



THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL SILENCE TOWARDS BURNOUT

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ABSTRACT

The universities and colleges play an important role in human development in any country as they provide the training essentials for doctors, engineers, nurses, teachers, scientists, etcetera, and foster the economic, social and knowledge level of country. Hence, it is vital to have a high quality education in the country. In order to achieve the high quality education, burnout level is to be reduced by all instructors to a minimum level in the universities and colleges as burnout is considered as one of the most important factors in influencing organizational effectiveness. As such this study aimed to analyze the effect of organizational silence and its dimensions on burnout at Al-Qunfudah College of Technology in Saudi Arabia. Primary data were used and collected by distributing self-administered survey questionnaires to 72 instructors at the college. The questionnaire was developed to detect the organizational silence dimensions (acquiescent silence, defensive silence, and prosocial silence) and the level of burnout. Out of total 90 questionnaires distributed, 72 instructors responded, the response rate was 80%. Regression results indicated that there is statistically significant effect for organizational silence and its dimensions on burnout at Al-Qunfudah College of Technology in Saudi Arabia.

Key words: Organizational silence, Acquiescent silence, Defensive silence, Prosocial silence, Burnout.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The universities and colleges play an important role in human development in any country as they provide the training essentials for doctors, engineers, nurses, teachers, scientists, etcetera, and foster the economic, social and knowledge level of country. Hence, it is vital to have a high quality education in the country. Human resources are the most important resources in any organization. Employees in the education sector such as universities and colleges are playing important role to achieve goals (Bakri & Ali, 2015). As the doctors and instructors are the main force of innovating and developing talents and in their role in developing the university and college. Therefore, the management of such universities and colleges need to foster and develop

a strong contingent of doctors and instructors with high quality. In order to achieve the high quality education, burnout level is to be reduced by all doctors and instructors to a minimum level in the universities and colleges as burnout is considered as one of the most important factors in influencing organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, burnout is negatively related to improve job performance, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Bin Zaid, 2019; Akdemir, 2019; Behilak & Abdelraof, 2019).

One of the measures that can play an important role on burnout among employees is organizational silence. The universities and colleges to achieve high quality education it is important to provide them good organizational climate that allows them to voice, and work with peace of mind that keeps productive employees. Moreover, to have a high quality education in the universities and colleges, it is important for the management to apply and understand organizational silence because employee behaviors are affected by organizational silence such as organizational commitment, employees productivity, and performance (Farrokh & Nooshabadi, 2018; Bordbar, Shad, Rahimi, & Rostami, 2019; Al Maaty & fayyad, 2018).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Burnout

Many researchers studied burnout widely and provided many definitions of the burnout concept, such as, “the extinction of motivation or incentive, especially where one’s devotion to a cause or relationship fails to produce the desired results” (Freudenberger, 1974, p. 159), “psychological withdrawal from work in response to excessive stress or dissatisfaction” (Cherniss, 1980, p. 16), and “a condition in which one loses all concerns and feelings toward the people one works with and comes to treat them as impersonal objects” (Maslach, 1976, p. 7).

The MBI-General Survey is one of the most popular multidimensional approaches (Maslach, Jackson, & Leither, 1996), Hence, there are three dimensions of burnout: (a) Exhaustion, (b) Cynicism, (c) Reduced Professional Efficacy.

2.2. Organizational Silence

Many researchers studied organizational silence widely and provided many definitions of the burnout concept, such as, “a potentially dangerous impediment to organizational change and development and is likely to pose a significant obstacle to the development of truly pluralistic organizations” (Morrison & Milliken, 2000, p. 707), “The opposite of voice -organizational silence- results when people cannot contribute freely to organizational discourse” (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003, p. 1394), and “motivation to withhold versus express ideas, information, and opinions about work-related improvements” (Van Dyne et al., 2003, p. 1361).

The multidimensional approach to organizational silence of Van Dyne and his college is one of the most popular multidimensional approaches. Hence, there are three dimensions of burnout: (a) Acquiescent Silence, (b) Defensive Silence, (c) Prosocial Silence.

2.2.1 Acquiescent Silence

Van Dyne et al. (2003, p. 1366) defined acquiescent silence as “withholding relevant ideas, information, knowledge, or opinions, based on resignation”. Pinder and Harlos (2001), described acquiescent silence as strong acceptance and resigning to organizational circumstances and submission.

2.2.2 Defensive Silence

Defensive silence was defined by Van Dyne et al. (2003, p. 1367) as “withholding relevant ideas, information, or opinions as a form of self-protection, based on fear”. Pinder and Harlos

(2001), described defensive silence as deliberate neglect depended on employee's fear of the consequences of sharing information, idea, and speaking up.

2.2.3 Prosocial Silence

Van Dyne et al. (2003, p.1368), defined prosocial silence as “withholding work-related ideas, information, or opinions with the goal of benefiting other people or the organization – based on altruism or cooperative motives”.

Korsgaard, Meglino, and Lester (1997), described this kind of silence as proactive and intentional behavior that focused on others.

2.3. Person-job fit theory

This study was underpinned on the person-job fit theory in testing the effect of organizational silence on burnout. Maslach and Leiter (1997) have established a model of burnout. This model concentrate on the degree of mismatch or match between the person and six domains of employee's job environments. According to this model, whenever the gap or mismatch between the person and the job is greater, they are more likely to experience burnout. These six domains of employee's job environment includes: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. In community domain which suggests that when the employees because of feeling of lack of support and of trust in their relationship with employees and managers that will let an employee to fear to express their ideas, information, and opinions and let an employee to prefer to keep silent that will lead them to be more likely to experience burnout.

2.4. The relationship between organizational silence and burnout

Organizational silence is considering as one of various factors that affect burnout in the organization. Many researchers supported the effect of overall organizational silence on burnout such as Saeed, Raheemah, and Shaalan (2019) and Abied and Khalil (2019), they found that organizational silence positively and significantly affect the burnout of employees. For the studies conducted on the universities field. A study of Akın and Ulusoy (2016) about the effect of organizational silence on burnout in 17 state universities in Turkey indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between the organizational silence and burnout.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The education sector plays an important role in human development in Saudi Arabia as they provide the training essentials for doctors, engineers, nurses, teachers, scientists, etc, and foster the economic, social and knowledge level of country in general and of the Saudi citizen in particular. Therefore, the management of such universities and colleges need to foster and develop a strong contingent of doctors and instructors with high quality. Al-Qunfduah is a Saudi city in makkah province, it has a population of 297000, Al-Qunfudah College of Technology currently employs 115 employees and has more 1500 enrolled students, and offers four diploma degrees in information technology, mechanics, management science, and electronics. Hence, Al-Qunfudah College of Technology is one of the important colleges in the country that provides high quality of education is Saudi Arabia in general and in Al-Qunfduah in particular. Based on the college reports, Al-Qunfudah College of Technology has a 15 percent turnover rate, which considered as high level. Many studies supported the effect of burnout on turnover intentions such as Elci, Yildiz, & Karabay (2018) and Wang, Jin, Wang, Zhao, Sang, Yuan (2020). This study will add to existing knowledge by testing the effect of organizational silence on burnout that has not been tested before by researchers in Al-Qunfudah College of Technology.

4. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will help the management of the college by providing them the assistance to reduce the burnout level of their instructors that will lead to achieve the college's goals.

5. STUDY OBJECTIVES

This research attempt to achieve five specific objectives as follows:

- To examine the effect of acquiescent silence on burnout
- To examine the effect of defensive silence on burnout
- To examine the effect of prosocial silence on burnout

6. STUDY HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses are proposed:

- Acquiescent silence has positive significance effect on burnout.
- Defensive silence has positive significance effect on burnout.
- Prosocial silence has positive significance effect on burnout.

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

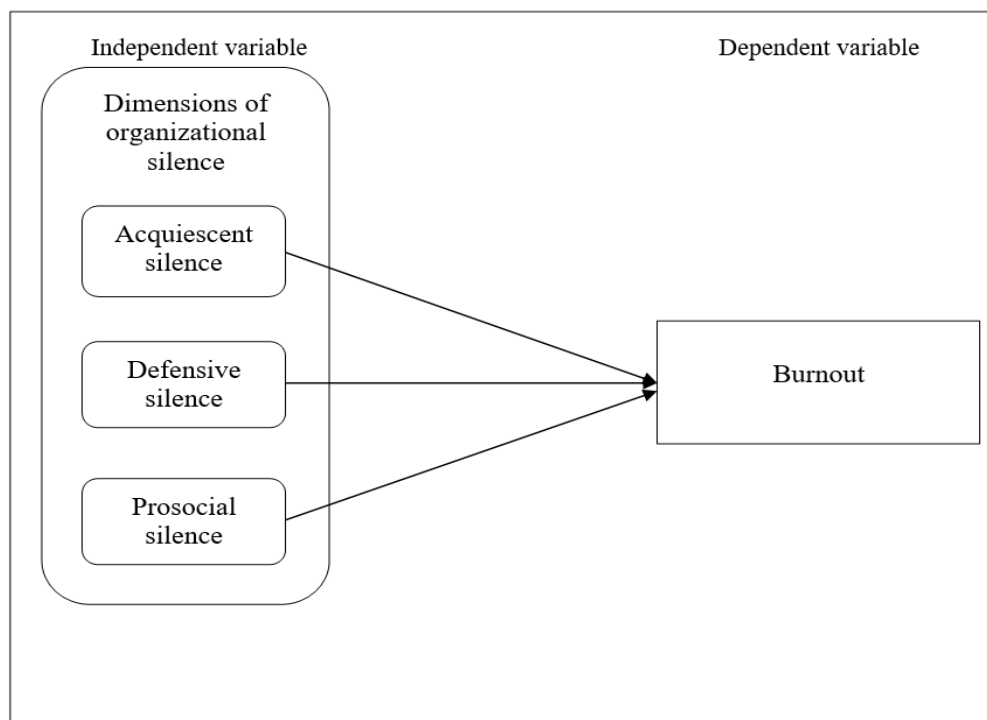


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

8. STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE

For this study it was decided to collect data through structured questionnaire. The study population consisted of 90 instructors at Al-Qunfudah College of Technology. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire that was distributed to all instructors in the college. However, 72 instructors responded, the response rate was 80%.

9. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

For this study it was decided to collect data through structured questionnaire:

9.1. Burnout

The questions were adapted from the questionnaire of Schaufeli et al. (1996) to measure the burnout variable. Exhaustion measured by a five-item scale. The responses are based on ranging from scale from “never” to “everyday”, cynicism dimension measured by a five-item scale. The responses are based on ranging from scale from “never” to “everyday”, and prosocial silence measured by a five-item scale. The responses are based on ranging from “never” to “everyday”.

9.2. Organizational Silence

The questions were adapted from the questionnaire of Van Dyne et al. (2003) to measure the organizational silence variable. Acquiescent silence measured by a five-item scale. The responses are based on ranging from scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, defensive silence measured by a five-item scale. The responses are based on ranging from scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, and prosocial silence measured by a five-item scale. The responses are based on ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

10. FINDINGS

10.1. Study Reliability

The current study undergone Cronbach's Alpha to measure the reliability of the scale. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient value for the scale is 0.80 which is satisfactory.

10.2. Demographical information

There were 72 instructors for this study. In Saudi Arabia, the universities and colleges students are separated by their gender. Hence, the male instructors teach the male students and female instructors teach female students. In this study only male instructors were involved. Majority of the respondents were from 31 to 40 years old of age with, from 3 to 5 years teaching experience. 70.8% of the respondents are married and 29.2% single. Most of the instructors had a bachelor degree. Table (1) presents the descriptive analysis of the respondents.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age	≤30	22	30.5%
	31-40	36	50%
	≥41	14	19.5%
Length of teaching service	≤2	15	20.8%
	3-5	29	40.3%
	6-10	20	27.8%
	≥11	8	11.1%
Marital status	Single	51	29.2%
	Married	21	70.8%
Level of education	Bachelor	46	63.9%
	Master	26	36.1%
	Phd	0	0%

10.3. Correlation analysis

Pearson correlation was conducted in the current study to test the association between variables in the study. This analysis revealed that organizational silence was positively related to burnout with $r=.692$, acquiescent silence was positively related to burnout with $r=.412$. Defensive silence was also positively related to burnout with $r=.455$, and prosocial silence was positively related to burnout with $r=.487$. In conclusion, this analysis revealed a positively related between organizational silence towards burnout among Al-Qunfudah College of Technology instructors in Saudi Arabia, as shown in table (2).

Table 2 Correlation Analysis

Variable	Organizational Silence	Acquiescent Silence	Defensive Silence	Prosocial Silence	Burnout
Organization Silence	1	.669**	.598**	.679**	.692**
Acquiescent Silence	.669**	1	.001	.217	.412**
Defensive Silence	.598**	.001	1	.184	.455**
Prosocial Silence	.679**	.217	.184	1	.487**
Burnout	.692**	.412**	.455**	.487**	1

10.4. Regression analysis

This analysis measures how much the variable impacts the other and its direction of impact. This study used organizational silence with its three dimensions as independent variable whereas burnout as dependent variable.

Table (3) shows that multiple correlation coefficient value was (.696) and the (R^2) was (.484) and the value of adjusted (R^2) was (.461) which indicate that acquiescent silence, defensive silence and prosocial silence were capable of accounting for (46.1%) of the changes in the dependent variable (burnout).

Table 3 Multiple Linear Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	STD. Error of the Estimate
1	.696 ^a	.484	.461	.14715
a. Predictors: (Constant), PS, DS, AS				
b. Dependent variable: Burnout				

There is a statistical significance for the coefficient of the multiple linear regression formula related to acquiescent silence, which the value of (t) was (3.780), with a statistical significance of (0.000), which is below the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), which means that there is a significant relationship between Acquiescent silence and burnout, therefore H1 is accepted, as shown in table (4).

There is a statistical significance for the coefficient of the multiple linear regression formula related to defensive silence, which the value of (t) was (4.420), with a statistical significance of (0.000), which is below the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), which means that there is a significant relationship between defensive silence and burnout, therefore H2 is accepted, as shown in table (4).

There is a statistical significance for the coefficient of the multiple linear regression formula related to prosocial silence, which the value of (t) was (3.756), with a statistical significance of

(0.000), which is below the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$), which means that there is a significant relationship between prosocial silence and burnout, therefore H3 is accepted, as shown in table (4).

Table 4 The Significance of Standardized and Unstandardized Multiple Linear Regression Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
Constant	.311	.349		.891	.376
Acquiescent silence	.255	.067	.338	3.780	.000
Defensive silence	.328	.074	.392	4.420	.000
Prosocial silence	.318	.085	.341	3.756	.000

11. DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to examine the effect of organizational silence and its dimensions on burnout at Al-Qunfudah College of Technology in Saudi Arabia. In this study three hypotheses were measured. Firstly, acquiescent silence has positive significance effect on burnout; this study indicated a positive significance effect of acquiescent silence on burnout. The result was supported by many researchers that acquiescent silence has a role to decrease the burnout of employees in the organizations such as Knoll, Hall, and Weigelt (2018). Secondly, defensive silence has positive significance effect on burnout. In line with this result, Abied and Khalil (2019) found that defensive silence positively and significantly affects on burnout of employees in their hospitals. Lastly, prosocial silence has positive significance effect on burnout; this study indicated a positive significance effect of prosocial silence on burnout. This result was supported also by many researchers that prosocial silence has a role to decrease the burnout of employees in the organizations such as Abied and Khalil (2019). However, this result is inconsistent with studies of Knoll, Hall, and Weigelt (2018).

12. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The management of the college has to understand the role of organizational silence in decreasing the burnout of the instructors in the college. Depending on the importance of acquiescent silence, the managers need attention that they have to adopt the culture that let every instructor to express their ideas, information, and opinions and the managers in the college have to respond to these ideas, information, and opinions, also encourage them to participate in discussing and solving the issues in the college. Based on the results of the current study which reported the effect of defensive silence on burnout of the instructors in the college, the managers should let every instructor to express their ideas, information, and opinions without any fear that they may afraid to encounter such as fired from their work or facing punishment from the management.. Lastly, based on the results of this study that affirmed the effect of prosocial silence on burnout, the managers should take advantage of prosocial silence by adopting encouraging regulatory environment that encourage instructors to have an effective communications among them in the college.

13. CONCLUSION

The current study was conducted within Al-Qunfudah College of Technology in Saudi Arabia and reported a positive significant effect of organizational silence and its dimensions on burnout. Management of the college must work towards decreasing the organizational silence

level which may lead to decrease the burnout level of the instructors in the college. In conclusion, managers in the college should need attention and understand the effect of organizational silence on burnout minutely because decreasing the organizational silence of the instructors leads to better college.

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