

## **Managerial Problems Confronted By Executive Chefs in Hotels**

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**ABSTRACT:** The study was conducted to determine the managerial problems confronted by executive chefs working at 4 and 5-star hotels in Turkey. A survey developed by the researchers was employed as a data collection tool. Answers given by participants were analyzed using “T-test” and “ANOVA” analyses in order to determine whether there are significant differences of opinion on the subject (collated in answers to the survey questionnaire) amongst executive chefs, based on answers given by them (expressed as average figures) dependent upon such variables as their “Age”, “Gender”, “Educational Status” and “Star status of the hotel within which they worked.” The study results showed that the most important problem confronting executive chefs was “finding educated/trained kitchen personnel.” On the specific problem, “responsibility and authority is not clear within the kitchen,” there was a significant difference of opinion by the gender of the executive chefs. Moreover, there was a significant difference of opinion dependent upon the star status of the hotels within which the chefs worked on the problem of whether or not “the working hours of kitchen personnel were too long.” The findings suggest that there are important problems confronted by executive chefs. Moreover, male and female executive chefs have different opinions on the magnitudes of some specific problems. Whereas there are various reports and similar publications discussing problems faced by executive chefs, the present study is the first one in the literature that solely explore the managerial problems experienced at a kitchen context.

**Keywords:** Hotel Managements; Kitchen Management; Administrative Problems in Kitchen Management.

**JEL Classifications:** L2; M1

### **1. Introduction**

Management is probably the most important building block of a hotel facility (Sener, 2010; Aktas and Ozdemir, 2007). Management in food and beverage establishments is a process in which available human, physical, monetary and other resources are effectively managed and used in accordance with the aims of the establishment. Management always acts with limited resources to achieve its goals. It is important therefore that hotel and kitchen managers should find ways to utilize these restricted resources in the most effective way (Sokmen, 2006).

If the term management is to be defined from the hotel kitchen standpoint, its goals and targets should be determined first. Out of all the desired targets that should be strived for in the hotel kitchen, customer satisfaction should be the first and probably most important target. To achieve this, food set out in the menu should fulfill the expectations of guests. The entire menu should be tasty and their presentation pleasing to the eye. Food should also be prepared in compliance with all relevant hygiene rules. In order to attain the hotels anticipated profit rate budget forecast, the sales revenue of the food should be pitched at a high level and the cost of food should be minimized (Kucukaslan, 2011).

Therefore, kitchen management can be defined as working in harmony with kitchen personnel in order to provide the best food in terms of quality, cost and hygiene standards as well as to attain all the other relevant goals of a hotel facility. Executive chef, who is the single most important employee within a hotel kitchen department, strives to carry out these strategies together with junior managers in

order to achieve the managerial goals and the other intended specific routines within the hotel facility (Kucukaslan, 2011; Ozdemir, 2001).

Looking back over the last 50 years, the numbers for travel and the demand for holidays have grown tremendously thanks to the rapid increase in incomes, education and leisure time (Simsek, 2006). New hotels, rapidly changing consumer demand and stiff competition are all decisive factors when considering all the most essential aspects of hotel management including its services and products. Parallel to the technological progress that has been achieved at all levels within hotel establishments, kitchens are now equipped with state-of-the-art technological equipment (Cakir, 2010). However, the success of hotel kitchens depends not only on high-end equipment and technology but also on planned and systematically executed programs and strategies (Simsek, 2006). Notwithstanding this, no matter how successful the hotel kitchen's operational system, an unsuccessful service within a kitchen can lead to a disastrous and irreversible public image not only for the kitchen but also for the entire reputation and image of the hotel (Sayim, 2008).

Satisfactory feedback from guests who have used and experienced the services of a hotel kitchen has a great impact in promoting the name and reputation of hotels and their kitchens. Thus guest satisfaction is probably the most important way in which the goodwill of a hotel kitchen together with the reputation of the hotel as a whole is promoted. In this sense, fulfilling the expectations of hotel guests depend on the kitchen, just as much as the other units within a hotel (Cakir, 2010).

This study was conducted to explore kitchen management and managerial problems encountered by executive chefs in 4 and 5-star hotels in Turkey. It is safe to claim that kitchens and the people working at the kitchens have been ignored by the researchers for a long time. It is possible to find reports, magazine articles and similar publications discussing problems faced by executive chefs. The present study is the first one in the literature that solely explores the managerial problems experienced at a kitchen context. A survey developed by researchers employed to obtain the necessary data. The collated data was first statistically analyzed, then findings discussed. Suggestions have also been made for possible future studies based on the findings and issues contained in this work.

## **2. Literature Review**

A comprehensive literature review revealed no study that directly examines administrative problems confronted by chefs in hotel establishment. As a result, this makes the study an authentic and a genuine first study in this area of research. It should however be pointed out that there are separate areas of study in the literature which examine problems confronted by hotel chefs themselves as well as by employees working under them.

According to a study conducted by Pratten and O'Leary (2007), one of the biggest problems that affect the accommodation industry is the task of finding appropriate kitchen personnel. The lack of properly educated and trained employees has shown itself to be a major problem in the industry. When it is considered that the need for ever reliable, loyal, educated and trained employees has been increasing within the accommodation industry due to competition intensifying ever more rapidly every day, it must surely be wise for hotel companies as a whole to implement long-term development programs to stay competitive.

In another study, Pratten (2003) concludes that kitchen personnel should be well-educated, trained and experienced to play a key role in the kitchen. However, it is a well-known fact that many trained and experienced chefs leave the kitchen job they have been working in to find alternative employment after just a few years. Low wages, long working hours and excessive discipline are amongst the more common reasons for their decision to quit their jobs. Some of the female employees have also drawn attention to alleged complaints of gender discrimination (Pratten, 2003).

Gibbons and Gibbons (2007) examined the stress factors experienced by executive chefs working in hotels, restaurants and bars operating in Northern Ireland and reached seven important conclusions for negative staff performance. These were listed as being due to: staff shortages, excessive workloads, lack of feedback on performance, feelings of being undervalued, insufficient management support and poor communication between staff. In conclusion, Gibbons and Gibbons (2007) claim that while lack of control over work is one factor that creates stress, having managerial responsibility as an executive chef is also one of the main causes of stress.

According to the "physical violence" themed literature review Bloisi and Hoel (2008) conducted on chefs: psychological abuse, swearing, physical violence, bullying and being pushed around, throwing kitchenware and intentionally scorching colleagues with hot kitchen equipments are some of the main factors that cause significant problems in kitchens.

At the conclusion of their research conducted on 95 executive chefs in hotels and independent restaurant executive chefs in Cyprus, Zopiatis et al. (2011) found the stress factors chefs have to face; inadequate monetary remuneration, receiving inadequate appreciation, inadequate training activities, lack of qualified personnel, inadequate opportunities for career advancement and excessive working hours as well as the issue of safety at work. The researchers highlighted the point that—employers should act more sensitively, particularly concerning matters of inadequate monetary remuneration and lack of career advancement opportunities.

According to the results of a study by Rowley and Purcell (2001) carried out in England, chefs mostly work under stressful, bureaucratic, wearisome and constantly changing working conditions. However in another study by Chuang and Lei (2011) conducted with chefs from 25 randomly chosen casino hotels in Las Vegas, it was reported that chefs only occasionally work under heavy stress loads.

Findings of Hu et al. (2012) obtained from 137 questionnaire forms received from chefs in Oklahoma showed that the greatest obstacle confronted for the proper presentation of healthy dishes to achieve customer satisfaction is the insufficient level of nutritional education of chefs. Another view point commonly expressed by chefs is that the greatest obstacle confronted is in fact the customers' own preference for the cheaper type of dish which is generally poorer in terms of nutritional value.

The biggest challenge faced by the food and beverage industry is the availability of qualified personnel and motivated employees. According to Lee and Shin (2005), food and beverage establishments have to essentially focus on the status of their available employees and managers, when conducting their survey on the nutritionists and chefs working in food and beverage establishments in Korea. They found that the most significant problems arising in management are: emotional burnout (exhaustion, cynicism) as well as administrative irresponsibility (ie lack of: vigor, dedication and absorption). However, emotional burnout was reported to be a more significant problem than administrative responsibility. Due to the difficulties in finding qualified and motivated employees and the cost of selecting and training employees, they recommended that food and beverage establishments should focus on their available personnel and seek ways to keep their motivation at maximum levels.

In a review concerning the importance of quality characteristics in cuisine schools' educational programs, negative findings were found to exist in five important areas namely: the sanitation of labs, faculty industry experience, faculty subject experience, required internship and placement rates (Hertman and Stefarelli, 2007).

Whereas there are not many studies examining the problems faced by the kitchen chefs and kitchen employees, the literature review at this study gives some important insights about the kitchen working environment. Kitchen staff and chefs all together, suffer from heavy working loads, long working hours, stressful working conditions and low wages. This must be no surprise to anybody at the industry that the kitchens are not able to attract qualified and well-trained workforce under these circumstances. However, kitchens are crucial for hotel and restaurant establishments and, today's new customers are more demanding and like any other industries, they continuously seek for value, change and quality. As a result, it is possible to claim at this point that tomorrow's successful kitchens operations must be human oriented at their kitchens and must exercise successful human resources management practices to be and stay competitive.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Material of the Study**

The population of the study was 4 and 5-star hotel establishments in Turkey that possess tourism operation licenses issued by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Since the researchers aimed to reach the whole population, no sampling was done within the scope of the study. On considering the size of the present population (in total 676 hotels with tourism operation licenses) it was decided to include all the 650 hotels whose addresses were found within the sample. Therefore, the sample had a high likelihood (i.e. 96% chance) of representing the whole population.

By reviewing the related literature and examining the previous studies, the theoretical and practical frameworks of the study were set. Further, by examining the studies on management, hotel management, kitchen management (Prattern and O'Leary, 2007; Prattern, 2003; Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007; Zopiatis et al., 2011; Ozdemir, 2001; Giritlioglu, 2008) and the scales used in these studies, a survey form suitable for the scope of the study was developed by the researchers.

The survey form consists of two sections. The first section is composed of 30 questions intended to determine the problems that may be confronted by chefs in kitchen management and administration. A five-point likert rating system (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree) was employed for the questions included in this section. The questions included in the second section are intended to determine the demographic characteristics of the participating chefs.

### **3.2. Study Problems**

The study, where the administrative problems confronted by executive chefs in the kitchens of 4 and 5-star hotels in Turkey were examined, sought answers to questions in three problematical areas.

1. What are the administrative problems confronted by chefs working in 4 and 5-star hotel kitchens?
2. Do the administrative problems confronted by chefs working in hotel kitchens differ by demographic variables?
3. Are there differences of opinion about the administrative problems experienced by chefs of 4-star hotels and chefs of 5-star hotels?

### **3.3. Data Collection**

In order to counter the difficulties relating to cost and of personally reaching all the hotels constituting the population due to their wide geographic dispersion, the survey form was sent to the chefs via fax using the benefit of a professional company to do the faxing. In total, 650 survey forms were faxed to the hotels on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012. In addition, 90 chefs were directly contacted by phone and asked to fill in the survey form. Finally, 121 chefs responded. Thus, 18.6% participation was achieved. After the examination of the returned survey forms and the elimination of 8 which determined unusable, a total of 113 survey forms were deemed suitable for analysis.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. Analysis of the Collected Data**

Among the participating chefs, 92% were male, while 8% were female. In a similar study conducted on chefs, all of the participating chefs were male (Hatipoglu, 2010). Accordingly, a deduction can be made from this that chefs in Turkey are mostly male. It was observed that 40.7% of the participating chefs were aged between "36 and 45", and that 62.8% of them had "16 years or more" professional experience. It could therefore be assumed with some certainty that the majority of hotel chefs are experienced. On the other hand, examining the educational status of the participating chefs showed that the majority of the chefs were only at "high school" graduate level (38.1%). On the other hand, 47.8% of the chefs stated that they were working for a 4-star hotel and 52.2% stated that they worked in a 5-star hotel establishment.

"The administrative problems experienced by the chefs serving in hotel kitchens" was the first problem the present study sought answer for. In order to find out the administrative problems confronted by chefs, the averages of the answers given to the 30 items were calculated and the first 10 of these items were put into order from the highest average to the lowest (Table 1).

"Having difficulties in finding properly educated and trained kitchen personnel" was found to be the number one problem confronted by executive chefs. The second main problem emphasized by the chefs was the "inability to employ kitchen personnel for long term periods." The fact that kitchen personnel are usually not employed for long-term periods due in general to the seasonality problem seems to put chefs in a difficult position (Gorkem and Ozturk, 2011; Pratten, 2003). "Lack of certified kitchen personnel" was recorded as being the third main problem by the chefs. Some of the other important problems stated by chefs included: "lack of funds for the training and education of personnel", "low wages", "lack of quality food production due to cost pressures" and "fast employee turnover rates."

**Table 1. Participation levels of managerial problems that kitchen chefs encounter**

Kitchen Management Problems	The Number of Relative Participation	Mean	Standard Deviation
26. Having difficulties in finding properly educated and trained kitchen personnel	1	4,0885	4,90728
1. Inability to employ kitchen personnel for long term	2	3,7080	1,38023
6. Lack of certification of the kitchen personnel	3	3,5841	1,29370
7. Lack of funds for the training and education of the personnel	4	3,5487	1,29554
3. Low wages	5	3,5133	1,36352
28. Lack of quality food production due to cost pressures	6	3,4867	1,39588
25. Trouble with obtaining capable personnel	7	3,4779	1,39577
30. High employee turnover rates	8	3,4425	1,25313
29. Lack of support by senior management for needs of kitchen	9	3,4071	1,37949
20. Lack of support for modern kitchen equipment	10	3,3628	1,35001

"Do the administrative problems confronted by chefs working in hotel kitchens differ by demographic characteristics?" was the second problem from which the study sought answer. In order to determine whether the previously established administrative problems differed according to the demographic characteristics of kitchen managers, t-test and ANOVA analyses were conducted (see Tables 2, 3 and 4).

**Table 2. Kitchen Management problems according to genders of kitchen chefs**

Kitchen Management Problems		N	Mean	t-value	Level of Significance
2. Ambiguous responsibility and authority in the kitchen	Male	104	2,9712	-3,134	0,003**
	Female	9	4,4444	-6,614	
3. Low wages	Male	104	3,4519	-1,638	0,030*
	Female	9	4,2222	-2,194	
6. Lack of certification of the kitchen personnel	Male	104	3,5385	-1,278	0,018*
	Female	9	4,1111	-1,968	
12. Inadequate experience levels of kitchen department chefs	Male	104	2,7692	-1,227	0,006**
	Female	9	3,3333	-2,083	
13. Failure in providing in-house training to kitchen personnel	Bay	104	3,3173	-0,531	0,017*
	Bayan	9	3,5556	-0,742	
16. The inadequate education level of kitchen personnel.	Bay	104	3,1731	-0,359	0,042*
	Bayan	9	3,3333	-0,507	

The statistical analyses showed significant differences between male and female chefs relating to such matters as: "ambiguous responsibility and authority in the kitchen", "low wages", "lack of certification of kitchen personnel", "failure in providing in-house training to kitchen personnel" and "the inadequate education level of kitchen personnel." The results indicate that woman chefs generally rate these problems higher than male chefs. This difference is especially much apparent at the problem

“ambiguous responsibility and authority in the kitchen” between male and female chefs. The hotel senior management’s support and assignment of more authority to male chefs may be the reason.

One-way ANOVA analysis (see Table 3) was employed to test differences on management problems was by way of analyzing the ages of chefs. The only difference found between different age groups was with the item concerning the "incompetent kitchen personnel." The biggest difference between the age groups took place between the age groups of “24 and younger” and “56 and older.” This may be due to the fact that chefs aged 56 and older have accumulated more extensive experience than younger chefs and therefore they are more experienced in assessing the qualities of the personnel.

**Table 3. ANOVA Table on Kitchen Management problems according to ages of kitchen chefs**

Kitchen Management Problems		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	f- value	Level of Significance
22. Incompetent kitchen personnel	24 age and below	3	1,66	1,15470	2,563	0,042*
	25-35 age	39	3,20	1,23926		
	36-45 age	46	2,67	1,13636		
	46-55 age	22	2,54	1,22386		
	56 age and over	3	3,66	1,15470		
	<b>Total</b>	113	2,83	1,22404		

Whether kitchen management problems differ according to the educational background was tested through the use of ANOVA analysis. The averages indicating job satisfaction levels of executives of varying educational levels are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. ANOVA Table on Kitchen Management problems according to education factor of kitchen chefs**

Kitchen Management Problems		n	Mean	Standard deviation	f- value	Level of Significance
10. Lack of leadership qualities of kitchen department chefs.	Primary	14	2,0000	1,30089	2,779	0,030*
	Secondasy	26	3,2692	1,36336		
	High School	43	2,8372	1,21362		
	Associate Degree	17	3,1765	1,42457		
	Undergraduate	13	3,2308	0,92681		
	Total	113	2,9292	1,30053		
12. Inadequate experience levels of kitchen department chefs	Primary	14	1,9286	1,26881	2,682	0,035*
	Secondary	26	3,3077	1,34964		
	High School	43	2,7442	1,23622		
	Associate Degree	17	2,9412	1,29762		
	Undergraduate	13	2,8462	1,34450		
	Total	113	2,8142	1,32657		
17. Limited promotion opportunities of kitchen personnel.	Primary	14	2,5714	1,55486	2,572	0,042*
	Secondary	26	3,3846	1,47179		
	High School	43	2,9767	1,14410		
	Associate Degree	17	3,8824	1,21873		
	High School	13	2,8462	1,34450		
	Total	113	3,1416	1,34872		

As a result of the analysis conducted, significant differences were found between the chefs' opinions on the items: "lack of leadership qualities of kitchen department chefs", "inadequate experience levels of kitchen department chefs" and "limited promotion opportunities of kitchen

personnel" dependent upon the chef's educational background. Examining the results shows that the level of agreement of the "high-school" graduate chefs to all three of these problems is higher than "primary school" graduate chefs. Therefore, it is possible to assert that the executives who have higher educational levels have higher expectations from kitchen department chefs.

"Are there differences when comparing administrative problems experienced by chefs of 4-star hotels and chefs of 5-star hotels?" was the third problem that the study sought to answer. The ANOVA analysis showed significant differences between chefs working in 4 and 5-star hotels on the "long working hours of kitchen personnel" problem (0,043). Examining the results shows that the chefs working at 4-star hotels rate the "long working hours" problem higher than the chefs working at 5-star hotels. Hence, it is possible to assert that the work load of the personnel at 4-star hotels is generally heavier than that of the personnel working at 5-star hotels.

Tables 5 and 6 respectively present the average survey results of those chefs working at 4-star hotels and 5-star hotels on the kitchen management problems.

**Table 5. Descriptive statistic Table of Kitchen Management problems according to 4-star kitchen chefs**

Relative Impotence	Kitchen Management Problems (n=54)	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	1. Inability to employ kitchen personnel for long term	3,7963	1,26461
2	6. Lack of certification of the kitchen personnel	3,7222	1,36557
3	26. Having difficulties in finding properly educated and trained kitchen personnel	3,7037	1,26833
4	7. Lack of funds for the training and education of the personnel	3,6852	1,30057
5	3. Low wages	3,6111	1,30914
6	15. Long working hours	3,5741	1,46148
7	28. Lack of quality food production due to cost pressures	3,5185	1,39731
8	25. Trouble with obtaining capable personel	3,5185	1,43725
9	13. Failure in providing in-house training to kitchen personnel	3,4630	1,25462
10	27. Intervention of business owners and senior management to kitchen management	3,4259	1,44851

**Table 6. Descriptive statistic Table of Kitchen Management problems according to importance levels for 5-star kitchen chefs**

Relative importance	Kitchen management problems (n=59)	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	26. Having difficulties in finding properly educated and trained kitchen personnel	4,4407	6,69089
2	1. Inability to employ kitchen personnel for long term	3,6271	1,48438
3	30. High employee turnover rates	3,5763	1,24849
4	29. Lack of support by senior management for needs of kitchen	3,5254	1,31773
5	6. Lack of certification of the kitchen personnel.	3,4576	1,22224
6	28. Lack of quality food production due to cost pressures	3,4576	1,40592
7	25. Trouble with obtaining capable personel	3,4407	1,36800
8	7. Lack of funds for the training and education of the personnel	3,4237	1,28926
9	3. Low wages	3,4237	1,41669
10	27. Intervention of business owners and senior management to kitchen management	3,2542	1,40925

Examining the tables shows that the first problem pointed out by 4-star hotel executive chefs is the "inability to employ kitchen personnel for long term periods." "Lack of certified kitchen personnel" and "having difficulties in finding properly educated and trained kitchen personnel" are the other two important problems emphasized by the chefs working in 4-star hotels.

Table 6, on the other hand, shows that the problems mostly pointed out by the chefs working in 5-star hotel chefs relate to personnel education and training(1, 5, 8) and the inability to employ the personnel for long term periods (2, 3). It is therefore possible to assert that the generally low level of

education of the personnel working in kitchens and the fact that in-house training is not provided to kitchen employees by hotel establishments adversely affect the chefs and kitchen operations. To solve the problem, it has to be ensured that qualified employees that received professional training are employed at the right place and time., A certain level of attention must be paid ensuring that there is cooperation between tourism graduate schools and the tourism industry and that there is provision made for in-house training in essentially required areas.

While the highest ranked problem among the 4-star hotel chefs is "inability to employ kitchen personnel for long term periods" the same problem is ranked second by the 5-star hotel chefs. The related problem "high employee turnover rates" was ranked as being third place by 5-star hotel chefs. As previously mentioned, this trend can be explained by the fact that personnel tend to resign from their seasonal jobs in hotel establishments particularly in coastal regions when they find permanent jobs. This problem seems to be a particularly pressing one for chefs and can be considered as an important problem that deteriorates the quality of available qualified personnel in hotel kitchen departments.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusions**

The present study was conducted with the intention of determining the most serious managerial problems confronted by executive chefs working in 4 and 5-star hotel establishments. Study results revealed that chefs put the problem of "having difficulties in finding properly educated and trained kitchen personnel" as their number one concern. It is possible to assert that executive chefs are fully aware of the important beneficial effects that trained and competent human resource staff have on attaining the requisite standard of service quality. Providing high quality service and remaining competitive globally seem to be unlikely with untrained human resource staff. To solve the problem, it has to be ensured that qualified employees that received professional training are employed at the right place and time. A certain level of attention must be paid to ensure that there is cooperation between tourism schools and the tourism industry and that there is provision made for in-house training in essentially all requisite areas.

The second important administrative problem pointed out by hotel executive chefs was the "inability to employ kitchen personnel for long term periods". One of the most important problems of the tourism industry is the seasonal work/employment problem. Due to this seasonality problem, employees in the tourism industry and accordingly in hotel establishments, tend to leave their jobs when they find an opportunity with permanent work. This in turn constitutes one of the main reasons for the lack of qualified personnel (Birdir and Tepeci, 2003). The constant flow of qualified personnel out of the industry (Young and Corsun, 2010; Pratten and O'Leary, 2007; Halis and Camlibel, 2011) typically causes personnel quality to fall and it also creates an increase in the lack of qualified personnel in the tourism industry.

"Lack of certified kitchen personnel" was the third issue complained of by the executive chefs. Long, tiring and irregular working hours cause such personnel to leave this particular sector of the industry (Birdir and Tepeci, 2003; Young and Corsun, 2010) as well as causing service quality levels to fall. Carrying out joint projects with educational institutions and efforts to enhance the quality of the employee resources is argued to be extremely useful to resolve this problem (Pratten and O'Leary, 2007).

The "lack of funds for the training and education of personnel" problem was again amongst the high ranked problems by the executive chefs. Increasing cost pressures may cause hotel managements to make certain cuts in their kitchen department budgets (Uner et al., 2006). This in turn may have an adverse knock on effect resulting in the management's ability to allocate sufficient funds for the training of kitchen personnel. When one considers that a major part of a hotels' income is generated by the F&B department, having highly qualified kitchen personnel, attaching the necessary importance to personnel training and allocating sufficient funds to have training renewed at certain strategic periods within the year are important measures for finding a satisfactory solution to this particular problem.

"Low wages to kitchen personnel" was the fifth problem set out in the present study. The high unemployment rate in Turkey has affected the tourism industry, as well as many other sectors. The surplus of labor force may have enabled hotel managements to act with more flexible wage strategies

as well as in the provision of human resources. Accordingly, it is possible to assert that employees are forced to work for lower wages (Bozkurt and Bozkurt, 2008). As one of the most important factors that ensure personnel motivation (Oz, 2006), improving "wages" can be considered as an essential factor for the performance of quality production in the kitchen.

Examining kitchen management problems by focusing on gender showed significant differences between male and female chefs in the areas relating to: "ambiguous responsibility and authority in the kitchen", "low wages to kitchen personnel.", "lack of certified kitchen personnel", "lack of leadership qualities of kitchen department chefs", "failure in providing in-house training to kitchen personnel " and "inadequate education level of kitchen personnel".

In examining such differences it was found that, female chefs were particularly more exposed and involved with the problem of "ambiguous responsibility and authority in the kitchen" in comparison with their male chef counterparts. It is possible to deduce from this that female executive chefs have more concern about the distribution of power and responsibility in the kitchen. This may be due to the senior managements providing more support to male executives than they provide to female executives.

On the other hand, the analysis by age factor showed that there is a significant difference between age groups concerning the problem relating to "inadequate competency of kitchen personnel." The biggest difference between the age groups was apparent between the groups of "24 and younger" and "56 and older". The reason for this may be that the executive chefs in the age group "56 and older" are more experienced and therefore can better assess the qualities of their personnel.

Examining kitchen management problems by education showed a statistically significant difference in: "lack of leadership qualities of kitchen department chefs", "inadequate experience levels of kitchen department chefs" and "limited promotion opportunities of kitchen personnel." In all these three problems, chefs with higher educational backgrounds seem to participate more to such disputes than the "primary school" graduate chefs. It can therefore be asserted with some confidence that the chefs with higher levels of educational background have higher expectations from kitchen department chefs and kitchen personnel.

The present study which studied the executive chefs working at 4 and 5-star star hotels in Turkey revealed some of the administrative problems experienced by hotel executive chefs. "Finding educated/trained kitchen personnel" is found to be the most important problem confronted by them. The problems; "inability to employ kitchen personnel for long term periods, lack of certified kitchen personnel and lack of funds for the training and education of personnel" were followed the first problem and they're also related to training and development of employees at the kitchens. The results strongly indicate that there is a need to pay attention to training and education gaps of kitchen personnel at the hotel kitchens. The fifth problem is identified as "low wages to kitchen personel." The results obtained call for many other studies on hotel kitchens and hotel chefs to be made. Understanding and effectively solving kitchen management problems seem to be at the core of successful hotel operations. Future studies concerning the effects of the negativities that arise due to administrative problems confronted by hotel executive chefs on the overall performance of hotel establishments will have the potential to help the firms for better management and competition.

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