The Factors Affecting the Organizational Silence of the Nurses And The Other Clinical-care Providers in Turkey

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 25 September 2014
Accepted 25 November 2014
Available online 1 December 2014

Keywords:
Organizational Silence, Health Care, Nurse, Clinical Care.

ABSTRACT

The organizational silence of nurses, midwives, and health-care assistants who play a key role to establish the communication in the health-care team is relatively more significant when compared to other occupations. The results of organizational silence can be examined in organizational, individual and social scale. The purpose of this study is to find out the reasons of organizational silence and the relations among these reasons. In the scope of analysis, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, ANOVA analysis and Regression analyses have been used by using PASW 18.0 package software to analyze the data gathered from 256 nurses, midwives and health-care assistants in a university hospital. In this study it has been found out that the organizational silence reasons differ according to age, education status, working year, occupation, working department and gender. It has also been determined that the administrative and organizational reasons, the fears related to work, the lack of experience, the fear of isolation and the fear of disturbing relations differ according to demographical variables. Since there is generally not a compensation for a mistake in health-care service, to remove the damages of the reasons of organizational silence in health-care sector which is relatively more significant than the other sectors is possible when the necessary precautions are taken and the reasons are identified correctly. The relations, similarities and the differences among the sectors can be presented, if the organizational silence studies both in health-care sector and in different sectors are carried out more.

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INTRODUCTION

The results of organizational silence can be examined in organizational, individual and social scale. Organizational silence, which is a voluntary behaviour [1], creates the feelings of abasement, fear and stress in individuals and corrupts the relations and decreases the creativity and productivity [2, 3], and it leads to growing relatively away from honesty [4], causes individuals to violate some individual, moral, ethical and legal standarts [5], affects learning negatively [6] and is related to some organizational variables such as poor communication atmosphere [7], low performance [8], high cease of employment and behaviours of sabotage together with organizational learning [9], low commitment and low organizational trust [10] and insufficient job satisfaction [11, 12]. Çakıcı has divided these results, which have been caused by organizational silence, into three main topics as the results affecting the performance and the synergy, the results restricting the progress and the improvement, and the results causing the worker to become unhappy[13].

Organizational silence behaviour emerges, when the main mechanisms of life satisfaction such as the interpersonal communication and the process of social interaction [14, 15] and justice perception [16, 17] are damaged. The majority influence and silence are the strain for consensus [18]. When employees choose not to speak up about their ideas or concerns, especially when this becomes a norm, potentially valuable information may be lost to the organization and to its top-level decision-makers [19].
Having a virtuous life and being able to use the inner power are considered as the most important keys to life satisfaction and happiness [20]. Reasoning, critical thinking, honesty, participation, creativity, courage, justice, eagerness, hope and optimism are the main inner powers and moralities of the individual which support life satisfaction [21]. When the individual suffer oppression with several reasons, s/he cannot show and actualise his/her universal inner powers, truths and values, and the inconsistency between cognition and behaviour causes tension in the individual as a result of organizational silence. Despite the fact that the individual remains silent to protect himself/herself and the other people, the behaviour of silence itself is a nettle some factor. The frustration feeling of the individual which emerges together with silence and not being able to express his/her thoughts contradict the individual's life satisfaction philosophy which aimed at self actualization, improvement and being aware of his/her potential [22]. Because of all these reasons, finding out the reasons which cause organizational silence is very important in terms of the solution of this problem.

In the literature review, it has been observed that the studies on organizational silence which have been done so far are mostly on the results of organizational silence and the studies on the reasons of organizational silence are relatively less. On the other hand there are theoretical studies within the scope of organizational silence which can explain the reasons why the workers act in these particular manners. Both the decision of silence and the workers' decisions about the forms of articulating feelings can be put on a common theoretical core in the literature. These are Vroom's Expectancy Theory and Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour. According to Vroom, the individuals' behaviours are shaped by their personal characteristics and expectations. If the individuals believes that speaking up does not create positive results, they will consider it as less important and will become more and more silent [23, 24].

Individuals review on the pros and cons of silence behaviour and decide accordingly. When the desired results are realized and undesired ones are blocked, if the individual's guess is positive, he/she tends to behave like this [25, 26, 27]. According to this theory, which is also known as the theory of cost-benefit analysis, when there is the possibility that personal interest is blocked or the losses are high, it is suggested that silence is observed organizedly [28, 29, 30]. Not getting promoted or losing job is predicted as a price [23] and so remaining silent is preferred. When the worker decide to speak or not to speak, by quickly doing risk analysis as s/he did cost-benefit analysis. s/he seeks for the answers to the questions like “Will I be offended, bothered and humiliated” [31]. According to Kolarska and Aldrich the decision of silence or voice is based on rationalist model [32].

According to the theory of spiral of silence by Noelle-Neumann [33], because of social pressure and fear together with the anxiety of breakoff phenomenon the individual tends to join the majority even though it is against his/her own thoughts. This theory is based on the idea that if the individuals do not join the majority, the majority will exclude them. By using this theory in organizational scope, Bowen and Blackmon [34] says that unless the workers are not backed up by their co-workers, they will remain silent. Although the spiral of silence was developed through public opinion research at the societal level, we apply it in the context of organizational silence to identify factors that will affect whether people will openly and honestly express their opinions about organizational issues [34].

The individuals can be unwilling to become minority even though they are in senior positions. In this context, individuals develop the behaviours of self-monitoring and adaptation to the public and the neighbourhood. The individuals whose self-monitoring level is high are the people who have the ability to change his/her social behaviours purposely and to use the ambient clues for the sake of making good impression in public [23].

Worker silence is based on the reasons that personal interests such as promotion and staffing should not be damaged, the individual should not be perceived as the stormy petrel in the organization, the thought that speaking has not got any advantages or disadvantages, and the feeling of loneliness and social exclusion and so on [28]. As well as being considered in 2 dimensions as individual and organizational [28, 35], there are opinions that also evaluate the reasons of organizational silence as in a 3rd dimension which is social [36].

When Çakıcı classifies the reasons of organizational silence, as well as individual and ambient factors which affect the decision of speaking up or trigger silence [26], he collects organizational factors under 5 main titles by examining the factors such as perceived organizational and administrative support [26], perceived risk [37], organizational norms [34], cultural power distance [38], interpersonal atmosphere in the workplace [31], silence atmosphere in the workplace [39]. These are:

- the administrative and organizational reasons
- the fears related to work
- the lack of experience
- the fear of isolation
- the fear of disturbing relations.

This study is predicated on Çakıcı's classification.
In our country, while the organizational silence studies are mostly carried out on workers of public and private sectors [40, 41, 25], and on academicians [13, 42, 22, 43], the studies on nurses and health-care providers are relatively fewer [44, 45].

The fact that only less than 10 people out of 1700 nurses, doctors, clinical-care providers and managers in the USA state their concerns about wrong decisions and applications in the workplace shows the critical status of silence in health-care sector. The problem described in that study is severe. 1) People see others make mistakes, violate rules, or demonstrate dangerous levels of incompetence 2) repeatedly 3) over long periods of time 4) in ways that hurt patient safety and employee morale 5) but they don’t speak up and 6) the critical variable that determines whether they break this chain by speaking [46].

The purpose of this study is to find out the main factors affecting the organizational silence of nurses, midwives and clinical-care providers in the health-care sector, the demographical reasons affecting these factors and relations among the factors. For this purpose, The questions of a Questionnaire aiming at determining the reasons of organizational silence which was developed by Çakıcı and in which 12 academicians from management and organization field participated as “arbitrators” was used [13]. In the first part of the questionnaire demographical and descriptive features of the attendants (6 questions) and in the second part, questions which are formed in 5 parts and aiming at determining the organizational silence (29 questions) are asked. Non-parametric and parametric statistical tests are applied on the data gathered.

Data Analysis:
In the scope of analysis, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, ANOVA analysis and Regression analyses have been used. PASW 18.0 package software has been used to analyze the data gathered. 0.05 significance level has been taken into consideration in relations and differences among variables.

Practice And Analyses:
Reliability analysis:
As the result of reliability analysis, due to the fact that Alpha = 0.964, we daresay that 29 subjects are at very high reliability level.

Table 1: Reliability analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.964</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographical Statistics:
When the age variance is examined, it is determined that 51.6% of the attendants are aged between 22-29, 44.1% of the attendants are aged between 30-39, and 4.3% of the attendants are aged between 40-49. When the educational levels are examined, 18.8% of the attendants are highschool graduates, 10.6% of the attendants have associate degree, 66.7% of the attendants have bachelor's (BA) degree and 3.9% of the attendants have master's (MA) degree. the percentage of the attendants who have worked for 5 and less than 5 years is 45.9%, the percentage of the attendants who have worked for 6 to 10 years is 36.5%, and the attendants who have worked for 11 to 20 years is 17.6%. the percentage of the nurses is 80.1%, the percentage of the midwives is 9.8% and the percentage of the other health-care providers is 10.2%. 93% of the attendants are women and 7% are men. In our country, the distribution in the health-care sector is generally at this level.

Table 2: Demographical statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Column N %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22-29</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>51.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Status</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Highschool</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Year Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ve alti</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwife</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other(Medical Asst. and health-care providers)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyses:
Factor analysis has been applied by evaluating the responses of the attendants. The factors below have been acquired as a result of the analysis.
29 questions which have been asked about organizational silence have been divided into 5 factorial sub-dimensions after factor analysis.
1. The administrative and organizational reasons
2. The fears related to work
3. The lack of experience
4. The fear of isolation
5. The fear of disturbing relations

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Administrative and Organizational Reasons</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>.755</td>
<td>.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.722</td>
<td>.696</td>
<td>.660</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>.589</td>
</tr>
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<td>.300</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fears Related to Work</td>
<td>.735</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>.703</td>
<td>.672</td>
<td>.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lack of Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.606</td>
<td>.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.531</td>
<td>.370</td>
<td>.501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fear of Isolation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.539</td>
<td>.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>.524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fear of Relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.864</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.894</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1: Screeplot diagram
When the correlations among those 5 main factorial dimensions about organizational silence are examined, the table below shows the results.

- **High**-level positive correlation is found between the administrative and organizational reasons and the fears related to work.
- **Low**-level positive correlation is found between the administrative and organizational reasons and the lack of experience.
- **High**-level positive correlation is found between the administrative and organizational reasons and the fear of isolation.
- **High**-level positive correlation is found between the administrative and organizational reasons and the fear of disturbing relations.
- **Medium**-level positive correlation is found between the fears related to work and the lack of experience.
- **High**-level positive correlation is found between the fears related to work and the fear of isolation.
- **High**-level positive correlation is found between the fears related to work and the fear of disturbing relations.
- **Medium**-level positive correlation is found between the lack of experience and the fear of disturbing relations.
- **Medium**-level positive correlation is found between the lack of experience and the fear of disturbing relations.
- **High**-level positive correlation is found between the fear of isolation and the fear of disturbing relations.

### Table 4: Component Transformation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.682</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td>.322</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-.563</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>.667</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.427</td>
<td>-.571</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>-.849</td>
<td>.243</td>
<td>-.341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>-.403</td>
<td>-.303</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Extraction Method:** Principal Component Analysis  
**Rotation Method:** Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

H1: The reasons of organizational silence differ according to age:

When the reasons of organizational silence are examined in terms of age, all the significance values are below the threshold value 0.05. So,

- It has been determined that the administrative and organizational reasons **differ** according to age.
- It has been determined that the fears related to work **differ** according to age.
- It has been determined that the lack of experience **differs** according to age.
- It has been determined that the fear of isolation **differs** according to age.
- It has been determined that the fear of disturbing relations **differs** according to age.
The reasons of organizational silence differs according to the age groups. Each age group reacts differently to the reasons of organizational silence.

H2: The reasons of organizational silence differ according to educational status:
When the reasons of organizational silence are examined in terms of educational status, the 1st, the 3rd and the 5th significance values are below the threshold value 0.05. So,
- It has been determined that the administrative and organizational reasons differ according to educational status.
- It has been determined that the fears related to work do not differ according to educational status.
- It has been determined that the lack of experience differs according to educational status.
- It has been determined that the fear of isolation does not differ according to educational status.
- It has been determined that the fear of disturbing relations differs according to educational status.

Except from the fears related to work and the fear of isolation, the reasons of organizational silence differs according to the educational status. Educational status causes individuals to react differently to the reasons of organizational silence.

H3: The reasons of organizational silence do not differ according to working year:
When the reasons of organizational silence are examined in terms of working year, the 3rd and the 4th significance values are below the threshold value 0.05. So,
- It has been determined that the administrative and organizational reasons do not differ according to working year.
- It has been determined that the fears related to work do not differ according to working year.
- It has been determined that the lack of experience differs according to working year.
- It has been determined that the fear of isolation differs according to working year.
- It has been determined that the fear of disturbing relations does not differ according to working year.
The working year in the sector or the working year in the same workplace cause the individuals to react differently to the organizational silence variables which are the lack of experience and the fear of isolation.

H4: The reasons of organizational silence do not differ according to occupation:
When the reasons of organizational silence are examined in terms of occupation, all the significance values are above the threshold value 0.05. So,
- It has been determined that the administrative and organizational reasons do not differ according to occupation.
- It has been determined that the fears related to work do not differ according to occupation.
- It has been determined that the lack of experience does not differ according to occupation.
- It has been determined that the fear of isolation does not differ according to occupation.
- It has been determined that the fear of disturbing relations does not differ according to occupation.

H5: The reasons of organizational silence differ according to working department:
When the reasons of organizational silence are examined in terms of working department, all the significance values are below the threshold value 0.05 except the 3rd. So,
- It has been determined that the administrative and organizational reasons differ according to the department.
- It has been determined that the fears related to work differ according to the department.
- It has been determined that the lack of experience does not differ according to the department.
- It has been determined that the fear of isolation differs according to the department.
- It has been determined that the fear of disturbing relations differs according to the department.

H6: The reasons of organizational silence differ according to gender:
When the reasons of organizational silence are examined in terms of gender, all the significance values are below the threshold value 0.05 except the 2nd. So,
- It has been determined that the administrative and organizational reasons differ according to gender.
- It has been determined that the fears related to work do not differ according to gender.
- It has been determined that the lack of experience differs according to gender.
- It has been determined that the fear of isolation differs according to gender.
- It has been determined that the fear of disturbing relations differs according to gender.

H7: The administrative and organizational reasons differ according to demographical variables:
When the administrative and organizational reasons are examined in regression analysis together with demographical variables, the results below are obtained.
Among the other demographical variables, gender is the most effective matter on organizational silence variables.

**H8: The fears related to work differ according to demographical variables:**
When the fears related to work are examined in regression analysis together with demographical variables, the results below are obtained.
- **Age group** makes 0,214 unit negative effect on the fears related to work.
- **Education status** makes 0,271 unit positive effect on the fears related to work.
- **Working year** makes 0,407 unit positive effect on the fears related to work.
- **Occupation** makes 0,134 unit negative effect on the fears related to work.
- **Working department** makes 0,002 unit positive effect on the fears related to work.
- **Gender** makes 1,503 unit positive effect on the fears related to work.

Among the other demographical variables, gender is the most effective matter on organizational silence variables.

**H9: The lack of experience differs according to demographical variables:**
When the lack of experience is examined in regression analysis together with demographical variables, the results below are obtained.
- **Age group** makes 0,067 unit negative effect on the lack of experience.
- **Education status** makes 0,207 unit positive effect on the lack of experience.
- **Working year** makes 0,045 unit positive effect on the lack of experience.
- **Occupation** makes 0,099 unit negative effect on the lack of experience.
- **Working department** makes 0,001 unit positive effect on the lack of experience.
- **Gender** makes 1,324 unit positive effect on the lack of experience.

Among the other demographical variables, gender is the most effective matter on organizational silence variables.

**H10: The fear of isolation differs according to demographical variables:**
When the fear of isolation is examined in regression analysis together with demographical variables, the results below are obtained.
- **Age group** makes 0,370 unit negative effect on the fear of isolation.
- **Education status** makes 0,250 unit positive effect on the fear of isolation.
- **Working year** makes 0,589 unit positive effect on the fear of isolation.
- **Occupation** makes 0,275 unit negative effect on the fear of isolation.
- **Working department** makes 0,003 unit positive effect on the fear of isolation.
- **Gender** makes 1,609 unit positive effect on the fear of isolation.

Among the other demographical variables, gender is the most effective matter on organizational silence variables.

**H11: The fear of disturbing relations differs according to demographical variables:**
When the fear of disturbing relations is examined in regression analysis together with demographical variables, the results below are obtained.
- **Age group** makes 0,190 unit negative effect on the fear of disturbing relations.
- **Education status** makes 0,265 unit positive effect on the fear of disturbing relations.
- **Working year** makes 0,489 unit positive effect on the fear of disturbing relations.
- **Occupation** makes 0,303 unit negative effect on the fear of disturbing relations.
- **Working department** makes 0,005 unit positive effect on the fear of disturbing relations.
- **Gender** makes 1,626 unit positive effect on the fear of disturbing relations.

Among the other demographical variables, gender is the most effective matter on organizational silence variables.
Conclusıon And Assessment:
- When the study is assessed from demographical aspect, people in the scope of the study are generally women who are between the ages 20-29, have bachelor degree, have worked for less than 5 years and mostly nurses.
- All the reasons of organizational silence differ according to age.
- The administrative and organizational reasons which are one of the main subdimensions of organizational silence reasons differ according to the lack of experience, the fear of disturbing relations and education.
- The lack of experience which is one of the main subdimensions of organizational silence differs according to the fear of isolation and the working year.
- Organizational silence reasons do not differ according to the occupation.
- The administrative and organizational reasons, the fears related to work, the fear of isolation and the fear of disturbing relations differ according to the working department.
- The administrative and organizational reasons, the lack of experience, the fear of isolation, and the fear of disturbing relations differ according to gender.
- According to the regression analysis, gender is the most effective matter on organizational silence variables.
- Age group mostly affects the fear of isolation.
- Education status mostly affects the fears related to work.
- Working year mostly affects the fear of isolation.
- Occupation mostly affects the fear of disturbing relations.
- Working department mostly affects the fear of disturbing relations.
- Gender mostly affects the fear of disturbing relations.

The organizational silence of nurses, midwives, and health-care assistants who play a key role to establish the communication in the health-care team is relatively more significant when compared to other occupations, due to the fact that they are the first round-the-clock consultees of the patients and the patients' relatives when they have a problem, since there is generally not a compensation for a mistake in health-care service. The relations, similarities and the differences among the sectors can be presented, if the organizational silence studies both in health-care sector and in different sectors are carried out more.

REFERENCES


