

Job Embeddedness Antecedents in the Context of Resource Conservation Theory: Crab Syndrome and Intrusion

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Abstract

The effect of crab syndrome and intrusion on job embeddedness is discussed in research within the scope of Resource Conservation Theory. Even though many researches have been conducted in literature to identify antecedents of job embeddedness, the researches on the role of the crab syndrome and intrusion seem to be quite limited. In this context, the research is important in terms of revealing factors that negatively affect employees experiencing job embeddedness. The sample of the research, which was carried out to fill this gap in related literature, consists of 216 accommodation sector employees reached by convenience sampling method. Questionnaire technique was used as data collection method in the research, and the survey was carried out between 12 July - 13 August 2021. The reliability and validity analyzes of the scales, used in the research, were performed. Internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity were calculated within the scope of reliability and validity studies. Moreover, the scale of intrusion, consisting of four-items and sole factor, was adapted into Turkish within the scope of the research. The research model was analyzed by the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-PM, PLS-SEM) method. T-values were calculated, taking 5000 subsamples from the sample by bootstrapping to evaluate the significance of PLS path coefficients. In consequence of the analyzes, it was determined that the crab syndrome and intrusion negatively predicted job embeddedness. Besides limitations of the research, various suggestions were presented at the end of research.

Keywords: Crab syndrome, Intrusion, Job embeddedness, Resource conservation theory

Introduction

Human behavior is affected by many factors, and there are many researches which deal with the positive and negative aspects of the reflection of human behavior on the organization. This research focuses on resource conservation theory (Hobfoll, 1989) in order to understand the consequences of human behavior. There are the preservation, increase and non-decrease of the obtained resources at the core of the

theory (Hobfoll et. al., 2018). Personal welfare also increases as the resources increases. The resource can be the position in the organization, the desired self-esteem, salary increase, time or any object (Hobfoll, 2001).

Gaining resource may not always give positive results. Undesirable results are likely to be encountered if the sum of the resources sacrificed to gain is greater than the return, or there is a risk of losing the available resource for the sake of gain (Hobfoll, 2001). On the other hand, the loss of resources creates stress on the individual since it will indicate a decrease in the level of welfare. One of the negative consequences of resource loss is stress (Halbesleben, 2006). According to Miller (2019), the threats, which prevent the preservation of organizational gains, cause stress, and the stress reveals the crab syndrome. In brief, increase in resource gives positive results while decrease in resource brings negative results (Wright and Cropanzano, 1998). The balance of gain and loss is a obvious motivator in exhibiting goal-directed behavior (Hobfoll, 1989).

The reasons why individuals continue to work in their jobs may be based on rational reasons such as liking their job very much or not having anywhere else to go (Lee, et al, 2014). Job embeddedness indicates what rational reasons are (Bollen and Bauldry, 2011), but it is important to interpret these reasons correctly as well as to identify them. The fact that continuing to obtain the resource gains from the existing organization emphasizes job embeddedness.

The social networks, which individuals have, can also be interpreted as resources. Individuals may behave excessively in social and work relations in order to increase relational resources. This situation, which is perceived as “much intimacy” can disturb while withdrawal for protecting social boundaries can cause distancing in social distance and decrease in commitment to the other party (Ehrhardt, 2014; Piorkowski, 1994). Intrusion as a a conscious choice or unconscious behavior can lead to the need to “withdrawal”.

Furthermore, the way for human resources management to retain “human” as a resource belonging to the enterprise is to comprehend the job embeddedness well (Zhang et. al., 2012). At this point, it is seen that the job embeddedness antecedents are important once again.

Even though many researches have been conducted in the literature to identify the antecedents of work-embeddedness, researches on the role of crab syndrome and intrusion seem to be quite limited. In this context, the aim of the research is to analyze the effects of the newly established Crab syndrome and the intrusion by taking into account the previous researches on job embeddedness within the scope of Resource Conservation Theory. The research differs from other researches in this aspect, and it constitutes its original aspect. In consequence of the research, it is aimed to fill a gap in related literature by detecting the relations between the crab syndrome, intrusion and job embeddedness, and to contribute to the researchers on the subject.

Conceptual Framework

From an individual point of view, job embeddedness contains “fit” in the individual-environment relation, “links” with other stakeholders and the “sacrifice” that the individual will have to undertake in case of giving up working (Mitchell, et. al, 2001). These elements form combinations in business life (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2008).

Job embeddedness focuses on the questions of why individuals continue to work in their jobs or why they quit their jobs, with a fundamentally psychological approach (Mitchell et al., 2001; Zhang et. al, 2012). It also includes all the factors that enable enable or prevent individuals from continuing to work in their jobs (Birsell, et al., 2012). These factors, which can also explain the organization-employee relations in certain respects (Holtom and O'Neill, 2004) entail an effort that requires unified thinking. However, these mere reasons are not sufficient to explain all the justification, such as the relation between employee turnover, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Holtom et al., 2008). Moreover, The level of knowledge, experience and cooperation between the employee and the leader in organizations where leader-member unity can be maintained (Lee et al., 2014) plays a moderator role between job embeddedness and intention to quit the job (Karatepe, 2012). Job embeddedness presents a structure that provides a broader explanation of job commitment or job satisfaction on employee-management relation (Holtom and O'Neill, 2004).

Although job embeddedness reveals indicators that explain the reasons why employees continue to work (Bollen and Bauldry, 2011), the important thing is to ensure that the thoughts behind these reasons can be determined correctly. In brief, efforts should be made to experience the feelings of getting closer and connecting, instead of quitting and withdrawing. Oladeji and Ayinde (2018) dealt with leadership types and personality traits as predictors of job embeddedness. Job embeddedness gives clues on how to retain employees. In other words, it gives clues on how resources should be protected from an administrative point of view.

Pegues (2018), who dealt with the Crab syndrome from an organizational perspective, considers the actions aimed at disrupting the working welfare and motivation of individuals who violate the organizational rules for the purpose of bumping their status up. Miller (2019), on the other hand, considers it as a metaphor that explains the violation of social norms as well as organizational norms. This syndrome is a combination of behaviors that cause anxiety, worry, stress and psychological harm in the face of competition (Özdemir and Üzümlü, 2019). In brief, the crab syndrome is a response to a situation that evokes the risk of losing the source of stress.

It is thought that the behaviors, which focus on preventing the success of others, evoke the crab syndrome (Miller, 2019), and refute the individual's sense of commitment to the organization or his/her job. At this point, examining the effects of crab syndrome is a notable issue. Crab syndrome causes actions that act with the desire to obtain limited resources to increase or prevent the loss of personal interests (Miller, 2019).

Personality is the combination of traits that make an individual different. It is also a source of motivation, and it provides a consistent set of behaviors belonging to that person that affect cognitive perception in various situations (Luthans, 2011). Personality can explain both susceptibility to stress (Lee-Baggeley et al., 2005) and job embeddedness behavior (Oladeji and Ayinde, 2018). In short, it sets light to business life and business-related behaviors. Workplace behavior is a reflection of individual traits. It is also shaped under organizational and situational conditions. The fact

that person continues to work in the organization and tries to survive under difficult situations is a way of protecting existing assets (Üzümlü et al., 2021). Crab syndrome can be considered as a life-sustaining strategy to reach resources. The nature of Crab syndrome reveals the consequences that impede the development and progress (Miller, 2019). The hypothesis, based on all these statements, is as follows:

H1: Crab syndrome has a negative impact on job embeddedness.

Personal relationships are conducted in a close and distant manner, keeping certain boundaries. Intrusion is defined as “violation of interpersonal distance in social networks or interference in private life” (Ehrhardt, 2014). Intrusion can be explained by Attachment Theory. According to this theory, infants become attached to the person who supports them to lead a normal life and develop trust with the person who takes care of them (Spitzberg and Cupach, 2003). Sense of confidence strengthens bonds, and it causes person to behave in a comfortable way in personal relationships. This situation can make the person feel that his/her limits of privacy have been exceeded. Going one step beyond the determined limit means exhibiting unwanted, annoying or disturbing behaviors for the other person (Cupach and Spitzberg, 1998). Attachment Theory also suggests that bonds can become weaker.

Various attempts, such as sitting next to a person in face-to-face communication, confronting in unexpected places, intruding while talking to others, can be given as examples of intrusion (Spitzberg and Cupach, 2007). Supportive behaviors, which are generally well-intentioned, can sometimes be used maliciously (Jit et al., 2017). The main point is to cross personal boundaries, and “intrusion” bells may begin to appear for the individuals who think that personal boundaries have been violated. Andersen and Chen (2002) think that separation and relationship determine the distance between people. According to the Attachment Theory, it is well-intentioned to be “too close” in personal relationships. However, it can be interpreted negatively on behalf of the other party as a pursuit to prevent loss of resources, according to the Resource Conservation Theory. And thus, a negative attitude towards the work environment or work can be displayed. The

hypothesis, which was developed in this context, is as follows:

H2: Intrusion has a negative impact on job embeddedness.

Method

This study was conducted by taking into consideration the quantitative research design, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses. According to the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p < .05$) results, the measurement model and structural model analyzes of the research were performed by using the SmartPLS 3.3.3 program since distribution of the data set was not normal.

Sampling Process

The universe of the research comprises of the employees which work in accommodation enterprises in Yalova. 216 accommodation sector employees, who were reached by convenience sampling method in the third quarter of 2021, constitute the sample of the research. In order to collect data for the research, it was aimed to reach the number of people ten times the number of items suggested by Hair et al. (2014).

Participants and Data Obtaining Method

Questionnaire technique was used as data obtaining method in the research. Firstly, the Ethics Committee Decision was taken for the research, and the participants were informed about the subject, and then, the questionnaire form was distributed online. 285 employees participated in the questionnaire (12 July-13 August 2021). 234 people filled in the distributed questionnaires, but 18 questionnaires were excluded from the evaluation since there were contradictory statements in the answers to the confirmatory questions.

It is seen that majority of the participants are male (60%), married (75%), associate-degree (58%), between the ages of 35-48 (52%) and have professional experience between 6-16 years (32%) when the demographic characteristics of the employees participating in the research are taken into account.

Measurement Tools

Crab Syndrome Scale: The crab syndrome scale, which was developed by Üzümlü and Özdemir (2020) and consists of

five items and sole factor, was used. "The fact that my colleagues are more successful than me scares me" is an example of the questions in the scale. A five-point Likert scale, which range from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree", was taken into account when the items in the scale were evaluated. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability value of the scale was calculated as .74.

Intrusion Scale: The four-item scale of Ehrhardt and Ragins (2019) was adapted into Turkish by the authors of the research for this research in order to measure the intrusion perception of employees. Following the translation and back translation procedure (Brislin, 1980), the original articles were translated. "Other people at work sometimes do not respect my need for a private personal life." statement is an example of the questions in the scale. The items in the scale were graded, according to a five-point Likert scale which ranges from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The Cronbach's Alpha reliability value of the scale was found to be .90.

Job Embeddedness Scale: The job embeddedness scale, which was developed by Crossley, Bennett, Jex and Burnfield (2007), and which was adapted by Kesen and Akyüz (2016), was used to reveal the participants' level of job embeddedness. The scale consists of sole factor and seven items, however, since the two expressions in the scale are very close to each other in meaning, one of these two items was eliminated (Dirican, 2020). "I feel that I am loyalty to this institution" is an example of the scale. The items in the scale were evaluated, according to a five-point Likert scale which ranges from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The Cronbach's Alpha reliability value of the scale was determined as .92.

Control Variable: It was observed that there was a relation between demographic variables, which were examined as control variables, and dependent variables. A significant relation was found between professional experience and job embeddedness in the researches performed (Dirican, 2020; Ng and Feldman, 2009; Peltokorpi et.al, 2015). Furthermore, professional experience and gender were used as control variables since there is a significant relation between gender and job embeddedness in the research. The effects of other demographic variables were not checked

since they did not show significant correlation with outcome variables in the model (Becker, 2005; Dirican, 2020). There is no significant relation between job embeddedness and age, however, the age variable was not used as a control variable since the age variable had a very strong correlation with professional experience ($\rho=.95$; $p<.01$). According to Dirican (2020) and Gavino et. al, (2012), using both of them as control variables in the model may cause bias in the estimations.

Findings

Common Method Variance Error

Harman's sole factor method was used to determine whether there was a common method variance error in the research (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986). For this purpose, items belonging to the variables of crab syndrome, intrusion and job embeddedness were subjected to exploratory factor analysis by the maximum likelihood method without applying any rotation method. In consequence of the analysis, a three-factor structure, which

has a an eigenvalue greater than 1 and explains 74% of the total variance, was obtained. This result suggests that the data were not collected in a sole and general factor. On the other hand, the total amount of variance explained by the factor, in which all observed variables are collected in a sole factor, is 40.582% when the number of factors is forced to 1. It shows that the common method variance error in the research data has a minimal effect on the findings since this rate is lower than 50% variance.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

The mean, standard deviation and correlation values of the research variables are shown in Table 1. It is seen that crab syndrome, intrusion and job embeddedness have negative relation with each other ($\rho=-.38$, $p<.01$; $\rho=-.39$, $p<.01$, respectively) when the correlation values are viewed. On the other side, crab syndrome and intrusion have positive relation with each other ($\rho=.54$, $p<.01$). Moreover, the relation between professional experience, gender, and job embeddedness ($\rho=.13$, $p<.05$; $\rho=-.16$, $p<.05$, respectively) was found to be significant.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlation levels for variables

Variable	Mean	S. D.	1	2	3	4	5
1. Crab Syndrome	2.50	.93	1				
2. Intrusion	2.20	.93	.54**	1			
3. Job Embeddedness	3.22	1.08	-.38**	-.39**	1		
4. Tenure	-	-	-.07	-.11	.13*	1	
5. Gender ^a	-	-	-.03	.04	-.16*	-	1

Note: N=216; * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; ρ =Spearman Correlation; Tenure in years; a=Dummy Variable 1=Male, 2=Female

Measurement Model

Reliability and validity analyzes of the scales were done before testing the hypotheses of the research, and the findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The Results of Measurement Model

Variables	Item	Factor Load	α	CR > AVE
Crab Syndrome	CS1	.84	.94	.94 > .77
	CS2	.86		
	CS3	.83		
	CS4	.88		
	CS5	.95		

Variables	Item	Factor Load	α	CR > AVE
Intrusion	INT1	.96	.91	.91 > .72
	INT2	.77		
	INT3	.90		
	INT4	.73		
Job Embeddedness	JE1	.92	.96	.96 > .83
	JE2	.86		
	JE3	.83		
	JE4	.97		
	JE5 ^a	.30		
	JE6	.96		
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Criterion				
Variables	Crab Syndrome	Intrusion	Job Embeddedness	Fornell-Larcker Criterion
Crab Syndrome	-	-	-	CS-CS: .87
Intrusion	.628	-	-	INT-INT: .85
Job Embeddedness	.436	.435	-	JE-JE: .91
Sum of Model				
Variables	R ²	f ²	Q ²	VIF
Job Embeddedness	.23	-	.18	-
Crab Syndrome → Job Embeddedness	-	.05	-	-
Intrusion → Job Embeddedness	-	.05	-	-
Crab Syndrome → Job Embeddedness	-	-	-	1.68
Intrusion → Job Embeddedness	-	-	-	1.68

Note: α =Cronbach's Alpha; CR=Composite Reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted; R²=Explained Variance; f²=Effect Size; Q²=Predictive Relevance; VIF=Variance Inflation Factor; a=JE5<.40

In consequence of the analysis, it is acknowledged as an indicator of internal consistency that the fact that the reliability levels of the scales are between .91 and .96, and the CR coefficients are between .91 and .96. It is expressed as convergent validity that the factor loads of the structures are between .73 and .97, and AVE values are between .72 and .83. The findings reveal that the measurement model has internal consistency reliability and convergent validity (Hair et. al, 2017). The fact that the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) coefficients in Table 2 are below the threshold value (<.85) indicates that the constructs are

separate factors from each other and discriminant validity is provided (Henseler et. al., 2015).

It was found out that there was no linearity problem between the variables since VIF values were below the threshold value (<5) (Hair et. al., 2017). When the effect size coefficients (f²) were examined, it was detected that the estimation variables had a low level of effect on the dependent variable (Cohen, 1988). It is seen that job embeddedness is explained by the estimation variables at a rate of 23% when the R² values obtained from the model are examined. The fact that the Q² value in the table is greater than zero indicates that the research model has the power to predict the variable of job embeddedness (Hair et. al., 2017).

Structural Model

Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the research model, and the path coefficients, standard deviation, t and p values for the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of analysis results

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	Std. Dev.	t	p	Result
1. Crab Syndrome → Job Embeddedness	-.27	.09	2.95	.003***	Accepted
2. Intrusion → Job Embeddedness	-.26	.09	2.80	.005***	Accepted

According to the results in the table, Crab syndrome and intrusion have a negative effect on job embeddedness ($\beta = -.27$, $p < .001$; $\beta = -.26$, $p < .001$, respectively). This result supports the hypotheses 1 and 2 of the research.

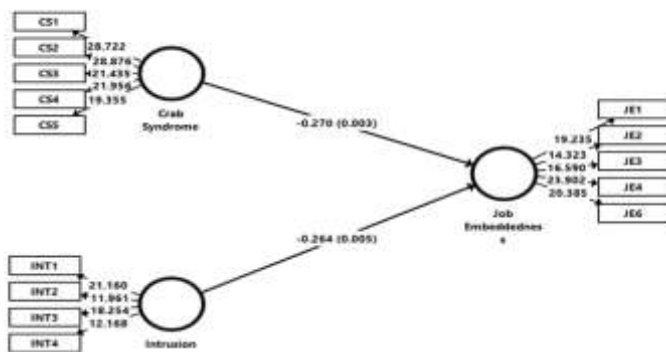


Figure 1: Research model and coefficients

Discussion

This research includes the crab syndrome as a personality trait that affects job embeddedness and as the concept of intrusion, which can be considered as an interference in personality rights. It has been detected that job embeddedness, which explains organizational commitment, intention to continue to work (Mitchell et al., 2001; Zhang et. al, 2012), and job satisfaction (Holtom et al., 2008; Holtom and O'Neill, 2004), is affected by the level of information sharing (Karatepe, 2012), leadership behaviors, and personality traits (Oladeji and Ayinde, 2018). It has been observed that the negative effects of low leader-member exchange and motivation are further increased by job embeddedness (Harris et. al., 2011). Even the time lost to commute can be perceived as intrusion by the employee. In this case, the level of job embeddedness cause them to not desire to stay in the organization even if it

is high (Zhang et. al., 2012).

Embeddedness enables that the employee and their family links to social, psychological and financial networks. These networks include the friends who are their colleagues or not, groups, communities and the physical environment in which they live. The stronger the links between the person and the network, the more committed the employee is to the job (Mitchell et. al. 2001). However, the fact that perceiving relational ties as violation of personal rights has been observed that the effect of “intrusion” causing withdrawal reduces job embeddedness.

As Spitzberg and Cupach (2007) stated, a negative perception of intrusion may cause the individual to alienate from the job or even quit the job. Work embeddedness, on the other hand, refers to the fact that the employee is linked to the job roles in a physical, cognitive and emotional manner (Yiluzar, 2016). Adaptation explains the ability of the employee to be in harmony with his organization or the community he lives in, or the possibility of living comfortably in his life (Dedeoğlu et.al, 2016). In other words, it explains the job embeddedness.

Status, success, desire for self-acceptance, anxiety as a resource (Tagle, 2021) provide an anxiety-inducing cognitive experience (Chen, 2010) while it causes to develop behavioral strategies for the continuation of vital existence under unpredictable conditions (Kaplan and Gangestad, 2005). Personality traits as a whole have the potential to motivate an employee's work-related behavior. Unlike Oladeji and Ayinde (2018), it has been determined that the crab syndrome, which is a stress and resource access-based personality trait, reduces the level of job embeddedness.

Conclusion

It is seen that individuals use the crab syndrome as a tool to increase resources in terms of career development, education, promotion and rewarding opportunities (Miller, 2019). Human resources management needs to have foresight about work behavior and dynamics in the work environment. For this purpose, it is suggested to implement the policies, which focus on resource conservation and support tenure, and especially increase job embeddedness. In particular, the crab syndrome, as a means of preventing competition and facilitating the access to resources, causes intense feelings of stress and anxiety (Üzümlü and Özdemir, 2020). Holtom et. al, (2004) state that the desire for personal power, the stress experienced and loyalty have an impact on the job embeddedness. Similarly, displaying hostile attitudes to win reveals the development of crab syndrome (Lith, 2017), and it also seen that this process affects job embeddedness.

Conservation Theory describes the attempts to save or retain resources. It is thought that this research contributes to providing implications for human resources management and the attachment of human resources to the organization.

Suggestions

This research is designed for the employee's perception of the attitudes and behaviors of his/her colleagues. It is suggested that future researches can be extended by using review resources (multisource) from the perspectives of the colleagues or even leaders. The research was fictionalized in a cross-sectionally manner. Independent variables and dependent variable can be dealt with at separate times again. As DeGruy (2005) stated, cultural values affect the crab syndrome. Mediator and regulatory variables can be added to the scope of the research. Furthermore, it is thought that it would be appropriate to deal with the relation between organizational characteristics, organizational culture and job embeddedness. In the framework of organizational behavior, human resource management should follow the changes regarding the protection of resources. Dealing with and solving the processes that impact each other is important for ensuring the sustainability of competition and preventing resource loss.

Policies, practices and behaviors, which take into account the protection of privacy in the workplace and prevent intrusion and crab syndrome, should be promoted. Even, the concepts, which are related to the psychological contract that reveal what these expectations are, can be analyzed together.

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