AN EMPIRIC RESEARCH ON THE THEMED HOTELS AND PREFERRİNG REASONS OF THEM IN THE FRAME OF CHANGING CONSUMER TENDENCIES

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ABSTRACT

Tourism being industry without chimney in our country, which has stepped important paces with membership process of the EU, has been developing constantly advancing itself. Since our country is increasingly much demanded destination, it is also necessary to submit different and various products to incoming tourists.

While the obligation of diversifying the touristic products begins the activity of movement on alternative tourism options, it activates the residence places at the option of catching the tourists with different concepts and themes.

Once an area, palace or structure to be seen only in its own country are placed on some coast by copying in very similar shape of its original, it is possible to be the first prefer of the touristic product consumers.

In this study, it will be focused on the development of the themed hotels in our country, preferring reasons of the themed hotels by tourists in Antalya region and the customer profile residing in the themed hotels and the results of surveys made with the administrators of the themed hotels will be evaluated.

Key Words: Themed hotels, Antalya, Theme.

1. PRELUDE

When the word “holiday” is pronounced in terms of both domestic and abroad market lately, only the days and hours spent on residences comes to the mind. A tourist buying a holiday pack spend all his time in the all-in residence he stay. For this instance, the investors have been tending to construct different residences to attract attention of potential customers and effect their buying decisions. For this reason, a themed hotel is preferable for the investors.

According to a famous architect on the themed hotels, only clean sea, sand, sun are not enough in tourism any longer. The sector entered the searching of fantasia. After extreme sports, interesting tours, attractive promotions, now the themed hotels are favorite trend. The themed hotels differing from their rivals are taking place in minds. Their photographs are circulating in the internet and leaflets are handing round. The children are maybe the happiest for this. They are making holiday in a palace, a landed giant ship or a plane.

2. TOURISTIC PRODUCTS AND VARIATION

The tourism sector not called in economical news but especially emphasized with its importance in crisis terms, has been carrying on being a quiet rescuer of Turkish economy. The most important feature of tourism sourcing from its structure is its playing an effective and leader role in generalizing universal

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values and comprehending and introducing domestic values universally. Turkey is struggling actively with all its sectors in the process of entering the EU. Tourism sector is also seen ready to carry on its duties in this process. The necessity of truly determining of main problems necessary for this is important just at this point. Because, although the tourism sector is at the head of the sectors getting in touch with Europe for longest time and at the most, it has still not been knowing thoroughly the European Union and determining to take what kind of place in this structure. But some criteria are necessary in the world to be a tourism operator and make tourism one of determinative factors in the state policies. These criteria are ones which Europe also uses and applies for years successfully.

Here are the constituents of the tourism economy in the world; (economical factors, consumers, demand and income) **touristic demand and income** (description of tourist, touristic demand, prices and income) **essential specialities of touristic demand** (dynamism, heterogeneity, time and place concentration) **factors of touristic demand,**(socio-economical factors, subjective factors) **touristic supply** (touristic products, touristic sources, transport) air transport and organisation, air companies and transport) **residence** (world hotel-keeping: hotel chains- willful and integrated chains- last improvements in the world tourism) and **tourism in Turkey** (the place of tourism in Turkish economy, development- tourism relations, touristic supply and demand, touristic investments) (http://www.turizmhabercisi.com)

The most important property of a tourism product is the products' completing of themselves. It is possible to inspect the elements forming a touristic product in 4 main titles:

* Attractiveness properties of the destination,

* Activities in the destination and presence of services,

*Transportability to the territory and accessibility,

* Image of the destination (Gökdeniz, 2004).

3. THEME AND THEMED ESTABLISHMENTS

The Turks have tried on tourism for very past ages and made exemplary creations in this area. For example, the Turks have made first the sample of the residences called motels today in the world. Old caravansaries are the first example of today's hotels. The first examples of caravansaries made with a monumental cognizance of architecture are in the age of Seljukians. The caravansaries, made on Anatolia's caravan roads in the first half of the 13th century in the age of Anatolian Seljukians, reflect a very important architectural program. The caravansaries some of which are ruined, some being quite strong are used nowadays as hotels (Sezgin, 1995).

We are inside of the structures, around the structures, in the places described with structures or inside of the landscape shaped by human ability in every time of our life, sleeping or awake. We avoid from picture, stature, drawing or other visual arts willingly but architecture constantly effects us with or without will, shapes our behaviors, determines our spiritual situation. Architecture is not only a shelter or protective umbrella but also a physical record of human activity and aspiration and a cultural heritage brought about to us (Roth, 2002).

A country culture finds out its own concrete form in its own art creation. So, the art creations are both visible memorials of thinking life of nations and also undeniable evidences of present society living in a country. In forming of the culture in which an art creation was born, there are shares of other cultures. In this regard, made observations show that art has the character exceeding boundaries. Neighbour or even distant cultures have very dimensional adding into a country art. These realities proves the idea that art culture forms by means of an international structure (Turani, 1995)

The word “theme” being synonym for the words context and topic, is said together with the words concept and design. If the word themed hotel is said, a hotel constructed as one-to-one example of a present place or object will come to the mind. When the word “holiday” is pronounced in terms of both domestic and abroad market lately, only the days and hours spent on residences comes to the mind. A tourist buying a holiday pack spend all his time in the all-in residence he stay. For this instance, the investors have been tending to construct different residences to attract attention of potential customers and effect their buying decisions. For this reason, a themed hotel is preferable for the investors.

Once an area, palace or structure to be seen only in its own country are placed on some coast by copying in very similar shape of its original, it is possible to be the first prefer of touristic product consumers.

3.1 PREFERENCE OF TOURISM PLANNERS

Tourism planners tending to the themed hotels which have been taking intensive interest, have been goaling to take much more shares from tourism slice.

The general director of Concorde Resort-Spa Hotel which started to service on April 2005 stated that there were 401 rooms at the capacity of 900 people and the part resembling a cockpit uppermost the hotel was arranged as royal flat. The tourism planner, attracting attention to that the rooms and halls of the hotel were resembled as vertical state of a tail of plane, stated that the image of a plane is reflected in a lot of furniture. He signing that the tourists of the Commonwealth of Independent States showed interest in the themed hotels at the most, said " First Russians were coming. European market also was showing interest in the themed hotels. The themed hotels were an effective tool for sale. The hotels attracting the interest of the customers by both vision, comfort and also service, would get much more customers. In addition, the hotels made in Antalya were more than the tourist increase rate, so increasing tourist number did not reflex the fullness of the hotels and thus the operations servicing well and having qualified establishments would work with much fullness rate" (http://www.ntvmsnbc.com).

The coordinator of WOW Hotels Chain depending on MNG Holding has been stating that the themed hotels represent the future in tourism. When it was asked him why the reason of your constructing a resemblance of Kremlin after Topkapı, he answered that " Understanding of people on holiday was changing. A lot of Topkapis were so important to attract the interest of the customers. It was first in the meaning of the themed hotel in Turkey and it took interest both from country and abroad. Even in the torturing terms of tourism, we kept in our hand the market advantage. The truth of the idea on constructing themed hotels in Turkey that was developed by MNG became proven practically. For this reason, as a new step, we constructed Kremlin (http://www.radikal.com.tr).

3.2. PREFERENCE OF TOURISTS

According to a famous architect on the themed hotels, only clean sea, sand, sun are not enough in tourism any longer. The sector entered the searching of fantasia. After extreme sports, interesting tours, attractive promotions, now the themed hotels are favorite trend. The themed hotels differing from their rivals are taking place in minds. Their photographs are circulating in the internet and leaflets are handing round. The children are maybe the happiest for this. They are making holiday in a palace, a landed giant ship or a plane.

That architect who brought together modernism with nostalgia first adapted the silhouuette of Topkapi Palace to luxurious hotel. He implemented inner decoration of Kremlin Palace after Titanic Hotel. If we look at what he say, the theme in the hotel is the helper of the investor in exceeding bureaucracy as attracting tourists as well... "They wanted me to construct a hotel in Kundu region of Aksu district in Antalya. There was no hotel there. The introduction of the establishment to open was going to be very difficult. I proposed to use of Topkapi Palace as a theme. They liked this idea very much. We visited the palace with the boss and investigated the parts to be example. I completed the construction drawing the project. The hotel had no road at all. The tourists were passing through the village road. I had thought that they would forget their fatigues if they met the palace at the point of the destination after 45 minutes village road. Namely, the absence of substructure enforced me to be creative. I turned out right. Anyone watching the model of the palace which he watched admiringly one day ago was being happy. The state made a new road when it saw that we founded a palace in the place having no road. And now I am constructing a building in the silhouette of Concorde. Because these planes are not flying now. I made this hotel to remember them. It will open to the service in 2005. I hope there will be the tourists saying that they couldn't fly with this plane but stayed in its hotel. In addition, I am making a ship themed hotel called Poseidon in Camyuva, Kemer and an institution like Artemis Temple in Cyprus. They will open in the next year" (http://www.hurriyetim.com.tr).

3.3 DISADVANTAGES

According to the General Coordinator of Justiniano Group, it has many disadvantages. "I think that the possibility of a German come to Aksu to see a resemblance of Venice is very difficult although he has a chance to arrive in Venice in shorter time and with cheaper price. The same is valid for Kremlin Palace. I don't know if the Kremlin which Russians walks around hesitatingly and protects a security army, orthodox churches with onion domes can attract anyone without ending its fashion. If you went to Spain, how much effect would you have taken from the resemblance of the hotel's reception you would stay to Sultanahmet Mosque(Blue Mosque) or Ortakoy Bazaar in your preference. What would you have thought when you saw that the concept had not continue by arriving to your room after reception there. To me, Justice Tower(Adalet Kulesi), Yerebatan

Cistern, Aya Irini(St.Irene) Church and Topkapi Palace are truly selected topics. Because they are telling an Anatolian history which every country can not get. They stimulate the wish of seeing Istanbul having places formed by creations of various civilizations which lived in these region. They look more convincing in proportion to Venice without pigeons and gondolas and Kremlin without Red Area and Lenin." (http://www.turizmgazetesi.com).

4. THEMED ESTABLISHMENTS IN TRNC

A big holding company has been making an 'Artemis Temple' themed hotel in TRNC. The basis of this hotel was made. After that, a second themed hotel project will be started like Istanbul Bosphorus. You know Artemis is abundance goddess in Ancient Greece. It is known as 'Kybele' in Anatolia. Its origin bases on Anatolian Civilizations. The holding company's representative stated that they selected the theme 'Artemis Temple' to emphasize common things between Turk and Greek cultures. It was stated that there would be 528 rooms and 1200 beds in the hotel on 160 acres land rented for 49 years, taking place in holiday village which is in Bafa region near Magosa. It was stated that the second themed hotel of the company would be like Istanbul Bosphorus. The place having been not determined yet, everything from Bosphorus Bridge to Sultan barques, from Dolmabahce Palace to Kız Kulesi(Leander's Tower) and waterside mansions in Bosphorus will be constructed. In this project, it was stated that the Bosphorus bridge would be above the pool and the hotel rooms near the pool would compose the waterside mansions near the Bosphorus. Entrance and lobby will be in the concept of Dolmabahce Palace and congress hall an example of Ayasofya(St.Sophia) Museum. The area where there are shops will be made by taking the Grand Bazaar an example. A la carte restaurant will be a miniature of Kız Kulesi(Leander's Tower). It will be arrived to rooms from the entry of hotel through boats in the shape of sultan barques above the pool (http://www.milliyet.com.tr).

5. AIMED INSTITUTIONS

World of Wonders(WOW) Hotels set off to add new ones to the hotels chain it started with Topkapi Palace and Kremlin Palace in Antalya. Sales and Marketing Coordinator of WOW Chain said that they wanted to complete the project 'Seven Wonders of the World' in 2006, which they planned to start in 2005. In the scope of this project, 2 thousands villas will be constructed in the concept of Grape Ferns of Babylon, Zeus Temple, Artemis Temple (http://www.hurriyetim.com.tr).

A big holding company which will start a new hotel project in Antalya has been also ready to give life to Savarona having 1800 beds in 2006 after the Titanic Hotel it opened in Lara in 2003. A businessman from Ordu has been goaling to have a hotel made in Ercek Plato of Kuru district in the formation of historical Ottoman Ecyad Castle which was demolished for a hotel construction in Saudi Arabia. The second project of the businessman is to make a hotel more in the formation of Noah's Ark at the submit of Boztepe which is the symbol of Ordu having 565 metres height (http://www.kobifinans.com.tr).

6. THEMED INSTITUTIONS IN THE WORLD

The first themed hotel was founded in the desert of Las Vegas in 1950 by Walt Disney. All the attentions of the architects tended into the hotel because there were no natural, historical beauties in the environment. Visual instances and shows were taken over. For this reason, Disney's hotel managed to pass ahead among the hotels of gamble tourism. The theme trend is still going on in Las Vegas. The glass hotel in the shape of Luxor pyramid, the copies of New York skyscrapers and Venice Hotel similar to San Marco Area are drawing big attraction. Nowadays a hotel in the form of Titanic is being constructed. Of themed hotels in the world, BurjElArab is the most popular (http://www.hurriyetim.com.tr).

Giant themed hotels having about three thousands rooms are available in Las Vegas. For example, Excalibur Hotel reflecting the chateaus of Feudalistic Ages of Europe and having 4000 rooms, Venice Hotel being a copy of Venice city in Italy and seen more beautiful to me having 4207 rooms. Magnificent hotel and complex made exactly the same with its canals, gondolas, bazaars and San Marco Area. The other one is Mandalay Bay Hotel with 1118 rooms and pools around having tropical mood. Giant Caesar Palace Hotel in which inspirations of Rome Empire are animated with 2423 rooms is the other one. Bellagio Hotel with its 4000 rooms, Viva Paris Hotel with its 3000 rooms, wonderful Luxor Hotel with its 4400 rooms. You can see the mysterious secret of Egypt Civilization in the architecture of this hotel. And you can see Aladdin Hotel reflecting mystic ambience of Eastern culture with 2567 rooms, Monte Carlo Hotel with 3000 rooms and New York New York Hotel with 2023 rooms (http://www.turizmdebusabah.com).

7. THEMED INSTITUTIONS IN ANTALYA REGION

* Xanadu Resort Hotel / www.xanaduresort.com.tr

* Kempinski The Dome / www.kempinski.com

* WOW Topkapı Palace / www.wowhotels.com

* WOW Kremlin Palace / www.wowhotel.com

* Venezia Palace Deluxe Resort Hotel / www.veneziapalace.com

* Riva Diva Exclusive / www.rivahotels.com

* Concorde Resort & SPA / www.concordehotel.com.tr

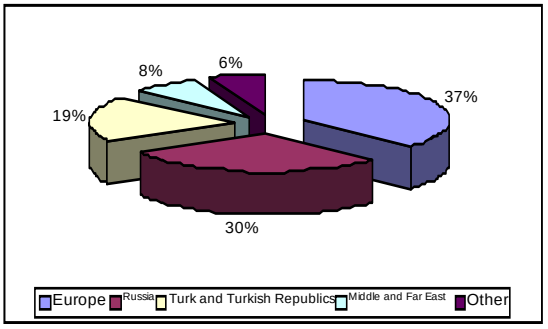
* Titanic De Luxe Beach & Resort / www.titanic.com.tr

* Orange County Resort / www.orangecounty.com.tr

8. RESULTS AND COMMENTS

7 out of 9 themed hotels have attended to the survey study made with the administrators of the themed hotels in Antalya. Analysises and comments are in the direction of the information the hotel administrators gave.

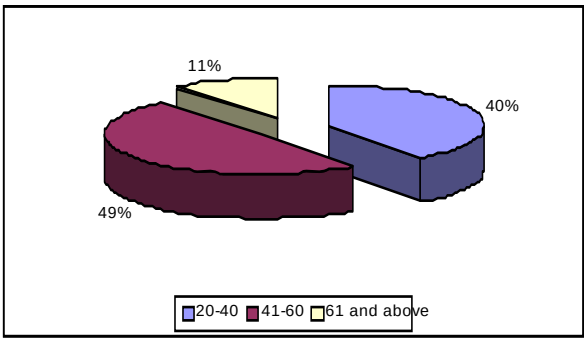
Graphic 1: Classification of Incoming Tourists to The Themed Hotels According to Nationalities



As seen in graphic 1, 37% of the tourists staying at the themed hotels of Antalya is from Europe, 30% from Russia, 19% from Turkey and Turkish Republics, 8% from Middle and Far East and 6% from other nations.

Graphic 2: Age Classification of Incoming Tourists to The Themed Hotels

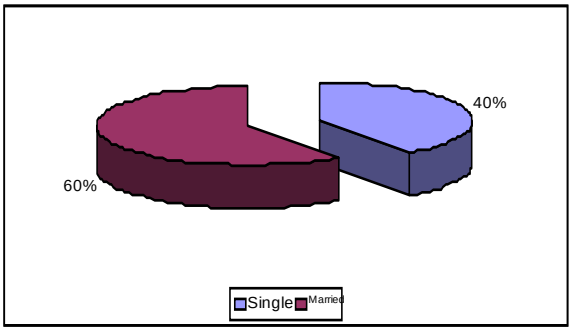
As seen in graphic 2, 49% of the tourists are 41-60, 40% are 20-40 and 11% are 61 and above.



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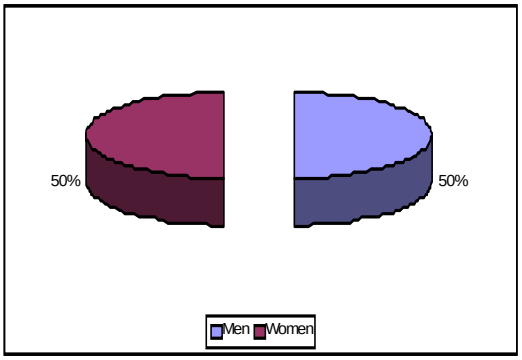
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Graphic 3: Marital Status Classification of Incoming Tourists to The Themed Hotels



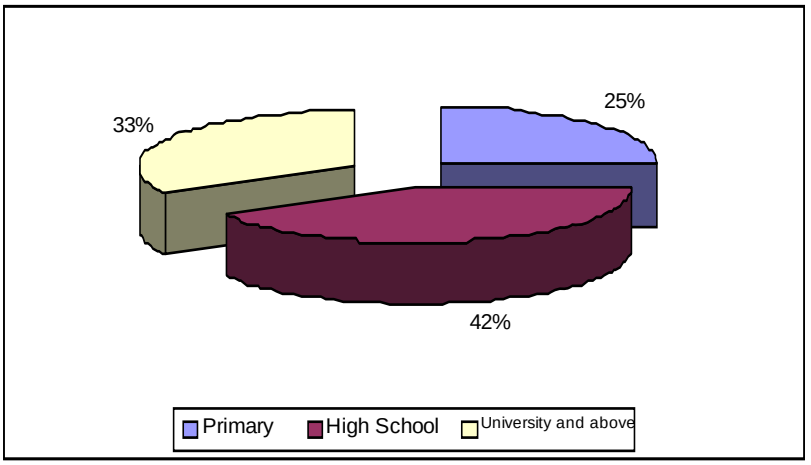
When graphic 3 is observed, it is seen that 60% of the tourists are married and 40% are single.

Graphic 4: Sex Classification of Incoming Tourists to the Themed Hotels



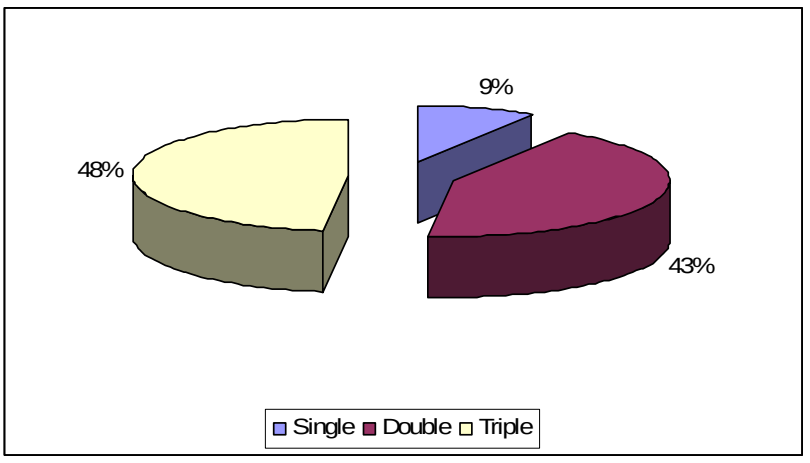
As seen in graphic 4, 50% of the tourists are women and 50% are men.

Graphic 5: Classification of IncomingTourists To The Themed Hotels According to their Level of Education



According to Graphic 5, 42% of the tourists graduate from high schools, 33% graduate from universities and master programs, while 25% graduate from primary schools.

Graphic 6: Classification of Incoming Tourists to the Themed Hotels According to Accommodation



According to Graphic 6, 48% of the tourists stay in triple, 43% in double and 9% in single rooms.

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Table 1: Opinions of Hotel Directors about Themed Hotels

		Frequency	Percentage
Architecture of the hotel plays an important role for a customer's choice to buy.	I agree	5	71,4
	Absolutely Not Agree	2	28,6
	Total	7	100,0
Any kind of living or nonliving being can be used as a theme.	Absolutely Not Agree	1	14,3
	Do Not Agree	1	14,3
	Can't Decide	1	14,3
	I Agree	4	57,1
	Total	7	100,0
Structure or any kind of being taken as an example must be used totally in the theme of the hotel	I Agree	4	57,1
	Absolutely Not Agree	3	42,9
	Total	7	100,0
Theme used in architecture must also be applied to sub-elements such as decoration, uniform etc.	Can't Decide	1	14,3
	I Agree	3	42,9
	Absolutely Not Agree	3	42,9
	Total	7	100,0
The reason of the customers visiting the themed hotels is always based on the theme of the hotel.	Absolutely Not Agree	1	14,3
	Do Not Agree	3	42,9
	Can't Decide	1	14,3
	I Agree	1	14,3
	Absolutely Not Agree	1	14,3
	Total	7	100,0
In order to please a customer a hotel with a theme is enough	Absolutely Not Agree	4	57,1
	Do Not Agree	3	42,9
	Total	7	100,0
The theme of the hotel must be used at the name of the hotel	Do Not Agree	1	14,3
	Can't Decide	1	14,3
	I Agree	4	57,1
	Absolutely Not Agree	1	14,3
	Total	7	100,0
The name of the hotel must be picked so that the attention will be drawn to the theme of the hotel	Can't Decide	1	14,3
	I Agree	5	71,4
	Absolutely Not Agree	1	14,3
	Total	7	100,0
The sale of a themed hotel is always easier than a hotel without a theme	Absolutely Not Agree	1	14,3
	Do Not Agree	1	14,3
	Can't Decide	1	14,3
	I Agree	4	57,1
	Total	7	100,0
To make an investment in a themed hotel is a loss of money	Absolutely Not Agree	2	28,6
	Do Not Agree	5	71,4

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	Total	7	100,0
The luck of the themed hotels in competitive atmosphere is higher than the hotels without a theme	Absolutely Not Agree	1	14,3
	Do Not Agree	2	28,6
	Can't Decide	1	14,3
	I Agree	3	42,9
	Total	7	100,0
It is important for an employment applicant whether the hotel has a theme or not	Absolutely Not Agree	2	28,6
	Do Not Agree	3	42,9
	Can't Decide	2	28,6
	Total	7	100,0
A detailed information must be given to the personnel during the orientation education	Can't Decide	1	14,3
	I Agree	2	28,6
	Absolutely Not Agree	4	57,1
	Total	7	100,0

According to Table 1; it is observed that,

- 71.4% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that architecture of the hotel plays an important role for a customer to buy.
- 57.1% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that any kind of living and nonliving beings can be a theme subject.
- 57.1% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that the structure or any entity taken as an example must be used totally in the theme of the hotel.
- 42.9% of the hotel directors in Antalya agree that the theme used in architecture must also be used in the sub-elements such as decoration, uniform etc., while 42.9% absolutely do not agree to such idea.
- 42.9% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that the reason why the customers visit the hotel is not always based on the theme.
- All of the hotel directors who filled our questionnaire think that a hotel having only themes is not enough for the pleasures of customers
- 57.1% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that the theme must be used in the name of the hotel.
- 71.4% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that the name of the hotel must be picked so that the attention will be drawn to the theme of the hotel.
- 57.1% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that a sale of a themed hotel is easier than a hotel without a theme.
- 71.4% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that to make an investment on a themed hotel is not a loss of money.
- 42.9% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that hotels without a theme has a chance in competition against the themed hotels
- 71.4% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that a hotel with a theme is not neccessary for an employment applicant.
- 57.1% of the hotel directors in Antalya think that to give a detailed information about the theme of the hotel to the personnel during the orientation education is not neccessary.

Although an accommodation facility with a different theme or concept is thought to be one step ahead from the other facilities, a touristic product consumer will always go for a clean and fine service. It is obvious that a tourist that does not get the service he expects from a themed facility staying there will not come back to the same facility again. In addition, the inclination of 'Themed Hotel' must be held in certain limits. Every product that is rapidly consumed will one day not be desired and will be forgotten. Therefore, investors with a long term view must build facilities that will last for a long time.

In conclusion, to serve in accordance with the famous hospitality of the Turkish people and Turkey at every facility, whether with or without a theme, must be the primary object of the tourism sector.

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