RECRUITMENT DAYS ACTIVITIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EXECUTIVES: A CASE OF TOURISM FACULTY

Işıl ARIKAN SALTIK•
Filiz GÜMÜŞ DÖNMEZ**

Abstract

University-industry collaboration is of the utmost importance with a view to supplying skilled and competent workforce to the tourism industry. This study examines the way tourism executives perceive the recruitment days activity, which is crucial for career development and conducted under the scope of university-industry collaboration. The data was gathered through participated observation and face-to-face interview techniques in a recruitment days which was organized by a faculty of tourism of a state university. The research found that despite the fact that participant enterprises were dissatisfied with some issues, such as facilities of venue, they still wanted to be part of this collaboration. In addition, it was also revealed that presence of other representatives of the tourism industry in recruitment days is likely to lead to enhanced university-industry collaboration as a result of increased motivation.

Keywords: Recruitment Days, University-Industry Collaboration, Tourism Management.

1. Introduction

Sustainable competitive advantage has a strategic importance in organizations where the performance of organizations is largely dependent on human resources such as tourism (Avcı and Gümüş Dönmez, 2016). Human resources training as a complex process requires the integration of individual and collective intellectual activities of employees under the leadership of high-potential managers in the light of institutional principles (İbicioğlu, Avcı and Boylu). Thus, enterprises that would like to have knowledgeable human resources are seeking for well-educated and trained employees. One of the most effective instruments of providing practical education, which has a key role in increasing service quality and providing competitive advantage in the tourism industry, is to build university-industry collaboration (UIC). Schools and countries which succeed in UIC have a leading role in driving innovation, trends and knowledge in tourism (Jauhari, 2013; Pizam, Okumus and Hutchison, 2013; Rawlinson and Dewhurst, 2013; Thomas, 2013). This collaboration has developed a base, on the fact that the industry is aware of the theoretical developments in universities and universities are changing education contents in line with the needs and expectations of the industry (Sel and Tepeci, 2016). Thus, the collaboration between university and industry plays a leading role in the development of planned tourism and economic development (Hall, 1999).

The success of the tourism industry is largely due to human beings. In this context, the tourism industry needs a well-educated workforce (Sel and Tepeci, 2016). Such organizations, organized in order to build UIC, have been taking a serious step in recent years. Many universities providing tourism education in Turkey organize and participate in events, such as employment fairs, university-industry meetings, career days and strategic industrial education organizations in order to bring together students and industry executives. However, it has been determined that the UIC in tourism in Turkey has not been yet progressed to a sufficient standard (Dönmez Polat and Kapucuoğlu, 2016; İbicioğlu, Avcı and Boylu; Mutlu and Kozak, 2015). It is becoming difficult to build a good career and keep oneself employed in the tourism industry, where the conditions have been changing and developing every day. For this reason, it is very significant to carry out UIC properly by both sides in terms of developing knowledgeable, competent and professional employees in tourism. Building a career and being successful in the tourism industry seems to be easier for the graduates who are well-educated in tourism and thus meet the requirements of the industry through appropriate applied courses, internships and foreign languages. This study aims to examine how tourism executives participated in a recruitment day, to evaluate the event and provide information for other tourism faculties wishing to organize such kinds of activities. In line with this intention, firstly a literature review of recruitment and selection in the tourism industry and UIC in tourism is provided. Secondly, the

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• Assistant Professor, Mugla Sıtkı Kocman University, Faculty of Tourism.
** Research Assistant, Muğla Sıtkı Kocman University, Faculty of Tourism.

methodology is explained and research findings are presented as subheadings. Finally, some managerial implications and suggestions for future research are reported as conclusions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Recruitment and Selection in Tourism

In tourism businesses, recruitment and selection of people for new or existing positions regardless of the size, structure and activity of the organization, constitute an important part of human resources (Nickson, 2007). In order to provide a service in quality standards, the employee must have the features and employability skills to deal with the requirements of his/her work. For this reason, selecting people to match the job specification, with the required skills, training, knowledge and capabilities is especially significant in the tourism industry, where the human being is the dominator and where service is provided directly in the presence of customers (Mathis and Jackson, 2007). In addition, the high rate of turnover is also a burden for tourism organizations. Costs such as employee recruitment, employment advertising, training and orientation are twice as costly as existing employee costs (DeConnick and Bachmann, 2005). On the other side, having an occupation compatible with personality not only a satisfactory factor for but also an important motivator for employee to build up his career in a profession. When the employees do not intent to leave the occupation, it would be easier to keep qualified people in the sector (Arıkan Saltık, Avcı and Kaya, 2016). Hence, recruitment and selection is not only important for the organizations but also significant for the sector in general.

Bratton and Gold (2000) argue that despite the value and importance of recruitment and selecting people, to find the right employee for the right position, with the appropriate qualifications, the process has been passed through unplanned, stifled and non-scientific methods. This argument has been also supported by other researches carried out on tourism organizations, where it was observed that at nearly all the stages of recruitment and selection, none were conducted out correctly (Akbaba and Günlü, 2011; Jameson, 2000; Price, 1994; Lockyer and Scholarios, 2005; Sarışık and Ulama, 2001). Recruitment and selecting people in small-scale organizations can not be conducted precisely as there is no human resources department. However, just having a human resources department as in large-scale organizations is not sufficient to perform the recruitment and selection of employees. Human resources departments need to apply certain techniques and methods within these processes. Besides, they also need to respect the significant changes in the techniques of measuring attitudes, behavior and orientation of people (psychometric tests) during recruitment, even though traditional methods such as interviewing are still used in the selection process (Nickson, 2007).

Businesses can use internal (promotion, internal transfer, informal research, skills inventory, announcement for open positions) or external sources (advertisements, job applications, employment agencies, private human resources departments, educational institutions, renting employee, internet) to find suitable candidates (Çavdar and Çavdar, 2010). Recruitment is defined as the process of determining a group of candidates from which you have the opportunity to choose the most eligible person to work in a job vacancy, whereas selection refers the process of evaluating job applicants in order to assign the most suitable person for the business through different kinds of methods (Heery and Noon, 2001:298-320). The job interview is a defining phase of the recruitment process in order to carry out predetermined tasks in an organization or institution (Nickson, 2007). The process of a job interview consists of determining the right candidates to serve customers, being informed about candidates, assessing the candidates according to their talents and skills for the job, and making a final decision (Hayes and Ninemeier, 2009).

The pre-interview process, held in organizations or institutions is carried out to see if the candidate has the minimum qualifications for the job. Candidates, who pass the first step, are interviewed by the department of human resources for a detailed interview. Even though validity and reliability are discussed, the technique of interview is still preferred as the most widespread selection tool currently used in job interviews (Rothwell and Kazanas, 2003). Hence, job interviews play a crucial role in determining how effective and efficient the desired skills and qualifications of candidates are during job interviews (Bayraktaroğlu, 2003). Thus, the best perspective on recruitment and selection comes from Mathis and Jackson (2007: 226) that "Hire hard, manage easy." and "Good training will not make up for bad selection." In other words, the more effort and time spent in selecting the most suitable person for the job, the easier it is to manage the employee and the less effort required.

2.2. University-Industry Collaboration in Tourism

The collaboration between stakeholders in the tourism industry has great importance in the development of tourism and direction to the future as it creates a social relations network (Sel and Tepeci, 2016). This network leads to the cross-sharing of information in tourism. In this context, while stakeholders

in the tourism industry have the opportunity to apply theoretical developments and changes in education to industry, educational stakeholders can make changes in the content of education in parallel with the trends in the industry. The collaborative relationship with educational institutions plays a key role in using resources in the industry efficiently, remaining information-based practices and providing competitive advantages (Jauhari and Thomas, 2013).

The collaboration between university and industry can take place in different ways. Financial support from industry executives directly to the universities and/or to the students, activities such as providing counseling thorough various meetings that enable sharing of industry knowledge and experiences with academicians and/or students, are included in university-industry collaboration provided by industry executives. When activities pioneered by universities are examined, it is seen that academicians are consulting by sharing their thoughts and opinions in general or by specific enterprises, organizing training programs to contribute to the personal and professional development of industry executives and employees, and creating employment opportunities in the industry for educated students in their field (Pizam, Okumus and Hutchison, 2013).

Recruitment days (RD) stand out in the practices of UIC in tourism, mostly organized by universities and gathering students and executives of industry. It has been held that RD enable undergraduates and graduates to practice lessons learnt at school in real-life situations, improve their communications skills, develop self-esteem, select the appropriate profession to direct their careers in accordance with their future goals, thereby contributing to their personal developments and becoming more aware of the industry by gaining a closer understanding of the business environment (Dönmez Polat and Kapucuoğlu, 2016). The importance of UIC in tourism is due to the fact that the source and the success of the industry are based on human capital. The tourism industry needs employees who are well-educated in tourism, speak foreign languages fluently and act professionally. At this point, UIC is at the forefront. The executives of the industry have been trying to meet the needs of workers, such as congress, conferences, applied courses, internship and career days (Wildes and Tepeci, 2002).

When observing the general situation of the institutions providing tourism education in Turkey, it has been seen that there are many secondary education, associate degree and undergraduate programs, and as an expected result, the number of undergraduates and graduates with a tourism education is very high. However, it has also been concluded that the same problems in the industry and education have continued for years. The main reason for these problems is that both sides fail to understand the needs and requirements of each other. Industry executives do not place much of a real importance to academic studies, academic research results are not put into practice, academic responses move too slowly to meet industry demands, and most importantly, UIC is not performed properly (Mutlu and Kozak, 2015; Polat-Üzümcü and Alyakut, 2017; Sel and Tepeci, 2016).

It has been seen in literature that the first research conducted by Cooper and Shepherd (1997) about the relationship between tourism education and industry resulted in a lack of trust because of the complex structures of collaboration. Pizam, Okumuş and Hutchinson (2013) discussed Rosen Collage in university-industry partnerships and found the requirement of mutual trust in collaboration, a common understanding of industry needs and expectations and the importance of successful UIC. Jauhari and Thomas (2013) gave examples that there were various ways in which they were studying the development of UIC. Thomas (2013) found that the collaboration between university and industry was necessary but this collaboration had not been adequately discussed in the field of tourism and hospitality industry. Jauhari (2013 clarified the issue by giving examples of collaborations of leading collages around the world on how UIC should be developed. Rawlinson and Dewhurst (2013) described in their study how university learning laboratories would be transferred and implemented in UIC. In the only research in Turkish literature, Sel and Tepeci (2016) pointed out that there was not only a single solution in the development of UIC and that strategies should be developed for such collaborations. He also added that the researches were insufficient in the field of tourism industry.

3. Methodology

The aim of this research is to investigate how tourism executives assess RDs which is important for the careers of tourism students. Thus, it intends to give managerial suggestions to improve efficiency of similar events after general evaluation and description of the situation of the RD or similar events in the scope of UIC. Besides, it is also expected that the results of the study will provide knowledge for future researches in this subject. In accordance with this aim, qualitative research methods were chosen in this study. The research data was gathered through participated observation and face-to-face interview techniques. The reason of using both techniques together is to obtain information about the events from

different perspectives and to make the research more comprehensive. Face-to face interviews with semi structured questions were conducted since there are only a limited number of studies in this subject but with researchers' desire to gain more detailed information (Veal, 1997). The reason for choosing the semi-structured interview technique is that it is conducted at a specific planned time and place and gives the flexibility of asking additional questions on topics that researchers need to learn more (Kvale, 1996). By the help of using semi-structured interview technique which is rather effective while obtaining knowledge about experiences, attitudes, opinions, complaints, feelings and beliefs of the people, it is aimed to contribute relevant literature by providing more descriptive and realistic conclusions (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005).

The interview form used in this research consists of four parts. There are questions related to tourism businesses and the demographic and professional features of the executives. The reason for asking these questions in the first part are twofold. First, researchers would like to get general information about the business and thus to adapt the following questions in accordance with structure of business. Second, it is intended to motivate participants via basic questions, which are easy to answer and provide a mutual interaction platform and natural interview environment. In the following parts there are questions to describe the form of participation, to determine the role of the RD in their employment activities and to reveal their opinions and expectations about the RD, respectively.

There are many universities, both at associate and undergraduate levels, providing a tourism education which organizes the RD in the scope of UIC in Turkey. The universe of this research consists of tourism enterprises which participated in an RD organized by a tourism faculty of a state university in March 2017. There are two reasons for choosing this event. First, this is one of the most established events among tourism faculties. Second, because it is an event which provides easy access for researchers. According to data gained through participated observation and also confirmed by the organizers at the RD, there were 66 establishments, five of which are public organizations and the rest tourism businesses. The sample of the research consists of sixteen tourism enterprises of which executives accepted to be interviewed by researchers. In fact, researchers asked to interview 21 event participants between the hours 09.00 and 18.30, on the event day. Two of them refused the offer by explaining their delay in preparing the stands and one of them was eliminated by researchers because the executive was unavailable. Data gathered from two interviews were not included since the interviews could not be conducted properly due to intensity of interruption of interviews by participant students. The data collection process was completed by respecting both the similarities of the answers of the participants and ending time of the RD.

All the participants were initially informed about the research subject and the provided with the names of researchers. It was observed that executives were pleased to be asked of their opinions about the RD. Even though participants confirmed interviews to be recorded electronically, it was not possible to use recorder properly due to background noise. Hence, any answers of the participants were written in detail by researchers and turned into text as field notes (Seyidoğlu, 1997). As Sekaran (2000) suggested, researchers started to ask structured open ended questions at the beginning and repeated the same questions with different words or asked some additional questions to get detailed information in case of need. The average duration of the interviews was 30 minutes. After checking whether there was any other information the executives wanted to add, the interviews were completed by thanking them for their participation.

The gathered data was analyzed through descriptive analysis and content analysis. First of all, descriptive analyses were applied to data including both researchers' previous knowledge and experience about the subject and observations they made during the research process. Descriptive analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis that involves summarizing and interpreting data obtained by various data collection techniques according to pre-determined themes (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). Researchers aimed to provide comprehensive information by the help of descriptive analysis. In line with this purpose, researchers didn't interfere with the conditions or the participants during the process of data collection and focused on determining the situation (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Content analysis was then applied in order to thoroughly investigate the findings provided by the descriptive analysis and reveal the relationships between the collected data (Bilgin, 2006). The interview notes were turned into text via MS Office Word program. At the beginning of this process, each participant was labeled as P1, P2…etc. The words and phrases they expressed while responding to the interview questions were then distinguished and coded according to the common features. The findings were finally presented on descriptive tables after being arranged in line with the determined themes. In addition, some direct citations were also provided in order to reflect the views of the interviewed participants noticeably. In the following section, findings of the research are presented as subheadings in accordance with the classification made in the interview form.

4. Findings

4.1. General Findings about the Tourism Enterprises

Findings showed that participants are mainly male and married persons. The average age of the participants was calculated as 45.7. It was also determined that most of the participants who were mainly educated in the field of tourism had bachelor's degrees. Demographic characteristics of the participants and features of Tourism Enterprises are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: General Findings about the Participants and Tourism Enterprises

Part. No.	General Findings about the Businesses					General Findings about the Executives				
	Tourism Enterprise	Age	Location	Operating period	No of Par.	Gen d.	Mar. St.	Age	Education Level	Education Area
P1	Hotel	20	Marmaris	Seasonal	2	M	M	52	Vocational School	Tourism
P2	Hotel	12	Bodrum	Seasonal	1	M	S	39	Master Degree	Tourism
P3	Hotel	8	Bodrum	Seasonal	10	M	M	29	Bachelor	-
P4	Hotel	26	Menteşe	Seasonal	4	M	M	38	Bachelor	Business Adm.
P5	Hotel	1	Bodrum	Seasonal	2	F	M	43	Vocational School	Tourism
P6	Hotel	40	Bodrum	Seasonal	5	F	M	32	Bachelor	Tourism
P7	Hotel	3	Marmaris	Seasonal	3	M	-	50	High School	-
P8	Hotel	23	Menteşe	Seasonal	4	M	M	32	Bachelor	Tourism
P9	Hotel	26	Bodrum	Seasonal	4	M	M	37	Bachelor	Tourism
P10	Hotel	17	Bodrum	Seasonal	7	F	M	26	Vocational School	Human R.
P11	Travel Agency	26	Turkey	All Year	4	M	M	30	Bachelor	Tourism
P12	Hotel	6	Marmaris	Seasonal	4	M	S	34	Bachelor	Public Adm.
P13	Hotel	7	Bodrum	Seasonal	1	M	M	30	Bachelor	Tourism
P14	Travel Agency	25	Marmaris	All Year	5	M	S	37	Bachelor	Tourism
P15	Travel Agency	20	Turkey	All Year	6	M	S	32	Bachelor	-
P16	Hotel	6	Bodrum	Seasonal	6	M	M	44	Bachelor	Tourism

When the tourism enterprises were examined, it was seen that only three of them are travel agencies that carry on the business all year round. The rest are hotels which are in service seasonally, between the months of May and November. Tourism enterprises are located in different districts of Muğla, in particular in Bodrum and Marmaris. The average age of the enterprises is 16 years, varying between 1 and 40 years. It was also determined that only one of the enterprises was participating in the RD for the first time.

After completing the questions about general features and demographics, the researchers intended to gain information related to the participation of businesses. In accordance with this purpose, the researchers asked the executives how they were notified of the event, how many people they representing their organization and which equipment they had brought with them to participate in the RD. Most of the executives were invited via an e-mail sent by organizers of the tourism faculty. Besides, there were also some others that were notified by GETOB (The Union of South Aegean Touristic Hoteliers and Managers). When the interviews were continued to obtain further information about this subject, it was also revealed that most of the executives who had previously participated in the RD already had previous connections with the tourism faculty academicians, and thus had prior information (approximate day, place, duration etc.) about the forthcoming event. The findings related to the participation form of tourism enterprises are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Findings related to participation form of tourism enterprises

	Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Event notification	**Invitation of University**		√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√		√		√
	Previously participation				√				√	√					√	√	√
	Invitation of NGOs	√												√			
Business team participants	**Human Resources Management**	√	√	√	√	√			√		√	√	√		√		√
	Food & Beverage		√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√				√
	Housekeeping	√			√						√						√
	Front Office		√		√					√	√						
	Operation											√		√	√	√	
	Sales and Marketing								√				√	√			
	SPA				√								√	√			
Materials & Equipment	**Technological Equipment** (Notebook, Barco vision, sound system etc.)			√	√				√				√				√
	Visual Presentation Equipment (Flag, banner, roller etc.)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
	Advertisement Materials (Brochure, flyer, catalogue , cd etc.)		√		√					√					√	√	√
	Promotion Materials (Notebook, pencil, keychain, cup, calendar etc.)					√	√		√		√		√	√	√	√	
	Catering Products (hot and cold drinks, cookies, candies etc.)	√		√		√	√			√	√						
	Documents for Recruitment (interview form, registration form, application form, resume form etc.)	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√	√		√

The businesses participated in the RD with an average of four people, varying between two and seven. In general, the business team which participated in RD consists of senior and/or mid-level executives of several departments such as Human Resources, Food & Beverage, Housekeeping, Front Office etc. When the equipment and documents of the businesses were examined, it was determined that all the participants, except one (P.16), had brought presentation materials (banners, flags, rollers etc.) for their stands. Some businesses also used technological tools such as notebook, barco vision and sound systems. The documents related to the recruitment process (registration form, application form, resume/CV form etc.) were the most mentioned items by the executives, following the presentation materials. In addition to them, some businesses brought promotional materials (cups, notebooks, pencils, keychains etc.), advertisement materials (flyers, catalogues, CDs, etc.) and catering products (cookies, candies, coffee, tea, fizzy drinks etc.) for the students.

4.2. Findings Related to Role of RD in Recruitment Process of Tourism Enterprises

In order to find out the executives' opinions about the role of the RD in the Recruitment Process of Tourism Enterprises, firstly the reasons for participating in the RD were asked. As expected, all the participants indicated the various types of recruitments in their responses. Table 3, which is composed of responses to these questions related to role of RD in recruitment process, is presented below.

Table 3: Findings Related to Role of RD in Recruitment Process of Tourism Enterprises

	Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Reasons for Participating	Recruitment of full time employees	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
	Recruitment of part time employees				√								√	√	√	√	√
	Recruitment of trainees		√	√		√	√	√	√		√		√	√	√	√	√
	Business publicity					√		√	√		√		√	√	√	√	√
	Developing university-industry collaboration			√			√	√			√		√		√		√
	Improving relationships with other tourism businesses		√	√		√	√		√		√		√				√
Recruitment Types	Recruitment of full time employees	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√
	Recruitment of part time employees															√	√
	Recruitment of trainees	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√

As it is seen in Table 3, the most mentioned reasons for participating in RD were; recruitment of full time employees and trainees. The other reasons according to their frequency of disclosure were business publicity, developing university and sector partnership, improving relationships with other tourism businesses and recruitment of part time employees, respectively. Following these responses, researchers attempted to learn about the realization of the stated objectives through the executives expressing their participation in RD in the past years. Thus, researchers asked executives the numbers and departments of the recruited employees and trainees through the RD. Some of the responses were as below:

"…I can't give certain numbers but both numbers of employees and trainees that were recruits through the RD is satisfactory…"(P.3)

"… I don't have the certain information, but I do not think that it is a small number … "(P.8)

By the help of the semi-structured interview technique, the researchers asked about this topic in different forms, but it was not possible to receive a straight answer. Rather, many of the participants answered the questions by mentioning nearly all departments of the business with the average numbers and they also emphasized that their main purpose to participate in the RD is recruitment. One of participant answer was as cited below:

"… even though I don't have exact numbers or departments, I can definitely say that we have recruited many employees via the RD. In fact we have already completed trainee recruitment process before participating in the RD. Thus, it is obvious that we are here to recruit new employees rather than trainees or part time employees… P.16).

4.3. Findings related to General Evaluation of RD

At the final stage of analysis, the data was analyzed with respect to the general evaluation of the RD by executives. Within this scope, researchers determined three themes, which were satisfactory issues, dissatisfactory issues and expectations. Interview notes were coded in the scope of these themes and the frequency of each subject is listed in Table 4.

Table 4: Findings related to General Evaluation of RD

Themes	Subjects	n	%
1. Satisfactory issues	Timing	12	75,00
	Event Announcement	9	56,25
	Hosting	9	56,25
	Other tourism enterprises	9	56,25
	Convenience of the participation process	7	43,75
	Quantity and quality of students	6	37,50
2. Dissatisfactory issues	Facilities of Venue	12	75,00
	Quantity and quality of students	9	56,25
	Quantity and quality of other tourism enterprises	5	31,25

	Announcement of the participation process	**5**	**31,25**
	Convenience of the participation process	**4**	**25,00**
3. Expectations	Improvement of venue	**16**	**100,00**
	Providing equipment support	**8**	**50,00**
	Improving the quality of students	**5**	**31,25**
	Increase of the tourism students	**4**	**25,00**
	Quantity and quality of other tourism enterprises	**4**	**25,00**
	Convenience of the participant process	**3**	**18,75**

It was determined that tourism executives were most satisfied with the timing of the RD. More than half of the participants stated their satisfaction about announcement of the event, hosting of the university and other participants from sector. More rarely, convenience of the participant process and quantity and quality of the students were also mentioned as satisfactory issues.

When the non-satisfactory issues were examined, it was seen that facilities of the event venue came top. Opinions of some participants are given below:

"…The place arranged was very constricted. Our stand was almost imperceptible due to the crowds. We had difficulties both in inviting students to our stand and interviewing them … "(P.4)

"…The purpose of the RD is definitely good, but I think that these tables and chairs are disfiguring this nice ambience..." (P.10)

"…ambience is very nice but, there it is very dark due to insufficient lighting…There are many tourism businesses and also many students… it makes the organization a bit chaotic… It was very hard to have a job interview…" (P.5)

Another issue that some of the tourism executives were dissatisfied was the characteristics of the students. While some of the participants were unpleasant with the students from other faculties, others were complaining about the lack of participation from students. Although not as common as the previously mentioned issues, the announcement of the event, quantity and quality of other tourism enterprises and difficulties in the participation process were other issues that discontented the participants.

Participants' expectations from future events were in accordance with their complaints. It was determined that the most discussed issues were requirements in the location of the event and the provision of equipment support. For example, participant 9 expressed his expectations with these words: *"…organizing this event in another place which is larger and in more favorable conditions will definitely enhance the efficiency of the organization".* In a similar manner, participant 3 indicated his opinions by saying that *"we had informed the organizers about the number of the participants from our business on the registration form … but there was just a table and two chairs for seven people. This is not reasonable … it should the first problem that must be solved…"*

Besides them, there were some other expectations related to tourism students that had participated in the RD. Some executives wish an increase in the number of tourism students, while some others would like tourism students to be much more interested in and conscious about the job interview. Participant 2 depicted his expectation as follows: *"…students should be aware of the importance of the job interview… Maybe it could be a good idea to prepare a specific workshop about employment interviewing…".* Participant 16 had some other words about this issue: *"It seems that this place is a common area where any students and employees of the university can come. It is quite normal and also nice to host various people in the RD. But since the place is not wide enough for such a crowd, it is becoming insufficient… I mean, it is getting very hard to communicate with tourism students… I think it would also be better if only tourism students could participate in the RD…".*

In addition to these, there were also expectations for wider participation of sector executives and facilitation of the participation process. When the participants were asked if there was any other matter they wanted to add, all of the participants declared their pleasure and appreciation for participating RD and thanked to the organizers in the Tourism Faculty.

5. Conclusions

Practical education in tourism is key to quality service and competitive edge. University-Industry collaboration is a central element for practical education and on the job training in tourism. Many universities providing education in tourism have initiatives such as career days and fairs as well as sectorial meetings. Building a good career and keeping one is becoming more and more difficult where business conditions change constantly and rapidly. Therefore, university-industry collaboration is of the utmost

importance with a view to supplying a skilled and competent workforce to the industry as mentioned in some recent research (Dönmez-Polat and Kapucuoğlu, 2016; Jauhari, 2013; Pizam, Okumus and Hutchinson, 2013; Rawlinson and Dewhurst, 2013; Sel and Tepeci, 2016). This study examines the way tourism executives perceive the recruitment days activities, which is crucial for career development and conducted under the scope of university-industry collaboration. The study differs from previous studies which are related to university-industry collaboration and analyzed how long-term university-industry partnership could be formed (Pizam, Okumus and Hutchinson, 2013), to foster effective university-industry partnership (Jauhari, 2013), how effective university-industry partnership could be developed (Jauhari and Rhodri, 2013; Rawlinson and Dewhurst, 2013; Sel and Tepeci, 2016), as a result of investigating a specific event, namely Recruitment Day.

The research revealed that the primary aim of participating executives at RD was to recruit full time employees and to select suitable trainees. This seems to be in line with the intended goals of the activity. This result is in accordance with findings of Dönmez-Polat and Kapucuoğlu (2016) who found out that RD had been held to find trainees for their enterprises. However, the fact that participants mostly failed to supply definite numbers in terms of those recruited as employee and trainee, raised some concerns over whether the goals were truly reached. As expressed by the majority of the participants besides the explicit purpose, it appeared that increased publicity, meeting participants from other businesses and improving university-industry collaboration were equally important. This is significant because although recruitment seemed to be on the top of the agenda for participants, all indications pointed to their interest in engaging with participants from other businesses. Therefore, it can be concluded that RD proved valuable in building up sectorial relationships as well as developing university-industry collaboration. Tourism executives, wishing to be part of the university-industry collaboration, clearly wanted to see the presence of other representatives. In other words, provision of wider sectorial participation is likely to lead to enhanced university-industry collaboration as a result of increased motivation.

The research also found that participant organizations were dissatisfied with the physical conditions of the event venue and, as a result, job interviews could not take place properly. Besides the venue related dissatisfaction, the presence of students from other departments and students with inadequate knowledge and awareness were some reasons why their expectations regarding prospective employee quality were not exactly met. Nevertheless, the organizations still wanted to be part of this collaboration since they clearly expressed their gratitude for the event and there was a repeated participation on the side of the organizations. University-Industry collaboration, which originally started as sectorial meetings, has not yet delivered fully in terms of employment. However, there appears to be a consensus that these two sides are shareholders within the same ecosystem rather than disparate parties often perceived as opponents. Therefore, these organizations, parts of the university-business collaboration, still believe that with some slight improvements, RD can turn into an efficient activity.

Managerial Recommendations

In line with the results, our recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the recruitment day activity fell under three categories:

1. The quality and the quantity of the students participating in the activity require improvement: Students must be encouraged to participate in the event by informing them about the event and its importance in consistency with the feedback and the expectations of business representatives. The increased levels in the supply of workforce through the recruitment day locally will mean a wider workforce with tourism education on a larger scale. Furthermore, the inclusion of the feedback from the students before and after the event to make necessary improvements will lead to wider student participation.

An increased awareness among students is needed through stressing the practicalities of job interviews and recruitment process in classes for better quality in addition to increased quantity (Torrington, Hall and Taylor, 2005). A standard CV format featuring school logo supplied by the faculty may be an invaluable tool. Students should be encouraged to participate in the activity together with a standard CV. This will help students become ready for the activity. A self-assessment tool can also be provided to measure their success of the RD event. As a result, the negative perception due to unprepared students with low levels of awareness, as the source of the majority of complaints, may change. Regarding the participation of students from other departments as the source of another major dissatisfaction, it is also beneficial to put some measures to partially control the participation of non-tourism students rather than imposing a strict ban. An upper quota may perhaps be applied for those participating from outside the tourism related disciplines.

2. *The quality and the quantity of the organizations participating in the activity require improvement:* Considering that the host city is one of the leading places as far as the touristic supply and demand are concerned, and that the activity has been running for many years, probably with the highest longevity among sectoral meetings, the level of participation fell short of expectations. A wider range of organizations must be reached via increased channels of promotion and through cultivation of organic ties with businesses particularly employing staff through RD. The event participants failed to supply clear numbers regarding those recruited through the activity, though the very purpose of the event was employment. There appears to be two reasons for this: First, the high level of staff turnover is a general problem in the sector. The students employed through the RD at the beginning of the season tend to leave after a short while or some students may be placed mid-season, making it harder to keep track of numbers. Secondly, this is predominately a result of organizations operating seasonally. As students employed through the RD are obliged to leave the job at the end of the season, there is a tendency for them being perceived as temporary workers. Therefore, in addition to organizations operating seasonally, the necessary provisions must be made to obtain the participation of those operating throughout the year. This will facilitate both the meetings the true objectives of the activity and increase the quality of the participating organizations.

Another important matter requiring consideration regarding participating organizations is that the business scope (range of activities) must be diversified to allow the employment of students being educated in disciplines other than hospitality management within the faculties of tourism. Publicity must be expanded outside the host city to enable organizations to see the activity as a recruitment instrument. Provisions made as a result of the interviews with business representatives conducted before and after the event will improve the communication side of the collaboration as well as satisfaction and participation levels. Regarding the physical facilities of the venue and the demands for improvement of the infrastructure, given the limited resources available to academic staff, sponsorships both from tourism organizations and also NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and teams consolidated with volunteering and qualified students, may help solve the infrastructural problems and provide assistance in meeting these expectations.

3. *Numbers employed through recruitment days must be increased:* RD should principally lead to students being employed. Provisions must be made for a suitable environment for job interviews, as interviews are the key activity of RD (Nickson, 2007). Therefore, costs attached to using the venue, accessibility and suitability of physical conditions (such as space, light and facilities) are some of the main factors needing consideration when choosing a venue. In addition to physical place arrangements, the data from the day must be recorded and the performance of the activity must be measured to see the planned and actual employment numbers. Thus, in addition to qualitative data regarding the effectiveness of the RD, quantitative data will provide valuable sector-wide insights concerning the employment situation of students. The dissemination of such data at the beginning of the activity will encourage organizations not only participation-wise but also for employment purposes.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

The main limitation of this study was that the data was only obtained from a single event (recruitment day activity), which took place in a particular faculty of tourism, as a result of scarcity of financial resources. Thus the results represent only the viewpoint of the business executives participating in this particular event rendering it unfit for generalization. Future research in which several activities are comparatively handled may perhaps deliver more generalizable results. Another limitation of the study was that the arrangement of a suitable place and time for the chosen data collection methodology, namely participator interview techniques, proved rather demanding in comparison to other known data collection tools. Throughout the interviews, the noisy and crowded environment meant it was difficult at times, both for the researcher and the interviewee causing interruptions during interviews. It is highly recommended that in future research interviews must be conducted in a company setting in a proper meeting room so that a richer set of data can be gathered. Another recommendation for future research is to gather data not only from business executives but also from students and academicians, as the other main components of the event. Thus it would be possible to have a more comprehensible evaluation. Despite all the mentioned limitations, with limited literature available on the topic, this study is thought to be beneficial in terms of its contribution towards future research.

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