

Studying the role of organizational justice, commitment and Ethical climate in organizational silence

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Abstract

Organizational silence is defined as the lack of effective interactions among staff and it stands opposite to the concept of organizational voice. Employees are regarded as sources of change, creativity, learning and innovation which are strategic factors to achieve organizational goals, but many of them choose to be silent and not to convey their valuable opinions and concerns about the problems in their organizations. This study aims to survey the factors that create this phenomenon. So with an overview on the literature about the subject has tried to achieve that why employees are silent. If tongues are not moving, no knowledge will be generated for organization. Tongue is a tool of human interactions in organizations. If human inspires the organization and is seen as its strategic capital, it is due to the fact that they are the employees who address organizational problems and provide solution for them. When silence is prevalent in an organization, depression penetrates in physical and social networks of the organization and competitive advantage will be meaningless for such organization.

Keywords: Ethical climate, organizational commitment, organizational justice, organizational silence.

Introduction:

Despite of the fact that prevalent literature on organization and management emphasizes on empowerment and creating open communication channels, the results indicate that many employees complain that organizations do not their communications. It can be a reason for failure of managers' goals and plans. Organizational silence is seen as a reason for failure of managers' goals and plans. Pinder and Harols (2001) defined organizational silence as employees' refusal in expressing their

behavioral, cognitive and effective evaluations on organizational situations. Morrison and Milikan defined it as a social phenomenon by which employees refuse providing the opinions and concerns about organizational difficulties. Organizational justice represent administrators' and management' concern for employees And provides a bridge of trust which finally leads to increase and strength in employees' commitment to organization. (Bahari-fard et al, 2011). Fair treatment by the organizations usually leads to higher commitment towards the organization and those who feel injustice it is more likely for them to leave the organization or demonstrate some misconducted behaviors in the organization (Fani et al, 2013).

Theoretical basis of research:

Organizational Justice

Distributive justice is grounded in equity theory of Adams (1995). (Inca et al, 2011). (Colquitt et al, 2000). argue that Before 1975 study of justice was generally centered on distributive justice (Safarzadeh, 2010). The results were also confirmed by other researchers, for instance Konovsky (2000) stated that much of the research on organizational justice focuses on the distribution of payments or rewards associated with it. (Konovsky, 2000). Individuals, evaluate the fairness of the exchange between people and organizations by the comparison between inputs and outputs. (Yi and Gong, 2008). Justice is one of the concepts that the collective wisdom of all people supports it. Selznick was the first person to study the concept of social justice as the foundation of modern industrial societies which he was referring to the concept of having equal treatment of all individuals and also creation of opportunities for the development of individual capabilities (Safarzadeh, 2010). An explanation that can account for the effect of ethical climate on employee silence is social information processing theory (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). The theory argues that individuals use information embedded in their direct social context (e.g., the norm of interpersonal interaction) to form their judgments about how they should behave in the situation where the social context is embedded. According to this theory, ethical climate can be regarded as an organizational context which is constituted by a set of ethical practices, values, and norms and acts as a source of information that can determine individual employee's attitudes and behaviors in organization. Similarly, Weber (1995) suggests that ethical values are embedded in organizations and can socialize employees toward particular ethical decisions, attitudes, and behaviors. If an organization is characterized by a strong ethical climate, its employees will regard ethics to be expected, desired, and rewarded in their workplace and are less likely to engage in ethical misconducts or dysfunctional behaviors (Martin and Cullen, 2006; Peterson, 2002; Wimbush et al., 1997).

A notion of justice and fairness also arise in organizational environments and among employees and generally is referred to as organizational justice. According to Greenberg (1987) organizational justice is organizational justice (Bahari-fard et al, 2011). Justice is a complex and multi-dimensional concept and it has very complex and distinct terms (Eberin and Tatum, 2008). In the literature, organizational justice is identifiable in the four following dimensions which include: Distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, and informational justice. According to Greenberg

(1987) Distributive Justice refers to the employees' justice perceived from reward or actual output. (Baker, 2006) and In fact, distributive justice is defined as a fair distribution of resources such as wages and benefits. (Blader and Tyler, 2003). In other words, distributive justice is not just limited to the fairness of the payments but also include a wide array of organizational outcomes such as promotion, rewards, punishments, business programs, benefits and performance evaluations. (Taylor, 1984).

The third type of justice is interactional justice and is introduced as a justice independent of the other two (distributive justice and procedural justice). Today, most researchers believe that Interactional justice is a field or part of the procedural justice but some researchers have questioned this perspective (Afjeh, 2006).

Interactional justice was proposed by Meg and Bass (1986) and is related to personal interactions between individuals (Abu-Alanine, 2010, Nadiri and Tavana, 2010). In fact, people perceive justice through the perception of their interactions with others (McDowall and Fletcher, 2004). In other words, Interactional justice focuses on the aspects of interpersonal and group communication (Abvalanyn, 2010), In this regard certain behaviors are recognized as Fair Whereas other behaviors are considered as inappropriate and unfair (Afjeh, 2006).

Organizational commitment

Commitment refers to the focus and the desire of attachment of an individual to a certain task or his work. Organizational commitment has been a topic widely researched over the years. Affective, continuance and normative commitment are the tools to measure organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Dunham et al., 1994). Affective Commitment deals with the attachment of an employee with his organization and the organizational goals. (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Continuance Commitment deals with the commitment to pursue working in an organization because of the inter-employee relations and other non-transferable investments like pensions (retirement benefits etc.) (Reichers, 1985).

Communities are set of humans with different cultures that guide their collective deeds. One of these human sets is organization as defined briefly: "a place of people who work together by an approved and coordinated discipline to realize organizational goals. Organizations are social arrangements to control the operation of realizing collective goals and a place to create aware management and necessary requirement to achieve the goals by collective instruments. Therefore, one can define organizational culture as dominating behaviors in organization: "a set of common critical values, beliefs and differences among organizational members" (Sadghpour, 1996: 78).

Organizational Ethical climate

Ethical climate is defined as "the shared perceptions of what ethically correct behavior is and how ethical issues should be handled in an organization" (Victor and Cullen, 1987, p. 51). According to the work of Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988), the theoretical typology of ethical climate can be constructed along two dimensions. The first dimension is derived from Kohlberg's (1984) theory of

cognitive moral development and composed of three levels of ethical criteria used for decision making, namely, the egoism, the benevolence, and the principle.

The egoism refers to the self-interest focus and the self-interest maximization behaviors; the benevolence refers to the concern for satisfying the interests of as many people as possible; and the principle concerns the internalization of universal standards and beliefs by members of organizations (Cullen et al., 2003; Martin and Cullen, 2006; Victor and Cullen, 1988). The second dimension, derived from sociological theories of roles and referent groups in organizations (Merton, 1957), refers to the three loci of analysis used as a referent in ethical decision making, namely, the individual (one-self) focus, local (group or organization) focus, and cosmopolitan (society or humanity) focus. The individual focus refers to the use of one's own self as the prime referent for moral reasoning; the local focus refers to reliance on a group in one's own immediate social systems as the referent for moral reasoning; and the cosmopolitan focus refers to the anchorage on a referent outside oneself and one's own immediate group or organization in moral reasoning (Cullen et al., 2003; Martin and Cullen, 2006; Victor and Cullen, 1988). By crossing the three levels of ethical criteria with the three loci of analysis, Victor and Cullen (1987) derived nine different types of ethical climate: self-interest, company profit, efficiency, friendship, team interest, social responsibility, personal morality, company rules and procedures, and laws and professional codes. Victor and Cullen (1988) used this typology of nine possible types of ethical climates to develop an ethical climate questionnaire and to collect empirical data to validate the typology. They found that there were only five ethical climate types existing in their data.

Schneider and Reichers (1983) have argued that organizational climate is a determinant more powerful than individual needs or motivations on employees' behaviors. Withey and Cooper (1989) have also indicated that group-level variables, such as group or organizational climates, account for more variance in employee communication choices than do individual-level variables.

An explanation that can account for the effect of ethical climate on employee silence is social information processing theory (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). The theory argues that individuals use information embedded in their direct social context (e.g., the norm of interpersonal interaction) to form their judgments about how they should behave in the situation where the social context is embedded. According to this theory, ethical climate can be regarded as an organizational context which is constituted by a set of ethical practices, values, and norms and acts as a source of information that can determine individual employee's attitudes and behaviors in organization. Similarly, Weber (1995) suggests that ethical values are embedded in organizations and can socialize employees toward particular ethical decisions, attitudes, and behaviors. If an organization is characterized by a strong ethical climate, its employees will regard ethics to be expected, desired, and rewarded in their workplace and are less likely to engage in ethical misconducts or dysfunctional behaviors (Martin and Cullen, 2006; Peterson, 2002; Wimbush et al., 1997).

Organizational silence

The sources of organizational silence are the factors which generate it. The factors of organizational silence include managers' fear of negative feedback, implicit beliefs of managers on employees and the nature of managers, organizational structure, top management teams traits, organizational and

environmental variables, consistency with public opinions, leadership style and organizational climate (Danayifar et al, 2011; Morrison et al, 2000; Henriksen, et al, 2006; Greenberg et al, 2009; Bowen et al, 2003).

Litreatuer Review:

Morrison and Miliken assert that organizational members have ideas, opinions and information to provide constructive methods in improving their work and organization. Such functions express a concept called organizational voice. Some people provide such ideas while others do not tend to provide them and keep silent. Authors call it as organizational silence (Morrison and Milien, 2000). Harlouz and his co-workers defined it as the refusal of employees from expressing their behavioral, cognition oriented, and effective assessments about the organizational chances. They showed that organizational silence in business is a common phenomenon which leads to mental problems for employees and affects organizational productivity in a negative way. This kind of silence is the result of many organizational characteristics such as the process of decision making, management of employees' culture and the control on employees. Moreover, Organizational Silence is the actor's motivation to with-hold versus express ideas, information, and opinions about work-related improvements (Van Dyne, Ang&Botero, 2003, Vakola, M., Nikolaou, I., & Bourantas, D. 2004). A potentially dangerous impediment to organizational change (Morrison & Milliken, 2000qtd. in Vakola, M., Nikolaou, I., & Bourantas, D. 2004), silence is not only ubiquitous and expected in organizations but extremely costly to both the firm and the individual (Perlow& Williams, 2003 qtd. in Vakola, M., Nikolaou, I., & Bourantas, D. 2004).

Affecting factors on shaping organizational silence

Concerning Affecting factors on shaping organizational silence, one can point out organizational, spatial and individual variables. Based on below model, organizational silence is the result of managers' fear on negative feedback and a set of their implicit beliefs. Concerning the factors which generate such beliefs, one can point out organizational individual and spatial conditions. Such beliefs along with management fear of negative feedbacks can lead into predictions of organizational and managerial policies which prevent top-down information flow. Organizational silence impacts on organizational decision making and change processes. Likewise, it impact on employees' conception, behavior and attitudes.

Table 1: Motivators and Inhibitor's in organizational silence

	Motivators	Inhibitor's
Individual dispositions	Extraversion Proactive personality Assertiveness Conscientiousness Duty orientation	Achievement orientation

	Customer orientation	
Job and organizational attitudes and perceptions	Organizational identification Work-group identification Felt obligation for change Job satisfaction Role breadth Control or influence Organizational support	Detachment Powerlessness
Emotions, beliefs, and schemas	Anger Psychological safety	Fear Futility Image or career risks
Supervisor and leader behavior	Openness Consultation Leader-member exchange Transformational leadership Ethical leadership Leader influence	Abusive leadership
Other contextual factors	Group voice climate Caring climate Formal voice mechanisms	Job and social stressors Climate of fear or silence Instrumental climate Hierarchical structure Change-resistant culture

Table 2: Key Concepts in The study of voice and silent in organization

Concept	Voice or silence focus	Direction	Level of analysis	Situation or event	Notable definition or description
Organizational change	voice	upward	Individual	Idea, need/ improvement	Hirschman (1970) defined voice is "any attempt at all to change rather than escape from an objectionable state of affairs"(p. 30).
loyalty	Silence	upward	Individual	Response to	When dissatisfied, loyal employees

				job dissatisfaction	are confident that things will improve, leading them to remain in their organizations and suffer in silence(Hirschman.1970)
The MUM effect	Silence	upward	Individual	Negative information	Individuals general reluctance to convey bad news because of the discomfort associated with delivering negative information (Conlee & Tesser,1973)
Spiral of silence	Silence	Upward, lateral, downward , or external	Individual, group or organization	Disagreement with public opinion/avoid isolation	Fear of isolation and feeling of self-doubt discourage people from expressing ideas that fail to conform to public opinion (Noelle-Neumann,1974) .
Whistle-blowing	Voice	external	Individual	Witness wrongdoing	of perceived organizational wrongdoing to authorities who can take action(Near & Miceli, 1985(
Principled organizational dissent	Voice or silence	Upward or external	Individual	Perception of moral wrongdoing in the workplace	"Effort by individuals in the workplace to protest and/or to change the organizational status quo because of their conscientious objection to current policy or practice" (Graham,1986,p.2)

Conclusion:

Silence and indifference are powerful forces in the organizations which usually may threaten organization's life. Emergence of these phenomena in the organization will have direct effect on the organizational productivity although employees are expected to contribute to the development of organization with their knowledge, ideas, opinions and suggestions, they Sometimes prefer to remain silent. Justice can be as a Reason. It is noted that Perceived justice, especially Procedural justice can be important in employers' decision to speak up about organizational issues. Employees choose to be silent because of their managers and maybe they fear, fear of reprimand or Punishment or even dismissal. So they prefer silent Of course sometimes they are silent because of they don't have the ability to do any voice or they don't know how express their mean. So the organization isn't able to use them and they aren't as sources of change, creativity, learning and innovation. In today's complex and changing world that there is too much competition between different

communities in order to achieve the latest technology, the most advantageous resources and the most experienced Manpower, human resources and especially creative individuals, entrepreneurs and owners of new ideas are the most valuable organizational assets. Structures are changing and organizations and their human resources are affected by different threats from which we can refer to “organizational silence” phenomenon. In this paper carried out Studying the role of organizational justice, organizational commitment and organizational Ethical climate in organizational silence

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