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The Impact of Contextual Factors of Silence on Employees' Satisfaction in the Jordan Ministry of Education

Osama Khaled Ahmad Alkhlaifat¹

Abstract: This research aims to determine the impact and relationship direction between organizational silence and employees' satisfaction in the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MOE). The study used a questionnaire tool that was developed based on previous studies. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 employees randomly. The alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the instrument. Also, multi-regression and the One-way ANOVA analysis were used to examine the hypotheses. The results showed that the sample reported a moderate degree of both silence and satisfaction and that the relationship is inverse between the organizational factors of silence and job satisfaction. The results also showed that the "Lack of support" factor was the most influential factor and the "Mistrust" had the lowest impact on satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: silence, satisfaction, communication, organizational behaviour.

JEL Codes: J28, O15, D63

Introduction

Today, organizations attempt to search for reliable solutions to improve performance and productivity among individuals and groups and use their effects. High performance and productivity require employees to feel comfortable and satisfied with the work environment. When employees join a job, they have a set of needs and past experiences and create expectations. Some of these needs include the tendency to get trained, learning and scientific progress, appropriate benefits, job promotion, and suitable work conditions, which lead to job satisfaction (Fard-Karimi, 2015). Thus, individuals choose organizations in which they feel satisfied and can express themselves. Employees are more motivated and highly perform in a workplace with the freedom to speak, and silence does not exist

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(Ahmad et al., 2018). Simultaneously, in a continuously changing world, organizations need employees capable of expressing their ideas and breaking the silence state. Organizations need people reacting well to new environmental challenges and do not fear sharing information and opinions, which requires organizations to afford a satisfying environment to attract such individuals.

Employees' satisfaction is formed after entering the organization, which is considered a pre-requirement of organizational commitment (Fard–Karimi, 2015). Most employees focus on economic returns, doing valuable tasks, and high job independence. If employees are encountered with barriers in their job expectations, it leads to low job satisfaction (Shojaie et al., 2011). Employees' satisfaction could be affected by many factors, especially organization-related factors. One of the critical factors could be the communication channels; most employees report that their organizations follow the directive management styles and do not support communication and information sharing (Nikolaou et al., 2011). The management style, organizational policies, tendency to dictatorship styles or democratic style, and the attitude to the human being, reactions on speech, supportive behaviours, and justice could affect one's readiness to speak or be silent.

The silencing behaviour within the organizations is represented by the superiors or colleagues practices colleagues that one perceives as unwillingness to listen (Ahrens, 2006). The problem with organizational silence that it avoids organizational development and changes by avoiding negative feedback needed to correct the errors or any deviation from the plans. So, mistakes are increased, and the correction activities are not performed as necessary (Panahi et al., 2012). Indeed, what essential for this research is not how silence affects the development or change, but the impact of silence on employees' opportunities to present and express themselves and their views. Thus, the employees' satisfaction could be affected and decreased as a result of a non-supportive environment. Hence, the researcher suggests that the organization-related factors have an impact on and an inverse relationship with the employees' satisfaction.

H1: Organizational factors are inversely correlated to employees' satisfaction.

H2: There is a statistically significant impact (at the level $\alpha \leq 0.05$) of organizational factors (Fear of negative reactions, Mistrust, Lack of management support, Abusing of formal authority, and injustice) on the employees' satisfaction.

Objectives

Organizational silence and its treatment methods are of great importance in organizational issues and require managers' serious consideration. However, research about this relationship has been carried out in the public sector and, in particular, research into this phenomenon in the Jordanian public sector are limited. The study here attempts to help bridge some of the gaps in the literature between organizational silence and job satisfaction in the context of the Jordanian ministry of Education (MOE).

Literature

Organizations members communicate and share information, feedback and views in different ways; upward, downward, and horizontally among people at the same level (Goris et al., 2000). Communication can be through formal channels like official meetings and procedures or through informal (unstructured) channels which are not prescribed by the organization but exist due to personal and social needs (Kandlousi et al., 2010). Communication can be conceptualized in terms of the openness and the extent of the free flow of information, suggestions and points of view among people (Gambarotto–Cammazzo, 2010). The exists literature described the ways communication is used to inform and socialize new members of an organization into its culture. The different patterns are associated with the management style, whether it is democratic or directive. Democratic communication refers to interactions concerned with participation in work-related issues (Stohl–Cheney, 2001). In contrast, the directive communication describes messages that aim to control or influence personnel (Dolatabadi–Safa, 2010). The style of management and organizational behaviour both affect the individuals' readiness to convey the work-related information. Thus, an organization with a supportive environment allows the natural communication atmosphere to take place and allows the individuals to express themselves and their ideas freely (Amazt–Idris, 2011). According to Thompson & Prottas (2006), the more supportive organizations, the more satisfied employees. On the opposite side, in a non-supportive environment, employees are most likely to speak less or to be silent. Empowering organizational environments that provide access to information, supporting employees, and give an opportunity to

learn and improve, influence employee work attitudes, such as job satisfaction (Kandlousi et al., 2010).

Employees are considered main sources of change, learning, and innovation, which are factors essential to organisations' success. However, many employees choose not to speak up about their concerns about work issues in their organizations; when they feel their participation doesn't make a difference and speaking up is pointless, they are not likely to share ideas or suggestions. According to Morrison and Milliken (2000), when most organisation members decide to keep silent, silence becomes a collective behaviour, which is referred to as organizational silence.

Organizational silence refers to as a collective-behaviour of not saying or doing less in response to organization problems (Henriksen–Dayton, 2006). Research on silence problem focuses on the overall levels of silence in organizations. The primary interest of research on silence within organizations is to identify the environmental factors that push most members to remain silent. Past studies identified two main types of silence factors; first personal factors related to individuals' attributes like beliefs, cultural and social level. Second, the organizational factors, often associated with the organisation's policies, work issues, and leadership styles (Akbarian et al., 2015). This research focuses on the organization-related factors to find the effect and the direction of the relationship between silence and job satisfaction. Management styles, organizational behaviour, and corporate culture are the primary sources of organization-related factors of silence. They have a vital role in determining employees' silence behaviour according to how they perceive them (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). Thus, organizational and environmental variables are likely to affect whether collective silence develops. The related studies found some vital factor that comes due to the policies, practices and communication atmosphere within the organization including, formal authority abuse, fear of negative reactions, lack of support, mistrust, and injustice (Alkhlaifat, 2019; Bagheri et al., 2012; Milliken et al., 2003; Panahi et al., 2012).

The abuse of formal authority results from different reasons. The most important one is the lack of leadership qualities of managers and the decision-makers, which cause them to rely more on the power to get work done (Al-Omari, 2013). However, when the decision-making process is centralized, and there are few channels for upward communication, the employees will perceive that managers do not think employee opinions are important. Another problem is the high power distance. Authority differences resulted from hierarchy can interrupt and distort communication

(Dessein, 2002). Thus, if there is a distance between the employees and managers, employees choose to remain silent. In a tall organizational hierarchy, top management will be less likely to interact with, relate to, and trust lower-level employees—the higher the organizational structure levels, the more likely to reinforce silence. Also, hiring managers from outside rather than promoting from within are more likely to have a gap between top management and lower-level (Morrison–Milliken, 2000). Thus, employees are more likely to maintain silent.

Fear of negative reactions is considered as a defensive silence and more proactive. It is a conscious decision to withhold information, ideas, and opinions as to the best personal strategy at the moment (Panahi et al., 2012). It includes withholding information based on a fear that the speaking up of ideas is personally risky. This self-protection motive might be based on the fear of punishment, endangering the job situation, or taking responsibility for the problem (Rhee et al., 2014). Also, defensive silence could include hiding personal mistakes as self-protection. The employee who is afraid of his manager chooses to remain silent or speak less instead of direct communication (Ehtiyar–Yanardağ, 2008). Then, the natural communication atmosphere will take an unrealized or incomplete formal communication place, and there will be inaccurate information flow to irrelevant people (Kandlousi et al., 2010). Besides, top managers' fear of negative feedback, especially from subordinates, is also a reason for not speaking. Superiors often feel threatened by negative feedback, and as a result, try to avoid it (Dolatabadi–Safa, 2010). When they receive negative feedback that suggests weakness or errors or challenges the current situation, they often try to ignore it or attack the source's credibility to avoid embarrassment and feelings of incompetence (Detert–Burris, 2007).

It is reasonable to say that supportive communication from superiors to staff members is associated with silence derived from a manager-employee relationship. A supportive environment refers to the environment that allows sharing positive messages related to encouragement and raising of confidence. Examples include positive feedback, constructive criticism, praise, showing interest in the opinions of staff. Upward and horizontal supportive communication are also related to silence. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that managers should maintain supporting structures by which these types of supporting communication may flow. Additionally, staff members should have opportunities to interact with one another outside the workplace as this may provide more opportunities for

supportive communication through social contact and sharing of concerns. This could help in reducing the tendency to silence. Ducharme and Martin (2000) reported that social support among individuals improved job satisfaction for a sample that included a variety of occupations. The evidence for this impact and relationship supports the formulation of our main hypotheses. Once the individuals perceive that organizational behaviour is not supportive, their satisfaction level could be affected (Yiing–Ahmad, 2009). The lack of a suitable rewarding system for employees' creative ideas and performance is another non-supportive environment characteristic. It could result in not sharing creativity and doing less (Ducharme–Martin, 2000).

Another important factor that lies at the root of silence is the (Mistrust). Managers implicitly hold beliefs about organization members and the nature of management. One belief is that individuals are untrustworthy and following their self-interest (Khalid–Ahmed, 2016). This paradigm reminds us of what McGregor calls “Theory X” takes as a starting assumption that employees are self-interested and act in ways to maximize their benefits (McGregor, 1960). Employees are also viewed as effort resistant, and they cannot be trusted to act in the best interests of the organization without incentive or sanction (Morrison–Milliken, 2000). Also, that top management knows more about most work-related issues within the organization is one of these beliefs. When negative feedback flows from below rather than from upper levels, from employees not from the superiors, it is taken as less accurate and as threatening to one's authority and credibility. Thus, a fear of bad feedback can set into mind a set of organizational practices that block the upward communication.

Moreover, on the horizontal level, the feelings towards colleagues will be influenced by how reliable and trustworthy information from them is, and vice versa. This also could affect the flow of information; if there is no trust, less information will be communicated. Organizational trust and decisions to keep quiet are founded to have a significant and negative relationship (Khalid–Ahmed, 2016). Their research indicated that as trust increases, the likelihood of organizational silence decreases. Satisfaction with colleagues may also encourage the exchange of support between peers. Managers must work hard to create a trustful environment in which employees know that their input is of importance and that it is safe to convey feedback even if it's negative. If employees feel that superiors do not want to hear negative feedback and work problems, they will not talk

about them. Managers must follow this dynamic and convince employees that they care about their input.

Furthermore, perceived justice, especially procedural justice, can be critical in employers' decision to speak up about organizational issues. Some researches have explored some justice dimensions (e.g., procedural, distributive, informational, and interpersonal; Colquitt 2001), while others have focused on overall justice judgments (e.g., Ambrose–Schminke, 2009). Organizational justice is a term that defines how employees are treated fairly in the workplace (Altahayneh et al., 2014). Also, justice is related to a fair distribution of organizational resources among employees (Ambrose–Schminke, 2009). These resources could be salary, rewards, promotion, appreciation, honest feedback, and prestige. These concepts make employees feel that they are treated with respect and sincerity, which leads to a more robust perception of justice (Burton, 2008). Employees look to gain these resources in exchange for their contribution to the organization through their efforts, training, experience, and knowledge (DeConinck–Stilwell, 2004). In case the employee feels that resources are not distributed in proportion to their contribution to the organization, they develop a feeling of injustice (Fortin, 2008). Employees with a perception of injustice first investigate the procedures and situations before they react. Therefore, justice is considered to be directly an organizational factor. Research on justice showed that organization members evaluate the work environment more favourably when it allows for employee input on an equal basis, even when this input does not impact the work and decision outcomes (Tan, 2014). Fairness leads individuals to believe that they can make meaningful changes in their environment, thereby decreasing acquiescent silence. Also, employees feel undervalued when they perceive that they are not allowed openly to express their opinions compared to the others. Thus, employees think their organization does not value them and will be less likely to speak or contribute to the organization (Berdahl–Martorana, 2006). Individuals who feel unfairly treated are more likely not to speak up and to be silent. The injustice could affect employees' ability to express themselves, which in turn could affect their satisfaction, self-esteem, and meaningful existence (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Rupp, 2011).

Satisfaction is defined as the employees' positive feelings about their work and the work circumstances (Lumley et al., 2011). In contrast, unfa-

avourable or negative feelings towards work may be called job dissatisfaction (Soodmand Afshar–Doosti, 2016). Employees' satisfaction begins at an individual's identification and involvement in a particular organization. Thus, satisfaction is determined by a range of organizational and personal factors such as personal characteristics, structural characteristics, experience, and role-related features. Many studies have investigated the dimensions of job satisfaction, the majority of which have focussed on organizational aspects, to name a few (Kandlousi et al., 2010; Lumley et al., 2011; Yiing–Ahmad, 2009). The dimensions of work identified in studies include the quality of relationships between employees and their supervisors, colleagues, pay, working conditions, recognition for work done, the work itself, participation in decision-making, and communication.

Alike, (The–Sun, 2012) revealed that job satisfaction is positively related to employees' knowledge sharing behaviour. Greater open communication between subordinates and superiors resulted in greater subordinate job satisfaction. Job satisfaction has been associated with different organizational behaviour relating to communication. However, little research has been conducted in the public sector, encompassing job satisfaction and silence. Therefore, this study investigated the impact and relationships between organizational factors of silence and the employees' satisfaction. The research's importance is that the potential costs or benefits to organizations from the effects of job satisfaction are worth considering when investigating silence in the public sector.

Methodology

This study uses quantitative methods to find the impact of silence organization-related factors on employees' satisfaction in the centre of the MOE. It measures the awareness of organizational factors as a reason for low satisfaction level. The study uses the primary data collected using the questionnaire and secondary data from the relevant previous literature.

The study population consists of 1128 employees of those with a higher education degree and with a full-time job. They are divided into 747 males and 381 females, according to the MOE databases in 2020. The sample reached 100 employees of both genders, which is almost 9% of the entire population. They were randomly selected and accessed using

google-drive electronic questionnaire tool after being requested to partake in the study-table (1) shows the sample's demographic distribution.

Table 1: demographic distribution of the sample

Variable		Number
Gender	Male	72
	Female	28
Age	20-30	17
	31-40	42
	41-50	34
	51 or more	7
Education	Diploma	12
	Bachelor	68
	Master degree	15
	PhD degree	5

Source: Own construction

The researcher utilized a questionnaire that consists of three parts: The demographic characteristics of the sample (gender, age, and level of education). Secondly, silence organization-related factors measure developed based on the results of the related-study (Alkhlaifat, 2019; Brinsfield, 2013; Milliken et al., 2003; Panahi et al., 2012). This part has 31 questions distributed as follows:

- Fear of negative reaction (7 questions).
- Mistrust (9 questions).
- Lack of management support (5 questions).
- Abusing of formal authority (5 questions).
- Injustice (5 questions).

The third part measures employees' satisfaction. In the present study, the focus is to test satisfaction through three dimensions; information communication satisfaction, relational, and informational/relational satisfaction, where they measured using 15 items. Informational communication satisfaction reflects the degree to which the accessible information conforms with employees' demand for information about their roles, or it is only about organizational tasks. In contrast, relational communication dimension is focused on satisfaction with communication relationships within the organization, including subordinate communication, supervisor communication, and horizontal communication. The third dimension was the informational/relational

focuses on a mix between two factors that are personal feedback and communication climate. This measure has been widely applied in several studies, where they attempted to determine the relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction (Bakanauskienė et al., 2010; Ejere, 2010; Ilozor et al., 2001; Kandlousi et al., 2010; Tsai et al., 2009).

The questionnaire items were rewritten in the form of questions that fit the purpose of this study. Furthermore, the questionnaire was presented to linguists to be sure that the rewording and translation were correct.

The study used a five-point Likert scale for all questions, where the result between (1-2.33) indicates a low silence or satisfaction level, (2.34-3.67) there is a medium level, and (3.68-5) or above shows a high level. The scale is applied for both parts, silence and satisfaction. SPSS v24 was used to test the reliability of the study tool and examine the hypotheses.

Data analysis and hypothesis testing

Reliability is the degree of internal consistency of study instruments (Roberts & Priest, 2006). The reliability test is used to judge the goodness of a measure and indicates the stability and consistency with which the used tool measures the concept (Sekaran–Bougies, 2013). The data collected were entered into the SPSS software package. Cronbach’s Alpha test was conducted to confirm the reliability of the study tool. The test result for the silence factors is 0.82, and 0.755 for the dependent variable (*Table 2*). Thus, according to the rule, the instrument is considered reliable when α is greater than 0.7 (Nunnally–Bernstein, 1994), which means that the tool is reliable and can be adopted.

Table 2: Reliability test

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach
Fear of negative reactions	7	0.811
Mistrust	9	0.789
Lack of support	5	0.801
Authority abuse	5	0.878
Injustice	5	0.802
Job satisfaction	15	0.755

Source: Own construction

The averages of the sample responses were calculated for both independent and dependent variables. The results were moderate to almost high for both the satisfaction and silence, which were respectively 3.231 and 3.69. Table (3) shows the averages and standard deviations of the independent and dependent variables.

Table 3: The mean and S. d.

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Fear of negative reactions	3.967	0.816
Mistrust	3.429	0.768
Lack of support	3.829	0.884
Authority abuse	3.550	1.026
Injustice	3.750	0.842
Job satisfaction	3.231	1.068

Source: Own construction

Regression analysis helps understand how the typical value of the dependent variable, employees’ satisfaction, changes when any one of the independent variables, the organizational factors of silence, is varied. In contrast, the other independent variables are held fixed (Sekaran, 2003). The data was added using the least square approach; the least square method is used to estimate the values of the model coefficients. Moreover, an (ANOVA) test was conducted; analysis of variance (ANOVA) test is used to compare variables that fall into different groups (Pallant, 2005). Table (4) shows the multiple regression analysis and (ANOVA) test.

Table 4: Multi-regression and (ANOVA) test for the impact of the organizational factors

	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-value	Sig	Standardized Beta	t-value	Sig
Fear of negative reactions	-0.754	0.569	0.546	24.819	0.000	-0.279	-2.063	0.041
Mistrust						-0.256	-2.001	0.048
Lack of support						-0.332	-2.343	0.021
Authority abuse						-0.263	-2.013	0.044
Injustice						-0.288	-2.115	0.038

Source: Own construction

The table shows the results of the hypotheses test. The correlation factor ($R = -0.754$) and the negative value of "T" both indicate an inverse relationship between organizational factors and employees' satisfaction. Moreover, the significance coefficient is less than 0.05 for all variables. Thus, the first assumption that the organizational silence factors are inversely correlated with employees' satisfaction is accepted. R^2 shows that the tested factors explain 57% of the amount of change in the dependent variable. For the second hypothesis, the results show that $F\text{-ratio} = 24.819$ and $P\text{-value} = 0.000$. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. Thus, the organizational factors of silence have an impact on the satisfaction within the MOE.

Results discussion

Five organization-related dimensions were included for the evaluation of the study model. After testing the hypotheses, the results revealed that employees' satisfaction is negatively related to employees' silence behaviour. This is supported by past research of Beheshtifar et al. (2012) showed that satisfaction is positively associated with open communication. Thus, logically being unable or unwilling to communicate to be inversely correlated with satisfaction. From the results also, all factors included in the study model significantly impact the satisfaction within the MOE.

The results show fear of negative reactions, mistrust, lack of support, formal authority abuse, and unfair practices (injustice) within the MOE. The past research showed that the organizational practices obstruct the exchange of relevant information with other members across the organization and impact their satisfaction (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002). Thus, organization-related factors of silence have to be treated as an essential reason that moulds employees' satisfaction.

Fear of negative reactions or resistance to negative feedback can set into motion a set of organizational practices that impede the upward communication of information. Thus, being unable to express individuals' thoughts about work concerns leads to lower satisfaction. This result can be supported by Kish-Gephart and Breaux-Soignet's (2013) opinion that individuals satisfaction is affected by the natural fear of challenging authority and workgroups because higher status group members typically

have the power to punish those who threaten their position. Also, as mentioned before, Rhee et al., (2014) indicated that fear of punishment, endangering the job situation, or taking responsibility for the problem affects satisfaction due to feeling unsafe.

Logically, one's feelings towards managers or colleagues will be influenced by the perception of how reliable and trustworthy information from them is, and vice versa. The analysis results showed that there was an inverse relationship between trust and satisfaction. This finding is consistent with Partonia (2014) results regarding the inverse relationship between organizational trust and the ability to communicate and share knowledge throughout the organization. Thus, the more trust in organization and control of silence factors, the more employees satisfied and committed.

Moreover, from the results, the absence of support from superiors to employees is inversely associated with satisfaction derived from how a superior relates to staff and vice versa. Staff members should have opportunities to interact with one another, upward and downward, as this may provide more opportunities for supportive communication through social contact and sharing of concerns. The past studies suggested that a supportive environment facilitates developing new competencies or sharpening existing ones, such as inventing new ideas, communicating, creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork. Still, the advancement of general competencies that drives individual effectiveness expressed by job satisfaction (Lam et al., 2001). Also, there is evidence to say that authority abuse is related to lowered job satisfaction. The monopoly of power and excessive directive communication by a manager lead to employees' dissatisfaction and, in some cases, intention to leave (Hong et al., 2012). Lack of vertical communication of support has emerged as an essential factor affects satisfaction in MOE. Individuals who feel they have power over their work are more likely to contribute to their organizational decisions and change, as both are consistent with democratic organizational practices. In organizations with no democratic management practices, managers are likely to closely control all aspects, and staff members are unlikely to have power, leading to job dissatisfaction (Dolatabadi–Safa, 2010; Stohl–Cheney, 2001). A manager might advocate an open door policy, giving opportunities to discuss issues and increase supportive communication opportunities. Leaders who have a willingness to accept good and bad news foster

openness in their organizations. Thus, if contact were more open with their superiors, employees would be more satisfied with their jobs.

Injustice might appear in the form of unequal dealing with employees, attention to the views and inputs of some and not others, application of work procedures on an unequal basis, or even inadequate payment; all lead to employees dissatisfaction (Timming–Johnstone, 2015). This is reinforced by the study results where the injustice factor is negatively related to satisfaction. As we mentioned previously, injustice leads employees to think that their organization does not value them, especially when they start comparing how they are treated with how the others are treated. Thus, they will be less likely to speak or contribute to the organization (Tan, 2014). Unfairly treated employees are less likely to speak and to share information and opinions. The injustice could affect employees' ability to express themselves, as indicated before, which in turn could affect their satisfaction, self-esteem, and meaningful existence (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Rupp, 2011).

Finally, the second hypothesis results enable us to rank factors according to the magnitude of their impact so that the higher value has more impact: lack of support, injustice, fear of negative reactions, abuse of the authority, and finally the mistrust. This sorting helps managers set a plan that directed and focuses more on factors that have the largest effect on employees' satisfaction.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study provides a better understanding of the factors that affect employees' satisfaction by investigating the effect of silence factors. The study identified statistically significant impact and relationships between aspects of silence and satisfaction as perceived by the MOE staff members. The linkages between the five factors and employees' satisfaction contribute to satisfaction literature because of the increased number of organizational variables associated with it.

The MOE staff members view the organizational factors to be connected to their working conditions in some way. This could be supported by the inverse relationship between silence factors and satisfaction. A troubling aspect of the factors that create silence is that they are hidden from superiors and often unrecognized. Managers may feel that employees are unengaged and dissatisfied but may assume that they follow self-

interest or not motivated. Thus, problems may accumulate to the point that they can no longer be hidden from managers. At this point, employees may come to the conclusion that the management is poor and may lose control over silence factors, then the level of dissatisfaction increases.

Moving from silence to a climate of open communication is difficult, but not impossible. To create such a change is to train the existing managers or to bring in new ones. The results of this study propose that the selection criteria for appointment of manager should include a proven ability to encourage open, supportive, and democratic communication and to model that through their leadership behaviour. This will not only enable us to break the silence but will signal to employees that their satisfaction matters. Moreover, to prevent silence from characterizing their organizations, superiors should not only open their doors but reward employees who come forward with sensitive feedback or risky information. They should establish formal communication channels through which employees can speak and share information anonymously if they wish to do so. The willingness of a manager to receive bad feedback, as well as good feedback, is likely to reduce staff members' apprehension about relating to the manager. Conversely, satisfaction with the way the manager relates to employees may encourage openness in the vertical channels of communication. If managers encourage and allow staff to contribute to decision-making and policy formation, organization members are more likely to feel more responsible and satisfied.

Limitation and future work

Although this study contributed to our understanding of the silence problem, the statistical analysis showed the factors explained only 57% of the change in employees' satisfaction; multiple reasons could have limited this. One of the major reasons is relying on the directive style of management. This directive management style could block individuals from participation and self-expression, which could lead to an organizational culture of silence; this silence can affect the questionnaires' answers and satisfaction. Also, It could be argued that a shorter questionnaire and rewording some of the questions in future studies could solve this issue. Moreover, this study distributed questionnaires to the employees alone and not the managers in MOE. Thus, many motives for silence and dissatisfaction could be hidden, especially those organizational motives. Hence, one of

the studies that could be suggested is conducting qualitative interviews with the MOE managements, which could reveal more motives and details on the employees' silence and satisfaction from a different point of view.

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