

Employee Silence: The Silent Killer of Morale

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Abstract: A cross-sectional study was carried out among 100 registered nurses and 30 doctors working in private hospitals in Punjab using random sampling method. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire framed on the basis of existing literature review. The study used Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Models (PLS-SEM) for data processing. Results concluded that as the acquiescent form of silence increases among employees, their morale also increases. However, defensive and pro-social form of silence has a negative impact on employee morale. Based on the findings of the study, managers and decision-makers in private hospitals can assess and eliminate structural and interpersonal barriers in order to discourage silence behaviour and boost up morale of employees.

Keywords: Employee Morale, Employee Silence, Private Hospitals

INTRODUCTION

Employee silence is the deliberate holding of thoughts and opinions by staff members. Despite the fact that an employee may be capable of contributing to an organisation and their work, there may be a lack of organisational communication because of which they may choose to withhold their views about certain matters. Researchers have attempted to identify organisational factors that contribute to and reinforce silence behavior among employees in certain studies looking at the circumstances in which it occurs. These research revealed that workers, for a variety of reasons, preferred to keep silent. Employees, for instance, preferred to remain silent due to conflicts with coworkers, disagreements with decisions made regarding organisational practises at work, poor relationships with managers, and the belief that their opinions would not be taken into account or would be judged if they voiced them (Jain, 2015; Brinsfield, 2009).

Healthcare Industry in India

Healthcare is regarded as among the most dynamic industry in India as well as worldwide, and working in such an industry is quite stressful. The health-care industry has a lot of opportunities, but it also has a lot of obstacles. As one of the largest service industries, it faces numerous obstacles, including cumbersome patient loads and consumer expectations, workplace violence, less no. of staff, multiple shifts, poor infrastructure etc. Despite the fact that health care workers are required to confidently and clearly voice their thoughts and opinions without fear, there are times when hazards and errors go unreported. Such methods are not desirable since they may endanger the patients health and have a negative impact on their job satisfaction and motivation. Non sharing of suggestions inhibit good decision-making, which can result in hospital injuries due to medical error (Hume, 1999). As a result, silence behavior can pose a concealed risk to patient safety. Recently, the issue of institutional silence in healthcare companies has come to light. The morale and well-being of healthcare professionals are known to suffer when the healthcare personnel in an organisation struggles to communicate effectively and transfer knowledge (Santos, 2020; Kaur & Arora, 2022). Individuals who use healthcare services are more likely to put at significant risk due to medical staff's silence (Harmanci et al., 2018). Such actions by healthcare organisations may have negative effects on the people who get treatment. Thus, recent studies have emphasised the significance of the link among safety of patients and health workers speaking up. Nurses and doctors are key employees who work in the healthcare industry (Kaur & Arora, 2022). There are limited number of research studies that have looked at the issue of employee silence affecting employee morale. The current study makes an attempt to investigate the impact silence behavior of private hospital employees, including doctors and nurses on their morale.

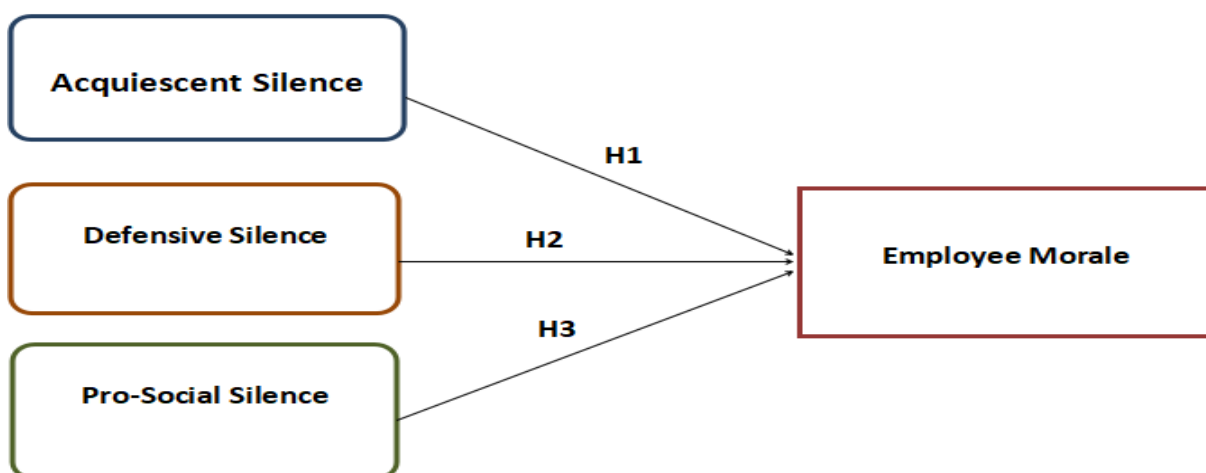


Figure No.1: Proposed model of the study

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study is descriptive in nature. Primary data was collected from 100 nursing staff and 30 doctors employed by four private hospitals having 100 or more beds in state of Punjab. To collect the data, a structured questionnaire was framed by reviewing existing literature review. The responses were recorded on 7 point likert scale [Highly dissatisfied (1) to (7) Highly satisfied].

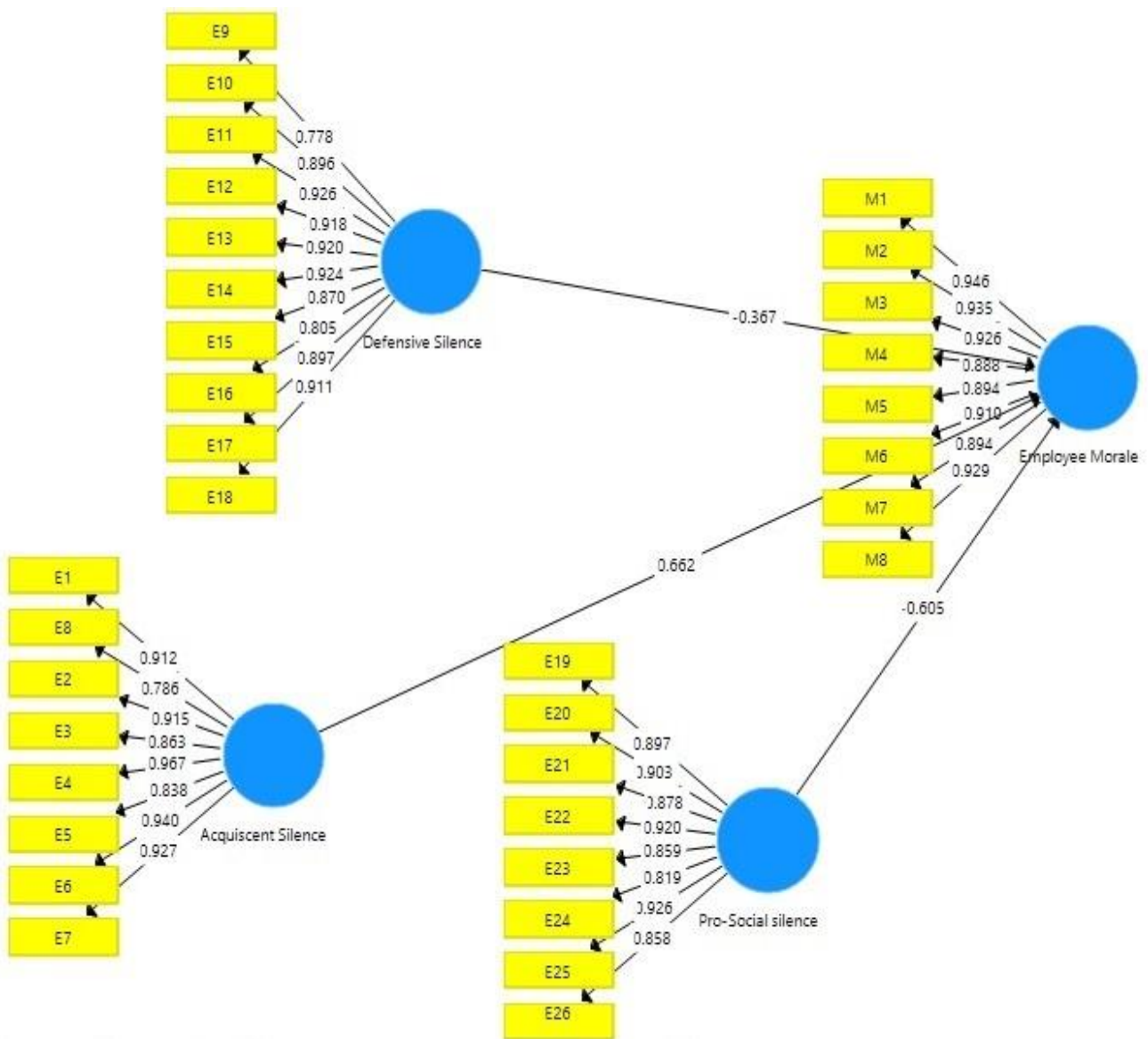


Figure No.2: SEM Model assessment

Construct	Indicator	Factor loading
Acquiescent Silence	A1	0.912
	A2	0.915
	A3	0.863

	A4	0.967
	A5	0.838
	A6	0.940
	A7	0.927
	A8	0.786
Defensive Silence	A9	0.778
	A10	0.896
	A11	0.926
	A12	0.918
	A13	0.920
	A14	0.924
	A15	0.870
	A16	0.805
	A17	0.897
	A18	0.911
Pro-Social Silence	A19	0.897
	A20	0.903
	B1	0.878
	B2	0.920
	B3	0.859
	B4	0.819
	B5	0.926
	B6	0.858
Employee Morale	M1	0.946
	M2	0.935
	M3	0.926
	M4	0.888
	M5	0.894
	M6	0.910
	M7	0.894
	M8	0.926

Table No.1: Factor loading

Construct	Composite Reliability	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Acquiescent silence	0.926	0.92	0.615	0.802
Defensive silence	0.922	0.93	0.621	0.785
Pro-social silence	0.914	0.89	0.711	0.781
Employee Morale	0.821	0.81	0.638	0.838

Table No.2: Measurement Model

TESTING OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is a negative relationship between acquiescent form of employee silence and employee morale.

Dependant variable	Independent variable	Standardized Beta value	T-Value	Hypothesis Result
Employee Morale	Acquiescent Silence	0.662	15.7	Rejected

Table No.3: Hypothesis-1 Testing

Table no.3 indicates that the standardized beta value of acquiescent form of employee silence and employee morale is positive (0.662) and the t- value is 15.7.Hence, H1 is rejected.This concludes that acquiescent silence affects morale in a significant and positive way.

H2: There is a negative relationship between defensive form of employee silence and employee morale.

Dependant variable	Independent variable	Standardized Beta value	T-Value	Hypothesis Result
Employee	Defensive Silence	-0.367	14.22	Accepted

Morale				
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Table No.4: Hypothesis-2 Testing

Table no.4 indicates that the standardized beta value of defensive form of employee silence and employee morale is negative (-0.367) and the t- value is 14.22.Hence, H2 is accepted.This concludes that as defensive silence increases, employee morale reduces and vice versa.

H3: There is a negative relationship between pro-social form of employee silence and employee morale.

Dependant variable	Independent variable	Standardized Beta value	T-Value	Hypothesis Result
Employee Morale	Pro-Social Silence	-0.605	20.15	Accepted

Table No.5: Hypothesis-3 Testing

As per table no.5, the Standardized beta value of pro-social form of employee silence and emotional morale is negative (0.605) .The estimated t-value is 20.15, thus H3 is accepted concluding that when pro-social form of employee silence increases,employee morale decreases and vice versa.

CONCLUSION

The present research examined how the morale of the doctors and nursing staff working employed in private hospitals in Punjab gets affected by their silence behavior . Total of 30 doctors and 100 nursing staff from four private hospitals were selected using random sample technique and a structured questionnaire was constructed to collect the responses.Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the proposed model.Results suggested that acquiescent form of silence has a positive impact on employee morale However,defensive and pro-social form of employee silence has a negative relationship with morale of the employees at workplace.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study offers crucial information that leaders and managers of healthcare institutions may consider in order to formulate a strategy that will foster greater levels of employee morale and, in

the long term, lessen silence behaviour of employees. By finding the relationship between silence behavior and employee morale in the Indian context, the study also adds to the body of current work.

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