WHY DO EMPLOYEES REMAIN SILENT? THE EFFECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract

This study aims to comprehend and explain how organizational justice perception, which is believed to influence the silence of employees, impacts the unwillingness of employees to express themselves. The study sample, selected using the convenience sampling method, includes 471 individuals employed in different industries in Ankara, Turkey. A survey was administered to the study participants for data collection. The tools used for the data collection process were Van Dyne, Ang and Botero's (2003) organizational silence scale and Colquitt's (2001) organizational justice scale. Results from the study found that organizational justice perception has a general influence over the silence behavior of employees. However, the analyses performed on the sub-dimensions of both variables have shown that the effects observed varied. Comprehensive data and evaluations regarding the results derived from the study will be presented in the following sections of this paper.

Key Words: Distributive justice, interactional justice, organizational silence, organizational justice, procedural justice.

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Çalışanlar Neden Sessiz Kalır? Algılanan Örgütsel Adaletin Etkisi

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, çalışanların örgütlerine ilişkin destek algısının sessizlik davranışları üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmektir. Örgütsel Destek Kuramı, Örgütsel Sessizlik Modelleri ve literatürde yer alan araştırma sonuçlarına dayalı olarak geliştirilen hipotezleri test etmek amacıyla, Ankara'da farklı sektörlerde çalışan ve rastgele örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen 337 kişi üzerinde bir araştırma yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre çalışanlarca algılanan örgütsel destek, kabullenici ve savunmacı sessizliği azaltmaktadır. Buna karşın pro-sosyal destek üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi bulunmamaktadır. Elde edilen sonuçların kuramsal açıdan yorumu ve ilgili yazına katkıları sonuç ve değerlendirme kısmında tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Dağılım adaleti, etkileşim adaleti, örgütsel sessizlik, örgütsel adalet, prosedür adaleti.*

INTRODUCTION

Different reasons govern the general unwillingness of employees to provide information or speak to their superiors (Roberts and O'Reilly, 1974; Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin, 2003). However, many advantages can be derived, in organizational terms, when employees openly express their opinions and suggestions about organizational matters(Spencer, 1986; Wilson and Peel, 1991; Dutton and Ashford, 1993; Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Liang, Farh and Farh, 2012), whereas the reluctance to speak or the hiding of certain information from superiors leads to negative results, such as the weakening of the organizational decision-making process and the reduction of the effectiveness of the organizational development process (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin, 2003). For this reason, it is important to understand the conditions responsible for creating organizational silence and to identify the individuals and organizational dynamics responsible for affecting these conditions.

Pinder and Harlos (2001) stated that organizational injustice is one of the most significant determiners of employee silence behaviors. Only a few empirical studies have been conducted on the relation between employee justice perceptions and silence behaviors. This study, therefore, has attempted to comprehend the relation between organizational justice and organizational silence. The results from this study, which was conducted on a national scale in Turkey, shall serve to contribute to the body of knowledge on the relation between organizational justice and silence.

In the literature review performed, it was observed that previous studies analyzing the relation between organizational justice and silence have addressed this subject in a one-dimensional manner, focusing primarily on the single topics of organizational justice or justice procedures, (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008; Naktiyok, Kızıl and Timuroğlu, 2015; Meydan, Köksal and Kara, 2016) or on organizational silence (Tulubaş and Celep, 2012; Meydan, Köksal and Kara, 2016). This narrow focus makes it impossible to interpret the dimensions of organizational justice from the viewpoint of its changing effects on organizational silence types. To reconcile this deficiency and contribute to a better understanding of the effect of justice on silence, this study analyzes three justice dimensions and three silence types within the same model.

Considering all the above, this study aims to analyze the effect that organizational justice perception, which can be assumed to be the premise of organizational silence, has on the phenomenon of employee silence. The analysis conducted as part of this study shall seek to demonstrate how the cause and effect relationship between these two phenomena is shaped, and to determine whether or not this effect changes according to the types of organizational justice. The study hypotheses, which were developed based on the relevant theories and research results, are tested using an empirical research method.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Silence

In contrast to the concept of employee silence, which is described as the practice of employees refraining from expressing their actual opinions and/or behavioral, cognitive and/or emotional evaluations about organizational conditions to those who are believed to be capable of fixing these conditions (Pinder and Harlos, 2001), Morrison and Milliken (2000) regard this subject as a phenomenon that operates at the organizational level. Accordingly, organizational silence is described as the adoption of a behavioral practice that avoids communicating information about potential problems or issues commonly encountered at the organizational level.

Many underlying reasons and motives account for the decision of employees to remain silent about certain matters in their organization (Morrison and Milliken, 2003). Van Dyne et al. (2003) classified three employee motives that lead to three types of silence behaviors: lack of commitment, self-protection and protection of others. The silence behaviors developed out of these motives are examined in three dimensions: silence of acceptance (based on trust in God and submission), defensive silence (based

on the motive of self-protection due to fear), and prosocial silence (based on self-sacrifice and protecting others) (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Silence of acceptance is the acceptance of a current situation due to the unawareness that alternatives do exist under the organizational conditions (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). In other words, individuals accept the conditions they are in and avoid speaking because they do not have sufficient information about the presence of any other options other than those existing at the time. These types of individuals tend to avoid spending effort to change the situation, as they believe that talking is unnecessary and that even if they did talk nothing would change; that or they lack confidence in their personal ability to effectively change the current situation. Among the three types of silence, the silence of acceptance is the only one with a passive nature (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Defensive silence is the state of silence whereby employees consciously opt to remain silent due to the fear of the results of their talking (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). Defensive silence is a conscious, proactive behavior, since individuals exhibit it for the purpose of protecting themselves. Employees are aware of the alternatives, yet they hold to the belief that the best strategy currently available to them is to keep their information, opinions and thoughts to themselves (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Van Dyne et al. (2003) expanded the concept of silence by adding a third type, never before described in the relevant literature, called prosocial silence. Prosocial silence occurs when employees refrain from expressing their opinions, ideas and thoughts about the business in order to protect the interests of the organization or the other employees. With this type of silence being an optional form of behavior, it cannot be managed by the organization. Some examples of prosocial silence behaviors include keeping a secret of the organization, avoiding talking about personal information of the other employees and keeping inside information to themselves, without sharing it with outsiders. Just as in defensive silence, employees are aware of the fact that they have alternatives, yet they remain silent for the sake of others or of the organization rather than for the sake of protecting themselves from the negativities they might experience (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

In general, the phenomenon of organizational silence is more harmful for the organization than beneficial. A multi-dimensional approach towards this phenomenon shows that among the three types of silence, only prosocial silence is functional for the organization. Considering the motives of defensive silence or silence of acceptance, it is not surprising that they act as a barrier to organizational change (Morrison and Milliken, 2000) or organizational performance (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Organizational Justice as an Antecedent of Silence

Organizational silence is described as the perception employees have of whether or not they are treated fairly in the organization (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). The question, "What do employees depend on when evaluating justice in their organization?", has led to the emergence of the organizational justice dimensions. Although there are still disagreements about what organizational justice entails, it is generally addressed as a three-dimensional topic, namely, distributional justice, procedural justice and interactional justice (Niehoff and Moorman, 1993; Özmen, Arbak and Özer, 2007; Yürür and Demir, 2011).

Distributional justice is the perception employees have about justice in terms of the attainments they are able to achieve in return for the work they do. Procedural justice involves employee perceptions about the methods, mechanisms and processes applied for the decisions enacted to achieve these attainments (Greenberg, 1993). Lastly, interactional justice, proposed by Bies and Moag (1986) as the third type of justice, is the evaluation of justice conducted by employees based on the quality of their relations with other individuals. Bies and Moag have referred to it as "the communication criterion of justice". While procedures reflect the structural quality of the decision-making processes in the organization, interactional justice functions as the social exchange between two persons.

From the viewpoint of the organization, numerous attitudes and behaviors (positive or negative) are shaped by employee perceptions of justice (Moorman, 1991; Konovsky and Organ, 1996; Moorman, Blakely and Niehoff, 1998; Masterson et al., 2000; Blakely, Andrews and Moorman, 2005; Lavelle et al., 2009; McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992; Martin and Bennett, 1996; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Yürür, 2008; Zapata-Phelan et al., 2009; Greenberg, 1990; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997; Fox, Spector and Miles, 2001). Accordingly, employees display positive attitudes and behaviors towards their organizations or managers when they believe that they are treated fairly, whereas they display behaviors that may result in negativities for the organization when they perceive unfairness. The Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) argues that employees operate within both an economic and a social system of exchange in their organizations, and that they would desire to pay for the social benefits offered to them by their organizations. The content of social exchange is the contributions presented by both sides based on mutual trust and commitment, rather than the contributions and benefits that are prescribed by certain rules, as in economic exchanges. In this regard, social exchange is more valuable for employees (Rupp and Cropanzano, 2002), and employees who feel that they have a high-quality social exchange with their organizations will consider

the act of doing something beneficial for their organization as their own benefit, and even view it as a responsibility (Lavelle, Rupp and Brockner, 2007). The concept of mutuality (Gouldner, 1960) involves the idea that the benefits offered by one side to the other is much more valuable for the receiver when it is offered entirely out of personal will instead of an obligation. According to the results of the studies mentioned above, organizational justice functions as another symbolic source for which employees wish to return the favor. Otherwise stated, employees who perceive their organizations and managers as fair desire to reciprocate the courtesy with positive attitudes and behaviors, the likes of which involve sharing their ideas. It may be suggested that the employees who perceive their organizations and managers as fair will not hide their ideas about organizational problems or issues that serve to secure the best interest of the organization, and would wish to return this fairness.

An analysis of the literature on organizational silence shows that many efforts have been devoted to better understanding the particular reasons for the posture of silence exhibited by employees (Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin, 2003). Pinder and Harlos (2001) argued that the culture of injustice is one of the factors related to organizational context and therefore functions as one of the reasons behind employees remaining silent. Under this belief, the culture of injustice creates systematic unfairness in the organization and discourages the employees who are treated unfairly from speaking.

In the model produced by Morrison and Milliken (2000) in their attempt to explain the organizational and managerial mechanisms responsible for triggering organizational silence, they cited two factors that supported the climate of silence, namely, the managers' actual fear of receiving negative feedback and the covert beliefs entertained by managers. According to this model, two of the three beliefs that lead to a climate of organizational silence are the conviction that managers are unreliable and take into consideration the personal interests of their employees, and that the management knows best about what's important for the organization (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Both of these manager beliefs will create conditions that are in contrast to the qualities attributed to the fair processes outlined in organizational justice literature. Tyler (2000) asserted that people feel they are treated fairly when they are given the opportunity to actively participate, through the proffering of their opinions and suggestion, in the processes involving the resolutions of any problems or conflicts they may have. In addressing procedural justice theories, Thibaut and Walker (1978) emphasized that procedures that give the right of control to the sides that are actually in conflict with one another during the conflict resolution process are perceived to be fairer. As illustrated from the above studies taken from

the literature, the premises of silence and the premises of justice perception on organizational justice create overlapping organizational conditions.

The Group-Value Model (Lind and Tyler, 1988), which attempts to explain why the fairness of organizational procedures is so important for employees, is yet another theoretical framework that can be used to explain the correlation between organizational justice and the behavior of silence. According to this model, the perceived fairness of organizational procedures is important not because these procedures will create conditions beneficial to employees (Instrumental Model), but rather because they are an indicator of the value given to the employees in the organization. In other words, fair procedures provide positive feedback to employees about their membership in the group they belong, while unfair procedures communicate negative messages to them. Accordingly, fair procedures are effective in the creation of the senses of pride and respectability, both of which facilitate organizational association in individuals (Tyler and Blader, 2003; Blader and Tyler, 2005). In this situation, fair procedures will help to prevent employees from adopting a stance of silence and encourage them to act in the best interest of the organization.

The attitudes and behaviors exhibited by managers are important determinants of employees' decisions to speak or not to speak (Vakola and Bouradas, 2005; Detert and Burris, 2007; Burris, Detert and Chiaburu, 2008; Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2012). The need of employees to believe that the voicing of their opinions and ideas will be effective is an important reason for this. Being effective involves their managers listening to them and acting upon their suggestions. Managers who consult their subordinates when making decisions help to reduce the practice of silence by encouraging them to believe that they can change something (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2012). Managers, therefore, who expect their employees to make suggestions about work-related matters and actually take these suggestions into consideration should encourage them to talk to their superiors about organizational matters. Similarly, it is argued that the strongest determinant of the behavior of silence is the attitude adopted by the head supervisor (Vakola and Bouradas, 2005). Managers who allow their employees to freely express themselves will facilitate a set of proper channels whereby opinions can be conveniently voiced. As most employees are inclined to see their managers as a representative of the company, their perceptions of the relationship with their managers will affect their attitudes (e.g. commitment) towards their organizations (Simons and Roberson, 2003). According to the Leader-Member Exchange Theory, which was created based on the assumptions of the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), every employee has a social exchange relationship with his or her manager, and the quality of this exchange influences the behaviors and attitudes of employees. In theory,

a high-quality exchange is described as an exchange relationship which depends on mutual trust, respect and responsibility between employees and managers (Janssen and Van Yperen, 2004). Studies have shown that employees who find this exchange relationship to be of high quality and fair undertake more responsibility and are more likely to voluntarily contribute to the units in which they work (Liden and Graen, 1980). Therefore, the employees who believe that they are in a fair relationship with their managers will prefer to speak their mind instead of remaining silent.

An analysis of the national and international studies conducted on the correlation between organizational justice and silence (or the behavior of refraining from reporting, which can be seen as a type of silence) shows that the results of these studies largely support the theories and opinions explained above (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008; Siefert et al., 2010; Miceli et al., 2012; Tulubaş and Celep, 2012; Aküzüm, 2014; Ateş, Sözen and Yeloğlu, 2014; Siefert et al., 2014; Tan, 2014; Ünlü, Hamedoğlu and Yaman, 2015; Naktiyok, Kızıl and Timuroğlu, 2015; Meydan, Köksal and Kara, 2016). In other words, a high perception of justice in employees reduces silence in organizations. Kassing and McDowell (2008) also stated that there is a correlation between organizational justice perception and organizational opposition, adding that the opposing voices against the managers, those who are capable of affecting the circumstances that are present within the organization, tend to increase in proportion to more positive perceptions of justice, while impulses to leave the organization or hushed opposition is reduced. According to Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008), employees who have a perception that the organizational procedures are fair do not refrain from speaking with a sense of responsibility regarding the good of the team and professional commitment.

As stated previously, organizational silence emerges in three types (defensive, acceptance and prosocial), depending on the intention behind remaining silent (Van Dyne et al., 2003). These postures of silence, which materialize as a result of different motives, including trust in God, submission, fear-induced self-protection and sacrifice, and protection of others (Van Dyne et al., 2003) feature different dynamics. In other words, the silence of acceptance, which is created by the motive of 'It would be no use even if I did talk', and 'It will not change anything' is likely increased by the perception of injustice, since employees who do not find their organizations or managers to be fair will develop the belief that they cannot change anything by speaking. Likewise, employees who perceive their work environment as unfair will prefer not to speak on account of the motive of protecting themselves. Even if they are right, they will be afraid of suffering negative consequences by the unfair structure and practices, preferring instead to remain silent. This is described as defensive silence. Prosocial

silence emerges based on certain positive motives (Van Dyne et al., 2003). The conditions creating these motives are expected to be positive ones. As indicated in the Social Exchange Theory (Balu, 1964), employees respond to positive practices in their organizations with positive behaviors and attitudes. Confirmed by many studies, employees respond to negativities with negative behaviors, such as stealing (Greenberg, 1990). In this case, from the viewpoint of an organizational justice perception, it is expected that a high positive perception of justice will reduce defensive and acceptance silence and increase prosocial silence. The results of the studies that have been conducted to date indicate that this expectation is correct.

Two studies conducted in Turkey stated that the three dimensions of justice are negatively correlated with acceptance and defensive silence, while they are positively correlated with prosocial silence (Aküzüm, 2014; Tan, 2014). Recently, Naktiyok, Kızıl and Timuroğlu (2015) conducted a study with a sample involving research assistants and determined that positive perceptions of justice reduced defensive silence (silence with the purpose of protection) among both the research assistants in the Faculty Member Trainee Program (FMTP) and the other research assistants. The research results also showed that a positive perception of justice increased prosocial silence in the sample of FMTP assistants. Another study, conducted with teachers and having the same objective as the above study, found that there was a negative correlation between justice types and defensive silence, and a positive correlation with silence of acceptance and prosocial silence (Ünlü, Hamedoğlu and Yaman, 2015).

Based on the theoretical explanations provided above and the results of the empirical studies conducted on this subject which the researchers were able to access, the model and hypotheses of this study were determined to be as follows:
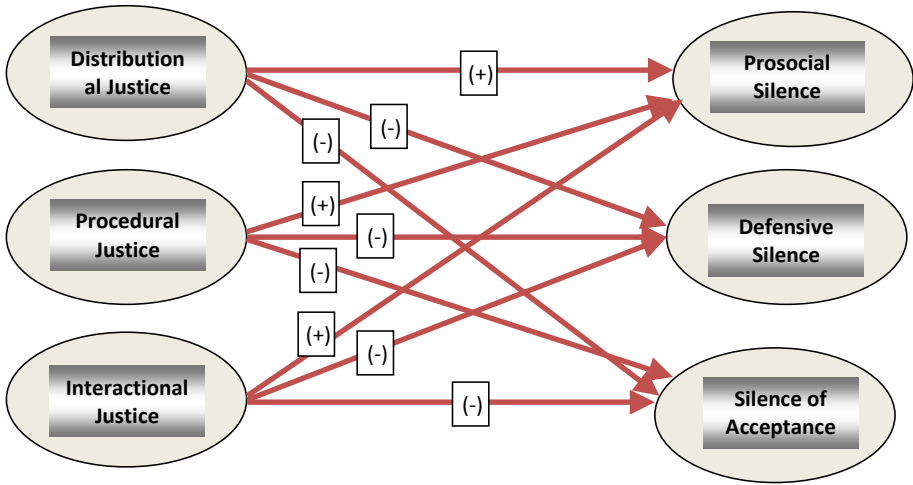
Figure 1.
Research Model

Hypotheses

H1. Distributional justice perceptions of employees have a positive effect on prosocial silence.

H2. Distributional justice perceptions of employees have a negative effect on prosocial silence.

H3. Distributional justice perceptions of employees have a negative effect on the silence of acceptance.

H4. Procedural justice perceptions of employees have a positive effect on prosocial silence.

H5. Procedural justice perceptions of employees have a negative effect on defensive silence.

H6. Procedural justice perceptions of employees have a negative effect on the silence of acceptance.

H7. Interactional justice perceptions of employees have a positive effect on prosocial silence.

H8. Interactional justice behaviors of employees have a negative effect on defensive silence.

H9. Interactional justice perceptions of employees have a negative effect on the silence of acceptance.

METHODOLOGY

Study Sample

The study was conducted with 471 employees who worked in different industries in Ankara, Turkey, and who were selected using the convenience sampling method. The question form, which was developed in conformance with the objective of the study, was given to each employee in closed envelopes and then retrieved from them after a determined period of time.

The average age of the 471 participants was 34 and the average number of their working years was 7.55, with the shortest duration of employment being one year, and the longest, 33 years. Among the responders, 57% were male. Regarding their marital status, 55.6% of the participants were married, while 44.4% were single. A majority of all participants, at 42%, had undergraduate degrees, 23.4% held graduate degrees, which is considered a very high rate, 17.6% were high school graduates, 12.5% were college (a type of university providing two years of education) graduates and 4.5% were middle school graduates. With respect to the participants' responses to their positions in the organizational hierarchy, 74.5% were employees, 21.2% were mid-level managers and 4.2% were senior managers.

Data Collection Tools

The study data were collected using the silence scale created by Van Dyne, Ang and Botero (2003). In this scale, defensive silence, prosocial silence and the silence of acceptance were each assessed in five statements. Employee organizational justice perceptions were assessed using Colquitt's (2001) four-dimensional organizational justice scale. Previous studies conducted in Turkey using this scale confirmed only three dimensions instead of four (Özmen et al., 2007; Yürür and Demir, 2011; Yürür and Nart, in the referees process). For this reason, this study also employed the organizational justice scale with a three-dimensional structure. All scales were identified as 5-point Likert type scales, with responses to the items ranging between "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". Analyses of the study findings were performed subsequent to identifying the missing observations in order to nullify their effect on the data set. Then, all analyses were conducted based on the cleared data set.

ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

Validity and Reliability Analyses

Validity and reliability analyses were performed on the scales used in this study. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 1, where it shows that the reliability levels of all scales were sufficient ($\alpha > 0.70$), and that the validity levels of the scales were within the acceptable limits.

Table 1. The Findings Related to the Reliability and Validity Analyses of the Scales

Scale	Number of Questions	Cronbach's alpha Coefficient	CFI	GFI	RMSEA
Defensive Silence	5	0.89	0.86	0.87	0.14
Prosocial Silence	5	0.78	0.76	0.77	0.16
Silence of Acceptance	5	0.84	0.83	0.86	0.13
Procedural Justice	7	0.81	0.86	0.92	0.14
Distributional Justice	4	0.86	0.98	0.99	0.10
Interactional Justice	9	0.90	0.89	0.86	0.14

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviation correlation values related to the study variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Values

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Procedural Justice	3.34	0.74		.512**	.634**	-.247**	-.197**	0.073
2. Distributional Justice	3.40	0.95			.534**	-0.09	-0.043	.172**
3. Interactional Justice	3.55	0.85				-.198**	-.140**	.144**
4. Silence of Acceptance	2.52	0.87					.582**	.210**
5. Defensive Silence	2.37	0.91						.296**
6. Prosocial Justice	2.91	0.69						

**The correlations are significant at the 0.01 significance level (two-tailed).

Table 2 shows that procedural justice had significant correlations with all variables, except for prosocial silence, which as expected, was in a negative direction compared to defensive silence and the silence of acceptance. In addition, interactional justice had significant correlations with all variables in the study. As with procedural justice, interactional justice had

a negative correlation with defensive silence and the silence of acceptance, which was also an expected outcome. In other words, there was a reduction in employees' defensive silence and silence of acceptance when there was an increase in procedural and interactional justice perceptions. An analysis of the correlation between distributional justice, an organizational justice type, and the different types of silence, indicated that only prosocial silence had a significant correlation with it. Other than this, the correlation between distributional justice and defensive silence and silence of acceptance, in contrast with procedural and interactional justice, was not statistically significant.

The Findings Related to the Tests of the Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study were tested using structural equation modeling, the results of which are presented in Figure 2.
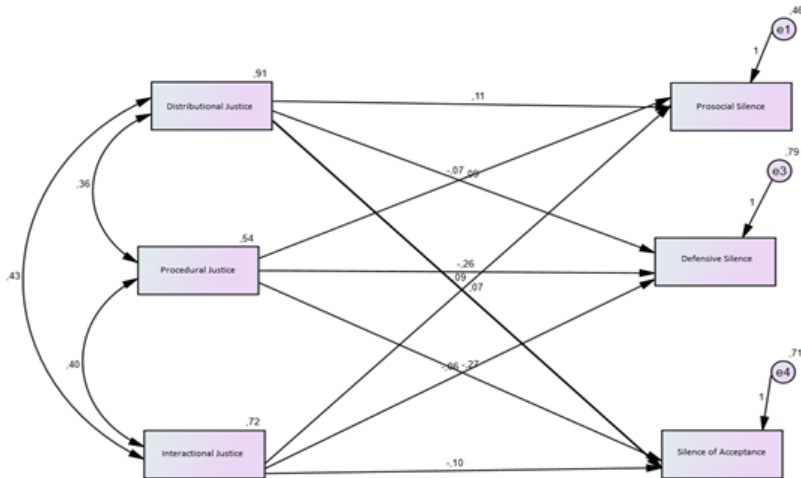

Figure 2.
The Findings Related to the Tests of the Hypotheses

Table 3 shows whether or not the coefficients in Figure 2 were statistically significant, while Table 4 shows whether or not the study hypotheses were supported.

Table 3. The Significance of the Coefficients in Statistical Terms

	Model1 Prosocial Silence	Model2 Defensive Silence	Model3 Silence of Acceptance
Constant	2.448*** (0.158)	3.141*** (0.208)	3.519*** (0.196)
Distributional Silence	0.110** (0.040)	0.091 (0.053)	0.069 (0.050)
Procedural Silence	-0.070 0.057)	-0.259** (0.075)	-0.266** (0.071)
Interactional Silence	0.089 (0.050)	-0.062 0.066	-0.098 (0.062)
R^2	0.036	0.045	0.068
F	5.886**	7.381***	11.271***

Table 4. The Results Regarding Whether or Not Hypotheses Were Supported

Hypotheses	Was the Hypothesis Supported?
H1. Distributional justice perceptions of employees have a positive effect on prosocial silence.	Supported
H2. Distributional justice perceptions of employees have a negative effect on prosocial silence.	Not Supported
H3. Distributional justice perceptions of employees have a negative effect on the silence of acceptance.	Not Supported
H4. Procedural justice perceptions of employees have a positive effect on prosocial silence.	Not Supported
H5. Procedural justice perceptions of employees have a negative effect on defensive silence.	Supported
H6. Procedural justice perceptions of employees have a negative effect on the silence of acceptance.	Supported
H7. Interactional justice perceptions of employees have a positive effect on prosocial silence.	Not Supported
H8. Interactional justice behaviors of employees have a negative effect on defensive silence.	Not Supported
H9. Interactional justice perceptions of employees have a negative effect on the silence of acceptance.	Not Supported

Tables 3 and 4 show that six out of the nine hypotheses of the study were refuted, while three were accepted. The employees' perceptions of distributional justice increased prosocial silence, while their perceptions of procedural justice reduced defensive silence and silence of acceptance (B=0.110; -0.259 and -0.266, respectively). A one-unit increase in the

perception of distributional justice explained 11% of the increase in prosocial silence, while the increase in the procedural justice explained approximately 26% of defensive silence and silence of acceptance each.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to facilitate a better understanding of how employee organizational justice perceptions affect organizational silence. The ability of employees to voice their opinions, ideas, reservations etc. and to actively participate in decision-making processes are important for organizations, insofar as these liberties serve to benefit organizations, through the provision of channels whereby employees can address and solve organizational problems (Liang, Farh and Farh, 2012), and to increase the effectiveness of decision-making processes (Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin, 2003). Employee silence can be attributed to various organizational and personal reasons and may even become a common practice in the organization, resulting in its development as an organizational behavior. When individuals do not share their suggestions, concerns or information related to organizational problems and thereby deprive the organization of a potential benefit, they are in effect displaying silence behavior (Morrison, 2014). Thus, the subject of organizational silence needs to be analyzed in terms of both the organizational factors and the personal factors responsible for creating this situation and the mechanisms that shape this cause and effect relationship. On account of all these reasons, this study examined the phenomenon of organizational justice as a premise of organizational silence.

Initial findings of the study showed that there was an overall relationship between organizational justice perception and employee silence behaviors. Regarding the dimensions of the two concepts, however, the only dimension of organizational silence that was found to affect defensive and acceptance silence was procedural justice. According to the study results, defensive and acceptance silence, both of which are regarded as non-functional by organizations, are reduced when employees perceive organizational procedures as fair (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Morrison and Milliken (2000) described the two conditions that characterize the climate of silence in an organization as follows: (1) Employee belief that speaking out is not worth it because nothing will change in regard to organizational problems, and (2) Their belief that speaking about the problems would have negative consequences. The first condition corresponds to the concept of silence of acceptance, while the second corresponds to the concept of defensive silence. Here, employees are essentially making a cost-benefit analysis. Simply put, employees speak when the effect of their speaking is

greater than the consequential cost that may accrue as a result of their speaking. Fair procedures, which have been described by Leventhal (1980) as procedural consistency, absence of prejudgments, based on accuracy of information, capability of correcting mistakes, the wills of all sides represented, and based on ethical standards, serve to create conditions opposite to the conditions stated by Morrison and Milliken (2000). According to Leventhal (1980), procedures that entail these qualities are perceived by employees as fair.

Among these qualities of fair procedures, specifically consistency, participation and having a basis of ethical standards, explain why the perception of procedural justice reduces silence. Consistency in the implementation of the procedures, in other words, ensuring that procedures do not change according to the person or time, helps employees to estimate what the consequences would be if they spoke, as previous practices will serve as a reference for them, thanks to the application of consistent procedures. Given this case, employees will be able to conveniently decide what would happen or how they could affect the process, if they spoke. When the procedures include participation, this creates an organizational environment where employees can better defend their interests in decision-making mechanisms and feel that they have control in the process. This dynamic points to an environment where individuals feel that they have the ability to impact decisions. As the presence of consistent procedural practices is compatible with ethical standards, these procedural practices are in agreement with the fundamental moral and ethical values of individuals (Leventhal, 1980). It is self-evident that procedures featuring these qualities will invert the silence conditions described by Morrison and Milliken (2000). Otherwise stated, the procedures create an organizational environment wherein employees believe that (1) they can change something by speaking, and (2) more importantly, speaking will not bear negative consequences. Therefore, individuals who have a high perception of procedural justice do not remain silent, and they do not avoid speaking about organizational matters.

Results from the study also found that among the organizational justice types, the perception of distributional justice alone affects employee prosocial silence levels. This means that employees who perceive the distribution of organizational resources to be fair remain silent for the interests of the organization or the other employees. Why, however, does distributional justice explain only prosocial silence and not affect the other silence types? Or, why is distributional justice the only dimension of organizational justice that explains prosocial silence? Here, the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) provides the answer, as it explains that individuals who perceive silence will adopt positive attitudes and behaviors

in correspondence to this situation. Because prosocial silence means that employees remain silent for the interests of the organization (Van Dyne et al., 2003), this type of silence can be seen as a positive behavioral reaction to the fair distribution of sources. Employees keep silent for the interests of the organization or for the employees when they perceive distributional decisions in the organization to be fair.

However, these explanations are not sufficient to explain the variable effects of procedural and distributional justice on the types of silence. One remarkable point in the study results was that the perception of procedural justice impacts the silence types that are seen to be non-functional for the organization (defensive silence and silence of acceptance), while the perception of distributional justice explains prosocial silence, which is said to be beneficial for the organization (Van Dyne et al., 2003). It has been stated, however, in the literature on organizational justice, that distributional and procedural silence lead to different results (Mcfarlin, Sweeney, 1992; Folger, Konovsky, 1989; Greenberg, 1990a; Tyler, 1991). This suggests that the perception of procedural justice is rather related to organizational results, while the perception of distributional justice acts as a significant indicator of personal results. In contrast with these results, this study found that the perceptions of procedural and distributional justice have different effects on those silence behaviors which emerge due to the intentions of remaining silent. Furthermore, the perception of distributional justice was found to increase positive silence (prosocial silence), while the perception of procedural justice reduced negative silence (defensive silence and silence of acceptance). From these results a question arises that has not yet been addressed by the relevant literature: Have the effects of organizational justice types on positive and negative employee attitudes and behaviors been changing? That is, does procedural justice reduce negative attitudes and behaviors and distributional justice increase positive attitudes and behaviors? Findings derived from the new studies recommended to be conducted with the purpose of answering this question will also contribute to the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) by adding another perspective. In the Social Exchange Theory, Blau (1964) focused on the positive behaviors of employees rather than the negative ones, as the avoidance of negative behaviors is not viewed as a 'response' in the terminology of exchange. At a later time, however, this theory was used to explain the relation between the perception of justice and the negative behaviors of employees (e.g. stealing among employees; Greenberg, 1990; Greenberg and Scott, 1996). Accordingly, the perception of injustice causes employees to develop negative attitudes and feelings, such as distrust and annoyance, towards their organizations, the results of which can lead employees to display behaviors that stand in opposition to the goals of the organization (e.g. feelings or acts

of revenge against someone, work behaviors not conducive to productivity) (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997; Skarlicki, Folger and Tesluk, 1999). The present study has addressed the question of whether or not the effect of organizational justice on the positive and negative attitudes and behaviors of employees changes according to the types of distributional and procedural justice. Further studies should, therefore, be conducted on this subject to better understand the dynamics governing these changes.

The final result obtained from this study indicates that the perception of interactional justice is not related to any type of silence. Both the Social Exchange Theory and the results of previous studies anticipated that employees who had high perceptions about the quality of their relationships with their managers would not display silence behavior. Although there is a lack of a direct correlation between these two variables, mediating variables may still be present. According to the Social Exchange Theory, employees have at least two important exchange partners, the organization and its manager. While the procedural justice perception of an employee depends on his or her exchange with the organization, interactional justice perception depends on the exchange between only one of these sides and the manager. Thus, procedural justice determines employees' attitudes and behaviors towards the organization, while interactional justice shapes employees' attitudes and behaviors towards their managers (Masterson et al., 2000; Cropanzano, Prehar and Chen, 2002). Organizational silence, which is measured by statements such as "I keep my opinions about any improvements that can be made to the work to myself, as I am worried about not being able to achieve them" or "I do not share my opinions about how to improve the work environment because it is not my business", is a type of behavior that is directed towards the organization rather than the manager. In this case, the lack of a significant correlation between organizational silence and interactional justice supports this argument. As stated in previously, the effect of procedural justice on defensive silence and the silence of acceptance also supports this opinion. To summarize, interactional justice does not affect organizational silence behavior, while the perception of procedural justice does have an effect on this behavior.

In taking a comprehensive review of the study results, greater clarity has now been added to ongoing discussions about the differentiation among the dimensions of organizational justice The results are pointedly in contrast with the approach that addresses procedural justice and interactional justice as the 'formal' and 'social' components of one structure, that is, the decision-making process (Folger and Bies, 1989; Greenberg, 1990a; Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1991), and instead support the studies that address them as separate structures (Masterson et al., 2000; Cropanzano, Prehar and Chen, 2002), given that all three justice types have been shown to have different

effects on the same variable (silence). Therefore, employee perceptions of these three justice types have different premises, dynamics and results. It is recommended that future studies on organizational justice examine employee justice perceptions based on the sub dimensions of organizational justice (distributional, procedural and interactional justice) rather than deal with this topic by looking at justice perception in general, as this will help to obtain more accurate and explanatory results.

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