ABSTRACT

Tourism has inevitably been associated with developments of new technologies and refreshed by organizational and structural innovations for being competitive in global environment. That is why alternative tourism and alternative built environment attempts with variation of types came into influence for being innovative by promoting organizational learning. This paper provides an evaluation on competitiveness and learning organisations particularly in relation to hotels as accommodation types. Also, this study is an attempt to bring the different examples on accommodation types with relation to competitiveness. The issues involved are an evaluation of the transformation process of a hospitality organisation and the key success factors to becoming an innovative, competitive organisation in order to develop and maintain a competitive advantage within the global change.

This paper seeks to answer the following questions; how hotels can transform themselves into organised learning environments to improve their competitiveness, how this might be related to the built environment of hotels? In other words, how competitiveness effect the service type of an hotel such as boutique hotel, holiday village or star hotels etc. The focus of this paper will be the Turkish tourism sector in the adventure of becoming a learning organisation. Therefore firstly, recent changes in the tourism industry are summarized based on fordist mass tourism to post-fordist flexible tourism debates, any more which emphasizes organizational learning and innovation based on competitiveness. Secondly, emerging types of hotels such as holiday villages, five star hotels, golf hotels, boutique hotels, city hotels with deluxe, first class, moderate ones, fun parks, aquapark and resorts are evaluated within the perspective of organizational learning, innovation and competitiveness. Lastly, the description try to be made on how competitiveness changes the structure of built environment of accommodation types based on especially hotels. It suggests that competitiveness on hotels may generate new opportunities for the creation of alterna-
tive structure of built environment by making upgrading strategies that is substantially beneficial for destinations.

**Keywords:** Competitiveness, Innovation, Built Environment, Tourism, Hotels

**INTRODUCTION**

The developments on globalization, technology and international society has created new winds of change, therefore appeared changes in the customer preferences, differences in built environment based on competitiveness among hotels. Due to the effects of globalisation and post-fordist tourism debates, the competition in tourism has shifted from interfirn competition to the competition between destinations (Go & Govers, 1999). In this respect, tourist expectations are taken as the key factor to be competitive in the market. Tourists are, now, start to saying what they want, when they want it, how much they want it, how much money they want to pay to the place they want to make travel.

Looked at this angle, hotels of local places start to compete in a complex and contingent environment of global. This environment has created a world without boundaries and has created new types of hotels that are intertwined in local and global networks. In this unbounded competitive environment not only local capacities, but also global capacities is required to be competitive for hotels in the contemporary conditions. That is why some hotels go into partnership with global hotel chain firm/corporation to supply the high quality service for tourists. In the guidance of this situation, organizational learning and innovation for competitiveness become the crucial factors on creating a competitive advantage for hotels in globalised world. By developing their learning capacities, hotels can easily adapt the global economic structure. Developed learning capacities of hotels promote their innovativeness in the sector and facilitate the global adaptation and therefore create competitive advantage in the sector.

These demand related competitive environment lead hotels to change their applications, service types and targets according to customer expectations. Hotels generally offer the same kind of services and goods. But now, the situation start to change because of though competition, especially among luxury hotels, different goods and services supplied by hotels are being suited to tourist expectations (Aksu & Tarcan, 2002). Therefore, to gain competitive advantage, tourist satisfaction in the global environment is becoming a significant factor. In the guidance of these situations, the answer of these questions, *How hotels can transform themselves into organised learning environments to improve their competitiveness?, How this might be related to the built environment of hotels?*, become the main focus and the core point of discussion of this paper. While researching the answer of these questions, we can reach different servicing methods of hotels for
different expectations of tourists such as boutique hotel, holiday village, star hotels, city hotels etc. The focus of the case area will be the tourism sector of Turkey in the adventure of becoming a learning organisation.

To understand the changes in the sector and shadows on accommodation types, firstly, recent changes in the tourist industry based on theoretical debates from fordist mass tourism based on comparative advantage to post-fordist flexible tourism based on competitive advantage try to be summarized detaily by categorizing the newly emerging concepts. Secondly, emerging types of hotels such as holiday villages, five star hotels, apart hotels, pensions, golf hotels, boutique hotels, city hotels with deluxe, first class, charming, moderate ones, fun parks, aquapark and resorts are try to be evaluated within the perspective of competitive advantage based on organizational learning and innovation. Lastly, the description is try to be made on how competitiveness changes the structure of built environment of accomodation types based on especially hotels. It suggests that competitiveness on hotels may generate new opportunities for the creation of alternative structure of built environment by making upgrading strategies that is substantially beneficial for destinations.

COMPETITIVENESS AS A CHANGING FACTOR FOR BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF HOTELS

Recent changes on the theoretical debates of tourist industry is based on post-fordist flexible tourism approach emphasize the importance of competitiveness. In this competitive environment, the determinants of tourism as the the product, the producer, the consumer, or the location, undergo significant transformations. In this era of post-tourism, traditional tourist destinations must restructure or face decline, particularly domestic-dependent coastal resort tourism. For this situation, change occurs at least three levels according to Stamboulis and Skayannis (2003);

(a) Tastes of tourists change in different directions. The majority of tourists still seek the consumption of the sea-sun-sand, but others are in search of something different is growing. Tour operators start to specialize in alternative tourism or offer thematic packages, and an increasing number of operators include such options as part of their traditional packages.

(b) There has been a change in the mode of supply of tourism locations and attractions. Destinations are undergoing changes resulting from complex processes. Tourists discover new locations and activities, which eventually become fashionable, subsequently organized, and then market their product themselves so as to either meet or to generate new demand. They are obliged to enter into a world of intensified competition.
There is a change in the providers of both the final product and the intermediate products in an effort to capture new product markets and customers arising from the transformation of the tourist business.

These three levels of change put the traditional tourism paradigm in crisis as all service sector industries follow the paradigmatic changes in the general economy. On this basis, there is a need for a more flexible, upgrading, interactive strategy to minimize the negative contingent effects which comes from external environment to be competitive.

In this point of discussion, Porter’s (1990) framework about competitiveness, competitive diamond, is very useful and crucial for understanding and adapting to these changes. He claims that for competitiveness; “success in international competition in a given industry depends on the relative strength of an economy in a set of business-related features or drivers of competitiveness, namely factor conditions; demand conditions; related and supporting industries; and firm strategy, structure, and rivalry”. As Porter (1990) noted however, strengths in other parts of the diamond may overcome factor disadvantages. Las Vegas, for example, arose in a rather unlikely tourist location despite the earlier lack of resources. That is why, any more, comparative advantage factors (factor conditions) such as sea, sand, human resources, infrastructure are not enough for the competitiveness of the region.

According to Porter (1990), an industry, whether product or service, is a group of competitors producing products or services that compete directly with each other. In the long period, hotels succeed relative to their competitors if they possess sustainable competitive advantage. For him, there are two types of competitive advantage; lower cost and product differentiation. In this study we will focus on the product differentiation part to explain the built environment changes of tourism sector. An example can be given for differentiation such as Disneyland, Eiffel Tower, and for Turkey it is travertens of Pamukkale, Kapadokya and traditional or conserving Turkish house areas.

For Porter (1990), “Firms create competitive advantage by perceiving or discovering new and better ways to compete in an industry and bringing them to market, which is ultimately an act of innovation”. He emphasize that innovation include both improvements in technology and better methods or ways of doing things. It can be manifested in product changes, process changes, new approaches to marketing, new forms of distribution and new conception of scope. Porter identifies the typical causes of innovations that shift competitive advantage as new technologies, new and shifting buyer needs, the emergence of a new industry segment, shifting input costs or availability and changes in government regulations. In this respect, hotels make innovation to be competitive by giving attention to new and shifting tourists needs and at the same time government regula-
tions to provide a more sustainable natural environment as in the example of regulations in Spain.

As shown in the recent conceptualizations of competitiveness, not only attractors as region of primary inputs are more crucial in competitiveness, but also business related factors as contributing factors and region of facilitators, region of institutional and networks capacities became more crucial for competitiveness. Moreover, there are critically important variables, such as location, overall costs, and safety, which are beyond the control of the tourism sector but which play a major role in destination competitiveness (Enright & Newton, 2004).

In the light of these theoretical discussions and new definitions for being competitive in tourism sector, a hotel must give attention on new changes related with literature and new conceptualizations on competitiveness such as corporate working, local and global networking with other hotels for adapting the changes, interesting architecture, new technologies and so making a differentiation on service. Besides, focusing some activities or services to provide the tourist expectation is an undispensable sitation for hotel to be competitive. Because when a hotel enhance its networking capacity, it is easy for that hotel to see what other hotels doing such as hotel chains, franchisings, in the world or to develop a strategy to be competitive (Figure 1).
When enhancing relations with other hotels, a hotel can easily see that to be more competitive in global environment, product differentiation or focusing some groups in services is an indispensable strategy. Product differentiation is the strategy of hotels to be competitive and these strategies change their applications, architecture and service types and targets according to customer expectations. Changing strategies trigger the development of new types of hotels such as holiday villages, five star hotels, apart hotels, pensions, golf hotels, boutique hotels, city hotels with deluxe, first class, fun parks, aquapark and resorts. All these types serve the services for different focusing groups such as for elites, middle class, low class, cultural groups, for some sport groups, businessmen, nature groups etc. The differentiation on hotel types, their causes and tools of transforming strategies will discussed the next part of the paper.

HOW HOTELS TRANSFORM INTO LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS?

Hotels are in one of most dynamic business environments, adapting themselves to external and internal changes occurring in the market and their business involves intense competition. They try to enhance their linkage with local and global to adapt the requirements of the sector easily by making innovation and to survive their competitive advantage. By fulfilling the requirements, hotels must be innovative on serving services and have to differentiate themselves not only marketing services but also in their physical environment (Bayraktaroğlu & Kutanis, 2003). According to Abernathy and Clark, innovations have four types: regular, niche, revolutionary and architectural. Each has a different consequences but in this paper architectural ones are taken into consideration. Architectural innovations are based on;

- Exploitation of a new resource, e.g. Arctic tourism, where the building of ice hotels and attractions requires new designers, builders, equipment, marketers, etc.
- Redefining infrastructure, e.g. in response to environmental regulation. A ban on new tourism facilities along the coast demands a redefinition of the economic potential in other places.
- Creation of other ways of accessing knowledge in centres of excellence.

For Hjalager (2002), large tourism enterprises such as holiday villages, 5 star hotels, golf hotels, hotel chains etc., are more likely to be portrayed for their innovative behaviour than their smaller colleagues. This is only reasonable since they are generally much faster to implement new ideas, thereby creating a competitive advantage for themselves. Smaller enterprises tend to follow only after they have assured themselves that the investments or changes are feasible. Related with its nature, the tourist sector makes it easy for enterprises to observe what others are
doing, almost large tourism enterprises try to give different services by changing their types related with different customer types and satisfactions. That is why some of them join a group for using the brandnames of the chains. Head offices, franchising organisations, management contracts and network service centres will increase the managerial and professional capacities of the totality of enterprises connected to these structures. These capacities are of major importance in relation to innovation. Therefore, they start to represent a type which is specialized with a high quality of service. Joining groups provide a brandname and image for hotel about its service quality. They mostly service on elite groups, businessmen. Some of the hotels transform themselves into learning organizations by making contracts with chains or leading tourism institutions, joining fairs, advertisements, computer reservation systems, conferences to be competitive in the global environment. They design and transform their activities according to the demands of tourists such as making resorts; boutique hotels, holiday villages, aquaparks, golf places for high quality ones; hammams, Turk Han’s, Turk house for cultural activities for local culture; World of Wonders (WOW) Topkapı Palace and Kremlin Palace for cultural activities for global culture; apart, motels and pensions for low quality ones as rural ones; skiing activities and winter sports for winter ski hotels and thermal hotels for health activities.

**HOW COMPETITIVENESS CHANGE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT OF HOTELS?**

Tourism is the main tool for global environment to implement borderless world, sensing that every part of the world as home. Hotels are important in sensing every place as a home for everyone according to their needs (Güzer, 2003). In the light of this debate, to understand todays structure of hotels and their evolution on typologies is not very difficult. There are many examples of city hotels related with this discussion in Turkey as in Ankara, İstanbul, and İzmir, metropolitan city centers, semi-house style business hotels. These types are all grouped into city hotels with servicing businessmen almost. In all of these hotels fix services are used as in our houses such as digital telephone, TV, climate, minibar, the same drinks, the same service menu, internet, fax service etc. The only difference is the quality changes with the number of stars in city hotels. The built environment of these types mostly designed as high layered building and apartment not only in hotel chains of city hotel, but also other quality changes in stars of city hotels. A city hotel is open throughout the year for holiday, entertainment, health and sport purposes as well as being available for international congress, conference and meetings (Bayraktaroğlu & Kutanis, 2003). (Figure 2). The built environment of these city hotels are similar with tourism centers, except the ones including with shopping centers, in cities as in Ataköy Tourism Center, Holiday Inn Crown Plaza in İstanbul (Yapı, 1996), in Karum Tourism Center of Sheraton Ankara.
Apart from this situation, in locality demand, *culture* is at the same time an important concept for hotels representing a type of a group demand. Tourism as a consumption sector, tries to represent the local and the global culture for pro-
viding a group demand to be competitive by using hotels and their differentiated services. *Boutique hotels* are the ones which are representing the locality, traditional architecture and high quality with low bed capacity is prepared for elite groups (Nişanyan, 2005)(Figure 3). In Turkey, all of which have the capacity of local culture of built environment areas and mostly take place in Muğla/Bodrum
as a traditional Bodrum House, in Antalya/Kaleiçi as a historical, traditional Turk House, in İstanbul/Sultanahmet as a traditional historical Turkish houses, in Nevşehir/Ürgüp as a traverten structure, in Karabük/ Safranbolu as a traditional Turkish house, in Çanakkale as a historical place.

Global culture is at the same time represented by hotels. These are mostly shown in Chain Hotels to provide the same service standard and these standards are shown themselves in the built environment of the chain hotels. But not all the chains have the theme of global culture such as Dedeman, Divan, Hillside, Magic Life Club, The Marmara, Martı Hotels, Rixos Hotels, Robinson Club Hotels. On the other side, in WOW Hotels, we can see the similar built environment of famous world places such as Topkapı Palace, Kremlin Palace, White House Golf Resort (Figure 4). In addition, we can see the same circular structure in built environment of all Sheraton hotels. These are representing the global culture by using global famous built environment. These hotels serve at the same time a high quality service for tourists by being a five star hotel with more bed capacity and therefore more sprawl on space of built environment.

Moreover, when we consider the differences in built environment of hotels for being competitive, another type, holiday villages, appear in front of us. The planning program of the holiday villages are important to understand the built environment of them which is determined by active and passive actions. For passive actions bedroom units are designed. For active actions recreational activities, sports such as tennis, riding, golf, fitness, water sports, swimming, diving and walking, relaxing and for amusement such as amphitheater, discotheque are designed for its built environment. The reasons for preference of holiday villages and resorts in both Turkey and different parts of the world based on providing airconditioning in closed places and natural, historical and cultural beauties. When we analyse these cultural, natural and historical values, we see rich cultural development in these region. The holiday villages are all designed to blend into the forest that encircles them (Figure 5). Besides, they have the capacity about 300-900 beds and 200-400 rooms, that is why their built environment shows a more sprawled structure on space about 4-10 ha. At the same time, in these holiday villages, the green area per bad is 41-104.5 m2. Beside holiday villages, golf hotels start to become a new type for hotels in supplying services for another demand group. Golf hotels show somehow a similar structure with holiday villages in design by encircling with forest. At the same time golf hotels taken as the same quality with 5 star hotels and some of the 5 star hotels in Belek-Antalya are at the same time golf hotels. Moreover, all of the golf hotels in Turkey takes place in Belek-Antalya because of the planned improved infrastructure by government supports and forest places (Figure 5).
Recently, a new service type appeared in hotels is *aquapark* which figure out the built environment of the hotel. Aqua services are more well developed in this type of hotels and aquapark area designs the external part of the hotel building by showing a different entertainment environment. Anymore aquapark, thermals and services such as ecopark etc. start to define the built environment of new type of hotels. *Seaside destinations and resorts* traditionally serve tourists on holidays. *Alpine destinations* attract leisure travellers for winter sports, such as skiing, as well as holidaymakers who appreciate natural attractions in all seasons (Buhalis, 2000). For the demand of winter sport activities, built environment of an hotel is designed with a different type in building structure by having a more vertical roof and 4-5 layered building type. These type of sport and recreation hotels mostly take place in Uludağ-Bursa, Saklıkent-Antalya, Palandöken-Erzurum, Sarıkamış-Kars, Erciyes-Kayseri.

On the other side, *thermal hotels* can be taken into consideration by having a different structure with low layered building type in low quality types, and show a similar type of structure with holiday villages in high quality types, all of which are settled around a place of hot-water resource such as thermal hotel of Afyon, Bursa, İzmir, Pamukkale-Denizli, Antalya, Kızılcahamam-Ankara etc. That is why in thermal hotels, beside competitive factors, we can not reject comparative advantage factors such as natural resource, which is still an important factor to determine the place and design of a hotel. In addition to different type of hotels, *honeymoon hotels* can be taken as a new type of example and shows a similar type of structure with holiday villages and five star hotels such as Ritz Carlton and Sheraton Hotels in global environment.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In this paper, the effects of *competitiveness* on built environment of tourism with reference to hotels tried to be scrutinized based on innovation and learning organization debates by the effect of globalisation and upgrading technology. Tourism and therefore the built environment of tourism is affected by new winds of change as post-fordist theoretical debate of tourism emphasize. In the guidance of discussions and given examples, the change on built environment of tourism can be seen on architectural innovations. Architectural innovations take different forms by the changes of tastes and demands of tourist types. The taste and demand of tourist can be effected by the factors such as cultural, thematic, historical, natural, *proximity to city*, aestetic, health and service quality etc. Taste and demand related difference on built environment of hotels is examined and showed based on the examples from Turkey. Early types of examples were very limited which is only based on 1, 2, 3 star hotels. Later holiday villages, individual villas and pensions have start to emerged. But now, we have seen different
and interesting architecture types of hotels start to emerge in Turkey, such as boutique hotels, golf hotels, increase in hotel chains, resorts for alpine and seaside destinations, holiday villages with tematic or ecological purposes or with honeymoon activities, city hotels and thermal hotels which all of them supports our theoretical discussion based on competitiveness debate that is effected by tourist demand.

This paper emphasize that competitiveness of hotels which is effected by tourist demand and taste. Demand and taste of tourists are only provided with hotels by adapting competitive conditions such as developing the capacity of organizational learning and the capacity of innovation with enhancing networking. The demand as a social factor determines the organization of space by building type, architecture and built environment as a supply of product and product differentiation in the concept of competitiveness. On the other hand based on the change on tastes of tourists, the space determines the social structure of demand in tourism. In tourism mostly nature, history and different geographical properties of space determines the social structure of tourist types such as adventure, cultural, thermal tourists. Therefore, the paper suggests that we must take into consideration the changing demand, social structure and nature, culture and history of land properties which generates new opportunities for the creation of alternative structure of built environment. By making upgrading strategies with reference to changing social structure and social demand, we can develop more innovative built environment types that is substantially beneficial for destinations.

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