

Effect of Employee Silence on Employees' Attitudinal Outcomes in Higher Education Sector of Pakistan

¹Abeer Imam, ²Dr. Faisal Tehseen Shah,

¹Ph. D. Scholar, Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Lahore

²Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Lahore

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ABSTRACT

Employee silence is detrimental for any organization because employees withhold a relevant and important information that is beneficial for the organizations. Employees don't speak up because of the associated risks that may damage the reputation of the employee. The objective of this is to identify how the silence of employee silence affect the job satisfaction and commitment of the faculty members in the Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) of Pakistan. A convenience sampling technique is used to gather the data. Analysis is run on 325 faculty members' data to identify the reliability, correlation and regression analysis. Questionnaire was adopted from well-established scales. Findings suggests that the employee silence don't affect the job satisfaction of employees (as there is no significant evidence), while employee silence significantly positively affect the organizational commitment of employees in HEIs of Pakistan. This finding lead to the conclusion that the employees being silent are more concerned with retaining job because of the so uncertain environment of job market. Future research direction is also provided in the end.

KEYWORDS: Employee Silence, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Higher Education Institutions, Pakistan

1. INTRODUCTION

Employees being an essential resource of the organization causes detrimental effects to the organizations. In fact, organizations suffers largely from the damaging and unfavorable emotions of the employees which become obvious when these employees face stress or something negative at their job. This reveals that the commitment of employees towards their organization or their satisfaction towards job is always imperative for the organizations. This shows loyalty and dedication of employees towards their organizations. Organizations performance and prosperity is directly related with the output that employees produce along with their attitudinal outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction and commitment). It is imperative for the organizations to have the loyalty and commitment of the employees with the organizations. If a skilled employee is lost, organizations have to face its adverse effects in form of reduced project quality, delays in projects and increased costs and overheads.

Similar is the case with the employees of higher education. If they are dissatisfied and not committed with the organization, they would likely to burnout from the institutes. Faculty is also an important resource for any university or institute because they are the ones who are providing up-to-date education to the student to develop their skills and ability to cope with the environment and to get success at the workplace. Their suggestions and opinions at the work place for the betterment of the institute and/or university or providing any information regarding any wrong doings at the workplace should be listened properly. But employees show silence at the work because they are not interested to give any extra effort to help institute because of the perceived negative image of themselves.

Therefore, the problem arises is that *"employee silence is detrimental for the organization because when employees have something important to say, they should reveal it because it saves the organization from the future threats that can affect the organization. When employees are silent, their silence adversely impact their satisfaction towards job and commitment towards organizations commitment is affected, which ultimately cause them to feel distress and helplessness at the organization. Therefore, it is imperative to identify the employee silence and helps employees speak up to maintain their satisfaction and organizational commitment with the organization to reap the future benefits from these employees"*.

Consequently, this study is destined to identify the impact of employee silence on employees' satisfaction towards job and commitment towards organization. It is becoming more focused area that silence is prevailing in the

*Corresponding Author: Abeer Imam, Ph. D. Scholar, Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Lahore. Email:abeer_imam11@gmail.com

organizations, which impact the attitudes of employees at their workplace. Therefore, this study is inclined to find the influence of employee silence on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of faculty members of the Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) of Pakistan. How employees silence impact their positive attitudes towards the HEIs.

The following research questions will be explored accordingly:

1. *How Employee Silence affect Job Satisfaction among employees in higher education sector?*
2. *How Employee Silence affect the Organizational Commitment among employees in higher education sector?*

Hence, the significance of this study lies in identifying the employee silence and its impact on their satisfaction towards job and commitment towards the organization in HEIs of Pakistan. Employees, who are essential for the smooth functioning of the organization, if don't contribute to their best affect the performance of the organization. Therefore, this study will help HEIs to devise policies and procedure to reduce employee silence and help enhance the satisfaction and commitment of the employees towards the institute.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Employee Silence:

If a supervisor desires a suggestion, then employee silence does not mean that employees are not giving suggestions to the supervisor but employee silence is withholding of suggestions [1]. It can also be defined as the intentional concealment of job-related thoughts, information and views by the employees [2-4].

Similarly, a decision to voice or remain silent by employee is reliant on number of factors, many of which are swayed by management. This means that the silence of employees is an obvious one which is dependent and restricted by the itineraries and institutional structures controlled by management [5-6]. Employees' decision to speak up will be dependent on to whom they voice. Their expectations regarding organizational norms to be listened to will direct them to keep silence or speak up [7-8]. Since management has control over the salary and performance evaluation, they can affect employee badly if they have a fear of getting affected by the employee speaking up. This speaking up is difficult for the employees when management has control over the perks; e.g., employee performance appraisals that evaluates employee output at the workplace and employee pay [9].

2.2 Job Satisfaction:

It is an individuals' optimistic and constructive or destructive feeling towards job [10-11]. [12] suggested that the employee satisfaction towards job is "the attitude of workers towards their job, rewards, that they get, and the social, organizational, and physical characteristics of the environment in which they perform their working activities". Similarly, [13] reported that "job satisfaction is a general attitude of an employee towards his job".

2.3 Organizational Commitment:

Organizational commitment has been defined as "an individual's psychological bond with an organization" [14]. Organizations are when rich in ethically strong values and conducts, organizational commitment originate from the perception of fairness, which gives a true example of social exchange relationships [15].

Organizational commitment has been extensively thought-out concept in the domain of organizational behavior and many diverse scholars have made an effort to define it. For-example, organizational commitment is regarded as an attitudinal phenomenon by [16-17], for others like [18-19], it is a behavioral phenomenon. When employees are committed with the organization, they voluntarily implemented responsible independent and self-sufficient, without taking any formal approval from leaders. They do not need their leaders to be present to keep check and balance on their performance because the committed employee is so comfortable in performing and providing efficient results to the organization.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

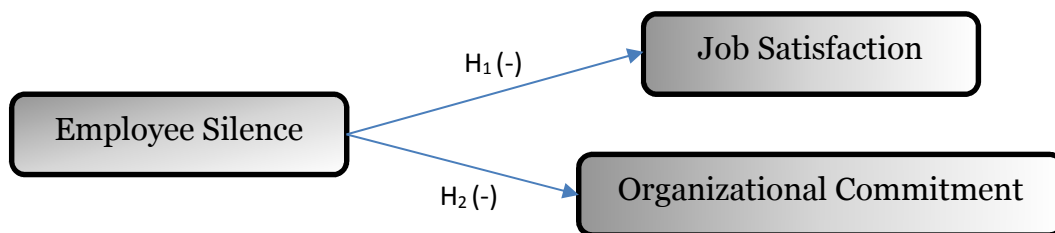


Fig-1: Hypothesized Model

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following are the important research hypotheses:

H₁: Employee silence has substantial negative impact on job satisfaction of employees in the Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) of Pakistan.

H₂: Employee silence has substantial negative impact on organizational commitment of employees in the Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) of Pakistan.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is imperative to take any research study. This study is inclined to find the impact of employee silence on satisfaction towards job and commitment towards the organization in higher education institutes (HEIs) of Pakistan. The population for this study was faculty working in different universities and institutes in Pakistan. The sample of 325 faculty member were contacted via online and personal visits and data is collected using questionnaire containing information about the study variables.

Convenience sampling technique is used to collect data. Questionnaire was developed from different research studies. Employee silence was measured with 10 items by using the scale of [4]. Job satisfaction is measured with 2 items using the scale of [20]. Organizational commitment contains 9 items using scale of [21]. Likert scale of 1-5 was used to calculate the response of faculty members. 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and to 5=strongly agree. Analysis is then run on data using following techniques and tools e.g., reliability test, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis using SPSS.

6. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS & DISCUSSION:

6.1 Reliability Statistics:

Reliability test is measured using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS. Table 1 reveals the number of items fall at the individual constructs and indicates the alpha value for each construct.

Table 1 Construct's Reliability

Constructs	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee Silence	10	0.834
Job Satisfaction	2	0.581
Organizational Commitment	9	0.788

The acceptable range for Cronbach's alpha is suggested to be 0.7 and above by [22]. The alpha value for employee silence is 0.888 (which is acceptable) and is measured using statements like "". The alpha value for job satisfaction is 0.50 (which do not lie in an acceptable range) and is measured using statement like "". The alpha value for organizational commitment is 0.000 (which is acceptable). The sample item for organizational commitment is "".

6.2 Demographics:

Demographics statistics of respondents are revealed in Appendix-A. There were total 325 respondents who participated in the survey. Gender representation reveals that female faculty members were 61.5% while male members were 38.5 %. There were 59.4% respondents from HEIs who have age bracket between 21-30 years, 36% were having age between 31-40 years, 4.3% were having age between 41-50 years, while remaining 0.3% were having age between 51-60 years. Almost 13.8% respondents were having Masters education, 1.2 were having Masters in Business Administration, 68% were having their MS/Mphil degree, 1.5% were having their double masters and there were 15.4% were having their doctorate. There were 74% respondents having job position of Lecturer, 24% were Assistant Professor, 1.2% were Associate Professor and remaining 0.6% were Professors.

There were 81.8% respondents who worked in HEIs in their current institute within 5 years or less, 12.3% were having 6-10 years of experience, 4.3% were having experience of 11-15 years. There were 0.9% respondents having experience of 16-20 years, 0.3% were having 21-25 years experience, 0.3% were having experience between 21-25 years and the faculty members having experience between 31-35 years were 0.3%. There were 70.5% of respondents who have total experience of 5 years or less in any university/universities/institutes. For 6-10 years of experience, there were 18.2% respondents. For 11-15 years of experience, there were 8.3% respondents. 2.5% respondents were working from last 16-20 years and 0.3% were working since 21-25 years. There were no respondents

having experience 26-30 years and respondents having experience of 31-35 years were 0.3%. There were 88.3% representation from Public institutes and 11.7% from Private institutes.

6.3 Analysis for Correlation:

Correlational analysis is used to identify the strength of relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. This analysis is also used to identify answers for the research questions of this study. Table 3 is obtained using SPSS software. There exists an insignificant relationship between employee silence and job satisfaction. The correlation coefficient is $-.009$ at the p-value 0.867 , which reveals that there does not exist any appreciable association between satisfaction towards job (dependent variable) and employee silence (independent variable). Therefore, the hypothesis H_1 is rejected, which states that the Employee silence has significant negative impact on job satisfaction of employees in HEIs of Pakistan. There is no evidence that support that faculty silence does have any influence on the satisfaction of the employees.

On contrary, employee silence and organizational commitment are strongly related with each other. Table 3 shows that there exists a positive correlation between the dependent variable (organizational commitment) and independent variable (employee silence). The correlation coefficient is $.154$ at p-value of 0.005 , showing a weak positive relationship. Therefore, it can be concluded that the employee silence has significant positive impact on the organizational commitment of employees in HEIs of Pakistan. This also leads to the rejection of H_2 . This means that with the increase in employee silence, organizational commitment of the employees also increases. This happens may be of the fact that the employees (which are faculty members in this particular case) are much concerned with their commitment towards the organization.

Table 2 also shows that the satisfaction towards job and commitment towards organization is strongly positively related with each other with correlation coefficient of 0.611 at 0.05 level of significance. With the increase in job satisfaction, organizational commitment also increases or vice versa.

Table 2 Correlation Analysis-N:325

		Employee Silence	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment
Employee Silence	Pearson Correlation	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-		
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	-.009	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.867	-	
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.154*	.611**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.000	-
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).				

6.4 Hierarchical Regression Analysis:

6.4.1. Measuring Impact of Employee Silence on Job Satisfaction:

Linear regression analysis is used to identify the impact of employee silence on the job satisfaction of the employees in the HEIs of Pakistan. Table 3 shows that employee silence is independent variable while job satisfaction is used as a dependent variable.

Table 3 Variables Entered/Removed^b

Model	Variable Entered	Variable Removed	Method
1	Employee Silence ^b		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction; b. All requested variables entered

Table 4 shows a model summary for the employee silence and job satisfaction. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.715 represents a no auto-correlation between the dependent variable (job satisfaction) and independent variable (employee silence). The thumb rule for the Durbin-Watson (or no auto-correlation) is that it should lie within $1.5 - 3$ (represents an acceptable range). The Adjusted R^2 is -0.3% , which does not show a good model fit. The standard error of estimate is $.65442$.

Table 4 Model Summary^b

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	.009	-.003	.65442	1.715

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Silence; b. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Table 5 depicts the ANOVA F-statistics for the model consisting of employee silence and organizational commitment. The F-statistics is 0.028 at the p-value of 0.8677, which is statistically insignificant. This means that there does not exist a prediction power to predict the job satisfaction.

Table 5 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	0.012	1	0.012	0.028	0.8677 ^a
	Residual	138.331	323	.428		
	Total	138.343	324			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction; b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Silence

Collinearity statistics, standardized and unstandardized coefficients along with significance level is shown in table 6. It can be clearly seen that the collinearity statistics shows the VIF value of 1.

Table 6 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1.	(Constant)	3.924	0.168		23.251	.000		
	Employee Silence	-0.009	0.054	-0.009	-0.167	0.867	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

This VIF is used to measure the multicollinearity (interdependence among variables) within the data. The decision rule for deciding on multicollinearity is that the VIF value show lie below or equal to 10 (i.e., $VIF \leq 10$). The unstandardized coefficient for employee silence is -0.009 at p-value of 0.867, showing an insignificant relationship between the employee silence and job satisfaction. Therefore, the H_1 is rejected.

6.4.2. Measuring Impact of Employee Silence on Organizational Commitment:

Linear regression analysis is again used to identify the impact of employee silence on the organizational commitment of the employees in the HEIs of Pakistan. Table 7 shows that employee silence is independent variable while organizational commitment is used as a dependent variable.

Table 7 Variables Entered/Removed^b

Model	Variable Entered	Variable Removed	Method
1	Employee Silence ^b		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment; b. All requested variables entered

Table 8 shows a model summary for the employee silence and organizational commitment. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.706 represents a no auto-correlation between the dependent variable (organizational commitment) and independent variable (employee silence). The thumb rule for the Durbin-Watson (or no auto-correlation) is that it should lie within 1.5 – 3 (represents an acceptable range). The Adjusted R^2 is 2.1%, while the standard error of estimate is .58187.

Table 8 Model Summary^b

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	.024	.021	.58187	1.706

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Silence; b. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Table 9 depicts the ANOVA F-statistics for the model consisting of employee silence and organizational commitment. The F-statistics is 7.868 at the p-value of 0.005, which is statistically significant. This means that there exists a prediction power to predict the organizational commitment.

Table 9 ANOVA^d

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.664	1	2.664	7.868	0.005 ^a
	Residual	109.358	323	.339		
	Total	112.022	324			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction; b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Silence

Collinearity statistics, standardized and unstandardized coefficients along with significance level is shown in table 10. It can be clearly seen that the collinearity statistics shows the VIF value of 1. This VIF is used to measure the multicollinearity (interdependence among variables) within the data. The decision rule for deciding on multicollinearity is that the VIF value show lie below or equal to 10 (i.e., $VIF \leq 10$). The unstandardized coefficient for employee silence is .135 at p-value of .005, showing an insignificant relationship between the employee silence and organizational commitment. Therefore, the H_1 is rejected. The Unstandardized coefficient of .135 means that with the increase of 1 unit in employee silence, organizational commitment increases by .135 times.

Table 10 Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1. (Constant)	3.230	.150		21.580	.000		
Employee Silence	.135	.048	.154	2.805	.005	1.000	1.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Silence; b. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

7. CONCLUSION

Findings suggested that the relationship between employees silence and job satisfaction is found to be insignificant, which depicts that the silent employees do not show a significant impact on the satisfaction of faculty members in the higher education institutes (HEIs) of Pakistan. On contrary, there exists a noteworthy positive association between the employee silence and organizational commitment in the HEIs of Pakistan. This means that the silent employees are more concerned about their institutes. Employees are more concerned with their job than being the conveyor of bad news. May be this finding is due to the fact that the faculty members are well aware of the job environment is unpredictable. In fact, there is a high unemployment rate in Pakistan, which makes the faculty member to retain their job where they are currently working.

Hence, it can be concluded that that the employee silence significant positive impact on the organizational commitment of employees in HEIs of Pakistan.

8. LIMITATIONS & PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This research study has some limitations which, if overcome, can present better results. The major limitation was the time constraint. Another limitation was that this study was cross-sectional in nature. Better results can be obtained if a longitudinal study is carried in the same industry.

Practically, higher education institutes and higher education commission itself devise policies and procedures to help reduce the employee silence. It is essential because employees are the backbone of any institute, if they are silent or not providing suggestions then organizations fail in the long-run. Since, this research shows a positive trend between employee silence and commitment towards organization, it is possible with the reduction of silence, organizational commitment enhance to its highest level and help increase the satisfaction among employees (which is in this study showed an insignificant results).

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Appendix-A Demographics

