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Visitor-Local People Communication: An Application in Pamukkale Destination

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Abstract

The primary aim of this study is to determine communicational skills of local people living in Pamukkale (Denizli-Turkey) regarding their interactions with visitors. Secondly, authors will try to develop concrete recommendations regarding amelioration of communicational context regarding visitors and local people. Following the survey method, quantitative data were collected via questionnaire technique. During the data analysis firstly, frequency distributions of demographic data were produced. Followingly, in order to determine variables with more precision and reduce number of variables, factor analysis was applied. Varimax option was used during factor analysis on data. The output scree plot graphic was then analyzed and factors with eigenvalues over one were kept for further analysis. As a result; 40 variables were defined under 5 factors. First factor was named positive communication, second factor was about understanding and being understood, the third one was negative communication, fourth factor covered communicational failures, and final factor was about amelioration of the communication.

Keywords: Communication, Communication Skills, Pamukkale, Denizli;

1. Literature

   Communication, that emerges as a product of an effort to continue the existence of human being (Oskay, 1992:7) and is an essential element of human relations, can be identified as the process of transferring information, ideas or apprehension from one person to another person and people (Tutar and Yılmaz, 2003:5). Communication, that is as natural and inevitable as existing and eating to live, emerges as a result of the needs of individuals to express themselves (Gölönü and Karcı, 2010:123-124). Considering that many of the problems are related to interpersonal communication and communication takes place on the basis of interpersonal relationships, its importance is understood once again (Korkut, 1996:18). Communication, which is the process of transferring information, ideas and emotions from person to person or group to group in verbal, nonverbal or written ways (Mısırlı, 2003:1), provides meaningful and satisfying human relationships when established healthfully and it is the basis of many issues including a sense of impenetrability and unwanted loneliness when established unhealthfully (Korkut, 1996:18).
   Communication concept is important for all professional fields -particularly in terms of service intensive industries it becomes even more decisive, "human" that is in the center of communication process is seen as a source and it is known that verbal and nonverbal communication skills of people affects the communication between them

(Günlü and Erkuş, 2009:7-8). To improve communication skills which is necessary for establishing communication effectively, maintaining it and ultimately for obtaining satisfaction from this action, people should be trained in the field of relationship skills and these skills are needed to be identified and expressed clearly (Özerbaş et. al., 2007:124-125). Communication skills can be summarized as effective listening and effective reaction; but in detail, it is ranged as asking proper questions, making summaries, repeating via different words, responding with keywords, defining the behavior, words or emotions of other person, reflection, testing if understood or not, giving effective feedback and that of communication skills are learned through experiences is known (Korkut, 1996:19). As one of the social skills, communication skills are used when people are together with other people, it helps to get positive responses, to be avoided from negative responses and it includes observable significant behavior, cognitive and affective elements as accepted learned behavior (Kılcıgil et. al., 2009:20). The observable, measurable, repeatable, and teachable behavior that work to establish healthy communication between people are called communication skills (Kılcıgil et. al., 2009:20). By improving communication skills, including skills like empathy, verbal and nonverbal communication, listening skill, accurate feedback, it will be possible for individuals to recognize communication obstacles better and to provide developing healthier relationships (Özerbaş et. al., 2007:126). As effective communication skills facilate relations in human relations and all professional fields, employees whom need to be among people, should have more control over communication skills (Kılcıgil et. al., 2009:22).

Communication, of which the most important activity is submitted as "awareness", is affected by the values, behavior, social class, education level, experiences, knowledge and cultures of speaker and audience (Price, 1991:25-29). Communication is also described as listening, speaking apprehensibly, making eye contact, encouraging conversation, verbal praise, using nonverbal actions in an appropriate manner (Omololu, 1984:97-100). According to Peter Hartley's "social context model", each communication is firstly composed of the components occured in the social and physical environment of its own, social norms, rules, social structure of relations and the completely comprehension of communication is depended on the recognition of this environment, the relation type, cultural and social differences, gender differences; is depended on the consideration of both sides' own goals and motivations and is depended on the evaluation of a combination of personal traits like social structure of communication, roles, rules, language, culture, environment, age, gender, personality, appearance (Doğanay and Keskin, 2008:13-25).

In the labour intensive tourism industry; tourism businesses, local people, visitors receiving service and employees are in a bilateral communication and so the communication between these individuals plays a very important role in visitor satisfaction (Tavmergen and Meriç, 2002:121). Visitors are strangers in the eyes of the local people living in the area where they went; therefore, the initial communication between local people and visitors begins with this perception and this strangeness results the communication to remain at a low level and problems are faced in communication between local people and visitors because of the language differences most of the time, immensity of self-interest in relations, different cultural structures, insufficient time for visitors to communicate with local people, lack of tolerance for both sides from time to time and different personal traits (Rızaoğlu, 2003:257-260).

It was stated that local people living in the touristic area are different from the ones those are living in non-touristic area in terms of foreign language knowledge level, encounter with tourists and frequency of interaction, aspect of tourists' visits to the area and effects made by tourists to the local people (Tayfun, 2002:2). Matters affecting the relationship between visitors and local people can be listed as the social structure of the local people, local peoples' attitudes towards visitors, visitors' behavior towards local people, conflicts of interest and communication difficulties between local people and visitors (Rızaoğlu, 2003:271). In terms of communication between visitors and local people, it can be said that the intercultural difference reached significantly but as a result of the social relations established by visitors and local people, it provided the opportunity for local people to learn the lifestyle of visitors and by means of this communication different cultural and social structure of societies knew themselves better and developed an international sensibility and common sense (Berber, 2003:210-212). In addition, researches showed significant differences between local people living in the touristic areas and non-touristic areas in terms of local peoples' aspect to tourism and tourists (Tayfun and Kılıçlar, 2004:1).

There are several scales used to assess the communication skills of individuals. One of them, CSAS-Communicational Skills Assessment Scale; has been developed by Korkut, and a 5-point Likert scale (Kılcıgil et.

al., 2009:22). This inventory has been applied to the participants during the communication skills training program for adults and it is revealed that the level of communication skills assessment participants have been increased (Korkut, 2005:143-149). As a result of a study to develop Communication Skills Assessment Scale by the method of factor analysis, a scale composed of 6 dimensions and 25 items was obtained and it is concluded that this scale can be used to get information and collect data (Karagöz and Kösterelioğlu, 2008:81-94).

There is also an inventory of communication skills developed by Balcı, the first version consisted of 70-item, then it was downloaded to 45 item by factor analysis (Gölönü and Karcı, 2010:129). The final version of the inventory provided by Balcı and Ersanlı in 1998 is a Likert-type, consists of 45 questions, and is used to measure communication skills in terms of mental, emotional, behavioral aspects (Ersanlı ve Balcı, 1998:11).

2. Method

The purpose of this study is determining the communication skills of local people living in Pamukkale destination, identifying the factors in which these skills occured and explaining importance levels of these factors. Questionaire technique was used as a method of data collection in the field research. After presenting a brief explanation on the front page of the questionnaire form, it was emphasized that the study was applied only for scientific purposes and especially the results would be kept strictly confidential. Questionnaire form consists of two main sections. Scientific reserach about the subject were studied firstly while creating the first part and Communication Skills Assessment Scale (CSAS) developed by Fidan Korkut was used. There are demographic questions about local people in the second part of the questionnaire. Demographic questions are placed at the end of the form. To learn the opinions of people included in the sampling, Likert Attitude Scale -commonly used in research based on quantitative data- was used in this study. Likert type scale items have options like 3, 5 or 7. Likert's quintet scale as the original format (Tezbaşaran, 1997) was preferred in this study. To determine the application areas of information technologies, participants were asked to mark each attitude statement according to the degree of their participation by giving the expressions like "very high, high, neither high nor low, low, very low". Questionaires were carried out face to face with local people living in Pamukkale destination. Primarily, a pre-test survey was conducted in Pamukkale destination. Questinaire was applied on people living in Pamukkale as residents. These data were analyzed in the statistics analysis software program SPSS 15.0. Factor analysis was used to determine communication skills of local people living in Pamukkale destination and to identify the factors in which these skills occured.

3. Findings and Discussion

Descriptive statistics derived from demographic data are displayed at Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Data

Demographic factors	N	(%)	Education status	N	(%)
Sex					
Female	32	25,2	Primary school	35	27,7
Male	91	74,8	Secondary school	31	24,4
Income status			High school	39	31,1
500 TRY or less	35	27,7	2 year university college	12	8,4
501-999 TRY	44	35,3	Bachelors degree	12	8,4
1000-1499 TRY	18	13,4			
1500-1999 TRY	12	8,4			
2000 TRY or more	20	15,1			

Demographic findings of respondents are given at Table 1 shows that 25, 2 % of them are female and 74, 8 % are male (32 females and 91 males). Regarding the education status of survey participants; 27, 8 % are graduated from primary school, 24, 4 % from secondary school, 31, 1 % from high school, 8, 4% from two year university college, and 8, 4% have diplomas as bachelors. As for income status of survey participants 27, 7% earns les then 500 Turkish Liras (TRY). 35, 3% of them have income between 501-999 TRY; and 13, 4% between 1000-1499

TRY. Those earning between 1500-1999 TRY constitute 8, 4%, and participants with 2000 TRY or more constitute 15, 1 % of the respondents.

As a test of reliability Cronbach Alpha score was sought and result was 0, 82. Since this score is over 0, 8 the reliability of the scale is considered to be high. In order to attain a more precise reliability data, to describe sound variables, and reduce the number of variables factor analysis was applied to the data set. Within the scope of this analysis Barlett test result was 2648,156 with p<, 001 level. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sample value figured as 0, 898 which is an acceptable level. During the factor analysis varimax option was used and only those data with eigen values over one (1) are chosen for analysis on the scree plot. Analysis of the eigenvalue dispersion on scree plot proved that after the sixth item data had become stable. After the analysis of eigenvalues based on relative values five factors came out of 40 variables with a total variance of 0, 5178. This variance is significant and within the acceptable limits. Results of factor analysis are given in Table 2.

Tablo 2: Results of Factor Analysis

Factors	Factor load	Eigenvalue	Percentage of Difference Explained
POSITIVE COMMUNICATION		6.290	14.628
When I talk with tourists I try give confort to them deliberately.	.515		
I pay attention whether tourists are open to suggestions or not.	.605		
I can create an effective eye contact when I talk with tourists.	.688		
I make empathy in order to understand feelings of tourists.	.513		
I can concentrate on tourists' centers of interest.	.540		
I consacrate adequate time to listen what tourists try to explain.	.601		
I feel understood by tourists that I communicated.	.630		
I use correct phrases during my conversation with tourists.	.688		
When I do not agree tourists I can still respect their opinions.	.597		
Trusting tourists make me happy.	.623		
I generally respect tourists' right to speak.	.749		
When tourists do not understand I respeak with new words.	.589		
I try to understand tourists.	.596		
I listen to the recommendations of tourists.	.659		
UNDERSTANDING AND BEING UNDERSTOOD		4.140	9.627
I can adjust my voice tone according to the topic in question.	.628		
I welcome each tourist with positive regards.	.419		
I try to understand the problem of tourist rather than his attitude.	.617		
I feel happy when tourists understand me.	.698		
When I talk with tourists I can take the initiative.	.650		
I can easily accept my wrong attitudes and behaviours.	.691		
I try to understand whether tourists are willing to listen or not.	.539		
I try to understand whether tourists are willing to talk or not.	.675		
NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION		4.014	9.336
I dislike tourists' criticism.	.622		
When tourists talk I get impatient and interrupt their speech.	.797		
When I listen to tourists I feel bored.	.801		
I can create abruptnesses that poison my relation with tourists during my conversation with them.	.809		
There are times I look at faces of tourists without listening them.	.535		
I judge tourists for their emotions that conflict my opinions.	.548		
I find it difficult to apologize to tourists.	.660		
COMMUNICATION ERRORS		3.030	7.046
I judge feelings of tourists that conflict my opinions.	.450		
I feel unease with someone from the opposite sex.	.707		
I think that I am not obliged to listen to tourists.	.769		
I think I am not interested with tourists.	.636		
I ask abrupt questions to tourists which are hard to answer.	.599		

AMELIORATION OF COMMUNICATION		2.830	6.582
At the end of the discussion I can accept that I am wrong.	.418		
I tell my critiques without hurting tourists.	.648		
I ask questions to tourists that I listen to so that I can understand better.	.461		
I make empathy and try to understand the opinions of tourists.	.552		

Positive communication factor described 14, 628 % of the variance. Understanding and being understood factor described 9,627 % of thevariance. Negative communication factor described 9,336 %, while amelioration of the ccommunication factor described 6,582 percent of the variance. Within the scope of positive communication factor following statements were regrouped: "I can concentrate on tourists' centers of interest", "I consacrate adequate time to listen what tourists try to explain", "I feel understood by tourists that I communicated", "I use correct phrases during my conversation with tourists", "When I do not agree tourists I can still respect their opinions", "Trusting tourists make me happy", "I generally respect tourists' right to speak", "When tourists do not understand I respeak with new words", "I try to understand tourists", "I listen to the recommendations of tourists". The factor " understanding and being understood" comprised the following statements: "I can adjust my voice tone according to the topic in question", "I welcome each tourist with positive regards", "I try to understand the problem of tourist rather than his attitude", "I feel happy when tourists understand me", "When I talk with tourists I can take the initiative", "I can easily accept my wrong attitudes and behaviours", I try to understand whether tourists are willing to listen or not", and "I try to understand whether tourists are willing to talk or not". The factor called "negative communication" included statements of: "I dislike tourists' criticism", "When tourists talk I get impatient and interrupt their speech", "When I listen to tourists I feel bored", "I can create abruptnesses that poison my relation with tourists during my conversation with them", "There are times I look at faces of tourists without listening them", "I judge tourists for their emotions that conflict my opinions", "I find it difficult to apologize to tourists". The fourth factor called "communication errors" regrouped the following items: "I judge feelings of tourists that conflict my opinions", "I feel unease with someone from the opposite sex", "I think that I am not obliged to listen to tourists", "I think I am not interested with tourists", and "I ask abrupt questions to tourists which are hard to answer". The fifth and last factor named "amelioration of communcation" included the items such as: "At the end of the discussion I can accept that I am wrong", "I tell my critiques without hurting tourists", "I ask questions to tourists that I listen to so that I can understand better", "I make empathy and try to understand the opinions of tourists".

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to probe communicational competencies of Pamukkale residents as regards to tourists. Relationships between demographic profile of the local population and their communicational competencies are tested. By doing so, this research aims to improve overall communication quality between residents and tourists in Pamukkale thanks to concrete recommendations. Survey method was followed and data were collected by questionnaires thanks to face-to-face interaction. Factor analysis was applied for data reduction and determines sound variables. Factor analysis with varimax option produced scree plot where data with eigenvalues of over one were accepted for analysis.

Variables were evaluated under the factor which had greater factor load and equal factor load amounts have been removed. Variables whose loading rates are less than 40 were kept out of the evaluation.

As the result of the factor analysis, it was found that; the difference percentage that positive communication factor defines is 14,628, the difference percentage that understanding and being understood factor defines is 9,627, the difference percentage that negative communication factor defines is 9,336, the difference percentage that communication errors factor defines is 7,046 and the difference percentage that amelioration of communication factor defines is 6,582.

Under the positive communication factor, there are 14 expressions including the positive attitudes and behaviour of local people about communicating with tourists. The expressions that compose positive communication factor are while talking with tourists, trying to give confort to them deliberately; paying attention whether tourists are open to suggestions or not; creating an effective eye contact when talking with tourists; making empathy in order to understand feelings of tourists; concentrating on tourists' centers of interest; consacrating adequate time to listen what tourists try to explain; feeling understood by tourists whom communicated; using correct phrases during the conversation with tourists; even if it is not agreed, respecting tourists' opinions; being happy by trusting tourists;

respecting tourists' right of speaking; when tourists do not understand repeating with new words and trying to understand tourists, listening to the recommendations of tourists.

There are 8 expressions under the understanding and being understood factor. The expressions that compose understanding and being understood factor are adjusting someone's voice tone according to the topic in question; welcoming each tourist with positive regards; trying to understand the problem of tourist rather than his/her attitude; feeling happy when understood by tourists; taking the initiative while talking with tourists; accepting someone's own wrong attitudes and behaviours easily; trying to understand whether tourists are willing to listen or not; trying to understand whether tourists are willing to talk or not.

There are 7 expressions under the negative communication factor. The expressions that compose negative communication factor are disliking tourists' criticism; getting impatient and interrupting tourists' speech while they are talking; feeling bored while listening to tourists, creating abruptnesses that poison the relation with tourists during the conversation with them; looking at the faces of tourists but without listening to them; judging tourists for their emotions that conflict someone's opinions; finding it difficult to apologize to tourists.

There are 5 expressions under the communication errors factor. The expressions that compose communication errors factor are judging the feelings of tourists that conflict someone's opinions; feeling unease with someone from the opposite gender; thinking that someone is not obliged to listen to tourists; thinking that someone is not interested with tourists; asking abrupt questions to tourists which are hard to answer.

There are 4 expressions under the amelioration of communication factor. The expressions that compose amelioration of communication factor are someones' acceptance that he/she is wrong at the end of the discussion; telling someone's critiques without hurting tourists; for better understanding asking questions to the tourists whom someone listened to; making empathy and trying to understand the opinions of tourists.

In this study -that was made for searching and determining the communication skills of local people living in Pamukkale destination and after identifying the effects of local people's demographic charecteristics on communication skills, putting forward suggestions to ameliorate the communication in terms of tourism and residents- factor analysis was applied and 40 variables were collected under 5 factors. First factor is positive communication, the second one is understanding and being understood, the third one is negative communication, the fourth one is communication errors and the fifth factor is amelioration of communication.

Explicating the factors mentioned before and expanding the research sample will be useful in terms of generalizing the results.

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