

Influence of Voice and Silence Behaviours on Employee Performance

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Abstract

Voice and silence are two common types of behaviours exhibited by employees in an organization that have not received the much expected empirical study over the years. Existing studies did not yet fully investigate the influence of voice and silence behaviors outside western countries. In order to fill the gap, this paper attempts to explore studies to understand the influence of the phenomenon of voice and silence behaviours on employee. The literature review was conducted within the accessibility limits provided to Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic, Birnin Kebbi, Nigeria by databases in Emerald, Sage, Science Direct, African Digital Library and African Journals online (AJOL). Seventeen (17) journal articles published between 2000 -2012 were reviewed. Thirteen (13) of the articles were studies carried out in western countries while four (4) of the articles were studies in non-western countries. Results suggested that cultural orientation significantly affect employees' voice and silence behaviours. In western countries the more an organization provided an opportunity for expression of concerns, the more employees' voice out and strengthened their relationships with supervisor/management implying better performance. On the other hand, the more dissent factors present in an organisation, the more employees remain silent for fear of being labelled negatively which in turn affect performance, lower morale, cause stress and dissatisfaction. In non-western countries, it was found that structural and organizational processes provides good fertile ground for enactment of voice and silence behaviours and actual enactment depend on individual differences. Furthermore, voice and silence behaviours were both antecedents and outcomes of work attitudes which, are culturally determined thus having an impact on performance. It is suggested that account should be given to individual, cultural and organizational factors in drawing the forces that influence voice and silence behaviours and further research should be culturally focused.

Key words: voice, silence, organization, employee, performance.

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