

ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINED COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: MEDIATING CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Didik Widiatoro, Md Azman Shahadan

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University
e-mail: mdazman@fpm.upsi.edu.my

Submitted: 2025-11-23

Published: 2025-03-13

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24036/rap.v16.i2.18>

Accepted: 2025-11-25

Abstract: Organizational Resilience and Sustained Competitive Advantage: Mediating Crisis Management in Higher Education. This study examines the influence of Organizational Resilience on Sustained Competitive Advantage, with Crisis Management as a mediating variable in the context of private universities in Indonesia. Employing a quantitative approach, data were analyzed using path analysis to test the relationships between variables. The findings indicate that Organizational Resilience has a direct effect on Sustained Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.0897$, $Z = 1.94$, $p = 0.052$), though the effect is marginally significant. Organizational Resilience also significantly influences Crisis Management ($\beta = 0.5402$, $Z = 14.17$, $p < 0.001$), and Crisis Management significantly affects Sustained Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.3489$, $Z = 6.81$, $p < 0.001$). The mediating effect of Crisis Management is significant (Indirect Effect = 0.1885, $Z = 6.14$, $p < 0.001$; Total Effect = 0.2781, $Z = 7.07$, $p < 0.001$), indicating partial mediation. These results suggest that Organizational Resilience supports Sustained Competitive Advantage both directly and indirectly through effective Crisis Management. This study contributes theoretically to understanding the dynamics of organizational resilience in the Indonesian higher education sector and offers practical recommendations for private universities to enhance competitiveness through systematic crisis management strategies amid global disruptions and competition with state universities.

Keywords: Organizational Resilience, Crisis Management, Sustained Competitive Advantage, Private Universities.

Abstrak: Resiliensi Organisasi dan Keunggulan Bersaing Berkelanjutan: Mediasi Manajemen Krisis di Pendidikan Tinggi. Studi ini mengkaji pengaruh Resiliensi Organisasi terhadap Keunggulan Bersaing Berkelanjutan, dengan Manajemen Krisis sebagai variabel mediasi dalam konteks perguruan tinggi swasta di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif, data dianalisis menggunakan analisis jalur untuk

menguji hubungan antarvariabel. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Resiliensi Organisasi berpengaruh langsung terhadap Keunggulan Bersaing Berkelanjutan ($\beta = 0.0897$, $Z = 1.94$, $p = 0.052$), meskipun pengaruh tersebut berada pada tingkat signifikansi marginal. Resiliensi Organisasi juga berpengaruh signifikan terhadap Manajemen Krisis ($\beta = 0.5402$, $Z = 14.17$, $p < 0.001$), dan Manajemen Krisis berpengaruh signifikan terhadap Keunggulan Bersaing Berkelanjutan ($\beta = 0.3489$, $Z = 6.81$, $p < 0.001$). Efek mediasi Manajemen Krisis terbukti signifikan (Indirect Effect = 0.1885, $Z = 6.14$, $p < 0.001$; Total Effect = 0.2781, $Z = 7.07$, $p < 0.001$), yang menunjukkan adanya mediasi parsial. Hasil ini mengindikasikan bahwa Resiliensi Organisasi mendukung Keunggulan Bersaing Berkelanjutan baik secara langsung maupun tidak langsung melalui Manajemen Krisis yang efektif. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi teoretis dalam memahami dinamika resiliensi organisasi di sektor pendidikan tinggi Indonesia dan menawarkan rekomendasi praktis bagi perguruan tinggi swasta untuk meningkatkan daya saing melalui strategi manajemen krisis yang sistematis di tengah disrupsi global dan kompetisi dengan perguruan tinggi negeri.

Kata Kerja: Resiliensi Organisasi, Manajemen Krisis, Keunggulan Bersaing Berkelanjutan, Perguruan Tinggi Swasta.

INTRODUCTION

In an era of disruption characterized by rapid digital technological advancements, shifting preferences among younger generations, and increasing demands for educational quality, higher education institutions in Indonesia, particularly private universities, face significant challenges to survive and achieve sustained competitive advantage. Within this context, *organizational resilience* emerges as a pivotal concept, enabling institutions not only to withstand disruptions but also to thrive through adaptation and transformation. Organizational resilience is defined as an institution's capacity to

anticipate, respond to, and recover from disruptions in an adaptive and transformative manner (Duchek, 2020). Resilient organizations are not merely capable of enduring crises but can leverage these experiences to foster learning and innovation (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Burnard & Bhamra, 2011).

However, private universities in Indonesia encounter substantial competitive pressures, primarily due to the autonomy policies for state universities (PTN) reinforced by Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education and the legal entity status

of PTN (PTN-BH). These policies grant PTN extensive authority to conduct independent student admissions without stringent quota restrictions, enabling them to attract a large number of prospective students, including those in popular programs, at more competitive costs compared to private universities. Consequently, private universities have lost their primary market segment, namely students previously targeted through non-SBMPTN admission pathways. Data from PDDikti indicate a decline of over 30% in new student enrollments at small and medium-sized private universities over the past three years (LLDIKTI, 2023). This decline directly impacts funding, operations, and institutional sustainability, as most private universities heavily rely on tuition fees as their primary revenue source.

To address these challenges, *organizational resilience* becomes a strategic necessity. However, resilience alone is insufficient to ensure sustained competitive advantage. Effective *crisis management* is required as a mediator in the relationship between organizational resilience and competitive advantage. Crisis management encompasses an organization's ability to identify potential disruptions, respond swiftly and

appropriately, and leverage crisis experiences to strengthen long-term strategies (Boin, Comfort, & Demchak, 2010). Private universities that excel in crisis management—such as by restructuring educational models, forging industry partnerships, or innovating curricula—are better positioned to remain relevant and competitive amidst intense competition.

Although the concepts of organizational resilience and crisis management have been extensively studied in the contexts of business organizations and public sectors in developed countries (Akgün & Keskin, 2014; Pillai, 2022), research exploring the interplay between organizational resilience, crisis management, and sustained competitive advantage in the context of private universities in Indonesia remains scarce. Yet, the higher education sector in developing countries like Indonesia presents unique dynamics and complexities, including regulatory challenges, resource disparities, and demographic pressures. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap in the literature by examining the influence of organizational resilience on sustained competitive advantage and the mediating

role of crisis management within the context of private universities in Indonesia. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to understanding the dynamics of organizational resilience in education and provide strategic recommendations for policymakers and leaders of private universities to navigate the increasingly competitive and uneven higher education ecosystem.

Organizational Resilience

Organizational resilience refers to an organization's capacity to address, respond to, and adapt to unforeseen environmental changes or disruptions, as well as its ability to recover and grow from such experiences (Duchek, 2020). Resilience is not merely passive endurance but involves active transformation in response to external pressures. Research demonstrates that organizational resilience contributes to enhanced innovation (Akgün & Keskin, 2014), long-term performance (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), and the creation of strategic value amidst environmental volatility (Burnard & Bhamra, 2011).

Sustained Competitive Advantage

Sustained Competitive Advantage (SCA) is the condition in which an organization creates unique value that is

difficult for competitors to replicate and can be maintained over the long term (Barney, 1991). In the context of higher education, SCA may manifest in academic reputation, graduate quality, industry relationships, teaching innovation, and efficient governance (Porter, 1996; Hidayat & Pangestuti, 2019). The primary challenge is how private universities can sustain these advantages amid external pressures, such as competition with PTN and declining prospective student numbers.

Crisis Management

Crisis Management is a strategic process encompassing the identification of potential crises, rapid response to disruptions, and learning from crisis experiences to strengthen the organization (Boin et al., 2010). In the context of private universities, crisis management involves the ability to adapt operational strategies, such as developing market-oriented curricula, leveraging educational technology, and strengthening industry partnerships. Effective crisis management serves as a bridge linking organizational resilience to the achievement of sustained competitive advantage.

This study aims to: Analyze the influence of *organizational resilience* on *sustained competitive advantage* in private

universities in Indonesia. Examine the mediating role of *crisis management* in the relationship between *organizational resilience* and *sustained competitive advantage* in private universities in Indonesia and, Provide strategic recommendations for leaders of private universities to enhance organizational resilience and competitive advantage through effective crisis management approaches.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a quantitative research endeavor aimed at examining the direct and indirect effects among the independent variable (organizational resilience), the mediating variable (crisis management), and the dependent variable (sustained competitive advantage). Additionally, this research seeks to investigate the causal relationships among these variables through a statistical modeling approach.

The population of this study consists of permanent lecturers or structural leaders of private universities in Indonesia who possess an understanding of institutional strategies, organizational learning, and institutional policies. The sampling technique employed was

purposive sampling, with the following criteria: individuals must be affiliated with private universities accredited at least at the B level and hold positions as active permanent lecturers, heads of study programs, vice deans, or chairs of the Quality Assurance Institute (LPM/LPPM). The sample size for this study comprised 191 respondents.

Data collection was conducted using a closed-ended questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was developed based on validated theoretical constructs and indicators from prior research. The measurement instruments were adapted from Organizational Resilience (Duchek, 2011), Sustained Competitive Advantage (Barney, 1991), and Crisis Management (Nazmiye Ülkü Pekkan & Abdullah Çalışkan, 2022). The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on path analysis with mediation. The statistical analysis was performed using Jamovi software. The hypotheses of this study are as follows: 1) Organizational Resilience has a positive effect on Sustained Competitive Advantage, 2) Organizational Resilience has a positive effect on Crisis Management, 3) Crisis

Management has a positive effect on Sustained Competitive Advantage, and 4) Crisis Management mediates the relationship between Organizational Resilience and Sustained Competitive Advantage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Based on the data analysis results, the following findings were obtained:

Table 1. Path Estimates Hypothesis Testing Results

			Estimate	SE	Z	p
OR	→	CM	0.5402	0.0381	14.17	<.001
CM	→	SCA	0.3489	0.0512	6.81	<.001
OR	→	SCA	0.0897	0.0462	1.94	0.052

Hypothesis 1: Organizational Resilience (OR) has a positive effect on Sustained Competitive Advantage (SCA). The analysis reveals that the direct effect of OR on SCA yields a coefficient of 0.0897, with a Z-value of 1.94 and a p-value of 0.052. Although the p-value slightly exceeds the conventional 0.05 threshold, this effect is deemed marginally statistically significant, leading to the acceptance of H1 with a caveat. This finding suggests that organizational resilience, encompassing the ability to anticipate, respond to, and adapt to disruptions, contributes moderately to an institution's capacity to sustain a competitive advantage over the long term.

Hypothesis 2: Organizational Resilience (OR) has a positive effect on Crisis Management (CM). The path

estimate for OR on CM is 0.5402, with a Z-value of 14.17 and a p-value < 0.001, indicating a highly significant statistical effect. Consequently, H2 is accepted. This implies that organizations with elevated levels of resilience are more adept at managing crises effectively, through rapid response strategies, identification of potential disruptions, and learning from crisis experiences.

Hypothesis 3: Crisis Management (CM) has a positive effect on Sustained Competitive Advantage (SCA). The path analysis demonstrates a coefficient of 0.3489, with a Z-value of 6.81 and a p-value < 0.001, confirming a highly significant statistical effect. Thus, H3 is accepted. This result indicates that institutions with robust crisis management capabilities, such as the

ability to adapt operational strategies and innovate in response to challenges, are

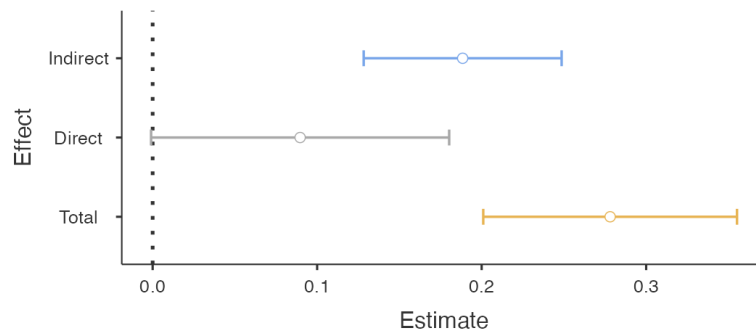
better positioned to build and maintain a sustained competitive advantage.

Table 2. Result of Hypothesis Test “Mediation Estimates”

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Indirect	0.1885	0.0307	6.14	<.001
Direct	0.0897	0.0462	1.94	0.052
Total	0.2781	0.0394	7.07	<.001

Hypothesis 4: Crisis Management (CM) mediates the relationship between Organizational Resilience (OR) and Sustained Competitive Advantage (SCA). The mediation analysis yields the following results: Indirect Effect: 0.1885 (Z = 6.14, p < 0.001), Direct Effect: 0.0897 (Z = 1.94, p = 0.052), Total Effect: 0.2781 (Z = 7.07, p < 0.001). Given the highly significant

indirect effect (p < 0.001) and the marginally significant direct effect (p = 0.052), the mediation is partial. This suggests that Organizational Resilience influences Sustained Competitive Advantage both directly, though with a weak effect, and indirectly through Crisis Management, which exerts a strong mediating role. Therefore, H4 is accepted.



Picture 1. Estimate Plot

DISCUSSION

This Word document can be used as a template for papers to be published in EAI Core Proceedings. Follow the text for further instructions on text formatting,

tables, figures, citations and references. This study also investigates the influence of Organizational Resilience (OR) on Sustained Competitive Advantage (SCA), with Crisis Management (CM) as a mediating variable in the context of private

universities in Indonesia. The analysis confirms that all proposed hypotheses are supported, with both direct and indirect effects being statistically significant.

First, the direct effect of Organizational Resilience on Sustained Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.0897$, $Z = 1.94$, $p = 0.052$) suggests that resilient organizations are capable of maintaining their competitive edge, albeit with an effect that is marginally significant. This finding is consistent with Duchek (2020), who posits that organizational resilience encompasses the ability to anticipate, respond to, and adapt to external disruptions. Prior studies also support the notion that organizational resilience contributes to competitive advantage through strategic adaptation and innovation (Burnard & Bhamra, 2011; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). In the higher education context, organizational resilience serves as an adaptive strategy for crisis planning, supporting long-term competitiveness (Serrat, 2017). Moreover, resilience can act as a source of competitive advantage, particularly in navigating environmental uncertainties (Boin et al., 2010).

Second, Organizational Resilience has a positive and highly significant effect on Crisis Management ($\beta = 0.5402$, $Z =$

14.17, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that organizations with high resilience are more effective in managing crises through rapid response strategies, identification of potential disruptions, and learning from crisis experiences. According to Boin et al. (2010), effective crisis management enables organizations not only to withstand external pressures but also to leverage crises as opportunities for transformation. In the context of private universities, this capability is critical for addressing challenges such as declining student enrollment and competition with public universities. The effectiveness of crisis management in mitigating negative impacts and enhancing organizational advantage is also supported by prior research (Pekkan & Çalışkan, 2022). The consensus that resilience is a critical factor in overcoming crises further reinforces the mediating role of crisis management (Teece, 2007).

Third, Crisis Management significantly influences Sustained Competitive Advantage ($\beta = 0.3489$, $Z = 6.81$, $p < 0.001$). This result highlights that an institution's ability to effectively manage crises—through strategies such as developing market-driven curricula or leveraging learning technologies—plays a pivotal role in achieving sustained

competitive advantage. These findings support the view that strategic crisis management enables organizations to build reputation, enhance graduate quality, and strengthen stakeholder relationships (Bui & Baruch, 2010; Jerez-Gómez et al., 2005). Additionally, prior studies indicate that internal processes like crisis management strengthen the relationship between organizational resilience and competitive advantage (Duchek, 2020). The dynamic capabilities derived from crisis management are essential for organizational performance in rapidly changing environments (Teece, 2007).

Finally, the mediating effect of Crisis Management in the relationship between Organizational Resilience and Sustained Competitive Advantage is significant (Indirect Effect = 0.1885, $Z = 6.14$, $p < 0.001$; Direct Effect = 0.0897, $Z = 1.94$, $p = 0.052$; Total Effect = 0.2781, $Z = 7.07$, $p < 0.001$). Given the marginally significant direct effect and the highly significant indirect effect, the mediation is partial. This suggests that Crisis Management serves as a critical bridge, converting organizational resilience into strategic actions that yield competitive advantage. These findings are consistent with structural mediation theory, which

emphasizes the role of internal processes in linking resources to organizational performance (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The effect of organizational resilience and strategic foresight on competitive advantage further supports the mediating role of crisis management (Serrat, 2017). Moreover, resilience as a driver of adaptability and innovation forms the foundation for organizational sustainability (Burnard & Bhamra, 2011).

Overall, this study provides significant contributions to the literature on strategic management and higher education in Indonesia. Amid global disruptions, pressures from public university autonomy policies, and declining student numbers, organizational resilience and effective crisis management emerge as critical factors for private universities to remain relevant and competitive. These findings underscore the need for private universities to integrate systematic crisis management strategies to bolster resilience and achieve sustained competitive advantage.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that organizational resilience is a critical factor in establishing sustained competitive advantage for private higher

education institutions in Indonesia. Organizational resilience enables institutions to adapt to external pressures, such as policy changes, competition with public universities, and fluctuations in student enrollment. However, to transform resilience into a long-term competitive advantage, robust crisis management is essential. The research results demonstrate

that crisis management is not only influenced by organizational resilience but also significantly contributes to fostering sustained competitive advantage.

Acknowledgement

This paper has been presented in 4th International Conference on Psychology and Health Issues (ICOPHI) 2025

REFERENCES

- Akgün, A. E., & Keskin, H. (2014). Organisational resilience capacity and firm product innovativeness. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 18(3).
- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1996). *Organizational Learning II: Theory, Method, and Practice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99-120.
- Boin, A., Comfort, L. K., & Demchak, C. C. (2010). The rise of resilience: Linking resilience and crisis management. In A. Boin, L. K. Comfort, & C. C. Demchak (Eds.), *Designing Resilience: Preparing for Extreme Events* (pp. 1-12). Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Bui, H., & Baruch, Y. (2010). Creating learning organizations: A systems perspective. *The Learning Organization*, 17(3), 208-227.
- Burnard, K., & Bhamra, R. (2011). Organisational resilience: Development of a conceptual framework for organisational responses. *International Journal of Production Research*, 49(18), 5581-5599.
- Duchek, S. (2020). Organizational resilience: A capability-based conceptualization. *Business Research*, 13(1), 215-246.
- Hidayat, D., & Pangestuti, E. (2019). Competitive advantage of private universities in Indonesia: Role of organizational learning and innovation. *Journal of Economics, Business & Accountancy Ventura*, 22(2), 167-178.
- Lengnick-Hall, C. A., Beck, T. E., & Lengnick-Hall, M. L. (2011). Developing a capacity for organizational resilience through strategic human resource management. *Human Resource Management Review*, 21(3), 243-255.
- LLDIKTI. (2023). Laporan Tahunan Penurunan Jumlah Mahasiswa Baru di Perguruan Tinggi Swasta. Retrieved from PDDikti: <https://pddikti.kemdikbud.go.id>.
- Pillai, R. (2022). Organizational resilience and sustainability: A study in the context of public sector organizations. *Public Management Review*, 24(4), 567-589.

- Porter, M. E. (1996). What is strategy? *Harvard Business Review*, 74(6), 61-78.
- Teece, D. J. (2007). Explicating dynamic capabilities: The nature and microfoundations of (sustainable) enterprise performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 28(13), 1319-1350.
- Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 12 Tahun 2012 tentang Pendidikan Tinggi. Retrieved from <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id>.
- Morales, S. N., Martínez, L. R., Gómez, J. A. N., López, R. R., & Torres-Argüelles, V. (2022). Organizational Resilience of Higher Education Institutions: An Adapted Measurement Instrument. *Education Sciences*, 12(5), 334. <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/12/5/334>
- Al-Obaidi, R. A. H. (2025). The Effectiveness of Crisis Management and its Role in Achieving Organizational Excellence. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, 15(1), 1-24. <https://ijps.in/admin1/upload/15%20Dr.%20Rafat%20Asai%20Hussein%20Al-Obaidi%2001324.pdf>
- Sahebjamnia, N., Torabi, S. A., & Mansouri, S. A. (2022). Is Organizational Resilience a Competitive Advantage? *Journal of Business Research*, 150, 1-12. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361542969_Is_Organizational_Resilience_a_Competitive_Advantage
- Kuhn, M. M., & Schäfer, U. (2023). The How and Why of Organizational Resilience: A Mixed-Methods Study of Resilience Dimensions and Their Leverage Mechanisms. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 59(3), 453-483. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00218863231165785>
- Li, J., Liu, H., van den Noortgate, W., Li, B., & Starr, C. R. (2022). The Mediating and Moderating Effect of Organizational Resilience and Leadership on Relationships Between Emotional Labour and Service Quality in Nursing: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Sustainability*, 14(21), 13797. <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/21/13797>
- Hamid, N., Soetjipto, B. E., Rudyanto, A., & Ronda-Pupo, G. A. (2025). Dynamic capabilities and organizational performance: the mediating role of innovation capability. *Future Business Journal*, 11(1), 1-15. <https://fbj.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s43093-025-00592-w>
- Bakkar, Y., & Alkurdi, A. (2022). The Effect of Organizational Resilience and Strategic Foresight on Firm Performance: Competitive Advantage as Mediating Variable. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 821691. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.821691>
- Chukwuemeka, O. D., & Eboh, C. N. (2025). Organizational Resilience as the Springboard for Organizational Sustainability. *European Journal of Management, Economics and Business*, 1(1), 1-10. <https://ejmeh.com/index.php/journal/article/view/55>