

# Does Crab Mentality in Universities Draw Strength from Organizational Culture? “If I Can’t Do It, You Can’t Do It Either!”

Üniversitelerde Yengeç Zihniyeti Örgüt Kültüründen mi Güç Alıyor? “Ben Yapamazsam Sen de Yapamazsın!”

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## Abstract

“Crab mentality” refers to a psychological and sociological phenomenon where individuals in the same organization hinder others’ advancement or success. While undesirable, especially in academic settings, this mentality appears to be on the rise. Individuals with this mindset often adopt the perspective of “If I can’t advance, neither can you” or “If I can’t be successful, neither can you.” Occasionally, even management may inadvertently support this mentality. This study focuses on how university organizational cultures may foster crab mentality, both sociologically and psychologically. Data collected from academics at Afyon Kocatepe University were analyzed, with reliability and validity tests conducted. Hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling. The study found that the “clan culture” dimension of organizational culture influences the cognitive aspect of crab mentality, while “market culture” and “hierarchy culture” impact its affective and behavioral dimensions. Control variables such as gender, marital status, professional title, and seniority significantly affected the relationship between organizational culture and crab mentality.

**Keywords:** Crab Mentality, Organizational Culture, Crab Mentality in Universities, Cameron and Quinn Organizational Culture Model.

## Özet

Yengeç zihniyeti bireyin örgütte çalışan diğerlerinin yükselmesini, başarılı olmasını istememesine odaklanan psikolojik ve sosyolojik bir olgudur. Örgütlerde özellikle üniversite yapılanmalarında olması istenmeyen bir durum olarak tanımlansa da gün geçtikçe bu zihniyete sahip insanların daha da arttığı gözlemlenen bir durumdur. “Ben yükselemezsem sen de yükselemezsin, ben başarılı olamıyorsam sen de olamazsın” bakış açısına sahip bireylerin olduğu, bazen de yönetim kademelerinde yer alan kişilerin kasıtlı veya istemsiz bu duruma destek verdiği söylenebilir. Sosyolojik ve psikolojik bir temele dayanan yengeç zihniyetinin üniversitelerin örgüt kültürlerinden destek aldığı düşüncesi çalışmanın amacını oluşturmasında esas alınmıştır. Bu kapsamda Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesinde görev yapan akademisyenlere uygulanan anketlerden elde edilen verilerin güvenilirlik ve geçerlik analizleri yapılmıştır. Hipotezlerin testi Yapısal eşitlik modeli ile yapılmıştır. Üniversitede örgüt kültürünün Klan kültürü boyutunun Yengeç zihniyeti bilişsel boyutuna, piyasa kültürü ve hiyerarşi kültürünün yengeç zihniyetinin duygusal ve davranışsal boyutuna etkisi tespit edilmiştir. Kontrol değişkenler olarak cinsiyet, medeni durum, unvan ve kıdemin örgüt kültürünün yengeç zihniyetine etkisinde anlamlı bir farklılık oluşturduğu görülmüştür.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yengeç Zihniyeti, Üniversitelerde Yengeç Zihniyeti, Örgüt Kültürü, Cameron ve Quinn Örgüt Kültürü Modeli.

Universities are organizations which, in addition to providing educational and training activities, seek to foster innovative ideas, theories, and creativity. They are the pioneers of development and change and their work also has an international dimension. In order for them to fulfil these roles, the “organizational culture” of a university must help to support this change and development, and these creative functions. Organizational

culture includes all the values that an institution and those working in it share. According to Schein (1984), the values and behaviours contained in the culture of an organization can be observed in the way the members of the organization feel, perceive and convey their thoughts. Therefore, all the rules, principles, and values that determine organizational culture are demonstrated in the behaviours adopted by individuals in the organization.

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As a concept, organizational culture began to be used frequently in the literature in the 1980s and soon appeared in the management literature. Management and organizational culture are the primary determining factors in the creation, management, and change of the activities that occur in organizations. Management oversees employees in organizations, and organizational culture provides the guidance and control to be able to do this (Yaman & Ruçlar, 2014, p. 37).

People, as a key part of the production process, constitute a strategic resource for organizations. The social and psychological structure of the human element in the organization has always been the subject of research. In this sense, activating this human element is of great importance in achieving organizational goals. Achieving effectiveness and efficiency within the organization necessitates engaging this strategic resource through effective management. In this process, it is necessary that individuals come to experience a sense of social and psychological satisfaction as well as any material benefits. In this context, the idea of “crab mentality”, which has also been called “crab-in-barrel syndrome”, “crab theory”, or the “crab-basket syndrome”, functions as a useful metaphor for how individuals’ effectiveness may be reduced. The emergence of “crab syndrome” as a novel phenomenon in literature (Çavuş & Sarpkaya, 2022; Fettahlioğlu & Alkış Dedeoğlu, 2021; Turan, 2023) has sparked recent inquiries into the factors which influence and its interconnectedness within organizational contexts. Consequently, this study was undertaken with the aim of making a substantive contribution to the existing body of literature. The situation in which certain individuals “pull each other down” in crab mentality has both social and psychological aspects which also relate to the organizational level. A group member who is not able to succeed may not want their colleagues to advance and be successful. Organizational culture comprises values that delineate success and establish standards, leaders and heroes who command followership, ceremonies symbolizing special events, stories and legends celebrating achievements, language, customs reflecting organizational priorities, norms guiding behaviour, as well as organizational socialization, the process of assimilating organizational culture (Köse et al., 2001, pp. 229-231).

Given that organizational culture encompasses the shared values and practices of an organization, it significantly influences managerial processes. Elements such as values, rituals, business practices, rewards systems, employee-manager relationships, and behavioural norms shape the organizational culture, thereby impacting management styles. If the organizational culture fosters a crab mentality, characterized by envy and sabotage among colleagues, it becomes challenging to eradicate such behaviour. Therefore, this study aims to explore the dimensions of organizational culture within universities that may inadvertently promote crab mentality, shedding light on potential strategies

for addressing this issue. In this context, it was explained to how the four dimensions of the Cameron and Quinn organizational culture scale, clan culture, adhocracy culture, market culture and hierarchy culture, affect the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of the crab syndrome.

## Literature Review

The concept of crab mentality is relatively new in the literature. Upon literature review, it is apparent that while there is a significant body of research defining crab mentality, studies focusing on employee motivation, job satisfaction, organizational justice, management hierarchies, gender inequality, work effort, and their correlation with Hofstede’s organizational culture framework are particularly prominent. These;

Soubhari & Kumar (2014) identified crab mentality as a factor induced by the stress of today’s competitive environment. They emphasized that crab mentality arises from an individual lack of resources leading to jealousy and constant competition. Miller (2015) aimed to investigate the nature and function of crab mentality, seeing it as a metaphor for the mindset and behaviours of individuals within a specific community that prevent them from taking up opportunities to progress and be successful even when incentives are offered for cooperation and such cooperation is expected.

Georgiadou (2016) evaluated the papers presented at the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) conference held in Cyprus, emphasised the crab mentality within the scope of the factors causing inequality. Bulloch (2017) discussed crab mentality as leading to anti-cooperative behaviour in his study on cooperation and corruption on an island in the Philippines. Veer Ramjeawon & Rowley (2017) examined the barriers of knowledge management in higher education institutions in Mauritius. They highlighted organisational culture as the first barrier to the implementation of knowledge management strategies. Özdemir & Üzümlü (2019) reviewed crab-in-barrel syndrome, defining it as something that emerges in the individual’s inner world and is then reflected in their behaviour. Miller (2019) investigated the existence of crab syndrome in organizational environments and the related intra-group, inter-group, and organizational dynamics. Aydın & Oğuzhan (2019) tried to determine whether crab mentality affects dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and motivation in emergency health workers. Williams (2020) addressed the difficulties of women in academic life within the scope of both gender discrimination and black skin racism. In her study, she conveyed her own experiences as a black academic and explained how her success was prevented by her female colleagues using the metaphor of crab mentality. Fettahlioğlu & Alkış Dedeoğlu (2021) conducted a scale development study to determine the existence of the crab mentality at the organizational level. They analysed the scale using questionnaires applied to 417 people working in hotels in the provinces of Ankara, Adana, Mersin, and Osmaniye.



Özkan et al. (2022) examined the mediating role of detected corporate support in the impact of crab mentality on innovative behaviours. According to the findings of the survey they conducted on 200 participants working in the IT sector, they determined that crab mentality negatively affects creative behaviour and the mediating effect of detected organizational support. Üzümlü et al. (2022) explain to reveal the relationship between Type A and Type B personalities and the effect of social comparison behaviours in determining the antecedents of “crab baskets.” Çavuş & Sarpkaya (2022) examined the perceptions of teachers working in public and private high schools about the crabs in the bucket phenomenon. Ayar (2023), in their book chapter, and Dikmenli & Yıldırım (2023), in their studies, all examined crab-in-barrel syndrome. Ermiş & Akyol (2023) examined the relationship between the degree of crab basket syndrome and the perception of organizational justice in academic members of the Faculty of Sports Sciences. According to the survey of 207 academics, while there was no significant difference in terms of the gender and marital status variables, a significant difference was found in some sub-dimensions by the variables of title and age. In addition, their study determined that the academics had less awareness of organizational commitment as the level of crab mentality increased. Çetiner et al. (2023) aimed to determine the status of the crab-in-barrel syndrome among upper, middle and lower level managers working in tourism. As a result of the surveys conducted with 310 tourism employees, it was determined that the level of crab-in-barrel syndrome was the highest among those in lower management positions and that there were significant differences in the degree of crab syndrome according to hierarchical levels. While there was no significant difference in the formation of crab-in-barrel syndrome in terms of gender and educational status, it was determined that the syndrome decreased as age increased. Uçel et al. (2023) examined the difficulties that gender inequalities bring to women’s working life. They found that in male-dominated environments, some female academics develop a sense of “sisterhood” with each other and demonstrate solidarity, while others engage in both “crab” and “queen bee” behaviours. In this context, they examined the status of these queen bees, sisterhood, and crab syndrome in the academic environment. Üzümlü & Özkan (2023) aimed to determine the effects of manager’s crab syndrome on their employees’ productivity and the mediating role of “relational power” in a study conducted on 221 private security employees. They determined that relational power did have a mediating role in the managers’ crab syndrome and their employees’ work. Fereydouni Forouzande et al. (2023) conducted a study examining the impact of crab mentality and the glass ceiling phenomenon on employees’ turnover intention, career success, and happiness. Their findings revealed that the glass ceiling phenomenon, mediated by the intention to quit, exerted an indirect, negative, and statistically significant influence on job success and happiness among the sample population. De Jong et al. (2023) in their study on career development, focused

on crab mentality and cultural expectations as a phenomenon that female doctors face in achieving their career goals within the scope of gender inequality. They defined that crab mentality was widespread in the academic environment and was the main reason for hindering career development. They stated that the individual was forced to make a choice between being included in the group with crab mentality or being opposed to this group and not being accepted by the group. Üzümlü & Özkan (2024) examined the effects of wise leadership and crab syndrome on psychological ownership. According to the data of survey, they applied on employees in the banking sector; it was found that while wise leadership positively predicted psychological ownership, crab syndrome predicted it negatively.

Given that crab mentality is a relatively novel concept within the field of organizational behaviour, there exists a scarcity of studies investigating its correlation with organizational culture. These include the following;

Turan (2023) tried to explain crab syndrome by associating it with social identity theory and Hofstede’s theory of cultural dimensions using a semi-structured interview with 18 personnel working in different department at a university in Türkiye. Altan & Filizöz (2023) evaluated the causes and consequences of crab mentality in their research. They asserted that organizational culture plays a pivotal role in the development of crab mentality. Worsley & Stone (2011) investigated the barriers to promotion for African American employees. They found that these arose from discriminatory behaviours and the attitudes of business managers towards these employees. They emphasized that the cultural framework adopted within the organization becomes entrenched in widely accepted behaviours. Akpınar- Sposito (2013) investigated the obstacles faced by female managers within the scope of “glass ceiling syndrome” and determined the barriers to the promotion of women managers to be stereotypes, cultural norms, and employers’ policies and practices.

## Conceptual Framework

### Crab Mentality

Crab mentality was first identified as “crab-in-barrel syndrome”, a term coined by the Filipino writer Ninotchka Rosca, who also developed the idea of “crab personalities”. The narrative of the crab-in-barrel syndrome begins with a man walking along a beach who encounters a fisherman. There are only a few crabs in the fisherman’s bucket. The crabs make an effort to get out of the bucket, but they keep climbing on top of each other and fail. The man turns to the fisherman and says, “Watch out or they’ll escape.” The fisherman looks up and replies: “If there were only one crab, it would have had a chance of getting out of the bucket. When there are lots of crabs together, those who want to escape are held back by the others.”

Theoretically, crab mentality thus means that if we put a group of crabs in a barrel or bucket, each one will try to crawl out, but as it nears its goal, one or more of the crabs underneath reaches up and pulls the crab back. This process is continuously repeated until one of the crabs finally manages to get out. However, the greater the number of crabs, the less likely they are to escape (Aaron & Smith, 1992, p. 2; Abrugar, 2014; Ayar, 2023, p. 23; Brosky, 2009, p. 26; Fettahloğlu & Alkış Dedeoğlu, 2021, p. 1225; Miller, 2019, p. 365).

Crab mentality thus emerges from the idea “If I can’t do it, you can’t do it either” (Caples, 2016). In terms of organizational behaviour, it refers to the efforts of those who do not want others working in the same organization to make progress, succeed, and achieve their dreams (Yılmaz, 2023, p. 257). In a sociological context, in terms of male and female behaviours, it is sometimes observed that other individuals tend to pull a person down or hold them back, just like the crabs in a bucket (Sampath, 1997, p. 53).

## Organizational Culture

The concept of “culture” was first used in an anthropological sense by Edward Taylor in 1871. This idea of culture was developed into the concept of “organizational culture” as a result of the growth of large-scale commercial businesses, and Elliott Jaques used the concept for the first time in 1952 in his book “The Changing Culture of a Factory” (Muratovic, 2013, p. 63; Karakılıç, 2019, p. 20). The subsequent increased in the number of studies of organizational culture occurred because Japanese firms were widely considered to have superior business characteristics to those in the West in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). Among the most prominent studies on organizational culture in the literature are Barley (1983), Cameron & Quinn (1999), Dyer (1982), Hofstede (1980), Hofstede et al. (1990), Lincoln et al. (1978), Ouchi & Wilkins (1985), Schein (1983), and Wilkins & Ouchi (1983).

Organizational culture has been defined as a tool for understanding the essential meaning and basic characteristics of corporations. Mayo (1945) and Barnard (1938), describing the nature and functions of informal organizations, emphasized the significance of norms, emotions, values, and the kind of interaction they gave rise to. Selznick (1957) further developed the idea of organizational culture as the inculcation of specific values. The definitions of culture in anthropology and sociology were not able to address culture in terms of a corporate structure. On this basis, Ouchi (1981) outlined a definition of organizational culture as consisting of the myths, ceremonies, and systems that convey the beliefs and values of an organization to those working there, while Lorsch (1985) saw the culture as the beliefs shared by senior managers in a company about how to best use their time and how to manage other employees (as cited in Hoy, 1990, p. 156).

Organizational culture has thus been defined as an intricate set of assumptions, beliefs, values, and symbols that determine how a business engages in its operations. In this regard, this sense of culture has widespread effects on a company, because a firm’s culture not only affects who its employees, customers, suppliers, and competitors are, it also defines how the firm will interact with them (Barney, 1986, p. 657). Edgar Schein defines organizational culture as a pattern of fundamental assumptions that a group develops while adapting to external problems and seeking internal integration. Culture in this sense is something taught to new group members as the correct way of perceiving, thinking, and feeling about these problems (Hodgetts & Luthans, 2000, p. 169). Organizational culture reflects the organization’s values and social standards, and its relationship to other organizations and individuals in the immediate environment (Roozi & Tetik, 2022, p. 1357). In this respect, the elements it contains also permeate all the individuals within an organization.

The organizational culture of a company represents the collective values embraced by its employees, fostering a sense of belonging among them. Consequently, the work environment is structured around a shared organizational culture (Çırpan & Koyuncu 1998, pp. 223-224). Activating a common culture within the organization is essential to achieve this cohesion. When the elements comprising the organizational culture are embraced by the organization’s members, they yield positive outcomes in terms of employee motivation, organizational commitment, team collaboration, and the establishment of robust communication networks.

## Methodology

### Population and Sample

The research was conducted with academics working at Afyon Kocatepe University. The study employed the survey method within the framework of quantitative research. It was designed as explanatory research, aiming to elucidate causal relationships. The reliability and validity of the scales utilized in the study were rigorously tested, demonstrating a high level of reliability. Structural equation modelling was employed to test the hypotheses outlined in the research problem.

### Research Model and Hypotheses

■ **Figure 1**  
Research Model







- H<sub>1</sub>. There is a significant relationship between organizational culture and crab mentality.
- H<sub>2</sub>. Organizational culture affects the formation of crab mentality.
- H<sub>3</sub>. Gender shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality.
- H<sub>4</sub>. Professional title shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality.
- H<sub>5</sub>. Seniority shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality.
- H<sub>6</sub>. Marital status shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality.

### Research Variables and Scales

In the research, a questionnaire consisting of 16 statements derived from the Cameron and Quinn organizational culture scale, whose reliability and validity were tested by Karakılıç (2019), was used to measure organizational culture.

In the literature, prominent organizational culture classifications include Quinn and Cameron, Geert Hofstede, Deal and Kennedy, Harrison and Handy, Sethia and Glinow, Diana Phesey, Schein, and Peters and Waterman organizational culture classification, etc. (Karaca, 2022). Cameron and Quinn's emphasis on the impact of organizational culture on organizational success and effectiveness, their organizational culture model and scale were selected for use in the study.

Cameron and Quinn's organizational culture scale consists of four dimensions: Clan, Adhocracy, Hierarchy, and Market culture. Each dimension contains different principles. Clan culture focuses on the principles of commitment, participation, teamwork, and family; Adhocracy culture focuses on creativity, innovation, and risk-taking; Hierarchy culture focuses on command order, rules and regulations, and efficiency; and Market culture focuses on competition, environment, and interaction (Karakılıç, 2019). Market culture refers to an organization that is itself the market. It is thus primarily externally oriented rather than concerned with internal business processes. Instead, it focuses on transactions with external groups, including customers, suppliers, licensees, regulators, and unions. Organizational culture, in line with hierarchy culture, is characterized by the existence of a place to work that is formally structured and governed by specific procedures. Within such an organization, the most influential leaders are those who are excellent coordinators, and who are also able to establish the formal policies and rules that ensure that the organization functions coherently. In clan cultures, shared goals and values, cohesion, participation, and a sense of the importance of individuality and "unity" are essential. Such businesses may resemble large extended families more than commercial enterprises. Instead of the procedures and rules found in a hierarchy culture or the competition and profit that are at the centre

of a market culture, a clan culture tends to involve a large degree of teamwork, programs to foster employee engagement, and the commitment of employees to the organization. In an adhocracy culture, unlike hierarchies, no power or authority relationships are in focus. Instead, depending on the specific issue being dealt with, power can shift between different work teams and different individuals. An adhocracy culture focuses above all on innovation, creativity, and risk-taking (Cameron & Quinn, 1999, pp. 37-44).

Fettahlioğlu & Alkış Dedeoğlu (2021), developed to construct a crab-in-barrel syndrome measurement tool developed a scale consisting of 27 statements and three dimensions: behavioural, cognitive, and affective. The cognitive dimension of the crab mentality scale includes statements between 1-8. Evaluation is made with the components of thoughts, knowledge and beliefs. Affective dimension includes statements between 9 -18. It includes the feelings and evaluations of the sample towards the item specified in the statements. Behavioural dimension includes 19 - 27 statements. It reflects the behavioural tendency of the sample towards the stimulus in the statements. In the study, organizational culture is an exogenous variable, and crab mentality is an endogenous variable.

Abbreviations were employed in the research to denote culture sub-dimensions and dimensions of the Crab Mentality Scale. Specifically, Clan Culture (CC), Adhocracy Culture (AC), Market Culture (MC), and Hierarchy Culture (HC) were represented by their respective abbreviations. Similarly, abbreviations such as (COG) for Cognitive Dimension, (AFFECT) for Affective Dimension, and (BEHAV) for Behavioural Dimension were utilized for the dimensions of the Crab Mentality Scale.

### Data Collection Method and Evaluation Technique

Ethical approval to conduct the survey and use the questionnaires involved was obtained from the relevant Ethics Committee, with decision number 2022/130881 dated 6.10.2022. Permission to conduct a survey was obtained from Afyon Kocatepe University Rectorate with the number E-24196161-929-139751 dated 11.11.2022.

The first part of the questionnaire included questions about gender, marital status, professional title, and seniority; the second part included the statements from the organizational culture and crab mentality scales. For the construct validity of the scales, validity and reliability analysis were performed with SPSS 25.

The surveys were applied from 20.10.2022 and this process lasted until 30.12.2022. From the 450 academics at Afyon Kocatepe University, 299 valid data points were collected.

## Testing the Scales

If  $.00 \leq \alpha < .40$ , the scale is not reliable,  
 If  $.40 \leq \alpha < .50$ , the scale has very low reliability,  
 If  $.50 \leq \alpha < .60$ , the scale has low reliability,  
 If  $.60 \leq \alpha < .70$ , the scale is at a sufficient reliable,  
 If  $.70 \leq \alpha < .90$ , the scale is highly reliable,  
 If  $.90 \leq \alpha < 1.0$  means that the scale is highly reliable.  
 Source: Özdamar (2015).

According to ■■ Table 1 the scales exhibit a high level of reliability.

■■ Table 1  
Cronbach's Alpha Values of the Scales

	Cronbach's Alpha
Crab Mentality Scale	.918
Organizational Culture Scale	.925

■■ Table 2  
Reliability of Crab Mentality Scale Statements

	Number of Statements	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Cognitive Dimension 1	1	.929
Cognitive Dimension 2	2	.925
Cognitive Dimension 3	3	.929
Cognitive Dimension 4	4	.927
Cognitive Dimension 5	5	.929
Cognitive Dimension 6	6	.926
Cognitive Dimension 7	7	.928
Cognitive Dimension 8	8	.927
Affective Dimension 1	9	.921
Affective Dimension 2	10	.921
Affective Dimension 3	11	.923
Affective Dimension 4	12	.919
Affective Dimension 5	13	.919
Affective Dimension 6	14	.919
Affective Dimension 7	15	.919
Affective Dimension 8	16	.919
Affective Dimension 9	17	.919
Affective Dimension 10	18	.919
Behavioural Dimension 1	19	.918
Behavioural Dimension 2	20	.920
Behavioural Dimension 3	21	.919
Behavioural Dimension 4	22	.917
Behavioural Dimension 5	23	.919
Behavioural Dimension 6	24	.919
Behavioural Dimension 7	25	.920
Behavioural Dimension 8	26	.918
Behavioural Dimension 9	27	.921

Upon inspection of ■■ Table 2, it is evident that the lowest reliability value computed for the sub-dimensions in the Crab Mentality Scale is .917. This finding indicates that none of the statements exert a detrimental impact on the overall reliability level of the scale. In essence, this implies that the removal of these statements from the scale does not lead to a significant increase in the reliability level.

Upon scrutiny of ■■ Table 3, it is discernible that the lowest reliability value computed for the sub-dimensions in the organizational culture scale stands at .916. This observation suggests that none of the statements exert a detrimental effect on the overall reliability level of the scale.

KMO:  $1.00 \leq \text{KMO}$  .90 = Excellent  
 KMO:  $.90 \leq \text{KMO}$  .80 = Good  
 KMO:  $.80 \leq \text{KMO}$  .70 = Moderate  
 KMO:  $.70 \leq \text{KMO}$  .60 = Weak  
 KMO:  $.60 \leq \text{KMO}$  = Bad  
 Source: Karaman (2023).

■■ Table 3  
Reliability of Cameron and Quinn Organizational Culture Scale Statements

	Number of Statements	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Clan Culture 1	1	.919
Clan Culture 2	2	.918
Clan Culture 3	3	.918
Clan Culture 4	4	.916
Adhocracy Culture 1	5	.916
Adhocracy Culture 2	6	.916
Adhocracy Culture 3	7	.917
Adhocracy Culture 4	8	.918
Market Culture 1	9	.918
Market Culture 2	10	.926
Market Culture 3	11	.918
Market Culture 4	12	.927
Hierarchy Culture 1	13	.922
Hierarchy Culture 2	14	.917
Hierarchy Culture 3	15	.924
Hierarchy Culture 4	16	.921

Table 4  
KMO Values of the Scales

KMO and Bartlett's Test	Organizational Culture Scale	Crab Mentality Scale
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.928	.938
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
Approx. Chi-Square	2697.769	5116.950
Df	120	351
Sig.	.000	.000

**Table 5**

Fit Values of the Scales

	$\chi^2$	Df	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
Organizational Culture Scale	228.26	95	2.40	.92	.95	.06
Crab Mentality Scale	611.45	256	2.38	.85	.92	.06
Good Fit Values			$\leq 3$	$\geq .90$	$\geq .97$	$\leq .05$
Acceptable Fit Values			$\leq 5$	.89-.85	$\geq .95$	.06-.08

The Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure test assesses whether the data structure derived from variables within a given sample is suitable for factor analysis (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018, p. 319). Considering the criteria, as can be seen in Table 4 the result for the KMO values of the scales was excellent.

The fit values of the scales indicate that both scales meet the  $\chi^2/df \leq 3$  equality with their dimensions. Both scales were found to meet the criteria of a GFI value  $\geq .85$ , a CFI value  $\geq .92$ , and an RMSEA  $\leq .06$ .

$\chi^2$  = Chi- Square; df = Degree of Freedom; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

Source: Meydan & Şeşen. (2015).

### Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The demographic features of the study participants are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6**

Demographic Features

		N	%
Gender	Female	95	31.8
	Male	204	68.2
Marital Status	Married	226	75.6
	Single	73	24.4
Seniority	1-5 year	70	23.4
	6-10 year	55	18.4
	11-15 year	50	16.7
	16-20 year	48	16.1
	21year and above	76	25.4
Title	Research Assistant.	77	25.8
	Lecturer	48	16.1
	Assistant Professor Dr.	78	26.1
	Associate Professor Dr.	42	14.0
	Professor Dr.	54	18.1
Total		299	100.0

A total of 299 valid sets of data were obtained from 450 academicians who participated in the research conducted at Afyon Kocatepe University. Of these 299 respondents, 204 were male (68.2%), and 95 (31.8%) were female. Of the sample, 226 (75.6 %) were married, and 73 (24.4 %) were single. Of the sample, 70 (23.4 %) have been working for 1-5 years, 55 (18.4 %) for 6-10 years, 50 (16.7 %) for 11-15 years, 48 (16.1 %) for 16-20 years and 76 (25.4 %) for more than 21 years. Of the sample, 77 (25.8 %) were Research Assistants, 48 (16.1 %) were Lecturers, 78 (26.1 %) were Assistant Professors, 42 (14.0 %) were Associate Professors, and 54 (18.1 %) were Professors.

### Findings

The first hypothesis of the research was determined as "There is a significant relationship between organizational culture and crab mentality" correlation analysis was performed to test this hypothesis.

The correlation results of the variables and sub-dimensions of the variables are presented in Table 7.

The correlation coefficient takes values between -1 and +1. From the values of the correlation coefficient ( $0 < r \leq 0.3$ , weak;  $0.3 < r \leq 0.7$ , moderate;  $0.7 < r \leq 1$ , strong) the level of relationship between variables can be interpreted (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2018, p. 262).

Table 7 shows the correlation values of the four dimensions in the organizational culture scale and the three dimensions in the crab mentality. Prior to conducting correlation analyses, a composite variable score for each participant was generated by calculating the mean of the scores assigned to the dimensions of the scale by the individuals. This aggregated score was taken into consideration. All dimensions of the scales demonstrated statistical significance at the ( $P < .01$ ) level.

CC had a strong correlation with AC ( $r = .778$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with MC ( $r = .495$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with HC ( $r = .613$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a low negative correlation with COG ( $r = -.221$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with AFFECT ( $r = -.581$ ,  $p < .00$ ) and a moderate correlation with BEHAV ( $r = -.610$ ,  $p < .00$ ).

**Table 7**  
Correlation Table

		CC	AC	MC	HC	COG	AFFECT
CC	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
AC	Pearson Correlation	.778**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
MC	Pearson Correlation	.495**	.586**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
HC	Pearson Correlation	.613**	.647**	.584**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000			
COG	Pearson Correlation	-.221**	-.103	.032	-.082	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.076	.587	.156		
AFFECT	Pearson Correlation	-.581**	-.554**	-.308**	-.416**	.313**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
BEHAV	Pearson Correlation	-.610**	-.575**	-.332**	-.494**	.300**	.863**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	299	299	299	299	299	299

\*\*p<0.01 \*p<0.05

AC had a strong correlation with CC ( $r = .778$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with MC ( $r = .586$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with HC ( $r = .647$ ,  $p < .00$ ), low negative correlation with COG ( $r = -.103$ ,  $p > .05$ ), a moderate correlation with AFFECT ( $r = -.554$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with BEHAV ( $r = -.575$ ,  $p < .00$ ).

MC had a moderate correlation with CC ( $r = .495$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with AC ( $r = .586$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with HC ( $r = .584$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a low correlation with COG ( $r = .032$ ,  $p > .05$ ), a low correlation with AFFECT ( $r = -.308$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a low correlation with BEHAV ( $r = -.332$ ,  $p < .00$ ).

HC had a moderate correlation with CC ( $r = .613$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with AC ( $r = .647$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with MC ( $r = .584$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a low negative correlation with COG ( $r = -.082$ ,  $p > .05$ ), a moderate correlation with AFFECT ( $r = -.416$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a moderate correlation with BEHAV ( $r = -.494$ ,  $p < .00$ ). COG has a moderate correlation with AFFECT ( $r = .313$ ,  $p < .00$ ), a low correlation with BEHAV ( $r = .300$ ,  $p < .00$ ) and high correlation with BEHAV and AFFECT ( $r = .863$ ,  $p < .00$ ).

### Structural Equation Model

Figure 2 Structural Equation Model As seen in Figure 2, paths were created for analysis from the four dimensions of organizational culture, which is an exogenous variable, to the three dimensions of crab mentality. Paths with insignificant values were removed during analysis. It can be observed in Figure 2 that the fit values of the model were within the limits of good suitable values and sufficient evidence was provided that the model was structurally appropriate.

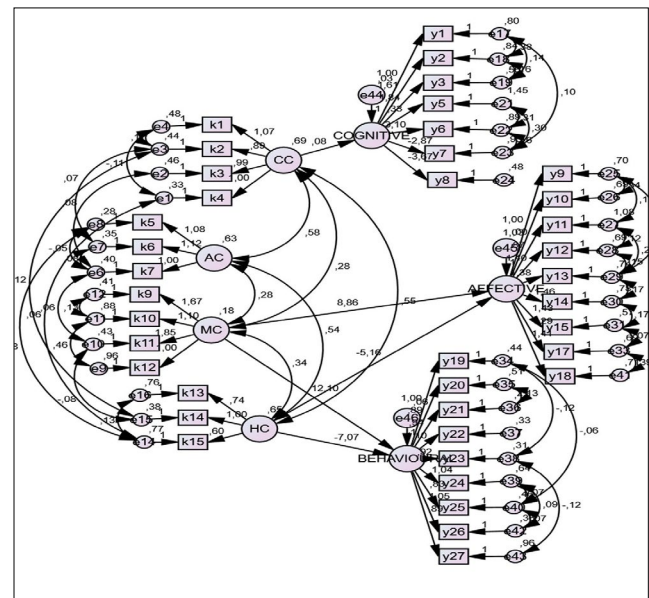
Model fit values are shown in Table 8.

The  $\beta$  coefficients, Standard deviation,  $p$ ,  $R^2$ , and CR values between variables according to the model are shown in Table 9.

Upon analysing the obtained data, other hypotheses were also tested and their results are listed below.

Hypothesis H<sub>2</sub> suggests that organizational culture affects the formation of crab mentality. The statistical tests yielded significant results: CC-COG, MC-AFFECT, MC-BEHAV,

**Figure 2**  
Structural Equation Model







■ Table 8

Structural Equation Model Fit Values

	x <sup>2</sup>	Df	x <sup>2</sup> /df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
	1207.22	652	1.85	.83	.93	.05
Good Fit Values			≤ 3	≥ 90	≥ .97	≤ .05
Acceptable Fit Values			≤ 5	.89-.85	≥ 95	.06-.08

HC-AFFECT, and HC-BEHAV demonstrated p-values of .013, .050, .049, .022 and .021, respectively, all of which are below the conventional threshold of  $p < .05$ . Therefore, the evidence supports the acceptance of the hypothesis.

Hypothesis  $H_3$  suggests that gender shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality. In the analysis, gender-specific differences across dimensions were examined through statistical significance tests. For females, MC-AFFECT, MC-BEHAV, HC-AFFECT, and HC-BEHAV yielded p-values of .032, .031, .009, and .003, respectively, all of which are below the conventional threshold of  $p < .05$ , indicating significant effects. Conversely, for males, only the effect of CC-COG demonstrated statistical significance with a p-value of .037. Other dimensions did not reach the threshold of statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ).

Hypothesis  $H_4$  suggests that professional title shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality. For Research Assistant, MC-AFFECT, MC-BEHAV, and HC-BEHAV yielded p-values of .047, .048, .005, all of which are below the  $p < .05$ . For Assistant Professor Dr. only HC-AFFECT, with a p-value of .013, and for Associate Professor Dr. only HC-BEHAV, with a p-value of .025, demonstrated statistical significance. For Professor Dr. HC-AFFECT and HC-BEHAV yielded p-values of .02 and .017, respectively. Conversely, Lecturer did not reach the threshold of statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ).

Hypothesis  $H_5$  suggests that seniority shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality. For 1-5 years of seniority, CC-COG and HC-BEHAV demonstrated statistical significance with p-values of .049 and .031, respectively. For 6-10 years of seniority HC-AFFECT and HC-BEHAV showed statistical significance with p-values of .016 and .056, respectively. For 11-15 years of seniority only the effect of HC-AFFECT with p-value of .050 demonstrated statistical significance. For 16-20 years and over 20 years of seniority the threshold of statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ) was not reached. Seniority makes a significant difference in the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality.

Hypothesis  $H_6$  suggests that marital status shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality. In the sample, a p-value of less than .05 was not attained from the responses reached to the statements by married participants. CC-COG, MC-AFFECT, MC-

BEHAV, HC-AFFECT and HC-BEHAV yielded p-values of .049, .032, .041, .013 and .015, respectively, all of which are below the conventional threshold of  $p < .05$ , indicating significant effects.

## Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

J. Stacy Adams' equality theory, which is one of the "motivation process theories", is based on the idea that people constantly compare themselves with others who do the same job in an organization and in their professional field (Koçel, 2005, p. 653). While Adams' equality theory sees this as a natural behaviour, considering it positively as an element that increases an individual's motivation and loyalty to a company, when the comparison is used by someone to demonstrate to others the mistakes that they have made or their professional failings, then this is a good example of crab mentality. Crab mentality is based on the thought "If I can't do it, you can't do it either!" and thus reflects a narrow, jealous, and selfish perspective. Although this mentality may seem to have an exclusively individual perspective, it also has an organizational dimension. At the individual level, it brings to the forefront an individual's feelings of not wanting anyone else to succeed, their competitiveness, and their sense of envy. At the organizational level, however, the behavioural styles adopted by the organizational management, which play a role in the formation of the values that help create the culture of an organization, may support this kind of crab mentality. At the individual level, the fact that a co-worker achieves what an individual cannot do, causes this individual to feel bad about them, experience envy and jealousy, feel anxiety due to a lack of self-confidence, and may lead them to try to pull others down with them due to a sense of their inferiority. A management approach that allows vertical and horizontal "mobbing" at the organizational level, that does not give an individual the responsibilities due to them and ignores their professional title and competencies, and the tendency to exclude the individual within the organization, making it difficult for the individual to advance in their career, etc. may both be supported by the organizational culture. Such situations reflect the impact of crab mentality at the organizational level. They lead to consequences such as the isolation of the individual, deterioration in their performance, prevention of promotion and advancement, and a decrease in their organizational commitment. The fact that the organizational culture may support these situations reveals the organization's complicity in the development of these negative results.

In the present study, it was determined that organizational culture affected crab mentality. Gender, marital status, professional title, and seniority created a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality. In the literature, Soubhari & Kumar (2014) examined the effects of crab mentality on job stress. In the analysis of the data obtained from their research on teachers in a college, they reported that actions fuelled by jealousy, greed, disrespect, and hatred tended to increase insecurity in others. They found that most of the administrators (with the titles “Assistant Professor” and “Lecturer”) were not ready to accept the feelings of the teaching staff. Most of the senior academics (“Associate Professor” and “Professor Dr”) were egoistic and tended to delegate the majority of the work to those at lower levels. It was stated that this situation caused psychological and physiological disorders in individuals. Akpınar-Sposito (2013) investigated the obstacles faced by female managers within the scope of “glass ceiling syndrome” and determined the barriers to the promotion of female managers to be stereotypes, cultural norms, and employers’ policies and practices. Worsley & Stone (2011) investigated the barriers to promotion and advancement for African Americans and determined that managers’ discriminatory perceptions had an effect on organizational decisions. Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2017) used the crab-in-barrel syndrome metaphor to explain how the climate of inequality for women and minority groups can reduce managerial support and lead to subordinates being at risk of threats to their identity. Miller (2019, p.368) stated that the negative situations caused by crab mentality need to be eliminated at a structural level and that conditions within organizations need to be improved.

The fundamental strategies for mitigating crab mentality can be synthesized as follows, drawing from various sources (Altan & Filizöz, 2023, pp. 92-93; Binboğa et al., 2018, p. 388; Fettahlıoğlu & Alkış Dedeoğlu, 2021, p. 1228; Miller, 2019; Özdemir & Üzüm, 2019, p. 134):

- Establishing a Fair Management System: Implementing a fair organizational climate with equitable distribution of resources, rewards, and disciplinary actions is imperative.
- Fostering Open Communication: The organization should foster an open communication network while actively preventing interpersonal communication barriers.
- Promoting Fairness across Levels: A fair environment should be cultivated both at managerial levels and among all employees within the organization.
- Preventing Negative Behaviour: Management should take proactive measures to prevent all forms of mobbing, emotional violence, conflicts, exclusion, and ignoring, which hinder individuals’ promotion, success, and motivation within the organization.
- Valuing and Appreciating Employees: Employees’ value should be demonstrated, and their need for appreciation and respect should be addressed within the framework of motivation.

Crab mentality, which it is desirable to eradicate as far as possible, is a situation that is frequently and increasingly encountered in businesses. In terms of minimizing crab mentality in universities, the main objective should be to prevent the formation of an organizational culture that supports this situation. This will only be possible if those in senior management positions pay utmost attention to this issue. Permitting the prevalence of an organizational culture that fosters negative attitudes and behaviours effectively integrates an oppressor mentality into the fabric of the organization’s culture. Moreover, in appointing managers, giving authority to individuals who may be inclined to support the crab mentality will only serve to make it more likely to occur. In all businesses, but especially in universities, which are centres of learning and the production of scientific knowledge, organizational structures that foster crab mentality should be reviewed and revised. At the organizational level, there should be no tolerance of any situations leading to such a mentality.



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**Table 9**

$\beta$  coefficients, Standard deviation, p,  $R^2$ , and CR values between variables

Hypothesis			$\beta$	Standard deviation	p	R <sup>2</sup>	CR	Hypothesis Reject/Accept
H <sub>2</sub> . Organizational culture affects the formation of crab mentality.		CC-COG	.082	.033	.013	.13	2.47	ACCEPTED
		MC-AFFECT	8.85	4.50	.050	.99	1.96	
		MC-BEHAV	12.1	6.15	.049	.93	1.96	
		HC-AFFECT	-5.15	2.25	.022	.99	-2.28	
		HC-BEHAV	-7.06	3.06	.021	.93	-2.30	
H <sub>3</sub> . Gender shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality.	Female	CC-COG	.095	.061	.119	.13	1.55	ACCEPTED
		MC-AFFECT	2.50	1.16	.032	.99	2.14	
		MC-BEHAV	2.56	1.12	.031	.93	2.15	
		HC-AFFECT	-2.93	1.12	.009	.99	-2.60	
		HC-BEHAV	-3.16	1.06	.003	.93	-2.97	
	Male	CC-COG	.085	.041	.037	.13	1.83	
		MC-AFFECT	13.3	10.4	.204	.99	1.26	
		MC-BEHAV	29.3	25.8	.256	.93	1.13	
		HC-AFFECT	-6.40	4.57	.162	.99	-1.39	
		HC-BEHAV	-14.0	-11.3	.218	.93	-1.23	
H <sub>4</sub> . Professional title shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality.	Research Assistant	CC-COG	.121	.090	.182	.13	1.33	ACCEPTED
		MC-AFFECT	3.68	1.85	.047	.99	1.98	
		MC-BEHAV	3.02	1.52	.048	.93	1.98	
		HC-AFFECT	-.881	14.2	.951	.99	-.062	
		HC-BEHAV	-2.94	1.05	.005	.93	-2.78	
	Lecturer	CC-COG	-.063	.072	.376	.13	-.885	
		MC-AFFECT	1.69	7.72	.826	.99	.220	
		MC-BEHAV	7.13	6.55	.276	.93	1.08	
		HC-AFFECT	.607	15.5	.969	.99	.039	
		HC-BEHAV	-6.42	5.01	.200	.93	-1.28	
	Assistant Professor Dr.	CK-COG	.208	.118	.078	.13	1.76	
		MC-AFFECT	3.32	2.31	.151	.99	1.43	
		MC-BEHAV	8.13	6.19	.189	.93	1.31	
		HC-AFFECT	-1.73	.700	.013	.99	-2.48	
		HC-BEHAV	.013	.180	.940	.93	.075	
	Associate Professor Dr.	CC-COG	.037	.048	.441	.13	.770	
		MC-AFFECT	1.96	1.71	.250	.99	1.14	
		MC-BEHAV	7.88	6.48	.224	.93	1.21	
		HC-AFFECT	-.730	.402	.069	.99	.069	
		HC-BEHAV	-3.07	1.36	.025	.93	.025	
	Professor Dr.	CC-COG	.096	.082	.241	.13	1.17	
		MC-AFFECT	2.73	1.51	.071	.99	1.80	
		MC-BEHAV	2.69	1.50	.073	.93	1.79	
		HC-AFFECT	-2.79	1.20	.021	.99	-2.31	
		HC-BEHAV	-2.73	1.14	.017	.93	-2.38	

H <sub>5</sub> . Seniority shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality.	1-5 year	CC-COG	.223	.113	.049	.13	1.96	ACCEPTED
		MC-AFFECT	5.92	4.04	.143	.99	1.46	
		MC-BEHAV	4.82	2.66	.070	.93	1.81	
		HC-AFFECT	-4.94	3.14	.116	.99	-1.57	
		HC-BEHAV	-4.18	1.94	.031	.93	-2.15	
	6-10 year	CC-COG	.104	.107	.332	.13	.970	
		MC-AFFECT	-1.39	1.87	.457	.99	-.744	
		MC-BEHAV	-10.4	13.31	.435	.93	-.781	
		HC-AFFECT	-.885	.366	.016	.99	-2.41	
		HC-BEHAV	-3.76	1.96	.056	.93	-1.91	
	11-15 year	CC-COG	.052	.065	.421	.13	.806	
		MC-AFFECT	2.59	1.90	.173	.99	1.36	
		MC-BEHAV	7.58	7.92	.339	.93	.956	
		HC-AFFECT	-1.42	.727	.050	.99	-1.95	
		HC-BEHAV	-4.31	3.30	.191	.93	-1.30	
	16-20 year	CC-COG	-.004	.046	.929	.13	-.089	
		MC-AFFECT	6.01	4.44	.176	.99	1.35	
		MC-BEHAV	7.19	4.90	.142	.93	1.46	
		HC-AFFECT	-4.88	2.93	.097	.99	-1.66	
		HC-BEHAV	-5.54	3.09	.073	.93	-1.79	
	20+ year	CC-COG	.072	.059	.226	.13	1.21	
		MC-AFFECT	4.86	3.17	.126	.99	1.53	
		MC-BEHAV	5.74	4.04	.156	.93	1.41	
		HC-AFFECT	-4.29	2.32	.064	.99	-1.84	
		HC-BEHAV	-4.85	2.91	.096	.93	-1.66	
H <sub>6</sub> . Marital status shows a significant difference in terms of the effect of organizational culture on crab mentality.	Married	CC-COG	.096	.066	.148	.13	1.44	ACCEPTED
		MC-AFFECT	-3.12	11.24	.781	.99	-.278	
		MC-BEHAV	14.6	24.44	.548	.93	.600	
		HC-AFFECT	-2.69	1.44	.063	.99	-1.86	
		HC-BEHAV	-9.45	14.08	.502	.93	-.671	
	Single	CC-COG	.074	.038	.049	.13	1.96	
		MC-AFFECT	6.22	2.90	.032	.99	2.14	
		MC-BEHAV	10.29	5.04	.041	.93	2.03	
		HC-AFFECT	-3.76	1.51	.013	.99	-2.49	
		HC-BEHAV	-6.30	2.59	.015	.93	-2.42	

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