Strategic Responses to Quality Management in Turkish Higher Education[1]

Türk Yükseköğretiminde Kalite Yönetimine Gösterilen Stratejik Tepkiler[2]

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Öz

Çalışmada, kuruluşların kendilerine uygulanan uygunluğa/uymaya (conformity) yönelik kurumsal baskılar sonucunda ortaya koydukları farklı stratejik tepkileri belirlemek ve alternatif stratejilerin oluşumunu tahmin etmek için geliştirilmiş olan Yeni Kurumsalcı bir ön kavramsal çerçeve takip edilmiştir. Bu kapsamda, Yeni Kurumsalcı bakış açısıyla Türk yükseköğretiminde kalite yönetiminin benimsenmesi için yapılan normatif baskılar karşısında hangi stratejik tepkilerin verildiği (uyma, karşı koyma, manipülasyon) belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Çalışmada SmartPLS yazılımı ile Kısmi En Küçük Kareler Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli (PLS-SEM) algoritmaları uygulanmıştır. Bulgular, Türk yükseköğretiminde kalite yönetiminin benimsenmesi için kurumsal baskılardan gelen normatif baskıya karşı "uyma" stratejik tepkisinin ve mimetik baskıya karşı "manipülasyon" stratejik tepkisinin verildiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışmada elde edilen sonuçlardan Türk yükseköğretiminde kalite yönetiminin benimsenmesine yönelik normatif baskılar karşısında yükseköğretim kurumlarının uyma stratejik tepkisi vermeleri, normatif baskının yükseköğretimde kaliteyi tesis etmek için önemli bir araç olduğunu kanıtlayan bir gösterge olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu durum, kalite yönetiminin ulusal bazda sistemsel olarak kurulması çalışmalarında başarının yakalandığına işaret etmektedir. Avrupa Yükseköğrenim Alanında Kalite Güvencesi Standartları ve Yönergeleri (ASY)'ne uygunluk, Türk yükseköğretimine başarı getirirken, Türkiye'nin yükseköğretim alanında Avrupa ile entegrasyonunu tamamlamasını sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler Stratejik Tepkiler; Yükseköğretim; Uygunluk; Uyma; Manipülasyon.

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Abstract

In the study, a neo-institutionalist pre-conceptual framework was followed which was developed to identify the different strategic responses that organizations put forth because of institutional pressures towards conformity and to predict the formation of alternative strategies. In this context, it has been tried to determine which strategic responses (acquiesce or defy or manipulate) are given faced with normative pressures to adopt quality management in Turkish higher education from a Neo-Institutionalist perspective. In the study, PLS-SEM algorithms were applied with SmartPLS software. The findings concluded that the "acquiesce" strategic response against normative pressure from the institutional pressures for the adoption of quality management in Turkish higher education, and the "manipulate" strategic response is given against mimetic pressure. According to the results obtained in this study, the acquiesce response as a strategic response to the normative pressures for higher education institutions to adopt quality management reveals that normative pressure is an essential tool for establishing quality in higher education. This indicates that success has been achieved in the systematic establishment of quality management on a national basis in Turkiye. Conformity to Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) standards brings success to Turkish higher education and enables Turkiye to complete its integration with Europe in higher education as soon as possible.

Keywords *Strategic Responses; Higher Education; Conformity; Acquiesce; Manipulate.*

Introduction

Studies conducted in recent years (Kondra & Hinings, 1998; Oliver, 1991; Westphal et al., 1997) show that organizations adopt management practices legitimizing by the institutional context differently, depending on many factors like the adoption time of the institutions, organizational characteristics, and position in the institutional context (Özen, 2002: 54).

Among these studies, Oliver's (1991) study named "Strategic Responses to Institutional Processes" has been one of the essential studies that left its mark on the literature. Oliver (1991, p. 145), who included the theory of resource dependence in his institutional theory studies based on the study of DiMaggio (1988), developed a preliminary conceptual framework to determine the different strategic responses of organizations as a result of institutional pressures for conformity and predict the formation of alternative strategies.

According to this conceptual framework, there are five strategic responses that organizations exposed to institutional pressure can use. These strategies are "acquiesce", "compromise", "avoid", "defy" and "manipulate". Boxenbaum & Jonsson (2017: 17) stated that "acquiesce" strategy is essentially the strategy leading to isomorphism, Compromise strategy can be manifested as separation (Scott, 2001), "avoid" and "defy" strategies are the two resistances of the components that pressure organizations to adopt a new organizational element when they disagree with their goals. They state that the "manipulation" strategy is similar to corporate entrepreneurship in that it is a conscious attempt to change institutions in a specific direction.

Which strategies organizations will follow may vary depending on the cause of institutional pressure, the identity of the oppressing actor, the context in which the oppression is made, the type of oppression and how it is done. As a result, despite being in the same institutional field, organizations with different

dependencies may respond differently to the same institutional pressure. For example, the more an organization is dependent on the oppressors in terms of resources, the more it will show “acquiesce” behavior. In the opposite situation, it will be able to follow strategies of resistance or even “manipulation” (Özen, 2013: 130).

Higher education research is one of the areas where new institutional theory and resource dependency theory are frequently used together. In general, how to conceptualize the environment of higher education institutions and the reactions to change are examined in these studies (Cai & Mehari, 2015; González et al., 2009; Taştan, 2021; Taştan & Yılmaz, 2021; Vellam, 2012). However, Oliver's (1991) study is more concerned with individual responses to these pressures than creating institutional meanings, which is a subject of institutional logic research (Vellam, 2012: 135). The arguments that the reactions of the institution members to an institutional change reveal the institution's characteristics (Ergül, 2007) and that the institutional structure affects the individual behavior (Özdemiray, 2018: 36) make individual reactions even more important.

In another higher education study in which institutional theory and resource dependency theory were used together, González et al. (2009) tried to identify Oliver's (1991) strategic responses while analyzing the coercive, mimetic and normative pressures and resistance for introducing skills in business management and accounting education in Spain within the framework of the new institutional theory.

Based on the same pressure mechanisms, in their studies Taştan (2021) and Taştan & Yılmaz (2021), which examine the diffusion and adoption of quality management in the Turkish higher education system within the framework of the new institutional theory, it is stated that the diffusion of quality management in the Turkish higher education system generally started with the establishment of Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) in 2015. Today, it has been concluded that it is in the completion stage. The study also concluded that normative pressure mechanisms are decisive in adopting quality management. Thus, quality management is adopted as normative, and higher education institutions show behavior to conform to the normative context.

According to Oliver (1991), the more widely an institutional expectation or practice diffuses, the more likely organizations are to conform to these expectations, while the less common it is, the less likely organizations are to conform and the more likely they are to resist (Oliver, 1991: 168–169). On the other hand, under conditions of moderate diffusion where the degree of diffusion is low and less likely to be affected by it, or where the diffusion is in its starting phase, organizations often “compromise” the degree of conformity or superficially adopt changes to ceremonial conformity or pressure or expectations, through spectacle services. It is claimed that they try to “avoid” tactics, and the less common a set of norms, values, and practices, the more likely they are to respond to “defy” or “manipulation” (Oliver, 1991: 168–169).

Based on these explanations, the model proposed by González et al. (2009: 7) within the framework of Oliver's (1991: 168–169) arguments were adapted to Turkish higher education, and a new model was examined in the study.

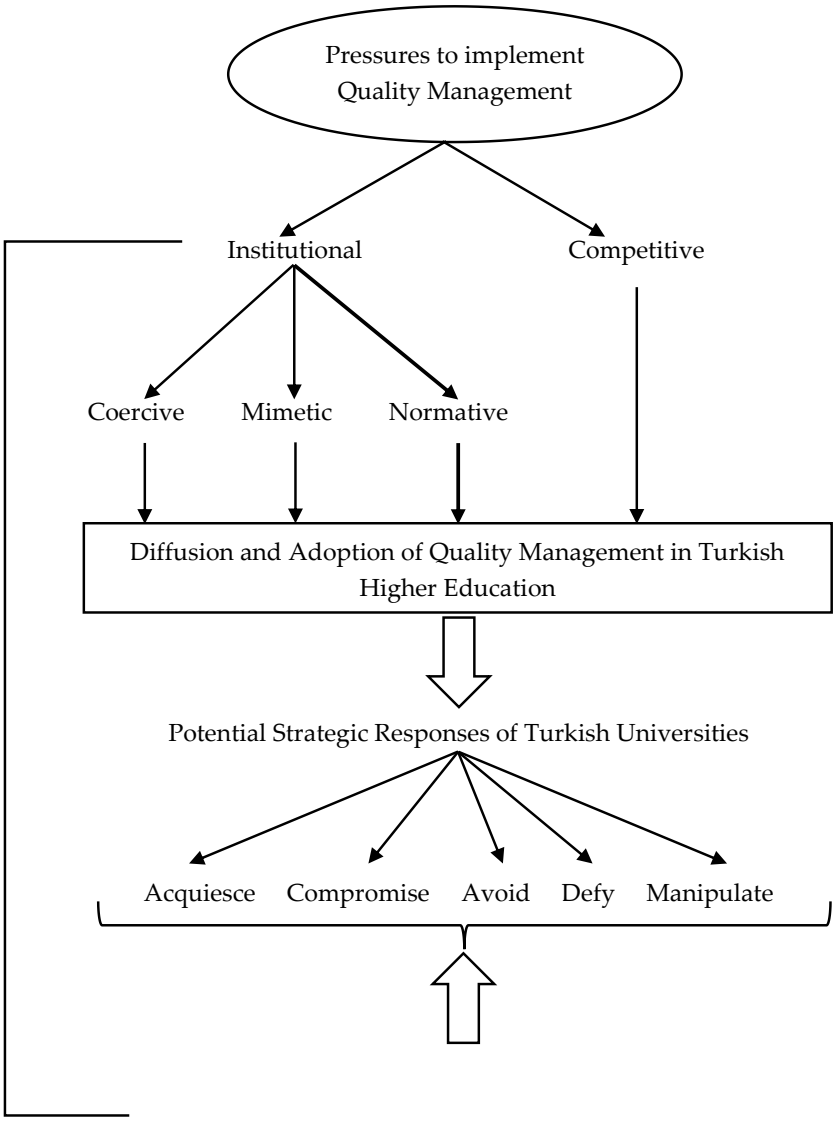

Figure 1. Pressures and Strategic Responses to Adopt Quality Management (Adapted from (González et al., 2009: 7))

In this study, the strategic responses to quality management in Turkish higher education institutions, which comply with the normatively presented quality management within the framework of the structural equation model (figure 2) developed in accordance with the model in figure 1 were analyzed with the PLS-SEM method. In this context, seeking answers to the following questions constitutes the main purpose of the study:

- Has the "acquiesce strategic response" been given following the new institutional theory literature because the normative context has been followed in the adoption of quality management in Turkish higher education?

- Or have the defy or manipulate strategic responses been given to quality management, which began to expand in 2015 and has just reached the stage of completion?

Additionally, a quantitative research model was developed from the arguments used in qualitative studies (González et al., 2009; Oliver, 1991). The infrastructure of this quantitative model is explained in the material and method section, together with the literature.

Materials and Methods

In this study, all the rules specified to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were complied with. None of the actions specified under the title of "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, were not carried out[6].

Within the scope of the research, the data obtained from the questionnaire named "Analysis of Quality Management in Higher Education and Evaluation in the Framework of New Institutional Theory" is used. A part of the questionnaire was previously used for the analysis of environmental pressure mechanisms in the study of Taştan (2021) and Taştan & Yılmaz (2021), and the same data is used as the independent variables (exogenous variables) of this study. Another part of the questionnaire consists of questions aiming to measure strategic responses based on Oliver's (1991) statements focusing on the strategic responses of organizations to institutional transition by determining the range of responses of an organization from acquiesce change to compromise, avoid, defy and finally manipulation. These data constitute the dependent variables (endogenous variables) of the study. The constructed PLS-SEM model is shown in Fig. 2.

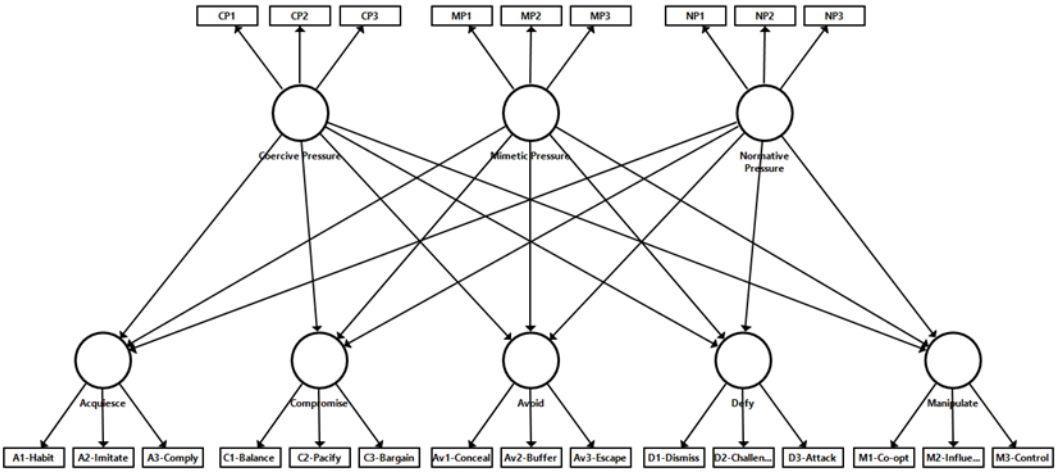

Figure 2. PLS-SEM Model. Source: Model compiled by the author using SmartPLS (Ringle et al. 2020)

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PLS-SEM algorithms were applied with SmartPLS software to test the constructed research model. Partial least squares (PLS) path modelling is a variance-based structural equation modelling (SEM) algorithm widely applied in business and social sciences (Henseler et al., 2009, 2012; Ringle et al., 2020; Sarstedt et al., 2017). It is a new statistical tool for research methods, and its use is increasing day by day. In testing the research model and hypotheses, the measurement model was first evaluated, and after the evaluation results were found appropriate, the structural model was evaluated (Hair et al., 2017). In other words, both the measurement theory and the structural theory, which includes testing the research questions and dealing with the relationships between latent variables (Sarstedt et al., 2017: 15), were examined in the research.

In the study, a five-point Likert scale was used to measure the variables. The exogenous variables[7] of the study were obtained by including the measurement items obtained from previous studies in the study context and are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Environmental Pressure Mechanisms

Indicators	**Questions**
CP1	Your university has adopted Quality Management to respond to the Higher Education field and societal expectations.
CP2	Your university has adopted Quality Management to fulfil legal requirements.
CP3	Your university has adopted Quality Management to fulfil the guidelines and practices of the THEQC.
MP1	Your university has adopted Quality Management by taking the business processes of other Higher Education Institutions as an example due to the uncertainties experienced.
MP2	Your university has adopted Quality Management by closely monitoring successful Higher Education Institutions.
MP3	Your university has adopted Quality Management to implement similar organizational structures with other Higher Education Institutions.

[7] Detailed information and literature information about the exogenous variables used in the research can be obtained from the studies of (Taştan, 2021; Taştan & Yılmaz, 2021).

NP1	Your university has adopted Quality Management as a result of the guidance of professionalized Quality Managers who have received training on quality and have professional knowledge and experience.
NP2	Your university has adopted Quality Management as a result of the guidance of your Quality Managers, who have memberships and participation in commercial, professional and non-governmental organizations related to quality.
NP3	Your university has adopted Quality Management as a result of the guidance of your specialized quality staff, whose duties are clearly defined and who carry out the quality processes professionally in accordance with professional norms.

Source: (Taştan, 2021)

The literature background of the Strategic Responses endogenous variables and the questions used in the research model are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Strategic Responses to Institutional Processes

Strategies	Tactics	Short Description	Questions
Acquiesce	Habit	Organizations accept pressures without significant change.	In your university, an acceptance process has occurred in implementing the rules related to quality management, and compliance with quality management has been demonstrated.
	Imitate		While applying quality management at your university, uncertainty was avoided, and advice was taken from institutional environments (successful universities, consulting firms or professional associations), and it was given importance to be seen as legitimate by them.
	Comply		While applying quality management at your university, you have acted consciously, and norms and rules regarding quality have been accepted.
Compromise	Balance	Organizations negotiate a balance	While applying quality management at your university, sometimes the expectations of different stakeholders were reconciled acceptably,

		between their interests and those of institutions.	and a balance was tried to be established, thus protecting the interests of the University in the most effective way.
	Pacify		While applying quality management at your university, only the most necessary procedures were followed, some other applications were sometimes resisted, and these resistances were neutralized and made passive.
	Bargain		While implementing quality management at your university, sometimes negotiations were held with institutional stakeholders, and certain privileges were given to institutional stakeholders.
Avoid	Conceal	Organizations try to avoid the compliance requirement without affecting the nature of the pressures.	Quality management has been superficially adhered to at your university, some quality practices have been deliberately avoided, and incompatibilities have been somewhat camouflaged.
	Buffer		A close connection and cooperation could not be established between quality management and education, training and research activities in your university.
	Escape		At your university, efforts are being made to reduce the scope of quality management practices and move away from quality management.
Defy	Dismiss	Organizations deal with pressures through direct conflict	Norms and values related to quality management are not considered in your university, and activities are continued as usual by ignoring quality management.
	Challenge		There is strong resistance to quality management practices at your university.

	Attack		There is a strong criticism and attack against the norm-setting and regulatory bodies and rules regarding Quality Management practices in your university.
Manipulate	Co-opt	Organizations try to manipulate the pressures to their advantage.	In your university, it is tried to strategically include personnel/administrators/experts from institutions that have an impact on your university at the institutional level (THEQC Members, Evaluation Team Members, Quality-related institution managers, Etc.) to neutralize the opposition to quality management and increase the legitimacy of quality management.
	Influence		At your university, an attempt is made to influence the institutionalized values and beliefs of quality management or the definitions and criteria of practices or performance.
	Control		At your university, it is actively sought to dominate to the institutional components and processes of quality management.

Source: (Etherington & Richardson, 1994; Oliver, 1991, p. 152)

Findings

Within the scope of the research, 198 universities actively carrying out educational activities in the 2019-2020 academic year constitute the population of the research, and data was taken from 158 (80%) of these universities as a sample. The analysis level of the research is organizations. The questionnaires were filled in by top managers directly responsible for the establishment or operation of Quality Management (if Quality Management was adopted), quality commission members, quality assessors and quality office managers.

In this context, 6 Rectors, 27 Vice-Rectors, 66 Quality Managers, 12 Deputy Quality Managers, 6 Quality Unit Staff, 28 Administrative Managers, 17 Academic Managers, 9 Assistant Academic Managers and 33 Quality Commission Members who do not have any administrative duties answered the questionnaire on behalf of their institutions. 3 universities stated that the questionnaire was answered institutionally. All of those who answered the question paper are members of the quality commission, or competent personnel of the institution related to quality management, whose questionnaire was directed by the relevant institution.

To analyze a structural equation model with the PLS-SEM method, first the factor analysis of the model should be done, then the path analysis should be done and finally the structural model should be evaluated (Taştan & Sabır Taştan, 2021).

Factor Analysis

In factor analysis measurements, reliability and validity values (outer loadings, internal consistency reliability [Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, Composite Reliability], convergent validity [Average Variance Extracted (AVE)], discriminant validity [the Fornell-Larcker criterion, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT criterion) and Cross Loadings]) are examined respectively in accordance with the literature (Taştan & Sabır Taştan, 2021: 82).

To obtain findings more stable results in factor analysis calculations, the Initial Calculations option was chosen as "Connect all LVs for Initial Calculation" (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015b). In the "Missing Value" field, the "Mean replacement" (Hair et al., 2017: 48) option was selected. Additionally, "Maximum iteration" (300) and "Stop criterion" (7) values were set as default values.

Outer Loadings were examined first in factor analysis. Factor analysis was repeated 3 times by removing the relevant indicators and variables from the model, since the variables that were not suitable according to the PLS-SEM literature should be removed from the model.

In the first factor analysis, there is no indicator with outer loading below 0.40 (Hair et al., 2017: 137) in the model. However, Outer Loading values of A1-Habit, A3-Comply, C1-Balance, C2-Pacify, C3-Bargain, Av1-Conceal, Av2-Buffer, CP2, CP3 and MP1 indicators are between 0.40-0.70 (Hair et al., 2017, p. 137). These values were removed from the model, respectively, and their reliability and validity values were re-examined. In the light of first factor analysis evaluations, the factor analysis was repeated by removing the C2-Pacify indicator from the model.

In the second factor analysis, the outer loadings, reliability and validity values obtained are in accordance with the literature. But, for the Fornell-Larcker criteria, the "Compromise" variable is higher than the highest correlation of "Acquiesce" variable, and "Defy" variable is higher than the highest correlation of "Avoid" variable. These two cases are not suitable for the literature (Hair et al., 2017: 144). And in the HTMT values, which were examined lastly for discriminant validity, the "Defy" variable does not fit the values that should be below 0.9 according to the literature (Doğan, 2019: 47; Henseler et al., 2015). For the stated reasons, "Compromise" and "Defy" variables were removed from the model (Fig. 3), and factor analysis was repeated.

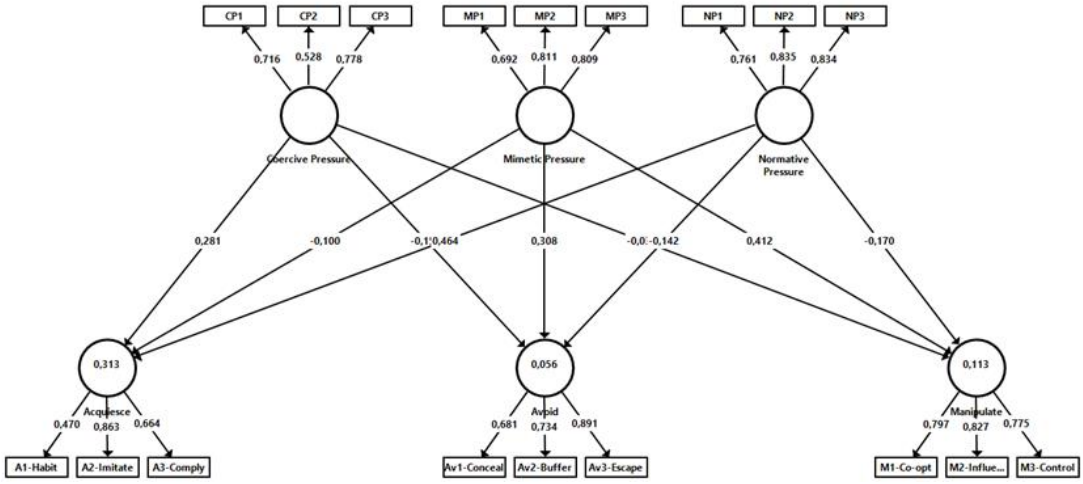

Figure 3. Factor Analysis Model. Source: Model compiled by the author using SmartPLS (Ringle et al. 2020)

Table 3. Factor Analysis Outer Loadings

	Acquiesce	Avoid	Coercive Pressure	Manipu-late	Mimetic Pressure	Normative Pressure
A1-Habit	0.470					
A2-Imitate	0.863					
A3-Com-ply	0.664					
Av1-Con-ceal		0.681				
Av2-Buffer		0.734				
Av3-Es-cape		0.891				
CP1			0.716			
CP2			0.528			
CP3			0.778			

M1-Co-opt				0.797		
M2-Influence				0.827		
M3-Control				0.775		
MP1					0.692	
MP2					0.811	
MP3					0.809	
NP1						0.761
NP2						0.835
NP3						0.834

As seen in Table 3, the outer loadings are in accordance with the literature (0.40<0.70) (Hair et al., 2017, p. 137).

Table 4. Factor Analysis Composite Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	**rho_A**	**Composite Reliability**	**Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**
Acquiesce	0.721	0.765	0.715	0.469
Avoid	0.810	0.830	0.815	0.599
Coercive Pressure	0.726	0.739	0.718	0.466
Manipulate	0.841	0.843	0.842	0.640
Mimetic Pressure	0.813	0.821	0.816	0.597

Normative Pressure	0.852	0.854	0.852	0.657

As seen in Table 4, reliability and validity values obtained are in accordance with the literature; composite reliability values greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017: 144), rho_A values at least 0.7 (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015a; Henseler et al., 2016; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), AVE values greater than 0.40 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Huang et al., 2013: 219; Lam, 2012).

Table 5. Factor Analysis Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Acquiesce	**Avoid**	**Coercive Pressure**	**Manipulate**	**Mimetic Pressure**	**Normative Pressure**
Acquiesce	0.685					
Avoid	-0.183	0.774				
Coercive Pressure	0.385	-0.038	0.682			
Manipulate	0.185	0.588	0.128	0.800		
Mimetic Pressure	0.300	0.150	0.532	0.303	0.773	
Normative Pressure	0.506	-0.028	0.339	0.040	0.538	0.811

As seen in Table 5, all variables have higher correlations than the other variables and so according to Fornell-Larcker criteria, all values are suitable for the literature (Hair et al., 2017, p. 144).

Table 6. Factor Analysis Cross Loadings

	Acquiesce	**Avoid**	**Coercive Pressure**	**Manipulate**	**Mimetic Pressure**	**Normative Pressure**
A1-Habit	0.470	-0.047	0.207	0.124	0.089	0.250
A2-Imitate	0.863	-0.040	0.301	0.304	0.401	0.366
A3-Comply	0.664	-0.302	0.278	-0.092	0.051	0.419

Av1-Con-ceal	-0.059	0.681	-0.008	0.419	0.112	0.017
Av2-Buffer	-0.219	0.734	-0.061	0.419	0.026	-0.178
Av3-Es-cape	-0.143	0.891	-0.020	0.520	0.196	0.078
CP1	0.443	-0.229	0.716	-0.025	0.226	0.326
CP2	0.136	0.135	0.528	0.177	0.349	0.121
CP3	0.191	0.051	0.778	0.132	0.510	0.226
M1-Co-opt	0.191	0.458	0.132	0.797	0.226	0.037
M2-Influ-ence	0.189	0.476	0.125	0.827	0.239	0.062
M3-Con-trol	0.060	0.479	0.049	0.775	0.261	-0.005
MP1	0.082	0.232	0.415	0.340	0.692	0.288
MP2	0.311	0.046	0.384	0.224	0.811	0.475
MP3	0.282	0.087	0.438	0.155	0.809	0.469
NP1	0.365	-0.006	0.267	-0.018	0.426	0.761
NP2	0.366	0.092	0.236	0.049	0.530	0.835
NP3	0.496	-0.152	0.321	0.062	0.353	0.834

As seen in Table 6, the outer loadings of all the indicators on the structure are higher than all the cross loadings with other structures in accordance with the literature (Taştan & Sabır Taştan, 2021: 92).

Table 7. Factor Analysis Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Acquiesce	**Avoid**	**Coercive Pressure**	**Manipu-late**	**Mimetic Pressure**	**Norma-tive Pres-sure**
Acquiesce						
Avoid	0.201					
Coercive Pres-sure	0.378	0.201				
Manipulate	0.256	0.592	0.162			
Mimetic Pres-sure	0.305	0.170	0.533	0.312		
Normative Pressure	0.506	0.158	0.328	0.065	0.534	

As seen in Table 7, in the HTMT values, all values are below 0.9 suitable for the literature (Doğan, 2019, p. 47; Henseler et al., 2015).

The results were bootstrapped as the last step of the factor analysis, with all the values obtained in accordance with the literature. In the bootstrapping process, the subsample value was determined as 500 (Xiaohui, 2016: 93), which is the appropriate value for exploratory research. Do Parallel Processing was selected in the drop-down menu, Confidence Interval Method option was selected as Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) Bootstrap (default) in Advanced Settings section, Test Type option was selected as Two-Tailed, and Significance Level option was selected as 0.5 by default. In the calculation, "t statistics" and significance values (p) for each variable in 500 sub-samples taken from the sample were calculated at 95% confidence interval (Xiaohui, 2016, p. 93).

Table 8. Path Coefficients of the Factor Analysis

	Original Sample (O)	**Sample Mean (M)**	**Stand-ard De-viation (STDEV)**	**T Statis-tics (|O/STDEV|)**	**P Values**	**Confidence Inter-vals Bias Cor-rected**	
						2.5%	**97.5%**

Coercive Pressure -> Acquiesce	0.281	0.287	0.180	1.559	**0.120**	-0.043	0.628
Coercive Pressure -> Avoid	-0.154	-0.170	0.157	0.981	**0.327**	-0.459	0.135
Coercive Pressure -> Manipulate	-0.034	-0.048	0.138	0.244	**0.808**	-0.299	0.234
Mimetic Pressure -> Acquiesce	-0.100	-0.093	0.180	0.554	**0.580**	-0.476	0.259
Mimetic Pressure -> Avoid	0.308	0.312	0.143	2.154	**0.032**	0.065	0.590
Mimetic Pressure -> Manipulate	0.412	0.424	0.161	2.562	**0.011**	0.097	0.749
Normative Pressure -> Acquiesce	0.464	0.457	0.139	3.338	**0.001**	0.208	0.706
Normative Pressure -> Avoid	-0.142	-0.150	0.144	0.980	**0.328**	-0.348	0.114
Normative Pressure -> Manipulate	-0.170	-0.177	0.134	1.269	**0.205**	-0.441	0.076

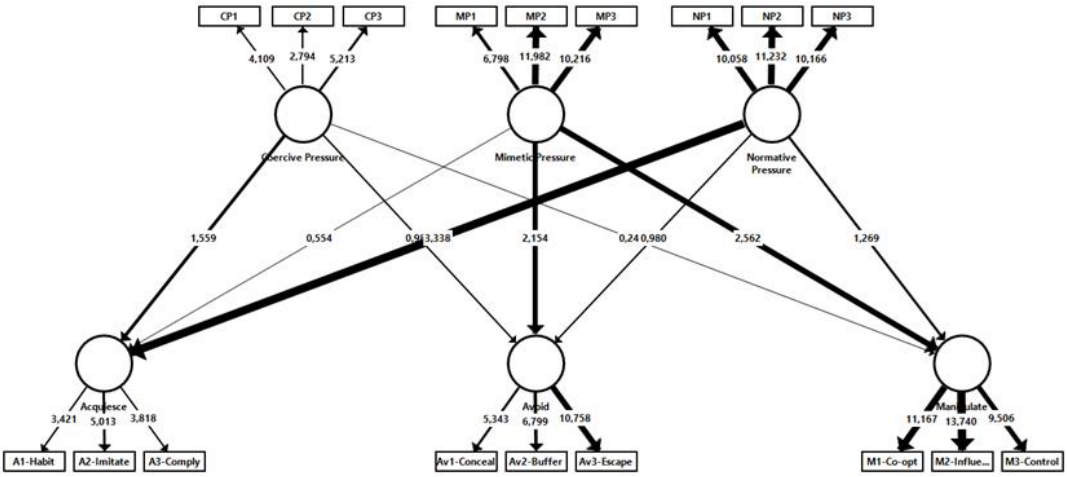

Figure 4. Factor Analysis Results. Source: Model compiled by the author using SmartPLS (Ringle et al. 2020)

According to these results, the correlations between "Mimetic Pressure" and "Avoid", between "Mimetic Pressure" and "Manipulate", and between "Normative Pressure" and "Acquiesce" are statistically significant.

At this stage, it is necessary to examine the Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected values according to the bootstrapping results (Hair et al., 2017: 149). In the examination of Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected values, the confidence interval values between "Mimetic Pressure" and "Avoid", between "Mimetic Pressure" and "Manipulate", and between "Normative Pressure" and "Acquiesce" are statistically significant since they do not contain a "0" value (Hair et al., 2017: 173). No significant correlation was found between the "Coercive Pressure" variable and the endogenous variables. Therefore, the "Coercive Pressure" variable was removed from the model.

Path Analysis

After the factor analysis was completed, another stage, Path Analysis, was started.

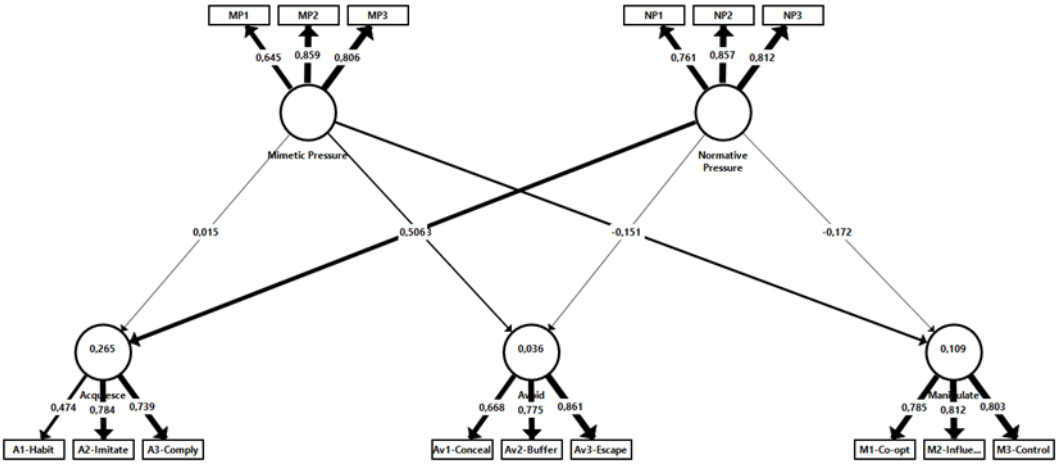

Figure 5. Path Model. Source: Model compiled by the author using SmartPLS (Ringle et al. 2020)

After running the path analysis, the path coefficient values of the model were examined.

Table 9. Path Coefficients

	Acquiesce	**Avoid**	**Manipulate**
Mimetic Pressure	0.015	0.223	0.390
Normative Pressure	0.506	-0.151	-0.172

As seen in Table 9, the path coefficient between "Mimetic Pressure" and "Acquiesce" is 0.015. The path coefficient between "Mimetic Pressure" and "Avoid" is 0.223, and the path coefficient between "Mimetic Pressure" and "Manipulate" is 0.390. The path coefficient between "Normative Pressure" and "Acquiesce" is 0.506, the path coefficient between "Normative Pressure" and "Avoid" is -0.151, and the path coefficient between "Normative Pressure" and "Manipulate" is -0.172.

After the path analysis, collinearity (VIF), Coefficient of Determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2) and relative predictive effect size (q^2) (Hair et al., 2019) were examined to analyze the structural model.

In the analysis of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) results from the Collinearity Statistics section, the measurement models were controlled for linearity of indicators (Outer VIF) and variables (Inner VIF) (Taştan & Sabır Taştan, 2021).

Table 10. Outer VIF Values

	VIF
A1-Habit	1.466
A2-Imitate	1.375
A3-Comply	1.418
Av1-Conceal	1.583
Av2-Buffer	1.868
Av3-Escape	2.160
M1-Co-opt	1.661
M2-Influence	3.079
M3-Control	2.511
MP1	1.589
MP2	1.976
MP3	1.965
NP1	2.289
NP2	2.249
NP3	1.876

Table 11. Inner VIF Values

	Acquiesce	**Avoid**	**Manipulate**
Mimetic Pressure	1.412	1.412	1.412
Normative Pressure	1.412	1.412	1.412

As shown in Table 10 and Table 11, there is no multicollinearity problem between the indicators and the variables. All values are below the threshold value of 5 (Hair et al., 2017: 185) in accordance with the literature.

Then, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the dependent variables in the model and the effect sizes of the correlations examined in the analysis (f^2) were evaluated.

Table 12. R^2

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Acquiesce	0.265	0.255
Avoid	0.036	0.024
Manipulate	0.109	0.098

In the R^2 analysis (Hair et al., 2017: 209), the dependent variable with the highest coefficient of determination was "Acquiesce" with 0.265, while the coefficient of determination of the "Manipulate" dependent variable was 0.109, and the coefficient of determination of the "Avoid" dependent variable was 0.036 (Table 12).

Table 13. f^2

	Acquiesce	Avoid	Manipulate
Mimetic Pressure	0.000	0.037	0.121
Normative Pressure	0.247	0.017	0.023

According to Cohen's (1988) f^2 evaluation rules, 0.02 represents small, 0.15 represents medium and 0.35 represents large effects; and when examining the f^2 effect size table (Table 13), it is seen that the "Normative Pressure" independent variable has a moderate effect on "Acquiesce" and a small effect on the avoid and manipulate variables. On the other hand, the "Mimetic Pressure" independent variable has a moderate effect on the manipulate variable and a small effect on the "Avoid" variable. The "Mimetic Pressure" argument has no effect on "Acquiesce".

Finally, bootstrapping was performed to test whether the previously calculated correlation coefficients were significant. In bootstrapping, the number of samples was 500, and the basic bootstrapping method and the missing data coping method were determined as Mean replacement. Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) Bootstrap, two-tailed test and 0.05 significance level were selected in advanced settings.

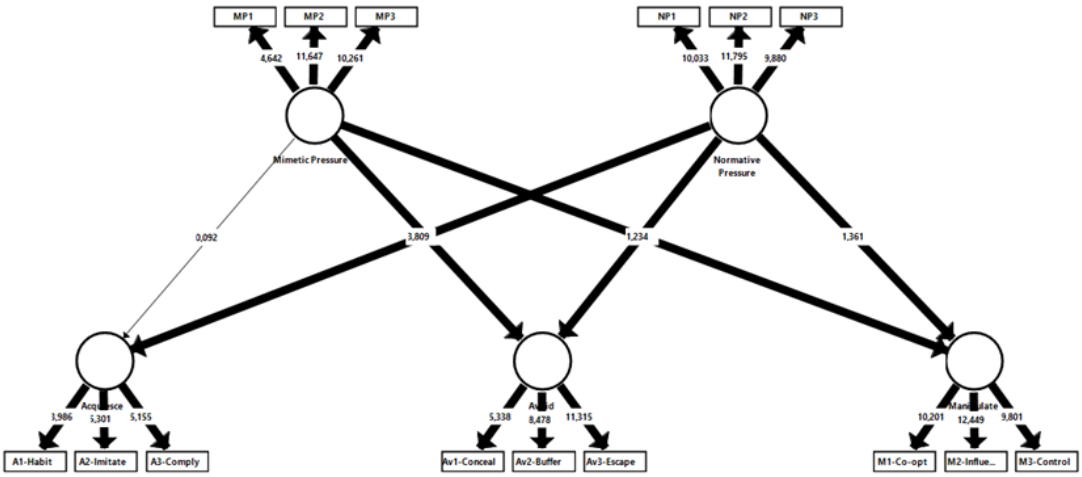

Figure 6. Bootstrapping Results. Source: Model compiled by the author using SmartPLS (Ringle et al. 2020)

Table 14. Path Analysis Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Confidence Intervals Bias Corrected	
						2.5%	97.5%
Mimetic Pressure -> Acquiesce	0.015	0.002	0.142	0.104	0.917	-0.267	0.291
Mimetic Pressure -> Avoid	0.223	0.228	0.130	1.720	0.086	-0.005	0.487
Mimetic Pressure -> Manipulate	0.390	0.399	0.125	3.130	0.002	0.141	0.600
Normative Pressure ->	0.506	0.510	0.126	4.033	0.000	0.214	0.724

Acquiesce							
Normative Pressure -> Avoid	-0.151	-0.168	0.127	1.191	0.234	-0.353	0.130
Normative Pressure -> Manipulate	-0.172	-0.185	0.126	1.365	0.173	-0.384	0.086

When the path analysis results are evaluated (Table 14), the correlation between "Mimetic Pressure" and "Manipulate" (Path Coefficient 0.390) and the correlation between "Normative Pressure" and "Acquiesce" (Path Coefficient 0.506) are statistically significant (t>1.96 and P<0.05).

On the other hand, no tactic stands out clearly in terms of the tactics developed while giving response to the "Manipulate". "Co-opt" has 0.375, "Influence" has 0.388, "Control" has 0.384 outer weight. In "Acquiesce" response, "Habit" has 0.295, "Imitate" has 0.488, and "Comply" has 0.460 outer weight, which shows that imitate and comply tactics have more weight than "Habit" (Table 15).

Table 15. Outer Weights

A1-Habit <- Acquiesce	0.295
A2-Imitate <- Acquiesce	0.488
A3-Comply <- Acquiesce	0.460
M1-Co-opt <- Manipulate	0.375
M2-Influence <- Manipulate	0.388
M3-Control <- Manipulate	0.384

Then, predictive power values (Blindfolding) were calculated in the model. In the Blindfolding analysis, the omission distance was determined as 7, and the missing data coping method was determined as Mean replacement. Q^2 values show how well the correlation coefficients can predict an observed endogenous variable (Doğan, 2019, p. 97). Values greater than zero are significant, and values greater than 0,

0.25, and 0.50 indicate that the PLS path model is small, medium, and large prediction accuracy, respectively (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 16. Construct Crossvalidated Redundancy

	SSO	SSE	Q² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Acquiesce	474.000	427.068	0.099
Avoid	474.000	475.563	-0.003
Manipulate	474.000	448.889	0.053
Mimetic Pressure	474.000	474.000	
Normative Pressure	474.000	474.000	

As seen in Table 16, the Q^2 value of the "acquiesce" variable is 0.099, and the Q2 value of the "Manipulate" variable is 0.053. This situation shows that the path coefficients can predict the observed "Acquiesce" and "Manipulate" endogenous variables at a small to moderate level. The Q^2 value of the avoid variable shows that the estimation accuracy is not significant.

Depending on the Q^2 values, the relative predictive effect size (q^2) must also be calculated. Exogenous variables were excluded from the model, respectively, and q^2 effect sizes were calculated using the obtained Q^2 values. Since the SmartPLS software does not provide this calculation, the q^2 value was calculated manually according to the formula shown below.

For q^2 values, results of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are interpreted as small, medium, and large f2 effect sizes, respectively (Hair et al., 2017, p. 215).

$$q^2 = \frac{Q^2 included - Q^2 excluded}{1 - Q^2 included} \qquad (1)$$

First, the "Mimetic Pressure" variable was removed from the model.

Table 17. Construct Crossvalidated Redundancy (Without Mimetic Pressure)

	SSO	SSE	Q² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Acquiesce	474.000	426.011	0.101
Avoid	474.000	477.262	-0.007
Manipulate	474.000	475.447	-0.003
Normative Pressure	474.000	474.000	

In the Blindfolding analysis performed again in the model without the "Mimetic Pressure" variable, the Q^2 value of the "Acquiesce" variable increased to 0.101, while the Q^2 values of the "Avoid" and "Manipulate" variables decreased (Table 17).

Of "Mimetic Pressure" variable, q^2 = (0.099-0.11)/(1-0.099) = -0.0022 for the q^2 effect size of the "Acquiesce" variable, and q^2 =(-0.003--0.007)/(1--0.003)= 0.0039 for the q^2 effect size of the "Avoid" variable according to the formula. The q^2 effect size of the "Manipulate" variable was q^2 = (0.053-0.003)/(1-0.053) = 0.0031. With these results, the q^2 effect size for the "Mimetic Pressure" variable was not significant.

Second, the Normative Pressure variable was removed from the model.

Table 18. Construct Crossvalidated Redundancy (Without Normative Pressure)

	SSO	**SSE**	**Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)**
Acquiesce	474.000	461.338	0.027
Avoid	474.000	474.817	-0.002
Manipulate	474.000	452.072	0.046
Mimetic Pressure	474.000	474.000	

In the Blindfolding analysis performed again in the model without the "Normative Pressure" variable, the Q^2 value of the "Acquiesce" variable decreased to 0.027, and the Q^2 value of the "Manipulate" variable decreased to 0.046 (Table 18).

Of "Normative Pressure" variable, q^2 = (0.099-0.027)/(1-0.099) = 0.0799 for the q^2 effect size of the "Acquiesce" variable, and q^2 =(-0.003--0.002)/(1--0.003)= -0.001 for the q^2 effect size of the "Avoid" variable according to the formula. The q^2 effect size of the "Manipulate" variable was q^2 = (0.053-0.046)/(1-0.053) = 0.0074. With these results, the q^2 effect size of the "Normative Pressure" variable for the "Acquiesce" variable shows the effect size close to the middle.

Discussion and Conclusion

From the study's findings, it was concluded that higher education institutions gave a strategic response to "acquiesce" against "normative pressure" from the institutional pressures for the adoption of quality management in Turkish higher education, and the "manipulate" strategy is applied against "mimetic pressure". The results of the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) are statistically compatible with the PLS-SEM literature, as seen in the findings section. Only the q^2 effect size value of the "mimetic pressures" variable was lower than the limits specified in the literature.

When the results are evaluated in general, it is seen that the “acquiesce” of “normative pressures” to adopt quality management in higher education supports the institutional theory arguments. For Oliver (1991, p. 153); the fact that the “conformity” mentioned in the literature is one of the factors that theoretically determine the adequacy of the organization (Meyer & Scott, 1983) by strengthening the defense against negative evaluations of the behavior, products or services of the organization, and it is generally seen as one of the important reasons for the “acquiesce” strategic response in the face of institutional pressures. Organizations may choose to “conform” to external pressures because they maintain the trust logic necessary for external factors or society to approve, increase legitimacy, increase stability, or conduct organizational activities in good faith (Meyer & Rowan, 1983). In this context, “conforming” to quality management for higher education institutions is an essential tool to ensure organizational legitimacy as one of the elements that establish social trust and reveal institutions' adequacy. This degree of importance is increasing day by day.

Previous studies (Taştan, 2021; Taştan & Yılmaz, 2021) on the adoption of quality management in the Turkish higher education system concluded that higher education institutions generally adopted quality management normatively as a result of normative pressures. In another study in the field, Gonzales's work on the Spanish university system for the inclusion of skills in business and accounting curricula has made it clear that there are both competitive and institutional (coercive, mimetic, normative) pressures. However, according to Gonzales, institutional characteristics (grouped into causes, components, content, control and context) led Spanish universities to pursue an "avoidance" strategy until about 2005. However, from 2005 onwards the institutional specifics had to change to approach the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), causing Spanish universities to adopt a "compromise" approach, which implies negotiating a balance between the interests of universities and the pressures of the environment.

Another significant result of Gonzales' work is that he emphasizes the need for an analysis of the institutional environment to understand the responses of university systems to the pressures of change. In particular, since institutional characteristics across countries are often different, Gonzales highlights two important conclusions: (1) university systems may respond differently, although institutional pressures for change are similar in various countries; and (2) although various countries may try to implement the same change, using “recipes” or common patterns to implement the change is inappropriate because different characteristics of their institutional environments may distort the desired results.

According to the results obtained in this study, which tries to determine the responses of Turkish higher education institutions to institutional pressures for the adoption of quality management, the “acquiesce” response as a strategic response to the normative pressures for higher education institutions to adopt quality management reveals that “normative pressure” is an essential tool for establishing quality in higher education. In other words, higher education institutions are in “acquiesce” against the normatively presented quality management by applying both “habit, imitate and comply” tactics. This indicates that success has been achieved in the systematic establishment of quality management on a national basis.

On the other hand, it was concluded from the study's findings that there was a strategic response to "manipulate" against mimetic pressures. In other words, "mimetic pressures" for the adoption of quality management result in institutions responding to this pressure by "manipulating" it with "co-opt, influence and control" tactics.

Considering that the "mimetic pressure" mechanisms on the subject have a negative effect on the normative context and quality management in Turkey has started to be adopted since 2015 with the "normative pressures" made by THEQC (Taştan, 2021; Taştan & Yılmaz, 2021), the reality that the quality management to adopted as a result of the "mimetic pressures" was "manipulated" reached in this study. One of the reasons and explanations for the failure of efforts to adopt quality management before 2015 was to give the response of "manipulating" in the face of mimetic pressures for the adoption of quality management.

"Manipulation" involves the active intent to use organizational processes, relationships opportunistically, to co-select and neutralize organizational components, to shape and redefine institutionalized norms and external evaluation criteria, and to control or dominate the source, allocation or expression of social conformity and legitimacy (Oliver, 1991, p. 158). For this reason, it is evaluated that, in the face of mimetic pressures related to the adoption of quality management in the pre-THEQC period, the institutions that can be considered as pioneers in the higher education system wanted to create a perception that they applied quality- but actually they did not make an effort to implement quality management.

At this point, it is considered that the power of the powerful higher education institutions of the period to direct the system is a source of manipulation. However, it is considered that the successful normative pressures that started with the establishment of THEQC as the national quality agency in 2015 also affected the universities that can be considered as pioneers in the system and caused them to really adopt quality management.

As a result, the context of quality management that THEQC created normatively corresponded to the "compliance" behavior in higher education institutions in the Turkish higher education system. Higher education institutions started to work towards complying with ESG standards.

This conformity to ESG standards will bring success to Turkish higher education and enable Turkey to complete its integration with Europe in higher education as soon as possible. In the next ten years, it is thought that Turkey will become one of the most critical higher education countries in Europe and an important market in higher education.

Author Contribution

The authors contributed equally to the study.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no financial conflict of interest with any institution, organization, person related to our article titled “Strategic Responses to Quality Management in Turkish Higher Education” and there is no conflict of interest between the authors.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Son yıllarda yapılan çalışmalar, örgütlerin benimseme zamanı, örgütsel özellikler, kurumsal bağlamdaki konum gibi birçok etmene bağlı olarak, kurumsal bağlamca meşrulaştırılan yönetim uygulamalarını farklı biçimlerde benimsediklerini göstermektedir. Bu çalışmalardan Oliver'ın (1991) "Strategic Responses to Institutional Processes- Kurumsal Süreçlere Stratejik Yanıtlar" isimli çalışması literatüre damga vuran önemli çalışmalardan birisi olmuştur. DiMaggio'nun (1988) çalışmasından hareketle kurumsal kuram çalışmalarına kaynağa bağımlılığı teorisini dahil eden Oliver (1991), kuruluşların kendilerine uygulanan uygunluğa/uymaya (conformity) yönelik kurumsal baskılar sonucunda ortaya koydukları farklı stratejik tepkileri belirlemek ve alternatif stratejilerin oluşumunu tahmin etmek için bir ön kavramsal çerçeve geliştirmiştir.

Bu kavramsal çerçeveye göre kurumsal baskıya maruz kalan kuruluşların kullanabileceği beş stratejik tepki bulunmaktadır. Bu stratejiler "uyma", "uzlaşma", "kaçınma", "karşı koyma", "manipüle etme" stratejileridir. Çalışmada, bu yeni kurumsal kuramcı kavramsal çerçeve kapsamında, normatif olarak sunulan kalite yönetimine uyulan Türk yükseköğretim kurumlarında literatüre uygun olarak "uyma" stratejik tepkisinin mi verildiği, yoksa 2015 yılında yayılımı başlayan ve tamamlanma aşamasına ulaşan kalite yönetimine yönelik olarak "karşı koyma" veya "manipülasyon" tepkilerinin mi verildiğini belirlemek için kurulan yapısal eşitlik modeli PLS-SEM yöntemi ile analiz edilmektedir. Çalışmada ayrıca, daha önce nitel çalışmalarda kullanılan argümanlardan bir nicel araştırma modeli keşfedilmeye çalışılmaktadır.

Çalışmanın analiz düzeyi örgütlerdir. Çalışmada, "Yükseköğretimde Kalite Yönetiminin Analizi ve Yeni Kurumsal Kuram Çerçevesinde Değerlendirilmesi" isimli soru kağıdından elde edilen veriler kullanılmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında 2019-2020 eğitim öğretim yılında aktif olarak eğitim-öğretim faaliyeti yürüten 198 üniversite araştırmanın evrenini oluşturmakta olup örneklem olarak bu üniversitelerin 158'inden (80%) veri alınmıştır. Anket formları, kalite yönetiminin kurulmasından veya işletilmesinden doğrudan sorumlu en üst yöneticiler, kalite komisyonu üyeleri, kalite değerlendiricileri ve kalite ofisi sorumluları tarafından doldurulmuştur. Bu kapsamda 6 Rektör, 27 Rektör Yardımcısı, 66 Kalite Birim Yöneticisi, 12 Kalite Birim Yönetici Yardımcısı, 6 Kalite Birim Personeli, Kalite Komisyonu Üyesi 28 İdari, 17 Akademik Birim Yöneticisi ve 9 Akademik Birim Yönetici Yardımcısı ve herhangi bir idari görevi olmayan 33 Kalite Komisyonu Üyesi kurumları adına soru kağıdını cevaplamıştır. 3 üniversite soru kağıdının kurumsal olarak cevaplandığını belirtmiştir.

Çalışmanın bulgularından Türk yükseköğretiminde kalite yönetiminin benimsenmesine yönelik kurumsal baskılardan normatif baskılar karşısında yükseköğretim kurumlarının "uyma" stratejik tepkisi verdiği, öykünmeci baskılar karşısında ise "manipüle etme" stratejisi uyguladıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Yükseköğretimde kalite yönetiminin benimsenmesi yönündeki normatif baskılara "uyma" yaklaşımı gösterilmesi kurumsal kuram argümanlarını destekleyici niteliktedir. Literatüründe belirtilen "uyumun" örgütün davranışları, ürünleri veya hizmetlerine ilişkin olumsuz değerlendirmelere karşı savunmayı güçlendirerek teori olarak örgütün yeterliliğini belirleyen etkenlerden olması, genel olarak kurumsal baskılar karşısında "uyma" stratejik tepkisinin verilmesinin önemli nedenlerinden biri olarak görülmektedir.

Ek olarak, yükseköğretim kurumlarına kalite yönetimini benimsemeleri için yapılan normatif baskılar karşısında stratejik yanıt olarak "uyma" tepkisi verilmesi normatif baskının yükseköğretimde kaliteyi tesis etmek için önemli bir araç olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Yani yükseköğretim kurumları gerek "alışkanlık", gerek "taklit"

gerekse de "razı olma" taktiklerini uygulayarak normatif olarak sunulan kalite yönetimine karşı "uyma" yaklaşımı içerisindedirler. Bu durum, kalite yönetiminin ulusal bazda sistemsel olarak kurulması çalışmalarında başarının yakalandığına işaret etmektedir.

Diğer taraftan, çalışmanın bulgularından öykünmeci baskılar karşısında "manipüle etme" stratejik tepkisinin verildiği ve kurumların bu baskıyı "bünyesine katmak (kooptasyon)", "etkilemek" ve "kontrol etmek" taktikleri ile yanıtladığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu şekildeki öykünmeci baskılar sonucu benimsenmeye çalışılan kalite yönetiminin manipüle edildiği gerçekliği, 2015 yılı öncesinde kalite yönetiminin benimsenmesi için yapılan çalışmaların başarısız olmasının nedenlerinden ve açıklamalarından birisi olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

"Manipüle etme", kurumsal süreçleri ve ilişkileri fırsatçı bir şekilde kullanmak, kurumsal bileşenleri birlikte seçmek ve etkisiz hale getirmek, kurumsallaşmış normları ve dış değerlendirme kriterlerini şekillendirmek ve yeniden tanımlamak ve sosyal uygunluğun ve meşruiyetin kaynağını, tahsisini veya ifadesini kontrol etmek veya egemen olmak için aktif niyet içermektedir. Bu çerçevede, kalite yönetiminin benimsenmesi ile ilgili Yükseköğretim Kalite Kurulu (YÖKAK) öncesi dönemde yapılan öykünmeci baskılar karşısında yükseköğretim sistemindeki öncü sayılabilecek üniversitelerin kalite yönetimini uyguladıkları yönünde algı oluşturmak istedikleri ama aslında kalite yönetimini uygulamak için bir çaba sarf etmedikleri değerlendirilmektedir.

Bu noktada, dönemin güçlü yükseköğretim kurumlarının sistemi yönlendirme gücünün manipülasyona kaynaklık ettiği değerlendirilmektedir. Ancak, 2015 yılında YÖKAK'ın ulusal kalite ajansı olarak kurulması ile başlayan başarılı normatif baskıların sistemdeki öncü sayılabilecek üniversiteleri de etkilediği ve kalite yönetimini gerçekten benimsemelerine yol açtığı değerlendirilmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, YÖKAK'ın normatif olarak oluşturduğu kalite yönetimi bağlamı Türk yükseköğretim sistemindeki yükseköğretim kurumları açısından "uyma" yaklaşımı ile karşılık bulmuş ve yükseköğretim kurumları Avrupa Yükseköğrenim Alanında Kalite Güvencesi Standartları ve Yönergeleri (ASY)'ne "uyma" yönünde çalışmalarına başlamışlardır. Bu durum, Türk yükseköğretimine başarı getirebileceği gibi Türkiye'nin Avrupa ile yükseköğretim alanındaki entegrasyonunu en kısa sürede tamamlamasını da sağlayacaktır. Önümüzdeki 10 yıl içerisinde Türkiye'nin yükseköğretim alanında Avrupa'nın önemli ülkelerinden biri ve önemli bir pazar konumuna geleceği düşünülmektedir.