

## Research on the predictability of crisis management activities in organizational loyalty\*

### Örgütsel sadakatte kriz yönetimi faaliyetlerinin yordayıcılığı üzerine bir araştırma

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#### Abstract

The COVID-19 outbreak affected many areas, as well as education systems worldwide. In our country, the transition of all universities to the distance education system due to COVID-19 has created the opportunity to analyse the administrators/academician loyalty in this system in many ways. This study investigated the effects of three sub-dimensions of crisis management, pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis activities, on each other and employees' perceptions of organizational loyalty. For this purpose, the data was obtained through questionnaires from 810 participants consisting of administrators and academicians working in public and foundation universities. As a result of the research, it was determined that the three sub-dimensions of crisis management have significant effects on each other and organizational loyalty.

**Keywords:** Crisis Management Activities, Organizational Loyalty, Higher Education Institutions

**Index Codes:** M0, M1, L2

#### Öz

COVID-19 salgını pek çok alanı etkilediği gibi, eğitim sistemlerini de dünya çapında etkilemiştir. Ülkemizde, COVID-19 sebebi ile tüm üniversitelerin uzaktan eğitim sistemine geçmesi, böylesi bir kriz döneminde yönetici/öğreticilerin örgütlerine karşı sadakatlerini çok yönlü analiz etme imkânı doğurmuştur. Bu çalışmada kriz yönetiminin üç alt boyutu olan, kriz öncesi, kriz esnası ve kriz sonrası faaliyetlerin birbiri üzerine ve çalışanların örgütsel sadakat algıları üzerine olan etkisi araştırılmıştır. Bu amaçla, kamu ve vakıf üniversitelerinde görev yapan yönetici ve öğretim elemanlarından oluşan 810 katılımcıdan anket yolu ile elde edilen verilerden yararlanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda kriz yönetiminin üç alt boyutunun birbirleri ve örgütsel sadakat üzerine anlamlı etkilerinin bulunduğu tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kriz Yönetimi Faaliyetleri, Örgütsel Sadakat, Yükseköğretim Kurumları

**İndex Kodları:** M0, M1, L2

## Introduction

Achievement of organizational goals is one of the primary goals for businesses. The essential resource that will help the organization achieve these goals is undoubtedly human resources. The organisation's human resource represents the human being's value (Paksoy and Özbezek, 2013). Man is a very complex social being. Therefore, understanding people, getting to know them and being aware of their needs have become much more critical for organizations in the last 20 years. Since the beginning of humanity, the most basic need has been belonging. Notably, the sense of belonging to an organization emerges as a determining factor in the formation and continuity of the attitudes and behaviours expected from the employees (Koç, 2009). In today's business conditions, where change is very severe, the individual's feeling of belonging to a particular organization provides a mutual benefit for both the individual and the organization. Studies conducted to date reveal that the presence of employees with a high sense of belonging within the organization is a necessary condition for organizational effectiveness, efficiency and performance (Efraty and Wolfe, 1988; Koç, 2009; Yıldırım, Üzüm and Yıldırım, 2012; Syanevets and Sudakova, 2019). Today, the view that the individual's sense of commitment has a distinctive advantage in the competitiveness of organizations is widespread (Gong, Law, Chang and Xin, 2009; Kehoe and Wright, 2013).

Another central concept in the organizational behaviour literature in recent years is loyalty. It is known that the concept of loyalty is frequently used in marketing literature. Loyalty is expressed as an individual's dedication to an object or institution and an effort to maintain her/his relationship with the object or institution (Oliver, 1999). Organizational loyalty is the attitude and behaviour of the individual that will directly contribute to the organization in the direction of adopting and realizing the goals and interests of the organization, ignoring her/his own individual goals and interests (Mael and Ashforth, 2001). In organizational loyalty, the individual has to glorify the organization s/he is affiliated with individuals outside the organization and protect and defend the organization against threats that may come from outside (Savage, Moon, Kelly and Bradshaw, 1997). It can be said that organizational loyalty also includes the individual's commitment to the organization even under undesirable conditions. Organizational loyalty is distinguished from commitment and satisfaction, reflecting an intense psychological state (Koç, 2009; Matzler and Renzl, 2006). For this reason, it is challenging and essential for an individual to feel a sense of loyalty toward an organization. Situations and events that affect, trigger or pave the way for the feeling of loyalty are closely related to both individual and organizational conditions. Considering the organizational conditions, another issue that needs to be emphasized is crisis management.

A crisis is a case of tension. This tension causes undesirable emotions such as stress, anxiety and panic within the organization (Küçük and Bayuk, 2007). Crisis management refers to a set of activities that include the perception and evaluation of the signs and symptoms of a crisis and the taking and implementation all necessary precautions for the organization to overcome this situation with minor damage (Puchan, 2001). Effective crisis management requires preparing and planning for the crisis in advance. Crisis management is the act that foresees potential crises and decides how to deal with them. The human being, the most valuable asset of an organization, will undoubtedly be the person most affected by the effects of the crisis. A crisis can become beneficial when it is managed effectively to take advantage of the opportunities it contains for the organization. A manager who turns the crisis into an opportunity by managing it well can get out of it by improving and strengthening both human resources and the organization (Huang, Tseng and Petrick, 2008; Olawale, 2014). How the employees perceive these practices is also extremely important. An employee who thinks that unexpected situations that arise in the organization are well managed will be able to show high loyalty with the sense of trust s/he has towards the organization.

In the current study, the effects of employees' perceptions of crisis management in the organization on their feelings of organizational loyalty will be measured. Not finding a study examining these two variables in the literature creates an important gap in the field regarding these issues, which have become increasingly important in recent years. In addition, the fact that the data of this study were collected during the pandemic period will provide the opportunity to make necessary inferences to the literature and those concerned about the relationship between crisis and organizational loyalty.

## Literature review

### Crisis and crisis management activities

A crisis emerges as a situation that threatens an organisation's goals and objectives, disrupts its activities, and endangers its existence (Huang et al., 2008; Choi, Sung and Kim, 2010). Because crises

involve uncertainty and disrupt the organization's plans, in other words, the crisis creates undesirable conditions and inconsistencies between organisations' expectations and goals (Çalışkan, 2020).

It is known that the crises have effects in many areas such as economy, politics, industry, finance, health, and education, and also cause significant damage to the products, services and image of organization (Ashcroft, 1997; Grundy and Moxon, 2013; Hale, Dulek and Hale, 2005).

The crisis is more comprehensive than the large and small problems an organization encounters in its routine activities. For this reason, it reduces the adequacy of the measures put forward to overcome the difficulties encountered. This case requires the necessity of unexpected and unpredictable attitudes and behaviours. Since crises develop suddenly, they are the cases that cause tension for all organizations. The adverse effects of the crisis create many undesirable effects for organizations. As a result of the crisis, it is possible to experience a decrease in quality and quantity in the production of goods and services and weaknesses in competitiveness (Brockner and James, 2008; Huang et al., 2008; Olawale, 2014).

Crisis management includes pre-made plans by reviewing all the possibilities that may cause a crisis against the crises that may arise. Effective crisis management includes efforts to take precautions against the crisis in the organization with rational decisions and a systematic structure and to carry out the necessary studies for the organization to overcome the crisis with the minor damage or in the aftermath of the Crisis (Pheng, David and Ann, 1999; Coombs, 2007; Çalışkan, 2020). Crisis management is a process that includes a series of activities that take place in trying to return the organization to its old normal as soon as possible. These are respectively; predicting the internal crisis, being prepared for this situation, determining the priorities of the organization, preventing negative situations, learning from the process, planning the improvement tools, and creating and implementing the new process (Pearson and Clair, 1998; Lee, Woeste and Heath, 2007).

The uncertainty caused by negative factors such as insufficient time, data and limited communication opportunities in crisis environments makes it almost impossible to find a strategy that has been tested many times and accepted by everyone to manage crises (Arendt, LaFleche and Limperopulos, 2017). As a result, solution methods developed for previous crises are often insufficient in newly encountered crisis environments. In that case, the simplest thing for organizations is to avoid the crisis as much as possible and to manage this process most effectively when a crisis arises (Graham, Avery and Park, 2015; Pan and Meng, 2016; Jurgens and Helsloot, 2018).

The preparations to be made before the crisis case arises can only be possible if the managers analyse the symptoms of the crisis well (Dawar and Lei, 2009; Dutta and Pulling, 2011). The evaluation of these symptoms by the managers varies according to their approach to the crisis. There are two basic approaches to managing crises effectively: escaping and overcoming the crisis (Hetu, Gupta, Vu and Tan, 2018).

In the approach to escaping the crisis, there are strategies to alleviate the negativities or escape. It is an accepted approach in businesses and plays an intermediary role in maintaining the balance. This approach aims to protect the business from crises by ensuring that the mechanisms related to preventing crises are activated. The prerequisite for this approach is a solid administrative structure and organizational culture that finds and implements solutions to problems as soon as possible (Ponis and Ntalla, 2016). In order to escape from the crisis, it is essential to know what is going on in the businesses, to make necessary shares about the institution's core values by the senior management, and to have a strong mission statement and a vision adopted by all stakeholders. Finally, it can be said that this approach is related to predicting crises in previous processes. Therefore, it is necessary to be extremely meticulous in conducting practical environmental analyses to manage business crises (Ritchie, 2004; Herbane, 2013).

The crisis resolution approach is based on the understanding of estimating the process before the crisis and acting quickly when exposed to a crisis. This approach requires previously prepared, reviewed, tried and updated plans. However, to solve the crisis, managers should be flexible and creative to identify the factors causing the crisis, take the necessary change decisions that will adapt to instant developments, and implement these plans (Grundy and Moxon, 2013). Therefore, teamwork is needed more than ever. In addition to strong leadership, correct management of communication with all internal and external stakeholders is also necessary to successfully overcome the crisis.

The most desirable thing in crisis management is to turn crises into success (Lee and Harrald, 1999). Crises allow organisations to change through the learning opportunities they offer. Experiences gained from crises are significant in preventing future crises, reducing damage, and being more resistant and equipped against crises and threats. The points of the organization most affected by the crisis are the

weaknesses that must be developed rapidly. The personnel who take responsibility during the crisis, can work in a team spirit and contribute to overcoming the crisis should also be appreciated and given more responsibility in the new organizational scheme. Crises are also an opportunity for organizational development/transformation for managers who know that change and development are the primary keys to success in a competitive environment (Blackman and Ritchie, 2008; Bossong, 2013; Makkonen, Pohjola, Olkkonen and Koponen, 2014).

### **Organizational loyalty**

An organisation's success undoubtedly depends on its talented employees' efforts. This has become a reality for almost every organization, no matter its industry (Aityan and Gupta, 2011).

It is observed that it is generally focused on "customer loyalty" and "brand loyalty" according to the literature review on the concept of loyalty (Gürçaylılar Yenidoğan, 2009; Venkateswaran, Sabarirajan, Mohammed Imrankhan and Elangovan, 2015; Mahmood, Ahmed Qureshi, Huraira and Mahmood, 2019; Uyar, 2019; Naeem and Sami, 2020; Williamson and Hassanli, 2020). It seems very difficult to reach a sufficient number of studies on organizational loyalty. Perhaps this low number is due to the difficulty of expressing the concept organizationally. The first studies on the subject stated that organizational loyalty refers to employees committed to the organization by acting in line with managerial guidance (Lawrence, 1958; Buchanan, 1974). But basically, loyalty refers to emotionality. Employees who show loyalty to their organization are the ones who stand by their organizations even in the most challenging times. It is impossible to talk about loyalty for those who ignore the troubling situation that the organization is going through or who tries to escape from the troubled situation. Loyalty is essential in building trust among employees, which is among the organisation's core values (Kiruthiga and Magesh, 2015). Ideally, loyalty is formed when the organization and employees mutually benefit (Punia and Sharma, 2008).

Organizational loyalty refers to the willingness of the employee to sacrifice their interests to gain strength in the organization. In the broadest sense, organisational loyalty can be expressed as the individual's intention to maintain his/her belonging to the organization s/he works for and hard work by contributing enthusiastically to the organisation's goals (Kang, Lee, Lee and Choi, 2007). Furthermore, organisational loyalty, such as commitment, refers to the belonging that the employee feels due to an emotional and rational evaluation of the organization. Therefore, the employee loyal to the organization will intend to show maximum effort by staying in the organization with this feeling (Koç, 2009; Syanevets and Sudakova, 2019).

### **Crisis management activities and organizational loyalty**

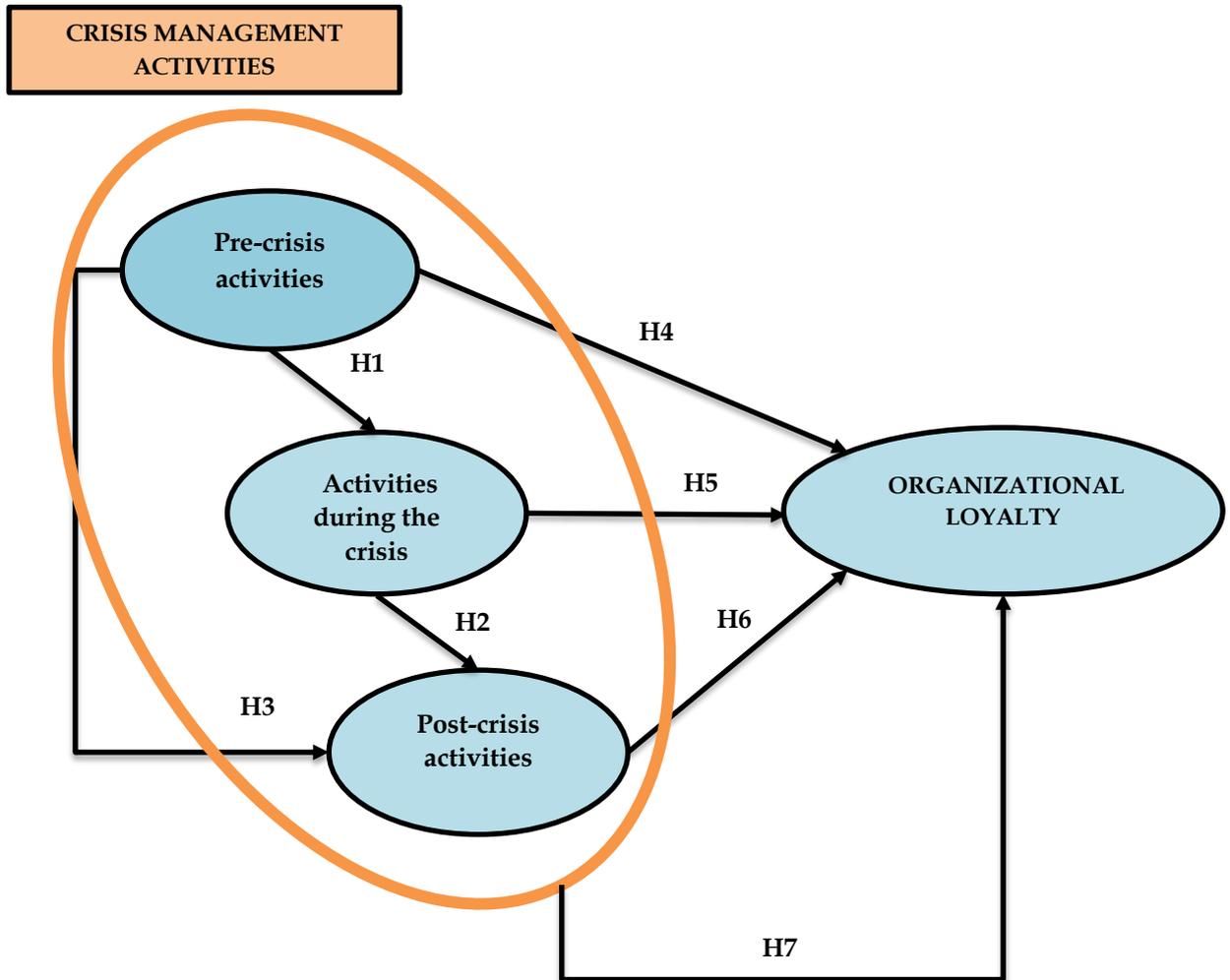
Considering the limited number of studies on organizational loyalty, it is observed that the concept is associated with many variables such as organizational justice, citizenship behaviour, identification, organizational attractiveness, leader-member exchange, image, cynicism, job satisfaction, and human resource management practices (Biçer, 2021; Liu, Cheng and Ouyang, 2021; Akman and Özdemir, 2019; Rodriguez, Roman and Zu'niga-Vicente, 2019; Aljayi, Fjer, Guennioui and Tamek, 2016; Yıldırım et al., 2012). Some studies examine the concept of loyalty during a crisis; however, these studies focus on customer loyalty (Skowron and Kristensen, 2012; Semerciöz, Pehlivan, Sözüer and Mert, 2015; Monferrer, Segarra, Estrada and Moliner, 2019). In these studies, it was found that the crisis phenomenon negatively affects loyalty. The study conducted by Semerciöz et al. (2015) determined that the strategic moves and management practices made during the crisis are related to loyalty. Although these studies focused on customer loyalty, it is known that the organisation's most valuable resource, the workforce's effort, lies at the basis of many positive outcomes such as customer satisfaction, satisfaction and loyalty. Employees are among the most affected by the adverse effects of crisis processes on organizations. Especially the uncertainty created by the crisis environment creates an atmosphere of fear and panic for employees.

Studies reveal the adverse effects of the crisis environment on employees. Braverman (2003) stated that the crisis causes physiological and psychological problems for employees in the long run. In addition, the author emphasized the importance of management practices in this process and stated that if these practices are insufficient, they will bring negativities such as disruption of business activities and an increase in absenteeism. Bennet et al. (1995) stated that during the crisis, employees directed all their efforts to solve the crisis, and their concerns for the future emerged the crisis. They expressed that this fear causes common anxiety among the employees and that this worry is influential on their decision to stay in the organization. These findings contradict loyalty, which expresses the employee's belonging to the organization. This reveals that organizational loyalty is affected by the situation created by the crisis. Meesangkaew (2019) examined the effects of organizational crisis communication on satisfaction,

commitment and intention to leave. As a result of the study, it was revealed that the employees' attitudes towards communication, especially during the crisis, have significant effects on satisfaction, commitment and intention to leave.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the world and dragged almost all organizations into a crisis environment (Ahmad, Baig and Hui, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected many areas, especially education systems worldwide. In most countries affected by the pandemic, it has been decided to close educational institutions and switch to distance education. With the closure of educational institutions, issues that will play an essential role in shaping the future, such as various social and economic (Taylor, Sharma, Martin and Jameson, 2020), digital learning (Karp and McGowan, 2020) and the internet have been brought to the schedule. In addition, Simon (2020) stated that the previously experienced infectious diseases worldwide also cause the closure of educational institutions worldwide according to their activity levels.

Barnum (2020) stated that the measures implemented in the United States during the flu pandemic between 1918-1919, such as the closure of educational institutions and the prohibition of public gatherings, reduced the death rates from the pandemic. Therefore, it is evident that similar policies will be followed in the subsequent possible pandemic processes. Traditional face-to-face education has been suspended to control the negative situations caused by a pandemic that has spread rapidly for years. Therefore, in the face of this negative situation, it is essential to take the necessary precautions in the early period so that the activities of the organizations are not disrupted and for the employees to overcome such crisis periods with minor damage. For educational institutions to react to sudden changing environmental conditions, all employees must first have crisis management awareness. In addition, all educational institution employees, especially the institution's administrators, should realize their will to implement crisis management in line with the training they have received and their skills regarding crisis management. Universities must have the skills mentioned here to show reflexes towards crises and related changes. It is expected that crisis management approaches will contribute positively to the loyalty of the personnel working in the institution to bring the public and private education institutions to a more effective and responsive level. The research model and hypotheses created from the theory and within the framework of previous studies are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Research Model and Hypotheses

*H<sub>1</sub>: Pre-crisis activities affect the activities during the crisis positively and significantly.*

*H<sub>2</sub>: Activities during the crisis affect the post-crisis activities positively and significantly.*

*H<sub>3</sub>: Pre-crisis activities affect post-crisis activities positively and significantly.*

*H<sub>4</sub>: Pre-crisis activities affect organizational loyalty positively and significantly.*

*H<sub>5</sub>: Activities during the crisis affect organizational loyalty positively and significantly.*

*H<sub>6</sub>: Post-crisis activities affect organizational loyalty positively and significantly.*

*H<sub>7</sub>: Crisis management practices affect organizational loyalty positively and significantly.*

## Research methodology

This study tried to determine the effect of the three sub-dimensions of crisis management on each other and the effect on the organizational loyalty perceptions of the employees. In this context, first of all, the sample for the research was defined, and information about the scales used was presented. Then, analyses were made regarding the model created in the light of the data obtained from the sample. Next, within the scope of the research, a confirmatory factor analysis of each variable was made, and then correlations between variables were determined. Afterwards, hypotheses were tested with regression analyses. Finally, the findings obtained as a result of the analysis were compared with the existing literature and suggestions were made to the administrators and researchers.

## Sample

In order to test the research hypotheses, the study's questionnaire was created. In addition, an ethics committee report was received for the research. The questionnaires were adapted according to the main field of the research and delivered to the research group through two different channels, e-mail and written text. Online questionnaires were distributed to each participant with a detailed message

description of the aim and significance of the research. The data collection process was carried out between 05/10/2020 and 05/01/2021.

The research was conducted within the quantitative research pattern and correlational research design. The research universe comprises administrators and academicians working in public and foundation universities. It is planned to send and collect questionnaires to approximately 1000 people from randomly selected universities by convenience sampling method to the individuals in this universe. Eight hundred twenty-two questionnaires were answered, and 810 were taken to the evaluation and analysis stage.

The demographic characteristics of the participants are as follows: 359 participants (44.3%) of 810 participants were male, and 451 participants (55.7%) were female. Three hundred eighty-two individuals (34.8%) of the participants are educated at the PhD level. This ratio is followed by 241 participants (29.8%) with a master's level and 187 employees (23%) with a bachelor's level. Furthermore, on account of the organization type, the participants comprised the public sector with 467 participants (57.7%) and foundation universities employees with 343 employees (47.1%). Finally, the mean age of the sample was 37.93; the average working time was 6.07 years.

**Measures**

**Crisis Management Activities Scale (CMAS):** The Crisis Management Activities Scale (CMAS) was used to measure the Çalışkan (2020). The scale has three dimensions and 23 items. The name of these dimensions is pre-crisis activities (9 items), activities during the crisis (10 items) and post-crisis activities (4 items). As a result of the reliability analyses, Çalışkan (2020) conducted, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient in the education sector sample was determined as .95 for pre-crisis, .98 for the crisis, and .97 for crisis post-crisis. Therefore, the total Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.97.

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to test the structural validity of the scale. As a result of CFA, it was seen that the data conformed to the three-dimensional structure of the scale. Factor loadings are between .62 and .80 for expressions in the first dimension (pre-crisis activities). It was found to be between .70-.84 for the second dimension (activities during the crisis) and .88-.91 for the third dimension (post-crisis activities). Goodness-of-fit values of the scale are presented in Table 1 together with those of other scales. As a result of the reliability analysis, the scale's Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were found as .97, .94, .98 and .96, respectively.

**Organizational Loyalty Scale (OLS):** To measure organizational loyalty, the scale was used, developed by Matzler and Rentzl (2006) and made Turkish and validated by Dede and Sazkaya (2018). The scale consists of 5 items and one dimension. Furthermore, as a result of the reliability analysis conducted by Çalışkan (2020), the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient in the sample was determined as .92 by Dede and Sazkaya (2018).

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to test the structural validity of the scale. As a result of CFA, it was seen that the data conformed to the one-dimensional structure of the scale. Factor loadings are between .86 and .92 for expressions in the scale. Goodness-of-fit values of the scale are presented in Table 1 together with those of other scales. As a result of the reliability analysis, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found as .94. The scales are evaluated with the Likert-type scale from 1-strictly disagree to 5-strictly agree.

**Findings**

The data obtained from the research were analysed in SPSS and Amos programs. In this context, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) of the scales used in the research were performed in the first stage. DFA results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Goodness of Fit Values of Scales (CFA)

Variables	CMIN/DF <5	GFI >.85	AGFI >.80	CFI >.90	NFI >.90	TLI >.90	RMSEA <.08
1. Crisis Management Activities	1,1	0.98	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.02
2. Organizational Loyalty	2,5	0.97	0.97	0.99	0.97	0.98	0.05

**Note:** Goodness of fit value ranges are arranged according to "acceptable" standards. (Meydan and Şesen, 2011)

In the second stage, descriptive statistics are included.

**Table 2:** Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations of Variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
1.Crisis Management Activities	3.67	1.23	(.97)				
2.Pre-crisis activities	3.34	.97	.89**	(.94)			
3. Activities during the crisis	3.26	1.03	.91**	.84**	(.98)		
4. Post-crisis activities	3.77	1.10	.82**	.54**	.57*	(.96)	
5.Organizational Loyalty	4.03	1.08	.15**	.15**	.16**	.10**	(.94)

Note: Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients are given in parentheses; \* p< .05; \*\* p< .01

As seen in Table 2, **there are significant relationships between all dependent and independent variables in the study.** Therefore, significant effects can be predicted between the variables.

In the third and last stage of the analysis, regression analyses were conducted to reveal the direct relationships between the variables, such as the explanatory (predictive) power of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

In the regression analysis, first of all, the effects of the three sub-dimensions of crisis management on each other were examined. Findings related to these analyses are given in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Regression Analysis of Crisis Management Activities' Sub-Dimensions

Variables	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	β
Pre-crisis activities → Activities during the crisis	0,709	0,708	1966.9**	<b>0,842**</b>
Pre-crisis activities → Post-crisis activities	0,294	0,293	335.7**	<b>0,542**</b>
Activities during the crisis → Post-crisis activities	0,325	0,324	388.5**	<b>0,570**</b>

When the analysis results made in the first step are evaluated, it is seen that the pre-crisis has a positive and significant effect on the activities during and after the crisis. Similarly, it is seen that activities during the crisis have a positive and significant effect on the post-crisis period. In this context, hypotheses H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, and H<sub>3</sub> were supported.

In the second step of the regression analysis, the effects of crisis management and its three sub-dimensions on organizational loyalty were examined and reported. Findings related to these analyses are given in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Regression Analysis of Crisis Management Activities and Organizational Loyalty

Variables	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F	β
Pre-crisis activities → Organizational Loyalty	0,021	0,020	17.28**	<b>0,145**</b>
Activities during the crisis → Organizational Loyalty	0,025	0,024	20.84**	<b>0,159**</b>
Post-crisis activities → Organizational Loyalty	0,01	0,008	7.80**	<b>0,098**</b>
Crisis Management Activities → Organizational Loyalty	0,023	0,022	19.05**	<b>0,152**</b>

According to Table 4, it has been determined that crisis management and its three sub-dimensions have positive and significant effects on the dependent variable, organizational loyalty. In this context, hypotheses H<sub>4</sub>, H<sub>5</sub>, H<sub>6</sub> and H<sub>7</sub> were supported.

### Conclusion and discussion

This study examined the effects of the three sub-dimensions of crisis management activities, pre-crisis activities, activities during the crisis, and post-crisis activities on each other and employees' perceptions of organizational loyalty. Determining the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector was also forceful in conducting the study on the administrators and lecturers working at universities. Suddenly faced with the global crisis created by the pandemic, universities had to continue their operations with distance education. The effects of the crisis that emerged in this process were also reflected in the attitudes of the instructors working in these institutions and the administrators who had to manage the current crisis process. In particular, it was beneficial to have more information about organizational loyalty levels. In our country, where significant progress is being made in the hybrid education system, the transition of all educational institutions to the hybrid education due to COVID-

19 has also created the opportunity to analyse the perceptions of the loyalty of the employees who have to adapt quickly to the change and transformation within this system.

Because crises are sudden and unpredictable, they threaten the organisation's values. For this reason, responding quickly and effectively when a crisis arises is extremely important. It was determined that the sub-dimensions of crisis management (pre-crisis activities, activities during the crisis and post-crisis activities) have an explanatory effect on each other and organizational loyalty. These results reveal the importance of the internal dynamics of crisis management. Quick strategic responses during a crisis increase the effectiveness of organizations. Similar studies support this result (Semerciöz et al., 2015; Jumayeva and Aktepe, 2020). Various studies also revealed many results regarding the positive and negative effects of the crisis. These studies revealed that the preparatory work done before the crisis, the effective communication during the crisis and the adaptation to the new situation after the crisis have positive effects on the employees (Küçük and Bayuk, 2007; Lanaj, Chang and Johnson, 2012; Markovits, Boer and Dick, 2013; Halkos and Bousinakis, 2016). Many studies on loyalty have been examined within the scope of customer loyalty or brand loyalty. In these studies, it was observed that the common points of loyalty positively affect the performance and is an attractive aspect of the organization (Kiruthiga and Magesh, 2015; Murali, Poddar and Seema, 2017).

In the context of the results obtained from this current research, it was observed that the crisis phenomenon is indispensable under today's ever-changing uncertainty conditions, and its existence is accepted. Although it may not seem possible to avoid the crisis, it is inevitable for organizations to be prepared for this process. The importance of crisis management is felt even more in this sense. It should be considered that the components of this process are understood correctly and that each component affects the other. Therefore, careful preparation for the crisis will affect the effectiveness of the crisis process and thus enable the crisis to be overcome with minor damage. A properly and effectively managed crisis process will directly reflect on the human power, which is the organisation's most important resource. Therefore, it can become beneficial if the crisis is managed effectively. A manager who turns the crisis into an opportunity by managing it well will be able to overcome the crisis by strengthening both organization and management. In particular, it can be recommended that managers review their crisis management strategies and activities in this direction and increase their trust, loyalty and loyalty through fast and accurate information transfer to their employees through open communication channels.

This research has some limitations. The study was conducted in institutions operating in a single sector is a significant limitation. Another limitation of the study is that it is not longitudinal. Considering that the variables in the research may be subject to change over time. So, it should be known that the findings are limited to the time and period of the research. In addition, it should be taken into account that the study results are based on the answers given by the participants and their perceptions. Finally, it should not be forgotten that focusing on sectors with different organizational cultures in future research may differentiate research results.

**Peer Review:**

Externally peer-reviewed

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**Author Contributions:**

Idea/Concept/Design: A.Ç., N.Ü.P. Data Collection and/or Processing: A.Ç. Analysis and/or Interpretation: A.Ç. Literature Review: N.Ü.P., A.Ç. Writing the Article: A.Ç., N.Ü.P. Critical Review: A.Ç., N.Ü.P. Approval: A.Ç., N.Ü.P.

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