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THE RELATIONSHIP OF GROUP COHESIVENESS, PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY, CONTROL OVER WORK, AND COMPETITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT WITH ORGANIZATIONAL SILENCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF MOTIVES OF SILENCE

THE RELATIONSHIP OF GROUP COHESIVENESS, PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY, CONTROL OVER WORK, AND COMPETITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT WITH ORGANIZATIONAL SILENCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF MOTIVES OF SILENCE[1]

Abstract

Morrison and Milliken (2000) defined organizational silence as "a collective phenomenon where employees withhold their opinions and concerns about potential organizational problems" (p.1364) and mainly focused on silence behavior as a response to fear and stated that if employees perceive their managers are not tolerant of hearing the truth, they are likely to keep away from sharing their opinions due to a fear of negative responses. The basic research problem that this study seeks to address is the following: (a) what are the antecedents of organizational silence? (b) what types of motives produce employee silence behavior? (c) do motives of silence mediate the relationship between the antecedents and organizational silence? Data were collected through convenience sampling method from 210 employees working in organizations functioning in the public/private sectors. Results of the study revealed that generally group cohesiveness, psychological safety, and control over work have significant negative; competitive work environment has significant positive contributions on organizational silence. Also, the motive of helplessness-based silence was found to mediate the relationship between group cohesiveness and organizational silence.

Keywords: Organizational Silence, Psychological Safety, Group Cohesiveness, Control over Work, Competitive Workplace Environment, Motives of Silence

GRUPTA KAYNAŞMA, PSİKOLOJİK GÜVENLİK, İŞ ÜZERİNDEKİ KONTROL VE REKABETÇİ İŞ ORTAMININ ÖRGÜTSEL SESSİZLİK İLE İLİŞKİSİ: SESSİZLİĞE YOL AÇAN GÜDÜLERİN ARACI ROLÜ

Özet

Morrison ve Milliken (2000) tarafından "çalışanların işle ilgili konular ve sorunlar hakkındaki bilgilerini, görüşlerini ve kaygılarını bilinçli olarak yönetimle paylaşmamaları, kendilerine saklamaları" (p.1364) olarak ifade edilen örgütsel sessizlik, çalışanların işle ilgili konulardaki fikirlerini paylaşmaları durumunda karşılaşabilecekleri olumsuz yönetici tutumlarıyla ilgili endişelerinden kaynaklanan kolektif bir davranış kalıbı olarak görülmektedir. Bu araştırma kapsamında yanıt aranan sorular; (a) örgütsel sessizliğin öncelleri nelerdir? (b) çalışanların sessizlik davranışlarının ortaya çıkmasına yol açan temel güdüler neler olabilir? (c) sessizliğe ilişkin güdülerin önceller ile örgütsel sessizlik arasında aracı rolü bulunmakta mıdır? şeklinde belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklem grubunda kamu/özel sektör çalışanı olan 210 kişi yer almıştır. Araştırma örnekleminin tespitinde kolayda örneklem yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları, grupta sargınlık, psikolojik güvenlik ve iş üzerindeki kontrol ile örgütsel sessizlik arasında anlamlı ve negatif yönlü; rekabetçi iş ortamı ile örgütsel sessizlik arasında anlamlı ve pozitif yönlü bir ilişki ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, çaresizlik temelli sessizlik güdüsünün, grupta sargınlık ve örgütsel sessizlik arasında aracı rol oynadığı bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Örgütsel Sessizlik, Psikolojik Güvenlik, Grupta Sargınlık, İş Üzerindeki Kontrol, Rekabetçi Çalışma Ortamı, Sessizliğe İlişkin Güdüler

1. INTRODUCTION

In the global world, organizations are demanding more things from their employees such as sharing their ideas, speaking up their opinions, ability to use judgments to make decisions because of the concern for competition, customer satisfaction, and quality management system (Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997). Although organizations mostly focus on providing people more freedom and communication opportunities while expressing themselves, several employees emphasize that their organizations are reluctant to promote direct communication methods and sharing of new ideas (Beer and Noria, 2000). More importantly, one of the main problems in terms of improving continuous learning in organizations was found to be related with organizational silence which is defined as "the employee's choice to withhold their opinions and concerns about organizational problems''

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[1] Bu makale 19-20 Mart 206'da Inmar Kongresinde bildiri olarak sunulmuştur.

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(Vakola and Bouradas, 2005, p.441). It can be seen as an intentional behavior but its nature is much complex than absence of voice. Therefore, it is important to identify the constitution of organizational silence and a deeper look for a meaningful understanding of this subject is required. Researchers have conceptualized organizational/contextual factors which interact with working environments to increase/decrease the tendency to display employee silence behavior and defined organizational silence as "a multi-dimensional construct based on a variety of different underlying motives" (Brinsfield, 2009, s.4). Although there are several studies related with this topic, we need more theoretical/empirical studies to deepen our understanding and explore the underlying motives of employee silence behavior in organizations. With this aim, in this study, competitive work environment/group cohesiveness (contextual variables) and control over work/psychological safety (organizational variables) are examined in terms of their contributions to employee silence behavior.

The basic research problem that this study seeks to address is the following: (a) what are the antecedents of organizational silence? (b) what types of motives produce employee silence behavior? (c) do silence motives mediate the relationship between organizational/contextual variables examined in this research and organizational silence?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Organizational Silence

In management literature, there is not a huge amount of research on organizational silence but three common studies are especially connected with our focus on employee silence behavior. The first one is the Pinder and Harlos's (2001) study which defined employee silence "as the withholding of any form of genuine expression about the individual's behavioral, cognitive, and/or affective evaluations of his or her organizational circumstances from persons who are perceived to be capable of effecting change or redress" (p.334). Researchers underlined the situations that causes silence behavior by proposing two forms of it; Acquiescent Silence (passive withholding of ideas, based on submission) and Quiescent Silence (active withholding of ideas in order to protecting the self). Following this individual-level approach, Morrison and Milliken (2000) defined organizational silence as "a collective phenomenon where employees withhold their opinions and concerns about potential organizational problems" (p.1364) and mainly focused on silence behavior as a response to fear and stated that if employees perceive their managers as being not tolerant of hearing the truth, they are likely to keep away from sharing their opinions due to a fear of negative responses. Beside this, it was also focused on the causes of the collective process which helps to create a climate of silence. Although these two researches differ in terms of their level of focus, both studies see withholding an opinion as the core element of silence (Van Dyne et al., 2003). After a while, Van Dyne et.al (2003) introduced three types of silence; defensive silence (the same with Pinder and Harlos's (2001) quiescent silence), acquiescent silence (the same with Pinder and Harlos's (2001) acquiescent silence), and pro-social silence which is defined as "withholding work-related ideas, information, or opinions with the goal of benefiting other people or the organization-based on altruism or cooperative motives" (p.1368).

On the other hand, Bowen and Blackmon (2003) clarified employees' silence decisions with the group dynamics concept and proposed that employees are likely to speak up when they are supported by group members in the organization, and choose to remain silent when their opinions are in minority. After a short time, Vakola and Bouradas (2005) mentioned about organizational climate factors in organizations and remarked the importance of managers' attitudes and communication properties for employee silence behavior. Beside this, Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008) examined the role of justice climate perceptions on employees' silence decisions and found that justice climate is influential on information withholding behavior in workgroups. Meanwhile, Brinsfield (2009) investigated the dimensionality of employee silence process and defined it as "pervasive, multi-dimensional, can reliably be measured, and is significantly related to other important organizational behavior phenomena" (p. ii). Detert and Edmondson (2011) also published four studies which are about employees' taken-for-granted beliefs about risk conditions when they choose to speak up or remain silent. On a similar line of research, Morrison et al. (2011) defined group voice climate as the collective level shared beliefs within groups and underscored the importance of organizational climate perceptions on employee silence behavior. After all, Brinsfield (2013) investigated the motivational causes of employee silence and proposed that six motives (ineffectual, relational, defensive, diffident, disengaged, and deviant) can have an important effect on employee silence behaviors in organizations. With the aim of identifying different motives of silence, Knoll and Dick (2013) mentioned about the conceptualization of Connelly et al.'s (2011) "hiding knowledge" (p.2) and proposed the term of opportunistic silence which implies withholding knowledge in an opportunistic manner.

2.2 Motives of Silence

There are several studies that define silence behavior as a multidimensional construct which involves different motives. Studies made by Pinder and Harlos (2001), Van Dyne et al. (2003), Milliken et al. (2003), Brinsfield

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(2013), Knoll and Dick (2013) inform us about four motives of employee silence and help us understand these motives in detail.

Acquiescent Silence; Pinder and Harlos (2001) defined acquiescent silence as "a deeply-felt acceptance of organizational circumstances, a taking-for-granted of the situation, and limited awareness that alternatives exit" (p.349). People who display acquiescent silence are less ready to change things around them and less motivated to express their opinions to the public based on attitudes of submission and resignation. Not long after this work, Van Dyne et al. (2003) defined acquiescent silence as a passive behavior and proposed that employees "are resigned to the current situation and are not willing to exert the effort to speak up, get involved, or attempt to change the situation" (p.1366).

Quiescent (Defensive) Silence; The second type of employee silence has been proposed in Pinder and Harlos's (2001) work and it is defined as "one form of silence that represents deliberate omission" (p.348). After a short time, Van Dyne et al. (2003) defined quiescent silence as "withholding relevant ideas, information, or opinions as a form of self-protection, based on fear" (p.1367) and it is determined by the unpleasant consequences of speaking up. This form of silence is intentional, proactive, and involves awareness of alternatives. However, a conscious decision to remain silent is made for the purpose of protecting the self from external threats. Employees can see the alternatives in many cases but decide not to share their opinions because of the strong negative affective state at that moment (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Pro-social (Relational) Silence; Van Dyne et al. (2003) added pro-social motives to the silence literature and defined it as ''withholding work-related ideas, information, or opinions with the goal of benefiting other people or the organization-based on altruism or cooperative motives" (p. 1368). This type of silence behavior can be seen as proactive which is mainly focused on other people with the aim of protecting a relationship. There can be different reasons for employees to be involved in pro-social silence like (a) general altruistic personality-employees are afraid to harm the image of the organization-, (b) a high motive for affiliation-employees may feel the need for a sense of involvement and "belonging" within a social group-, and (c) protecting social identity-employees may feel in-group favoritism to satisfy a psychological need for positive distinctiveness (strive for a positive self-concept) and as such situations where in-group favoritism is likely to occur arise (Knoll and Dick, 2013).

Opportunistic Silence; The fourth form of employee silence is proposed by Knoll and Dick (2013) on a basis of opportunistic behavior and defined it as "strategically withholding work-related ideas, information, or opinions with the goal of achieving an advantage for oneself while accepting harm of others" (p.352). According to their proposal, employees may remain silent with the purpose of harming the organization and/or co-workers with an opportunistic manner. Furthermore, they can decide not to share their ideas because they do not want to lose their power/status or assume an increased workload (Connelly et al., 2011; Garfield, 2006; Knoll and Dick, 2013). On the other hand, employees can refuse to give information in order to gain an advantage for themselves in a strategic way although contradicting with the core values of the organization. Besides, opportunistic behaviors of employees are also influenced by elements of organizational dynamics like the nature of organizational culture or leadership behaviors.

2.3 Group Cohesiveness

Cartwright (1968) defined group cohesiveness as "the resultant of all forces acting on all the members to remain in the group" (p.91) and he proposed four determinants of cohesion; (a) individuals' desire for attraction, (b) the promotive properties of the group, (c) beneficial consequences of the membership, and (d) comparison level of outcomes. After a short time, a similar approach was proposed by Shaw (1981) and he underlined three different meanings of cohesiveness; (a) the intra-group attractiveness of its members, (b) the group's motivation level, and (c) the basis of coordinating the group's efforts. On the other hand, some studies identified group cohesiveness with other categories like group spirit (makes the members want the group to succeed), interpersonal attraction (people in a group feeling attracted to each other for friendship), sense of belongingness (emotional need to be an accepted member of a group), and sense of we-ness (enacted through collective identity and culture) (Mudrack, 1989).

In order to clarify the group cohesiveness construct, Carron (1982) defined group cohesiveness as "a dynamic process which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives" (p.259). The main point of this definition is its multidimensionality including both group/individual and task/social dimensions. After that, Carron et al. (1998) reformulated it by adding an affective dimension as "a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs" (p.213).

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Group Cohesiveness and Organizational Silence

According to previous studies about group cohesiveness construct, when employees feel accepted by group members and identified with its norms, they share strong similarities and common goals so they don't hesitate to express their opinions about organizational issues based on trust motives which are influenced by the level of connectedness between group members. Thus, we argue that, when deciding whether to express their opinions, employees will be especially likely to be influenced by collective beliefs about the potential consequences of this behavior. That is, if employees receive social cues suggesting that group members' expressing their view is perceived as something that can be done safely and effectively, they will be more likely to share suggestions and concerns about organizational issues.

Considering all these arguments about the effects of social mechanisms on employee silence behavior, group members in a highly cohesive group will have the tendency to express work related opinions or solutions to problems based on cooperation motives and suggest constructive/proactive ideas for change to benefit the organization. Thus, the linkage between group cohesiveness and employee silence leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Group cohesiveness contributes negatively to organizational silence.

2.4 Psychological Safety

In organizational behavior literature, the psychological safety term is constructed by Kahn's (1990) qualitative studies which are conducted in two organizations. According to findings, four factors have been identified that affect employees' psychological safety condition in a workplace. First, employees feel themselves psychologically safe when their work environment is shaped by social connections which are based on mutual agreements, supportiveness, trust, and acceptance of criticism. According to the uncertainty reductions theory (Berger and Calabrese, 1975), people try to reduce uncertainty about others by communicating with them and learning information/details about them in order to predict their behaviors easily. Second, psychological safety is shaped by collective properties which originate from group size, status, power imbalances, norms, informal roles, and interpersonal relationships which bring them close to each other. Social networks may allow employees to benefit from their actions and make them more relationship-oriented. Third, supportive leadership bolstering risk taking, showing tolerance for mistakes, providing guidance/psychological support, and displaying consistency with the ideas expressed in groups is associated with higher psychological safety levels of employees. When leaders use participatory management techniques to empower the members of a group, employees are encouraged to share their opinions and ideas about organizational issues safely. Finally, employees can feel less safe when they feel obliged to obey the organizational norms which are set by group dynamics. People are often likely to conform to group norms due to a desire for security and unwillingness to carry the risk of social rejection (Henrichs, 2013).

Unlike most research on psychological safety, Edmondson (1999) focused on organizational work teams and defined psychological safety as "a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking" (p.354) and proposed that psychological safety perceptions can be closely similar among employees who are facing the same contextual influences and sharing the same experiences in the workplace. After that, in 2002, Edmondson described psychological safety as "individuals' perceptions about the consequences of interpersonal risks in their work environment and it consists of taken-for-granted beliefs about how others will respond when one puts oneself on the line, such as by asking a question, seeking feedback, reporting a mistake, or proposing a new idea" (p.6). In a psychologically safe environment, if employees make a mistake, others don't judge them so they feel confident while discussing problems or asking for help. According to Edmondson (1999), psychological safety "goes beyond interpersonal trust; it describes a team climate characterized by interpersonal trust and mutual respect" (p.354). Besides, openness to conflict is prevalent such that employees feel safe while sharing their differences/disagreements.

Psychological Safety and Organizational Silence

According to Edmondson's (1999) study, psychological safety is something more than interpersonal trust between employees and is also related with a work climate where employees feel respected and safe in terms of sharing their opinions without being punished. In a psychologically safe environment, managers often underline the importance of open communication channels among employees, interaction with coworkers with truthful motives, and promises that it will not produce any negative effect for employees if they express themselves freely in their organizations. If employees feel uncomfortable with expressing their thoughts and avoid engaging in interpersonal risk taking, it means that they are afraid of a possible harm to their image, being labeled as troublemakers, losing respect and support of others, subjecting themselves to a poor performance evaluation

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process, being not able to receive a possible promotion or putting themselves at risk of being fired (Pacheco and Caldeira, 2015).

According to the psychological mechanism of employee silence behavior, psychological safety has been described as a key factor to influence silence (Ashford et al., 1998; Edmondson, 1999). Put simply, employees who have fears about significant personal losses arising from speaking up are likely to choose "quiescent" silence (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Considering that quiescent silence is based on protecting oneself from negative consequences associated with speaking up, it is expected that psychological safety will be negatively related to employee silence behavior since being safe is connected with no negative impact on a relationship due to mentioning opinions (Brinsfield, 2012). Moreover, when employees experience good relations with their managers in the organization, they feel more courageous to take risks for proposing new ideas/constructive suggestions with the help of a supportive environment which is personally nonthreatening (Cheng et.al, 2014). In addition, if managers encourage subordinates for questioning procedures, they send a clear message that employees can feel psychologically safe and that it is expected to express themselves openly without the fear of negative interpersonal consequences (Kahn, 1990). So, the relationship between psychological safety and employee silence leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Psychological safety contributes negatively to organizational silence.

2.5 Competitive Work Environment

Employees' perceptions of work environment can be an important determinant of individual behavior and this relationship can affect several organizational outcomes. Some work environments can be seen as demanding (Sears et al., 2000), stressful (Sulsky and Smith, 2005) or competitive (Fletcher and Nusbaum, 2010). Such contexts affect employees' attitudes/behaviors negatively. Therefore, a competitive environment may be considered as an important construct for understanding employee silence behavior in organizations.

Fletcher and Nusbaum (2010) have defined competitive environment as "the individual-level perceptions of a work environment resulting from structured competition for rewards, recognition or status or competition inspired by coworkers within a work unit" (p.107). As we all know, individuals are commonly employed in highly competitive work environments where they face uncontrollable factors/general uncertainty that cause job stress. The definition of competition refers to social comparisons affecting an unequal distribution of rewards/resources deriving from the performance of participants in an activity (Mudrack et al, 2012). Deutsch (1949) investigated the effects of competition on employees in his study and drew attention to the point that sometimes employee perceptions can be more important than the objective reality.

Employees may compete for tangible/intangible rewards within an organization and these efforts can also affect employees' attitudes, behaviors, and their relationships with coworkers. But it is obvious that too much competitiveness in a workplace can make employees unhappy and create a harmful environment which can lead to various workplace problems. Generally, employees want a workplace that gives them the opportunity to have healthy relationships and helps work to be an enjoyable and productive process for all employees. At times competitive workplace environments interfere with these desires and work and relationships may suffer. Eventually, conflict may occur among employees and damage the interpersonal relationships in the workplace. If a manager encourages healthy competition in the work environment, this can motivate employees for better performance but if a destructive competition is promoted, a toxic workplace culture is generated where team spirit and common purposes are devastated. According to Cooke and Rousseau (1998), competitive culture is "one in which winning is valued and members are rewarded for outperforming one another. People in such organizations operate in a win-lose framework and believe they must work against (rather than with) their peers to be noticed" (p.258).

Competitive Work Environment and Organizational Silence

Understanding of the processes through which the competitive work place dynamics influences organizational silence is still limited; however, there are several reasons to expect a positive relationship between the two variables. Firstly, employees who are in a competitive work environment can minimize their contributions in order to protect personal resources (time, physical/emotional energy, attention). That is because sharing their ideas, making suggestions about organizational issues, and helping others can be seen as risky and costly in terms of time/energy (Bolino and Turnley, 2005; Detert and Burris, 2007; Organ, 1988). Consistent with this logic, Hobfoll (1989, 2002) proposed conservation of resources theory to understand the stress process and the strategies used by employees. According to the integrated model, people are likely to maintain resources (objects, personal characteristics, conditions, and energies) to deal with stressful situations as they arise. That is, in organizations, employees are likely to make a conscious decision not to spend a lot of time and energy focusing on problems and to avoid situations that might lead to the loss of any valued resources.

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Secondly, in competitive organizations, employees can choose not to share their knowledge with the intention of hiding information from their coworkers. Knowledge hiding is "an intentional attempt by an individual to withhold or conceal knowledge that has been requested by another person" (Connelly et al., 2006, p.65) and it captures dyadic situations in which knowledge is requested by one employee and that knowledge is hidden by another employee.

Thirdly, there has been little research that examines individual characteristics related to the withholding of knowledge in competitive organizations but Machiavellianism which is a trait that can predispose individuals to withhold knowledge was proposed several decades ago (Christie and Geis, 1970). People who display high levels of Machiavellianism are self-interested and are predisposed to win at all costs (Fehr et.al, 1992). Because of their strategic orientation, high Machiavellians can depart from ethical standards under some circumstances and hide opinion/information if it serves their best interests. Furthermore, perceptions of another individual's level of Machiavellianism may affect whether or not someone will engage in knowledge hiding from this person (Webster et.al, 2008). For example, in a competitive workplace, Machiavellianism can be demonstrated by the majority of the employees and others can be affected by their harsh tactics and manipulative behaviors so they can choose not to share their opinions or ideas about organizational issues in order to protect themselves against their manipulations.

Based on these arguments about the effects of competitive work environment on employee behaviors, it may be assumed that employees, who are in stressful situations/competitive work environments, would be likely to make use of situations for their self-interests and present examples of opportunistic silence in the form of utilizing information to their own advantage (Ng and Feldman, 2012). Therefore, the association between competitive work environment and employee silence leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Competitive work environment contributes positively to organizational silence.

2.6 Control over Work

The concept of employee control can be seen both in organizational behavior and decision making literature but the job demand control model is one of the most widely used models about control and it identifies two important job aspects in the workplace; job control and job demands. According to Karasek (1979), job control is defined as "working individual's potential control over his task and his conduct during the working day" (p.289-290). It is likely to include influence over the plan of daily work tasks, having a say on deadlines, effect on physical/social environment, and freedom to use creativity in decision making. Thus, control at work can be related with organizational characteristics such as "the extent to which employees perceive they are able to make decisions about their work (e.g., when and where to work, how to work, what type of tasks to do), and the extent to which there are opportunities for employees to use their skills and knowledge at work" (Dupre et.al, 2005, p.376).

As mentioned in the organizational behavior literature, control over work is closely linked to employee perceptions about autonomy and impact. Autonomy is related with the perceptions of employees about having control over their work behaviors, and impact is the extent to which employees believe they have control over important decisions or work outcomes (Spreitzer, 1995). When employees have job autonomy in their workplace, they will feel greater responsibility for the work outcomes and this will increase their work motivation (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). In addition, when employees have freedom about sharing their own judgments, they will feel powerful in terms of influencing the desired outcomes, and this will reduce their uncertainties and worries about organizational issues. In other words, control over work is high when autonomy and impact are high; that is, when employees believe that they have discretion over their work behaviors and influence over important work outcomes, they feel that things are under control. Control over work is low when autonomy and impact are low; that is, when employees believe that they have limited independence in choosing their work behaviors and fail to see a contingency between such behaviors and important work outcomes, they feel that they are unable to exercise control (Brockner et al., 2004).

Control over Work and Organizational Silence

When we take a deeper look at the relationship between control at work and organizational silence, it is important to refer to the expectancy-based perspective, which suggests that when employees perceive high autonomy and impact in their workplace, they do not only feel a sense of independence and initiative in their work, but also try to improve the organizational processes (Abramson et al., 1978; Bandura, 1997; Heckhausen and Schulz, 1995; Mitchell, 1973). More clearly, when employees feel high levels of control in their workplace, this belief increases their responsibility about work issues and may motivate them to resolve problems or obstacles in accordance with this belief. In other words, employees with high personal control believe that they can influence their work environment and have impact on workplace issues, so they are motivated to use

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opportunities to participate in work-related affairs by sharing their opinions to make a difference (Folkman, 1984; Greenberger et al., 1989).

In a similar vein, according to Martinko and Gardner (1982), learned helplessness is "the notion that after repeated punishment or failure, persons become passive and remain even so after environmental changes that make success possible" (p.196). When employees feel that they don't have any chance to affect work outcomes or they lack control over organizational processes, they can feel "helplessness" and engage in acquiescent silence which is the acceptance of organizational circumstances based on submission and resignation. With the belief that speaking up is pointless and unlikely to make a difference, employees don't show any extra "effort to speak up, get involved or attempt to change the situation" (Van Dyne, et al., 2003, p.1366) and this psychology of helplessness probably leads them to become demoralized and show apathy towards and withdrawal from organizational issues.

Following these arguments about the effects of control at work on employee silence behavior, it may be suggested that if employees feel relatively powerless in an organization without being able to exert any control over the course of events, they would be likely to demonstrate acquiescent silence implying that it is not worth to take initiative since nothing will change. Thereby, the connection between control over work and employee silence leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Control over work contributes negatively to organizational silence.

2.7 The Conceptual Model of the Study

Overall, our research model consists of Group Cohesiveness, Psychological Safety, Control over Work, and Competitive Work Environment as independent variables and Organizational Silence as the dependent variable. With this research model, we aim to analyze the contributions of these variables to Organizational Silence. The research model and the hypothesized relationships are presented below (Figure 1):

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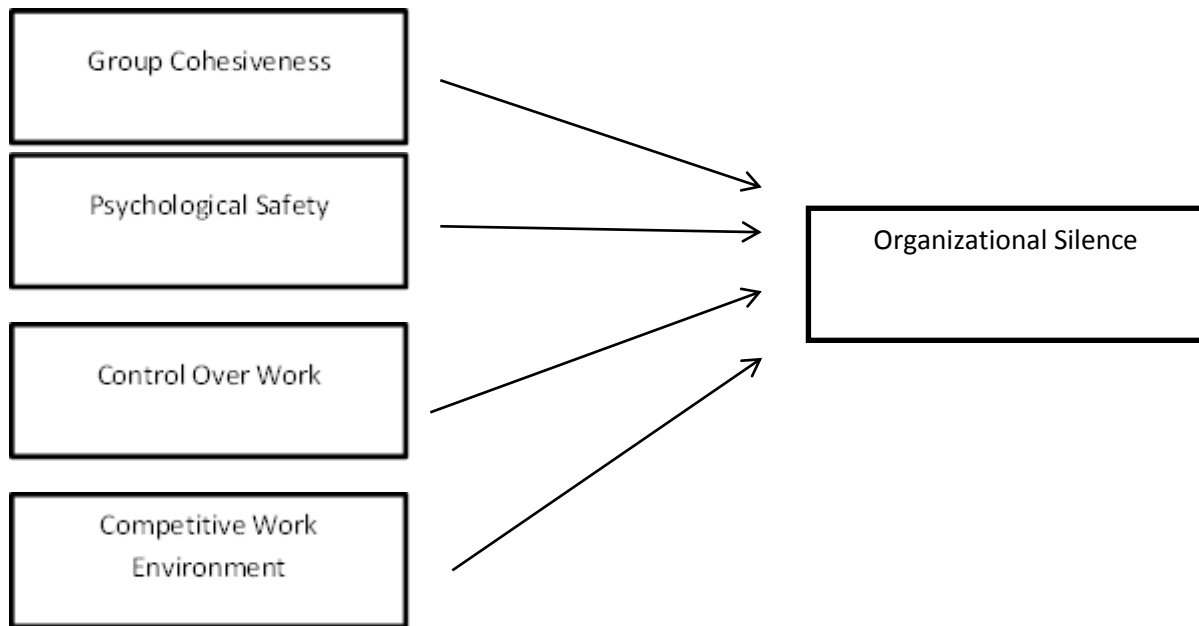
Figure 1. The Conceptual Research Model

The research question of the study is as follows:

Do silence motives mediate the relationship between group cohesiveness, psychological safety, control over work, competitive work environment and organizational silence?

3. METHOD

3.1 Sample

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This study aimed to target a population of employees from private and public sector, who are working in İstanbul. Among a convenient sample of 1570 employees; 210 employees responded the survey. In the sample of 210 participants, 49.5 % were female, and 82 % held at least a university degree. In terms of age, 25.2 % of the sample was younger than 30 years old and 15.7 % were older than 45 years old. The average age of the employees was 36.7 years, ranging from 24 to 65 years. All employees had been employed by their organizations for at least one month. On average, employees were employed in their company for 6.4 years. Table 1 provides a summary of the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1. Demographic Features of the Sample

VARIABLES		FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Age	20-25	8	3,8
	26-30	45	21,4
	31-35	67	31,9
	36-40	27	12,9
	41-45	30	14,3
	46 +	33	15,7
Gender	Female	104	49,5
	Male	106	50,5
Marital Status	Married	136	64,8
	Single	74	35,2
Education	High School	38	18,1
	University	143	68,1
	Master-Phd	29	13,9
Sector	Public	89	42,4
	Private	121	57,6
Field	Manufacture	16	7,6
	Service	170	81,0
	Other	24	11,4
Total Tenure	Under 5 years	40	19,0
	5-15 Years	96	45,7
	Above 15 Years	74	35,2
Present Tenure	Under 3 Years	52	24,8
	3-10 Years	123	58,6
	Above 10 Years	35	16,7

3.2 Procedure

Data were collected from 210 employees who were employed in various organizations in public/private sector companies located in İstanbul. The questionnaires were sent to 1570 potential participants by e-mail. Of the 223 responses achieved, 13 surveys were disregarded due to the missing data or suspect responses and the remaining 210 surveys constituted the data for this study. Therefore, a 13% response rate was obtained in a period of five months. A brief introduction explaining the purpose of the study was provided by the researcher to the participants. In the last section of the survey, the respondents were asked to state their demographic information, including age, gender, marital status, education, job tenure, organizational tenure, job type, and industry type. To ensure the anonymity of the responses, the information collected in the survey did not identify a respondent. No further information, including the participant's name and contact information, was collected to protect privacy.

3.3 Survey Instruments

Five measurement scales are used in this study in order to evaluate the effects of group cohesiveness, psychological safety, control over work, and competitive work environment on Organizational Silence. Also, we worked up on a motives of silence scale which includes the sources of silence that can stem from employees' themselves. The scale was prepared with the help of a qualitative study which is conducted by the authors (Üçok and Torun, 2015). In the questionnaire, there were also 8 demographic questions to be analyzed for comparing groups. Items of the scales were translated into Turkish by the researchers. Afterwards, in order to control the unity of meaning with the English version, a re-examination and necessary correction were made by academicians in Organizational Behavior field and a group of specialists who were proficient in both languages.

Group Cohesiveness Scale

Group Cohesiveness is measured by an 8-item scale which was developed by Wongpakaran et al. (2013). Sample items for Group Cohesiveness Scale are given in the following sentences; "I feel accepted by the group", "In my group, we trust each other", "The members like and care about each other", "The members reveal sensitive personal information or feelings". Wongpakaran et al (2013) found the Cronbach alpha value of the instrument as 0.87. The response scale for these items ranged from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). While low scores mean that group cohesiveness is low, high scores mean that group cohesiveness is high in the organization.

Psychological Safety Scale

Psychological Safety is measured by a 7-item scale which was developed by Edmondson (1999). Some examples of Psychological Safety scale items are given in the following sentences; "If you make a mistake in this organization, it is rarely held against you", "It is safe to take a risk in this organization", "It is quite easy to ask other members of this organization for help", "Working with members of this organization, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized". Edmondson (1999) found the Cronbach alpha value of the instrument as 0.79. The response scale for these items ranged from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). While low scores mean that psychological safety is low, high scores mean that psychological safety is high in the organization.

Control over Work Scale

Control over Work is measured by a 3-item scale which was developed by Spreitzer (1995). Control over Work scale items are presented in the following sentences; "I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job", "I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in conducting my job", "I have the power to influence work outcomes". Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of agreement or disagreement with the items ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree). While low scores mean that employee's control over work is low, high scores mean that employee's control over work is high in the organization.

Competitive Work Environment Scale

Competitive Work Environment is measured by a 10-item scale which was developed by Cooke and Rousseau (1988) and is generally used for assessing competitive culture profiles of organizations. Some examples of Competitive Work Environment scale items are given in the following sentences; "emphasis on competition rather than cooperation", "never appear weak", "always try to be right", "be more successful than others". This scale was previously translated into Turkish (Özarallı, 2006). Cooke and Rousseau (1988) found the Cronbach alpha value of the instrument as 0.86. The response scale for these items ranged from 1 (never expected) to 6 (totally expected). While low scores mean that competition is low, high scores mean that competition is high in the organization.

Organizational Silence Scale

Organizational silence scale is adapted from Çakıcı's (2008) organizational silence inventory which is composed of 30 items. Some examples of 9-item-Organizational Silence Scale items are given in the following sentences; "I accept the decisions made at the workplace and keep my thoughts to myself", "I choose not to share my ideas related to solutions about problems at work with my colleagues", "I hide some unethical behaviors of other employees even if I need to explain them". Çakıcı (2008) found the Cronbach alpha value of the instrument as 0.82. The response scale ranged from 1 (never) to 6 (always). While low scores mean that organizational silence is low, high scores mean that organizational silence is high in the organization.

Motives of Silence Scale

Motives of silence are measured by a 29-item scale which was developed by the authors (2015). In the process of developing the scale, definitions of organizational silence and available scales have been analyzed (e.g. Knoll and van Dick's (2013) scale for assessing four forms of employee silence and Briensfield's (2013) scale for assessing six forms of employee silence).

In order to identify the different motives of silence behavior, firstly, the definition of employee silence was given to a group of participants and then, they were asked to explain their experiences when they were intentionally silent at work in response to an important event and the specific reasons lying behind this kind of silence behavior. Participants consisted of 20 MBA students from a large state university, and 35 full-time employees from different companies located in İstanbul.

From a sample of 55 respondents completing the qualitative survey for employee silence behavior, 22 different silence-incidents were collected. These 22 different silence-incidents provided 114 reasons for remaining silent. The reasons stated by the respondents outnumbered the incidents because the participants frequently provided

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more than one reason for each incident. From the 114 reasons that were reported; 38 were repeated and 13 were classified as unclear, so 63 unique silence-motive examples were created. After that, these silence motives are gathered under 19 themes by content analysis and matched with 4 silence motive categories which are defined previously in the organizational silence literature.

To assess the reliability of the 4 silence-motive categories relative to the original 63 silence motive examples, seven independent judges were asked to assign one of the 4 categories to each of the original 63 examples. The analysis revealed a Kappa (K) = .76. Kappa's of .70 or greater are generally thought to be sufficient for psychological measurement (Fleiss et.al, 2004).

Each form of employee silence was represented by several statements to complete the following item root: "I remain silent at work....". Sample items are "...because of a fear of negative consequences" (quiescent silence); "...because I will not find a sympathetic ear anyway" (acquiescent silence); "...because I do not want others to get into trouble" (pro-social silence); "...to avoid giving away my knowledge advantage" (opportunistic silence). The response scale for these items ranged from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree).

3.4 Statistical Analyses

The data was analyzed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 20). The normality (for normal distribution check) and linearity (to determine linear relationship) tests were done. Frequencies, means, and standard deviations were also calculated to describe the sample and the general results.

Factor analysis was conducted to evaluate the construct validities of all measures. The reliability of each scale was determined by Cronbach's Alpha. Then Pearson's Correlation analysis was used to calculate the correlation between the variables. Finally, simple and hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses and the research question.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Factor and Reliability Analyses

The principal components analysis method of factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to identify the factor structures of variables. During each step, any item that had a factor loading less than 0.50 was extracted. If an item was loaded on more than one factor with a .10/less difference or only one item was loaded on a factor, these items were eliminated. Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis was also used to determine the internal consistencies of the scales. The Cronbach Alpha value of 0.60 was used as reference value and the factors with 0.60 values or more were regarded as having sufficient reliability (Janssens et al., 2008).

Factor and Reliability Analysis of Organizational Silence

Factor analysis was conducted with varimax rotation in order to determine the factors of "Organizational Silence" variable. The exploratory factor analysis for "Organizational Silence" revealed a one factor structure.

The KMO value was found as 0.953 and the value exhibits that the items are correlated and they are suitable for factor analysis. Barlett's test produced the value of 1376,763 with a significance level of 0,000 which confirms the conclusion that the data is suitable for factor analysis. As a result of the factor analysis, the nine items of the variable loaded on one factor named as "organizational silence" which explained 67,254 % of the total variance.

Then, reliability analysis for the factor is conducted and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,937 is obtained.

Factor and Reliability Analysis of Group Cohesiveness

"Group Cohesiveness" variable consists of eight items and the rotated component matrix revealed only one component, so it means that Group Cohesiveness Scale items are categorized under one factor.

The KMO value was found as 0.924 and the value exhibits that the items are correlated and they are suitable for factor analysis. Barlett's test produced the value of 1070,902 with a significance level of 0,000 which confirms the conclusion that the data is suitable for factor analysis. As a result of the factor analysis, eight items loaded on one factor named as "group cohesiveness" which explained 65,589 % of the total variance.

Then, reliability analysis for the factor is conducted and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,924 is obtained.

Factor and Reliability Analysis of Psychological Safety

"Psychological Safety" variable includes seven items and as a result of the rotated component matrix only one component was extracted which means that Psychological Safety Scale items are gathered under one factor.

The KMO value was found as 0.933 and the value exhibits that the items are correlated and they are suitable for factor analysis. Barlett's test produced the value of 1070,902 with a significance level of 0,000 which confirms the conclusion that the data is suitable for factor analysis. As a result of the factor analysis, seven items loaded on one factor named as "psychological safety" which explained 71,485 % of the total variance.

Then, reliability analysis for the factor is conducted and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,933 is obtained.

Factor and Reliability Analysis of Control over Work

"Control over Work" variable is composed of three items and the rotated component matrix led to the extraction of only one component which means that Control over Work Scale items are grouped under one factor.

The KMO value was found as 0.767 and the value exhibits that the items are correlated and they are suitable for factor analysis. Barlett's test produced the value of 633,297 with a significance level of 0,000 which confirms the conclusion that the data is suitable for factor analysis. As a result of the factor analysis, three items loaded on one factor named as "control over work" which explained 91,062 % of the total variance.

Then, reliability analysis for the factor is conducted and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,951 is obtained.

Factor and Reliability Analysis of Competitive Work Environment

"Competitive Work Environment" variable covers 10 items and the rotated component matrix produced only one component which means that Competitive Work Environment Scale items are classified under one factor.

The KMO value was found as 0.928 and the value exhibits that the items are correlated and they are suitable for factor analysis. Barlett's test produced the value of 1333,949 with a significance level of 0,000 which confirms the conclusion that the data is suitable for factor analysis. As a result of the factor analysis, ten items loaded on one factor named as "competitive work environment" which explained 61,363 % of the total variance.

Then, reliability analysis for the factor is conducted and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0,930 is obtained.

Factor and Reliability Analysis of Motives of Silence

Factor analysis was conducted with varimax rotation in order to determine the factors of "Motives of Silence" variable. The exploratory factor analysis for "Motives of Silence" revealed a six-factor structure.

The KMO value was found as 0.892 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded a significant result with a p=.000. During the analysis, one item displayed a factor loading less than 0.50, so it was discarded from the analysis. The remaining twenty-eight items loaded under six factors which accounted for 68,490 % of the total variance. According to the nature of the items, these six factors were named as "Fear-based Silence" (eight items), "Prosocial-based Silence" (five items), "Opportunity-based Silence" (five items), "Helplessness-based Silence" (four items), "Individual-based Silence" (three items), and "Ignorance-based Silence" (three items). Moreover, the Cronbach Alpha values of the factors were determined as 0.905, 0.941, 0.841, 0.795, 0.819, and 0.669 respectively.

4.2 Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations between Variables

The means, standard deviations, and correlations between the variables are reported below in Table 2. The correlation between organizational silence and group cohesiveness was low (r= -.202, p <0.01) and negative as expected. Organizational silence and psychological safety were correlated highly and significantly (r= -.538, p <0.01) in the negative direction. The correlation between organizational silence and competitive work environment was low (r=.281, p<0.01) and positive as expected. In addition, a medium negative correlation between organizational silence and control over work (r=-.347, p<0,01) was found.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations between Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Cr. alfa	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Age	36,74	8,67		,900**	,491**	-,080	,071	,027	,061	-,069

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2.Total Tenure	12,25	8,73		,563**	-,056	,061	,013	,042	-,023
3.Present Tenure	6,40	5,77			-,048	,028	-,086	,044	,036
4.Org.Silence	3,14	1,15	,93			-,202**	-,538**	,281**	-,347**
5.Group Cohesiveness	3,79	,98	,92				,353**	-,074	,308**
6.Psychological Safety	2,96	1,08	,93					-,404**	,506**
7.Competitive Work Environment	4,00	,97	,93						-,315**
8.Control Over Work	2,56	1,26	,95						

4.3 Hypothesis Testing and Research Question

According to Pearson correlation coefficients and VIF values, it was possible to pursue the analyses safely. In order to test our hypotheses, simple regression analyses were conducted.

The presence of high correlations (generally 0.90 and higher) is the first indication of substantial collinearity (Hair et.al, 2010). Since correlation results mentioned above (see Table 2) were not close to the value of .90, it was ensured that there was no multi-collinearity between the variables. In addition, the second measure of multi-collinearity is the variance inflation factor. If VIF value is lower than 10, then it means there would be no multi-collinearity between the variables (Sipahi et.al, 2008). For all regression analyses conducted for this research, it was found that all VIF values were lower than 10. Consequently, we can say that there is no multi-collinearity between research variables.

The relationship between group cohesiveness and organizational silence

In order to test Hypothesis 1 ("Group cohesiveness contributes negatively to organizational silence"), simple regression analysis was conducted. As it can be seen in Table 3, group cohesiveness was negatively related (Beta=-.202; p=.003) with organizational silence, however, it can only explain 3.6 % of the total variance in employee silence behavior (F=8.819, p<.05). Thus, *Hypothesis 1 was supported*.

Table 3. The Effect of Group Cohesiveness on Organizational Silence

Dependent Variable	Organizational Silence		
Independent Variable	Group Cohesiveness		
Adjusted R^2: 0.036	**F test:** 8.819	**Significance:** .003	
Variable in equation	**Beta**	**T**	**p**
Group Cohesiveness	-.202	-2.970	.003
N:210			

The relationship between psychological safety and organizational silence

In order to test Hypothesis 2 ("Psychological safety contributes negatively to organizational silence"), simple regression analysis was conducted again. As presented in Table 4, psychological safety was negatively related (Beta=-.538; p=.000) with organizational silence and it can explain 28,6 % of the total variance in employee silence behavior (F=84.659, p<.05). Thus, *Hypothesis 2 was supported.*

Table 4. The Effect of Psychological Safety on Organizational Silence

Dependent Variable	Organizational Silence		
Independent Variable	Psychological Safety		
Adjusted R^2: 0.286	**F test:** 84.659	**Significance:** .000	
Variable in equation	**Beta**	**T**	**p**
Psychological Safety	-.538	-9.201	.000
N:210			

The relationship between competitive work environment and organizational silence

In order to test Hypothesis 3 ("Competitive work environment contributes positively to organizational silence"), simple regression analysis was conducted. As presented in Table 5, competitive work environment was positively related (Beta=.281; p=.000) with organizational silence, however, it can only explain 7.5 % of the total variance in employee silence behavior (F=17.862, p<.05). Thus, *Hypothesis 3 was supported*.

Table 5. The Effect of Competitive Work Environment on Organizational Silence

Dependent Variable	Organizational Silence		
Independent Variable	Competitive Work Environment		
Adjusted R^2: 0.075	**F test:** 17.862	**Significance:** .000	
Variable in equation	**Beta**	**T**	**p**
Competitive Work Environment	.281	4.226	.000
N:210			

The relationship between control over work and organizational silence

In order to test Hypothesis 4 ("Control over work contributes negatively to organizational silence"), simple regression analysis was conducted. As presented in Table 6, control over work was negatively related (Beta=-.347; p=.000) with organizational silence and it can explain 11.6 % of the total variance in employee silence behavior (F=28.387, p<.05). Thus, *Hypothesis 4 was supported*.

Table 6. The Effect of Control Over Work on Organizational Silence

Dependent Variable	Organizational Silence		
Independent Variable	Control Over Work		
Adjusted R^2: 0.116	**F test:** 28.387	**Significance:** .000	
Variable in equation	**Beta**	**T**	**p**
Control Over Work	- .347	-5.328	.000
N:210			

In order to test the research question, regression analyses are implemented to explore the mediating role of motives of silence between the independent variables and organizational silence. Tests are conducted for all silence motives, namely, "Fear-based Silence", "Prosocial-based Silence", "Opportunity-based Silence", "Helplessness-based Silence", "Individual-based Silence", and "Ignorance-based Silence". The results showed that "Helplessness-based Silence" fully mediated the contribution of "Group Cohesiveness" to "Organizational Silence" (see Table 7). For other motives, partial mediations were found between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Table 7. The Mediating Role of "Helplessness-Based Silence" between "Group Cohesiveness" and "Organizational Silence"

	R	Adj.R^2	F	B	T	P
Analysis 1	.256	.061	14.552			
Independent Variable: **Group Cohesiveness**				-.256	-3.815	.000
Dependent Variable: **Helplessness-based Silence**						
	R	Adj.R^2	F	B	T	P

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Analysis 2	.202	.036	8.819			
Independent Variable: **Group Cohesiveness**				-.202	-2.970	.003
Dependent Variable: **Organizational Silence**						
	R	**Adj.R²**	**F**	**B**	**T**	**P**
Analysis 3	.470	.214	29,395			.000
Independent Variable: **Group Cohesiveness**				-.089	-1.408	.161
Mediating Variable: **Helplessness-based Silence**				.439	6.927	.000
Dependent Variable: **Organizational Silence**						

5. DISCUSSION

Over the years, in related studies, researchers found different constructs that make employees unwilling to speak about organizational problems and most of them were examined as an antecedent of employee silence behavior. When most of the employees in an organization decide to remain silent about important organizational topics, silence behavior becomes a collective decision which is known as "organizational silence". Despite the various numbers of researches related with this topic, there are still large gaps about the nature of organizational silence and the reasons behind this phenomenon. For organizations, it is important to find the underlying factors of silence behavior and try to catch the opportunities to correct organizational problems for better performance. For this purpose, organizational management strategies need to develop a democratic and participative climate that motivates employees to speak freely in their work environment and break down the barriers such as being labeled negatively, blamed for the problem or retaliation. So, it is essential to develop a comprehensive understanding of when/why employees decide to remain silent and identify the underlying motives of this decision with the aim of avoiding the irrevocable costs of silence in the workplace. As many researchers (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003; Van Dyne et al., 2003; Briensfield, 2013; Knoll and Dick, 2013) have conceptualized organizational silence as a multi-dimensional construct based on a variety of different motives (acquiescent, quiescent, pro-social, opportunistic), the present study also aimed to identify the different types of antecedents/motives of employee silence behavior in organizations. Thus, we analyzed the relationship between group cohesiveness, psychological safety, control over work, competitive work environment and organizational silence. Also, the mediating role of motives of silence was explored. In this sense, the results of this study gave support for the hypotheses/research question presented in the introduction part.

According to Van Dyne et. al's (2003) recommendations, it is important to differentiate the motives of silence and investigate the relationships between these motives and other organizational variables. In consideration of the related results, we found six silence motives that can form a basis for employee silence behavior which are crucial for understanding the nature of this organizational concept. Besides, some of the silence motives emerged as an important variable that linked independent variables and organizational silence, thereby lending further support to the important role of this collective phenomenon.

In conclusion, our study provides empirical support for the evidence that organizational silence is driven by not just individual attitudes/perceptions, but also by group-level beliefs (group cohesiveness) and organizational dynamics (competitive work environment). Further, it also became apparent that employees' psychological safety and control perceptions influence their decisions about choosing to remain silent. Identifying with the group, working in an environment of rivalry, being free of judgmental attitudes, and having discretion over work processes seem to influence organizational silence. With these results, the study has shed light on several potential antecedents of organizational silence.

Moreover, the model of organizational silence is extended by showing the effect of silence motives on employees' silence decisions. In case of silence motives, it seems that some of them make employees become more or less concerned about speaking up and more or less willing to be constructive. According to our mediation analysis results, helplessness-based silence motive plays a mediator role between group cohesiveness and organizational silence in line with the previous findings. In cohesive groups, employees feel more secure and strong because of the various reasons related with group identification, so when the feelings of risk/helplessness decreases, it is more possible to share their opinions with group members without any concern or doubt. Along with partial mediations observed, it may be asserted that employees are influenced by silence motives (individual-based, helplessness-based, opportunity-based, fear-based) dependent on their own individual, group

or organizational level beliefs. These results can be seen as an important source of support regarding the invisible, complex, and multi-dimensional nature of employee silence behavior in organizations.

One limitation of our study is the fact that all data in our survey was gathered via self-reports from employees, raising the possibility of common method variance. In self-report studies, respondents may exaggerate their answers to make their situation seem worse, minimize the importance of problems in order to look less extreme or they can feel too embarrassed to provide private personal information.

Additionally, the convenient sample for this study consists of 210 employees but studies with a much larger sample size would be required for the generalization of the findings of the study. Besides, all analyses for the test of the model were done at the individual level but it is necessary to conduct new studies at the group/organizational level analysis for the scientific validity of the results.

Our results have important implications for organizational/group managers who wish to encourage their employees to express themselves freely in organizations. Managers have to redesign organizational hierarchies to ease upward transfer of information about organizational issues/problems and focus on the causes of silence through the eyes of employees. Organizational managers should focus on creating an atmosphere where employees would feel safe to speak up in the workplace by developing high quality social relations with subordinates. Another important implication of this research is the variety of different underlying motives for employee silence behavior. Whereas prior research on employee silence has mainly focused on silence in response to perceived risks associated with speaking up, this research has shown that motives for silence other than fear of consequences are also common. Not only do employees remain silent because they rationally decide to avoid a certain risk, as was supposed by many scholars before, they can also choose to remain silent for other reasons. These reasons are not always based upon a rational choice of costs and benefits, but also based upon emotion and implicit beliefs about voice (Brinsfield, 2013; Detert and Edmondson, 2011). This information is useful for managers for understanding the scope of silence behavior in organizations and developing effective strategies for the management of silence in the workplace.

The research reported in this study confirmed the expectation that significant relationships exist between organizational silence and the independent variables but we suggest further investigation for exploring other psychological and behavioral antecedents of employee silence behavior. We also believe that future research should combine organizational level, group-level, and individual level antecedents of organizational silence in a longitudinal study which involves repeated observations of same variables over long periods of time. Morrison (2011) insistently emphasizes researchers to conduct multi-level analysis on silence by asserting that only personal factors, group factors or organizational factors may not provide a complete understanding of silence behavior. Accordingly, we recommend researchers to consider other individual/group/organizational level predictors that shape work environments leading to organizational silence.

Finally, we recommend methods that mix qualitative and quantitative data from different samples, conduct more cross-national/cross-sectoral studies, and explore the moderating/mediating role of additional psychological variables and other contextual factors such as caring climate, instrumental climate, independence climate, and hierarchical structure on employee silence behavior in organizations.

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