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The Suitability of Disabled Friendly Holiday Accommodation in Turkey: The Case of Kastamonu Hotels

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand the extent to which the hotels under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the center of the Turkish city Kastamonu are fit for the accommodation of the disabled. The author investigated six accommodation facilities located in the center of Kastamonu by utilizing various tools for data collection, including the Survey Method, face-to-face interviews with business managers, and the Drop-off and Pick-up (DOPU) method. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data. The results indicated that accommodation in these places is far from satisfying the special requirements for the disabled. This study contributes to the literature on barrier-free tourism by providing an original and comprehensive review of the theories, methods, discussion points, and implications of research in this field.

Keywords: tourism, accommodation businesses, disabled individuals, Kastamonu

Introduction

The number of people with disabilities is increasing, with over a billion people having some form of disability according to World Health Organization (WHO) records (WHO, 2014). In Turkey alone, approximately 12.29% of the population (between 8.5 and 9 million) lives with some form of physical impairment (İnal, 2012; Sezer & Tozlu, 2012; Turkish Statistical Institute, 2002).

The challenges faced by the disabled are as old as the history of humanity, affecting not only their lives, but also those of the caregivers and the whole structure of the society (Pehlivanođlu, 2012). One of these challenges represents lack of disabled friendly holiday accommodation (Erdem, 2007; Müftüođlu, 2006; Yılmaz & Gökçe, 2012), which reflects negatively on the disabled's participation in tourism activities (Blichfeldt & Nicolaisen, 2010; West Mediterranean Development Agency, 2012; Yaylı & Öztürk, 2006). There should be no disparity among members of the society in terms of their ability to visit places (Şahin, 2012). Therefore, people who are not able to travel because of a disability should be encouraged to participate in tourism activities (Toskay as cited in Şahin, 2012). In addition, inclusion of disabled people in tourism activities is one of the main issues discussed in social tourism (Kozak, Akođlan, & Kozak, 2013).

The issue of lack of disabled friendly accommodation has been raised in several studies (Düđer

& Kayhan, 2001; Olcay, Giritlioğlu, & Parlak, 2014; S. Yolasığmazoğlu, personal communication, September 15, 2015; Yılmaz & Gökçe, 2012), some of them indicating that there are no handicap and wheelchair accessible hotels in Turkey (Arıcı, 2010; Kuyumcu, 2013; Pehlivanoğlu, 2012; Prime Ministry Administration for Disabled People, 2010) as also revealed by several seminal studies including Mülayim and Özşahin (2011), Şahin (2012), West Mediterranean Development Agency (2012), and Yenişehirlioğlu (2013). Moreover, as both Cavinato and Cuckovich (1992) and Tozlu, Mercan, and Atay (2012) suggest, in order to further facilitate inclusion of the disabled in tourist practices, all the obstacles preventing them from traveling should be eliminated (Cavinato & Cuckovich, 1992; Tozlu et al., 2012).

Review of Travel in Kastamonu

The tourism potential of Kastamonu is higher than its prospects in the manufacture industry and trade (Arslan, 2015; Babaş, 2014; Bektaş, 2012; Kaplan, 2012) as it represents one of the very rare areas in Turkey that can offer tourists a combination of beaches, historical sites, hunting opportunities, snow sports, and ecological tourism (Aydoğdu, 2013). However, although Kastamonu is among the primary provinces proposed for economic development, the process has barely been initiated and much is yet to be done. Factors like insufficient land transportation or the small size of the Port of İnebolu, which cannot be converted into a bigger port due to difficulties with customs and the absence of railway transportation, add up to the challenges posed by the rough geographical structure of the area, preventing the city from developing. In addition, Kastamonu is among the top provinces from which people have been migrating as a result of economic underdevelopment and an increase in unemployment.

Emigration impacted the business initiatives in the city negatively, with the exception of only a few family-owned businesses (M. Elmas, personal communication, September 22, 2012). These are the reasons why, despite its touristic potential, Kastamonu has not been promoted either nationally or internationally and therefore failed to become a destination brand. This in turn has resulted in its failure to meet Turkey's standards in terms of quality bed supplies and expected number of visitors, reflecting badly on tourism income (Kastamonu İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü [KİKTİM], 2014) and causing businesses to avoid Kastamonu and the surrounding area (M. Elmas, personal communication, September 22, 2012).

There were several debates on the topic of tourism in Kastamonu whose outcome was that turning it into a destination brand might help solve its economic problems. However, tourist activities in this (or any other) region are inevitably determined by the supply of qualified beds and the usage rates of this supply. In this context, both the demands of the able-bodied and those of the disabled should be met to reach the desired rates of accommodation in the facilities located in the city center of Kastamonu and thus make it possible for it to become a destination brand.

Disabled tourists might make a noticeable contribution to the economic development of the city since there are 5 million disabled people in Turkey with an above-average income who have never been on holiday (Kuyumcu, 2014). In addition, the number of European impaired persons is said to have reached 130 million individuals, equating 80 billion euros. Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB) (2008) survey found that 15 million disabled, including the disadvantaged elderly, are not able to visit Turkey. Stoddard (2014) further reports that there were 56,672,000 disabled in the United States of America (U.S.) before the year 2010, constituting about 18.7% of the entire population of the U.S. This population could be targeted by the Tourism Industry in Turkey. Considering the immense potential that disabled visitors constitute for tourism, the

purpose of this research is to determine whether accommodation enterprises operated in Kastamonu are suitable for disabled individuals and to provide suggestions for improving them. The study seeks answers to the following questions:

- Are the accommodation facilities operated in Kastamonu suitable for the disabled?
- What kind of practices for the disabled are there in these facilities?
- What can be done to make accommodation facilities in Kastamonu more suitable for the disabled?

Literature Review

Recent academic studies indicate that individuals with disabilities should be divided into very different groups in terms of their experiences, perspectives, and needs for travel and tourism depending on the type of disability they have (Fleischer & Pizam, 2002). This line of research concludes that various types of disabilities should be classified accurately in order to provide the disabled with individualized products and services (Buhalis, Eichhorn, Michopoulou & Miller, 2005). Yet, McKercher, Packer, Yau, and Lam (2003) reveal that the psychological barriers encountered by individuals with disabilities during the holidays, including the negative attitudes of business staff as well as lack of accurate and accessible information, affect them more than the physical barriers they encounter.

Burnet and Baker (2001) drew a correlation between the reasons behind participation in tourism and degrees of disability and found, on the one hand, that individuals with low and moderate disabilities have the same reasons to go on vacation as abled people do and on the other, that the higher the degree of disability, the more likely the people were to make holiday plans based on how well their needs were met by holiday providers. The other important issues in accessible tourism are, of course, financial constraints and physical barriers. Burnet and Baker (2001) state that while the decision to promote moderately priced services would appeal to people with disabilities, it is not possible for available enterprises to reach this market with low-quality products and services (Cengiz & Aksöz, 2018).

In the research carried out by Rice (2006) in order to identify differences in the knowledge level of various managers at hotels adapted for disabled tourists, it was found that the former do not have accurate or consistent views on how to meet the needs of the latter, nor do they have solid knowledge of the market. Another study by Chikuta (2016) aiming to explore accessibility in Zimbabwe's tourism sector indicates that, while policies were being crafted to bring the country back to economic stability, little was being done to provide access to tourism for people with disabilities. This might mean that, as is the case with other industries, people with disabilities are regarded as insignificant contributors to tourism.

Vila, Darcy, and González (2015) investigated the elements that make a destination competitive for the accessible tourism market by comparing Spain and Australia and found that both countries use a critical accessibility regulation for fundamental structural aspects: architecture, urban planning, transport, communication, information and leisure activities. Accommodation businesses were also analyzed, and the findings indicated that these points will continually be developed under the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. According to Kim, Stonesifer, and Han (2012), this line of research has two important purposes: (a) to identify disabled guests' points of view on their hotel experiences and (b) to describe, on the one hand, the feasibility of implementing disabled facilities in hotel design such

as handicap accessible and mobility friendly rooms and on the other, to lay out staff policies such as training employees to pay better attention to their needs, and hiring helpers.

In a study that set out to investigate the difficulties arising from the interactions between people with various disabilities - wheelchair users, individuals using crutches, and blind people - and the hotel environment as well as the effort required to overcome these difficulties, the respondents emphasized that challenges originate from both the physical design of the hotel environment and staff behavior. Discrepancies were found among hotel experiences of those with several types of disabilities such as blind people and wheelchair users (Poria, Reichel, & Brandt, 2010). From a different perspective, Shaw and Coles (2004) attempted to widen the research agenda on the disabled and holiday taking to include challenges presented by holiday places as well. Their findings suggest that access of the disabled includes a series of barriers in both private and public spaces in addition to financial restrictions. All in all, based on the experience of the disabled, the market does not attend to their needs well enough.

Along these lines, Grady and Ohlin (2009) suggest that lack of training is one of the main barriers in the hospitality sector, as guests with special needs are not aware of specific implementations and services available for them. On the other hand, the authors also indicate that modifying policies and procedures to prevent discrimination towards guests might allow the latter to obtain services from the staff without any surveillance by the management. Darcy (2010) argued that there is not any research reflecting the marketing side of the topic and by investigating the criteria that disabled people determine as important in choosing accommodation.

Another important study in the hospitality field, Pagán (2015), analyzed the contribution of holiday trips to the life satisfaction of disabled people as compared to people without any physical barriers. Although the study indicated that the disabled are less likely to go on holiday, it also concluded that they have more life satisfaction than people without disabilities despite not being always offered the full array of services specific to their needs. In an attempt to provide a thorough analysis of these issues, Darcy and Pegg (2011) indicate that five key subjects which have not been previously investigated in the literature represent “inclusive attitudinal approach, safety, the responsibility of disabled people to communicate their necessities to the hotel, perceptions of accessible rooms by the general public, and operational processes” (p. 471). In their study, all the hotel managers agreed that providing high-quality customer service requires an understanding of disabled peoples’ individual needs and that there should not be any differences in hospitality services between the disabled and the nondisabled. Significantly, the results also indicate that there is a lack of understanding by managers as to what constitutes suitable accessible accommodation.

Methods

Accommodation enterprises under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) in Turkey - possessing Business Documents issued by MCT - were chosen as the subject of research in this study. These particular MCT-certified facilities were investigated in this study because, as opposed to the municipality-certified ones, the former is required to follow certain standards such as allocating at least 1% of bed capacity for the disabled (Universal Standards for Persons With Disabilities [USTAD], 2012).

Research Model and Design

The Screening Model was used in this study because it provides valid and reliable answers to the research questions thus satisfying the purpose of the study. The Screening Model represents a research approach that aims to describe either a past or a present situation as is, without modifying or influencing the participants' and the objects' terms. (Karasar, 1984). In other words, within this framework, the purpose of the researcher is to observe, record and detect relationships between cases, and then generalize the controlled invariant relations as in a descriptive approach (Yıldırım & Aytaç, 1966). The model allows researchers, on the one hand, to conduct research on larger samples of the population (Metin, 2014) and on the other, to easily determine participants' views or interests, skills, abilities, and attitudes on a topic.

This research uses particularly the Relational Screening Model to determine relationships among variables and predict possible outcomes by means of statistical tests (Metin, 2014). The procedure included familiarization with the relevant literature and then developing a scale (a questionnaire) by using the secondary data obtained from books, articles, conference papers, and online resources. The participants were volunteers selected by means of the convenience sampling method and the data was collected by using face-to-face and drop-collect approaches in order to find valid and reliable solutions to the research questions.

Target Population and Sample of Research

The collection of components having common characteristics that comprise the universe is known as the population. It is often not possible to access all of the elements, individuals, and objects, of which the outcomes of a research are to be generalized, especially when the universe is enormous and requires a lot of time and financial resources. Data was obtained from an impartial and representative sample of the population that was believed to represent the universe and the results obtained from this sample were generalized to the entire universe (Kaptan, 1998). For instance, out of 21 hotels in the city center of Kastamonu that have an MCT certificate (KİKTM, 2019), the biggest six hotels in Kastamonu were sampled in this research, comprising one 1-star hotel, two 3-star hotels and three boutique hotels. Within this sample, interviews were conducted with a total of six participants including one owner-manager, one firm partner, two general managers, one (executive) manager, and one front office manager.

Materials

As mentioned before, the hotels sampled were MCT-certified hotels located in the center of Kastamonu and listed in KİKTM (F. Şenoğlu, personal communication, April 10, 2014). The scale was developed based on the information gathered from the literature and by using Şahin's (2012) model. The latter was considered a good model for this study because it represents a thorough investigation of facilities and amenities in hotel businesses (parking lots, restaurants, staircases, corridors, rooms, bathrooms and toilets, cafeterias, bars, and saunas and baths) in terms of their compliance with existing legislation in Turkey. The suitability of the model is clearly detailed by Şahin (2012) in terms of legislative and/or recommended standards such as law Turkish Standard (TS) 9111 and the regulations of the Legislation on the Qualities of Tourism Investments and Establishments regarding the disabled (Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey, 1993).

TS 9111 / April 1991 (Standards for the Regulation of Buildings for Disabled Persons' Residence) represents an important guide detailing the requirements for each disability group, including the

close surroundings of the building, the entrance, the properties of the units in the houses and the characteristics of the accessible structures such as floor covering material, doors and stairs (Asbcert, 2018). The questionnaire used in the study as data collection tool consisted of two sections. In the first section, 72 statements (and 19 subordinate statements among these), mostly based on a 5-point Likert-type scale, were used to seek a valid and reliable answer to the question regarding the extent to which the investigated hotels are suitable for usage by the disabled. In the second section, descriptive questions regarding accommodation enterprises were posed to the respondents. Then, pre-testing face-to-face interviews were launched at the beginning of September 2014, in addition to the drop-off and pick-up (DOPU) method.

Data Analysis

All facilities that constituted the study area were visited to conduct surveys, and the desired complete coverage was achieved. The data obtained in the study were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0 a software package used in social sciences. Because the number of items was small, and other analyses were not suitable, the data analysis reports frequencies, percentages, the standard deviation and mean values to achieve reliability.

In terms of participants' answers' reliability, since some of them provided unrealistic data, claims such as the existence of a 3.5 meters (m) wide handicapped parking space (for each twenty parking spaces) marked by yellow lines were further corroborated by observations made by the researchers on site. A similar process was used for physical structures, the in-person analysis including the suitability of elevators for disabled usage, the general organization of rooms along with in-suite toilets and bathrooms as well as the accessibility of restaurants, bars, and common usage areas. Since the researchers' own observations were compared to the participants' descriptions, a mixed descriptive research design was applied to both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Findings

The following section provides descriptive information about the sample facilities and the level of easiness/difficulty for the disabled along the process, starting from their arrival until their departure. Table 1 depicts descriptive information about the sample facilities used in the study.

Table 1. Descriptive Information on the Study Sample Hotels

| Facility | Number of Establishments | Frequency of accommodation facilities % | Number of beds | Frequency of number of beds % | Number of employees |
|----------------|--------------------------|---|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1-Star | 1 | 16.66 | 96 | 24.18 | 1-10 |
| 3-Star | 2 | 33.33 | (114 and 45) | 40.05 | 11-20 x 2 |
| Boutique Hotel | 3 | 50.00 | (35, 52 and 55) | 35.77 | 1-10 x 3 |
| Total | 6 | 100 | 397 | 100 | |

Demographic Findings

The suitability of the six MCT-supervised accommodation facilities for the disabled's usage was measured against the above-mentioned scale, and the findings are provided in the following sections. Table 2 depicts information on the demographic information on sample respondents in the study.

Table 2. Demographic Information on Sample Respondents in the Study

| Position | Owner Manager | Firm Partner | General Manager | | (Executive) Manager | Front Office Manager | Total |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Category | 1-star | 3-star | Boutique | 3-star | Boutique | Boutique | 6 |
| Number | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Ratio % | 16.66 | 16.66 | 16.66 | 16.66 | 16.66 | 16.66 | 100 |
| Sex | M | M | M | M | M | F | 6 |
| Age Interval | Over 60 | 20-29 | 30-39 | 30-39 | 50-59 | 20-29 | |
| Education | Assoc. Deg. | Undergrad. | Undergrad. | Undergrad. | High School | High School | 6 |
| Experience | Over 20 Years | 1-5 Years | Over 20 Years | 1-5 Years | Over 20 Years | 1-5 Years | |

The State of the Parking Spaces

Parking services are priorities for individuals who regularly travel outside the places they live in and participate in recreational touristic activities. Pursuant to Article 4, item g of the Parking Space Legislation published in Turkey on 01/07/1993 in the Official Gazette no. 21624 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey, 1993), it is mandatory to allocate one-twentieth of the entire parking space for the disabled and place them very close to the reception area (Zengin & Eryılmaz, 2014). In terms of dimensions, each car space needs to be at least 3.5 m x 5 m and marked with yellow lines for proper visual awareness (Şahin, 2012; USTAD, 2012).

The data obtained in the study indicate that five out of six hotels included in the study had parking spaces. However, it was understood from both the statements of sample respondents and the on-site-observations that these parking spaces were not suitable for the disabled. The means and standard deviations of the answers provided by the sample respondents are presented in Table 3.

Reception Areas

The reception area is the place where guests go first when they arrive in order to check in. All guests need to provide an identity document a mandatory practice by virtue of law (Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi, 1973). For these reasons it is essential that the reception areas of accommodation facilities be designed to provide easy and functional operation of record-keeping for the incoming disabled. However, it was noticed that the reception areas of the enterprises included in the subject of this study are far from satisfying this expectation, with only 3-Star enterprises having a desk suitable for individuals in wheelchairs.

Elevators

The primary function of elevators is to make life easier for individuals with any form of disability, and especially for visually impaired individuals. To this end, the dimensions of entrance doors and cabins as well as the sizes and placements of commanding buttons are of crucial importance. Moreover, there should be audio notifications on the levels and floors to grant the visually impaired ease of access and the means to move without help.

The findings revealed that only one 1-Star and two 3-Star enterprises had elevators for their guests. It was reported that building elevators were not necessary for an enterprise having boutique hotel status, as they are registered as wooden residences and/or historical stone buildings and have two floors at most. Among the enterprises equipped with guest elevators, we found that none of them had a door width of 91.5 centimeters (cm) suitable for wheelchair access, except for one 3-Star hotel which used to be a hospital. This means that individuals in wheelchairs would not be able to utilize the elevators. It should also be indicated that the elevators did not have the necessary cabin dimensions of 130x140 cm (Asbcert, 2018; USTAD, 2012) either and lacked an audio notification

system.

Table 3 provides means and standard deviation scores for the parking space, reception and elevator facilities for the disabled in the six accommodation enterprises.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviation Scores for the Parking Space, Reception and Elevator Facilities for the Disabled in Accommodation Enterprises

| Statement | N | M | SD |
|---|---|------|-------|
| Parking Space Statements | | | |
| Disabled parking spaces are allocated in our parking space by 1/20 as suitable for the standards | 5 | 1.2 | 0.447 |
| Dimensions of the spaces allocated for the disabled are at least as large as 3.5m x 5m | 5 | 1.2 | 0.447 |
| The spaces allocated for the disabled are marked with yellow lines | 5 | 1.2 | 0.447 |
| The spaces allocated for the disabled are indicated with a different sign | 5 | 1.2 | 0.447 |
| Floor of our parking space is covered with material that does not obstruct walking | 5 | 2.6 | 2.191 |
| The disabled do not encounter any obstacles such as columns, walls, steps while going to / leaving their cars | 5 | 2.8 | 1.304 |
| The entrance to our establishment is level with the floor | 6 | 3.33 | 1.366 |
| There is an access ramp at the entry area with a slope of no more than 5% and supported by railings when required | 6 | 2.83 | 1.722 |
| The entry area to our establishment is well illuminated | 6 | 5 | - |
| The entry area to our establishment is covered with material that prevents slipping | 6 | 4.33 | 0.816 |
| The door providing access to our establishment is at least 90 cm wide | 6 | 5 | - |
| The door providing access to our establishment can be opened and closed easily | 6 | 4.33 | 1.211 |
| The door providing access to our establishment is 20 cm inwards in alignment to walls | 6 | 3.83 | 1.835 |
| All glass doors and sections in our establishment are marked with a distinctive tape | 6 | 2.33 | 1.751 |
| Reception Areas | | | |
| All floors in our establishment are made of slip-resistant material | 5 | 4.4 | 0.548 |
| The reception desk where we meet and greet our guests is 90 cm height, 90 cm wide, and 80 to 85 cm deep to allow for usage by the disabled in wheelchairs | 6 | 1.83 | 1.169 |
| The reception desk where we meet and greet our guests has a leg space that is 50 cm deep and 70 cm high to allow for usage by the disabled in wheelchairs | 6 | 1.5 | 1.225 |
| There is adequate lighting in the reception area | 6 | 5 | - |
| The color of the lighting luminaires in the reception area has a suitable contrast | 6 | 4.17 | 1.169 |
| Elevators | | | |
| Buttons used to call our elevators are at least 19 mm in diameter | 3 | 4.33 | 0.577 |
| The button showing ascending movement in our elevator is at the top | 3 | 4.33 | 0.577 |
| The buttons on our elevator entrances have a height of 90 to 120 cm from the floor | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| The buttons on our elevator entrances allow accessibility for wheelchairs | 3 | 3.67 | 0.577 |
| The elevator doors in our establishments are at least 91.5 cm wide; cabins are at least 110 cm wide and 140 cm deep | 3 | 1.33 | 0.577 |
| There are continuous grip bars for the disabled in the cabins of our elevators | 3 | 1.67 | 0.577 |
| There are phones in the elevator cabins in our establishment | 3 | 2 | 1.732 |
| There are folding seats in the cabins of our elevators | 3 | 1 | - |
| Control buttons in the cabins of our elevators have heights between 89 and 137 cm from the floor to allow wheelchair access. | 3 | 2.67 | 1.155 |

Note. 1 = Completely disagree - 5 = Completely agree

Corridors, Stairs, and Railings

Another building construction feature that provides access for the disabled to their rooms and common usage areas across the building are the stairs and corridors allowing transition between building sections. In addition to the answers of the sample respondents, the participatory observations also showed that stairs and corridors were not suitable enough for the disabled. Furthermore, it was observed that the handrailing of stair landings and that on the walls in the corridors were nowhere near the quality needed to meet the expectations of the visually impaired or other physically disabled persons; in particular, the requirement to connect the corridors and passages on different levels by means of ramps with a 6% slope at most connection points was not met, in an obvious non-compliance with the official requirements (USTAD, 2012).

Table 4 represents the means and standard deviations of the answers provided by the sample respondents on the topic of corridors, stairs, and railings.

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviation Scores for the Corridors, Stairs and Railings Facilities for the Disabled in the Accommodation Enterprises

| Statement | N | M | SD |
|--|---|------|-------|
| <i>Corridors, Stairs, and Railings</i> | | | |
| Corridors in our establishment are at least 152.5 cm wide to allow passage of two wheelchairs side by side | 6 | 3.33 | 1.211 |
| Corridors in our establishment are cleaned up of all decorations and additions that may make passage of the disabled difficult or impossible | 6 | 4.00 | 1.265 |
| There are bars on the walls of our corridors for the visually or orthopedically impaired to hold on to | 6 | 2.17 | 1.602 |
| Stairs in our establishment are planned perpendicular to the direction of walking | 6 | 3.00 | 1.673 |
| Beginning and ending points of the stairs in our establishment are indicated with suitable material and hardware | 5 | 3.60 | 1.949 |
| Stairs in our establishment have a step width of 30 cm | 6 | 3.50 | 1.643 |
| There are landings at every 8-10 steps in the stairs of our establishment | 6 | 3.33 | 1.862 |
| Stairs in our establishment have railings on both sides | 6 | 2.00 | 1.673 |
| There is a 3.8 cm gap between the railings on our stairs and the walls | 6 | 2.00 | 1.549 |
| Railings on both sides of the stairs in our establishment are clean from bumps and roughness | 6 | 2.67 | 1.966 |
| Railings on both sides of the stairs in our establishment have different colors than the surrounding walls | 6 | 2.83 | 2.041 |
| Railings on both sides of the stairs in our establishment are fixed in a way to safely support an individual's body mass | 6 | 2.83 | 2.041 |
| Places on different levels in our establishment are connected via access ramps | 6 | 1.67 | 1.211 |
| Floors of areas on different levels in our establishment connected via access ramps are made of slip-resistant sets and smooth materials | 6 | 1.50 | 1.225 |
| There is a horizontal maneuvering area at the beginning, end, and door-front areas of each ramp in our establishment | 6 | 1.50 | 1.225 |
| The ramps in our establishment that are more than 6% floor are divided by landings | 6 | 1.00 | - |
| Our rooms are clear of imbalanced, sharp objects that may pose dangers to the disabled | 6 | 2.67 | 0.816 |
| Electricity switches and sockets in our rooms are 40-120 cm high from the floor | 6 | 4.50 | 0.548 |
| Cabinet doors in our rooms are sliding doors, and the maximum height for hangers is 140 cm | 6 | 1.33 | 0.816 |
| There is a 40-cm space for comfortable use of the dressing cabinets | 6 | 1.67 | 0.816 |
| There is a central light switch at bedside | 6 | 3.67 | 2.066 |
| Window knobs in the rooms are 90 to 100 cm high from the floor | 6 | 1.50 | 1.225 |
| There are beds in our rooms that allow various sleeping positions and adjustable height | 6 | 1.00 | 0.000 |
| There are storage spaces for the disabled to place items they may need | 6 | 4.17 | 1.602 |
| There is special-purpose furniture and similar hardware in our rooms that allow dining in bed | 6 | 1.67 | 0.816 |
| There is a mechanism to control lighting, door, TV, radio, and similar items without leaving the bed | 6 | 3.67 | 1.366 |

Note. 1 = Completely disagree - 5 = Completely agree

Rooms, Bathrooms, and Toilets

Rooms are the settings where guests spend the longest time and which they utilize the most when accommodating in hotels. Indeed, the most basic requirements expected in any accommodating facility are sleep and rest. The minimum amount of sleep recommended by experts for an adult to start a day fresh is eight hours. Moreover, individuals spend a large amount of time and energy during the day not only for recreational activities but also for business and other activities. Therefore, hotels represent a shelter for all guests where they enjoy a warm bath, lie in bed, and relax.

One of the hotels audited, a boutique hotel where the existence of a disabled room was mentioned in the data obtained via the survey, presented an interesting picture in the information gathered during the area research. The width of the disabled room door was narrower than 85 cm and not level with the floor, the room was not cleared of sharp objects, and the available wardrobe was the same as the ones used for other rooms. In addition, there was not a 40 cm area to allow easier access to the wardrobe by the disabled and the requirement to have a height of no more than 140 cm for easy access to hangers was not met. When the bathroom and toilet in the audited disabled room of the aforementioned boutique hotel were audited in terms of suitability for accessibility by the disabled, a series of issues were raised including the necessity to pass the 8 cm of height of entrance between the room and the bathroom; the area around the sink was smaller than 76 x 122 cm and the height of the sink was lower than 68.5 cm with no 20.5 cm depth below the sink (Şahin, 2012); there was no mechanism to allow orthopedically handicapped individuals to sit on the toilet seat or an appropriate mechanism for emergency alerts required for disabled rooms and bathrooms.

Overall, there was only a holding bar for the disabled in the so-called disabled room, including the toilet and bathroom areas complementary to the room while nothing else seemed to indicate compliance with the requirements of a disabled room.

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviation Scores for the Rooms, Bathrooms, and Other Facilities for the Disabled in the Accommodation Enterprises

| Statement | N | M | SD |
|--|---|------|-------|
| Toilets and Bathrooms | | | |
| There are holding bars in the bathrooms of our establishment fixed to the floor or on the walls | 6 | 1.50 | 0.548 |
| There is at least a 45 cm gap in the bathrooms between the axis and the side wall that allows for comfortable movement | 6 | 2.17 | 1.472 |
| Our toilets are constructed in a way to allow accessibility to the disabled in different ways | 6 | 1.33 | 0.516 |
| In bathrooms where the sink is next to the water closet, there is a 120x165 cm area left for accessibility with a wheelchair | 6 | 1.33 | 0.516 |
| In bathrooms where the sink is not next to the water closet, there is a 150x135 cm area left for accessibility with a wheelchair | 6 | 1.00 | - |
| The height of toilet seats is between 45 and 50 cm | 6 | 1.00 | - |
| The height of the sinks in toilet cabins are at most 86 cm | 6 | 1.00 | - |
| There is a 76x122 cm area to grant accessibility to the sinks in cabins from the front, and leg space below the sink of 68.5 cm height and 20.5 cm depth | 6 | 1.17 | 0.408 |
| The minimum sink depth is 43 cm | 6 | 1.17 | 0.408 |
| The height to grant comfortable usage of toilets for the disabled is 101.5 cm | 6 | 1.33 | 0.516 |
| Mirrors in bathrooms either have a height and slope to allow comfortable usage for the disabled or are adjustable | 6 | 1.33 | 0.516 |
| Bathrooms in the rooms are big enough for a wheelchair to enter | 6 | 1.67 | 1.211 |
| Floors of the bathrooms in the rooms are made of non-slip material | 6 | 2.00 | 1.265 |
| Bathtubs have an area that grants accessibility to a wheelchair | 6 | 1.17 | 0.408 |
| There is a 40-cm deep passage surface / sitting area at one end of bathtubs | 6 | 1.67 | 1.211 |
| There is a 40-cm deep sitting area in the bathtubs | 6 | 1.50 | 1.225 |
| There is a shower unit of 150 cm height with a fixed shower head | 6 | 4.00 | 1.549 |
| Restaurant, Cafeteria, Bar, and Similar Dining-Drinking Areas | | | |
| Suitable seats for wheelchairs shall 5% of total available seats | 6 | 1.17 | 0.408 |
| A corridor with a width of 91.5 cm is provided for access to tables allocated for wheelchairs | 6 | 1.50 | 0.837 |
| Wheelchair tables have a height of 71-86 cm from the floor, leg space height of 70 cm, width of 50 cm, and depth of 48.5 cm | 6 | 1.17 | 0.408 |
| There are menus with large, bold letters for visually impaired individuals | 6 | 1.17 | 0.408 |
| There are menus written in braille for visually impaired individuals | 6 | 1.00 | - |
| General Issues | | | |
| Information is provided beforehand regarding evacuation of facilities in case of emergency | 6 | 2.17 | 1.835 |
| Our personnel are trained on awareness of social issues | 6 | 2.83 | 2.041 |
| There is affirmative action for the disabled in hiring employees | 6 | 4.17 | 1.169 |
| There are booklets, posters, etc., on social life and environment in disabled-accessible areas | 6 | 2.00 | 1.265 |
| There are alarms in suitable areas to satisfy the urgent needs of the disabled | 6 | 1.50 | 1.225 |
| It is more important that our goods and services are not harmful to the public and our customers than be attractive or profitable | 6 | 4.83 | .408 |

Note. 1 = Completely disagree - 5 = Completely agree

Restaurants, Bars, and Cafeterias

Most of the consulted managers of the accommodation enterprises in this study stated that their common areas, such as restaurants, bars, and cafeterias were suitable for disabled users. However, it was found during the audits that such statements were not realistic. There were no special areas allocated for disabled usage in restaurants, bars or cafeterias of any audited enterprise, and the organization of seats and tables in areas for the able-bodied did not satisfy any suitability requirements for disabled accessibility.

General Issues

In the study's scope of work, the managers of hotels established in the city center of Kastamonu were also asked questions about their general attitudes towards the people with various forms of disability. One of the questions the informants were asked was whether evacuation information is granted upon guest arrival and the results indicated a mean value of 2.17, $SD = 1.835$. The

responses to the question on affirmative action for the disabled yielded a mean of 4.17 while the mean for the question whether it is more important for their goods and services not to be harmful to the public or their customers than be attractive or profitable was 4.83. This may be interpreted as hotel managers being more committed to social responsibility. The means and standard deviations of the answers provided by the sample respondents are presented in Table 5.

Conclusions

Both in Turkey and in the rest of the world, the ratio of people with disabilities has increased significantly and represents a rising trend. Research in Human Dimensions suggests that around half of the world population may be considered as disadvantaged if pregnant women, elderly and children are included (Akıncı, 2013; Panero & Zelnik, 1979 as cited in Pehlivanoglu, 2012).

Kastamonu sees tourism as a safe option to overcome not just its economic problems but also social, cultural and environmental underdevelopment difficulties. Making Kastamonu a destination brand may be a feasible goal because of its tangible and intangible cultural resources that offer opportunities for tourism during the four seasons as well as rich and diverse natural beauty throughout the year. However, the qualified bed capacity and the rates of filling this capacity are facts that need to be considered before attempting to change this place into a real touristic destination. In addition, Kastamonu must provide options for the disabled who are considered a niche market. This study analyzed the current state of MCT-certified hotels in the city center of Kastamonu based on the applicable laws, regulations, and standards recommended by relevant organizations for parking spaces, reception areas, elevators, stairs and corridors, rooms, bathrooms and toilets and common areas such as bars, restaurants, and cafeterias in the selected accommodation enterprises. The findings suggest that these accommodation places are unsuitable for the disabled.

However, the number of holiday accommodation buildings investigated is relatively small. Future studies need to expand the investigation to include other enterprises such as municipality-certified accommodations and other places that have tangible cultural heritage and power of attraction.

Theoretical Implications

This research constitutes an important addition to the literature on the suitability of disabled friendly holiday accommodation, practice and society as it described hotels in Kastamonu, a city which has not been investigated with regard to disabled friendly holidays before. Similar research might be carried out in different cities and in various sectors.

Practical Implications

With regard to practical implications of this study, the deficiencies in disabled accommodation described here need to be rectified and the places investigated need to be adapted to fully serve the disabled individuals. This study may serve as an example for other enterprises in the tourism industry as well as for institutions and organizations in different industries. Thus, it is hoped that community members who witness such practices will exhibit a more sensitive behavior regarding issues related to the disabled.

Limitations and Future Research

The generalizability of this study might be affected by a few limitations including the relatively small number of accommodation facilities certified by MCT that were investigated ($N = 6$) and of the people interviewed (one person from each accommodation enterprise). Another possible shortcoming might represent the fact that the analysis is limited only to settlements located in the city center of Kastamonu, leaving out other districts in the city. Additionally, the other limitation of the study is that no swimming pool, bath or sauna was audited in the enterprises.

The results suggest that the same questionnaire needs to be adapted by future research both to tourism and hospitality and in the healthcare sector in different cities so that more effective steps may be actualized.

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