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AN EXPLANATION OF THE SILENCE ORGANIZATION AS THE MAIN OBSTACLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIZATION

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Abstract:

Today, there is no doubt that in many organizations, many employees refuse to provide their opinions and comments about the organizational problems. In fact, in many organizations there is a created climate, which often makes employees feel their opinion is not valued.

Organizational silence is a new phenomenon that is posed in the area of human resources and the theories of organizations. This concept is very remarkable in the organizations today and unfortunately no research has been done on this issue so far. In this paper, after familiarity with the organizational silence, other issue like organizational voice and organizational plateaus will be discussed.

One of the reasons of failure in plans and capability in achieving organizational goals is the lack of effective communication and lack of sharing information or, in other word, this phenomenon called organizational silence by authors. Organizational silence is employees' refusal in expressing their ideas, opinions and information on organizational difficulties. Organizational silence is a common phenomenon in most organizations. However, there are not widespread studies on this issue. Organizational silence is a new phenomenon in Iranian scientific and organizational communities and there is a limited literature on it. Although the current literature in the field of organization and management emphasizes on empowerment and create open communication channels, the results of studies show that many employees complain that their organizations do not support communication, information sharing and the explicit and implicit knowledge and all these could be a reason for failure in goals and objectives of managers in organizations.

Keywords: Organizational sound, Organizational silence, Employee Motive, Organizational policies

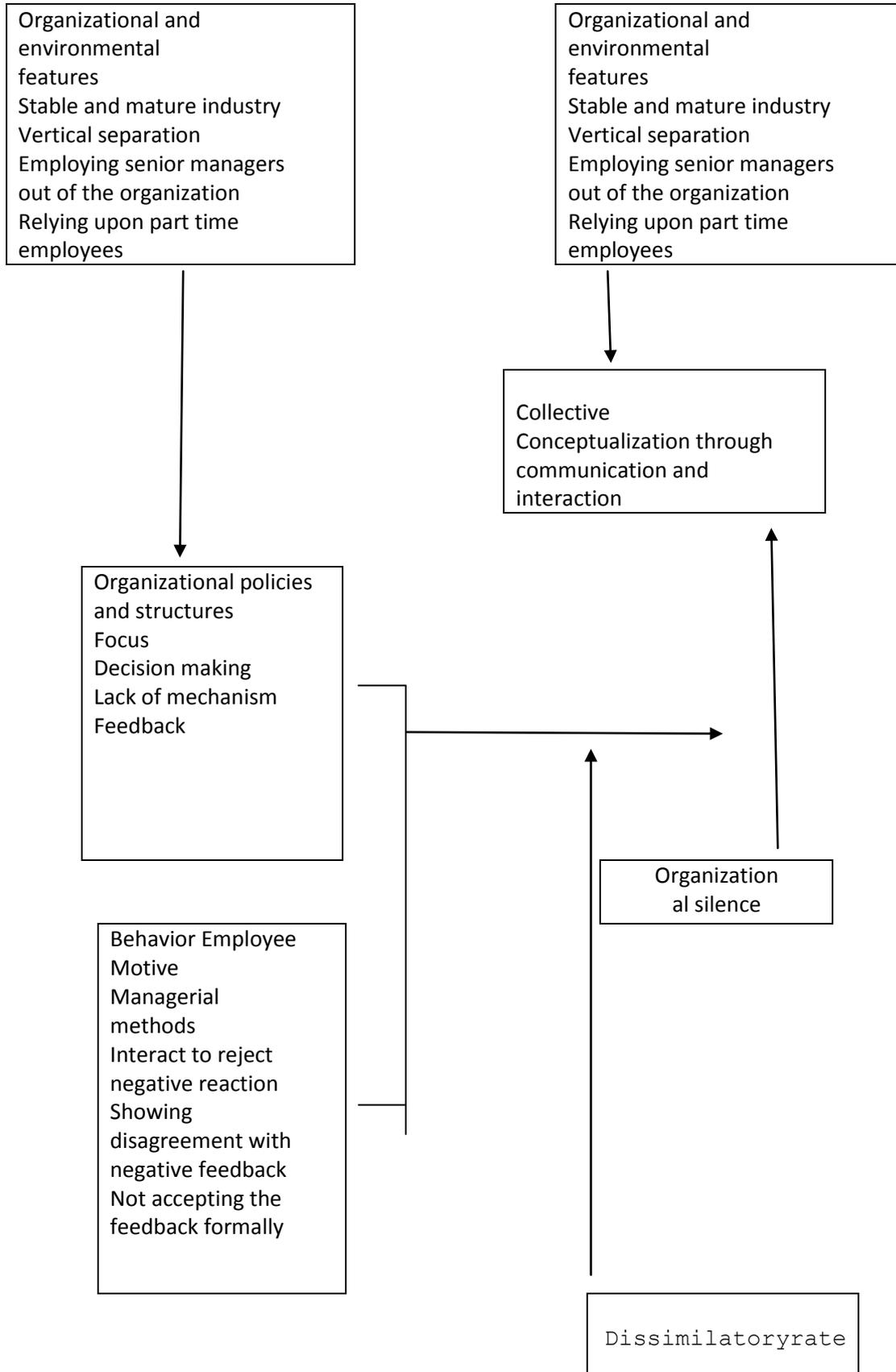
Introduction:

Today, organizations expect from the employees to take their responsibilities because competitions, high expectations of the clients and quality-based changes have increased. In the modern world, organizations try to hire people who encounter suitably with difficulties and emphasize on their beliefs. Although this research emphasizes on enabling channels and free relations, most of the employees believe that the organizations do not support their knowledge and relationships. The main barriers on our programs are the lack of trust and organizational silence (Dimitris, & Vakola, 2007). This research is mainly aimed to investigate the factors, which affect the obligations of the employees and organizational silence. In fact, such system involves with negative impacts of silence on organizational decision making and change processes are enforced (Danayifard & Panahi, 2010).

Organizational silence (OS), which is an important problem in organisations, can be described as an employee’s absence from activities that provide progress for the organisation, refrainment from sharing opinions and concerns and deliberately not sharing innovative opinions. Organizational silence may lead to lack of positive feedback, lack of information and organization may suffer from ineffective organizational process (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Concerning the importance of organizational sound in decision makings, developing organizational operations, making decisions effective and so on, we are looking for illuminating the status of organizational silence among the employees of Qom selected organizations in present study. Today, organizations increasingly need employees who are creative and innovative, talk about different problems and are responsible (Quinn & Spritzer, 1997). When a system fosters organizational silence, such climate in the organization would persuade statements. Hence such system enters a process which cannot realize its own goals properly and attempt to learn for experiences. In fact, such system is captured in a way that negative impact by silence on organizational decision making and change processes are fostered (Duncon and Weiss, 1997). In these review definitions, effects of silence on organization and employees, and one of the important models of organizational silence will be discussed.

Organizational sound	Organizational silence
There are managers with different backgrounds in the Organization.	There are managers with financial or economic background in the organization
Management values liberal and democratic decision making.	Managers value homogeneity and hierarchy
There is low acceptance of control by employees and low Emphasis on efficiency.	There are huge differences between management and employees in terms of age and gender.
Management designates decision making.	Management’s emphasis is on control and efficiency.

In terms of resources, the organization is rich	Organizational structure centralizes decision making.
Management encourages receiving feedback from Subordinates.	Management responses feedback negatively.
Organization performs its jobs through its staff.	Organization is highly relied upon contracted manpower.



Employee Motive	Behavior
Disengaged Behavior Based on Resignation Feeling unable to make a difference	Acquiescence Silence Examples : Withholding ideas based on resignation Keeping opinions to self-due to low self-efficacy to make a difference
Self-Protective Behavior Based on Fear Feeling afraid and personally at risk	Defensive Silence Examples: Withholding information on problems based on fear Omitting facts to protect the self
Other-Oriented Behavior Based on Cooperation Feeling cooperative and altruistic	Prosaically Silence Examples: Withholding confidential information based on cooperation Protecting proprietary knowledge to benefit the organization

Organizational Silence

Pinder and Harlos (2001) define Organizational Silence as “staff refusal of stating behavioral, cognitive and effective assessment about the situation of the organization”. Morrison and Milliken (2007) consider organizational silence as a social phenomenon in which the staffs refuse to make their comments and express their concerns about organizational problems. Silence is affected by many organizational features including decision -making processes, culture management processes and employees' perceptions are factors affecting the silence Presenting ideas (Organizational Voice) or refusing to present them (Organizational Silence) may seem two contrasting activities from the behavioral point of view, since „silence“ implies that one do not intend to Speak, while „voice“ means presenting the existing problems and issues. These three types of motivation lead to the three following types of silence or voice: obedient silence, defensive silence, altruistic silence. Being silent, keeping one's tongue, being calm, all mean silence in a general sense. In etymology, it can be easily understood. but within organizations this must be a concept beyond simple passivity which means that silence can have a message. In fact, silence is something more than nothing (Afkhani Ardakani & Khalili Sadr Abad, 1391)/ despite the fact that organizational silence has been a common phenomenon among the workers, it can be still an unknown and scientifically

uninvestigated topic (Zarei et al.,2011). Pinder and Harlows (2006) define organizations silence as refraining from expressing personal behavioral cognitive and effective evaluations of there alities of an organization. Morrison and Milikan also define it as a social phenomenon in which the working staffs do not speak about the concerns and ideas and the problems. Silence is affected by several organizational features including decision-making, cultural management process, and the workers' perception of the feature crucial to silence. Expression of ideas (organizational voice) or refraining from presenting them (organizational silence) can seem very different from a behavior alpoint of view in that silence means not speaking and voice means speaking about the events and the existing problems in an organization. But the truth is that silence is not necessarily something against the voice. In fact the difference between the two is not in speaking but in the motives among the individuals in remaining silent. There are three kinds of concepts related to silence and voice: disengaged behavior on the basis of being passive and inactive, self-protective behavior and resignation from fear and altruistic behaviors for having interest in others and trying to share opportunities with them (Nasr Esfahani & Aghabapoor Dehkurdi, 2011). As interaction is the key to cure many organizational problems, the organizational silence is on the contrary the cause of many problems. Obviously, no employee is interested in being silent forever, what makes them be silent is the inappropriate culture and behavior among the leaders and managers that mostly affect these phenomena (Samadi, 2012). Henricson and Daithon (2001) define the organizational silence as a collective behavior. Van Dein et al (2000) also define it as conscious refrain from expressing ideas, information, and opinions on the job. In Morrison and Milikan (2011) terminology when most of the members of an organization remain silent about the problems it can turn into a group behavior and this is called organizational silence (Khanifer et al., 2012). Organizational silence refers to a collective phenomenon about the expression of ideas in response to serious issues which the organization has encountered. Morrison and Milikansay that silence is a powerful element in the organization that has not been considered in an appropriate way (Poursadegh, 2014). Knowing that voice and organizational silence are organizational behaviors and good strategic communication sources, it is often thought that individuals have little connections in this case with the outside(Moasa Horia, 2013). In fact organizational silence is a phenomenon in which the workers consciously decide not to speak about the matters in an organization for various reasons. Silence is an important indicator of disease, stress, oldness, depression or fear in an institute and managers must quickly identify its cause and eliminate it. Failing to pay attention to this matter can have detrimental

effects and can even mean death for the organization (Naderizadeh, 2014). The worse kind of organizational silence appears when the workers seem apparently very active but are in fact refraining from giving expert and helpful comments and do and say what the authorities want them to. The experts in the management science call this phenomenon dangerous or harmful. The term 'organizational silence' is used to refer to the subjects that are not to be discussed from the perspective of the working staffs. These can topics like the performance of the managers, their colleagues, bad news, quarrels, personnel problems, etc. In other words, the personnel in a silent organization think that it is useless to speak about these issues and remain silent. This phenomenon means a lack of comments from the employees in serious issues because of fear of punishment, receiving no attention and rewards for the ideas, the lack of belief in managers about the employees, one-sidedness or fear for endangering one's professional status. It is an inauspicious phenomenon that can act as a blockage to the creativity, positive changes, continual improvement, appropriate feedbacks, and organizational management of knowledge, correcting the organizational errors, the employees' internal satisfaction, and powerful decisions without asking the employees' opinions. This makes the workers get used to the current situation and experience downfall and recession (Ghasemi & Samimi Sadeh, 2013). Silence does not just mean not speaking; rather, it means being absent, not writing, having negative outlooks, not listening, and indifference. In fact, the working members prefer to be silent when they know that they will oppose their opinions (Deniznevin et al., 2013).

Pinder and Harlos (2001) defined silence as the absence of voice as it has its own form of communication, involving a range of cognitions, Emotions or intentions such as objection or endorsement. Additionally, they recognized that the phenomenon of employee silence might take on Different meanings depending on its underlying motives. Van Dyne, Ang and Botero conceptualized organizational silence as a multi-dimensional construct and present three types of silence, acquiescent silence, defensive silence and prosocial silence. Acquiescent silence is described as an intentionally passive silent behavior. Defensive silence is described as deliberate omission of work related information based on fear of reprisal. Prosocial silence is withholding of work related information for the benefit of others including the organization (Bogosian, 2012).

Literature Review:

It is often believed that the employees do not have suitable experience in perceiving main issues. They do not authority over the issues and their behavior can only increase the difficulties and Negative attitudes toward the partnership. Increasingly, the managers believe that the employees are Encouraged to speak plainly. On the other

hand, they use various methods to silence the opposite Employees (Dimitris & Vakola, 2007). There is a direct relationship between the organizational Silence and organizational decision–makings but organizational silence generally limits the Effectiveness of organizational decision makings. Organizational silence effects on the development of the organization because it prevents the negative feedbacks by influence of which the organization Is not able to examine and correct the errors (Miller, 1972). It is an art to teach the employees how to Say "no". These negative behaviors lead to organizational silence, so that the employees neglect them (Cox, 1993). Some people believe that some of the managers work in stressful environments and they cannot change their conditions, which effects on the organizational silence. Therefore, this condition increases the managers' dissatisfaction. The organizations, which accept this trust, are regarded as the prosperous organizations (Dimitris & Vakola, 2007).Morrison and Milliken see organizational silence as a “collective” phenomenon. They ground the question “why silence?” in the sociology of the workplace, not the psychology of individual workers (Maria, 2006: 226). They proposed that when most members of organizations choose to keep silent about organizational matters, silence becomes a collective behavior, which is referred to as organizational silence (Dan et al., 200 9: 1647).

Actually, organizational silence is an inefficient organizational process that wastes cost and efforts and can take various forms, such as collection silence in meetings, low levels of participation in suggestion schemes, low levels of collective voice and so forth (Shojaie et al., 2011). So employee silence refers to situations where employees withhold information that might be useful to the organization to which they are a part of whether intentionally or unintentionally. This can happen if employees do not speak up to a supervisor or manager (Subra Tangirala, 2008).

Studies by Brinsfield (2009) suggest that employees’ silence is prevailing, multidimensional and measurable phenomenon which relates to other organizational phenomena significantly (Zehir & Erdogan, 2011). Literature review indicates that the factors which generate organizational silence include: organizational structure, fear of negative e feedback, organizational and environmental variables, organizational culture and climate, consistency with general beliefs, decision making processes, culture management process and employees; conceptions (Greenberg et al, 2009, Henriksen et al, 2006, Dimitris et al, 2007). 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). In their research, Zarei Matin (2011) concluded that silence require not speaking while voice requires expressing the problems and

difficulties. The reality is that silence is necessarily a phenomenon not in contradictory to organizational voice. In fact, the difference between silence and voice is not is speaking; rather, it is in the motivation of people in refusing to provide their ideas. In their own studies, authors have concluded that a factor which facilitates organizational silence is management's fear of receiving negative feedback from subordinates. There are well – established observations on the fact that people usually fear of providing or receiving negative feedbacks whether about themselves or the activities related to them (Carver, et al, 1985, Meyer & Stark, 1982, Swann & Read, 1981).

Conclusion:

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. If employees’ lips are sealed, knowledge generation engine will stop working. When human resources as the most important organizational capital silence, management must feel a great risk. It suggested that the communication is the key to an organization's success, participative management, and proposed system and eventually prepares a safe and secure climate to receive the employees idea and suggestions.

Regarding the achieved results, the followings are suggested:

- 1- To present a suitable rewarding system for creative ideas,
- 2- To establish the training workshops in order to train the relational skills to the managers and the supervisors,
- 3- To regulate some rules for supporting the employees' attitudes,
- 4- To make decisions about the work groups of the organizations,
- 5- To change the organizational cultures related to the learning organizations and organizational learning,
- 6- To establish some programs in order to improve the human resource management for training skills of decision – making.
- 7- Enhancing team working in Qom organizations through emphasizing on avoiding collective thinking;
- 8- creating a trusted and goodwill climate by management in order to make better and more efficient communications between employees and managers/supervisors;
- 9- Creating the feeling of accountability to organization among employees by avoiding personal interests;

10- Establishing a flat structure and avoiding hierarchical structures and lack of concentration in decision making.

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