

Impact of Organizational Silence on Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Moderating Role of Procedural Justice

A. Fatima, S. Salah-Ud-Din, S. Khan, M. Hassan, and H. A. K. Hoti

Abstract—The present research aims at two aspects: firstly to examine the effect of organizational silence (OS) on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and secondly to examine procedural justice as a moderator on the relationship between organizational silence and OCB. Results are generated with the help of purposive sample of 250 employees of various services companies of Pakistan using structural equation modeling (AMOS). The findings reveal that organizational silence had negative effect on the organization citizenship behavior while procedural justice moderates this association.

Index Terms—Organizational citizenship behavior, organizational silence, procedural justice.

I. INTRODUCTION

All organizations are struggling hard to cut their cost through every possible mean in the recent era of hectic competition. They are building more demands and expectations from their employees including taking initiatives, taking responsibility due to the presence of change, being proactive during severe competition, meeting higher customer expectations, and being more quality focused. In order to get these expectations fulfilled the organizations need responsive individuals. However, some employees do not indulged in raising their voice and concerns at any matter prevailing within the organization and thus prefer silence. On the one hand, organizations need expressive employees who are vigilant and expressive. On the other hand, employees search for the organizations which value their concerns. Due to the absence of silence there will be better performance and high motivation in employees as well as organization. However, breaking culture of silence and developing the one in which employees can raise their voice is such a big challenge for managers at present [1].

Zehir and Erdogan state that employees have different ideas and opinions to improve their work and organization [2], [3]. Silence is absence of voice [4]. The employees

remain quiet about the certain aspects of the organization [3]. Some of the major causes of organizational silence are lack of organizational political skills, fear and embarrassment, implicated friends [5]. Morrison and Milliken explained that organizational silence is the collective-level occurrence in which little voice raise is included in response to the presence of an issue because of the negative reaction [6], [7].

For organizations prosperity and stability, it is very important to highlight the factors which are the major causes of silence. These are factors due to which organizational silence got emerged. Basic origins of silence include negative feedback of the top managers, they ignore the message, attacking the credibility of the source. Employees under organizational silence carry knowledge about the reality but due to the certain threats they prefer to be silent in front of their supervisors. It has been stated that 29% of seniors within the organizations motivate their employees to express their opinions and concerns.

It has been observed that silence prevailing in the climate would generate negative organizational outcomes [8]. Hence through silence, organizational members hold down fears about problematic personnel and organizational issues including, awkwardness, absence of ethical responsibility, decreased chance for raising voice, diminished political skills [5]. According to Bagheri, Zarei and Aaeen, with the passage of time the organization silence bought low quality of work for organization. Hence, this not only hurts the organization but the employee as well [9]. Therefore, this study confers that due to these factors, silence may sometimes lead to negative impact on the progress of any organization. In such scenarios employees not only lose their confidence but also their self-esteem and got weaker in producing beneficial output for the organization. The present study focuses on the construct of organizational citizenship behavior and shows how organizational silence may lead towards decline in organizational citizenship behavior. The concept of organizational citizenship was first introduced by Organ [10]. He defined this construct as a worker's deed is considered as discretionary, which is not recognized directly or clearly with the system of reward, and where they encourage the efficient function of the organization. Thus, it is a performance that goes beyond the basic necessities of the job and to a large extent is flexible. Such behaviors are of benefit to the organizations. However, an employee's silence leads towards indifferent employee's behavior. According to Joinson, such indifferent employees build up the attitude "to get along, go along". Such type of employees causes the organization to suffer in terms offinances as well as reputation [11].

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Organizational citizenship behavior is significant in organizations because it can be extremely valuable to organizations. It can assist to enhance performance and win competitive advantage. William and Anderson created a two-dimensional characterization of OCB [12]. One is directed to individuals (OCBI) and other towards organization (OCBO). So, organizational citizenship behavior is regarded as one of the most important elements for organizations because it facilitates the achievement of organizations goals [13]. There are five dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. i.e. *Altruism*: It is most commonly referred as the helping activities of employee towards its fellow employee; *Conscientiousness*: employees of the organization will stay up to-date with the prior knowledge of their products and services; *Civic virtue*: It is uncovered by taking part in unofficial activities of organization, which are not mandatory or necessary; *Courtesy*: It is a flexible behavior on the part of entity/person aimed at preventing work related problems with others from occurring; *Sportsmanship*: It the willingness of an employee to bear less than ideal situations without complaining. According to the viewpoint of these theorists, OCB can maximize the efficiency and improves the reliability. And hence this can lead to prosperity of the organization [14].

The present study is also aimed at studying the moderating role of procedural justice. This construct implies the perceptions of fairness about organizational procedures [15], [16]. The concept of procedural justice focuses on the perceived equity of the procedures. Researchers like, Thibaut and Walker and Gilliland argue that the procedures are considered to be more "fair" if the person has the option to influence the decisions [17], [18]. Gilliland also states that perception of procedural justice is influenced by the extent to which procedural rules are met or violated [18]. The studies show that there is a close relationship between procedural justice and cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses of the employees of the organization. Employees react fairly in the presence of fair procedure which suggest that if the workers' complaints are handled fairly with the fair procedure, the employee will be more satisfied to company's reporting rules and procedures [19]-[22].

According to social exchange theory (SET) all relationships are based upon give and take within organizations. However, the balance of this exchange is not always equal. Social Exchange theory describes how employees feel about a relationship with others depending upon their perceptions.

Organization silence is a relatively new concept in human resource management. Moreover, there are very few studies that have examined the association between organization silence and organizational citizenship behavior [3]. Therefore, the present study is aimed at examining this relationship along with exploring the moderating role of procedural justice on this relationship in the service sector organizations of Pakistan. The services sector has provided steady support to Pakistan's economic growth. The share of this sector now stands a more than 50 percent in GDP. By examining the moderating effect of procedural justice, the present research helps to explain conditions under which the strength of relationships between organization silence and

organizational citizenship behavior may vary.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

A. Theoretical Anchor-Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange lies between two parties, which is consisting on the trade [23]. Individuals weigh the potential benefits and risks of relationships. And where the risks outweigh the rewards, individuals cease or abandon that relationship. Therefore the present paper has its basis on the social exchange theory. Due to the restricted rules and procedures prevailing within the organizational climate employees feel fear and decide to keep silent. This feeling causes them to be limit in their concerns regarding their organization. However, in the presence of procedural justice which is moderating variable on the relation between OS and OCB would help workers to have confidence in their ideas and they would attempt to behave in a positive way for their organization.

B. Organization Silence and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Since organizational citizenship behavior is needed by the organizations for better performance and integrity, there is a risk emerging for the organizations called organizational silence. It has been observed that silence prevailing in the climate would generate negative organizational outcomes [8]. The collective-level occurrence, in which little voice raise is included in response to the presence of an issue because of expected negative reactions. Hence, through silence, organizational members hold down fears about problematic personnel and organizational issues including, awkwardness, absence of ethical responsibility, decreased chance for raising voice. Researchers have suggested that silence can work against desired organizational outcomes [5], [8]. Therefore, on the basis of this discussion the present study maintains that:

H₁: There is a significant negative impact of organizational silence on organizational citizenship behavior.

C. Procedural Justice as a Moderator of Organizational Silence and Organization Citizenship Behaviour

The researchers argue that employees will behave in a desired way when they are assured of fair procedure [19]. This suggests that if the workers' complaints are handled fairly with the fair procedure employee will be more satisfied to company's reporting rules and procedures [19]-[22], [24]. According to H. Dogan, procedural justice is referred to the level to which employees are treated fairly at their workplace [24]. If the employees feel that they are being treated fairly by the authorities with the procedural justice, they are expected to be more owing to challenges and would therefore, be better in producing desired output. For instance, organizational citizenship behavior has been selected to be investigated in this study.

Procedural justice leads to several beneficial outcomes e.g., commitment and trust [26]; commitment of managers in order to support decisions [16], [27]; increased trust and commitment [28], [29]; work performance [30], [31]. Many researchers claimed that procedural justice is an important

predictor of OCB [32]-[34]. Therefore, there is strong theoretical and empirical evidence supporting procedural justice as a moderator. Procedural justice is considered to exercise a buffer effect by attenuating the negative effects of organizational silence on the level of OCB in the workplace. Procedural justice is considered as a complementary aspect of the work environment today. Hence, the present study maintains that the moderating effect of procedural justice exists between the organizational silence and OCB.

H₂: Procedural justice moderates the relationship between organizational silence and organizational citizenship behavior (Fig. 1).

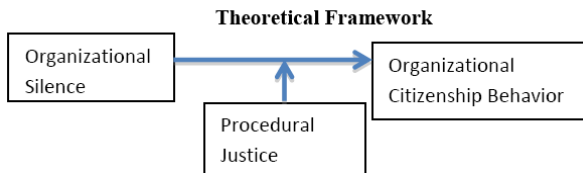


Fig. 1. Theoretical framework.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Sample and Method

The data were collected with the help of purposive sample from individuals working in different service sectors which include banks, hotels, and telecommunication companies. The data were tested and analyzed using SPSS and Amos.

B. Instrument

Organizational silence scale was adopted from Cakici comprising 30 items, OCB scale was adopted from Mackenzie et al., and it consists of 17 items, and procedural justice scale was adopted from Moorman consisting of 15 items [32], [35], [36]. A five points Likert-type scale varying from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was anchored for all items.

IV. RESULTS

Mean statistics, Cronbach’s alpha reliability and correlation coefficients have been shown in the above tables (Table I and Table II). Reliability values for all variables are above 0.70 [37]. 3.48 is the mean value of PJ and 3.68 is of OCB. All the three variables are significantly related.

TABLE I: DEMOGRAPHICS

		F	%
Gender	Male	138	55.2
	Female	112	44.8
Age	18-25	164	65.6
	26-35	70	28.0
	36-45	16	6.4
Education	Graduation	111	44.4
	Masters	101	40.4
	M.Phil/M.S equivalent	24	9.6
	PhD	14	5.6

TABLE II: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, CONSTRUCTS, RELIABILITY AND CORRELATIONS

Constructs	Mean	Reliability	Correlations		
			1	2	3
1.OS	3.52	0.89	1		
2.OCB	3.68	0.70	-0.39*	1	
3. PJ	3.48	0.80	-0.34*	0.34*	1

*p < 0.001

TABLE III: HYPOTHESES TESTING

No. Relationships	Baseline Model H ₁	Baseline Model with EI as Moderator H ₂			
		Group Variant		Group Invariant	
		Low PJ	High PJ	Low PJ	High PJ
1 OCB ← OS	-0.524 ***				
2 OCB ← OS					
With Moderation		-0.530 ***	-0.632 ***	-0.630 ***	-0.654 ***

***p < 0.001

The two hypotheses of the study were tested using two models. Firstly, the baseline model showing the impact of organizational silence on OCB (H₁ respectively) was examined. Secondly, the baseline model with procedural justice as a moderator was tested. This model shows the moderating role of procedural justice between organizational silence and OCB. All the measurement and structural models were at good fit.

Table III shows that organizational silence significantly and negatively affects OCB (52.40 %). In measurement model, better fitness was shown by the group variant. Therefore, it was considered for holding pair-wise parameter assessment. In the structural model better fitness were shown by the group invariant. The results show that pair-wise parameter comparisons (high PJ vs. low PJ) for the hypothesized path corresponding to the posited effect of organizational silence on OCB is significant (C.R. > ±1.96, p < .05). This analysis gives support for the role of moderation of procedural justice and hence H₂ is accepted.

V. DISCUSSION

The present research is aimed at examining the effect of organizational silence on OCB of employees working in the service sector organizations of Pakistan. The moderating effect of procedural justice was also tested on aforementioned relationship. Employee silence is extremely detrimental to companies often causing an “escalating level of dissatisfaction” among employees, “which manifests itself in absenteeism and turnover and perhaps other undesired behaviors” (Colquitt and Greenberg: 311-312). Therefore, mainly, this study describes the individual reaction to the organizational silence in reducing their citizenship behavior and this relationship is further studied by examining the role of procedural justice.

Sometimes employees raise voice and convey their ideas and opinions while in other conditions they remain silent. This gives a way to emerge a silence within an organization. As modern organizational environment become more diverse, the environment and communication processes within them also become more complex and interactive. As a result,

employees have been identified as a rich source of feedback to address and solve work problems and issues. Employees who prefer to respond challenging environment, and are concerned about sharing knowledge and information would be more beneficial and successful for themselves as well as for their organizations. Such workers are considered as blessing and precious asset for the company. This study reveals that how employees' intentions of putting an extra effort, towards their work and organizational development, beyond their work responsibilities and duties (Organizational citizenship behavior), could be negatively affected by their attitude of being indifferent and silent (organizational silence). However, due to having confidence that workers will be treated fairly, efficient complaint resolution can increase OCB.

A survey of 250 employees serving the service sector of Pakistan shows that organizational silence has a negative effect on OCB which refers that the first hypothesis is accepted. This finding has been supported by the past literature (Cinar et al, 2013). Individuals who prefer silence than raising voice consider themselves as a separate entity from their organization. This study maintains that if workers are not provided with ample space to allow them to raise their voice their OCB will be decreased. Thus, the organization may lose new ideas, thoughts, creative solutions and employee efforts which might be very beneficial to the organizations. The second hypothesis related to moderation of procedural justice has also been supported. These results are vital and significant.

VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The research paper has some limitations. Firstly it is a cross-sectional study. Over a long period of time, the examination of organizational silence and its interaction with the OCB and moderating role of procedural justice would unfold more reliable findings. Much work can be done in the future by focusing on the respondent traits and on many variables which can impact on person- perceptions.

Till now, most of the research on organizational silence and OCB is done abroad not within Pakistan. Hence some cultural issues must be taken into account. Such research work on these constructs prevailing in the present study's culture is one of the vital add up in the literature. Other sectors can be employed like manufacturing sector. All variables have been used as uni-dimensional here. Various dimensions of these variables can also be added in order to in depth exploration and then more compound models can be added in. Common method bias is another limitation of this study. In future the mediating role of trust on supervisor, organizational culture and organizational commitment may also be studied.

VII. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Employees lose their interest within organizational affairs while working at places where silence is encouraged and employees are motivated to keep their mouth closed. The employees who opt to keep silent stop caring for their organization and do not even bother to solve the issues. This

matter is even more worst in service sector organizations where employees have to directly interact with the customers. The managers, therefore, should be watchful for the silence of employees. The results of this study suggest that managers should keep in view the importance of voice of employees. They should also develop the employee evaluation procedures in such a way that motivate the employees to break their silence. The employees should be made assured of fair procedures within their organizations.

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