

Organizational Silence: A Barrier to Job Engagement in Successful Organizations

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Abstract

Purpose: Although the phenomenon of Organizational Silence (OS) is widely seen in organizations, there is little empirical evidence regarding its nature and components. The purpose of this research is to identify the types of OS and its effects on JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Design/methodology/approach: To assess OS, refer to (OS questionnaire, Schechtman, 2008; Brinsfield, 2009) and JE (JE questionnaire, Rich et al., 2010). Five dimensions of OS are constructed and measured in order to examine their effects on JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt. Out of the 338 questionnaires that were distributed to employees, 300 usable questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 88%. Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was used to confirm the research hypotheses.

Findings: Results indicate that supervisors' attitudes to silence, top management attitudes to silence and communication opportunities are associated and predict ES behaviour. The research has found that there is significant relationship between OS and JE. Also, the research has found that OS directly affects JE. In other words, OS is one of the biggest barriers to organizational engagement of the employees at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Practical implications: This research contributes to stimulate scientific research, particularly in terms of testing the model content, as well as studying the research variables and the factors affecting them. In addition, this research pointed to the need for organizations to adopt a culture which encourages and urges employees to speak in the labor issues and the non-silence in order for the administration to be able to realize these issues and try to solve them first hand in order to prevent their aggravation.

Originality/value: Although the phenomenon of silence is expected in organizations, there is little empirical evidence in the literature aimed at defining, analyzing, and coping with it. Silence climate has an impact on the ability of organizations to detect errors and learn. Therefore, organizational effectiveness is negatively affected. This research aims to measure the effect of OS on JE. Based on the findings of this research, some important implications are discussed.

Keywords: organizational silence, job engagement

1. Introduction

During the 1980's, silence and voice were studied through the lens of justice theory. Issues of fairness and mechanisms of voice in organizational settings were the main focus. In the 1990's, scholars continued to focus on voice mechanisms and it was not until the year 2000 that Scholars began to focus on the relation between management practices, organizational policies and silence and other antecedents to a "climate of silence" (Bogosian, 2012).

Introduced in 1974, the spiral of silence theory is one that explores hypotheses to determine why some groups remain silent while others are more vocal in forums of public discourse. The theory contends that the silence displayed by certain groups is due to the unpopularity of their opinions in the public sphere. The minority groups remain silent due to a fear of isolation (Neill, 2009).

Silence in worklife can harm both employees and organizations. Generally, Organizational Silence (OS) causes stress, cynicism, dissatisfaction and lack of communication between friends (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005).

Silence has a strong impact on organizations and managements and this can overwhelm the organizations and businesses. Almost every employee has thoughts, suggestions, concerns or worries about organizations. However, employees either usually refrain from stating them or they have learned to keep silent in time (Piderit & Ashford, 2003).

OS and Job Engagement (JE) are very important subjects for organizations to reach the desired objectives. This research focuses on the relationship between OS and JE. It is structured as follows: Section one is introductory. Section two

presents the literature review. Section three discusses the research methodology. Section four presents the hypotheses testing. Section five explains the research findings. Research recommendations will take place at section six. Section seven handles the research implications. Limitations and future research will take place at section eight. Conclusion will be provided at the last section.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Silence

There are five functions served by silence: (1) it both brings people together and pushes them apart, (2) it can both heal and wound people, (3) it both hides and provides information, (4) it can signal deep thought and/or the absence of thought, and (5) it can indicate either assent or dissent (Jensen, 1973). The target of silence is persons who are perceived to be capable of effecting change or redress (Ashkenas et al., 1998).

Silence is the absence of voice as it has its own form of communication, involving a range of cognitions, emotions or intentions such as objection or endorsement (Pinder & Harlos, 2001).

Silence leads to a reduction in the sense of freedom of individuals to express their views, which contributes to reduce the chances of independence and weak stimulation mechanisms that lead to certain lack of job performance (Premeaux & Bedein, 2003). Silence has psychological effects, as it is an indication of the sense of fear, despair and lack of self-esteem. It may also lead to suicidal ideas (Cortina & Magley, 2003).

Silence doesn't only mean people's silence, but also includes not writing, not being present, negative attitude, not being heard and being ignored. Silence within organizations refers to "quieting, censorship, suppression, marginalization trivialization, exclusion, ghettoization and other forms of discounting (Vakola & Boudaras, 2005; Hazen, 2006).

Employees doing what is expected without speaking up any concerns could be a sign of withdrawal or a way of protesting organizational practices. Silence must be more than a passive acceptance of current situation. When employees remain silent, they withhold some information regarding their organization. This information could be based on either some objective data or some subjective judgment (Brinsfield, 2009).

It is not simple to define silence as the opposite of talking. This is because silence or talk about the organization's performance depends on several motives which should reflect a conscious decision to build on the opportunity cost (Gambartto & Cammozzo, 2010).

Silence is an employee's motivation to withhold or express ideas, information and opinions about work-related improvements (Donaghey, et al. 2011).

2.2 Types of Silence

2.2.1 Acquiescent Silence

Acquiescent silence (AS) relates to occasions where employees chose not to express relevant ideas, information and opinions based on resignation which suggests disengaged behaviour (Kahn 1990). AS is synonymous with employees who are essentially disengaged and are unwilling to take steps to enact change (Pinder & Harlos, 2001).

AS is described as an intentionally passive silent behavior. AS is withholding relevant ideas, information, or opinions, based on resignation. AS suggests disengaged behavior that is more passive than active (Van Dyne, et al. 2003). AS is the withholding of information, views, opinions and ideas in the face of developments in the organizations.

AS is a passive behavior. In the case of AS, employees approve the status quo, do not want to speak up much, and do not attempt to change the organizational circumstances. This attitude requires remaining silent purposefully and not being involved in developments. The reason that lies behind employees' failure to speak out is the belief that it will not make a difference even if they do speak out (Karacaoglu & Cingoz, 2008).

2.2.2 Defensive Silence

Defensive silence (DS) is based on an employee's personal fear of speaking up. This can be termed as quiescent silence (Pinder & Harlos, 2001).

DS is described as deliberate omission of work related information based on fear of reprisal. DS is intentional and proactive behavior that is intended to protect the self from external threats. In contrast to AS, DS is more proactive, involving awareness and consideration of alternatives, followed by a conscious decision to withhold ideas, information, and opinions as the best personal strategy at the moment. DS differs from the previous form in that defensive silence involves the individual weighing up the alternatives and making a conscious choice to withhold ideas information and opinions as the safest option for the individual at that point in time (Van Dyne, et al., 2003).

DS is a proactive and conscious behavior with the urge of self-protection against external threats (Karacaoglu & Cingoz, 2008).

2.2.3 Pro-social Silence

Pro-social silence is withholding of work related information for the benefit of others including the organization. Pro Social silence as intentional and proactive behaviour is primarily focused on others. Pro Social silence involves conscious decision making by an employee. It arises from a concern for others instead of fear of negative personal consequences (Korsgaard et al., 1997).

Pro social silence is withholding work-related ideas, information, or opinions with the goal of benefiting other people or the organization-based on altruism or cooperative motives. This form of silence is intentional, proactive and other-oriented. In other words, primary priority of an employee who decides to remain silent is not himself but the external factors (Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Pro social silence is the refusal to express ideas information or opinions so that others in the organization might benefit from it. This silence is motivated by the desire to help others and share the duties. It is considerate and focuses on others (Podkasoff et al., 2000).

Like Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), pro-social silence is intentional and proactive behavior that is primarily focused on others. Like OCB, pro-social silence is discretionary behavior that can not be mandated by an organization. Like DS, pro-social silence is based on awareness and consideration of alternatives and the conscious decision to withhold ideas, information, and opinions. In contrast to DS, pro-social silence is motivated by concern for others, rather than by fear of negative personal consequences that might occur from speaking up (Van Dyne, et al. 2003).

2.2.4 Protective Silence

Protective silence is where employees can be silent and accept decisions of higher level management. One of the most important causes of silence is the good relationship between the organization and employees. Therefore, employees prefer to be silent instead of telling what is wrong in their organizations. For that reason silent employees never share their opinion to solve conflict in the organization (Morrison & Milliken, 2003; Perlow & Repenning, 2009, Alparslan 2010).

2.3 Organizational Silence

There are two important differentiating characteristics of OS. First, OS is focused on collective-level dynamics. Second, OS was on why employees intentionally choose to remain silent, rather than on why they do not choose to speak-up. OS is the hard choice made by employees within some organizations to keep their thoughts and opinions quiet and shut themselves away from company decisions. OS can lead to several consequences on organizations and employees. Employees believe that they are to be punished openly or discreetly when they express their opinions about organizational issues and faults (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

OS not only slows down organizational development but also cause several consequences such as decreasing in employees' commitment levels, causing interior conflicts, reducing decision making process, blocking change and innovation, preventing positive or negative feedbacks to the management. OS also cause an increase of behaviours such as breaking down of morale and motivations of employees, absenteeism, tardiness and releases which negatively affect individual and organizational activities. Employees, who are concerned and under stress, are increasingly involved in the swirl of silence (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

OS means the presence of a common perception among employees limiting their participation in providing their knowledge about the issues and policies of the Organization (Nennete, 2002).

OS is deliberate prevention of information and opinions by the staff of the organization (Van Dyne, et al, 2003).

OS is a condition that occurs when people cannot contribute freely to organizational discourse (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003).

OS is the common choice made by organization members despite all research extolling the virtues of upward information for organizational health (Glauser, 1984; Deming, 1986; Rodriguez 2004).

OS refers to the employee's failure to participate views and suggestions on important labor issues and choosing to remain silent. OS may cause labour turnover, lack of motivations and a tendency towards low endeavor for reaching organizational aims. OS may cause insignificance feeling, lack of control perception and cognitive inconsistency (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005).

OS refers to the collective-level phenomenon of doing or saying very little in response to significant problems or issues facing an organization or industry because of negative reactions (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006).

OS is a variable which can prevail about barriers to effectiveness, commitment and performance (Beer 2009).

OS is an inefficient organizational process that wastes cost and efforts and can take various forms, such as collection silence in meetings, low levels of participation in suggestion schemes, and low levels of collective voice (Shojaie et al., 2011).

OS occurs when employees intentionally withhold their knowledge and ideas regarding organizational issues. Many organizations have been involved in solving a major puzzle and that is most people know the fact about certain problems of organization but do not have the courage to express those facts to their supervisors (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; 2003; Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; Brinsfield et al., 2009; Tulubas & Celep, 2012).

2.4 Organizational Silence Factors

There are multiple views about the factors leading to OS (Schechtman, 2008), because of its many different determinants or causes, as follows: (1) support the top management of silence, (2) lack of communication opportunities, (3) support of supervisor for silence, (4) official authority, and (5) the subordinate's fear of negative reactions (Brinsfield, 2009).

2.4.1 Support of the Top Management of Silence

The role of top management is instrumental in the success of the business organizations. The availability of a high degree of confidence in the administration reduces concerns of speaking freely about the problems and issues of labor. Climate of confidence in the top management reduces the feelings of uncertainty (Weber & Weber, 2001).

The attitudes and values of the top management may contribute greatly to the formation of a climate of silence, as some organizations prohibit employees from saying what they know or feel (Argyris, 1997).

The top management practices may lead to increased levels of silence within the organization. These practices are represented in two factors (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

2.4.1.1 Managers' Fear of Negative Feedback

The top management may be afraid of getting negative feedback information from the subordinates, as it may feel threatened as a result of this information, particularly, if they involve its members personally or their work. Because of that, those members would eschew this information, and even if it reached them they would neglect it or question the credibility of the source, believing that the feedback from the bottom may be less accurate and less legitimate (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005).

2.4.1.2 Managers' Implicit Beliefs

Silence increases when the top management is in an ivory tower prohibiting it from seeing the actual reality because of lack of access to information, or due to welcoming the good information rather than the negative (Van, Dyne, et al, 2003).

Thus, the support of top management of silence leads employees not to talk about work issues. Besides, the administration may describe employees who talk about labor issues as problem makers (Milliken, et al., 2003).

2.4.2 Lack of Communication Opportunities

Contact is essential to the effectiveness of any organization. It represents the transfer of information verbally or using other means for the purpose of persuasion and influencing the behavior of others. Among the most important functions of the communication process is that it provides individuals with the necessary information for the purpose of decision-making, as it represents an outlet to express feelings, opinions and trends. It is an important means to satisfy social needs of individuals (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

The more contact opportunities within the organization, the greater participation and expression of opinion on issues and problems of the work, as employees have the opportunity to make suggestions, which increase the degree of career belonging and involvement of employees (Smidts, et al., 2001).

2.4.3 Support of Supervisor for Silence

The relationship of supervisor's strength and stature to silence or talking can be analyzed in two ways: on the one hand, the subordinate may tend to talk more than keep silence with a strong supervisor, because this subordinate believes that the supervisor has the ability to resolve any problem or issue related to work. Here, a subordinate finds it useful to talk in the presence of a supervisor who has the powers to solve work problems within the organization (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

On the other hand, the freedom to express dissenting opinion may be restricted when working under the leadership of a supervisor with prestige and power, because the subordinate tends to the option of silence due to fear of the negative impact of expressing the dissent opinion (Turner & Pratkanis, 1998).

The supervisor's behavior creates a microcosm climate of silence at the level of the department where he works. Therefore, subordinates tend to silence (Spreitzer, 1996; Sugarman, 2001).

The subordinates' silence is influenced by trends and tendencies of the supervisors to silence rather than trends and tendencies of top management. Therefore, when the supervisor listens to his subordinates, they will consider him a role model, and tend to involve themselves in labor issues and talk about it (Sparrowe & Liden, 2005).

In spite of that, power and status of the supervisor can increase or decrease the silence of subordinates, but many researchers assert that subordinates are more sensitive to the risks of talking more than the benefits, in the presence of a strong supervisor (Edmondson, 1996).

2.4.4 Official Authority

Officialdom is the degree by which the activities carried out by employees are formed within the organization, through the adoption of several measures (Moorhead & Criffin, 2004).

Officialdom is based on the strength of the position or location in the organizational structure. Dealing follows specific orders and a bureaucrat approach through decision-making centralization, and the use of regulations to deal with the problems and issues of work. At this point, the organization lacks an effective mechanism for information feedback. This is because there are few upwards communication channels because heads believe that the views of the subordinates are unimportant and therefore tend to silence (Ashford et al., 1998).

2.4.5 Subordinate's Fear of Negative Reactions

The fear of the reaction may lead employees to believe that talking about work problems might deprive them of their jobs or upgrade to higher positions within the organization (Milliken, et al, 2003).

2.5 Organizational Silence Effects

There are several implications of OS, as silence is of a significant impact on individuals and the organization (Bogosian, 2012).

OS correlates negatively with three dimensions of organizational trust (trust in the organization, trust in leadership, trust in the supervisor). This means that the more silence means less trust (Nikolaou, et al., 2011).

OS does have implications and consequences on the climate of trust within the organization, because it leads to poor relations of trust between employees due to lack of dialogue between them (Willman et al., 2006).

The effects of OS are not limited to the organization, as it can negatively affect the behavior of individuals working in the organization. These effects are represented in (1) the individual feeling unappreciated, as he does not contribute in earnest in the issues of the organization, reducing the importance and value of his presence, (2) lack of the individual's ability to control, reducing motivations at work and participation in the issues within the organization, and (3) the individual suffering from cognitive dissonance. This is because silence makes it difficult to the individual to strike a balance between his beliefs and behaviors (Hazen, 2006).

There are negative impacts of OS. They are (1) poor participation of employees in decision-making because of the lack of the channels or opportunities of communication, (2) reducing dealing with conflict or dispute in an effective manner, and (3) weakness of the employees' capacity to learning and self-development (Low et al ., 2002).

2.6 Job Engagement

Job Engagement (JE) is the emotional link between the employee and the organization, in which he works (Joshi & Sodhi, 2011).

JE means that employees do what they are told and adapt their work according to job description and in light of the traditional work environment (Frese & Fay, 2008). JE is the involvement and enthusiasm of the employee to the organization in terms of being ready to devote more effort and innovation (Griffin et al, 2008).

JE is the internal merging of the individual to work, or the psychological congruence and responding to work, something which will affect the individual self-achievement or his commitment to work (Kanungo, 1982).

JE means that the individual likes to do or interested in the work he is associated with, since individuals who love their jobs are working with more productivity and efficacy (Pollock, 1997).

JE represents the degree to which the individual merges with the job he exercises by sensing its importance, so that JE is associated with both the mental and emotional aspects (Riipinen, 1997).

JE means that the employee is aware of the nature of work in the organization, and working closely with co-workers in order to improve the functionality for the benefit of the organization (Bevan et al, 1997).

There are three basic elements of JE. They are (1) work as the primary interest of man's life, (2) active participation in labor, (3) performance as the basis of self-realization, and (4) performance association with self-conception (Rasmey et al, 1995).

JE is the commitment and communication of the employee to the job and the organization to which he works (Sweem, 2008).

There are three key aspects to encourage the employee engagement which are (1) workers' experience and their psychological and personal affairs, (2) employers and their ability to create the conditions that encourage employees' engagement and (3) interaction among employees at all the administrative levels of the organization (Tiwari, 2011).

In light of this, the research identifies JE as the positive feeling of the employee towards the organization to which he works in a way that contributes in a high degree in achieving their goals and values.

There are three main dimensions of JE. They are cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and physical engagement. Cognitive engagement means that individuals are fully engaged in exercising the tasks they are assigned with. Emotional engagement means the existence of a strong relationship between emotions, thoughts, and feelings of the individual and the organization, to which he works. Physical engagement means directing man's physical energies towards the completion of a specific task in a way that contributes to achieving the organization's objectives efficiently and effectively (Rich et al., 2010).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Model

The proposed comprehensive conceptual model is presented in Figure (1). The diagram below shows that there is one independent variable of OS. There is one dependent variable of JE. It shows the rational links among the variables. The research model is as shown in the following figure.

The research framework suggests that OS has an impact on JE. OS as measured consisted of support of the top management of silence, lack of communication opportunities, support of supervisor for silence, official authority, and subordinate fear of negative reactions (Schechtman, 2008; Brinsfield, 2009).

JE is measured in terms of cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and physical engagement (Rich et al., 2010).

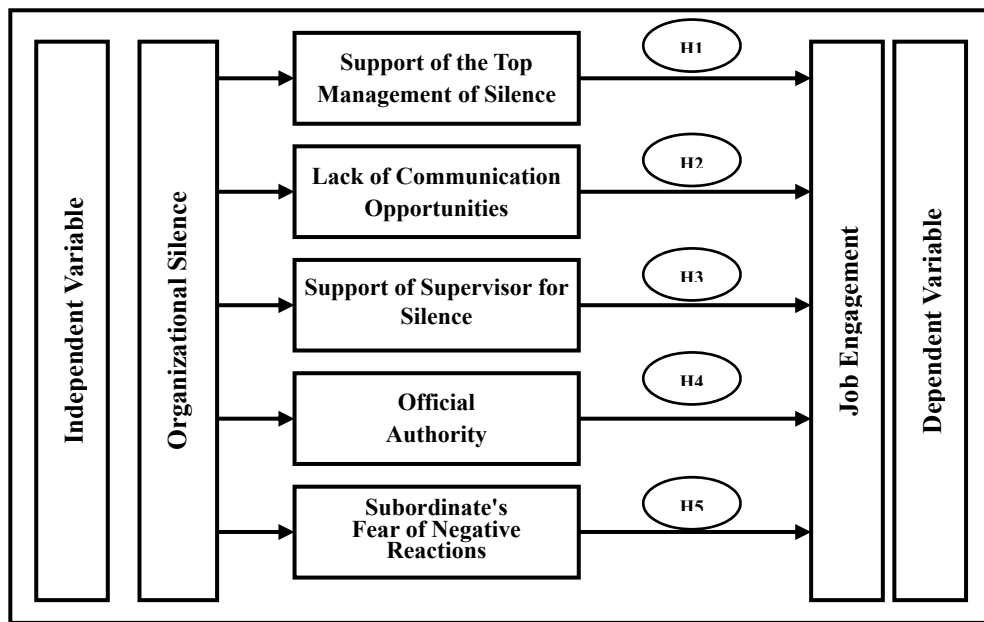


Figure 1. Proposed Comprehensive Conceptual Model

3.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The researcher found the research problem through two sources. The first source is to be found in previous studies, and it turns out that there is a lack in the number of literature reviews that dealt with the analysis of the relationship between OS and JE. This called for the researcher to test this relationship in the Egyptian environment.

The second source is the pilot study, which was conducted in an interview with (30) employees in order to identify the relationship between OS and JE. The researcher found several indicators notably the important and vital role that could be played by OS. As a result of the discussions given above, the research questions are as follows:

Q1: What is the nature and extent of the relationship between OS (support of the top management of silence) and JE at

Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Q2: What is the nature of the relationship between OS (lack of communication opportunities) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Q3: What is the statistically significant relationship between OS (support of supervisor for silence) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Q4: What is the nature and extent of the relationship between OS (official authority) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Q5: What is the nature of the relationship between OS (subordinate's fear of negative reactions) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

There are studies in literature that study OS and JE factors separately and within the frame of bilateral relation, there is no study that examines these two factors collectively at the Egyptian environment. This study aims to contribute to the literature by examining the research variables collectively and reveal the interaction between the research variables.

As a result of the discussions given above, the following hypotheses were developed to test the effect of OS on JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

H1: OS (support of the top management of silence) of employees has no statistically significant effect on JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

H2: OS (lack of communication opportunities) of employees has no statistically significant impact on JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

H3: OS (support of supervisor for silence) of employees has no statistically significant influence on JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

H4: OS (official authority) of employees has no statistically significant effect on JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

H5: OS (subordinate's fear of negative reactions) of employees has no statistically significant impact on JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population of the study included all employees at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt, including, physicians, nurses and administrative staff. The total population is 2839 employees.

Determination of sample size was calculated using the formula (Daniel, 1999) as follows:

$$n = \frac{N \times (Z)^2 \times P(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + (Z)^2 \times P(1-P)}$$

The number of samples obtained by 338 employees at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt in Table (1).

Table 1. Distribution of the Sample Size

Job Category	Number	Percentage	Size of Sample
1. Physicians	486	17.1%	338 X 17.1% = 58
2. Nurses	1675	59.0%	338 X 59.0% = 199
3. Administrative Staff	678	23.9%	338 X 23.9% = 81
Total	2839	100%	338 X 100% = 338

Source: Personnel Department at Menoufia University in Egypt, 2015

Descriptive statistics are used to describe some of the features of the respondents at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt who participated in the survey. Table (2) provides more detailed information about the sample and the measures.

3.4 Procedure

The goal of this study was to identify the relationship between OS and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

A survey research method was used to collect data. The questionnaire included three questions, relating to OS, JE, and demographic information of employees at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Data collection took two months. Survey responses were 88%, 300 completed surveys out of the 338 distributed.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution Table of Demographics

	Variables	Number	Percentage
1- Job Title	Physicians	127	42.3%
	Nurses	154	51.3%
	Administrative Staff	19	6.3%
	Total	300	100%
2- Sex	Male	114	38.0%
	Female	186	62.0%
	Total	300	100%
3- Marital Status	Single	74	24.7%
	Married	226	75.3%
	Total	300	100%
4- Age	Under 30	122	40.7%
	From 30 to 45	124	41.3%
	Above 45	54	18.0%
	Total	300	100%
5- Educational Level	Secondary School	107	35.7%
	University	144	48.0%
	Post Graduate	49	16.3%
	Total	300	100%
6- Period of Experience	Less than 5 years	97	32.3%
	From 5 to 10	79	26.3%
	More than 10	124	41.3%
	Total	300	100%

3.5 Data Collection Tools

3.5.1 Organizational Silence Scale

The researcher will depend on the scale developed by Schechtman, 2008; and Brinsfield, 2009 in measuring OS, which has been divided into five elements (support of the top management of silence, lack of communication opportunities, support of supervisor for silence, official authority, and subordinate's fear of negative reactions).

The 27-item scale OS section is based on Schechtman, 2008; and Brinsfield, 2009. There were five items measuring support of the top management of silence, six items measuring lack of communication opportunities, five items measuring support of supervisor for silence, five items measuring official authority, and six items measuring subordinate's fear of negative reactions. The survey form is used as the main tool for data collection in measuring OS at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Responses are categorized using a 5-point Likert Scale for each statement, ranging from (1) "very ineffective", (2) "ineffective", (3) "neither effective nor ineffective", (4) "effective", and (5) "very effective".

3.5.2 Job Engagement Scale

The researcher will depend on the scale developed by (Rich et al., 2006; 2010), in measuring JE, which has been divided into three main components (cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and physical engagement).

The 18-item scale JE section is based on Rich et al., 2010. There were six items measuring cognitive engagement, six items measuring emotional engagement, and six items measuring physical engagement. The survey form has been used as a key tool to collect data to measure JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Responses to all items scales were anchored on a five (5) point Likert scale for each statement which ranges from (5) "full agreement," (4) for "agree," (3) for "neutral," (2) for "disagree," and (1) for "full disagreement."

3.6 Data Analysis

The researcher has employed the following methods: (1) Cronbach's alpha or ACC, (2) (MRA), and (3) F- test and T-test. All these tests are found in SPSS.

4. Hypotheses Testing

4.1 Evaluating Reliability

Before testing the hypotheses and research questions, the reliability of OS and JE were assessed to reduce errors of measuring and maximizing constancy of these scales. To assess the reliability of the data, Cronbach's alpha test was conducted.

Table 3 shows the reliability results for OS and JE. All items had alphas above 0.70 and were therefore excellent, according to Langdridge's (2004) criteria.

Table 3. Reliability of OS and JE

Variables	The Dimension	Number of Statement	ACC
OS	Support the top Management of Silence	5	0.9520
	Lack of Communication Opportunities	6	0.9369
	Support Supervisor for Silence	5	0.9017
	Official Authority	5	0.8795
	Subordinate Fear of Negative Reactions	6	0.9013
	Total Measurement	27	0.9841
JE	Cognitive Engagement	6	0.9788
	Emotional Engagement	6	0.9786
	Physical Engagement	6	0.9400
	Total Measurement	18	0.9789

Regarding Table 3, the 27 items of OS are reliable because the ACC is 0.9841. Support of the top management of silence, which consists of 5 items, is reliable because the ACC is 0.9520. Lack of communication opportunities, which consists of 6 items, is reliable because the ACC is 0.9396. Furthermore, support of supervisor for silence, which consists of 5 items, is reliable because the ACC is 0.9017. Official authority, which consists of 5 items, is reliable because the ACC is 0.8795. Subordinate's fear of negative reactions, which consists of 6 items, is reliable because the ACC is 0.9013. Thus, the internal consistency of OS can be acceptable.

According to Table 3, the 18 items of JE are reliable because the ACC is 0.9789. The cognitive engagement, which consists of 6 items, is reliable because the ACC is 0.9788. The 6 items related to emotional engagement are reliable because ACC is 0.9786 while the last six-item variable (physical engagement) is reliable because the ACC is 0.9400. Thus, the reliability of JE can be acceptable.

Accordingly, two scales were defined, OS (27 variables), where ACC represented about 0.9841, and JE (18 variables), where ACC represented 0.9789.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The researcher calculated means and standard deviations for each variable and created a correlation matrix of all variables used in hypothesis testing. Arithmetic mean and standard deviation values related to dependent and independent variables of this study and correlation coefficients between these variables are given in Table (4).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix of Constructs

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Support of the top management of silence	3.36	0.942	1					
2. Lack of communication opportunities	3.47	0.880	0.971**	1				
3. Support of Supervisor for silence	3.40	0.875	0.966*	0.944**	1			
4. Official Authority	3.49	0.820	0.977**	0.958**	0.965**	1		
5. Subordinate's fear of negative reactions	3.35	0.846	0.973**	0.973**	0.940**	0.947**	1	
6. Job Engagement	4.22	0.986	0.463**	0.454**	0.445**	0.481**	0.450**	1

Note: ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

According to Table 4, the reasons of the employees remaining silent was generated according to the respondents' answers. Reasons were grouped under five factors. They are (1) support of the top management of silence, (2) lack of communication opportunities, (3) support of supervisor for silence, (4) official authority, and (5) subordinate's fear of negative reactions.

Based on Table 4, the first issue examined was the different facets of OS. Among the various facets of OS, those who responded identified the presence of official authority ($M=3.49$, $SD=0.820$). This was followed by lack of communication opportunities ($M=3.47$, $SD=0.880$), support of supervisor for silence ($M=3.40$, $SD=0.875$), support of the top management of silence ($M=3.36$, $SD=0.942$), and subordinate's fear of negative reactions ($M=3.35$, $SD=0.846$).

The second issue examined was the different facets of JE (cognitive engagement, emotional engagement and physical engagement). Most of the respondents identified the overall JE ($M=4.22$, $SD=0.986$).

According to Table 4, OS dimensions have negative and significant relation with JE dimensions. The correlation

between OS (support of the top management of silence) and JE is 0.463. For OS (lack of communication opportunities) and JE, the value is 0.454 whereas OS (support of supervisor for silence) and JE show correlation value of 0.445. For OS (official authority) and JE, the value is 0.481 whereas OS (subordinate's fear of negative reactions) and JE show correlation value of 0.450.

Finally, Table 4 proves that there is a significant and negative correlation between OS and JE. So our hypothesis is supported and it can be said that there is a significant and negative correlation between OS and JE.

4.3 Organizational Silence (Support of the top Management of Silence) and JE

The relationship between OS (support of the top management of silence) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt is determined. The first hypothesis to be tested is:

There is no relationship between OS (support of the top management of silence) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Table 5. MRA Results for OS (Support of the top Management of Silence) and JE

The Variables of OS (Support of the top Management of Silence)	Beta	R	R ²
1. Organization's management believes that its role is limited to the implementation of instructions.	0.210*	0.425	0.180
2. The organization is not interested in encouraging employees to express their opinions or suggestions concerning aspects of the work.	0.363	0.462	0.213
3. Management of the organization does not tend to serious discussion of the views and suggestions of employees.	0.272**	0.357	0.127
4. Management of the organization does not express gratitude to workers for their opinions and suggestions for useful work.	0.294**	0.444	0.197
5. I do not feel comfortable when management of the organization is involved in solving a problem belonging to me personally.	0.087	0.442	0.195
▪ MCC		0.502	
▪ DC		0.252	
▪ Calculated F		19.796	
▪ Degree of Freedom		5, 294	
▪ Indexed F		3.78	
▪ Level of Significance		0.000	

** P < 0.01 * P < 0.05

Table 5 proves that there is a relationship between OS (support of the top management of silence) and JE at significance level of 0,000. As a result of the value of R², the 5 independent variables of support of the top management of silence can explain 25.2% of the total differentiation in JE level.

For the results of a structural analysis of the MRA, the direct effect of OS (support of the top management of silence) and JE is obtained. Because MCC is 0.502, it is concluded that there is enough empirical evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

4.4 Organizational Silence (Lack of Communication Opportunities) and JE

The relationship between OS (lack of communication opportunities) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt is determined. The second hypothesis to be tested is:

There is no relationship between OS (lack of communication opportunities) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

As Table 6 proves, the MRA resulted in the R of 0.502. This means that JE has been significantly explained by the 5 independent variables of lack of communication opportunities.

Furthermore, the R² of 0.252 indicates that the percentage of the variable interprets the whole model, that is, 25.2%. It is evident that the five independent variables justified 25.2% of the total factors of JE. Hence, 74.8% are explained by the other factors. Therefore, there is enough empirical evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 6. MRA Results for OS (Lack of Communication Opportunities) and JE

The Variables of OS (Lack of Communication Opportunities)		Beta	R	R ²
1.	There is no exchange of information among various departments and divisions within the organization.	0.117	0.354	0.125
2.	The chances of communication between employees in other departments are not enough	0.078	0.334	0.111
3.	Management of the organization does not notify the staff with the organization's important problems and issues.	0.268*	0.357	0.127
4.	There is not enough channels of communication between employees and senior management of the organization.	0.301*	0.425	0.180
5.	Management of the organization does not bother to hold meetings to discuss issues and matters relating to work.	0.225	0.462	0.181
6.	My superiors at work do not possess the good skills needed for listening to my views and suggestions.	0.298**	0.444	0.197
▪	MCC		0.502	
▪	DC		0.252	
▪	Calculated F		16.487	
▪	Degree of Freedom		6, 293	
▪	Indexed F		3.01	
▪	Level of Significance		0.000	

** P < 0.01 * P < 0.05

4.5 Organizational Silence (Support of Supervisor for Silence) and JE

The relationship between OS (support of supervisor for silence) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt is determined. The third hypothesis to be tested is:

There is no relationship between OS (support of supervisor for silence) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Table 7. MRA Results for OS (Support of Supervisor for Silence) and JE

The Variables of OS (Support of Supervisor for Silence)		Beta	R	R ²
1.	I hesitate to speak freely with my direct manager concerning a problem at work.	0.156*	0.395	0.156
2.	My direct manager does not care about any negative information about my performance.	0.104	0.442	0.195
3.	My direct manager sees any criticism against him a sort of challenging him.	0.330	0.462	0.213
4.	My direct manager suspects the source of my information concerning my performance at work.	0.191*	0.444	0.197
5.	My direct manager sees the difference in opinion on the problems of working longer unhelpful.	0.097	0.155	0.024
▪	MCC		0.488	
▪	DC		0.238	
▪	Calculated F		18.387	
▪	Degree of Freedom		5, 294	
▪	Indexed F		2.63	
▪	Level of Significance		0.000	

* P < 0.05

Table 7 proves that there is a relationship between OS (support of supervisor for silence) and JE. As a result of the value of R², the 5 independent variables of support of supervisor for silence can explain 23.8% of the total differentiation in JE level. For the results of a structural analysis of the MRA, the direct effect of OS (support supervisor for silence) and JE is obtained. Because MCC is 0.488, there is enough empirical evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

4.6 Organizational Silence (Official Authority) and JE

The relationship between OS (official authority) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt is determined. The fourth hypothesis to be tested is:

There is no relationship between OS (official authority) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

Table 8. MRA Results for OS (Official Authority) and JE

The Variables of OS (Official Authority)	Beta	R	R ²
1. My direct manager depends mainly on the official authority to influence subordinates.	0.154	0.425	0.180
2. My direct manager draws on the method of threatening with punishment to guide the behavior of subordinates.	0.264*	0.462	0.181
3. My direct manager accepts excuses of subordinates with difficulty when they commit negligence in their work.	0.217	0.357	0.127
4. My direct manager directs the behavior of subordinates through compliance with laws and regulations.	0.271**	0.444	0.197
5. My direct manager complies with laws and regulations in force when solving problems of subordinates.	0.107*	0.282	0.079
▪ MCC		0.510	
▪ DC		0.261	
▪ Calculated F		20.720	
▪ Degree of Freedom		5, 294	
▪ Indexed F		3.78	
▪ Level of Significance		0.000	
** P < 0.01		* P < 0.05	

Table 8 proves that there is a relationship between OS (official authority) and JE at significance level of 0,000. As a result of the value of R², the 5 independent variables of official authority can explain 26.1% of the total differentiation in JE level. For the results of a structural analysis of the MRA, the direct effect of OS (official authority) and JE is obtained. Because MCC is 0.510, it is concluded that there is enough empirical evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

4.7 Organizational Silence (Subordinate's Fear of Negative Reactions) and JE

The relationship between OS (subordinate's fear of negative reactions) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt is determined. The fifth hypothesis to be tested is:

There is no relationship between OS (subordinate's fear of negative reactions) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt.

As Table (9) proves, the MRA resulted in the R of 0.489. This means that JE has been significantly explained by the 5 independent variables of subordinate fear of negative reactions.

Furthermore, the R² of 0.239 indicates that the percentage of the variable interprets the whole model, that is, 23.9%. It is evident that the six independent variables justified 23.9% of the total factors of JE. Hence, 76.1% are explained by the other factors. Therefore, there is enough empirical evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 9. MRA Results for OS (Subordinate's Fear of Negative Reactions) and JE

The Variables of OS (Subordinate's Fear of Negative Reactions)	Beta	R	R ²
1. I feel afraid to inform my direct manager with the problems of work in the organization.	0.012	0.250	0.062
2. I don't tend to talking about the negative working conditions for fear of being held accountable.	0.436*	0.462	0.181
3. I prefer to stay silent in order to avoid conflicts or disagreements with superiors.	0.021	0.442	0.195
4. I prefer to stay silent for fear of breaking my relationships with my colleagues.	0.032	0.276	0.076
5. I prefer to stay silent not to be considered a problem-maker.	0.227*	0.357	0.127
6. My speaking of work problems could be harmful to my personal interests.	0.262**	0.444	0.197
▪ MCC		0.489	
▪ DC		0.239	
▪ Calculated F		15.335	
▪ Degree of Freedom		6, 293	
▪ Indexed F		3.01	
▪ Level of Significance		0.000	
** P < 0.01		* P < 0.05	

5. Research Findings

The present study on analyzing the relationship between OS (support of the top management of silence, lack of communication opportunities, support of supervisor for silence, official authority, subordinate's fear of negative reactions) and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt revealed the following results:

1. There is a significant relationship between OS and JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt. OS plays an important role in influencing JE. Also, OS contributes significantly to JE. Hence, the top management should (1) encourage employees to talk about work issues and choose the appropriate time for that, (2) increasing employees'

exchange and circulation of new ideas, and (3) the need to motivate employees to talk and provide their opinions and suggestions about work problems.

2. This study concluded that the OS was negatively related with JE at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt. Overall findings from this study suggested that OS does affect employees' engagement. Hence, the top management should (1) coordinate between different departments and divisions within the organization, (2) provide of good channels of communication between the employees within the organization, and (3) develop effective communication channels which support exchange and transfer of ideas and information.

3. There is a negative relationship between OS and JE of employees at Menoufia University Hospitals in Egypt. In other words, OS affects JE. So, top management should (1) pay attention to the moral of the employees within the organization, (2) provide of organizational support for the exchange of ideas associated to labor issues, (3) encourage employees to creative thinking within the organization, and (4) the need to employ and attract talented employees especially those who have high levels of organizational commitment.

6. Research Recommendations

1. The need to adopt a culture which encourages and urges employees to speak in the labor issues and the non-silence in order for the administration to be able to realize these issues and try to solve them first hand in order to prevent its aggravation.

2. Officials have to pay attention to develop effective channels of communication between them and the employees in the organization, to ensure the participation of employees in solving problems and issues of work.

3. Building mutual trust between the direct superiors and their subordinates in a framework that allows the later to express their opinions and suggestions in a way which reduces their degree of silence.

4. Increasing the spirit of harmony between work groups, through increasing convergence between employees, in addition to reducing the level of conflict between them, which leads to a reduced level of silence within the organization.

5. Officials need to adopt the democratic style of leadership, as this method leads to an atmosphere of work within which the subordinate can actively express his ideas and suggestions, which reduces the degree of OS.

6. Reducing the degree of job alienation among employees in the organization, so that it can encourage employees to speak and participate in matters and issues of work.

7. The need to create an organizational climate which encourages building good relations. This leads to a lack of fear of negative reactions in case of talking about labor issues and problems.

8. Good choosing or promoting heads to ensure the selection and appointment of heads who have a personal vision and an ability to influence the course of events, as this contributes to a high degree in reducing the OS.

9. Necessity of activating the role of employees' unions and representatives in the systematic expression of their opinions and suggestions in order to ensure balance between the interests of employees and the public interest.

10. It is necessary for the top management to pay attention for greater transparency in the provision of truthful information, as this significantly contributes to reducing the level of OS.

7. Research Implications

The findings of the study should contribute to managers and practitioners becoming more aware of ES. In addition, management should encourage employees to express their relevant ideas, information and opinions.

The ambiguity of the role or tasks of the employee leads to role conflict, which contributes to an increasing climate of silence.

Therefore, the clarity of the role and duties of the employee lead to a sense of employee comfort and some kind of harmony or balance between the formal role and the role expected, which helps reduce OS (Deci, et al., 1989).

The nature of silence behavior makes it difficult to break. This may be due to the fact that OS may be a result of lack of confidence in the organization.

It may be difficult to restore that trust in a short period of time. This is because breaking silence and transition from a climate of silence to one that encourages talking may need a revolutionary or radical change of system (Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

Silence climate has an impact on the ability of an organization to detect errors and learn. Therefore, organizational effectiveness is negatively affected. ES behaviour can also create stress, cynicism, and dissatisfaction (Tamuz, 2001).

Breaking silence needs a vision which can provide a climate that helps in engagement and talking. Silence can be

overcome through (1) encouraging employees to talk about work issues and choosing the appropriate time for that, (2) increasing employees' exchange and circulation of new ideas, (3) coordination between different departments and divisions within the organization, (4) provision of good channels of communication between the employees within the organization, (5) paying attention to the moral of the employees within the organization, (6) provision of organizational support for the exchange of ideas associated to labor issues, and (7) encouraging employees to creative thinking within the organization (Piderit & Ashford, 2003).

Another way of breaking silence would be through the keenness of the leaders of organizations to fight or prevent any impediments to the transfer or exchange of upwards information relating to problems and issues of work (Edmondson, 2003).

Top managers and supervisors have to create a workplace where employees will feel safe to express their views and will be encouraged to offer their ideas and suggestions. Therefore, top managers and supervisors should develop attitudes and engage in behaviours that would create a psychologically safety net for their employees (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005).

There are some tools that can be used for the purpose of breaking OS. They are (1) the need to motivate employees to talk and provide their opinions and suggestions about work problems, (2) developing effective communication channels which support exchange and transfer of ideas and information, and (3) the need to employ and attract talented employees especially those who have high levels of organizational commitment. This is because these employees have a high tendency to speak and participate in labor issues. Thus, OS can be reduced or faced focusing on the selection and retention of this distinctive quality of the staff (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005).

Finally, employees are regarded as major sources of change, creativity, learning, and innovation, which are critical factors to the success of organizations. However, many employees choose not to voice their opinions and concerns about matters in their organizations. While in a changing world, organizations need for employees who express their ideas. Also, employees choose organizations in which they can express themselves. (Liu, et al. 2009).

8. Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations of this study. They are (1) the most important limitation is that data was gathered from one private sector in Egypt. Therefore the findings of this research need to be evaluated with this in mind. The survey answers are related to the perception of employees at that moment, (2) the respondents were unwilling to answer the questionnaires accurately. Therefore, before distributing questionnaires among respondents, we attempted to describe the positive effects of the results of this research on their work-life quality and satisfying their needs, (3) the current study is about cause and effect relationship among research variables; maybe there are other factors that affect research variables, which need to be identified.

Although the current research has contributed to the study of the determinants of silence, the field is still open to continue and complete research in this area. There are several areas for future research. They are (1) identifying factors that affect ES; (2) identifying the effects of ES on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (3) identifying the effects of leadership style on ES, (4) identifying the effects of demographic variables on ES, (5) identifying the relationship between organizational culture and OS, (6) identifying the relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and OS, (7) identifying the relationship between organizational success and OS, (8) identifying the relationship between organizational excellence and OS, (9) silence motivations (defensive silence, relations supportive silence, de facto silence, the silence of negligence) in service organizations, (10) the relationship between silence and organizational justice within business organizations, (11) comparing determinants of silence in the production and service organizations, and (12) the relationship between the determinants of OS and work involvement.

9. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, OS is evident in many organizations. This study expanded on previous research which conceptualized OS. Based on systematic examination of subjects' reported experiences, silence does indeed appear to be more complex than can be accounted for by assuming it is equivalent to an absence of voice.

Moreover, the empirical evidence gathered makes a strong case for conceptualizing and examining OS. Additionally, this research demonstrated that this covert and seemingly ambiguous phenomenon can be measured. Although more work is needed in the area of OS, it appears that this research has effectively set the stage for further empirical examination.

In this research, most of the employees felt that the common reasons for ES are derived from administrative and organizational factors.

The results are consistent with the previous researchers who found that the most common reason for choosing to remain silent is "administrational and organizational reasons". The managers hold the key role on ES since they determine the policies and organizational decisions. They have the power to establish an internal mechanism in order to remove any

administrative and organizational reasons for ES allowing employees to speak up explicitly (Cakici, 2008).

It is often believed that the employees do not have suitable experience in perceiving main issues. The managers believe that the employees are encouraged to speak plainly. On the other hand, they use various methods to silence the opposite employees (Panahi, et al. 2012).

OS with its various meanings is one of the significant issues of organizational behavior management. ES, which is used as a counterpart to concepts such as employee withdrawal, lack of confidence, or social silence etc., has been a research subject for many local or global academics who study organizational behavior.

However, the difficulty of analyzing silence is the biggest limitation and drawback of research in this field. The concept has both personal and organizational characteristics. However, it is possible to define OS as ES about or inability to express their opinions that may affect the organizational activities. Therefore, top managers and all other employees should have confidence in each other, build relationships on mutual respect, distance between the superiors and subordinates should be decreased and establishment of healthy feedback mechanisms should be ensured (Yıldız, 2013).

Since the OS makes employees feel less involved in work, deterioration or depersonalization is created and people suffer emotional exhaustion.

Managers should not create an organizational climate in which employees are afraid of negative feedback. When employees fear the managers negative feedback, they may avoid the expression of their ideas, opinions, and even mistakes (Tahmasebil, et al., 2013).

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