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Study of Employee Silence and its Relationship with Employee Commitment among Faculty of Higher Education Institutions in Sindh

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Abstract:

It is noted that employees tend to remain silent at work because they do not want to have risk of discontinuity of job due to voice up. This study has tried to understand the impact of dimensions of employee silence (Defensive silence, Acquiescent Silence and Pro-social silence) on employee commitment among faculty of higher education institutions in Sindh. A close ended questionnaire was used in the study and data was collected from 234 Faculty members determined on the basis of sample size table given by (Saunders et al. 2009) and same was analyzed through correlation analysis and regression analysis. Results of the study suggest that all three dimensions of employee silence (Defensive Silence, Acquiescent Silence and Pro-social Silence) negatively and significantly affect employee commitment among faculty members of higher education institutions in Sindh. The findings of the study recommend that management of the universities should work on silence related problems which are faced by employees to create a better environment. Results further elaborate that employee silence is a negative sign because the commitment level of the employees tend to be decreased if silence exists within the organization.

Keywords: *Employee Silence, Employee Commitment, Defensive Silence, Acquiescent Silence, Pro-Social Silence*

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1. Introduction

Success of the organization depends upon employees who are the major sources of learning, creativity, rapid variation, and innovation. Employee Commitment plays a pivotal role in making organization a success story. Commitment on part of employees not only generates a feasible environment but it also creates intrinsic motivation to give a peak to that specific organization. Among many hindrances that negatively affect employee commitment one is Employee silence. Many employees in the organization try not to speak and not to express their ideas and opinions. The fluctuating scenario of the world in the institutions has need of those employees which express their views and opinions. Employees and managers both have great level of performance and motivation in their working organizations where they can express their ideas, thoughts and related matters and their silence doesn't exist. It is a biggest challenge for managers to establish a free environment by breaking the silence culture which help to encourage employees' voice (Liu et al, 2009). Employee silence leaves many effects on commitment level of employees. Few researchers worked on the issue and came up with a conclusion that employee silence creates a motivation for turnover intension and employee's absence ratio increases which is unwanted behavior for the organizations as suggested by (Bagheri et al, 2012). Employee silence has three dimensions including defensive silence (employees withhold their ideas because of fear), acquiescent silence (employees withhold their ideas because of fright of fire) and pro-social silence (employees do not want to benefit colleagues). This study is conducted to see the impact of dimensions of employee silence on employee commitment among the faculty members of higher education institutions in Sindh. This research is significant because it will help management of higher educational institutions to solve silence related problems of employees which decrease the commitment of employees ultimately creating negative impacts for organization.

2. Research Problem

Aamir (2006) found that when the employees are highly committed, they stay longer, engage in hard work, and perform in a best way and do hard work. Employee silence is the level where employee of an organization has lesser commitment level. As the silence increases, the level of commitment will decrease. (Dyne et al, 2003). As per our knowledge, there is no study conducted on effects of employee silence having three dimensions (defensive silence, acquiescent silence and pro-social silence) on employee commitment. So the problem for this research study is to understand effects of employee silence having three dimensions on employee commitment.

3. Study Objectives

This research study has following objectives.

- To understand different dimensions of employee silence and employee commitment.
- To explore the relationship between employee silence and employee commitment among faculty of higher education institutions in Sindh.
- To find out effects of dimensions of employee silence on employee commitment among faculty of higher education institutions in Sindh.

4. Literature Review

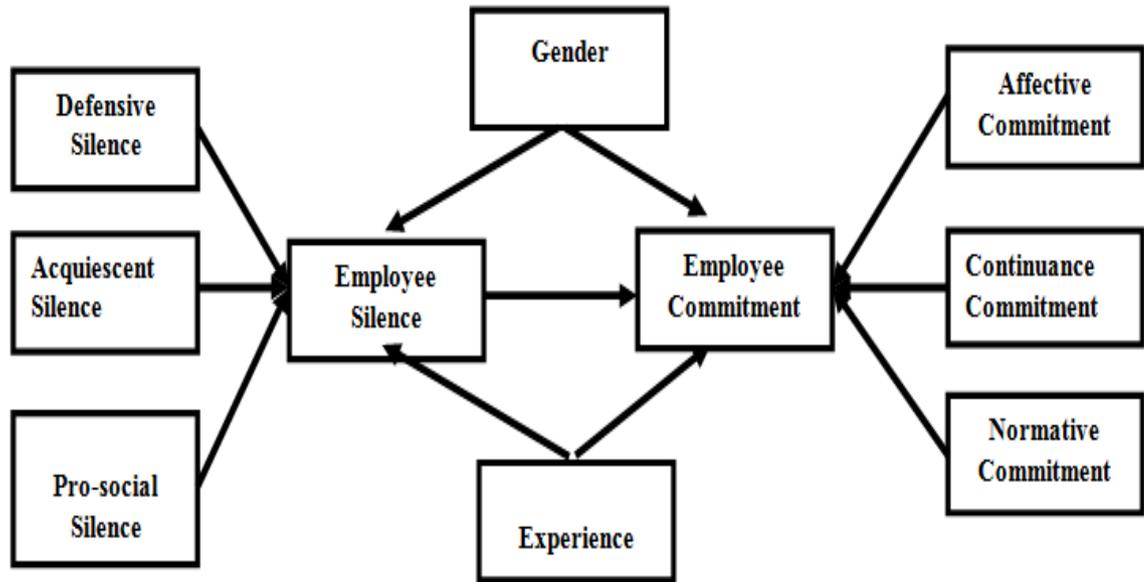
Employee silence affects the personal well-being of employees, increases stress and causes them to feel guilty where they often experience psychological problems and have trouble seeing the possibility of change (Bagheri, et al. 2012). People silence themselves to avoid embarrassment, confrontation and other perceived dangers (Perlow & Williams et al, 2003). Defensive silence is to withhold thoughts, ideas, and facts for self-protection, which are based on fear (Dyne, et al. 2003). The study of Pinder and Harlos' (2001), suggest that acquiescent silence means when the employees do not actively communicate within the organization. It also suggests that employees do not express their thoughts, ideas, facts and job related information due to fear of fire. This type of silence elaborates inactivated behavior. It is proactive behavior which focuses on others. Pro-social silence is a third dimension of employee silence. It is based on consideration, awareness, opportunities and consciousness about employees who are experienced and skilled workers. These types of employees remain silent at job because they do not want to benefit the people of the organization. They withhold their experiences, knowledge, information and concerns by not to facilitate their colleagues (Dyne et al, 2003).

Employee commitment is viewed as an important variable in facilitating the understanding of an employee's attitudes and behavior in the workplace (Hui and Lee et al, 2000). Employee commitment is the relative strength of an employee's identification with involvement in a particular organization (Mowday et al, 1982). Commitment is a binding force for one's loyalty, identification, and involvement with an educational institution (Ciriello et al, 1987).

Employee commitment has three dimensions. Affective commitment refers that employee commitment is the spiritual and motivational attachment of an employee with the organization. (Mowday et al 2003). Continuous commitment refers that employees tend to have continuance commitment based on employees' recognition of staying with the organization because leaving the organization may be the result of involvement of high costs (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Normative commitment refers that employees have normative commitment means they feel to be loyal with organization. They think that their job is obligatory upon them (Allen and Meyer, 1990).

Employee silence is the level where employee of an organization has lesser commitment level. As the silence increase, the level of commitment will decrease (Dyne et al, 2003). Morison and Miliken (2000) explained that silence is a result of manager's attitudes and it opposes the culture of organization to limit the level of commitment. As a result, employees do not voice up in the organization.

Figure: 01. Study Model



The model used in this study has been adopted and modified from Dyne et al (2003). This model describes the effects of dimensions of employee silence on dimensions of employee commitment. Employee silence is an independent latent variable characterized by three dimensions like defensive, acquiescent and pro-social silence. Further, employee commitment is dependent latent variable characterized by three dimensions which are affective, continuance and normative. Different demographic variables are also seen on both variables.

5. Methodology

Quantitative methodology has been used in this study to comprehend the study of employee silence and its relationship with employee commitment among faculty of higher education institutions in Sindh. Permanent faculty members from general universities in public sector are taken as population. Total population of the study is 2120. Convenient sampling technique has been used. Same faculty members have been taken as sample and sample size for the study is 234 determined on the basis of table given by (Saunders et al., 2009). Adopted and modified questionnaire of (Dyne et al. 2003), has been used to get responses.

6. Analysis and Results

Data has been analyzed using SPSS software.

Table No. 1 Correlation Analysis

Variables	M	SD	DS	AS	PS	AC	CC	NC
DS	2.48	.937	1	.583**	.558	-.584*	-.563**	-.519**
AS	2.46	.837		1	.659*	-.556**	-.622	-.615**
PS	2.52	.620			1	-.545**	-.642	-.599
AC	2.72	0.771				1	.595	.583*
CC	1.76	0.921					1	.572
NC	2.6	0.864						1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation test was applied on the study variable to find the level of relationship among them. The correlation table shows that DS has positive and statistically significant correlation with AS ($r = .583^{**}$, $p < .01$). There is positive correlation between DS and PS and both are statistically insignificant ($r = .558$, $p > .05$). There is negative and statistically significant correlation between DS and AC ($r = -.584^*$, $p < .05$). There is negative and statistically significant correlation between DS and CC ($r = -.563^{**}$, $p < .01$). There is negative correlation between DS and NC and both are statistically significant ($r = -.519^{**}$, $p < .01$). The correlation table shows that AS has positive and statistically significant correlation with PS ($r = .653^*$, $p < .05$). There is negative correlation between AS and AC and both are statistically significant ($r = -.556^{**}$, $p < .01$). There is negative and statistically insignificant correlation between AS and CC ($r = -.622$, $p > .05$). There is negative and statistically significant correlation between AS and NC ($r = -.615^{**}$, $p < .01$). The correlation table shows that PS has negative and statistically significant correlation with AC ($r = -.545^{**}$, $p < .01$). There is negative correlation between PS and CC and both are statistically insignificant ($r = -.642$, $p > .05$). There is negative and statistically insignificant correlation between PS and NC ($r = -.599$, $p > .05$). The correlation table shows that AC has negative and statistically insignificant correlation with CC ($r = -.595$, $p > .05$). There is positive correlation between AC and NC and both are statistically insignificant ($r = .583$, $p > .05$). The correlation table shows that CC has positive and statistically insignificant correlation with NC ($r = .572$, $p > .05$). Pearson correlation results also indicate that while making this analysis among dimensions of employee silence and employee commitment there was no issue of multicollinearity and each dimension was independently related without overlapping to other dimension.

7. Regression Analysis

Below is given results of regression analysis of dimensions of employee silence with employee commitment.

Table No. 2. Regression Analysis of dimensions of Employee Silence with Employee Commitment

Variable	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	β	Sig
	.601	.592	.571		
DS				-.29	.018
AS				-.22	.007
PS				-.27	.046

The results of regression analysis shows that ($R^2 = .592$) about 59.2% variation in the employee commitment of the faculty of higher education institutions in Sindh is the result of dimensions of employee silence among them. Further, R value (.601) and Adjusted R square value (.571) show good fitness of model. The first dimension of employee silence which is defensive silence account for ($\beta = -.29, p < .05$) showing 29 percent negative and significant variation in employee commitment. The second dimension of Employee Silence which is acquiescent silence account for ($\beta = -.22, p < .05$) showing 22 percent negative and significant variation in Employee Commitment. The third dimension of Employee Silence which is pro-social silence account for ($\beta = -.27, p < .05$) showing 27 percent negative and significant variation in Employee Commitment. Results of regression analysis specifically indicate that all dimensions of employee silence are having significant effect on employee commitment. This significance of dimensions of employee silence on employee commitment forces commitment to vary one a dimension of silence is changed.

8. Hypothesis Acceptance /Rejection

H1: The Defensive Silence negatively and significantly affects the Employee Commitment among Faculty of Higher Education Institutions in Sindh.

Result of Regression Analysis shows that Defensive Silence shows negative and significant variation in Employee Commitment ($\beta = -.29, p < .05$). It suggests that Defensive Silence negatively and significantly affects the Employee Commitment among Faculty of Higher Education Institutions in Sindh. Hence above hypothesis stands accepted and result is in line with Van dyne et al (2003)

H2: The Acquiescent Silence negatively and significantly affects the Employee Commitment among Faculty of Higher Education Institutions in Sindh.

Result of Regression Analysis shows that Acquiescent Silence shows negative and significant variation in Employee Commitment ($\beta = -.22, p < .05$). It suggests that Acquiescent Silence negatively and significantly affects the Employee Commitment among Faculty of Higher Education Institutions in Sindh. Hence above hypothesis stands accepted and result is in line with Sahar et al (2012)

H3: The Pro-Social Silence negatively and significantly affects the Employee Commitment among Faculty of Higher Education Institutions in Sindh.

Result of Regression Analysis shows that Pro-Social Silence shows negative and significant variation in Employee Commitment ($\beta = -.27, p < .05$). It suggests that Pro-Social Silence negatively and significantly affects the Employee Commitment among Faculty of Higher Education Institutions in Sindh. Hence above hypothesis stands accepted and result is in line with Van dyne et al (2003)

9. Conclusion

This study is an exemplary in the context of developing country where research on occupational psychology is emerging gradually but its pace is very slow. The study is exceptional in way that it has studied the considerably under researched area, the academic staff of universities. The aim of this study was to study and supplement the literature on Employee Silence (defensive silence, acquiescent silence, and pro-social silence), its relationship with employee commitment (affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment).

As moderate and developing nation, Pakistan needs outstanding higher education system to channelize young population and improvement in the economy. Development of faculty is integral part of perceived progress of universities. In recent time, HEC of Pakistan has implemented the policies of getting PhD and number of research publication in reputable journal. These requirements have been imposed on faculty to get promotion to higher grades. Such policies have created confusion among large number of faculty who have no or limited facilities to conduct research. This situation has led to less motivation, engagement and commitment, so the majority of faculty is being silent and considering switching jobs. The study has been conducted in the higher education institutions in Sindh where same problems are faced by the faculty. It should be noted that the working environment of faculty members in different universities is completely different from other organizations in services sector. Therefore, the findings of the study should be viewed in that perspective.

The results of this study provide comprehensive evidence to interpret the relationship between employee silence and commitment among the faculty, which will broaden the horizon of occupational psychology research in Pakistan. Through this study Van dyne et al (2003) has been validated in Pakistani context. The Silence level of the faculty of higher education institutions was significantly negative and its relationship with commitment was found negative relationship.

Thus it can be concluded from study that if employee tend to remain silent in the organization then its commitment level will decrease and if employee voice up in the organization then its commitment level will increase.

10. Suggestions for Future Research

The literature regarding Employee Silence and Employee Commitment provided evidence of linear relationships between all variables. The researchers can include more variables e.g. Hofstede's cultural dimensions in educational settings to study their relationship with Employee Silence and commitment. Further, the effects of socio-economic factors, law and order situation may also be considered in future studies. The cross-sectional and longitudinal studies on the occupational psychology in Pakistan are rare so it is strongly recommended to conduct studies in different context and provide comparative results. This study used the sample from comparatively large and mostly public sector universities; however, future research might include the sample from small and private universities and different organizations in services sector to check the generalizability of the findings of this study. Future researchers may use the entire commitment scale to capture the organizational commitment level of the employees. Future researchers should examine employee silence and employee commitment through qualitative research to draw more rich and varied information and opinion.

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