



HEALTH TOURISM EDUCATION: THE CASE OF TURKEY AND THE WORLD*

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to investigate the university training programs that train professional manpower in the field of health tourism in Turkey and in the world. The study is descriptive and cross-sectional type. Data were collected from the web pages of the universities on February 1-25, 2018. The curriculum content of programs was investigated in terms of the credits of the courses, the process of the programs, the education fees, the language of education and the universities and institutions to which they are affiliated. There are five programs in the field of health tourism, with 3 masters without thesis and 2 masters with thesis. There is no doctoral program and also BSc program in Turkey. There are two programs that associate degree which is called as health tourism management. In the study, in total 12 country and 25 programs were examined. Three of them are doctoral, nine are masters, 11 are BSc degree and three are associate degree level. Considering that health tourism is one of the high value added of the sector in Turkey and the World it can be argued that the number of programs to train professional manpower in this sector is not sufficient.

Key Words: *Health Tourism, Health Tourism Education, Higher Education Programs*

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Introduction

The global tourism sector has been protecting its position as a sector that attracts high interest. The role played by tourism in the development of national and international trade, in the cultural and social arena, and in the establishment of good intentions and understanding between the countries, forced the countries to put emphasis on this sector, and the fact that tourism sector is an important source of income and employment accelerated the competition for development of countries in this field (Ünlüönen and Boylu, 2005; Yıldız, 2011). For example, according to 2016 report of World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC), the total contribution of travel and tourism to gross national product was 10.2% (WTTC, 2016).

The increase in the number of tourists and expenditures as well influence employment. Also tourism is generally accepted as a sector creating employment (Riley and Szivas, 2009). Considering to 2015 report of WTTC, while the number of directly employed persons is 105 million in 2014, it is predicted that this figure will increase by 2% in 2015 and reach 107 million (WTTC, 2015).

The globalization of the tourism sector will increasingly require graduates who are able to job with culturally various workforce either in their own country or in foreign country. For this reason, higher education is important because of preparing graduates to participate in a global economy and understand various cultures, developing sensitivity to different perspectives, being capable of working and communicating with people from around the world, and fostering global citizenship (Stoner et al. 2014).

Raising and employing qualified staff in the tourism sector where international competitive power is high, has a vital importance for the enterprises (Üzümcü and Alyakut, 2017). Raising a qualified labor force depends only on a quality tourism training. The main reason for the importance put today by many countries in the tourism training is to become a leader in tourism sector and to vitalize the tourism activities. The increase in the opening of organizations that provide tourism training is the most important indicator of this. The fact that tourism sector is a labor intense sector and the element which gives and receives service is human, makes it necessary for the sector to raise the staff it needs and employ the qualified staff in this area (Ünlüönen and Boylu, 2005)

Training develops qualified labor force having the knowledge and skills that the sectors need, makes the worker productive and contributes in the economic growth (Baltacı et al. 2012). The focal point of tourism education is the vocational training (Üzümcü and Alyakut, 2017). Vocational education is defined as the process wherein the enterprises that operate in tourism sector raise the labor force that has theoretical, practical knowledge and skills they need, provide them with information needed for

doing their works better, and develop them in physical, intellectual, emotional, social and economic aspects (Aymankuy and Aymankuy, 2002; Aksu and Bucak, 2012).

Vocational tourism training means the process of training carried out for increasing the efficiency of the enterprises in the tourism sector, so as to reveal scientific methods that will follow the innovations in the sector, and develop the research and planning actions needed by the sector (Hacioglu et al. 2008). The objective of vocational tourism training is to provide the occupational formation needed by tourism (Üzümcü and Alyakut, 2017). In addition to this purpose, there are other objectives such as establishing theoretical and practical relationship by means of training, debriefing the place and importance of tourism in economic development, creating tourism awareness in the public, increasing knowledge and skills of the workers in tourism enterprises, and raise qualified tourism trainers. Under the light of this information, the purposes of tourism training could be listed as follows (Üzümcü and Bayraktar, 2004)

- Establishing the relationship between theoretical and practical by means of training,
- Contributing in the development of tourism sector
- Provide qualified staff to tourism sector and explaining the importance of tourism in economic development,
- Creating a positive tourism consciousness among citizens,
- Providing an occupational formation for those who work in the tourism sector,
- Increase the knowledge and skills of those who are employed in tourism enterprises,
- Draw the attraction of citizens towards tourism, raise qualified tourism trainers.

According to Butler (1999) tourism education began as a technical and vocational schools in Europe. Technical and vocational schools highlighted training in core competencies such as hospitality, hotel management and related business skills (Butler, 1999; Morgan, 2004). Interest and demand from the public and private sectors impelled rapid growth of tourism studies and development and establishment, of departments of travel and tourism at institutions of higher education in addition to technical schools (Butler, 1999). Tourism courses in higher education are often referred to as vocational with educators focusing on producing skilled and knowledgeable managerial personnel for the sector (Busby, 2001). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has discriminated tourism higher education as holding a potential to improving the competitiveness of tourism businesses and regions if specific education and training are guaranteed (Fayos Solà, 1997).

Turkey puts emphasis on health tourism in order to create new potential areas towards changing consumer preferences in the foreign market, and to regulate the seasonal and geographical distribution

of tourism. The fact that tourists arrive at our country from all over the world for treatment purposes is a result Turkey providing health services at a level that could compete with quality health services in developed countries. Ministry of Culture and Tourism examines in its Turkey's Tourism Strategy 2023 draft report the issue of health tourism as one of the areas of priority. According to that report, Turkey has a long-term tourism strategy. The basic objective of the strategy is to become by the year 2023 one of the top 5 countries of the world that earns the highest tourism income and attracts the highest number of tourists. (Aydın, 2012; Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2013).

Today's globalizing world requires qualified workers who rapidly adapts to the ever changing conditions and increasing needs of the health system. Health tourism basic training increases the efficiency of each individual in the related issue in the health institution he/she works. Staff who suffer from lack of basic training in health tourism could only fulfill simple processes and experience problems in skills for advanced communication with individuals from different cultures (Ministry of Health, 2017).

1. Methods

The study is of a descriptive cross-section type, and was compiled from the web sites of universities between 1 – 25 February 2018 by relevant internet pages. The universe and sample of the research comprise the programs that provide health tourism training, of which information could be accessed through internet in Turkey and in the world.

The curricula contents of the programs, credits of the courses, periods of programs, tuitions fees, training languages and the affiliated universities and institutions were examined. The data was evaluated in SPSS 21 software with descriptive statistics.

2. Findings

Table 1. Associate Degree Level Health Tourism Training in Turkey

Program name/type	University	Owner of the University	Vocational School/ Faculty/ Institute	Year of training Start	University Entrance Exam type	University Entrance Exam Score
Associate Degree Program in Health Tourism Management	Harran University	State	Şanlıurfa Vocational School of Health Services	2016	YGS-6	195,967**
Associate Degree Program in Health Tourism Management (full scholarship and 50% scholarship)	Kapadokya University	Foundation	Kapadokya Vocational School	2015	YGS-6	195,677** %50 scholarship

** Values for the last person set by 2017 YGS Score

Table 1 gives the programs providing training at the two-year degree level training related to health tourism in Turkey. This program was found in two universities, one of them is foundation (private) and the other is a State university.

Table 2. Curriculums of the Associate Level Education Programs on Health Tourism in Turkey

Area of Course	N	%
Business	28	35,4
<i>Accountancy and Finance</i>	9	11,4
<i>Business Administration</i>	6	7,6
<i>Marketing</i>	6	7,6
<i>Human Resources Management</i>	2	2,5
<i>Quality</i>	2	2,5
<i>Organizational Behavior</i>	2	2,5
<i>Economy</i>	1	1,3
Tourism	9	11,4
Health	9	11,4
English	8	10,1
Information Technologies	4	5,1
Ethic, Patient Rights	3	3,8
Statistics	1	1,3
Law	1	1,3
Other courses (Atatürk's principles and reforms, Turkish language, Physical education, Correspondence Techniques, Fine Arts, Occupational health and Safety, <u>Communication</u>)	16	20,2
Total	79	100,0

*Elective courses are also included in the table.

Table 2 gives the information about the course contents of programs providing training at the associate degree related to health tourism in Turkey. %35,4 of the curricula of associate degree programs comprise courses about “business” such as accountancy and finance, business administration. In total 11.4% tourism, 11.4% health, 10.1% English, 5.1% IT technologies, 3.8% ethics, 1.3% law and 1.3% statistics and 20.2% comprises other courses.

Table 3. Master’s Degree Level Health Tourism Training in Turkey

University name	Institute name	Program type	Year of Training Start
İstanbul Medeniyet University	Social Sciences Institute	Master of Health Tourism Management without Thesis	2016-2017
Eskişehir Osman Gazi University	Social Sciences Institute	Master of Health Tourism Management without Thesis	2017-2018
Adnan Menderes University	Health Sciences Institute	Master of Health Tourism Interdisciplinary without Thesis	2017-2018
Adnan Menderes University	Health Sciences Institute	Master of Health Tourism Interdisciplinary with Thesis	2017-2018
Cumhuriyet University	Social Sciences Institute	Master of Health Tourism Administration with Thesis	2017-2018

As it could be seen in Table 3, there are five programs at masters degree level in health tourism in Turkey, of them two are with thesis and three without thesis. Three of these programs are under the body of the social sciences institute and two are under the body of health sciences institute.

Table 4. Curriculums of the Master Level Education Programs on Health Tourism in Turkey

Area of Course	N	%
Business	9	36
<i>Business Administration</i>	4	16,0
<i>Marketing</i>	2	8,0
<i>Economy</i>	2	8,0
<i>Human Resources Management</i>	1	4,0
Tourism	8	32,0
English	2	8,0
Quality	2	8,0
Law	1	4,0
Statistics	1	4,0
Communication	1	4,0
Ethic	1	4,0
Total	25	100,0

As can be seen in Table 4, when the course contents of programs providing education at master's degree level in health tourism in Turkey are examined, it could be seen that 36% of the courses are in the field of business, 32% in tourism, 8% in English, 8% in quality, 4 % in law, 4% in statistics, 4% in English, 4% in communication and 4% in ethics.

Table 5. Programs Offering Training in Health Tourism in the World

Name of Country	University	Faculty/ Institute name	Department	Program	Fee	Education language
Arizona (United State)	Scottsdale Community Collage	Hospitality and Tourism	Hospitality Tourism/Spa and Wellness Management	Bachelor degree	€15.00	English
Austria	Umt University	Division for management in health, sport and tourism	Business, Health & Sports Tourism	Bachelor degree	Free for Austrian Students, others €3.600 for a term	German and English
Austria	Umt University	Division for management in health, sport and tourism	Sports Medicine, Health Tourism& Leisure Sciences	PhD	€2.800 for a term	German and English
Austria	Joanneum University	Health and Tourism Management	Health Management in Tourism	Bachelor degree	For a term €727 EU/UK Int. €1.454	German and English
Austria	Joanneum University	Health and Tourism Management	Health Tourism and Leisure Management	MSc	-	German
Austria	Joanneum University	Health and Tourism Management	International Hospitality and Spa Management	PhD	-	English
Britain	Derby University	Social Sciences	International Spa Management	MSc	€825 20 per credit	English
Britain	Derby University	College of Business, Law and Social Sciences	International Spa Management	Bachelor degree	£9.250 for a year UK/EU £12.500 International students	English
Britain	Derby University	College of Business, Law and Social Sciences	International Spa Management	Associate degree	£9.250 for a year UK/EU students £11.750 Int. students	English
Croatia	International University of Rijeka	Tourism and Hospitality Management	Specialist Health Tourism	PhD	average €3.000	English
Estonia	University of Tartu Pärnu Collage	Arts in Social Sciences	Spa and Wellness Management	MSc	€1.500 for a term	English
Germany	Apollon Univ of Applied Sciences		Health Tourism	Bachelor degree	€11.052	German
Germany	Technische Hochschule	Health Sciences	International Tourism Management/ Health &Medical Tourism	Bachelor degree	€52 for a term	%80 English %20 German

Hungary	Semmelweis University	Health Sciences	Health Tourism Management	Bachelor degree		Hungarian and English
Ireland	Athlone Institute of Tegnology	Hospitality, Tourism&leisure Studies	Wellness Tourism Management	Bachelor degree		English
Korea	Wonkwang University	Tourism Management	Wellness&Cultural Tourism	Bachelor degree		Korean and English
Spain	University of Malagan	Economics and Business Sciences	Health Tourism	Bachelor degree	€4.200	Spanish
United States	University of Delaware	Hospitality Business Management	Spa and Wellness Management	Bachelor degree	€22.773 for a term	English

Table 5 shows the details of the programs that provide training in the field of health tourism in the World. Of these programs, three are at the level of PhD, four at masters, 10 at undergraduate and one at associate degree level. Countries where these programs are provided are Croatia, Austria, UK, Estonia, Spain, Hungary, Germany, USA, Ireland and Korea. There programs are listed Specialist Health Tourism, Sports Medicine, Health Tourism & Leisure Sciences, International Hospitality and Spa Management, Health Tourism and Leisure Management, Spa and Wellness Management, Health Tourism, Health Tourism Management, Business Health & Sports Tourism, Health Management in Tourism, Hospitality Tourism/Spa and Wellness Management, International Tourism Management/Health & Medical Tourism, Wellness Tourism Management, Wellness & Cultural Tourism. 13 of these programs' teaching lanugage are English.

Table 6. Course Content of the Programs in Health Tourism in the World

Area of Course	N	%
Tourism	112	36,0
Business	80	25,7
<i>Marketing</i>	24	7,7
<i>Business Administration</i>	22	7,0
<i>Accountancy and Finance</i>	13	4,2
<i>Economy</i>	8	2,6
<i>Human Resources Management</i>	8	2,6
<i>Quality</i>	4	1,3
<i>Organizational Behavior</i>	1	0,3
Health	34	10,9
Psychology	17	5,5
Communication	16	5,1
Correspondence Techniques	14	4,5
Statistics	10	3,2
Law	8	2,6
Foreign language	7	2,2
Ethic	1	0,3
Other courses	12	3,8
Total	311	100

Table 6 includes the information about the course contents of the programs that provide teaching in relation to health tourism in the World, and of these 36.0% are in tourism, 25.7% are in management, 10.9% are in health, 5.5% are in quality, 5.5% are in communication, 4.5% are in IT technologies, 3.8% are in other courses, 3.2% are in statistics, 2.6 % are in law, 2.2% are in foreign language and 0.3% are in ethics.

3. Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the educational programs of universities that raise professional human power in the field of health tourism in Turkey and in the world. The information related to training program was collected over web and information that was open to access was collected, and this situation also constitutes the restriction of the study. The Ministry of Development has aimed at developing the staff working in health tourism in qualitative and quantitative terms under the scope of enhancing health tourism as part of 10th Development Plan (2013). Reaching this target could only be possible through education and training provides by Higher Education institutions.

At the end of this study, there were 5 programs in the field of health tourism in Turkey at graduate level, of which three were without thesis and two were with thesis, and there was no PhD program. There was no program that provides training at undergraduate level. There were two programs that provide training at associate degree level, which was named as health tourism management. When we examine the training programs abroad there were 4 PhD programs, namely “Specialist Health Tourism” in Croatia, “Sports Medicine, Health Tourism & Leisure Science” and “International Hospitality and Spa Management” in Austria. 5 masters programs were reached, including “Health Tourism and Leisure Management” in Austria, “International Spa Management” in the UK, “Spa and Wellness Management” in Estonia, “Health Tourism” in Spain and “Wellness Culture Sport, Health And Tourism” in Italy. When the undergraduate programs were examined, 10 undergraduate programs were found, namely “Health Tourism Management” in Hungary, “Business, Health & Sports Tourism”, “Health Management in Tourism” in Austria, “International Tourism Management/Health & Medical Tourism” in Germany, “International Spa Management” in the UK, “Wellness Tourism Management” in Ireland, “Spa and Wellness Management” and “Hospitality Tourism/Spa and Wellness Management” in the USA, “Wellness & Cultural Tourism” in Korea, and “Health Tourism” in Germany. One two-year degree programs was found in the UK, which was “International SPA and Management.

As a conclusion, a total of 12 countries, including Turkey, and 25 programs were examined in this study. Of these three were at PhD level, ten at master’s level, ten at undergraduate and three and

associate degree level. When the course contents of the programs were examined, whereas the programs in Turkey were carried out mainly with management courses, the abroad programs mostly have tourism courses. Different from the programs in Turkey, the abroad programs and curricula are seen to be specified on SPA and wellness fields.

Considering the fact that health tourism is among the sectors with high added value, it was determined that the number of programs to raise professional human power in this sector in Turkey and in the world is low. At the end of the study, it was suggested that Turkey should increase the number of graduate and undergraduate trainings in particular, without sacrificing from the quality of training.

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