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Co-Variation Effect of Gender, Education Level and Seniority on The Relationship Between Mushroom Management Perceptions of Agricultural and Forestry Personnel and Their Quiet Quitting

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
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| Keywords: Agricultural and forestry employees, Mushroom management, Quiet quitting | Purpose — Organizational behavior studies are an extremely important issue in today's world where competition is fierce. Studies on the problems experienced by employees in agricultural activities in organizations are extremely few. The purpose of this study is to reveal the relationships between mushroom management perceptions and quiet quitting management perceptions of employees working in the Kırşehir provincial organization of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. It is also to determine whether gender, education level and seniority have a covariation effect in this relationship. |
| Received 19 January 2025 Revised 7 July 2025 | Design/methodology/approach – In this context, a questionnaire form consisting of ready-made scales was applied to 132 employees in the central and provincial organizations of the Kırşehir Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry. The questionnaires were determined on a voluntary participation basis. Thanks to this research, it was determined whether the employees were informed about these scales and what their attitudes and behaviors were about this issue. |
| Accepted 15 July 2025 | Results – According to the research results, a positive significant relationship was determined between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting behaviors. It was determined that gender, education level and seniority did not have any covariation effect in this relationship between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting attitudes of employees. |
| Article Classification: Research Article | Discussion – The research results revealed the existence of a positive significant relationship between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting behaviors. This finding indicates that quiet quitting behaviors increase with the increase in mushroom management practices that employees are exposed to. One of the striking findings of the research is that there is no covariation effect of gender, education level and seniority variables in the relationship between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting attitudes. This result shows that the negative effects of mushroom management are seen similarly on all employees regardless of demographic characteristics. |

1. Introduction

The concept of mushroom management refers to a management style in which employees' access to information is restricted and they are left in uncertainty, similar to the process of growing mushrooms (Herman, 1997). In this theory, managers follow a one-sided path in communication, while the feedback given to employees is at a minimum level and uncertainty is quite high. Therefore, the flow of information and resources literally turns into an unknown (Baxter, 2005). Communication channels do not work well in institutions that adopt this type of management approach. Employees remain in the dark like mushrooms and are guided by the instructions given; however, no explanation is given about these instructions or a causeeffect relationship is established. Although it is a traditional and ineffective practice, examples of mushroom management can still be encountered today. Employees in businesses that adopt this management style may develop a negative attitude towards their jobs, experience intense work stress and face the thought of leaving their jobs (Çetin, 2021).

Silent resignation is accepted as the continuation of the great resignation that emerged after the Covid 19 pandemic in the USA (Moç, 2024). Quiet quitting can be defined as an attitude in which employees are limited to only the responsibilities included in their job descriptions. According to Savaş and Turan (2023), the basis of this situation is usually reduced motivation and a feeling of burnout. Individuals in a state of quiet quitting minimize the effort they spend at work and often choose this path in order to maintain their personal work-

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life balance or to preserve their health and well-being in a pressured work environment. This concept, which has attracted attention in recent years, means that exhausted or dissatisfied employees perform at the lowest level at work in order not to lose their current wages. The basic philosophy behind the concept of quiet quitting is that employees' work life does not take precedence over their personal lives and that they should have the right to focus on other areas of their lives without spending extra time or effort. This concept can also be seen as related to the 80-20 rule, which is known as the 80% of employees' efforts at work and 20% of a significant minority (Hare, 2022). Quiet quitting can be described as an attitude in which employees exhibit a kind of passive resistance by only performing mandatory tasks.

When the studies in the literature are examined; although there are studies on the relationships between mushroom management and quiet quitting issues with other issues; there are almost no studies on the relationship between these two variables. Moreover, these studies are studies on the relationships between mushroom management and organizational silence, mushroom management and organizational commitment, mushroom management and cyberloafing, mushroom management and burnout. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are no studies on the covariance effect between the variables mentioned above. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) define covariates as variables that may have an effect on the dependent variable in a study, but are not the main focus of the study. These variables, which should be kept under control in statistical analyses, provide a more accurate interpretation of the results.

Gündüz and Özyer (2022) conducted a survey on teachers in a private educational institution in Ankara in their study; According to the research results, they determined that there is a moderate positive relationship between perceived mushroom management style and organizational silence, and that perceived mushroom management style affects organizational silence. Günaltay et al. (2022) concluded that mushroom management perception negatively affects organizational commitment in their study on research assistants. Ulun et al. (2022) similarly concluded that mushroom management perception negatively affects organizational commitment as a result of their research on 200 people working in the General Directorate of Sports Services. Abodaqa (2022) examined the relationship between mushroom management perceptions and cyberloafing of employees in the organized industrial zone in his master's thesis and concluded that mushroom management perception increases employees' cyberloafing. Bozkır and Fidan (2021) examined the effect of mushroom management approach in sports enterprises on employees' burnout; As a result of the research, a positive significant relationship was determined between the mushroom management approach and the emotional exhaustion and desensitization dimensions, which are sub-dimensions of burnout.

As mentioned above, the lack of studies in the organizational behavior literature on the relationship between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting attitude, and the fact that this study is conducted in agricultural and forestry organizations, reveals the importance of this study. In the light of the above data, the following hypotheses were developed. In addition, some abbreviations used in this study are as follows:

2. Research questions

Within the scope of the research, answers to the following questions are sought.

- Is there a positive and significant relationship between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting behaviors?
- Does education level have a significant effect on quiet quitting behavior when perception of mushroom management is controlled?
- Does gender have a significant effect on quiet quitting behaviors when perception of mushroom management is controlled?
- Does seniority have a significant effect on quiet quitting behavior when perceptions of mushroom management are controlled?

3. Material and Methods

The material of this study consists of 132 employees working in Kırşehir Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry. Ready-made scales were used to collect the research data. The complete count method was used within the scope of the research. During the period when the research was conducted, there were 188 personnel working in the Kırşehir Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry. The ratio of the sample to the personnel was 70%. Sürgevil (2013) stated in his study that a return rate of 30% and above was sufficient.

The study was conducted with 132 samples that were returned in the surveys. Within the scope of the research; Homogeneity of Variances Test (Leneve's) and Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk) and ANCOVA analyzes were applied to the data obtained with the ready-made scales using the jamovi 2.3 program and the results were obtained. The surveys first included demographic questions. Then, there was the mushroom management scale developed by Birincioğlu and Tekin (2018) and the quiet quitting scale developed by Boz et al. (2023) and edited by Moç (2024).

The Mushroom Management Scale, developed by Birincioğlu and Tekin (2018), consists of 19 items and 4 dimensions in total. These dimensions are named as "insufficient information transfer", "fear of losing power", "insufficient communication" and "lack of participatory management". The Cronbach Alpha coefficient calculated in the reliability analysis of the scale was determined as 0.90; the test-retest correlation was determined as 0.82. In addition, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results of the Mushroom Management Scale reveal values that show good fit.

In the book prepared under the editorship of Duran (2024), it was determined that the quiet quitting scale developed consisted of 5 dimensions. These dimensions are "distrust", "belonging", "worthlessness", "miscommunication" and "inconsistency". While Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.969, it was determined that the KMO value explained 85.67% of the total variance with the result of 0.869. As a result of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), it was determined that the GFI value was 0.95, the NFI value was 0.91, the CFI value was 0.96, the CMIN/DF value was 1.99 and the RMSEA value was 0.043.

For this study, Ethics Committee Permission was obtained from Kırşehir Ahi Evran University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee dated 08.01.2025 and numbered 2025/01/07.

4.Findings

4.1.Demographic Findings

When the data in Table 1 is examined; the distribution of education levels by gender is given.

| EL | Gender | Counts | % of Total | Cumulative % |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|------------|--------------|
| Primary education | Male | 8 | 5.3 % | 6.8 % |
| | Female | 2 | 0.8 % | 7.6 % |
| Secondary education | Male | 17 | 12.9 % | 20.5 % |
| | Female | 6 | 4.5 % | 25.0 % |
| Undergraduate education | Male | 48 | 36.4 % | 61.4 % |
| | Female | 24 | 18.2 % | 79.5 % |
| Postgraduate education | Male | 22 | 16.7 % | 96.2 % |
| | Female | 5 | 3.8 % | 100.0 % |

Table 1. Distribution of Education Levels (EL) by gender

When the table is examined; it is determined that 72 employees (54.6%) have a bachelor's degree. When the gender of the employees with a bachelor's degree is examined; it is seen that 48 (36.4%) are male employees and 24 (18.2%) are female employees. This situation reveals the strong aspect of the human resources structure of the Kırşehir Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry personnel.

The first aim of this research is to examine the relationship between the perceptions of mushroom management (MM) and quiet quitting (QQ) of public agricultural and forestry employees. Another aim of the study is to examine the effects of gender, seniority and education level (EL) variables on the quiet quitting behaviors of employees by controlling (statistically purifying) the possible effects of mushroom management perception. For this purpose, mushroom management perception was used as a covariate and the analysis was carried out with the ANCOVA (Covariance Analysis) method.

4.2. Findings for the first research question

There are some assumptions that need to be made to perform regression analysis within the scope of this study. These are autocorrelation, multicolinarity and normality analyses (Field, 2013). The results of the analysis conducted in this direction are given below.

Table 2. Assumption Tests

| Durbin–Watson Test for Autocorrelation | | | Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk) | | Collinearity Statistics | | | |
|--|--------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|-------------------------|------|-----------|--|
| Autocorrelation | DW Statistic | p | Statistic | p | | VIF | Tolerance | |
| 0.0766 | Oca.81 | 0.268 | 0.989 | 0.347 | MM | 1.00 | 1.00 | |

Durbin Watson test was performed for autocorrelation. Durbin-Watson test results (DW=1.81, p=0.268) show that there is no significant autocorrelation between the error terms. The DW value being close to 2 and the p value being greater than 0.05 support that the autocorrelation assumption of ANCOVA analysis is met.

Table 3. Model Coefficients – QQ(Colleration Test)

| Predictor | Estimate | SE | t | p |
|-----------|----------|--------|------|-------|
| Intercept | 0.993 | 0.2120 | 4.69 | <.001 |
| MM | 0.492 | 0.0727 | 6.77 | <.001 |

Simple linear regression analysis was performed to examine the effect of perception of Mushroom Management on quiet quitting behaviors. The model was found to be statistically significant (β = 0.492, SE = 0.073, t = 6.77, p < .001). The regression equation was formed. The regression equation can be expressed as follows:

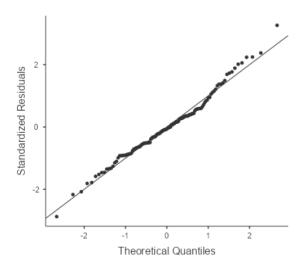
QQ = 0.993 + 0.492(MM)

4.3. Findings for the Second research question

There are some assumptions that need to be made to perform regression analysis within the scope of this study. These are Homogeneity of Variances and Normality analysis. (Field, 2013) In this context, Q-Q pilot analysis, Leneve's test and Shapiro-Wilk test were performed. The results of the analysis made in this direction are given below.

Table 4. Homogeneity of Variances Test (Leneve's) and Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk) (Educational Levels)

| Homogeneity | of Variances Te | st (Leneve's) | Normality Test (Shapi | iro-Wilk) | |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------|
| F | df1 | df2 p | | Statistic | р |
| 0.974 | 4 | 125 | 0.424 | 0.985 | 0.160 |



Shape 1. Q-Q Plot (Educational Levels)

Table 5. ANCOVA Results According to Educational Levels

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p | η^2 | η²p |
|---------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| Overall model | 1.3082 | 9 | 0.1454 | 6.067 | <.001 | | |
| MM | 0.0471 | 1 | 0.0471 | 0.413 | 0.522 | 0.003 | 0.003 |
| EL | 0.5970 | 4 | 0.1493 | 1.308 | 0.271 | 0.039 | 0.041 |
| EL * MM | 0.6641 | 4 | 0.1660 | 1.455 | 0.220 | 0.044 | 0.046 |
| Residuals | 13.9174 | 122 | 0.1141 | | | | |

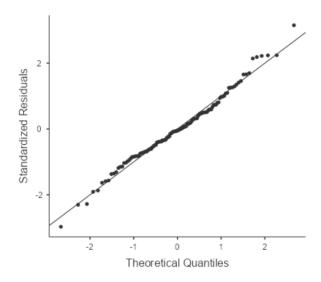
The first ANCOVA analysis examined the effect of education level on the relationship between mushroom management perceptions (MM) and quiet quitting (QQ) behaviors. As a result of the analysis, the main effect of mushroom management perception on quiet quitting behaviors was found to be a positively significant relationship, F(1, 124) = 44.36, p < .001, $\eta^2 p = .264$. However, the effect of education level was not significant, F(4, 124) = 0.75, p = .563, $\eta^2 p = .023$. Levene test showed that the variances were homogeneous (F(4, 125) = 0.974, p = .424), and the Shapiro-Wilk test showed that the assumption of normal distribution was met (W = 0.985, P = .160).

4.4. Findings for the Third research question

There are some assumptions that need to be made to perform regression analysis within the scope of this study. These are Homogeneity of Variances and Normality analysis. (Field, 2013) In this context, Q-Q pilot analysis, Leneve's test and Shapiro-Wilk test were performed. The results of the analysis made in this direction are given below.

Table 6. Homogeneity of Variances Test (Leneve's) and Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk) (Gender)

| Homogeneity | of Variances Tes | st (Leneve's) | Normality Test (Shapi | iro-Wilk) | |
|-------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------|
| F | df1 | df2 | р | Statistic | p |
| 0.249 | 1 | 128 | 0.618 | 0.988 | 0.303 |



Shape 2. Q-Q Plot (Gender)

Table 7. ANCOVA Results According to Gender

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p | η^2 | η²p |
|---------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|----------|-------|
| Overall model | 5.2403 | 3 | 1.7468 | 15.251 | <.001 | | |
| MM | 5.1656 | 1 | 5.1656 | 44.551 | <.001 | 0.257 | 0.258 |
| Gender | 0.0410 | 1 | 0.0410 | 0.354 | 0.553 | 0.002 | 0.003 |
| Gender ∗ MM | 0.0337 | 1 | 0.0337 | 0.290 | 0.591 | 0.002 | 0.002 |
| Residuals | 14.8415 | 128 | 0.1159 | | | | |

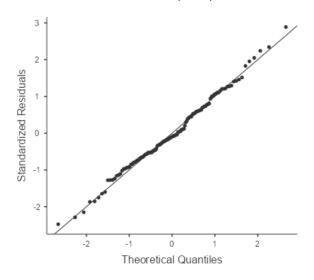
Another ANCOVA analysis was conducted to evaluate the effect of gender on the relationship between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting behavior. The main effect of mushroom management perception was found to be significant, F(1, 127) = 43.55, p < .001, $\eta^2 p = .255$. However, the effect of gender here was not significant, F(1, 127) = 0.16, p = .693, $\eta^2 p = .001$. Levene test and Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed that the assumptions of homogeneous variance (F(1, 128) = 0.249, p = .618) and normal distribution (W = 0.988, p = .303), respectively, were met.

4.5. Findings of the fourth research question

There are some assumptions that need to be made to perform regression analysis within the scope of this study. These are Homogeneity of Variances and Normality analysis. (Field, 2013) In this context, Q-Q pilot analysis, Leneve's test and Shapiro-Wilk test were performed. The results of the analysis made in this direction are given below.

Table 8. Homogeneity of Variances Test (Leneve's) and Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk) (Seniority)

| Homogeneity | of Variances Tes | st (Leneve's) | Normality Test (Shapiro-Wilk) | | |
|-------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| F | df1 | df2 | р | Statistic | р |
| 0.775 | 30 | 99 | 0.784 | 0.990 | 0.486 |



Shape 3. Q-Q Plot (Seniority)

Table 9. ANCOVA Results According to Seniority

ANCOVA - QQ

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p | η^2 | η²p |
|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|-------|----------|-----|
| Overall model | 4.74 | 58 | 0.0817 | 1.02 | 0.459 | | |
| Seniority | 2.32 | 27 | 0.0859 | | 0.951 | | |
| Seniority * MM | 2.42 | 27 | 0.0895 | | 0.938 | | |
| Residuals | 11.11 | 73 | 0.1522 | | | | |

Note: Singular fit encountered; one or more predictor variables are a linear combination of other predictor variables.

The last ANCOVA analysis was conducted to examine the effect of professional seniority on the relationship between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting behavior. Here, the main effect of mushroom management perception on quiet quitting behaviors was found to be positive and significant, F(1, 98) = 29.73, p < .001, $\eta^2 p = .233$, as mentioned before. However, the effect of seniority in this relationship was not found to be significant, F(30, 98) = 0.34, p = .999, $\eta^2 p = .094$. Levene test (F(30, 99) = 0.775, p = .784) and Shapiro-Wilk test (F(30, 99) = 0.990, F(30, 99) = 0.990,

5. Conclusion

This research aimed to examine the relationship between mushroom management perceptions and quiet quitting attitudes of Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry employees. The research results revealed the existence of a positive significant relationship between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting behaviors. This finding indicates that quiet quitting behaviors increase with the increase in mushroom management practices to which employees are exposed. One of the striking findings of the research is that there is no covariation effect of gender, education level and seniority variables in the relationship between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting attitudes. This result shows that the negative effects of mushroom management are seen similarly on all employees regardless of demographic characteristics. In this case, research question 1 was confirmed; research questions 2, 3, and 4 were not confirmed. The positive significant relationship between mushroom management perception and quiet quitting behaviors is an expected result. Therefore, according to Hare (2022); important tasks fall on organization managers to save them from this situation where 20% of employees are assumed to work and 80% are mediocre. As stated in the literature summary, mushroom management perception can cause negative organizational behaviors and job stress that employees have recently started to show more. Job stress refers to the fatigue state that creates mental and physical balance problems in the working individual (Akpınar, 2008;

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Özdemir, 2019). When these situations are taken into consideration, mushroom management perception can increase the quiet quitting behaviors of employees, which can lead to irreparable consequences for organizations. Managers need to adopt a participatory management approach in order to eliminate the dark side of mushroom management. Because Yıldız and Özmenekşe (2022) suggested that quiet quitting feelings develop with unsuccessful managers and bad management strategies. In addition, some of the factors that cause the development of quiet quitting feelings can be listed as employees feeling worthless because they think they have an unimportant role in the work environment and the lack of transparent relationships between managers and employees. According to Özdemir and Erkutlu (2018), one of the dimensions of the concept of authentic leadership is transparency. Therefore, managers are advised to adopt the concept of authentic leadership in order to get rid of the dark side of the mushroom management perception. In addition, according to Özdemir and Akça (2024); job demands and job expectations should be made more realistic. Again, one of the dimensions of authentic leadership, the dimension of evaluating information in a balanced and impartial manner, can play an effective role in eliminating the mushroom management perception. In the light of the research findings, the following suggestions have been developed:

Recommendations for Managers: Managers should adopt a transparent and open communication policy and create an organizational climate where employees can easily express their opinions and suggestions. Regular performance evaluation meetings should be held and constructive feedback should be given to employees. A fair and transparent approach should be adopted in the distribution of tasks and determination of responsibilities. Managers should implement mentoring programs that support employees' career development. Training and development opportunities that will increase employees' competencies should be provided.

Recommendations for Institutional Management: Policies to prevent mushroom management practices should be developed and a zero tolerance approach should be adopted in this regard. Safe communication channels should be established where employees can convey their complaints and suggestions. Institutional regulations that guarantee organizational justice and equality principles should be made. Human resources practices that will increase employee satisfaction and loyalty should be developed. Organizational climate and employee attitude surveys should be conducted at regular intervals. Effective leadership, communication and conflict management training should be organized for managers. Talent management programs that support the career development of employees should be implemented. Job rotation and horizontal transfer opportunities should be offered so that employees can gain experience in different positions.

Recommendations for Future Research: Similar studies should be conducted in different public institutions and private sector organizations and the results should be compared. The role of mediating and moderating variables in the relationship between mushroom management and quiet quitting should be examined. The reasons underlying mushroom management and quiet quitting behaviors should be investigated in depth using qualitative research methods. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine the long-term effects of mushroom management. Cross-cultural comparative studies should be conducted to investigate the relationship between mushroom management and quiet quitting in different cultural contexts.

In conclusion, this research has revealed the negative impact of mushroom management practices on the quiet quitting behaviors of employees. It is expected that these findings will shed light on the steps to be taken to improve human resources management practices in public institutions and increase employee well-being. In order to increase organizational efficiency and employee loyalty, it is of great importance to prevent mushroom management practices and strengthen the sense of institutional belonging of employees.

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