Proposing a New Term for Organizational Behavior Literature: Achilles's Tendon Syndrome in Businesses

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Abstract

In spite of threatening external factors such as uncertain environmental structure and market pitfalls, the companies struggling with the difficulty of retaining the current customer and finding the potential ones should first realize the existence of "Achilles Tendons" within themselves. To prevent this potential problem, they should focus on the labor which can be a very substantial weak point and an important asset as well. Regarding serious problems arisen from labor force, this study proposes a new term called as "Achilles Tendon Syndrome" to be used in organizational behavior literature. Various theories from different disciplines such as medicine, psychology, physics, economics and sociology support development process of the term. Similarities and differences with other close concepts are also provided throughout the paper. The current study aims to inspire future studies by filling an important gap in the organization and management literature.

Keywords: Achilles Tendon Syndrome, Organizational Behavior, Service Sector Organization, Brand Value, Corporate Reputation

1. Introduction

Business enterprises are defined as open systems because of the input-transform-output loop's providing them endurance and interaction [56]. While these open system enterprises comprise internal and external environments depending on the characteristics of the relationship they build upon [88], they both keep interacted with this environment and depend on those environmental factors to keep their sustainability [12]. The interaction with both its internal and external environments in

competitive conditions [96] presents some opportunities and threats for enterprises [97].

In order to ensure competition and sustainability, the enterprises need agents that will carry them forward. One and maybe the most important of these agents that enterprises need are customers who are also one of the close-external environmental factors [37]. The perception of customers is vital to enterprises. In order to retain the existing customers and accessing the new potential ones, enterprises need to have a positive place in the perception of them. The image or interaction that customers gain about the business enterprises develops as a general impression, reflecting the respect [35] and trust that the enterprise has gained so far. This critical concept, which can also be associated with the success of competition [28], is corporate reputation [9]. Furthermore, each perception that occurs in the minds of the customers towards enterprises also reflects onto brand. In other words, the brand is an image that is in the minds of customers and the reflection of their perception [92]. The relationship built between the customers and brand is called as brand value in the literature [98]. This term refers to how the brand is positioned by the consumer and the value assigned to the brand. In order to preserve and increase the brand value, it is necessary to attach great importance to the value of the customer, which expresses the perception of the enterprise and its output in the customer's mind [13]. Because, brand value and corporate reputation are both long-term earnings for enterprises [24].

The concept of *corporate reputation and brand value* are of paramount importance in working environments where customers and employees communicate directly, especially in enterprises operating in the service sector [6]. Therefore, problems that may occur in an environment where customer and employee come together will have a negative impact on brand value and / or corporate reputation for the enterprise. The reason is that individuals tend to pay attention to negative experiences and information more when making an impression, especially in such a situation where the production and consumption of service are occurred at the same time. In other words, negative information outweighs even an individual tries to make a general impression. This situation, called as "negativity effect", shows that although people think that evaluation is fairly equal, they actually emphasize and attach importance to negative qualities more [87].

On the other hand, if the customer has a negative perception about the enterprise, potential customers with whom they share their experiences will tend to focus on negative information. According to this condition defining as the "impact of negative information", when people try to obtain information about an enterprise, they give more importance on negative information they acquire, which results in the negative information they have acquired plays a more prominent role when they make decisions [87]. These attitudes or behaviors point a process of word of mouth having a negative effect. Word of mouth statement includes informal communication among consumers about products and services [47] and as described by Arndt in 1967 [7], is a statement of circulation of information from mouth to mouth. Word of mouth has a strong effect on judgements about products and / or services [52]. It was also found that information spread from mouth to mouth was more effective in creating negative value as well as creating positive value [61].

In this context, considering that people attach more importance on negative information in the process of acquiring information, it may be said that even a small problem between the customer and the employee may lead to greater losses for the enterprise. Thus, a negative situation experienced by the customer in a service business will be able to progress by increasing its effect in a way that leads to a negative perception both in his/her own perception and in the minds of potential customers.

Until here, actualization of the problem and its results have been shortly discussed. On the other side of the medallion, there is a process which involves beforehand of this problematic issue. That means, individuals as human beings, are complicated creatures and naturally they are not always pure-minded. Besides committing to society they belong to, they may also wish not to obey the social norms. They may behave in anomie, which is a classical term in sociology used by Emile Durkheim and means that people sometimes intend not to obey the rules [80] and they become normlessness. That results in the situation that their behaviors are not predictable. Likewise, some employees may not obey the norms of the organization because of either psychological, physical, job related or organization related factors. This situation is called as workplace deviance (WPD) in fact. But in WPD the source of harms may arise from anyone in the organization. Thus there is a need for specifity to point a potential risk at the lower levels. In WPD the bad intention may be either towards the organization or people and the severity of this harm may not be so serious to affect whole organization badly.

At all, there is a gap in the literature that explains service sector's hierarchically lowest-level employees' deliberately harmful attitude or behavior towards organization via interaction with customers that results in damaging either reputation or brand image. Thus the aim of this paper is to bring a new term called as Achilles Tendon Syndrome to fill the gap of such situations. Although there is a study [25], which emphasizes the importance of business performance on the concept of Achilles' heel in individuals exist in organizational sense and the study claims that an organizational weakness caused by Achilles' heel of an individual may leave enterprises vulnerable. However, that study focuses on increasing the performance of enterprises and protecting themselves against threats from competing firms. The element generating the danger in ATS which is planned to be introduced to the literature originates from the off-norm behaviors of the employee in the lowest position "within" the enterprise proves that its originality from Drago and Folker's (1999) study. For this reason, this study was needed because of the lack of focus on the problem and the lack of the concept to define the problem.

Thus, within the aim of this paper our research questions are thereby; is there a need for a new term to describe such a problem in management field? If yes, why? What are possible reasons determining this problem? What are possible outcomes of this problem? What should be done to prevent or handle this problem? Throughout the paper, both in process of developing the term and in answering these questions, we benefited from multiple theories from different disciplines as well as reflections of practical experiences and analogies.

2.   Theoretical Background

In service sector organizations, the situation, in which a customer's experiencing an insignificant problem growing by one mouth to another with negative qualifications increasingly is like an example in which the process that starts with the overthrow of a domino stone's ability to topple a much larger stone than itself in the Domino Effect Theory. This theory is used both as a good explanatory of the mechanics of rigid bodies used in physics [45] and as a metaphor in the social sciences to express the situation in which respectively social, economic and political events in local contextual may cause a global effect [83] such as the phrase of "if U.S. sneezes, the rest of the world catches cold".

Similarly, in the science of physics, a small stone thrown into a still pond, and then the reflex of movement creates regular and growing circles around it [85]. The best-known example about this topic is the "Butterfly Effect Theory" indeed. The Butterfly Effect Theory, which has also contributed to the "Chaos Theory" explains the situation that insignificant events can have major impacts after a while, a situation that is valid in both natural and social sciences [49]. The theory is based on the fact that a butterfly's flapping wings in Brazil can lead to a storm in Texas that is if the flapping of a tiny insect such as a butterfly can be effective in the formation of a hurricane in the other sphere of the world, then this situation can be equally effective in preventing the same hurricane [49].

Another example is the term known as "Avalanche Effect" in crypto science, which is used to describe the situation in which a minor change in the encryption algorithm greatly affects the outcome [93] that results in failure in entire system. In economics, "Multiplier Effect" serves for the similar purpose. It is the fact that a change in any of the variables making up an income will have a greater impact on national income [99]. These examples from different disciplines have a common point. It is that the events considered as insignificant at first may cause in outstanding and perhaps unpredictable consequences. Since Hawthorne studies, 1924-1933, organizations have been regarded as social and living structures and the human part is more important than considered [90]. If it is natural and possible that a problem, which seems insignificant at first, causes major problems in humans' lives, which are of living organisms, it is likewise possible for the same situation to occur in organizations.

All these examples are for the logic of ATS in the sense of transformation of reasons that were considered insignificant at first into outstanding results. Another important issue that lies in the rationale of ATS is that why it is originated by hierarchically lowest level employees. Why does that kind of employees engage in such attitude and behaviors toward organization? Adams' Equity Theory proposes that when employees perceive inequity about the ratio of their inputs such as effort and performance over the outputs as salary and promotion, they intend to correct this situation by lowering productivity or reducing the quality of their work [2]. But the issue here is that the theory is based on reciprocity, which means the inequity perception arises from the input/output ratio by the comparison of others. But according to this theory, to make a comparison, people should give the same amount

of input despite gaining a different amount of output. Thus, this theory does not meet exactly the requirements of the situation where ATS may emerge. Because, in ATS, we think that a lower-level employee feels this injustice when s/he compares him/herself with different positioned-employees, within him/herself or with the organization. Maybe Siegrist's Effort-Reward Imbalance Theory would be more explanatory in this syndrome. This theory proposes that when employees perceive lack of reciprocity regarding low gains as output and high costs as input, they reveal negative emotions [82]. It occurs especially when the anticipations are high, such as expecting achievement supplying no promotion or any reward in such demanding and unstable jobs [8].

Similarly, Upward Social Comparison Theory is also beneficial in explaining this situation. This theory refers to individuals believe others perform better than themselves [15] and so that they are dissatisfied with their own situation [79]. The theory also claims a situation where individuals compare their own situation with those at the higher level, for reasons such as thinking that the people above them are lucky, and even thinking that they are being treated unfairly and unrighteously in the organization [65]. Employees can compare themselves upward with these emotions, observe the higher rewards/income/position achieved by others, see the underlying injustice, and act on feelings of envy, wrongedness, and injustice that trigger behaviors that potentially harm productivity [64].

2.1. Developing a New Concept: Achilles's Tendon Syndrome

In the literature, analogies are frequently used when developing a new concept. Icarus Syndrome is defined as the situation in which people are overly self-confident and arrogant in a subject that they are very good at, is also known as "invincibility error" [10], Andromeda Syndrome, also known as "Cinderella Syndrome", is defined as women's expecting to be rescued by a man in order to get rid of the difficulties and pressures they have fallen into [23]. Similarly, if it is to compare corporate organization to Achilles, who is a mythological hero, then the situation in which the employees of the lowest level hierarchical position as seen in Figure 1, moving away from the norms and their conducting attitudes or behaviors intentionally damaging the corporate reputation and / or brand value of the organization would be called as Achilles Tendon Syndrome (ATS). The reason for using "syndrome" when making this definition is that the results and symptoms of it can be easily distinguished [55]. In other terms, the reasons why the employee goes out of the norms that s/he must comply with and the losing corporate reputation and brand value in the perceptions of the customers are separable. But when they come together, they form an interrelated whole.

2.1.1. The Role of Size, Institutionalism and Leader

ATS is a problem that is more likely to be seen in large-scale and institutional enterprises. Because the size of the enterprises can negatively affect employee satisfaction, morale and motivation, work performances and continuity [26].
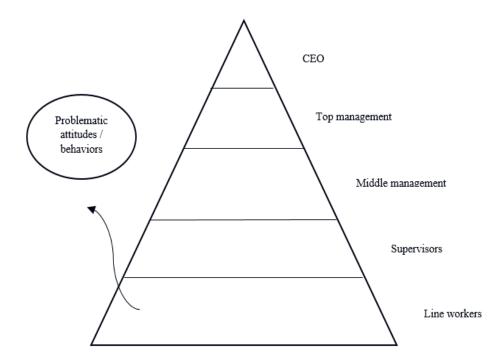
Figure 1. Organizational Structure and ATS

Davis (1972) described this situation as "Behemoth Syndrome" which is the tendency to increase absenteeism, lack of coordination, and low efficiency of that most likely seem in larger organizations [21]. Moreover, it may cause setting new rules and creating new problems, and at the end may have a demoralizing effect on human relations.

In this context, ATS is more likely to occur in institutional enterprises. However, such enterprises relying on their large-size and institutionalism may also get the idea that they will never experience these problems. Smith and Saint-Onge (1996) explain this attitude as every manager may not wish to believe that their Titanic is sinkable, just as the ship had never foreseen to sink. Executives raise more superficial issues with the idea that their ships will never sink when "Titanic Syndrome" begins [84]. Because the managers are driven by the urge of arrogance by relying on the institutionalism, size, and success of the enterprise in the past.

Another point that can be mentioned about this syndrome is that although it is predictable in the cause-effect context, its source may not be predicted precisely. The overwhelming sense of arrogance of the leaders or the unwillingness to see them deliberately could cause this unpredictability. The term "Willful Blindness", which is a doctrine in law, is used to express the situation in which a person evades information about a fact [94]. Mcgee (2011) added a managerial meaning to this concept because it can be encountered among leaders [54]. They may even provide short-term comfort by blinding themselves to the impending dangers [67]. The thought that the entire world comprises themselves explains the reason for this type of behavior of leaders

[62]. In this context, leaders who do not wish to see the likelihood of having this syndrome deliberately or who think that the enterprise will never experience such a problem can actually support the unpredictability of ATS.

Clarkson (1994) explains Achilles' heel on the sociological basis with the conclusion that "every person has a small but important flaw" bases on the weaknesses that leaders ignore potential threats by relying on the corporate or past success of the enterprise [18]. In that defined concept by Clarkson, the Achilles Heel of such leaders constitutes arrogance. Leaders who exhibit this behavior, which is described as "Hubris Syndrome", do not seek advice and never consider another idea, resulting in weak assessment and even inadequate focus on the problems because of their excessive self-confidence [68]. In addition, high levels of management and past success of the managers' increases the likelihood of experiencing this syndrome by triggering hubristic [69]. When all those attitudes and behaviors are taken into consideration, they serve as another brick in the wall of ATS.

2.1.2. *ATS in Practice*

Although it does not seem so rational for the entire organization to be harmed by the deliberate attitude or behavior or a relatively minor important employee in the hierarchical perspective of the entity, this may be exemplified with a server's working in a five-star hotel or flight attendant working in an airline company being rude to customers or not paying attention to his or her dress in terms of hygiene and tidiness; a hospital housekeeper does not show diligence in cleaning the restroom; or a call center employee of a bank crossing the lines of emotional labor during a phone conversation with the customer. Despite seeming to have similarity with the phrase of "a chain is as strong as its weakest link", in this phrase all links have the equal importance and there is no hierarchy among them. But in ATS, the problem arises from the hierarchically lowest level employee as seen in Figure 1. Actually, it is more like system approach. In this approach, systems are constituted by sub-systems. In the 1950s when system approach is adopted by organizations, it was understood that organizations are comprised sub-systems which work collaboratively as a whole. Considering these sub-systems are equally important or some of them are relatively more/less important than others, we could say that a system is as strong as its weakest sub-system [40].

2.1.3. *Origin and Scope of Achilles Heel/Tendon*

When the literature is reviewed, it is seen that the widespread use of mythological elements in different disciplines provides a universal similarity and simple expression. For this reason, mythology is frequently used when making new definitions or conceptual studies [78]. The mythological hero Achilles forms the primary name of ATS. According to the mythology, mother of Achilles is Thetis who is the Goddess of the seas, and father of him is mortal, Peleus who is also the king of Phthia [78]. Thetis is sad that her child will die because she married a mortal and wants to immerse her son in the waters of the River Styks. However, he could not be immortal at all

because she immersed Achilles by the heel [31]. In the ongoing process, Achilles is killed in the Trojan War with a poisoned arrow thrown at his heel by Paris [63]. A strong and invincible hero, Achilles, was killed by his non-vital and yet vulnerable part of his body. As a mythological figure, Achilles is also important in medicine and psychology, used metaphorically as well as in sociology.

In medicine, the mythological hero Achilles' vulnerable heel was established by the similarity to the structure of the heel was called as "Achilles tendon" [3]. The Achilles tendon in the heel, which is not attributed much importance as other organs in the body such as heart and brain, causes a decrease in the quality of human life and severe pain in case of any damage.

Considering a heel is forming the basement of a body and helps him stands straight, employees at hierarchically the lowest level of the organization stands so for the same purpose. In psychology, Achilles Syndrome is used for so-called competence or fear of hidden failure of people for who do not feel self-confident even though they are considered as competent by their environment [18]. Furthermore, there is also a study [89] in the management literature that considered as the fear of hidden failure experienced by the managers in the sense that the concept of Achilles Syndrome defined in psychological field.

As mentioned above, it is clearly seen that some definitions and concepts have been created in different fields from the Achilles legend. ATS is similarly based on the Achilles example. It occurs when the enterprise faces loss of brand value or corporate reputation seriously by the results of the negative attitudes and behaviors presented by an employee deliberately who is relatively less important within the body of an organization.

2.1.4.   A Similar Concept: Workplace Deviance

ATS also identifies a probable problem in the management field. The most important point to be mentioned here is that the *conscious attitude or behavior* must belong to hierarchically the lowest level employee, and majority should perceive this attitude or behavior with the same level of negativity that is the problem should be generalized. These two features determine the differences between this syndrome and WPD behaviors, which can be seen as a close concept.

Robinson and Bennett (1995) define WPD as the deliberate violation of the organizational norms [77]. The widespread impact of these behaviors is particularly evident in service enterprises where employees are confronted with customers, which is the area where employees meet customers directly. Deviant behaviors can be directly related to the person (harassment, assault, insult, rude attitude etc.), as well as towards organization (misconduct, abuse of duty etc.) [86].

First characteristics that distinguishes ATS from WPD behaviors is that the hierarchically low-level employees perform the deliberate out-of-norm behaviors specified in the definition in ATS. However, in terms of WPD behaviors, this type of behavior can be exhibited at all levels of employees. Therefore, WPD behaviors may be counted among the reasons that cause ATS.

Second difference between two concepts arises from the perception of the movement that produces negative results in the same importance degree. While in ATS, everyone should perceive the act resulting in worse conditions in equal danger; there is no such necessity in WPD behaviors. Robinson and Bennett (1995) first proposed the typology of WPD comprising two dimensions [77]. First dimension is about its target as whether towards organization or its members. Second dimension is about if the behavior is severe. After 5 years, Bennett and Robinson (2000) realize that severity is based on quantity rather than quality and cannot be measured [11]. Thus, by omitting the severity dimension, they re-proposed the typology comprising its target only.

2.2. Factors Resulting in ATS in Organizations (Paris' Arrows)

ATS occurs mostly in enterprises in the service sector where hierarchically lowest level employees are held responsible for the first and one-to-one relation with the customers. Apart from service sector, such a problem will be less likely to occur in manufacturing sector. In the view of customers, it will be the product itself or the setbacks in the post-purchase service that will directly affect the value perception of the businesses. In short, for the emergence of such a syndrome in a company that produces goods, the problematic attitude or behavior of an employee who is employed in the service department and is in a hierarchically lower position is required. For example, a factory worker who handles the problem occurring in the production process of a manufactured product will not face the customer because of this problem. The problem would be solved within the organization and this situation will not directly affect the customer's value judgement. This responsibility will again be left to the personnel involved in the sales and or post-service.

Besides its unpredictability of causes, there may be many factors causing ATS in organizations. Although the factors to be specified here are the ones that trigger the occurrence of such a syndrome regardless of a sector, it is possible that such a problem occurs for more specific reasons depending on the sectors. The factors that lay the groundwork for ATS in businesses will be examined under two main headings, apart from managerial reasons mentioned above. These are reasons arising from individual factors of the employees and the organizational factors.

2.2.1. Individual Factors

Job alienation is defined as the employees' inconsistent behaviors towards the norms and values of the organization as a result of individual or organizational problems related to their jobs [57]. In another definition, it is explained as negative feelings that arise because of the difficulty in realizing professional norms due to the individual problems [81]. For this reason, the deformation that occurs in the quality of working life causes employees who become alienated, a decrease in productivity and efficiency of them and eventually of organizations [91].

Employees' alcohol consumption habits and drug addiction also have many negative effects on businesses. The change in alcohol and drug consumption leads to consequences such as finding the job insignificant and negatively affecting the work order [16]. In a study, it is stated that alcohol and drug addiction are among the reasons that reduce job satisfaction and productivity in businesses [75].

Many people spend most of their time outside of their working time to get ready to work again. This prevents individuals from spending time in other areas of life such as time spent for the road trip, preparing for work, relaxing to work efficiently, which are not subject to pay [27]. This situation is related to insufficient work-life balance which is a state of well-being that enables individuals to manage multiple responsibilities at work, at home and in other areas, and to define their own goals [20]. In addition, work-life balance is a state of balance in which both work and personal life of a person have equal shares [48]. If this balance is broken, deterioration in employee relations, decrease in productivity and unethical business practices will come to the fore as problems that businesses will frequently encounter [48].

The demographic characteristics of the employees working together in the organization are also important. Organizational norms are the behaviors that employees are expected to follow and apply [4]. However, the personality and demographic characteristics may affect the decisions of employees about if obeying the norms [33]. People may not behave align with the aims, norms and principles of the organization due to their demographic characteristics (age, gender, educational status, marital status, working time, salary amount) [60]. Considering that ATS occurs mostly at the hierarchically lowest level employees; intergenerational differences in value judgments, negative effect of low education level on self-discipline, financial distress, dissatisfaction and feeling of worthlessness caused by low wages could be some of demographic factors. In addition, the socio-economic status, socio-cultural structure, and severe physiological arousal of the employees can also cause some problems. Employees may have negative feelings about the organization they work for or their work life for these and many similar reasons, and they may harm the organization by violating the institutional norms [59].

Another personal cause is *a lack of motivation*. The importance of interest in motivation or job satisfaction actually stems from the fact that it affects performance and productivity [43]. The lack of motivation of the employee causes him to be reluctant in his job and his performance to decrease [17] which directly reflects on customers in service sector organizations. According to Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model (JCM), a job should have five basic features those are autonomy, task identity, task significance, skill variety and feedback to motivate employees [51]. At the lowest level jobs, some of these characteristics may not exist in the job itself or either the employee's perception. These lowest-level jobs may require more physical effort but less of mental, which means to seem more simple than managerial duties, for example. Thus the responsible employee may feel like the duty is not significant for organizational goals, which prevents motivating oneself and one's job performance. According to Grant's study (2008) for simple types of jobs, task significance has a positive effect on the job performance, which was indicated by job dedication with self-disciplined and commitment-driven behaviors [30]. Similar

to JCM, person-job fit also plays an important role in motivation and employee behaviors. In countries where unemployment rates are high, young people may have to work in positions which are beneath their skills and levels. In these situations, the person and the job itself do not fit each other. According to attitude dimension of person-job fit [74], employees evaluate the components of the job such as colleagues or the task, and if there is an unfavorable situation, then it reflects on their work behavior in the same way.

2.2.2. Organizational Factors

Perceived organizational injustice [66], provocative behaviors [44], injustice in wage charges [72], insufficient organizational support [1] and other deficiencies in organizational structure [60] could cause WPD and eventually emergence of ATS. Especially in service businesses, these behaviors do not leave a positive impression on the customers, and they can damage the reputation and brand value of the institution.

Human resources management, which plays a role in the solution of many problems within the organization, can cause problems when it is insufficient. Because human resources practices play a central role in the creation and maintenance of organizational capability [19]. Human resources are of vital importance, especially for businesses operating in the service sector where customers are often physically present at the workplace during producing and offering the service. For this reason, both employees and customers make up the human resources field of service businesses [36], [34]. As a result, human resources management should produce practices that will lead to customer satisfaction and perception during the time the customer has spent in the organization. In this critical process, assigning the right people to the right jobs and at the right time has a direct effect on the value and existence of the organization [39]. In a management process, where the correct personnel selection is not made [39], training and communication are not established properly [22], these problems can easily be reflected on the customer in a management process in which HR is inadequate to solve problems.

In order to ensure organizational harmony, *leadership* is an important factor as well as HR management. According to Lipman-Blumen (2005), the situation when leaders cause serious and permanent damage to their followers using tactics that will have a harsh or bad effect is called toxicity [46]. Toxic leaders exhibit destructive behaviors that try to undermine the morale, motivation and self-confidence of groups under their influence [71]. Toxic leaders often make hasty decisions, constantly changing decisions, and do not accept responsibility for the results. Employees who are exposed to these conditions will feel confused and insecure as they are constantly drawn in different directions, and this will ultimately reflect on their behavior in their work lives [5].

Role ambiguity and *role conflict* in businesses can also result in ATS among employees. There is a causal relationship between role ambiguity and role conflict. As the uncertainty perceived by the employee increases, the perceived conflict increases [53]. While role ambiguity and role conflict increase stress in the work

environment, it also decreases job satisfaction and work commitment [41]. This situation will cause the employee to act outside the rules and norms of the business in the workplace.

One of the most important environments that ATS can affect is the customer environment of the enterprises in corporate reputation and brand value regards. For this reason, one of the organizational reasons that will lead to this syndrome is the deficiencies arising from *customer relationship management (CRM*) which is a strategic process applied in order to ensure a stable income, retention of the customer and maximum customer value [95] and includes continuous corporate change in organizational culture and management process. Customer information collected within CRM is transformed into corporate information and in this context requires extensive changes in both the organization and the employees [32]. In addition, the smooth functioning of the CRM depends on the trust environment of the organization, and this environment of trust can be realized with the efforts of all employees [101]. As a result, the lack of CRM in businesses may lead to the fact that employees do not show the necessary care and importance while doing their work, which may negatively affect customer perception.

2.3.   Precautions, Proactive Measures and Solution Recommendations

It is often not enough to just describe a problem. It is also necessary to offer proactive measures before the occurrence of this problem or reactive solution recommendations for after it occurs. In the Butterfly Effect Theory, Lorenz's (1972) conclusion of "If the butterfly's wing beat can cause a hurricane, it can be equally effective in preventing a hurricane" also applies at this point. Human capacity to identify and rectify errors and to adapt to unexpected events before insignificant factors develop into disastrous failures, what is called as "organizational mindfulness" [29] is required. Thus, since the root point of the problem is the effect of negative behaviors intentionally performed by the employee, a correct HR management will form the basis of the solution process. In order to define the link between HRM and human capital affecting firm performance, the universal approach based on the 'best practices' perspective and contingency approach, which foresees the strategic behavior of the enterprise in cases where a sudden decision is required, is used [100]. HR practices that will decrease or increase the performance of the company should be human-oriented, especially since the most important capital in enterprises operating in the service sector is the human factor [100]. Since the areas where ATS is likely to occur may be businesses operating in the service area, HR practices to be carried out in terms of precaution or problem solving should be human-oriented. In this context, strategies that focus on the human factor should be developed through practices such as fair remuneration and promotions in the organization, clarity of job description, organization of in-house trainings, seminars, events, determination of working hours within humanitarian limits, and that provide psychological support to personnel [70].

If high level organizational performance is aimed at an organization, business and HR activities should be compatible with each other and support each other [50]. For this reason, organizational commitment should be increased, brand-institution

awareness should be created by introducing the corporate culture and brand to employees, and an effective diversity management should be applied to ensure that the organization has access to the widest possible pool of skills, experience and ideas [76]. It is also vital to identify and prevent toxic leaderships by HR and CEOs in the organization [5], and ensure leader-member interaction. In addition, a participatory management approach should be adopted and emphasis should be placed on the experience and ideas of employees, and this harmony should be reinforced [58]. In this way, the employee who can express his opinion in the decisions made and feels that his views are valued will be provided more ownership of his work.

Besides the applications to be carried out for current employees, HR should also be meticulous during the recruitment phase. In the recruitment process, HR should pay attention to the abilities and skills as well as habits or addictions (alcohol, smoking), previous work experiences, and the capacity to represent the company [38]. The candidates who may contain risk factors for the organization will be thoroughly evaluated and eliminated during the recruitment process, which will help prevent potential problems that organizations may encounter.

When ATS occurs, the first area where it shows its effect is the customer base of the organization. The perception of the customer, who is adversely affected because of this syndrome, directly affects the institution. For this reason, it is important to manage customer relations management effectively. The most important point in CRM is the method of developing strategies for attracting new customers and improving the company's ability to keep existing customers, known as relationship marketing [14]. With the CRM strategies to be applied, customer relations can be strengthened to prevent negative effects on customer perception. These important applications listed above actually require a continuous improvement process. This process is a total quality management that expresses the integration of all functions and processes within an organization that aims to achieve customer satisfaction, which is the ultimate goal for continuous improvement of the quality of goods and services [73]. As the adoption of total quality management understanding will mean continuous improvement of quality for an organization, unlawful and anti-norm behaviors of the personnel will be prevented, as in the ATS.

Considering antecedents, possible outcomes, precautions and solution suggestions we propose a conceptual framework of ATS in Figure 2.

Discussion and Conclusion

We believe that this study has both theoretical and practical contributions. First of all this research was conducted in order to contribute to an organizational literature with a new phenomenon which identifies the situation that may occur because of the deliberate negative behaviors of an employee at the lowest level in the enterprises and which may cause an outstanding negative outcome by starting with an insignificant effect. The second one is by pointing out an internal threat, we added a new phenomenon that could affect brand image, corporate identity and corporate reputation seriously if proactive measures are not taken.
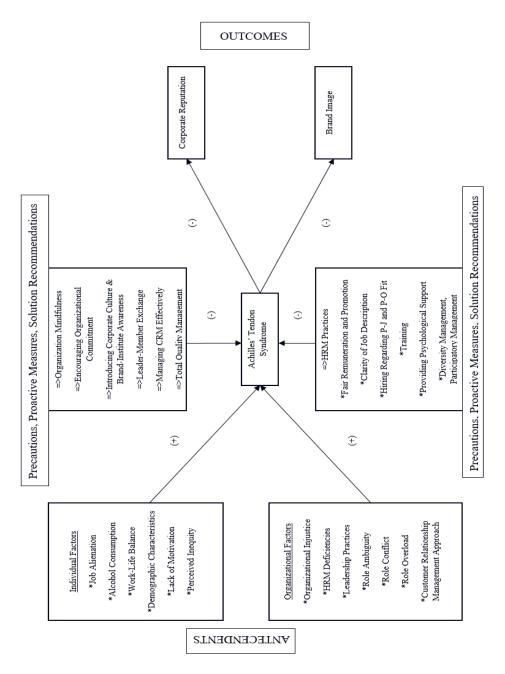
Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of ATS

Practically, we underlined what kind of steps organizations should take to prevent such potential dangers by recognizing them early, how they can cope when it is too late to take precautions, and what important consequences will arise if they do not take precautions or ignore them. In addition, when organizations take the proactive

measures mentioned before, they will be able to gain competitive advantage when they turn such crisis-creating situations into opportunities. Furthermore, we made suggestions on how to protect the concepts of corporate reputation and brand value, which are difficult to build and maintain for success, with the prevention of ATS.

ATS, which may cause possible macro-scale results in organizations, has a theoretical background in managerial terms. In addition there are important boundary points that form the theoretical framework of ATS. These are WPD behaviors, chaos theory and Drago and Folker's (1999) study which refers to Achilles analogical in managerial field. While ATS is fed from these border points, it is also differentiated by its nature with important differences. These differences constitute the systematic features of ATS.

The formation of ATS and its consequences occur at two important points. The first point is the non-normative behaviors that the hierarchically lower-level employee deliberately performs. In this context, ATS is fed by WPD behaviors defined by Robinson and Bennet (1995) as the non-normative behavior of the employee in the organization with the intention of deliberately harming the organization or other organization members. At this point, 'deliberate' and 'non-normative behaviors' constitute the points where ATS is fed. When WPD behaviors are examined in detail, it expresses the intention to harm the organization or other employees, and that this damage is done by physical/tangible methods such as vandalism, theft, sabotage, violence, and unjustified absence [44]. In line with this statement, the nature of ATS differs from WPD behaviors in that it is carried out by employees at the 'hierarchically lowest level', having a direct intention only to harm the organization and that the macro-level damage it may cause is more like intangible and simultaneously harming ways as of attitudes and behaviors.

The second point that constitutes the importance of ATS is that it gains momentum from the beginning and progresses towards the result and ultimately leads to a great negative effect compared to the beginning. Here, it is fed by the theory supported by the Butterfly Effect Theory and eventually placed in the management literature as the Chaos Theory [49]. Because the Chaos Theory is based on the fact that a small change that may occur in the initial state of a nonlinear dynamic system can lead to unexpected big results and this has an unpredictable and unavoidable feature [42]. In addition, the Chaos Theory develops over time based on the interaction between internal and external environmental factors such as organizations, governments, institutions, competitors and consumers. In this context, ATS differs in that it focuses only on the 'internal environment' and is 'preventable' with strategic and correct managerial steps, while it is fed by Chaos Theory with the assumption that a small behavior/movement can cause huge consequences. Finally, while there is an evolutionary transformation in Chaos Theory and the actors that provide stability and cause a re-transformation by adapting to it [42], the adaptation of the organization to the possible negative consequences that will occur in the ATS will threaten the life of the organization.

To the best of our knowledge and as far as we can reach in the literature, the closest use of ATS in the field of management has been the study of Drago and Folker (1999) in which they investigated the 'effects of organizational competencies on firm

performance'. The similarity of the study with ATS was to draw attention to the weaknesses that could not be noticed by comparing the organizations to Achilles. Apart from this similarity, ATS maintains its originality in terms of focusing on different areas.

As a result, ATS has some distinguishable features in terms of both its theoretical framework and managerial originality. These can be listed as 1) an action to be taken by the lowest level hierarchically, 2) deliberate non-normative behaviors directly targeting the organization, 3) intangible and simultaneously harming methods, 4) being focused on the internal environment of the organization, 5) being unpredictable but preventable and 6) insignificant seem-like attitudes/behaviors resulting in outstanding outcomes.

ATS phenomenon's never been studied before in the management field, which is likely to occur because of literature research in management, entailed the study. In subsequent studies, the issue can be addressed in more detail in terms of cause-effect and preventions with empirical studies. Developing an attitude scale and associating with other organizational concepts such as performance, commitment and so on by placing in both dependent and independent variables will help for the development of this phenomenon. It is also necessary to whether the antecedents and outcomes are empirically related with ATS that we drew upon in Figure 2.

Naturally this study has some limitations. First of all, we claimed that ATS mostly occurs in service sector due to reasons aforementioned. Thus we cannot conclude that this syndrome is valid and generalizable for any organization. The second is, also the assumption of ATS that the problematic situation should be considered in equal or at least similar dangerous perception. That means that even a minority of group see the outcome of this syndrome as insignificant, then this syndrome is more like any of WPD behavior. The last one is that we aimed at hierarchically lowest-level employees' attitudes and behaviors because of ATS' nature. These kind of off-norm attitudes and behaviors could be originated from mid-level or managerial people too which also result in damaging brand image and/or corporate reputation. But this damage would be in different ways and methods. Thus any off-norm behaviors originated from anyone in the organization but hierarchically lowest-level employees are out of the ATS scope.

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