

THE PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN FAMILY HOTELS

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Abstract

A child-friendly tourism enterprise includes (1) physical facilities and services for children, and (2) employees' attitudes and behaviors that support children's development and happy holiday experience. In this study, we focus on the first pillar. This study aims to reveal the physical facilities and services for children in hotels that appeal to the family market. The information on the web pages of the top 24 family hotels that have been awarded in the family category by TripAdvisor, a world-renowned travel review site in 2020 was subjected to content analysis. Findings demonstrated that kids-related amenities in hotels are related to activity areas, activities, baby equipment, room options, kids tab on website, price options, food and beverage options, health and safety and room with toys. Based on the findings, suggestions were given to hotel businesses that appeal to the family market on issues that should be considered in child-related practices and marketing communications.

Keywords: Child Friendly, Family, Hotel

Jel Classification: M31, Z32, Z33

AİLE OTELLERİNDE ÇOCUKLARA YÖNELİK FİZİKSEL OLANAKLAR VE HİZMETLER

Öz

Çocuk dostu turizm işletmesi, (1) çocuklara yönelik fiziksel olanaklar ve hizmetler ile (2) çalışanların çocukların gelişimini ve mutlu bir tatil deneyimini destekleyen tutum ve davranışlarını içermektedir. Bu çalışma da, aile pazarına hitap eden otellerde çocuklara yönelik fiziksel olanak ve hizmetleri ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlanmaktadır. İkincil verilerden yararlanılan çalışmada, 2020 yılında dünyaca ünlü bir seyahat yorum sitesi olan TripAdvisor tarafından aile kategorisinde ödüle layık görülen ilk 24 aile otelinin web sayfalarındaki bilgiler içerik analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Bulgular, otellerde çocuklara yönelik olanakların aktivite alanları, aktiviteler, bebek ekipmanları, oda seçenekleri, web sitesindeki çocuklar sekmesi, fiyat seçenekleri, yiyecek ve içecek seçenekleri, sağlık-güvenlik ve oyuncaklı oda ile ilgili olduğunu göstermiştir. Elde edilen bulgulara dayalı olarak, aile pazarına hitap eden otel işletmelerine çocuklarla ilgili uygulamalarda ve pazarlama iletişimde dikkat edilmesi gereken hususlara ilişkin önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çocuk Dostu, Aile, Otel

Jel Sınıflaması: M31, Z32, Z33

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1. Introduction

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, individuals under the age of 18 are considered as children (the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund's [UNICEF], 1989). According to (UNICEF, 2019) statistics, the child population (2,330,774,000) makes up 30.54% of the total world population (7,631,091,040) in 2018. Additionally, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (2020), the child population (22,876,798) makes up 27.5% of the total population (83.154,997) in Turkey in 2018. Families traveling with children are recognized as an important part of the tourism industry worldwide and are estimated to account for more than a third of revenues in the travel industry (Ben Lahouel & Montargot, 2020: 1819). The rate of families with children in package tour sales has reached 35% and the number of accommodation enterprises describing themselves as "child-friendly" in the 2018 catalogs and on the sales sites have increased almost %300 compared to previous year in Turkey (Ahipaşaoğlu, 2018: 15).

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing demand for amenities for children, child care services and children's programs within the family travel market. Parents want, on the one hand, to enjoy joint family activities that they can participate with their children, and on the other hand, they want to enjoy their holidays while their children have fun with kids-related programs (Gaines et al., 2004: 86; Khoo-Lattimore, Prayag & Cheah, 2015: 523). On vacation, children want to participate in new, unique, challenging and fun activities (Gaines et al., 2004: 86). Accommodation businesses aiming to generate higher incomes by increasing their product diversity and market share gain a competitive advantage by providing the services needed by families with children (Tuna, Özyurt, & Kurt, 2019: 1). Facilities and services for children provide various benefits for the accommodation businesses such as improved guest satisfaction and experience, increased customer retention, improved corporate image and increased revenues (Gaines et al., 2004: 86; Liu & Filimonau, 2020: 6-7).

Today, many tourism businesses are trying to get a bigger share of the family travel market by marketing themselves as "child friendly". Child-friendly tourism businesses are defined as tourism enterprises that can meet the needs and demands of families with children and are preferred because of these features (Aymankuy & Ceylan, 2013: 264). Being a child-friendly enterprise requires two elements; (1) physical facilities and services for children, and (2) employees' attitudes and behaviors that support children's development and happy holiday experience (Özkan Buzlu & Atçı, 2020: 3343). In this study, we focus on the first pillar. The aim of this study is to reveal the physical facilities and services provided for children in hotels that appeal to the family market.

Although some tour operators have their own criteria for definition, the absence of legally binding standards required for a hotel to be considered a "child-friendly hotel" is seen as an important problem by some tourism scholars (Tuna et al., 2019:2; Güven, et al., 2017:633; Özel, 2013:242). It is stated that standards for being a child-friendly tourism business should be determined in order to ensure unity in practices in this regard in the world and in Turkey, necessary legal regulations should be made, and such facilities should be certified as 'child friendly' (similar to blue flag, green star) if they meet the criteria determined by the legislation (Özkan Buzlu & Atçı, 2020:3355; Ahipaşaoğlu, 2018:16; Güven, et al., 2017:633; Aymankuy and Ceylan, 2013:264).

The main focus and common emphasis of the 1st and 2nd International Child Friendly Tourism Congresses (25-28 April 2018; 24-27 April 2019) and the 3rd International Family, Youth and Child Friendly Tourism Congress (23-25 June 2020) was the necessity of determining the criteria for “Child Friendly Tourism Enterprise” (<https://fycft.beykoz.edu.tr>). However, more research is needed to determine the framework of child-friendly tourism, exemplary child-friendly tourism practices and the qualifications that child-friendly tourism businesses should have. Based on the issues mentioned above, this study, which reveals “exemplary” physical facilities and services for children in hotels that appeal to the family market, will provide important insights into the studies on determining child-friendly facility criteria.

2. Children and Tourism

Despite its increasing importance for families with children and tourism businesses, studies on children in tourism, tourism for children or child-friendly tourism are quite limited (İçöz, 2018: 33). However, the number of studies on this subject has started to increase in recent years. Studies on “tourism and children” or “child-friendly tourism” can be grouped under the following themes (Table 1); child/family friendliness in hospitality businesses, family travelers’ decision making, family holidays and functions, child rights violations and protection of child rights, children’s perceptions, experiences and dreams of tourism, child friendly tourism with societal and educational perspective and accessible tourism for children.

Table 1: Focused Themes in The Child/Family Friendly Tourism Studies

Themes	Specific Subjects	Sources
Child/family friendliness in hospitality businesses	child-friendly hotels	Ceylan, 2019; Tuna et al., 2019; Güven, Beydilli, Ceylan & Bütün, 2017
	complaints about child-friendly hotels	Aslan, Tosun & Kurtuluş, 2019
	facilities and activities for children in (child-friendly) hotels	Öztürk, Atasoy & Arıkan, 2018; Özel, 2013; Gaines et al., 2004
	the kids related products produced for hotel enterprises	Kahvecioğlu & Topaloğlu, 2018
	examination of food served to children in accommodation businesses in terms of health	Şeker & Keleş, 2019
	service quality in family hotels	Yılmaz, 2007
	non-child friendly behaviors of employees in hospitality industry	Özkan Buzlu & Atçı, 2020
	creating memorable experiences for children in hotels	Ben Lahouel & Montargot, 2020
	opportunities and challenges related to childcare services in hotels	Liu & Filimonau, 2020
	the experiences of parents and careers with children in hospitality businesses	Lugosi, Robinson, Golubovskaya & Foley, 2016
Family travelers’ decision making	the practices in resort mini clubs	Seraphin & Yallop, 2020
	kid-friendly hotels’ marketing practices	Özel, 2015
	factors affecting restaurant choice for families with children	Aşık, 2019
	choice process and vacation needs of parents	Khoo-Lattimore, Prayag & Cheah, 2015
	accommodation constraints, vacation needs and preferences of parents	Khoo-Lattimore, delChiappa & Yang, 2018

	factors affecting hotel choice of families with children	Emir & Pekyaman, 2010
	the role of children in families' holiday purchasing decision process	Aymankuy & Ceylan, 2013
	family travelers' decision making	Kang et al., 2003
Family holidays and functions	functions of family holidays	Fu, Lehto & Park, 2014
	family holiday activities and family interaction	Lehto, Lin, Chen & Choi, 2012; Lehto, Choi, Lin & MacDermid, 2009
Child rights violations and protection of child rights	exploitation and abuse of children in tourism	İçöz, 2018; Şeker & Şeker, 2018
	protection of child rights in the tourism sector	Schierkolk, 2019
	child labor in tourism destinations	Yang, Yang & Khoo-Lattimore, 2020
Children's perceptions, experiences and dreams of tourism	children's cruise experiences	Radic, 2019
	children's family tourism experiences	Wu, Wall, Zu & Ying, 2019
	children's travel dreams	Demirdelen et al., 2019
	children's perceptions of tourism	Ertaş, Ghasemi & Kuhzady, 2021
Child friendly tourism	relationship between child friendly society and child friendly tourism	Taner, 2019
	child-friendly tourism education	Meremikwu, Ekwueme & Odigwe 2013
Accessible tourism for children	hospitality customer experiences of families with children on the autism spectrum disorder	Freund et al., 2019
	disabled children in tourism	İçöz, 2019

Studies on children in the field of tourism, on the one hand, reveal the sad reality of violations of children's rights in the tourism sector, on the other hand, focus on issues that can contribute to a happy and safe holiday experience for children. A happy holiday, which can contribute to children's mental health, learning and developing positive relationships with their environment, is also important in terms of contributing to the happiness of the society (Ahipaşaoğlu, 2018: 14).

3. Child-friendly tourism service

When it comes to presenting a child friendly tourism service it is usually understood that some physical organisations or practices aimed to children (crib, kiddy pool, kids' menus, mini club, etc.) are involved. In fact; apart from these, being child friendly includes establishing safe, warm and affectionate environments which enables them to experience a happy tourism without any problems by supporting their learning and development, and in which children can freely express themselves and get respect (Güven, vd. 2017: 634).

The majority of child-related services in hotels were initially developed 15 to 20 years ago (Gaines et al., 2004: 87). Öztürk et al., (2018) investigated the recreational activities and facilities provided to children in child-friendly hotels in Antalya.

They revealed that the hotels offer facilities and activities such as children's reception, mini amphitheater, children's pools, aqua-park, aqua-disco, amusement park, children's restaurant, ice cream service, outdoor playground, mini club personnel trained in childcare, children's mini club, kettle in the room, solid food service suitable for babies, entertainment and activities for children, baby bathtub, bottle sterilization opportunity in the main restaurant, sleeping rooms, strollers, 24-hour hot milk, baby food, animations throughout the day, playground, cinema, mini fitness, banana boat tour, game rooms, mini playback show, pool games, share show, dance lessons, hobby club, horse riding, magician show, bowling tournament, kite days, darts tournament, face painting, mini kitchen, mini golf tournament, origami, morning gymnastics, basketball, talent show, football, pirate games, plaster mask making, cake-cookie making activities, costume design workshop, ballet training, environmental and recycling activities, children's disco, science workshop, golf and tennis lessons, competitions, volleyball, horse farm (Öztürk et al., 2018: 11-12).

Gaines et al. (2004) analyzed the children's programs in hotels in the United States and revealed that hotels offer several amenities for children such as crib, safety netting, first-aid kit, playpen, childproof kit, stroller. Additionally, it is indicated that there were many indoor and outdoor activities such as tennis, croquet, story-telling, swimming, computer activities, hula lessons, etiquette classes, volleyball, biking, nature trails, playgrounds, lawn games, scavenger hunts, arts and crafts in hotels (Gaines et al., 2004: 96-97).

Özel (2013) assessed the facilities and services of 77 kid-friendly hotels in Turkey through the examination of web sites. In the study, facilities and services offered in kid-friendly hotels has been grouped into five main categories: "room options for children", "food and beverage options for children", "activities for children", "price options" and "children's health and safety". It has been revealed that the kid-friendly hotels provided facilities and services such as room furnishers suitable for families with children, special welcome for children, decoration materials appealing to children, mini club and several activities under the sub-categories of entertainment, sports, classes and workshops, swimming and sunbathing, handicraft skills, computer games and electronic toys (Özel, 2013: 244). In another investigation aiming to determine the priorities of kid-friendly hotels' marketing practices, it has been revealed that the practices in order of importance were children's health and safety, price options for children, activities for children, food and beverage options for children and room options for children (Özel, 2015). According to the findings of the study, the most important practice about children's health and safety was doctor and nursing services and this was followed by the pedagogically trained mini club staff, antibacterial floor in mini club, camera system in mini club and babysitting service. Large family room was the most important practice within room options for children, which is followed by baby cot and child reception. Section devoted to children in the main restaurant and child buffet in the main restaurant were two important practices within food and beverage options for children. Outdoor swimming pool was the most important practice within the activities for children. Age segmentation in mini club, animation shows for children and mind developing games were the other important practices. Free accommodation for children was the most important practice within the price options for children category (Özel, 2015: 9).

4. Method

This study in which the physical facilities and services provided for children in hotels that appeal to the family market are revealed is a descriptive study in terms of purpose (Ural & Kılıç, 2013: 18-19). In this study, carried out based on qualitative study approach (Rubin & Babbie, 2008), secondary data were used. Data was collected between 23 March and 9 May 2021. The web pages of the top 25 hotels that had been awarded in the family category by TripAdvisor, a world-renowned travel review site in 2020 were examined. The content on the website of one of the hotels (All Inclusive VilaVip Hotel Fazenda, Brasil) could not be accessed because it was closed due to the pandemic (www.hotelfazendaserranegra.com.br/). Information about facilities and services for children on the websites of 24 hotels (Table 2) were subjected to content analysis. In content analysis, it is tried to reach a conclusion by looking at the content of written texts, images or discourses, and by looking at which concepts, events or thoughts are emphasized the most or least (Kozak, 2014: 138).

Table 2: Sampled Award-Winning Hotels

	Name of the Hotel*	Country	Website
1	Max Royal Kemer Resort	Turkey	https://www.maxxroyal.com/
2	Padma Hotel Bandung	Indonesia	https://www.padmahotelbandung.com/
3	Welcomhotel The Savoy	India	https://www.itchotels.com/in/en/welcomhotelthesavoy-mussoorie
4	Club Family Hotel Riccione	Italy	https://www.clubfamilyhotelriccione.com/
5	Albatros Aqua Park Sharm	Egypt	https://www.pickalbatros.com/
6	Tulemar Resort	Costa Rica	https://www.tulemarresort.com/
7	Chandys Windy Woods	India	https://www.chandyswindywoods.com/
8	Potidea Palace Hotel	Greece	https://www.potidea-palace.com/
9	Max Royal Belek Golf Resort	Turkey	https://www.maxxroyal.com/
10	Cavalino Bianco Family Spa Grand Hotel	Italy	https://www.cavallino-bianco.com/en/family-holidays-italy/1-0.html
11	Vinpearl Resort & Golf Nam Hoi An	Vietnam	https://vinpearl.com/vi/hotels/vinpearl-resort-golf-nam-hoi-an
12	Parto Sani	Greece	https://sani-resort.com/our-hotels/porto-sani
13	U Coral Beach Club Eilat Ultra All Inclusive	Israel	https://www.fattal-hotels.com/hotels_in_israel/eilat_hotels
14	HD Parque Cristobal Tenerife	Spain	https://www.hdhotels.com/es/hd-parque-cristobal-tenerife/
15	Rocking Horse Ranch Resort	USA	https://www.rockinghorseranch.com/
16	The Papandayan	Indonesia	https://thepapandayan.com/
17	Tui Magic Life Skanes	Tunisia	https://tuimagiclifeskane.com-tunisia.com/en/
18	Recanto Alvorada Eco Resort	Brasil	https://www.recantoalvorada.com.br/
19	The Grand Bliss at Vidanta Nuevo Vallarta	Mexico	https://www.vidanta.com/web/nuevo-vallarta/the-grand-bliss
20	Club Med Sahoro Hokkaido	Japan	https://www.clubmed.com.tr/saoc
21	Just Sleep Hualien Zhongzheng	Taiwan	https://www.justsleep.com.tw/hualien/en
22	Serenity Fun City	Egypt	http://www.serenityhotelsegypt.com/de/hotel/serenity-fun-city

Name of the Hotel*	Country	Website
23 Isrotel Lagoon	Israel	http://www.isrotel.co.il/
24 Club Med Ixtapa Pacific	Mexico	https://www.clubmed.com.tr/r/ixtapa-pasifik/y

* Tripadvisor, Top 25 Family Hotels, (<https://www.tripadvisor.com.tr/TravelersChoice-Hotels-cFamily>, d.a. 21.03.2021), made by authors.

In this study, frequency analysis has been carried out among the types of content analysis. Frequency analysis reveals the frequency of countable units (for example, concepts) in numerical and percentage manner (Bilgin, 2014:18). Relevant information about physical facilities and services for children on the web pages was examined and codes were determined according to the content of the data (for example; bottle warmer, changing mat etc. was coded as “baby equipment”) based on the consultation between the researchers. In addition, Ozel's (2013) research findings were taken into account in naming some of the codes (room options for children, food and beverage options for children, activities for children, price options and children's health and safety). The generated codes are listed and crosstabs are created in Microsoft Excel where the frequencies and percentages of each code are calculated with the corresponding sum and percentage formulas.

It is seen that some studies in the literature examine the facilities and services in child-friendly hotels (Özel, 2013; Öztürk et al., 2018). However, in this study, award-winning family hotels were deliberately chosen to be examined instead of child-friendly hotels. This is because, currently, there are no legally binding standards (criteria) required for a hotel to be considered a "child-friendly hotel". This situation leads to different practices under the name of child-friendly enterprise in hotels, and it can be seen that some facilities introduce themselves as child-friendly hotels even based on child discounts (Güven et al., 2017: 637). Additionally, it is thought that the facilities and services in award-winning family hotels can provide different expansions than previous studies in terms of child-friendly tourism literature. The findings obtained are presented under the following heading.

5. Results

Among the sampling hotels, 41% (n=10) are five star hotels, 38% (n=9) are 4 star hotels and the rest (21%, n=5) are 3 star hotels. Findings related to the physical amenities and services provided for children in hotels (N=24) are summarized in the table below (table 3).

Table 3: The Physical Amenities and Services Provided for Children in Hotels

Generated Codes	n _i	% (N=24)*
Activity Areas for Children (activity areas divided by age groups, children swimming pool/aquapark, fun fair, mini disco etc.)	18	75,00
Activities for Children (family activities and children activities)	16	66,67
Baby Equipment (baby cot, changing mat, bottle warmer, bath seats etc.)	12	50,00
Baby-Care Services	11	45,83
Room Options (rooms with bunk bed, connected family rooms, child's washbasin, kids tent in room)	11	45,83
Kids Tab on Website	11	45,83
Price Options (child discount)	9	37,50
Food and Beverage Options for Children (Kid's menu, kids' restaurant, baby corner)	8	33,33

Generated Codes	n _i	% (N=24)*
Health and Safety (lifeguard, kid's doctor, bathroom with double access, bed guards)	6	25,00
Room with toys (car, doll house, etc.)	2	8,33

*N= Total number of the hotels

The two most frequently mentioned content on websites appear as 'activity areas for children' and 'activities for children'. Activity areas for children includes swimming pools, playgrounds, fun fair, mini disco, game room, aqua-park, sleeping room, theme park, laser tag. According to the findings of the present study, it was determined that 18 of the 24 hotels included in the study had special activity areas for children. However, it has been observed that the activity areas are separated according to age groups in some hotels (table 4).

Table 4: Grouped Activity Areas

Age Groups	Activity Areas	n _i	% (N=24)*
0 – 3	nap room, soft playground, gym area, paddling pool, room with the animals decorating the walls	11	45,83
4 – 7	sports area, theatre, swimming pool	10	41,67
8 – 12	mini disco, activity room	9	37,50
13 – 17	game room with options such as play-station, pinball, billiards, laser tag, DJ courses	7	29,17

*N= Total number of the hotels

Designated activity areas for each age group are nap room, soft playground, gym area, paddling pool, room with the animals decorating the walls for 0-3 age groups; sports area, theatre, swimming pool for 4-7 age group; mini disco, activity room for 8-12 age group and game room with options such as play-station, pinball, billiards, laser tag, DJ courses for 13-17 age group.

It has been observed that the hotels offer special activities for children, as well as activities that the whole family can participate in. Family-oriented activities can contribute to family cohesion by increasing the positive interactions among family members on vacation (Lehto, et al., 2012: 845). Additionally, family oriented activity programs which can encourage parent-child interactions are one of the important aspects that families seek from hotels (Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2015: 523). For this reason, children-oriented and family-oriented activities in hotels are grouped separately and shown in Table 5 in two categories. Educational activities for families such as cooking class (snacks, pancake parties, baking workshops), art class (local crafts, painting) petting zoo, fishing, family contests (sports tournaments, treasure hunts, puzzles, sand and castle competitions, skill and logic games), family water fun, sailing, trekking prepared only for families are considered as "family-oriented activities". Children-oriented activities are special events, baby gym, early learning, baby walks, birthday parties, mural paintings, musical and artistic activities, educational games, sport lessons such as tennis and swimming, cooking class, child theatre (which kids play apart), contests, crafts, tour organizations, club events, online games designed by the hotel, toy blocks, treasure hunts, and trips.

Table 5: Kinds of Activities

	Activities	n_i	% (N=24)
Children-oriented	special events, baby gym, early learning, baby walks, birthday parties, mural paintings, musical and artistic activities, educational games, sport lessons such as tennis and swimming, cooking class, child theatre (which kids play apart), contests, crafts, tour organizations, club events, online games designed by the hotel, toy blocks, treasure hunts, and trips	16	67
Family-oriented	Educational activities for families such as cooking class (snacks, pancake parties, baking workshops), art class (local crafts, painting) petting zoo, fishing, family contests (sports tournaments, treasure hunts, puzzles, sand and castle competitions, skill and logic games), family water fun, sailing, trekking	5	21

After the activities and activity areas for children, the most frequently mentioned content on the websites is baby equipment (n=12, 50%). Equipment such as baby cot, changing mat, bottle warmer, bath seats, bedding and hangers, bottle sterilizer, buggies, strollers, thermometers, audio/video monitors, highchairs, cot mosquito net, potty chair, toilet seat, baby toiletries etc. are included in the scope of baby equipment. It has been observed that baby-care services (n=11, 45,83%), room options (n=11, 45,83%), and kid's tab on website (n=11, 45,83%) are repetitive to the same degree. Baby-care services are important because it provides special times to parents. Room options contains bunk beds for kids, connected family rooms, child's washbasin, and the most interesting is the room tent service for children. Web site tab for kids are important as it helps parents easily find about hotel amenities related to children. Otherwise, this information can be viewed at the room preferences tab in the absence of this tab, but it contains much less information. In addition, aspects such as price options (n=9, 37%), food and beverage options (n=8, 33%), and health and safety (n=6, 25%) have less frequency ratings. Food and beverage options contains kids restaurant, kids buffet and baby corner (baby food and preparing equipment, bottle warmer, sterilizer, etc.). It was observed that two hotels in the sample supply toys to the rooms or had family rooms containing toys such as doll house, toy cars road mat/equipment, etc. Health and safety indicators are child doctor, 24-hour medical support, soft playground for babies and toddlers, nursing room, safe environment, and bathroom with double access.

We could not find any child-related information on the websites of three of the hotels. Additionally, as a child related information, one of the 24 hotels only has 50% child discount information on its website.

6. Conclusion

This research was conducted to identify and analyze the physical amenities and services provided for children in hotels that appeal to the family market. According to the results of the research, it is an important element that there is kid's tab on website that will allow parents to easily access the information about hotel amenities related to children.

In addition to this, organizing the activity areas according to age groups will not only satisfy the needs of children of different age groups, but also help to provide a safer environment especially for children in younger age groups. Additionally, activity areas and activities should be presented under separated headings on their web sites by hotels.

As family activities supports child development (Axelsson & Wilder, 2014) and have a positive effect on the holiday experience by increasing the parent-child interaction that families need during the holiday (Lehto, et al., 2012; Khoo-Lattimore, et al., 2015), the inclusion of family activities in hotels can be an important element towards becoming a child-friendly (or family-friendly) hotel. Baby equipment such as baby cot, changing mat, toilet bowl, bottle warmer, thermometer, sterilizer, feeding chair are other important facilities that hotels should offer to families with children. However, the fact that the best rated hotels do not touch on the price possibilities can be interpreted as families paying more attention to experience than price. This finding shows that child discounts are not a sufficient factor to attract families with children and that hotels that appeal to families with children should definitely try to strengthen their service facilities for children.

One of the interesting results is that, although health and safety aspects of children are one of the most important issues for families with children in their choice of accommodation businesses (Khoo-Lattimore, et al., 2018; Khoo-Lattimore, et al., 2015; Emir & Pekyaman, 2010), very few of the web pages of hotels contain information on this subject. It is recommended that hotels appealing to families with children should have the necessary facilities regarding child health and safety, and should include explanations on this issue on their web pages. Although welcome baby or children's reception are an important experience that makes children feel special (Lahouel & Montargot, 2020), it has been observed that very few of the hotels we have reviewed indicate this on their website. This is another important point that hotels should pay attention to.

This study, which was carried out by sampling 24 top-rated hotels that appeal to the family market in 16 different countries from 5 continents, provides some additional insights into child-friendly hotel practices beyond supporting the findings of previous studies investigating programs and amenities for children at hotels in specific destinations; namely in Antalya (Öztürk et al., 2018), in Turkey (Özel, 2013) and in the United States of America (Gaines et al., 2004). The information gathered in this study is expected to benefit the accommodation businesses appealing to family travel segment by increasing the awareness of child friendly practices. Additionally, the study offers various suggestions that can guide businesses in their decisions regarding child-friendly practices and marketing communications. This study, which reveals "exemplary" physical facilities and services for children in award-winning hotels that appeal to the family market, will also shed light on the studies on determining child-friendly facility criteria.

The fact that the data is limited to the relevant information on the websites of the hotels and that the reviewed accommodation businesses consist of only 24 hotels that have been awarded in the family category by TripAdvisor should be considered as important limitations of the study. Since the data is limited to the information presented on the web pages of the hotels, the analyzes in the study were carried out at a descriptive level.

Although the sampled hotels were from 16 different countries, no local differences were observed in terms of physical facilities and services for children. In future research, the physical facilities and services provided for children in different tourism establishments can be researched by using different data gathering techniques.

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