

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND EMPLOYEE SILENCE IN NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OIL COMPANY (2015)

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Abstract: Current research aims at investigating relationship between transformational leadership and organizational culture and employee silence in National Iranian South Oil Company using structural equations model. To this end, 368 employees of National Iranian South Oil Company participated in the research. They completed transformational leadership and organizational culture and employee silence questionnaires. To analyze the data, structural equation modeling with LISREL software was used. Results showed that transformational leadership has direct, positive and significant impact on organizational culture. But its impact on employee silence was negative and significant. Organizational culture has direct, negative and significant impact on employee silence. In addition, transformational leadership indirectly has negative significant impact on employee silence through organizational culture. Overall, findings emphasize role of transformational leadership and organizational culture in employee silence.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, organizational culture, employee silence

INTRODUCTION

Efficiency and development of each organization is highly dependent on proper application of human resources. The larger becomes companies and organizations; problems of this great force are also increased. Undoubtedly capitalism of organizational knowledge is the key for sustainability in the highly competitive world. Source of knowledge generation is organizational discourse halls which encompass various and different discourses. If mouths of the organization are made silent, minds of the employees, which are source of organizational knowledge generation, would become fossilized. When employees, as strategic capital of the organization, are silent, the management should sense great risk for its management (Danaeefard and Panahi, 2010).

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Many organizations state that innovation process in their organizations is usually very slow and sometimes they fail in this regards. One of the reasons for weakness of innovation in the organizations is silence due to lack of appropriate space for presenting new ideas and sharing knowledge. Thus, accurate investigation of organizational behaviors which are obstacle for organizational learning and innovation in the organization and cause reduced motivation in employees for offering innovative and risk taking plans is necessary (Gambaroto & Cammozzo, 2010; Morrison, See & Pan, 2014). According to Bier and Nouria (2000) organizations needs employees which respond to environmental challenges and are not afraid of sharing their knowledge and information and are stable about their beliefs and group beliefs. However, despite achievement of this goal requires empowerment of employees and open communication channels, many employees believe that their organizations do not support from open channels of communication and sharing of information and knowledge. One of the main obstacles for change programs is lack of information, trust and the factor which is called s employee silence by Morrison and Milliken (2000) (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005; Morrison, See & Pan, 2014).

While employee silence covers the organizations, no quantitative research work has been allocated to employee silence. Morrison and Milliken state that silence has turn to a powerful force in the organizations, but not serious studies have been done on it (Morrison, 2014). The question is that why employees don't talk when they have potentially useful information about issues which don't have solution. There are many factors which influence it. This question is important for organizational experts to attempt to find its answer. Hence, the main research question in the current study is as follows: Do transformational leadership and organizational culture affect employee silence? In other words, current research aims at investigating effect of transformational leadership and organizational culture on employee silence in National Iranian South Oil Company.

BACKGROUND

Employee Silence

Employee silence was raised in 2001 in the organizational silence literature by the study of Morrison and Milliken (2000) on organizational silence (Morrison, 2014). According to Pinderand Harlos (2001), employee silence is perceived as avoiding any real expression about individuals' behavior, cognitive or emotional assessment of their organizational conditions for the people which are able to make change or compensate. According to the view of Pinderand Harlos (2001), employee silence can be analyzed at individual level, while Brinsfield et al. (2009) state that silence

may occur also at team and organizational level. They express that silence starts at individual level and then it may become prevalent among other team members and many people who do not want to talk. Brinsfield (2009) showed that employee silence is contagious, multi-dimensional and measurable that has significant relationships with other important organizational behavioral phenomena. Subsequent studies extended focus on silence about inequality to silence about any critical issue (Milliken et al., 2003; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008; Morrison, 2014). Individuals in the organization have ideas, opinions and information for providing constructive methods in their work and organization improvement. These functions represent a concept called organizational voice. Some individuals present these ideas and some others don't express their ideas, opinions, and information and keep silent. Expression of ideas (organizational voice) or not expressing them (organizational silence) may seem two opposite activities behaviorally, because silence requires not talking, while the voice needs expression of issues and problems present in the organization. However, the fact is that silence is not necessarily a phenomenon in contrast to organizational voice. In fact, difference between silence and voice is not in not speaking, rather it is in motivation of individuals for avoiding presenting information, ideas, and opinions (Afkhani Ardakani and Khalili Sadrabad, 2012; Timming, & Johnstone, 2015). Considering motives of employees for silence its nature is different. In this framework, there are three motives related to silence including withdrawal behavior based on surrendering and admitting to anything, self-protective behavior based on fear and social behavior due to interest in others and creating opportunities for collaboration with them (Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Tulubas & Celep, 2012; Cullinane & Donaghey, 2014; Wang & Hsieh, 2013).

Morrison and Milliken introduced this concept and showed that employee silence is a social phenomenon which is created at organizational level and it is influenced by many organizational features. These organizational features which include decision-making processes, management processes, culture and employees' perceptions are factors influencing silence behavior (Dimitris and Vakola, 2007; Greenberg & Edwards, 2009; Henriksen & Dayton, 2006). Overall, authors consider organizational silence as result of following origins: managers' worry about negative feedback, implicit beliefs which are often developed by the managers. Structures and methods used in the organization helps extending what which is called Climate of Silence. It is widely perceived among employees as talking about problems and issues in ineffective and dangerous. When such climate is dominant in the organization, the dominant reaction in the organization will be silence rather than idea expression. Thus, emergence of such climate and its strengthening depends on collective significant activities of the employees (Morrison and Milliken, 2000).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership theory is one of the theoretical frameworks in the world which was raised by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985). Transformational leader is one who encourages followers to act beyond which is expected (Bass, 1985; Qu, Janssen & Shi, 2015). Burns defines transformational leadership as the process in which leaders and followers direct each other to higher levels of ethics and motivation. Unlike traditional leadership theories, which mainly focus on logical processes, transformational leadership theory emphasizes on emotions and values. Today, transformational leadership plays significant role in increasing power of individuals and organizations in order to create, operate, renew and apply knowledge to create competencies needed to improve organizational learning (Grant, 2012; Mittal & Dhar, 2015). Transformational leadership influences role of employees (Judge & Piccolo, 2004) and ultra-role performance (Wang et al., 2011).

In transformational direction of subordinates and commitment to them regarding organizational missions, firstly the leaders should motivate employees using clear vision of the missions and future of the organization. Creation of vision does not suffice and transformational leaders should encourage and help followers for working in direction with created vision. The second condition related to transformational leadership is creating such situation in which the leader is source of ideal influence and he acts as the pattern and model and creates trust in employees, so that they feel proud of working in the organization. Third condition is that they should help subordinates in achievement of mission through their mental simulation for challenging their old assumptions regarding issues and organizational methods. In using these three factors, essentially transformational leadership directs, inspires, and empowers the employees (Wright & Pandey, 2009).

Transformational Leadership Aspects

Transformational leadership includes four aspects including inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation and individualized considerations which are known as 4Is.

A. Idealized Influence

This aspect explains leaders which act as strong models for the followers. Also, pride, charisma, respect and undisputed loyalty of followers of leadership transfer idealized sense (Moghli, 2004). Idealized influence causes that leaders are viewed as models of behavior for the followers. If a leader is transformational it will create appreciation, admiration and loyalty among the followers and importance of having strong commitment to achieve organizational missions is emphasized (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009 - Li, Zhao & Begley, 2015). In this aspect, the leader

specifies high standards for moral and spiritual behavior and such leaders are admired, respected and trusted by the subordinates (Northouse, 2015), and subordinates want to imitated their leader. Central core of this aspect is creation of values which are inspiring and provide purposefulness for the people (Fernet et al., 2015; Linde, 2004).

B. Inspirational Motivation

This factor describes leaders which increase commitment of followers through participating them in drawing future outlook and they motivate (Ergenelia et al., 2007). Motivation and increasing motivation in followers is done with reliance on their emotions and the emphasis is put on internal emotions and motives rather than on daily transactions between leader and followers (Tonkehnejad, 2006; Li, Zhao & Begley, 2015). Inspirational motivation increases understanding of followers about missions of organization and encourage then for perceiving the mission, which is a key element in this aspect (Northouse, 2015). In addition, the mission (or vision) denotes essential basis of the organization (Linde, 2004).

C. Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation is stimulation of followers by the leader in order to discover new solutions and rethinking on solving organizational problems by the followers. In fact, the leader's behavior creates such challenge for the followers so that they rethink about the work they do (Fernet et al., 2015; Tonkehnejad, 2006). In this aspect, leaders stimulate their followers through raising questions and specific assumptions, specifying problems and approach g old situations to new ones. There is no general and public criticism of mistakes of the group members. New ideas and creative solutions are asked from the subordinates so that they are involved in problem solving and finding solutions (Bass et al., 2003).

D. Individualized Considerations

Individualized considerations mean paying attention to individual differences of followers and communicating with them and stimulating them through relegating responsibilities for learning and supervision and supportive behaviors (Fernet et al., 2015). Individuals are supported by the leaders and leaders worry about their personal emotions and needs (Tonkehnejad, 2006). Transformational leaders pay special attention to their followers which denotes respecting them and serving as the trainer (Dogger et al., 2007). Individualized considerations occur when the leader serves his followers in line with achievement of their optimal needs and attempt for development of their potential capacity (Horwitz et al., 2008). Creating new opportunities for learning in supportive climate, diagnosis and acceptance

of individual differences in having specific needs and values, using mutual communication are behaviors for achievement of Individualized considerations. Considering this aspect, the leaders actively and effectively listen (Hoy&Miskel, 2008).

Behaviors of leaders play significant role in determining precautionary behaviors of employees (Wang and Jiang, 2014). In comparison with other forms of organizational behavior including Organizational citizenship behavior, silence occurs mostly due to ethical space (Wang & Hsieh, 2013), and decision by subordinates for speaking require more encouragement and psychological security (Detert & Burris, 2007). Creating an ethical and secure organizational climate is affected by the leaders and their appropriate behaviors (Shin, 2012). Studies indicate that leadership style influences organizational silence (Detert& Burris, 2007; Zahari & Shurbagi, 2011; Wang & Hsieh, 2013; Hsiung, 2012).

Organizational Culture

Concept of organizational culture is growing importance in the organizational and management studies and the number of studies in this field has been increased considerably since 1980s (Shafritz, Ott & Jang, 2014). Culture as a concept originates from fields of social anthropology and sociology. Overall, the term culture is used for specifying an organization or a group of people within a social structure. Culture describes roles and interactions which originate from norms and values in social traditions or beliefs and attitudes in the field of social psychology. Organizational culture includes beliefs, views, norms, assumptions and shared values which are available in the organization. In other words, it is the way of performing works by the organization (Gunter & Furnham, 2014; Panagiotis, Alexandros & George, 2014).

Hill and Jones (1998) define organizational culture as “shared rules and values of internal members of the organization” (quoted by Hill, Jones& Schilling, 2014). Organizational culture can be defined as shared and essential assumptions which the organization learns to cope with the environment and solve problems resulting from external and internal environment adaptation cohesion. For the new members, it is learning proper way of learning to solve the problems (Williams & Glisson, 2014). Organizational culture can be a source and origin for movement and dynamicity, creativity and innovation or an obstacle for their progress (Hogan & Coote, 2014; Efrat, 2014; Mohamadi et al., 2015; Hadizadeh et al., 2005). Organizational culture is a complicated issue which manifests the organizational past and memory and influences current status of the organization and transfers organization’s past to its future (Iivonen, 2004).

Organizational culture determines individual and group behavior and plays significant role in success of organizational programs (McDermott & O’Dell, 2001;

Leal-Rodríguez et al., 2014). When the organization has strong culture, individuals are directed toward the organization and its goals so that they view themselves as part of the organization. In the strong culture, the main emphasis is on the spirit and creativity and innovation and it is done easily due to strong cultural influences (Chatman et al., 2014; Hadizadeh et al., 2005).

Organizational culture constitutes behavior of employees in the organization and has important effect on behavior of managers and employees at all organizational level and it can influence ability for a strategic orientation change. Organizational culture can enhance communications and coordination structure in the organization. It helps in preserving health of the organization through creation of work teams, harmony, and solidarity between the various parts which contributes to continuous quality improvement. Therefore, understanding the organizational culture as a major need is at the top priority of activities of the managers in the organizations (Amin Mozaffari et al., 2008).

Results of studies indicate culture influences formulation of objectives, individual behavior, motivation, creativity and innovation, decision making, amount of employee contributions in affairs, dedication and commitment, job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness (Büschgens, Bausch & Balkin, 2013; Hogan & Coote, 2014; Tsai, 2011; Dwivedi & Kaushik, 2014; Hartnell, Ou & Kinicki, 2011; Cheung, Wong & Lam, 2012). The other main effect of organizational culture is creating conditions which lead to organizational silence. Danaeefard, Fani and Barati (2011) found that organizational culture influences organizational silence.

Overall, review of literature indicates that no research has been conducted on relationship between transformational leadership and organizational culture and employee silence in *using structural equations mode*. Thus, *current paper aims at investigating relationship between transformational leadership and organizational culture and employee silence to enrich the research literature in this regards*.

Research Conceptual Model

Considering theoretical and research literature, research conceptual model is drawn in Fig 1. As observed, transformational leadership is regarded as the independent variable, organizational culture is regarded as a mediator variable and employee silence is considered as the dependent variable. The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

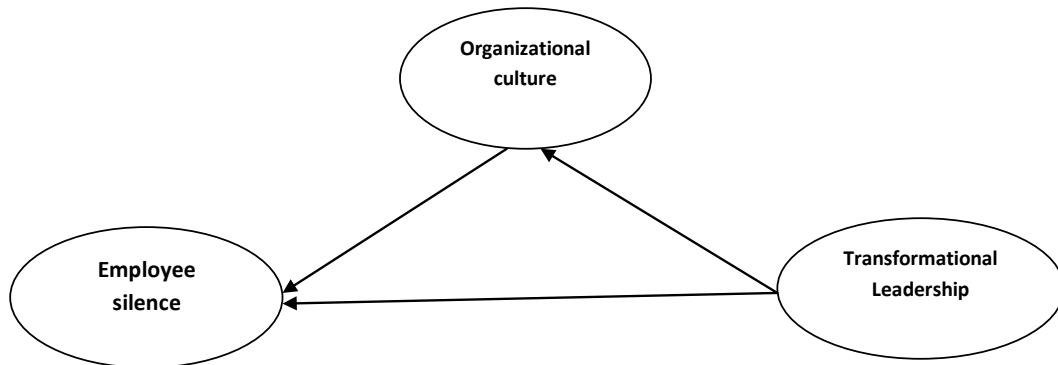
Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership influences organizational culture.

Hypothesis 2: Transformational leadership influences employee silence.

Hypothesis 3: Organizational culture influences employee silence.

Hypothesis 4: Organizational culture has mediatory role in relationship between transformational leadership and employee silence.

Figure 1: Research conceptual model



Methodology

Current research is descriptive (non-experimental) and research design is correlation of structural equations type, because relationships between variables are investigated in the form of causal pattern.

Statistical Population and Sample

Statistical population in the current research includes all employees of National Iranian South Oil Company. 368 of them were selected as sample randomly.

Data Collection Tool

In the current research, transformational leadership, organizational culture and employee silence questionnaires were used to measure the variables. To evaluate the validity and reliability of the variables, Cronbach's alpha coefficient and confirmatory factor analysis were used. Confirmatory factor analysis is in fact a theory test, in which the researcher begins his analysis with a previous hypothesis. This model, which is based on a strong theoretical and empirical foundation, determines which operating variables should be associated with which factors. For evaluating the construct reliability, a useful method is provided to the author so that hypotheses about factor structure of data resulting from a predetermined model with specific number and combination of factors are tested. Following specifying pre-experimental factors, confirmatory method tests optimal match between factor structures and theoretical ones for collection

of data. In this research, characteristics of χ^2/df , RMSEA, GFI and AGFI are used for evaluating confirmatory factor analysis. χ^2/df index lacks a constant criterion for an acceptable model, but small value for χ^2/df denotes better model fit (Hooman, 2008).

Brown and Kadek suggested using Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) which was provided as difference for each degree of freedom. RMSEA is 0.05 or smaller for good models. Higher values up to 0.08 suggest logical error for approximation in the population. Models with RMSEA as 0.10 or higher have weak fit. Joreskog and Sorbom (1989) introduced GFI and AGFI indexes in LISREL program which indicate the model to what extent has good fit toward its absence. By contract, GFI and AGFI values should be equal or larger than 0.90 so that the model is accepted (Hooman, 2008).

Transformational Leadership: For measurement of transformational leadership, Bass and Avolio's (2000) questionnaire is used. This questionnaire contains 20 items including ideal aspects (4 items), ideal behaviors (4 items), intellectual stimulation (4 items), inspirational motivation (4 items) and individualized considerations (4 items). Items are measured based on five-point Likert scale from never (1) to always (5). Psychometric properties of this questionnaire were approved by Bass and Avolio (2000). Internal consistency coefficient of this scale was obtained as 0.92 using Cronbach's alpha. Also, indexes obtained from confirmatory factor analysis, GFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.043, AGFI = 0.93, suggest good fit of model with data.

Organizational Culture: For measurement of organizational culture, Wilderom, Berg and Wiersma's (2012) questionnaire is used. It was formulated based on van den Berg and Wilderom's (2004) questionnaire. This questionnaire contains 22 items including aspects of empowerment (6 items), external orientation (6 items), inter-organizational participation (4 items), HR orientation (3 items) and improvement orientation (3 items). Items are measured based on five-point Likert scale from totally disagree (1) to totally agree (5). Internal consistency coefficient of this scale was obtained as 0.96 using Cronbach's alpha. Also, indexes obtained from confirmatory factor analysis, GFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.055, AGFI = 0.90, suggest good fit of model with data.

Employee Silence: For measurement of employee silence, questionnaire by Van Den et al. (203) is used. This questionnaire contains 15 items which measures submissive silence (5 items), defensive silence (5 items) and social silence (5 items). Items are measured based on five-point Likert scale from totally disagree (1) to totally agree (5). Internal consistency coefficient of this scale was obtained as 0.93 using Cronbach's alpha. Also, indexes obtained from confirmatory factor analysis, GFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.047, AGFI = 0.91, suggest good fit of model with data.

Data Analysis Method

Following calculation of descriptive indexes of research variables, structural equations model was used for investigating causal relationships between variables. To overcome limitations of previous methods, authors increasingly use structural equations modeling as a suitable solution. In comparison with regression methods, in which only one level of relationship between dependent and independent variables is simultaneously analyzed, it is possible to model relationship between several independent and dependent constructs as secondary method (Gefen, Straub, & Boudreau, 2000). LISREL and SPSS software was used for data analysis.

Results

Considering correlation matrix is basis for analysis in causal models, correlation matrix, means and SD of variables are given in Table 1.

Table 1
Correlation matrix for research variables

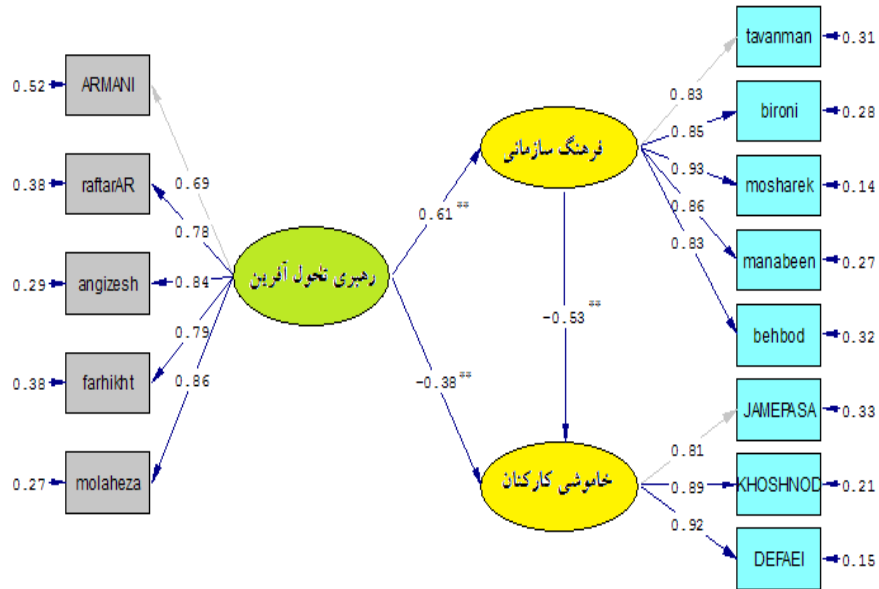
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Transformational leadership</i>	<i>Organizational culture</i>	<i>Employee silence</i>
Transformational Leadership	1		
Organizational culture	**0.65	1	
Employee Silence	-0.43**	-0.55**	1
Mean	3.16	2.91	3.14
Standard deviation	0.71	0.88	0.81

** P < 0.01

As observed in Table 1, correlation coefficient of all variables of transformational leadership ($r = 0.43$) and organizational culture ($r = 0.55$) with employee silence is negative and significant at level $P < 0.01$. Correlation coefficient of transformational leadership and organizational culture ($r = 0.65$) is positive and significant at level $P < 0.01$.

Figure 2 indicates fitted model of employee silence. Values on the paths are standardized parameters. According to Fig. 2, all paths are significant. Organizational culture has highest impact on employee silence.

Figure 2: Fitted model for employee silence prediction



Chi-Square=137.23, df=62, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.057

Since in the current research, mediatory role of organizational culture between variables of transformational leadership and employee silence is investigated using structural equations method, Table 2 gives coefficients of direct effect, indirect effect, total effect, described variance and significance level between research variables.

Table 2
Estimation of standardized coefficients of direct effect, indirect effect, total effect, described variance of model

Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	Described variance
To employee silence from Organizational culture	-0.53**	-	-0.53**	0.43
Transformational leadership	-0.38**	-0.32**	-0.70**	
To organizational culture from Transformational leadership	0.61**	-	0.61**	0.37

** P < 0.01

As observed in Table 2, direct effect of transformational leadership ($\beta = -0.38$) and organizational culture ($\beta = -0.53$) on employee silence is negative and significant at level $P < 0.01$. Direct effect of transformational leadership ($\beta = 0.61$) on and organizational culture is positive and significant at level $P < 0.01$. Also, indirect of transformational leadership ($\beta = -0.32$) on employee silence through organizational culture is negative and significant. According to Table 3, 43 percent of variance of employee silence and 37 percent of variance of organizational culture is described by the research model.

Features of fit for path analysis model are given in Table 3.

Table 3
Fit characteristics of structural equations model

<i>NFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>	χ^2/df
0.98	0.99	0.91	0.95	0.054	2.21

According to Table 3, chi square to degree of freedom ratio ($\chi^2/df = 2.21$), $GFI = 0.95$, $AGFI = 0.91$ and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ($RMSEA = 0.054$) are at good level. Thus, fit of model for prediction of employee silence is at acceptable level.

Discussion and Conclusion

Current paper aims at investigation of relationship between transformational leadership and organizational culture and employee silence in National Iranian South Oil Company using structural equations model. Results of structural equations showed there is good fit between the proposed model and research data and it can describe 43 percent of variance of employee silence.

Results of structural equations showed that transformational leadership has direct positive significant impact on organizational culture. This finding is consistent with findings by Bass and Avolio (1993), Jaskyte (2004), Shao, Feng and Liu (2012), Zahari and Shurbagi (2012) and Tipu, Ryan and Fantasy (2012). This finding indicates importance of transformational leadership in organizational culture as one of the distinctive points of successful organizations from unsuccessful organizations. This finding indicates shows since transformational leaders are always worry of innovation of the organization, they seek for nurturing organizational culture which is optimal in relation with empowering employees, external orientation, inter-organizational participation, human resources orientation and employee improvement. One of the main tasks of managers is forming and directing basic values and organizational culture. In fact,

essential role of leaders in the organization is management of the values. Even some authors measure great performance with achievement and dominance of excellence goals and values in the organization. Also, many authors have found that even if organizational goal is just profitability, without attention to values of organizational culture it is not possible to achieve its goals. Thus, managers should have necessary attention and investment on organizational culture.

Results of structural equation showed transformational leadership have direct, negative and significant effect on employee silence. This finding is consistent with findings by Detert and Burris (2007), Zahari and Shurbagi (2011), Wang and Hsieh (2013), and Hsiung (2012). This finding can be justified in this way that transformational leadership delegates authority to the employee, values employee empowerment, uses ideas of employees in organizational decision making, encourages them to express their ideas and invests for improvement and growth of employees, thus it causes reduction of employee silence. To this end, Bass et al. (2011) state that in transformational leadership, subordinates' potential abilities are developed and progressed through being considered, new opportunities for learning through supportive conditions in the organization are created, and personal differences latent in the needs and expectations are specified (Bass et al., 2003). New opportunities for learning in a supportive atmosphere, recognition and acceptance of individual differences in having specific needs and values, use of two-way and mutual communication and interaction are encouraged. In addition, transformational leadership stimulates subordinates through changing their attitudes and presumptions. With directing and inspiring individual attempts of their followers, these leaders create change in their followers through increasing their awareness toward importance of organizational outputs and products, and thus it leads to activation of higher level needs and stimulating going beyond personal needs for the sake of organization. Hence, their capability is increased. All of these features of transformational leadership lead to reduction of employee silence.

Results of structural equation showed organizational culture have direct, negative and significant effect on employee silence. This finding is consistent with findings by Harlos and Pinder (2001) and Danaeefard, Fani and Barati (2011). Organizational culture determines level of interaction between individuals in performing tasks in the organization and has negative influence on employee silence through knowledge sharing and employee empowerment and attention to employee improvement and progress. According to Morhed and Griffin (1995), organizational culture is a collection of values which help individuals in the organization to know which actions are acceptable or not acceptable for the organization and its members. In other words, organizational culture causes emergence and formation of innovative performance in the organization and

individuals through creation of competitive and risky situations and opportunities. In fact, it can be stated organizational culture can cause nurturing new ideas in people with impact on information sharing and employee empowerment and paying attention to HR and knowledge transfer. It encourages employees to express their ideas, opinions and suggestions and thus employee silence is reduced. Thus, it can be concluded that organizational culture considers empowering of employees, attention to human resources, inter-organizational participation, employee improvement and progress and it causes reducing employee silence and expressing proposals, solutions and organizational problems and issues.

Results of structural equation showed transformational leadership have indirect, negative and significant effect on employee silence through organizational culture. This finding can be justified as transformational leaders seek for providing a new path of growth for the organization by creating new ideas and outlooks, and mobilizes organizational members for creating fundamental changes in the foundation of the organization in order to acquire readiness and capabilities for movement in the new path and achieving higher levels of ideal performance with creating commitment and eagerness in the managers and employees. They talk skillfully about values and beliefs, the stimulate competition so that innovation in problem solving is grown and high level of trust, commitment, and admiration is developed in the employees (Balthazard et al., 2008). Thus, transformational leadership leads to creating such organizational culture which attempts for improvement, empowerment and participation of employees and hence employee silence is reduced, and employees are encouraged to innovation, creativity and expressing their idea about organizational issues.

Overall, in transformational leadership style, the leaders and followers cooperate with a shared vision so that they have collaboration and share their vision. Followers are able to imagine great picture and outlook and are perfectly committed and leaders can involve their intimate followers in outlook setting process (Li, Mitchell and Boyle, 2015). When both leader and follower are involved in the process, a transformational process not only occurs in interpersonal relationships, but also inside the organization. This sense of commitment to a larger outlook and mutual support and respect act as an adhesive leading to job satisfaction, increased empowerment, inter-organizational participation and employee growth and improvement and thus expression of ideas, suggestions and organizational issues. Then, employee silence is reduced. In this research, only a sample of employees in National Iranian South Oil Company was studied. Thus generalization of the findings to other organizations and companies has limitation. Also, findings are based on self-reporting data. It is suggested that qualitative and mixed research methods are used in the future works for identifying factors affecting organizational silence.

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