

BENEFITS OF NETWORKING FOR SMALL HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES:  
THE CASE OF ISTANBUL'S SULTANAHMET AREA

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BENEFITS OF NETWORKING FOR SMALL HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES:  
THE CASE OF ISTANBUL'S SULTANAHMET AREA

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Mehtap Çivi, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

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## ABSTRACT

### Benefits of Networking for Small Hospitality Businesses:

#### The Case of Istanbul's Sultanahmet Area

Considering its contribution to economy through tourism revenues and employment, tourism is among the important industries in Turkey. However, the industry has faced serious problems in recent years due to the political and economic fluctuations in the country. During this period, a large number of small and medium sized hotels (SMHEs) have faced difficulties in sustaining their operations due to this fluctuations and, unfortunately, some had to cease their operations. Considering all these difficulties faced by small hotels, this study is undertaken to understand how they deal with these problems and use networking in running their operations and the perceived benefits of their networking activities. Thus, networking structure of these small hotels; frequency and purpose of their formal and informal networks and the benefits, if any, of networking activity are investigated in this study. Istanbul Sultanahmet area is selected as the context of the empirical study. Data is collected during the period April 27, 2019 - July 17 2019 using a questionnaire administered to owner/managers of 71 small hotels and four in-depth interviews with four owner/managers. Results indicate that although hotel owner/managers state the difficulties that they face in reaching resources, such as human resources and guests; the formal and informal networks that they utilize for gaining access to the resources remain insufficient in solving their problems. Rather than formal and informal networks of owner/managers, the results suggest the need for establishing specific-purpose networking platforms that involve relevant stakeholders.

## ÖZET

İşbirliği Bağlantıları'nın Küçük ve Orta Büyüklükteki Otellere Faydası:

İstanbul Sultanahmet Bölgesi Araştırması

İşbirliği ağları olarak adlandırdığımız etkileşim hem resmi (formel) hem de kişisel (enformel) şekillerde karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Turizm gelirlerinin ülke ekonomisine yaptığı katkı ve yarattığı istihdam ile turizm sektörü Türkiye'nin önemli sektörlerinden biridir. Turizm sektörü, son yıllarda ülkedeki politik ve ekonomik dalgalanmalar ile ciddi sorunlar yaşamıştır. Bütün bu olumsuzlukların ışığında; küçük otellerin bu zorluklarla nasıl baş edebildiği, faaliyetlerini sürdürürken işbirliği ağlarını nasıl kullandıkları ve bu bağların onlara nasıl fayda sağladığını öğrenmek amacı ile bu araştırma yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, formel ve enformel işbirliği ağlarının küçük ve orta boyutlu otel işletmelerinde kullanım şekilleri, ne sıklıkta ve hangi amaçlar kullanıldıkları ve işbirliği ağlarının küçük işletmelere sağladığı (var ise) katkıları incelenmiştir. Araştırma bölgesi olarak, İstanbul, Sultanahmet bölgesi seçilmiştir. Veriler, 27 Nisan- 17 Temmuz 2019 tarihleri arasında, 71 otel sahip ve yöneticisi ile yapılan anket çalışması ve konu ile ilgili daha derin ve nitelikli bilgiye ulaşmak için de dört otel sahibi/yöneticisi ile yüz yüze yapılan görüşmeler sonucunda toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucunda oteller faaliyetlerini yürütmede insan kaynakları ve müşteriye ulaşma gibi faaliyetleri ile ilgili kaynaklara ulaşmakta zorluklar yaşadığını belirtmiş olmalarına rağmen bu konuda bir profesyonel ya da kişisel işbirliği ağları kursalar da, bu ağların sorunlarını çözmekte yetersiz olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Sosyal ağların kullanılmasından daha çok doğru paydaşlarla amacına uygun olarak işbirliği zeminlerinin kurulmasının gerektiği sonucuna varılmıştır.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

DGIE	Directorate General of Investments and Enterprises ( <i>Yatırım ve İşletmeler Genel Müdürlüğü</i> )
KOSGEB	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Development Organization ( <i>Küçük ve Orta Ölçekli İşletmeleri Geliştirme ve Destekleme İdaresi Başkanlığı</i> )
MUSİAD	Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association ( <i>Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği</i> )
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
ÖZBİ	Association of Historical & Boutique Hotels of Turkey ( <i>Özel Nitelikli Turistik ve Butik Otelciler Birliği Derneği</i> )
SKAL	International Associations of Travel and Tourism Professionals ( <i>Sundheit Karlek Ålder Lyka</i> )
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMHE	Small and Medium Size Hospitality Establishments
SMTE	Small Medium Size Tourism Enterprises
TUROB	Hotel Association of Turkey ( <i>Türkiye Otelciler Birliği</i> )
TURSAB	Association of Turkish Travel Agencies ( <i>Türkiye Seyahat Acentaları Birliği</i> )
YADA	Association For Life ( <i>Yaşama Dair Vakfı</i> )

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research background

Tourism is one of the biggest industries in Turkey and its influence in economy is increasing. According to the Directorate General of Investments and Enterprises of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (DGIE, 2018); tourism revenue has been 29.5 billion U.S. dollars and the number of incoming tourists has been 46.1 million in 2018. Turkey ranks the 8<sup>th</sup> in the world according the number of incoming tourists; however it takes the 14<sup>th</sup> place considering the tourism revenues. Due to its rich cultural and natural assets, the country has an appeal for different segments of tourists and a developed tourism industry offering a variety of services in well-known destinations that have become brands in the global tourism industry. Istanbul is one of these destinations. According to statistics of the DGIE (2018), 34 percent of incoming tourists (13.432.990) to Turkey have chosen Istanbul in 2018. It is hard to serve to this demand and manage all the related tourism movements. Accordingly, providing services such as safety and security, availability of accommodation, food and beverage facilities and transportation options become important both for visitors and public authorities. This research, focuses on accommodation services and sustainability of small hospitality businesses in Istanbul's Sultanahmet area.

Tourism is inherently composed of many small enterprises and the sector's backbone consists of small to medium-size enterprises (SMEs) (Lashley & Rowson, 2010). The great majority of tourist facilities are small and medium sized businesses. According to Avcıkurt (2003), approximately 99 per cent of all European tourism businesses are small and medium-sized enterprises. In the hospitality sector, small

businesses also have serious influence on the quality of the tourism product and sustainability of the destination. Small and medium size hospitality establishments (SMHEs) act as locomotive of the travel and tourism industry and has also big role for local area development. On the other hand; due to their small size, SMHEs have inherent weaknesses (Avcıkurt, 2003; Keskin et al., 2010). Given the importance of SMHEs for the industry and the economy, it is worthwhile to investigate how they deal with these inherent weaknesses. “In contrast to large companies in the tourism industry, small tourism businesses are often family-operated and are easily influenced by competition and the external environment” (Zhang & Zhang, 2018, p.112). To develop competitive strength, survive and sustain their business, SMHEs need to collaborate and benefit from the stakeholders in their business environment, including their competitors, suppliers, customers and employees by building strong network channels. According to Freeman (2010, p. 53) a stakeholder in an organization is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objective”. It can be said that stakeholders present opportunities for networking. For this reason, benefits of networking can be analyzed by focusing on SMHEs’ relationship with their stakeholders.

Strong networks and collaboration is also crucial for the development of tourism hospitality sector. Since SMHEs are not strong enough by themselves, they need support to be stronger, successful and sustainable. They must develop solutions to continue their existence. For all these activities, they may create networks to sustain their businesses. As important actors in the tourism industry, it is crucial to understand how SMHEs use networking to overcome their weaknesses, gain access to resources and develop support systems for sustaining their performance. Networking enables businesses to build relationships for improved performance,

sustainable development and also being strong in any kind of situations, including periods of political and economic fluctuations, uncertainties and crises.

Understanding how SMHEs overcome barriers and sustain themselves is important especially during periods of increased uncertainties and crises. Recently, there have been various fluctuations in political and economic landscape in Turkey which directly affected the tourism industry, especially in the recent years. All these problems and increased uncertainties coupled with the inherent weaknesses and barriers have made business life difficult in the tourism industry. During crises periods, as a former employee in the tourism industry, I have observed a lot of small hotels having difficulties and survival problems or unfortunately closing their hotels. So, I wondered how these businesses tried to cope with all these difficulties in troubled periods or sustained their businesses. How did they find support and survive?

This study utilizes a mixed methodology for benefiting from both qualitative and quantitative research methods and its unit of analysis is small hotels. Because of concentrated and high number of small hotels in the area, Sultanahmet is chosen as the empirical research setting. The sample of the study includes 71 small hotels and questionnaires have been administered to the owners or managers. Additionally, in-depth interviews have been conducted with four owners/managers who accepted to make face to face interview.

It also can be said that, there is a lack of empirical research about this subject in Turkey, especially in relation to networking structures and contribution of networking activity to operations in small hotels. Moreover, research into the areas that small hotels collaborate with each other, the sources that they utilize and the

benefits that they perceive to receive as a result of their networking activities is scarce.

## 1.2 Aim of the study

Networking is undoubtedly important for all kind of institutions. These relationships are mostly in the form of formal ties like agreements, memberships in associations, and relationships within industry groups. Formal business networks are “voluntary arrangements between firms aimed at providing a competitive advantage for the participants” (Fuller-Love & Thomas, 2004, p. 245). In these arrangements participants have agreed to share a level of coordination of actions and resources (Talarowska & Tuzinovic, 2008). However, informal ties are also significant, especially for SMHEs. These networks can involve both formal and informal relationships with various stakeholders such as competitors, suppliers, customers, travel agencies, families and friends (Talarowska & Tuzinovic, 2008), but its importance may change according to organization’s size, line of business and impact area. In addition to this, informal relationships like friendships, relatives, or other personal ties are also important. Informal relationship may be used for running business or overcome obstacles that exist in business life.

The aim of this research is to understand the extent and structure of networking, in SMHEs in the Sultanahmet area. Additionally, the factors (such as to owner/manager and hotel characteristics) that differentiate hotels with respect to their perceptions on benefits of networking are investigated.

In order to reach this aim, the following research questions are used:

- What is the structure of networking among SMHEs in the tourism industry?
- How small hotels benefit from networking and in what ways?

- What factors differentiate these hotels with respect to their networking types, structures and perceptions on benefits of networking?

The findings reveal the types of networking used to access critical resources for running the operations, main purposes and areas of networking and explain the possible benefits of those interactions for SMHEs. Findings show that; SMHEs need effective networking activities especially to reach critical resources for their operations, such as finding qualified workforce, reaching customers and accessing professional information. They mostly collaborate with neighboring stakeholders in the destination they are located in and are not actively involved in networking activities because of different reasons. Most of the owner/managers state that trust and familiarity are very important for them. Additionally, very limited use of formal networking in the form of memberships to industry associations is worth noting.

At the result of different univariate analyses; it was realized that SMHEs' current networking activities are not sufficient to solve the main problems like reaching to qualified workforce, reaching to customer or reaching to financial resources. Multivariate analysis reveals that networking structure (networking intensity and network partner variety) is associated with certain perceived benefits derived from networking activity, such as solving conflicts, increasing connections in the industry, gaining competitive advantage and increasing reputation. Increasing network intensity and network partner variety is associated with increased perception of benefits derived in these areas. SMHEs utilize their networks for their abstract problems more than primary operating concerns. Perceived benefits derived from networking is less obvious for reaching resources. There is slightly significant relationship between networking structure and perceived benefits of access to information sources and reaching customers. There is no significant relationship

between networking activity and reaching qualified workforce, which is stated as the most overwhelming problem by the owner/managers. The results suggest the need for specific-purpose networking platforms that can bring together relevant stakeholders and provide solution oriented networking opportunities for SMHEs.

In following chapters, initially previous research about the topic is presented in chapter two on the literature review. In the chapter on the conceptual framework research questions, conceptual model and the components of the model which are analyzed are introduced. In chapter four, the methodology of the research is presented including the empirical research setting, data collection and analysis methods. After methodology; the results section includes the results tables and detailed explanation of findings. At the end; conclusion and discussion section presents a summary of major results, implications and some suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of the literature, relevant to the study of networking in SMHEs. Different lines of research are presented to give information about networking definition, networking types and network benefits in detail.

Organizations create social relationships with others to gain popularity, reputation, and awareness. Due to their inherent weaknesses, SMHEs need to build strong relationships with their stakeholder in their environment to sustain their businesses.

“Networks are non-hierarchical forms of organization which evolve as interconnections of individuals engaged in reciprocal, preferential, mutually supportive actions” (Burt, 1992; cited in Racherla & Hu, 2010, p. 1017). Network is made of nodes or vertices, which can be used to represent the system’s elements, and links or edges, which usually correspond to the interactions or relationships between the elements (Baggio & Chiappa, 2016). Besides the concept of networking, collaboration is another term should be considered within the subject. According to Roschelle & Teasley (1995), collaboration is the mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve a problem together. “Collaborative interactions are characterized by shared goals, symmetry of structure, and a high degree of negotiation, interactivity, and interdependence” (Lai, 2011, p. 39). They help to create new models and ways of thinking to improve the sector, and the internal and external environment of business, both natural and social (Lozano, 2008). Definitions of networking and collaboration gives the idea that stakeholders should be the closest partners of SMHEs in business activities. Stakeholders, such as competitors and

partners, in small hospitality businesses can have a significant value for the firm according to Lechner, Dowling & Welppe (2006).

Networking among tourism businesses can take different forms, such as destination-marketing strategies (Morrison, 1998); tourism business collaboration (Tinsley & Lynch, 2001) and tourism information and resource exchange (Augustyn & Knowles, 2000). Van der Zee & Vanneste (2015) provide a review of research on networking and classify studies on networking in four main groups: studies on business networks, policy networks, co-opeting networks and network configurations. Business networks are horizontal, non-hierarchical self-organising network of tourism firms that consist dense local ties and weak global ties (Van der Zee & Vanneste, 2015). Policy networks represent a triangle between government, businesses and civil society and explain how these contacts create synergy through having relationship. At this point, trust and stability plays a big role, because according to La Porta et al. (1997) public and private institutions are less effective in countries with low levels of trust among citizens, as well as businesses. Co-opeting network focuses on “relationships between tourism stakeholders and the nature of their relationships”. Also, according to Lemmetyinen & Go (2009) “network co-opetition” indicates that communicating common network goals are central to network success. Lastly, network configuration applies network analysis to understand the structure of tourism networks (Van der Zee & Vanneste, 2015).

Similar to other sectors, small businesses in tourism industry have problems, for example independent and small-sized enterprises have limited natural, human and financial resources (Avcıkurt, 2003), lack of skilled administration, lack of an expert group in financing, lack of capital and financial planning (Keskin et al., 2010). They have limited access to necessary capital, human resources, marketing expertise and

technology (Avcıkurt, 2003). Since SMHEs are small and have limited sources, they need more support to deal with problems or running their business.

Networks can be both formal and informal relationships with different stakeholders. Formal business networks are “voluntary arrangements between firms aimed at providing a competitive advantage for the participants” (Fuller-Love & Thomas, 2004, p.245) and one way relationship like reading publications, taking vocational assistance courses or being a member of online reservation web page can be counted as formal relationship. Additionally, relations with government departments, banks, and universities are examples of a formal network (Jonathan 2018). Informal network is the emergent patterns of individual behavior and interactions between individuals (Gulati & Puranam, 2009). Informal networks may have an indirect effect on overall development of the firm (Buonocore & Iqbal, 2018). Friendships, relatives, or other personal ties, acquaintances, other colleagues, consulting related business organizations are counted as informal networks and informal network activities in this study. Informal networks are composed of social and personal relationships between individuals Awazu (2004). According to Birley (1985), informal networks may be less aware of options and opportunities available to business owners so they are more likely to be generous with their time and advice. We can understand that importance informal networking should be considered. Networking type (i.e., formal and informal) is differentiated according to size and need of the business. Businesses might choose one or both of them to cope with the problem they have.

SMHEs’ impact on tourism industry cannot be ignored, this study will bring create awareness and give a point of view for understanding their problem, and developing policies for strengthening their networks within tourism sector.

“Networking allows a large number of small actors with limited resources to take part in the decision-making process, which is particularly important for those that cannot pursue sustainable development independently” (Erkuş-Öztürk & Eraydın, 2009, p. 114).

In addition to those; benefits of tourism networks as of three main types are summarized by Lynch et al. (2000) as; learning and exchange, business activity and community. From this point of view, social network is necessary for small organizations because it plays a role in the success of businesses and organizations. (Ireland, Hitt, & Vaidyanath, 2002). Networking will help businesses become more efficient, improve their brand value and reputation, provide a platform for innovation. Networking also makes the company preferred either in terms of customers or employees; improved access to economic and social resources lowers costs and strengthens stakeholder relations. According to Hu Xuhua et al. (2016), SMHEs’ social networking gives the business access to; “shared knowledge, opportunities, raising the SMHEs’ (p. 43), profile, increased confidences and connections”

Halme & Fadeeva (2000) pointed out some positive effects of networking for SMHEs; sharing of information when co-operating with other tourism enterprises, learning from other entrepreneurs’ experiences, obtaining new knowledge from the network’s expert members (i.e., trainers or consultants in the case of formal networks that organize training and employ consultants). In the same research Halme & Fadeeva (2000) also mentioned some unexpected positive effects too for SMHEs; for instance, new ideas for business strategy development and systematization of general management.

Strong and positive relationship with stakeholders, including competitors, sector leaders, government and other parties related to the business has a significant contribution for running a business, improving business performance and contributing to successful development and growth (Lynch et al., 2000; Ireland, Hitt, & Vaidyanath, 2002; Hu Xuhua et al., 2016). Additionally, these relationships influence policy formation for industries. Policy and planning networks are formed out of a need for cooperation and collaboration in tourism planning (Erkuş-Öztürk & Eraydın, 2009; Hall, 1994; Roberts & Simpson, 1999) which is important for sustainable tourism development. There are many potential benefits when stakeholders in a destination collaborate together and attempt to build a consensus about tourism policies (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999). It is clear that networking can be useful for organizations in terms of collaboration and coordination for influencing tourism policies.

Networking can potentially facilitate the avoidance of costs arising from the resolution of conflicts among stakeholders in the long term (Healey, 1997). Good relationships and support have always positive effects between businesses. Firms are motivated to form alliances with other firms in order to reduce investment risks, share technology, improve efficiency, gain access to specific foreign markets and distribution channels, enhance global mobility, and strengthen global competitiveness (Huang, 2006). Strong relationships build shared knowledge and experience and help the business to survive in the sector. Business networks' structure is argued to be beneficial for knowledge sharing, innovation and collective learning, but empirical evidence is lacking according to Van der Zee & Vanneste (2015). Collaborative networks improve the coordination of policies and related actions, and promote consideration of the economic, environmental and social

impacts of tourism in development strategies (Lane & Bramwell, 2000). Networking helps actors create a common sense especially for decision making process. It might also reduce cost and time wasted.

If networking is effectively implemented; it can create dynamism, value creation, brand identity (Lemmetyinen & Go, 2009), convey information and induce innovation through knowledge exchange and shared strategies (Scott, Baggio & Cooper, 2008). Tourism business networks can be viewed as a market in which nodes are connected by service providers (Lemmetyinen & Go, 2009). As a result, networking has different benefits. We can associate these benefits to business development. So, organizations can benefit from these approaches to have better results in terms of sustainability. Especially in economic sustainability used as keeping a business afloat. According to Colovic & Beran (2018), networking is important to facilitate entering new markets, sharing mutual resources, and sustaining enterprise and industry growth and competitiveness.

In areas where businesses are located in same area, firms may use their relationships for passing a customer from one to another business for different product and experiences. With this movement tourists may have a comprehensive experience in the area. As a result, the destination becomes a holistic area for the tourists (Pavlovich, 2003).

Networking strengthens the relationships among stakeholders and also relationships within organizations. This also has multiplying effect for destination development. An important point mentioned in Van der Zee & Vanneste (2015) is that networks aim to create balance between collaboration and competitiveness and create relations between stakeholders. Firms with stronger resource bases are better able to survive the consequences of bad decisions and environmental shocks (Hanlon

& Saunders, 2007). It is also mentioned that projected network benefits are suffered by hierarchical management structures.

In addition to networking, social capital is another term that should be considered for the analysis of networking activity. There are some definitions of social capital; a definition offered by Cohen & Prusak (2001) “Social capital consists of the stock of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviors that bind the members of human networks and communities and make cooperative action possible” (p. 3). Social capital is an asset which businesses should have to sustain their network activities. Social capital is essentially about the relationships between individuals and groups (Adler & Kwon, 2000). Another definition made by Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998, p:243) is “social capital as the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit”. According to a research by Sainaghi & Baggio (2014), social capital has positive effect on hotel occupancy and operating performance. Also; a rich social capital gives; access to goods and resources, reduces transaction costs, and provides safety nets in the social field (Çakmak, Lie & Selwyn, 2019), in addition to this, according to the same research when social capital is highly heterogeneous its value reaches the highest level.

Social network analysis can be used as a road map for the actors. Those actors can designate their networks, build relationship with them and decide how benefit from each other. As a definition, according to Scott, et al. (2008, p.1). Social Network Analysis is; “the network of relationships that allows the tourism industry to deliver its products and to overcome the problems of fragmentation”. Social network analysis focuses on analyzing actors and their network relations to reveal

aspects such as the strength of relationships, actors' centrality within a network and the characteristics of cliques (Dredge, 2015). It also helps to reach different actors in different sectors of tourism industry.

Social network analysis helps businesses to deliver their products and overcome the problems of fragmentation (Scott, et al., 2008), identify and examine the relationships in tourism and focus on relationships among social entities and on the patterns and implications of these relationships (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Also, measuring and representing the structure of relations among entities of interest (people, small groups, organizations, or even nation-states, etc.) accurately and explaining both why these relations occur and what are their consequences (Knoke & Yang, 2008) are some of the expected contributions of social network analysis.

Consequently, to summarize the benefits of networking, we can say that networking helps organizations to understand their working area better, help to adjust for changing, complex situations and increase their competitiveness. In addition to this, it helps innovation, knowledge sharing, collaboration, resource management and sustainable economic development. Also we can say that companies with strong relationship have competitive advantage to develop and sustain their businesses.

Although the literature shows that networking activities seem to be beneficial to the entrepreneurs and their ventures, not all entrepreneurs are able to actively participate in networks (Jonathan, 2018). According to research made by Franco (2018), SME owners/managers are aware of the importance of networking, but have not implemented it effectively.

CHAPTER 3  
CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Based on the literature review, a conceptual model has been developed to analyze the relation between network characteristics and perceived benefits of networking for SMHEs within tourism sector.

This relation is analyzed using the following questions

- What is the structure of networking among SMHEs in tourism industry?
- How small hotels benefit from networking and in what ways?
- What factors differentiate hotels with respect to their networking types, structures and perceptions on benefits of networking?

There are numerous approaches of networking in professional life which depends on different components. Initially, the four main components will be analyzed. These are shown in Figure 1.

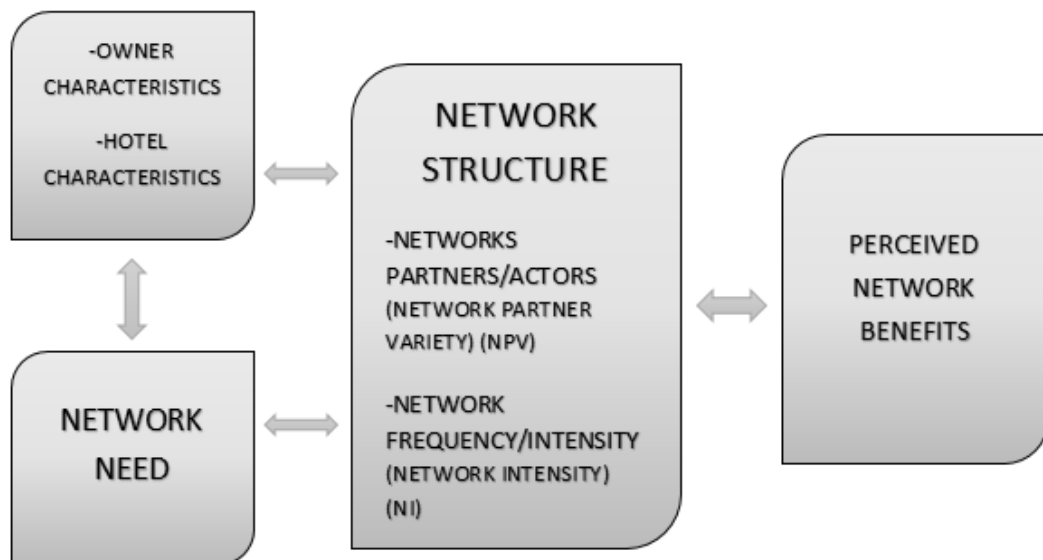


Fig. 1 Conceptual model

Owner characteristics indicate personal characteristics of owners/managers like; age, gender, education level, work experience and personality characteristics such as extravert /introvert personality, collaborator, competitive. Owner characteristics' importance is undeniable for running small and medium entrepreneurs. Being small and local, SMHEs are often run by owners (Zhang & Zhang, 2018), a research made by Jaafar et al. (2010) highlights the most important positive characteristics of self-confidence, independence and the ability to learn from failure as significant factors for their business ventures and success. Factors like years in business, firm size and educational level of managers in small businesses influence the choice of entering a formal network (Talarowska & Tuzinovic, 2008). According to Jonathan (2018), social competency, teamwork skills, passion for the industry, flexibility and humility are vital for small firm owner-managers. If s/he is introvert, this business may not be active within the system but is s/he extravert than networking gains importance for this organization. In this study, owner characteristics are defined using age, gender, education, years of experience and position in the hotel.

Hotel characteristics are also another component. In this study, size and age of the hotel are taken as variables defining hotel characteristics. Size of the hotel is defined by hotel's number of rooms, number of employees. In many studies, it was found that small and medium tourism businesses are not likely to actively participate in tourism networks (Van der Zee & Vanneste, 2015). In this study, hotel characteristics are defined using hotel age, hotel size measured as number of rooms and number of staff of a hotel.

Network need can also be thought as limited natural, human and financial resources (Ying, 2010), lack of general administration; lack of an expert group in

financing, lack of capital and financial planning (Keskin et al., 2010). Additionally, fluctuations in economy and politics create greater uncertainty for small business owners. There are different reasons for businesses to have networks. Since networking will help individual/institution become more efficient, improve brand value and reputation; provide a platform for innovation, increased confidences and connections (Hu Xuhua et al., 2016), tourism information and resource exchange (Augustyn & Knowles, 2000) and resilience towards external threats (Van der Zee & Vanneste, 2015). Networking makes the company preferred either in terms of customer or employee, growing economic and social, lower costs and stronger stakeholder relations, “learning and exchange, business activity, and community” (Lynch et al., 2000, p. 88) Because of having limited resources, networking helps to gain access to resources like capital, labor, customers and knowledge, training and employing consultants (Halme & Fadeeva, 2000). SMTEs would benefit from increased information flow through regional networking, to enhance market visibility (Soteriades, 2012). In this study, network need denotes the potential weaknesses that a small hotels faces in sustaining their businesses. They are defined as; economic and political uncertainty, difficulty in finding qualified personnel, difficulty in finding customers, financial problems and lack of financial resources, difficulty to reach industry and profession information.

Network categorizations can be defined according to needs of a hotel. Hotels both apply informal networks or use formal sources for reaching to necessary human, financial, customer and professional information resources. Workers’ acquaintances, relatives/acquaintances and other companies can be thought as informal, walk-in applications, digital human resources platforms and human resources companies can be thought formal sources as source for human resources. Same distinction can be

thought for reaching to customer; agency and other companies can be counted as informal networks. Hotels make professional agreements with agencies but they have close and direct relationship in the process so they are counted as informal relationships. Alternatively, hotels also use internet, advertisement, tourism and travel journals and walk-in customers and these can be counted as formal sources. Most owners of small hotel are involved in the management. In this situation reaching to financial resources networks cannot be though only formal. While banks, governmental incentives, loans from sellers are counted as formal sources, retained earnings, family members and personal financial assets are counted as informal resources. Additionally, membership in associations is investigated for understanding the extent of formal networking in small hotels.

In this study, network structure is studied under two titles; network frequency and identity of network partners/actors. These two dimensions are used to create a map of the network relationships, thus the structure of networks. Network partners are the actors which have interaction with the business within business area. The dimension of network partners represents the number and identity of actors involved for networking. Dhanaraj & Parkhe (2006) emphasize that common identity among the network partners enhances knowledge, mobility and promotes value creation. Partners include people/institutions which a hotel has relations, either formal or informal. In this study, network partners of SMHEs can be family members, tourism agencies, other hotels, other businesses, institutions and associations in tourism industry, central and local governments, education institutions (universities) and NGOs.

Network frequency is the intensity of getting in touch with other actors for network activities (Jonathan, 2018). Organizations are willing come together in terms

of collaboration and coordination to operate in a competitive business environment. While network intensity is defined as sum of frequency scores of all network areas, network partner variety is sum of all network partners. Businesses need professional information to have idea about their sector. There are more than one source to reach information; meeting with other colleagues, consulting to experienced friends, consulting related business organizations and joining domestic and foreign fairs (informal networks), reading publications, taking vocational assistance courses (formal sources). In addition to this; there are more than one source and area to reach information sectorial information exchange, sector activities, complying with technology, reaching qualified human resources, passing customer, marketing, advertising, reaching financial resources, education and training, consultancy. It was measured by 5-point Likert type scale items (from very often: 5 points to never: 1 point)

This study aims to find structure of networking, and try to understand how prevalent is in the area. It also aims to see if perception of benefits derived from networking differentiates according to networking structure, hotel size or owner/manager characteristics. Benefits of networking activities are assessed according to the perceptions of the owners/managers of SMHEs. Sustainable resource management, reciprocity among industry stakeholders, increased competitive advantage, social capital enhancement, having voice in policy making (Van der Zee & Vanneste, 2015), reputation (Hu Xuhua et al., 2016), increase knowledge, reaching customer, (Halme & Fadeeva, 2000), economic enhancement (Huxham, 1996) can be used as categories of perceived benefits of networking. In this study, perceived benefits of networking are defined as: access to qualified workforce, access to customers, access to information sources, access to financial

sources, competitive advantage in the sector, increase profitability of my hotel, increase reputation of my hotel, ease of dealing with crisis, ease of solving conflicts, influence on industry level decisions, and increase connections in the industry. It was measured by 5-point Likert type scale items (from strongly agree: 5 points to strongly disagree: 1 point).

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

This study aims was first to understand the structure of networking and try to find out its perceived benefits for SMHEs. As outlined in the conceptual model, owner/manager characteristics, hotel characteristics, network need and network structure were used to explore the networking activity of SMHEs to identify its relation to benefits of networking as perceived by the owners/managers of SMHEs. This study utilizes a mixed methods approach, benefiting from both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The quantitative research emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of the data (Buonocore & Iqbal, 2018). Quantitative research was chosen to build an overall understanding on the network structure of small hotels within contextual setting. Qualitative study is to understand how behavior of individuals develops over the time and qualitative research puts emphasis on words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of the data (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Since, there is limited research in Sultanahmet qualitative research is beneficial to gain insight into understanding networking activity and owner/managers' perceptions on benefits derived from networking activity in the area.

#### 4.1 Study population and sampling

According to Jonathan (2018), small hotels have been defined as hotels have been in the tourism business for at least 2 years; standing alone and not part of a larger organization or franchise, and the hotels have less than 75 employees. According to KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey),

businesses which have up to 50 employees are defined as small while those which have from 51 to 250 employees are called medium sized enterprises. EU recommendation (no.2003/361) adopts a similar definition for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) based on number of employees, but additionally defines businesses with less than 10 employees as micro enterprises.

There is no universally accepted definition of the term ‘small firms’ in the hospitality and tourism industry, because hotel classifications and size parameters often differ from country to country (Avcıkurt, 2003). Scholars normally define the size of a hotel in terms of the number of rooms and full-time employees. Buhalis and Main (1998) define SMHEs as enterprises offering less than 50 rooms, employing fewer than ten staff. In this study, this definition is adopted and hotels that have 50 rooms and less are categorized as SMHEs.

The research is carried out in Istanbul Sultanahmet, since numerous important tourist attractions and an accompanying dense population of small and medium size hotels are present in this region of Istanbul. Given the criteria adopted for defining SMHEs, hotels that have less than 50-room capacity and are located in Sultanahmet area constitute the sample for this study. In order to compile a list of hotels in Sultanahmet area, the Hotel Association of Turkey (TUROB) and the Municipality of Istanbul are contacted, but due to the absence of a list based on number of number of rooms, a list has been constructed by the researcher. Thus, a final list of hotels has been compiled from the lists of the two sources. Initially, various internet sites have been searched to identify a list of all the hotels in Sultanahmet area. Then, the room and bed capacity of each hotel in the final list have been inquired through telephone calls to the hotels. Based on the information obtained, the researcher identified 90 hotels in Sultanahmet area with less than 50 rooms. All of the hotels in the sample

have been approached personally and 71 hotels (79%) accepted to participate in the study and constituted the sample of this study. Four owners/managers quotations are referred as Respondent A, Respondent B, Respondent C and Respondent D in the results section.

#### 4.2 Data collection

Based on the conceptual framework, a questionnaire has been developed and administered to the individuals managing the hotel, either the owners or the professional managers of the hotels in the sample. Questions consist of demographic, scale and open-ended questions. The questionnaire for this study is presented in Appendix A. Data is self-collected between 24 April 2019 and 17 July 2019. Also, “Bogazici University Ethical Committee Approval” document for the questionnaire is presented in Appendix B. Additionally, four face to face interviews have been done with the owners/managers who were willing to share their networking experiences after the face-to-face administration of the questionnaires or later through phone calls. Extensive notes were taken during these interviews, which were later tabulated and coded for analysis.

#### 4.3 Data analysis

For data analysis, initially descriptive statistics are tabulated for all of the dimensions and sub-dimensions of the conceptual model of the study. Accordingly, descriptive statistics on owner-manager characteristics (age, gender, education, experience, position- manager or owner, and personality attributes), hotel characteristics (number of rooms, number of employees, age of hotel), network need, sources used to access resources (human resources, customers, financial resources and information),

network structure (network areas/intensity and partner identity/variety) and network benefits are tabulated to identify extent and structure of networking in SMHEs and the perceived benefits that result from networking activity.

In order to assess the factors differentiate hotels with respect to their networking types, structures and perceptions on benefits of networking, univariate analysis (Crosstabs and One-Way Anova) are done according to owner/manager characteristics, hotel characteristics, network need and network structure variables. Additionally, sources used to access resources are categorized as informal networks and formal sources to identify role of networking in reaching critical resources for operations. Combinations of using informal networks and/or formal sources are recoded and compared with reported network need for accessing a given resource to identify network benefits.

Additionally, multivariate analysis (linear regression analysis) is used and the relationship between network structure (i.e. network intensity and network partner variety) and different dimensions of perceived benefits of networking is investigated. In this analysis, different regression models are used taking the dependent variable as the different dimensions of the perceived benefit scores and the independent variables as owner education, hotel size, network intensity and network partner identity.

$$\text{Regression Equation; } PB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 OE + \beta_2 HS + \beta_3 NI + \beta_4 NPV + \epsilon$$

Where PB is a perceived benefit score in a given networking area, OE is a dummy variable for education level of the owner/manager, HS is hotel size in number of rooms, NI is network intensity and NPV is Network Partner Variety. The same regression model is used for perceived benefit scores for different areas of

networking as the dependent variable. In the next chapter, the results of analyses are presented.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS

In this chapter, first the descriptive statistics relating to owner/manager and hotel characteristics, networking needs, network structures and perceived network benefits are presented to identify the extent, structure and benefits of networking activity of SMHEs in Sultanahmet area. Then, the differences in network structures according to owner/manager and hotel characteristics and network needs are explained. Lastly, the relation between network structures and perceived benefits are presented.

#### 5.1 Owner/Manager characteristics

Owner/manager characteristics are investigated using age, gender, education, experience and position. Majority of the owners/managers are young and highly educated. The average age of the owner/managers is 37, with a standard deviation of 9 there are only 20 owner/managers with an educational at high school level or less and the rest (71%) have studied after high school and obtained vocational school, undergraduate or a graduate degree. Almost all of the owner/managers are male. Only five hotels (7%) have female owners/managers. Owner/managers are relatively experienced in hotel business. More than half of the owner/managers have more than 10 years of experience. Out of 71 hotels, 15 are managed by their owners and additional 9 are managed by first degree relatives of the owners, thus 24 hotels (34%) are managed by their owners while the remaining 47 hotels (66%) are run by professional managers with no relationship to the owners. Descriptive statistics relating to owner/manager characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Owner/Manager Characteristics

Owner/Manager Characteristics:	#	%
<b>Age</b>		
Between 20-30	21	30%
Between 31-40	27	38%
41 and over	23	32%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	66	93%
Female	5	7%
<b>Experience</b>		
Between 1-10 years	29	47%
Between 11-20 years	20	32%
Between 21-30 years	11	18%
Between 31-40 years	2	3%
<b>Education</b>		
Primary School-Middle School-High School	20	29%
Vocational School-University-Master-PhD	50	71%
<b>Position</b>		
Manager	47	66%
Owner	24	34%

Personality and behavioral characteristics of managers influence the decision making and management of a small firm (Talarowska & Tuzinovic, 2008) their community activities and relations with other stakeholders (Zhang & Zhang, 2018). In this study, most the owner/managers find themselves very social and collaborative but not so competitive according to their self- evaluation of personality characteristics on five-point Likert-scale. They report a significant level of self-confidence and liberalism. Owners’/managers’ self-evaluation of their personality characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Owner/Managers' Self-Evaluation of Personality Characteristics

	Mean	Std.D	5	4	3	2	1	
Social	4.06	0.639	23%	59%	17%	-	-	Very Introvert
Very Collaborative	3.94	0.833	28%	40%	28%	3%	-	Not Collaborative
Very Competitive	3.57	1.069	22%	32%	29%	13%	3%	Not Competitive
High Self-Confidence	3.99	0.782	27%	49%	22%	3%	-	Low Self-Confidence
Liberal	3.81	0.902	22%	47%	21%	10%	-	Conservative

## 5.2 Hotel characteristics

Most of the hotels in the sample of the study are young and in the micro size category. Firm age of more than half of the hotels is 1 to 20 years category. Two indicators are used in order to measure the firm size of the SMHEs: number of rooms and number of employees. Sultanahmet is known as high number of small hotels. Most of the hotels are in the micro size category; 56 percent of the hotels in the sample have less than 20 rooms and 72 percent have less than 10 employees. Disproportionately low number of employees can be attributed to the wide-spread presence of unreported use of immigrants and part-time employees in the sector. Firm age and firm size characteristics of the SMHEs in the sample are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Characteristics of the Hotels

	#	%
Firm Age:		
0 to 20 years	55	79%
21 to 40 years	13	19%
40 years and over	2	3%
Number of Rooms:		
Micro (0 to 20 Rooms)	40	56%
Small (21 to 50 Rooms)	31	44%
Number of Staff:		
1 to 10 staff	51	72%
11 to 30 staff	20	28%

### 5.3 Network need

In order to identify the network needs of the SMHEs, owner/managers were asked to identify the problems they faced in running their businesses. Table 4 presents the breakdown of 198 problems mentioned by 71 respondents in the sample of this study. It is clear that economic and political problems rank the first among their problems with 25% of the all the responses. Networking can be used to overcome this problem. According to Lane & Bramwell (2000), networks helps coordination of policies, promote consideration of the economic and economic enhancement. It also reduces cost (Erkuş-Öztürk & Eraydın, 2009). In the face-to-face interviews all respondents complained from political instability and frequent economic crisis in the country. They especially mentioned the big crisis following the terrorist attacks in the Sultanahmet region and the relatively long time period required for recovery afterwards. They also complained about lack of collective and collaborative action during the crisis period and stated that everybody tried to save its own business and acted individually. According to Respondent C, who mentioned all items as problems, says that “nobody cares about what happens to the tourism industry, the only concern that they have is how much money they earn at the end of the day”.

Finding qualified personnel ranks the second according the frequency of responses with 21% of all responses. All respondents in face to face interviews mentioned about unfavorable working conditions in the sector (long working hours/days, low wages, labor rights issues and unregistered labor practices) as a result most of qualified and educated personnel choose to work in different sectors and it becomes hard to find qualified, reliable and trustworthy personnel. According to Respondent A; “In the crisis period, most of the qualified staff changed their sector and they actually ran away from this chaos in the industry”.

They also report a need for networking since they cannot trust people they prefer to find their workforce using their own or their staff’s acquaintances. Similarly, Avcıkurt (2003) identifies finding necessary human resources as one of the important problems of small businesses. Thus, networking becomes important to create a power to access to necessary resources. Other problems reported by owner/managers are difficulty of finding customers (19%), bureaucracy (13%), difficulties in reaching financial resources (11%) and professional information (9%). It is worth noting that reaching financial resources and professional information, which are frequently mentioned as important problems of small businesses (Ying, 2010; Avcıkurt, 2003; Augustyn & Knowles, 2000; Halme & Fadeeva, 2000; Scott, Baggio & Cooper, 2008), rank among the least frequently mentioned problems by owner/managers in SMHEs in Sultanahment area. Considering the resources needed for running the operations, most of the hotel owners/managers report difficulty in reaching qualified human resources (49 out of 71 hotels) and finding customers (38 out of 71 hotels). Problems faced by owner/managers that indicate potential network need areas are reported in Table 4.

Table 4. Potential Networking Needs

	#	%
Economic and political uncertainty	49	25%
Difficulty in finding qualified personnel	42	21%
Difficulty in finding customers	38	19%
Bureaucracy	25	13%
Financial problems and lack of financial resources	21	11%
Difficulty to reach industry and profession information	18	9%
Other	5	3%
Total responses	198	100%

#### 5.4 Network structure

##### 5.4.1 Formal sources and informal relations used for reaching critical resources

The sources that owner/managers of SMHEs use in reaching human resources, customers, financial resources and professional information are investigated. Table 5 shows 133 different sources used by 71 respondents for finding human resources. The sources for reaching employees are categories as sources that employ personal relationships and networks and formal sources. Results indicate that 56% of responses relate to finding employees through the references provided by informal relationships (workers' acquaintances, relatives' or self-acquaintances and other companies' managers). Digital human resource platforms rank the second as a source of human resources. Reference through informal relationships is preferred because of the difficulty of finding qualified and trustworthy employees.

Table 5. Sources for Finding Human Resources

		#	%
Informal Relationship	Workers' Acquaintance	42	32%
	Relatives / Acquaintance	20	15%
	Other Companies	12	9%
	Total Informal Relationships	74	56%
Formal Sources	Walk-in Application	22	17%
	Digital Human Resource Platforms	28	21%
	Human Resources Companies	9	7%
	Total Formal Sources	59	44%
	Total Responses	133	100%

Most of the owner/managers (52 out of 70) use more than one source and utilize both their informal relationships and formal sources in finding employees and the remaining 18 owner/managers use only formal sources. Contrary to expectations, those who utilize both informal networks and formal sources continue to have human resources problems and hotels which use only formal sources report less human resources problems. Only 19 (36.5%) of 52 SMHEs which use both informal networks and formal sources mentioned they do not have problem to find staff but 33 (63.5%) of them still have human resources problem. In contrast, only 8 (44.4%) of small hotels which do not use any informal networks indicated human resources problem and 10 (55.6%) of the respondents indicated no issues in relation to finding employees. We can say that using informal networks do not eliminate the difficulty of finding employees for SMHEs.

According to face to face interviews, Respondent A says “I work with sense of confidence, I must trust my staff but it is hard to find trustworthy one. I only accept the applicants who have references (via our networks). Also, I cannot find staff due to bad working conditions. Istanbul is highly in demand; in this kind of tourism city it is very sad not to have an industry union for workers”. In addition to

this, Respondent D mentioned they used to use human resources companies but now because of bad economic conditions they do not have any agreements and moreover when they need a staff (especially receptionist) they hire them from different departments of their hotel. For other needs like waiter/waitress and housekeeper they use their staffs' acquaintances and their own acquaintances. Respondent C also supports these answers. Besides, walk-in application percentage is remarkable. When it is asked in face to face interviews they mentioned "Because of increasing migration to Turkey, immigrants especially from Syria, they knock the door and ask for a job". Observations during collecting surveys from respondents also support this situation. There is at least one immigrant working in some hotels and more in others, most of which are probably illegal workers. Hotel managers/owners count this another problem in finding qualified human resources. We understand that even they reach human resources, they still have problem in quality labor force. Crosstab results between networking structure and difficulty of finding human resources is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Networking and Difficulty of Finding Human Resources

Difficulty in finding HR	Informal networks and formal sources	Only formal sources	Total
Problem	33 (63.5%)	8 (44.4%)	41 (58.6)
No problem	19 (36.5%)	10 (55.6%)	29 (41.4)
Total	52 (100%)	18 (100%)	70 (100%)

For finding customers SMHEs report to use various sources. Table 7 shows that internet has biggest role to reach customer. In face to face interviews, owner/managers' report initially booking.com and then expedia.com, as their favorite sources for finding customers. Interviewees also mentioned that it is easy to reach

customer via internet. They especially mention that booking.com rescues most of them. However, hotels still need to form relationships and work with travel agencies, which have a big role for reaching customers. Respondents A; “Unavoidably agencies oblige you to have agreements because they find customers”. Respondent C thinks agencies have big role to provide customer satisfaction. Respondent D; “We used to have our reservation on our webpage before but now, because they give more confidence to the customer we use (have agreements) big online booking webpages like booking.com. Online reservation sites create big loyalty and trust and moreover they provide some advantages to the customer like extra discount.” Also neighbor hotels pass customers if they are short or in different negative situations. That's why hotels must have and mostly have good relationship with other hotels located in the same street. Almost all answers in the “other” category are "walk-in customers”, which is 5% of total responses.

Table 7. Sources for Reaching to Customers

		#	%
Informal Networks	Agency	51	34%
	Other Companies	8	5%
	Total Informal Network	59	40%
Formal Sources	Internet	66	45%
	Advertisement	8	5%
	Tourism and Travel Journals	8	5%
	Other (walk-in customers)	7	5%
	Total Formal Sources	89	60%
	Total Responses	148	100%

For finding customers, owner/managers use various sources. As a result of crosstab analysis between networking and difficulty of finding customers; only 20 owner/managers (37.0%) which find customers with both their informal networks

and formal sources indicate that they do not have problem to finding customer but 34 (63.0%) owner/managers still have problem to find customers. In contrasts, while 13 (76.5%) of respondents which use only formal networks indicate customer problems, only 4 (23.5%) have problem with reaching customers. Again, difficulty in reaching customers is more widespread for owner/managers who use informal networks in reaching their customers as compared to those that only use formal sources. There can be two different reasons. One, the hotels cannot manage their networks to solve their problem or second, even if the hotels try to get help from their informal networks they still cannot find customer because of their unsuccessful management. The difference between hotels that employ informal networks and those that use only formal sources is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Networking and Difficulty of Finding Customers

Difficulty in finding customers	Informal networks and formal sources	Only formal sources	Total
Problem	34 (63.0%)	4 (23.5%)	38 (53.5%)
No problem	20 (37.0%)	13 (76.5%)	33(46.5%)
Total	54 (100%)	17 (100%)	71 (100%)

The sources that SMHEs use to gain access to financial resources mainly represent informal ones. There are only 8 owner/managers (11%) that report using bank loans or loans from sellers. As seen from Table 9, more than half of respondents mentioned that the business support itself and personal assets takes second place. “Governmental Incentives” are used by only one of the hotels. According to respondents, there is limited support by governmental authorities. In the face to face interviews, the respondents complained about lack of support of authorities, but they mentioned banks in the area support hotels for their investment.

According to Respondent A, “In normal times (with no crisis in the sector), banks do not cause difficulty in giving loans for tourism investments but sometimes owners’ personal financial assets support the hotels as collateral because it is hard to manage during crisis period. Also, if the owner has a good relationship with a bank manager, s/he can have loan easier than others and also, other hotel owners/managers ask for a favor to contact with the bank manager to have bank loan”. Respondent B also mentioned they use their retained earnings but sometimes this is not enough, so the hotel applies bank loans. Respondent D also supported this and added; “Turkey is a country of uncertainty, because of these fluctuations even the banks cannot see their future, so having loans from banks is much harder than before”. Respondent D also mentioned family members’ assets as sources of finance and complained about lack of governmental incentives. The sources that SMHEs employ for gaining access to financial resources are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Sources Used to Gain Access to Financial Resources

		#	%
Informal Sources	Retained earnings	51	57%
	Family	6	7%
	Personal financial assets	21	24%
	Total Informal Sources	78	88%
Formal Sources	Banks	7	8%
	Governmental incentives	1	1%
	Loans form sellers	1	1%
	Other	2	2%
	Total Formal Sources	11	12%
Total responses		89	100%

Lynch et al. (2000) summarized benefits of networking sector as; learning and exchange, business activity, and community. Small businesses have more problems to reaching resources and information, so networking is more important for

them, especially in the tourism industry where collaborative relations are weak.

Table 10 indicates the sources where owner/managers gain access to professional information. Meeting with other colleagues and consulting experienced friends are the most frequently used ways to reach information. Face to face interviews confirm the same result as they frequently state that they meet their friends to exchange information and that they prefer to have contact with the people they trust most. Respondent B; “I have problems to reach professional information. I think fairs are not goal-directed at all. Fairs are only useful for advertising and sponsorship agreements, not about information sharing or building networks. I prefer Ted-Talks. Also, we take vocational courses from professionals; we can create the content of the course which is more helpful for our operation”. In addition to this, in the “other” category, two respondents indicated that they reached their needed information from their university education and one indicated that they gain access to professional information from internet through social media posts and news.

Table 10. Sources Used For Reaching Professional Information

		#	%
Informal Networks	Meeting with other colleagues	41	23%
	Consulting to experienced friends	34	19%
	Consulting related business organizations	19	10%
	Joining domestic and foreign fairs	34	19%
	Total Informal Networks	128	70%
Formal Sources	Reading publications	27	15%
	Taking vocational assistance courses	13	7%
	I do not need information about industry	10	5%
	Other	4	2%
	Total Formal Sources	54	30%
Total responses		182	100%

Differences between owner managers who use both informal and formal sources as opposed to those who only use formal sources are not analyzed with respect to problems they face in these areas because most of the SMHEs use informal relations or their networks to reach financial resources and information.

In summary; different ways utilized to reach different resources for operations are categorized as “informal relations” and formal sources and presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Role of Networking in Reaching Resources

	Informal Relations	Formal Sources
Finding human resources	56%	44%
Finding customers	40%	60%
Access to financial resources	88%	12%
Reaching professional information	70%	30%

Using informal relations is relatively high in access to financial resources. Informal relations for financial resources include relations with the family members and/or business partners using retained earnings, family and personal financial assets. It seems, informal ties are more useful for the respondents. Informal relations are also highly important for reaching professional information with 70% percent of responses. When we look informal relations to reaching professional information are; meeting with other colleagues, consulting to experienced friends, consulting related business organizations, joining domestic and foreign fairs. They are high interactions areas to get in touch. On the other hand, while informal relations and formal sources ranks almost equal in finding human resources, formal sources ranks higher than informal relations in finding customer section. It can be said that, while finding needed human resources and customer are handled through formal and professional

sources; reaching financial resources and professional information needs trust and closer relationship more than professional relationship according to respondents.

#### 5.4.2 Formal networking by memberships in associations

Membership in associations can be a tool for formal networking. Most of respondents are not aware of tourism related associations and do not know what they work for. Only 16 owner/managers (23%) report membership in associations while 55 (77%) report they are not members in associations. According to a research done in city centers by YADA (Yaşama Dair Vakfı) in 2014; only 11.9% of respondents are members of an associations or foundations. Moreover; 84.9% of respondents mentioned they are not thinking of becoming a member to any NGOs. The result of this study is supported by the report by YADA. It can be said that, intention of being a member of an NGO is also low in Turkey. Associations' membership is shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Membership in Associations

	#	%
Member in associations	16	23%
Not a member in associations	55	77%
	71	100%

The associations the respondents mentioned are; TUROB (Hotel Associations of Turkey), ÖZBİ (Association of Historical & Boutique Hotels of Turkey), MUSİAD (Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association), TURSAB (Association of Turkish Travel Agencies), Küçük Oteller Derneği (Association of

Small Hotels) and SKAL (International Associations of Travel and Tourism Professionals).

Most hotels that are members of an association are not happy with being a part of these associations. Mostly, they think they do not have any contribution because none of them work effectively. “Becoming social, following innovations, reaching human resources, updating about sectorial news, marketing, information about legal issues, complying with technology, gaining information and cooperation with others” are the benefits reported relating to association memberships. On the other hand, most of respondents who are members of associations did not mention any benefit or they especially indicated that they do not receive any benefits from associations. Respondent A; “No benefit, membership in associations is useless. Everybody is self-interested in Küçük Oteller Derneği. They provide network but it is useless”. Similarly, Respondent C states “We have no communication with TUROB, or other associations. Even I am a founding member of one of those associations. I struggled a lot but I gave up at the end because neither the association nor the members take even one step forward”. While Respondent A and C remained strongly negative, Respondent B and C displayed a moderate approach to associations. Respondent B mentioned benefits in sharing information, Respondent D said; “we only come together for superficial sectorial activities, not beneficial. We have mail groups within this association. We have some information like a price offer from a wholesaler, a CV sometimes or news about the sector. But, it is not very efficient. They are not useful actually”.

#### 5.4.3 Frequency of networking in different collaboration areas

Respondents are asked about the areas and frequency of their collaborations in order to identify frequency of networking. It can be seen from Table 13 that owner/managers most frequently apply their networks for exchanging information about the industry and sectorial decision. Complying with technology seems another area respondents collaborate with each other. In the face to face interviews, owner/managers explained that hotels in same area use same technology such as the reservation programs or hotel management software and they refer to each other in relation to using these programs. Sometimes they learn from each other when deciding about which program to purchase or sometimes get together to have a greater bargaining power. For example, if they want to purchase a hotel software program, several hotels come together to get a discount. Passing customers is another activity hotels frequently do. Especially hotels located in a same street report that they frequently pass customers to each other. When they have overbooking or different repair problems in their hotel, they refer them to hotels in their neighborhood as a solution. Thus, they prevent a problem and meet the customer satisfaction. This happens in opposite way as well, and they also receive customers from neighboring hotels. In summary; they support each other for daily and operational problems, but they do not frequently use their networks for sector activities, education and consultancy or for reaching financial resources. Rather than sectorial development and joint industry initiatives, they collaborate frequently to solve their operational problems that directly impact profits. Frequency of networking with respect to different areas of collaboration is presented in Table 13.

Table 13. Areas of Collaboration and Frequency of Networking

	Mean	Std.D.	Very Often	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never
Sectorial information exchange	4.18	0.885	46%	30%	21%	3%	
Sector activities	2.58	1.374	7%	26%	23%	10%	36%
Complying with technology	3.87	1.138	39%	24%	27%	5%	5%
Reaching qualified human resources	3.45	1.141	19%	34%	24%	18%	5%
Passing customer	3.82	0.833	18%	52%	25%	3%	2%
Marketing	3.82	1.049	28%	40%	20%	8%	3%
Advertising	3.16	1.345	21%	21%	26%	18%	15%
Reaching financial resources	3.12	1.288	19%	20%	27%	22%	12%
Education and training	3.31	1.235	19%	27%	32%	10%	12%
Consultancy	3.28	1.293	20%	30%	21%	18%	12%

#### 5.4.4 Networking partners and partner variety

Owner/managers responses with respect to the stakeholders that provide support to their businesses indicate that SMHEs receive support mostly from businesses that they engage with in running their operations. While respondents report mostly benefiting from travel agencies and other neighboring hotels, support from associations, central and local governmental agencies and NGOs remains limited. In this section Respondent A focused on education and training part and said; “I sent my staff to another hotel (the one I used to work before) for training because I know that the hotel’s housekeeper is very good at her work and I have good relationships with her. She helped me. They come to my hotel to train my staff” but Respondent C has very different experience; “There is no cooperation among stakeholders. I tried to create a platform which we come together but after years I fed up and gave up making effort”.

For developing a supportive business environment for SMHEs and a sustainable tourism area, all the stakeholders including institutions (governmental or nongovernmental) need to get together and collaborate. According to Van der Zee &

Vanneste (2015), business networks are useful for “knowledge sharing, innovation and collective learning” (p. 51), again, according to the same research; there should be policy networks which is between government, businesses and civil society to create synergy for sustainable development. These results indicate that only the stakeholders which have the same concern support each other. In addition to travel agencies, other hotels, restaurants and other businesses in the area, experienced family members are also listed among the stakeholders providing support to SMHEs. Other category includes internet and online marketing webpages, reservation pages, such as booking.com and expedia.com. Stakeholders reported as providing support to SMHEs are presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Networking Partners

	#	%
Travel Agencies	53	25%
Other Hotels	52	24%
Restaurants	29	14%
Other Businesses	27	13%
Family Members	26	12%
Central Government	9	4%
Associations	7	3%
Local Government	6	3%
NGOs	3	1%
Universities	2	1%
Other	5	2%
	214	100%

Network intensity (NI) and network partner variety (NPV) are recoded from the variables on frequency of networking in different collaboration areas and networking partners. While network intensity is the sum of the frequency scores in all areas of collaboration, network partner variety is the sum of the different

stakeholder types that the hotel's Owner/manager is engaged in as network partners. On the average, the network frequency score in all areas of collaboration is 34.6 (out of a possible score of 50 in ten different areas of collaboration), with a maximum score of 49 and a minimum of 13, indicating that most of the hotels engage in networking in multiple areas and with high frequency. With respect to network partner variety, owner/managers collaborate on the average with three different stakeholders. This number reaches 10 different stakeholders at the maximum and zero at the minimum. Summary statistics relating to these recoded variables are presented in Table 15.

Table 15. Frequency of Network Intensity and Network Partner Variety

	Network Intensity	Network Partner Variety
Mean	34.6	3.0
Median	34.5	3.0
Std. Deviation	6.5	1.7
Minimum	13.0	0.0
Maximum	49.0	10.0

### 5.5 Perceived network benefits

If stakeholders in a destination collaborate, there are many potential benefits (Bramwell & Sharman, 1999). The aim of this research is to find the main purposes and established structures of networking and perceived benefits as a result of networking activity. In Table 16 there are many benefits as perceived by the owner/managers of the SMHEs in the Sultanahmet region. It was measured by 5-point Likert type scale items (from strongly agree – 5 point to strongly disagree – 1 point). They mostly agree that their businesses benefit from networking in all the listed aspects. According to their relative scores, networking mostly provides

benefits in the form of increasing social connection within the industry, providing access to information and customers, and increasing hotels' reputation. On the other hand, benefits of networking is perceived to be less for gaining access to financial resources, dealing with crisis and creating competitive advantage and profitability. Previous studies indicate that small businesses can benefit from networking in terms of value creation, brand identity (Lemmetyinen & Go, 2009), brand value and reputation (Hu Xuhua et al., 2016). It is worth noting that owner/managers' perceptions about benefits are lower in relation to end results, such as competitive advantage and profitability.

Table 16. Perceived Benefits of Networking Activity

Networking provides for my business:	Mean	Std. D.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Access to qualified workforce	4.17	0.90	31%	34%	25%	7%	3%
Access to customers	4.34	0.93	33%	26%	19%	21%	1%
Access to information sources	4.39	0.77	52%	38%	9%		1%
Access to financial sources	3.67	1.19	46%	30%	20%	4%	
Competitive advantage in the sector	3.97	1.04	38%	34%	17%	10%	1%
Increase profitability of my hotel	4.11	1.02	44%	35%	13%	6%	3%
Increase reputation of my hotel	4.31	0.89	51%	37%	7%	4%	1%
Ease of dealing with crisis	3.81	1.07	54%	35%	6%	3%	3%
Ease of solving conflicts	4.15	1.00	31%	33%	24%	9%	3%
Influence on industry level decisions	3.92	1.14	41%	27%	18%	11%	3%
Increase connections in the industry	4.42	0.79	55%	37%	6%	1%	1%

When owner/managers were questioned during the face-to-face interviews about networking and its contributions all respondents had something to say; Respondent A: "All stakeholders must work with coordination. They must create a common sense in the sector. Low education degree shows its effect even in very small crisis. Management and human resources channels must be managed

professionally. Some owners open their hotel with the money they gain from smuggling. Everybody who has money should not open a hotel, they need to be controlled, and management should be qualified”. Opening a hotel seems very easy, but sustaining the operations is not as easy as opening a hotel. Istanbul is a very popular city, so operating a hotel in this city needs industry information, experience and qualified labor force. This is the best way to have a sustainable business. During the interviews, a frequent incidence of unregistered staff, ignorant owners/managers and bad working conditions were observed. This shows us there is lack of supervision by authorities. It seems same with associations, Respondent B says; “Professional industry associations are politicized. TURSAB, TUROB and Küçük Oteller Derneği have image problems. Because of our cultural background we are successful to create networks and corporation so networking is implementing in our sector. People can be devoted if they have a benefit at the end. There is a social collapse not only sector for all people. For example, a very religious and honest hotel owner that we all know works with staff that is mostly without insurance.” As mentioned before uninformed and unexperienced owners/managers do not know how to handle difficult situations. Respondent C: Most of the owners/hotels retire into their shell after the crisis. They did not know what to do and how to do. Trust does not exist anymore. The owners/hotels are not aware of benefits of being in cooperation. They do not feel the need of cooperation. Moreover they are oblivious of what social benefit is. As Respondent B mentioned social collapse shows itself in this situation. Alliance is not possible in this atmosphere. Lack of information and experience also has a big role on this behavior. Since most of the owners/managers are not accomplished, they become helpless even in small crisis. On the other hand, even some of them try to keep their good relationship within sector, some difficulties

like economic crisis, they might give a break or decrease the time they spend to networking. Respondent D: We try to keep have good relationship with our stakeholders in the sector, from craftsmen in our street to bank managers. But especially after the crisis we stopped some relationship like going to universities to have support or we recruit staff from Boğaziçi University because our operations almost stopped. We always try to keep good relationship with other stakeholders in the sector.

#### 5.6 Relation between network structure and perceived benefits

Different univariate analyses have been done to see relation between different perceived benefits and owners/manager characteristics and hotel characteristics. There are no significant differences, except owner education on certain dimensions; therefore owner education is used to denote owner/manager characteristics in the multivariate analysis to analyze the relations between the perceived benefits from networking and network structure (NI and NPV). Additionally, hotel size (as measured by number of rooms) is used as an indicator of hotel characteristics.

Network structure variables, owner/manager education and hotel size does not explain the perceived benefit of access to qualified workforce. There is no statistically significant relationship ( $p = 0.248$ ) between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of access to qualified workforce and independent variables. Thus increases in the network intensity (NI) and partner variety (NPV) are not associated with increased perceived benefit of access to qualified human resources. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of access to qualified workforce and the independent variables on

network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 17.

Table 17. Network Structure and Access to Qualified Workforce

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		3.610	0.001
Owner education (OE)	-0.043	-0.297	0.768
Hotel size (HS)	0.230	1.562	0.125
Network partner variety (NPV)	0.053	0.366	0.716
Network intensity (NI)	0.226	1.613	0.114

$R^2 = 0.109$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 1.404$ ,  $p = 0.248$

$VIF_{OE} = 1.072$ ,  $VIF_{HS} = 1.121$ ,  $VIF_{NPV} = 1.068$ ,  $VIF_{NI} = 1.015$

There is slightly statistically significant relationship ( $p = 0.064$ ) between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of access to customer and independent variables network structure variables, owner/manager education and hotel size. Thus, network partner variety (NPV) is associated with higher perception of benefits in the form of access to customers ( $p = 0.046$ ), while network intensity displays a less significant relationship ( $p = 0.095$ ) on this benefit perception dimension. Networking with diverse stakeholders seems to improve perception on access to customers benefit. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of access to customer and the independent variables on network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 18.

Table 18. Network Structure and Access to Customer

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		4.252	0.000
Owner education (OE)	-0.222	-1.597	0.117
Hotel size (HS)	-0.054	-0.382	0.704
Network partner variety (NPV)	0.284	2.048	0.046
Network intensity (NI)	0.231	1.706	0.095

$R^2 = 0.172$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 2.390$ ,  $p = 0.064$

$VIF_{OE} = 1.072$ ,  $VIF_{HS} = 1.121$ ,  $VIF_{NPV} = 1.068$ ,  $VIF_{NI} = 1.015$

There is statistically significant relationship ( $p = 0.048$ ) between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of access to financial resources and independent variables of network structure variable (NI and NPV), owner/manager education and hotel size. However, the source of variation in the dependent variable is significantly attributable only to the owner/manager education variable ( $p = 0.008$ ). Access to financial resources is only perceived as a benefit derived from networking activity by owner/managers with an attained education level high school or less. Neither network intensity ( $p = 0.152$ ) nor network partner variety NPV ( $p = 0.882$ ) display a statistically significant association with perceived benefit of access to financial resources. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of access to financial resources and the independent variables on network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 19.

Table 19. Network Structure and Access to Financial Sources

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		3.394	0.001
Owner education (OE)	-0.384	-2.786	0.008
Hotel size (HS)	-0.050	-0.353	0.725
Network partner variety (NPV)	-0.031	-0.227	0.822
Network intensity (NI)	0.196	1.458	0.152

$R^2 = 0.185$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 2.604$ ,  $p = 0.048$

$VIF OE = 1.072$ ,  $VIF HS = 1.121$ ,  $VIF NPV = 1.068$ ,  $VIF NI = 1.015$

Network structure variables, owner/manager education and hotel size display a slightly significant relationship ( $p = 0.058$ ) with the perceived benefit of access to information sources. Thus, increases in the network intensity ( $p = 0.027$ ) and network partner variety ( $p = 0.065$ ) are associated with increased perceived benefit of access to information sources. Increasing levels of network intensity and network partner variety are associated with better access to professional information. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of access to information sources and the independent variables on network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 20.

Table 20. Network Structure and Access to Information Sources

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		3.837	0.000
Owner education (OE)	-0.020	-0.146	0.885
Hotel size (HS)	0.056	0.393	0.696
Network partner variety (NPV)	0.261	1.888	0.065
Network intensity (NI)	0.308	2.283	0.027

$R^2 = 0.176$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 2.465$ ,  $p = 0.058$

$VIF OE = 1.072$ ,  $VIF HS = 1.121$ ,  $VIF NPV = 1.068$ ,  $VIF NI = 1.015$

There is statistically significant relationship ( $p = 0.046$ ) between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of competitive advantage in the sector and the independent variables of network structure variables, owner/manager education and hotel size. While the influence of network intensity (NI) is significant ( $p = 0.035$ ), network partner variety (NPV) is not associated ( $p = 0.12$ ) with increased perceived benefit of competitive advantage in the sector. Increasing networking frequency in different areas of collaboration is associated with gaining competitive advantage in the industry. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of competitive advantage in the sector and the independent variables on network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 21.

Table 21. Network Structure and Competitive Advantage in the Sector

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		1.707	0.095
Owner education (OE)	0.026	0.186	0.853
Hotel size (HS)	0.207	1.467	0.149
Network partner variety (NPV)	0.217	1.582	0.120
Network intensity (NI)	0.291	2.170	0.035

$R^2 = 0.187$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 2.640$ ,  $p = 0.046$

$VIF\ OE = 1.072$ ,  $VIF\ HS = 1.121$ ,  $VIF\ NPV = 1.068$ ,  $VIF\ NI = 1.015$

Network structure variables, owner/manager education and hotel size does not explain the perceived benefit of increasing profitability of the hotel. There is no statistically significant relationship ( $p = 0.680$ ) between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of increasing profitability of the hotel and independent variables. Thus increases in the network intensity (NI) and network partner variety (NPV) are not associated with increased perceived benefit of increasing profitability of the hotel. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent

variable of perceived benefit of increasing profitability of the hotel and the independent variables on network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 22.

Table 22. Network Structure and Increasing Profitability of the Hotel

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		2.980	0.005
Owner education (OE)	0.033	0.218	0.828
Hotel size (HS)	-0.033	-0.218	0.828
Network partner variety (NPV)	0.152	1.023	0.312
Network intensity (NI)	0.142	0.980	0.332

$R^2 = 0.048$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 0.578$ ,  $p = 0.680$

$VIF_{OE} = 1.072$ ,  $VIF_{HS} = 1.121$ ,  $VIF_{NPV} = 1.068$ ,  $VIF_{NI} = 1.015$

There is slightly statistically significant relationship ( $p = 0.047$ ) between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of increasing reputation of the hotel and independent variables of network structure, owner/manager education and hotel size. While the influence of network intensity (NI) is significant ( $p = 0.017$ ), network partner variety (NPV) is slightly associated ( $p = 0.097$ ) with perceived benefit of increasing reputation of the hotel. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of increasing reputation of the hotel and the independent variables on network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 23.

Table 23. Network Structure and Increasing Reputation of the Hotel

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		2.981	0.005
Owner education (OE)	-0.104	-0.757	0.453
Hotel size (HS)	0.050	0.355	0.725
Network partner variety (NPV)	0.233	1.693	0.097
Network intensity (NI)	0.333	2.485	0.017

$R^2 = 0.186$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 2.621$ ,  $p = 0.047$

$VIF OE = 1.072$ ,  $VIF HS = 1.121$ ,  $VIF NPV = 1.068$ ,  $VIF NI = 1.015$

Network structure variables, owner/manager education and hotel size does not explain the perceived benefit of influence on industry level decisions. There is no statistically significant relationship ( $p = 0.265$ ) between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of influence on industry level decisions and independent variables. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of influence on industry level decisions and the independent variables on network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 24.

Table 24. Network Structure and Influence on Industry Level Decisions

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		2.333	0.024
Owner education (OE)	-0.157	-1.084	0.284
Hotel size (HS)	0.017	0.113	0.911
Network partner variety (NPV)	0.135	0.940	0.352
Network intensity (NI)	0.248	1.762	0.085

$R^2 = 0.105$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 1.352$ ,  $p = 0.265$

$VIF OE = 1.072$ ,  $VIF HS = 1.121$ ,  $VIF NPV = 1.068$ ,  $VIF NI = 1.015$

Network structure variables, owner/manager education and hotel size are significantly associated with the perceived benefit of influence on industry level decisions ( $p = 0.034$ ). While the influence of network intensity (NI) is not significant

( $p = 0.321$ ) and increasing network partner variety (NPV) is significantly associated ( $p = 0.009$ ) with increased perceived benefit connections in the industry. Thus, as partner variety increases owner/managers perceive higher perceived benefits in the form of increased connections in the industry. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of increasing connections in the industry and the independent variables on network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 25.

Table 25. Network Structure and Increasing Connections in the Industry

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		4.045	0.000
Owner education (OE)	0.042	0.308	0.760
Hotel size (HS)	0.137	0.981	0.332
Network partner variety (NPV)	0.372	2.730	0.009
Network intensity (NI)	0.133	1.003	0.321

$R^2 = 0.199$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 2.859$ ,  $p = 0.034$

$VIF OE = 1.072$ ,  $VIF HS = 1.121$ ,  $VIF NPV = 1.068$ ,  $VIF NI = 1.015$

Network structure variables, owner/manager education and hotel size significantly explain ( $p = 0.020$ ) the perceived benefit of ease of solving conflicts. Influence of network intensity (NI) is slightly significant ( $p = 0.080$ ), while network partner variety (NPV) is significantly associated ( $p = 0.036$ ) with increased perceived benefit of ease of solving conflicts. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of ease of solving conflicts and the independent variables on network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 26.

Table 26. Network Structure and Ease of Solving Conflicts

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		2.870	0.006
Owner education (OE)	-0.180	-1.337	0.188
Hotel size (HS)	0.162	1.172	0.247
Network partner variety (NPV)	0.291	2.164	0.036
Network intensity (NI)	0.235	1.788	0.080

$R^2 = 0.220$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 3.246$ ,  $p = 0.020$

$VIF OE = 1.072$ ,  $VIF HS = 1.121$ ,  $VIF NPV = 1.068$ ,  $VIF NI = 1.015$

Network structure variables, owner/manager education and hotel size does not explain the perceived benefit of ease of dealing with crisis. There is no statistically significant relationship ( $p = 0.353$ ) between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of ease of dealing with crisis and independent variables. As have been stated by respondents in the in-depth interviews, small hotels act individually during crisis periods and do not engage in networking to deal with the problems posed by the crisis. Results of the regression analysis on the relationship between the dependent variable of perceived benefit of ease of dealing with crisis and the independent variables on network intensity (NI), network partner variety (NPV), owner education (OE) and hotel size (HS) is presented in Table 27.

Table 27. Network Structure and Ease of Dealing with Crisis

	Beta	t-value	p
(Constant)		2.242	0.030
Owner education (OE)	-0.051	-0.345	0.732
Hotel size (HS)	0.145	0.968	0.338
Network partner variety (NPV)	0.065	0.445	0.658
Network intensity (NI)	0.252	1.759	0.085

$R^2 = 0.092$   $F$  test statistics / significance  $F = 1.136$ ,  $p = 0.352$

$VIF OE = 1.069$ ,  $VIF HS = 1.119$ ,  $VIF NPV = 1.059$ ,  $VIF NI = 1.014$

As a result of the multivariate analysis, network intensity and network partner variety is found to explain perceived network benefits on certain areas. In Table 28

summary results of regression analyses are presented. There is no significant relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables of benefits of industry level decision, profitability of the hotel, access to qualified workforce and ease of dealing with crisis. Influence of network structure variables on access to qualified workforce result coincides with the univariate statistics of sources for finding human resources in Table 5. As a result of analyses and face to face interviews; even though they use their networking to reach needed human resources they still face problems in finding qualified workforce. Similarly, increases in their networking intensity and expanding network partners do not lead to increased perceived benefit of accessing qualified workforce. This might indicate that they do not use their networks as it should be, they do not contact relevant partners, and networking do not solve human resources problems of businesses. A similar finding is observed in the benefit of dealing with crisis. Ease of dealing with crisis was also asked face to face surveys and the answers support this result. Even if the hotels create industry networks to reach sectorial information they do not use these contacts to cope with crisis. Hotels do not utilize their networks to manage with the crisis; they prefer to take care of the situation by themselves. Perceived benefits of both influence on industry level decisions and increase profitability of the hotel do not have significant relation with industry structure.

On the other hand, benefits relating to increasing connections in the industry and ease of solving conflicts display significant relationship (levels of significance; 0.034 and 0.020, respectively) with the independent variables. As network intensity and partner variety increase perceived benefits from networking increases in these areas. Also, these areas have significant difference with network partner variety. This

might indicate that small hotels use their networks for more abstract means and relationships which do not directly affect their operations.

Similar significant relationships are observed between networking structure variables and benefits of increasing reputation (significance level of 0.047) and access to financial resources (significance level of 0.048). However, in access to financial resources, there is a negative relationship between the perceived benefit from networking in this area and higher owner education (university, master of PhD) (significance level 0.008) and no significant relationship between network structure variables. This might be due to the finding that hotels that report problems in access to finance are low (29.5%) and most of these are smaller hotels (in the micro hotels category of less than 10 rooms) with owner/managers with lower education levels. In addition to these results, we can also see network intensity has meaningful relation with accessing information, competitive advantage and reputation of the hotel while network variety have meaningful relationship with increasing connection, accessing to customer and ease of solving conflicts. Hotel size does not have any meaningful relationship with any dependent variable but it has negative relationship with profitability of a hotel, accessing financial resources and accessing to customer variables.

Table 28. Summary of the Relations between Network Structure and Perceived Benefits

Independent Variables	Constant	Owner Education (OE) (University, Master, PHD)	Hotel Size (HS)	Network Partner Variety (NPV)	Network Intensity (NI)	
Dependent Variable (Benefits)	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.
Access to qualified workforce	0.001	0.768	0.125	0.716	0.114	0.248
Access to customers	0.000	0.117	0.704	0.046	0.095	0.064
Access to financial sources	0.001	0.008	0.725	0.822	0.152	0.048
Access to information sources	0.000	0.885	0.696	0.065	0.027	0.058
Competitive advantage in the sector	0.095	0.853	0.149	0.120	0.035	0.046
Increase profitability of my hotel	0.005	0.828	0.828	0.312	0.332	0.680
Increase reputation of my hotel	0.005	0.453	0.725	0.097	0.017	0.047
Influence on industry level decisions	0.024	0.284	0.911	0.352	0.085	0.265
Increase connections in the industry	0.000	0.760	0.332	0.009	0.321	0.034
Ease of solving conflicts	0.006	0.188	0.247	0.036	0.080	0.020
Ease of dealing with crisis	0.030	0.732	0.338	0.658	0.085	0.352

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

#### 6.1 Conclusion

Istanbul is one of the most popular tourism destinations in the world. Undoubtedly, all areas of tourism industry must collaborate to increase the quality of the tourism product offered and for the sustainable development of the destination.

The aim of this research is to analyze extent and structure of networking activity and its contribution to operations in SMHEs, which is one of the important elements of the tourism product offered. Additionally, the factors (i.e. owner/manager and hotel characteristics) that differentiate the hotels with respect networking activity and benefits are investigated. The literature review identifies positive contribution of networking activity along various dimensions of operations and industry action, which formed the basis for some expectations in results. These dimensions are also used to understand the gaps in networking activity. The results are used to develop suggestions and road maps that may guide the authorities to solve the problems of small hotels in these areas. This may help to increase competitive strength and viability of small hotels and contribute to sustainable development for the area.

Small businesses inherently face difficulties in running their operations and sustaining their businesses. Political and economic fluctuations and resulting uncertainties add to these problems. Similarly, most of the small hotel owner/managers mention economic and political uncertainties as their most important problems. They also report difficulties in reaching resources, especially qualified human resources and steady flow of customers. Especially after the big

crisis following the terrorist attacks in the Sultanahmet region, it took long time for owner/managers to build up their businesses afterwards. Networking can be used to overcome problems in gaining access to resources. Small hotel owner/managers mostly utilize both their informal connections and formal sources to reach human resources, customers, and professional information. Their use of networking remains limited in reaching financial resources. They mostly use their own financial sources or reach out to friends and family to reach financial resources. Even though the results indicate widespread use of different types of networks in reaching human resources, customer and professional information, they still report problems in reaching qualified human resources, a wide range of customer segments. Contrary to expectations respondents who mentioned reaching human resources as a problem are also the ones who mostly use informal networks or both formal and informal networks. The results may indicate that these problems cannot be solved through networking or the connections/stakeholders are not relevant for the purposes of these networks.

Similar to the results on human resources, even if hotels have good informal relationship with agencies and other hotels in terms of finding customers, they mention finding customers as problems more than those hotels that only reach their customer base through formal sources, such as online platforms. Thus, it can be concluded that networking does not solve the problems of small hotels in gaining access to resources or small hotels cannot utilize their networks effectively.

Small hotels report that they receive support from various sources. Travel agencies and other hotels are most mentioned stakeholders; Small hotels also receive support from restaurants, other businesses and family members. NGOs, local-central government, universities and surprisingly associations are reported to provide limited

support. We can also understand this from limited number of their existing membership in associations, especially tourism related associations. Only 23% of respondents are members in an association. Additionally, both questionnaires and face to face interview indicate that almost half of those who have memberships strongly stated that associations do not provide any services and advantages to them. They state that associations do not work properly; they do not take real action for the industry. It was expected that associations would provide useful networking platform for small hotels in terms of business activities and industry action, however the results indicate that they do not effectively function as a platform for strengthening small businesses and leading their collective action for gaining access to resources. As a result, owner/managers' perceptions on the benefits of networking activity relate mostly to increasing social connection within the industry, providing access to information. Results of this study is in conformity with previous research (Augustyn & Knowles, 2000; Halme & Fadeeva, 2000; Scott, Baggio & Cooper, 2008; Soteriades, 2012; Talarowska & Tuzinovic, 2008; Halme & Fadeeva, 2000; Hu Xuhua et al., 2016).

There are some other examples of networking activities from previous research done in different contexts. The research that Frey (2002) conducted in 2002 in Switzerland showed that 63.9% of SMHEs create strategic networks with other companies and 21.7% were not a part of any network, but they were ready to join (Colovic & Beran, 2018). Also, according to the research done by Colovic & Beran (2018), it is concluded that; networking is significant for selling of accommodation capacities, human resources management and making decision also not significant differences for operational affairs Colovic & Beran (2018). In this research,

owner/managers of SMHEs is able to utilize networking for operating areas in a limited manner.

In this study several factors relating owner/manager and hotel characteristics have been analyzed to identify sources of differences in networking structures and perceived benefits derived from networking. Significant results are mostly observed relating to the education level of owner/managers. In addition to this; multivariable analyses made with hotel size, network partner variety and network intensity shows that networking makes no difference in terms of; industry level decisions, increasing profitability, access to qualified workforce and ease of dealing with crisis for businesses. In contrast, accessing to information sources, increasing connections in the industry ( $p = 0.034$ ) and ease of solving conflicts ( $p = 0.020$ ) have highest scores for perceived benefits of networking. Increasing network partner variety and network intensity leads to increases in perceived benefits only in these limited areas of collaboration (access to information sources, increase reputation of the hotel, access to customer, ease of solving conflicts). In addition to these, accessing to financial resources has a negative relation with owner education.

## 6.2 Discussion and implications

Networking is a key to access various sources if it is used properly. Results indicate that although hotel owner/managers state the difficulties that they face in reaching resources, such as human resources and customers; the formal and informal networks that they utilize for gaining access to resources remain insufficient in solving their problems. Thus, owner/managers are not able to overcome barriers in reaching resources which are critical for their operations through their existing networking activity. This brings in the question whether the owner/managers of small hotels are

able to form connections with relevant stakeholders and for specific purposes directed to their needs as small businesses.

From this point of view, networking should be thought as a web of complex interactions which affect all stakeholders from smallest to biggest and it should include mechanisms for all parties to work in a harmony. This may support the expectation that sustainable development for both small businesses and industry through networking. Rather than formal and informal networks of owner/managers, the results suggest the need for establishing specific-purpose networking platforms that involve relevant stakeholders.

Role of civil society organizations is an important subject to think about. The results suggest a need for civil society organizations for this industry. If they work effectively, they can play big role to create a synergy to have more efficient networking activities and success in sustainability and regional development.

To reach critical operating resources, informal relations are used more. This can be attributed to being a small business and relations are based mostly on trust. For example; to reach financial resources informal sources makes a big difference when compared to formal sources. It is same in almost all results. So, it can be said that because of trust issue, informal sources have a big role on small businesses.

The results are used to develop suggestions and road maps that may guide the authorities to solve the problems of small hotels in these areas. This may help to increase competitive strength and viability of small hotels and contribute to sustainable development for the area. The government authorities and/or industry associations can create portfolio alliances to answer the needs of sectorial employment such as, creating central human resources platforms. Marketing activities should be done professionally to effectively reach customers and broaden

customer base. Government support can be directed at promoting clusters of SMHEs and facilitating collaboration for professional marketing activities. Periodically, for example each year a panel should be arranged to discuss the current issues in the sector, take actions to bring solutions and facilitate collective action for dealing with problems. Associations' actions and functions should be inspected and motivated by governmental authorities.

### 6.3 Further studies

There are many potential studies will be carried on after this research. Both, qualitative and quantitative research has been applied in this research. Based on the findings of this study, further qualitative research can be undertaken to identify the role of trust in networking activities and mechanisms that relate intention for networking and performance of small businesses.

In addition to hotel owners'/managers', several interviews can be done with associations' and government representatives related to tourism sector to reveal out institutional weaknesses of the context. Such a multi-stakeholder approach would help to understand the problems that SMHEs face better and bring more comprehensive insight for building platforms to support SMHEs. With this approach, some additional solutions can be suggested to solve the problems.

### 6.4 Limitations

Sultanahmet is an area where numerous small hotels are located. Since there is no official database of hotels in the area, it was difficult to determine the population and sample of the study. As a result, a list of hotels was compiled from different sources and data relating to hotel size was compiled through telephone calls to hotels in this

list. Additionally, the most problem in administering the questionnaires was to convince the owners/managers. Most of them were reluctant to participate in the study and said that they were not interested in the topic of the study since they did not believe in the possibility of collaboration and collective action in the tourism industry. This prejudice not only acts as a limitation for this study but also acts as an indicator of why networking is not effectively implemented in the industry.

Additionally, owners did not want to answer the questionnaire themselves and they direct us to their managers. They were also hesitant to share any information about themselves or their hotels.

The empirical setting for the study is a popular destination in Istanbul, where small hotels are located as a cluster. The structure and perceived benefits identified in this study might relate to the specific characteristics of this empirical setting and might not be generalizable to small hotels in other destinations. Further studies should be done in other destinations, especially in those where small hotels are not located in clusters.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE IN TURKISH

KÜÇÜK VE ORTA BÜYÜKLÜKTEKİ OTELLER ANKETİ

1. Yaşınız: .....

2. Cinsiyetiniz: .....

3. Eğitim durumunuz: .....

4. Kaç yıldır bu sektörde çalışıyorsunuz?

5. Soruları yanıtlayan kişi:

- İşletme sahibi  
 İşletme yöneticisi  
 İşletmenin sahip ve yöneticisi

6. Soruları yanıtlayan kişi yönetici ise, işletme sahibi ile ilişkisi nedir?

- İşletme sahibinin eşi, oğlu, kızı  
 İşletme sahibinin diğer yakın akrabası  
 İşletme sahibinin arkadaşı  
 İşletme sahibi ile ilişkisi yok

7. Kendinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?

5	4	3	2	1
Çok Sosyalim				Çok içe kapanığım
İşbirliğine sık sık başvururum				İşbirliğine hiç ihtiyaç duymam
Çok rekabetçi bir yapım var				Hiç rekabetçi değilim
Kendime çok güvenirim				Kendime hiç güvenmem
Çok özgürlükçüyüm				Hiç özgürlükçü değilim

8. Otelin kuruluş yılı .....

9. Oteldeki toplam oda sayısı .....

10. Toplam çalışanların adedi:.....

11. İşletmeniz aşağıda belirtilen alanların hangilerinde sorunlar yaşamaktadır? Önem derecesine göre sıralayınız

- Ekonomik ve politik belirsizlikler
- Bürokratik işlemler
- Müşteri bulma zorluğu
- Finansal problemler, kaynak yetersizliği
- Nitelikli eleman bulma zorluğu
- Sektörel veya mesleki bilgilere ulaşma zorluğu
- Diğer .....

12. Eleman ihtiyacınızı nereden karşılıyorsunuz?

- İK siteleri (Kariyer.net vs )
- İK firmaları
- Kapıdan başvuru
- Akraba / Tanıdık
- Çalışanların Çevreleri
- Diğer İşletmeler
- Diğer .....

13. Müşterilerinize hangi kanallardan ulaşıyorsunuz?

- Reklam
- Acente
- Diğer İşletmeler
- İnternet
- Turizm/Seyahat yayınları
- Diğer .....

14. Finansal kaynaklarınız nelerdir?

- Aile bireyleri
- Devlet teşvikleri
- Bankalar
- Kişisel varlık
- İş kendi kendini döndürüyor
- Satıcılardan borçlar
- Diğer .....

15. Faaliyet alanınızla ilgili bilgiye hangi kaynaklar aracılığı ile ulaşıyorsunuz?  
Önem derecesine göre sıralayınız.

- Yurtiçi ve yurtdışı fuarlara katılarak  
 Mesleki kurslara katılarak  
 İlgili meslek kuruluşlarına danışarak  
 Konu ile ilgili yayınları okuyarak  
 Diğer meslektaşarımla görüşerek  
 Bilgisine güvendiğim tanıdık dost ve ahbablarla görüşerek  
 Bu tür bilgiye ulaşmakta zorluk çekiyorum.  
 Faaliyet alanımla ilgili bilgiye ihtiyacım yok.  
 Diğer .....

16. Faaliyetleriniz ile ilgili üyesi olduğunuz her hangi bir dernek var mı?

- Evet  
 Hayır

17. Evet ise, hangileri? .....

18. Bu derneğin/derneklerin size nasıl faydaları var? .....

19. Hangi alan veya alanlarda yardımlaşıyorsunuz? Ne Sıklıkla?

	<b>Çok Sık</b>	<b>Sık</b>	<b>Orta</b>	<b>Nadir</b>	<b>Hiç</b>
Sektör ile ilgili bilgi alışverişi ve kararlar					
Müşteri yönlendirme					
Eğitim					
Danışmanlık					
Teknolojiye ayak uydurma					
Pazarlama					
Finansal kaynaklara ulaşma					
Tanıtım					
Kaliteli iş gücüne ulaşma					
Sektör aktiviteleri					
Diğer Lütfen belirtiniz					

20. Faaliyetlerinizi yürütürken destek aldığınız tüm kişi ve kurumları işaretleyiniz. Destek aldığınız kişi ve kurumlardan hangi alanlarda destek aldığınızı 19. Sorudaki alanları dikkate alarak cevaplayınız.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Aile bireyleri.....
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diğer oteller.....
<input type="checkbox"/>	Çevre esnaf (bakkal, market, hediyelik eşya mağazaları vb) .....
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yerel Yönetim (Belediye vs) .....
<input type="checkbox"/>	Merkezi Yönetim (Turizm İl Müdürlüğü vs) .....
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acenteler .....
<input type="checkbox"/>	Restoranlar.....
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sivil Toplum Örgütleri.....
<input type="checkbox"/>	Üniversiteler (Eğitim kuruluşları) .....
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dernekler .....
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diğer.....

21. Aşağıdaki cümlelerin sizin görüşünüzü ne kadar yansıttığını belirtiniz

	Tamamen Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılmıyorum	Hiç Katılmıyorum
Sektör içerisindeki diğer paydaşlar ile iyi ilişkiler içerisinde olmak benim için önemlidir					
Sektör içinde diğer paydaşlarla genel olarak ilişkilerimiz iyidir					
Diğer paydaşlarla ilişkilerimizi geliştirerek faaliyetlerimizle ilgili problemleri çözebiliriz					

22. Sektör içerisindeki paydaşlarınızla iletişim içerisinde olmanın sizler açısından gerçekleşmiş faydaları nelerdir?  
Lütfen aşağıdaki cümlelere ne kadar katıldığınızı işaretleyerek işbirliği ağıları sayesinde hangi faydalar edindiğinizi belirtiniz.

	Tamamen katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılmıyorum	Hiç katılmıyorum
İşbirliği ağlarım sayesinde sürekli bilgi kaynağına erişebiliyorum					
İşbirliği ağlarım sayesinde sektörde rekabet üstünlüğüm oluyor					
İşbirliği ağlarım sayesinde sektör ile ilgili kararlarda söz sahibi olabiliyorum					
İşbirliği ağlarım sayesinde otelimin itibarımı arttırabiliyorum					
İşbirliği ağlarım sayesinde sektörde çevremi arttırabiliyorum					
İşbirliği ağlarım sayesinde otelimin karlılığını arttırabiliyorum					
İşbirliği ağlarım sayesinde nitelikli eleman bulmam kolaylaşıyor					
İşbirliği ağlarım sayesinde finansal kaynaklara erişimim kolaylaşıyor					
Müşteri potansiyelim artıyor					
İşbirliği ağlarım sayesinde kriz dönemleri ile daha rahat başa çıkabildim					
İşbirliği ağlarım sayesinde anlaşmazlıklarımı daha rahat çözebiliyorum					
Diğer Lütfen belirtiniz					

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZE HOTELS INTERVIEW

1. Age: .....

2. Gender: .....

3. Education Level: .....

4. How long have you been working in this sector?

5. You are:

- Owner
- Manager
- Both owner and manager

6. If you are a manager what is your relation with the owner?

- Wife/son/daughter of the owner
- Relative of the owner
- Friend of the owner
- No personal relationship with the owner

5	4	3	2	1
Very Social				Self-enclosed
Very Collaborative				Never Collaborative
Very competitive				Not competitive
High self-confidence				No self-confidence
Freedom Lover				Not freedom lover

7. How do you describe yourself?

8. Foundation year of the hotel .....

9. Number of room of the hotel .....

10. Number of staff: .....

11. In which areas mentioned below, your business has problems? Please indicate in order of priorities.

- Economic and political uncertainty
- Bureaucracy
- Difficulty in finding customers
- Financial problems and lack of financial resources
- Difficulty in finding qualified personnel
- Difficulty to reach industry and profession information
- Other .....

12. Which channels do you use for staff recruiting?

- Digital Human Resource Platforms
- Human Resources Companies
- Walk-in Application
- Relatives / Acquaintance
- Workers' Acquaintance
- Other Companies
- Other .....

13. Which channels do you use to reach your customers?

- Advertisement
- Agency
- Other Companies
- Internet
- Tourism and travel journals
- Other .....

14. What are your financial resources?

- Family
- Governmental incentives
- Banks
- Personal financial assets
- Retained earnings
- Loans form sellers
- Other .....

15. In which areas do you reach professional information? Please indicate in order of priorities

- Joining Domestic And Foreign Fairs
- Taking Vocational Assistance Courses
- Consulting Related Business Organizations
- Reading Publications
- Meeting With Other Colleagues
- Consulting To Experienced Friends
- I have difficulty to reach these information
- I Do Not Need Information About Industry
- Other .....

16. Are you a member of any association related to your business area.

- Yes
- No

17. If yes, what are they? .....

18. What are the benefits of these associations to your business?.....

19. In what areas do you collaborate? How often?

	<b>Very often</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>
Sectorial Information Exchange					
Passing Customer					
Education and Training					
Consultancy					
Complying with Technology					
Marketing					
Reaching Financial Resources					
Advertising					
Reaching qualified human resources					
Sector activities					
Other (please indicate)					

20. Please mark people and institutions you receive support from during sustain your business. Please answer this question by considering the areas in 19<sup>th</sup> question.

- Family Members.....
- Other Hotels .....
- Other Businesses .....
- Local Government .....
- Central Government .....
- Travel Agencies .....
- Restaurants .....
- NGOs .....
- Universities .....
- Associations .....
- Other .....

21. Please indicate how much you agree these statements below.

	<b>Totally agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Don't agree</b>	<b>Never</b>
Being in a good relationship with other stakeholders in the sector is important to me					
We are in a good relationship with other stakeholders in the sector					
We can solve problems by improving our relationship with other stakeholders					

22. What are the benefits of having connection with other stakeholders for you?

	<b>Totally agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Don't agree</b>	<b>Never</b>
Favor of my networks, I can access to information sources					
Favor of my networks, I have competitive advantage in the sector					
Favor of my networks, I have influence on industry level decisions					
Favor of my networks, I can increase reputation of my hotel					
Favor of my networks, I can increase connections in the industry					
Favor of my networks, I can increase profitability of my hotel					
Favor of my networks, I can access to qualified workforce					
Favor of my networks, I can access to financial sources					
Favor of my networks, I can access to customers					
Favor of my networks, I can easily deal with crisis					
Favor of my networks, I can easily solve conflicts					
Other, please indicate					

APPENDIX C

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

**T.C.**  
**BOĞAZIÇI ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Yüksek Lisans ve Doktora Tezleri Etik İnceleme Komisyonu**

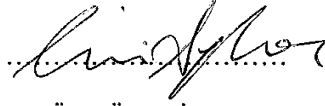
Sayı: 2019 - 53

9 Mayıs 2019

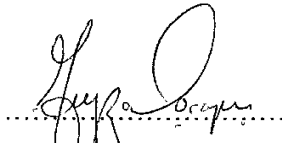
Mehtap Pekdoğan Çivi  
Sürdürülebilir Turizm Yönetimi

Sayın Araştırmacı,

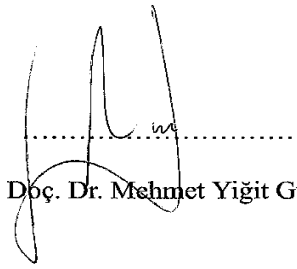
"İşbirliği Bağlantıları ve Bu Bağlantıların Küçük ve Orta Büyüklükteki Otellere Katkısı"  
başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığımız SBB-EAK 2019/48 sayılı başvuru komisyonumuz  
tarafından 9 Mayıs 2019 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi İnci Ayhan



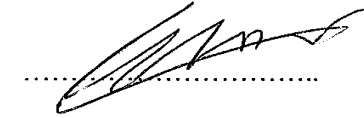
Prof. Dr. Feyza Çorapçı



Doç. Dr. Mehmet Yiğit Gürdal

RAPORLU

Doç. Dr. Ebru Kaya



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şebnem Yalçın

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