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Reasons for Whistleblowing: A Qualitative Study[1]

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ABSTRACT

Whistleblowing has become a commonly encountered concept in recent times. Negative behaviors and actions can be experienced in any organization, and whistleblowing, as a communication process, is a kind of ethical behavior. Whistleblowing is the transmission of an unfavorable situation discovered in the organization to either internal or external authorities. An examination of the reasons for the employee's whistleblowing is important for a better understanding of this concept; hence, this research focuses on the reasons for whistleblowing. In addition, the reasons for avoiding whistleblowing were also investigated. This research, which is designed as a qualitative study, is based on the phenomenological approach. Interviews were conducted with open-ended, semi-structured interview form in the study. The research was conducted on 20 teachers, 12 administrators, and 7 inspectors. The data were analyzed using the content analysis method. As a result of the research, the individual, organizational and social reasons for whistleblowing have been differentiated. Among the individual reasons for whistleblowing are the considerations of protecting and gaining interests. Organizational reasons include business ethics and the expectation of subsequent promotion. Social reasons encompass social benefits, social justice, and religious belief. Reasons for avoiding whistleblowing vary based on retaliation and worry. This research is considered important because as it is believed to be the first qualitative research to approach the reasons for whistleblowing. The results of this research have revealed gaps in the understanding of this area for future studies.

Key Words: Whistleblowing, Avoiding Whistleblowing, Reasons for Whistleblowing

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INTRODUCTION

Whistleblowing is a concept frequently heard in recent times that developed from the literature of organizational behavior. Whistleblowing is a kind of organizational knowledge transferal process which occurs between an employee and an organization. In this process, the employee transfers his/her knowledge into or out of the organization. Whistleblowing has been frequently discussed in the organizational literature for two decades. These debates have mostly focused on the whistleblowing concept itself, its process, and its consequences. This study is considered important in that it is the first qualitative study to be conducted on the reasons for whistleblowing. In the following sections, the concept of whistleblowing is discussed.

Concept of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is a conscious act of the organization employee that involves a high degree of ethical conduct and risk. Whistleblowing is basically an ethical situation in which an organization employee becomes aware of an unethical behavior or a sort of crime within the organization. At this point, the employee of the organization must first notice the negative situation. Also, this negativeness should be a source of serious discomfort to the employee. Whistleblowing is the notification of the organizational information by the employee to the authorities (Cross & Tiller, 1998). Such authorities may be within or outside the organization (Becker, 2014; Delk, 2013). The whistleblower is an employee who is the subject of the whistleblowing action. The whistleblower can be a person or a group of people (Near & Miceli, 1985). Whistleblower acts with rather different motivations, even though the main purpose of this action is a 'protection drive' (Taylor & Curtis, 2010). This protection drive may be directed at the individual, the organization, or the community. At this point, it can also be predicted that one can be motivated to provide a certain benefit or interest. Yet, badly affected victims customarily blow the whistle (Ajzen, 1991). Plus, the whistleblower may still be a working or former employee. Whistleblowers are most often former workers, having lost their jobs at the end of the whistleblowing process (Poitras, 2014).

Whistleblowing can be performed in two ways, internal and external. Internal whistleblowing is described as informing within the organization, whereas external whistleblowing is the transfer of information outside the organization (Miceli & Near, 1994). Internal whistleblowing is mostly conducted by colleagues or senior managers. Non-organizational authorities such as the media, political parties, unions and supervisory agencies are external whistleblowing channels (Bucholza & Rosenthal, 1998). The negative situations encountered within the organization are contrary to the law or prevailing ethical values. Any action or situation that constitutes a crime or that opposes commonly accepted values are being studied in the context of whistleblowing (Lenanne, 1993). Whistleblowing can also be the subject of any irregular work and transactions that arise from the organization's functioning. In addition, whistleblowing may be subject to a form of formal and informal interaction in organizations (Nasu, 2015).

Reasons for Whistleblowing

There can be many factors that cause whistleblowing. Problems can be encountered in any environment where people live together. In environments where there is such a varied kind of problem, there are many different reasons for whistleblowing. In the early studies found in the literature, the reasons for whistleblowing was the subject of controversy on the

axis of profit-taking and benefit-making (Ajzen, 1991; Banja, 1985; DeGeorge, 1990; Near & Miceli, 1985). Whistleblowing has been linked to psychological, sociological, and philosophical bases in subsequent discussions that have been enriched by different kinds of study (Alford, 2001; Castagnera, 2003; Hersh, 2002; Hunt, 1998). The reasons for whistleblowing in recent discussions examine the context of individual, organizational and social values (Kaptein, 2011; Lee, 2011; Modesitt, 2013; Moore, 2012). In this study, a summary of recent discussions will be presented, and the reasons for whistleblowing examined in terms of individual, organizational and communal values.

Individual reasons

It is generally known that the main reason for whistleblowing within an organization is the instinct for protection and/or avoidance (Elliston, 1982). Whistleblowing is done to protect the whistleblower him/herself and others. Individual reasons are often identified as psychological needs (Moore, 2012). In addition, whistleblowing can also be done to achieve individual gains of various kinds such as prestige, courage, self-confidence, and self-control (Greenberg, 2012). Employees can also whistleblow to reflect the various attitudes and behaviors that have become part of their character or to control other people (Jubb, 1999; Kaptein, 2011).

Organizational reasons

Employees can report very different situations within an organization. It is reported that the employee may be the basic driver to exhibit such behavior, having the desire for notoriety (Vinten, 1999). Individual interests can be material- and/or spiritual-based. For example, an employee, who notifies in the hope of promotion or expectation of a prize does so in the hope of material gain. Interest-based intra-organizational conflicts are often shown as the main reason for whistleblowing (Nasu, 2015). By notifying cases that might be of benefit to the organization, a whistleblower can strengthen their working position within the organization, and also gain the social support of fellow employees (Kaptein, 2011). In addition, whistleblowing can be done in order to fulfill a desire to damage the organization. The belief, which by reporting inconsistencies in the organization in certain situations will improve, is also among the known causes for whistleblowing (Tran, 2011). As an example, an employee exposed discriminatory attitudes, with a desires to punish the organization by reporting to the media. Lack of communication and conflict circumstances between employees are also considered among the organizational reasons for whistleblowing (Dorasamy, 2012).

Social reasons

Whistleblowers often have high ethical awareness and keep the interests of the community in the foreground, with whistleblowing done in order to protect the wellbeing of society. A situation that experiences in the organization, which is dealing with the general public, is often reported. (Bjørkelo, 2013). Whistleblowing, frequently in the interest of the public, is often done with a pattern of prerogative behavior such as patriotism, sacrifice, generosity and dedication. Edward Snowden, for example, was reported as a whistleblower through patriotic instinct (Poitras, 2014).

Organizations must have a transparent and accountable structure to sustain their being. It is important to prevent employees in the organization from participating in activities pertaining to misconduct (Kaptein, 2011). Internalizing ethical values of organizations will reduce the frequency of whistleblowing (Jubb, 1999). Besides, promoting the visibility of

whistleblowing in organizations should be ensured. Whistleblowing, which can be experienced in all kinds of organizations, requires examination through research. Many studies found in the literature have generally been conducted in order to determine the existence of whistleblowing and to identify the difficulties encountered by whistleblowers (Bjørkelo, 2013; Lee, 2011; Modesitt, 2013; Moore, 2012; Poitras, 2014; Tran, 2011). No study was found in which the focus was on the reasons for whistleblowing, and is therefore an important gap in the literature. This is believed to be the first qualitative-patterned study focusing on the reasons for whistleblowing.

Studies on the reasons for whistleblowing found in the literature were limited. Celep and Konaklı (2012) examined the views of teachers in educational organizations on whistleblowing behaviors. In their research, they found the teachers guard the aims of the school and the interests of their colleagues; with a tendency for internal or external whistleblowing from female teachers being higher than that of their male counterparts. In addition, teachers' whistleblowing views differed according to gender, school type, and seniority. Akıllı, Çam, Kılınç and Kızılboğa (2013) determined that the employees ignored the situation of working in a second job and that they were denied whistleblowing due to social exclusion and fear of retaliation. Altun, Sayer and Barutçu (2013) determined that employees did not sufficiently report actions, such as a conflict of interest, failure to comply with the prohibition on receiving gifts, arbitrariness in the use of public resources and other corruption. Also in their research, they emphasized the importance of an ethical structure in public administration.

The general feature of the studies found in the literature is that they mostly examined the whistleblowing concept through quantitative research methods. The investigations focused on the existence of the concept, not its cause, and worked on possible models with different concepts. However, this current study is conducted with the intention of closing a gap in the literature and also examining the reasons for whistleblowing, which was not mentioned previously. The aim of the current study is to discover the reasons for whistleblowing in schools. In this study, participants will be asked questions such as, "What are your opinions on the reasons for whistleblowing?" and "What are your opinions on the reasons for avoiding whistleblowing?"

METHOD

This research is designed based on the phenomenological qualitative research method. With qualitative research, it is possible to examine the details of the subject under research and to then elaborate on it (Balcı, 2015).

Participants

This participants of this study are education staff, with 20 teachers, 12 school administrators, and seven school inspectors working in Ankara, Turkey. Detailed interviews were held with the working group adhering to the semi-structured interview form.

Collection of Data

An open-ended and semi-structured interview form was devised to enable participants to identify their thoughts on the subject. A draft interview form was evaluated for its reliability by three educational science experts, two measurements specialists, a sociologist, and a psychologist. The revised form, taking into account the experts' opinions, was applied to one teacher, an inspector and a school administrator who are not part of the research group and the construct validity was tested. In the interview form prepared after the preliminary study, participants were asked two questions: (1) What is the reason for reporting the negativities you are experiencing with your organization? (2) If you do not report the negativities you are facing, what might be the reason for this? Participant opinions were voice recorded and, when necessary, notetaking by the researcher.

Analysis of Data

Data obtained at the end of the interviews were analyzed based on the Miles-Huberman (1994) model of content analysis methods; a phased model such as categorizing, coding, summarizing and extracting research data. The data obtained from the interviews were written up first of all, and then the textual data was classified and pre-coding performed. Then, from this initial coding, the first categories were created and then the categories rearranged to create themes. The process was validated by three different researchers coding separately, with consistency between practitioners found to be 82%.

FINDINGS

This section contains findings from the analysis. Findings for the reasons for whistleblowing were examined in three groups: individual, organizational, and social themes.

Findings Related to the Individual Theme

The findings of the individual reasons for whistleblowing are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Findings for 'individual' theme*

Theme	Categories	n					
			School Administrator		Teacher		
		Inspector	Public	Private	Public	Private	Total
Individual	Self-protection	5	4	3	5	5	22
	Protecting of colleagues	3	3	3	4	4	17
	Thinking of personal interest	4	2	1	3	2	10
	Requesting self-respect	1	2	1	2	2	8

When Table 1 is examined, four categories of individual reasons for whistleblowing are identified. Among these, three categories can be defined as "self-protection" (n=22), "protecting of colleagues" (n=17), and "thinking of personal interest" (n=10).

The following are several views on the individual reasons given for whistleblowing:

I've lived for my own good in my life. The basic principle of my notification is that it is appropriate to my interests. Adhering to my benefits allows me to gain respect in the community. (Public School Administrator, male, aged 41)

First of all, I informed so as to protect myself. I even wanted to protect my colleagues. (Private School Teacher, female, aged 47)

I was lonely in social terms. I witnessed negative events at the institution and reported them. The only reason for me to report was the desire to increase my reputation within the institution. (Public School Teacher, male, aged 46)

It can be stated that the findings support similar research in the literature. Jackson et al. (2010) reported that an employee self-protection motive may lead to whistleblowing. Similarly, Modesitt (2013) mentioned the importance of protectionism and stated that one can act with impulsiveness as if protecting oneself and colleagues. Kaptein (2011) explains the main reason for the whistleblowing behavior as a person's internal motives (conscience, virtue, self-esteem, self-control, etc.). Ohnishi, Hayama, Asai, and Kosugi (2008) determined that whistleblowers' desire to increase their reputation is the main reason pattern for them.

Findings Related to the Organizational Theme

Findings related to the organizational reasons for whistleblowing are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. *Finding of organizational theme*

Theme	Categories	n					
		Inspector	School Administrator		Teacher		Total
			Public	Private	Public	Private	
Organizational	Desire to act according to business ethics	6	4	3	9	5	27
	Promotion and award expectation	4	5	4	7	4	24
	To protect the organization	4	3	2	4	3	16
	The belief in organizational change	2	2	1	1	2	8

When Table 2 is examined, the organizational reasons for whistleblowing is examined in four categories. It was determined that the employees' reasons for whistleblowing were 'desire to act according to business ethics' (n=27), 'promotion and award expectation' (n=24) and 'to protect of an organization' (n=16). The following are some of the participant's views on the organizational reasons for whistleblowing:

I want to glorify business ethics to protect the school. I don't want to hurt my school. Sometimes I thought I might have a career in school. I expected recognition for the act of whistleblowing. (Public School Administrator, male, aged 42)

I wanted to act in accordance with business ethics. I never expected to be promoted or rewarded. But there was also the belief that something could change in the organization. (School Inspector, male, aged 51)

It can be determined that the findings are similar to that seen in the literature. For example, Delk (2013) stated that whistleblowing is performed as part of the job. Celep and Konaklı (2012) found that teachers are whistleblowing to protect the organization. In addition, in their survey, it was determined that teachers' reasons for whistleblowing differed according to gender and occupational seniority. Outterson (2012) stated that employees' expectation of reward is an important organizational reason for whistleblowing. Shawver (2008) reported that whistleblowing could also be used to invoke organizational change. Vandekerckhove (2006) notes that the underlying pattern of the organizational reason for whistleblowing should be examined within business ethics. Brinsfield, Edwards, and Greenberg (2009) argue that organizational change is an important organizational reason underlying whistleblowing behavior. Lachman (2008) emphasized the expectations of rewards and penalties of employees of the organization. According to Lachman (2008), the organizational reasons for whistleblowing are the desire of a person to avoid reward or punishment. As a result, it can be said that the findings of the current research show similarities to the literature. It has been determined that the reasons for organizational whistleblowing depend on factors such as business ethics, reward expectation, protection, and change.

Findings Related to the Social Theme

Findings related to the social reasons for whistleblowing are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. *Findings of social theme*

Theme	Categories	n					
		Inspector	School Administrator		Teacher		Total
			Public	Private	Public	Private	
Social	Provision of social justice	6	5	2	8	4	25
	Benefit of society	5	4	3	6	3	21
	Religious beliefs	4	4	2	4	3	17
	Protecting of social order	4	3	1	2	1	11

According to the findings in Table 3, ensuring social justice (n=25) is the most important social reason for whistleblowing. In addition, community benefit (n=21), religious beliefs (n=17) and social order protection (n=11) can be identified as social reasons for whistleblowing. Some selected participant opinions on the social reasons for whistleblowing are as follows.

Justice is perhaps the most important thing. I always wanted to be fair in the institutions I work with. I wanted people to treat me fair. I blew the whistle because justice had to be achieved, justice had to find the right place. (Public School Administrator, male, aged 42)

The benefit of society is what I always keep on the front page. My reason for whistleblowing is essentially wanting to be with the community. My belief is to do what is right for my country. (School Inspector, male, aged 57)

My religious beliefs are more important than anything else. Religion is the most important part of a society. My reason for whistleblowing was to act in accordance with my basic religious beliefs. (Public School Teacher, male, aged 53)

As a whistleblower, I wanted to protect the values of the community. The protection of social order is more important than anything. (Private School Teacher, female, aged 43)

It can be said that the findings of the research reached parallel findings in the literature. Onishi, Hayama, Asai and Kosugi (2008) reported that whistleblowing could be done with the intention of protecting the order of society. Schmidt (2005) emphasized the importance of ensuring social peace and justice and found that whistleblowing was closely related to providing justice. Wilkes, Peters, Weaver, and Jackson (2011) reported that religious beliefs are important among the reasons for whistleblowing. Bjørkelo (2013) stated that employees may exhibit whistleblowing behaviors in the interests of the community. Tran (2011) emphasized the main reason for external whistleblowing is the desire to do things for the benefit of society.

Findings Related to Reasons for Avoiding Whistleblowing

Findings related to the avoidance of whistleblowing are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. *Findings for avoiding whistleblowing*

Categories	n					
	Inspector	School Administrator		Teacher		Total
		Public	Private	Public	Private	
The thought of not getting results	-	6	2	11	6	25
Worrying about business and private life deterioration	2	7	4	6	5	24
Concern about retaliatory behavior	1	6	2	9	2	20
Concern about punishment	1	6	2	6	2	17
Concern about loss of job	1	3	5	2	5	16
Protecting colleagues	2	4	2	5	2	15

From the views on the reasons for avoiding whistleblowing, 'the thought of not getting results' (n=25), 'worrying about business and private life deterioration' (n=24) and 'concern about retaliatory behavior' (n=20) have been determined to be in the foreground. Some of the reasons for avoiding whistleblowing are given below.

I have not informed due to concerns that my business and private life may deteriorate. Moreover, I could face retaliatory behavior and could be fired from work. (Private School Administrator, male, aged 42)

I was worried about the punishment. There are many things I have not reported for this reason. (Public School Teacher, male, aged 35)

I thought that I would not see any results, so I did not inform. (Public School Administrator, male, aged 53)

The findings of the study on the reasons for avoiding whistleblowing support the related research findings from the literature. Greenberg (2012) determined that

whistleblowing was avoided with the belief that the anticipated results cannot be realized. Moberly (2006) reported that negativities (retaliation, job loss, etc.) that may be encountered in business life reduces the frequency of whistleblowing. Hunt (1998) states that an employee may give up on whistleblowing over concern for punishment. Alford, (2001) states that the most important reason for avoiding whistleblowing is the anxiety of loss of work. Hersh (2002) reports that there may be workers who give up whistleblowing in order to protect their colleagues. Castagnera (2003) notes that employees often have reasons for avoiding whistleblowing based on fear and anxiety. According to Castagnera (2003), employees do not make a declaration that their balance in business and private life may be disrupted and that they may lose their job.

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focuses on the reasons for whistleblowing and avoiding whistleblowing, an area found to be lacking in the published literature. In this context, the reasons for whistleblowing were examined at the individual, organizational, and social aspects. With research data obtained from schools, new and important results were determined for the literature. In the following section, the results of the study are discussed.

According to research findings, it can be determined that among the reasons for individual whistleblowing, self-protection and the protection of colleagues are considered important. In this case, the employee is whistleblowing to protect himself or another colleague. Protection drive causes the employee to approach ethical behavior. This result achieved by the research is similar to the works of Jubb (1999) and Near and Miceli (1985) in the literature. However, Welch (2013) reports that whistleblowers are quite brave decision makers and often do not consider their own safety. Likewise, Lindblom (2007) reported that the employee would behave in the opposite direction of whistleblowing in order to protect himself. It is also important that one exhibits a protective attitude towards colleagues with which there is social interaction and commitment in the workplace. It has been determined that employees in the workplace behave in a protective manner unless their interests conflict (Castagnera, 2003; Kaptein, 2011). As an important result of the research, it can be said that it is an important part of collegiality in the study areas. It can be determined that an employee, who considers the interests of his colleague as well as himself, demonstrates good team solidarity. Whistleblowing for the protection of colleagues is similarly found in many studies in the literature (Arastaman, 2013; Buchholza & Rosenthal, 1998; Fidan & Öztürk, 2015; Tsahuridu & Vandekerckhove, 2008).

Providing personal benefit from research findings is an important individual reason for whistleblowing. Accordingly, employees are whistleblowing in consideration of their personal interests. Even if whistleblowing is performed for such a reason, it constitutes an ethical contrast, this result provides important data for understanding the climate of the organizations. The opinion of providing personal benefit consists of the employee's financial or moral interests (Becker, 2014; Delk, 2013). Employees are whistleblowing in order to provide some concrete return, such as receiving awards or promotions (DeGeorge, 1990). The employee's whistleblowing for such a purpose is similar to a number of research studies in the literature (Armstrong, 2005; Arnold & Ponemon, 1991; Dorasamy, 2012; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Miceli, 2004). In addition, it is important that the desire to increase self-respect, which is among the reasons for individual whistleblowing, becomes evident in this study. This finding suggests that employees may exhibit ethical behavior in order to gain

respect in organizations. Increasing individual respect is an indication of the employee's desire to increase social position within the organization (Alford, 2001). This result achieved within the scope of the research supports many conclusions in the literature (Fidan & Balcı, 2016; Hunt, 1998; Lewis, D'Angelo, & Clarke, 2015; Moore, 2012; Tran, 2011).

Based on the findings of the research, it seems that the organizational reasons for whistleblowing have come forward to act in accordance with business ethics. The ethical and moral values of employees are influencing their way of living and working (Moberly, 2006). The employee who wants to carry out the work in a moral framework evaluates the negativeness that is encountered in the workplace within its own values. As a result of the study, it is seen that whistleblowing emerges in the event of a conflict with these values. In addition, it was determined that promotion and reward expectation are among the organizational reasons for whistleblowing identified in this research. Accordingly, employees are basically able to achieve whistleblowing with the intention of getting a promotion and making progress in their careers. This result is an indication that whistleblowing has a pragmatic ethical system. Similar results were obtained with this research in different studies in the literature (Armstrong, 2005; Baltaci & Balcı, 2017; Buchholza & Rosenthal, 1998; Miceli, 2004). It is also remarkable that some anticipate receiving some sort of prize as a result of whistleblowing. Being in the expectation of profit or reward at the end of an act can be determined as the operant conditioning. In this case, whistleblowing is not only an ethical cognition but also a conditioning behavior at the same time.

The requirement for employees to protect their organization is important, which is among the organizational reasons seen for whistleblowing. Employees are able to demonstrate the dynamics of individual and organizational bonding as they are social assets. It is often seen that employees internalize their organizations. They can also demonstrate high levels of commitment, identification, and citizenship behavior towards their organizations. Such an attitude of employee ownership leads to protection drive. Employees think that they are contributing to the maintenance of their existence by protecting their organizations. In addition, maintaining the life of the organization will consolidate the position of the employee in the organization and make it permanent. It can be determined that the results of the research find favor in the literature. In many studies conducted in the literature, it has been determined that employees are motivated to protect their organizations as well as protect themselves (Celep & Konaklı, 2012; Delk, 2013; Lewis et al., 2015; Poitras, 2014; Tran, 2011).

Another organizational reason for whistleblowing, which is evident in the research, is the belief in the organizational change. This finding suggests that employees perceive certain problems within the organization. Employees perform whistleblowing in the organization with the belief that non-functioning mechanisms will become organized and that certain parts of the organization will change as a result (DeGeorge, 1990). Whistleblowing performed for such a reason is an important indicator that the whistleblower is actually taking care of organizational interests. In addition, an employee who wants organizational change emphasizes a change that may increase organizational effectiveness. This finding, which is an important result of the research, also makes it clear that there is a need for organizational change in organizations where whistleblowing behavior is observed. This result is similar to the various studies in the literature (Balcı, Baltacı, Fidan, Cereci, & Acar, 2012; Hunt, 1998; Lewis et al., 2015; Moore, 2012; Tran, 2011). Yet, Poitras (2014) and Lindblom (2007) report that

whistleblowing can be achieved because of the continuation of the existing status quo of organizational change.

The provision of social justice is among the social reasons for whistleblowing. Many negativities that may be experienced within the organization can directly or indirectly affect society. It is an interesting finding that an organization's negativity is reported to contribute to the justice mechanism in society. The subject of whistleblowing and of the negative situation in the organization firstly requires a fair approach in the decision-making process of the organization. The whistleblower is often acting in order to ensure justice. By ensuring it is right and fair, the organization will achieve have a more transparent administration. This situation is similar to many studies in the literature (Castagnera, 2003; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). It is important for the whistleblower to act with supra-cognitive ethical codes such as rights and justice. The conclusion of the research is that whistleblowing is an ethical behavior. The whistleblower has an important behavior pattern, such as the assurance of justice in society.

Whistleblowing for the benefit of society is socially important. Unlike the benefit of the individual or the organization, the benefit of the society is a concept that has significant influence. The whistleblower is contributing to the community's welfare by reporting on a situation witnessed in the organization. As in the case of Edward Snowden, it can be determined that an employee who exposes the negative enterprises of the organization acts for the benefit of society. The employee can only do whistleblowing in a way that is in the best interest of the society, which emphasizes a rather high moral level. According to Kohlberg's universal moral principles tendency (1976), which is the final stage of moral development theory, one must exhibit behaviors that emphasize the well-being of the society. Such an important finding from the research suggests that the whistleblower actually has a high degree of moral integrity. Numerous studies in the literature support this research (e.g., Brinsfield, Edward and Greenberg, 2009; Cross & Tiller, 1998; DeGeorge, 1990; Jubb, 1999; Near & Miceli, 1985; Outterson, 2012).

The concept of religion, which can be defined as a collection of a person's values and beliefs, is among the social reasons for whistleblowing. People can live a life that is compatible with their religious beliefs in social life. Such a choice also requires compliance with the various principles that religion brings with it. Because religion is a way of life, it determines a person's business life to a great extent. Whistleblowing can be done as a requirement of a religious principle. An employee who emphasizes that religions determine their living and working areas according to ethical principles can only report for their religious beliefs. Such a result as seen in the current research is also supported in the literature (Ajzen, 1991; Becker, 2014; Delk, 2013); though there are some religious beliefs and principles such as 'hiding existing flaws' and 'not looking for people's exploits'. The whistleblower, which acts in such a way as to refer to all of these principles, may be not reporting on negativity. There are also studies in the literature about religious beliefs that may prevent whistleblowing (Lindblom, 2007; Wilkes et al., 2011).

In this current study, the reasons for avoiding whistleblowing were also investigated. The most important reason for avoiding whistleblowing is the notion of not achieving the desired results. This finding reflects the insecurity of the employee's organizational and social complaint mechanisms. The employee, who has encountered a certain negativity in the organization, prefers to remain silent instead of reporting this situation. This situation, which

can also be called organizational silence, reflects an important situation in organizations (Armstrong, 2005; Miceli, 2004). This result emphasizes that the organization does not have a transparent management structure. In addition, this result emphasizes the lack of effective communication mechanisms within the organization. In some studies in the literature, 'not getting results' is thought to be among the reasons of avoiding whistleblowing (Bjørkelo, 2013; Kaptein, 2011). In addition, employees have avoided whistleblowing due to worrying that their business and private life would deteriorate as a result. In addition to this, there may be retaliatory behavior against the whistleblower. The employee, who is afraid of retaliation behavior, withdraws from whistleblowing. Other reasons for avoiding whistleblowing include 'punishment anxiety' and 'worrying about job loss'. These results are supported by many studies in the literature (e.g., Alford, 2001; Armstrong, 2005; Castagnera, 2003; DeGeorge, 1990; Hersh, 2002; Miceli, 2004).

This research focuses on a gap that has not been adequately explored in the literature before. Although whistleblowing and avoiding whistleblowing reasons have been the subject of different types of previous research, this study is the first to operate on the deterministic feature of qualitative research. This feature enhances the importance of studying. The results of this research have revealed new gaps in the literature. Whistleblowing is important to examine relations with different kinds of organizational behavior concepts. Especially focusing on the role of moderator or intermediary with whistleblowing concepts such as organizational citizenship and organizational silence will contribute to the literature. Furthermore, by adding different kinds of concepts, nature and reasons for the whistleblowing concept can be handled in a wider frame. Plus, it needs to be reshaped to include more evidence of the concept, using different kinds of research methods. The nature of social phenomena allows for different kinds of explanations for different conditions. This research is limited to the views of participants. Different kinds of social influences can be tested in the future as an update to this research. From this point of view, it can be suggested that the research is renewed at different time cycles.

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