

Investigation of Relationship between Organizational Health and Organizational Silence in Branches of Islamic Azad University in Southern Khorasan Province

Mahdi Mahmoodzadeh^{1*}, Mohammad Mohammadi², Seyedeh Somayeh Ramazani³

¹ Department of Business Management, Birjand Branch, Islamic Azad University, Birjand, Iran.

² Department of Management, Birjand Branch, Islamic Azad University, Birjand, Iran.

³ Department of Psychology, Center of Province Health, Medical Sciences University, Birjand, Iran.

Received: January 7, 2015

Accepted: March 12, 2015

ABSTRACT

The present research aims to investigate the relationship between dimensions of organizational health and organizational silence in an academic environment. The statistical population of the research included all employees of Islamic Azad University branches in Birjand, Tabas and Ferdows cities. A questionnaire was used for collection of data. The questionnaires were distributed among respondents by means of random sampling method. Correlation coefficient was used for data analysis. Results showed that relationships between institutional integrity, consideration, support and scientific emphasis with organizational silence were negative and significant. However, relationship between principal influence, structuring and spirit with organizational silence was not significant. Support dimension ($r=-0.351$) has the greatest negative relationship with organizational silence.

KEYWORDS: organizational health, organizational silence, acquiescent silent, defensive silence, prosocial silence

INTRODUCTION

Universities are the base of social, economic, cultural and political development of any society. Universities receive the highest budget after defensive industries and are considered as growth industry. Since a large part of educational activities are done in universities, they have special social places. Universities will be able to fulfill their duties in case they are healthy and dynamic organizations. Today, educational organizations have been developed worldwide due to development of human sciences and technologies and industrial advancements. One of the important indices of growth in any society is the range of tasks which are taken on by educational system (Safi, 2004).

Mayers believes that organizational health refers to compatibility with environment and development of organizational ability for more consistency and is dependent on organizational survival in its environment (Hovi and Miskel, 2004). Hertzberg believes that factors like employees' perceptions and attitudes, method of affairs management, organizational policies, nature of supervision, working security, working conditions, status and position, level of salary and wage, establishment of mutual relationships, supervisors, colleagues and subordinates and personal life of employees are necessary for organizational health. He also believes that absence of these factors may dissatisfy employees in a way that they leave the organization and endanger organizational health. Based on Amichiel's viewpoint (2011), effective organizations are important means of achieving progress and development in a society. Effective organizations are healthy as well as having other conditions (Shok Kon, 2004). Psychological health is affected by many factors. Society and culture are important in prevention of psychological health because psychological health is something beyond absence of disease in which the individual enjoys his or her life and does not have abnormal behavior and thoughts and is able to establish good relationship with his or her environment and has generally appropriate behavior. Such an individual has a healthy body and happy life. Since psychological health is an emergent need, it seems necessary to invest in psychological and physical health. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to social factors which are necessary for social and individual psychological health. Usually, employees in an organization have constructive ideas which can help improve organizational performance. These functions indicate "organizational voice". Some employees express their ideas but some others remain silent (Alvani and Danayefard, 2011). Morrison and Millikan (2000) consider organizational silence as a social phenomenon in which employees refrain from expression of their worries and ideas about organizational problems (Morrison and Millikan, 2000). Therefore, recognition of organizational health state is not only important in terms of understanding of working conditions and dynamism but also helps predict organizational effectiveness, employees' working

progress, organizational commitment and psychological health of employees and helps employees with trusting in each other to express their persona and organizational worries and can have an important role in employees' success. Therefore, the researcher tries to answer the question: is there any significant relationship between organizational silence and organizational health of employees and members of academic boards of Islamic Azad universities in Southern Khorasan province?

THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Organizational health

The word "health" means "wellbeing, happiness, security, honesty, abstinence, prosperity, peace and reconciliation (Ensafpour, 1994). In general belief, it means absence of disease and failure in an organism (living creature). "In positive health state, an organism fulfills its duties and also grows. self-awareness is a similar and close concept which is used in psychotherapy and teaching of human relations. Maslaw believes that self-awareness is the desire for achieving perfection. In self-awareness, a person's (an organization's) potential talents are developed and fulfilled. Both positive health and self-awareness have received a lot of attention by researchers in behavioral sciences domain (Alaghe band, 1999). Bynyard (1996) criticized the definition of health based on complete state of biological, social and psychological comfort. He believes that achieving that state is very difficult in action. On the other hand, this definition ignores widespread social, economic and political factors which may be effective in health. This definition also dictates that individuals who are not complete are not (necessarily) healthy. When investigating organizational health, the question is that "whether we can use health concept which applies to living creatures for organizations?" organizational health approach has many scientific advantages in terms of understanding of organizations' dynamism and research into their improvement (Alaghe band, 1999). Moreover, an organization can be seen as a living creature when it is viewed in a systematic approach which is changing. Development of civilization and social life moved humans towards collective life in order to meet their needs and try to reach common goals. Humans collections caused maximum personal satisfaction with normal effort. Consequently, group activities formed and resulted in emergence of organizations. An organization always tries to solve its problems, either environmental or intra-organizational. Recognition of a problem and its dimensions are necessary for solving the problem. A healthy organization is one which is able to reach its human goals and intentions, identify its barrier and remove them. A healthy organization is realistic with respect to the situations. It must have flexibility and be able to use its resources to deal with problems.

Organizational health concept

The term organizational health was first used by Miles in 1969 in investigation of organizational atmosphere of schools. From Miles opinion (1969), organizational health refers to situation beyond short-term organizational effectiveness and refers to a set of relatively steady characteristics and means: an organization's survival in its environment, compatibility with the environment and development of organizational ability for higher compatibility. This term was first used for explanation of sustainability and survival of organization. It was defined by Parsones, Byls & Sales (1953), Hoy and Tarter (1997) and Hoy and Miskel (1991) as "an organization's ability to become compatible with its environment, creation of coordination among organizational members and achieving the targets.

Organizational health has 7 dimensions: institutional integrity, principal influence, consideration, structuring, support, spirit and scientific emphasis. These 7 dimensions were used in the present research and have been defined in the following table.

Table 1. dimensions of organizational health

references	definitions	variable	row
Miles, 1969	Refers to an organization's ability to adapt to environment and compatibility by means of methods which maintain the health of organizational educational program	institutional integrity	1
Miles, 1996	It refers to an employees' ability to influence supervisors' actions. An influencing manager is convincing and works with his or her boss effectively but they are independent to think and take action	principal influence	2
Miles, 1969	It shows a behavior or manager which is friendly, supportive, open and collaborative.	consideration	3
Miles, 1969	It refers to a behavior of the manager which is dutiful and success-oriented. The manager opens his expectations for employees and protects exact performance standards.	structuring	4
Hoy & Fedman, 1987	It refers to an organization which has necessary materials and instruments and other additional things can be obtained easily.	support	5
Hoy & Fedman, 1987	It refers to sense of certainty, trust, cooperation and friendship which exists among employees. Employees have good feelings towards each other and feel they do their works well.	spirit	6
Hoy & Fedman, 1987	It refers to an organization's emphasis on learning. High scientific goals have been set for employees which are also achievable. Learning environment is serious and managers trust in employees' ability to succeed in learning.	scientific emphasis	7

Organizational silence

Usually, individuals have ideas, opinions and information for presenting constructive methods in improvement of their organizational performance. These functions refer to a concept called: "organizational voice". Some individuals express their ideas and some others remain silent and do not express their opinions (Danayeeferd et al, 2011). Expression of ideas (organizational voice) or refraining from expressing them (organizational silence) may seem two separate activities in behavioral terms because silence involves not speaking while voice requires expression of problems in an organization. However, silence is not necessarily a phenomenon against organizational voice. In fact, difference between silence and voice is not only the speaking but is related to individuals' motivation for refraining from giving data, ideas and opinions (ZareiMatin et al, 2011). Therefore, although organizational silence refers to absence of expression of ideas and information by employees but the nature of silence is different considering the motivation of the employee. Sometimes, silence can be due to an individual's yielding to conditions either due to fear and presence of conservative behaviors and sometimes due to creation of opportunity for others and expression of their ideas. Considering the three types of silence and voice proposed in figure and table 1, we describe these two concepts. Acquiescent silence: when most individuals call a person as a silent person, they mean they do not establish relationship actively (Crant, 2000). Silence arisen from this kind of behavior is called acquiescent and refers to refraining from expression of ideas, information or opinions based on yielding to conditions and accepting the existing conditions. Therefore, acquiescent indicates anevasive and passive behavior rather than an active one (pinder and Harlos, 2001). Individuals who have such a kind of silence have the following features: weak participation, laziness, negligence, ignorance and being stopped. Pinder and Harlos considered this kind of silence as a factor in contrast with voice which is usually a form of passive acceptance of the present situation. Individuals who have such a kind of silence yield to the existing conditions and do not tend to try to talk or participate to change the existing conditions. Defensive silence: fear from presentation of information is the motivation for this kind of silence. In fact, individuals may refrain from presentation of information and ideas due to protection from their existing situation and conditions (self-protection motivation). Defensive silence is an intentional and non-passive behavior which is used to protect oneself against external threats. However, this kind of silence is non-passive, contrary to acquiescent and involves more awareness of different choices of decision-making and refraining from presenting ideas, information and opinions as the best strategy in appropriate time. Defensive silence is similar to a state in which individuals avoid spread of bad news due to upsetting individuals or creation of negative outcomes for the messenger person (Avery & Quinones, 2002). prosocial silence: prosocial silence is based upon literature of organizational citizenship behavior and means refraining from expression of ideas, information or opinions which are related to work in order to benefit other individuals of the organization and based upon altruistic, collaborative and cooperative motivations. Altruistic silence is intentional and non-passive which is basically concentrated and emphasized on others. Just like organizational citizenship behavior, altruistic silence us a rational and insightful behavior which cannot be implemented via organizational orders and commands (podsakoff and MacKenzie, 2003).

Research hypotheses

1. there is a significant relationship between institutional integrity (one of the dimensions of organizational health) and organizational silence in employees.
2. there is a significant relationship between principal influence (one of the dimensions of organizational health) and organizational silence in employees.
3. there is a significant relationship between consideration (one of the dimensions of organizational health) and organizational silence in employees.
4. there is a significant relationship between structuring (one of the dimensions of organizational health) and organizational silence in employees.
5. there is a significant relationship between support (one of the dimensions of organizational health) and organizational silence in employees.
6. there is a significant relationship between spirit (one of the dimensions of organizational health) and organizational silence in employees.
7. there is a significant relationship between scientific emphasis (one of the dimensions of organizational health) and organizational silence in employees.

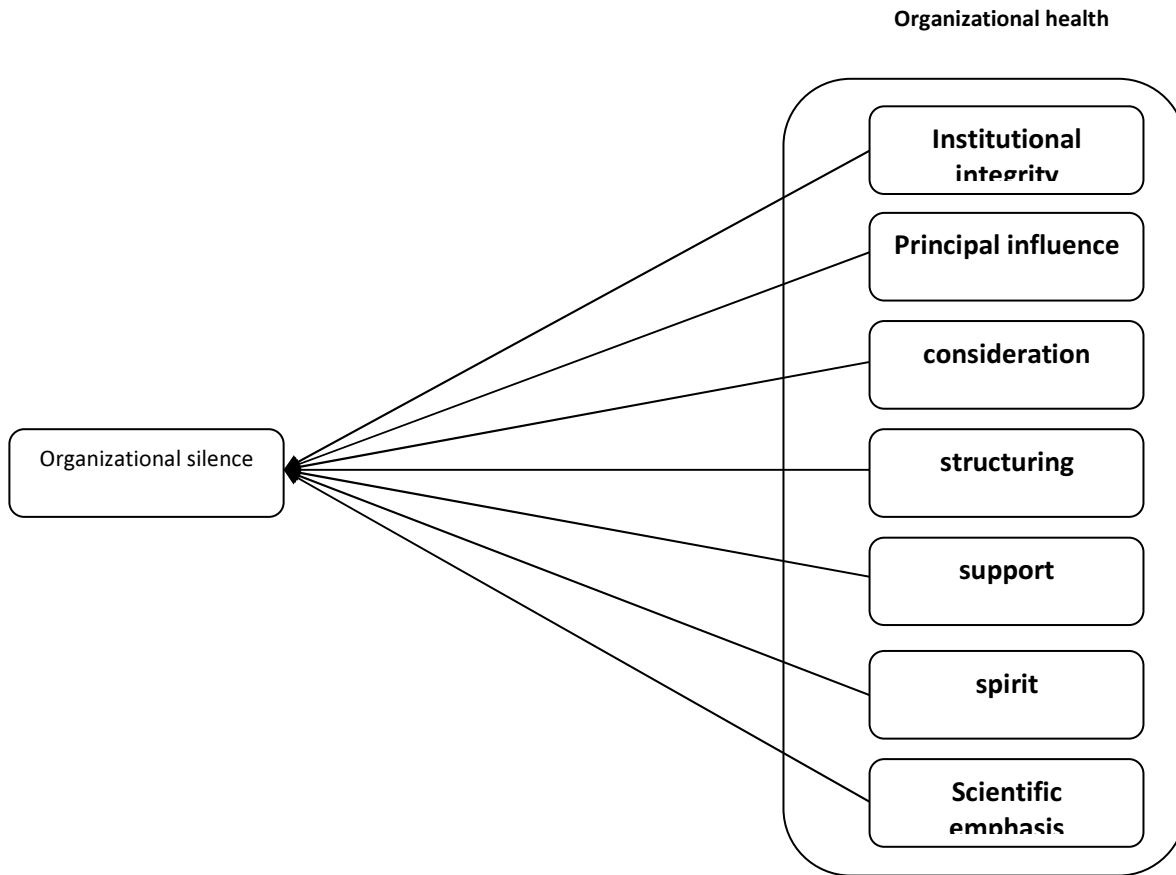


Figure 1: research conceptual model

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire was used for collection of data in this research. The questions were based on 5-point Likert scale (from completely disagree to completely agree). The questions of the questionnaire were extracted from previous studies (Miles, 1996 & Hoy & Fedman, 1987). In order to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, 25 questionnaires were pretested before being distributed in the statistical population. Chronbach's alpha was used for reliability measurement and its results have been summarized in table 2.

Table 2: reliability of the questionnaire

	Number of questions	Cronbach's alpha
Organizational health	36	0.794
Organizational silence	15	0.843

As it can be seen in table above, Cronbach's alpha for both variables is above 0.7. Therefore, the questionnaire has enough reliability for distribution among population members.

The sample

In the present research, Azad University branches in Birjand, Tabas and Ferdows cities were used for data collection considering the research goal which is to investigate relationship between organizational silence and health. The questionnaires were distributed among 100 employees of the aforementioned universities randomly over

In the subsequent sentences, we deal with research hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: the calculated correlation coefficient for investigation of relationship between institutional integrity and organizational silence is equal to -0.346 and its significance value is equal to 0.001. The calculated correlation coefficient indicated presence of a negative relationship between two variables and this relationship is also significant. Therefore, the first hypothesis is supported.

Hypothesis 2: the calculated correlation coefficient for investigation of relationship between principal influence and organizational silence is equal to -0.165 and its significance value is equal to 0.126. Considering the calculated significance number, there is no relationship between the two variables.

Hypothesis 3: the calculated correlation coefficient for investigation of relationship between consideration and organizational silence is equal to -0.221 and its significance value is equal to 0.039. The calculated correlation coefficient indicated presence of a negative relationship between the two variables and this relationship is also significant. Therefore, the third hypothesis is supported.

Hypothesis 4: the calculated correlation coefficient for investigation of relationship between structuring and organizational silence is equal to -0.142 and its significance value is equal to 0.190. Considering the calculated significance number, there is no relationship between the two variables.

Hypothesis 5: the calculated correlation coefficient for investigation of relationship between support and organizational silence is equal to -0.351 and its significance value is equal to 0.001. The calculated correlation coefficient indicated presence of a negative relationship between the two variables and this relationship is also significant. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is supported.

Hypothesis 6: the calculated correlation coefficient for investigation of relationship between spirit and organizational silence is equal to -0.131 and its significance value is equal to 0.230. Considering the calculated significance number, there is no relationship between the two variables.

Hypothesis 7: the calculated correlation coefficient for investigation of relationship between scientific emphasis and organizational silence is equal to -0.347 and its significance value is equal to 0.001. The calculated correlation coefficient indicated presence of a negative relationship between the two variables and this relationship is also significant. Therefore, the seventh hypothesis is supported. Table 5 indicates summary of the results of research hypotheses.

hypothesis	Correlation coefficient	Significance number	conclusion
Organizational silence—institutional integrity	-.346	0.001	supported
Organizational silence---principal influence	-0.165	0.126	Not supported
Organizational silence-consideration	-.221	0.039	supported
Organizational silence--structuring	-0.142	0.19	Not supported
Organizational silence---support	-.351	0.001	supported
Organizational silence---spirit	0.131	0.23	Not supported
Organizational silence---scientific emphasis	-.347	0.001	supported

CONCLUSION

The present research aimed to investigate relationship between dimensions of organizational silence and organizational health in an academic environment. Correlation coefficient was used for investigation of relationship between the two variables. Data analysis showed that relationships between dimensions of institutional integrity, consideration, support and scientific emphasis with organizational silence were significant and negative. In other words, as these dimensions increase, employees have higher tendencies to present ideas, state problems and so on. On the other hand, relationships between principal influence, structuring and spirit with organizational silence were not significant. Support dimension ($r=-0.351$) has the strongest relationship with organizational silence. Considering the results of the research, the following recommendations are presented to reduce organizational silence:

- * implementation of appropriate reward system for creative ideas and recommendations;
- * formation of educational workshops for improving communications skills in managers and supervisors;
- * preparation of directions for supporting employees' ideas and encouragement of them to express their ideas;
- * making group decisions permanent and caring about working groups and committees in organizations;
- * changing organizations' culture to improve organizational learning and create learning organizations.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank Islamic Azad University, Birjand branch, for supporting this research.

REFERENCES

- Alaghe Band, Ali, school organizational health, quarterly of management in educational system, number 21, spring 2009, p 14.
- Alvani, Mehdi and DanayeeFard (2011), speeches on the philosophy of public organizations theories, Tehran: Saffarpublishations
- Avery, D. R., & Quiñones, M. A. (2002). Disentangling the effects of voice: the incremental roles of opportunity, behavior, and instrumentality in predicting procedural fairness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(1), 81.
- DanayeeFard, Hasan and Panahi, Belal (2011). Analysis of occupational approaches of employees in public organizations, description of organizational silence atmosphere and organizational silence behavior. *journal of change management*, second year, number 3, first half of 2010.
- Ensafpour, Gholam Reza (1994), complete Persian ictionary, Tehran.
- Hoy and Miskel (2008), Theory, research and action in educational management, (translated by Seyyed Abbas Zadeh, Mir Mohammad), second volume, Urmia: Anzali publications, pp: 236-263.
- Hoy, W. K., & Fedman, J. A. (1987). Organizational Health: The Concept and Its Measure. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 20(4), 30-37.
- Miles, M. B. (1969). Planned change and organizational health: figure and ground. In F. D. carver & T. J. sergiovanni (Eds), *organizations and human behavior* (PP. 375-391) New York MCGraw-Hill.
- Morrison, E. W., & Milliken, F. J. (2000). Organizational silence: A barrier to change and development in a pluralistic world. *Academy of Management review*, 25(4), 706-725.
- Pinder, C. C., & Harlos, K. P. (2001). Employee silence: quiescence and acquiescence as responses to perceived injustice. *Research in personnel and human resources management*, 20, 331-370.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of applied psychology*, 88(5), 879
- Safi, Ahmad (2010), organization and management in education, Tehran: Arasbaran Publications. 17th printing.
- Shokrkon, Heidar (2004). People in organizations and context of organizational behavior, authored by: Trans, Armichael, Roshd Publications.
- ZareiMatin, Hasan; Taheri, Fatemeh and Sayyar, Abolghasem (2011). Organizational silence: concepts, causes and outcomes. *Quarterly of Iranian management sciences*, sixth year, number 21, spring 2011, pp: 77-104.