Presenting the structural model of organizational silence based on leadership styles and organizational justice

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  Corresponding author's Email: snanzmazaheri11@yahoo.com	**Abstract** **Background and purpose:** Today, human capital is considered the most important capital of the organization, and managers, knowing the importance and role of this capital, are trying to create a competitive advantage for their organization; The current research was conducted to provide a structural model of organizational silence based on leadership styles and organizational justice in the Islamic Azad University of Tehran. **Methodology:** This research is of an applied, descriptive-correlation type and the statistical population of this research included all the employees of the Islamic Azad University of Tehran in 2015-2016, which is 8021 people, using the Krejcie and Morgan table, 367 People were selected by cluster random sampling method. To collect data, Vakola and Bouradas's (2005) organizational silence questionnaire, Bass and Olive's (1997) multifactorial leadership style, and Niehoff and Moorman's (1998) organizational justice were used. Structural equation modeling has been used for data analysis. **Results:** The results showed that exchange and transformational leadership style positively and significantly predicts non-interventional leadership style negatively organizational silence, organizational justice positively and significantly predicts organizational silence, and organizational justice the relationship between non-interventional leadership style. Moreover, it mediates organizational silence in a negative way and the relationship between transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style and organizational silence in a positive and meaningful way. **Conclusion:** The research results provide a model of effective factors on organizational silence based on leadership styles and organizational justice.

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Introduction

Today, human capital is considered the most important capital of the organization, and managers, knowing the importance and role of this capital, are trying to create a competitive advantage for their organization. Many organizations increasingly want their employees to be creative, express opinions, and express their problems and issues, and accept more responsibility in the ever-changing world where the competition is tight, and the level of customer expectations is higher, and the emphasis is more on quality. (Abzari, Shamei, Talebi and Abdul Manafi, 2012). Most of educational organizations are worried about the very few comments of their employees (Danaei Fard and Panahi, 2010). Due to the nature of such organizations and the vital role that employees play in the preservation and survival of the aforementioned organizations in today's highly competitive world, the issue of employees' silence becomes much more important.

The concept of organizational silence was first proposed in the 1980s as administrative justice theories, which were formed due to the ethical and administrative scandals of that period (Bogosian, 2012). Milliken and Morrison (2003) have presented a model to describe silence; they have examined the phenomenon that a person chooses silence in the organization in three dimensions: individual characteristics, organizational characteristics, and the relationship between the individual and the supervisor. The lack of experience or a person's low position in the organization are classified as individual characteristics, the hierarchical structure in the organization as well as cultural roots as organizational characteristics, and the lack of a close and intimate relationship with the supervisor or the supervisor's management style are classified as factors related to the supervisor's relationship. These factors can ultimately lead to two separate views on the emergence of silence. According to the first point of view, the person thinks that breaking the silence will result in a negative attitude towards himself or other coworkers. In the second point of view, the person thinks that completely expressing his opinion will not lead to an effective change. In these two cases, the person decides to remain silent. Organizational silence has a significant relationship with limiting the effectiveness of organizational decisions and change processes. When this happens, the quality of decision-making and the rate of change decrease. Organizational silence prevents effective organizational changes and development by preventing negative feedback, so the organization will not be able to investigate and correct errors, and day by day, they fall behind their competitors (Mangeci, 2015). In other words, it can be acknowledged that silence can be like a contagious virus because, in addition to being transmitted from person to person, as Bowen and Blackmon (2003) acknowledge, it can also be transmitted from one subject to another. As a result, silence on one issue can lead to silence on another. In the first definition of silence, it is said that silence is a kind of conscious action and even a collective phenomenon. At the same time, some researchers consider it a factor at the individual level (Danaei Fard, Fani,

and Barati, 2011). These differences show the multidimensionality and complexity of silence. Silence is a newly recognized phenomenon, and many researchers in this field are looking for reasons, consequences, and ways to solve it. In the research literature, wherever organizational silence has been mentioned, it has been associated with the discussion of leadership style, justice, and discourse (Moasa, 2013).

In today's world, the manager's role as a leader has become so important that continuous efforts are made in all fields to find people who can lead. In fact, if this role is not fulfilled, then nothing is actually done. In the form of duty, the leader must measure the power and desire of the individual or the group and choose one of the leadership styles to deal with it according to his power (Sand Bakken, 2006). Suppose the leadership style is chosen inappropriately, on the one hand. In that case, it leads to a decrease in the efficiency of individuals and the organization. On the other hand, it acts as a factor causing psychological stress caused by the job or psychological pressure on employees. Managers' leadership style is one of the effective factors in increasing the efficiency, effectiveness, and, ultimately, productivity of organizations (Kristina, 2012). The appropriate behavioral pattern of the manager in any organization causes strong morale and motivation in employees and increases their satisfaction with their jobs and careers. In recent years and in a conscious return to the views related to leadership personality theories in a new format, there has been a special movement under titles such as transformational leadership theories, exchange leadership and non-interference leadership. Transformational leadership is a conscious influence on individuals or groups to create continuous change and transformation in the current situation and functions of the organization as a whole (Raadi Afsoran et al., 2014). According to Bass (1985), a transformational leader refers to a person who empowers followers, motivates them to act beyond their expectations, and encourages them to follow collective goals instead of pursuing short-term personal interests (Blome, Forstell, and Schleper). , 2017). A transformational leader affects the imagination of others by using his charm and charisma, and in addition to a combination of creativity, inspirational leadership, and mental stimulation, he has skill and mastery and can turn unfavorable situations with failure into success (Deinert, Homan, Boer, Voelpel, and Guterman, 2015). Transformational leaders transform their followers into leaders, give meaning to their work, and create work autonomy (Herman and Tessi, 2014). For their subordinates, these leaders are who always protect them and encourage people by creating bright and attractive visions (Binti, 2017). The transactional leadership style emphasizes a logical exchange; Reward for the work done. In this process, the leader tries to motivate the followers to achieve their maximum personal benefits. For this purpose, the leader sets clear criteria for the desired performance and ideal performance in front of the followers and then, in return, considers a suitable reward for the followers (Abdi Jafari and Aghaz, 2008). In the non-intervention leadership style, the leader refrains from making decisions and delegates responsibilities.

This type of leadership is the avoidance of leading (Moghli, 2003). Non-interventional or non-interventional leadership is letting followers free when the leader is not present or avoiding leading, which is the most passive type of leadership in the leadership spectrum. In contrast to transactional leadership, the non-intervention style represents a completely non-transactional indifference state. In this case, the leader refuses to make decisions and delegates responsibilities. The motivation and satisfaction of the followers reach the minimum, and the leader's foresight is lost (Ghorbanian, 2010).

Justice in the organization means monetary and non-monetary rewards such as fair pay and incentives, equal conditions for advancement, and fair procedures to improve performance; As a result, the concept of organizational justice is related to employees. Since the employee receives orders from his manager and reacts to them, his perception of these decisions is the beginning of fairness or unfairness, which is very important because the perception becomes the basis of the individual's behavior (Yan and Youssef, 2016).). The type of behavior and dealing with employees in an organization may affect their beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors. Proper distribution of facilities and fair treatment of employees in the organization will bring cohesion and closeness of members to each other. Generally, a strong link will be formed between the organization's components. In fact, justice can be introduced as a factor of cohesion in the organization (Mirsabri, 2013). Organizational justice includes three different components of justice: namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Tezner, Fela, and Vasiliou, 2015). Distributive justice refers to the level of people's perception of the fairness of reward allocation and distribution. Employees expect that people benefit from rewards based on skill, competence, and effort. Organizational employees' perception of fair benefits from payment, salary increase, and job promotion is related to organizational dependent variables such as job satisfaction, transfer, performance, productivity, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior (Qalipour, 2014). Procedural justice refers to the fairest means available to achieve outcomes. In fact, if people know that their performance will be carefully reviewed by managers and evaluated based on their performance and will benefit from points and rewards, they will be more motivated to work and perform better. (Aldossari, 2016). Interactional justice is the exchange between people and is rooted in the theory of social exchange and is achieved when people observe justice in their communication. If the manager does not implement this justice, the employees will feel more dissatisfied with their direct supervisor with respect to the entire organization. Therefore, a major share of the negative attitudes of such employees is toward the supervisor, and a small part of these negative attitudes will return to the organization (Hosseinzadeh and Naseri, 2017). According to what was said about organizational silence based on leadership styles and organizational justice, the concept model of the research can be drawn as follows.
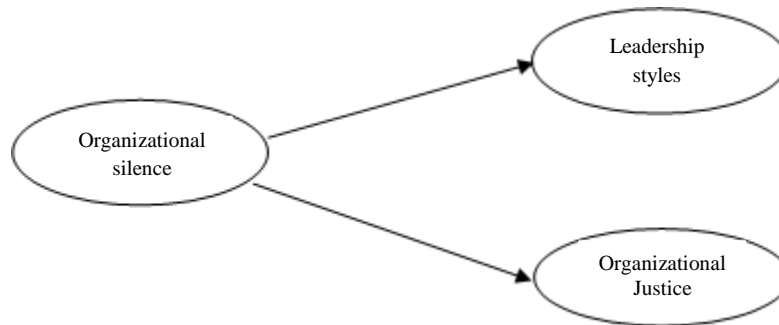
Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study

Methodology

The current research is based on the objective of an applied type, and because of trying to explain the existing relationships between the investigated variables, this research is a descriptive correlational type. The statistical population includes all employees of the Islamic Azad University of Tehran who were officially employed in these universities in 2016-2017, whose number is 8021, and 367 were selected using random cluster sampling. In order to collect information, library and field sources (questionnaires) were used. The research questionnaire consists of two parts. One section includes general characteristics of subjects, such as gender, the field of study, age, and work experience, and the other section includes three standard questionnaires. The first questionnaire is the organizational silence questionnaire of Vakola and Bouradas (2005), which investigates the factors that cause organizational silence. It consists of 15 items and three components senior management's attitude towards silence (5 items), supervisor's attitude towards silence (5 items), and communication opportunities (5 items). The range of responses to the items is set as (totally disagree=5, disagree=4, slightly agree=3, agree=2, totally agree=1). In the dimension of top management's attitude to silence, items 3, 4, and 5 are presented in reverse and their scores are calculated on the opposite of the above scores. In the present study, the reliability of this questionnaire was obtained using the internal consistency method using Cronbach's alpha method for the components of senior management's attitude towards silence and supervisor's attitude towards silence and communication opportunities equal to 0.609, 0.591, and 0.584, respectively. Salvati, Yarahmadi, and Seyedhashmi (2014) confirmed the validity of this questionnaire with the help of the content validity method and using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis methods and KMO index, and in this research, Cronbach's alpha value was determined to be 0.8217. The second questionnaire is Bass and Olive's (1997) Multifactor Leadership Style Questionnaire. Its purpose is to evaluate the factors and indicators of transformational leadership, exchange leadership, and non-interventional leadership, and it consists of 41 items and three components of transformational leadership (19 items), exchange leadership (17 items), and

non-interventional leadership (5 items). The scale of this questionnaire is of the Likert type and its scoring is between 1 and 5, the range of responses to the items is set as (completely disagree=5, disagree=4, slightly agree=3, agree=2 and completely agree=1). In the present study, the reliability of this questionnaire was obtained using the internal consistency method using Cronbach's alpha method for the components of transformational leadership, exchange leadership, and non-interventional leadership equal to 0.783, 0.762 and 0.619, respectively. Zahed-Babelan (2008) confirmed the formal and content validity of the questionnaire after its translation with the opinion of experts and obtained the concurrent validity of Bass and Olive's (1997) leadership style questionnaire equal to 0.83. Also, for the validity of this questionnaire, Mughli (2004) conducted the standardization of the relevant test and confirmed its validity. The third questionnaire is Niehoff and Moran's (1998) organizational justice questionnaire, which aims to measure organizational justice and its dimensions. This questionnaire consists of 20 items and 3 components (distributive justice (5 items), procedural justice (6 items) and interactional justice (9 items)). The range of responses to the items is set as (totally disagree=5, disagree=4, slightly agree=3, agree=2, and totally agree= 1). In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained using the internal consistency method using Cronbach's alpha method for the components of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice equal to 0.527, 0.581, and 0.754, respectively. Saberi, Soltan Hosseini, Izadi, and Vazirian (2015) have used the method of content validity and diagnostic validity to determine the index of average variance extracted (AVE) for the validity of the questionnaire.

Results

Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and correlation coefficients between leadership styles, organizational justice, and silence.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha coefficients and correlation coefficients between the variables of the present study

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Transformational leadership style	-								
2. Interactive leadership style	0/600[**]	-							
3. Non-interference leadership style	-0/539[**]	-0/505[**]	-						
4. Organizational-distributive justice	0/368[**]	0/367[**]	-0/314[**]	-					
5. Organizational-procedural justice	0/405[**]	0/318[**]	-0/335[**]	0/474[**]	-				
6. Organizational-interactional justice	0/291[**]	0/320[**]	-0/253[**]	0/288[**]	0/478[**]	-			
7. Organizational silence - management attitude	0/442[**]	0/427[**]	-0/464[**]	0/434[**]	0/338[**]	0/247[**]	-		
8. Organizational silence - supervisor's	0/410[**]	0/324[**]	-0/400[**]	0/308[**]	0/326[**]	0/259[**]	0/337[**]	-	

attitude								
9. Organizational silence - communication opportunities	0/457**	0/422**	-0/419**	0/374**	0/273**	0/293**	0/406**	0/406**	-
Mean	51/22	47/92	16/26	15/01	17/38	25/72	13/44	14/73	13/60
Standard deviation	12/34	11/72	4/42	4/17	4/82	7/06	3/49	3/96	3/64
Cronbach's alpha	0/783	0/762	0/619	0/527	0/581	0/754	0/609	0/591	0/584

*p<0/05 , **p<0/01

Table 1 shows that the non-intervention and transformational and interactive leadership styles are positively and at a significance level of 0.01 correlated with all three components of senior management's attitude towards silence, the supervisor's attitude towards silence, and communication opportunities of organizational silence. All three components of organizational justice were positively correlated with all three components of organizational silence at the 0.01 level. In addition to the average, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients between research variables, the above table also shows Cronbach's alpha coefficients. In the continuation of the assumptions of structural equation modeling analysis, including the normality of univariate distribution, colinearity, homogeneity of variances, linearity of relationships and normality of multivariate distribution, it was evaluated and observed that those assumptions are valid among the data of the current research.

In this research, before analyzing the structural model in line with the opinion of the experts (Bairne, 2010), the fitting of the measurement model of the current research was evaluated. In this model, it was assumed that the underlying variable of organizational justice is measured by indicators of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactive justice, and organizational silence is measured by indicators of top management's attitude towards silence, supervisors' attitude towards silence, and communication opportunities. Confirmatory factor analysis showed that in addition to the chi-square and normalized chi-square, the root means square error index also does not support the acceptable fit of the measurement model with the collected data. However, three adaptive fit indices, the goodness of fit index and the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI=0.929), supported the measurement model's fit with the data. Despite this, due to the importance of the goodness-of-fit index (RMSEA), the measurement model was modified by creating covariance between the errors of the two indicators of distributive justice and interactional justice, and the desired goodness-of-fit indices were obtained. Table 2 shows the standard factor loadings and the significance level of each indicator of the two independent variables of organizational justice and silence.

Table 2: Standard factor loadings in the research measurement model

Indicators		β	Indicators		β
Organizational Justice	Distributive justice	0/754**	Organizational Silence	Management attitude	0/651**

Procedural justice	0/671**		Attitude of supervisor	0/530**
Interactive justice	0/653**		Communication opportunities	0/610**

P**< 0/01

Table 2 shows that all indicators have adequate power to measure their underlying variable after ensuring the measurement model's optimal fit and how the structural model fit was evaluated. In the structural model of the research, it was assumed that leadership styles predict organizational silence both directly and through the mediation of organizational justice. The analysis results showed that the research's structural model is a good fit with the collected data. Table 3 shows the unstandardized path coefficients (b), standardized path coefficients (β), standard error (SE), and significance level (p) in the structural model.

Table 3: Total and direct path coefficients between the research variables in the structural model

Path	b	S.E	β	p
Total path of non-intervention leadership style to organizational silence	-0/199	0/035	-0/395	0/001
Total path of transactional leadership style to organizational silence	0/045	0/014	0/235	0/001
Total path of transformational leadership style to organizational silence	0/067	0/014	0/373	0/001
direct path of of non-intervention leadership style to organizational silence	-0/162	0/034	-0/322	0/001
direct path of transactional leadership style to organizational silence	0/024	0/016	0/124	0/126
direct path of transformational leadership style to organizational silence	0/045	0/017	0/249	0/011
path of non-interventional leadership style to organizational justice	-0/110	0/046	-0/160	0/017
path of transactional leadership style to organizational justice	0/064	0/022	0/245	0/005
path of transformational leadership style to organizational justice	0/068	0/021	0/274	0/001
path of organizational justice to organizational silence	0/331	0/063	0/454	0/001
path non-intervention leadership style to organizational justice to organizational silence.	-0/037	0/017	-0/073	0/016
path the exchange leadership style to organizational justice to organizational silence	0/021	0/008	0/111	0/005
path of transformational leadership style to organizational justice to organizational silence	0/022	0/009	0/124	0/001

Table 3 shows that the total path coefficient between non-interventionist leadership style and organizational silence is negative and significant at the 0.01 level. The total path coefficient between the exchange and transformational leadership styles with organizational silence was positive and significant at 0.01 level. This shows that the

Laissez- Faire leadership style predicts organizational silence negatively and exchange and transformational leadership style positively and significantly. The path coefficient between organizational justice and silence was also positive and significant at 0.01. This finding shows that organizational justice positively predicts organizational silence at a significant level of 0.01. Also, the indirect path coefficient between non-interventionist leadership and organizational silence was negative and at 0.05 level, and the indirect path coefficient between exchange leadership and transformational leadership with organizational silence was positive and significant at 0.01 level. In this way, it can be said that organizational justice mediates the relationship between Laissez- Faire leadership style and organizational silence in a negative way and the relationship between the other two leadership styles and organizational silence in a positive and meaningful way.

Discussion and Conclusion
The first finding of this research showed that the non-interference leadership style predicts organizational silence negatively and the transformational leadership style positively and significantly. In explaining this problem, it can be stated that the leadership style is to leave the followers free when the leader is not present or to avoid leading. The leader does not interfere in important issues, refuses to make decisions, and delegates responsibilities. Such leaders cannot solve the organization's problems due to their inability to solve the problems and problems of the organization and avoid making decisions. According to the conditions of leadership and the prevailing atmosphere of the organization, the role of committed and visionary supervisors in the organization can be determined. In these situations, this type of leader should encourage employees to express their opinions by using the appropriate leadership style appropriate to the organization's situation and holding brainstorming meetings, which can reduce the silence in the organization. In the exchange leadership style, the parties enter the exchange process. In this process, both sides are aware of each other's sources of power and perspectives, and each tries to maximize their own interests. In this style, the leader sets the standards, and employees can achieve organizational rewards for meeting them. If the employees act against the leader's wishes, they will not be eligible to receive bonuses and benefits. Therefore, they try to act according to the leader's wishes, considering the economic issues that are very important in their lives. Also, they should not express their opinions and ideas about the issues of the organization to reduce the resentment of the organization's leaders due to not accepting the statements of their subordinates and not paying attention to them, which causes more silence in the organization. Also, in the transformational leadership style, the leader of the organization has the vision, insight, and particular personality traits to motivate employees and increase their self-confidence in expressing their opinions. By empowering employees, the leader can encourage them to reveal their maximum abilities and efforts for the organization.

Meanwhile, we can also mention the conservative role of employees in educational organizations. Even with the transformational leadership style governing the organization, their fear of losing their positions makes them remain silent about the issues and problems of the organization. In this way, silence increases in the organization. The results of the present study are consistent with the results of Molavi and Kazemzadeh (2017), Sarmast and Irannejad (2016), Shababifar and Taghvaei (2016), Shahesvari and Maktabi (2016), Fakhimi Hosseinzad et al. (2016).

The second finding of this research showed that organizational justice positively predicts organizational silence at a significant level. In explaining this finding, it can be said that organizational justice can play a significant role in increasing organizational silence. Organizations with a discriminatory organizational culture foster an atmosphere that discourages people from speaking up about issues. When employees feel that justice is only applied to a certain number of people at the top of the organization, they realize that the benefits and resources of the organization are not fairly allocated among them, and the procedures for allocating these resources are also not suitable among them. This affects their sense of responsibility. Regarding the energy and time they spend to accomplish their activities in the organization, whether they are fairly appreciated, or whether only high-ranking leaders of the organization are appreciated. This feeling, attitude, and concern affect their activities, and silence increases in the organization. The results of the present study are not consistent with the results of Ghanbari and Feyz Javadian (2017), Morshedtalab and Tajri (2017), Rahat Dahmareh and Sheikhepour (2015), Shohani, Mohibinejad, Yektayar (2016), Kurudirek et al. (2016), Kamel and Akozum (2014), Tulubas and Celep (2012).

The third finding showed that organizational justice mediates the relationship between non-interventionist leadership style and organizational silence in a negative way and the relationship between transformational and exchange leadership style and organizational silence in a positive and meaningful way. When managers adopt a leadership style of non-intervention, they leave the choice of the way and method of doing activities to their employees and apply the least amount of supervision capabilities. This leadership style gives employees much power to make decisions. In this regard, if the decision-making power is only reserved for a certain number of employees and other employees feel that justice in the organization has been forgotten, a kind of indifference will be formed. In this case, the employees lose their motivation and hope for physical participation and even talking about the issues and problems of the organization, and organizational silence will increase and bring unfortunate consequences. Also, the success of the organization and the realization of its goals depend on how to apply leadership and effective leadership styles. Leaders can increase the job satisfaction of employees and productivity by using the correct leadership style, according to the existing situation of the organization. According to the

organization's existing situation, the leaders of the organization use a transformational leadership style based on inspirational motivation, ideal influence, mental persuasion, and individual considerations. Alternatively, even when they use the exchange leadership style that is based on conditional reward, exception-based management (active), and exception-based management (passive), they can somehow affect organizational justice in the organization. In this way, the behaviors and reactions of the leaders of organizations in general and in educational environments, in particular, are placed under the microscope of employees. Due to the special role of the leader in providing paternal and supportive behaviors in the organization, sometimes employees magnify their mistakes and performance. Especially when they feel that the use of justice by leaders with transactional and transformational styles is only reserved for high-level employees of the organization; in this case, their perception and attitude towards the manager are interpreted negatively. Employees do not consider the leader to be a supporter of their opinions and speech in examining and solving issues and problems, and they mostly conclude that talking in the workplace is useless; in this way, silence increases in the organization. The present study's results are inconsistent with the results of Mahdavi Nik (2012).

Ethics
This research observed ethical standards, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring privacy and confidentiality. Also, while completing the questionnaires while emphasizing completing all the questions, the participants were free to withdraw from the research at any time and provide individual information. They were assured that the information would remain confidential, which was strictly adhered to.

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Conflict of Interest
According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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