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The Relationship between Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Organizational Silence

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to empirically investigate the effect of organizational silence dimensions on organizational citizenship behaviours. This study considers organizational silence as a multidimensional construct and compares the effects of these dimensions on organizational citizenship behaviours. The research sample formed by 462 full time employees of one multinational private company which is headquartered in Istanbul. The data was provided by a questionnaire which was structured according to the research questions. Regression was performed to test our hypothesized model. On the basis of using regression, we found that: i) acquiescent silence and defensive silence have a negative effect on organizational citizenship behavior, ii) prosocial silence has a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior.

Keywords: Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Organizational Silence

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1. Introduction

Many studies have noted social functionality and contribution of helping behaviors, volunteering and altruism towards individuals, groups or institutes. In recent decades this fields has also received considerable attention in management studies and added new insight into our understanding of organizations, and the workplace in the modern societies. Hence, beyond its general social relevancy, these altruistic and helping behaviors have proven to have interdisciplinary meanings (Gadot, 2006: 77).

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) are discretionary behaviors on the part of an employee that directly promote the effective functioning of an organization, without necessarily influencing an employee's productivity. Organ (1997) stated that, although various descriptions of specific dimension underlying the concept of OCB abound, the overall construct is generally referred to as those sets of individual behaviors that contribute to the social and psychological context in which the task performance of a job must function (Todd, Kent, 2006: 253).

Since the development of the concept, much research has been focused to explore the antecedents of OCB. The most research on OCB has related to individual antecedents of OCB (Bateman and Organ, 1983, Organ and Lingl, 1995; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986; Moorman, et al., 1993; Williams and Anderson, 1991; Paille, 2011) and contextual antecedents of OCB (Podsakoff & McKenzei, 1995; Randall, et all, 1999; Chu, Lee, Hsu, 2006; Padsokoff, et al., 1990, Truckenbrodt, 2000; Zellars, et al, 2002; Somech, Drach-Zahavy, 2004; Feather and Rauter, 2004). Because OCB has become a major research topic in the last decade, the lack of research associating organizational silence and OCB is surprising. Recently, Bolino and Turnley (2005:740) pointed out that today "the ideal worker is an employee who does not only demonstrates high levels of task performance, but also engages in high levels of contextual performance or OCB as well (Paille, 2011: 2). According to researches (Podsakoff, et al., 2000), OCB increases organizational efficiency by increasing production, improving the quality of service provided, raising client satisfaction or decreasing customer complaints.

Organizational silence is a new concept in the literature and was first introduced in the 2000 by Morrison and Milliken. While Morrison and Milliken (2000: 706) defined the organizational silence as "a collective phenomenon that impedes the development of a hazard and a pluralistic organization that hinder organizational change and development", Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008: 39) defined it as "not to share with others, and to keep themselves for the employees of businesses or organizations important situations, issues or events". In the context of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), organizational silence is an important organizational behavior issues that arise in lack of having the relationship equitable social change.

Although employees who are the most reliable source of data and information in the organization (Clapham and Cooper, 2005: 307), it is seen that employees generally tend not to express their ideas, views or feedback consciously. While it is accepted that employees are participating to organizational activities voluntarily on the basis of organizational citizenship behavior, organizational silence behavior theory says that employees avoid revealing their views and ideas with a conscious decision. Accordingly, the employees who are in the behavior of organizational silence also has lower tendency for organizational citizenship behavior.

Within this framework it is possible to say that both organizational silence and organizational citizenship behavior are very important subjects for organizations to reach desired objectives. In this context, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and organizational silence. According to this purpose, first of all, conceptual framework will be discussed in the subsequent section and after that, methodology of the study will be discussed. This study reveals the causes and the results of these variables and differentiates with using organizational citizenship behavior in a one dimension and investigates the relationship between this dimension and organizational silence.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses
2.1. Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

According to Organ (1988) OCB represents individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization. By discretionary, we mean that the behavior is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description that is the clearly specifiable terms of the person's employment contract with the organization; the behavior is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable. A key component of the OCB definition is that omission of the OCBs is not punishable (Zellars, et al., 2002: 1068).

Although there is no clear consensus with the literature on the number of dimensions of OCBs, Organ (1988) and other studies (Padsakoff and MacKenzei, 1994; Padsakoff et al, 1997; Farth, et al.,, 2004) have proposed a variety