

# THE IMPACT OF THE LOCUS OF CONTROL ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL SILENCE

## KONTROL ODAĞININ ÖRGÜTSEL SESSİZLİK ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

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### ÖZET

**B**u çalışmanın amacı, bireysel düzeyde ele alınan kontrol odağı kavramı ile örgütsel davranış alanının bir kavramı olan çalışan sessizliği arasındaki bağlantı sağlayan temel mekanizmayı tanımlamaktır. Bu etkiyi test etmek amacıyla İstanbul / Türkiye'deki bir kamu bankasının Bilgi Teknolojileri bölümlerinde çalışan 201 katılımcı ile çevrimiçi bir anket gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri Sosyal Bilimler programı için geliştirilmiş olan İstatistik Programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmadan elde edilen bulgulara göre, *dış kontrol odağı*, *kabullenici sessizlik* ( $\beta = .55, p = .000, F = 89.154$ ) ve *savunmacı sessizlik* ( $\beta = .49, p = .000, F = 62.948$ ) üzerinde anlamlı ve olumlu etkilere sahiptir. Böylece, bu çalışma için önerilen birinci ve ikinci hipotezler desteklenmiştir. Ayrıca, *iç kontrol odağının prososyal sessizlik üzerinde önemli olumlu etkisi bulunmaktadır* ( $\beta = .17, p = .000, F = 6.040$ ). Bu bulgu da önerilen üçüncü hipotezi desteklemiştir. Bu nedenle, iç ve dış kontrol odağının işyerinde çalışanların sessizlik davranışının yordayıcıları arasında olması önerilmektedir. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma, bireysel durumların örgütsel sessizliği ne ölçüde etkilediğini gösterdiği için değerlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İç kontrol odağı, Dış kontrol odağı, Kabullenici sessizlik, Savunmacı sessizlik, Prososyal sessizlik.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to define an underlying mechanism that provides a link between locus of control as an individual-level concept and employee silence as organizational behavior. To test this link, an online survey was conducted with 201 participants who work as Information Technology employees of public bank in Istanbul/Turkey. The data of the research were gathered by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program. According to the findings of the study, *the external locus of control had significant positive impacts on acquiescent silence* ( $\beta = .55$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $F = 89.154$ ) *and defensive silence* ( $\beta = .49$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $F = 62.948$ ). Thus, the first and second proposed hypotheses for this study were supported. Further, *the internal locus of control had significant positive impacts on prosocial silence* ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $F = 6.040$ ). This finding also supported the proposed third hypothesis. Thereby, internal and external locus of control is suggested to be among predictors of employee silence behavior at workplace. In conclusion, this study has value as it shows what extent individual states impact on organizational silence.

Keywords: Internal locus of control, External locus of control, Acquiescent silence, Defensive silence, Prosocial silence.

## INTRODUCTION

**T**n today's changing business environment, organizations and employees face many contradictory opinions and work related issues. It is possible for organizations to make difference by adding such divergent knowledge, skills and talents of the employees in the workplace. Thus, organizations may desire organizational change and positive outcomes with wide range of the individuals' characteristics and their opinions (Morrison and Milliken, 2000).

However, previous studies (Milliken and Morrison, 2000; Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003) have been carried out that employees prefer to be silent about the workplace issues, and eventually organizations have undesired outcomes. Therefore, individuals have different traits, opinions, and behaviors within the organizational environment. Such features of individuals along with organizational dynamics lead to the emergence of dissatisfaction or disagreements in the workplace. To cope with these kinds of issues, employees may prefer to display various behaviors. For example, individuals prefer to remain silent about work-related issues, to quit their jobs, to display negligent behaviors, or speak out about organizational concerns (Hirschman, 1970).

At the same time, employees withhold their thoughts about workplace problems due to threatening factors like labeling complainer by the top management and/or fear of retaliation, and/or not damaging the trust-based relations with the others in the organization (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Moreover, the perceptions of the employees about whether s/he can be supported by colleagues and/or collaboration with others' sake are also determinant factor to remain silent (Bowen and Blackmon, 2003). As it mentioned above, such individual and organizational level factors create contradictions in the organization (Çakıcı, 2007). Based on these statements, it is beneficial to know whether employees want to share their opinions or to remain silent (Meyerson, 2001).

There are varieties of sources that employees often do not feel comfortable speaking out about organizational problems, which concern them. According to the previous studies, it can clearly be seen that organizational silence can be motivated by several factors such as competitors of the workplace environments, technological advancements, organizational dynamics, managerial procedures, personality, self-esteem, locus of control, sense of responsibility, individual's workplace experiences Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Çakıcı, 2007). The literature suggests that personality plays important role in silence behavior. As for the personality disposition, the concept of locus of control

is defined as the events are under control by individual's own skills or by the external conditions (Solmuş, 2004). Therefore, the internal and external locus of control and the organizational silence in the view of the sub-dimensions is worth to analyze in the organization, i.e., individuals remain silent with belief that they cannot influence their organizations, or they remain silent for the benefit of others in the organization under the conditions of participation (Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003).

Thus, this study points out the types of employees' characteristics (internal and external locus control) and identify its linkage with the reason why employees sometimes decide to remain silent rather than voice their concerns. Hence, in these recent years, most of the studies focus on the organizational silence issues from the point of employees' characteristics, but sub-dimensions of the silence behavior and its relations with sub-dimensions of locus of control are least developed areas. Therefore, this study suggests that locus of control may affect the forms of silence among employees who work the information technologies units in the public bank.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Concept of Organizational Silence

Morrison and Milliken (2000) stated that when organizational problems, wrongdoings or dissatisfaction occur, employees may withhold their concerns and information about issues in the organization. They noted that employee silence behavior has two individual notions about organizational functions: (i) speaking about issues is not worth to act, (ii) expressing one's opinions is harmful due to fear of retaliation (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Briensfield et al., 2009). Besides, other organizational silence conceptualizations in the literature emphasize that silence behavior is affected by organizational (organizational norms, threat of retaliation, etc.), contextual (organizational communication practices, top management policies, etc.) and individual-level factors (personality, trait, demographic characteristics etc.) (Milliken et al., 2003).

Many studies conceptualize employee silence behavior upon studies of Morrison and Milliken's (2000); Pinder and Harlos's (2001); Vakola and Bouradas's (2005); Van Dyne, Ang and Botero's (2003) studies. Pinder and Harlos (2001) define the silence behavior as "*withholding of any form of genuine expression about the individual's behavioral, cognitive, and/or affective evaluations of his or her organizational circumstance to persons who are perceived to be capable of effecting change or redress*" (p.334). According to Pinder and Harlos (2001) silence behavior consists of individual level factors that would cause employees to withhold their opinions, mostly concerning the unjust situations in the organizations. They suggested that employee silence behavior has two forms, such as, (i) Acquiescent Silence (remain silent, based on resignation) (ii) Quiescent Silence (remain silent, based on fear of retaliation) (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Van Dyne et. al. 2003).

After that, a study conducted in 2003 by Van Dyne, Ang and Botero revealed some characteristics of silence behavior in detail. They proposed three forms of silence behavior; *acquiescent silence* which has the same concept with Pinder and Harlos's studies, *defensive silence* which has the same concept with Pinder and Harlos's quiescent silence studies. In the form of acquiescent silence, employees exclude themselves from issues. Employees do not prefer to express their work relevant ideas, information, and opinions because of low levels of involvement (for example, the employee may not share his/her ideas during a meeting in the organization because s/he does not believe that the situation can change) (Van Dyne, Ang and Botero, 2003). Therefore, it has been suggested that this type of silence may be called disengaged behavior (Kahn, 1990). The second type, defensive silence, is related to the personal fears

of employees for speaking out about organizational issues. When the employee feels in danger or encounters a threatening situation, s/he may prefer to remain silent to protect herself/himself (for example, the employee may not express a problem s/he has noticed for fear of being targeted) (Van Dyne, et al., 2003). In general, employees tend to withhold relevant ideas, opinions, and suggestions due to the safest option for themselves (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Edmondson, 1999). Nakedly, third form of silence behavior added by them is *pro-social silence* which is defined as remaining silent about organizational problems, based on individual's intentions for cooperation and goals of benefiting other people in the organization (Morrison and Miliken, 2000; Van Dyne et al. 2003). Considering the organizational interests, the employee does not share any information that will be against the organization with the external environment (for example, the employee does not even share the details of the project on which the organization is working with the social environment) (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Hence, previous studies have mostly reported on individual level antecedents and outcomes, that silence behavior is influenced by many group-level and organizational-level factors (Üçok and Torun, 2015). In other words, organizational silence has influenced by organizational dynamics, such as organizational communication structure, injustice treatment in organization, managerial practices in the work-groups (Çakıcı, 2007; Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Previous studies have also revealed that there are significant associations between lack of experience, low self-esteem, a person in high neuroticism, external locus of control and employee silence behavior (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Huang et al., 2005; Çakıcı and Aysen, 2014).

### Locus of Control as Antecedents of Organizational Silence

The concept of Locus of control (LOC) has recently increased crucially, with implications recognized in many studies in a variety of areas such as psychology literature (Rotter, 1966; Phares, 1976; Chambliss and Murray; 1979; Spector, 1988; Norman and Bennett, 1996; Lefcourt, 2014;). Basically, LOC creates resources in order to clarify the reasons of human beings behavior. According to Rotter (1966), behavior is controlled by rewards and punishments. Based on that view, human behaviors are explained by these consequences of individual actions that determine his/her belief about underlying causes of actions (Rotter, 1966). Naturally, belief of an individual about what causes his/her actions influences his/her behaviors and attitudes (Rotter, 1990). Besides, Walter, Zeiss and Zeiss (1974) stated that LOC is psychological concept that relates to personality and an aspect of self-esteem that represents to a degree which controls the perception of individuals in their lives (Walter, Zeiss and Zeiss, 1974). According to their arguments, LOC is a person's perception of the source of his or her fate because perception enables the explanation that how a person interprets the underlying causes of events in his/her life. Moreover, the literature examining LOC offers an approach for understanding the concept; such that, perceptual process may lead to differences in belief, and within this natural cycle, dissimilarities in person's perception and assessment of events that happen to both him/her and others can be also sourced for tendency of LOC (Basım, Erkenekli and Şeşen, 2010).

On the ground of the above explanations, subjective beliefs and assessments reflect to how individuals attribute their reinforcements. At this point, LOC can help to understand which factors the one's successes and failures are based on. In the light of the literature, the concept has been categorized as two types: internal LOC and external LOC.

If people feel that they have control over the events that influence their lives and believe that events result primarily from their own behavior or relatively permanent traits and actions. Thus, people who

tend to attribute a sense of control to them are internal LOC (Rotter, 1990; Küçükkaragöz, 1998). Their main belief is that they can influence what happens to them and try to exert control to their environment. Individuals with internal locus of control have tendency of being responsive to environmental stimuli or changes. Furthermore, they are enthusiastic in changing environmental conditions and they have high resilience against such changes. The main reason for this is that they ascribe their abilities, achievements or failures to themselves (Solmuş, 2004: 196). In addition, internal LOC is often used synonymously with "self-determination" and "personal agency" (Breeding, 2008). For instance, those with high internal LOC are more likely to take responsibility for their actions, tend to be less influenced by the opinions of other people. Because these people believe in themselves intrinsically, they feel confident in the face of challenges. Thus, they often achieve greater success in the workplace thanks to this motivation (Skinner, 2003). At the same time, obtained autonomy from successful works leads the individual to be happier and more independent. Moreover, when they are provided autonomy in the workplace, they often do better at tasks (Lopez, 2011).

Conversely, if you believe that you have no control over what happens and that external variables are to blame, then you have what is known as an external locus of control. Those with an external LOC, compared to individuals with internal locus of control, they believe that their abilities, achievements or failures depend on external factors without them. (Solmuş, 2004: 196). Therefore, regardless of whether the result is positive or negative, they are less likely to take responsibility for their actions. As a result, they might not do much in order to achieve and change to situation. They tend to be fatalistic and this tends to make them more passive, acquiescing and hopeless. For them, similar events will result in similar outcomes. Even if they succeed in anything, they are more likely to attribute this to luck than their own efforts. Hence, they are not enthusiastic in order to change the situation or make any difference. Thus, they are more prone to experience it as learned helplessness. Basically, LOC claims that individuals seek some reasons about the things concerning their lives (Ray, 1974; Jackson and Coursey, 1988; Pannells and Claxton, 2008).

Consequently, it lies in the background of the internal and external LOC to explain individual behaviors by factors such as ability, luck, task difficulty or effort. Therefore, this concept can help to provide an approach to understand what reasons individuals attribute to the events in their lives.

### The Relationship between Locus of Control and Organizational Silence

Considering these two features of locus of control, it is likely to say that individual's locus of control and employee silence behavior are associated. Previous studies examined the locus of control level in general, and its association with the employee silence behavior (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003). According to Pinder and Harlos (2001), personality traits such as locus of control plays important role in voice and/or silence behavior. People who have external locus of control, they may feel that speaking up will make no difference in the organization (Rothmann, 2001). This point of view would indicate that external locus of control emphasizes the acquiescent silence. Those kind of employees cannot have control over organizational environments. As a result, they can withhold their ideas. Acquiescent silence describes withholding the work-related opinions from organizational problems because of the notion that sharing information is pointless. Another word, employees are not included in the organizational issues, so it may cause this type of silence behavior (Rhee, Dedanov and Lee, 2014). We, therefore, posit that external locus of control will promote acquiescent silence behavior.

*H1: There is a relationship between external locus of control and acquiescent silence behavior.*

When employees receive negative feedback, in turn, their desire to speak up about organizational issues will decrease, which leads employees to choose silence due to fear of retaliation (Kassing and Kava, 2013). Since voice behavior in the organization is a risky choice (Van Dyne et al., 2003), employees consider that how their opinions will be perceived; hostile, destructive or constructive. Therefore, with this self-protection perception may lead individuals to have defensive silence behavior. We, therefore, assume that this is the association between external locus of control and employee silence behavior.

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is a relationship between external locus of control and defensive silence behavior.*

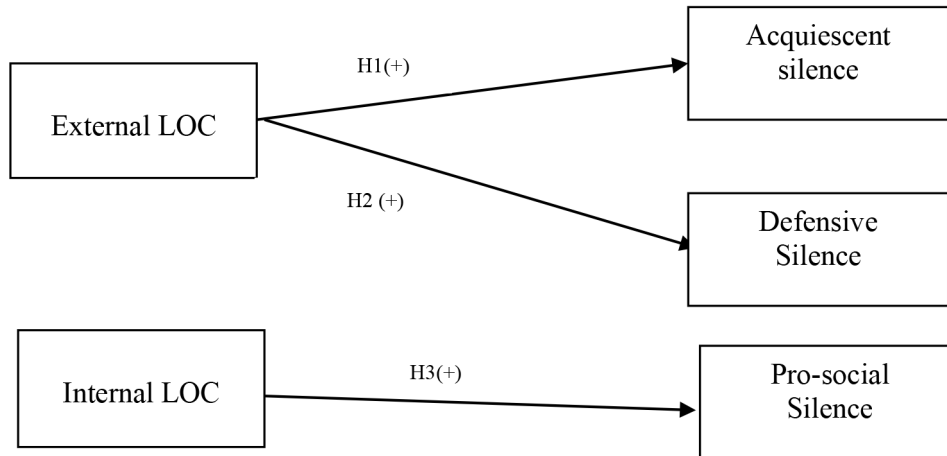
According to Van Dyne et al., (2003) prosocial silence refers to withholding opinions and information about organizational issues for the sake of other people in the units or groups in the organization. That is to say, in order to not to harm other people in the organization, they do not have voice of work-related problems.

Based on the exit–voice–loyalty–neglect (EVLN) model (Farrell, 1983; Hirschman, 1970) employees will act differently to dissatisfying conditions in the organization. Employees face with many dissatisfying work-related issues so that they choose to exit the organization or they decide to stay and have voice in their concerns in an attempt to resolve issues. In addition, employees may engage to neglectful behaviors such as tardiness, absenteeism, and also employees may purposely remain silent about problems in the organization (Farrell, 1983). Moreover, depending on previous studies, personality is one of the factors that play role in exhibiting organizational silence or voice behavior (Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003). Thus, locus of control in Rotter's (1990) framework was analyzed as personality factors based on social learning theory. It is reported that locus of control is one's belief and behavior in the ability to control events/ issues. Previous studies showed that employees with internal locus of control have the notion which they can control of events that happen to them (Rothmann, 2001). It was stated that employees who possess internal control orientations are more likely to act responsible for desired outcomes; on the other hand, externals are more likely to act limited control for outcomes in life (Spector, 1988). Thus, internals show behavior that is more responsible than externals. Another word, people with internal locus of control demonstrate more positive and protective attitudes towards their work (Rothmann, 2001).

However, there are arguments that internal and external locus of control should not be treated two opposing sides (Bakoğlu, Aşkun and Berber, 2009). It is reported that two dimensions of locus of control should be treated as two interfering multidimensional concepts (Lam and Mizerski, 2005). So, it is expected to indicate that locus of control has impact on silence behavior and the outcomes of the silence behavior may be affected differently with the internal and external ones. According to Van Dyne et al., (2003) prosocial silence behavior includes individual's intentions for goals of benefiting other people in the organization. Thus, prosocial silence behavior may be different from other dimensions because of having cooperative motives for the organization. Therefore, it is assumed that internal locus of control is expected to be related with prosocial silence behavior. The research model is shown in Figure 1.

*H<sub>3</sub>: There is a relationship between internal locus of control and prosocial silence behavior.*

Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study



## METHODOLOGY

### Sample and Procedure

The data in the present research acquired from a sample of 201 participants working at the public bank in Istanbul/Turkey. Employing snowball sampling method, as a data collection method, 201 questionnaires were obtained as online. Given the importance of employees' behaviors, it is important to understand the reasons for their attitudes. In this context, the study has focused on helping the organizations by seeking reasons for employee attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, the sample of this study includes IT (Information Technology) employees in the public bank located in İstanbul. The participants consisted of software engineer, computer engineer, information technology specialist or assistant, software developer, system programmer and other related professions. At the same time, employees did not have top managerial position because the participants were expected to evaluate their superiors.

The participants were 21.9% women and 78.1% men. In terms of age, 40.8% of the participants were between 21 and 29 years old; 34.8% were between 30 and 39; 20.9% were between 40 and 49; 3.5% were between 50 and 58 years old. The mean of the participants' age was 33.4 years, ranging from 22 to 58 years ( $SD = .71$ ). The graduation degree of the participants was 1.5% from associate degree, 80.1% from university degree, 17.4% from master's degree and 1% from doctorate (PhD) degree. When the distribution of the work experience of the participants was examined, it was seen that 10.4% of the participants has a work experience of 1 year and below, 30.8% between 1 and 5 years, 25.9% has an experience of 6 to 10 years, 9.5% has an experience of 11 to 15 years, 9% has an experience of 16 to 20, 8% has an experience of 21 to 25, 6.5% has an experience of 26 to above. In addition, 20.4% of the participants has a company experience of 1 years and below, 35.8% between 1 and 5 years, 16.4% between 6 and 10 years, 7% between 11-15 years, 11.9% between 16-20, 5% between 21-25, 3.5% more than 26 years.

### Survey Instruments

Totally, two different scales were used to measure the variables of the study. All the scales were answered by the employees. The items of the scales were evaluated on a 5-point scale (1="totally disagree" to 5="totally agree").

**Measurement of Organizational Silence and Locus of Control:** Employees' degrees of "organizational silence" were measured by means of Dyne, Ang and Botero's (2003) 15 items scale, namely as

Organizational Silence Scale. In the Organizational Silence Scale, there are three sub-dimensions as acquiescent silence, defensive silence, and prosocial silence. Turkish translation of the items was performed by Örenlili and Çekmecelioğlu (2018). According to their results, KMO coefficient was found .81 and Cronbach alpha values of the scale were found to be .82, .83, and .81, respectively. The percentage of total variance explained by the factors is 64.28% and it is a sufficient percentage. In the light of these results, the validity and reliability values of the scale were found to be high level.

To measure internal and external locus of control, 47-item scale of Dağ (2002) consisting two components and five sub-components was utilized. The scale is to develop a new Locus of Control scale in Likert format, more comprehensive than Rotter's Internal and External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter's I-E Scale). For this purpose, first of all, the scales which were taken from the same control or by changing them, a pool of 80 items were created, covering the possible control areas. Rotter's I-E scale, the Rosenbaum's Learned Resourcefulness Schedule, the SCL-90-R, and the Paranormal Beliefs Scale was applied. The results obtained with the item analysis, Pearson correlation and Factor analysis techniques showed that all reliability and validity indicators of Locus of Control were high and compatible with the literature. The Cronbach alpha values of the scale were found to be .87 for internal control, and .72 for external control. Because of acceptable internal consistency reliability, it was decided to use this scale for the current research study.

## THE STUDY FINDINGS

### Factor and Reliability Analyses

In the current study, initially, the factor analyses were applied before testing the hypotheses. Thus, the reliability and validity of the scales were evaluated in this study's perspective. As presented in Table 1 and Table 2, the Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of the scales was found on the high internal reliability coefficient. According to the results, KMO coefficient of the scales was also on a significant level.

**Table 1. Factor Analysis Findings for The Locus of Control Scale**

Factor	Explained Variance (%)	Total Variance (%)
External LOC	43.016	43.016
Internal LOC	37.727	80.743
KMO=.859 Chi-Square Bartlett's Test= 1684.140 P= .000		

**Table 2. Factor Analysis Findings for The Organizational Silence Scale**

Factors	Explained Variance (%)	Total Variance (%)
Acquiescent silence	42.974	42.974
Defensive silence	24.772	67.746
Prosocial silence	18.904	86.650
KMO= .881 Chi-Square Bartlett's Test= 1938.291 P= .000		

As presented in Table 1, the factor analysis results showed that the locus of control scale had two factors which explained the 80.7% of the total variance. The factors in the scale were labeled as internal LOC and external LOC. The item number 47 was excluded from the scale due to the low factor loadings which was less than .50. KMO coefficient was .859 which was on a significant level and Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant which had a level of  $\leq .05$ .

Similarly, the organizational silence scale had three factors which explained the 86.6% of the total variance. The factors were labeled as acquiescent, defensive and prosocial silence as in the original scale. The item number 8 in the scales had low factor loading ( $\dots \leq .50$ ) so the item was excluded from the scale of the study. Additionally, KMO coefficient was .881 which was on a significant level and Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant which had a level of  $\leq 0.05$ .

Further, after performing the factor analysis, reliability analysis was carried out to determine the Cronbach  $\alpha$  value of the scales. The reliability values of the scales, means and standard deviations values of the variables were presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Values for Study Variables**

	<i>Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (SD)</i>	<i>Cronbach Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</i>
<b>External LOC</b>	2.74	.5509	.888
<b>Internal LOC</b>	3.55	.4459	.833
<b>Acquiescent Silence</b>	2.22	.7284	.890
<b>Defensive Silence</b>	1.95	.7602	.898
<b>Prosocial Silence</b>	3.90	.7531	.788

### Correlations of the Study

Table 4 reports the means, standard deviations and correlations of research variables and demographic factors. Mean or standard deviation values of demographic variables were not presented in the table because of being categorical variables. In general, the results show that there are significant correlations as statistically among all research variables and the "Pearson Correlation r values" among the research variables which vary between 0.250 – 0.733 at correlations levels.

**Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations of Variables**

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Gender			1										
2. Age				1									
3. Marital Status			.001	.122	1								
4. Education Level			.056	.102	.052	1							
5. Work Experience			.118	.877	-.430**	.004	1						
6. Company Experience			.102	.032	-.366*	.621**	.621***	1					
7. Internal LOC	2.71	.553	.067	.141	-.095	.029	.029	-.066	1				
8. External LOC	3.55	.445	.124	.033	-.010	.012	.013	.013	-.250**	1			
9. Acquiescent Silence	2.22	.728	.147*	.049	-.109	.000	.006	.006	.556**	-.226**	1		
10. Defensive Silence	1.95	.760	.074	.234	-.095	.018	-.048	-.048	.490**	.205**	.733*	1	
11. Prosocial Silence	3.90	.753	-.140*	.111	-.086	-.048	-.033	-.033	.005	.172*	-.145*	-.130	1

N=201; \* p= .000

### Regression Analysis of the Study

As aforementioned in the literature review, the first hypothesis of the study claims that if an employee has an external locus of control, this attitude of the employee leads to acquiescent silence in the organization. In line with this claim, for testing the first hypothesis that "External locus of control has a positive effect on acquiescent silence" regression analysis is done.

**Table 5. The Impact of External Locus of Control on Acquiescent Silence**

Variable	b	Std. Error	t	P
(Constant)	.224	.215	1.137	.000***
<b>External LOC</b>	.556	.077	9.442	.000***

**R<sup>2</sup>= .309; F= 89,154; P<.001**

a. \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01\*\*\* p<.001

b. Dependent Variable: Acquiescent Silence

c. Independent Variable: External LOC

According to Table 5, the results showed in Model 1 that external locus of control has a moderate impact on acquiescent silence ( $\beta = .556$ ,  $R^2 = .309$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $F = 89.154$ ). It means that if employees have external locus of control, they tend to withhold relevant ideas, information, or opinions in the organization rather than sharing them. These employees can easily take the situation for granted because they believe that the present situation occurred by external factors beyond their control. Therefore, first hypothesis (H1) in the study is supported.

For testing the second hypothesis that "External locus of control has a positive effect on defensive silence" the regression analysis was performed.

**Table 6. The Impact of External Locus of Control on Defensive Silence**

Variable	b	Std. Error	t	P
(Constant)	.133	.235	.567	.000***
<b>External LOC</b>	.490	.085	7.934	.000***

**R<sup>2</sup>= .240; F= 62.948; P<.001**

a. \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01\*\*\* p<.001

b. Dependent Variable: External LOC

c. Independent Variable: Defensive Silence

In Table 15, Model 2 contains the external locus of control variable. The results of the regression analyses indicated that the external locus of control coefficient is both positive and significant ( $\beta = .490$ ,  $R^2 = .240$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $F = 62.948$ ). This result indicated that external locus of control has significant incremental explanatory power over defensive silence. In other words, if employees have external locus of control, they tend to withhold relevant ideas or opinions related to the organizational issues instead of sharing them because of a form of self-protection or reasons based on fear. Therefore, second hypothesis (H2) in the study is supported.

For testing the third hypothesis that "Internal locus of control has a positive effect on prosocial silence" regression analysis was performed.

**Table 7. The Impact of Internal Locus of Control on Prosocial Silence**

Variable	b	Std. Error	t	P
(Constant)	2.870	.432	6.790	.000***
<b>Internal LOC</b>	.172	.118	2.458	.000***
<b>R<sup>2</sup>= .029; F= 6,040; P&lt;,001</b>				
a. *p<.05; **p<.01*** p<.001				
b. Dependent Variable: Internal LOC				
c. Independent Variable: Prosocial Silence				

In Table 7, Model 3 contains the internal locus of control variable. The results of the regression analyses indicated that the internal locus of control coefficient is both positive and significant ( $\beta = .172$ ,  $R^2 = .029$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $F = 6.040$ ). According to this result, internal locus of control has significant incremental explanatory power over prosocial silence. Yet, it has a low effect on prosocial silence. In this situation, the reason for the employees to show prosocial silence can be explained by the fact that they have internal locus of control, albeit low. It means that employees with internal locus of control withhold work-related or organizational-related ideas and information in order to protect and support the organization. Thus, third hypothesis (H3) in the study is supported.

Finally, the t-tests were also applied that determining whether the means of two groups are statistically different from one another (Bhattacharjee, 2012). For this purpose, the t-tests were performed concerning the demographic variables as marital status, age, work experience and company experience. The gender variable was not included in to the analysis for the current study because the group did not have a homogeneous distribution. However, there were not significant relations between these demographic variable and study's variables. Besides, in order to determine whether there is a difference in respect to the education level, Anova test was applied. Yet, according to the results, there were not any significant differences between total work experience/company experience of the employees and study's variables.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The current study investigated the effect of internal and external locus of control on organizational silence as acquiescence, defensive and prosocial. As an important concept of psychology and organizational behavior literature, the locus of control has a role in explaining the underlying causes of employees' attitudes and behaviors. Organizational silence, on the other hand, is a state of absence of speech that employees in the organization prefer various reasons that can be categorized as individual, managerial and organizational. Additionally, the relationship between locus of control and organizational silence has been investigated by researchers because of the significant role of personality on organizational behavior studies. However, important emphasis of the current study was to be concentrated on employees who work as IT employees of the specific public bank in Istanbul. The reason for focusing on the sample was that it is expected IT units to deal with the several organizational based issues and IT employees create a solution to these issues (Maudgaly, Wallace, Daraiseh and Salem, 2006; Cenkci, 2018). In this situation, IT employees should express their ideas and opinions directly and openly. Yet, in such job structures, understanding the reason why these employees remain silent is rather important. Here, it has been thought that personality may be a determinant factor for explaining the possible antecedents of employee silence as well as organizational and managerial reasons. In this context, the sample of this study included employees working at IT units in public bank.

According to the findings of the quantitative research study (N=201), it has been seen that participations ( $M=3.55$ ) had moderate level of internal control tendency than external control ( $M=2.74$ ) on 5'likert scale. Indeed, the participants' statements when answering the open-ended questionnaire can explain this tendency. During the online survey questionnaire, open-ended questions were included where the participants can give other information about their locus of control tendencies if they wish to. Since locus of control is the tendency of individual's own skills or notions to perceive the consequences of the events, the participants' real statements are worth to find out. Based on participants' statements, internal and external locus of control tendencies were almost close to each other. For instance, some participants stated that their controls on events depend to relevant time; *'Right time, right place... At least we say, we did our best.'* However, internal locus of control was found the most repeated statements by the participants, like; *'Everything is under control by the person. People can manage their lives, as they want it so. Luck cannot be an excuse.'* Another type of participants, also declared the perception of external locus of control, but the external ones are not as much as the internal ones. Some participants emphasized that luck and belief can motivate the control of the events. As the statements are; *'There is fortune in everything.'* *'You are not God, you cannot control everything.'* These statements of the participants were in parallel to Rotter's (1966)'s locus of control concept. Among organizational silence dimensions, participations had moderate level of prosocial silence attitudes ( $M=3,90$ ) than acquiescent and defensive silence ( $M=2.22$  and  $M=1.95$ ; respectively).

In addition, the scales of the study had high reliability values & internal consistency and the scales showed same componential structures as in the original scales. When reviewed the hypotheses of the study, the first hypothesis was "External locus of control has a positive effect on acquiescent silence". According to the result, external control tendency had significant incremental explanatory power over acquiescent silence ( $\beta = .55$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $F= 89.154$ ). It means that, as external control tendency of employees is high, they fall into acquiescent silence in the organization. Thus, the result supported first hypothesis (H1). The second hypothesis was "External locus of control has a positive effect on defensive silence". The result indicated that external control tendency had significant incremental explanatory power over defensive silence ( $\beta = .49$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $F= 62.948$ ). It means that if employees have external locus of control, they tend to withhold relevant ideas or opinions because of various reasons. Thus, the second hypothesis (H2) was supported. Finally, the third hypothesis was "Internal locus of control has a positive effect on prosocial silence". According to the result, internal control tendency had significant incremental explanatory power over prosocial silence ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $F= 6.040$ ). It was seen that the impact of the independent variable – internal locus of control - on dependent variable –prosocial silence- had significant result but  $\beta$  value was not significantly adequate level. Still, third hypothesis (H3) was accepted because of helping to explain the relationship, albeit low. In conclusion, the results demonstrate that employees' internal and external control tendency, as personality determinants, explain to reasons for remaining silence.

In the study, t-tests were performed concerning to the demographic variables as marital status, age, work experience & company experience, and one-way Anova test applied according to the education level of the employees regarding to the variables of the study. Surprisingly, it was not found significant differences between study variables and demographic variables. In this study's sample, employees' states and attitudes were not affected by their demographic situations. However, it would be expected that organizational experience had an effect on prosocial silence because of identification with organization or commitment to organization.

Consequently, according to main findings, internal locus of control and external locus of control are the significant predictors for organizational silence as acquiescent, defensive, and prosocial which were also in-line with the literature (Üçok and Torun, 2015; Huang, Vliert and Vegt, 2005; Bakoğlu, Aşkun and Berber, 2009; Kahya, 2015). The current study evaluated the effect of external locus of control on acquiescent silence and defensive silence. The results showed that external locus of control had a moderate and positive impact on acquiescent silence and defensive silence ( $\beta = .556$  and  $\beta = .490$ ). This positive impact can be explained by Heider's Attribution Theory (1920). In the theory, it is maintained that when individuals try to explain own behaviors, they tend to make external attributions, such as situational or environment features. It is well known that the employees with high external tendency believe the power of change and the role of fate. Therefore, the outcome such as success or failure in the lives depends on factors such as timing, other people or some type of divine intervention beyond individual's control. It is highly possible that employees cannot share their opposing views in order to protect themselves as they believe their fate is under control of other authorities. For this reason, employees can prefer to remain silent due to the reasons of defense. Moreover, employees who believe that events occur beyond their control can easily accept situation and they think that voice in the organization is not necessary. At the same time, since these employees do not have confidence in their own abilities and continually doubting they can accomplish difficult goals, they show passive behaviors in point of expression of their ideas. Besides, they can think their own careers depend on their manager and so, remaining silent is the best alternative for their future. Employees with high external tendency believe that their actions won't make a difference in the outcome. This belief may be the trigger factor for acquiescent silence within the organization (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

In addition, internal locus of control had a low and positive impact on prosocial silence ( $\beta = .172$ ). Individuals with internal tendency believe that they have control over the outcome of events in their lives. Such that, external forces in the life can not affect the person's lives. As the feeling of control increases, the roles of chance or fate decrease. Therefore, to benefit co-workers and the whole organization, employees may not be willing to share any information on their own initiative. Thus, they may think that they control the situation. At the same time, employees with high internal tendency can show more prosocial silence in order to maintain quality relationship in the organization. The employees with high internal tendency can remain silent because of the concerns for the organization. It is possible that these employees withhold information from others to protect a colleague or the organization from embarrassment and unexpected troubles (Knoll and Van Dick, 2013). Thus, they believe they have a steady hand on the tiller. Similarly, Attribution Theory clearly explains the relationship. According to the theory, internal attribution, just as internal locus of control, refers to the process of assigning the cause of behavior to some internal characteristics, like ability and motivation, rather than outside forces (Myers, Staats and Gino, 2014).

This study has several important contributions for the relevant literature. Firstly, it highlights the importance of understanding employees' personality on the employee silence. In this perspective, it has been explained how & why employee's locus of control explains organizational silence. In addition, it is confirmed that in organizational context, personality is rather powerful factor in point of attitude and behavior within workplace. In addition, it should not be ignored that the sample of this study includes employees who had been employed in IT units in specific public bank located in Istanbul. As a public bank employee, individuals may think that events in the organization are taking place under the control of external forces in hierarchical order. This situation can explain organizational silence.

## LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In the present study, there are several limitations despite its significant contributions. Firstly, as in the many researches, this study includes limitation of cross-sectional study design. It is well-known fact that, mood of the participants may be affected by the recent events while responding to the scale. Secondly, for this study, any moderator or mediator effects on these variables were not measured. In future studies, possible moderator/mediator variables that can change the impact may be included in the relationship. Thirdly, locus of control was measured with the Dağ's scale (2002) as a two-factor construct (internal and external locus of control) rather than with dimensions. However, the scale has five sub-dimensions as personal control, belief in change, meaninglessness of the effort fullness, belief in fate, and belief in an unjust world. Therefore, further researches should test for new hypothesis with these sub-dimensions.

In addition, an effect of national culture may be the conditional factor that needs to be examined in the upcoming studies. The predictive role of national culture can explain employees' attitudes and behaviors because of its effect on organizational culture. On the other hand, there are studies claiming that culture both influences and shapes the development of personality (Triandis and Suh, 2002; Mooradian and Swan, 2006). Finally, the present study aimed to discover the impact of internal and external locus of control on organizational silence in the employees in IT environment in the public bank. Further studies can investigate the same model in different organizations and compare the results with the organizational structure.

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