Organizational Silence Behaviour and Corporate Performance of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined organizational silence behaviour and corporate performance in tertiary institution in Nigeria. The main objective of the study is to examining the relationship between defensive and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The study used descriptive survey research design to investigate the relationship between organizational silence behaviour and corporate performance, the population of the study consists of the Twenty-one thousand, three hundred and sixty-nine (21,369) employees from three (3) institutions in Edo state such as: University of Benin, Edo University Uzairue, and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. A sample size of three hundred and fifty (393) was determined using Taro Yamane. The questionnaire is the major instrument used in collecting data for this research and the data were further analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and regression analysis with the help of statistical packages for social science (SPSS). Finding from the study reveal that there is significant relationship between defensive silence, (β=3.693, P≤0.0319), acquiescent silence, (β=3.490, P≤0.0077), pro-social silence (β=9.1390, P≤0.0000), deviant silence (β=4.9879, P≤0.0106), diffident (β=5.6412, P≤0.0.4531). The study recommends among others that; tertiary institutions administrators should address the organizational silence behaviours using a suitable way to achieve work interests. Finally, management should create an environment where organizational silence as an important variable to be considered and to encourage collaborative behavior by employees, providing opportunities to create good communication and formal systems to transfer or exchange of information, concerns and ideas to take the necessary action.

Keywords: Silence, Organization, Institution, Corporate

Introduction

Organizational silence and ways of dealing with it have great importance in organizational discussions. Employees' attitude and behavior toward customers impact customer happiness and the quality of services provided, which in turn are successful in boosting the effectiveness of the firm as a whole. Silence in the workplace has a number of negative effects, including a reduction in employee commitment, the escalation of internal conflicts, a slowdown in decision making, a barring of change and innovation, and the suppression of good or negative feedback to management. There is a rise in bad behaviors including absenteeism, tardiness, and the breakdown of staff morale and motivation as a result. In order to achieve their goals, organizations engage in a wide variety of actions. Quantifying the various repeatable activities that rely on processes for the success of an organization is necessary for determining the level of performance and allowing management to make informed decisions about where, if anywhere, within the processes to initiate actions to improve corporate performance. It follows that the concept of corporate performance is inextricably related to the organization's overarching objective. Therefore, every company strives to maximize the efficiency with which it achieves its objectives. Therefore, both the organizational objective and the organizational inputs or resources may be included in an analysis of company performance. Educating young minds how to act and think in the workplace depends on the continued success of companies (Okoro & Okoro, 2014). Workers who are trusted to make their own decisions and act on their own initiative are more invested in their work (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). Several studies have looked at how quiet in the office affects productivity, but the findings have been mixed (Frances, Cindy & Bishara, 2015; Kiu-Sik, Hiroyuki, Takao, Dong-Bae & Isao, 2011; Ikon & Chukwu, 2017; Naquib, Muhammad & Hafiz, 2016; Procter, 2014). All businesses, but particularly educational ones, need to address the

issue of employee silence. Factors inside an organization that may lead to a culture of silence have been studied.

Statement of the Problem

Collective quiet at meetings, poor involvement in proposal schemes, and low levels of collective voice are all examples of organizational silence, which is an unproductive process that can waste all of an organization's efforts (Nikmaram, Yamchi, Samereh, Zahrani & Alvani, 2012). In addition, this trend promotes transparency and a sense of adventitious impotence among workers, which in turn lowers job satisfaction and dedication. A lack of open communication may have a chilling impact on team spirit, ethics, motivation, and ultimately productivity in the workplace. It's common for workers to offer insightful recommendations about how to enhance their jobs and their companies. Sometimes these workers use voice by speaking up and sharing what they know or what they think, while other times they use silence by keeping quiet. Silence in the workplace is a behavioral choice that may either hinder or boost productivity. Aside from the obvious emotional difficulty, silence may be used as a powerful pressure tool on both people and groups, signaling either acceptance and sharing or disapproval and disagreement (Gambarotto & Cammozzo, 2010). In the 1980s, scholars applied justice theory to the study of silence and speech. The emphasis was on issues of justice and methods of voice in corporate contexts. Scholarly attention to whistle blowing and "rocking the boat" has resulted from the uncovering of scandals, both corporate and otherwise, and violations of ethics. It has also been discovered that, depending on the scenario and the sort of commitment involved, an employee's productivity to the organization may generate both good and negative consequences on the option of whether or not to speak up. The impact of quiet on employee output has been the subject of several scholarly discussions, both individually and in conjunction with other topics such as corporate performance (Alqarni, 2020; Yang, Guo, Ma, Li, Tian, & Deng, 2017). Therefore, it is important to understand organizational silence so as to prevent it from negatively affecting the corporate performance of companies, especially higher institutions.

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of Organisational Silence on Corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Specific objectives are to:

i. Examine the relationship between defensive silence and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria;
ii. Determine the relationship between pro-social silence and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria;
iii. Observe the relationship between acquiescent silence and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria;
iv. Evaluate the relationship between deviant silence and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria; and
v. Determines the relationship between diffident silence and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Based on the research problem and objectives, the following research hypotheses were formulated;

Ho_1 – There is no significant relationship between defensive silence and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria

Ho_2 – There is no significant relationship between pro-social silence and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Ho_3 – There is no significant relationship between acquiescent silence and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Ho_4 – There is no significant relationship between deviant silence and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Ho_5 – There is no significant relationship between diffident silence and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between organizational silence and corporate success

in Nigerian universities. Five types of quiet in the workplace are identified and analyzed for their impact on the productivity of Nigerian universities: defensive silence, pro-social silence, acquiescent silence, deviant silence, and diffident silence. The universities of Edo State, Uzairue, Benin State, and Ambrose Alli at Ekpoma will serve as case studies for this study.

Literature Review - Organizational Silence

Employees often engage in a behavior known as "organizational silence," in which they deliberately hide their thoughts and feelings regarding their employer. Employees can withhold information that could be detrimental to the company's success if they choose to remain silent. Organizational silence has far-reaching consequences, both for the company's bottom line and for the morale of its workforce. Organizational silence occurs when there is a lack of communication on critical issues inside an organization. Some of the less obvious factors that might threaten patient safety and contribute to organizational silence are highlighted in this paper.

The term "organizational silence" refers to instances in which members of an organization withhold information that may be of great use to the company. Silence, as defined by Van Dyne et al. (2003), is an employee's motivation to withhold or express ideas, information, and opinions on changes at work. Employees are free to select silence as their preferred mode of communication. Employees may be intentionally or unintentionally keeping knowledge to themselves, as claimed by Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008). Silence in the workplace occurs when workers agree that raising their voices would be unwise. When employees understand that the company benefits much from their disclosure of sensitive information, they become more reluctant to do so. Employees are hesitant to raise concerns that can be misunderstood by superiors and interpreted as a threat. They are aware of the issues and discuss them between themselves when they are alone, but they are afraid to tell their superiors the truth and so they keep quiet, as noted by Milliken (2000). Silence inside an organization is not a singular act but rather a replicated phenomenon. It requires workers to think broadly, but even so, it will have repercussions for the organization's newcomers. Employees no longer value communication due to the precedent of unfavorable episodes among long-tenured workers. Employees with more seniority set the tone for new hires, who chose to keep quiet to protect the company. According to Aktan (2006), workers who believe that nothing can be done to improve unfavorable workplace conditions often stop trying, get demoralized, and ultimately experience increased feelings of helplessness. According to Aylsworth (2008), instead of resisting unfavorable workplace conditions, employees learn to accept and adapt to them. Research in the intersection of the cognitive, social, and organizational sciences with studies of socio-technical systems may help identify some of the factors that contribute to and maintain quiet in the workplace. These elements have been broken down into their individual, societal, and organizational components. The availability heuristic, the self-serving bias, and the status quo trap are all variables that people themselves may control. Conformity, the spreading of blame, and suspicious small-group dynamics are all examples of social forces. Unchallenged beliefs, the good provider fallacy, and ignoring interdependencies are all organizational variables. Silence was formerly synonymous with devotion, and the absence of complaints was seen as evidence that all was well. However, recent studies have demonstrated that an atmosphere of quiet can be counterproductive to an organization's success (Aylsworth, 2008).

Types of Organizational Silence

Acquiescent quiet, defensive silence, prosocial silence, deviant silence, and diffident silence are the five varieties of silence identified by Van, Ang, and Botero (2003), who defined organizational silence as a multi-dimensional construct.

Acquiescent Silence - Passive, obedient quiet is referred to as acquiescence. Passive action is part of an acquiescent quiet. As a necessity of subservient conduct, it tends to stay out of operational organizational procedures. Employee resignation, an indifference to the evolution of silence as a behavior, is the natural consequence of acquiescent quiet. This has been shown by (Van, Ang, & Botero, 2003).Acquiescent quiet was

described by Van, Ang, and Botero (2003) with reference to research by Pinder and Harlos (2001) cited by Van, Ang, and Botero, 2003) as "withholding crucial thoughts, facts, or opinions, based on resignation." According to Kahn (1990), as referenced by Van, Ang, and Botero (2003), passivity manifests itself through quiet rather than activity.Those who choose for quiet in the workplace have become accustomed to their surroundings and are unwilling to make any changes to their condition (strongly rooted resignation).

Defensive Silence - The purposeful omission of work-related information out of fear of retaliation is referred to as defensive silence. Employees that are defensively silent choose to maintain their composure as a personal strategy by taking proactive steps to utilize their options in the future. This quiet is more active than conventional silence and differs fundamentally from it. There is a fear of offering recommendations or speaking out for change based on protective silence in 2003 (Van, Ang, & Botero). The basis for defensive silence is an employee's inner apprehension about speaking up. This is what is known as "Quiescent Silence" (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). According to Morrison and Milliken (2000), fear is a major cause of organizational silence. It also fits with the notions of psychological safety and voice opportunity put out by Avery and Quinones (2002) as essential prerequisites for speaking up in professional settings.

Pro-social Silence - Prosocial silence is a concept borrowed from the literature on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and described by Van, Ang, and Botero (2003) as the deliberate suppression of one's own thoughts, knowledge, and opinions at the workplace for the greater good of the group. Therefore, this quiet is not imposed by authority but rather stems from selflessness and the desire to work together. In addition, the motivation for prosocial quiet is the desire to protect others rather than the fear of getting undesirable effects for one's "self," as is the case with defensive silence (Van, Ang & Botero, 2003).

Deviant silence - A form of damaging deviant conduct in the workplace is "deviant silence." Deviant silence, as described by Rego (2013), occurs when workers intentionally avoid speaking out in order to influence others to make a poor decision. Organizational problems sometimes stem from employees adopting deviant habits, which may be either beneficial or harmful to the company. In addition to deviant silence, damaging deviant behaviors including theft, workplace hostility, and sabotage are designed to harm the organization and its people (Ahmad & Omar, 2014).

Diffident Silence - Insecurities, self-doubt, and confusion about the circumstance and what to say all play a role in what Brinsfield (2013) calls "diffident silence" among employees. Both diffident and defensive silence share the fact that the employee is trying to protect themselves from any unfavorable effects, as mentioned by Brinsfield (2013). Reluctant to make eye contact and otherwise appear socially awkward, diffident silence may represent a passive kind of conduct (Rego, 2013).

Concept of Corporate Performance

Corporate performance is a comprehensive assessment of how successfully a certain firm achieves its objectives. These objectives are very dependent on the firm; however, they often fall into the predefined categories of financial, market, and shareholder performance. Each firm must establish its own corporate performance goals. Once the goals have been established, a system for tracking, assessing, and meeting those goals must be put in place. This is where corporate performance management enters the picture. The organization does not execute any labor; nonetheless, its managers complete their assigned tasks, and the sum of these tasks is referred to as organization performance. Senior managers always attempt to enhance the performance of their organizations in order to fulfill the expectations of various stakeholders. In general, organizational improvement methods revolve around three primary activities: corporate planning, strategy execution (execution), and performance assessment or evaluation (David, 2005). The corporate planning process includes establishing goals and objectives that are consistent with the organization's corporate vision, purpose, and value statements. Goals and strategies are developed following a careful and critical analysis of the

organization's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as its external opportunities and threats, as conducted through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, also known as corporate analysis. Following the corporate analysis, strategies are developed as a way of achieving the goals that have been established, and the corporate plans are implemented.

Research Methodology

This study employed descriptive research to examine the elements that influence organizational silence as well as corporate success in selected Nigerian tertiary institutions. The goal of descriptive research is to characterize the traits, attributes, or actions of a certain population, event, or area of interest in relation to the subject under examination. The descriptive survey research design was also employed in the study to evaluate the association between organizational quiet behavior and business performance. A descriptive survey was best suited to determine whether there was a strong enough link or relationship between the variables. That the researcher can draw the conclusion that the independent variable caused the other dependent variables.

The academic and non-academic personnel of Edo State University, Uzairue, Etsako West L.G.A. Edo State. (Edo North), University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. (Edo South), and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Esan West L.G.A. Edo State were chosen as the study's target group (Edo Central). The emphasis was on government-owned tertiary institutions in Edo State's three geopolitical zones. Each university has a large enough population to do this type of research. The population of staff (Academic and Non-Academic) in the selected tertiary institutions was 21,369, which was distributed as follows: Edo State University, Uzairue is 615 (276 are Academic staff and 339 are Non-Academic staff) (Federal Ministry of Education 2022), University of Benin, Benin City is 14,996 (3,768 are Academic staff and 11,228 are Non-Academic staff) (Federal Ministry of (Federal Ministry of Education 2022). The study employed simple random sampling to pick samples from each of the three tertiary institutions that served as the study's sample. A sample of 385 respondents will be chosen for the study using Taro Yamine (1967). The calculation of the sample size is as follows:

$n = N/(1 + N(e)^2)$

N = 21369,

$n = \frac{21,369}{(1+21,369\,(0.05)^2)}$

$n = \frac{21,369}{(1+21,369\,(0.0025))}$

$n = \frac{21,369}{(1+53.4225)}$

$n = \frac{21,369}{54.4225}$

n = 392.65

Approximately n = 393

Therefore, 393 respondents is the sample for this study.

Table 1

Institution	Workings	Result
University of Benin	$\frac{14,996}{21,369} \times 393$	276
Edo State University, Uzairue	$\frac{615}{21,369} \times 393$	11
Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma	$\frac{5,758}{21,369} \times 386$	106
	TOTAL	**393**

Source: Field Work, 2023

The sample frame described above will be used to disseminate the questionnaire for this investigation. As a result, 276 questionnaires would be distributed utilizing the Random Sampling Technique at the University of

Benin in Benin City, 11 at Edo State University in Uzairue, and 106 at Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma. The researcher ran a pilot test with 20 participants and analyzed the results using Crombach Alpha. Hence, the Coefficient obtained using the Crombach Alpha was more than 0.70. The rule states they are all reliable.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The objective of this study is to identify organizational silence behavior and corporate performance at a selected tertiary institution in Nigeria.

The numbers of questionnaire distributed and returned are shown in the table below.

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percent
Total questionnaire distributed	393	100.00
Total retrieved	350	89
Total not retrieved	43	11

Source: Analysis of field study (2023)

In the table shown above it was clearly observed that 89% were retrieved and 11% were not retrieved.

Table 9: Analysis of Data and Interpretation of Result

	DS	PRO-SOC	ACQ	DES	DIF
Mean	578.44	165.806	18.178	102.74	10.278
Median	498.91	19.5891	16.900	103.03	92.000
Maximum	1762.6	36.0802	24.700	59.172	24.7000
Minimum	84.140	11.9433	15.100	12.322	14.000
Std. Dev.	7.3923	7.2028	2.1515	0.9479	4.7392
Skewness	396.18	60.252	2.5987	70.154	2.9777
Kurtosis	0.3747	1.5287	1.5574	0.3358	5.2074
Jarque-Bera	1.8816	3.7802	4.4968	1.8845	3.5668
Probability	1.4922	0.6334	2.6825	5.3456	8.2525

Source: (Authors' computation using E-views 9.0)

The descriptive data reveal that defensive quiet has the greatest mean value of 578.44, followed by Pro-Soc at 165.806, ACQ at 18.178, and DES at 102.74. Pro-Social quiet (Pro-Soc) has the highest calculated value of 36.0802, while defensive silence has the lowest recorded value of 84.140. DES has the lowest standard deviation of 0.9479, meaning that it is the most stable variable investigated in this study. DS, on the other hand, is the most volatile variable due to its largest standard deviation of 7.3923. According to the preceding table, DS, PRO-SOC, ACQ, DES, and DIF all exhibit positive Skewness and so lengthy right tails. Kurtosis evaluates the peakedness or flatness of the series distribution.

Table 10: Result of Pearson Correlation

	COR	DS	PRO-SOC	ACQ	DES	DIF
COR	1					
DS	0.90031	1				
PRO-SOC	0.18614	0.361713	1			
ACQ	0.561354	0.50192	0.60111	1		
DES	0.234111	0.548713	0.763351	0.912652	1	
DIF	0.631421	0.886219	0.722456	0.6543313	0.7235	1

Source: (Computed by the authors using E-views 9.0)

Pearson correlation analyzes the direction of the link between the dependent and independent variables. As a

result, Pearson correlation cannot be used to evaluate the study's assumptions. According to Table 10, there is a favorable association between defensive silence and corporate performance. This suggests that defensive silence (DS) contributes favorably to corporate performance in Nigerian tertiary institutions. They have a positive and relatively significant relationship. The correlation matrix, on the other hand, indicates that the link between the independent variables is more than fifty percent (5 percent). At 0.18614, pro-soc has a positive association with business performance. As a result, increasing pro-soc will result in increased corporate performance. The results indicate that there is no serial multicollinearity problem because the correlation coefficient between the predictors is less than 0.70 (Adzor & Emmanuel, 2013).

Table 4.11: Regression Results

Dependent Variable: COR				
Included observations: 350				
	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
DS	3.693	24201	-2.0485	0.0319
PRO-SOC	9.1390	0.8359	8.8269	0.0000
ACQ	3.49062	7.7450	-3.0491	0.0077
DES	4.9879	81.767	2.8963	0.0106
DIF	5.6412	4.7542	6.3452	0.4531
R-squared	0.890259	Mean dependent var		66294082
Adjusted R-squared	0.869682	S.D. dependent var		46054871
S.E. of regression	16625608	Akaike info criterion		36.26764
Sum squared resid	4.42E+15	Schwarz criterion		36.46679
Log likelihood	-358.6764	Hannan-Quinn criter.		36.30652
F-statistic	43.26579	Durbin-Watson stat		1.676077

Source: (Computed by the authors using Eviews 9.0)

The analytical results suggest that the coefficient of determination R2 is 0.869682. These statistics indicate that our estimated model has a high goodness of fit. As a result, we estimate that the repressor mix in this model contributes for about 87 percent of the variance in corporate performance, with the remaining 13 percent ascribed to the error term. The F-statistic provides trustworthy evidence of the model's overall relevance. The estimated F is more than the critical F, which has a value of 3.36 at the 5% level of significance, with a value of 43.26579. This merely means that at least one of the model's variables is statistically significant. The estimated F has a probability of 0.000, which is less than the level of significance. This reinforces the model's overall relevance. The low levels of the standard errors in the result indicate that the estimations may be trusted. The Durbin-Watson statistic, with a value of 1.676077, provides evidence of the absence of first-order autocorrelation in the estimated model, because d* is close to two.

Testing of Hypotheses

The level of significance adopted in this study in testing the stated hypothesis of this study is 5%. This level is usually considered adequate for studies in management and other behavioural sciences. The critical p-value used in these tests is 0.05. Thus, the research accepts a given alternative hypothesis that there is no significant effect. The test statistic is computed by E-Views software and results are as show in table 4.11 above**.** All the independent variables had a significant relationship with corporate performance as their P – values were less than the decision rule of 5%. Hence, we rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis in each case.

Summary of Finding, Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the ranking above, respondents viewed silence as an important issue to be considered in corporate

performance at tertiary institutions since silence has the power to impair an organization's performance and growth. It was evident that the majority of respondents agreed on this point.

i. There is a considerable relationship between defensive silence and corporate performance at a few Nigerian tertiary institutions. As a result, the p-value of 0.0319 is larger than the table value of 0.05, implying that tertiary institution corporate success may be obtained by protective quiet.
ii. According to the regression analysis model, there is no significant relationship between pro-social and corporate performance of selected Nigerian tertiary institutions.
iii. The relationship between acquiescent quiet and corporate performance of selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria was revealed, stating that a unit shift in acquiescent silence will lead to declines in corporate performance.
iv. There is a link between deviant behavior and business performance at a few academic institutions in Nigeria. As a result, the p-value of 0.0106 is lesser than the table value of 0.05.
v. There is a link that exists between diffident quiet and the corporate performance of selected Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Thestudy therefore made the following recommendations:

i. Administrators of tertiary institutions should handle organizational silence behaviors in a proper manner in order to realize work interests.
ii. Administrators of tertiary institutions should pay attention to field research in order to monitor the ways for dealing with organizational silence behaviors while keeping the job interests and workers in mind.
iii. Fear is the primary source of organizational silence, and it should be reduced. Fear of deportation is heightened by employment insecurity, which is why employees' job stability and security must be maintained.
iv. Management should create an environment in which organizational silence is viewed as an important variable to be considered, as well as opportunities to create good communication and formal systems for the transfer or exchange of information, concerns, and ideas in order to take the necessary action.
v. Employee assessment methods in tertiary institutions should be developed in such a way that motivates employees to break their silence. Employees should be confident that their firms follow fair processes.

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