

Effect of Organizational Silence on Employees' Productivity

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Abstract

Productivity and development of any organization depends highly on the right application of human resources in the organization. One of the factors affecting productivity is organizational silence which has not been considered today. Since silence can have unfavorable consequences, identifying the factors and their relationship with other phenomena is important. Hence, this research tries to investigate the effect of organizational silence on human productivity. Statistical population is 25 personnel in Arak Tax Organization. Findings showed that organizational silence has a direct and negative effect on human productivity.

Keywords: Organizational silence, submissive silence, defensive silence, peaceful silence and productivity.

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Introduction

Achievement of goals in an organization depends on the proper understanding of issues, resources and facilities. There are many factors which determine the productivity in organizations. Among all, human resources play a key role and the effectiveness and efficiency of other factors are influenced by their behaviors and performances. The main reason of organization failure in achieving its goals is lack of human resources productivity.

Previously, productivity has been emphasized by scholars and researchers in different disciplines such as economics, industrial and organizational psychology, accounting and etc. that the various knowledge, experience and environmental fields and conditions contributed to different definitions of productivity in different science disciplines. In fact, productivity is an intellectual view which attempts to promote the current situations. Productivity is based on this opinion that human can do his duties better than before over the time (Latifian, 2013).

One of the main goals of any organizations is the improvement of productivity level. For this reason, identification of factors contributing to decrease of productivity is very important. One of the factors which affects the decrease of productivity is organizational silence. It is a new phenomenon in which employees hide their opinions about the organizational problems. Silence is a sign of organizational sickness and managers must track and remove its main reason unless it can lead to the organization failure and death.

Organizational silence is a phenomenon in which employees do not pay attention to issues such as illegal and unethical activities, legal standards and defeating persons and they do not show any reaction in this regard (Doustar et al, 2014). Organizational silence is a social phenomenon which emerges in an organizational level and it is influenced by many organizational features such as decision making processes, managerial processes, culture and employees' perceptions of factors affecting the behavior of silence (Dimitris & Vakola, 2007: 2).

Factors affecting the organizational silence includes: managerial factors (negative reaction of manager to comments, coercive leadership style, fear of employees from negative feedback to their comments, distrust and suspicion atmosphere), organizational factors (job inertia, centralized organizational structure and lack of upward feedback procedure), social factors (compliance with others, existence of group responsibility instead of personal responsibility and group thinking) and personal factors (preserving the current situation and pessimism to the manager) (Mokhtari et al. 2014).

When employees do not disclose their opinions organizational silence occurs but its nature depends on the employee's motive. Sometimes, silence can be due to the employee surrender to any conditions, or due to the fear and existence of conservative behaviors or due to the creation of opportunity for others to reveal their opinions (Tulubas and Celep, 2012). There are different kinds of organizational silence among which submissive silence, defensive silence, and peaceful silence can be pointed. Since silence can have unfavorable consequences, finding its factors and relating it with other organizational

phenomena is important. Thus, this research attempts to investigate the relationship between organizational silence and human resource productivity.

Theoretical foundations

In this section theoretical basics of productivity and then organizational silence will be stated.

Productivity

The word of productivity was used by Quizny in 1776 for the first time. Adam Smith discussed about the work productivity, specialization for profit increase, reduction of fatigue in 1776. He pointed to the efficiency and specialization in relation to the productivity and considers the work division as a foundation of efficiency and productivity. Number of economists explored the productivity based on worker's physical quality, intellectual, spiritual, skill and stamina. But the revolution of productivity was initiated by Taylor in 1881 which can be regarded as history of formal and scientific studies in productivity management (Nazem, 2007).

Productivity shows the level of system success in applying resources to achieve goals. In this simple definition there several points:

1. Productivity is a systematic concept which can be applied for different entities, an individual, a machine, an organization, as adjective or national economy.
2. According to this definition productivity is description of system success in doing works and is an evaluative concept.
3. Definition of productivity consists of two concepts of efficiency (doing things right) and effectiveness (doing right things) (Kazemi, 2002).

Productivity is mostly used mistakenly by words such as efficiency and effectiveness. But it is far beyond these two concepts and efficiency and effectiveness are defined as the dimensions of productivity.

Efficiency is doing things right which is calculated by dividing real output by expected output and its objective is cost reduction and minimum usage of resources. Effectiveness is the degree of achievement to the predetermined goals in the organization. In other words, effectiveness represents the degree of conformity among the outputs and determined goals. In fact, productivity combination of efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, productivity is not only the quantity of output but also it is the quality of output and measure the goal achievement (Salimi, 2015).

Human resource productivity can be defined as the degree of output produced by work hours (Thomas, 1994). There are six views in definition of productivity: economists, accountants, physicists, industry engineers, organizational and industrial psychologists and at last managers. In managerial view, productivity is the degree of system success in utilization of resources to achieve goals. In fact, productivity includes both concepts of

efficiency and effectiveness (Prichard, 1992). Human resource productivity is the relation of human resource output to human resource input (Mirsepasi, 2013). Human resource productivity is the optimal usage of all talents and potential and realized abilities in order to increase the quantity and quality of production and reduction of waste in a way that workers live better beside their work (Saatchi, 2001).

Productivity makes a nation and an organization wealthy and enables an organization to pay high wages to its employees. Productivity enables managers of an organization to maintain capital return high. In the announcement of Productivity Center in Japan in 1955 the goals of productivity improvement is stated as: the maximum usage of physical resources, human resources and other factors in scientific methods in a way that productivity improvement lead to reduction of production cost, market expansion, employment increase and escalating the life level of nation as whole (Taleghani et al., 2011).

Hersey and Goldsmith presented the ACHIEVE Model about the factors affecting productivity. According to this model human resources productivity consists of seven dimensions as follows: Abilities (knowledge and skills), Clarity (perception or role imagination), Help (organizational support), Incentive (willing to work), Evaluation (Education and performance feedback), Validity (valid practices and employees' wages), Environment (environmental conformity) (Hersey and Goldsmith, 1980).

Organizational silence

In the literature, organizational silence has been surveyed as an active and purposive behavior. The silence concept in organizations has been considered as a sign of loyalty at first time. While, silence is basically regarded as a negative behavior since employees hide the knowledge about the organization deliberately (Çakıcı, 2010).

In new management approach, it has been accepted that the key of organization success is human resources. For organizations without qualified human resources it is impossible to offer high quality services and preserve their entity in the fields of competition and innovation (Erigüç et al., 2014). Today's, organizational environment requires the employees to be innovative, talk and undertake responsibilities. It is due to the more severe competition and more customer expectations. Concentration of quality shows the stable world of change. For surviving, organizations need employees who respond to environmental challenges, do not have fear to share their information and knowledge and can also maintain their beliefs and self-confidence (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005).

Organizational silence are categorized as follows:

Submissive silence: when the majority of individuals call a person silent they mean that he does not communicate actively. Silence resulted from such behavior is submissive silence and refers to refuse of idea, information or views presentation according to satisfaction of any conditions. Therefore, submissive silence shows a behavior which is inactive rather than active. The characteristics of individuals with such behavior are low participation, negligence and inactivity. This kind of silence is a factor against voice

which is a form of inactive acceptance of current situation. Individuals with such silence obey current situation and do not have willing to attempt for talking, participating and trying for changing the current situation.

Defensive silence: motive of such salience is the feelings of fear in individual to disclose information. In fact, sometimes it is possible that individuals refuse to present their idea, information and viewpoints in order to protect their situations and conditions. Defensive salience is a deliberate and inactive behavior of an individual to protect himself from foreign treats. But, this kind of silence, contrary to submissive silence, is more inactive and involves more understanding of available options for decision making and at the same time refusal of presenting ideas, information and views as the best strategy in the relevant time. Defensive silence resembles a state in which individuals refuse to release news due to the unfavorable consequences for the informer.

Peaceful silence: it is the refusal of stating ideas, information or views related to the work in order to benefit others in the organization based on peaceful motives, collaboration and cooperation. Peaceful silence is deliberate and inactive which is basically emphasizes on others. This kind of silence a logical and brilliant behavior as like as citizenship behaviors which can not be performed through orders and commands. This kind of silence as like as defensive silence is based on knowledge about alternatives in decision making and at the same time refusal of presenting ideas, information and views. But contrary to defensive silence, it is occurred by regarding others and paying attention to them instead of being due to the fear of personal negative consequences of idea presentation (Zarei Matin et al., 2011).

Organizational silence is very influential on organization. With silence, organizations do not make benefit out of employees' intellectual participations, the issues will not be identified, there would be no feedback, informations will not be attained directly, and the solutions will be inadequate for the problems. These are the impediments for effective decision making, development, change and performance improvement (Morrison & Milliken 2000; Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003).

Most of employees knows the facts about the organizational issues and problems but dare not to disclose. Organizations must know that this occurs, productivity, performance, job satisfaction and commitment in human capital will be happened (Mohammadi, 2016).

Boen and Blackmoon claimed that being silent in an organization limits the knowledge sharing, collective brainstorming, problem identification and also the possible solutions for the issues related to the work environment. This issue can lead to new problems which depends on its expansion and repetition. Being silent about the work problems leads to lack of knowledge transfer. Organizational silence affects the institutional knowledge, evolution and development too (Achieng, 2014).

Literature review

Seifzaedeh et al. (2016) showed that the more the employees' trust in organization, the less their silence and consequently effectiveness will be more and there is a negative and significant relationship between organizational silence and employee's effectiveness.

Yousefi Saeedabadi and Mohammadian (2015) indicated that organizational silence and its indicators (defensive, submissive and peaceful silence) has a significant relationship with organizational productivity, efficiency and effectiveness.

Mohaimeni (2013) stated that organizational silence and voice are effective on employees' performance by the mediating role of ethical leadership. Organizational silence has negative and organizational voice has a positive effects on employees' performance. Also, the ethical leadership is not at a favorable level.

Asgari et al. (2014) detected a significant relationship between two indicators of organizational silence and performance.

Bozorgnia Hosseini and Enayati (2014) claimed that there is a significant relationship between two variables organizational silence and employees' performance. Also, there was a significant and negative relationship between organizational silence and organizational dimensions such as role clarity, organizational support, employees' motivation, participation in decision making, employees' evaluation and organizational environment. But it was not significant in relation to employees' abilities. Multivariable regression showed that among the performance dimensions three dimensions of organizational environment, participation in decision making and role clarity has the power of anticipating the organizational silence.

Pourakbari Foumani (2016) presented that there is a significant relationship between organizational silence of managers and employees. There was not a significant variation between the managers and employees attitudes in relation to organizational silence. The results also showed that organizational silence and its indicators has the power of anticipating the organizational performance in two levels of managers and employees.

Mohammadi (2016) and Jalilian and Batmani (2015) showed the significance of organizational silence on job performance. Achieng (2014) concluded that organizational silence is the result of managerial beliefs and organizational structure and culture.

Research Hypotheses

H₁: organizational silence has effect on human resource productivity.

H_{1a}: submissive silence has effect on human resource productivity.

H_{1b}: defensive silence has effect on human resource productivity.

H_{1c}: peaceful silence has effect on human resource productivity.

Research methodology

This is an applied, descriptive and correlational research. Statistical population of research is all employees of Tax Organization in city of Arak. The sample size was equal to population and it is 25. Organizational silence was measured by Vakola & Bouradas (2005) and human resource productivity was evaluated by Goldsmith (1980). The face validity was confirmed by scholars' comments and construct validity by confirmatory factor analysis and the reliability was calculated by the Cranach's Alpha. The analysis of data and testing hypotheses were performed by structural equation modeling by applying Smart-Pls.

Findings

In structural equation modeling it is required to study the construct validity to specify the selected questions for evaluating are prompt. For this reason, confirmatory factor analysis is used. To test the research model average variance extracted and composite reliability is used. The AVE must be over 0.5 and CR must be over 0.7 for each construct to show the validity and reliability of the model. Table 1. Shows the validity of the model.

Table 1. AVE and CR Values

Variable	AVE	CR
Organizational silence	0.675	0.912
Human resource productivity	0.590	0.834

Testing the structural model

To test the research hypotheses it is required to test the structural model. Table 2. Summarizes the result of testing research hypotheses.

Table 2. Result of testing research model

Hypotheses	Path coefficient	T value	Result
H1	-0.797	15.114	Accept
H1a	-0.716	3.981	Accept
H1b	-0.258	1.962	Accept
H1c	0.020	0.123	Reject

Conclusion and discussion

The purpose of this study was the investigation of organizational silence on human resource productivity among the employees in Tax Organization in city of Arak. For this purpose, one major and three hypotheses were tested. The main hypothesis tested the effect of organizational silence on productivity and since T value was more than 1.96 it was accepted. But the coefficient path was -0.797 implying that this effect is negative. Thus, it can be inferred that organizational silence has a direct and negative effect on productivity. It means that the more the willing of individuals to organizational silence

and refusal of ideas and views, the less the individual and organizational productivity; because individuals refuse to disclose their opinions about the unfavorable current conditions and its solutions and become indifferent to the organization. The result of testing this hypothesis is consistent with findings of Yousefi Saeidabadi and Mohammadian (2015) which emphasized the direct and negative relationship between organizational silence and productivity.

The result of testing the effect of submissive silence on productivity was also supported since T value was more than 1.96 but the negative coefficient implies the inverse relationship between submissive silence and productivity. The other hypothesis also was found to be accepted as like as previous ones implying the direct and negative relationship between defensive silence and productivity. The last hypothesis which were testing the effect of peaceful silence on productivity was rejected since the T value was less than the 1.96 which could be due to the effect of intervening factors such as psychological characteristics and organizational culture dominant on the relevant population. Finally, according to the results of this research and negative effect of organizational silence on productivity levels and its negative effects it is recommended to organizational managers and policymakers to improve the dominant organizational culture and providing an environment to disclose opinions and also ensure their employees that ideas and opinions are welcomed and will not have any bad consequences for the individuals who criticize current situations and recommend honestly. Because one of the major factors of individuals' willing to organizational silence is fear of being fired and demotion and repent by the managers which contributes to the indifference toward the organization statute and attempt to maintain the current situation.

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