

Can Supervisor's Crab Syndrome be an Antecedent of Abusive Supervision From the Perspective of Hospitality Organizations Through the Lens of Conservation of Resources Theory?

Kaynakların Korunması Teorisiyle Konaklama İşletmeleri Perspektifinden Yönetici Yengeç Sendromu İstismarcı Denetimin Öncülü Olabilir mi?

ABSTRACT

In this study, the effect of supervisor's crab syndrome on abusive supervision (AS) was tested based on the resource conservation theory. The aim of the study is to determine whether crab syndrome (personal resources) is an antecedent of AS (organizational resources). In this context, the research is crucial in terms of revealing the unknowns about the impact of supervisor's crab syndrome on AS and contributing to the literature. The sample of the study consists of employees working in different departments in the hospitality sector and reached by convenience sampling method. The sample size was determined using the G*Power software. Data were collected through questionnaire technique and the questionnaire included supervisor's crab syndrome scale, AS scale and demographic questions. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the level of participation. The data collected for the research model were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS software. The research hypothesis was tested with structural equation modeling (SEM). The results of the study revealed that supervisor's crab syndrome had a significant and positive impact on AS. Contributions and limitations of the study were discussed and suggestions for future studies were presented.

Keywords: Supervisor's crab syndrome, abusive supervision, competition, stress.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, yönetici yengeç sendromunun istismarcı yönetim (AS) üzerindeki etkisi, kaynakların korunması teorisine dayalı olarak test edilmiştir. Çalışmanın amacı, yengeç sendromunun (kişisel kaynaklar) AS'nin (örgütsel kaynaklar) bir öncülü olup olmadığını belirlemektir. Bu bağlamda araştırma, yönetici yengeç sendromunun AS üzerindeki etkisine ilişkin bilinmeyenleri ortaya koyması ve literatüre katkı sağlaması açısından önemlidir. Araştırmanın örneklemini konaklama sektöründe farklı departmanlarda görev yapan ve kolayda örnekleme yöntemiyle ulaşılan çalışanlar oluşturmaktadır. Örnekleme büyüklüğü G*Power yazılımı kullanılarak belirlendi. Veriler anket tekniği ile toplanmış ve ankette yönetici yengeç sendromu ölçeği, AS ölçeği ve demografik sorular yer almıştır. Katılım düzeyini ölçmek için 5'li Likert tipi bir ölçek kullanılmıştır. Araştırma modeli için toplanan veriler SPSS ve AMOS yazılımı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma hipotezi yapısal eşitlik modellemesi (YEM) ile test edilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçları, yönetici yengeç sendromunun AS üzerinde anlamlı ve olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğunu ortaya koydu. Çalışmanın katkıları ve sınırlılıkları tartışılmış ve gelecek çalışmalar için öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Yönetici yengeç sendromu, istismarcı yönetim, rekabet, stres.

INTRODUCTION

Conservation of resources (COR) theory is used to make sense of human behavior (Hobfoll, 1989). This theory defines everything that an individual finds valuable as a resource and suggests that individuals aim to increase their resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Hobfoll and Ford (2007) stated that one resource could be used to increase or prevent the decrease of another resource. While resources are classified as object, situation, personal and energy resources (Hobfoll, 2001a), it is also possible to categorize resources as organizational, personal and work resources (Hobfoll et al., 2016). Personal resources include resilience and self-esteem; organizational resources include leadership styles (Hobfoll, 2001b). In this study, crab syndrome is evaluated as a personal resource and abusive supervision (AS) as an organizational resource. This research aims to reveal the relationship between personal resources and organizational resources in hospitality businesses. COR theory states that individuals are more sensitive to resource loss (Ford, 2009). While this sensitivity causes stress, it also creates changes in individual behaviors and attitudes (Hobfoll, 1989).

The motivation to conserve resources can cause positive/negative outcomes in the organizational environment (Üzüm and Özkan, 2023). It is a metaphor for the behaviors in the basket where the crabs are placed with the observation of the fisherman catching crabs (Özdemir and Üzüm, 2019). The crabs' motivation to climb on top of each other to get out of the basket is interpreted as their efforts to reach valuable resources (Üzüm and Özkan, 2023). It is seen that research on crab syndrome has been examined with qualitative techniques (Miller, 2019; Soubhari and Kumar, 2014). In addition to these studies, empirical research on crab syndrome (Özkan et al., 2022;

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Uzum et al., 2022; Üzümlü and Özdemir, 2022; Üzümlü et al., 2022; Üzümlü and Özkan, 2022a; Üzümlü and Özkan, 2022b; Üzümlü and Özkan, 2023) is in its infancy.

Crab syndrome includes the reflection of behaviors that are willing to gather resources (Üzümlü and Özkan, 2023), while AS is considered as a control mechanism that controls resources. Frieder et al. (2015) defined AS as a type of leadership in which employees believe that the supervisor shows consistently bad attitudes and behaviors towards them. According to COR theory, it is considered as an organizational resource; it is noted that it decreases helping behavior (Xia et al., 2019) and job satisfaction (Pan et al., 2018) and increases information withholding behavior (Khalid et al., 2018). While Tepper (2007) states that AS is influenced by past family history, Martinko et al. (2023) stated that it has a character affected by injustice. On the other hand, it is also known that oppressive, stressful, high-risk working environments are the antecedents of AS (Martinko et al., 2023). It is possible to shed light on the concept of AS with COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989). However, it is stated that research on how AS created a sectoral change has been neglected (Martinko et al., 2023; Tepper, 2007).

Since the tourism sector is a sector where emotional labor is dominant, where there is constant interaction with customers and customer pressure, it causes the emergence of AS (Yu et al., 2020). In the work environment, competition can be seen depending on the amount of resources, while the size of the hierarchical structure can be effective in determining behavioral strategies (Ellis et al., 2009). It is stated that the antecedents of AS in hospitality organizations are moral competence (Yu et al., 2020). This research is inspired by the COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018) with the emphasis that the antecedents of AS are neglected (Hobfoll et al., 2018), called by Tepper (2007) and Martinko et al. (2023), and seeks an answer to the question, can supervisor's crab syndrome be an antecedent of AS? This research sheds light on what is known about crab syndrome and its antecedents from the perspective of hospitality organizations and offers both theoretical and practical implications.

THEORETICAL CONCEPT

Individuals may use their personal resources to get rid of conditions that they perceive as a threat to their resources in order to keep and not lose them (Hobfoll and Ford, 2007). These resources can also be consumed to increase another resource (Hobfoll et al., 2018). On the basis of COR theory, any behavior that contributes to improving individual well-being can be called crab syndrome (Miller, 2019). The individual does not want anyone else to be free by climbing out of the basket, he/she focuses on bringing others down and thus resources are left to the individual (Üzümlü and Özkan, 2022b).

It is also stated that the crab syndrome has detrimental effects on the work atmosphere in the organizational environment (Miller, 2019). Crab syndrome is a mentality that wants resource dominance to be in one's own hands (Üzümlü and Özkan, 2023). Üzümlü and Özkan (2022b) found that the crab syndrome, in which individual gains are at the forefront, puts ethics and social responsibility in the background in the organizational framework. It is seen that the crab syndrome (Üzümlü and Özdemir, 2022), which can be evaluated as a personality trait and in which negative behaviors or attitudes are intense, is closely related to moral dissolution (Üzümlü and Özkan, 2022b). In this framework, it can be stated that the individual who is focused on protecting resources does not care about social and moral values in order to access scarce resources (Üzümlü et al., 2022). Üzümlü and Özkan (2022a) also stated that crab syndrome has a decreasing effect on job embeddedness.

While attention has been drawn to the negative effects of negative personality traits (Wu and Lebreton, 2011), it has been observed that crab syndrome has the effect of reducing innovative behaviors (Özkan et al., 2022). It was also found that the level of crab syndrome varies according to type A and type B personality traits. Type A personality is more prone to crab syndrome than type B personality. In the same study, utilizing the perspective of social comparison theory, it was determined that people with low self-esteem are prone to crab syndrome (Uzum et al., 2022). It has been determined that the leader's being under the influence of the crab syndrome has a decreasing impact on the work effort of the employees, and on the other hand, it also decreases the relational energy (Üzümlü and Özkan, 2023).

When employees perceive that they receive "consistently bad behavior" from their leaders, Tepper (2000) calls this type of leadership AS. Looking at the consequences of AS on employees, it can be seen that it has inverse relationships with helping behaviors (Xia et al., 2019), job satisfaction (Pan et al., 2018), and mental well-being (Wang et al., 2022). Kim et al. (2018) emphasized that AS increases job stress and emotional exhaustion. Nevertheless, it reflects the impact of reducing employees' personal and work resources on the presence of organizational resources by reducing employee performance (Siyal et al., 2021). Although it is known that the seasonal workforce increases during the high season in the tourism sector, employees who do not have permanent status are not willing to report the loss of resources they experience as a result of facing AS to the management (Yu et al., 2020).

When the antecedents of AS are examined, it is stated that it is influenced by culture; however, it is seen that power distance is the most determinant among cultural characteristics (Martinko et al., 2023). Üzüm and Özdemir (2022) point out that crab syndrome also increases as power distance increases. Furnham (2018) states that personality traits are the antecedents of behaviors encountered in the work environment, and Martinko et al. (2023) states that stressful working environment is the antecedent of AS. As stated by Yu et al. (2020), it is thought that the antecedent of AS is supervisor's crab syndrome due to the fact that accommodation businesses have a similar structure (Üzüm and Özkan, 2023). The stress caused by the loss of resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018) can create a structure that aims to eliminate competition and to concentrate resources in one hand (Özdemir and Üzüm, 2019). Managers may tend to engage in AS to maximize the use of organizational resources (Üzüm and Özkan, 2023; Martinko et al., 2023):

H₁ : *Supervisor's crab syndrome positively influences AS.*

METHOD

In this section, the research model, population and sample, data collection technique and scales used in the research are explained.

Research Model

The aim of the study is to examine the effect of supervisor's crab syndrome on abusive leadership. The model created for this purpose is illustrated in Figure 1.

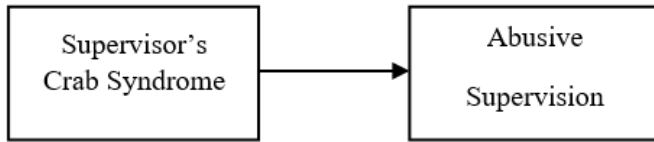


Figure 1: Research model

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the research consists of employees employed in various departments in the accommodation sector in Aydın province. Since it was not possible to reach the whole population within the scope of the research, an online survey form was sent to the employees with the convenience sampling method.

The return rate of the questionnaires was 176 due to conditions such as leave, rest and shifts. The sample size in the study was determined using the G*Power software (Faul et al., 2007). The required sample size was calculated as 89 with 95% statistical power, $\alpha=.05$ significance level and .15 effect size (Cohen, 1988). According to this result, it can be said that the sample is statistically representative of the research population (Bougie and Sekaran, 2019).

Data Collection Technique and Scales

The survey questionnaire method was utilized in the research. Since it is easy to answer and access, the questionnaire form was conducted online. The questionnaire included questions about supervisor's crab syndrome, AS and demographic information. In the application part of the research, 5-point Likert-type scales were used to test the model and the hypothesis put forward.

Supervisor's Crab Syndrome: The supervisor's crab syndrome scale, which was created by Üzüm and Özdemir (2020) consisting of 5 items and a single factor, was used. It was employed to assess supervisors according to the statements included in the scale. One example statement from the scale is "My leader is afraid of being surpassed by employees."

Abusive Supervision: Mitchell and Ambrose's (2007) version of Tepper's (2000) abusive supervision scale consisting of five items and one factor was used in the study. A sample item is "My supervisor ridicules me." (Dirican and Erdil, 2020).

FINDINGS

In this study, SPSS was used for descriptive statistics and correlational relationships and AMOS was used to test the measurement model and structural model. The results are presented in Table 1 (measurement model) and Table 2 (structural model).

When the descriptive statistics of the sample (n=176) are analyzed; 63% of the sample is male in terms of gender, 54% of the sample is married in terms of marital status, 47% of the sample has associate's degree in terms of educational status. It is observed that 41% of the participants are between the ages of 24-34 and 38% have 5-10

years of professional experience. In terms of correlation values, there is a positive relationship between supervisor's crab syndrome (mean=2.37) and AS (mean=1.81) ($r=.24$; $<.01$).

Table 1: Measurement model

Latent Variables	Items	Standardized Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
SCS	SCS1	.81	.90	.90	.64
	SCS2	.82			
	SCS3	.76			
	SCS4	.91			
	SCS5	.70			
AS	AS1	.68	.88	.88	.59
	AS2	.71			
	AS3	.90			
	AS4	.72			
	AS5	.81			
Fit Indices	$\chi^2/df=1.47$	GFI=.95	Fornell-Larcker Criterion		SCS
	RMSEA=.05	CFI=.98	SCS		(.80)
	SRMR=.04	TLI=.98	AS		.25
				AS	(.77)

Notes: CR=Composite Reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted.

SCS=Supervisor's Crab Syndrome; AS=Abusive Supervision.

χ^2/df =Chi-Square/Degrees of Freedom; RMSEA=Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR=Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; GFI=Goodness of Fit Index; CFI=Comparative Fit Index; TLI=Tucker-Lewis Index.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) revealed that the measurement model was compatible with the data and met the specified index values (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). According to the values in Table 1, it can be said that the internal consistency reliability (α and $CR \geq .70$), convergent ($CR > AVE$) and discriminant (square root of AVE for each construct exceeds the correlation between constructs) validity of the supervisor's crab syndrome and AS scales were achieved (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2010).

The hypothesis of the study was tested by SEM method and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: SEM

Effect	β	SE	t-value	p-value	R ² value	Conclusion
SCS \rightarrow AS	.24	0.07	2.90	.004**	.06	H ₁ =Supported

Notes: ** $p < .01$; SE=Standard Error; R²=Explained Variance; SCS=Supervisor's Crab Syndrome; AS=Abusive Supervision; Coefficients are standardized (β).

According to the findings, the effect of supervisor's crab syndrome on AS was positive and significant ($\beta=.24$; $p < .01$). Supervisor's crab syndrome explains approximately .06% (R²) of the variation on AS. This result supports the hypothesis H1 of the study.

CONCLUSION

In this study, an answer to the question "Is supervisor's crab syndrome an antecedent of AS in the hospitality industry?" was sought. The research was supported by the COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018), the hypothesis was tested and it was determined that supervisor's crab syndrome is an antecedent of AS. The efforts of hospitality organizations to keep customer satisfaction at a high level create a stressful working environment (Yu et al., 2020). Organizational hierarchical structure is also an element of stress and pressure (Ellis et al., 2009). When the supervisor's crab syndrome is considered as the reflection of the stress and anxiety caused by competition on behaviors, it has been determined that it causes changes in individual behaviors. The unique structure and conditions of hospitality organizations encourage AS (Martinko et al., 2023). The findings of the study, which coincide with the results that supervisor's crab syndrome creates resource loss (Üzüm and Özkan, 2023), support Furnham's (2018) view that personality traits shape behaviors in working life. As a result of this research, Tepper's (2007) and Martinko et al.'s (2023) calls for sectoral change and antecedents of AS were also answered.

Tests to determine the personality traits of employees should be applied by human resources in accommodation businesses, training should be provided to eliminate or minimize the negative effects of personality traits that may have negative consequences in the work environment, and policies and practices should be put into effect in this direction (Kuhl et al., 2006; Özkan et al., 2022). Suggestion/complaint systems should be established where individuals can freely express their opinions about the conditions they are satisfied or dissatisfied with.

This research has some limitations. First of all, it identified the supervisor's crab syndrome as an antecedent of AS and evaluated employee perceptions in hospitality organizations. The data subject to the study were cross-sectional

and collected from a single source. The stress inherent in the loss of resources encourages a structure that is willing to eliminate competition and wants the dominance of resources to be in one hand (Üzüm and Özkan, 2023). Preferring people who focus on teamwork rather than individual competition is a factor that human resources should pay attention to in job interviews. Thus, supervisor's crab syndrome can be turned into an advantage rather than a problem. In this respect, it is recommended to evaluate the role of crab syndrome in inter-team relations for future research. Personal development and support programs can positively benefit from the crab syndrome that desires to be unrivaled.

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