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A study into the level of first aid of hotel employees

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Abstract

Although many studies emphasize the importance of first aid training in saving human life, it is known that individuals are known to lack the adequate first aid knowledge and skill levels. In order to decrease the death number and injuries resulted from unexpected and life threatening events such as heart attacks, traffic accidents, work accidents, natural disasters, terrorist attacks and the war, people should be equipped with their vital life-saving skills. The first professional aid soon after the emergency is important in determining the difference between life and death. The aim of this study is to reveal the education levels of the employees on first aid knowledge and skills in the improvement of customer safety in the hotel managements.

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1. Introduction

People have participated in tourism activities for a variety of reasons throughout all the eras of the history. Dating back to very early times in history, the concept of travel and tourism has reached the peak along with the technological advancements. According to the statistics of World Tourism Organization the number of people who took part in tourism movements was above 1 billion in 2012 and the tourism receipts were above 1 billion US dollars. Besides, in 2020, it is expected that the number of people that will take part in tourism movements will be 1,8 billion (WTO, 2013). As seen in the figures, tourism sector is on the rise and has reached to massive dimensions.

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This being the case, the health and the safety of the tourists should be provided at every phase of the travel process, for tourists expect that their life and security will be ensured. The safety of tourists is under guarantee with specific reference to the international non-governmental organizations. For example, European union resolved for 1999-2001 period in the consumer policy action plan that risks that could threaten the health and the safety of consumers should be analyzed, safe goods and services should be offered and measures against the threats should be taken and scientific recommendations should be taken into account in setting policies on supervisions (Çicek and Özgen, 2001). Besides, in a meeting held by World Tourism Organization in 1991, it was resolved that hotels should set the standards on precaution against fire, food safety, environmental safety as well as hygiene and health needs (WTO, 1991). Among the points under discussion in the meeting, it was highlighted that basic health needs and first aid, emergency treatment, protection from accidents and appropriate health and safety environments at hotels should be evaluated within the framework of tourist health and security standards should be established accordingly (Koyunoğlu, 2003). Hotels do not only offer accommodation and food services but security services as well.

It is possible to categorize safety services as property safety, food safety and health safety. It is necessary that these services should be provided in a complete manner. Especially, it is of great importance that the health needs of the customers should be met and first aid procedures should be followed. Hotel employees with first aid skills and knowledge play an important part in saving human lives hence, it is of great significance that hotel employees should be knowledgeable about first aid procedures until the emergency service paramedics reach the place of the incident (Uçar, 2002). On the other hand, health services offered by hotels are not the final treatment services and cover only the first aid procedures. In a general sense, such first aid procedure as drowning, heart attack, electrocuting are needed within the context of hotels. In this respects, first aid services at the right and appropriate time will definitely have a positive effect on people's lives. For this reason, first aid procedures should be within the very comprehension and skills of the hotel staff. (Tataroğlu and Subaşı, 2009). Because of the significance of the subject, in order to decrease the casualty and fatality rates subsequent to an accident, first aid training became compulsory in work places by the "First Aid Regulation" issued by the Ministry of Health in the official gazette as of 22.05.2002 (Resmi Gazete, 2002).

2. Conceptual Framework

Among the causes of human death are accidents, natural disasters and unexpected suddenly developing causes. Cited in the ninth place of the World Health Organization's "Health for All in the 21st Century" policy targets, the principle of "Reducing Injury from Accidents and Violence" address to the issue of first aid (Erdil 2009). First aid procedures are the un-medicated implementations through the available means and materials without medical tools in the place of the incident in order to save a life or to prevent the deterioration of the situation until the paramedics arrive at the incident scene in the case of an accident or jeopardy situation. First aider is the person who had the training of medication free implementations with the available tools, not necessarily the medical tools, for the patient or the injured within the scope of the definition of first aid (İnan and et.al., 2011). In line with the contribution of the developing technology to all aspects of human life, increases in the sudden illnesses and injuries made the need for those the first aid skills stimulated (Erdil 2009). Hence, first aid training has become an indispensable part of a modern life. Due to on-the-job or traffic accident and natural disasters a number of people lose their lives or become disabled. In such cases, since there will not be a person in charge of health issues all the time, first aid implementations that will be performed by others is of extreme importance. In such cases as heart attack, accidents or similar cases, the critical minutes of the first aid implementation is the first 5-10 minutes. Hence, it is important to start the first aid procedures within the first 5 minutes (Sosada et al., 2002). The possibility of survival or the improvement in the situation goes higher as long as the first aid is implemented timely and the emergency service reaches at the scene of incident.

A study conducted to assess the first aid knowledge level of the students and teachers in Poland found out that the majority of the teachers and students lack the desired knowledge level in first aid procedures and implementations (Sosada et al., 2002). In a similar vein, a study conducted in Kuwait University revealed that that the knowledge level of students are at moderate levels in first aid procedures (Nedaa et al., 2006). Besides, a study performed on athletics couches at 17 High Schools in the USA found out that the first aid knowledge level is not adequate (Ransone et al., 1999). On the other hand, A study by Mahony et al., (2008) on 35 aircraft crew found out that their level of first aid knowledge was adequate; however, when it comes to ,implementation, they fail to meet up to the standards. In their study on 291 taxi drivers in Ankara, Bayraktar and Çelik (2000) noted that the first aid knowledge level of the derivers was not adequate, but they showed eagerness to have first aid training. Bayraktar et.

al., (2009) found out that, following the training of the drivers on first aid, they had positive results and expressed that first aid training programs should be disseminated across all aspects of the society through the collaboration of public and private institutions. What's more, a study done to assess the first aid knowledge level of the teachers and their attitude towards first aid training program and to determine the problems they encounter in İsparta, it was found out that the first aid knowledge level of the teachers was at moderate level, and most of them regarded themselves inadequate and they were eager to participate in the first aid training programs (Nayir et al., 2011). In sum, considering the studies mentioned above, the participants lack first aid knowledge but they show eagerness to make up for the lack in the first aid skills and knowledge.

People in tourism activities travel to other destinations different from the ones they live in. In the destinations they are in, their needs for accommodation, safety, esteem and health should also be met. In order to have sustainable tourism, services in protecting the health care of tourist and safe environment should be offered. Aydın and Şeker (2011) defines tourist health care as "the obligation to have health services for emergency and sudden developing incidents during their period of travel for holiday purposes." as it can be understood from the definition, first aid can be evaluated within the scope of the intervention until the qualified health care personnel arrives in case of emergency. It is necessary that first aid service should be offered and measures be taken in order to protect customers from accidents and contagious illnesses in touristic establishments where the customer circulation is very high (Özsarı and Karatana, 2013). Therefore, hotel staff should have the grasp of first aid knowledge. This being the case, hotel management should offer first aid training programs, which will have a protective role in the prevention of likely risks that could emerge during operation. Besides, hotel staff should be eager in health training programs and behave in a socially responsible manner. Güler and Çobanoğlu (1994) emphasized that health education is among the implementations of preventive medicine and this should be regarded as a task not only for themselves but also for the society, which could only be implemented into real life by means of health education.

3. Purpose of the Research

The main objective of this study is to assess the level of the first aid knowledge and the skills of the staff. Besides, this study sets out to find out whether there is difference between the variables such as first aid knowledge level, age, education, and department.

4. Method of the Research

The sample group of the study is comprised of hotel employees at five-star hotels in Afyonkarahisar. The sample was calculated with $n = \sigma^2 * Z_{\alpha}^2 / H^2$ (Özdamar, 2001) formulae and calculated to be 300 employees. However, considering the fact that there could be invalid questionnaires, 400 questionnaires were administered. Excluding the erroneously coded questionnaires, 340 questionnaires were used for data analysis. The questionnaire form was administered to employees in person.

Composed of two parts, the first part of the questionnaire accommodates questions on demographic features such as age, gender, department, position, whether they have first aid certificate, their knowledge on first aid, etc... In the second part, there are 17 statements aiming to determine the first aid knowledge levels of the participants. The statements are on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1 = Know very well" to "5= Know not at all). The second part of the questionnaire was compiled from the previous studies by Güler and Çobanoğlu, 1994; Ransone et al., 1999; Sosada et al., 2002; Mahony et al., 2008; Bayraktar et. al., 2009; Nayir et al., 2011; İnan et al., 2011.

Data obtained from the study has been analyzed through SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences). In data analysis, percentage, frequency distribution, arithmetic mean, standard deviation has been employed and since the data have normal distribution, independent samples t test and One Way ANOVA have been used, as well. The reliability coefficient, Cronbach's Alpha, was calculated to be 94, 4, which is considered high in terms of reliability of the scale (Alpar, 2011). Table 1 reports the frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic features.

5. Results

Table 1: Demographic Features (n=340)

Variables	Groups	f	%
Education	Primary School	107	31.5
	High School	155	45.6
	Associate's Degree	43	12.6
	Undergraduate	30	8.8
	Graduate	3	0.9
	Post Graduate	1	0.3
	Other	1	0.3
Gender	Male	104	30.6
	Female	236	69.4
Age	20 and below	21	6.2
	21-25	90	26.5
	26-30	90	26.5
	30 and above	139	40.9
Experience in Tourism	0-4	152	44.7
	5-9	101	29.7
	10-14	54	15.9
	15-19	22	6.5
	20+	11	3.2
Department	Front Office	47	13.8
	Food and Beverage	109	32.1
	Security	6	1.8
	Housekeeping	88	25.9
	Human Resources	7	2.1
	Marketing and Sales	5	1.5
	Maintenance	14	4.1
	Customer Relations	4	1.2
	Accounting	15	4.4
	Spa	45	13.2
Position	General Coordinator	3	0.9
	General Manager	2	0.6
	Assistant General Manager	4	1.2
	Department Director	11	3.2
	Chief	47	13.8
	Clerk	194	57.1
	Waiter	48	14.1
	Busboy	21	6.2
	Hostess	1	0.3
	Painter	1	0.3
Cook	8	2.4	
Knowledge on First Aid and Emergency Treatment	Yes	209	61.5
	No	131	38.5
First Aid Certificate	Yes	60	17.7
	No	280	82.3
First Aid Training in the Establishment	Yes	212	62.4
	No	128	37.6
Marital Status	Single	128	37.6
	Married	212	62.4

Hypotheses tested in the study:

Gender

H₀: There is no difference in terms of first aid knowledge level by gender

H₁: There is difference in terms of first aid knowledge level by gender

Education

H₀: There is no difference in terms of first aid knowledge level by education

H₁: There is difference in terms of first aid knowledge level by gender

Department

H₀: There is no difference in terms of first aid knowledge level by department

H₁: There is difference in terms of first aid knowledge level by department

First Aid Training

H₀: There is no difference in terms of first aid knowledge level by first aid training

H₁: There is difference in terms of first aid knowledge level by first aid training

First Aid Certificate

H₀: There is no difference in terms of first aid knowledge level by first aid certificate

H₁: There is difference in terms of first aid knowledge level by first aid certificate

The results of the analyses suggest that there is statistically significant difference between first aid knowledge level and gender at 95 % reliability level. According to the values in Table 2, it is seen that females have more knowledge on first aid than males. As for the education status, H₀ hypothesis is accepted and it is seen that there is no statistically significant difference by primary school, high school, associate's degree, university and graduate degree at 5% reliability level. When it comes to the department, H₀ hypothesis is accepted and it is seen that there is no statistically significant difference by departments at 5% reliability level

It is found out that there is statistically significant difference between first aid knowledge level and whether they received first aid training before ($p=0.001<0.05$) at 95% reliability level. Considering the mean scores in Table 2, it is seen that those who received first aid training have more knowledge than those who didn't. It is also seen that there is a statistically significant difference between those who have first aid certificate and those who don't ($p=0.00 < 0.05$). It could be said that first aid knowledge level is higher for those who have the first aid certificate by looking at the mean values in Table 2.

Table 2: Comparison of the First Aid Knowledge Level of the Employees by Groups

Variables	Groups	First Aid Knowledge Level	
		Mean	Std. Dev.
Gender	Male	2.65	0.76
	Female	2.99	0.80
	p (sig.)	0.000	
Education	Primary School	2.89	0.75
	High School	2.75	0.82
	Associate's Degree	2.62	0.76
	Undergraduate	2.50	0.70
	Graduate	2.84	0.70
	Post Graduate	1.58	----
	p (sig.)	0.091	
Department	General Coordinator	2.59	0.77
	General Manager	2.63	0.72
	Assistant General Manager	2.65	0.79
	Department Director	2.82	0.88
	Chief	2.93	0.74
	Clerk	3.00	0.72
	Waiter	2.98	0.68
	Busboy	2.73	0.56
	Hostess	3.06	0.73
	Painter	2.81	0.82
	p (sig.)	0.421	
First Aid Training in the Establishment	Yes	2.65	0.73
	No	2.94	0.84
	p (sig.)	0.001	
First Aid Certificate	Yes	2.36	0.75
	No	2.83	0.77
	p (sig.)	0.000	

$p < 0,05$

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

Hotel establishments are of specific characteristics in terms of the operations. Apart from accommodation services, they also offer food and drink, entertainment and security services, it is important that the expectations of the guests should be met and services that will meet the needs for health care and emergency services should be offered. For this reason, till the qualified medical personnel arrives at the place of incident, staff with the first aid knowledge and skill should be available in this study, it is seen that females have higher level of first aid knowledge than males, which could be put down to the fact that they act with maternity feelings and have higher level of protection feelings. Besides, there is no statistically significant difference between the education status and the first aid knowledge level of the employees. This shows that first aid is an issue that should be known by everyone and hotel employees have this awareness. On the other hand, it is seen that there is no statistically significant difference between the department and the first aid knowledge level. The fact that there is no statistically significant difference by department and education status shows us that first aid issue is an issue of humanity. That is to say, it could be put forward that hotel employees should have the first aid knowledge. Employees who have received first aid training will be more knowledgeable than those who have not. This was also confirmed by the findings of the study. Therefore, hotel establishments should not only equip the employees with vocational skills but with skills related to the social life. Since those with first aid certificate will have the first aid implementations in a conscious manner, they will have a contribution to human life. Intervention in first aid procedure in incorrect manners risks human life. On the other hand, employees equipped with first aid skills will add value to hotel, whereas the opposite case will have a negative impact on the hotel image. In order to prevent this, the number of studies on first aid which represent the all aspects of society should be increased; and as a result of the studies conducted in the field, people should be directed to first aid training program.

Tourism sector is composed of a variety sector branches. This study is limited to employees at only five-star hotels. It would be great benefit to conduct studies on other branches of tourism sector; travel agencies, food and

beverage establishments, entertainment establishments, etc... in this way, the present status of first aid knowledge levels of employees could be found out. According to the result that could yield measure that could be taken by the private sectors and public sectors could be determined.

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