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**INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEE SILENCE ON
INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT IN THE SELECTED
UNIONIZED ORGANIZATIONS IN LAGOS STATE,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study focused on the influence of employee silence on the industrial conflict in a selected unionized organization in the manufacturing industry within Lagos Metropolis. The study identified five factors that were responsible for employee silence to include job security, unemployment situation, recruitment

practices, institutional structures, and agenda settings and their consequences on the industrial conflict. A questionnaire was used as the research instrument for data collection which was administered to 267 respondents and findings from the data analysis revealed that there was strong relationship between employee silence and industrial conflict where $r = 0.713$ and $R^2 = 0.508$ and job security ($\beta = 0.445$, $p = 0.000$) was found to contribute more to employee silence in the workplace and a highly institutional structure suppresses employee silence ($r = -0.233$, $p < 0.05$) It was concluded that industrial conflict will manifest at a minimal level when the degree of freedom and institutional structures are balanced to an equilibrium state.

Keywords: *Industrial conflict, employees silence, institutional structures, agenda-setting, recruitment practices*

JEL: E24, O15, J24

1. INTRODUCTION

Deductions from the contributions of the early scholars in the field of management theories especially the scientific management theory as postulated by Taylor where it was discovered that ‘soldering’ was the rationale behind the low productivity in the business organization highlighted the significance of behavior in the workplace. In the views of Taylor, soldering was described as a deliberate attempt on the part of workers to reduce their output which invariably affected organizational productivity thus revealing that the deliberate reduction of output as a result of soldering by workers was a behavioral issue contingent upon many factors and these factors explain the complexity faced by management in the workplace on daily basis (Oginni & Adesanya, 2013). Therefore, the complexity and dynamism of business and work environment made it imperative for managers of the workforce to take clues from the behavior of employees in the workplace which could be expressed or implied to attain the predetermined objectives. Employees’ behavior (expressed or implied) is a form of communication in the workplace and has been identified as a veritable source of getting feedback useful to gauge the temperature of the work atmosphere and a quick response to the degree of the temperature will solve many work-related issues that may be negative (Oginni, Olaniyan & Ajibola, 2022). Over the years, the expressed behavior is well pronounced, visible, and easily detected and the outcome could be measured or gauged wherein necessary actions could be taken to address any negative behavior that might affect productivity. However, the implied behavior is multi-dimensional and often difficult to gauge except it becomes overt. One of the dimensions of implied behavior in the workplace is employee silence and it is covert because it is obscured, hidden, and covered thus serving as an

impetus to the unpredictability of employees' behavior in the workplace (Knoll & Van, 2013). Employee silence in an organizational context does not connote the absence of voice nor signify the absence of communication rather connotes agreement, avoidance of problems, frustration, anger, dissent, anxiety, and fear to speak as well as dissatisfaction and upset (Van, Ang & Botero, 2003).

Employee silence in the workplace was an offshoot of the industrial revolution era that was characterized by the dictate of the owner of the business thereby minimizing the contributions of workers on the matter concerning them in the world of work and the major expectation from workers was the performance of assigned tasks during this era. However, the advent of industrial democracy heralded workers' participation wherein employees shared in the prerogative power of the management in decision making which often compels management or the owner of a business to get suggestions from or interact with employees on different issues concerning the organization and the workforce (Akuh, 2016). The implication was that employees should be free to express their ideas or opinions as deemed fit on matters concerning the organization and workforce to create a family-like atmosphere that will usher in enabling environment for the attainment of organizational objectives. The works of Abdulkadri, Isiaka, and Adedoyin (2012) in this area corroborated by Oginni, *et. al* (2022) indicated that employees often refrain from taking the opportunity provided by industrial democracy (workers' participation) on account of insincerity on the part of the management, experience on some issues in the past, vendetta or insecurity while Deniz, Noyan, and Ertosun, (2013) believed that employees refrain because of the fear of causing upset in the current balance as being experienced in the organization. This will invariably make employees take a conscious or unconscious decision to remain silent as long as being in the service of the organization i.e. employee silence in the workplace is purely a decision of employees to withdraw expression of ideas, information, opinions, or concerns on any of the organizational issues for reasons best known to such employees and where this is the order of the day, workplace atmosphere is usually filled with dissatisfactions, grievances, and conflict (Oseyomon & Eiya, 2015).

Employee silence in the workplace would have been ignored had it manifested in an organization whose employment relationships were based on the unitary philosophy where the interests of employer and employees are said to be the same, no room for expression of other views, trade unions outlawed, and conflict is perceived as dysfunctional but the focus was on organizations whose employment relationships were based on the pluralism philosophy that allows expression of divergent views, acknowledge the importance of trade union and conflict is perceived as functional which informed the choice of the unionized organization as the unit of analysis. Then, why should employees operating under pluralism

employment relationships that allow employees to express their views on any matter of concern/interest will decide to remain silent, especially in a unionized organization where union members are expected to play active roles? The decision to remain silent signifies the manifestation of dissatisfaction, injustice, or grievances in the workplace over some aspects of work-related issues or terms and conditions of employment guiding employment relationships at work, thus, making the work environment atmosphere to be tensed, and most often, it is the accumulation of either dissatisfaction, injustice or grievances that lead to industrial conflict in the workplace (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Sonika and Kaushik (2017) likened employee silence to cancer in the human body which was considered a giant killer and that early discovery will save a life but the late discovery will be terminal death i.e. some organizational problems could have been resolved if observed early such as labor turnover, low motivation, strike, etc., Adewoye, (2019) posited that there exists a relationship between employee silence and informal conflict as the two are covert and the rationale behind strike and withdrawal of service with or without notice is employee silence. In most of the union addresses to members before embarking on strike action, the common language has always been ‘enough is enough’ to imply long silence of many issues fueling the conflict therefore, the time has come to speak up (Oseyomon & Eiya, 2015).

Many scholars have discussed the effect of employee silence and employees’ commitment as well as organizational commitment, the place of employee silence in organizational development, employee silence, and procedural justice (Perlow & Williams, 2003; Tangirala & Rangaraj, 2008; Abdulkadri et al, 2012; Deniz, Noyan & Ertosun, 2013) and very few studies on unionized organizations concerning employee silence and industrial conflict. Most of these scholars projected employee silence as intentional behavior contingent upon employees’ decision to remain silent without recourse to other significant dimensions in terms of constraints imposed by the work environment atmosphere as created by the management through institutional structures, agenda settings, and recruitment practices to preserve their prerogative power as well as external constraints such as unemployment situation. Therefore, the study seeks to know what is responsible for employee silence in a unionized organization despite the acceptability of divergent views, the relationship between employee silence components and industrial conflict, and at the same time, identify among the components of employee silence, the one with the propensity to contribute more to the course of industrial conflict.

Objectives of the study

Based on the focus of the study, the following were the objectives of the study;

1. identify factors responsible for employee silence in a unionized organization;
2. investigate the relationship between employee silence and industrial conflict
3. determine which of the components of employee silence has the propensity to contribute more to the course of industrial conflict.

Hypothesis

H₁: there is no relationship between employee silence and industrial conflict

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Employee Silence

Early scholars in the field of Communication and Psychology such as Hirschman (1970); Ewing (1977); Argyris (1991); Deming (1986) associated silence with decorum, avoidance of embarrassment, perceived danger and confrontation, prudence, respect for others, modesty and more importantly as golden to show a sign of loyalty. To this group of scholars, there is nothing wrong when subordinates failed to voice their concerns. Scholars contributed after this, perceived silence as a medium to convey approval or consent, disfavor, and opposition (Rousseau, 1995; Pfeffer, 1997; Edmonson, 1999) but today's scholars have found these positions to be awkward on the ground that climate of silence will work against the desired outcomes of any organization as it will prevent improvements to processes, projects and strategies to reposition organization to meet prevailing circumstance internal and external to the organizations. Employee silence is found in the organization which also implies the presence of organizational silence although similar in outlook and contents but differs in terms of occurrence. Organizational silence occurs at an organizational level which is a collective-level phenomenon of saying or doing very little in response to significant problems that face an organization while employee silence occurs at an individual level when workers fail to bring pertinent information to the attention of their employer and it is a conscious choice in decision making.

Donaghey, Cullinane, Dundon, and Wilkinson (2011) described employee silence as an employee's motivational decision to withhold or express ideas, information, and opinions about work-related improvements. The implication is that employee silence is neither by accident nor circumstance not premeditated rather a decision to restrain from giving feedback or sharing criticism to make work processes better. Deniz et. al (2013) corroborated this position and asserted that employee silence is withholding of any form of genuine expression about

the individual behavioral, cognitive, and affective evaluations of organizational circumstances to people who are perceived to be capable of effecting change or redress. In a nutshell, it is a deliberate act on the part of an employee to withhold any information that might benefit the organization where they belong at a particular time i.e. intentionally withholding concerns, information, or opinions by employees concerning important situations, issues, or events relating to their job or organization.

2.2. Factors Causing Voluntary Employee Silence

Since the decision of employees to withhold vital information from members of the organization who may be in the category of colleagues, line managers and leaders is intentional, Bagheri, Zarei & NikAeen (2012) said it was caused by both internal and external factors such as fear, injustice, experience on past issues, insecurity, embarrassment, unethical behavior, organizational politics, cultural fit, inconsistent treatment of employees, isolation phobia, administrative/institutional structures, avoidance of being perceived negative (trouble maker), lack of trust, individual characteristics, loss of job and management belief as well as stigmatization arising from the shameful act. These causal factors were corroborated by Fapohunda, and Tinuke (2016) and Jafary, Yazdanpanah, and Masoomi (2018), however, Fapohunda and Tinuke (2016) opined further that the motivation to remain silent can come from the employees' perception, needs, and goals while Jafary et. al. (2018) classified these factors into three categories namely organizational factors, individual (psychological factors) and socio-demographic factors but before this classification, Milliken and Morrison (2003) recognized these factors and placed a premium on other factors aside those making employee silence to be intentional such as environmental and organizational factors. To Milliken and Morrison (2003), these environmental and organizational factors often made employees remain silent even when willing to speak up such as institutional structures, agenda settings, recruitment practices, unemployment situation, and safety with different consequences on organizational stability.

- 1. Institutional Structure:** this revolves around a well-defined procedure that communicates how activities in the workplace such as task allocation, coordination of various tasks, and supervision of these activities are directed in a given way towards actualizing or attainment of organizational objectives. The modus operandi of the organization rests on this structure through which everything in the organization is being accounted for or mirrored and it varies from organization to organization depending on the nature and scope of the organization, leadership styles adopted (autocratic or democratic), and objectives set to achieve.

- 2. Agenda-setting:** this is about influencing the views and thoughts of organizational members through the information made available. It attempts to bring about a rethinking process with implications on perception. For example, the role of media in reporting news about an organization in a way that will influence and guide any discourse about a phenomenon as put in place by management. It is a way to make a particular issue look more important than others based on the attention given to such. It is affected by politics in the organization, framing in terms of context, and the goal of public relations
- 3. Recruitment Practices:** this is described as any of the strategies adopted by an organization in the course of bringing people into the organization to ensure the accomplishment of the organizational objectives efficiently and effectively (Sikalumbi & Situmba, 2019). It could be through vacancy advertisement, employee referral, employment agencies, employee promotion, job rotation, e-recruitment, transfer, the union office, etc., this is usually guided by human resource management policies and greatly influenced by the degree of objectivity (Ooi, Ng, Heng, Chua & Lim, 2022).
- 4. Unemployment situation:** this is concerned with individuals who are within the working population age and willing to work but could not secure work after a series of searches. It may be a result of occupational and geographical immobility, technological and structural changes in the economy, depression, and recession (Adeagbo, 2019). Aside from these, it is also being affected by macroeconomic and individual firm-related factors and it has an effect on the mental and physical health of individuals, reduces life expectancy, drug abuse, social isolation or alienation, poverty, increases the propensity to engage in criminal activities, adverse economic conditions (Adamu, 2015).
- 5. Job Security:** it connotes job-for-life, permanent employment contract, secure employment, etc., it, therefore, revolves around the degree of safety in respect of an individual's job for continuity without any fear of dismissal. The degree may be high or low. When it is high, it shows a high state of having a secured job with an unlikely threat of dismissal and vice versa. It is contingent on the probability that an individual job is safe and thus gives assurance that the current employment will not fizzle out in the foreseeable future. Adeoti (2018) posited that job security gives a sense of belonging among the members of an organization, results in a more relaxed work atmosphere, better employee engagement, reduces employee turnover, and improves the level of efficiency and productivity although affected by factors such as outsourcing, downsizing, recession, and new technology, mergers, and acquisitions to mention a few (Adeagbo, 2019)

2.3. *Dimensions of Employee Silence*

All factors highlighted above provided a good basis to discuss various dimensions of employee silence and this explains why there were many dimensions to this as indicated below;

1. Pinder and Harlos (2001): Acquiescent silence and Quiescent silence.
2. Van Dyne, Ang, and Botero (2003): Acquiescent silence, Quiescent silence, and Pro-social silence
3. Brinsfield (2013): Deviant silence, Relational silence, Diffident silence, Ineffectual silence, Disengaged silence, Defensive silence
4. Knoll and Dick (2013): Acquiescent silence, Quiescent silence, Pro-social silence, and Opportunistic silence

For this study, the dimension postulated by Knoll and Dick was adopted since it was more detailed and comprehensive enough to be used as a summary of other dimensions. These dimensions of employee silence provided answers to the rationale behind the ‘why’ of employees remaining silent in the workplace i.e. the purpose of each of the dimensions. For example, quiescent silence which is also known as defensive silence occurred based on fear while acquiescent silence is usually due to resignation.

- a. **Acquiescent silence:** this relates to a situation whereby employees have chosen to remain silent by intentionally withholding information relevant to the sustainability of work output in terms of ideas, opinions, and suggestions based on resignation. This silence orchestrated by employees simply connotes disengaged behavior with correspondingly low levels of involvement.
- b. **Quiescent silence:** this is also known as defensive silence whose focus is mainly on self-protection. The decision to withhold relevant ideas or opinions is usually based on employees’ fear of the aftermath of speaking up i.e. considering alternatives (voice opportunity and safety) and choosing to withhold information as the safest option for safety at that time.
- c. **Pro-social silence:** this is a deliberate withholding of information relating to work ideas or opinions with the mission to benefit other members of the organization. The desire to remain silent was borne out of concern for others to benefit as it focused mainly on others without recourse to personal consequences.

- d. Opportunistic silence:** this is another form of protective silence and an extension of pro-social silence. This occurred when employees strategically withheld work-related information, ideas, or opinions with the hope of achieving an advantage for themselves which is personal, and at the same time accepting harm to others by way of concealing information through refusal to speak up.

2.4. Industrial Conflict

Industrial conflict is a permanent feature of Industrial Relations which is concerned with the employment relationship between and among all the parties in the workplace (Ogundele, Alaka, Oginni & Ogunyomi, 2013). Industrial conflict is often a true reflection of the extent of the relationship between employees and the management or owner of the business in the world of work. It refers to expressions of dissatisfaction over issues within the employment relationship guided by the contract of employment. This dissatisfaction can manifest in different ways but can be categorized into two namely informal and formal conflict. Informal industrial conflict is wholesomely expressive as it emanates directly from one's sense of grievance and is not usually based on any systematic arrangement while formal industrial conflict is an organized expression of grievances that is well-articulated through workers' representative (trade union) usually over issues bothering on terms and conditions of service (Oginni, Faseyiku & Ajani, 2021).

Informal industrial conflict manifests in form of unconscious forms of protest such as accidents at work, absenteeism, and negligence as well as frequent job-changing and absconding from the workplace. Dedekuma (2011) likened informal industrial conflict in the workplace to cardiac arrest in the human body because most often the symptoms are neglected and could cause sudden death to operational activities in the short run especially when employees abscond, engage in dispensary visits, or put-up negligence act (sabotage). This was also corroborated by Olawoyin (2015) who opined that the management of an organization does not always see the need to nip on board unconscious forms of protest because it is unofficial and illegal but asserted that the result has always disrupted the production processes. This position supported the earlier work of Dedekuma (2011) that no structural provision or procedure to express dissatisfaction or concern over disaffection in the operation of the organization rather put in place structures that would suppress the expression of any form of dissatisfaction, especially at the individual level. Oseyomon and Eiya (2015) asserted that an individual is the source of informal industrial conflict and may or may not develop into an organizational crisis but an employee in this kind of category often withdraws from the organization willingly or unwillingly while formal industrial conflict is

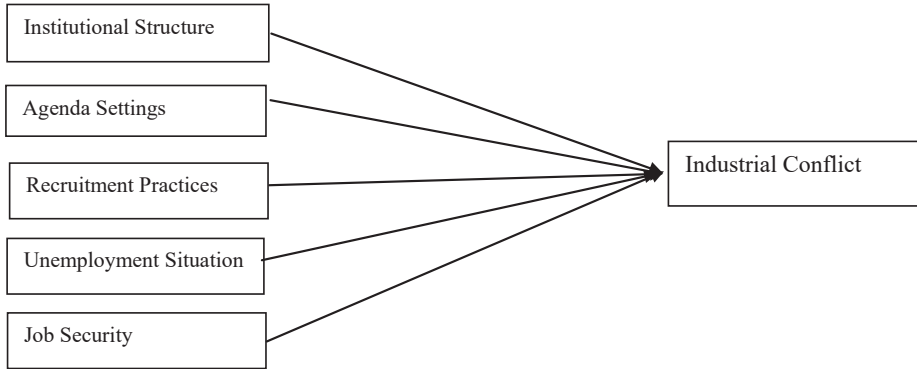
an unconscious form of protest manifesting mainly in strike form. Oseyomon and Eiya (2015) however, concluded that the suppression of expression of any form of dissatisfaction especially at the individual level through no structural provision negates the constitutional provision as stated in the Trade Dispute Act of 1976 where industrial conflict resolution starts from an individual expression of grievances although noted non-availability of alternative jobs made this possible without any form of protest from the employee.

Oginni and Adesanya (2013) described a strike as a temporary cessation of work and it can come in different varieties such as wildcat strike, sympathy strike, work-to-rule strike, sit-in strike, lockout strike, sit-down strike, go-slow, overtime ban, etc. Osamwonyi and Ugiagbe (2013) see formal industrial conflict as strategic, official, and instrumental to pursue and seek acceptance of demands from management which centers around the working conditions of employees. Contrary to the position of Oseyomon and Eiya (2015), Akuh (2016) asserted that formal industrial conflict derives its strength from collective action against the individual silent expression of dissatisfaction and thus, enables it to avoid sanctions whether are they directly affected or by workers in related jobs and industries. However, the work of Adewoye (2019) on industrial conflict in the workplace, whether it is a blessing, or a curse summarized what informal and formal industrial conflict stands for. It was asserted that informal industrial conflict is more dangerous than formal industrial conflict because most of the causes of formal industrial conflict can be addressed since they are often made known. Expressing contrary opinion through collective Will may not be sanctioned unlike if it is individual, not only that, all the various dimensions of formal industrial conflict can be predicted with possible outcomes without many contradictions, unlike informal industrial conflict which is more silent and lead to withdrawal of service with or without notice (Dedekuma, 2011).

The root cause of industrial conflict can be classified into two i.e. individual and organizational-based causes and reactions are interwoven. Under individual-based cause, it was the relationship with organizational environment and atmosphere such as superior-subordinate relationship, quality of atmospheric condition under which work is done, degree of freedom of expression, the dignity of labor, etc. that would bring about industrial conflict while that of organizational based cause has issues such as terms and conditions of employment, organizational structure, respect for agreement, etc. that would bring industrial conflict (Oginni, Faseyiku & Ajani, 2021; Oginni & Adesanya, 2013). The degree of freedom enjoyed by employees in the expression of their concerns over the situation in their work environment has implications on labor turnover and the manifestation of industrial conflict in the workplace. Where the degree of freedom is high, there is usually relative stability, and where otherwise, it is a decision to embark

upon job search behavior that is usually prevalent even though still does the bidding of the present employer (Adewoye, 2019; Akuh, 2016).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework showing the direction of the Study



Independent Variable Dependent Variable

The framework described the connection between the variables (independent and dependent) of the study. The variables in the study institutional structure, agenda settings, recruitment practices, unemployment situation and job security as made available by the organization were independent, and industrial conflict was the dependent variable which was the subject of interest in this work.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The study was carried out in Lagos Metropolis using unionized organizations in the manufacturing industry as the unit of analysis and made use of both primary and secondary data as the sources of data collection. The process of data collection started with a pilot study which lasted for three weeks in August 2021 after necessary moderation to the questionnaire structured along the Likert 5-point rating Scales (Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4 and Strongly Agree = 5), it was administered to the 267 respondents selected in the unionized organizations in the manufacturing sector within the three Senatorial districts (West, South, and East) in Lagos Metropolis within 4months October 2021 – January 2022. Lagos West has 24 organizations, Lagos South has 19 organizations, and Lagos East with 10 organizations totaling 53 organizations in all with 800 employees, The selection of the respondents took into consideration the number of unionized organizations in each of the Senatorial districts and Yamane's formula for sample size derivation was used to get the sample size which was 267. A proportional sampling technique was applied to get the sample

size of 267 from the population size of 800 employees and the random sampling technique was used in the administration of the questionnaire to the respondents.

The research questionnaire has three sections labeled A, B, and C, each with distinct information. Section A on the biodata of the respondents, Section B on the independent variable (institutional structures, agenda settings, recruitment practices, unemployment situation, job security) and Section C has information on the dependent variable (industrial conflict). Cronbach's Alpha value was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument. Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, and Ringle(2019) posited that when the value of coefficient alpha is less than 0.60 it is poor and when the value is within the range of 0.60 to 0.70, it is considered to be good while the range that is greater than 0.80 is excellent. Cronbach's Alpha values for institutional structures, agenda settings, recruitment practices, unemployment situation, job security, and industrial conflict were as follows 0.850, 0.917, 0.876, 0.841, 0.921, and 0.877 respectively. For the study's independent and dependent variables, the values ranged from 0.80 to 0.92 which was in agreement with the position of Hair,*et al*,(2019) and therefore confirmed the excellent reliability and adequacy of the research instrument. Descriptive (Percentage, Mean, and Kendall's W test) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression methods) were employed to analyze the data to achieve the objectives of the study.

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Information

Demographic variables	Respondents' Characteristics	Frequency Distribution	Percentage
Gender	Male	173	65%
	Female	94	35%
	Total	267	100%
Marital Status	Single	56	21%
	Married	182	68%
	Divorced	8	3%
	Widow	21	8%
	Total	267	100%
Educational Qualifications	ND/NCE	59	22%
	B.Sc./BA/B. ED/HND	114	43%
	M.Sc./MBA	50	19%
	Professional Membership	44	16%
	Total	267	100%

Age Bracket	Less than 25 years	42	16%
	25yrs – 35yrs	60	22%
	36yrs – 45yrs	84	31%
	46yrs – 55yrs	50	19%
	56yrs & above	31	12%
	Total	267	100%
Work experience	Less than 5 years	43	16%
	6yrs - 10yrs	69	26%
	11yrs - 15yrs	103	39%
	16yrs and above	51	19%
	Total	267	100%

Source: Survey 2021

The idea behind the information in Table 1 was contingent on the need to understand the characteristics of the respondents for this study regarding gender, marital status, educational qualifications, age, and work experience. From the gender, it was obvious that out of 267 respondents selected from unionized organizations in Lagos Metropolis, 173 of the respondents were male representing 65% while the remaining 94 respondents were female representing 35%, this signified that the selected unionized organizations in the three Senatorial districts were dominated by male counterparts. It was also evident that majority of these respondents 68% were married which signified that 182 respondents were married although 11% of the respondents were once married and divorced (3%) and death (8%) compelled them to be out of marriage. From the educational qualifications, 62% of the majority of these respondents in the selected unionized organizations attained a university education and it can therefore be deduced that the literacy level of the respondents was high while the age of the respondents showed that the respondents in the selected unionized organizations were relatively young and lie within maturity range going by the percentage proportion of the respondents that were married (68%) and the age range where 36yrs – 45yrs and 46yrs – 55yrs dominated as 50% of the respondents were within this range which seems to be the active age in service and the work experience of the respondents indicated that the respondents' experience was high ranging from 6yrs - 15yrs representing 65% and this was considered very good and adequate for the study employee silence and industrial conflict can be well-positioned when there is a long history behind it, especially in the unionized organization.

Objective 1: Factors Responsible for Employee Silence in the Selected Unionized Organizations

Many factors responsible for employee silence had been identified in the extant literature however, the peculiarity of the Nigerian business environment as evident in the focus of the study and unit of analysis, the factors in these areas deviated a little to include

- i. institutional structures,
- ii. agenda-setting,
- iii. recruitment practices,
- iv. unemployment situation and
- v. job security

Objective 1: Factors Responsible for Employee Silence in the Selected Unionized Organizations

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Factors Responsible for Employee Silence in the Selected Unionized Organizations

S/N	Variables	Measurement Scales / Percentage SD(1)					Mean Scores	Standard deviation	Rank Score	Remark
		D(2)	N(3)	A(4)	SA(5)					
1	Institutional Structures	46(17)	27(10)	40(15)	66(25)	88(33)	3.61	1.197	4	A
2	Agenda Settings	71(27)	67(25)	37(14)	25(9)	67(25)	2.87	1.234	5	D
3	Recruitment practices	10(4)	37(14)	32(12)	97(36)	91(34)	3.74	1.071	3	A
4	Unemployment Situation	19(7)	29(11)	13(5)	123(46)	83(31)	4.05	0.941	1	A
5	Job security	9(3)	40(15)	26(10)	127(48)	65(24)	3.95	0.948	2	A

Source: Field Study, 2021

Remark, where Agreement (A) is ≥ 3.0 and Disagreement (D), is ≤ 3.0

To achieve this objective, descriptive statistics (percentage, mean and standard deviation) with deduction through ranking and Kendall’s W coefficient of concordance (level of agreement) were applied to the data collected for the study. The descriptive statistics results and Kendall’s W coefficient were presented in Table 2 and Table 3 respectively while the scale of measurement used was Likert’s scale and the benchmark criterion for the decision was set for agreement at the weighted mean of ≥ 3.0 and that of disagreement was set at the weighted mean of ≤ 3.0 . From Table 2, it was found that the unemployment situation has the

highest mean score of 4.05 with a standard deviation of 0.941, this was followed by job security with a mean score of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 0.948 and next to this was recruitment practices with a mean score of 3.74 and standard deviation of 1.071. After recruitment practices were institutional structure with a mean score of 3.61 and a corresponding standard deviation of 1.197 while

Agenda Settings was ranked last with a mean score of 2.87 and standard deviation of 1.234.

In all, five (5) factors were identified and the unemployment situation has the highest mean score to imply that the non-availability of alternative jobs in the country is a major factor to explain the rationale behind employee silence in unionized organizations. This was also evident in the factor that followed which was job security implying that employees are conscious about their job retention and this has been given utmost priority overexpression of ideas, information, and opinions about work-related improvements and on this basis will avoid embarrassment, perceived danger, and confrontation with the employer. This was supported by the benchmark criterion decision set for agreement at the weighted mean of ≥ 3.0 and 77% of the respondents agreed that the unemployment situation was a major concern that has made employees remain silent in the unionized organizations that were expected to speak out and protect the interests of members against employers' oppression or misuse of prerogative power. Aside from job security, institutional structures and recruitment practices also contributed immensely to employee silence in unionized organizations. Employers through the management representatives placed a high premium on employees' background and reference checks and any record of a tendency to oppose, confront, or element of protection or promoting workers' interests or rights would be considered unsuitable and where erroneously employed would be sacked before others are influenced along with such belief and philosophy. However, agenda-setting was not considered one of the factors responsible for employee silence in unionized organizations as evident in the disagreement criterion set at the weighted mean of ≤ 3.0 . The implication is that the employees in these selected unionized organizations knew and understood why silence is prominent among them and was not influenced by the media 's pressure concerning the discussion of their silence in the world of work. thus, truly affected by the unemployment situation and job security. Therefore, these factors will remain dominant forces in the wake of understanding why employees remain silent in the workplace until the unemployment situation and job security atmosphere improve.

Table 3. Kendall’s W Test and Mean Rank Statistics

Variable factors	N	Mean Rank	Kendall’s W ^a	Chi-Square (X ²)	Df	Asymp. Sig.	Rank Score
Institutional Structures	267	3. 88	.634	145.773	4	.000	3
Agenda Settings	267	2.99					5
Recruitment practices	267	3.96					4
Unemployment Situation	267	4.10					2
Job security	267	4.21					1

Kendall’s Coefficient of Concordance

Source: Field Study, 2021

In Table 3, data used in Table 2 for objective 1 were subjected to Kendall’s coefficient of concordance to further know the extent of agreement among the respondents concerning the factors responsible for employee silence in the selected unionized organizations. The result was analyzed in comparison with the result in Table 2, the mean in Table scores in Table 2 was not exactly with that of Table 3 but has many in common. Table 3 ranked job security highest followed by the employment situation and this variance in ranking does not change the significance of the factors as each serve as a complement to the other while other factors were in the same position as ranked in Table 2. However, the two analyses as presented met the benchmark criterion that was set at a weighted mean score of ≥ 3.0 for agreement and ≤ 3.0 for disagreement for decision and were adequately satisfied. The deduction from Kendall’s coefficient is a measure of agreement among raters where $W = 0.634$, $X^2=145.773$, $Df = 4$, and $Sig. = 0.000$ was that the level of agreement was high and strong to imply that the respondents believed in the factors responsible for employee silence in the selected unionized organizations. Hence, objective 1 was achieved.

Objective 2: The Relationship between Employee Silence Components and Industrial Conflict

Table 4. Correctional Analysis of Employee Silence and Industrial Conflict Contents

Variables	IS	AS	RP	US	JS	I	F
Institutional Structures (IS)	1.000						
Agenda-Setting (AS)	0.335	1.000					
Recruitment practices (RP)	0.573	-0.237	1.000				
Unemployment Situation (US)	0.634	0.587	0.633	1.000			

Job Security (JS)	0.444	0.497	0.672	0.611	1.000		
Informal (I)	-0.233	0.423	0.345	0.559	0.682	1.000	
Formal (F)	0.662	0.256	0.555	0.672	0.682	0.558	1.000

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

Table 4 has information on the correlational relationship between employee silence and industrial conflict contents wherein the degree of relationship between and among the independent and dependent variables were depicted. The Table revealed that informal conflict has positive correlation with agenda-setting (0.423, $p < 0.05$), recruitment practices (0.345, $p < 0.05$), unemployment situation (0.559, $p < 0.05$) and job security (0.682, $p < 0.05$) while the correlation with institutional structures was negative ($r = -0.233$, $p < 0.05$). The implication was that variables with positive correlation signify a positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables i.e. the increase in one which also yields an increase in the other. For example, informal conflict and agenda-setting, where the pressure exerted by external part as a result of media attention are high by way of demanding functional roles from members of the selected unionized organizations, the greater the potential of the members in the organization to refrain from being silence and expression of dissatisfaction is overtly expressed and same goes for recruitment practices, unemployment situation, and job security. However, the correlation of informal conflict with institutional structure was negative which suggests an inverse relationship i.e. increase in the level of degree of one of the variables will yield a decrease in the level of degree of the other variable. In this case, a highly institutional structure will reduce the expression of informal conflict as decision-making is highly centralized and the opinions or ideas of the members of the organization are not reckoned with. For the formal industrial conflict, it has positive correlation with all the independent variables i.e. institutional structures ($r = 0.662$, $p < 0.05$), agenda-setting ($r = 0.256$, $p < 0.05$), recruitment practices ($r = 0.555$, $p < 0.05$), unemployment situation ($r = 0.672$, $p < 0.05$) and job security ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.05$). The positive correlation showed that there is a direct relationship, however, the relationship with agenda-setting is weak while that of institutional structures, unemployment situation, and job security was found to be strong.

Table 5. Summary of the Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	0.713	0.508	0.503	0.550

- a. Dependent Variable: Industrial Conflict
- b. Predictors: (Constant), institutional structures, agenda settings, recruitment practices, unemployment situation, job security.

The result from the regression Table 5 further confirmed the relationship between employee silence and industrial conflict where the value of $r = 0.713$ and the amount of total variation in the dependent variable due to the independent variable was revealed where the value of $R^2 = 0.508$ to indicate that there is 51% variation in the dependent variable (industrial conflict) due to a one unit change in the independent variable (institutional structures, agenda settings, recruitment practices, unemployment situation, job security).

Hypothesis

H_0 : there is no relationship between employee silence and industrial conflict

Table 6. ANOVA Result

Model		Sum of Squares	Df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	111.885	3	37.295	142.893	0.000 ^b
	Residual	68.723	263	0.261		
	Total	180.608	266			

- a. Dependent Variable: Industrial Conflict
- b. Predictors: (Constant), institutional structures, agenda settings, recruitment practices, unemployment situation, job security.

The result in Table 6 revealed the value of F statistics and significance level which was used to decide whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis. The decision rule was that where $F_{cal} \leq F_{tab}$, the null hypothesis would be accepted, and if otherwise to be rejected and accept the alternate hypothesis i.e. where $F_{cal} \geq F_{tab}$. From the result in table 6, $F_{cal} = 142.893$ and $F_{tab} = 2.605$ which implies that $F_{cal} \geq F_{tab}$ ($142.893 \geq 2.605$), therefore, the alternate hypothesis was accepted thus affirming that there exists a relationship between employee silence and industrial conflict. Hence, objective 2 was achieved.

Objective 3: Employee Silence Components with Contributory Propensity to Industrial Conflict

Under objective 1, five (5) different variables were identified as factors responsible for employee silence

in the selected unionized organizations including institutional structures, agenda-settings, recruitment practices, unemployment situation, and job security wherein the weighted average and Kendall’s coefficient of concordance ranked unemployment and job security respectively. This objective seeks to know among all

these variables, the contributory propensity of each of these variables that might cause the manifestation of industrial conflict in the selected unionized organizations in Lagos, Nigeria.

Table 7. Coefficient Value of Factor Responsible for Employee Silence

Variables	β	Sig	Potency
Institutional structure	0.167	0.001	4
Agenda-setting	-0.081	1.381	5
Recruitment practices	0.171	0.002	3
Unemployment situation	0.187	0.000	2
Job security	0.445	0.000	1

Source: Field Study, 2021

Table 7 showed recruitment practices were the most potent variable of all the factors responsible for employee silence for the various levels of industrial conflict in the unionized organization. The statistical contribution of job security value was $\beta = 0.445$, $p = 0.000$ to imply 44.5% of the variation in the factors responsible for various levels of industrial conflict in the unionized organization; the next factor was the unemployment situation with $\beta = 0.187$, $p = 0.000$ accounting for 18.7% of the variation and this was followed by recruitment practices with $\beta = 0.171$, $p = 0.002$ representing 17.1% of the variation in the factors responsible for the various levels of industrial conflict in the selected unionized organizations while the next factor after recruitment practices was an institutional structure with $\beta = 0.167$, $p = 0.001$ signifying 16.7% of the variation in industrial conflict. However, agenda-setting was not a unique contributor with statistical value of $\beta = -0.081$, $p = 1.381$. hence, objective 3 was achieved.

4.2. Discussion

It was found that the demographic characteristics of the respondents selected from the unionized organizations were dominated by male gender, married personnel, and educated as well as matured and experienced workforce. This was in agreement with the position of Oginni, Olaniyan, and Ajibola (2022) where it was affirmed that the workforce of unionized organizations in Nigeria is dominated by the male gender, married and educated personnel with matured and experienced personnel in their employment folds.

From objective 1, factors responsible for employee silence in the selected unionized organizations were identified to include institutional structures, agenda-setting, recruitment practices, unemployment situation, and job security and these

were in agreement with the earlier work of Bagheri et al. (2012) where fear, injustice, insecurity and administrative were considered as the main factors. The outcome of this study was also found to agree with Milliken and Morrison (2003) and Jafary et. al. (2018) where the factors were classified into three categories namely; organizational, psychological, and socio-demographic factors although Milliken and Morrison (2003) added environmental factor which made the outcome of the study to be well situated. However, the only variance was job security which can easily be inferred from fear, loss of job, and safety identified by Bagheri et al. (2012) and Milliken and Morrison (2003). Similarly, the outcome of the study confirms the different dimensions as postulated by some scholars (Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003; Brinsfield, 2013; Knoll & Dick, 2013) which explains why people remain silent in their various workplace irrespective of the nature of the organizations.

Objective 2 has its focuses on the relationship between employee silence components and industrial conflict wherein it was established that there was a relationship between the employee silence components and industrial conflict at a 0.005 level of significance. It was found that both formal and informal industrial conflict has a direct relationship with institutional structures, recruitment practices, agenda-setting, unemployment situation, and job security although institutional structures have an inverse relationship with informal industrial conflict. This outcome corroborated the earlier work of Milliken and Morrison (2003) that there was a relationship contingent upon environmental and organizational factors which can be used to explain the rationale behind employee silence and the manifestation of conflict in the workplace. Similarly, the findings of this objective were in agreement with the position expressed by Dedekuma (2011); Olawoyin (2015); Oseyomon and Eiya (2015) especially on the inverse relationship of informal industrial conflict with institutional structures and this explains why Adewoye (2019) perceived informal industrial conflict to be more dangerous than the formal industrial conflict.

Objective 3 was on employee silence components with the contributory propensity to industrial conflict. The result of the findings showed that all the factors have the propensity to contribute to the level of industrial conflict in the industrial organization except the agenda-setting which was found not to be a unique contributor, however, job security was found to be a strong contributory factor among all the employee silence components to industrial conflict which was followed by unemployment situation. This was in agreement with the work of Deniz, Noyan, and Ertosun, (2013) that most employees remain silent because of fear of losing their job and would never express any contradictory opinion thus depriving their organizations of valuable ideas or constructive criticism that would have helped to reposition the organization with a competitive edge. Similarly, the outcome

of the findings can also be situated in the works of Adewoye (2019) and Akuh (2016) that factors inside and outside the organization could be the rationale behind employee silence which serves as an impetus to constantly comb the labor market for possibility of another job while pretending to go along with the operational activities of the present organization. This outcome was also in agreement the objective 2 which established that exists a strong and direct relationship between employee silence and industrial conflict with deduction such that where job security is high, the industrial conflict will also be high and vice versa.

5. CONCLUSION

The study set out to examine the influence of employee silence on the industrial conflict in the selected unionized organizations in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria wherein factors responsible for employee silence were identified to include job security, unemployment situation, recruitment practices, institutional structures, and agenda-setting from where job security was found to be a most contributory factor among all the factors with the potential to cause industrial conflict except agenda-setting and the existence of relationship among employee silent components and forms of industrial conflict was also established. It was found that there was a direct relationship between employee silence and industrial conflict although the institutional structure has an inverse relationship with industrial conflict. Therefore, in the selected unionized organizations, the industrial conflict will manifest at a minimal level when the degree of freedom and institutional structures are balanced to an equilibrium state otherwise the organization would be losing both manpower and material resources that could have worked well for profit maximization of the organization i.e. a highly institutional structure that suppresses employee voice would make employee refrain from offering valuable ideas or express concern over issues that could bring improvement or a higher degree of freedom that would also impair operational stability via the manifestation of conflict. Job security and employment situations were found to be unique and strong contributors to industrial conflict where it could have been thought otherwise, this can be researched further to understand the rationale behind this relationship. The study was limited by the use of a self-administered survey which did not take into consideration the overall procedural behavior of employers and employees leading to silence and conflict in industrial organization, the study was restricted to Lagos metropolis, Nigeria being the commercial hub although it could have been madeto cover other major cities with many unionized manufacturing outfits to situate the results of the study for generalization and the study also made use of unionized manufacturing organizations as a unit of analysis without recourse to unionized or non-unionized organization in the service industries and other non-unionized manufacturing organizations.

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UTJECAJ ŠUTNJE ZAPOSLENIKA NA INDUSTRIJSKI KONFLIKT U ODABRANIM SINDIKALNIM ORGANIZACIJAMA U DRŽAVI LAGOS, NIGERIJA

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Sažetak

Studija se usredotočila na utjecaj šutnje zaposlenika na industrijski sukob u odabranim sindikalnim organizacijama u proizvodnoj industriji unutar Lagos Metropolis. Studija je identificirala pet čimbenika koji su bili odgovorni za šutnju zaposlenika, uključujući sigurnost posla, situaciju nezaposlenosti, praksu zapošljavanja, institucionalne strukture i postavke plana i njihove posljedice na industrijski sukob. Kao instrument istraživanja za prikupljanje podataka korišten je upitnik koji je primijenjen na 267 ispitanika, a rezultati analize podataka otkrili

su da postoji jaka povezanost između šutnje zaposlenika i industrijskog sukoba gdje je $r = 0,713$ i $R^2 = 0,508$ i utvrđeno je da sigurnost posla ($\beta = 0,445$, $p = 0,000$) više pridonosi šutnji zaposlenika na radnom mjestu, a visoko institucionalna struktura suzbija šutnju zaposlenika ($r = -0,233$, $p < 0,05$) Zaključeno je da će se industrijski sukob manifestirati na minimalnoj razini kada su stupanj sloboda i institucionalne strukture uravnotežene do stanja ravnoteže.

Ključne riječi: *industrijski sukob, šutnja zaposlenika, institucionalne strukture, planiranja, prakse zapošljavanja*

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