



Silence Behavior in Public and Private Higher Learning Institutions in Selangor, Malaysia

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Abstract

Silence behavior is a behavioural choice that can deteriorate or improve organisational performance. Silence can convey sharing information or disfavour and opposition, thus becoming a pressure mechanism for both individuals and organisations. This study was conducted to examine the extent of silence behavior and investigate the factors influencing silence behavior among staff in public as well as private universities in Selangor, Malaysia. Based upon a model of employee silence developed by Milliken et al. (2003), a survey was conducted with 136 academic and non-academic staff of public and private higher learning institutions in Selangor. Overall, the respondents reveal that they preferred to remain silence because they are not going to talk about sensitive issue and they need to preserve the dignity of higher management personnel before expressing any sensitive matter. Among the antecedents of silence behavior, the expected of negative impact and management practices have substantial influence. The findings of this study are consistent with the Face Negotiate Theory as the higher management personnel in fear receiving negative feedback from the middle level officers. Besides, fear of retaliation or being marginalized as well as being misunderstood as challenging the status of the higher management makes no one preferred to be as a whistle-blower to report the wrongdoing cases to the higher management. Some of them just ignored the incidence of wrongdoing happened to avoid the negative impact towards them.

Keywords: Silent Behavior, Expected of Negative Impact, Management Practice, Face Negotiation Theory.