

THE INFLUENCE OF FACILITIES ON  
CONSUMERS' CHOICE  
OF 5-STAR HOTELS IN ANKARA

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT  
AND  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
OF BILKENT UNIVERSITY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

BY  
FERİDE KARAPINAR  
JANUARY 1994

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*Feride KARAPINAR*  
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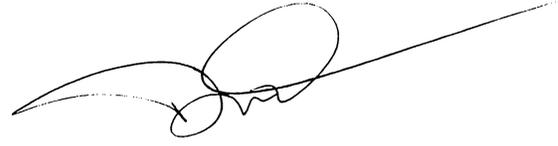
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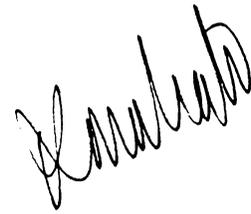
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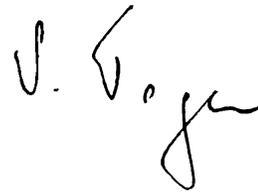
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Assist. Prof. Selcuk KARABATI



Approved for the Graduate School of Business Administration.

Prof.Dr. Subidey Togan



To  
Mediha KARAPINAR  
and  
My Parents

**ABSTRACT**  
**THE INFLUENCE OF FACILITIES ON CONSUMERS' CHOICE**  
**OF 5-STAR HOTELS IN ANKARA**  
**BY**  
**FERIDE KARAPINAR**  
**SUPERVISOR: ASSIST.PROF. MEHMET PASA**  
**JANUARY, 1994**

This study examines the influence of facilities on consumers' choice of 5-star hotels in Ankara.

Visitors are the key ingredients of the hotel industry; without them there would not be the hotel product. Thus, to be able to produce a saleable product the hotel management must discover what the customers want, as well as the effects of the facilities that are provided by the hotel on the consumers' choice.

In this study, the services provided by the hotels, as well as their characteristics which have an effect on customers' choice of hotel are discussed.

From the interviews and questionnaires, it is found that, each hotel has a different facility which influences the customers' decision in choosing that particular hotel. Some hotels are aware of the effect of a specific facility on the visitors' choice and some are not. Thus, after analyzing the facilities that influence the consumers' choice, some recommendations are given to the related hotels in order to have a good match between the facilities provided and the customer needs.

Keywords: Facilities 5-Star Hotels, Consumers' Choice

**ÖZET**  
**ANKARA'DAKI 5-YILDIZLI OTELLERİN SECİMİNDE,**  
**TÜKETİCİLERİN KENDİLERİNE SUNULAN HİZMETLERİN**  
**ETKİSİ**  
**FERİDE KARAPINAR**  
**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ. İŞLETME FAKÜLTESİ**  
**TEZ DANIŞMANI: YRD.DOC.DR. MEHMET PASA**  
**OCAK 1994**

Bu çalışma Ankara'daki 5-yıldızlı otellerin seçiminde, tüketicilerin kendilerine sunulan hizmetlerin etkisini incelemektedir.

Otel ürününün varlığı, içinde yaşayan misafirlere bağlıdır, çünkü onlar bu sektörün ana unsurlarıdır. Bu nedenle, otel yönetimi, satılabilir bir ürün yaratmak için, misafirlerine vereceği hizmetler yanında, onların otellerinin seçiminde etkisi olacak isteklerini de bilmek durumundadır.

Bu çalışmada, otellerin tüketiciye sağladığı hizmetler ve otel seçiminde onları etkileyen özellikleri incelenmiş ve tartışılmıştır.

Yapılan anket ve mülâkatlar göstermiştir ki, her otelin, tüketicinin seçimini etkileyen farklı bir yönü vardır. Otellerden bazıları tüketicinin kendilerini hangi etkenler yüzünden seçtiklerinin bilincinde değildirler. Bu nedenle, otellerin sunduğu hizmetlerle, tüketicinin onları seçmesinde etkin olan nedenler incelenmiş ve bunun sonucunda otellerin sunduğu servislerle tüketici isteklerinin birbirlerine uyum sağlayabilmesi için bazı öneriler oluşturulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: 5-Yıldızlı Otellerin Hizmetleri, Tüketici Secimi

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Thanks are due to the staff of Buyuk Ankara Oteli, Buyuk Surmeli Oteli, Merit Altinel, Hilton International Ankara and Sheraton Hotels and Towers Ankara who have spent their time and have given valuable information, which formed the basis of this study.

Gratitude is also extended to my family, my friends and Mrs. Molly KILIC for their help.

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## **CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION:**

Hospitality is a people industry (Morrison, 1989), and hotel business would not exist if people did not travel.

Thus, "a company has to identify both the importance which customers attach to each element of a service and their expectations for each. Lacking this knowledge, a company that wants to guarantee its service may very well guarantee the wrong things" (Heskett, Sasser and Hart, 1990).

Therefore, all hotels' activities must meet consumer needs, hence hotels must produce what can be sold and not sell what can be produced (Kotler, 1991). Also, it is important for the hotel management to know the effects of the facilities provided on the customers' choice of a hotel. All these concepts form the basis of this study.

The hotel industry offers services, and it differs from businesses involved in trade, that is selling material goods, and from other businesses offering services (insurance companies, banks etc.) which are oriented on pure services. Owing to this particularity, the specific features of the hotel product as well as the needs of the visitors are discussed in Chapter II.

In order to be able to analyze the matching of the customer profiles of the hotels and the potential customers that come to Ankara, the information about the market potential in relation to the services that can be provided by the hotels should be known. Thus, in Chapter III the tourism activities in Turkey and Ankara are also analyzed.

Then the following chapter discusses the Methodology used in this research. Chapter IV discusses the Methodology used in this research. The methods used to obtain the information that forms the basis of this study is discussed in this section.

Since the main topic concerns the 5-star hotels In Ankara, Chapter V includes a brief background about these hotels as well as the facilities provided by them and the customer profiles of each hotel.

The results of the questionnaire are analyzed in the Chapter VI. This section mainly discusses the level of the importance of the facilities provided by the hotels from the visitor's point of view. The results from this section indicate that there are differences between hotels considering the facilities that they provide, and each hotel is chosen by its visitors because of a particular characteristic.

The last section, which is the conclusion and the recommendations, analyzes the effects of the characteristics that are included in the questionnaire.

## **CHAPTER II. THE HOTEL PRODUCT AND THE CUSTOMER NEEDS:**

We live in an economic system where "the boss's boss" is the customer. He/she is the person who will determine the success or failure of a business. Hotel managers cannot overlook their guests' needs and requirements. Efficient management and guest satisfaction are prerequisites to successful business in the hotel industry.

In the hotel industry, all companies offer the same basic products. Thus in this competitive environment the hotel management must try to attract new customers. To achieve this goal, the aim of the hotel managers should be to match their own business objectives to the needs and requirements of potential customers, in the search for a systematic competitive advantage over competitors. The hotel should be managed according to its market, that is in terms of consumers' requirements, competition and economic environment.

The marketing of the hotel product has several unique characteristics. The hotel trade offers a product including both tangible and intangible products. Unlike other products, the hotel product cannot be stocked (McDonald and Leppard, 1989). When it is bought, the latter does not acquire the product but the right to use it later (through reservation). It is not delivered, that is the buyers come to it.

The hotel product contains objective elements (room, meals) and subjective elements (atmosphere, site, climate), which make it an intangible, abstract, undefined good. What remains of it after consumption consists in memories, in feelings. The value of the product is relative, subtle.

The facilities provided by the hotels include accommodation, food and beverage, meeting rooms, ball rooms, banquet rooms and active leisure. Accommodation is the main stay of the global hotel product. The Rooms Department generally turns in the highest income and the highest profit (Table 11). Food and Beverage is an integrated part of the hotel's product mix. Hence the quality, style and size of the restaurants must meet the requirements of the hotel's visitors' needs. Hotel guests will be as demanding for food and beverage as they are for accommodation.

The promotion of the various function-rooms receives as much care as the other products of the hotel. Generally all the actions aimed to sell these rooms are included in the annual marketing plan of the hotel (Table 11).

"Hospitality is a people industry. It's a business of people (staff) providing services to people (customers), who share these services with other people (other customers)." (Morrison, 1989)

So in the hotel industry, all employees in contact with the customers have a marketing spirit and that they all contribute to create the firm's image. Staff members are potential sales people. The continuous contacts between the hotel staff and the client allow a permanent market study and a constant adaptation of the product to consumer requirements.

Furthermore, since "employees are part of the *product* offered by hospitality organizations, their recruitment, training, supervision and

motivation all play an exceptionally important role" (Morrison, 1989), so the training program held for the personnel is also important.

The clients of the hotels are simply the travelers and they can be both organizations and individuals. The type of decisions that they face are similar but the way they make their decisions is different.

"Organizational buying behavior tends to be more complex because more people are involved in decision making, competitive bids may be required, and objective factors such as costs and service facility amenities may weigh more heavily than emotional ones." (Morrison, 1989)

On the other hand, individuals buying behavior is more simple since the buying process takes place in his/her head rather than being institutionalized as a system (McDonald and Leppard, 1989).

One of the characteristics of the hotel product is that it satisfies basic needs as well as psychological needs. In the hotel business, the psychological aspect is essential because the product contributes in influencing the personal tastes of its buyers. People often buy products for their accessory benefits rather than for their functional qualities or prices. Because:

"Products provide symbolic meaning to and about their owners above and beyond their functional uses. This symbolic meaning is often social in nature. In this sense goods and services are a type of social tool that serve as a means of communication between people." (Hyatt, 1992)

Besides, the need or the want to buy a product comes from certain inner impulses called motivations and desires (Kotler and Armstrong, 1980). Keeping this in mind, to be able to understand the needs of the people

that cause them to choose a specific hotel, it necessary to analyze some examples of needs and motivations.

There are various motivational theories to explain how customers are motivated to make purchase decisions. One is Maslow's *hierarchy of needs* that assumes, "Customers think before they act, using a rational, decision-making process." (Morrison, 1989)

Those needs are:

- Physiological (primary needs). Seeking pleasure, satisfaction, physical well-being, eating, drinking, sleeping, keeping healthy and fit. But also the need of rest and recuperation, as well as comfort, relaxation, peace.

- Security. Keeping away from problems, worries and troubles. Feeling safe, in a familiar, stable and hospitable background.

- Price sensitivity. Buying quality products at the best price, or at a set price.

- Affective (feelings). Loving, being loved, pleasing others, offering. But also being welcomed, making friends, forging bonds.

- Consideration (self-esteem). Satisfying one's ego, ambition, pride, feeling of power. Gaining consideration. Social status, showing off, "Keeping up with the Jones."

- Belonging to a group. A collective phenomenon which both bring together - the feeling of sharing something exclusive with the other members of the group - and excludes the people who do not have this "something" in common (belonging to an elite).

- Self-actualization (thirst for knowledge) . To be cultivated, to live new experiences...

The purpose of studying these concepts is to emphasize that behind needs and behaviors lay emotions, feelings that cannot be detected by the eye. Therefore, to buy or not to buy a hotel product partly depends on these needs as well as some psychological constraints such as fears, monetary concerns etc.

It can be concluded from this chapter that, since the hotel product has some characteristics different from other products, it should be handled with care. All the items that form the product have a certain importance for the success of the hotel. Furthermore, the hotel management should know its customers as well as their needs and motivations to buy the hotel product.

### **CHAPTER III. THE TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY AND ANKARA:**

Since 1980 the Turkish economy has made great improvements, in the quantity and quality of accommodation facilities as well as in transport and telecommunications, which has had beneficial effects for the tourism sector. At the beginning, the tourism policy of the Turkish government was more or less uncontrolled. Now the act of 1981, which is the most comprehensive framework for the development of tourism, covers most aspects of the improvement of tourism, ranging from the allocation of public land for suitable projects to the provision of infrastructure, incentives for investment and personnel training. By this legislation, the country's five year development plans set the tourism sector's specific targets (Mr.Servet Kocak, Ministry of Tourism, Tourism Controller).

However, the implementation of the policy has not been successful. First of all, there has been periodic economic crises and economic stability could not be attained. With the continual devaluation of Turkish Lira and with the increasing threat of terror, investing in the tourism sector becomes risky. Secondly, there is still some sort of confusion over the specific goals of tourism policy. Sub-sectors within the industry, target groups of customers and the desired types of developments have never been clearly defined.

In spite of this, the numbers of arrivals of foreign visitors have been increasing since 1985 (Table 1). However, with the threat of a Gulf war in the second half of 1990, numbers arriving from Western Europe showed relatively less increase, and with the actual war itself in the following year

there was a fall, which took the proportion of visitors from that region down to only a third of total arrivals. Although there is no data, experts (Table 11) state that with the increasing threat of terror on tourism sector, the number of arrivals from Western Europe had decreased in the summer of 1993.

The 1992 figures (Table 2) show that 73.79% of arrivals were to the Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean regions. Central Anatolia comes fourth with 15.68%. So it is not surprising that about 62% of total bed capacity are located in those prime tourist regions. For this reason the government's current policy is to encourage the development of tourism in other parts of Turkey.

With the new incentive system of the government, the number of establishments, rooms and the beds has been increasing drastically since 1985. The 1991 figures on licensed accommodation establishments show that there were 1404 establishments in Turkey, 1030 of them were hotels and the rest were motels, holiday villages, boarding houses, camping sites etc. (Report on Tourism Establishments Licensed by the Ministry 1991). However, only 5.33% of them were 5-star and 6.21% of them were 4-star hotels (Table 3). This indicates that, the largest proportion belongs to 2-, 3- and 1-star hotels in descending order.

On the other hand, when the numbers of beds are considered, figures show that 5-star hotels have the third largest amount with 20.40%, then 4-star hotels with 12.82% bed capacity and these are followed by 3- and 2-star hotels.

Most 5- and 4-star hotels are located in Istanbul, Ankara and in the region of Antalya . As in other countries, because of the absence of any standards set internationally, the star rating system needs to be regarded

with some care in Turkey. Especially in the previous years, hotels were earning an extra star by having a casino, to attract visitors mainly from the Middle East. The new regulations and the star rating system is in Appendix 1.

Since 1923, when it was established as the new capital city, Ankara has gained political and economical importance. Although it has a touristic interest potential with its historical resources, these have not been well utilized, nor developed until now.

In Ankara, according to the 1990 figures from Foreign Visitors and Tourism Receipts, it is shown that the major tourism activities focus on holiday (37.65%), business (26.60%), and study/education (7.20%) (Table 4).

Although these figures show that an important portion belongs to holiday purposed visits, it is only 1.09% of the whole of Turkey (Table 5). This ratio is very low in comparison to other places that attract tourists in Turkey, which indicates that Ankara is not an ideal place for holiday purposed visitors.

It can be reasoned therefore that, places of interest in Ankara are very few. These are mainly (Ankara Rehberi, 1993);

- Citadel of Ankara,
- Roman Baths,
- Augustus Temple,
- Ataturk Mausoleum,
- Ethnological Museum,
- Archeological (Hittite) Museum,
- Museum of Natural History.

All these locations can be visited in one day easily.

On the other hand, Cappadocia, Pamukkale, remains of Hittite Civilization and Gordion are close to Ankara. These are the places that attract most of the tourists. Generally visitors come to Ankara by airplane, and stay one day, spending most of their time in these areas (Table 11). These tourists are called *transits* (Table 11). About 18% of the visitors who come to Turkey, arrive in Ankara as transits. This is the second largest number in Turkey after Istanbul which has 49% of the whole transits (Table 5).

The second largest percentage belongs to business purposed visits (Table 5). The main reason is its political importance. Being the capital city of Turkey, the Parliament House, all the municipalities and embassies are located in Ankara.

Most of the students, which account for 30.57% of the total student movements in Turkey, arrive in Ankara for their education (Table 5). This is the largest portion in comparison to other cities (Foreign Visitors and Tourism Receipts, 1990). However, those students generally stay in dormitories, rented houses or stay with their relatives. So students who come to Ankara for study or education purposes are not the topic of this study.

In Ankara, the largest numbers of foreign visitors prefer to stay in 4-star hotels, and this is followed by a slightly smaller group who choose 5-star hotels. However, in considering the number of arrivals of citizens, 5-star hotels of Ankara have a very low market share. Most citizens prefer to stay at 1- or 3-star hotels (Table 6). However, the citizens who arrive in Ankara with the aim of business generally prefer to stay in 5-star hotels.

**Conclusion:**

Because of continuous changes in the legislation that covers the tourism sector, the goals in this industry are disorganized. Despite this chaos as well as the negative effects of Gulf war and increasing threat of terror, the numbers of arrivals of foreign visitors have been increasing.

However only 15.68% of these visitors come to Central Anatolia. This has resulted in the total bed capacity being lower in this region than the other parts of Turkey. Furthermore, only few of the hotels are of 5-star rating with relatively higher bed capacity. Ankara is one of the places where most of the 5-star hotels are located. Because of the uncertainties in the star rating system, the characteristics of these hotels are slightly different from each other.

The major tourism activities in Ankara focus on holiday, business and education. Since the people who come with the aim of holiday stay only 1 night (in transit) in the hotels and the students stay in dormitories, the main focus will be on business people in this study.

## **CHAPTER IV. METHODOLOGY:**

In this chapter, the methodology used for the analysis of this research will be discussed.

The hotels which are the topic of this study were chosen by their numbers of stars. The names of the hotels were obtained from the records of the Ministry of Tourism. In Ankara there are five 5-star hotels which are Buyuk Ankara Oteli, Buyuk Surmeli Oteli, Hilton International, Merit Altinel and Sheraton Hotels and Towers. Cankaya Hotel is still under construction.

Descriptive research forms the basis of the research design of this study. However, since the aim of exploratory research is "to gather preliminary information that will help to better define the problem" (Kotler and Armstrong 1989), literature review is also done.

In the descriptive part of the study, both the interviews and the questionnaires were carefully designed by the researcher, as the goal was to find out answers to specific questions, like the facilities provided by the 5-star hotels and the characteristics that influence the choice of hotel to stay.

A brief experience survey was completed by holding interviews with the managers and the staff of the hotels, in order to get ideas and insights about the subject (Churchill, 1987). Furthermore, the comments of experienced consumers' about the hotels were gathered from informal interviews.

In order to attain validity, the interviews with the visitors of 5-star hotels were useful as well as the feedback gathered from the questionnaires. The

answers received from both interviews and questionnaires were used in parallel and complementary ways.

### **Problem Definition**

**Problem :** "Finding the effect of the contribution of facilities, provided by the 5-star hotels in Ankara, on guests' decisions in choosing a hotel."

The following questions were asked to the hotels' managers in order to have an idea about the services provided by these hotels:

- What are the facilities provided by the hotel?
- What is the customer profile of the hotel?
- What is the importance of its location and its name?
- What is the pricing policy?
- What kinds of training programs are used for the hotel personnel?

As well as the interviews, a questionnaire was conducted for the guests of the hotels, in order to have the guidelines about the characteristics which are effective on their decisions. The purpose of both interviews and the questionnaire was to gather information about the characteristics of the hotels which have an influence on the decision of the visitors.

### **Sample**

Since the main focus is on Ankara's 5-star hotels, the sample was chosen from the visitors of those hotels. However, as the general characteristics of the respondents staying at these hotels are mainly busy people, a small sample of 10 to 13 were given the question sheet.

Besides this, a sample of 22 business people who were not citizens of Ankara as well as 9 Ankara citizens, were interviewed. The information

obtained from the interviews and from the questionnaires was interpreted together.

Another sample of 14 people, who were mainly the sales managers and front-line staff of the hotels were also interviewed by the researcher.

### **Data Collection Methods**

The data used in this study mainly depends on primary data obtained by the researcher. Interviews and questionnaires were used as qualitative data.

### **INTERVIEWS :**

Interviews were held with the managers and the employees of the hotels as well as 22 people who had stayed in these hotels and 9 Ankara citizens who had visited these hotels.

The interviews with the clients of the hotels were conducted mainly in the airport and were short in time (about 5 minutes) so as not to be disturbing. The passengers in the airport were chosen as the sample for the interviews as the management of the hotels did not allow this kind of activity in their hotels, and the visitors of the 5-star hotels generally use airplane as the mode of transport. Furthermore, the passengers are usually more relaxed while they are waiting for their time of departure.

All the interviews started by indicating the purpose of the study then continued if that respondent had stayed in one or more of the 5-star hotels in Ankara. They were asked to answer some specialized questions about these hotels like:

- In which hotel did they stay?
- The reason of choosing that hotel?
- How many days did they spend in this particular hotel?
- The purpose of their visit to Ankara?
- if they had stayed in more than one 5-star hotel, a comparison of these hotels considering the items included in the questionnaire.

On the other hand, interviews held with 14 hotel staff members were longer in time (45 to 60 minutes). At least 2 employees from each hotel were asked questions. The respondents were a sales manager and a person from front-line staff. Again the interviews started with the purpose of the research then the previously specified questions were asked.

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

A questionnaire was conducted in order to have an idea about the characteristics of the hotels which are effective on the consumers' decisions.

Since excessive length and monotony bores and tires people, the length of the questionnaire was kept as short as possible. Also, as ambiguous instructions on what is wanted may cause measurement problems (Luck and Rubin, 1987), rank-order scale from 1 to 5 is chosen because of its easy tabulation.

The items included in the questionnaire were chosen as a result of interviews with the front-line personnel of Buyuk Surmeli (Eren Eke) and Swiss Hotel (Emre Eke) (Appendix 2). Two kinds of question sheets, where only the order of the characteristics were different, were prepared in order to avoid

the biases that can occur during the filling out of the questionnaire by the respondents.

To counteract unexpected reaction to the questionnaire from the respondents, the question sheet was applied as a sample (Luck and Rubin, 1987), pretesting was carried out on 12 students from various universities in Ankara, who had stayed in 5-star hotels before. With the feedback received from these respondents, the unclear questions were changed and the questions which seem to be useful for the purpose of the study were added.

The sample of the questionnaire is chosen from the visitors of these hotels. The number of the respondents from each hotel is limited from 10 to 13, as the general characteristics of the visitors are mainly busy business people.

### **Evaluation of the Questionnaire**

The respondents of the questionnaire were asked to rank the characteristics in the question sheet from the most important item (1) to the least (5), taking into account the items considered during the decision process while choosing a specific hotel.

Since the aim here is "to develop some form of measurement scale and then transform the observation of the characteristics of the object onto this measurement scale" (Luck and Rubin, 1987), the researcher developed a measurement method.

The researcher transferred the answers of the respondents as;

1 -> 5

2 -> 4

3 -> 3

4 -> 2

5 -> 1, and 0 was given to the items which were not considered by the respondents.

Then the averages were taken, the biggest average was named as the most effective characteristic in choosing that hotel, and it continued from biggest to lowest. The resulting means taken from the questionnaire is in Table 9. However, the interpretations in the following chapters are done considering the first 5 items since the respondents ranked only the first 5 characteristics.

## **CHAPTER V. 5-STAR HOTELS IN ANKARA:<sup>1</sup>**

In the following pages, the main products supplies by the hotels and the customer profiles of them will be discussed.

A comprehensive outlook to the services provided by those hotels is in Table 7. Even so, as the goals of the management of the hotels vary, the way the facilities provided by those hotels also differ.

In addition to these varieties, there are also differences in the services provided due to the continual changes in the laws. In each law the specifications of 5-star hotels also change, but since a given right can not be taken back, the qualifications of the hotels that were established before, still stay as the same.

For that reason it is important to give some detailed information about the hotels for further discussions.

### **Buyuk Ankara Oteli:<sup>2</sup>**

Buyuk Ankara Oteli was established in 1966-67 as Ankara's first and only 5-star hotel. This constitutes a real advantage for the hotel in knowing their customers. Although the hotel management did not use customer surveys efficiently until this year, Buyuk Ankara knows more about the behavior and the needs of its visitors because of its long-term experiential learning. As indicated in Heskett, Sasser and Hart (1990), Buyuk Ankara enjoys the long-

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<sup>1</sup>The information has been gathered by the interviews with the sales and front office managers of the hotels (Table 11) as well as the Hotel Brochures.

<sup>2</sup>Mrs.Hatice ABDULLAH (Sales Manager of Buyuk Ankara)

Mr.Meilh BASER and Miss.Fatos AKSAKAL (Front Office Personnel)

term harvest of its experiential information about its visitors. Buyuk Ankara carried this special feature of being a unique 5-star hotel in Ankara until the establishment of Etap Altinel in 1986.

It is located in Kavaklidere, in close proximity to the Parliament House and the embassies, on Ankara's biggest road, Ataturk Boulevard (Appendix 3).

The partnerships of the hotel are Emek Insaat enterprises, Emekli Sandigi and Kizilay. Buyuk Ankara Oteli is one of the hotels in the chain of Emek Hotels. Buyuk Tarabya and Macka Oteli in Istanbul, Celik Palas in Bursa, Buyuk Efes Oteli in Izmir and Stad Oteli in Ankara are the other hotels of Emek hotel chains. Currently Buyuk Ankara, as well as the other hotels in the chain, are waiting to be sold.

The fundamental goal of Buyuk Ankara, as well as the other hotels in the chain, is to transfer money to its partnerships. A hundred percent of the revenues belong to its syndicates.

As well as the other common services that are offered by 5-star hotels, Buyuk Ankara Oteli has 165 rooms, 25 suite rooms and 2 master rooms.

There are two restaurants with different characteristics. One is "Pool Restaurant" and it is used in the summer season. Its capacity for 600 persons. The other one is the "Roof Restaurant" with 150 person capacity. It is open through out the year, and it has different musical entertainment programs with different famous singers in each month.

The hotel also provides several meeting rooms with different capacities. For example, there is a private meeting room for the THY crew which is available at all times.

The Business Center is run by the hotel management. All the facilities related to business, except fax, can be utilized. The fax service is provided separately by the reception.

Some years ago, the hotel management decided to have VIP rooms providing the same services as Sheraton Ankara's Towers and Hilton International's Executive Floor, which will be discussed later. However, since the management has changed since then, the VIP rooms have not been established, yet.

As Buyuk Ankara Oteli has only an outdoor swimming pool, it can only be used in accordance with Ankara's weather conditions.

Once in a year, a seminar is given to the hotel staff. However, greater importance is given to on-the-job training.

The visitors that stay in Buyuk Ankara are typically the citizens (70%) that come for business purposes. The occupations of those guests are generally; bureaucrats, officials from military, people working for the embassies, building contractors, staff of the airlines especially from THY.

Furthermore, the visitors of Buyuk Ankara are usually brand-loyal frequent guests. These are the people who are used to staying in this hotel and have done so for many years. The reason is that Buyuk Ankara was the only 5-star hotel of Ankara for about 18 years, and people tend to choose Buyuk Ankara as a result of habit. These visitors are familiar with all the services provided by the hotel.

The managers of the Buyuk Ankara indicated that most of the revenues of the hotel come from the activities performed under the department of Food and Beverage. This is completely opposite to other 5-star hotels in Ankara.

Consequently, Buyuk Ankara's target market also includes the private schools that organize balls, as well as some clubs like Lions and Rotary, and other meetings that require banquet services. Also the Roof activities serve for this purpose.

### **Buyuk Surmeli Oteli:**<sup>3</sup>

In 1985, Buyuk Surmeli was established by Yalcin Surmeli and his family as a 4-star hotel. It is one of the hotel in the hotel chain of Mr.Surmeli. The other hotels are Buyuk Surmeli in Istanbul and in Adana, Istanbul Buyuk Surmeli and Adana Buyuk Surmeli.

Buyuk Surmeli is located in Sihiye, which is next to the courthouse and one of the shopping centers of Ankara which is Kizilay (Appendix 3).

In 1992, by the construction of an additional building with sauna, casino and indoor swimming pool in it, earned another star and became the latest established 5-star hotel in Ankara.

Buyuk Surmeli is in a managerial change. Nearly all the managers who were working in the hotel for at least 4 years have transferred to Dedeman which is a 4-star hotel. The new staff was appointed to those positions by personal contacts of the General Manager

Since it has been a 5-star hotel for only 1 year, and the managers have changed within that time, the services that are offered only include the basic facilities that are required to be a 5-star hotel. Buyuk Surmeli Oteli, has 196 rooms and 10 suite rooms with a total bed capacity of 412.

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<sup>3</sup>Mr.A.Mecbur OZOKTEM (Front Office Manager)  
Mr.Oguz GOKOGUZ (Front Office Personnel)

Buyuk Surmeli offers the services of Business Center through the front office personnel in the reception. All the translations, fax, typing and other facilities related with business are done by that staff.

"Prestige Card" that is sold for a certain amount money and mainly distributed by Yalcin Surmeli. It allows a discount for the owners of this card. The visitors who have this card can stay one night in the hotel without any charge.

Buyuk Surmeli has only on-the-job training. However information on job description and training methods are not available. Therefore it can be assumed that all staff recruited must have some previous experience and background in tourism. This constitutes a disadvantage to the hotel for the time being, since all the hotel managers of the hotel have changed. There is a lack of communication between the departments. The adaptation period of the new managers is still continuing.

The customer profile of Buyuk Surmeli changes due to seasons. In the winter season generally citizens (70%) that come with the aim of business (70%) stay in the hotel. The reverse is true in the summer season.

The occupations of the visitors are mainly; contractors, electric engineers, politicians, people working for the unions and municipalities, sportsmen, pilots and hostesses.

In fact the customer profile of the hotel has stayed the same since Buyuk Surmeli earned another star and became a 5-star hotel. Still it has the same frequent guests.

### **Merit Altinel:<sup>4</sup>**

Etap Altinel was established in 1986 as the second 5-star hotel of Ankara. Its owner was an Italian Firm. In 1991 the title of Etap changed into Merit when Net Holding acquired the hotel.

At present, its an establishment of Net Group of Companies with other hotels in the chain, which are Merit Antique in Istanbul and Laguna Azur in Marmaris.

Merit Altinel is located in Tandogan and it is close to bus and train stations as well as the airport bus terminal, in addition to Ataturk and Selim Sirri Tercan basketball courts as well as 19 Mayıs football field (Appendix 3). Furthermore the construction of a Metro station next to Merit Altinel shows that, it will be an absolute advantage for the hotel, although construction work is a disadvantage for the time being.

Merit Altinel has 161 rooms and 8 suites. Apart from the common facilities with other 5-star hotels, the rooms are sound-proofed. Since there is construction of metro station just behind the hotel, the environment is noisy, thus sound-proof rooms are a real advantage for the hotel.

Merit Altinel also provides special services for businessmen with a Business Center that is managed by the hotel itself. The Business Center is on the second floor of the hotel and open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.. If any request comes for its use when the center is closed, the manager who is on duty provides similar services.

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<sup>4</sup>Ms. Aysegül KIRALI (Sales Manager of Merit Altinel)  
Mr. Falk BALKIM (Front Office Manager)  
Mr. Hasan YASAN (Banquet Department Personnel)

There is continuous training for the hotel personnel in Merit Altinel. There are meetings every night for this purpose. However there are no strict rules to be followed by the hotel staff.

The visitors that stay in Merit Altinel are composed of 50% Turkish citizens and 50% foreigners. Most of the foreigners who are staying in Merit Altinel come to Ankara for pleasure purposes in groups. Usually, they stay for 1 night in the hotel. The management of Merit Altinel prefers these groups when the occupation rate is low, especially in the weekends.

Generally, 70% of the total guests - i.e., both Turkish citizens and foreigners - come for business purposes. The occupations of the visitors of Merit Altinel are broadly; government officials, embassy representatives, people working for the chamber of commerce, sports teams, actors and actresses, and business people. These are the people who stay 2 or more nights in the hotel.

### **Sheraton Ankara Hotels And Towers:**<sup>5</sup>

The Sheraton Corporation is one of the largest international luxury hotel companies in the world. There are currently 488 hotels in almost 60 countries worldwide.

Ernest Henderson founded Sheraton in 1937 at Springfield, Massachusetts. It became an international organization in 1949 because of the acquisition of the hotel chains in Canada. By the acquisition of four hotels in Honolulu, Sheraton expanded outside the United States in 1959. Within the next years other acquisitions followed.

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<sup>5</sup>Mr. Serdar TURAN (Sales Manager of Sheraton Hotels and Towers Ankara)  
Mr. Ahmet YAYBOKE (General MANAGER)

In 1968, Sheraton became a wholly owned subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT). ITT Sheraton Corporation's headquarters is in Boston today.

Sheraton Ankara Hotels and Towers was opened in 1991 when the construction of the building was finished. The building of the Sheraton consists of two parts; one is the building of Sheraton Ankara Hotels and Towers, and the other part is the shopping and business center called Karum.

Previously it was owned by Kavala Group and a German firm DEG. In 1993, Nurol Holding acquired the largest share of the hotel from Kavala Group. Consequently, Nurol Holding has the 92.5% and DEG has the 7.5% of the shares of Sheraton Ankara.

Even though Nurol Holding and DEG get the revenues of the hotel, it is ITT Sheraton Corporation who is responsible for the hotel's management. ITT Sheraton Corporation appoints the general manager, executive general manager and controller of the hotel. These are the people who hire the rest of the personnel under the given standards given by Boston headquarters.

Sheraton Ankara is in Kavaklıdere, behind Hilton (Appendix 3). The region that the hotel is in is mainly the shopping center of Ankara. Besides, most of the companies are located there. The location of the Sheraton Ankara is considered to be central by the hotel managers.

As the name Sheraton Ankara Hotels and Towers implies, it has two different parts consisting of hotel and towers sections. The hotel has 311 rooms with 622 beds. 16 of the rooms are suites, 33 of them are deluxe bedrooms and 48 additional rooms in the Towers section.

The hotel part includes all the facilities that are required by the law for 5-star hotels, as well as the services provided by all other ITT Sheraton Hotels in international standards.

The Towers section provides extra facilities other than the hotel part, and because of those extra services rooms are more expensive. Towers Reception is on the 20th floor of the building. It has a specially designed reception, other than the customary reception of the Hotel part.

The Towers reception is more like a manager's room. The visitor who has a reservation in Towers is welcomed by front office personnel sitting behind a big table. The guest sits on the other side of the table in a very comfortable armchair. A drink is served while he/she is waiting for his/her check-in.

Generally, the check-in is done very quickly. However, as the booking of the visitor who comes for the first time, is done in detail, including his/her birthday and special days, it takes some time. As well as the information obtained for the booking, the other small personal details, such as the kind of pillow that visitor wants and the newspapers he/she reads, are all recorded in the computer. At the second visit of the guest all the personal details are considered. If it is his/her birthday, some flowers or a bottle of drink with a birthday cake is provided as a present from Hotel Management.

All the services provided in both the Hotel and the Towers are the same as the ITT Sheratons all over the world without any exception.

Fully equipped "Business Center" is run by Ankara Business Center (ABC) apart from the hotel management. It is open from 8 p.m. to 10

a.m., at other times the hotel management offers the similar services if there is a request for its use.

Since Sheraton offers a concentrated management training program called Sheraton Accounting Management Effectiveness (SAME) for its personnel, the staff of the ITT Sheraton does not need to have a previous tourism background. Even the managers are required to attend this training program.

SAME includes the ITT Sheraton's internationally set standards, as well as the strategies used to attract the customers both for those who have already visited ITT Sheraton and those who have not visited yet. SAME takes at least 1 month, and it is repeated every 6 months as well as on-the-job training.

Sheraton Ankara mainly serves business people (85%) between the ages of 25-50. Only a small percentage comes to Sheraton for pleasure purposes and their ages vary 40 to 60.

Nearly all of the guests arrive in Ankara by airplane. The occupations of those visitors are predominantly; officials from defense industry, engineers of Ankaray, construction engineers and the representatives of the companies that have their centers in a foreign country.

### **Hilton International:<sup>6</sup>**

In 1919 Hilton started its operations by Conrad Hilton when he bought a chain of hotels in America. In 1953, he acquired a building in Madrid which was already a hotel, and changed it to Hilton. The first purpose built Hilton International Hotel outside the America was the Istanbul Hilton which

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<sup>6</sup>Mr. Collin ABERCROMBIE (Sales Manager of Hilton International Ankara)  
Ms. Zeynep GUREL (Front Office Manager)

was opened in 1958. There are about 357 Hilton Hotels in America and another 156 more hotels outside the America.

In 1964 the corporation of Conrad Hilton got into financial trouble, and the company got split up into two different companies. One is the Hilton Corporation, that is owned by PanAm; and the other is owned by the British, called Hilton International. When PanAm went bankrupt, Ladbroke acquired Hilton International Hotels.

Hilton International Ankara started its operations in 1988. It's partnerships are Sabanci Holding, General Dynamics and Ladbroke. The greatest percentage belongs to Sabanci Holding. The revenues belong to the Turkish owner, however the management of the Hotel absolutely belongs to Hilton International.

The location of Hilton International is in Kavaklıdere, behind Sheraton Hotels and Towers (Appendix 3). The location is very close to shopping areas, embassies and business areas. The management of the hotel considers this location of Hilton as central and this feature is stated as a competitive advantage for the hotel. However, since the place is on Tahrir Boulevard, there are problems of parking places although the hotel has some parking space.

Hilton International has two different divisions which are Guest room Floors and the other is the Executive Floor. Guest room floors are up to 16th floor with 325 rooms, 1 King suite and 24 suites. The services provided in these floors are identical with Sheraton's Hotels and Towers sections.

The facilities that is provided by the Executive Floor is very similar to the services performed by Sheraton's Towers part, which was discussed in the previous section. The Guest rooms have the facilities that are required by

the law as well as the services which have been standardized by Hilton International as in the case of Sheraton.

The facilities related with business is provided like in the case of Sheraton. Business Center is run by Ankara Business Center (ABC), apart from the hotel management.

The vast majority of the visitors of Hilton International are Turkish businessmen (49%). They are the biggest individual group of people and they stay in the hotel about 3 days. Most of the guests come with the aim of business (85%), others come with music groups, sports teams etc.

The visitors usually use airplanes as the mode of transport and they are usually from the defense industry, power industry, military, as well as the businessmen working for the mega projects like road building. Generally it is the guest's company who pays the bill.

Although the facilities provided by the hotels are similar, the difference is in the small details. This chapter summarized these services by using the information gathered from the interviews with the hotel staff as well as the hotel brochures. Thus the database that is formed in this section reflected mainly the ideas of the hotel management. On the other hand, the following chapter will analyze the facilities provided by the hotels from the consumers' point of view.

## **CHAPTER VI. THE RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY:**

In this section the findings of the questionnaires are discussed. The results also include comments obtained from the respondents during the filling out of the question sheets. In fact, those observations are the most important sources while interpreting the results.

In fact all the features in the questionnaire have interrelationships. Because the global value of the hotel product is tied to the individual value of its various parts and they are evaluated according to subjective criteria. However, in this chapter to make life easier the results are interpreted as if each factor is important for its own sake, and it has no effect on the other criteria.

As it is seen from the Table 8, more or less the same factors are effective on the guests' decisions while choosing the hotels to stay in. The common features like the central location, the quality of the other visitors and having agreement with the visitors' companies, are important for the guests of all hotels. Then comes the attitudes of the personnel and the hotels' safety.

The other items such as the names of the hotels, having a Business Center and having a contract with the visitors' company are the common effective characteristics in the international hotels. On the other hand, their central locations and the attitudes of the personnel are more effective in the Turkish owned hotels.

All the features listed above are important while deciding on which hotel the visitors will be staying in, and all of them are crucial for the hotels in different ranking.

Both Hilton International's and Sheraton Ankara's visitors' choice; and Buyuk Ankara's and Merit Aitinel's preferences depend on more or less the same characteristics, except for some small distinctions. This result indicates there are differences between International and Turkish owned hotel chains.

On the other hand, the characteristic that is effective on choosing Buyuk Surmeii is a bit different from other 5-star hotels, because the customer profile did not change much since it earned another star. Still the frequent visitors who have the same expectations prefer this hotel.

As indicated in the previous section, the occupations of the visitors are generally business people. Their needs and wants are quite different from pleasure travelers. Mainly, business persons prefer locations close to their place of business (Morrison, 1989).

The results from the survey also indicated that the location of the hotels is extremely important in selecting the hotel. The central location criterion has the priority importance in choosing Buyuk Ankara and Merit Altinel. These two hotels are found to be more centrally located than the other 5-star hotels.

Buyuk Surmell's location is in the second degree ranking. Although it is not as important as in Buyuk Ankara and Merit Altinel case still it is found to be more central than Hilton and Sheraton. In these three hotels, clearly there is a match of the customers' need of closeness to the place business and the location of these hotels. (Refer to Table 7)

On the other hand, the locations of both Hilton and Sheraton are effective because of some other factors. On the contrary to the managers' of Hilton and Sheraton's beliefs, both hotel's locations are not considered to be as central as the other 5-star hotels.

From the interviews with the visitors of the other 5-star hotels' it was found that to some guests even the locations of Hilton and Sheraton were not known. Consequently, these hotels are not considered to be centrally located by those people, either. On the other hand, the citizens of Ankara consider the place of both Hilton and Sheraton as central, more than the other hotels. This result shows that the locations of these hotels are not an ideal place for the guests that come for business purposes. However their locations are more suitable for other uses such as conferences and meetings to which the citizens of Ankara are also invited.

"The individual identifies with the group, influences it in some cases, and is influenced by it in others" (Steward and Glynn, 1985). Hence people surrounding us are extremely important, also while staying in the hotel.

Keeping this in mind, the most distinguishing feature of Hilton and Sheraton from other 5-star hotels is the quality of visitors. It is the most important factor that affects the guests' decisions to stay in those hotels.

The general image of Hilton and Sheraton among Turkish people is, that first class people stay in these hotels, and "People are often influenced by groups to which they do not belong but to which they aspire" (Steward and Glynn, 1985). Thus, by the *trickle-down effect*, which is the influence of upper social classes on one or two steps down the social ladder (Assael, 1992), staying in these hotels becomes a status symbol. This feature of Hilton and Sheraton positively effects the self-image of the visitors.

Although, the quality of the visitors' is important in different orders in Merit Altinel, Buyuk Surmeli and Buyuk Ankara, the rationale that lies behind it is similar. All in all, Merit Altinel, Buyuk Surmeli and Buyuk Ankara enjoy having the same brand-loyal frequent visitors for many years. The reputation of the visits to these hotels is simply because of emotional appeals. These frequent guests know the kind of people staying in these hotels, and generally they are familiar with the faces of the other visitors. Thus, with the effect of friendship interest needs, visitors prefer to be in these hotels.

In the hotel industry, the front-line people are the key elements of the hotel. It is "veteran front-line people who enjoy meeting and greeting people, putting them at ease if they are tense and making people feel welcome as you would make someone feel welcome in your own home" (Hinton, 1991). For that reason the attitudes of the personnel are one of the effective factor in selecting the hotel.

It is the second item in the Buyuk Ankara case. The observations in the hotel, also show that, especially the front office personnel have a very good impact to attract visitors. The communication between the frequent visitors and the personnel of the hotel is like close friends.

Buyuk Ankara provides a little training for its personnel, but employees learn the qualifications that are needed for the job quite well by on the job training.

Although the attitude of the personnel is an important issue for choosing Merit Altinel and Buyuk Surmeli, it is not as important as in Buyuk Ankara. This is probably because Buyuk Ankara has the advantage of having been established for about 18 years before the others opened.

However, these three hotels are still observed as having a more warm and friendly service than those of others (Hilton and Sheraton).

The visitors of Hilton International consider the attitudes of the staff as the last item in the decision list. On the other hand, it is not taken into account in the case of Sheraton. This feature of personnel's attitudes is one of the major difference between Hilton and Sheraton which are considered as similar in terms of their services.

Furthermore, from the interviews with the respondents, it is seen that the Sheraton's personnel are found to be a bit more unfriendly than those of the Hilton. The reason for that is the experience of this hotel in Ankara is 3 years later than Hilton, besides unlike in the hotels in other parts of the Turkey, the customer profile of the hotel is mostly Turkish citizens. Thus the training system is not well adapted according to the needs of the Turkish citizens.

This shows that, although training is crucial in the hotel industry, if the training program is "so compartmentalized and regimented, they eliminate all evidence of human judgment and initiative." (Hinton, 1991) As a result, the services provided by the personnel becomes insensitive to the feelings of the visitors, especially for the Turkish guests who like warmer personal interactions than US. and European people.

People want to be relaxed, feel safe, secure and to be free from the unexpected events, while they are staying in a hotel. Hence safety is another item that is considered for Buyuk Ankara and Merit Altinel.

As stated in the previous chapter, hotels give importance to having contracts with some organizations at a discounted price. All the visitors of the hotels that were interviewed agreed that, having a contract is a good

reason to choose these hotels. However in Hilton and Sheraton this issue is given greater importance.

As McCleary and Weaver (1991) indicated, generally business travelers are "willing to pay more for a room when their company is paying". Also in this study it is seen that the feature of hotel's having an agreement with the visitors company is more important in the hotels which have higher room rates, that is in Hilton and Sheraton as well as Buyuk Ankara, Buyuk Surmeli and Merit Altinel.

Also the big companies prefer to have a contract with these hotels. The representative of that company will work efficiently if he/she is happy and comfortable. Hence the work of that person will be profitable to the firm.

Having a Business Center is another factor that helps to draw a distinction between Turkish and International owned hotels. The importance of the facilities provided by a Business Center has priority than the attitudes of the personnel and the location of the hotel. On the other hand, in the other 5-star hotels having Business Center is not as important as in the Hilton and Sheraton.

In fact, the success of the Business Center belongs to Ankara Business Center (ABC) by the way it runs the service, and it is admired by the visitors of those two hotels. However, it is not clear that whether the Business Center is important because of the way ABC runs it, or generally the visitors who need the services provided in the Business center prefer to stay in those hotels.

"An image is a total perception of the object that is formed by processing information from various sources over time" (Assael, 1992). All

the hotels' aspects and activities combine to its image, success is heavily dependent on this reputation and on the confidence people have in it.

Keeping these in mind, being a part of international hotel chain, Hilton's and Sheraton's names become a reference for them since they are sufficiently more well-known than other hotels. Furthermore, since staying in these hotels has an influence on the self-image of the visitor, the names of Hilton and Sheraton gain importance in the eyes of the guests.

However the degree of importance of Hilton and Sheraton names differs. The name of Sheraton is the last item to be considered while deciding on the hotel to stay in, whereas the name of Hilton is more effective. The reason is, simply Hilton International was opened in 1954 that is 15 years before Sheraton in Turkey. So, people are more familiar with the name and the services provided by the Hilton.

Price is one of the major components of the hotel product as consumers like to compare prices before choosing a hotel. Therefore price is often a determining element of the final choice.

A client can find that the hotel rates are reasonable at one given moment; but he/she will find them too expensive at another, according to whether his/her stay is paid by his/her firm or by him/her self. Besides, "value is only relevant in the eyes of beholder, some services have perceived value for certain customers, but not for others" (Morrison, 1989).

The visitors of all 5-star hotels do not consider price as a determining factor, except in the case of Buyuk Surmeli, because generally the image of the hotel is a determining factor in price acceptance, especially when snobbery is involved.

As Morrison, 1989 indicated "there are people who pay high prices for luxury-oriented travel services, and they perceive that they get exceptional value for their money". Furthermore "when consumers do not have sufficient information about product quality, they use price as an indication of quality" (Assael, 1992).

On the other hand, in the case of Buyuk Surmeli, price has the priority among all other factors. The price given by this hotel is about 37% cheaper than the other 5-star hotels (Table 10), it has not changed since it was a 4-star hotel. Thus, Buyuk Surmeli is preferred by price sensitive guests who want to stay in a 5-star hotel.

As stated before, although all the facilities provided by the hotels have an influence on the consumers' choice of the hotel product, their level of importance varies from individual to individual as well as from hotel to hotel. The analysis done in this chapter indicated these differences from the consumers' point of view using the results taken from the questionnaires as well as from the interviews that were held by the researcher.

## **CHAPTER VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Since management varies from hotel to hotel, the ranking of hotel characteristics given by guests also differs. In other words, each hotel is preferred by a particular kind of customer for separate reasons, which were discussed in Chapter VI.

In this chapter the conclusion and recommendations for the matching of the facilities provided by the hotels and the characteristics which are effective on the decision in choice of hotel of the visitors are discussed. The limited recommendations for each hotel is tries to maximize the fit in the facilities provided and the factors effecting the choice of the guest.

### **Buyuk Ankara Oteli**

The result of the survey indicates that the people staying in Buyuk Ankara are mainly business people who prefer to stay in this hotel whenever they are in Ankara, and consider the location of the hotel as the most important item in choosing that hotel.

The location of Buyuk Ankara is its greatest competitive advantage. The building is in the most convenient place considering its closeness to the places of business and visibility from the street (Appendix 3). So for promotion purposes stress should be put on its central location in attempting to attract potential guests.

The items such as the attitudes of the personnel and the quality of the other visitors are directly related to Buyuk Ankara's being established for a longer period of time. Buyuk Ankara's guests are generally frequent visitors who are loyal to this hotel. They prefer to stay in Buyuk Ankara whenever they are in Ankara.

This feature of the Buyuk Ankara is a competitive advantage for the time being. Since all hotels offer the same basic products, there is high competition among 5-star hotels as their target market is more or less the same. Thus Buyuk Ankara should focus on keeping its existing brand-loyal frequent visitors, as well as attracting potential brand-loyal frequent guests.

Since those kinds of visitors try to reduce the risk of uncertainties with the repeat buying of any service, Buyuk Ankara should try to make its potential visitors feel more secure with its services. In order to gain the element of trust of possible guests, Buyuk Ankara should first introduce its facilities in a more presentable way. Such as providing a free room for one night for the people who generally makes the reservations for the company or for a tourist group, like the representatives of the travel agencies, of the companies which have their centers out of Ankara as well as for the secretaries. The importance of these people is that they are the ones who make the bookings for the visitor, so they have the power to choose the hotels.

Furthermore to have an agreement with the visitor's company constitutes a factor that effects the guest's decision to choose a hotel. Thus the management of the hotel should also give importance in making contracts with the companies which are consistent with the general image

of the hotel, so that the quality of the visitors will not be effected in a negative way.

### **Merit Altinel**

This research indicates that the people staying in Merit Altinel are mainly business people as well as the members of the sports teams, actors/actresses, who prefer to be close to the places that they are interested in, and generally stay in Merit Altinel when they are in Ankara.

Although both Buyuk Ankara and Merit Altinel show similarities in terms of the characteristics which influence the visitors decisions, there are slight differences between them.

First of all, the concept of brand-loyalty is not as important as in the case of Buyuk Ankara. Because Merit Altinel was opened about 18 years after Buyuk Ankara and its reputation is not as effective as that hotel. However, Merit Altinel still has some brand-loyal frequent visitors.

Secondly, as in the case of Buyuk Ankara, the central location of the Merit Altinel is its greatest advantage over other 5-star hotels. However the difference becomes clear when the occupancy of the visitors of two hotels are considered. Since the places that the hotel's guests are interested in are very close to Merit Altinel, the location of the hotel is seen as central. Furthermore, being close to bus and train stations as well as the airport's bus terminal, cause to be perceived by the visitors as central (Appendix 3).

These results indicate that the Merit Altinel should focus on the visitors, both individuals and companies, who are interested in the places which are close to the hotel. While doing these, Merit Altinel should not forget

that keeping the quality of the visitors higher is another important item which is more effective than in the cases of other two Turkish owned hotels (Buyuk Ankara and Buyuk Surmeli). This constitutes an advantage for the hotel in comparison to other two hotels.

### **Buyuk Surmeli Oteli**

The most important factor for its visitors in choosing Buyuk Surmeli is its premium price (Table 10). The level of the room rates stayed the same since it was 4-star rated and for the time being the price difference between this and other 5-star hotels is quite different.

However price not only represents a monetary item, it can also indicate the quality of the service. Furthermore, the price perceptions of the visitors play an important role in guests' purchasing behavior. Thus when Buyuk Surmeli offers rates lower than market prices, it devaluates its image. Consumers of the hotel product agree that a certain reputation justifies a certain price.

For that reason, Buyuk Surmeli has to increase its room rates, taking into account the market price, but still it should be cheaper than the other 5-star hotels, since mainly price sensitive customers prefer this hotel.

By increasing the prices, Buyuk Surmeli can also add value to the quality of the visitors. The clients who are more suitable for 5-star hotel will shift to that hotel.

Furthermore, the agreement with the companies has an effect on the employee of that company in choosing this hotel, so Buyuk Surmeli should also consider giving importance to the more price sensitive companies.

These are important, since the quality of the visitors is directly related to the representatives of these companies who stay in the hotel.

Although there is no formal training in the hotel, the attitudes of the personnel is found to be quite effective on the visitors decisions. In the present situation this constitutes a disadvantage for the Buyuk Surmeli since the newly appointed personnel's adaptation period lasts longer. This may result in dissatisfied customers whereas an efficient ongoing training program would empower the personnel to provide the service that they would like to provide but can not at present because of not having the knowledge of how to do. So a kind of training program should be instituted.

### **Hilton International & Sheraton Ankara Hotels and Towers**

Since the general characteristics and the image of the Hilton and Sheraton show similarities, both will be discussed together.

As the result of this study the visitors staying in these hotels have the image of busy business people who give importance to work as well as to their comfort, and generally they are people who have status in the society.

Both hotels enjoy the advantages of having higher quality of visitors, having agreement with the companies, and having a Business Center which is successfully run by ABC. These three features are the most effective items on visitors' decisions. Thus there is no need to change the policy that is used for these items.

However, as stated before, on the contrary to the beliefs of the Ankara's citizens, the visitors who live in other cities do not consider the location of these hotels to be as central as the other 5-star hotels. But, since these hotels' managers' beliefs are different, these hotels are advertised as being centrally located. The central locations of these hotels should be communicated to the citizens of Ankara who are the potential customers of meeting rooms and the ball rooms.

On the other hand, through consumer education programs that are carefully designed by the hotel management considering the consumers' needs, the concept of central location of the hotel could be imposed to consumers' minds. The tools that can be used for this purpose can be mailing a map which shows the location of these hotels as well as the important places and companies around them, to the potential visitors.

Another alternative is providing a bus service from these hotels to the basic places of interest in Ankara every hour, and having the time schedule announced at the bus stops.

The distinctions between Hilton and Sheraton are observed in perception of the names of the hotels and the attitudes of the personnel. Being the members of well-known international hotel chains, both of them have the advantage of the positive effect of their names. However, it is more important in the case of Hilton. Thus to compete with a name which has a perception that is as high as Hilton, Sheraton should use publicity.

As discussed in the previous section the other distinction between these two hotels is their personnel's attitudes. Although it is the fifth item in the list in Hilton, in both hotels the behavior of the personnel is considered as more unfriendly than the other three hotels. For that reason the training

program that is held for the personnel should be adapted to the needs of the Turkish citizens.

This research showed that each 5-star hotel in Ankara has a different facility which is especially important for the visitor while they are making their decisions. Thus hotel management should know its strength and act in accordance with that facility, to create a competitive advantage.

## Appendix 1

### THE REGULATION ABOUT STAR RATING SYSTEM

5-star hotels are the foundations showing higher characteristics in choice of location, building, installation, decoration, service standards; with at least 200 rooms, carrying the properties given below:

- Rooms should be decorated within the standards and should be 20 meters square excluding the bathroom,
- At least 2 multipurpose large rooms,
- At least 1 conference room with a capacity of 100 persons, which has a secretary that is responsible for at least 3 meeting rooms, and simultaneous translation services,
- A safe box in the rooms to keep valuables and confidential papers,
- In the bathroom a bathtub and a telephone which is connected to reception and also has an alarm system,
- TV satellite and video system,
- The size of the garage should cover the requirement for at least 10% of the rooms,

- At least an 80 square-meter indoor swimming pool which has a heating system,

- A night club or a disco,

- 24 hours room service,

- A restaurant which provides pastries,

- At least 40 squares meters fully equipped gymnasium, sauna, Turkish bath, massage room, squash courts or 4 of the facilities which provide similar services,

- At least one additional restaurant apart from the first-class restaurant,

- A saloon which provides American Bar service,

- Sections of laundry, ironing, tailoring and dry cleaning,

- A first aid room which has 24 hours doctor-nurse facilities.

Source: "Resmi Gazete: Turizm Yatirim ve Isletmeleri Nitelikleri Yönetmeliği", 14.10.1993-21728, p.p.13-17

## Appendix 2

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS PREPARED FOR THE BILKENT UNIVERSITY'S MBA PROGRAM THESIS, TO FIND OUT AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER ANKARA'S 5 STAR HOTELS ARE ABLE TO RESPOND TO THE CUSTOMER NEEDS.

YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE ANALYZED WITH THE OTHER ANSWERS TO CREATE A TOTAL DATABASE, SO YOU ARE NOT EXPECTED TO WRITE YOUR NAME.

- WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT MADE YOU TO STAY IN THIS HOTEL? PLEASE RANK THE FIRST FIVE CHARACTERISTICS ACCORDING TO THEIR IMPORTANCE AS 1, 2, 3, 4 AND 5.

- \_\_\_ ITS NAME
- \_\_\_ PRICE
- \_\_\_ CENTRAL LOCATION
- \_\_\_ CLOSE TO BUS AND TRAIN STATIONS, AND AIRPORT
- \_\_\_ SAFETY
- \_\_\_ QUALITY OF OTHER VISITORS
- \_\_\_ GOOD ATTITUDES OF PERSONNEL
- \_\_\_ FAST SERVICE
- \_\_\_ HAS PARKING PLACE
- \_\_\_ ITS DECORATION
- \_\_\_ HAS BUSINESS CENTER
- \_\_\_ HAS A CONTRACT WITH MY COMPANY
- \_\_\_ ITS RESTAURANT, CASINO, POOL ETC.
- \_\_\_ OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Appendix 3

The Map of Ankara

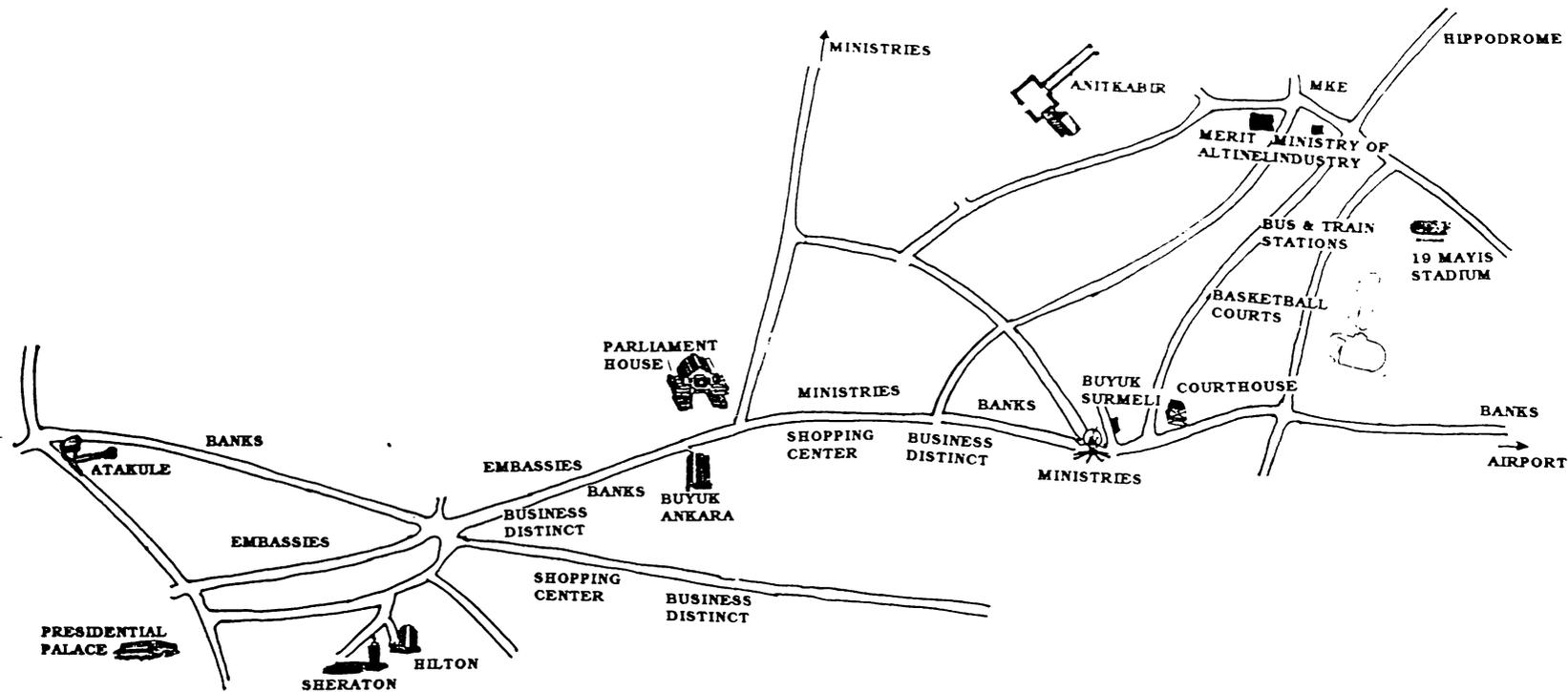


TABLE 1

## Arrivals of Foreign Visitors at Frontiers, 1987-1992 ('000)

	1985	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Austria	77	118	157	197	102	205
Belgium	20	39	48	56	34	75
Denmark	9	31	32	35	32	64
Finland	13	49	70	104	81	104
France	150	247	284	311	117	248
Germany	300	768	897	974	780	1,165
Greece	213	430	277	228	139	147
Italy	75	144	154	156	64	158
Netherlands	31	81	107	150	107	205
Norway	6	21	26	40	25	43
Spain	19	44	56	62	25	47
Sweden	11	43	67	110	69	120
Switzerland	36	68	78	76	42	79
UK	125	465	406	352	201	315
Other Western Europe	5	24	31	35	20	32
<b>Total Western Europe</b>	<b>1,090</b>	<b>2,572</b>	<b>2,690</b>	<b>2,886</b>	<b>1,838</b>	<b>3,007</b>
Bulgaria	20	9	16	73	943	817
Czechoslovakia	6	8	12	66	217	127
Hungary	37	61	194	172	165	148
Poland	88	166	196	207	184	112
Romania	13	16	13	377	504	567
Yugoslavia	366	290	217	326	159	156
USSR/CIS	12	22	43	223	732	1,221
Iran	354	234	241	254	253	146
Middle East	313	272	300	289	271	313
USA	196	165	205	206	79	183
Canada	22	29	32	35	18	26
Australia	23	29	34	37	21	31
New Zealand	5	10	10	13	7	7
Japan	17	28	32	35	18	36
Latin America	22	22	27	30	11	26
All other	31	240	197	160	99	128
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,615</b>	<b>4,173</b>	<b>4,459</b>	<b>5,389</b>	<b>5,519</b>	<b>7,051</b>

TABLE 2

Distribution of Beds and Nights Spent by Region in 1992

	Turkish Citizen	Foreigner	Beds
1 Marmara	28.33%	19.76%	23.67%
2 Aegean	25.30%	24.89%	29.22%
3 Mediterranean	17.14%	49.26%	32.64%
4 C.Anatolia	15.68%	4.81%	9.12%
5 Black Sea	6.21%	0.82%	2.68%
6 Eastern Anatolia	5.24%	0.22%	1.41%
7 S.East Antolia	2.10%	0.24%	1.26%

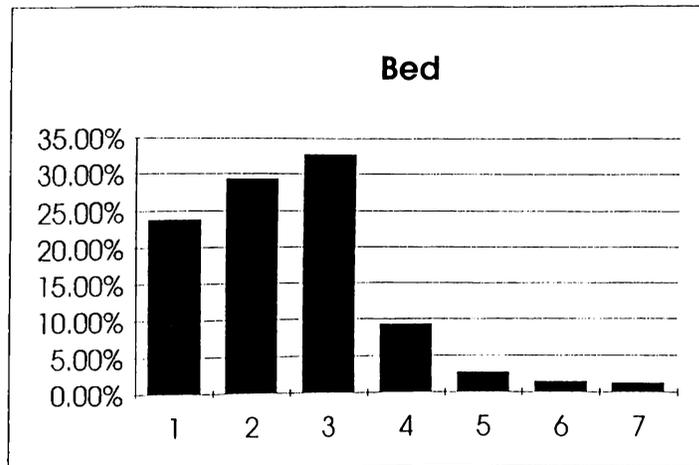


TABLE 3

Figures on Accommodation Establishments by Class in 1991

	A	B	C
1 STAR	247	9102	17242
2 STAR	411	19168	37458
3 STAR	253	21580	43871
4 STAR	64	9318	18929
5 STAR	55	14653	30121

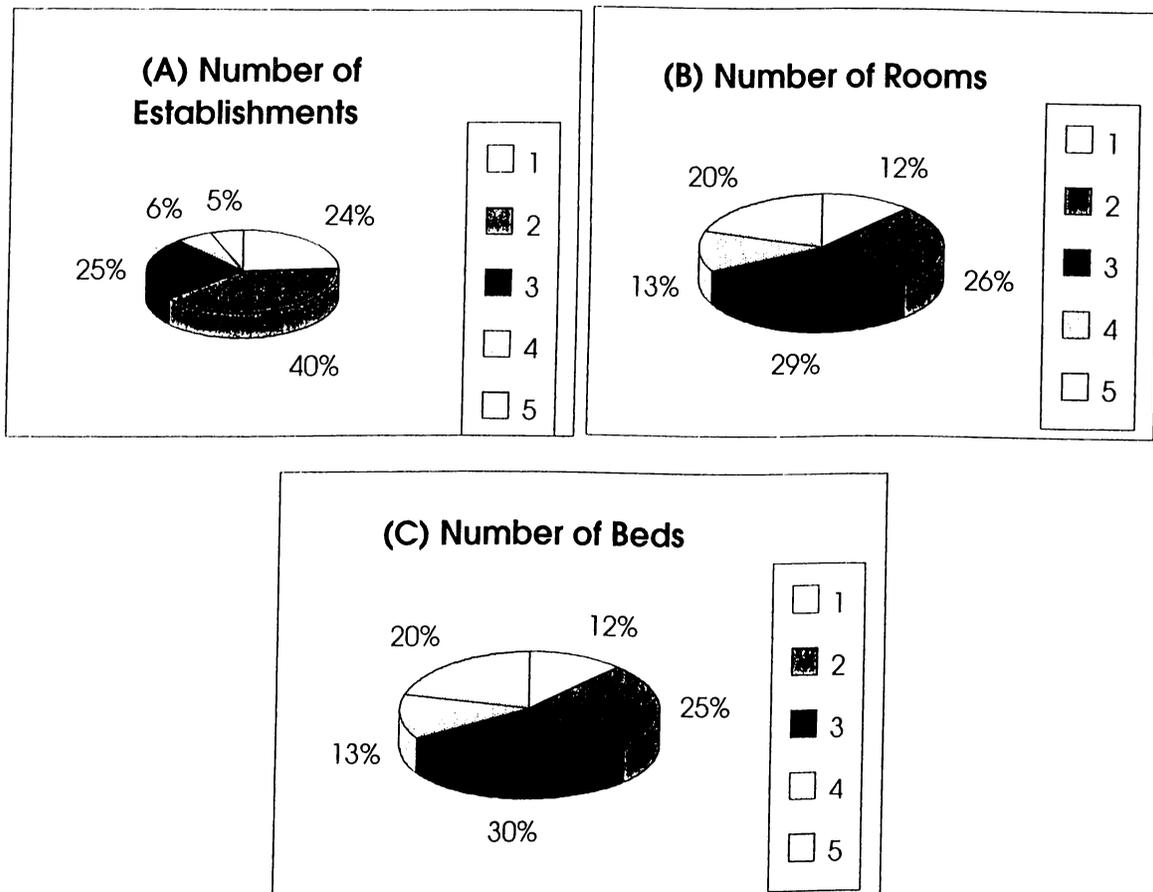


TABLE 4

**Tourism Activities in Ankara**

Holiday	37.65%
Culture	7.03%
Sports	3.24%
Visit Friends	5.06%
Meetings	2.80%
Missions	3.60%
Business	26.60%
Health and Spa	0.65%
Religion	0.09%
Shopping	0.23%
Study/Educator	7.20%
Transit	3.68%
Other	2.17%

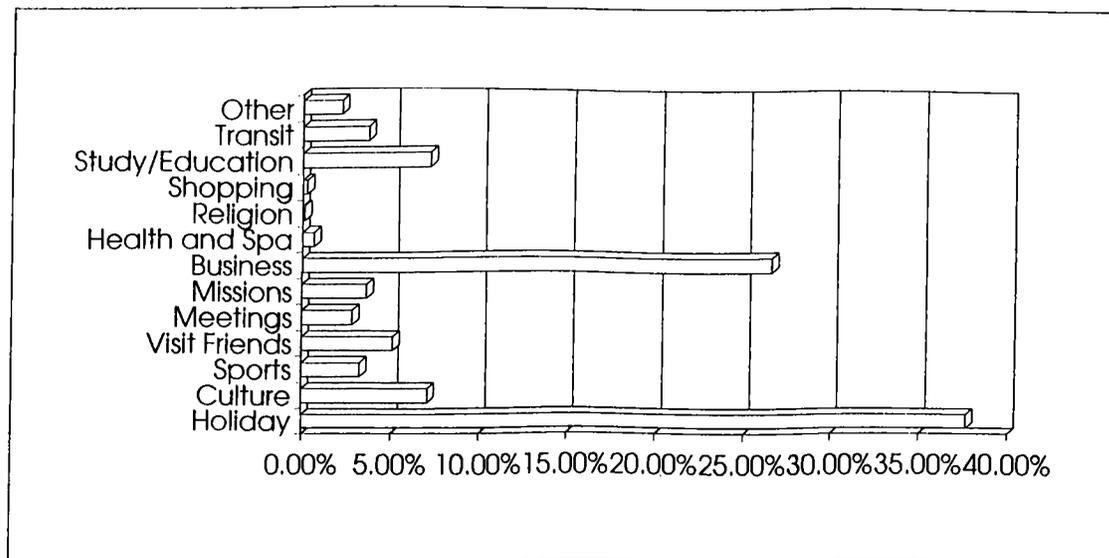


TABLE 5

**Tourism Activities in Turkiye**

	Ankara	Istanbul	Izmir	Antalya	Other
Holiday	1.09%	19.27%	5.76%	29.13%	44.75%
Culture	3.12%	35.52%	4.78%	16.88%	39.70%
Sports	8.48%	41.33%	1.65%	18.47%	30.07%
Visit Friends	4.35%	35.62%	10.37%	11.63%	38.03%
Meetings	11.48%	50.92%	9.84%	12.33%	15.43%
Missions	16.44%	43.77%	15.91%	4.14%	19.74%
Business	15.00%	48.26%	9.42%	3.43%	23.89%
Health and Spa	9.99%	28.24%	7.97%	24.24%	29.56%
Religion	2.00%	26.57%	29.64%	23.19%	18.60%
Shopping	0.46%	77.21%	1.19%	5.32%	15.82%
Study/Education	30.57%	30.78%	3.26%	7.54%	27.85%
Transit	17.96%	42.81%	7.88%	5.00%	26.35%
Other	5.41%	48.74%	1.88%	2.20%	41.77%

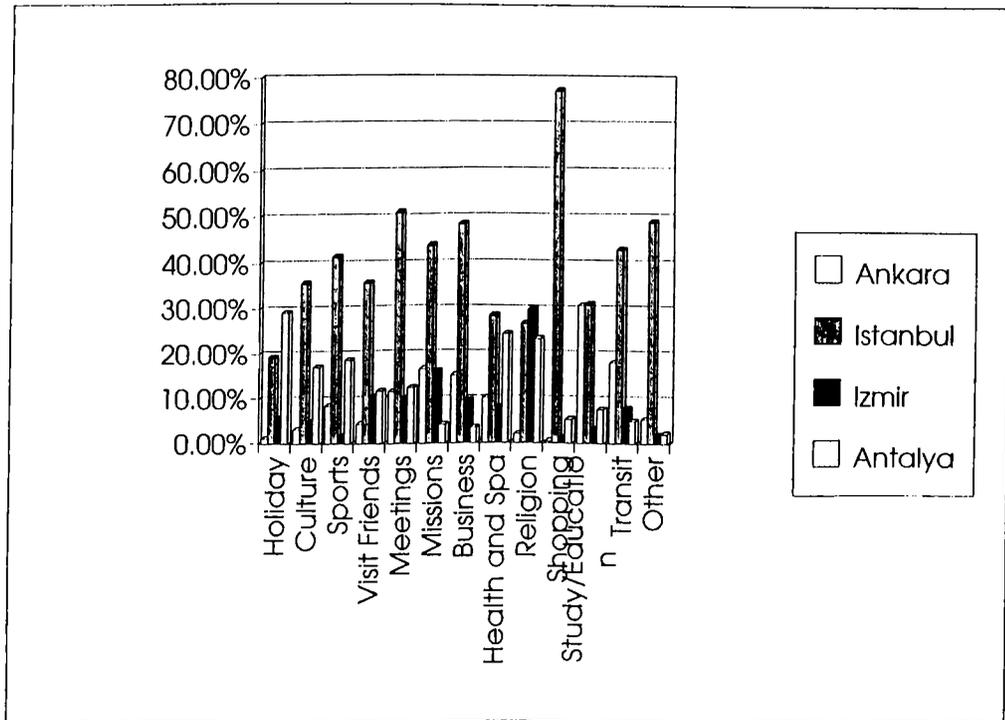
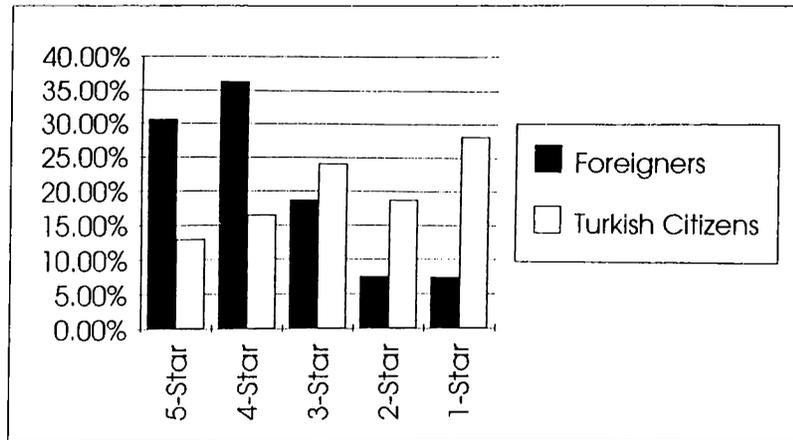


TABLE 6

**Number of Arrivals in Ankara**

	Foreigners	Turkish Citizens
5-Star	30.48%	12.83%
4-Star	36.23%	16.38%
3-Star	18.59%	24.00%
2-Star	7.38%	18.65%
1-Star	7.32%	28.14%



THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF 5-STAR HOTELS IN ANKARA

	<i>Büyük Ankara</i>	<i>Büyük Sürmeli</i>	<i>Merit Altinel</i>
Establishment Date	1967	1985	1986
Owner	Emek Insaat Emekli Sandigi Kizilay	Yalcin Sürmeli	Net Holding
Location	Kavaklıdere	Sihye	Tandogan
Room Numbers	192	206	169
Number of Restaurant	2	4	3
Number of Meeting, Ball Rooms	7	4	4
BC Run by	Hotel management	Reception	Hotel Management
Customer Profile			
Pleasure Purposed	Minority	30% *	30%
Business Purposed	Majority	70% *	70%
Foreigners ***	30%	30%*	50%
Turkish Citizens ***	70%	70% *	50%
Occupation of the Visitors	Bureaucrats, Military Officials, Embassy representatives, Building Contractors, Staff of the Airlines.	Contractors, Electric Engineers, Politicians, Union Members Municipality Members,	Government Officials, Embassy representatives, Mem. of Chamber of Commerce Sportmen, Actors & Actresses
Training Programs	Once in a year a seminar On the job training	On the job training	Meetings every night On the job training

\* : Winter Season is Considered

\*\* : Room Numbers of the Towers and Executive Floor Sections

\*\*\* : The Visitors that Come with the Aim of Business are Taken into Account

TABLE 7 (Continue)

## THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF 5-STAR HOTELS IN ANKARA

	<i>Sheraton</i>	<i>Hilton</i>
Establishment Date	1991	1988
Owner	Nurol Holding, DEG	Sabancı Holding, General Dynamics Ladbroke
Location	Kavaklıdere	Kavaklıdere
Room Numbers	360 48 **	350 33 **
Number of Restaurant	4	4
Number of Meeting, Ball Rooms	6	6
BC Run by	Ankara Business Center	Ankara Business Center
Customer Profile		
Pleasure Purposed	15%	15%
Business Purposed	85%	85%
Foreigners ***	Minority	51%
Turkish Citizens ***	Majority	49%
Occupation of the Visitors	Defense Industry, Engineers, Construction Engineers,	Defense Industry, Power Industry, Military, Businessmen.
Training Programs	SAME On the job training	Continious training programs On the job training

\* : Winter Season is Considered

\*\* : Room Numbers of the Towers and Executive Floor Sections

\*\*\* : The Visitors that Come with the Aim of Business are Taken into Account

TABLE 8

The Rankings Obtained from the Questionnaire

	Büyük Ankara	Büyük Sürmeli	Hilton	Merit Altinel	Sheraton	Total
Name	7	6	3		5	8
Price	6	1				2
Central Location	1	2	4	1	4	1
Safe	5		6	5	6	7
Quality of the Visitors	3	5	1	2	1	3
Attitudes of the Personnel	2	3	5	3	7	5
Business Center	8		3		3	6
Has an Agreement with the Compa	4	4	2	4	2	4

1 : The most effective characteristic while choosing that hotel

8 : The least effective characteristic while choosing that hotel

TABLE 9

## The Means Obtained from the Questionnaire

	B. Ankara	B. Sürmeli	Hilton	Merit Altinel	Sheraton	Total Avg.
Its Name	0.85	0.2	2		1.7	1.19
Price	1.08	4.7				2.89
Central Location	4.1	4.1	1.7	4	1.9	3.16
Close to Bus Station				0.5		0.50
Safe	1.23		0.7	1.83	1.3	1.27
Quality of other visitors	2.23	1.1	3.6	3.41	3.5	2.77
Good Attitudes of the Personnel	2.61	2.9	1.2	2.75	1.2	2.13
Fast Service						0.00
Has Parking Place						0.00
Its Decoration	0.23		0.4			0.32
Has Business Center	0.61		2		2.3	1.64
Has a Contract with my Compar	1.77	2	2.7	2	2.4	2.17
Its Restaurant etc.			0.5			0.50

TABLE 10

## Room Rates of the Hotels

	Büyük Ankara	Büyük Sürmeli	Hilton	Merit Altinel
Single Room	195\$	140\$	215\$	230\$
Double Room	175\$	110\$	195\$	185\$
Single Room*	125\$	**	146\$	130\$
Double Room*	109\$	**	136\$	110\$

\* : Room rate which is given to the contracted companies

\*\* : Discount level depends on the contracted company

Source: Front offices of the Hotels

TABLE 11

**General Information About the Interviews**

Name of the Hotel	Name of the Respondent	Occupation of the Respondent
Buyuk Ankara Oteli	Hatice Abdullah	Sales Manager
	Melih Baser	Front Office Personnel
	Fatos Aksakal	Front Office Personnel
Buyuk Surmeli Oteli	Mecbur Ozoktem	Front Office Manager
	Eren Eke	Front Office Personnel
	Oguz Gokoguz	Front Office Personnel
Merit Altinel	Aysegul Kirali	Sales Manager
	Faik Balkim	Front Office Manager
	Hasan Yasan	Banquet Department Personnel
Hilton International	Collin Abbercrombie	Sales Manager
	Zeynep Gurel	Front Office Manager
Sheraton	Serdar Turan	Sales Manager
	Ahmet Yayboke	General Manager
Swiss Hotel	Emre Eke	Front Office Personnel
Ministry of Tourism	Servet Koçak	Turizm Kontrolörü

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