



# The mediating role of organizational trust in the relationship between organizational transparency and employee silence:

## Case study of economics, commercial sciences and management faculty, Setif 1 University



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### Abstract

This study examines the mediating role of organizational trust in the relationship between organizational transparency and the three types of employee silence: acquiescent silence, defensive silence, and pro-social silence, among university professors, represented by the faculty members of the Faculty of Economics, commercial sciences, and Management Sciences at Setif 1 University. The sample size consisted of 151 professors from the same faculty. Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the hypotheses. The results showed that acquiescent silence is the only type of silence affected by both organizational transparency and organizational trust with a full mediation from organizational trust. In contrast, the other two types of silence, defensive silence and pro-social silence, were not affected by either organizational transparency or organizational trust, neither directly nor through mediation.

### Keywords

Organizational transparency;  
Organizational trust;  
Acquiescent silence;  
Defensive silence;  
Pro-social silence.

### الكلمات المفتاحية

الشفافية التنظيمية؛  
الثقة التنظيمية؛  
صمت الإذعان؛  
الصمت الدفاعي؛  
الصمت؛  
الاجتماعي الإيجابي.

### الدور الوسيط للثقة التنظيمية في علاقة الشفافية التنظيمية بصمت الأفراد دراسة حالة كلية العلوم الاقتصادية والتجارية وعلوم التسيير جامعة سطيف 1 ملخص

تختبر هذه الدراسة الدور الوسيط للثقة التنظيمية في العلاقة بين الشفافية التنظيمية وأنواع صمت الأفراد الثلاثة: صمت الإذعان، الصمت الدفاعي، الصمت الاجتماعي الإيجابي لدى الأساتذة الجامعي ممثلاً بأساتذة كلية العلوم الاقتصادية والتجارية وعلوم التسيير بجامعة سطيف 1. بلغ حجم العينة المدروسة 151 أستاذاً بذات الكلية. تم استخدام المعادلات الهيكلية بالمربعات الصغرى لاختبار الفرضيات. بينت النتائج أن صمت الإذعان هو النوع الوحيد الذي يتأثر بالشفافية التنظيمية والثقة التنظيمية؛ بحيث تؤثر عليه الشفافية تأثيراً كلياً بوساطة من الثقة. بينما لا يتأثر النوعان الآخران من الصمت: الصمت الدفاعي والصمت الاجتماعي الإيجابي لا بالشفافية التنظيمية ولا بالثقة التنظيمية، لا بشكل مباشر ولا بوساطة.

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## **I- Introduction :**

Organizational transparency and trust have gained considerable attention in contemporary research on organizational behavior, particularly concerning their impact on employee attitudes and behaviors in different fields amongst academic and higher education field (Atalay, Birincioglu, & Acunen, 2022) (Akar, 2018) (Wehmeier & Raaz, 2012) (Lin & Shin, 2021). One of the important attitudes and behaviors in the academic field where teachers play vital role in improving the higher education outcomes quality is employee silence (Akar, Organizational silence in educational organization: a meta-analysis study, 2018) (Alqarni, 2020) (Fapohunda, 2016) (Akin & Ulusoy, 2016). The interplay between the three variables; organizational transparency, trust, and employee silence has considerable implications for fostering a conducive and productive work atmosphere that promotes openness and engagement.

Employee silence is a crucial challenge in higher education field and can be determinantal because withholding work-related ideas and concerns, important suggestions, problem solving ideas, valuable insights... will certainly hinder innovation, fail the work issues identification and resolution, decrease the teacher's satisfaction, lead to the sense of disempowerment and many other negative results. That will all finally affect the quality of the education the teachers provide.

The issue of employee silence is associated with several factors characterizing the organizational environment. The academic researchers endeavored to identify the most important factors to handle the issue. Many researchers focused on organizational trust as an antecedent of employee silence in academic and other fields (Rhee, 2015) (Fard & Karimi, 2015) (Karabay, Sener, & Tesergil, 2018) (Saglam A. C., 2016). Organizational trust means that employees' preparedness to accept their organization's actions based on their beliefs that it acts competently and ethically and cares about the employees' interests. When trust is settled and constant in the workplace, the employee feels free and secure in expressing himself, his ideas, his opinions, his criticism without fear of negative repercussions or of the consequences of speaking up.

Additionally, previous studies (Rawlins, 2008) (Solteo & Schneider, 2022) indicate that organizations involving open communication, open sharing of information, decisions and processes with their members succeed in building organizational trust and reducing uncertainties through impacting their perception of fairness and integrity.

Although the studies examined the relationship between organizational trust and employee silence and the relationship between organizational transparency and trust, only very limited number of studies focused on the effect of organizational transparency on employee silence. In particular, there is no previous study that examined the mediation of organizational trust between organizational transparency and employee silence. Consequently, this study comes to fill in this research gap by testing that mediating role among university teachers precisely the teachers of Economics, trade and management faculty in Setif 1 University by answering the following research question:

### **Does organizational trust mediate the effect of organizational transparency on employee silence?**

By examining this relationship, the research seeks to provide insights into how transparency initiatives can foster trust and reduce silence, thereby contributing to a more open and communicative academic environment. The findings of this study will have significant implications for policy-making and administrative practices within universities, ultimately enhancing the organizational climate and educational outcomes. This paper will be organized into three main sections. The first section reviews the relevant literature, builds the hypotheses, and provides the theoretical framework. The research design and data analysis are detailed in the second section in addition to providing and discussing the results. The last section provides the conclusion, the research limitations and future directions.

## **II- Literature review and hypotheses development:**

The nature of this study necessitates beginning with the theoretical background of the key concepts outlined in its title: employee silence, organizational transparency, and organizational trust. To ensure brevity and precision, the focus of this theoretical background will be first on clarifying the definitions of the three concepts, followed by an identification of the measurement dimensions for each. This will facilitate the development of the study's model and the determination of the relationships between its variables, which will be formulated as hypotheses to be tested throughout the course of the study.

### **II.1. Literature review:**

#### **II.1.1. Employee Silence**

Although employee silence has been a dominant and progressing subject since the 1970s, it is a concept that can be regarded differently; depending on several approaches. (Morrison & Milliken, 2000) early defined the employee silence phenomenon as not giving sufficient information by the employee; in reaction to troubles and complications that

the organization can face. (Pinder & Harlos, 2001) believe that due to apprehension about adverse outcomes, and absence of psychological safety, silence extends to employees concealing their opinions, worries, and recommendations that senior staff could take certain actions if they knew about it in advance. In this context, (Brinsfield et al, 2009) claimed that it is possible silence could be contagious among team members; even if it started at first at an individual level and if many employees are not willing to make their voices heard. Silence also might be found at different organizational levels.

Employee silence was conceptualized by (Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003) across three key dimensions: acquiescent silence, defensive silence, and prosocial silence. Acquiescent silence occurs when employees withhold information because they feel that speaking up will not make a difference. Defensive silence, on the other hand, is a protective mechanism where employees remain silent to avoid negative consequences, such as retaliation or conflict. Lastly, prosocial silence involves withholding information to benefit others, such as protecting colleagues from criticism or embarrassment

### **II.1.2. Organizational transparency**

Organizational transparency definitions differ according to the researchers' domains and specialty but they are common in focusing on the relationship between the organization and one or multiple stakeholders (internal or external). For example; marketing researchers focused on consumers by giving them the information they need about the companies' products and services. Finance and accountability researchers focus on financial operators (marketing policy, financial market...). Whereas behavior researchers focus on employees (leadership, organizational culture, organizational trust...) (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2014).

Transparency can be defined from two perspectives. The first concentrates on the sender-oriented way which focuses on clarity, accessibility, and availability of information. The second adds the receiver who should understand the information he received. For example, understanding why, when, and how a decision is made and applied. (Wehmeier & Raaz, 2012). But Rawlins (Rawlins, Give the emperor a mirror: toward developing a stakeholder measurement of organizational transparency, 2009) pointed out that organizational transparency is not only about the information side where information is truthful, substantial, and useful but it requires also both participatory and accountability sides. Participatory means the participation in acquiring, distributing, and creating knowledge, the availability of a truthful communication of the reality and the events happening in the organization, and the substantial completeness by providing true and complete information for those who need it. Accountability means that the organization is accountable for its actions, words, and decisions as they are available for others to see and evaluate.

Organizational transparency may be divided into dimensions. Information transparency which concentrates on the information quality specifically relates to disclosure and clarity. In other words; it means how clearly and openly an organization shares information that is critical to its functioning, including organizational changes, decisions, and performance metrics (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2014, pp. 1788-1802). Procedural transparency, on the other hand, emphasizes the processes that underpin decision-making, including how fair and open these processes are perceived to be by employees (Rawlins, 2008). Finally, accountability focuses on how the organization holds itself responsible for its actions, creating an environment of trust and openness. Rawlins 2009 proposed a stakeholder model to measure it with three transparency reputation traits (integrity, respect for others, and openness) and four transparency efforts (participation, substantial information, accountability, and secrecy).

### **II.1.3. Organizational Trust**

Organizational trust has several definitions. It may be a psychological state of mind which means the employees' confidence in their organization's fairness, integrity, and reliability (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Also, it is often defined as the willingness of employees to be vulnerable based on their perception of the organization's competence, benevolence, and integrity. (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007, p. 911) To sum up the definitions of trust (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012) provide a multilevel-multireferent model of trust that differentiates between trust at different levels and in different referents. The levels are the individual's degree of trust, the trust collectively shared by individuals, and the aggregated degree of trust among the organization's members. While the referents are interpersonal trust such as trust in leaders or in partners and trust in a collectivity of independent people with shared goals and trust in the entity of an organization. In all cases (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012) conclude that the definitions of trust focus on two dimensions: positive expectations of trustworthiness and willingness to accept vulnerability or both dimensions.

Organizational trust can be broken down into three main famous dimensions: trust in leadership (vertical trust), trust in colleagues (lateral trust), and trust in the organizational system (institutional trust) (Ellonen, Blomqvist, & Puumalainen, 2008, p. 162). Lateral and vertical trust are interpersonal trust in nature because they refer to the interactions between employees (lateral) and between employees and their leaders (vertical). While institutional trust is impersonal because it means trust in the organization's fairness and justice in its procedures, processes, structure, strategy, roles, and systems....

## II. 2. Hypotheses development:

Previous studies have focused largely on examining the relationships network between this study's three constructs: organizational transparency, organizational trust and employee silence. Organizational transparency is a known antecedent of organizational trust. Previous research has shown that when organizations are open about their goals, decisions, and challenges, employees are more likely to trust the organization (Zainab, Akbar, & Siddiqui, 2022), (Pirson & Malhotra, 2008). The relationship between organizational transparency and employee silence is not largely examined but the studies indicates that the open communication which is in the heart of transparency reduces the silence behavior of employees because when employees perceive transparency in their organizations' processes, they will be more likely to express their opinions and less likely to feel the need to withhold them. (John & Manikandan, 2019), (Safary, Yazidanpanah, & Masoomi, 2019) and the study of (Vakola & Bouradas, 2005) proved that the communication opportunities affect the employee silence behavior as one construct without dividing it into its types. Furthermore, the study of (Sargazi & Ramrodi, 2024) proved that organizational transparency affects the employee voice. Additionally, previous studies of (Saglam, 2016), (Fard & Karimi, 2015) proved that organizational trust affects employee silence.

In conclusion, previous studies have demonstrated a relationship between organizational transparency and organizational trust and they indicate that transparent communication may lead to decrease the silence behavior among employees. They have also shown that organizational trust has an impact on employee silence. This opens the possibility to hypothesize that organizational trust mediates the relationship between organizational transparency and employee silence, particularly given the scarcity of studies that have tested this hypothesis. Consequently, this study posits that the three types of silence are influenced by organizational transparency through the mediation of organizational trust:

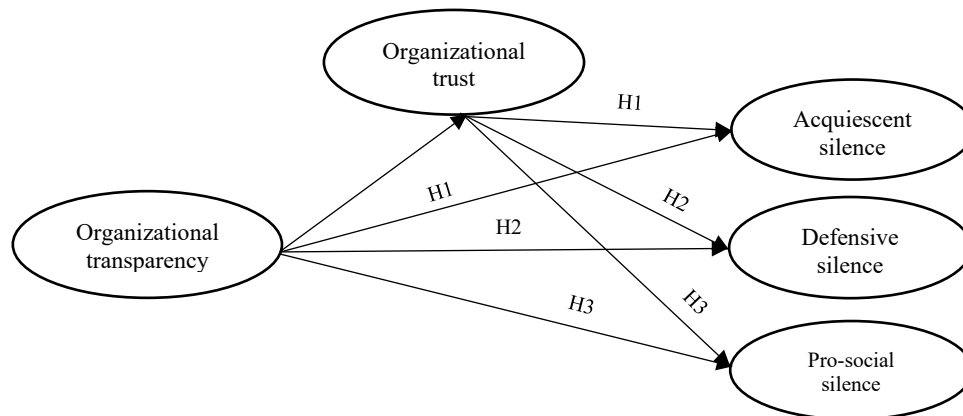
H1 Organizational trust mediates the negative effect of organizational transparency on acquiescent silence.

H2 Organizational trust mediates the negative effect of organizational transparency on defensive silence.

H3 Organizational trust mediates the negative effect of organizational transparency on pro-social silence.

The following figure illustrates the study's variables and the hypothesized inter-relationships between them which will be examined through the adoption of a process, oriented hypothesis-based research:

**Figure 1. The conceptual framework and hypotheses**



## III– Methods and Materials:

### III.1. Methodological approach:

In line with this study's objective concerning the role played by organizational trust as a mediator in the relationship between organizational transparency and employee silence, the most appropriate approach is post-positivism paradigm. According to this approach, previous studies related were reviewed to determine the definitions and dimensions of the studies constructs: organizational transparency, organizational trust, employee silence. Then the hypotheses were formulated by examining the relationship between the three variables, identifying those that were substantiated and those that have not. Finally, to ensure the objectivity required by this paradigm, a quantitative approach based on structured questionnaire was used.

### III.2. Measures:

To ensure the accurate measurement of all the constructs of this study (organizational transparency, organizational trust, employee silence), validated reflective scales with multi-items were adapted from the literature and used. The degree of agreement on each item in all used scales was evaluated using 5-point scale (from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Organizational transparency is a second order construct measured by Brad Rawlins scale (Rawlins, 2008). It contains four subconstructs: communication efforts are participative (5 items), communication efforts provide substantial information (5 items), communication efforts provide accountability (5 items), and communication efforts are secretive.

The fourth and last subconstruct wasn't used because Rawlins indicates that it was not significant contributor in the model of transparency (Rawlins, 2008, p. 13). Organizational trust is also a second order construct that contains three subconstructs. The first is lateral trust. It was measured by adapting the scale of Spreitzer and Mishra 1999 (5 items). The second is vertical trust that was measured by adapting the scale of Tyler 2003 and Robinson 1996 and Gillespie 2003 (5 items). The third subconstruct is institutional trust. It was measured by adapting Mayer and Davis 1999 and Brad Rawlins scales (7 items). All the mentioned scales except Rawlins's were gathered in the study of (Dietz & Hartog, 2006) where they gathered the most famous scales to explain and demonstrate how trust is measured in organizations. Employee silence was measured as a first order construct by measuring each of its types separately using Van Dyne scale (Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003): acquiescent silence (5 items), defensive silence (5 items) and prosocial silence (5 items). The questionnaire was organized and translated into Arabic to distribute it on the sample respondents.

### **III.3. Sample and data collection:**

The empirical data necessary to reach this study's goal were collected by distributing a questionnaire to the teachers of economics, commercial sciences and management faculty in Setif 1 University. The distribution was via google forms and hand to hand to ensure that all the faculty's teachers participate. 162 questionnaires were returned, 11 of them were eliminated as they were not totally completed and 151 remaining questionnaires were used in this study. 62.3% of the respondents were females, the majority of the respondents 64.5% have an experience of 6-15 years and 13.2% have an experience of more than 16 years, 23.8% of the respondents were assistant teachers, 55% were lecturers and 21.2% were professors. this will help them to give accurate answers that reflect the reality of the studies constructs.

### **II.4. Data analysis:**

To test this study's hypotheses, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is used. This method is chosen as it deals with complex models with more than two reflective unobserved variables and as the sample size is not very large, and also as it helps to identify the key drivers of a construct (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012). Alongside, Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS is also used in data entry and in identifying the sample characteristics. The empirical study is conducted following three main steps:

- Testing the measurement model: The measurement model deals with evaluating the outer model focusing on reliability and validity of each construct in the study's model.
- Statistically testing the respondents' answers on the questionnaire items and their agreement levels on each item using a set of descriptive measures (the mean, the standard deviation).
- Analyzing the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships among the variables. The tests used are VIF (Collinearity statistics which must be less than 5),  $R^2$  (2% - 13% weak effect, 13% - 26% medium effect, more than 26% strong effect) (Cohen, 1988, pp. 413-414),  $F^2$  (2% - 15% weak effect, 15% - 35% medium effect, more than 35% strong effect and  $Q^2$  to test the model's predictive power (Shmueli, et al.)

## **IV- Results and discussion:**

### **IV.1. Measurement model:**

The conceptual framework shown in (Figure 1) was transformed into a measurement model (Figure 2), then transformed into a measurement model (Figure 3) with scores through the two-stage approach (Sarstedt, Joseph, Cheah, Becker, & Ringle, 2019) which ensures that the second order latent variables are measured according to their sub-variables not according to repeating the measured items. This means that each sub-construct is measured by items, but the constructs are measured by the scores saved from the sub-construct results.

Figure 2. Measurement model

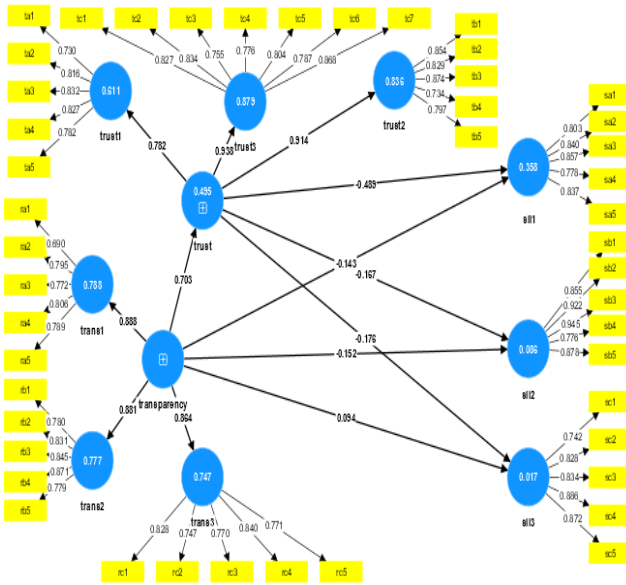
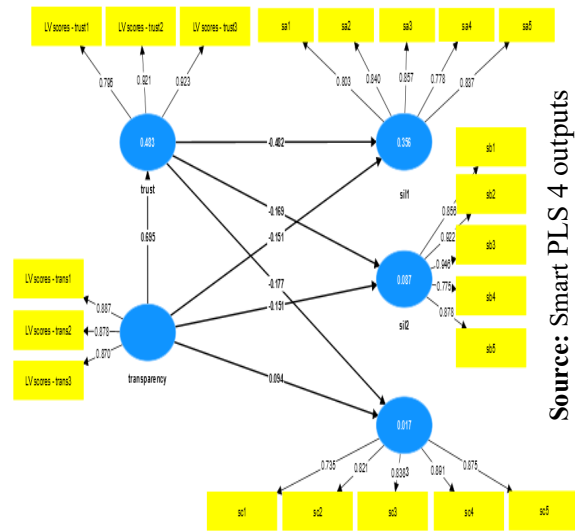


Figure 3. Two-steps second-order model



Source: Smart PLS 4 outputs

As long as all the outer loadings shown in Figure 2 equal 0.7 except one 0.69 (the first item of the first construct of organizational transparency) which almost equals 0.7 the study's model was not modified and used in saving the latent variable scores (Figure 3). It is clear that the outer loadings of all the latent variables scores are above 0.7. therefore, the second-order model is appropriate to test the hypotheses proposed in this study.

Table 1 confirms the internal consistency and reliability of each latent variable in the model as Cronbach's Alpha and the composite reliability CR are all above 0.7 and less than 0.95 (Hair). These results alongside with the significance outer loadings (of all the items) and the average values extracted AVE values that are above 0.5 prove the model's convergent validity.

Table 1. Model's reliability and validity

|              | Cronbach's alpha | CR   | AVE  | Sil1 | Sil2 | Sil3 | transparency | trust |
|--------------|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------|-------|
| Sil1         | .881             | .885 | .678 | 1    |      |      |              |       |
| Sil2         | .924             | .937 | .769 | .708 | 1    |      |              |       |
| Sil3         | .894             | .939 | .695 | .374 | .482 | 1    |              |       |
| Transparency | .852             | .854 | .771 | .553 | .296 | .064 | 1            |       |
| Trust        | .856             | .881 | .778 | .659 | .303 | .124 | .807         | 1     |

Source: Smart PLS 4 outputs

Concerning discriminant validity, HTMT (Heterotrait-monotrait ratio) matrix shown in Table 1 indicates that its values for all the constructs are less than the predefined threshold of 0.85 (Hamid, Sami, & Sidek, 2017). This means that this study's model constructs are differing from one to another and the discriminant validity requirement is achieved.

## IV.2. descriptive statistics:

Table 2 summarizes the results of descriptive statistics of each variable and dimension in the study's model. They are presented with their names and their labels shown in Figure 2. The statistical mean is used to assess the dimensions' level according to the respondents' opinions and the standard deviation is used to assess the dispersion of their responses.

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics**

|                                   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-----------------------------------|------|----------------|
| Trans 1 (participation)           | 2.64 | .72            |
| Trans 2 (substantial information) | 3.28 | .75            |
| Trans 3 (accountability)          | 2.45 | .79            |
| Trust 1 (lateral)                 | 3.32 | .75            |
| Trust 2 (vertical)                | 3.61 | .77            |
| Trust 3 (institutional)           | 3.07 | .82            |
| Sil 1 (acquiescent silence)       | 2.78 | .96            |
| Sil 2 (defensive silence)         | 2.33 | 1.03           |
| Sil 3 (pro-social silence)        | 3.15 | 1.01           |

**Source:** SPSS v.25 outputs

According to the surveyed faculty members and the results shown in Table 1, the level of organizational transparency in the faculty under study is perceived as moderate in terms of the first and second dimensions, which consist of the participative efforts of communications and providing substantial information. Specifically, respondents believe that the administration places only moderate importance on assisting individuals in identifying the information they need to perform their tasks effectively, ensuring that this information is easily accessible, credible, and accurate, and seeking feedback on the quality of the provided information. Additionally, they perceive the administration's success in providing information in a timely manner, in a clear, complete, precise, and honest format, as moderately effective. However, the respondents indicated a low level of transparency concerning the third dimension, which involves accountability by accepting criticism, ensuring accountability, informing individuals about upcoming changes before they occur, and acknowledging and correcting mistakes.

The results regarding organizational trust indicate that the respondents have a high level of trust in their immediate supervisors and a moderate level of trust in their colleagues and the administration. These findings suggest that the respondents believe in the integrity and competence of their direct supervisors and trust that they provide honest explanations regarding decisions made. Additionally, the respondents moderately trust that their colleagues share necessary information, express their genuine feelings about various work-related issues, offer assistance when problems arise, and that their actions align with their words. Regarding trust in the administration, respondents exhibit a moderate level of confidence in the college's management, including the quality of administrative processes, consistency in operations, the effectiveness of solutions provided for work-related issues, consideration of faculty interests in decision-making, recognition of their contributions, and fair treatment through the application of uniform rules for everyone in the college.

The results regarding organizational silence indicate that the level of defensive silence is low, and the level of the two other kinds of silence: acquiescent and prosocial is average. This result means that respondents have a relatively low fear of potential harm, persecution, or supervisors' reactions when expressing their personal opinions, offering suggestions for work improvement, or providing solutions to existing problems. The result means also that the respondents' acquiescent which means withholding the ideas of work improvement and the solutions for work problems based on the ignorance of the responsible of these ideas and solutions or based on feeling of disengagement or resignation is in an average level in the faculty under study. Furthermore, the result means that the prosocial silence among the respondents is in an average level two meaning that they mediumly agree about withholding the work information for the benefit of their university and for preventing harming their colleagues and supervisors.

### IV.3. Structural model:

Before testing the hypotheses, the Variance Inflation Factor VIF was calculated and its values are shown in table 3. All VIF values are less than 5 proving that this study's model is free from collinearity problems (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012). Therefore, it is permissible to proceed to hypotheses testing using standard regression coefficients, their significance (P values),  $R^2$  coefficient of determinacy, and  $R^2$  adjusted.

**Table 3. Standardized regression paths**

| Paths                | coefficient | P value | VIF   | $R^2$ | $R^2$ adjusted |
|----------------------|-------------|---------|-------|-------|----------------|
| Direct paths         |             |         |       |       |                |
| Transparency → sil1  | -.151       | .085    | 1.934 | -     | -              |
| Transparency → sil2  | -.151       | .248    | 1.934 | -     | -              |
| Transparency → sil3  | .094        | .493    | 1.934 | -     | -              |
| Transparency → trust | .654        | .000    | 1.000 | .483  | .479           |
| Trust → sil1         | -.482       | .000    | 1.934 | -     | -              |
| Trust → sil2         | -.169       | .201    | 1.934 | -     | -              |

|                             |       |      |       |      |      |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|------|
| Trust → sil3                | -.177 | .181 | 1.934 | -    | -    |
| Indirect paths              |       |      |       |      |      |
| Transparency → trust → sli2 | -.117 | .213 | -     | .087 | .075 |
| Transparency → trust → sli3 | -.123 | .189 | -     | .017 | .004 |
| Transparency → trust → sli1 | -.335 | .000 | -     | .356 | .347 |

Source: Smart PLS 4 outputs

According to the results in Table 2 organizational trust totally mediates the relationship between organizational transparency and acquiescent silence. ( $B=-.335$ ,  $P=0.000$ ) This means that organizational transparency does not affect acquiescent silence only through its effect on organizational trust which is transmitted to this type of silence because organizational transparency positively and directly affects organizational trust ( $B=.695$ ,  $P=.000$ ), and organizational trust negatively affects acquiescent silence ( $B=-.482$ ,  $P=.000$ ) and in the same time, transparency does not affect it.  $R^2$  indicates that 35.6% of the variation in acquiescent silence is explained by organizational transparency and trust. These results provide a support to confirm the first hypothesis that proposed that organizational trust mediates the negative effect of transparency on acquiescent silence.

Regarding the second and third hypotheses, the results do not support their confirmation because indirect paths between organizational transparency, organizational trust, and defensive and prosocial silence are not significant. ( $B=-.123$ ,  $P=.189$  for defensive silence.  $B=-.117$ ,  $P=.213$  for prosocial silence) and even the direct paths between organizational transparency and the two types of silence and between organizational trust and the types are insignificant. To give additional insights about the model  $F^2$  effect size and  $Q^2$  predictive relevance are calculated.

**Table 4. Effect size and model predictive quality**

| $F^2$                |      | $Q^2$ |      |       |       |
|----------------------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Transparency → trust | .934 | Sil1  | Sil2 | Sil3  | Trust |
| Trust → silence      | .186 | .225  | .057 | -.015 | .472  |

Source: Smart Pls 4 outputs

Table 4 shows that the  $F^2$  value is .189 meaning that the effect size of both organizational transparency and organizational trust on acquiescent silence is medium. Table 5 indicates that the model has a good predictive quality for almost all the constructs as its values are above zero except for prosocial silence.

#### IV.4. Discussion:

The effect of organizational transparency on organizational trust: The findings indicated that organizational transparency has a direct, positive, and strong impact on organizational trust. This result is consistent with the results of (Rawlins, 2008) (Solteo & Schneider, 2022) (Zainab, Akbar, & Siddiqui, 2022) (Pirson & Malhotra, 2008) This means that when individuals perceive that managerial practices emphasize transparency by integrating them into the organizational information system by providing accurate, in the needed time. In a comprehensive manner and with all necessary details the request and through actively soliciting information from employees, such as encouraging them to offer constructive criticism, share their opinions regarding potential changes before implementation, or contribute ideas on work-related issues of concern to them. This perception positively influences their trust in management and ensures that employees become more confident in management's actions, more supportive of its initiatives, and more willing to collaborate to ensure the success of its efforts.

The effect of organizational transparency and trust on acquiescent silence: the findings revealed that the level of acquiescent silence among the sample was moderate, whereas it should ideally be low or even non-existent. Because the most critical aspect of acquiescent silence is that individuals withhold their ideas, problem-solving solutions, improvement suggestions, and personal development strategies at work because they hold a deep-seated belief that their contributions are futile and will not be considered. For such individuals, their relationship with the organization is reduced to merely completing their assigned tasks and withdrawing once those tasks are finished. This issue is particularly significant in the context of university researchers, especially within faculties specializing in management sciences. Professors in such faculties are expected to be closely engaged with managerial challenges, possessing the expertise to identify and address these issues more effectively. The study further demonstrated that acquiescent silence is influenced by transparency through the mediating role of organizational trust. This indicates that when management prioritizes enhancing transparency levels, it strengthens organizational trust, which, in turn, contributes to reducing the prevalence of this type of silence.

The effect of organizational transparency and trust on pro-social silence: The findings revealed that pro-social silence is not influenced neither by organizational trust, nor organizational transparency within the studied faculty. This finding aligns with the conclusions of (Karabay, Sener, & Tesergil, 2018). This result can be interpreted by considering the ethical dimension associated with this type of silence. Faculty members may prioritize the interests of the university

they work for, as well as the relationship with leaders and colleagues they collaborate with over expressing their opinions or offering critiques. This is driven by a desire to avoid being a source of conflict, reflecting their respect for the moral contract binding them to university, leaders, and colleagues. Furthermore, it underscores their commitment to fostering social harmony, upholding shared values, and maintaining positive social relationships with colleagues. Even when the levels of organizational transparency and trust fall short of individual expectations, these factors do not appear to influence this type of silence.

The effect of organizational transparency and trust on defensive silence: The findings indicated that defensive silence is not influenced by either organizational transparency or trust. This result does not consist with the results of (Karabay, Sener, & Tesergil, 2018) and can be interpreted as suggesting that individuals' reluctance to share their opinions or proposals is not driven by fear of management or its treatment of them, but rather by their preference to safeguard their personal interests and protect themselves, regardless of the levels of trust and transparency within the organization. When examining the level of this type of silence within the faculty under study, it was found to be low, which accurately reflects the reality of the context. There is little reason for faculty members to fear sharing their ideas, especially considering that university employment is within the public sector, governed by civil service laws. These laws ensure job security unless a professional misconduct justifying dismissal occurs, even if the individual is not an actively contributing member of the institution.

## **V- Conclusion:**

Employee silence is a result of behavior from organizational environment characteristics. This silence may be acquiescent silence which means that employees withhold their opinions, ideas, and solutions... due to their negative perception to their value in making any positive changes and that the organization neglects them. The second type of silence is defensive silence which means that the employees have fears of speaking up. The third is pro-social silence which has a moral aspect because the employee will take into account the effect of his words on his colleagues or organization. This study investigated this topic in the academic field among university teachers by focusing on two important organizational environment components which are organizational transparency and organizational trust. The main finding of this study is that acquiescent silence is affected by organizational transparency through the mediation of organizational trust. The two other types are not affected. This means that employees will be more open to participating positively in improving their organization's climate with their creative ideas, and opinions, providing help to others, and suggesting solutions to daily or even difficult problems... if they witness transparency in their administration processes, communication, procedures... which will ensure higher levels of trust in it.

Although the important results of this study that are supported by previous studies' findings and which fill a research gap in the topic literature, the study has limitations. The main limitation is that it focused only on university teachers and only on a small not random sample of teachers in only one faculty at Setif 1 University and not on a random sample of Algerian university teachers among different faculties. So, it is recommended that future studies try to investigate the organizational silence topic to be on larger samples and search for other reasons that explain this behavior, especially the defensive and pro-social silence. The other limitation of this study is that it focused on employee silence which is only a facet of organizational silence, so as a direction for future research, it is recommended to enlarge the topic to organizational silence.

## **- Appendices:**

Appendix 1: the study's questionnaire.

### **Items**

The administration asks for feedback about the quality of its information  
The administration involves people like me to help identify the information I need  
The administration makes it easy to find the information people like me need  
The administration asks the opinions of people like me before making decisions  
The administration takes time with people like me to understand what we need

### **Trans 1 communication efforts are participative**

The administration provides information in a timely fashion to people like me  
The administration provides information that is complete  
The administration provides information that is easy for people like me to understand  
The administration provides accurate information to people like me  
The administration provides information that is reliable

### **Trans 2 communication efforts provide substantial information**

The administration accepts being questioned and held accountable for its actions  
The administration informs people like me about the activities it will undertake  
The administration presents more than one side of controversial issues  
The administration is open to criticism by people like me

The administration freely admits when it has made mistakes

### **Trans 3 communication efforts provide accountability**

I trust that the employees are competent in performing their jobs

I trust that employees share important information with me

I trust that employees express their true feelings about important issues

I trust that employees will help me out when I run into difficulties at work

I trust that employees take actions that are consistent with their words

### **Trust 1 lateral trust**

I trust in my supervisor integrity

My supervisor gives me an honest explanation for decisions

I feel confident about my supervisor's skills

responsible in the faculty are capable in performing their jobs

I trust that I can rely on my supervisor in handling work problems

### **Trust 2 vertical trust**

I trust that my actions are supported in charge of the job

I trust that top management makes decisions that are good for me

I trust that top management is capable in performing its job

I trust that top management applies the same rules for all employees

I trust that top management actions and behaviors are consistent

I trust that top management looks out for what is important to me

I trust the way top management deals with work problems and issues

### **Trust 3 institutional trust**

I withhold ideas about how to improve the work around here based on being disengaged

I passively withhold ideas based on resignation

I passively keep ideas about solutions to problems to me

I don't speak up with suggestions for change because I am disengaged

I keep any ideas for improvement to me as none in administration cares

### **Sil 1 acquiescent silence**

I don't speak up and suggest ideas for change based on fear

I avoid expressing ideas for improvements due to self-protection

I withhold my solutions to problems because I am motivated by fear

I withhold relevant information due to fear

I withhold my ideas

### **Sil 2 defensive silence**

I protect the information in order to benefit the university

I withhold any work-related information that may harm my colleagues or superiors.

I withhold ideas for change based on concerns about my colleagues and my university

I refuse to divulge information that might harm the university

I withhold confidential information based on cooperation

### **Sil 3 pro-social silence**

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