ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Organizational Silence and Organizational Commitment: A Study of Turkish Sport Managers

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ABSTRACT

Background. There is a limited number of studies investigating the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence, especially in the sports sector. **Objectives.** This study aims to examine the effects of organizational silence perception on organizational commitment behaviors of employees in the sports sector in Istanbul. **Methods.** The participants of this study were 294 professional employees from sports organizations in Istanbul, Turkey. Participants completed the organizational silence scale (Van Dyne, Ang and Botero, 2003) and the corporate commitment scale (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The relations between sub-dimensions of organizational silence and organizational commitment are tested with factor analysis, correlation analysis and SEM Partial Least Squares. **Results.** The results of this study have shown that there is a relationship between organizational silence and organizational commitment. While examining the sub-dimensions of both variables, acquiescent silence was a negative effect on the continuation and normative commitment; defensive silence was also a negative effect on affective and normative commitment; prosocial silence was the only positive effect on continuance commitment. **Conclusion.** Defensive silence and acquiescent silence affect organizational commitment negatively, whereas prosocial silence has a positive effect on it. The reason for these different results that organizational silence and organizational commitment variables may be subjected to statistical analysis based on sub-dimensions in this study.

KEY WORDS: *Acquiescent, Affective, Continuance, Defensive, Normative, ProSocial*

INTRODUCTION

As modern organizational environments diversify, the environmental and communication processes within them become more and more complex. As a result, employees have been identified as useful sources of feedback to address and solve their problems at work (1, 2). Employees are crucial to the success of organizations and they are recognized as organizations' sources of change, creativity, learning and innovation (3). Nevertheless, research has shown that employees, when asked by their management, often feel insecure about expressing their views and opinions due to the fact they feel that their comments and suggestions may upset the existing balance and organization or managers. This feeling of insecurity of employees causes them to remain consciously or unconsciously silent (4). In a changing world, organizations need employees who express their ideas, respond to the demands of the external environment, are not afraid to share information and knowledge, and are committed to their organizations.

Despite the importance of empowering personnel and new communication channels in working environments where employees need to

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take more initiatives, some fears due to lack of trust in employees' organizations are still an essential obstacle for the employees (5). This situation negatively affects the employees' commitment to their organizations.

The human factor plays a crucial role in today's management not only in achieving the goals of the organization but also in fierce competition with its competitors. Organizations are aware that they need to work in cooperation with their employees to achieve success. Because the motivation, opinions and thoughts of the individual affect the productivity and productivity of the enterprise. If the employees do not express their views and ideas, organizational silence perceptions emerge if a stable, silent environment prevails in the enterprise. Organizational silence is the situation in which employees do not knowingly and intentionally express their opinions about a subject within the organization for various reasons (6).

The quality can be increased by prioritizing the continuous development of employees' knowledge, skills and abilities. Organizational voice can be an authoritative source of organizational commitment. However, research reveals that although employees trust themselves, they hesitate to express their opinions and believe that it is risky to participate in discussions or speak openly. In this case, it is determined that employees are generally reluctant to talk. This situation makes it possible to determine that employees are usually reluctant to speak, and that makes them unwilling to talk. On the one hand, many academics emphasize the necessity of upward communication for the health of the organization and the importance of different and multiple views for a practical decision.

On the other hand, many employees find vertical communication within the organization confusing. Therefore, organizational silence is seen as a dangerous obstacle to organizational change as well as commitment and it is expressed as a subject that needs serious research (7, 8). Besides, various studies suggest that employees consider sharing their ideas a risky action (9).

Aside from sport, a lot of research has been done for both variables in the literature, and many questions have been asked about these two variables. However, there are still some unanswered questions on these issues. Therefore, a research question is raised to better understand the effects of organizational silence on organizational commitment: Is there a relationship between organizational silence and organizational commitment in Turkish Sport Managers?

This study tries to explain the relationship between organizational silence and organizational commitment for the first time in the sports sector in Turkey. The first section uses national and international literature to define the concepts of organizational silence and organizational commitment. In the second part, empirical data is explained as well as data collection and analysis. Based on these empirical findings, the third section analyses organizational silence and organizational commitment. As a result, the discussion summarizes the main conclusions.

Organizational Silence. Organizational silence is defined as the fact that the employee, who can change or correct the situation, does not transmit real statements in terms of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of the perceived facts about the status of the organization (10-12).

In some studies conducted after Hirschman's study, organizational silence was considered as a lack of sound, which means acceptance. Further, organizational silence defines as the fact that employees do not consciously share their concerns and ideas about organizational problems with management and keep them for themselves (11). This concept is often known as the fact that employees do not express their thoughts, concerns and suggestions about organizational problems or issues that concern them.

Some employees would not always like to share any information with other people, with senior management in particular, when they come up against various problems with their jobs (13). Employees may sometimes choose remaining silent instead of talking when they consider cost-benefit analysis. According to the definition of organizational silence, it is defined as saying very little in response to essential problems faced by an organization or sector (14). Organizational silence, on the other hand, is defined as the fact that the employee who can change or correct the situation does not transmit real statements that are perceived and thought about the status of the organization in terms of behavioral, cognitive and emotional aspects (10, 12). According to Albert Hirschman, when employees feel that something is wrong with the organization, they often have negative consequences such as increased

dissatisfaction, reduced commitment to the organization and work, and increased intention to leave (15).

This situation is the silence and consent of the employees, even in the negative circumstances in the working environment, and it is considered as an indicator of commitment to the organization (16). In some studies conducted after Hirschman's study, organizational silence was considered as a lack of sound which means acceptance. Besides, organizational silence defines as the fact that employees do not consciously share their concerns and ideas about organizational problems with management and keep them for themselves (11). This concept is often known as the fact that employees do not express their thoughts, concerns and suggestions about organizational problems or issues that concern them (17).

Organizational silence also implies a lack of information on ongoing activities in the institution. Therefore, inter-process disruptions and communication disruptions may occur, and this may cause problems that cannot be solved in time and cause a slowdown in operation. These slowdowns and outages constitute the conceptual framework of the issue of organizational silence, which creates significant problems for organizations (12). Organizational silence is divided into three different types (18). These are acquiescent silence defensive silence prosocial silence.

Acquiescent silence includes passive behavior. It tends not to be involved in working organizational processes as a requirement of submissive behavior. For this reason, acquiescent silence leads the employee to resignation behavior that is a kind of indifference towards the change and development of silence behavior (18).

Defensive silence was described by Morrison and Milliken (2000) as the hide of information, ideas, and thoughts for self-protection of the employee. Defensive silent employees prefer to remain calm as a personal strategy by acting proactively to use the alternatives in their favor in the future. This silence is fundamentally different from accepted silence and is more active than accepting silence. Based on defensive silence, there is a fear of making suggestions or speaking for change (18).

Prosocial silence is also referred to as silence for the benefit of the organization. This silence, devotion, and cooperation depending on the work-related ideas, information and ideas, are stored for the benefit of the organization or other colleagues (19).

Organizational Commitment. Organizational commitment is the result of employees' experiences with their organizations. In the Organizational Behavior literature, it is a variable that is of great interest to researchers (20). Organizational commitment is accepted as an essential factor that determines the behaviors of employees in their organizations (21, 22). Engagement is the factor that connects employees to the organization and helps the organizational success (23) since employees who are devoted to their organizations often feel that they are in harmony with their organization.

Organizational commitment characterizes employee's relationship with the organization and a psychological condition that will affect the decision of the organization to continue or not to continue membership. It is the power that binds an individual to be single or more goals (22). Organizational commitment behavior can be defined as the employee's acceptance of the goals, objectives, and values of the organization and the willingness to make efforts on behalf of the organization (24).

Allen and Meyer (1991) proposed an analytical perspective of organizational commitment and divided it into three identifiable components. These components are affective, continuance, and normative commitment (24). This model establishes a psychological bond that defines the relations of employees with the organization and determines their future actions concerning the organization. Meyer and Allen's aim to develop this model was to contribute to behavioral studies and to provide a framework for further research (25). Therefore, this study is based on the organizational commitment model developed by Meyer and Allen.

Affective commitment is conceptualized as a psychological condition that characterizes the relationship of employees with their organizations (26). Employees with strong affective commitment identify with their organizations and become more determined to achieve their goals (27, 28). More specifically, employees with emotional commitment tend to stay in their organizations. Therefore, this type of commitment occurs as a result of the overlap between the values of organizations and employees.

Continuance commitment can be defined as awareness of the costs associated with the leaving of employees from the organization (29). Since this commitment reflects the cost of moving the organization, any factor that increases perceived costs is considered a side bet or investment. These costs include side bets or stakes made by employees during their work in their organizations; wages may involve the reduction of pensions, benefits, duties, status or opportunities (25). Therefore, the most crucial reason for the continuation of employees in their organizations is the side bets and investments that increase the costs to the employees.

Normative commitment comes from an individual's sense of moral duty and value system. There are periods where organizations postpone payments and pay salaries to employees, but those with high normative commitment do not want to leave their organizations during these bad times (24). Several researchers address this form of duty as an obligation to maintain membership in the organization for reasons such as the culture of organizations (21). The culture of the organization predicts appropriate and acceptable behavior (30). Organizational culture includes elements such as universal values, beliefs, assumptions, traditions, and standards that affect how corporate members behave in an organization (31).

In this context, there are few studies in the sports sector related to the perception of organizational silence, which are among the variables that directly affect the organizational commitment behaviors of the employees. Therefore, it is considered essential to see the practice of these two concepts in the sports sector. For this purpose, it is aimed to examine the effects of organizational silence perception on organizational commitment behaviors of employees in the sports sector in Istanbul. Thus, the hypothesis of the research is developed as follows:

H1- Acquiescent Silence has a negative and significant effect on Continuance Commitment.

H2- Acquiescent Silence has a negative and significant effect on Affective Commitment.

H3- Acquiescent Silence has a negative and significant effect on Normative Commitment.

H4- Defensive Silence has a negative and significant effect on Continuance Commitment.

H5- Defensive Silence has a negative and significant effect on Affective Commitment.

H6- Defensive Silence has a negative and significant effect on Normative Commitment.

H7- ProSocial Silence has positive and a significant effect on Continuance Commitment.

H8- ProSocial Silence has a positive and significant effect on Affective Commitment.

H9- ProSocial Silence has positive and a significant effect on Normative Commitment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Organizational commitment stays at the center of the research model. In the study, it will be examined whether there is any relationship between organizational silence and organizational commitment. In the current study, there were three dependent variables including acquiescent silence, defensive silence and prosocial silence, while the independent variables were continuance commitment, affective commitment and normative commitment (Figure 1).
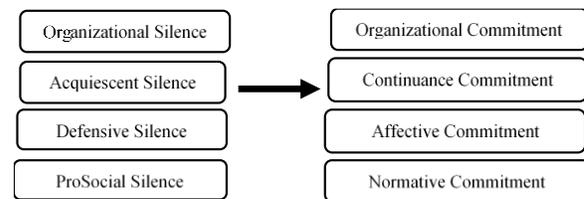

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Participants. The sample of this study consisted of 294 employees selected by the volunteer sampling method among sports professionals who are working in Istanbul Sports Sector. 74.1% (n = 218) of the participants were male, 25.9% (n = 76) were female, and 56.5% (n = 166) of the participants were single. The largest age group was 25-34 years with 36.4% (n = 107); 63.6% (n = 187) of the participants are university graduated. Among the participants, 28.6% (n = 84) the group of 5000 TRY, and over were the most dominant group in terms of monthly income. Moreover, when we look at the sector of the participants, the public sector was the largest group with 57.8% (n = 170). As we examine the working period in profession and institution, the largest working period in the profession was 14 years and over 28.2% (n = 83), and the largest working period in the institution was 1-2 years with 32.3% (n = 95).

Procedure. After official approval from governmental, municipal, and public bodies, sports professionals were informed about the objectives and use of the information.

Professionals voluntarily participated in an online questionnaire. The survey is consisting of 48 items and demographic variables to sports professionals who are working in the Istanbul sports sector. The descriptive survey method is preferred to analyze the perceptions of organizational silence and commitment of sports professionals. A total of 294 responses were preserved for analysis.

Measurement. The research was quantitative research, and the questionnaire was chosen as the data collection tool. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used in the survey. The survey consists of two parts. In the first part of the questionnaire, there are demographic questions about the participants' gender, age, marital status, education and income status. In the second part, there are 15 statements to determine the silence levels of the workers, while there are 24 statements to assess the levels of organizational commitment. The survey was conducted between 1 June and 15 August 2019.

In the study, one scale developed by Linn Van Dyne, Soon Ang, and Isabel Botero in 2003 for "Organization Silence." Another range developed by Meyer and Allen in 1991 was used for "Organizational Commitment." The validity and reliability of the scale were examined by confirmatory factor analysis. Reflective scales were used for all variables (32). To evaluate the psychometric properties of the measurement instruments by using the SmartPLS program, a null model without any structural relationship was calculated. Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) parameters are used to calculate reliability. For all measurements, Cronbach's alpha and PLS based CR values are above the threshold value of 0.70 and AVE values exceed 0.50 characteristics.

Data Analysis. Partial Squares (PLS-Smart 3.0 package program) method was chosen as a method within the scope of the "Structural Equation Model" (SEM) to analyze the measurements and structural variables discussed in the research. The PLS method represents a new component-based method and approach that differs from conventional covariance-based approaches such as Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) and Linear Structural Relations (LISREL). In SEM, classical plans based on covariance are suitable for models with up to 8 latent variables and large sample groups. In contrast, Component-Based SEM approaches

(PLS) are included in the literature as an optimal method of analysis for smaller sample groups and for complex models (no upper limit for latent/latent variable numbers is specified in the PLS model) (33).

RESULTS

Table 1 shows factor loads for endogenous variables. The standardized loading of the measurements on the relevant concepts was calculated by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and it was found that all the measurements tested in convergent validity showed that a standardized loading is exceeding 0.60 to their factors (Table 2).

Table 1. Factor Loads for Endogenous Variables

	Values
Continuance	
Continuance5	0.795
Continuance6	0.817
Continuance7	0.773
Continuance8	0.813
Affective	
Affective1	0.783
Affective2	0.610
Affective3	0.838
Affective4	0.637
Affective7	0.739
Acquiescent	
Acquiescent1	0.724
Acquiescent2	0.860
Acquiescent3	0.831
Acquiescent4	0.873
Acquiescent5	0.817
Defensive	
Defensive1	0.703
Defensive2	0.623
Defensive3	0.879
Defensive4	0.914
Defensive5	0.901
Prosocial	
Prosocial 1	0.885
Prosocial 2	0.884
Prosocial 3	0.804
Prosocial 4	0.803
Prosocial 5	0.891
Normative	
Normative1	0.657
Normative4	0.814
Normative5	0.719
Normative6	0.805
Normative7	0.803

Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) parameters are used to calculate reliability. For all measurements expect external, Cronbach's alpha and PLS based CR values are above the threshold value of 0.70 and AVE values exceed 0.50. After that, the "Pearson Correlation Analysis" was used to examine the relationship between organizational silence and organizational

commitment. The correlations between the variables are given in the Table 3.

Table 2. Reliability and Validity Values

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Continuance Commitment	0.812	0.876	0.639
Affective Commitment	0.776	0.846	0.528
Acquiescent Silence	0.880	0.912	0.677
Defensive Silence	0.868	0.905	0.660
Prosocial Silence	0.907	0.931	0.730
Normative Commitment	0.819	0.873	0.581
Continuance Commitment	0.812	0.876	0.639

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker and Latent Variable Correlation Values Regarding Measurement Model

	Continuance	Affective	Acquiescent	Defensive	Prosocial	Normative
Continuance	0.799	-	-	-	-	-
Affective	0.409	0.726	-	-	-	-
Acquiescent	-0.300**	-0.050	0.823	-	-	-
Defensive	0.324	-0.473**	0.036	0.813	-	-
Prosocial	0.278**	0.110	0.720	0.031	0.854	-
Normative	0.488	0.685	-0.102**	-0.474**	0.043	0.762

* P < 0.05; ** P < 0.01

Table 4. Path Analysis Values Concerning the Structural Model Testing of the Research

	Original Sample (β)	P Values
Acquiescent Silence ≥ Continuance Commitment	-0.300**	0.041
Acquiescent Silence ≥ Affective Commitment	-0.050	0.003
Acquiescent Silence ≥ Normative Commitment	-0.102**	0.021
Defensive Silence ≥ Continuance Commitment	0.324	0.000
Defensive Silence ≥ Affective Commitment	-0.473**	0.000
Defensive Silence ≥ Normative Commitment	-0.474**	0.000
ProSocial Silence ≥ Continuance Commitment	0.278**	0.041
ProSocial Silence ≥ Affective Commitment	0.248	0,001
ProSocial Silence ≥ Normative Commitment	0.187	0,042

* P < 0.05; ** P < 0.01

Table 5. Structural Model

R^2	Endogenous Variables	Compliance Index	Saturated Model
0.202	Continuance Commitment	SRMR	0.073
0.254	Affective Commitment	NFI	0.806
0.249	Normative Commitment		

According to correlation results:

A significant (** p < 0.01) and negative (r = -0.300) relationship between acquiescent silence and continuance commitment

A significant (** p < 0.01) and negative (r = -0.102) relationship between acquiescent silence and normative commitment

A significant (** p < 0.01) and negative (r = -0.473) relationship between defensive silence and affective commitment

A significant (** p < 0.01) and negative (r = -0.474) relationship between defensive silence and normative commitment

A significant (** p < 0.01) and positive (r = 0.278) relationship between prosocial silence and affective commitment

Besides, the square root of the AVE values is higher than the correlation pairs. Thus, it can be said that our measurements meet the required validity and reliability criteria. The following Table 4 shows the results of the hypothesis tests, path analysis.

As shown in the Table 5, the results confirm some hypotheses. When the effects of perceptions of silence on organizational commitment are examined; first sub-dimension of acquiescent silence has a negative and significant effect on continuance (β = -0.300, p < 0.01) and normative commitment (β = 0.102, p < 0.01). Second, sub-dimension of defensive silence has a negative and significant effect on affective commitment (β = -0.473, p < 0.01) and normative commitment (β = -0.474, p < 0.01). Third, the sub-dimension of prosocial silence has a positive and significant effect on continuance commitment (β = 0.278, p < 0.01). However, other findings do not support the existence of a statistically significant relationship between the sub-dimension of silence and commitment. Lastly, the following Table 5 shows the results of the structural model of the research.

When the structural model is examined, it is seen that the model explains 20% (R^2 = 0.202) of the change on continuance commitment; 25% (R^2

= 0.254) of the difference on affective commitment, and 25% ($R^2 = 0.249$) of the change on normative commitment. According to the indices of fit, NFI is calculated as 0,806. NFI value is excellent between 0.9-1 and a good model between 0.8-0.9. Therefore, our model seems to be within acceptable limits for NFI. SRMR value should be less than 0.08. The SRMR value for this model is calculated as 0.073, which again indicates that the model provides the necessary threshold values. Therefore, our model is considered as a "good" model from the point of fit indices.

DISCUSSION

This study disclosed the relationship between organizational silence and organizational commitment in the sports sector in Istanbul. In the studies investigating the relationship between organizational commitment and silence, different results were found to be positive (34-37). Those concluding that there is a positive relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence, that the employees with high commitment perceptions feel indebted to their organizations may cause them to remain silent in the face of problems. Those concluding that there is a negative relationship interpreted that employees who are internally affiliated to the organization can express their ideas about improving their organizations by actively accepting the values of the organization and seeing themselves as citizens of the organization (38-42). The reason for these different results may be the analysis of the relationship between the two variables based on sub-dimensions. The results of the relationships between the sub-dimensions of both variables in the study are as follows:

Acquiescent silence was found to have a negative and significant impact on continuance and normative commitment. In other words, when employees' perception of acquiescent silence increases, it causes a decrease in extension and normative commitment behavior. Therefore, employees with a high level of emotional commitment to their organizations choose to share their ideas with both colleagues and managers to make a difference when they need it. Thus, the findings of the sports sector employees in Istanbul support the acquiescent silence literature. This finding is similar to some studies in the literature (34, 43, 44).

Defensive silence was also found to have a negative and significant impact on affective and normative commitment. In other words, when employees' perception of defensive silence increases, it causes a decrease in affective and normative commitment behavior. Even if an employee has ideas, projects, and processes that can bring solutions or improvements to change, he feels reluctant to express this to the other party. The basis of this situation is fear, which way comes in many ways, such as the fear of the negative perception of the ideas shared by employees and the fear their knowledge may harm their relationship with other employees or managers. Thus, the findings of the sports sector employees in Istanbul support defensive silence literature. This finding is similar to some studies in the literature. It is recommended that sports organizations should create an organizational culture where employees can easily express their ideas.

Prosocial silence was only found to have a positive and significant impact on continuance commitment. In other words, when employees' perception of prosocial silence increases, it also causes an increase in continuance commitment behavior. Therefore, employees with a high level of continuance commitment to their organizations choose to share their ideas with both colleagues and managers to make a difference when they need it. Thus, the findings of the sports sector employees in Istanbul support the acquiescent silence literature. This finding is similar to some studies in the literature (44-46).

There is a limited number of studies investigating the relationship between organizational commitment and organizational silence, especially in the sports sector. This study aimed to fill this gap in the literature. It is understood that the results of these studies and other studies in the novel are partially similar. The reason for these different results that organizational silence and organizational commitment variables may be subjected to statistical analysis based on sub-dimensions in this study.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while defensive silence and acquiescent affect organizational commitment negatively, prosocial silence has a positive effect on organizational commitment. The reason for these different results that organizational silence and organizational commitment variables may be subjected to statistical analysis based on sub-dimensions in this study. These findings show

that silence is a severe form of communication and should be perceived as an employee's behavior towards the organization. Employee engagement dimensions are both related and active with this behavior. Based on this research, a comparative study can be done by integrating into different organizational cultures variables.

APPLICABLE REMARKS

- It should establish communication channels in which employees can express their opinions openly and freely.

- Employees who freely share their ideas and thoughts they will both show more commitment behavior and less intention to leave work.
- Employees with high commitment behavior make share less out company information.
- Employees should take their opinions into account and respect their advice when making decisions about their jobs.
- Organizational communication and cooperation between units should be increased.
- Organizations should create an organizational culture that prioritizes employees' thoughts.

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