EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN TOURISM ENTERPRISES IN TERMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to empirically analyze the crisis management practices of tourism enterprises in terms of their effects on organizational learning. It is aimed to determine the ways that the hotels in Turkey respond to previous crisis, what kind of precautions were taken and whether these crises had taught anything regarding the operation and performance of the enterprise. It is also aimed to contribute to related literature and to offer suggestions that will guide businesses and future studies. Within this context, taking account of 2016 (October) data of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, Antalya, which embodies most certified 5-star hotels, and highest bed capacity and number of rooms in resort category, and Istanbul, which embodies most certified 5-star hotels, and highest bed capacity and number of rooms in urban hotels category, are included within the scope of this study. It's decided to conduct this study on hotels, considering the effects of tourism industry on world economy. In this study, it is aimed to empirically analyze the crisis management practices of tourism enterprises in terms of their effects on organizational learning. It is aimed to determine the ways that the hotels in Turkey respond to previous crisis, what kind of precautions were taken and whether these crises had taught anything regarding the operation and performance of the enterprise. A comprehensive literature review was conducted in the first and second part of this three-part study; The concept of crisis management in the enterprises was examined and the applications on tourism enterprises were discussed. The last part of the study contains information on testing and analyzing hypotheses. The data obtained as a result of the questionnaires were analyzed in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and LISREL (LInear Structural RELationships) program. A Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between factors and scales. As a result of the study, the results of the crisis management practices in the enterprises affecting the organizational learning positively have been reached.

Keywords: Crisis Management; Enterprise; Hotel; Organizational Learning; Tourism.

Jel Codes: Z320, M1, Z310.

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TURİZM İŞLETMELERİNDE KRİZ YÖNETİMİ UYGULAMALARININ ÖRGÜTSEL ÖĞRENME AÇISINDAN AMPİRİK OLARAK ANALİZİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada, işletmelerde kriz yönetimi uygulamalarının örgütsel öğrenme üzerindeki etkileri açısından ampirik olarak analizinin yapılması amaçlanmıştır. Türkiye'deki otel işletmelerinin, yaşadıkları krizlere nasıl tepki verdikleri, ne tür önlemler aldıkları ve krizlerin işletme operasyonu ve performansı için öğretici özelliklerinin olup olmadığının tespit edilmesi hedeflenmiştir. Ayrıca, konuyla ilgili literatüre katkı sağlanması, bu alanda yapılacak olan araştırmalara ve işletmecilere rehberlik edecek önerilerin sunulması amaçlanmaktadır. Bu kapsamda, T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı'nın 2014 (Ekim) yılı verileri dikkate alınarak, kıyı otelciliğinde en fazla işletme belgeli beş yıldızlı otelin, yatak kapasitesinin ve oda sayısının bulunduğu şehir olan Antalya ve şehir otelciliğinde en fazla beş yıldızlı otele, yatağa ve oda sayısına sahip İstanbul araştırma kapsamına dâhil edilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın birer turizm işletmesi olan otel işletmeleri üzerinde yapılmasına turizm sektörünün dünya ekonomisi üzerindeki etkisi göz önünde bulundurularak karar verilmiştir. Bu çalışmada, otel işletmelerindeki kriz yönetimi uygulamalarının örgütsel öğrenme üzerindeki etkilerinin ampirik olarak analizinin yapılması amaçlanmıştır. Üç bölümden oluşan bu araştırmanın, birinci ve ikinci bölümünde kapsamlı bir literatür taraması yapılmış; işletmelerde kriz yönetimi kavramı incelenerek, turizm işletmeleri üzerindeki uygulamalar ele alınmıştır. Araştırmanın son bölümü ise, hipotezlerin test ve analiz edilmesine ilişkin bilgileri içermektedir. Yapılan anketler sonucunda elde edilen veriler, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) ve LISREL (LInear Structural RELationships) programında analiz edilmiştir. Faktörler ve ölçekler arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi için Pearson Korelasyon analizi yapılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda işletmelerde kriz yönetimi uygulamalarının, örgütsel öğrenmeyi pozitif yönde etkilediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kriz Yönetimi; İşletme; Otel; Örgütsel Öğrenme; Turizm.*

Jel Kodları: *Z320, M1, Z310.*

INTRODUCTION

It is safe to say that tourism industry grows further each year and becomes a significant economic potential for nations. Especially in 2014, tourism industry acted as a "*life saver*" and continued to provide economic support and employment for European countries, which were fighting against countless economic crises. Along with globalization, crises not only take hold of where they take place, they sometimes have an impact throughout the world. At this point, it is also necessary to touch upon tourism, which is a universal industry. In any case, crises may have negative impact on tourism. Tourism industry works in cooperation with many other sectors and offers an integrated service. Therefore, tourism industry has a multiplier effect on global and national economy. Thus, if tourism industry suffers from any economic crisis, it means many other sectors from agriculture to textile will suffer extensively.

In order to weather the storm and/or get through crises without any damage, the enterprises should always be ready for crises. These enterprises should also learn their lessons from previous experiences and should use those experiences as learning resources. Huber (1991) suggests that learning plays a key role under fierce competition and ever-changing environmental conditions for organizations to meet the expectations of customers and to

increase the performance of the organization. The significance of learning makes individual and organizational learning very important.

Roux-Dufort and Metais (1999) ascertain that crises are new opportunities to learn more and they improve their competitive advantage. They also stated that learning through crisis has positive impact on production capacities of organizations and on their relationships with their surroundings. Vijande et al. (2005) state that organizational learning has a positive impact on company's performance. Blackman and Ritchie (2008) emphasize that organizational learning is a significant factor in companies' fight against crises. Carmeli and Schaubroeck (2008) state that crises are severe threats against enterprises, but learning through taking lessons from previous mistakes has a positive impact. According to Jimenez-Jimenez and Sanz-Valle (2011), organizational learning has a positive impact on both company's performance and creativity. In addition, there is a relationship between the size and capacity of the company and organizational learning and company performance. Makkonen et al. (2014) state that the companies should always be ready for crises and these situations may even increase their performances if they turn them into opportunities.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Crisis Management

The concept of crisis has been defined in various ways by many researchers and authors. One of the most common definitions is Faulkner's definition. Faulkner (2001) defines crisis as a test that measures the ability of an organization to cope with immediate problems. Institute of Crisis Management (ICM) (2014) defines crisis as "a condition, which influences routine operation of a company and which may have politic, legal, and financial impacts". World Health Organization (WHO) defines crisis as "an insidious process that cannot be identified in time". According to WHO, a crisis may not necessarily be explicit and it should be analyzed in order to be get recognized. In addition, a crisis must have a pre-crisis and intervention periods (World Health Organization, 2014). Pauchant and Mitroff believe that crisis is "subjectively an assumption of existence and essentially an assumption of deterioration, which affects a system as a physical whole" (Ritchie, 2003: 70). A crisis is an undesirable, unexpected and an extraordinary phenomenon, which takes place in a short period of time. Crises arise because of sudden progresses. Thus, decisions should be taken as

quickly as possible throughout the crisis period in order to prevent negative results and damages.

Along with globalization, crises not only take hold of where they take place, they sometimes have an impact throughout the world. At this point, it is also necessary to touch upon tourism, which is a universal industry. In any case, crises may have negative impact on tourism. Based on this statement, a definition for crisis for tourism industry can be made. Sönmez et al. define the concept of "tourism crisis" as follows (Glaesser, 2005: 21-22):

Tourism crisis *"...is any event, which may threaten the operation of normal and touristic activities, which may totally damage a destination's reliability, attractiveness, and comfort by having a negative impact on visitors' opinions regarding a destination, and which may cause an economic downturn in local travel and tourism economy by causing a rapid decrease in number of visitors and revenues."*

Crisis management is a periodic activity. This activity begins when the executives extensively analyze the risks that they encountered. The analysis of each threat is unmatched. The structure and activities of an organization differ upon various factors, such as the risks of natural disasters and security problems (Boatwright, 2007:34). Crisis does not always mean a threat or a hazard for companies, it may turn into an opportunity in some cases. Incremental costs, fruitless decisions, staff dismissals, and production and sales failures may be given as negative impacts of crises. Decreasing production costs, gaining experience on crisis management and introduction to new programs may be given as positive impacts, i.e. opportunities of crises (Okumuş et al., 2005: 97).

Crisis management is the process of taking and implementing the necessary precautions in order to take crisis signals, evaluate them, and to survive the crisis with minimum loss, in case of possible crisis (Demirtaş, 2000: 6).
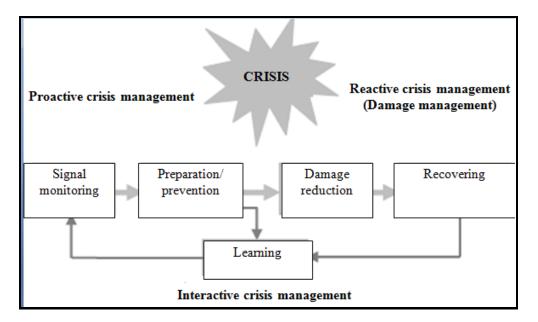
Figure-1: Crisis Management Process

Source: T.C. Pauchant and Mitroff I., Transforming The Crisis-Prone Organization: Preventing Individual, Organizational, and Environmental Tragedies, (San Fransisco: Jossesy-Bass Publishers, 1992), s. 135.

As shown in Figure 1, the crisis management process can be grouped into three groups: proactive, reactive and interactive. Proactive crisis management is based on a preventive understanding of monitoring early warning signals, preparing for possible crises and preventing crises. In reactive crisis management, there are efforts to minimize the effects of the crisis on the business that arise when proactive efforts are inadequate. The most important contribution of the model is to emphasize the fact that the courses taken from the crises called interactive crisis management are shared within the organization and an internal learning is realized. Effective crisis management is a continuous learning process (Gainey, 2010: 92).

Some researchers say that the crisis is composed of four periods: pre-crisis period, intense crisis period, crisis period and solution period (Fink 1986; Kash ve Darling 1998). In the first step, it is necessary to take some precautions such as analyzing the external environment, collecting information, analyzing signals, making plans, setting up crisis team and determining communication channels. The second stage is the period when all the symptoms of the crisis are clear (Fink, 1986: 17). In this process, the short and long term effects of the event should be calculated and the necessary measures should be taken immediately. In the third stage, the statement of the crisis becomes more prominent than the

previous step, and it becomes compulsory to act. The last step is that the indication of the crisis gradually declines and begins to lose its effect, the process returns to its normal routine (Okumuş ve Karamustafa, 2005: 944).

1.2. Organizational Learning

According to the previous studies on this field, if learning process occurs among the members of the organization, learning would occur and an organizational learning culture would be created. The lessons learned by the individuals become a part of the memory, culture, and assets of the organization (Argyris, 1996: 146). Organizational learning is a process that extends knowledge and that is created by the individuals in an organized way (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995: 34). According to Garvin (1999), organizational learning is all about optimization of the actions of the organizations. Organizational learning occurs when the organizations receive punctual, accurate and consistent information, and when their thinking is enhanced. In order to learn, organizations should change potential behaviors or should improve current behaviors. An organization cannot improve itself without learning. The following may be examples of learning: solving a problem, introducing a new product into the market, designing processes, ensuring that the enterprises view the world from a new viewpoint and act accordingly. Without learning, organizations would repeat previous practices. In this case, the chances of improvement would diminish, and learning would be coincidental and nondurable.

Organizational learning is a complicated process about learning new things and behavioral changes. It is a traditionalized process that changes individual and organizational behaviors. Companies with strong organizational learning cultures succeed in creativeness, in obtaining and transferring new information and in arranging behaviors according to new information (Huber, 1991: 67). Organizational learning is a dynamic and a strategic process of renewal, which occurs in three dimensions in an organization (at individual, group, and organizational levels), which leads cognitive and behavioral change, and which allows for synthesis of old and new information (Crossan et al., 1999: 523).

Organizational crisis and organizational learning are strongly related. Organizational crisis may be defined as a chain of events that occur in a chaotic environment. Organizational learning is a process that leads to organizational change. Chaos theory and organizational theory help us understand crisis. According to learning theory, threats and crises can be used as learning opportunities and may also lead to renewal (Ciftci, 2015: 98). Seeger et al. (2003)

state that if crisis is used as an instrument for learning, its damages would be reduced, potential damages may be minimized, and an opportunity to get into new markets by turning crisis into opportunity may emerge. Larson et al. (1998) suggest that organizational crises are significant opportunities for the future of the company. New ideas emerge when interdivisional learning and communication increase in organizations. Organizations with better interdivisional communication skills can make better plans for forthcoming crises. If the process of organizational learning is implemented properly, crises may provide competitive advantage. Organizational learning is used as a principal factor by the companies to manage crises. In this sense, crises no longer become risk factors for the companies and they turn into potential sources of learning and development (Roux-Dufort and Metais, 1999: 116, 117). Learning may occur at different stages of the crisis, such as before the crisis, during the crisis and after the crisis. In order to maximize learning at the time of crisis, the biases such as blaming, scapegoating, and hiding the truth should be prevented, honesty and candidness should be supported and learning should be rewarded.

Crises are also perfect opportunities to learn and to gain competitive advantage. Lessons should be taken from previous crises in order to prevent similar crises or to get through the crises without any major damages (Roux-Dufort and Metais, 1999: 126). In macro-economic terms, it is safe to say that the previous crises in Turkey were very helpful. For example, the crisis in 1994 led to a better insight of "quality" and many companies received quality awards; the global crisis in 1998 helped internalize the concept of "competition", and the crisis in 2001 helped us understand the importance of "cash flow" (Oğuz, 2003: 7).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. The Purpose of the Study

Even though they bear risk and threat factors, the crises can be turned into opportunities if handled discerningly and planfully, and the companies should always be ready and should not disregard crises. Crises can also act as sources of learning, knowledge, and performance improvement for companies. In this study, it is aimed to empirically analyze the crisis management practices in terms of their effects on organizational learning. It is also aimed to contribute to related literature and to offer suggestions that will guide businesses and future studies.

2.2. Research Sample

It is safe to say that 5-star hotels have broader and more hierarchical means of organization in terms of their administrative and organizational structures (Kozak, 1997: 27). In corporate businesses, the organizational structure and mode of operation are quite systematic. Based on this information, 5-star hotels in Istanbul and 5-star hotels in Antalya constitute the population of this study. According to Baran (2012), the leader of the team that is all set to intervene in times of crisis is usually the top executive of the company. The top executive of the company plays an active role in preparation of crisis management plan. Within this context, the top executives, who work both in 5-star resorts and 5-star urban hotels, were included within the population of the research. In this study, "stratified sampling selection" method was used, which is one of the selection methods based on probability. For this purpose, separate homogeneous strata for urban hotels and resorts in Istanbul and Antalya were created and the counties of both cities were also approached as substrata in order to prevent them from lose their homogeneity. Within this context, surveys were conducted with general managers of 57 5-star hotels in Antalya and general managers of 43 5-star hotels in Istanbul. In order to test the understandability of the survey questions, a pilot project was conducted on 26 5-star hotels in Antalya. Following this application, the survey form took its final shape and the survey was conducted on participants from Istanbul and Antalya.

According to Baran (2012), the leader of the team to be present at the time of the crisis is usually the top manager of the firm. The senior manager of the company is actively involved in the preparation of the crisis management plan. For this reason, it is considered appropriate for the questionnaires to be made by the top managers of the hotel enterprises, as the authority of decision making and application in crisis is in the hotel manager. In this context, both five-star coastal hotels and five-star city hotels were included in the survey when determining the research universe.

In this study, "stratified sampling selection" method was used as sampling selection techniques. For this purpose, homogeneous strata were formed within the cities of Istanbul and Antalya as coastal hotels and the layers located on both sides of the strata were considered as the lower strata so that these strata would not lose their homogeneity within themselves. There are a total of 327 tourism-operated five-star hotels in İstanbul and Antalya, which constitute the research universe, in total 72 in İstanbul and 255 in Antalya.

2.3. Data Collection Method and Hypotheses

Roux-Dufort and Metais (1999), crises are a new opportunity to learn. In addition, they noted that the crisis affected the learner, the organizations' production capacity and their relations with the environment in a positive way. Vijande et al. (2005), in their study they suggest that organizational learning has a positive effect on the performance of the company. Chajnacki (2007), found a positive relationship between organizational performance and organizational learning as a result of the research. Köksal and Özgül (2007), indicates that the marketing strategies applied in the crisis period have a positive effect on the business performance. Blackman and Ritchie (2008), emphasizes that organizational learning is an important factor in the struggle with crises. Carmeli and Schaubroeck (2008), crisis is an important threat to businesses, but by taking lessons from the mistakes made, it is a positive influence.

In order to receive more detailed answers, personal interview method was adopted in this study. The data obtained through surveys were analyzed through SPSS and LISREL programs. The related literature was reviewed before the survey questions were prepared and the scales developed in previous studies were reviewed. Accordingly, the questions about "Crisis Management" were taken from the scales developed by Israeli ve Reichel (2003), and the questions about "Organizational Learning" were taken from the scales developed by Santos-Vijande et al. (2012). The questions in the first part of the survey were intended for determining the demographic attributes of the participants. This part included questions regarding gender, age, educational background, monthly income, and occupational and marital status. This part also consisted of questions about the type of enterprise, operating period, place of operation, number of affiliates, number of personnel, and room and bed capacity. The questions in the second part of the survey were asked to determine their pre-crisis measures and preparations. This section also had a question to determine whether their hotel went through a crisis before, and if they did, to determine the type of the crisis. In the third section of the survey, the precautions adopted in the event of crisis/crises in hotels were analyzed. The scale developed by Israeli and Reichel (2003) includes four dimensions as human resources, marketing, maintenance-repair and the government and there are 21 questions prepared on 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The fourth section of the survey includes questions about the effects of crisis management

practices on organizational learning and company's overall performance. The scale about organizational learning, which was developed by Santos-Vijande et al. (2012), includes four dimensions as knowledge acquisition, spreading the knowledge, interpretation of knowledge and organizational memory and there are 30 questions prepared on 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

The research hypotheses are as follows:

H1: The crisis management practices of a company have a positive impact on organizational learning.

H1a: The human resources practices within the scope of crisis management policies of the company have a positive impact on organizational learning.

H1b: The maintenance-repair practices within the scope of crisis management policies of the company have a positive impact on organizational learning.

H1c: The governmental practices within the scope of crisis management policies of the company have a positive impact on organizational learning.

H1d: The marketing practices within the scope of crisis management policies of the company have a positive impact on organizational learning.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section of the study includes information about testing and analysis of the hypotheses. The data obtained through the questionnaires conducted on general managers of 57 5-star hotels in Antalya and 43 5-star hotels in Istanbul were analyzed.

Table 1: Distribution Of The Hotels According To The Type Of Crisis That Affected Them

Question	Answer	Frequency	%
What kind of crises have effect your company?	Natural Disaster	20	20,0%
	Economic Crises	22	22,0%
	Social Crises	37	37,0%
	Political Crises	15	15,0%
	Biological Crises	0	,0%
	Ecological Crises	2	2,0%
	Company Based Crises	5	5,0%
	Total	**100**	**100,0%**

Table 1 shows the distribution of the hotels according to the type of crisis that affected them. 37% of the managers stated that their facilities were affected by social crisis, *such as illegal protests against the government's fruitless efforts for solutions that fail to satisfy the expectations of the majority of the society, and the crisis arising from malpractices of the ruling authorities*. 22% of hotel managers stated that they suffered from economic crisis, 20% from the natural disasters, 15% from political crisis, 5% from internal crisis and 2% from ecological crisis. According to frequency values, biological crisis did not affect the hotels.

Correlation analysis was performed in order to measure the effect between crisis management and organizational learning.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Crisis Management and Organizational Learning Scales

		Crisis Management	1	2	3	4	5	6
Organizational Learning	Pearson Correlation	0,067	-0,275**	378**	041	195	0,084	0,053
	Significance (2-tailed)	0,548	009	000	699	062	436	614

Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated in Table 2 in order to find out whether there was a significant relationship between organizational learning scale and crisis management practices scale. When the results were analyzed, poor and positive correlation was found (0.067) between organizational learning and crisis management scales. Poor and negative correlation (-0,275) was found between "*Factor1-Maintenance and repair practices*" of organizational learning and crisis management scales, intermediate and positive correlation (0.378) was found between "*Factor2-Govenrmental practices*", poor and positive correlation (0.041) was found between "*Factor3-Marketing practices*", poor and positive correlation (0.195) was found between "*Factor4-New market practices*", poor and negative correlation (-0.084) was found between "*Factor5-Budget practices*", and poor and negative correlation (-0.053) was found between "*Factor6-Human resources practices*". In other words, all items on this scale have an intermediate-level relationship with the total scale score (p<0.01). There is an intermediate correlation between crisis management practices and organizational learning in companies. Therefore, H1 hypothesis was accepted.

H1: The crisis management practices of a company have a positive impact on organizational learning.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Subdimensions of Crisis Management and Organizational Learning Scales

		M	1	2	3	4	5	6
OL-F1	Pearson Correlation	215*	0,638**	772**	022	171	075	330**
	Significance (2-tailed)	046	000	000	827	093	480	001
OL-F2	Pearson Correlation	0,068	308**	0,322**	001	0,028	0,046	0,168
	Significance (2-tailed)	532	003	001	991	783	662	101
OL-F3	Pearson Correlation	0,006	259*	0,295**	278**	197	0,191	0,188
	Significance (2-tailed)	956	012	003	006	054	070	065
OL-F4	Pearson Correlation	0,129	028	003	0,156	0,067	0,037	0,245*
	Significance (2-tailed)	231	787	980	125	513	728	014

OL- Organizational Learning, **CM-** Crisis Management

When the results in Table 3 were analyzed, a poor and negative correlation was found between human resources practices within the scope of crisis management policies of the company and organizational learning. **H₁ₐ** hypothesis was rejected. An intermediate and positive correlation was found between maintenance-repair practices within the scope of crisis management policies of the company and organizational learning. **H₁ᵦ** hypothesis was accepted. A poor and positive correlation was found between governmental practices within the scope of crisis management policies of the company and organizational learning. **H₁ᵢ** hypothesis was accepted. A poor and positive correlation was found between marketing practices within the scope of crisis management policies of the company and organizational learning. **H₁ᵈ** hypothesis was accepted.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In this study, empirical analysis of crisis management practices in tourism enterprises in terms of organizational learning was made. In this context, a comprehensive literature review was conducted in the first and second part of this three-part study; The concept of crisis management in the enterprises was examined and the applications on tourism enterprises were discussed. The last part of the study contains information on testing and

analyzing hypotheses. The data obtained as a result of the questionnaires were analyzed in SPSS and LISREL program. A Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between factors and scales. As a result of the study, the results of the crisis management practices in the enterprises affecting the organizational learning positively have been reached.

Seeger et al. (2003), if the crisis is used as a learning tool; the potential damage will be minimized, and the crisis may be transformed into a new opportunity to open up to new markets. Larson et al. (1998) stated that, the organizational crisis is an important opportunity for the future of the operation. Increasing learning and communication among the units in organizations ensures the emergence of new ideas. Organizations with high inter-unit communication can make better plans for future crises. Organizational crisis plans constitute a phase of organizational learning. If an accurate organizational learning process occurs, crises can provide a competitive advantage. Organizational learning is used by companies as a key factor in managing crisis situations. In this respect, crises are a risk factor for companies and are a potential source of learning and development (Roux-Dufort and Metais, 1999: 116,117). From macroeconomic point of view, it is possible to say that crises in Turkey are very instructive. or example, the 1994 crisis has helped to grasp the concept of "quality" and that many businesses receive quality awards; The 1998 global collapse helped to internalize the concept of "competition" and the 2001 crisis to understand the "cash flow" (Oğuz, 2003: 7).

Akıncı (2010) stated that when evaluating the positive effects of the crisis on accommodation operations, it has been determined that the increase in the importance of the customer, the efforts to find new markets, the better understanding of the quality of the qualifications, the increase of the crisis experience and the prevention of the future and the increase of team work. According to Köroğlu (2004), hotel managers reported that they learned to develop effective strategies to combat the crisis as positive results they experienced during the crisis periods they experienced and they are prepared for the crises that may arise in the future.

Crises are very hard to accept and settle for businesses. Although the companies think that they have everything under control, they may sometimes undergo crisis due to unavoidable reasons. In those cases, the crisis should be considered an opportunity, rather than a threat. Hospitality facilities should have a crisis management plan against potential

crisis. While preparing this plan, it should be noted that each crisis has different reasons and solutions. In this plan, which is prepared in line with previous lessons learned from previous crisis, a step by step explanation of the actions to be taken in case of crisis should be provided. The crisis management plan should be updated according to ever-changing conditions. In order to prevent chaos in case of crisis, a crisis management team should be organized and job definitions and distribution of tasks should be made for each team member in line with the training programs and guidelines. These plans and tasks should include pre-crisis, crisis, and after-crisis processes. Crisis management team should constantly perform SWOT analysis and should follow up on changes and progresses. Crisis management team should predetermine the potential crisis that may arise from those changes, and should take all necessary measures to prevent crisis. Crisis warning signal systems should be developed to predict those crises. The advantages of technological advancements could be utilized and crisis warning software may be developed. These systems may be developed through information technologies, as well as old and customary methods. Warning systems may ensure that the crises can be predicted by the companies and a potential crisis would be prevented and/or thrown off with minimum damages.

Other significant practices that help the companies survive the crises in this increasingly competitive environment are marketing practices. The enterprises should develop marketing strategies with a few alternatives while developing their crisis management plans. Engaging new customers and penetrating new markets may be extremely costly for companies. Thus, companies should always focus on their customers. The opinions and expectations of the customers should be closely followed and their loyalties and commitments should be maintained. Regular customers are one of the most important factors that protect hotels from further damages in times of crisis. First, the relationships with regular customers should be improved and then the new markets and new customers should be analyzed. For example, some destinations affected by Tsunami turn this dangerous natural disaster into an opportunity and created new market segments by featuring less favored markets (Scott et al., 2008: 7). The companies should place emphasis on creating an organizational structure that gives prominence to learning in order to prevent potential negative effects of potential crises. Companies should take lessons from each crisis and use their mistakes and malpractices as sources of learning. Seeger et al. (2003) state that if crisis is used as an instrument for learning, its damages would be reduced, potential damages may be minimized, and an opportunity to get into new markets by turning crisis into opportunity may emerge. Argyris

and Schön (1996) state that organizational learning is a fundamental factor necessary to increase organizational performance and to reinforce competitive advantage. Improving a brand-new knowledge derived from organizational learning ensures that the company gets rid of old and useless knowledge, begin to compete more dynamically, and increases its performance.

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