

Professional Silence In Light Of Certain Variables Among Secondary School Teachers -Field Study In Some Educational Institutions In Sebdou, Tlemcen Province

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Abstract:

The current study seeks to reveal the level of professional silence in the light of some variables (gender, educational level, and years of seniority at work). To achieve the objectives of the study and answer its hypotheses, the descriptive method was relied upon and an intentional sample from the category of secondary education teachers was selected, consisting of (115) teachers according to their variables in some educational institutions in The City of Sebdou, Tlemcen State. The professional silence scale prepared by (Arbah Said Khalil, 2019) was applied on them. After the data were collected and statistical treatments were conducted through the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26, the study therefore reached the following results:

- An average level of professional silence among the participants.
- There are statistically significant differences in the level of professional silence among the participants attributable to the gender variable.
- There are statistically significant differences in the level of professional silence among the participants attributable to the educational level variable.
- There are statistically significant differences in the level of professional silence among the participants attributable to the years of seniority at work.

Keywords: professional silence, High school teacher.

1- Introduction:

Professional silence of teachers affects education and the achievement of their objectives, especially at the level of the educational institution due to the lack of feedback, which refers to practices that need to be strengthened and developed due to underperformance. The effectiveness of schools in achieving their objectives is therefore determined by the effectiveness of their teachers. Workers in various institutions are making great efforts to help the organization achieve its goals, but they face some coercion that prevent them from carrying out their duties well. Hence, the staff members are

exposed to stressful situations that make them feel uncomfortable with constant anxiety, which has a negative impact on them. This is confirmed by the study of (Alkhatabiya, 2018, p. 125), which aimed to identify the reality of organizational silence among the employees of the directorates of education in The Province of Irbid. The study found that the level of professional silence was average, with no statistically significant differences in the response of the participants to the reality of professional silence attributable to the variables of (gender, specialization, experience).

The study also concluded that the degree of problems that lead to professional silence was average, in addition, the participants believed that teamwork has a better impact than individual work. The reaction of employees is represented in adopting behaviors and indicators of silence, dissatisfaction, fear, isolation, non-interference in the course of the organization's affairs, and not to profess problems with colleagues within the work environment ... etc. The absence of the dialogue culture about improving the individual and overall performance of the institution, to achieve quality and ensure the survival and continuity of the organization against the challenges of digitization, hinders the employees performance and ambitions.

2- Study problem:

The study of professional silence phenomenon among secondary school teachers as an organizational problem allows to know the real causes behind the phenomenon and determine its limits and levels in order to intervene and develop mechanisms that allow to benefit from the positive aspects of it. Professional silence is considered one of the indicators of some organizational phenomena that affect the overall performance of the organization, for example: work turnover, job dissatisfaction, underperformance of workers and others. The adoption of this behavior by the faculty members stems first from the fear of some administration officials negative reaction to criticism and counter-opinion towards the management process and the nature of the decisions taken. Secondly, the misperception of this expression and openness about the nature of the problems. The concept of criticism is considered in the eyes of officials at work as equivalent to the concept of confrontation and problem-making. This idea crystallizes in the implicit beliefs that the organization's officials create for all employees of the organization. In order to avoid this situation in light of the closed doors of dialogue and expression, the best solution is to remain silent and to look for an alternative or to be satisfied with the teaching hours without offering programs for creativity and innovation (Bastug, 2016, pp. 126-130) Among the studies that dealt with this concept as an independent variable, we find the study of (Abdul Razzaq, 2015, pp. 297-384) and the study of (Sayed Ahmed, 2015, p.

122) which concluded many results, the most important of which is: there are average levels of professional silence among faculty members with statistically significant differences in the participants' responses to the level of silence attributable to the gender variable.

Based on the intellectual perception from which we started, we will try in this study to reveal the level of professional silence of secondary school teachers in light of some demographic variables, and therefore we start from answering the following main question:

- What is the level of professional silence among secondary school teachers in light of some demographic variables (gender, educational level, and seniority years at work)?

This main question is related to sub-questions as follows.

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2-1- Sub-questions:

- What is the level of professional silence among the participants?
- Are there differences in the professional silence of participants attributable to the gender variable?
- Are there differences in the professional silence of participants attributable to the educational level variable?
- Are there differences in the professional silence of participants attributable to the seniority years' variable?

3- Hypotheses:

Depending on the study's questions, we suggest the following hypotheses:

- A high level of professional silence among the participants.
- There are differences in the professional silence of participants attributable to the gender variable.
- There are differences in the professional silence of participants attributable to the educational level variable.
- There are differences in the professional silence of participants attributable to years of seniority variable

4- Study objectives:

The current study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Revealing the level of professional silence of secondary school teachers in Sebdou, Tlemcen province.
- Identifying the degree of differences in professional silence according to the following variables (gender, educational level, and years of seniority at work).

5- Importance of the study:

The importance of the study is highlighted through the following points:

- Trying to highlight the importance of raising the issue of professional silence in labor organizations as a negative pathological phenomenon.
- The possibility of benefiting from the results of the current study to take the necessary measures by the decision makers in order to overcome the behavior of professional silence, as well as the active participation of teachers in the study work.
- Add new addition to the scientific knowledge and develop solutions and mechanisms to reduce the behaviors of professional silence among teachers in educational institutions.
- This study may help us enrich the Arab Library in the field of theoretical studies related to professional silence.

6- Procedural definition of study terms:

6- 1: Professional silence:

It is a conscious and deliberate behavior by teachers towards work issues and everything related to management, decision-making, organizational policies and job problems. This behavior occurs through non-disclosure of expression and opinion due to the employees' fear of negative reactions by administration officials such as threats and punishments (Tutar, 2010, p. 47)

Procedurally: it is the score that teachers obtain from answering the paragraphs of the professional silence scale prepared for this purpose (Morrison & Milken, 2000, pp. 706-725)

6-2: Secondary education teacher: In our research, we mean the characteristics, features or

traits of high school teachers that distinguish them as they are in fact from the point of view of students according to the following specifications: (cognitive, professional, behavioral, social characteristics (Fhoul, 2007, p. 11)

7-Previous studies:

1-The study of(Khtabiya, 2016, p. 125): this study aimed to find out the reality of professional silence among the employees of the education directorates in Irbid province. The sample of the study consisted of (253) employees in which the descriptive approach was used. The results of the study showed that the level of professional silence was average with no statistically significant differences to the responses of the participants regarding the reality of professional silence attributable to the variables of (gender, educational qualification, and years of experience). The members of the sample also believe that teamwork achieves better results than individual work.

2- The study of(Hawala, 2018): aimed to recognize the reality of professional silence among the female leaders of secondary schools in Riyadh from the point of view of teachers. The study community is made up of (922) female teachers in which the descriptive approach was adopted. The results of the study indicated that the reality of professional silence among secondary school teachers in Riyadh came to an average degree, in addition to lack of administration support. The results also indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the responses of the participants concerning the reality of professional silence attributable to the variables of gender, educational level, and years of experience.

3- The study of (Alkarni, 2016)entitled "The nature of the relationship between ethical leadership and the level of professional silence behavior among faculty members". The study sample consisted of (761) faculty members. The results of the study found that the level of professional silence was high with the existence of a relationship between ethical leadership and the level of professional silence. The findings also indicated that there were statistically significant differences concerning the participants' answers

about professional silence behaviors depending on the variables of gender, specialization, and years of experience

4- The study of(Alkinkurt, 2014):this study aimed to reveal the relationship between the school climate and the behaviors of professional silence among teachers. The most significant findings of the study are that the idea of organizational justice is one of the important variables in predicting the professional silence of teachers. The results also pointed out that there are no differences in the behaviors of professional silence attributable to the variable of educational qualification.

8- Second subtitle:

8-1: Concept of professional silence:

states that “professional silence is not an individual behavior but it spread throughout the whole organization. It is the general attitude of the employees towards the issues that occur within the organization (Alkinkurt, 2014, pp. 289-297)

said that it is “unwise to talk about the organization's problems for fear of spreading”.

Professional silence is a common perception among the employees of the educational institution that they have limited participation in providing what they know about school policies and organizational problems, or it is the collective feeling that generates a perception of organizational problems among employees(Van Dick, 2012, pp. 349-362)

Therefore, we conclude from this definition that the behaviors of professional silence in the educational institution are shared by teachers within the working group to avoid providing information and proposals for fear of any negative feedback from the administration.

8-2: Implications of professional silence:

Conditions and problems in educational institutions are increasing towards professional silence behaviors, which require great efforts to achieve the institutions goals. The prevalence of professional silence leads to serious and negative consequences on the organizational performance in general and on the sustainability and organizational health of the institution in particular (Hafnawi, 2012)

We conclude that the effects of widespread professional silence in educational institutions inevitably lead to a decrease in the quality of decisions, poor analysis of ideas, and no feedback. All the mentioned consequences kill the spirit of creativity and reduce the chance of detecting information errors which weaken the educational system among pupils and increase their level of absences and school violence(Husrevsahi, 2015, p. 117)

8-3: Professional silence dimensions:

8.3.1. Compliant silence: This type of silence represents a free and negative attitude of the workers where they hold their tongues from talking and speaking not because of fear or difference of knowledge, but as a result of indifference and despair This kind of silence expresses a reluctance to give thoughts and information due to the organizational circumstances and situations. Individuals who are silent about this type behave negatively (Van Dick, 2013, pp. 12-16)

8.3.2.Defensive silence: is directly related to the degree of psychological security and speaking opportunities available to the individual within the work environment (Eroglu, Adiguzed, & Ozturk, 2011, p. 127)

8.3.3. Social silence: has pointed out that social silence “is the silence in support of social relations. It is a reluctance to provide information and opinions on the issues and problems of work as a form of altruism, cooperation with others and maintaining good relations with them (Ksbah & Faouri, 2010, p. 28)

9- Methodological procedures for field study:

9-1: Study approach: in our current study, we used the descriptive approach because it suits the subject and the nature of the study concerned with the professional silence among secondary schools' teachers.

9-2: Study community and its sample: the study community represents teachers and therefore the sample of the study consisted of (115) teachers (male and female) selected in a random manner

Table 1. Title (Source: Name of author (year), page)

Variable	Variable level	Number
Gender	Male	35
	Female	80
	Baccalaureate	14
Educational level	University graduate	91
	Higher studies phase three	10
	Less than 5 years	29
Years of seniority at work	5-10 years	40
	More than 10 years	46

9-3: Data collection tools: we depended in our study on the professional silence scale proposed for this study.

Professional silence scale: this scale was designed by (Arbah S. , 2019, p. 9)It consists of 20 paragraphs consisting of three dimensions (compliant silence, defensive silence, social silence). The scale paragraphs were responded to according to Likert scale, where the numerical value (5) is given to the response (very high), the numerical value (4) is given to the response (high), as the numerical value (3) is given to the response (average), the numerical value (2) is given to the response (low), and finally the numerical value (1) is given to the response (very low). The stability of the scale was estimated at (**0.88) by the Alpha Cronbach equation and the correlation coefficient was estimated at (**0.95).

* The psychometric characteristics of the professional silence scale were verified in the current study. As for the stability of the scale, internal consistency coefficients of the scale were extracted, using the Alpha-Cronbach equation according to the statistical program (SPSS). Accordingly, an acceptable stability value of

(**0.94) was observed based on applications of the Alpha Cronbach equation, so we can say that the scale is characterized by acceptable stability. Concerning the honesty of the scale, we monitored the internal consistency where Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between each paragraph and the overall score of the scale to determine the internal homogeneity of the scale. From there, we observed acceptable values that reflect the validity of the scale, so that the values of the scale ranged from (**0.54- **0.97) which are acceptable and significant values at the level of significance (0.05), indicating that the scale is highly honest and usable.

9-4: The statistical methods used;

In order to analyze the study's data and test its hypotheses and questions, we relied on SPSS (Statistical package for social science) version 26, using the following statistical methods that varied from statistical description and statistical inference:

Percentage, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, Pearson coefficient, simple linear regression, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the T test.

Table 2. the level of professional silence behavior according to the scale weight of participants

Degree	The extent of the arithmetic mean
Low	Less than 2.33
Average	3.66-2.34

High	More than 3.67
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Source: from the study of (Arbah S. , 2019)

10. Presentation and interpretation of the study results

* Presenting and interpreting the general hypothesis

Table 3. shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the participants' responses to each field of professional silence fields

Field of complaint silence	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	degree	Order
I refrain from putting forward new ideas to avoid disagreement with the director	2.18	0.75	Low	4
I don't want to talk about development suggestions in order not to help my colleagues in school.	2.14	0.80	Low	5
School administration is not serious about discussing teachers' suggestions	2.76	0.69	High	2
I keep my opinions to myself due to lack of appreciation from the school administration for self-efficiency	2.96	0.90	High	1
I refrain from providing ideas on improving work to avoid losing my colleagues	2.66	0.70	Average	3
Total score	2.54	0.76	Average	
Field of defensive silence	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	degree	Order
I do not talk about working conditions at school for fear of accountability	2.33	0.56	Low	5
I withhold information about the school to avoid loss of reputation and confidence	3.09	0.66	Average	
I think my development suggestions are not important because my job is a teacher.	2.80	0.30	Average	2
I donot want to tell my boss about the school problems for fear of harming the interests of my colleagues.	3.40	0.80	High	4
I avoid expressing my ideas about work improvement due to fear of losing my job.	3.15	0.58	Average	3
Total score	2.95	0.58	Average	
Field of social silence	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	degree	Order
I hide information about the school to preserve the school's reputation.	3.90	0.46	High	2

I'm under pressure from others to tell them the secrets of school.	3.36	0.79	Average	4
I refuse to disclose information that may harm the school.	4.12	0.80	High	1
I keep the information about the school because it's confidential and not for the purpose of public debate.	3.21	0.66	High	5
I hide information about my work because it is confidential and proprietary of the school.	3.50	0.59	Average	3
Total score	3.61	0.66	Average	
Total score of all the fields	3.03	0.66		

** Significant at the significance level (0.01)

* Significant at the significance level (0.05)

It is clear from table (03) that the arithmetic mean of the total score for all fields was (3.03) which is an average score, and the values for these fields ranged from (2.95) to (3.61). The field of social silence had the highest arithmetic mean of an average score (3.61), followed by defensive silence estimated at (2.95). In the last field, the silence of compliance was estimated at (2.54) which is an average score as well.

Therefore, the reason why social silence took the first place is due to the degree of teachers' awareness that the information about the educational institution is confidential and must be protected and preserved, and cannot be talked about whatsoever. Defensive silence came in second because teachers avoid expressing their professional ideas and opinions about school problems. The silence of compliance came in the last place due to teachers' desire to maintain a good relationship with their colleagues and to avoid disagreement with the headmaster.

The result of this study was in agreement with the study of (Alkhatabiya, 2018), which indicated that the level of professional silence among teachers in the departments of education in Irbid province was

average, as well as the study (Hawala, 2018), which indicated that the reality of professional silence among female secondary school leaders in Riyadh came at an average level. This study also disagreed with the study of (Alkinkurt, 2014) which indicated that teachers' professional silence behaviors were low. The results of the latter study differed in return with the study of (Alkarni, 2016) which said that the level of professional silence among the faculty members was high.

***Presenting and describing the results of the first partial hypothesis:**

The first partial hypothesis states that: **there are statistically significant differences in the professional silence attributable to the gender variable among the participants.** To validate this hypothesis, the total degree of professional silence variable for both males and females has been calculated, in which the arithmetic means, the standard deviation and the T test were calculated to determine the significance of differences between the silence averages according to the gender variable (male-female). The following table illustrates:

Table 4. shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the participants' responses to each field of professional silence fields

Gender	Number	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Freedom degrees	T calculated value	Statistical significance
Male	35	27.34	0.72	113	0.83	0.00
Female	80	22.47	2.88			

** Significant at the significance level (0.01)

* Significant at the significance level (0.05)

Table (04) illustrates the arithmetic means where the highest one was in favor of males by (22.47) with standard deviation estimated at (0.72). The table also shows the T test value that was estimated at (0.83). The potential value reached (Sig) reached (0.00) which is statistically insignificant. Consequently, there are differences in the degree of professional silence among the participants attributable to the gender variable, and therefore the hypothesis has been achieved.

Here we can say that this finding agreed with the study of (Alkarni, 2016) that pointed out to the existence of statistically significant differences in the answers of the participants regarding professional silence behaviors attributable to the gender variable. However, this finding disagreed with the study of (Alkhatabiya, 2018) stating that there are no statistically significant differences in the answers of the participants about the reality of professional silence attributable to the gender variable.

Table (05): Results of the one-way variance analysis test (ANOVA) for the differences significance in the responses of the participants about the degree of professional silence depending on the educational level variable.

	Variance source	Sums of squares	Mean squares	Freedom degree	Calculated F value	Significance level
Professional silence	Between groups	22.30	7.425	2	1.002	0.25
	Inside groups	809.852	7.416	113		

** Significant at the significance level (0.01)

* Significant at the significance level (0.05)

We observe from table (05) that there are no differences in the professional silence according to the educational level variable. The value of F was estimated at (1.002) and the level of significance was (0.25) which is greater than (0.05) and (0.01). Thus, there are no differences and therefore the hypothesis has not been achieved.

In other words, teachers, despite their different level of education, practice professional silence due to personal and social factors. The result of this study was in agreement with the study (Alkarni, 2016) which indicated that there are differences at the level of professional silence among teachers attributable to the variable of educational qualification. However, the finding of this study

The result of this study can therefore be explained by the fact that there is no difference in the estimates of the participants about professional silence, whether male or female, and they have the same thinking about withholding ideas and not giving their opinions about the problems that face them during their educational tasks.

*** Presenting and describing the results of the second partial hypothesis:**

The second partial hypothesis states the following: **there are statistically significant differences in the degree of professional silence among the employees attributable to the level of education variable.** To validate the hypothesis, the arithmetic means, the standard deviations and the value of the one-way variance analysis Test (ANOVA) were calculated to identify the differences between professional silence averages depending on the educational level variable.

disagreed with the study of (Alkinkurt, 2014), which indicated that there are no differences in professional silence behaviors attributable to the educational level variable.

This result can be interpreted by referring it to the personal factors and the prevailing climate in these educational institutions. The institutional environment does not encourage presenting the problems that face the teacher. It can be referred as well to the convergence of their living and cultural conditions, in addition to the economic problems

*** Presenting and describing the results of the third partial hypothesis:**

The hypothesis states that: **there are statistically significant differences in the degree of professional silence among the employees attributable to years of seniority variable.** To validate the hypothesis, the arithmetic means, the

standard deviations and the value of the one-way variance analysis Test (ANOVA) were calculated to identify the differences between professional silence averages depending on seniority at work variable.

Table6. shows the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the participants' responses to each field of professional silence fields

	Variance source	Sums of squares	Mean squares	Freedom degree	Calculated F value	Significance level
Professional silence	Between groups	22.235	7.225	2	1.023	0.3008
	Inside groups	912.458	7.427	113		

** Significant at the significance level (0.01)

* Significant at the significance level (0.05)

the seniority at work variable. The value of F was estimated at (1.023) and the level of significance was (0.308) which is greater value than (0.05) and (0.01). Thus, there are no statistically significant differences and therefore the hypothesis has not been achieved.

Hence, the result of this study was in line with the study of (Alkhatabiya, 2018), which indicated that there are no statistically significant differences in the responses of participants regarding the reality of professional silence attributable to years of experience variable. The study of (Alkarni, 2016) also pointed out in the same context that there are no differences at the level of professional silence behaviors.

Through this study we conclude that teachers in the educational institution did not disagree concerning the estimates of professional silence attributed to years of experience variable, as the workers in this institution do not involve the factor of experience as a justification for the professional silence between teachers.

Conclusion:

The current study produced a series of results, most notably:

- A moderate level of professional silence among the participants.
- There are statistically significant differences in the level of professional silence among the participants attributable to the gender variable.
- There are no statistically significant differences in

the level of professional silence among the participants attributable to the educational level variable.

- There are no statistically significant differences in the level of professional silence among the participants attributable to years of seniority at work variable

-The study therefore recommends the following:

Taking care of modifying and improving the appropriate atmosphere and the appropriate climate by the institutions for the nature of the work.

- Involving teachers in school work through devolution of powers.

- Encouraging initiatives and pioneering ideas from teachers.

- Developing communication skills between teachers.

- Developing collectivity spirit and human relations among faculty members.

- Taking care of working individuals by allowing them to express their opinions through establishing effective communication systems between them and their subordinates, establishing flexible organizational structures and giving them the confidence to raise their concerns and what they see fit in order to address the causes of their professional silence

- Increasing the tasks and responsibilities of some employees with high levels of competency and

giving them broad powers to make constructive decisions.

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