Trainee Employment in Hotel Kitchens and an Application for Qualification of Skill Education

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Introduction

Because of the characteristics of touristic goods and services, qualified labor is the most important production factor for tourism sector in the world and Turkey (Timur, 1994, p. 44). Especially food and beverage serving establishments have some missions such as protecting the health care of the consumers, introduction of local cuisine and transferation of unique tastes to next generation. These missions increase the necessity of qualified labor for food and beverage serving establishments. On the other side tourism has a function to get the countries closer to each other. And food is an effective instrument on this action. From this point, Turkish cuisine must be introduced to tourists within the Turkish hospitality, and with its originality (Güler, 2007, s. 25).

As a department hotel kitchens are responsible for preparing and cooking the dishes for hotel guests with the necessity cooking equipment and qualified staff. And the kitchen staffs are the persons who are employed to produce food and beverage in a team work. Head Chef, Assistant Head Chef, Section Chefs, Section Cooks, Assistant Section Cooks, and Trainees are the main members of kitchen staff team (Aktaş and Özdemir, 2007, p.5-6). The hierarchy of kitchen staff in hotels can be seen on Figure 1.

The students of tourism education need to practice their theoretical knowledge to improve their vocational experience. There are two ways to practice the theoretical knowledge for students. The first one is to use the school practicing areas and equipments and the second way is getting the practicing experience in tourism establishments as a trainee (Pelit and Güçer, 2006, p. 143).

The trainees who are getting vocational education in hotel kitchens are from secondary schools, universities or adult education centers. In this study, research questions are focused on the factors which affect the practical education process of cookery trainees who are from Hotels and Vocational High Schools.
As Robinson and Baron (2007, p. 913) mentioned; “the occupation of cookery has been identified as one sharing a shortage of skilled employees. While the trade attracts moderate numbers of new recruits, the attrition or wastage rate, either before completion of an apprenticeship or soon after, is high”. The previous researches on culinary education and vocational competence levels of chefs (Atılgan, 1998; Böyükylimaz, 2006; Çetin, 1993; Gömeç, 1995; Hughes, 2003; Kayayurt, 2002; Görkem, 2011) have also mentioned such kind of findings. In this way, it has been thought to build up a research to determine the vocational educational levels of chefs who are employed for 3, 4 and 5 star hotels and analyze the factors which affects the practical education process of cookery trainees in hotels.

![Hierarchy of Kitchen Staff in Hotels](Resource: Aktaş and Özdemir, 2007, p. 61.)

**Figure 1: Hierarchy of Kitchen Staff in Hotels**

**Resorce:** Aktaş and Özdemir, 2007, p. 61.

**Method**

The sample of the research is constituted from 405 chefs (head chefs, assistant chefs and section chefs) who are employed for 3, 4 and 5 star hotels in Ankara and Antalya. Public survey was used for data collection. The validity and reliability studies of the scale employed were implemented; following this the questionnaire was applied between April 30 and June 30 to the sample population. Data obtained were analyzed through “frequency”, percentage”, “t-test for related-sampling one-factor variance (ANOVA) and Bonferroni test”.

![Hierarchy of Kitchen Staff in Hotels](Resource: Aktaş and Özdemir, 2007, p. 61.)
Results and Conclusion

According to the findings of the study, 44% of the applicants are the department chefs (chef garde mange, chef saucier and chef patisserie), 32.3% of applicants are assistant chefs and finally 23.7% of the applicants are head chefs. 35.1% of the applicants who had no vocational education experience, and 29.4% of the applicants who had vocational education in Center of Vocational Education, and 18.3% of them had vocational education in Vocational Courses, and 16% of the applicants had vocational education in Hotels and Vocational High Schools and finally 1.2% of the applicants had vocational education in colleges. The t-test for related-sampling one-factor variance (ANOVA) and Bonferroni test” showed that there were differences (p<0.01) between the factors which affect the practical education process. However there were no significant difference (p<0.01) between the factors of “Qualification of master trainers” and “methods of skill education process”. From the other point of view, factor of “the plan of skill education” showed significant differences (p<0.01) between the other factors. As a result of the findings of the study, some recommendations were made to increase the vocational competence levels of kitchen staff and trainee.

- Pedagogic and vocational education must be given to kitchen staff (especially to master trainers). These education programmes could be arranged by corporation of the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Culture and Tourism and food and beverage establishments. After the educational programmes kitchen staff should be certificated.

- Hotel establishments must be forced not to employ uneducated staff by The Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

- National Cookery Vocational Standard must be renewed within the necessities of food and beverage industry.

- Each subject of the National Cookery Vocational Standard must be applied individually by the trainees in the kitchens

- Individual application opportunity must be given to each trainee on each subject of the National Cookery Vocational Standard. And reapplication chance must be given to failed trainees.