

## THE EFFECT ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF MARKETING STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED AGAINST THE CRISES

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### Abstract

The aim of the research was to identify the impact of marketing strategies implemented by hotel businesses in response to crises on business performance. Four & five-star hotels in the Antalya and Istanbul provinces constituted the universe of the research. The data were collected by questionnaire. Consequently, it was found that the hotel businesses are affected at a higher degree by the political and economic crises and that the businesses benefit more intensively from marketing strategies aimed at gaining customers and competition against the crises. As a consequence, it was found out that the crises have a positive effect on marketing strategies and a negative impact on the business performance, and that the marketing strategies have a positive effect on business performance. It is considered that the study will contribute at the point of well-evaluation of the fact of the crisis with regards to the tourism industry and at the point of positive effect of businesses' correct marketing strategies on their performance. The study focused on exogenous crises affecting hotel businesses. In future studies, the marketing strategies to be implemented by businesses against endogenous crises may be investigated.

**Keywords:** Crisis; Marketing Strategies; Business Performance.

### O EFEITO NO DESEMPENHO EMPRESARIAL DAS ESTRATÉGIAS DE MARKETING IMPLEMENTADAS CONTRA AS CRISES

#### Resumo

O objetivo da investigação foi identificar o impacto das estratégias de marketing implementadas pelas empresas hoteleiras em resposta a crises no desempenho empresarial. Os hotéis de quatro e cinco estrelas das províncias de Antalya e Istanbul constituíram o universo da investigação. Os dados foram coletados por meio da técnica de levantamento. Consequentemente, verificou-se que as empresas hoteleiras são afetadas em maior grau pelas crises políticas e econômicas e que as empresas beneficiam mais intensamente das estratégias de marketing destinadas a conquistar clientes e da concorrência contra as crises. Consequentemente, verificou-se que as crises têm um efeito positivo nas estratégias de marketing e um impacto negativo no desempenho empresarial, e que as estratégias de marketing têm um efeito positivo no desempenho empresarial. Considera-se que o presente estudo contribuirá para uma boa avaliação do fato da crise em termos da indústria do turismo e para o efeito positivo das estratégias de marketing corretas das empresas no seu desempenho. O estudo centrou-se nas crises exógenas que afetam as empresas hoteleiras. Em estudos futuros, podem ser investigadas as estratégias de marketing a implementar pelas empresas contra crises endógenas.

**Palavras-chave:** Crise; Estratégias de marketing; Desempenho dos negócios.

### L'EFFET DES STRATÉGIES MARKETING CONTRE LES CRISES SUR LA PERFORMANCE DES ENTREPRISES

#### Resumé

L'objectif de la recherche était d'identifier l'impact des stratégies de marketing mises en œuvre par les entreprises hôtelières en réponse aux crises sur la performance des entreprises. Les hôtels quatre et cinq étoiles des provinces d'Antalya et d'Istanbul constituaient l'univers de la recherche. Les données ont été collectées à l'aide de la technique du questionnaire. Il en a résulté que les entreprises hôtelières sont davantage affectées par les crises politiques et économiques et que ces entreprises bénéficient plus intensivement des stratégies de marketing visant à attirer les clients et à faire face à la concurrence pendant les crises. En conséquence, il a été constaté que les crises ont un effet positif sur les stratégies de marketing et un impact négatif sur la performance des entreprises, et que les stratégies de marketing ont un effet positif sur la performance des entreprises. Il est considéré que la présente étude contribuera à une meilleure évaluation de la notion de crise en termes d'industrie du tourisme et à l'effet positif des stratégies de marketing appropriées des entreprises sur leur performance. L'étude s'est concentrée sur les crises exogènes affectant les entreprises hôtelières. Dans les futures études, les stratégies de marketing à mettre en œuvre par les entreprises face aux crises endogènes pourraient être étudiées.

**Mots clés :** Crise ; Stratégie de Marketing ; Performance de l'entreprise.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The hotel businesses are active under dynamic conditions where the competition is high. The hotel businesses are able to face crises from time to time along with the changing environmental conditions. The crisis in tourism may be expressed as the state of the tourism sector's

or businesses' experiencing various problems and seeking solutions with respect to such problems due to socio-economic changes, natural disasters beyond the control of the businesses, terrorism and conflicts, adopted false policies, and administrative faults (Aymankuy, 2001). The crises are able to cause negative impacts, leading to the cancellation of



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reservations for hotel businesses and of events such as congresses and tourism fairs (Cro & Martins, 2017, p. 8).

The crises may arise due to many causes, such as economic depression, acts of terrorism, fires, and legal arrangements. All the businesses may face crises. The possibility of facing a crisis is higher especially for the tourism sector due to the vulnerable nature of the sector (Kalpaklıoğlu, 2010).

Considering the incidents that had been experienced at global scale throughout the history and that had led to crises in tourism sector, such as collapse in New York and world banks (1987), collapse of Tokyo Stock Exchange (1990), volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo Philippines (1991), Russian financial crisis (1998), terrorist attack in USA (2001), the central European floods disaster (2002), Iraq War (2003), SARS disease (2002-2003), Asian bird flu (2003-2004), Indian Ocean tsunami (2004), Bali bombings (2005), Amman hotel bombings (2005), invasion of Lebanon by Israel (2006), initiation of global economic crisis (2008), Greece's debt crisis (2009), Swine Influenza (2009), and the COVID-19, it is observed how crisis management is necessary and significant for the hotel businesses (Başer and İnce, 2022, p. 1314).

Effective crisis management becomes possible through strategic control. Through proper strategies, the crisis may be turned into an opportunity. As the effect of each crisis is different, it is required for business executives to determine the most proper strategy against the crisis (Redjeki et al., 2021, p. 121).

The hotel businesses are using different strategies against the crisis (Bilgiç et al., 2020). In other words, taking in advance the required measures against the crises or minimizing the effect of the crises may be possible by virtue of strategies to be implemented by hotel businesses. In periods of crisis, consumers' spending patterns and demand for products decrease. Effective marketing strategy begins with correct marketing tactics.

Through marketing strategies, hotel businesses may take the required steps in order to overcome drastic times such as economic stagnation periods (Moussa et al., 2017: 2). The businesses may turn the crisis into an opportunity by eliminating the hitches caused or to be caused by the state of crisis through some strategies to be developed in the domain of marketing.

Despite the fact that hotel businesses have a brittle nature against crises, there are few studies in the literature on the subject. The reseraches found through literature review (Getahun & Dhaliwal, 2017; Adewale et al., 2013; Slater et al., 2010; Sin et al., 2005) focus on the effect of marketing strategies on business performance or on the effect of crises on business performance (Enz & Kosova, 2011; Chen et al., 2007; Okumuş & Karamustafa, 2005).

Additionally, such studies also focus on the strategies implemented against crises and the direct impact of crises performing. Despite the marketing strategies implemented by the businesses during periods of crisis were investigated in the previous studies, the reflection of the consequences of the adopted marketing strategies on the businesses has not been addressed.

This circumstance is unable to reveal the success and failure statuses of the marketing strategies implemented against the crisis. The lack of measurement of the impact of

marketing strategies implemented by hotel businesses against the crisis constituted the fundamental problem of this research. Eventually, the direct effect of the crisis on business performance may be in a negative direction. But when the crises are managed properly and when proper strategies are adopted, the effects of the crises may be turned in a positive direction.

The aim of the current study was to investigate the impact of marketing strategies implemented by hotel businesses in response to crises on business performance. In the present study, the crises affecting the hotel businesses and the level of the impact of marketing strategies implemented by hotels against the crises on their performance (positive or negative) were determined.

Thus, it was revealed to what extent the marketing strategies implemented by the businesses against the crises had been successful and unsuccessful. It is considered that the study is important at the point of contribution to the well consideration of the crises in terms of hotel businesses, the business executives' decision-making for correct marketing strategies during periods of crises, and the filling of the gap in the relevant literature.

## 2 THEORETICAL REVIEW

### 2.1 The Concept of Crises

Although the concept of crisis is used in many different domains, it was initially used in the domain of medicine. Especially in the 1960s, it entered the literature of the social sciences (Güneş & Beyazıt, 2010). In the social sciences, the term "crisis" is generally used in a way similar to concepts such as "depression" and "the megrims" (Delice, 2003). The word crisis consists of the combination of words "weixian" meaning "danger", and "jihui" meaning "opportunity".

This combination of the words clearly reflects the intrinsic characteristics of a crisis (Glaesser, 2006). Even if the intense use of the concept of crisis is observed in the domains of business and medicine in general, it may be specified that it is possible to encounter the concept of crisis in each point of life (Çakmak, 2018). For that reason, it may be stated that the concept of crisis has an extensive area of use (Zerenler, 2004).

The crisis is expressed as a circumstance that is unexpected and that suddenly arises (Kalpaklıoğlu, 2010), that requires quick response, and that endangers the present values, assumptions, and objectives of a business (Aymankuş, 2001). According to another definition, the crisis is an extraordinary incident disrupting the normal activities of a business and threatening the business' assets, its future relations with its stakeholders, and its survival (Carroll, 2009). The crisis is a great and unforeseen incident threatening the business and its stakeholders with harm (Pedraza, 2010).

When different definitions of the concept of "crisis" are checked, it is fact that they generally emphasize the negative aspect of the concept. But the crisis may not always have a negative effect on a business. On the contrary, the crisis may be considered an opportunity or milestone (Keown-McMullan, 1997). Even if it is urged upon the negative aspect of the concept of crisis within the framework of literature, it is required to emphasize that the crisis may have positive

aspects in which it turns into an opportunity for some businesses.

## 2.2 Marketing Strategies Implemented at Hotel Businesses Against the Crises

Marketing strategy may be expressed as the marketing programs and tactics planned by the business in order to actualize its objectives (Ebitu, 2016). Marketing strategy is also defined as the proper allocation of resources in order to ensure the businesses' competitive edge in a specific market (Adewale et al., 2013).

In times of crisis, tourism businesses are required to implement different strategies as per the conditions of the market in which they operate and as per the resources they possess. In times of crisis, the aim of marketing strategies should be to meet the requests of consumers (Altunışık & Karataş, 2015; Redjeki et al., 2021). The crisis may change consumer behaviors and cause weakness in demand, and such circumstances may cause a decrease in supply and a re-formation of consumer behaviors during the crisis (Hall et al., 2020).

Therefore, business managements should be able to identify the market's needs and requests, determine the potential market segments, formulate the proper marketing strategies, and measure the marketing performance (Supriadi et al., 2024).

The strategies generally implemented by the hotel businesses may be listed as savings, decreasing the input costs, mergers or sales, building a planned maintenance and repair system, market diversification, resorting to reductions in personnel's salaries, penetrating into the market, entering into new markets, product diversification, sales development, resorting to all kinds of savings measures, passing to a part-time work system, eliminating the products that don't generate added value, making long-term agreements with the tour operators, concentrating on public relations, advertising, publicity, and image activities, and focusing on the domestic market (Çelik & Özdevecioğlu, 2002; Köroğlu, 2004).

When the literature is examined, it is observed that the marketing strategies that may be implemented by hotel businesses in periods of crisis are able to be addressed in five parts. The referred strategies may be listed as (Usal & Oral, 2001; Öztürk & Türkmen, 2005; Kaşlı et al., 2009; Middleton vd., 2009; Zengin & Şahin, 2012; Pappas, 2015; Serçek, 2017; Redjeki vd., 2021) growth, competitiveness, market share, cost reduction, and customer-gaining strategies.

In their study, Karagiorgos et al. (2011) revealed that the hotel businesses in Athens had resorted to the pursuit of alternative markets in order to compensate for the reservation cancellations and low occupancy rates they faced as a consequence of the crisis. It was determined that operations had been performed for growing alternative markets, increasing the operations aimed at domestic markets, and ensuring price discounts against individual reservation cancellations.

Moreover, it was also concluded that the businesses had allocated their limited budgets to alternative markets for the performance of publicity and advertisement activities. In the relevant study, it was observed that the businesses had concentrated on marketing strategies for market share, cost reduction, and customer gain against the crisis.

Ghaderi et al. (2012) revealed that the strategies of the tourism businesses found in Penang –among the significant destinations of Malaysia- most extensively used against the regional and global crises are moving the market from long distance to regional and short distance and trying to grow domestic tourism.

Pappas (2015), in his study investigating the Greek hotels' marketing strategies in the stagnation period, conducted a survey with the business managers of 914 hotels in the whole country. Results of the study, he concluded that the hotel businesses concentrated on marketing strategies for decreasing production costs during periods of crisis and that this had a direct effect on the marketing strategies.

In a study addressing the subject of crisis management in Brazil following the crisis of 2020-2021, the routes to be followed in tourism after the crisis were expressed as encouraging the training of the stakeholders on crisis management, investing in research and actions for improving the Ministry of Tourism by prioritizing the crisis prevention and preparation theories and for implementation, and performing various studies regarding the analysis of developments in the tourism market and the prevention of political crises (Veloza et al., 2023).

Garbuio et al. (2022) investigated the strategies that the accommodation businesses in Brazil had adopted in order to mitigate crisis impact as part of crisis management. Research uncovered that the crisis has had adverse impact on hotel businesses, with a significant drop in demand, cancellations and financial difficulties. The strategies that the business adopted the most against the crisis were marketing management and reduction of expenditures. It was determined that the businesses had not implemented their crisis management plans in general. Additionally, Minohara et al. (2024) determined that the climate crisis in Brazil is negatively affecting the tourism sector.

Chanyasak et al. (2022), in their study focusing on a boutique hotel chain located in Chiang Mai Thailand, determined that the hotels adopted strategies for increasing the income beyond the rooms and training the personnel by decreasing the costs in light of the crisis experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Redjeki et al. (2021), in their study performed to determine how a four-star hotel business in Bandung was affected by the pandemic and which marketing strategies were adopted by it in order to master the referred crisis, concluded that the hotel business had been negatively affected by the crisis and that the hotel management had adopted the strategies of cost reduction, market share and customer gain against the crisis.

When analysing the relevant studies, although the marketing strategies adopted by the businesses in times of crisis have been examined in the previous studies, the reflection of the consequences of the adopted marketing strategies on the businesses has not been addressed. Therefore, the lack of measurement of the impact of marketing strategies implemented by hotel businesses against the crisis constituted the fundamental problem of this research. Marketing strategies used to deal with crises are defined in Table 1.

Table 1. The Concept of Crises.

| Concept                            | Definition   | Reference   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Growth Strategies</b>           | The aim of businesses is to grow and increase their market share. Businesses can adopt intensive, inclusive and diversifying growth strategies.  | Kotler, (2000); Redjeki vd., (2021)   |
| <b>Competitiveness Strategies</b>  | Competitive strategies are a form of response developed by tourism enterprises by comparing themselves with their competitors and taking into account the characteristics of the market.   | Usal ve Oral, (2001); Petzer vd., (2008)                                      |
| <b>Market-Share Strategies</b>     | This strategy is an attempt to determine which markets are more suitable for the company's activities. Businesses perform best when they carefully select their target market(s) and prepare special marketing programmes. Businesses can use undifferentiated, differentiated and intensified marketing strategies. | Yükselen, (2008); Middleton et al. (2009); Oktay, (2017); Redjeki vd., (2021) |
| <b>Cost Reduction Strategies</b>   | In times of crisis, these are the strategies used by companies to reduce their purchases of products and services. Reducing costs ensures the survival of businesses in the short term during the crisis, but may cause customer losses in the long term.  | Broome et al., (2007); Milić (2011)   |
| <b>Customer-Gaining Strategies</b> | Companies are prioritising the reduction of production and input costs in order to retain customers and attract new ones. At the same time, strategies can be used to increase cooperation with intermediaries and develop direct communication channels with customers.   | Binbay, (2007); Notta & Vlachvei (2015); Eser ve Korkmaz (2017)               |

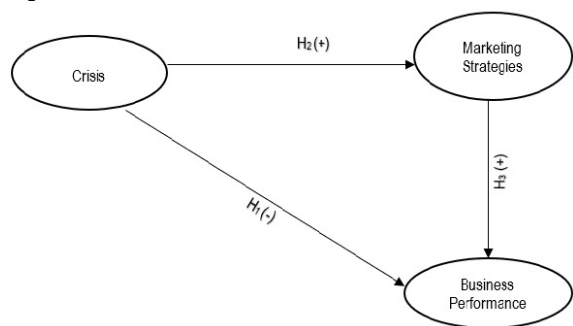
Source: own elaboration.

### 2.3 Research Purpose and Hypothesis Development

The hotel businesses may frequently encounter crises pursuant to their construct. The hotel business sector, in which demand is vulnerable and competition is intense, has to always be ready to face crises. The ability of the businesses to take the required measures against the crises and to minimize the effects of the crises is possible through the strategies they would implement. One of the strategies that may be implemented by the businesses against the crisis is certainly marketing strategies.

The object of the current paper was to identify the effect on business performance of marketing strategies implemented by hotels in response to the crisis. In addition, the examination of the effect of crises on business performance and marketing strategies may be specified as the second aim of the study. Towards these objectives, the model and hypotheses of the study were developed.

Figure 1. The Research's Model.



Source: own elaboration.

The crisis is a sudden and unexpected incident that disrupts the activities of the business, which constitutes a threat both materially and in terms of reputation (Coombs, 2007). Moreover, the crises may physically, emotionally, and financially harm the stakeholders (Chen et al., 2007). In environments of uncertainty, such as during periods of crisis, the people resort to saving on their expenditures except for their basic needs.

This circumstance causes decreases in the businesses' incomes. Many researches (Okumuş & Karamustafa, 2005; Chen et al., 2007; Enz and Kosova, 2011) reveal that the crisis negatively affects businesses and business performance. The first hypothesis developed considering the aforementioned considerations is as follows:

H1: The crisis has had a negative impact on business performance.

Numerous businesses encounter crises due to various causes. In case the businesses encounter a crisis, it is important for them to develop effective marketing strategies (Serçek, 2017) so that they can abstain from the negative effects of the crisis and continue their existence.

The businesses implement numerous different strategies, such as reducing their implementing discounts, operating costs and postponing the investments (Pappas, 2015), in order to maintain their activities during periods of crisis. Thus, it can be stated that businesses resort to marketing strategies more in environments of uncertainty, such as during periods of crisis.

The second hypothesis developed within the scope of the study considering these considerations is as follows:

H2: The crisis affected the marketing strategies positively.

Many businesses implement strategies during periods of crisis to decrease the effects of the crises, to be able to maintain their activities while standing in the environment of crisis, and to be able to turn the crisis into an opportunity. Many businesses resort to marketing strategies in such periods in order to be able to forestall the decreases in sales and income that occur or are possible to occur in environments of uncertainty.

Such marketing strategies implemented in the periods of crisis affect the businesses in many aspects such as sales, income etc., and as a consequence, the performances of the businesses are affected from such strategies implemented. The researches conducted (Sin et al., 2005; Slater et al., 2010; Adewale et al., 2013; Nar & Gök, 2016; Getahun & Dhaliwal, 2017) discover the presence of a positive and remarkable relationship between the marketing strategies and business performance.

The third hypothesis developed from the above is:

H3: The marketing strategies affected the business's performance positively.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Data Instrument Tool and Method of the Research

In research, it was benefited from the questionnaires as a data collection tool. There were two sections to the questionnaire used to collect the data. Scale questions were included in the questionnaire's initial section, and demographical ones were covered in the following section. Three different scales were used in the first section of the questionnaire form.

The scales used were the scale of crisis for determining from which crises the businesses are being affected, the scale of marketing strategies for identifying the marketing strategies adopted by the businesses during the periods of crisis, and the scale of business performance prepared for measuring the performances of the businesses.

Through a literature review, the scales used in different studies were examined. The marketing strategies scale was formed by benefiting from the studies of Türkmen (2005) and Serçek (2017). The statements in the scale were adapted to the present study, and changes were made in some statements.

Through such changes, it was ensured that some statements on the scale would be more comprehensible by getting expert opinions. A business performance scale was obtained from Avcı et al.'s study (2011). Then, a pilot study was conducted with 25 hotel businesses, and the last touches were put on the questionnaire form.

The questionnaire form used in the research was applied by the face-to-face meeting way. In the collection of data from the field, support was obtained from a research company.

Four-five-star hotel businesses, located in the Antalya and Istanbul cities, constituted the universe of the research. The cause of the selection of the referred cities as the research's universe is the intense presence of four- five-star hotel businesses in these provinces, considering the distribution of resort hotels and city hotels in the Republic of Türkiye.

The research was confined to the hotel businesses located only in the cities of Antalya and Istanbul due to reasons such as time, accessibility, and economy. The results obtained by the research don't cover all the hotel businesses in the Republic of Türkiye. But it was considered that it would reveal a general view regarding hotel businesses' marketing strategies and performances against the crisis.

It was determined that there were 730 hotel businesses in total of which 226 operated in Istanbul (99 five-star businesses and 127 four-star businesses), and 504 operated in Antalya (308 five-star businesses and 196 four-star businesses) (<https://yigm.ktb.gov.tr>).

It was decided to make a complete count by considering that it would be possible to reach all 730 businesses. It was contacted with all the businesses, and data regarding 402 questionnaire forms in total that had participated and that could be taken into consideration was obtained.

Before the analysis, the state of suitability for normal distribution of data gathered during the research was examined. There are different methods of determining for

normal distribution. One of these methods is the calculation of skewness and kurtosis values (Coşkun et al., 2017). The skewness value being in the range of  $\pm 1$  (George and Mallery, 2010) and the kurtosis value being smaller than the value of  $\pm 3$  (Sposito et al., 1983) is deemed to be sufficient for meeting the normal distribution assumption. In the study, skewness (0.987) and kurtosis (2.067) were calculated. The data met the normal distribution. Descriptive statistics and path analysis were used towards the research objective.

### 4 RESULTS ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Demographic Findings

In Table 2, the demographic information of the executives participating in the research.

**Table 2.** Demographic Characteristic of Participants

|                   |                                | n   | %    |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----|------|
| Gender            | Female                         | 133 | 33.1 |
|                   | Male                           | 269 | 66.9 |
|                   | Total                          | 402 | 100  |
| Educational Level | Secondary School – High School | 42  | 10.4 |
|                   | Associate's Degree             | 59  | 14.7 |
|                   | Bachelor's Degree              | 270 | 67.2 |
|                   | Postgraduate Degree            | 31  | 7.7  |
|                   | Total                          | 402 | 100  |
| Position          | General Manager                | 79  | 19.7 |
|                   | Deputy General Manager         | 323 | 80.3 |
|                   | Total                          | 402 | 100  |
| Working Time      | 1-5 years                      | 240 | 59.7 |
|                   | 6-10 years                     | 83  | 20.6 |
|                   | 11-15 years                    | 44  | 10.9 |
|                   | 16 years and more              | 35  | 8.7  |
|                   | Total                          | 402 | 100  |

Source: own elaboration.

When Table 2 was examined, it was observed that most of the hotel business executives taking part in the study were male (66.9%). In addition, 33.1% of the executives were female. It was observed that 14.7% of the participants had associate degrees, 10.4% had secondary and high school degrees, and 7.7% had graduate degrees.

When the distribution of executives of 402 hotel businesses as per their positions was examined, it was observed that 80.3% of them were holding office as deputy general managers, and that 19.7% of them were holding office as general managers.

When the working time of executives at the hotel businesses was examined, it was observed that 59.7% of them were holding office in the range of 1-5 years, 20.6% of them were holding office in the range of 6-10 years, 10.9% of them were holding office in the range of 11-15 years, and 8.7% of them were holding office for 16 years and more. When evaluated in general, it was understood that the majority of the executives of businesses were holding office at their current businesses for a relatively short period.

**Table 3.** Characteristic of Hotel Businesses.

|                               |                 | n   | %    |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----|------|
| Class of Hotel                | 4 Star          | 139 | 34.6 |
|                               | 5 Star          | 263 | 65.4 |
|                               | Total           | 402 | 100  |
| Type of Hotel                 | Resort Hotel    | 214 | 53.2 |
|                               | City Hotel      | 188 | 46.8 |
|                               | Total           | 402 | 100  |
| Operating Period of the Hotel | 1 - 5 years     | 91  | 22.6 |
|                               | 6 - 10 years    | 106 | 26.4 |
|                               | 11 - 15 years   | 111 | 27.6 |
|                               | 16 years & more | 94  | 23.4 |
|                               | Total           | 402 | 100  |

Source: own elaboration.

When the status of hotel businesses participating in the research was examined in terms of their class, it was observed that 65.4% (263 of them) were 5 star hotel businesses, and 34.6% (139 of them) were 4 star hotel businesses. When the distribution in relation to the types of hotel businesses was examined, it could be stated that 53.2% of them were operating as resort hotels and 46.8% of them were operating as city hotels.

When the distribution of hotel businesses was examined in terms of their operating periods in the tourism, it was understood that 27.6% of them were operating for 11-15 years, 26.4% of them were operating for 6-10 years, 22.6% of them were operating for 1-5 years, and 23.4% of them were operating for 16 years and more.

#### 4.2 Validity and Reliability of Scales

For the dataset to be suitable for factor analysis, it is required for the KMO value to have a value above 0.50, and in addition, it is required for the result of Bartlett's sphericity test to be statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Can, 2013). For that reason, as a consequence of KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test actualized regarding the scales of marketing strategies, business performance, and crisis used in the study, KMO value was calculated as 0.722, 0.788 and 0.701 and consequence of Bartlett's test was calculated as ( $p < 0.05$ ). When the values of KMO and Bartlett's test obtained were examined, it could be said that the sample used for the research was of sufficient size, and that such a sample was suitable in terms of factor analysis.

In Table 4, the marketing strategies scale emerged as a five-dimensional structure, the business performance scale

**Table 5.** Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

| Scales               | ( $\chi^2/sd$ ) | RMSEA       | SRMR        | CFI         | GFI         | AGFI        |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Marketing Strategies | 2.53            | 0.06        | 0.06        | 0.92        | 0.88        | 0.85        |
| Business Performance | 2.84            | 0.07        | 0.05        | 0.97        | 0.97        | 0.94        |
| Crisis               | 2.96            | 0.07        | 0.04        | 0.98        | 0.99        | 0.96        |
| Degree of Fit        | ( $\chi^2/sd$ ) | RMSEA       | SRMR        | CFI         | GFI         | AGFI        |
| Good Fit             | $\leq 3$        | $\leq 0.05$ | $\leq 0.05$ | $\geq 0.95$ | $\geq 0.90$ | $\geq 0.90$ |
| Acceptable           | $\leq 4-5$      | 0.06-0.08   | 0.06-0.08   | 0.90-0.94   | 0.89-0.85   | 0.89-0.80   |

Source: own elaboration.

as a two-dimensional structure and the crisis scale as a one-dimensional structure. The marketing strategies scale revealed about 56% of the total variance. The two-factor business performance scale revealed about 57% of the total variance. The crisis scale revealed about 47% of the overall variance.

**Table 4.** Factor Analysis Results.

| Scale of Marketing Strategies   |             |             |               |                 |
|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Factor Dimensions   | Factor Load | Eigen value | Variance Rev. | Number of Items |
| Growth  | 0.809       | 4.63        | 16.63         | 6               |
| Competition   | 0.717       | 3.82        | 13.63         | 7               |
| Market Share  | 0.683       | 2.83        | 10.09         | 6               |
| Customer Gaining  | 0.717       | 2.51        | 8.95          | 5               |
| Cost Reduction  | 0.626       | 1.84        | 6.56          | 4               |
| Varimax Rotation Principal Components Analysis: Total Variance Revealed: 55.86% |             |             |               |                 |
| Scale of Business Performance   |             |             |               |                 |
| Factor Dimensions   | Factor Load | Eigen value | Variance Rev. | Number of Items |
| Financial Performance   | 0.835       | 3.45        | 38.46         | 4               |
| Non-Financial Performance   | 0.649       | 1.62        | 18.03         | 5               |
| Varimax Rotation Principal Components Analysis: Total Variance Revealed: 56.49% |             |             |               |                 |
| Scale of Crisis   |             |             |               |                 |
| Factor Dimensions   | Factor Load | Eigen value | Variance Rev. | Number of Items |
| Crisis  | 0.682       | 2.35        | 46.96         | 5               |
| Varimax Rotation Principal Components Analysis: Total Variance Revealed: 46.96% |             |             |               |                 |

Source: own elaboration.

The current research's scales' reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. This value between 0 and 1, and it is desired for an acceptable value to be at least 0.7. But it is anticipated that having this value at 0.5 or higher may be acceptable in examination-type of research (Coşkun et al., 2017). The Cronbach's alpha value of marketing strategies, business performance and crisis were determined as 0.756, 0.766 and 0.708. These values are an indication that the scales' reliability on the basis of internal consistency was at a sufficient level.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used for the examination of the factor constructs. The fit index values attained as the result of CFA and the ranges in which the fit index values are required to be present are provided in Table 5.

The values of the model were meeting the fit criteria as per the standardized estimation results calculated by the CFA of the scales. The model was statistically significant. It was understood that construct of the scale of marketing strategies was generally showing a fit of acceptable level with the data in hand, and that the construct of the scale of business performance and that the scale of crises were generally showing a good level of fit with the data in hand, and that they were confirmed. Also, the fit index values determined as the result of CFA were in the range of good and acceptable values.

In the measurement of the validity of the data collection tools, it is possible to encounter different validity types in implementation, such as content validity, criterion validity, and construct validity (Coşkun et al., 2017). For the validity of content of the scales included in the present research, a literature survey was performed, expert opinions were obtained, and pilot study was carried out.

Following these stages, it was understood that the assessment instrument used in the research was clear and comprehensible and that the questions included in the research were not causing any confusion. Thus, it can be stated that the content validity of the research was ensured. Karasar (2009) specified that the factor analysis technique could be used to ensure construct validity. In ensuring the construct validity of the scales used in the present research, both CFA and EFA techniques were used.

When the results of EFA and CFA were examined as a whole, it was concluded that the scales of crisis, marketing strategies, and business performance, included as main variables in the research model, were statistically valid, reliable, and confirmable scales. It is stated that only construct fit shouldn't be deemed sufficient in order to refer to validity, and that testing the convergent and divergent (distinctive) validities is also important following the testing of construct validity (Yaşlıoğlu, 2017).

The convergent and divergent validity is the examination of multi-dimensional scales in terms of correlation (Coşkun et al., 2017). The confirmation of a first-level multi-factor measurement model as the result of CFA means that the factors and items included in the scale have convergent and distinctive validity at a specific level (Gürbüz, 2019). In this study, first-level CFA was performed regarding the multi-dimensional scales, and it was confirmed in terms of construct. In this sense, it can be stated that the multi-dimensional scales have convergent and distinctive validity.

#### 4.3 Means of Scales

In the following table, the arithmetic mean values regarding the marketing strategies implemented to combat the crises are provided.

**Table 6.** Arithmetic Mean Values of the Scale of Marketing Strategies.

| Marketing Strategies | N   | Mean |
|----------------------|-----|------|
| Customer Gaining     | 402 | 4,04 |
| Competition          | 402 | 3,92 |
| Market Share         | 402 | 3,74 |
| Growth               | 402 | 3,54 |
| Cost Reduction       | 402 | 3,05 |

Source: own elaboration.

While the arithmetic mean of the participants' responses for the phrases being close to 5 indicates their approval for the relevant phrase, the mean being 3 indicates their indecisiveness regarding the relevant phrase, and the mean being close to 1 indicates their disapproval for the relevant phrase.

It can be stated that the hotel businesses concentrate on strategies of preserving their current customers and of drawing new customers to their businesses (customer gaining) and moreover, on strategies for competition by bringing to prominence their aspects of being different than their competitors in the market (competitiveness strategies) in the periods of crisis.

If the phrases that the participants approve of at a low rate are evaluated in general, it can be stated that the strategies implemented the least by the businesses in the periods of crisis are growth and cost reduction strategies. The cause of the lesser use of cost reduction strategies may result from business executives' unwillingness to compromise on quality. And the lack of intense use of growth strategies may result from business executives' willingness to resort to strategies that they can get results from in the short term during periods of crisis.

In the Table 7, the responses of executives of hotel businesses regarding the crises that they were affected by were graded from negative response "(1) none" to positive response "(5) too much".

**Table 7.** Arithmetic Mean Values of the Scale of the Level of Being Affected by the Crisis.

| Crises   | N   | Mean |
|--|-----|------|
| Political Crises                               | 402 | 3.78 |
| Economic Crises                                | 402 | 3.56 |
| Crises Based on Political Violence (Terrorism) | 402 | 3.49 |
| Crises Based on Natural Disasters              | 402 | 2.70 |
| Ecological Crises                              | 402 | 2.66 |

Source: own elaboration.

It was observed that the type of crisis from which the hotel businesses participating in the research were most affected had been "political crises" (3.78). And the second type of crisis from which the businesses were most affected had been "economic crisis" (3.56). The other crisis types affecting the hotel businesses participating in the research were determined as "crises based on political violence" (3.49), "crises based on natural disasters" (2.70), and "ecological crises" (2.66), respectively.

#### 4.4 Testing Hypotheses

The model developed and tested in accordance with the research's objective is provided in Figure 2. The fact of being affected by the crisis was included as an endogenous variable in the model, and marketing strategies and business performance were incorporate as exogenous variables in the model. Fit values obtained by testing the model are provided in Table 8.

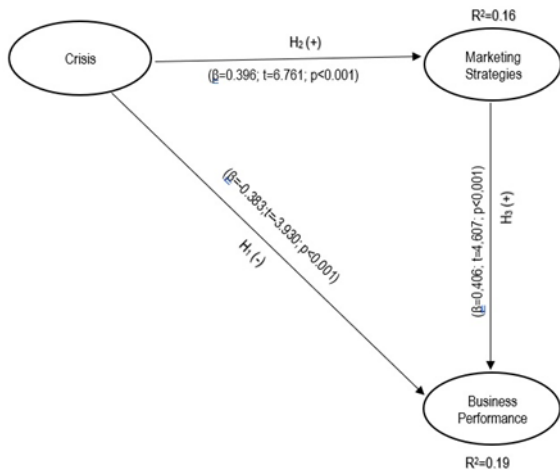
**Table 8.** Fit Values of the Tested Model.

| Criterion     | Good Fit    | Acceptable Fit | Value Obtained | Result     | Reference                                     |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|------------|---|
| $(\chi^2/sd)$ | $\leq 3$    | $\leq 4-5$     | 2.55           | Good Fit   | Byrne, 1989                                   |
| RMSEA         | $\leq 0.05$ | 0.06 - 0.08    | 0.06           | Acceptable | Hu and Bentler, 1993; Browne and Cudeck, 1993 |
| SRMR          | $\leq 0.05$ | 0.06 - 0.08    | 0.05           | Good Fit   |   |
| CFI           | $\geq 0.95$ | 0.90 - 0.94    | 0.94           | Acceptable | Marsh, 1990 and McDonald                      |
| AGFI          | $\geq 0.90$ | 0.89 - 0.80    | 0.91           | Good Fit   | Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993;                    |
| GFI           | $\geq 0.90$ | 0.89 - 0.85    | 0.94           | Good Fit   | Tanaka and Huba, 1985                         |

Source: own elaboration.

It was found out that the model had statistical significance and that the values of the model met the fit criteria as per the standardized estimation results calculated by testing the model developed for testing the hypotheses of the research. In general, the model showed a good level of fit based on the available data.

**Figure 2.** Structural Equation Model Tested,  $\chi^2=183.90$ ;  $sd=72$ ;  $p<0.001$ .



Source: own elaboration.

In model tested, the level of being affected by the crisis had a direct effect in a positive direction on marketing strategies ( $\beta = 0.396$ ). The level of being affected by the crisis reveals about 16% of the change in marketing strategies. The degree of crisis impact had a direct negative effect on business performance ( $\beta = -0.383$ ). And the marketing strategies had a direct effect in a positive direction on the business performance ( $\beta = 0.406$ ). The values of path coefficients regarding the relationships included in the model are provided in Table 9.

The variables of the level of being affected by the crisis and the marketing strategies that affect business performance together reveal about 19% of the change in business performance. When the indirect effects were examined in the model, it was found that the level of being affected by the crisis had an indirect effect in a positive direction on business performance over the marketing

strategies ( $\beta = 0.161$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). According to the results obtained, hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 were accepted.

**Table 9.** Path Coefficients Included in the Structural Equation Model.

| Effects                | Being Affected from the Crisis ( $\beta$ ) | Marketing Strategies ( $\beta$ ) | R <sup>2</sup> |
|------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Direct effect</b>   |  |                                  |                |
| Marketing Strategies   | 0.396                                      | 0                                | 0.16           |
| Business Performance   | -0.383                                     | 0.406                            | 0.19           |
| <b>Indirect effect</b> |  |                                  |                |
| Marketing Strategies   | 0  | 0                                |                |
| Business Performance   | 0.161                                      | 0                                |                |
| <b>Total</b>           |  |                                  |                |
| Marketing Strategies   | 0.396                                      | 0                                |                |
| Business Performance   | -0.222                                     | 0.406                            |                |

Source: own elaboration.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the current study, the marketing strategies adopted by the hotels against the crises and the effect of marketing strategies implemented as a result of the crises on the performances of hotel businesses were examined.

By the research, it was found out that the types of crises that affected hotel businesses the most were political and economic crises and crises based on extensive armed violence incidents. The frequent economic crises of the past have negatively affected the hotel businesses. The types of crises that the businesses taking part in the research were those beyond the control of the businesses (political and economic crises and crises based on extensive armed violence incidents).

But the business managements may prevent the negative effects of crises through strategies they would develop against the crises. In addition, it was observed that the two crisis types that the businesses participating in the research were being affected less were ecological crises and crises based on natural disasters. Serçek (2017), in his study performed on hotel businesses, concluded that the crisis types from which the businesses were being affected the most were economic crises and crises based on acts of terrorism. Thus, it can be specified that the research's result was analogous with the results of researches included in the literature (Akıncı et al., 2012).

It was determined that the hotel businesses participating in the research were using the marketing strategies for gaining new customers (customer-gaining strategy) by preserving their current customers more intensely compared to other marketing strategies. The referred result obtained tallies with the results obtained by Karagiorgos et al. (2011), Redjeki et al. (2021), and Chanyasak et al. (2022) in their reseraches.

Hence, in the referred studies, it was also concluded that one of the marketing strategies most often adopted by



hotel businesses against crises is the customer-gain strategy. This state may result from the willingness of businesses to abstain from the negative effects of the crisis by primarily preserving their current status.

Consequently, it was identified that the marketing strategy adopted the least by the businesses was the cost reduction strategy. This result obtained by the study differs from the results obtained by Pappas (2015), Garbuio et al. (2022), and Chanyasak et al. (2022) in their researches. Hence, in the referred studies, the marketing strategy adopted the most against the crisis was determined to be the cost reduction strategy.

One of the root causes of the difference between the results obtained by the present study and the results obtained by the researches in the literature may be the conduct of the studies at hotel businesses in different regions and on different scales. In the present study, only large-scale hotel businesses were included in the research. Large-scale hotel businesses may not feature strategies relevant to cost reduction for making no concessions on service quality in times of crisis, and for that reason, they may not intensively adopt cost reduction strategies.

The crisis should not always be considered bad or negative for businesses. In terms of the businesses, the crisis may be a milestone in a positive direction (Keown-McMullan, 1997). The direct effects of the crises were investigated in the studies in the literature, and in numerous studies, it was found that the crises had negatively affected businesses and the tourism sector. In the present research, it was also found that the crisis had directly negatively affected the performance of the businesses.

But unlike the studies in the literature, in the present research, it was identified that the crisis had an indirect and positive impact on business performance over the marketing strategies. Contrary to many studies in the literature, the present study may be considered a significant indicator of the fact that the effects of crises would not always be in a negative direction through well-managed crises and the adoption of correct marketing strategies.

In this research, the result revealed by the marketing strategies implemented by the accommodation businesses being active in the tourism sector against the crises was measured with business performance. According to the research results, it was identified that the marketing strategies had positively affected the business performance.

This finding greatly aligns with the results of studies performed by Sin et al., (2005), Köksal and Özgül (2007), Adewale et al., (2013), Getahun and Dhaliwal (2017). In this sense, it can be stated that the positive effect on business performance of marketing strategies implemented by the businesses during the crisis was supported by the literature.

Eventually, hotel businesses frequently face different types of crises due to their nature. Even if the crises are perceived negatively, the indirect effects of the crises on business performance are in a positive direction when the crises are managed correctly and when correct marketing strategies are adopted for the businesses. In the direction of the findings and results acquired by the study, the below suggestions were offered for the hotel businesses' executives and for the researchers:

- The periods of crisis are extremely fertile periods in terms of marketing activities. Many businesses resort to cutting back on marketing activities during such periods. Thus, business executives may increase both their sales and market shares by concentrating more on marketing strategies.
- The crisis doesn't always negatively affect businesses. The crisis also has numerous positive effects for businesses, such as the comprehension of the importance of costs and the emergence of opportunities for growth. At this point, business executives may benefit more from growth strategies such as mergers with businesses involved in the sector in which they operate, mergers with businesses involved in different fields of activity, and heading to new markets and customers.
- In the present study, it was focused on exogenous crises affecting hotel businesses. There are also endogenous crises affecting hotel businesses. In future researches, the marketing strategies implemented by businesses to combat crises may be explored by addressing both exogenous and endogenous crises together. Thus, there would be the possibility of comparing the marketing strategies implemented by the businesses against the exogenous crises and against the endogenous crises.
- This study was limited to the provinces of Antalya and Istanbul. In future studies, through the inclusion of large- and small-scale businesses in the Republic of Türkiye, the results to be obtained may be generalized.

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#### CRediT author statement

| Term                       | Definition  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Author | 2 <sup>nd</sup> A. |
|----------------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------|
| Conceptualization          | Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims  | x                      | X                  |
| Methodology                | Development or design of methodology; creation of models  | x                      | x                  |
| Software                   | Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components  | x                      |                    |
| Validation                 | Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/ reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs  | x                      | x                  |
| Formal analysis            | Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data   | x                      | x                  |
| Investigation              | Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection   | x                      | x                  |
| Resources                  | Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools   | x                      | x                  |
| Data Curation              | Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse | x                      | x                  |
| Writing - Original Draft   | Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation)   | x                      | x                  |
| Writing - Review & Editing | Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre- or post-publication stages   | x                      | x                  |
| Visualization              | Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/ data presentation  | x                      | x                  |
| Supervision                | Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team  | x                      | x                  |
| Project administration     | Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution   | x                      | x                  |
| Funding acquisition        | Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication  | x                      | x                  |

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