



Impact of employee silence on organizational performance: A case from Mogadishu universities

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ABSTRACT

Organizational performance is crucial for success in today's competitive environment. This study focuses on how employee silence affects organizational performance in Mogadishu's universities. It aims to explore three factors: the impact of employee voice, fear of retaliation, and communication climate on organizational performance. The research employed a quantitative methodology, using descriptive and correlation designs. Data was gathered through an online questionnaire from 234 respondents across both public and private universities in Mogadishu. The findings indicate a positive relationship between employee voice, fear of retaliation, communication climate, and organizational performance. The study concludes that these factors positively influence employee performance in the universities studied. It highlights the need for a culture that supports employee voice, clear policies against retaliation, and transparent communication climates in higher education. These measures are vital for organizational leaders and policymakers to improve performance and tackle issues related to employee silence in educational settings. The study suggests creating a work environment that promotes open communication, addresses fear of retaliation, and supports employee voice, which could enhance organizational performance in Somalia's higher education sector, particularly in Mogadishu's universities.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, as organizations have come to understand the value of developing a culture of open communication and employee participation, there has been an increase in interest in the relationship between employee silence and organizational performance (Alarabiat and Eyupoglu, 2022). In the early 2000s, after Milliken et al. (2003) published a work on organizational performance as its focus, employee silence gained popularity (Hyma and Nair, 2019). Organizational performance is essential for success in today's challenging and competitive business environment. What occurs if staff members keep silent about problems affecting the company? Employee silence is a phenomenon that has drawn more attention recently since it can significantly

affect organizational performance (Zehir and Erdogan, 2011).

According to Otsupius (2019), employees are an essential asset of an organization. Employees often have ideas, information, and opinions for improving work and work organizations. At every level of their work, they also face many challenges. Although they must report issues and communicate any knowledge and solutions they may have, individuals may opt to keep silent. Pirzada et al. (2020) defined Employee silence as a behavior in which employees decide to keep quiet and stop sharing their opinions inside a company to protect themselves from undesirable consequences. Financial and non-financial factors that can assess the extent to which organizational goals have been attained can be used to define organizational performance (Saqib and Arif, 2017).

Employee silence has the potential to have a substantial impact on organizational performance. Although the relationship between employee silence and organizational performance has been studied in previous studies in several contexts, universities in Mogadishu, Somalia, have received very little attention regarding its implications. Universities play a significant role in education by offering higher education opportunities. However, the frequency

and effects of employee silence within these organizations still need to be studied. Understanding the effects of employee silence on organizational performance in Mogadishu's universities is essential to addressing possible issues and creating robust improvement plans. Therefore, this study is trying to fill the gap and examine the impact of employee silence on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu. The study's first objective is the impact of employee voice on organizational performance in universities in Mogadishu. The second objective is the impact of employee fear of retaliation on organizational performance in universities in Mogadishu, and the third objective is the impact of communication climate on organizational performance in universities in Mogadishu. The study hypothesized that employee voice, fear of retaliation, and communication climate do not significantly impact organizational performance.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical foundation

Social exchange, psychological contract, and organizational justice theories are the theoretical frameworks investigating the relationship between employee silence and organizational performance. However, the study only covers two of them.

According to [Emmanuel and Al-Janat \(2022\)](#), social exchange theory holds that employees have a reciprocal relationship with their employer in providing their skills and effort for rewards such as salary, benefits, and job stability. Employees who believe their contributions are not recognized may become disengaged and less willing to speak up. The social exchange theory and the rule of reciprocity describe the analogy of preserving the balance of social exchange between employees and the organization. There are two types of silence. The first group includes behaviors that directly impact the balance of social interaction between employees and the organization, such as employee silence aimed at the organization. The second type includes quiet behaviors that have an indirect influence and are focused on specific individuals.

The organizational justice theory can be applied to understand employees' willingness to speak up, share ideas, or provide feedback in the workplace. According to this theory, employees' perceptions of fairness within the organization influence their behavior, including their willingness to voice their opinions or concerns. According to [Pirzada et al. \(2020\)](#), Organizational justice theory consists of three main components: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. Distributive justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in the outcomes they receive. If employees believe that outcomes such as rewards, recognition, or promotions are distributed fairly, they are more likely to feel comfortable expressing their opinions or challenging decisions.

Procedural justice focuses on the fairness of the processes and procedures used within the organization. When employees perceive that decision-making processes are transparent, inclusive, and unbiased, they are more likely to feel comfortable sharing their ideas or concerns. Interactional justice relates to the quality of interpersonal treatment and communication within the organization. When employees feel respected, listened to, and treated with dignity, they are more likely to feel safe and encouraged to provide feedback or voice their opinions.

2.2. Employee silence

The idea of employee silence was first presented by [Pinder and Harlos \(2001\)](#), who defined it as a specific behavior of keeping a silent attitude to avoid any unfavorable effects. It is a behavior connected with employees who need to voice their views and opinions about their work and tasks. [Xuanfang and Qiao \(2019\)](#) mentioned that employee silence is when employees avoid speaking out or sharing their ideas, concerns, and thoughts within an organization. This lack of voice may negatively impact the performance of the organization.

Employee silence reduces knowledge transfer within the organization and limits the efficient flow of information. Other evidence emphasizes that organizational silence can lead to stress, pessimism, dissatisfaction, and withdrawal of employees ([Beer and Nohria, 2000](#)). Furthermore, [Dyne et al. \(2003\)](#) studied the reasons for employees' silence negative consequences. They concluded that the meaning and concept of silence are more important than employees' contribution, and connoisseurs believe that employees' motivations depend more on contribution than silence. Silence leads to more incompatibility than contribution.

Organizational silence can hurt decision-making and transformation processes. As a result, when employees remain silent, overall organizational performance suffers ([Moghaddampour et al., 2013](#)). Therefore, organizations must create an environment where employees feel comfortable and empowered to speak up and share their ideas. By fostering open communication and creating channels for employees to express their opinions, organizations can tap into their workforce's collective intelligence and perspectives.

Similarly, a study by [Emmanuel and Al-Janat \(2022\)](#) investigated the relationship between employee silence and organizational performance in Nigeria, specifically concerning the Nigerian Institute of Chartered Accountants. The study revealed that the system and leadership style significantly impact performance. Therefore, it was advised that management set policies in place on how management should regard employee ideas and trust that employees care about what is best for the firm to lessen any potential fear that may have developed due to employees being mistreated. Although employee silence has been studied in

various contexts, relatively little is known about its antecedents. Employee silence is an issue that has been studied for many years, and there is no clear consensus about its causes. At the same time, some research suggests that employee silence results from psychological risk factors such as fear of retaliation; other research points to external antecedents or environmental factors that may be at play in influencing the phenomenon.

Hyma and Nair (2019) found that silence indicates one's attitude towards the problem or situation. In addition, Pacheco et al. (2015) revealed that psychological safety is a factor that affects employee silence. Other researchers also explained the culture of silence in an organization and how it affects the organization and employees' performance. Morrison (2023) summarized the body of work on employee voice and silence over the past decade, emphasizing the positive outcomes of employee voice.

Researchers argue that voice is associated with many positive organizational outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction, commitment, and performance. A study conducted by Saqib and Arif (2017) examined the impact of toxic leadership behaviors on organizational performance with the mediating role of employee silence in the Pakistani banking sector. The study used a quantitative approach to collect data from 715 respondents using a self-administered questionnaire. The research employed a stratified sampling technique to choose the sample from the population. The paper found that toxic leadership behaviors significantly and negatively impact organizational performance.

The literature review highlights several areas of disagreement and contradiction, such as different definitions, different outcomes, and opposing viewpoints regarding the causes and effects of employee silence. These discrepancies point to further research and a deeper understanding of the variables impacting employee silence in various organizational and cultural settings.

2.3. Employees' voice

Wilkinson et al. (2020) defined employee voice as how employees attempt to have a say about and influence their work and the organization's functioning. According to Dyne et al. (2003), employees often have ideas, information, and opinions for constructive ways to improve the work and performance of organizations. Sometimes, these employees exercise voice and express their ideas, information, and opinions; other times, they engage in silence and withhold their ideas, information, and opinions. On the surface, expressing and withholding behaviors appear opposites because silence implies not speaking, while voice implies speaking up on important issues and problems in organizations.

A study explored the relationship between employee voice, engagement, and organizational effectiveness. The study found that employee voice has a significant positive impact on employee

engagement, which in turn positively impacts organizational effectiveness. The study also suggests that employee voice can be used as an engagement strategy to increase the engagement level of employees. The findings of this study provide empirical validation to the assumption of the mediating role of engagement between employee voice and organizational effectiveness. Finally, the study provides new evidence of the relationship between the studied variables and validates their known association (Jha et al., 2019).

Kim et al. (2010) discussed the impact of team and worker representative voices on labor productivity. The authors draw data from a single industry at the establishment level and measure the extent of influence of direct and representative voices. They differentiate between different combinations of the high and low incidence of these two types of employee voice concerning labor productivity. The study found that team voice significantly contributes to enhanced worker efficiency compared to representative voice. The article concludes that there is no complementary effect and only a partial substitution effect between team and representative voice. The poorest outcomes result from a combination of low team and low representative voice.

Another study examines the impact of employee voice on organizational success in the information technology sector, specifically in Dublin-based IT companies in Ireland. It focuses on factors that influence employee voice and how employees perceive them. The study used a quantitative research approach with 62 respondents and analyzed the data using SPSS software. It found that factors related to employee-organization interactions and the employee-supervisor relationship significantly impact employee voice. The study also identified that certain factors influence employee voice in ways that help them fulfill their responsibilities within the organization. In contrast, others are connected to anticipated benefits for excellent work (Venkataramappa, 2022).

The reviewed literature draws attention to potential points of disagreement, the relationship between employee voice and participation, the effect of various expression formats on the outcome, the fact that the findings are industry-specific, and the variables affecting employee voice. These grounds of dispute help us comprehend the complicated dynamics underlying employee voice in educational organizations more effectively.

H1: There is no significant impact on employee voice on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu.

2.4. Employee fear of retaliation

According to Ryder (2021), retaliation and retaliatory action refer to any direct or indirect detrimental action that adversely affects the employment or working conditions of a staff

member, where such action has been threatened or taken to punish, intimidate, or injure an individual because that individual engaged in a protected activity. Retaliation constitutes misconduct and may result in disciplinary or other appropriate action. Employees' fear of retaliation can significantly impact organizational performance. When employees fear retaliation for reporting wrongdoing or expressing dissent, it can create a climate of silence in the organization.

This climate of silence can hinder the flow of important information, as employees may be hesitant to speak up or share any discordant opinions or negative news. As a result, valuable insights and feedback that could lead to improvements or prevent potential problems may not reach the upper levels of management. This lack of information can impede decision-making and hinder organizational performance (Wilson, 2016). Furthermore, Lestari et al. (2020) argued that when employees fear retaliation, they may be less likely to engage in whistleblowing, which can prevent the exposure of misconduct or unethical behavior within the organization. If the misconduct is not addressed and corrected, this can negatively impact the organization's reputation, employee morale, and financial stability. Moreover, the fear of retaliation can also affect employee engagement and job satisfaction.

OSHA (2013) argued that without an effective program, problems in the workplace may go unreported because workers fear retaliation for reporting concerns or feel frustration over the lack of action taken. The paper provides comprehensive guidance for employers to establish effective anti-retaliation programs, fostering a culture that values employees' concerns and prevents retaliation. This report recommends that employers review their anti-retaliation programs, involving workers and worker representatives in the evaluation process if retaliation is confirmed.

About the perception of retaliation, the complex effects of retaliation fear on organizational performance, the role of whistleblowing, the complex ramifications of retaliation fear, the efficacy of anti-retaliation programs, and the extent of worker involvement in such programs, the literature review identifies potential areas of disagreement or contradiction. These debate topics influence the discussion on how organizations should handle and lessen the detrimental impacts of retaliation.

H2: There is no significant impact on employee fear of retaliation on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu.

2.5. Communication climate

According to Lantara (2019), organizational communication climate connects individual employees and organizations. The overall climate will give clues about the beliefs and attitudes of employees towards the organization. Conceptually, it

consists of employee perceptions of information flow and the climate in which communication occurs. Some studies show a positive relationship between the communication climate in the organization and the level of employee commitment to the organization. According to Eka and Anik (2020), empirical evidence reveals a positive correlation between communication and variables of organizational performance, such as performance at work, job satisfaction, and employees' work productivity.

A positive and supportive organizational communication climate is crucial for driving organizational performance and success. Effective communication is vital in creating an organization's positive and supportive communication climate. Open, transparent, and frequent communication fosters trust among employees and facilitates better understanding and collaboration. Moreover, a positive communication climate is linked to increased employee engagement, motivation, and commitment to the organization (Khin et al., 2016). When communication is perceived as open and effective, it leads to a more positive organizational climate overall. Research has shown that a positive communication climate is positively related to engagement, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance (Ariana, 2015).

A study examined the importance of communication climate in organizing organizational work activities. It focuses on the interaction characteristics that develop communication climate and the communication dimensions related to communication climate practices. The study finds significant perception differences between employees of two public organizations, with Hospital KB practicing a more positive supportive climate than Hospital AS. The study also reveals significant relationships between all communication dimensions and climate.

Components of communication climate, the importance of successful communication, the relationship between communication climate and employee involvement, and how to measure and evaluate the communication climate are among the potential points of dispute or contradiction in the literature study. These grounds of contention add to the continuing discussion over the function and significance of organizational communication climate.

H3: There is no significant impact on communication climate on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu.

The conceptual framework in Fig. 1 shows the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

3. Research method

The study used a quantitative approach and adopted descriptive and correlation to analyze the

relationship between employee silence and organizational performance. Descriptive research design aims to provide a comprehensive and accurate description of a phenomenon or population, while correlation analysis will determine the strength and direction of the relationship. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, percentages, and tables were used to describe the targeted population. The target population for this study consists of employees from four different universities in Mogadishu. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation from different faculties and departments.

The sample size for this study was 234 employees. The dependent variable in this study is organizational performance, which will be measured using indicators such as financial performance, employee satisfaction, and student satisfaction. The independent variable is employee silence, which will be assessed through employee voice, employee fear of retaliation, and communication climate. Data was collected through an online structured questionnaire explicitly developed for this study. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with a small group of employees to evaluate its clarity, reliability, and validity. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27 was used as a statistical tool for data analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic analysis

The following demographic information about the participants was derived from the data, including gender, age, type of university, level of education, and experience.

As indicated in Table 1, most respondents were male, accounting for 91.5% of the total sample population, while females constituted only 8.5%. This shows that universities in Mogadishu hire male employees. The age distribution shows that the most significant proportion of respondents (43.6%) fell between 20 and 30, followed closely by those aged 31 to 40 (43.2%). Smaller percentages were distributed among the age groups of 41 to 50 (9.4%) and above 50 (3.8%). Regarding university type, most respondents (71.4%) attended private universities, while the remaining 28.6% attended public universities.

Regarding the level of education, the highest percentage of respondents (53.4%) held a master's degree, followed by 43.2% who had a bachelor's degree. A smaller proportion had a Ph.D. (2.6%), and the lowest percentage held a diploma (0.9%). The distribution of experience brackets shows that most respondents (35.5%) had 1-5 years of experience, followed by 5-10 years of experience (32.1%). A significant proportion of respondents had 10-15 years of experience (27.8%), while a smaller percentage had 20 or more years of experience (4.7%). This study investigated the impact of employee voice, employee fear of retaliation, and

communication climate on organizational performance. As indicated in Table 2, the results were analyzed using Pearson correlation and revealed the following.

Table 1: Gender, age, university, education, and experience respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	214	91.5
Female	20	8.5
Age		
20-30	102	43.6
31-40	101	43.2
41-50	22	9.4
50 above	9	3.8
Type of university		
Private	167	71.4
Public	67	28.6
Level of education		
Diploma	2	0.9
Bachelor	101	43.2
Master	125	53.4
Ph.D.	6	2.6
Level of experience		
1-5 years	83	35.5
5-10 years	75	32.1
10-15 years	65	27.8
20 years above	11	4.7

The correlation between employee voice and organizational performance is .457. This correlation is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating a moderate positive relationship. As employee voice increases, there is a tendency for organizational performance to improve. This implies that the organization performs better when employees feel comfortable expressing their opinions. H1 There is no significant impact of employee voice on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu, which was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is that there is a significant impact of employee voice on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu. This could be explained by the idea that a positive work environment is fostered by individuals feeling free to voice their thoughts, which may boost innovation, collaboration, and overall performance.

The correlation between fear of retaliation and organizational performance is .690. This correlation is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating a strong positive relationship. As fear of retaliation increases, organizational performance tends to decrease. This implies that a higher fear of retaliation is associated with lower organizational performance. H2 There is no significant impact of fear of retaliation on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is that there is a significant impact of fear of retaliation on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu. This shows that organizational effectiveness and performance may be hindered in workplace environments when people fear negative consequences for voicing their opinions.

The correlation between communication climate and organizational performance is .810. This correlation is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$),

indicating a strong positive relationship. Organizational performance also tends to improve as the perceived quality of the communication climate improves. This indicates a strong connection between a positive communication climate and better organizational performance. H3 There is no significant impact of communication climate on organizational performance at universities in

Mogadishu was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is that communication climate has a significant impact on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu. This highlights how crucial an environment of open and comfortable communication is to the success of an organization, as it may improve coordination, employee loyalty, and overall productivity.

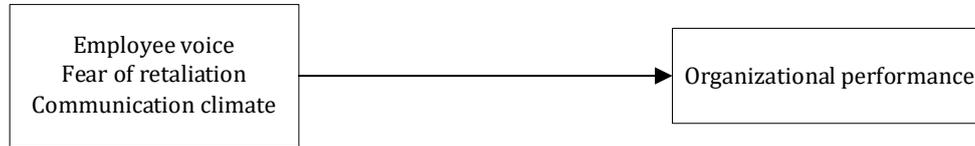


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework

Table 2: Correlation table

Objectives		Employee voice	Fear retaliation	Communication climate	Organizational performance
Employee voice	Pearson correlation	1	-.100	.085	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.129	.196	.000
	N	234	234	234	234
Fear retaliation	Pearson correlation	-.100	1	.436**	.690**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.129		.000	.000
	N	234	234	234	234
Communication climate	Pearson correlation	.085	.436**	1	.810**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.196	.000		.000
	N	234	234	234	234
Organizational performance	Pearson correlation	.457**	.690**	.810**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	234	234	234	234

** : Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Objective 1: The impact of employee voice on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu.

As shown in Table 3, the first item, "Employees in my university feel comfortable expressing their opinions freely," has a mean score of 4.09, an "agree"

rating. This means that most employees feel comfortable expressing their opinions freely. The second item, "My university encourages employees to voice their concerns and ideas," also has a mean score of 4.10, an "agree" rating. This means that most employees feel that their university encourages them to voice their concerns and ideas.

Table 3: Employee voice on organizational performance

Items	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Interpretation
Employees at my University feel comfortable expressing their opinions freely	234	4.09	.898	Agree
My university encourages employees to voice their concerns and ideas	234	4.10	.928	Agree
Employee voice suppression hinders the resolution of issues at the university	234	3.95	.952	Agree
The management takes action to suppress employee opinions or ideas	234	3.93	.919	Agree
Employee voice is positively linked to organizational performance	234	4.18	.920	Agree
Mean average		4.05		

The third item, "Employee voice suppression hinders the resolution of issues in the university," has a mean score of 3.95, an "agree" rating. This means that most employees believe that employee voice suppression hinders the resolution of issues in the University. The fourth item, "The management takes action to suppress employee opinions or ideas," has a mean score of 3.93, which is also an "agree" rating. This means that most employees believe that the management takes action to suppress employee opinions or ideas. The fifth item, "I believe that employee voice is positively linked to organizational performance," has a mean score of 4.18, which is an "agree" rating. Most employees believe that employee voice is positively linked to organizational performance.

The mean average of 4.05 suggests that employees have a favorable view of employee voice in their university. This is a good sign, as employee voice can benefit organizations in many ways. For

example, employee voice can help to improve communication, problem-solving, and decision-making. It can also help to identify and address issues early on before they become more significant problems.

Objective 2: The impact of employee fear of retaliation on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu.

As indicated in Table 4, the first item, "Employees in my university fear negative consequences if they speak up against issues or concerns," has a mean score of 3.78, an "agree" rating. This means that most employees in your university fear negative consequences if they speak up against issues or concerns. The second item, "Fear of retaliation affects employees' willingness to share their ideas openly," also has a mean score of 3.92, an "agree" rating. This means that most employees believe fear

of retaliation affects their willingness to share their ideas openly. The third item, "The fear of retaliation hinders the flow of information in the university," has a mean score of 3.58, which is also an "agree" rating. This means that most employees believe that fear of retaliation hinders the flow of information at the University. The fourth item, "I believe that

reducing employee fear of retaliation would positively impact organizational performance," has a mean score of 3.78, an "agree" rating. This means that most employees believe reducing employee fear of retaliation would positively impact organizational performance.

Table 4: Employee fear of retaliation on organizational performance

Items	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Interpretation
Employees in my University fear negative consequences if they speak up against issues or concerns	234	3.78	1.081	Agree
Fear of retaliation affects employees' willingness to share their ideas openly	234	3.92	.973	Agree
The fear of retaliation hinders the flow of information in the University	234	3.58	1.042	Agree
I believe that reducing employee fear of retaliation would positively impact organizational performance	234	3.78	1.154	Agree
The fear of retaliation impacts employee morale and job satisfaction within the University	234	3.76	1.030	Agree
Mean average		3.76		

The fifth item, "The fear of retaliation impacts employee morale and job satisfaction within the University," has a mean score of 3.76, which is also an "agree" rating. This means that most employees believe that fear of retaliation impacts employee morale and job satisfaction within the University. The mean average of 3.76 suggests that employees have an agreed view of the fear of retaliation in their university. However, the fact that the mean scores for the other items are all above 3.5 suggests that employees believe that fear of retaliation is a serious issue that needs to be addressed.

Objective 3: The impact of communication climate on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu.

As shown in Table 5, the first item, "My University fosters a positive communication climate where ideas are welcomed and respected," has a mean score of 3.22, a "neutral" rating. This means that most employees do not agree or disagree that their university fosters a positive communication climate. The second item, "Effective communication

practices positively influence organizational performance," has a mean score of 3.88, an "agree" rating. Most employees believe that effective communication practices positively influence organizational performance. The third item, "A transparent communication climate fosters a better understanding of organizational goals," has a mean score of 3.85, which is also an "agree" rating. Most employees believe a transparent communication climate fosters a better understanding of organizational goals. The fourth item, "Poor communication climate negatively affects the decision-making process in the university," has a mean score of 3.79, which is also an "agree" rating. This means that most employees believe that poor communication climate negatively affects the decision-making process in the University. The fifth item, "I believe that improving the communication climate would lead to better organizational performance," has a mean score of 3.98, an "agree" rating. Most employees believe improving the communication climate would lead to better organizational performance.

Table 5: Communication climate on organizational performance

Items	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Interpretation
My university fosters a positive communication climate where ideas are welcomed and respected	234	3.22	1.219	Neutral
Effective communication practices positively influence organizational performance	234	3.88	1.036	Agree
A transparent communication climate fosters a better understanding of organizational goals	234	3.85	1.056	Agree
Poor communication climate negatively affects the decision-making process at the University	234	3.79	1.151	Agree
I believe that improving the communication climate would lead to better organizational performance	234	3.98	1.106	Agree
Mean average		3.74		

The mean average of 3.74 suggests that employees have an agreed view of the communication climate in their university. However, the fact that the mean scores for the other items are all above 3.5 suggests that employees believe that communication is essential and that it can have a positive impact on the organization.

5. Discussions

The study's findings show that employee voice significantly impacted employees' overall performance. The p-value of <0.05 shows a

statistically significant relationship between employee voice and organizational performance in universities in Mogadishu. This implies that the organization performs better when employees feel comfortable expressing their opinions. These findings concur with prior research conducted by Wilkinson et al. (2020), who found that employees have ideas and opinions for constructive ways to improve work and organizational performance.

The study's findings also revealed that employee fear of retaliation significantly impacted organizational performance. The p-value of <0.05 indicates a statistically significant association

between employee voice of retaliation and overall organizational performance in Mogadishu higher education, with high fear of retaliation associated with lower organizational performance. It suggests that as far as increases, organizational performance tends to decrease. The findings of this study agree that when employees fear retaliation for reporting wrongdoing or expressing dissent, it can create a climate of silence in the organization. The present study's results are consistent with previous studies (Wilson, 2016). He revealed that a lack of information from employees can impede decision-making and hinder organizational performance.

The paper also found that Communication climate had a strong positive relationship with organizational performance. The p-value of <0.05 indicates a statistically significant relationship between communication climate and overall organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu with a higher level of communication climate is related to better organizational performance. As the quality of the communication climate improves, organizational performance also tends to improve. It also implies that effective communication can enhance the performance of the organization. The study's findings align with those of Eka and Anik (2020), who demonstrated a positive correlation between communication and various aspects of organizational performance, including work performance, job satisfaction, and employee productivity.

The study's exclusive focus on Mogadishu universities may limit the findings' applicability to other contexts or kinds of organizations. Variations in culture, organization, and geography may impact how employee voice, retaliation fear, communication environment, and organizational performance interact. Response bias linked to gender may be introduced by the large percentage of male respondents (91.5%). The study's generalizability and comprehension of gender-specific dynamics in the workplace may be impacted by the underrepresentation of female employees' opinions and experiences.

6. Conclusion and suggestions

The study aimed to examine employee silence's impact on organizational performance at universities in Mogadishu. The presence of a statistically significant association between employee voice, fear of retaliation, and communication climate and organizational performance suggests that the three variables positively impact employee performance in the targeted universities in Mogadishu. According to the findings, employee voice has a statistically significant and moderately positive relationship with organizational performance in Mogadishu universities.

Organizations perform better when employees feel safe expressing their thoughts. Employee retaliation fear is statistically significant and strongly related to organizational performance. Fear of

retaliation is linked to lower organizational performance, potentially generating a climate of silence. Organizational performance has a statistically significant positive association with communication climate. A positive communication climate is associated with improved organizational performance, as good communication practices can improve overall performance.

According to the study, organizations should design clear anti-retaliation policies and processes that safeguard employees who express concerns or report difficulties and foster an open and transparent communication climate in which ideas are encouraged, appreciated, and acted upon. Universities in Mogadishu should also foster a culture that recognizes and encourages employee involvement, suggestions, and feedback. Make it possible for employees to communicate their thoughts and views without fear of retaliation. Higher education institutions in Mogadishu can establish a more inclusive, open, and communicative work atmosphere that empowers employees, eliminates the fear of retaliation, and ultimately contributes to enhanced organizational performance by implementing these suggestions.

The study's conclusions emphasize how critical it is to foster an environment where open communication is encouraged, fear of retaliation is actively addressed, and employee voice is constantly supported. The resulting changes benefit particular employees and can significantly improve organizational performance in Somalia's higher education institutions, especially considering Mogadishu's universities. The primary focus of this study is the impact of specific factors on organizational performance—such as employee voice, communication climate, and fear of retaliation. Confounding variables or other unexamined factors, however, might impact these associations. Increasing the number of factors that are controlled for would increase the study's resilience.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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