotified	Unnotified
P4	Male	32	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	5	2
P5	Male	36	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	16	7
P6	Male	53	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	Unnotified	Unnotified
P7	Male	37	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	14	2
P8	Male	38	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	12	12
P9	Male	45	Vocational School	General Manager	18	9
P10	Male	38	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	21	11
P11	Male	40	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	19	6
P12	Male	Unnotified	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	14	8
P13	Female	38	Vocational School	Human Resources Manager	18	3
P14	Female	30	Undergraduate	Chief of Staff	7	4
P15	Male	44	Undergraduate	Human Resources Manager	22	22
P16	Male	52	Vocational School	Human Resources Manager	30	11
P17	Female	24	Undergraduate	Human Resources Personnel	1	6 months
P18	Female	26	Vocational School	Human Resources Personnel	5	4

When the findings in Table 1 are examined; it is seen that the majority of participants are male and human resource managers with bachelor’s degree. It is noteworthy that the majority of these managers have over 12 years of work experience in the tourism industry.

The first question to be answered in the research is “RQ 1: What is the profile of foreign workers employed in hotel businesses?” Findings related to this research question are given in Table 2.

Table 2
Foreign Worker Profile

	Nationality	n	Department	n
	Theme Profile of Foreign Workers	Kyrgyzstan	16	Food and Beverage
Ukraine		10	Housekeeping	5
Russia		10	Animation	8
Indonesia		4	Kitchen	4
Tunisia		3	Front Office	9
Czech Republic		3	Guest Welcoming	1
Georgia		3	Public Relations	9
Germany		3	Sales and Marketing	1
Azerbaijan		2	Spa / Wellness	4
Kazakhstan		2	Mini Club	1
Bali		1	Position	n
People's Republic of China		1	Lower level	18
Italy		1	Intermediate level	8
Moldova		1	Mid-level Manager	4
Uzbekistan		1	Senior Manager	4
Kenya		1	Employment Status	n
Tajikistan		1	Seasonal	17
Total Number of Participants:		18	Full time	7

As is seen in Table 2, the most employed foreign nationals in hotels within the scope of the sample are *Kyrgyz*, *Ukrainians* and *Russians*. The reasons that these foreign workers are preferred from the above mentioned countries; two participants gave the answer as *foreign language knowledge*, one participant as *being fit for the guest profile*, one as *having difficulty in finding Turkish staff for animation*, one as *having difficulty in finding Turkish staff* and one participant responded as to the *cost*. It was determined that the employment of foreign workers was mostly *seasonal*. In this context, it can be said that the employment of foreign workers in the hotels is mostly in the summer season, since tourism in Antalya is largely seasonal. Besides, it is observed that food-beverage and animation departments stand out among the departments which the foreign workers are employed. The food and beverage department is one of the departments that hotels employ the highest number of workers. The fact that the animation department was specified as the second important option in the question may be due to foreign language knowledge of foreign workers or the difficulty of managers in finding Turkish personnel for the animation department. On the other side, it is determined that almost all the foreign workers are employed at lower levels of the hotels. It is thought that such a result is due to the fact that these workers are generally composed of individuals in the young age group and are mostly employed seasonally.

Participants stated that they generally prefer younger employees in foreign worker employment, that there is no discrimination in terms of gender and generally female or male workers are employed equally. It is possible to explain why foreign workers

are mostly young people is because of the dynamic structure of tourism sector. Similarly, Tansel (2012) emphasizes that age is an important factor in the decision to migrate and that migrants are mostly young people. Regarding the education level of workers, the participants stated that most of the foreign workers are preferred from those who have finished or are studying at undergraduate level. A small number of participants stated that they employ foreign workers with high school education.

Some participants’ statements within the scope of the first research question are as follows:

P1, We generally employ in half by gender; but undergraduate students or graduates in education levels, (...) For example, we generally assign lower-level in the F&B department, but mid-level in departments such as animation and guest relation.

P2, As a business, we prefer to work with young people at first regardless of gender, and consider a long-term work for the upcoming years. University education is one of our preferences as we think for the future. We employ 85% seasonal contracted workers and provide 15% permanent employment.

P10, On the average; 35-40 years in housekeeping, 20-21 years in F&B, 20-23 years in Guest relations. Mostly in temporary status. However, our hotel guest relations manager works in permanent status. Besides, as of this year, we would like to employ foreign managers especially for mid-level around 20%. The reason is that we think it will be easier to manage the newly introduced foreign personnel.

The second question to be answered within the scope of the research is “RQ 2: What are the criteria taken into consideration in the selection of foreign workers in hotel enterprises?” The codes and categories regarding the theme of criteria sought in the selection of the foreign worker are given in Table 3.

Table 3
Criteria for Foreign Worker Selection

	Bureaucratic / Economic	n	Personal characteristics	n	
Theme Criteria in Selection of Foreign Workers	Having the conditions to get a work visa	2	Age	1	
	Work time	1	Family life	2	
	Cost	1	Physical appearance	5	
	Background	n	Reliability	1	
	Education	3	Adaptation	n	
	Foreign language knowledge	11	Proximity to Turkish culture	1	
	Professional experience / knowledge	12	Social life	1	
	Turkish knowledge	5	Country culture	1	
	Reference	1	Continuity	1	
	Guest relationships	1	Employer’s expectations	1	
	Total Number of Participants: 18				

According to the findings in Table 3; *vocational experience/knowledge, foreign language knowledge and Turkish knowledge* stand out among the basic criteria that the majority of participants seek for in the employment of foreign workers. In addition,

physical appearance of foreign workers is among the important features that hotel managers seek for in selecting workers. Some participants' statements regarding the theme of "criteria sought in the selection of foreign workers" are as follows:

P3, Education, age, physiological structure, experience, family and social life, and the language is a must.

P5, We pay attention to speaking Turkish with foreign language knowledge, profession and human love. Because tourism is a service sector, and the one who doesn't like people and the profession can not be successful.

P17, Having sufficient knowledge about the current job and knowing enough Turkish to communicate is among our essential criteria.

The third question asked for answers within the scope of the research is "RQ 3: Why is it necessary to employ foreign workers in hotel enterprises?". Themes, categories and codes created according to answers given by the participants to this question are shown in Table 4. The question was directed to the participants in order to cover their opinions and thoughts about their needs in the future and in the current time frame.

Table 4
Reasons for Employment of Foreign Workers

Reasons Related to Business / Industry		Currently	In the Future
		n	n
Theme Reasons for the Employment of Foreign Workers	The concerns of local worker due to structure of the sector		1
	Economic and cultural structure of tourism		1
	Not encouraging local workers		1
	Eligibility for seasonal work	2	
	The need for qualified workers	5	1
	Working for suitable wages	1	
	Working hours	3	2
	Cultural exchange	1	
	Productivity	2	
	Experience	1	
	Stability	2	2
	Guest Related Reasons	n	n
	Providing better service to guests from their own nationalities	1	1
	Communication power with guests of their own nationality	2	
	Guest satisfaction	2	1
	Guest profile	4	
	Workers' Characteristics	n	n
	Strict compliance with business rules / business discipline	1	2
	Their external appearance / being presentable	2	3
	Professional skills / tendencies	1	2
	Having career goals	1	1
	Strong social aspects		2
	Knowing a foreign language	13	9
	Demographic structures	2	
	Ability	1	
	Total Number of Participants: 18		

As is seen in Table 4, the most important reason for the employment of foreign workers is that these employees know the foreign language which is demanded especially in accordance with the existing customer profiles of the business. Some of the participants also describe foreign workers as qualified personnel. Moreover, other important issues among the reasons for participants to employ foreign workers are that their working hours provide advantages for businesses compared to local employees, that they have some professional qualifications sought in accordance with the structure of jobs in the tourism sector, and that local workers who have such features do not prefer the sector or are not sustainable. One participant stated that the idea of employing foreign workers may be negatively affected in the future for the increase in costs due to exchange rate difference. Some participants' answers to the third research question are as follows:

PI, We generally consider their physical properties. But we also prioritise some features of the persons according to departments they will work for. For example, the person who will work

in animation should definitely have a good knowledge of foreign language and a strong social aspect. However, we also care about having minimum knowledge about the department he/she will work for.

P10, The fact that the foreign language being Russian and the predominant Russian guest profile has led to qualified personnel shortage in the sector as the Turkish employees moved away from the sector. This is not only ours, but also the general problem of Turkish tourism. The fact that tourism is seasonal especially in Antalya steers Turkish employees to other sectors. This is especially evident for married workers. Foreign staff do not instantly leave or discontinue the job in high season. In the context of all these issues, our first choice in the recruitment of foreign personnel is to guarantee that we can complete the season with foreign personnel in a stable manner:

P11, Foreign language knowledge is one of the leading factors. Foreign language knowledge suitable for the hotel guest portfolio, difficulty of finding Turkish personnel for the service and housekeeping department, being educated in the profession.

P15, Foreign staff are employed due to knowing a foreign language and reduced workforce in tourism.

The fourth question to be answered in the research is “RQ 4: What are the problems arising from the employment of foreign workers in hotel businesses?” Themes, categories and codes created according to answers received from the participants regarding this research question are shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Problems Arising in Employment of Foreign Workers

		Problems Arising from the Worker	n
Theme Basic Problems in Employment of Foreign Workers		Lack of trust in foreign workers	1
		Negative experiences in the country	1
		Lack of motivation	1
		Loyalty	1
		Accommodation problem	1
		Problems with Bureaucracy-Functioning	n
		Problems with the employment visa	8
		Intermediary companies	3
		Duration/difficulty of bureaucratic procedures	4
		Difficulty in reaching foreign employees	2
		Exchange-rate difference/wage dissatisfaction	3
		Socio-Cultural Issues	n
		Adaptation problem	3
		Racism/nationalism	2
		Cultural differences	2
	Language/communication problem	3	
		Total Number of Participants: 18	

Although participants stated that they did not generally encounter a major problem in the employment of foreign personnel, they mostly reflected the problems they experienced related to bureaucratic functioning (such as difficulties in obtaining employment visa, long time for obtaining work permits), as can be seen also in Table 5. Participants also mentioned the existence of difficulties experienced by foreign workers regarding adaptation and communication with the cultural structure in the

host country. Participants also touched upon the difficulties in paying wages in foreign currency due to increase in the exchange rate, and therefore the dissatisfaction among foreign workers and various disputes with foreign intermediaries from which foreign workers are provided. Some participants’ responses to the fourth research question are as follows:

P8, There is a problem of trust. Foreign workers have trust issues with the facility. For example, some contracted foreign personnel cancel the arrival close to the season. The negative experiences that the foreign staff faced in Turkey before are effective about that. There are problems in obtaining official work permit. The permit process is slow and takes a long time. The system change that occurs in certain periods regarding the permit process can not be fully carried out by the personnel working in the relevant ministry.

P12, There are hitches in the work permit system and problems in the adaptation process. People may be dissatisfied due to recent exchange rate differences.

P16, Intermediary fees, delay of work permits and high exchange rate are our important problems.

The fifth question asked for an answer in the research is “RQ 5: Is there a problem finding a worker in tourism? If yes, what causes this problem?”. Themes, categories and codes created according to the responses of participants to this question are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Problems Encountered in Supply of Workers in Tourism

Problems Specific to the Tourism Sector		n	
Theme Problems Encountered in Supply of Workers in Tourism	Failure of the parties to fulfill their duties and responsibilities in employment	1	
	The gradually decline in social status of the profession	1	
	Having trouble in finding qualified personnel	1	
	Not considering tourism as a profession	3	
	Lack of employees to work in the sector	1	
	Flexible working hours	1	
	Sector’s not promising future	1	
	Low state support	1	
	Sectoral instability	3	
	Being seasonal	9	
	Educational Problems		n
	Shortage of vocational schools	1	
	Lack of practice in education	1	
	Foreign language insufficiency	1	
	Problems Related to Workers		n
	Impatience of workers who are studying tourism about promotion	1	
	Not being satisfied with the work done	1	
	Not being satisfied with the fee	1	
Disliking the job	1		
Lack of Education	1		
Total Number of Participants: 18			

As seen in Table 6, the most important problem faced by the participants is that the tourism sector is generally seasonal. Besides, the participants also stated the reason why workers do not tend to work in the tourism sector or to pursue a career as that

tourism is not regarded as a profession and that the tourism sector can not maintain its stability for various reasons. In addition, the participants highlighted some deficiencies related to vocational tourism education among the difficulties in finding workers, and mentioned the insufficiency of cooperation among the stakeholders in the sector. In addition, the vast majority of the participants stated that the problem experienced in finding a worker in the tourism sector can be solved with a foreign worker. The answers of some participants to the fifth research question are as follows:

P4, In my opinion, there is no such unemployment problem in Turkey, it's just the problem of work dislike. Particularly to tourism students in schools, it is necessary to explain the importance of starting from the lowest level in order to become important. Also, trainings should be given not only from book information but also practically.

P9, Yes there is definitely. The reason is seasonal work. The solution to this problem seems to be possible with foreign personnel employment. I estimate that the employment of foreign personnel in hotels will increase in the coming years.

P14, There are problems due to bumpy characteristics of the tourism sector.

P18, It happens due to changes in the tourism sector each year, as it functions based on foreign relations.

The sixth question to be answered within the scope of the research is “RQ 6: What are the prominent characteristics of the foreign workers employed in hotel businesses compared to the local workers?” Themes, categories and codes related to this research question are shown in Table 7.

Table 7
Prominent Characteristics of Foreign Workers Compared to Local Workers

<i>Theme</i>	Characteristics of Foreign Workers		Characteristics of Local Workers		
		n		n	
Prominent Characteristics of Foreign Workers Compared to Local Workers	Avoid taking responsibility	1	Good grasp of Turkish culture/hospitality	5	
	Foreign language knowledge (sufficient)	11	Informal communication / frivolity	2	
	Work discipline/following the rules	5	Foreign language knowledge (insufficient)	5	
	Customer relations (positive)	5	Coping with difficult conditions	2	
	Hospitality (weak)	1	Excessive self-confidence/obstinacy	3	
	Cultural adaptation problem	4	Communication is easy/powerful	9	
	Increase satisfaction	2	Practicalness/comprehension	2	
	Willing to improve	1	Dislike of work	1	
	Strong communication	2	Unstable	1	
	Respect for the superiors	1	Flexibility	1	
	Productivity	1	Stable	1	
	Stable	6	Accessibility	1	
	Total Number of Participants: 18				

As is seen in Table 7, both local and foreign workers have prominent positive and negative characteristics according to the participants. However, with regard to foreign workers; it is seen that foreign language knowledge is the most important factor in the employment of foreign workers by many participants and the issue that

is most cared about by businesses. Besides, it is noteworthy that the participants emphasized stability, work discipline and positive behaviors in guest relations regarding foreign workers. Therefore, knowledge of foreign language, stability, work discipline and positive behaviors they display in customer relations are the prominent factors in preferring foreign workers over local workers. However, the most important problem that participants expressed about foreign workers is their ability to adapt to a different culture. From the perspective of local workers, the participants mostly emphasized the ability of local workers to communicate easily among their prominent features. Besides, the local workers' good grasp of Turkish culture and their hospitable behaviors are other issues emphasized by the participants. The most important inadequacy issue expressed by the participants regarding local workers is the knowledge of foreign language. The answers of some participants to the sixth research question are as follows:

P6, (Foreign workers) They know foreign language, do not leave the work whenever they want, experience problems with some of their colleagues because the culture is different. (Local workers) They know a little foreign language, may leave the work immediately with excuses such as my mother is sick, my father is not allowing etc.

P8, (Foreign workers) Relations with guests are good, namely they have the communication ability, guarantee of completion of the season, foreign language, discipline. (Local workers) Good grasp of Turkish culture, Better relations with managers due to moral values, customs and traditions.

P13, (Foreign workers) They speak foreign languages better and have better relations with customers. (Local workers) Communication ability, continuity and easy accessible.

Results and Discussions

Employing sufficient employees in terms of number and quality, motivating and employing these employees in line with the aims of the organization and keeping qualified employees as a valuable part of the organization is very important for hotel businesses. However, due to the dynamic nature of the tourism sector, it is very difficult for hotels to achieve these alone. This situation requires being able to act in coordination with stakeholders (such as educational institutions, relevant public and private sector organizations, non-governmental organizations) that are directly or indirectly involved in the sector. For example, coordination problems or lack of cooperation with tourism education institutions as one of the external resources that hotels utilize in the process of employing employees may negatively affect the number and quality of employment in hotels. Thus it is witnessed in recent years that as a result of failing to provide all the needed workforce inside Turkey; the hotel businesses in Turkey are heading for foreign worker employment, particularly the ones in summer resorts. Therefore, examining the reasons that prompt these hotels to foreign worker employment is an important issue. This study focuses on the reasons

that lead hotel managers to employ foreign workers. The prominent findings of the research can be summarized as follows:

- The top three foreign worker group in the hotel businesses within the scope of the research are from Kyrgyz, Ukraine and Russian nationality. It was determined that the majority of these workers are employed in the food and beverage and animation departments of hotels as seasonal and lower-level personnel.
- It was determined that young people are generally preferred in the employment of foreign workers, that there is no discrimination in terms of gender in employment, and that mostly the workers having an undergraduate degree are preferred.
- It was identified that in the selection of foreign workers, the main criteria sought by the hotel managers within the scope of the research are professional experience/knowledge, knowledge of foreign language, Turkish knowledge and physical appearance.
- The most prominent option that prompts hotel managers to employ foreign workers is that these workers know foreign languages. This is followed by the need for qualified workers.
- Hotel managers stated the most important problem they had during the process of employing a foreign worker as the difficulties they faced in obtaining a work visa. Managers complained about the long duration of bureaucratic procedures, especially in the process of obtaining a work permit.
- It was determined that hotel managers within the scope of the research agree that there is a problem of finding workers in tourism in general. The vast majority of managers think that this problem stems from the seasonality of the tourism industry.
- Finally, after the hotel managers in scope of the research compare prominent characteristics of the foreign workers they employ and the local personnel; it was determined for the foreign workers that their knowledge of foreign languages, completing the season steadily in terms of working time, having a work discipline and exhibiting desired behaviors in relations with the guests were prominent. In the evaluations of managers regarding local workers; it was detected that the characteristics such as easy communication, good grasp of Turkish culture and hospitable behavior were prominent.

When the research findings are evaluated in general, it is necessary to consider it natural that foreign employees in hotels are mostly employed in the food and beverage department. Because this department is among the departments where the most employees work in hotels. Therefore, it is understood that hotel managers try to

fulfill some of the seasonal workforce need in the food and beverage department with foreign employees. The second option that is prominent is the animation department, which can be explained by seeking a good foreign language knowledge for the employees who will work in this department. As revealed in the findings of the study, the most important reason that pushes hotel managers to employ foreign employees is that these employees speak a foreign language. Therefore, it is understood that the managers try to fulfill some part of the workforce requirement in the animation department by employing foreign employees. Undoubtedly, foreign language knowledge is a feature that all employees working in front departments (such as food and beverage, front office) should have at a certain level, not only in the animation department. Therefore at least the hotel managers within the scope of this research have difficulties in finding Turkish personnel who have a good grasp of languages spoken by their guest profiles. In this context, for the young people who want to make a career in the tourism sector in Turkey or are having tourism education of any level, it is recommended to develop their knowledge levels of a foreign language by taking into account the weighted guest profile visiting Turkey.

It is quite an interesting finding to see ‘qualified worker needed’ as the second important factor after foreign language among the reasons that prompt hotel managers to employ foreign workers. Point of view this findings it is understood that in Turkey at least within the scope of this research the hotel managers have difficulty in finding qualified employee. In other words, the managers of the hotel showing seasonal activities in Turkey try to fulfill from part of the skilled labor needs of the foreign worker employment. Considering Turkey’s young population structure and a large number of institutions providing education in the tourism field, one might have thought that the tourism sector, especially the hotels, did not have any problems in providing a qualified workforce. The fact that hotel managers have emphasized the need for qualified workers among the reasons for employing foreign workers suggests that hotels have difficulties in finding a qualified workforce for some departments.

Another important finding is that after comparing the employed foreign workers with the local personnel, “stability” was mentioned among the prominent features of foreign workers after knowledge of language. The high number of resignations that may occur in hotel businesses during the peak season may leave businesses in a difficult situation in the middle of the season. For this reason, hotel managers naturally act with the motive to protect their staff during these periods until the end of the season. Workers being employed in the company until the end of the season consistently creates the possibility to eliminate or decrease flaws in the service delivery. According to the result obtained in this research, it is understood that foreign workers who are seasonally employed work largely during the season (that is, they complete the season) in a consistent manner, and therefore are preferred. It is known

that in many of the resort hotels operating in the summer season in Turkey, trainees are employed in some departments. These trainees may quit in the middle of the season for different reasons (completing the compulsory internship period, difficulty in keeping up with the intensive working tempo, obtaining a relatively low wage, etc.). In addition, creating the local worker staff other than trainees from people who are not experienced in the tourism sector may be increasing the worker turnover rate in the high season, as these workers display a problem of adapting to the work tempo and functioning of the sector. Therefore, based on such a finding; it is suggested for hotel managers to employ experienced and qualified local workers on structure and functioning of the tourism sector, and for trainees to be given the status which allow them to have the same rights with other workers in the business after the completion of their compulsory internship period; and thus preventing them from leaving the job in high season.

When we compare the findings of the study with the findings obtained from previous studies in the relevant literature, we see that some similarities are noticeable. For example, the findings which were revealed in some studies (Ergün, 2012; Benli et al., 2019) in the literature that foreign workers employed in the accommodation enterprises in Turkey consist of individuals mostly from younger age groups were also supported in this research. Yet again, some findings revealed in previous studies (Yılmaz & Arı, 2018; Benli et al., 2019) in the relevant literature suggesting that the foreign workforce employed in accommodation enterprises in Turkey mainly work in animation and food and beverage departments were also seen to be supported by the results obtained from this research. Besides, in some studies in the literature, there are findings that the long duration of processes during the obtaining of work permits for foreign workers employed in hotel businesses in Turkey causes criticism from hotel managers (Yılmaz & Arı, 2018). On the other hand, in a study conducted by Ekiz-Gökmen (2018) on migrant labor in the tourism sector; it was revealed that while migrant workforce is often seen as a way to reach cheap and unskilled labor in the world, that migrant labor in Turkey plays a role to fill the qualified manpower deficit in the tourism sector and the jobs which have labour supply constraints. In the study conducted by Yılmaz & Arı (2018), it was determined that foreign workers are more qualified in terms of foreign language. Again, in some studies in the literature (Janta et al., 2011b; Markova et al., 2016), it is emphasized that foreign workers are preferred by employers because of their foreign language skills. Similarly, in our research, the two main reasons that prompt hotel managers to employ foreign workers were determined as “these workers know foreign languages” and the “businesses’ need for qualified workers”. Again, in the study of Yılmaz & Arı (2018), the turnover rate of foreign workers was detected as relatively low. Similar to this finding, in our research, hotel managers emphasized that foreign workers finish the season more steadily in terms of working hours compared to local workers. In some studies (Janta

et al., 2011b; Kim et al., 2016), the adaptation problems experienced by foreign workers in the host country are mentioned. This problem was also supported by the statements of some participants in our research.

On the other hand, although it is emphasized in many studies in the literature (Jandl et al., 2009; Janta et al., 2011a; Janta et al., 2011b; Joppe, 2012; Zopiatis et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2016; Markova et al., 2016; Choi et al. 2017; Ravichandran et al. 2017) that foreign workers are generally preferred by employers because of their willingness to work with low wages or their cost reduction aspects, this does not overlap with the results of our research. According to the findings of our research, hotel managers did not mention the “cheap labor force” (except for one participant) among the basic criteria they sought in foreign employees. From here, it is understood that the hotel managers within the scope of the sample do not employ foreign employees with cost concerns. Therefore, our research has brought a new finding to the literature on this subject.

As a result, the findings obtained from this research are thought to be beneficial for hotel managers, educational institutions and public authorities. In this sense, the research results can significantly contribute to decisions of hotel managers on foreign personnel employment, to the relations of tourism education institutions with tourism businesses, and to the relevant legislation practices of public authorities. In summary, the findings obtained from this research are expected to help raise awareness in the perspectives of the interested circles seeking a solution in recent years for the shortage of employees in the tourism sector. Moreover, considering the limitations of relevant studies in Turkish literature, it is expected that the findings obtained from the research will contribute to the literature.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Researches

This research is limited to five-star hotel businesses operating in Antalya and selected as samples. It is known that foreign workers are employed in hotel businesses operating in some other major cities which are important for tourism in Turkey. In the future studies, similar researches to be done in the cities which the tourism is concentrated upon such as İstanbul and Muğla can contribute to the literature and allow to reach more generalizable results. On the other hand, this research is limited to hotels operating at summer resorts of Antalya and mostly as seasonal (during summer). In the future, similar studies can be carried out on city hotels that are open throughout the year. Conducting the research on only five-star hotel businesses can also be considered a limitation. Small and medium-sized hotel businesses can also be included in the research. In fact, it is thought that foreign workers are employed not only in the hotel business in Turkey but also in other tourism businesses such as travel agencies/tour operators, food and beverage businesses, recreation businesses

etc... It is thought that the inclusion of other tourism establishments along with hotels in the sample will contribute to the literature in future researches. Finally, although the data of this research were collected by face-to-face interviews with the administrators forming the sample, some managers stated that they would not be able to perform face-to-face interviews by justification of their workload on the date of the appointment made to collect the data and filled the interview form in person and sent them via e-mail. This can be considered as a limitation of the study.

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