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Research Paper

Assessing the status of social capital and its relationship with organizational voice and silence in kermanshah university of medical science

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Abstract

The present study aimed to assessing the status of social capital and its relationship with organizational Voice and Silence in Kermanshah University of Medical Science in 2017-18. This research was an applied one in terms of the purpose and used a descriptive correlational design for data collection. The population included all employees working at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences (n = 350) and a sample of 186 subjects were selected using random stratified sampling method. Data were collected using three standard questionnaires including Social Capital by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1997), Organizational Voice by Hames, (2012) and Organizational Silence by Vakola (2005). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for measuring the reliability of the questionnaire: social capital questionnaire (0.96), organizational silence and organizational voice questionnaire(0.85), (0.95). In addition, the content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by professors and experts. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient via SPSS v. 21 software. According to the results, there is a negative and significant correlation between social capital and organizational silence (P = 0.01, r = -0605) and a positive and significant correlation between social capital and organizational voice (P = 0/001, r = 0.675) among the employees working at Kerman-shah University of Medical Sciences.

Keywords: *Social Capital; Organizational Silence; Organizational Voice; Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences.*

1. Introduction

From a traditional management perspective, economic, physical capital growth and workforce play a crucial role in the country's economic development; however, social capital has now been shown to be a key component of community development [1]. Social capital provides an appropriate platform for human and physical capital productivity and presents key steps to achieve success and organizational performance improvement [2]. Excellent communication skills are essential for good performance management. Most managers spend more than 75 percent of their time working on establishing communications and the quantity of communication to share the information within the network can promote capital [3], [4].

Therefore, understanding the role of social capital and its impact on other factors in organizational silence and organizational voice are of great importance. There are mechanisms and techniques for improvement the productivity of human capital including participatory management system and suggestion acceptance system. The efficiency and effectiveness of organization can be improved by increased contribution of capital in achieving the organizational objectives [5, 6]. Listening to the voice of employee (VoE) has a special significance in organizations, because, on the one hand, getting employees' ideas and opinions can offer several ways for resolving various persistent problems that plague all organizations, and, on the other hand, it is a reflection of employee's interests and views to the management [7].

Organizational voice is defined as a condition that occurs when management exhibits a positive attitude towards employee's voice, and in turn, they display a greater willingness to express their opinions and suggestions. Therefore, managers are more willing to give constructive feedback toward their employees resulting in an increased number of by employees [8]. In addition, according to Liu et al., although most employees may have some central thoughts and ideas, or are aware of a problem or issue within the organization, they do not like to express them directly [9]. Managers should be able to provide evidence-based management for their organization [10]. They make their decisions largely based on the incomplete and outdated information and rely on their judgment and intuition [11]. One of the major issues organizations are facing these days, particularly in the area of human resource, is the reluctance of employees to take part in organizational discussions. Literature provide evidence that increased silence behavior of employees is a hurdle for the organizational progress and can minimize their opportunities to display their creative, innovative and productive capabilities within the organization [12]. Organizational silence and creating and fostering an appropriate climate for organizational voices, as well as finding productive ways to deal with the silence are of great importance in contemporary organizational discussions, and managers thus need to pay particular attention to them [13].

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This topic has received considerable attention from researchers. For example, in the study by Makan et al (2015), it was found that a shortage of capital and excessive political behaviors in organizations may affect the employee's behavior so that a decline in social capital and increased number of political behaviors may lead to a climate of silence within the organization [5]. In another study by Sehitoglu and Zehir (2010), a significant negative correlation was shown between defensive silence and staff performance and a significant positive relationship between altruistic silence and employee performance. However, no significant relationship was observed between the submissive silence and employee performance [14]. The result of a study also showed that climate of silence plays a decisive role in the attitude of individuals, including their job satisfaction [15, 16]. In this regard, Ardalan and Ghanbari (2015) evaluated the role of transformational leadership in the emergence of organizational voices by analyzing the intermediate role of information and communication technology. Their findings indicated that transformational leadership has a significant impact on organizational voice and information technology [17]. Furthermore, according to the results of the study by Farsi (2013), creativity will occur in the organization when employees are motivated to work together and can share their ideas, information and knowledge within the organization's environment [18]. Takeuchi et al. (2012) also reported that different dimensions of organizational justice could create conditions for the emergence of employee's voice behaviors. He added that due to the high risk of voice behavior, employees with higher levels of justice communications are more likely to experience and display voice behaviors because they feel less confident when faced with their supervisors [19]. Further, Camps and Marques (2011) demonstrated that social capital promotes risk-taking behaviors for the development of novel projects, fosters a sense of both stability and security among the employees, encourages them to take on new challenges and induces them to suggest new ideas [20].

Furthermore, Detert and Burris (2007) found that employee's performance is positively correlated with their constant expression of viewpoints, acknowledging that the freedom to hold opinions without interference is one of their unique professional responsibilities [21]. Pervasive changes in the growing needs of information and education, innovation and creativity, continuous progress, and a shift into a flexible organizational structure build close links between organization and customer networks requiring immediate attention from corporate leaders to social capital as a valuable resource [22], [23]. However, low amount of social capital between employees and managers is one of the major problems of today's organizations. There is a remarkable gap among the employees, management, and their demands within the organizations, especially in government agencies. Therefore, employees exhibit a high level of stubborn characteristic for implementing decisions causing an increasing level of organizational silence and reducing social capital and organizational voices [24]. Since the schools of medical sciences operating in the field of education and sciences play a special importance in providing health services for the public and the successful delegation of tasks to employees depends on promoting favorable conditions for its occurrence in several respects, including availability of social capital and timely emergence of organizational voices as well as prevention of organizational silence; therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between social capital with organizational voice and organizational silence among the employees working at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences. The detailed objectives of this study can be summarized as follows: to determine the relationship between social capital dimensions (structural, cognitive, and relational) with organizational voices; relationship between social capital dimensions (structural, cognitive, and relational) with organizational silence and predictive power of organizational voice and silence of social capital in Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences.

2. Method

This study is quantitative in nature and used a descriptive correlational design for data collection. The population consisted of all employees working at six faculties of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences (N = 350). The sample size was estimated 186 using Krejcie and Morgan table. We used stratified random sampling for selecting the subjects. To collect data (social capital, organizational voice and organizational silence), three standard questionnaires including social capital by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1997) with cognitive dimensions (6 items), structural dimension (6 items) and relational dimension (12) [25], organizational voice by Katharine Hames, (2012) with 18 items including encouragement (6 items), safety (6 items) and efficiency (6 items) [26] and organizational silence by Vakola and Bouradas (2005) with 18 items [22] were utilized. The items were scored based on a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 1= disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for measuring the reliability of questionnaire: social capital questionnaire (0.96), organizational silence questionnaire (0.85) and organizational voice questionnaire (0.95). In addition, the content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by professors and experts. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient via SPSS version 21 software.

3. Findings

Our findings showed that of 186 subjects, 55.4% were female and 44.94% were male. 26.3% of the respondents were single and 73.7% were married. In addition, 11.8% of the employees had an associate degree, 39.2% a bachelor's degree, 29% a master's degree, and 19.9% a doctorate's degree. According to our findings, social capital has a higher average than other two dimensions (3.13 out of 5), so that the structural component with a mean value of 3.30 and cognitive component with a mean value of 3.02 gained the highest and lowest scores, respectively.

Table 1: Correlation Coefficient and Significant Level of Social Capital and Organizational Silence

Social Capital	Number	Correlation	Organizational Silence	
			Correlation Coefficient	Significant Level
	186	Pearson	-0.605	0.001

Based on the results presented in Table 1: There is a negative and significant association between organizational silence and social capital; it means that there is a negative and significant correlation between these two variables ($\alpha < 0.05$).

Table 2: Correlation coefficient and significant level of social capital with organizational voice

Social Capital	Number	Correlation	Organizational Voice	
			Correlation Coefficient	Significant Level
	186	Pearson	0.675	0.001

According to the results represented in Table 2: There is a positive and significant relationship between organizational voice and social capital; it means that there is a significant correlation between these two variables ($\alpha < 0.05$).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficient by the Components of Social Capital with Organizational Voice.

Variable		Dimensions of social capital		
		Structural dimension	Relational dimension	Cognitive dimension
Organizational voice	Pearson correlation coefficient	0.580	0.600	-0.748
	significant	0.001		

	level	
Number		186

According to the results represented in Table 3: There is a positive and significant relationship between organizational voice and social capital (structural, cognitive, relational); it means that there is a significant correlation between these two variables ($\alpha < 0.05$). Since the significance level of all three dimensions is close to zero and is less than significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), the above conclusion can be deduced.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Coefficient by Components of Social Capital with Organizational Silence

Variable		Dimensions of social capital		
		Structural dimension	Relational dimension	Cognitive dimension
Organizational silence	Pearson correlation coefficient	-0.557	-0.654	-0.640
	significant level	0.001		
Number		186		

Based on the findings shown in Table 4: There is a negative and significant relationship between organizational voice and social capital (structural, cognitive, relational); it means that there is a significant negative correlation between these two variables ($\alpha < 0.05$). Since the significance level of all three dimensions is close to zero and is less than significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), the above conclusion can be deduced.

The regression coefficient was used to predict the organizational voice variable based on the social capital. According to the results, with a unit of change in social capital (0.214), organizational voice will also increase (0.206) and social capital is able to predict 46 percent of the changes related to organizational silence. That is, social capital with beta (-0.678) has the power to predict silence behavior within the organization

4. Discussion

According to the findings, there is a correlation between social capital and organizational silence in Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences. The result of Pearson correlation test showed that there is a negative and significant relationship between social capital and organizational silence with an error level of 5%. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the findings of the study by Alvani (2013), suggesting a positive and significant relationship between social capital and knowledge management [8], Yildiz (2013) [27] and Camps and Marquez (2011), showing that social capital promotes risk-taking behavior for the development of novel projects and activities [20].

In addition, our results showed that there is a significant and negative correlation between social capital dimensions (structural, relational, cognitive) and organizational silence with an error level of 5%. That is, an increase in the dimensions of social capital can reduce organizational silence and vice versa. In addition, the findings of this hypothesis are congruent with the results of the study by Makan et al (2015), indicating that the lack of social capital and excessive use of organizational political behaviors affect the employee's behavior [5]. Our results also support the findings of the studies by Yaldiz [27], Comps and Marquez [20] and Elinger et al. (2013), demonstrating that social capital, commitment, and effort spent by the service staff have an impact on job performance and organizational citizenship behavior [28]. Further, a positive and significant correlation was found between social capital and organizational voice.

This finding is consistent with the result of the study by Makan et al (2015), investigating the impact of social capital and the perception of organizational political behaviors on the silence and organizational voice and reached the conclusion that the lack of social capital and excessive use of organizational political behaviors influence on employee's behavior [5]. Additionally, our findings are in agreement with the findings of the studies by Fanie et al [29], Cumps and Marquez [20] as well as Takeuchi et al [19], emphasizing the positive role of dimensions of organizational justice on the emergence of silence behaviors among the employees. A high level of shared understanding and attitudes between members of a social unit is enhanced where employees have a lot of opportunities to interact and communicate with one another [28].

Our findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between the relational dimension of social capital and organizational voice ($\alpha = 0.05$), suggesting a direct relationship between dimensions of social capital and organizational voice. That is, an increase in the dimensions of social capital contributes to the enhancement of organizational voices. These findings are in line with those findings of the studies by Ardalan and Ghanbari [17], showing that creativity will occur in the organization when employees are motivated to work together and can share their ideas, information and knowledge within the organization's environment [18], [30]. These results also support the findings obtained by Takeuchi et al. [19], Detert and Burris [21], Merlow et al., Sehitigloo and Zahir, who found a significant negative relationship between defensive silence and employee performance, as well as a significant positive correlation between altruistic silence and staff performance. However, they did not detect any significant relationship between submissive silence and employee performance [31], which is not consistent with the result of study by Doostar and Ismailizadeh, showing no significant impact of organizational justice on the submissive and defensive voices [32]. According to the findings, structural dimension plays an important role in the emergence of organizational voice and can increase the voice behavior among the employees working at Medical Sciences Organization.

5. Conclusion

Our findings indicated a negative and significant relationship between social capital and organizational silence among the employees working at Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences. Therefore, in order to minimize the silence behavior within the academic environment, it is recommended to provide an appropriate and open climate for employees in order to express their own thoughts and ideas freely and without resorting to fear and managers can acquire the necessary information and knowledge regarding the current work environment in order to be able to make immediate and constructive decisions to achieve their academic goals. In addition, it is advisable to enhance informal relationships among the staff and to align their goals with the university's objectives. Our findings indicated that increasing social capital could lead to the improvement of organizational voice.

Based on the predictability level of organizational voice via social capital, our results support the application of strategies and pathways to strengthen social capital. Furthermore, in order to develop voice behavior within the organization, managers should provide effective education and communication, and also create a sense of partnership and altruism among employees, so that they can freely express their opinions and solutions to facilitate change and ultimately all the employees can get some real advantages that the organization offers. Moreover, managers should organize some productive meetings with their employees, and encourage them to be able to easily express their views and ideas, as well as to recognize their significant role in the prosperity of the organization. They also need to pay especial attention to physical design of the university because it can facilitate productive, bilateral and voluntary interactions between units and formal boundaries of the organization. To provide employees with the information and updated organizational information systems in different units and managers of operational and intermediate levels and tailoring them to the information needs of staff operating in various organizational positions, application of techniques for increasing creativity such as brainstorming, heterogeneous integration, nominal group tech-

nique (NGT), holding consultation rooms based on the techniques mentioned above in order to take advantage of the employee's opinions, creating motivation and enthusiasm for employees to provide innovative ideas and suggestions for the university to reach its predefined objectives and perspectives are among the recommendations for the management to increase organizational voice.

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