

Silence of Female Family Members in Family Firms

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Abstract

Employee silence, which is defined as employees not sharing their thoughts and feelings intentionally regarding the development of the organization they are in, attracts attention as a topic that is discussed frequently recently. The purpose of this study is to research what kind of silence behavior female family members have, by analyzing the silence behaviors of female family members working in family firms. Sample of the study consists of female family members working in Afyonkarahisar city, which owns the most important marble deposits and marble industry of Turkey, in marble and natural stone sector. It has been observed that female family members participated in the study showed a more acquiescent and prosocial silence behavior at the end of the study, in which semi-structured interview method was used.

Key Words: Silence, Employee Silence, Organizational Silence, Family Firms, Female Members in Family Firms

1. Introduction

Under heavy competition conditions, organizations need their employees more and more in order to both meet the market needs and increase quality and productivity, and to keep costs under control. It is possible for the organization to reach this dynamic structure with employees who take responsibility, provide suggestions and are proactive. Voice of the employee, which is defined as the most correct information source in the organization, is explained by Vay Dyne and LePine (1998) as a constructive behavior intended to develop the organization and may create improving influences on the organization's activities. However, organization's employees, whose voices are expected, mostly cannot put their ideas, point of views and concerns into words, and stay silent. Employees, who have to choose between voice and silence, can chose silence despite what is expected. Within this context, silence is a situation as natural as employees putting forward their ideas, participating or talking. Employees working in organizations to stay silent by feeling safer and not voicing their ideas and thoughts about organization's activities or jobs they are responsible of are experienced widely.

Silence in organizations, which can occur collectively as well as individually, is a concept that is examined in terms of both organizations and employees in the literature (Milliken and Morrison, 2003; Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Because, spreading of an employee's individual silence among other employees in the organization enables silence to transform as a climate in the organization. As Pinder and Harlos (2001) stress, silence climate, which is shaped by the employees who keep their power to affect change hidden, will create an organization in which employees cannot voice their ideas and share what they know. This situation will increase the unwillingness of employees to voice, and decrease the loyalty to the organization by influencing trust and morale negatively. Therefore, problems occurring or that might occur in the organization will not be able to be prevented; mistaken decisions will be made, and innovation and improvement processes will be affected negatively (Milliken et al, 2003). Voice and silence have been analyzed from different aspects since 1970s to our time. Hirschman (1970) handled silence as a reaction to dissatisfaction. In another important study in this period, Rosen and Teser (1970) conceptualized this reaction of employees who do not want to deliver negative information as "Mum effect". In the same period, Noelle - Neumann (1974) associated silence with societal support, with the "spiral of silence" theory.

According to this theory, while employees that think that they will not have any support from the society and be isolated are reluctant to talk; in an opposite situation they can express themselves without any fear. Following these antecedent studies, why and in which topics employees prefer to remain silent have been researched. Moreover, why and how employees decide about getting silent have also been discussed (Milliken et al, 2003: 1454). Afterwards, many studies have been done in the literature, associating voice and silence concepts with different variables (such as organizational learning, organizational justice).

Recently on the other hand, studies aiming to determine the effect of gender, which is among the demographical characteristics of employees, on silence stand out (Detert and Burris, 2007; LePine and Van Dyne, 1998; Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Pinder and Harlos, 2001). According to Morrison and Milliken (2000), gender is one of the important factors influencing silence behavior of employees. Pinder and Harlos (2001) point that women are more silent in the presence of men. In this study, effect of gender on silence is handled in terms of societal gender, and it is stated that men have a louder organizational voice.

When viewed from the point of societal gender, which is explained as the division of roles in the society as women and men, women are raised as convenient to certain role patterns (Acker, 1988). Therefore, women present roles that are perceived suitable by society to them and this situation reflects to business life as well. Especially in traditional societies, gender asymmetry between family and business increases. The fact that business life is the most important role in men's lives put women forward with their roles in family lives, and their roles in business life remains in the second plan (Loscocco and Leicht, 1993). Therefore, women take place in business life in service sector or operational jobs that are perceived more suitable for them, with lower payments and statuses than men. This situation prevents women to voice their ideas, knowledge or thoughts about the organization or their jobs. This picture appears in family firms, which are formed by traditions, more often. Silence is a behavior, which is consulted to by both professionals and family members working in family firms. However, when the silence of family members is analyzed, silence of female members who are defined by their absence or invisibility become more remarkable. In the literature, silence of female family members is mostly associated with the invisibility of these members. In this regard, it can be stated that there are not enough studies that handle female family members working in the family firms in terms of only voice and silence. In Turkey on the other hand, there is not a study that makes an evaluation from this aspect on female family members in family firms. In this study, with an aim to fill this gap in the literature, silence is handled from the point of female members in family firms and what kind of silence behaviors women express is aimed to be identified. With this study, forming a perspective on female family members' staying silent behaviors is aimed.

2. Causes of Silence in Organizations

Even though silence, whose dictionary meaning is explained as staying silent and lapse (www.tdk.org.tr), is seen as a brand new concept in terms of organizations, it was first aimed to be defined by Hirschman (1970) with the "Exit-Voice" approach. In this approach "Exit" gives the opportunity to escape from the relationships with the organization or to end them; and "Voice" gives the opportunity to resolve the displeasures while protecting the relationships (Lee and Jablin, 1992). "Exit" or "Voice" are affected from "Loyalty", which is a third concept in Hirschman model. Loyalty is related to waiting for the conditions to get better in a passive but optimistic way, supporting the organization and hoping for development (Leck and Saunders, 1992; Parker, 1997). Hirschman handled silence as the lack of voice and associated with loyalty. According to this, employees staying silent do not give any voice by being loyal, although they are unsatisfied.

Morrison and Milliken (2000) approached to silence as a collective phenomenon, and defined organizational silence concept for the first time. According to Morrison and Milliken (2000), organizational silence is the intentional protection of employees' ideas, information and thoughts about the organization they are in and tasks they are responsible of. Preference of employees to remain silent is shaped by the belief that talking about the problems in the organization will not create a difference, and the expectation that sharing ideas, information and thoughts will receive anticipated negative outcomes (such as being viewed negatively, damaged relationships, retaliation or punishment and negative impact). Another important study, in which the decisions of employees to remain silent are examined, belongs to Pinder and Harlos (2001). Pinder and Harlos (2001) define employee silence as the protection of thoughts about topics related to organizational situations, by people who are perceived as having the skill to affect change. In light of these studies, it is seen that organizational silence is approached in the literature both as a collective phenomenon and an individual behavior.

Employees not sharing the problems they face or improvements they might suggest, and this situation to become collective in the organization brings out organizational silence. Therefore, organizational silence can be evaluated as a process that starts with the employee to choose not to share his/her thoughts by not contributing to his/her own organization; and ends as silence spreads in the organization and employees become reluctant to state their views and thoughts (Bowen and Blackmon, 2003).

Although many employees know the truth about the topics and problems in the organization, they do not have the courage to tell it to their superiors; and they are struck in a paradox. Paradoxical employee silence, which is assessed as a dangerous obstacle in front of organizational change and development, may occur in organizations because of various reasons (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). In the literature however, employee silence is handled with two different dimensions. The first dimension stresses that employees remain silent consciously and employee silence is caused by themselves, that is individual factors. The second dimension on the other hand argues that employees are kept silent by force because of organizational or managerial factors (Blackman and Sadler-Smith, 2009; Morrison and Milliken, 2003; Pinder and Harlos, 2001).

Individual factors affecting employee silence can be listed as lack of experience or working in lower levels (Milliken et al, 2003), the employee to evaluate talking risky or meaningless (Morrison and Milliken, 2000), to be afraid of being labeled, being perceived as order violator, having their relationships get harmed and being isolated (Blackman and Sadler-Smith, 2009; Milliken and Morrison, 2003; Milliken et al, 2003; Pinder and Harlos, 2001), as well as being punished, losing their jobs or not being able to promote (Bowen and Blackmon, 2003; Milliken et al, 2003; Perlow and Williams, 2003). On the other hand, organizational norms (Bowen and Blackmon, 2003), non-existence of a participative organization culture (Huang et al, 2005), hierarchical structuring and lack of feedback (Morrison and Milliken, 2000), organizational culture supporting silence and existence of silence climate in the organization (Milliken et al, 2003; Morrison and Milliken, 2000) appear as organizational factors causing employee silence. Together with this, inadequacy of the management (Morrison and Milliken, 2000), the manager to be prejudiced (Milliken et al, 2003; Morrison and Milliken, 2000), not behaving in a supportive way and to be distant in relationships with employees or being afraid of negative feedback (Bowen and Blackmon, 2003; Milliken et al, 2003; Pinder and Harlos, 2001) are managerial factors associated with employee silence.

3. Types of Silence in Organizations

Employee silence has been analyzed by Pinder and Harlos (2001) under two headings, as acquiescent silence and quiescent silence. While acquiescent silence is associated with obedience, quiescent silence is based on planned negligence. Van Dyne et al (2003) on the other hand stressed that employee silence will not appear as only inexistence of voice. They added prosocial silence as an addition to Pinder and Harlos's (2001) silence types, by associating employee silence with organizational citizenship. Thus, they argued that there are three different types of silence and voices as acquiescent silence, defensive silence and prosocial silence. Accordingly, they classified motives regarding three different types of silence and sonance tendency, and the behaviors of these motives.

Acquiescent silence includes silence behaviors that appear depending on neglect and obedience. In this type of silence, employees settle for the organizational situation that they are in, most of the times they are not aware of alternatives or ignores alternatives. Therefore employees do not share the information, idea and thoughts with anyone and stay passive (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). The employee to think that his/her ideas will not be given importance and thus will not create a difference, to feel inadequate individually, to shape his/her behaviors and thoughts according to decisions taken and norms formed in workplace, and to accept all these are characterized as acquiescent silence behaviors. Defensive silence includes silence behaviors directed to self-protective behavior based on fear. Silence based on self-protection and fear is the act of the employee to keep his/her ideas, thoughts and information owned, in order to protect him/herself (Van Dyne et al, 2003). While there is a tendency of not giving any effort in a passive way in acquiescent silence behavior, there is silence in defensive silence depending on fear. Employees tend to remain silent by not telling what they know, since they are afraid of being punished by their managers or being isolated. Moreover, this type of silence can also be related to the individual strategy that the employee sets for the future (Milliken and Morrison, 2003, Van Dyne et al, 2003). Prosocial silence on the other hand is other-oriented behavior based on cooperation. In other words, it is the protection of ideas, information and thoughts on behalf of the organization.

Accordingly, prosocial silence behaviors, which are associated with organizational citizenship behavior, are proactive behaviors that are performed to prevent the threats coming from outer environment and might affect organizational loyalty (Morrison, 2011). Employees do not share special information belonging to the organization by protecting privacy and do not make any negative comments about the organization (Van Dyne et al, 2003).

4. Causes of Silence in Family Firms

When studies in the literature are analyzed, it is seen that organizational silence is defined as employees consciously not sharing their feelings and thoughts about their jobs and organizations. Employees prefer to remain silent because of individual, organizational or managerial factors, and may show silence behaviors in different types. When these factors causing silence are taken into consideration, it is seen that family firms have characteristics convenient for employee silence to appear. In their study, Peirce et al (1998) stated that the deaf ear syndrome, which they define as ignorance against defects and troubles in the organization, will appear because of three different reasons. They defined especially family firms, businesses in rural areas, and businesses with a majority of male workers as organizational characteristics causing deaf ear syndrome.

Family firms are defined as businesses, in which more than one family member have a voice in the management and investment decisions (Cox, 1996) or basic management decisions are made with the influence of family members in board of directors or management (Chua et al, 1999). As can be understood from the definitions, family firms have unique dynamics that separate them from other businesses. Participation of family members in both business and family relations simultaneously, identification of family with firm values, formation of organization culture with values and believes of the family head the list of characteristics that separate family firms from others (Aronoff, 2000; Kepner, 1983). While most of the times these characteristics provide an advantage to the family firms; they also create disadvantages such as reflection of family relationships to work, a centralized management, a traditional manager theme and formation of a culture closed to change (Hollander and Bukowitz, 1990; Kepner, 1983), conflict and start of a power battle between family members (Beckhard and Dyer, 1983; Sonfield and Lusier, 2004), and having less trust to employees out of the family and nepotism (Kepner, 1983; Sharma, 2004).

It is seen that the disadvantages listed above overlap with organizational and managerial factors affecting employee silence. However, different than other firms, employee silence in family firms can be approached from 2 different dimensions; silence of employees who are not a member of the family, and silence of employees who are family members. When evaluated from the perspective of employees who are not family members, having less trust to employees who are not family members and experiencing nepotism will cause these employees to perceive talking meaningless. On the other hand, from the perspective of employees who are family members, participation of family members to both business and family relationships simultaneously and reflection of family relations to work are reasons for preferring silence. Existence of a centralized management, a traditional manager theme and a cultural understanding closed to change in family firms will support the silence of both family member and non-family member employees.

5. Silence of Female Members in Family Firms

In studies, in which the demographical characteristics of employees are analyzed, it is observed that female employees are more silent than male employees in organizations (Pinder and Harlos, 2001: 343). Also in family firms, female members are defined as silent and even most of the times as invisible in a similar way. Culture of family firms consist of rules and principles that are not questioned and are directly applied. Families might have several rules about money, loyalty, conflict and roles in the family (Hollander and Bukowitz, 1990). The fact that traditional culture and values, and gender based norms are dominant in family firms will cause the silence of family member employees to differentiate. In family firms, in which traditional structure is strong and protected, female family members are still kept out of the business. Mostly, it is seen that the views of female members are consulted insincerely, only in board of directors process in voting or participating in the decisions made (Rowe and Hong, 2000). It is known that although female family members actively working in family firms have the same working conditions with female family members; they do not receive the same level of importance and cannot obtain the salary or position as a result of their contributions (Hollander and Bukowitz, 1990). Female family members often take place in the business in backstage or as invisible, and work without any payment or with a lower payment than male family members (Danes et al, 2005; Jimenez, 2009).

Furthermore, female family members frequently do not plan their careers in the family firms and do not apply for the ownership of the family firm, with the aim of helping their families (Cole, 1997). This situation may be associated on one hand with traditional structure, and on other hand with fathers' limitation towards their little daughters in order to protect them and prevent them to get exhausted (Hollander and Bukowitz, 1990).

As a result, female family members remain silent since they are not in a position to share their views, information and thoughts about the organization or their jobs, and because they are often defined as helpful, mediator and coherent. In addition, changing the culture, value and norms of the family firms is not easy. Traditional culture and values, gender based rules in family firms contribute to the invisibility of female employees as well as their silence. Especially in traditional families, in which values such as respecting elders, avoiding conflict, obeying elders without criticizing are accepted, silence of females are assessed as a virtue. In such a situation, female family members prefer to remain silent and approve their superiors (Perlow and Williams, 2003).

6. Methodology of the Research

Family firms have a special organization structure that is formed with the values of the family. In family firms the aim is to protect the future of the family and to leave the business to future generations. Therefore, employment of family members is given priority in family firms. It is seen that employees out of family are employed only when a certain size is achieved or family members fail to be adequate. This structure brings together other evaluations with it, in terms of silence. In family firms, where the founder or the family member in top management act more authoritarian in order not to lose his power or not to leave management to later generation family members, only the founder has voice. Other family members in the business prefer silence both because of the respect they have and the fear of spoiling the relationships. In family firms where employees out of the family take place, the situation is evaluated from the perspectives of both family members and non-family members (Hollander and Bukowitz, 1990; Kepner, 1983). While family member employees have more rights and voice in the organization by the power they have from the family; non-family member employees prefer silence more because of the fear of losing their jobs or not being able to promote (Kepner, 1983; Sharma, 2004). Therefore, non-family member employees frequently show loyalty to the founder or the family member in top management. Furthermore, silence behavior between family members observed in family firms depending on age and gender can also be expressed. Obedience to the oldest male child in traditional families cause other family members to choose silence (Danes et al, 2005; Hollander and Bukowitz, 1990). Again in traditional family firms, it is known that roles of female family members in the business are still shaped with societal gender approach. Female members, who are visible in the firm and manage to take place not only on paper but actively, are seen to be more silent than male family members (Hollander and Bukowitz, 1990). Female family member, who accepts or has to accept the role shaped by societal gender, will prefer silence in the firm.

In Turkey however, a study that is done directly on female family members regarding voice-silence axis does not exist. In this study, filling the gap in the literature by handling silence in terms of female members in family firms, and identifying what types of silence behaviors female members express are aimed. With this study, forming a view on the remaining silent behaviors of female family members in family firms is aimed.

The research is shaped with the assumption that female family members working in family firms will prefer to remain silent when they think that their voice will not create a difference, or they will receive negative consequences as response to their voice. In order to identify what types of silence behaviors female family members represent, silence behaviors are tried to be associated with acquiescent silence, defensive silence and prosocial silence in the study of Van Dyne et al (2003). Silence behaviors are classified considering the behavior list regarding silence types that take place in that study (Van Dyne et al, 2003).

Context of the research was determined as firms operating in Afyonkarahisar marble and natural stone sector, since they occupy an important place in the economy of the country and continue their activities maintaining traditional structures. While determining the content of the research, female family members working in family firms maintaining their traditional structures were aimed to be reached. The most important marble deposits and the oldest marble industry exist in Afyonkarahisar. Besides, many small and medium-sized businesses operate in marble and natural stone sector. Because of this reason, context of the research was determined as businesses operating in marble and natural stone sector in Afyonkarahisar city, since they occupy an important place in Turkish economy and also operate by maintaining their traditional structures.

Accordingly, current business lists prepared by Afyonkarahisar Chamber of Commerce and Industry have been analyzed. Business lists, in which firms operating in marble and natural stone sector take place, namely 5. Group headed “Mining, Stone and Marble Quarries”, 10. Group headed “Marble Factories” and 27. Group headed “Marble Exporters” were integrated. Firms taking place in both lists were identified and simplified; and firms operating in different business branches although they take place in the lists and firms that do not employ any female family members are exempted from the list, according to the information gathered from Afyonkarahisar Chamber of Commerce and Industry records. Accordingly, 53 firms form the sample of the study. In order to identify the female family members to be interviewed in the firms in the context of the sample, again Chamber records were looked at and information was gathered from the Chamber management, and interviews were requested from the firms. However, problems such as female family members to refuse the interview or as not being able to reach these members were experienced. Consequently, 32 female family members were interviewed in total. Not being able to interview all the female family members working in the sample is one of the limitations of the research.

With the thought that female family members may voice their feelings and thoughts about their silence in a more clear way; semi-structured interview method among qualitative research techniques was used. Interviews were done in the workplace of the female family members and took 25-50 minutes considering their work intensity. Questions asked in semi-structured interviews consist of three groups:

1. Questions regarding demographic characteristics,
2. Questions regarding the causes of female family members’ silence,
3. Questions regarding the identification of silence behaviors of female family members.

7. Findings of the Research

After the semi-structured interviews, demographic characteristics of female family members interviewed are summarized in Table 1. 28.1% (9 people) of the female family members interviewed take place in 20-30 age group, 37.5% (12 people) in 31-40 age group and 34.4% (11 people) in 41 and above age group. Rate of married participators is 78.1% (25 people). 34.4% (11 people) of the participants are high school graduates, while 53.1% (17 people) are university graduates and 12.5% (4 people) are master’s graduates. Accordingly, it can be stated that majority of the female family members interviewed were married, 31 ages old and above, and have higher education. Furthermore, when the working time of female family members interviewed is assessed; it has been seen that 28.1% (9 people) worked in the family firm for 1-5 years, 21.9% (7 people) for 6-10 years and 50% (16 people) for more than 11 years.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

AGE	PERCENT	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
20-30	28,1%	9
31-40	37,5%	12
41 and above	34,4%	11
MARITAL STATUS	PERCENT	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
Married	78,1%	25
Single	21,9%	7
EDUCATION	PERCENT	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
High-School	34,4%	11
University	53,1%	17
Master’s Degree	12,5%	4
WORKING PERIOD IN THE FIRM	PERCENT	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
1-5 Years	28,1%	9
6-10 Years	21,9%	7
11 and above	50,0%	16

When analyzed in terms of their family membership, it is seen that 25% (8 people) of the participants are wives of the founders, 53.1% (17 people) are the daughters of the founders and 21.9% (7 people) are the daughter-in-laws of the founders. It might be said that family firms, in which daughter-in-laws join the working life, made a transfer to a more democratic structure than a traditional structure that keeps their members who do not have blood ties or joined the family later. When the departments of female participants in the family organization are examined, it has been identified that 15.6% (5 people) of them work in accounting department, 37.5% (12 people) in marketing or sales department, and 46.9% (15 people) in export department. The fact that any of the participants do not have positions in production department or marble quarries is remarkable. It can be said that most of the participants interviewed have education in social sciences and advanced foreign language skills have been effective. In the open ended questions that were asked about how the choice of departments were made, it was seen that the choice was left to female members.

However, daughters in the first instance stated that they got suggestions from both their husbands and parents towards the convenience of administrative departments for them. Again majority of the participants (22 people) mentioned that they think production departments or marble quarries more suitable for men. It can be stated that the thought of working in production department or marble quarries is more suitable for men is adopted, depending on the role division based on gender. As the titles of female family members working in family are evaluated; it can be stated that 12.5% (4 people) work as specialists, 78.1% (25 people) as middle level managers, and 9.4% (3 people) as top level managers. Consequently, it can be said that majority if the female family members interviewed worked as mid-level managers. In all the firms in the sample, top management consists of male family members. Most of the female family members (18 people) working as mid-level managers expressed that they did not desire to be top level managers, since it would be difficult to balance work-family lives.

Table 2. Characteristics of Participants Regarding Their Statuses in Family and the Business

STATUS IN THE FAMILY	PERCENT	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
Wife	25%	8
Daughter	53,1%	17
Daughter-in-law	21,9%	7
DEPARTMENT IN THE FIRM	PERCENT	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
Accounting	15,6%	5
Marketing-Sales	37,5%	12
Export	46,9%	15
TITLE IN THE FIRM	PERCENT	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
Specialist	12,5%	4
Mid-Level Manager	78,1%	25
Top Level Manager	9,4%	3

In the interviews, participants were asked if they experienced any situations when they hesitated to share their views, thoughts and feelings intentionally, regarding improving their firms or jobs they are responsible from. 34.4% of the participants (11 people) answered this question as they never hesitate to share their thoughts and feelings and do express their thoughts in a democratic way. The rest 65.6% (21 people) of the participants on the other hand stated that they sometimes prefer not to share their thoughts about the firm or jobs they are responsible from.

Table 3. Silence of the Participants

CAUSES OF SILENCE	PERCENT	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
I always share my ideas, thoughts and feelings about the firm and the jobs I am responsible from	34,4%	11
From time to time I remain silent by hesitating to share my ideas, thoughts and feelings about the firm and the jobs I am responsible	65,6%	21

Participants who prefer to remain silent were asked whether the reason underlying their choice was the belief that their talking will not create a difference, or the expectation of anticipated negative outcomes. 52.4% (11 people) of the participants prefer to remain silent stated that they remain silent since they think that there will not be any difference towards improving the firm or their jobs. 47.6% (10 people) of the participants on the other hand stated that they prefer to remain silent since they think they will face anticipated negative outcomes. These negative outcomes were listed as to be afraid of being perceived as a person continuously complaining (1 person), to be afraid of the relationships with other employees and especially family members working in the firm to be damaged (7 people), and to be concerned about the negative impact of their ideas, thoughts and feelings on other employees, especially family member employees (2 people). Opposite of the literature, none of the participants had a statement indicating that they remain silent because of fear for punishment. This situation can be associated with the fact the study was completed in family firms and on family members working in these firms.

Table 4. Causes of Silence of Silent Participants

CAUSES OF SILENCE	PERCENT	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
Thought that talking will not create a difference	52,4%	11
Thought they will face negative consequences	47,6%	10

*** 11 people in the sample indicated that they do not remain silent**

In the research, dominant type of silence behaviors in female family members who first prefer to remain silent were aimed to be found out by in-depth questions. Additionally, both female family members, who indicated that they prefer to remain silent and that always share their thoughts, were asked if there were any special cases in their firms that require silence. All participants stated that they remained silent in order to protect confidential organizational information appropriately, and remaining silent in such cases is the right behavior.

Table 5. Silence Behaviors of Silent Participants

DIMENSIONS AND BEHAVIORS OF SILENCE	PERCENT	FREQUENCY
Acquiescent Silence		
Unwilling to speak up with suggestions for change because she is disengaged.	%59	19
Keeps any ideas for improvement to herself because she has low self-efficacy to make a difference.	%38	12
Defensive Silence		
Does not speak up and suggest ideas for change, based on fear.	%31	10
ProSocial Silence		
Protects confidential organizational information appropriately, based on concern for the organization.	% 100	32

As seen in Table 5, female family members present acquiescent silence behavior in topics that are not related to them, or in situations that their talking will not create a difference. Again as also mentioned in causes of silence, it has been found out that the participants show defensive silence behavior because they are afraid of the reactions of especially the founders (husband or father) than their husbands or other family members. In the sample of this study, silence behaviors taking place in three different silence dimensions in the study of Van Dyne et al (2003) were not came across equally. It can be predicted that the reason for especially behaviors in defensive silence dimension to be observed less than other behaviors might be caused since female family members are working in their own family firms.

8. Conclusion

This study has been completed in order to identify what types of silence behaviors are shown by female family members, who are working in family firms operating in Afyonkarahisar city marble and natural stone sector. It has been identified that participants showed acquiescent silence behavior caused by the belief that they will not create a difference, and defensive silence behavior caused by the expectation of negative consequences. Protection of family secrets, keeping critical information in the firm and family have been mentioned as special cases that require silence by participants. They have stated that they think performing prosocial silence behavior is the right behavior in such special situations.

This situation can be evaluated as an indicator that family firms constructing the research sample have dominant traditional family structure and loyalty to family values is protected. On the other hand, allowing female family members, especially daughter-in-laws in family firms, and having female members to take place in managerial positions are reflections of a modern structure. However, the fact that all participants are working in administrative departments and not thinking to promote to upper levels in terms of business-family life are indicators of conventionalism under this modern structure.

As the research results are evaluated, it can be stated that transition to modern structure to traditional structure enabled the curtain that ensured the invisibility of woman to open out. Together with the invisibility to disappear, changes do occur in the silence behaviors of women 31.3% of the participants to declare that they always share their ideas, information and thoughts is a positive indicator in this way. However, a big majority of the participants (68.8%) consisting the sample present silence behavior. In case that this silence climate formed is maintained, it would be unavoidable that female family members will become more defensive. Therefore, feeling of creativity and innovation will disappear in the organization; and this situation will negatively influence morale and loyalty.

Conclusions obtained from the study must be evaluated in the context of the research sample. The fact that the study was completed only in Afyonkarahisar city on female family members working in family firms, which operate in marble and natural stone sector, prevents the findings to be generalized to all family firms operating in Turkey or all female family members working in family firms. Despite these limitations, it is believed that the study will have a premise nature for the similar studies to be done on family firms.

Although the difficulty of changing the structure of family firms is known, it would be beneficial to approach silence concept not only from the perspective of female family members, but from the perspective of all employees. Forming a more participative structure, in which employees share their views and thoughts, is a prescription that will save not only family firms but all organizations from silence spiral.

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