

Could Partipative Decision Making Be Solution For Organizational Silence Problem?

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Abstract

Whereas participative decision making is considered as sharing decision making process with subordinates, organizational silence is unwillingness of employees to share their thoughts, interests and affections about organizational issues or problems and keeping them unexposed. The present study aims to explore the relationship between participative decision making and acquiescent silence, defensive silence and prosocial silence. Established hypotheses along the purpose of the present study were tested by means of correlation and regression analyses. Based on the analysis results, it was determined that participation in decision making process has negative influence on organizational silence, acquiescent silence and defensive silence.

Keywords: Participative decision making, Organizational Silence, acquiescent silence, defensive silence, prosocial silence

Introduction

In parallel to progressive globalization, which removes the geographical borders in the 21st century, organizations have faced with cruel and intensive competition which has not been encountered before. In order to maintain their existence under these circumstances, they attempted to make amendments in their management structures; and significance of employees in management and manufacturing processes as “human beings” has increased. New approaches introduced by the new century necessitated managers to adopt new organizational structures. In this regard, managers are required to create innovative opportunities for their employees, to enhance knowledge, skill and talents of their employees through new management methods and to take advantage of them in order to ensure their organizations to cope with dynamic and competitive conditions. Employees, who are seen as factors effective on organizational performance, source of change, innovation and creativity in organization, encounter taking over additional

authorities, strengthening and being included in decision making processes in organizations owing to new management approaches. Recently developed open-door policies which have been put in prominence by organizations, suggestion-complaints systems, organizational sharing meetings including members from all departments and ranks are indeed environments in which employees could find opportunity to share their opinions clearly and to speak out their words.

Making effective and accurate decision is vitally important for organizations. Decision makers need relevant information to make an effective and accurate decision. Under conditions of our contemporary world, effective decisions are not only expected from managers. Persons who are directly in the relevant subject are expected to participate in decision making process to ensure that different point of views and rational decisions are taken. Participative decision making is preferred by management to hand an opportunity over to their subordinates to participate in decision making process. Similarly, it can be defined as “making joint decision” and “sharing authority of making decision between management and subordinates”. However, relevant studies indicate that participant decision making phenomenon addressed prominently and frequently in the literature is not considered in the professional life sufficiently as it was expected.

Indeed, employees today usually do not share their professional subjects with their managers and coworkers on purpose; they prefer silence. In this case, if employees part of mechanisms requiring participative decision making prefer silence instead of sharing their area of expertise, decision, as an output of this process, can only be considered given by the ones who are holding authority rather than by the ones skilled and expert. In other words, decision made during daily meetings would be consequence of authority instead of common mind. Remaining silent in such a decision making environment could result in false or mistaken decisions. While dominance of silence in decision making process results in internal conflict and alienation among individuals, and in organizational insecurity feeling and serious performance loss in companies within medium and long term. It is necessary take precautions against organizational silence a serious threat to development of organizations.

Conceptual framework

Decision and Participative Decision Making Concept

According to the definition prescribed by the Turkish Language Association, decision is “final judgment about a job or issue, made following a thinking process” (www.tdk.gov.tr). Decision refers several meanings such as judgment reached through thinking and reasoning, continuance, calmness, persistence, and optimal. In the simplest extent, decision is making selection

or preference among current alternatives. On the other hand, in terms of management, decision is considered as preference or choice of manager in any issue. Decision making is starting point of all activities in an organization (Onaran, 1975: 6). Decision of manager is remedy or solution that is adopted and presented after thinking on a subject. If so, decision making is equivalence of making selection between good or bad and right or wrong (Koçel, 2005: 76). Since decision making process is vitally important for organizational functions, while some philosophers consider decision making as heart of management, some claim that it is the key of management or that management is consisted solely of decision making. In this regard, it is possible draw a general conclusion such that the most distinctive characteristic of a manager in an organization is his effectiveness in decision making process (Ertük, 2012: 237). As a mobilization and steering element in organizations, decision making constitutes focal point of organizational action (İraz, 2004: 414).

Decision making activity is undeniable reality of organizational life. As globalization intensifies, industries experience pressures to manufacture high-quality product or service, to utilize from advanced technology in their products and services to survive. Work force highly educated and who are capable of behaving flexible is necessary (Howcroft and Wilson, 2003: 6). In order to establish and maintain this work force, certain mechanisms in organization in which they can prove themselves and express their decisions loudly are required. Participative decision making activity in which employees could participate in decision making process is one of such mechanisms in organizations

Participative decision making concept originated from Y-theory exhibited in X-Y theory of McGregor. According to Y-theory, employees are usually in pursuit of showing good performance in their jobs, if managers receive contribution of employees regarding the works in organization, it is considered that employees would be committed to their organizations at higher levels (Elele and Fields, 2010: 369). Participative decision making is taking a joint action by employees at similar or different authority levels within hierarchical structure of organization for (Bakan and Büyükbeşe, 2008: 33). According to Knoop (1991), participative decision making is carrying maintaining decision making process together with other employees of an organization in order to reach organizational purposes. Another definition describes participative decision making as inclusion of employees in decision process which determine both futures of employees and organization such as determination of policies and targets of their institution (Childs, 1991: 14). According to Cornell (1998), modern organizations are required include their employees into decision making process to maintain their flexibility against irrational expansion of globalization and technology

(Ladd and Marshall, 2004: 646). Participative decision making is direct or indirect voices of employees in decisions given an organization (Cotton et al., 1988: 15). According to Greengard (1993), participative decision making, which offers employees opportunities to make significant changes in their work, is one of the tools employed by large-scale companies to accomplish change. In order to obtain positive results from efforts associated with participative decision making, it is important to determine timing, procedure and level of participation of subordinates into decision making process (Parnell and Crandall, 2000: 524).

Organizational Silence Concept and Its Varieties

Silence concept which has been referred in various disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy and linguistics, and on which various studies have been conducted, have been considered as a subject that needs attention because it has not been thought in studies conducted until recently that it does not refer any meaning but the ones such as approval/acceptance, immobility or lack of sound. Nevertheless, recent studies have revealed that silence concept could indeed have different meanings such that it could be sort of communication. Essentially, silence is a concept hard to comprehend, which contains many feeling, sentiment and action (Pinder and Harlos, 2001: 362). Core point of silence is that employees retain their opinion, view and thoughts at their own discrete. Silence is status of remaining silent; but although this situation is considered as remaining closed to communication, this indeed represents a way of communication. Silence usually commences at the point where someone fails to take a chance to face with challenge and thus prefers remaining speechless (Perlow and Williams, 2003: 4).

Johannesen (1974), the author who described the silence concept at organizational level first, stated that “silence is withholding information by employees from others” (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2009: 213). In addition, Johannesen stresses that although silence is quite common in organizations and its existence is recognized, it is an important subject for further studies because it is related with unexposed and unrevealed sections of human behavior (Fletcher and Watson, 2007: 157).

In the literature on management, there are two prominent studies which put organizational silence concept in today’s definition. In one of these studies, Morrison and Milliken (2000) describe organizational silence as dangerous obstacle before change and development and as a collective phenomenon which blocks developing a pluralist organization. Additionally, pluralist organization is described as an organization in which values and opinions of employees differs and in which its members are allowed to exhibit their different views and opinions. Furthermore, Morrison and Miliken associate employees’ silence attitude with two essential beliefs: the

first is that it is not worth to display effort against the organizational problems; and the second is that expressing opinions and views regarding a problem could result in dangerous consequences (Morrison and Milliken, 2000: 707). Milliken et al. (2003), in their study conducted on 40 fulltime workers from various sectors, employees are not alone regarding retention of what they know, even it was determined that there are issues among group members, waiting for resolution in some circumstances, and although these issues are known among employees, they do not submit the issue to the management. These results confirm the view of Morrison and Milliken (2000) which indicates silence as a collective behavior in organizations (Milliken et al., 2003: 1469). Similarly, Henriksen and Dayton claim that if majority of employees prefer to remain silent about problems experienced within an organization, silence turns into a collective behavior and this is to be called as organizational silence (2006: 1540).

The second significant study in the literature on organizational silence was conducted by Pinder and Harlos (2001); and oriented on silence as a reaction exhibited against unjust practices. The authors described silence as on-purpose retaining of their thoughts, affections and cognitive considerations about organizational conditions, personal expressions by individuals who are aware that they could be influent on change or fixing (Pinder and Harlos, 2001: 334). In further studies, Van Dyne et al. (2003) described organizational silence as keeping opinions and displeasures regarding work under suppress or not to expose by employees on purpose. Bowen and Blackmon (2003) described as opposite of making sound; and as failure of employees in expressing their opinions regarding organizational matters freely. Slade (2008) described organizational silence as a common behavior of employees in retaining their opinions and thoughts when they encountered issues at their organizations (Slade, 2008: 50). Organizational silence is hiding opinions, views and suggestions by employees consciously about any subject needed to be resolved. If employees have nothing to say about an issue, or if they find the subject unnecessary to make a comment about it, then, silence of employees cannot be assessed as organizational silence. In this regard, it would be mistaken to assess silence of employees about relevant subject as organizational silence because silence is a conscious act (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008: 39; Durak, 2012:45). Van Dyne et al. (2003) stated that the circumstance in which employees are not knowledgeable about a subject or when they have no opinion about it, this situation should not be confused with organizational silence (Van Dyne et al., 2003: 1361).

In the present study, organizational silence varieties were the ones developed by Van Dyne et al. and commonly used in the literature. Based on

this classification, organizational silence varieties are acquiescent silence, defensive silence and prosocial silence.

Acquiescent Silence

Acquiescent silence is abstaining from sharing knowledge, feeling and opinion about current status because of dispensation of individuals. These individuals are indeed irrelevant to the current status. They accept the prevailing circumstances and they are not inclined to speak, participate or spend effort to change current status. For instance, if employees are of the opinion that it is pointless and unnecessary to express his opinions and suggestions deliberately and to make a difference in the organization, they may not express their opinions. In his case, employees acquiesce to the current situation; refuse to talk about the situation; and spend no effort to change the situation. In other words, the circumstance in which employees think that their opinion will not be taken into consideration or it will not make any difference could be regarded as they are personally incompetent; their behaviors and opinions are shaped parallel to the organizational decisions and create norms; employees' acquiescence of those could be considered their irrelevant and submissive silent behaviors and attitudes (Dyne et al., 2003, p.1366). Employees mostly think that remaining silent could protect their relationships and allow them to perform their job better (Perlow and Williams, 2003: 3-4). Employees exhibiting acquiescent silence behavior are not aware of existence of alternative options to alter these conditions since they acquiesce in conditions in their organization as is. Therefore, this type of silence has passive characteristic (Pinder and Harlos, 2001: 349).

Defensive Silence

Morrison and Miliken (2000) emphasized that one of the key factors which pushes individuals in organization to remain silent is sense of fear. Consistently, defensive silence mentioned in study of Pinder and Harlos (2001) is considered as making decision not to speak because employees are afraid of consequences of their word spoken to express their knowledge, opinion and thoughts. In the light of these, Dyne et al. described defensive silence as an action to protect themselves from threats associated with expressing their knowledge, opinion and thoughts because of their fears (Dyne et al., 2003:1367). Employees have essentially two purposes within an organization: one of them is to gain an income sufficient to survival of themselves and their families; the other is to have social capital by taking a certain position in professional life. Thus, employees could prefer to remain silent to protect their personal position at the organization by accomplishing these purposes (Gephart et al., 2009:7). Acquiescent silence behavior

observed in organizations refers deeper meaning with respect to defensive silence. While in defensive silence, voluntariness and consciousness are prevalent in leaving silent status, in acquiescent silence, there is no such situation or it is quite low. Whereas current status is preferred consciously in defensive silence, employees get used to current status in acquiescent silence. Defensive silence is aware of current alternatives and therefore there is higher stress level; on the other hand, employees have no such an effort in acquiescent silence. Therefore, their stress level is much lower. Since employees are aware of alternatives in defensive silence, they are more eager to talk; but, such an intention is quite low in acquiescent silence. While tendency of employees to quit the organization is higher in defensive silence, tendency of employees who exhibit acquiescent silence behavior to quit their job is rather low.

Prosocial Silence

As prosocial silence behavior which was introduced to the silence literature by Dyne et al. (2003), the authors mentioned that prosocial silence behavior was developed based on organizational citizenship behavior. Prosocial silence is described as that retention of opinion, thought and knowledge of employees about a subject for the sake of their organization and their coworkers by relying on principles of establishing cooperation and for benefit of their coworkers. Korsgaard et al. (1997) claimed that this type of silence, as the same with organizational citizenship behavior, is focal point of others and it is conscious and proactive behavior. Its common point with defensive silence is that employees are aware of available alternatives and they are not able to say what they know and think on purpose. The difference between prosocial silence and defensive silence is based on motivations in their backgrounds. Whereas in prosocial silence, the motivation behind behavior of remaining silent is that it was for benefit of others, in defensive silence, employees are afraid of adverse consequences of their actions and thus, they prefer silence (Dyne et al., 2003: 1368).

There are some positive consequences with prosocial silence. Employees protect confidential information concerning organization against third party individuals (Rafferty and Restubog, 2011: 272). The most distinctive dimension of prosocial silence from others is courage dimension. Hiding information necessitates courage. Regarding this silence type, it is essential not to share what they know for the sake of organization or others (Esfani et al., 2013: 415). In some other occasions, when employees do not share what they know to protect their co-workers, they might damage their organizations (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986: 716).

Research

Purpose and Scope of Research

Morrison and Milliken, who introduced organizational silence as a collective subject, addressed two organizational factors which develop silence: organizational structures, policies, managerial applications and behaviors. If organizations adopt central decision making processes, and if there is no mechanism or channels through which employees could share their opinions and interests, employees prefer to remain silent within organization based on the thought that they are not respected in their organization and their opinions will not be tolerated. In an organization, if decision making is only discretion of management, allowing employees to participate in organizational decision making process and listening to their words are not common practices. In these types of organizations, decision maker departments do not pay much attention to opinions brought by their employees or regard them irrelevant. Thus, employees assume that their opinions are useless and they prefer not to speak out their words (Morrison and Milliken, 2000: 713). In their studies, Park and Keil (2009), based on findings reported by Morrison and Milliken, tested whether organizational structure and policies such as existence of central decision making processes and lack of feedback mechanisms for senior management affect silence atmosphere, or not. In the end, researchers reported that these types of practices are effective on organizational atmosphere. Additionally, they advised managers to minimize centralization in their decision making processes, sharing decision making authority with other departments instead of top management, to share authority with employees if management wants to reduce silence atmosphere in their organizations (Park and Keil, 2009: 911-912). Participative decision is considered as inclusion of employees in decision making processes. In this case, participation in decisions reduces centralization in decision making; and from this point, it could be possible to reach a conclusion that participation in decisions could reduce organizational silence. Individuals want to get involved in their professional and private lives and to have a voice in them. Expressing opinions and being part of decision making process allow employees to feel that their opinions are respected and regarded. In counter circumstances, employees feel worthless and silence atmosphere is started to be flourished in their organization (Rodriguez, 2005: 1). Structural and social mechanisms in organization and subjects concerning organizations encourage employees to speak out what they know about their organization. Additionally, employees who participate formally in decision making and feedback mechanisms would be inclined to share their opinions, thoughts and interests in more open and participative organization atmosphere (Huang et al., 2005: 460).

In study of Huang et al., conducted on 421 divisions of a multinational company across 24 countries, it was investigated that whether practices encouraging participation of employees increase organizational silence, or not. In this scope, researchers defined two voice mechanisms encouraging participation in decisions to reduce organizational silence. These mechanisms are the structures in which employees are included formally in decisions and participant atmosphere perceived by employees in their organizations. As a result of their researches, authors concluded that establishment of mechanisms in which employees working in countries with short strength-distance are included in decisions formally could reduce organizational silence more with respect to the countries with longer strength distance. Another finding was that in countries with longer strength distance, organizational silence level is higher; and it is necessary to provide mechanism which includes employees in decision process and higher participative atmosphere in order to reduce organizational silence (Huang et al., 2005: 475-476). That is, whereas establishment of mechanisms in which employees could participate in decision making process to reduce organizational silence in countries with low strength distance; besides the mechanisms formally established in higher strength distance, existence of participative atmosphere across organization is necessary as well. In another study which considers the relationship between participation and silence, Shojoie et al. (2011) describe organizational silence as an inefficient organizational process which consumes resources and efforts. Moreover, it was stated that low participation levels of employees concerning the organizational subjects and their preference to remain silent were type of organizational silence, the claimed that organizational silence would arise when organizational participation cannot be ensured (Bagheri et al., 2012: 50). Based on all these studies, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between participating decisions and organizational silence varieties in the light of following hypothesis.

Hypotheses concerning the relationship between participative decision making and organizational silence types:

H₁: Participative decision making has negative influence on acquiescent organizational silence.

H₂: Participative decision making has negative influence on defensive organizational silence.

H₃: Participative decision making has negative influence on prosocial organizational silence.

Method

Universe of the study is consisted of companies from Denizli City, which are ranked on the largest 500 Turkish companies list published by the Istanbul Chamber of Industry.

For the sampling group, Denizli companies ranked in the 500 companies list of the Istanbul Chamber of Industry published in the official internet page were determined. Accordingly, twelve companies were determined in the published list (www.iso.org.tr). Denizli companies ranked on the ISO 500 list were in metal, copper processing, textile, cable manufacturing, packaging, food and cement sectors. Research sampling is composed of white-collar employees who work for aforesaid companies. In order to conduct the study, mentioned companies were requested permission; and six of them granted permission for survey. Totally, 673 white-collar employees were distributed survey forms; finally, 213 survey forms were returned to researchers and 202 of them were found adequate for further evaluation. When it is considered that return rates from selected samples were in the range of 20% to 40% in applied studies (Öğüt, 2003: 293), a return rate of 30.1% obtained in our study can be considered as acceptable rate.

A quantitative approach was adopted for the study. Two separate scales were employed for data collection purpose. Whereas as the scale developed by Kahnweiler and Thompson (2000) for participating in decision process was employed, 12 expressions measuring status of this scale with respect to participative decision making were added into the research survey. 15 expressions of the organizational silence scale developed by Dyne, Ang and Botero (2003), which measure organizational silence dimensions, were added into the research survey.

Findings

Results of the reliability analysis conducted to measure internal reliability of the scale were summarized in Table 1. It was found that reliability level of 12-item participative decision making scale was 92.8% ($\alpha=.928$). Regarding the 15-item scale employed in the research for organizational silence types, a value of the acquiescent silence, defensive silence and prosocial silence dimensions were found respectively as 0.799, 0.885 and 0.808. To be able to consider a scale as a reliable tool, minimum acceptable alpha coefficient is 0.7 (Altunışık et al., 2012: 125-126). Since all alpha coefficients estimated for scales and sub-dimensions used in the study were greater than 0.7, it was possible to conclude that employed scales were reliable and appropriate for analysis.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis Results

| Dimensions | N. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha (α) |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Participative decision making | 12 | .928 |
| Acquiescent Silence | 5 | .799 |
| Defensive Silence | 5 | .885 |
| Prosocial Silence | 5 | .808 |

Since scales were adapted from English, a factor analysis was conducted to measure validity. In order to determine whether obtained data was appropriate for factor analysis, KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) and Bartlett tests were conducted. KMO values of scale were greater than 0.5; and Bartlett test results were found significant. No any item was determined, necessary to be excluded from the survey. Factor coefficients of all items were greater than threshold value of 0.40.

Participative decision making levels of respondent employees and descriptive analysis results of their answers given to the expressions prepared to measure organizational silence types, standard deviation, and correlations among variables were exhibited in Table 2. It was observed that respondent employees displayed dominantly “medium level” participation to the expressions regarding the participative decision making status at workplace. Thus, it was possible to conclude that respondent employees agreed with decisions but their agreement was at medium level. It was observed that except prosocial silence, respondent employees exhibited “low” level of participation to the expressions regarding the organizational silence behavior. Accordingly, it is possible to conclude that employees exhibited low level of acquiescent silence (\bar{x} =2.10) and defensive silence (\bar{x} =1.91) behaviors; on the other hand, they exhibited high level of prosocial silence (\bar{x} =4.36) behavior. In the organizations where the present research was conducted, it was possible to conclude that employees preferred remaining silent to protect their organization and their co-workers at the times when things in the company came to a point which could harm them, instead of preferring silence just because they believed that exposing what they know could not make any change on results or because of protecting themselves. In studies conducted by Eroglu et al. by means of the same scales on employees in textile industry in Isparta City, average scores of acquiescent organizational silence, defensive organizational silence and prosocial organizational silence were respectively found as 2.01, 1.87 and 4.25.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Values of Collected Data

| | Mean (\bar{x}) | S.D. | 1 | 2 | 2a |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. Participative decision making | 3.29 | 1.192 | | | |
| 2. Organizational Silence | 2.84 | .956 | -.317** | | |
| 2a. Acquiescent Silence | 2.10 | 1.080 | -.307** | .936** | |
| 2b. Defensive Silence | 1.91 | .980 | -.486** | .925** | .733** |
| 2c. Prosocial Silence | 4.36 | .827 | .108** | | |

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

The relationship indicated in hypotheses was tested by means of correlation; and it was attempted to reveal whether the relationships were statistically significant. First, correlation analysis was conducted to expose general structure of the relationship; then, regression analysis was conducted to expose direction and degree of this relationship. Hypothesis tests were investigated individually as below.

Concerning the first hypothesis of the study (H_1), it was observed that participative decision making status in organizations was negatively effective on acquiescent organizational silence. In order to test this hypothesis, a linear regression analysis was conducted such that whereas participative decision making status was taken as independent variable; acquiescent organizational silence was taken as dependent variable. Analysis results were exhibited on Table 3.

Table 3. Results Of The Regression Analysis Concerning The Relationship Between Participating In Decisions And Acquiescent Organizational Silence.

| VARIABLE | Regression Coefficient | Standard Error | Standardized Reg. Coefficient (Beta) | t | p |
|--|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|--------|------|
| Constant | 3.151 | 0.205 | - | 15.402 | .000 |
| Participation in Decisions | -0.273 | 0.060 | -0.307 | -4.556 | .000 |
| Correlation Coefficient (R)= -0.307 $R^2= 0.094$ F= 20.760 p = 0.000 | | | | | |

According to the table above, a negative significant correlation ($B=-.273$) was determined between participative decision and acquiescent silence ($p<0.05$). In other words, one unit increase in participative decision score would result in 0.273 units decrease in acquiescent organizational silence behavior. According to the determined variance value ($R^2= 0.094$), it can be inferred that participative decision could explain 9.4% of acquiescent organizational silence behavior. Thus, H_1 hypothesis of this study was accepted.

In the H_2 hypothesis, it was assumed that there was a negative correlation between participative decision making status in organizations and

defensive organizational silence. In the test process of this hypothesis, participative decision making status was considered as independent variable, and defensive organizational silence was considered as dependent variable for linear regression analysis. Analysis results were summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of the Regression Analysis Concerning The Relationship Between Participating in Decisions and Defensive Organizational Silence.

| VARIABLE | Regression Coefficient | Standard Error | Standardized Reg. Coefficient (Beta) | t | p |
|---|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|--------|------|
| Constant | 3.270 | .182 | - | 17.968 | .000 |
| Participation into Decisions | -.418 | .053 | -.486 | -7.860 | .000 |
| Correlation Coefficient R= 0.486 F= 61.786 | | | R ² = 0.236 p = 0.000 | | |

According to the table above, participative decision has negative significant effect (B=-.418) on defensive organizational silence ($p < 0.05$). In other words, one unit increase in participative decision score would result in 0.418 units of decrease in defensive organizational silence behavior. According to determined variance value ($R^2 = 0.236$), participative decision could explain 23.6% of defensive organizational silence behavior. Thus, H_2 hypothesis of this study was accepted.

In the H_3 hypothesis, it was assumed that participative decision making status in organizations has negative effect on prosocial organizational silence. In the test process of this hypothesis, participative decision making status was considered as independent variable, and prosocial organizational silence was considered as dependent variable for linear regression analysis. Analysis results were summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the Regression Analysis Concerning The Relationship Between Participating in Decisions and Prosocial Organizational Silence

| VARIABLE | Regression Coefficient | Standard Error | Standardized Reg. Coefficient (Beta) | t | p |
|--|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|--------|-------|
| Constant | 4.102 | .171 | - | 23.952 | 0.000 |
| Participation in Decisions | .077 | .050 | .108 | 1.540 | .125 |
| Correlation Coefficient R= 0.108 F= 2.371 | | | R ² = 0.012 p = 0.125 | | |

According to table above, the relationship between participative decision and prosocial organizational silence was not significant since $p > 0.05$ ($p = 0.125$). Thus, H_3 hypothesis was rejected.

Conclusion

The present study was based on two concepts. Whereas one of them is “participative decision making”, the other is “organizational silence”. Decision making can be described as cognitive, bodily and affection process concerning preferring the most appropriate option among multiple choices. Decision making activity also considered as center of management is undeniable truth of life in organizations. Parallel to the globalizing world, it is necessary for organizations to gain competitive advantage and maintaining this against its competitors and to acquire success.

Another concept taken into consideration in the present study was organizational silence. As organizational silence is considered as an obstacle before organizations to cope with issues and hinder their progress; and described as retention and hiding on purpose what they know about organizational subjects and problems consciously. An organization in which its employees do not feel free to speak up their opinions would eventually be destitute of creative opinions and resolutions; and its survival would be jeopardized. Therefore, it is important for organizations to share knowledge, opinion and thoughts which would develop organizational functions under this difficult and tough competition environment. According to the findings of the present study, it was observed among employees of companies in sampling group that that was “medium level” silence behavior.

In the research section of the study, “organizational silence” classification introduced by Dyne et al. (2003) was taken as foundation. Within framework of this classification, organizational silence was investigated under three dimensions; namely, acquiescent, defensive and prosocial. As the first dimension of organizational silence, “acquiescent silence” is described as that employees’ reluctance to share their knowledge, opinion and views about the relevant situation since they believe that they could not make any difference in current status. The second one, “defensive silence”, is described as employees decide not to express their opinions or views since they are afraid of their potential consequences. The third dimension, “prosocial silence” is described as by relying on establishing cooperation and considering benefits of other co-workers in the organization, employees refrain from expressing their opinion, views and knowledge about certain organizational issue. Furthermore, in the societies in which mass culture and post modernism are common, majority of employees could lack of sufficient knowledge, skill and personal characteristics because they are incompetent subject to human resources malpractices which do not consider merit and qualification of personnel across organizations in its promotion system. Again, in societies in which hypocrisy is common practice, employees could prefer to remain silent not to undergo certain commitment to have flexibility when they encounter various circumstances. According to

study results, acquiescent silence and defensive silence dimensions were seen in organizations at “low level”. High level of “prosocial silence” dimension in organization caused that mean score of silence behavior increased to “medium level”. Although no any study was observed in the literature, which investigates the relationship between participative decision making and organizational silence directly. In the results of available studies, it is mentioned that it is necessary to establish mechanisms through which employees could speak up their words and to conduct managerial arrangements enabling them to share authority in organization so as to break silence wall or to reduce silence in organization. The present study aims to make a contribution into the relevant literature by taking both concepts into consideration.

According to hypothesis test results, negative significant correlation was determined between participative decision making and both acquiescent silence and defensive silence. As employees are included in decision making processes in organizations, their tendency to prefer silence behavior subject to renouncing and fear would reduce. Accordingly, as employees participate in decisions and their authority in organizational decisions made, they would think they are responsible for consequences of organizational decisions and thus they would observe that their opinions would make a difference. Furthermore, it is reported in the literature that as participation of employees into organizational decisions increases, their confidence in organization increases; their self-confidence levels increases and they consider themselves more valuable in the eye of organization. Based on these results, it is possible to claim that employees who have confidence in their organization and who witness that they are valuable members of organization would not be afraid to share their affection and opinions, namely, speaking up their own words. In other words, as inclusion of employees in organizational decisions increases, motivations underneath of acquiescent silence behavior and defensive silence behavior, believing that expressing their opinion could not make any difference and that fearing from consequences of expressing their opinions, would be weakened; and finally organizational silence would be replaced with organizational soundness. In the present study, H_1 and H_2 hypotheses were accepted. However, since it was determined that there was no significant relationship between participative decision and prosocial silence based on result of conducted analyses, H_3 hypothesis was rejected.

Finally, commercial success of companies ranked in 500 Company Index of the Istanbul Chamber of Industry and their contribution into economies of Turkey and Denizli City is undeniable fact. According to the present study, it was determined that companies are required to pay attention to level of organizational silence and necessary precautions are to be taken to reduce this across organizations because they could jeopardize success of

afosaid companies on the long term. Furthermore, in the light of obtained findings, companies' success in transformation from organizational silence into organizational soundness with respect to participative decisions, is important in terms of sustainability of organizational success. Companies' corporate performance could be enhanced by establishing more active and functioning system within their organizations which include their employees into these processes. It is believed that the present study would contribute into the relevant literature in this respect.

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