

## **Research Article**

### **Crisis Management Strategies in the Hospitality Sector: A Case of Türkiye**

*Konaklama Sektöründe Kriz Yönetim Stratejileri: Türkiye Örneği*

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#### ***Abstract***

*The tourism sector plays a vital role in enhancing the economies of nations by creating jobs, attracting foreign travellers and increasing total income. However, the sector is vulnerable to crises such as conflicts, terrorism, natural disasters, and other unfavourable events. This research focused on hotel managers in Türkiye working in hotels that are classified by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as 1-, 2-, 3-, 4-, or 5-star hotels and hold either a tourism operating certificate or a tourism investment certificate. The study was undertaken by collecting data from the managers of hotels in different cities of Türkiye, such as Ankara, Antalya, Istanbul, Izmir and Nevşehir. The primary data were collected from 415 hotel managers or owners.*

*In this study, the impact of pre-crisis measures on the crisis forecasting and crisis management process is evaluated, and the outcomes of the crisis forecasting and management process in the Turkish hospitality sector are examined. The most recent crisis for the Turkish hospitality industry is considered the COVID-19 crisis. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis and other crises on Turkish tourism and the approaches of hotel managers before, during and after the pandemic were analysed. Hotel managers' perspectives on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Turkish tourism sector and the strategies implemented against the effects of the pandemic were evaluated. In terms of preparation and planning for possible crises, it was observed that a significant number of hotels exhibited a high level of effectiveness and preparedness in controlling and mitigating the crisis. Action plans developed and implemented in sales, marketing fields and savings measures to prevent potential crises.*

**Keywords:** Hospitality Sector, Crisis Management, Tourism, Management, COVID-19 Pandemics

#### ***Öz***

*Turizm sektörü büyümeye etkisi, istihdamı artırması, yabancı turistlerin gelişini teşvik etmesi ve toplam geliri artırması gibi nedenlerle ekonomilere büyük katkı sağlamaktadır. Ancak sektör, krizlere, çatışmalara, terörizme, doğal afetlere ve diğer olumsuz durumlara karşı hassastır. Bu araştırma Türkiye’de faaliyet gösteren ve Turizm Bakanlığı tarafından 1, 2, 3, 4 ve 5 yıldızlı olarak sınıflanmış turizm yatırım ya da işletme belgesine sahip otellere odaklanmış, veriler Ankara, Antalya, İstanbul, İzmir ve Nevşehir gibi çeşitli şehirlerde bulunan otel yöneticilerinden alınmıştır. Araştırmaya toplam 415 otel yöneticisi katılmıştır.*

*Bu çalışmada kriz öncesi tedbirler, krizlerin tahmini ve kriz yönetimi süreçlerinin konaklama sektörü üzerindeki etkisi değerlendirilmekte, bu süreçlere bağlı olarak Türk konaklama sektöründe krizlerin etkisini azaltmak amacıyla yapılan çalışmalardan elde edilen sonuçlar incelenmektedir. Türk konaklama sektöründe en büyük etkiye sahip olan en son kriz COVID-19 krizidir. COVID-19 krizinin ve diğer krizlerin Türk turizmine etkisi ve otel yöneticilerinin pandemi öncesinde, esnasında ve sonrasındaki yaklaşımları incelenmiştir. Otel yöneticilerinin*

#### **Önerilen Atıf /Suggested Citation**

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*COVID-19 salgınının Türk turizm sektörü üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin bakış açıları ve salgının etkilerine karşı uygulanan stratejileri değerlendirilmiştir. Olası krizlere karşı yapılan hazırlık ve planlama çalışmalarına bakıldığında, otellerin önemli bir kısmının krizi kontrol altına alma ve azaltma konusunda ileri düzeyde etkinlik ve hazırlık sergilediği görülmüştür. Potansiyel krizlere karşı eylem planları geliştirmek ve uygulamak amacıyla ekipler oluşturulmuş ve satış, pazarlama ve tasarruflar konusunda çalışmalar yapılmıştır.*

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Konaklama Sektörü, Kriz Yönetimi, Turizm, Yönetim, COVID 19 Pandemi

## 1. Introduction

Tourism has significant importance for the economies of many countries. The concept comprises a wide range of elements, including behaviours, actions, segments, or subjects that are linked with humans travelling to various countries and regions. The increase in the number of travellers provides evidence in favour of this topic. Tourists are commonly referred to as those who temporarily move from their place of residence to another city or country for the reasons of visit, business, recreation etc. Tourists have different motivations for travelling regardless of the geographical proximity to their place of residence (Camilleri 2018, p 4). The tourism industry plays a significant role in strengthening the economic conditions of nations by generating substantial cash and employment opportunities. The growing importance of global tourism has led to a rise in the number of significant contributors. (Coathup 1999, p 69). With the growing number of foreign travellers, governments are increasingly tending to enhance their participation in the tourism industry. Based on the statistical data provided by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), there was a global rise of 4% in international visitor arrivals in 2019, resulting in a total of 1.5 billion tourists before the beginning of the pandemic. Nevertheless, the tourism sector exhibits significant susceptibility to many crises, including but not limited to conflicts, acts of terrorism, natural disasters, and other unfavourable occurrences. According to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer (2021), there was a significant decrease of 72.8% in international tourist arrivals in 2020, which can be attributed to the global impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The global community has seen significant impacts due to the breakout of COVID-19, particularly in 2020, originating from China. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation officially classified the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic. The ongoing pandemic and the implementation of various measures aimed at mitigating the transmission of COVID-19 have led to a decline in economic conditions and a significant negative impact on the tourism sector. Travel restrictions, border closures, and alterations in tourist travel patterns have significantly limited the ability to travel to other places (Liew 2020, p 110).

The COVID-19 pandemic had distinct characteristics in comparison to previous disasters. In just three months following the global registration of initial case identifications, the prevailing uncertainty prompted the implementation of lockdowns and stringent social distancing measures worldwide. Consequently, individuals experienced isolation and a reduction in social interactions, necessitating alterations in daily routines such as remote work, online learning, and virtual gatherings. These changes have contributed to a rise in mental health concerns, including anxiety, stress, and depression, attributable to the prevailing uncertainty and social isolation (Uğur & Akbıyık 2020, p2). Conversely, the tourism industry experienced a severe downturn due to the imposition of travel limitations, border closures, and reduced global mobility. This resulted in a substantial decrease in tourist activity, adversely impacting various sectors such as airlines, hotels, restaurants, and local economies that heavily rely on tourism-generated income. Additionally, the postponement or cancellation of events, conferences, and prominent sporting competitions further exacerbated the negative effects on the industry.

The objective of this study is to examine the effects of COVID-19 and other crises on the Turkish tourism industry, while also exploring the measures implemented by hotels in addressing these challenges before, during, and after the pandemic. Furthermore, this research will examine the actions implemented against the COVID-19 pandemic and investigate the views of managers or owners in the hospitality sector of Türkiye.

The current study has been divided into six sections. The first section of this paper comprises an introduction while the subsequent section consist of a literature review. The third section defines the methodology employed in the research. The fourth section of the paper focuses on the findings obtained from hotel managers in Türkiye. The fifth section of the study will involve an evaluation of the research findings with the existing literature, while the sixth section will be the conclusion.

## 2. Literature Review

Over the last two decades, the global tourism and hotel industries have been significantly affected by a series of virus epidemics that have emerged from different regions, including Asia, America, and Africa. Outbreaks such as severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS; 2002), Swine Flu (H1N1; 2009), the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-Coronavirus (MERS-CoV; 2012) and Corona Virus (COVID-19) have had a substantial impact on global tourism and the economic situations of affected nations (Abdelrahman, Z et al., 2020, p 1-2; Kuo. at all., 2008, p 917-918; Liew, 2020, p 110).

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) initially appeared in March 2003, resulting in the infection of 8,096 individuals, with a mortality rate of 774. The rapid transmission of this disease led to widespread global anxiety. The phenomenon exhibited a quick rate of spreading, reaching a total of 28 countries. The country most significantly impacted by the disease was the People's Republic of China. In addition to China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Canada, Singapore, and Vietnam have also seen significant impacts from the SARS outbreak (Cooper, M. 2005, p119). The tourism industry, widely recognised as a significant participant in the global economy, experienced a severe downturn in the wake of the SARS outbreak. The beginning of fear and panic has had detrimental effects on both local and international travel. In regions of Asia where there was a significant dependence on tourism, the decrease in the number of tourists has resulted in significant financial losses and a notable reduction in employment opportunities. Following the beginning of the epidemic, there was a notable decrease of 9% in the number of arrivals to Asia and the Pacific region, as compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The hotels in Beijing have experienced a significant decline in the number of visitors, resulting in a decrease in occupancy rates to as low as 10% (Wilks et al. 2006, p 55). The outbreaks hurt Asia and the global landscape, as they resulted in significant changes in travel patterns and exerted influence on global tourism trends. It is important to mention that the effects of these outbreaks extended beyond the tourism industry. Various travel-related industries saw a significant downturn in their financial performance, resulting in a severe crisis. The restricted cross-border movements had a severe impact on supply networks, resulting in substantial decreases in trade volumes. As a result, multiple industries experienced adverse consequences, leading to a global slowing of economic growth (Mao et al., 2010, p 856; Lee and McKibben, 2004a, p 93). The crisis had a huge impact on China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan, leading to substantial employment losses in these countries. According to the World Health Organisation, the Asian region incurred an economic cost of approximately \$30 billion as a result of the SARS outbreak (Caballero 2005, p 482). Furthermore, it is worth noting that these economies collectively encountered a reduction in their Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Specifically, Hong Kong had a fall of 2.63 per cent of its GDP, China experienced a decline of 1.05 per cent, Taiwan experienced a decline of 0.49 per cent, and Singapore experienced a decline of 0.47 per cent (Lee and McKibben 2004b, p 123).

The first occurrence of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in March 2003 and the H5N1 avian influenza in December 2003 provoked widespread panic on a global scale because of the possibility of human-to-human transmission via close contact. The virus exhibited a wide geographical distribution, affecting many nations including Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, China, and Türkiye (McAleer et al., 2010, p 102). The countries that have been impacted by this influenza outbreak have observed a reduction in tourist arrivals and a loss in their tourism competitiveness. Brahmabhatt (2005) points out that the economic consequences of H1N1 extend beyond the direct impacts of illness and mortality, including the potential effects arising from the pervasive anxiety around the rapid transmission of the virus. The anxiety about avian flu had the potential to lead to a decrease in the level of global travel (Page et al., 2006, p 375). Furthermore, Kuo et al. (2009) stressed that Avian Flu hurt destination marketing activities. Furthermore, empirical evidence suggested that the Avian Flu epidemic in Vietnam in 2004 potentially resulted in a GDP reduction of approximately 1.8% (Kuo et al., 2009, p 4). An estimation was made indicating that the potential outcome of this situation might lead to a global loss of approximately US \$800 billion. This amount is equivalent to approximately 2% of the total global economic production (McAleer et al., 2010, p 101).

The emergence of Swine Flu may be traced back to its initial outbreak in Mexico in March 2009, followed by further transmission to neighbouring countries in the same continent. Following the initial outbreak in the Americas, the Swine Flu subsequently spread to other nations, resulting in a notable decline in travel activity (Page et al., 2012, p 143). According to Page et al. (2012), the H1N1 pandemic had a substantial effect on the tourism business of the United Kingdom, particularly the demand for inbound tourism from nations such as Russia, Spain, Mainland China, and South Korea. Page et al. (2012) also emphasised the potential consequences of Avian Flu on the tourism sector, suggesting that it could lead to a more significant crisis of confidence in travel when compared to diseases such as SARS. Olive Research (2009) pointed out that there would be a decrease in tourist arrivals to the United Kingdom from the United States, Ireland and Spain because of the economic downturn. The H1N1 virus was seen to have spread to a total of 40 nations, with the highest number of reported cases occurring in the United States, Mexico, and Canada (Monterrubio, 2010, p 7).

The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreak mostly impacted the Republic of Korea. Joo et al. (2019) found out that the outbreak of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in the Republic of Korea in 2015 resulted in an approximate loss of \$2.6 billion in tourism income. This loss accounted for 0.2% of the country's Gross Domestic Product in 2015. Shi and Li (2017) explored the effects of the MERS outbreak on tourist arrivals in South Korea. The researchers discovered that the outbreak had a noticeable impact on the number of tourists arriving from China, although the arrival of business travellers saw a comparatively smaller degree of disruption. The tourism business in South Korea was impacted by the MERS outbreak, which had impacts on several sectors such as accommodation, food and beverage, and transportation (Joo et al., 2019, p 3).

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged in Wuhan, China, and rapidly disseminated globally towards the end of December 2019. The World Health Organisation (WHO) officially declared the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as a pandemic on 30 January 2020. The global pandemic had a widespread impact on nearly all nations, prompting the implementation of strict measures aimed at controlling the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. These efforts included the enforcement of lockdowns, imposition of flying bans, and restrictions on travel (Suleiman et al. 2021, p 51). Abdelrahman, Z et al. (2020) indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic exhibits similarities in its inception to earlier crises, although its impact diverges significantly from previous epidemics such as SARS, H1N1, H5N1, and MERS. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in 2023, the global impact of the epidemic has been significant, particularly in nations such as the United States, India, France, Germany, and Brazil.

Sigala (2020) pointed out in his research that a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic consists of three main subjects namely, demand for tourism, tourism operators and destinations and policy makers. The global pandemic has caused significant disruptions and posed health hazards for individuals who engage in travel, leading to notable shifts in their attitudes, intentions, and anticipated future behaviour. Moreover, as a consequence of the implementation of lockdown measures, individuals have progressively become more dependent on digital platforms to make purchases, avail themselves of food delivery services, and seek amusement. Sigala (2020) also emphasised the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment in the tourism industry. The availability of internship possibilities for students and graduates in the field of tourism has significantly declined, leading to a state of anxiety over future employment prospects. Educational institutions that provide courses in tourism and hospitality have encountered a decrease in government support and a reduction in student enrolment. The impact of COVID-19 differs from that of previous epidemics such as SARS and H1N1. The development of novel frameworks is necessary to appropriately evaluate the impacts of pandemics. The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak has exerted a notable influence on the integration of capital markets in Asian countries. Similarly, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has also yielded comparable consequences in this regard. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been characterised by more stringent and comprehensive measures in comparison to previous outbreaks (Škare et al., 2021, p 2). In a recent study conducted by Nian et al. (2020), a dynamic stochastic general equilibrium (DSGE) framework was utilised to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry. The findings of the study revealed an obvious decline in tourism activity, which was attributed to an increased health risk.

The peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation sector, such as Airbnb and Booking.com, has attempted to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic through several strategies. Farmaki et. al. (2020) examined the experiences of hosts in the peer-to-peer hospitality industries, such as Airbnb and Booking.com. The results suggest that the hosts have experienced both short-term and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as financial losses and the cancellation of appointments. Certain hosts have decided to discontinue their involvement in the hospitality industry and instead shift towards long-term rental arrangements as a means of recuperating their financial gains.

Based on the World Bank's report in 2023, it is indicated that the Turkish economy attained a total value of \$906 billion during the same year. Furthermore, the per capita GDP for Türkiye was recorded at \$9,626. In light of its \$906 billion GDP, Türkiye currently holds the position of the 19th-largest economy globally (World Bank 2023). The Turkish tourism industry plays a crucial role in the nation's economic growth, with a substantial contribution of 8.3% to the country's GDP (WTTC, 2023). Furthermore, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2022), the tourism sector in Türkiye accounts for 8.4% of the total employment.

In contrast to previous outbreaks such as SARS and MERS, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a sustained and significant influence on nations such as the United States and Türkiye (Aydın & Ari 2020, p 1811). In their study, Günay et al. (2020) employed a scenario analysis technique to forecast the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism demand of visitors in Türkiye. The analysis conducted in this study projected a range of decline in the number of foreign visitor arrivals, ranging from 5% to 53%. This decline was found to have significant economic implications, resulting in an estimated tourism income loss of \$15.2 billion. According to data provided by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2022), there was a progressive decline in the number of tourists coming to Türkiye, dropping from over 50 million in 2019 to 15.9 million in 2020, which can be attributed to the beginning of the pandemic. Furthermore, it is important to note that the proportion of tourists accounted for 28% of the prior last three years' average, even during the peak month of August in the year 2020 (Çakmaklı et al., 2021, p 21). Besides, there was a significant decline in Türkiye's international tourism revenue, which decreased from \$34.5 billion in 2019 to \$12.06 billion in 2020, resulting in a substantial loss of \$21.9 billion (Açıkgöz and Günay 2020, p 523, TUIK 2022).

The anxiety regarding the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in substantial levels of uncertainty and turmoil in different sectors. The tourism sector has encountered a significant decline in income and has been greatly impacted by the pandemic. The pandemic impacts both the demand side and the supply side of the tourism sector (Ugur & Akbiyik, 2020, p 2). This has led to a substantial decrease in the tourism sector estimated to be 70% (Liew, 2020, p 110). The interconnection between travel and tourism and the negative effects of the pandemic were indistinguishable due to the presence of many uncertainties. There was a substantial reduction in international visitor arrivals in 2020, with an incline of 73%. This downward trend continued into 2021, with a further decrease of 87% seen at the beginning of the year (Ertas and Kirlar (2022, p 2).

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 significantly influenced airport traffic and the movement of airline passengers. The adoption of measures such as border closures, travel restrictions, isolation protocols, and reduced air travel, in response to worries regarding the transmission of infections at airports and during flights, has had significant impacts on the safety and welfare of both personnel and travellers, as well as for the financial and operational components of the tourism sector. The implementation of the COVID-19 travel ban, which imposed restrictions on both international and domestic travel, significantly affected the tourism sector (Deveci, Ciftçi, Akyurt, & Gonzalez, 2022, p 93).

The event industry holds an important place in the field of hospitality and tourism, as it increases visitors' expenditures, thereby generating financial resources and employment prospects in this sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as an unforeseen crisis that has led to the downfall of the event industry. (Zakirai, Isa, Emran, Azmi, & Azan, 2022, p 111).

There was a significant decline in both the volume of passengers and the revenue generated by tourism during the pandemic period, with reductions of 70% and 65% respectively. In March 2020, there was a 53% decrease in tourist arrivals in Türkiye compared to the corresponding period in the previous year (Ugurlu, Akay, and Demirel 2022, p 17). It is anticipated that a decline in the mobility of travellers will

have a significant adverse effect on individuals and change the demand for tourism (Ilgaz et al. 2021, p 391),

The study conducted by Zorlu et al. (2022) examined the attitudes and behavioural intentions of individuals towards camping tourism in Türkiye during the COVID-19 pandemic, employing the theory of planned behaviour as a theoretical framework. The findings of the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between risk perception and risk aversion, and the subsequent increase in unpleasant feelings and intent to engage in camping activities among tourists. Similarly, Ilgaz et al. (2021) conducted a survey in Antalya, which demonstrated that the pandemic had a significant impact on the cleanliness practices and attitudes of domestic tourists in Türkiye. However, travellers also choose destinations based on factors such as safety and cleanliness. Therefore, destinations with reliable healthcare and strong disinfection protocols took the attention of visitors, resulting in a higher arrival of individuals to such locations (Jafari et al. 2020, p 12).

The Turkish government has implemented many assistance measures aimed at assisting the tourism sector in its recovery from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 epidemic. These efforts are intended to help the sector maintain its crucial role as a driver of the Turkish economy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Turkish government provided substantial assistance to personnel in the tourism sector by subsidising almost two-thirds of their salary for approximately three months. During this period, the primary tourism businesses experienced closure, resulting in their employees being given unpaid leave (Ertaş et al., 2021, p 12). Financial assistance was offered by the government to hotels, restaurants, and travel companies to support their operational expenses and sustain their employees. Furthermore, the government implemented measures to alleviate tax burdens, including the exemption of hospitality services from value-added tax (VAT) and the reduction of VAT rates for restaurants and transport services. Additionally, it facilitated the preservation of liquidity and the allocation of funds towards operational activities for tourism businesses using low-interest loans and loan guarantees. To aid businesses in effectively managing their financial flows and mitigating the risk of default, the government implemented a one-year suspension on tourism loans (Turizm Günlüğü, 2020).

Several initiatives were implemented to promote both domestic and international tourism, hence providing support to the tourism sector. One such initiative was the implementation of the "Safe Tourism Certification Programme." In response to the COVID-19 epidemic, the Turkish government implemented the Safe Tourism Certification Programme in 2020 to enforce adherence to health and safety procedures in the tourism industry. This programme encompasses a range of industries in the tourism business, such as the hospitality sector, food and beverage industry, transportation sector, and tour operators. The administration of this programme falls under the authority of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. It undergoes periodic revisions to align with the latest guidelines and recommendations provided by esteemed international organisations, including the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) (TGA 2020). The "Safe Tourism Certificate" is awarded to tourism businesses that satisfy the program's requirements, signifying their successful implementation and obedience to designated health and hygiene protocols. These measures include the provision of personal protective equipment to employees, regular cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces and objects, enforcement of social distancing measures, monitoring the health of both employees and guests and the dissemination of COVID-19-related protocols to guests. During the global pandemic, tourism enterprises that possessed Safe Tourism Certificates were granted permission to conduct their operations and were officially authorised to accommodate visitors from outside (TGA 2020). Governments tend to enhance their ownership in private enterprises, allocate resources for marketing and advertising purposes, and streamline the procedures for visa applications in times of political uncertainty (Avraham 2016, p 2).

### **3. Methodology**

According to Cohen (1988), the fundamental aspect of any research endeavour is in its methodology, which relates to the systematic approaches employed to investigate matters in a particular discipline. Morgan and Smircich (1980) pointed out that the selection of a research methodology depends on the underlying motivation behind the study problem being studied. The success or failure of any research

effort depends on various aspects, such as the employed methodology, the researcher's level of skill, and the present state of the topic (Creswell, 2014, p 214).

The pre-crisis measurements of an organisation assist in anticipating the occurrence of a crisis. Organisational resilience refers to the preparedness of a business to effectively respond to and recover from a disaster by utilising predictive and adaptive procedures. Various conceptual frameworks have been suggested to enhance disaster resilience in the hotel industry, to address unexpected emergencies. The capital-based approach encompasses various dimensions, including economic, social, cultural, physical, natural, and human resources, in its assessment of an organization's resilience (Brown et al. 2018, p 69). Research conducted in the small and medium-sized hotel sector provided evidence that financial limitations barricade their ability to implement any pre-crisis strategies (Fabeil et al., 2018, p 35). However, the majority of empirical studies conducted on senior managers or executives in the hospitality industry have indicated that pre-disaster measurements are not given the necessary importance. Additionally, it has been found in other studies that the formalisation of resilience does not necessarily ensure full recovery from a disaster. (AlBattat & MatSom, 2014, p 51; Fabeil et al., 2018, p 30). Furthermore, Herbane (2018) also indicated that the formalisation of resilience may not guarantee a complete restoration from a disaster. The efficiency of expensive and widely implemented disaster-preparedness structural solutions in providing comprehensive protection against disasters may be limited. As a result, the assessment of pre-crisis measures can significantly influence the evaluation of the crisis's effects on the hospitality sector (Alexander 2021, p 4)

The main aim of this study is to examine the factors contributing to the crisis preparedness of the Turkish hospitality sector. Additionally, the impact of pre-crisis measures on crisis forecasting and the subsequent crisis management process will be evaluated. How the process of forecasting and crisis management supports the management of crisis outcomes in the hospitality sector will also be analysed. How the crisis prediction and management process helps in handling crisis outcomes in the Turkish hospitality sector will be evaluated.

The research methodology employed in this analysis was based on the approach proposed by Saunders et al. (2019). This study employed the positivist research philosophy, which is characterised by a deductive research strategy. The research objective was to describe and explain phenomena, utilising a quantitative research design.

The present study uses a survey as the research method since surveys are often the favourite instrument for any empirical research, which includes socio-psychological factors (Roberts, 1999, p 53). Variables can be easily quantified and connected using the perception of a large-scale study population (Cohen et al., 2013, p 334). Although there are many methodical instruments used to collect primary data, such as tests, questionnaires, observational data, field notes, accounts, case studies, simulations, role plays, personal construction etc., questionnaires were found to be best suitable for this study. The survey research approach was employed, employing a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument.

Questionnaires have been defined as a "group of questions" that are organised and structured for use with similar-natured samples (Mathers et al., 1998, p 21).. This instrument provides various advantages, including remote access by contributors, broad reach, no expertise required, confidential mode, simplicity in contributions, and so on, lowering the cost of data collecting.

The present study was undertaken by collecting data from experts in the hospitality business throughout multiple locations in Türkiye, such as Ankara, Antalya, Istanbul, Izmir and Nevsehir. The study focused on hotel managers in Türkiye who manage or own hotels that are classified by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as 1-, 2-, 3-, 4-, or 5-star hotels that hold either a tourism operating certificate or a tourism investment certificate. According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2021), the number of hotels in this particular category was 5,386 as of December 31, 2021. Due to the impracticality of surveying all hotels in the target population, a non-probability sampling technique was employed to establish a sample population for this study. The calculation of the necessary sample size was calculated using Cochran's approach (Chaokromthong and Sintao 2021, p 80). The determined sample size, under a confidence level of 95.0% and a margin of error of 0.05%, was found to be 359.

The survey employed in the current study comprised 42 questions arranged into six sections. The first part of the questionnaire aims to gather necessary details relating to profile of the hotels, including the

hotel's location, the age of the hotel, the group activities that the hotel belongs to, the legal status it holds, the number of employees and the number of rooms.

The second part of the questionnaire contains Crisis Management Process Scale, developed by Aslan et al. (2020), for the five study variables in the present study. The evaluation of pre-crisis measurements and their corresponding measures involved the analysis of pre-crisis activities through the use of eight sub-questions. Additionally, the assessment encompassed the analysis of preparation and planning, which was evaluated using three questions. Furthermore, the evaluation process included the examination of sales and marketing strategies, which were assessed using five questions. Moreover, the evaluation encompassed the analysis of savings measures, which were evaluated using three questions. Lastly, the assessment involved the examination of financial measures, which were evaluated using two questions. The following parts encompassed the third, fourth, and fifth parts, which required ascertaining the prediction of the problem by six statements, assessing the crisis management process via seven items, and arriving at a judgment using a single question. To meet the criteria of this study, the component related to decision-making was isolated from the original construct, which is the perceived success measure of crisis management as described by Aslan et al. (2020). The concluding segment of the survey was employed to assess the influence of the crisis on both external and internal dimensions, utilising three inquiries and the assessment of adaptability to crisis-related experiences via five assertions.

The survey questions were designed by utilising a seven-point Likert scale to gather responses. The statements and questions were formulated affirmatively and accompanied by a set of multiple-choice options. The respondents selected the answer that most closely aligned with the viewpoint of the sample population.

This research was conducted while the COVID-19 crisis continued between June 10 and September 20 2021. An online questionnaire has been constructed to reach respondents. The questionnaire used in this study was formed by Aslan et al. (2020). Pilot tests were undertaken, and reliability and validity tests were performed for the questionnaire by them. Initially, questionnaires were sent by e-mail to 2,017 hotels that had Safe Tourism Certificates as most of the hotels were not working as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Hotels web site information had been received from the web page of TGA (2022). Hotel e-mail addresses and contact information received from their web pages. Although an online questionnaire was sent to all hotels on the list, the return rate was very low. As hotels are located in different cities and personal contact was difficult, each hotel individually was called, attempting to contact managers and asking them to fill out the questionnaire, if possible. This way of collecting data was also not so successful. Then, hotels in Ankara, Istanbul, Nevsehir, Aksaray and Kırşehir were personally visited by making appointments with hotel managers and questionnaires were filled out by managers personally. The data collection process was completed by gathering 415 usable questionnaires from hotel managers.

Hence, the sample size of 415 exceeded the estimated sample size of 359. Out of a total of 415 respondents, 91.3% were identified as hotel managers holding executive positions at different hotels. A smaller proportion, 3.4%, were hotel owners, while 2.4% were partners. The remaining 2.9% of respondents were found to be employed in other administrative positions in the hotels. It may be assumed that a majority of the individuals comprising the sample population are responsible for the formulation and execution of strategies in times of emergency.

The descriptive analysis method was used to analyse the data collected. Tables were used to organise the data for analysis, which was then followed by the interpretation of the results. Different tables were used to arrange the replies for the analysis according to the hotel profiles. The category of the hotels in the sample was studied according to their business experience, owner group activity of the hotel, the legal status of the hotel, staff number and number of rooms in the hotel. For these categorical variables, descriptive analyses have been conducted using frequency and percentage measures.

On the other hand, continuous variables have been assessed by calculating their mean and standard deviation. Statistical analyses were conducted on the acquired data using SPSS software, followed by the formulation of findings.



#### 4. Results

The age of hotels spanned almost a century, with one establishment commencing operations in 1910 and four others as recently as 2022. A significant proportion of the hotels, specifically 42.2%, fell in the age range of 4 to 13 years. Subsequently, 29.6% of the hotels were between 14 and 23 years old. Additionally, 11.3% of the hotels were between 24 and 33 years old, 7.7% of them 34-43 years old and 4.3% of them were older than 43 years old. It is significant to observe that the COVID-19 pandemic period corresponded with the commencement of around 5% of hotel establishments.

Among the total of 415 hotels surveyed, a significant majority of 86.7% were found to be only engaged in hotel management activities. Conversely, a smaller proportion of 6.3% was identified as part of a group in several tourism-related sectors, including the service industry, travel agencies, and other enterprises associated with tourism. The remaining 7% of these entities are part of a group that operates in several sectors, including industrial items, construction, IT technologies, and hospitality and tourism. Based on the legal categorization, a majority of the hotels (63.9%) were classified as limited companies. Additionally, a significant proportion (24.8%) operated as incorporated firms, while a smaller percentage (7%) functioned as sole proprietorships. The remaining 4.3% of hotels were affiliated with larger networks. A significant part of hotels, 68.2% have a number of staff ranging from 11 to 49 personnel. Additionally, 19% of the hotels employed a larger staff of 51 to 150. 10% of the hotels surveyed employed staff consisting of less than 10 personnel. Approximately 73.7% of the 415 hotels surveyed have a range of 31-99 rooms, while an additional 18.1% of them have more than 100 to 250 rooms. A total of 3.7% of hotels were found to have a range of 1-30 rooms, while 4.6% of hotels were observed to have more than 250 rooms.

Table 4.1 shows that a considerable portion of the participants expressed the view that substantial measures were implemented to mitigate the possibility of accidents, fires, conflicts, strikes, and other crises ( $5.812 \pm 1.709$ ). The hotels were carefully observing both their existing competitors and any prospective competitors ( $5.954 \pm 1.709$ ). Based on the insights derived from previous crises, proactive measures were being implemented and executed to a satisfactory degree ( $5.956 \pm 1.712$ ). Furthermore, careful observation and analysis were conducted on the sector-specific, political, and economic occurrences in the marketplaces in which they were active ( $5.747 \pm 1.818$ ).

The study analysed the changing preferences and demands of the operating market, and significant measures were carefully considered ( $5.708 \pm 1.841$ ). The tracking reports for production, sales, maintenance, repair, resource utilisation, and human resources were effectively generated, reviewed, and necessary measures were implemented at a proficient level ( $5.928 \pm 1.697$ ). To enhance crisis preparedness, hotel managers carefully monitored and adjusted strategies relating to the advancement of production and services ( $6.489 \pm 0.705$ ). In addition, significant emphasis was focused on maintaining regular communication and information exchange with both employees and stakeholders ( $6.590 \pm 0.611$ ). The findings indicate that the hotels actively engaged in pre-crisis activities and demonstrated a significant level of commitment towards them.

**Table 4.1: Pre-crisis activities**

Pre-crisis activities	Mean	Std. Deviation
To what extent were precautions taken against potential dangers and risks (accident, fire, conflict, strike, costly wrong or faulty production/design, etc.) that could cause a crisis in your business?	5.812	1.709
To what extent would competitor and potential competitors' activities be tracked and analysed?	5.954	1.626
To what extent were necessary measures taken and implemented in light of experience gained from previous crises?	5.956	1.712

<b>Pre-crisis activities</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
To what extent would sectoral, political and economic developments be followed in the market in which you operate, and their possible effects on the market would be analysed?	5.747	1.818
To what extent were the changes in demand and preferences in the operating market investigated and necessary actions were taken?	5.708	1.841
Production, sales, maintenance/repair, resource utilization, human resources etc. To what extent were such reports prepared, examined and necessary actions taken?	5.928	1.697
To what extent would the developments in all activities, including production/service, be followed and adapted to your business?	6.489	0.705
To what extent was the emphasis placed on internal communication and information sharing with employees and stakeholders?	6.590	0.611

As indicated in Table 4.2, about the extent of planning and readiness for crises, the majority of respondents agreed that many studies were conducted to determine the size of the crisis and its potential consequences inside their hotels ( $5.651 \pm 1.851$ ). Furthermore, hotels have established dedicated teams who are prepared to promptly address any potential emergencies ( $5.639 \pm 1.818$ ). Additionally, a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of the crisis has been conducted, and a strategic course of action has been formulated and effectively communicated to both stakeholders and employees ( $5.824 \pm 1.739$ ). This approach is expected to facilitate a more targeted resolution of the problem. The findings indicate that the hotels are engaging in thorough planning and preparation measures to effectively manage potential disasters.

**Table 4.2: Preparation and planning in hotels**

<b>Preparation and planning</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std deviation</b>
To what extent have studies been carried out to determine the dimensions of the crisis and its possible effects?	5.651	1.851
Have teams been formed about what needs to be done to get out of the crisis? To what extent have they been ensured to do the necessary work?	5.639	1.818
To what extent were the dimensions and effects of the crisis and the action plan to be implemented to overcome the crisis accurately shared with employees and stakeholders?	5.824	1.739

Table 4.3 provides additional details on the scope of sales and marketing activities conducted by the hotel. The study found that implementing effective sales and marketing strategies in hotels can significantly help reduce the impact of a crisis ( $5.786 \pm 1.794$ ). The company prioritised new service offerings as marketing strategies ( $5.773 \pm 1.797$ ). Additionally, the company placed a high emphasis on finding more stable new markets ( $5.817 \pm 1.749$ ). Furthermore, significant investments have been made in equipment technology to reduce operational, production, and service costs. This, in turn, leads to improved efficiency ( $5.908 \pm 1.6944$ ). In addition, significant importance was given to research, planning, and development, with particular emphasis on maintaining a competitive position ( $5.916 \pm 1.458$ ).

**Table 4. 3: Sales and Marketing in Hotels**

<b>Sales and marketing</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std deviation</b>
To what extent was a very active sales and marketing strategy followed to mitigate the effects of the crisis?	5.786	1.794
To what extent was the focus on marketing activities for the new service offering?	5.773	1.797
To what extent were more stable new markets sought?	5.817	1.749
To what extent have investments been made in equipment technology to reduce production/service and operation costs and increase efficiency?	5.908	1.694
To what extent was the emphasis placed on R&D and P&D activities to maintain the competitive position?	5.916	1.458

After analysing the cost-saving techniques employed by hotels, it was found that a considerable portion of the workforce had been placed on unpaid leaves as a measure to reduce staff-related expenses ( $5.754 \pm 1.841$ ). Considerable reductions were implemented for each category in the operational budgets ( $5.853 \pm 1.799$ ) with a specific focus on decreasing the quantities of vital inventories while guaranteeing the preservation of supplies required for daily operations ( $5.790 \pm 1.820$ ) as shown in Table 4. 4. The results suggest that the hotels implemented strategies to reduce costs to withstand the effects of the epidemic.

**Table 4. 4: Savings measures taken by hotels**

<b>Savings measures</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std deviation</b>
To what extent have employees been given unpaid leave or reduced in number?	5.754	1.841
To what extent were cuts made to each item of the operating budget?	5.853	1.799
To what extent has attention been paid to reducing critical stock levels and keeping stock only as required by daily service production?	5.790	1.820

Table 4.5 shows that regarding the financial measures implemented by hotels as a component of crisis preparation, it was observed that the process of debt restructuring involved extensive negotiations with financial institutions and other relevant creditors ( $5.875 \pm 1.621$ ). The primary focus was placed on expediting the recovery of receivables to improve the financial situation ( $5.530 \pm 1.835$ ). This demonstrates the hotel's recognition of the significance of implementing budgetary measures.

**Table 4. 5: Financial measures taken by the hotels**

<b>Financial measures</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std deviation</b>
To what extent has the debt restructured been negotiated with financial institutions and all creditors?	5.875	1.621
To what extent was the emphasis given to an early collection of receivables, with some discounts if necessary?	5.530	1.835

Table 4. 6 provides a detailed analysis of the degree of success achieved by hotel managers in predicting and managing crises, both during and after the crisis period. The management demonstrated an impressive degree of success in forecasting the crisis ( $5.998 \pm 1.560$ ). Furthermore, the management expressed confidence in their ability to promptly address the crisis ( $5.783 \pm 1.742$ ). The management

effectively managed the events that occurred during the crisis ( $5.831 \pm 1.643$ ). Moreover, several diverse solutions were effectively generated during the crisis ( $5.745 \pm 1.773$ ). In addition to this, the management strongly advocated for the implementation of the normalisation process as a strategy to recover from the crisis ( $6.031 \pm 1.584$ ). Furthermore, as part of crisis forecasting, the measurement of the management's decision-making ability was assessed. The study revealed that the decisions made by the management at the onset and throughout the crisis, in terms of their suitability for the crisis and their focus on finding solutions, were of moderate quality ( $5.067 \pm 1.155$ ). This suggests that there exists a necessity and potential for enhancement in this particular area, particularly in the context of crisis management. This evidence suggests that the managers of the respective hotels demonstrated a high level of proficiency in predicting the impending crisis.

**Table 4. 6: Forecasting the crisis**

<b>Forecasting the crisis</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Management's success in predicting the crisis.	5.998	1.560
Management's success in responding to the crisis promptly.	5.783	1.742
Management's approach and handling of events during the crisis.	5.831	1.643
Management's success in producing different solutions to problems during the crisis.	5.745	1.773
After the crisis, the approach of the management to the events in the normalization process and the way it was handled.	6.031	1.584
Decisions taken by the management at the beginning and during the crisis are appropriate and solution-oriented.	5.067	1.155

Table 4.7 indicates the various significant procedures included in the evaluation of the COVID-19 crisis management process implemented by different hotels to alleviate the crisis. The impact of the preparatory meetings and action plans conducted during the initial emergence of the crisis was found to be significant ( $5.935 \pm 1.480$ ). Additionally, various measures implemented in sales and marketing ( $6.034 \pm 1.476$ ), production activities that include goods and services ( $5.961 \pm 1.538$ ), human resources ( $5.896 \pm 1.732$ ), and finances ( $5.911 \pm 1.603$ ) were found to have a significant impact, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of crisis management processes. Furthermore, it was observed that the communication between the employees and stakeholders had a significant impact ( $6.007 \pm 1.506$ ). Finally, the majority of individuals believed that developments taking place in the sectoral, political, and economic fields resulted in significantly beneficial outcomes.

**Table 4. 7: Crisis management process**

<b>Crisis management process</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
The impact of the preparatory meetings and action plans that were held when the crisis first emerged.	5.935	1.480
The effect of the measures and actions taken in sales and marketing.	6.034	1.476
The effect of measures and actions taken in goods/services, and production activities.	5.961	1.538
The effect of the measures and actions taken on human resources.	5.896	1.732
The effect of the measures and actions taken on finance.	5.911	1.603
The impact of communication with employees and stakeholders.	6.007	1.506
Analysing sectoral, political and economic developments.	6.214	1.339

Table 4.8 illustrates the perceived scale of the internal changes experienced by the hotel industry as a result of the crisis. The hotels experienced significant adverse effects as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis had a significant impact on human resources, resulting in a major shift in business operations ( $6.048 \pm 1.616$ ). The observed effects were evident in all administrative or managerial procedures, resulting in significant improvements in the production of goods or services ( $5.867 \pm 1.658$ ) as well as in sales and marketing processes ( $5.904 \pm 1.697$ ) that were integrated into the business. Additionally, the implementation of these processes resulted in the creation of various products or services ( $5.964 \pm 1.603$ ). The business models of their organisations underwent a significant transformation during the crisis period ( $6.010 \pm 1.554$ ). This observation indicates that the hotel industry experienced significant effects as a result of the crisis, leading to internal changes in the business.

**Table 4. 8: Internal outcomes of the crisis on hotels**

<b>Internal outcomes of the crisis on hotels</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
All administrative/managerial processes, including human resources, applied in your business	6.048	1.616
Good/service production processes implemented by your business	5.867	1.658
Goods or services produced by your business	5.964	1.603
The business model of your business	6.010	1.554
Sales and marketing processes and/or after-sales service processes implemented by your business	5.904	1.697

A quantitative analysis is presented in Table 4.9 regarding the external effects of the crisis on hotels. The impact of the crisis on the market share of hotels was found to be significant ( $5.677 \pm 1.839$ ). Additionally, these recent crises have had a significant negative impact on the reputations of the hotels among both customers and suppliers ( $6.048 \pm 1.584$ ). Furthermore, it had a significant effect on the size and growth of the hotels ( $6.082 \pm 1.557$ ). This suggests that despite the hotels' proactive measures in preparing for the crisis, the hotel industry suffered significant consequences as a result of the pandemic.

**Table 4. 9: External outcomes of the crisis on hotels**

<b>Outcomes of Crisis (External)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
The crisis has affected the market share of the hotels.	5.677	1.839
The crisis affected our business's reputation with customers and suppliers.	6.048	1.584
The crisis affected the size of our business.	6.082	1.557

## 5. Discussions

The findings of this study indicate that pre-crisis activities, preparation and planning, sales and marketing, savings measures, and financial measures are significant elements in understanding pre-crisis indicators. The present study highly values pre-crisis activities, which include various actions concerning production and services development, internal communication and information sharing with employees and stakeholders, as well as monitoring production, sales, maintenance, repair, resource utilisation, and human resources. Similarly, Malhotra, & Venkatesh (2009) argued that regarding the 2004 Tsunami, it is clear that the Thai Government had no proactive crisis plan. The lack of pre-crisis planning resulted in a delay in taking efficient responses to prevent harmful outcomes of tsunamis in a

limited time. The existence of this disaster explicitly demonstrated the significance of proactive pre-crisis preparation. They concluded that effective pre-crisis planning is crucial for the hospitality and tourism industry. Similarly, the study conducted by Inkinen et al. (2021) demonstrated the necessity of implementing contingency planning strategies, which encompass the identification of potential crises, the formulation of contingency statements, and the implementation of preventive controls, to ensure the long-term viability of hotels.

This study demonstrated that sales and marketing activities constitute an important component of pre-crisis assessments in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the current study, marketing strategies place a priority on the inclusion of new service offerings, while also seeking out new markets as a part of pre-crisis preparation. The study conducted by Ivanov et al. (2016) provided the evidence of supporting the effectiveness of using price reduction techniques as a means for agencies to sustain their operations in the challenging circumstances arising from political instability in Ukraine.

The present study observed the implementation of cost-saving measures, such as offering unpaid leaves to employees and reducing operating budgets, as pre-crisis measures. Similar types of activities have been observed in other research as well, aimed at decreasing the effects of a crisis. In their study, Ertaş et al. (2021) demonstrated that tourism businesses consider the implementation of unpaid leaves for their staff as a potential cost-saving strategy.

The participants in the current study expressed consensus regarding the significance of debt restructuring with financial institutions, as well as all creditors, and the collection of receivables as essential components of financial measures. Similarly, Inkinen et al. (2021) proposed that the development of a contingency plan should encompass the allocation of sufficient resources to address the challenges that may arise during unexpected disasters.

The current analysis provides evidence to support the idea that the preparatory meetings and action plans implemented during the initial stages of the crisis had a substantial influence. Furthermore, the present study identified certain crisis management actions that have a significant impact on sales and marketing, production activities (including goods and services), human resources, and finances. Consistent with current research, previous studies have also identified the importance of human resource strategies in the context of crisis management processes. Establishing mutual respect between owners and employees, supporting regular communication, and enabling information exchange between guests and hotels are crucial strategies for successfully managing the crisis management process. (Burhan et al., 2021, p 3 Pavlatos et al., 2020, p 5). According to Hidalgo et al. (2022), implementing various marketing methods, such as price reduction offers, special promotion offers, and temporary closure of the business during a crisis period to conserve resources, can also be advantageous for crisis management.

The findings of this study indicate that all components of disaster preparedness, except the sales and marketing factor, exert a substantial influence on the outcomes of the crisis. Herbane (2018) stated that the formalisation of resilience does not necessarily ensure a comprehensive restoration following a disaster.

The current study provides further evidence in favour of the conceptual framework proposed by Brown et al. (2018), which suggests that the utilisation of pre-crisis measurements contributes to the development of resilience in an organisation, subsequently leading to enhanced levels of organisational performance, employee commitment, and job satisfaction.

Contingency planning consists of various components, such as the identification of potential uncertainties, the formulation of a policy statement for contingency planning, the identification of preventive controls and safety measures to be employed during a crisis, and the development of strategies for effective contingency planning. The planning process also encompasses the allocation of sufficient resources to be utilised in the event of a crisis. (Inkinen et al., 2021, p 12). Furthermore, the use of pre-crisis measures allows management to exhibit resilience and confidence during periods of extraordinary conditions (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2021, p 9). Consistent with previous researches, the current study suggests that including pre-crisis measurements, specifically for the COVID-19 pandemic, improves the predictive capabilities of Turkish hospitality management.

Previous researches have demonstrated that planning has an important and positive influence on various approaches to crisis management, specifically, cooperation, confrontation, and containment. Moreover, the utilisation of pre-crisis measurements contributes to the development of resilience and finally leads to enhanced organisational performance, commitment, and job satisfaction (Brown et al., 2018; p 74; Filimonau et al., 2020, p 2). A similar phenomenon was observed in the current study whereby pre-crisis measurements assisted Turkish hotel managers significantly in the crisis management process.

The present study has shown that during the COVID-19 epidemic, crisis forecasting exerts a substantial influence on the outcomes of crises. Consistent with the findings of the present study, Gani et al., (2021) have indicated that several factors, such as preparedness, awareness campaigns conducted via social media platforms, destination-specific disaster management measures, and effective communication methods, have had a significant role in effectively managing crisis process. However, it has been seen in some studies that the use of forecasting techniques and past experiences may not always be effective in understanding the unparalleled impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel business (Alonso et al., 2022, p 2). The present study also showed that crisis forecasting contributed to a full understanding of the pandemic in the Turkish tourism sector.

This study provides evidence that the evaluation of the crisis management process exerts an important influence on the crisis outcome in Turkish hotels. By the current findings, previous researches have demonstrated the valuable effects of crisis management strategies, such as marketing and promotional initiatives, on crisis management outcomes (Hidalgo et al., 2022, p 3). In addition, Lai and Wong (2020) emphasised that organisations employ a range of maintenance-related tactics to effectively navigate and sustain their operations during times of crisis. These strategies may include the deliberate postponement of maintenance activities, the procurement of office materials that offer cost-effective solutions, and the closure of unused facilities.

The present study has shown that the process of crisis forecasting and the evaluation of crisis management plays a mediating role in the relationship between pre-crisis measurements and crisis outcomes. Previous researches have demonstrated that pre-crisis measurements significantly influence the accuracy of crisis forecasting. The acquisition and development of expertise and skills in disaster prevention can significantly enhance the forecasting capacity of organisations in successfully preventing and overcoming a crisis (Tsai et al., 2020. P 445). In addition, the implementation of crisis management processes, including government decisions and crisis strategies, as well as marketing and promotional campaigns, have been found to contribute to improved outcomes in the context of disasters (Hidalgo et al., 2022, p 3; Novelli et al., 2018, p 85).

The current study demonstrated that crisis forecasting plays an important role in the crisis management processes in the Turkish hospitality sector. The study conducted by Song and Lin (2010) revealed the validity of making reliable forecasts through the estimation of interval tourism demand. Additional research has also demonstrated that the high levels of self-assurance and forecasting capabilities of managers eventually contribute to the development of better organisational resilience, hence enhancing crisis management procedures (Giousmpasoglou et al., 20p. 19 p19). In a study conducted by Ritchie et al. (2011) in Australia, findings similar to those of the current study were observed. The research revealed that hotel managers in Australia exhibited a high level of confidence that their hotels were ready to battle crises.

The main focus of this study was to examine how the hospitality sector in Türkiye has been preparing for recent crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a global impact. Specifically, the study aimed to understand the strategies and processes implemented by hotels to effectively manage the crisis and its overall impact. Furthermore, the study also examined the correlation between various aspects of crisis management and the resulting outcomes of the crisis. A positive correlation was discovered among all aspects of crisis management. The study found a range of correlations, with the lowest being 0.195 between financial measures and preparation and planning in hotels, and the highest being 0.582 between the evaluation of the crisis management process and internal outcomes of the crisis.

## 6. Conclusions

The measurement of hotels in advance of a crisis involved the assessment of five sub-variables; pre-crisis activities, preparation and planning, sales and marketing, saving measures and financial measures

Hotels actively engaged in various activities in preparation for potential crises and hazards, including accidents, fires, conflicts, strikes. Efficient progress was made regarding the sector, political, and economic aspects, whereby relevant information was distributed to employees through appropriate communication channels.

Regarding the preparation and planning efforts undertaken in expectation of potential crises, it was observed that a significant proportion of hotels demonstrated an excellent level of effectiveness and preparedness in controlling and reducing crises. The crises have been identified by the hotels, and the potential impacts of the crisis on the hotel industry were estimated. Teams were formed to develop and execute action plans by both employees and other stakeholders to successfully deal with and prevent potential crises.

Concerning the scope of sales and marketing efforts in hotels, it is significant that these businesses have demonstrated proactive involvement in implementing effective sales and marketing strategies. These initiatives have the potential to reduce the adverse effects of crises. The primary objective was to enhance the efficiency of hotel services by implementing cutting-edge technology and conducting strategic research and development to maintain a competitive edge. Many cost-saving measures were implemented to cope with the difficulties created by the crisis. These measures included the implementation of unpaid leave policies to reduce expenses, the strategic management of important inventory to ensure the fulfilment of daily needs, and the implementation of reductions in operating budgets. The financial measures included the restructuring of debts through negotiations with financial institutions and all creditors, as well as focusing on the timely collection of receivables by offering appropriate discounts.

The present study revealed that an important portion of hotel management demonstrated the capacity to correctly forecast and effectively deal with the crisis promptly. Furthermore, the management effectively addressed the various events that transpired during the crisis and developed effective strategies to reduce the difficulties faced. The hotel management regarded the restoration of normality as a vital component of crisis forecasting. The managers' decision-making was determined to be suitable and focused on finding solutions. However, there appears to be room for enhancement in this regard.

The crisis evaluation process was determined to consist of several components, including the level of preparedness exhibited in meetings and the development of action plans during the beginning of the crisis. Additionally, it included an examination of the actions undertaken regarding sales and marketing, production activities, and the supply of goods or services.

The crisis brought about internal changes in hotels, specifically in areas such as administrative and managerial processes, human resources management, production of goods and services, acquisition of business-related products, business models, and implementation of after-sales service processes. As a component of external outcomes, it was observed that the crises had an impact on the market share of hotels, their business reputation among customers and suppliers, and also influenced their business size.

The current study consider COVID-19 as the primary crisis that occurred throughout the study period. Consequently, it can be inferred that the different aspects of crisis management and their influence on the crisis outcomes examined in this study are related to this significant crisis. Despite being done during the COVID-19 epidemic, the present study's findings hold significant managerial and human resource implications that can be extrapolated to crisis management beyond the current context, as well as to the broader tourism business in other countries.

It has been recognised that these elements of crisis management are essential and require consideration by the hotel and tourism sector to effectively restore normalcy following a major disaster. It is vital to know the processes involved in crisis management and develop specific solutions for hotels based on factors such as location, industry affiliations, room capacity, personnel size, and overall hotel dimensions.

The results of this study have the potential to be applied to the global tourism industry, including situations such as the COVID-19 crisis, extending beyond the territory of Türkiye. These crises are having a direct or indirect impact on all nations. While it has been observed that individual hotels were responsible for developing their crisis management plans, it is important to emphasise the necessity for



sharing good practices in order to enhance their action plans, especially in addressing crises on a global scale.

It has been thought that hotels should be well prepared to undertake appropriate activities during periods of crises. It is important to engage in managing strategies that effectively address the characteristics of the crisis and enhance comprehension of its consequences. The sales and marketing personnel should possess a comprehensive understanding of the services being offered, even in the face of a crisis, as well as the appropriate tactics for equipping hotels with a competitive advantage. Ensuring adequate savings for financial objectives is of the highest priority. However, it is essential to address the needs of human resources simultaneously.

The ability to predict a crisis is crucial to promptly respond and effectively recover from the disaster. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate this aspect within the context of hotel management and training initiatives. This intervention is expected to enhance the current state of operations and facilitate the adoption of solution-focused and crisis-responsive strategies. The evaluation procedure for crisis management necessitates a serious approach, encompassing comprehensive oversight of all issues related to hotel management. Furthermore, it is important to implement measures to guarantee an achievement of optimal efficiency. The present study has pointed out that it is crucial to take into account the mediating influence of the interaction between crisis forecasting and crisis management evaluation procedures before formulating an action plan aimed at reducing the crisis.

This study dealt with a range of crises, including accidents, fires, conflicts, strikes, and other frequently encountered situations including the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that the majority of participants in this research were hotel managers, it is important to include the viewpoints of owners and senior management to ensure a comprehensive approach to crisis management.

The limitations identified by the current study have presented some potential options for future research advancement. Given that the current investigation was conducted in Turkey, subsequent research endeavours must be conducted in other countries to compare our findings, as the COVID-19 pandemic had a worldwide impact. Moreover, this will assist in being prepared for potential future crises of comparable characteristics. While the study models have been validated through empirical evidence, it is recommended that future researches employ longitudinal designs to ascertain the directionality of the causes revealed in the present study. Given that the sample for this study primarily consisted of managers, it might be useful to broaden the scope of analysis to additional stakeholders within the hospitality and tourism sector.

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**Araştırma Makalesi**

**Crisis Management Strategies in the Hospitality Sector: A Case of Türkiye**

*Konaklama Sektöründe Kriz Yönetim Stratejileri: Türkiye Örneği*

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**Genişletilmiş Özet**

Türkiye, COVID-19 salgınına kadar dünyanın en çok turist alan altıncı ülkesiydi. Bununla birlikte, COVID-19 salgınının yayılmasından önce, Şiddetli Akut Solunum Sendromu (SARS; 2002), Kuş Gribi (H5N1; 2003), Domuz Gribi (H1N1; 2009) ve Orta Doğu Solunum Sendromu-Koronavirüs (MERS-Cov; 2012) gibi sağlıkla ilgili başka krizlerde meydana gelmiştir. Bunların küresel turizm eğilimleri ve ekonomik alternatif maliyetler üzerinde büyük ve önemli bir etkisi vardır. Bununla birlikte, kriz döneminde turistlerin seyahat isteği büyük ölçüde azalmış ve turistlerin seyahat etme isteği uzun bir süre boyunca artmamıştır. Diğer taraftan, oteller ve diğer turizm işletmeleri gelir kaybına uğramış ve gelecekteki rezervasyon talepleri büyük ölçüde iptal edilmiştir. Airbnb, Booking. Com gibi platformlar üzerinden evlerini kiralayan bazı ev sahipleri konaklama sektöründeki işlerini bırakmaya yada uzun dönemli kiraya vermeye karar vermişlerdir.

Krizlerin tanımlanması, acil durum planlaması ve tedbirler alınması otellerin krize dayanıklılığının sağlanması için çok önemlidir. Öte yandan, oteller tarafından sürdürülebilirlik için farklı kriz yönetimi stratejileri benimsenmektedir. Bu stratejiler hükümet destekleri, pazarlama faaliyetleri, kriz sırasında bakım, teknolojik yenilik vb. ile ilgilidir. Kriz döneminden çıkış için devlet destekleri ve tanıtım girişimleri tüm ülkeler için önemlidir. Türk hükümeti, turizm sektörünün COVID-19 salgınının olumsuz etkilerinden kurtulmasına yardımcı olmayı amaçlayan birçok tedbiri uygulamaya koymuştur. COVID-19 salgını esnasında bir tedbir olarak Türk hükümeti, turizm sektöründe sağlık ve güvenlik prosedürlerine uyulmasını sağlamak amacıyla 2020 yılında Güvenli Turizm Sertifika Programını uygulamaya koymuştur.

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, kriz öncesi tedbirlerin krizlerin tahmini ve kriz yönetimi süreci üzerindeki etkisi değerlendirildiğini ve kriz tahmin ve yönetim sürecinin Türk konaklama sektöründe kriz sonuçlarını nasıl etkilediği incelemektir. Türk konaklama sektörün için en son kriz COVID-19 krizi olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Otel yöneticilerinin kriz öncesi hazırlıkları, kriz esnasında ve sonrasındaki faaliyetleri incelenmektedir. Bu çalışma bir dizi bağımsız ve bağımlı değişkene sahiptir. Çalışma, kriz öncesi tedbirler, kriz tahmini ve kriz yönetimi, karar verme süreci gibi bağımsız unsurları analiz etmeye odaklanırken, bağımlı değişken olarak krizin otel içindeki ve dışındaki faaliyetlere olan etkisi incelenmiştir.

Araştırmanın amacına yönelik olarak nicel bir araştırma tasarımı kullanılmış ve kriz yönetim sürecini tanımlamaya ve açıklamaya odaklanılmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak anket formu kullanılmıştır. Ankette yedili Likert ölçeği kullanılmış, ifadeler ve sorular olumlu bir şekilde formüle edilmiş ve çoktan seçmeli seçenekle birlikte sunulmuştur. Bu çalışma, Ankara, Antalya, İstanbul, İzmir ve Nevşehir gibi Türkiye'nin çeşitli şehirlerinde faaliyet gösteren otel yöneticilerinin katılımıyla yapılmıştır.

Araştırma örneklemini olarak Türkiye'de Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı tarafından 1, 2, 3, 4 veya 5 yıldızlı olarak sınıflandırılan, turizm işletme belgeli veya turizm yatırım belgeli otelleri yöneten veya bu otellerin sahibi olan otel yöneticilerine odaklanmıştır. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı'na (2021) göre, 31 Aralık 2021 itibarıyla bu kategorideki otel sayısı 5.386'dır. Hedef kitledeki tüm otellerle anket çalışmasının mümkün olmaması nedeniyle, bu çalışma için bir örneklem oluşturulmuştur. Gerekli örneklem büyüklüğünün hesaplanmasında Cochran'ın yaklaşımı kullanılmış ve örneklem büyüklüğü, %95,0 güven düzeyi ve %0,05 hata payı varsayımı ile 359 olarak bulunmuştur. Yapılan alan çalışmasında online olarak hazırlanan anket formu hedef kitledeki otellere gönderilmiş ve 415 otel yöneticisinden geri dönüş alınmıştır.

Mevcut çalışmada kullanılan anket altı bölüm halinde düzenlenmiş 42 sorudan oluşmaktadır. Anketin ilk bölümü, otelin adı ve konumu, otelin yaşı, otelin ait olduğu grup faaliyetleri, sahip olduğu yasal statü, çalışan sayısı ve oda sayısı dâhil olmak üzere otellerle ilgili genel bilgileri toplamayı amaçlamaktadır. Anketin ikinci bölümü, Aslan ve diğerleri (2020) tarafından geliştirilen Kriz Yönetimi Süreci Ölçeğini içermektedir. Bu ölçek çalışmadaki beş kriz değişkeniyle ilişkili olduğu için seçilmiştir.

Veri toplama süreci 415 otel yöneticisinden birincil verilerin toplanmasıyla tamamlanmıştır. Toplam 415 katılımcının %91,3'ü farklı otellerde yönetici pozisyonunda çalışan otel müdürleri, %3,4'ü otel sahibi, %2,4'ü ise otel ortağıdır. Katılımcıların geri kalan %2,9'u otellerde diğer idari pozisyonlarda çalışmaktadır. Örneklemini oluşturan otel yöneticilerinin acil durumlarda stratejilerin oluşturulması ve yürütülmesinden sorumlu olduğu varsayılabilir.

Otellerin kuruluş yılları neredeyse bir asırlık bir süreyi kapsamakta olup bir tesis 1910 yılında faaliyete geçmiş, diğer dördü ise 2022 gibi yakın bir tarihte açılmıştır. Otellerin önemli bir kısmı, %42,2'si, 4 ila 13, %29,6'sı 14 ila 23, %11,3'ü 25 yıldan daha da yaşlı olarak sınıflandırılmıştır. COVID-19 salgını döneminin otel işletmelerinin yaklaşık %5'inin faaliyete geçtiği döneme denk gelmesi dikkat çekicidir.

Ankete katılan toplam 415 otelin %86,7 gibi önemli bir çoğunluğunun sadece otelcilik faaliyetlerinde bulunduğu tespit edilmiştir. Buna karşılık, %6,3'lük daha küçük bir oranın hizmet sektörü, seyahat acenteleri ve turizmle ilişkili diğer işletmeler de dâhil olmak üzere turizmle ilgili çeşitli sektörlerdeki bir grubun parçası olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu kuruluşların geri kalan %7'si ise sanayi ürünleri, inşaat, bilişim teknolojileri ve konaklama ve turizm dâhil olmak üzere çeşitli sektörlerde faaliyet gösteren bir grubun parçasıdır.

Otellerin önemli bir kısmı, özellikle %68,2'si, 11 ila 49 arasında değişen sayıda personele sahiptir. Ayrıca, otellerin %19'u 51 ila 150 arasında personel istihdam etmektedir. Ankete katılan otellerin %10'u ondan az personel çalıştırmaktadır. Ankete katılan 415 otelin yaklaşık %73,7'sinin oda sayısı 31-99 arasında değişirken, %18,1'inin oda sayısı 100 ila 250 arasındadır. Otellerin toplam %3,7'sinin 1-30 oda aralığına sahip olduğu, %4,6'sının ise 250'den fazla odaya sahip olduğu görülmüştür.

Olası krizlere karşı yapılan hazırlık ve planlama çalışmalarına bakıldığında, otellerin önemli bir kısmının krizi kontrol altına alma ve azaltma konusunda ileri düzeyde etkinlik ve hazırlık sergilediği görülmüştür. Otel yöneticileri tarafından krizin boyutları belirlenmiş ve krizin otelcilik sektörü üzerindeki potansiyel etkileri tahmin edilmiştir. Potansiyel krizlere karşı başarılı bir şekilde tedbirler almak ve bunları önlemek için hem çalışanlar hem de diğer paydaşlar tarafından eylem planları geliştirmek ve uygulamak amacıyla ekipler oluşturulmuştur.

Otellerdeki satış ve pazarlama çabalarının kapsamına ilişkin olarak, bu işletmelerin etkili satış ve pazarlama stratejilerinin uygulanmasında hızlı bir şekilde hareket etmeleri önemlidir. Bu girişimler, krizlerin olumsuz etkilerini azaltma potansiyeline sahiptir.

Ana hedef, rekabet üstünlüğünü korumak için en son teknolojiyi uygulamak, stratejik araştırma ve geliştirme yaparak otel hizmetlerinin verimliliğini artırmak olmuştur. Krizin yarattığı zorluklarla başa çıkabilmek için birçok maliyet tasarrufu tedbirleri de uygulanmıştır. Bu tedbirler arasında giderleri azaltmak için personele ücretsiz izin verilmesi, günlük ihtiyaçların karşılanmasını sağlamak için önemli olan varlıkların stratejik yönetimi ve otelin çalışma bütçesinde kısıtlama uygulanması yer almaktadır. Mali önlemler arasında, finans kuruluşları ve tüm alacaklılarla görüşmeler yoluyla borçların yeniden

yapılandırılması ve uygun indirimler sunarak alacakların zamanında tahsil edilmesine odaklanılması yer almaktadır.

Çalışma, otel yönetiminin önemli bir bölümünün krizi doğru tahmin etme ve zamanında etkili bir şekilde tedbir alma yetkinliğini gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, yönetim kriz sırasında meydana gelen çeşitli olayları etkili bir şekilde ele almış ve karşılaşılan zorlukları ortadan kaldırmak için etkili stratejiler geliştirmiştir. Yöneticilerin karar verme mekanizmasının uygun olduğu ve çözüm bulmaya odaklandığı görülmüştür.

Kriz değerlendirme sürecinin, krizin başlangıcında yapılan toplantılarda sergilenen hazırlık düzeyi ve eylem planlarının geliştirilmesi de dâhil olmak üzere çeşitli bileşenlerden oluştuğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, satış ve pazarlama, üretim faaliyetleri ve mal veya hizmet tedariki ile ilgili olarak çeşitli çalışmalar yapılmıştır. Kriz, otellerde özellikle idari ve yönetsel süreçler, insan kaynakları yönetimi, mal ve hizmet üretimi, faaliyet alanı ile ilgili ürünlerin satın alınması, iş modeli ve satış sonrası hizmet süreçlerinin uygulanması gibi alanlarda içsel değişikliklere yol açmıştır. Dışsal sonuçların bir bileşeni olarak, krizlerin otellerin pazar payını, müşteriler ve tedarikçiler arasındaki itibarını ve işletme büyüklüğünü etkilediği görülmüştür.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları, COVID-19 pandemisi gibi Türkiye sınırlarının ötesine uzanan krizler de dahil olmak üzere küresel turizm endüstrisine uygulanma potansiyeline sahiptir. Bu krizler tüm ulusları doğrudan ya da dolaylı olarak etkilemektedir. Her bir otelin kendi kriz yönetim planlarını geliştirmekten sorumlu olduğu gözlemlenmiş olsa da, özellikle küresel ölçekteki krizlerin ele alınmasında eylem planlarını geliştirmek için iyi uygulamaların paylaşılması gerekliliğinin vurgulanması önemlidir.

Turizm endüstrisinin en önemli kurumlarından biri olan otellerin, kriz dönemlerinde etkili bir şekilde faaliyet gösterebilmek için acil durum planlarının olması gerekmektedir. Krizin özelliklerini ele alan ve sonuçlarının anlaşılmasını sağlayan yönetim stratejilerini benimsenmesi önemlidir. Satış ve pazarlama personelinin bir kriz durumunda bile rekabet avantajı sağlayacak doğru taktiklere ve sunulan hizmetlere önem vermesi gerekmektedir. En önemli öncelik, mali hedeflere uygun tasarruf sağlamak olmalı ancak, insan kaynaklarının ihtiyaçları da eş zamanlı olarak ele alınmalıdır. Krizleri önceden tahmin edebilmek ve hızlı bir şekilde müdahalede bulunabilmek krizden etkin bir şekilde çıkabilmek için önemlidir. Bu nedenle, otel yönetimi ve personele verilen eğitimlerde bu konuya özel önem verilmesi faydalı olacaktır. Bu faaliyetler, mevcut operasyonların iyileştirilmesini ve çözüm odaklı stratejilere kolaylıkla adapte olunabilmesini kolaylaştıracaktır.